



2025 - 2029

MS SCORP

MISSISSIPPI STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE
OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

Improving Outdoor Recreation in Mississippi



Prepared for:
Mississippi Department of
Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks



Prepared by:
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State of Mississippi

TATE REEVES
Governor

Dear Fellow Mississippians:

We live in a state with an abundance of natural resources and a moderate climate that provides ample opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. As stewards of our state's natural resources, we strive to conserve, protect, and enhance these recreational opportunities. This stewardship is reflected in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan "Improving Outdoor Recreation in Mississippi" (SCORP).

The SCORP was developed in accordance with the Land and Water Act of 1965, which established the Land and Water Conservation Fund State Assistance Program. "Improving Outdoor Recreation in Mississippi" was developed by creating a statewide inventory of recreation opportunities, input from recreation providers, and documenting the recreational needs and interests of citizens across the state. This information was gathered through an outreach effort that included public meetings, social media, emails, and online surveys. This data was analyzed, compiled, and presented in the SCORP. The 2025-2029 SCORP will aid in recreational planning and will guide the disbursement of federal funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to municipal, county, and state units of government for public outdoor recreation.

I approve and submit "Improving Outdoor Recreation in Mississippi" as the 2025-2029 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. I would like to extend a special thanks to the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, the SCORP Task Force Committee, and Dana Brown and Associates for their expertise with the development of the SCORP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tate Reeves".

Tate Reeves
Governor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword

Governor’s Certification	iii
Acknowledgements	iii
Executive Summary	iv

Section 1: Introduction

Purpose	1
Scope	3
Report Background	4
Vision	4
Goals and Objectives	4

Section 2: The State of Mississippi

Geography and Hydrology	7
Ecology	8
Demographics	8
Economy	11
Administrative and Government Boundaries	11

Section 3: The Benefits of Outdoor Recreation

Environment	12
Public Access, Connectivity, and Accessibility	15
Personal Health and Wellness	16
Communities and Equity	21
Economic Opportunities and Tourism	23

Section 4: 2024-2029 SCORP Planning Process

Methodology	24
Public Outreach & Engagement	31
Surveys	32
Provider Survey Overview	34
Resident Survey Overview	34

Section 5: Recreation Supply and Demand

Recreation Supply	49
Analysis	50
Recreation Demand	55
Recommendations	60

Section 6: Issues Affecting Outdoor Recreation

Funding	63
Maintenance	64
Programming	65
Access	65
Advocacy	66
Issue Trends Compared to Previous Reports	66

Section 7: Assessment and Protection of Wetlands

Introduction	69
Description of Mississippi Wetlands	70
Major Regional Habitats and Threats	70
Wetlands Management Programs and Efforts	71

Section 8: Outdoor Recreation Priorities, Strategies and Actions

Recreation Priorities	72
Recreation Strategies	76
Action Plan	76
Issues Affecting Recreation	77
Action Plan Matrix	77

Section 9: LWCF State Assistance Program

LWCF Open Project Selection Process	81
Application Process	85
Priority Rating System	86
LWCF Project Application	87

Reference

List of Images	93
List of Tables and Figures	95
Glossary of Acronyms	96
Works Cited	97

Appendices

Appendix A Provider Survey	A1
Appendix B Resident Survey	A7
Appendix C Outreach	A21
Appendix D Additional Charts and Tables	A35
Appendix E OPSP Measured and Incentive Criteria	A85

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



John W. Kyle State Park

Improving Outdoor Recreation in Mississippi is the 2025 - 2029 edition of Mississippi's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). This report identifies the demands, needs, and existing resources of outdoor recreation throughout the state. The SCORP addresses issues affecting outdoor recreation, and it sets goals and recommendations for the planning and programming of future and existing facilities. This report complies with the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant criteria to allow the State of Mississippi to remain eligible for LWCF funds.

The report's goals include encouraging residents to become active outdoors; attracting new visitors to experience outdoor recreation, providing more inclusive programming recommendations for seniors and youth; increasing universal access throughout state trails and outdoor recreation facilities; and extending facilities with accessible, user-friendly, low-maintenance infrastructure that allows for year-round visitor use.

The report also provides updated information of the status of outdoor recreation in Mississippi. The project team obtained this information through the issuance of two surveys: one to residents and the other to park managers or providers. The resident survey produced responses from approximately 1,600 residents in nearly all counties, while the provider survey resulted in more than 50 responses for facilities from city parks

to state lakes. Summaries of the survey responses are included in this plan and copies of both surveys are located in the appendices. The provider survey findings are supplemented by an inventory that includes state parks, national forests, state fishing lakes, wildlife management areas, and more. The inclusion of these two databases allows for a comprehensive analysis of the opportunities that are available to residents and match their interests.

The report also presents the issues identified through the public engagement process. Presenting recommendations to address the issues outlined, and comparing the current issues against previously identified issues in SCORP reports. The project's Task Force Committee determined the chosen issues, which directly reflect their expertise knowledge of ongoing conditions across the state. The issues include funding, maintenance, access, programming, and advocacy. Action items and successful programs are provided to address each issue, as recommendations for providers and managers for future consideration.

Outdoor recreation in Mississippi presents a wide array of diverse activities to enjoy. By improving access and utilizing natural resources, the state offers ample opportunities to experience the benefits of outdoor activities. Engaging in these activities also helps cultivate a stronger sense of environmental stewardship.

1 INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The 2025 - 2029 edition of Mississippi's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is titled Improving Outdoor Recreation in Mississippi, and the purpose is to identify the demands, needs, and existing resources of outdoor recreation throughout the state. This report is a five-year comprehensive plan that includes an assessment of the state's recreation supply, demands, needs, and challenges. The SCORP addresses issues affecting outdoor recreation, and it sets goals and recommendations for the implementation of future facilities. This report complies with the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant criteria to allow the State of Mississippi to remain eligible for LWCF funds.

SCOPE

Improving Outdoor Recreation in Mississippi is meant to serve as a guide for future recreational development in Mississippi. The plan analyses the needs and issues outlined in the public engagement process against the outdoor recreation data at national, state, and local levels. It also suggests methods to improve existing facilities and provides future opportunities, driven by the collected data.

REPORT BACKGROUND

Established in 1965, the LWCF State Assistance Program was developed to encourage a nationwide action program to promote outdoor recreation opportunities by preserving, developing, and assuring available resources with an eye toward the future health and recreation needs of all citizens. Congress appropriates federal funds through the Department of Interior and administers funds through the National Park Service (NPS). The program provides matching grants of up to 50 percent to States, local governments, and Tribal Nations for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation sites and facilities.

The Outdoor Recreation Grants (ORG) Division of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) awards LWCF grant funds to projects that align with the priorities established within this plan. According to the National Park Service, over the past 50 years, the LWCF's "state side" program has generated a national recreation investment of \$10.4 billion, supporting 45,000 projects¹. Since 1965, the state of Mississippi

has received \$65.6 million from LWCF for a total of 711 grants². On August 4, 2020, the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) was signed into law, authorizing \$900 million annually to provide full and permanent funding for the LWCF program.

The fiscal year 2023 LWCF apportionment for the State of Mississippi was \$3,347,769³. The apportionment is available for obligation for State-established priority outdoor recreation projects benefiting communities across Mississippi. To be eligible for an LWCF apportionment, states must maintain a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan that meets the requirements of the LWCF Act. The SCORP is required to be updated every five years. This edition serves as an update to the 2019-2024 Mississippi SCORP titled Ensuring Mississippi's Outdoor Legacy. *Additional information on LWCF funds and requirements is located in Section 9 – LWCF State Assistance Program.*

VISION

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) will use the SCORP report as a guide for recreational planning and development. The SCORP will also be used for the evaluation of projects submitted for LWCF financial assistance. Additionally, the SCORP will serve as an milestone in the progression toward the goal of a recreational facilities database to catalog opportunities across the state and identify trends and preferences for recreational facilities, and to help guide recreational development at local, regional, and state agencies.



Birdwatching Outdoors

¹ National Park Service. 2023 Department of Interior News Release

² MDWFP. Land and Water Conservation Fund 2023 Past Projects Database

³ Department of the Interior. 2023 Fiscal Year 2023 Total Apportionments by State/Territory

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The plan's goals guide recommendations to enhance outdoor recreation statewide. The project team's Task Force Committee (TFC), discussed in the following section, developed the goals. The TFC was formed to:

- *Represent various stakeholders in the public realm, composed of knowledgeable and diverse individuals who collaborate to set strategic goals that align with the overall vision of the SCORP.*
- *Actively participate in drafting the SCORP document by contributing insights, research findings, and recommendations. Once the Plan is approved, committees work on implementing the proposed strategies which may involve advocating for funding, policy changes, or infrastructure development.*
- *Engage with the public by seeking input through surveys to ensure that the SCORP reflects the needs and desires of the community.*

Initially, the TFC gave priority to goals that sought to improve access to recreational facilities, trails, pathways, connections between existing facilities, and overall resident interest in outdoor recreation. Further discussion and investigation led to adding the goals of the following: providing user-friendly, low-maintenance infrastructure at park facilities; expanding the availability of amenities; and aiding physically impaired users through extended access along trails. The finalized list of goals is as follows:

- *Encourage residents to become active outdoors.*
- *Attract more visitors to parks statewide.*
- *Increase access throughout state trails and recreational facilities.*
- *Extend facilities with accessible, user-friendly, low-maintenance infrastructure that allows for year-round visitor use.*

These goals are not an exhaustive list but are presented to support ongoing efforts and to mitigate trends that are challenges to the improvement of outdoor recreation in Mississippi. The project team encourages the formation of future projects that will incorporate the intention of these goals in their objectives.

CONCLUSION

Improving Outdoor Recreation in Mississippi is Mississippi's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for 2025 - 2029. The plan reviews and analyzes the state of outdoor recreation within Mississippi based on supply and demand and recommends improvement strategies that are in alignment with the plan's goals.



Road Cycling

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2

THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

GEOGRAPHY AND HYDROLOGY

Mississippi encompasses 46,923 square miles of river delta, farmland, forested hills, coastal lands, and urban centers. The state lies between the Mississippi River Alluvial Plain and the Gulf Coastal Plain, causing it to be mostly low-lying. The Pontotoc Ridge and the Transition and Fall Line Hills in the Northeast contain the state's highest point, Woodall Mountain, at 806 feet. Floodplains and oxbow lakes make up the River Delta Region while the Gulf Coast Region contains bays, marshes, and swamps. The Mississippi River stretches from north to south along the western state border. This river section is part of the third largest river system in the world. Other major local rivers include the Pearl River, Big Black River, and Yazoo River. Several natural and artificial lakes exist across the state, including Enid Lake, Grenada Lake, Sardis Lake, and the Ross Barnett Reservoir. Moreover, gulf bays line the coastline, calmed by the barrier islands of the Gulf Islands National Seashore.

Climate⁴

Mississippi is within the subtropical climate region, which experiences temperate winters and long summers. The state typically experiences humid days from May to September. High temperatures exceed 90 degrees more than 100 days each year, yet the winters consistently bring freezing temperatures. Due to its geography, the northern and southern ends of the state contain slightly different climates.

Northern

In the northern part of the state, the average daily temperature is 62 degrees. Annual precipitation averages approximately 50 inches. Nearly every year snow or sleet falls in some part of the state, yet the ground does not usually freeze, and the winters are short.

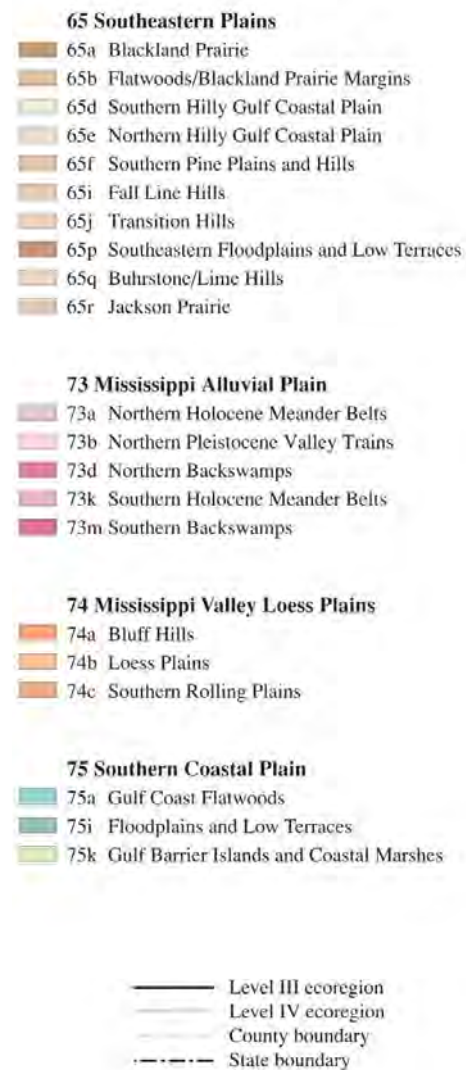
Southern

In the southern part of the state, the average daily temperature is slightly higher at 68 degrees. The Gulf of Mexico causes milder winters in this region. Here, annual precipitation averages over a foot more than in the north, with an average of 65 inches. Severe weather is common, occurring on an average of 60 days per year. In particular, Southern Mississippi and its coast are prone to the impacts of tropical storms and hurricanes.

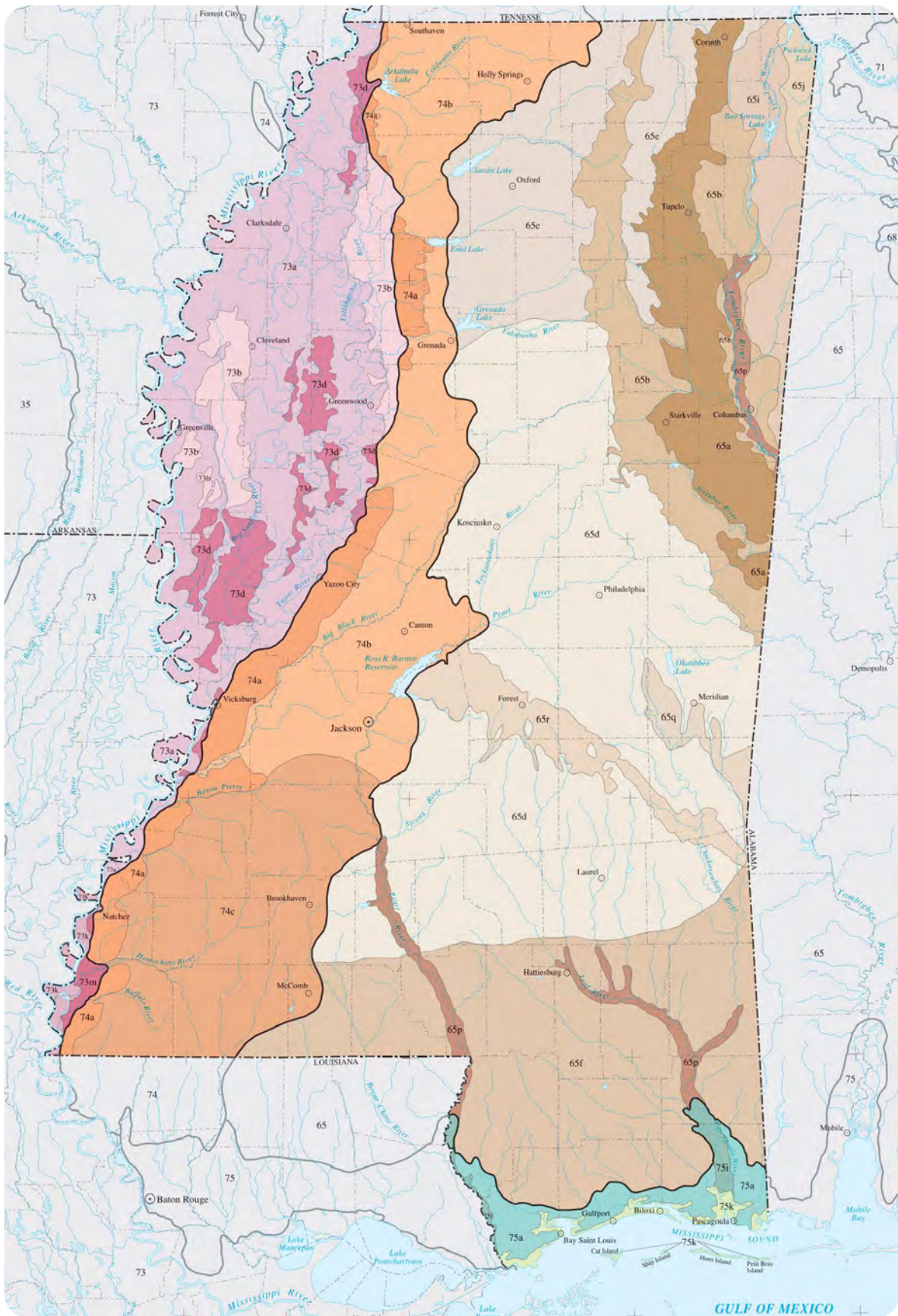
ECOLOGY⁵

Mississippi is comprised of a diverse variety of ecosystems. These ecosystems are compiled into ecoregions which are defined as “areas of general similarity in ecosystems and in the type, quality, and quantity of environmental resources.” The delineation of these ecoregions is important in research and management efforts as each region is unique in nature and has its own capacity and potential to handle disturbance. The data used to establish ecoregions includes geology, physiography, vegetation, climate, soils, land use, wildlife, and hydrology. The four ecoregions that make up the state of Mississippi are depicted in the adjacent map.

LEGEND:



⁴ MSU Department of GeoSciences. Mississippi Climate
⁵ MDEQ, EPA, NRCS. Ecoregions of Mississippi. 2004



Map of Mississippi Ecoregions

Mississippi Alluvial Plain

This ecoregion is riverine in nature and consists of broadly flat topography. Soils in this region are generally fine textured and poorly draining. Before logging efforts of the 19th and early 20th century, this region primarily consisted of bottomland deciduous forests. Much of this land has since been converted to agricultural use. This ecoregion is a major corridor for migratory waterfowl populations. The Mississippi Alluvial Plain consists of the following subregions:

- *Northern Holocene Meander Belts*
- *Northern Pleistocene Valley Trains*
- *Northern Backswamps*
- *Southern Holocene Meander Belts*
- *Southern Backswamps*

Mississippi Valley Loess Plains

This ecoregion primarily consists of large irregular plains, gently rolling hills, and bluffs adjacent to the Mississippi Alluvial Plain. The soils are primarily made up of loess, giving the region its name. Flora in the region is characterized as oak-hickory and oak-hickory-pine, while a large portion of land has been converted to agriculture. The Mississippi Valley Loess Plains consist of the following subregions:

- *Bluff Hills*
- *Loess Plains*
- *Southern Rolling Plains*



Mississippi River between Mississippi and Arkansas

Southeastern Plains

This ecoregion consists of a mosaic of flora coverage including cropland, pasture, and woodland. The original composition of flora was mostly longleaf pine, with some areas of oak-pine and other mixed forests and savannahs. The topography in the region is a mix of smooth plains with low hills. The Southeastern Plains consist of the following subregions:

- *Blackland Prairie*
- *Flatwoods/Blackland Prairie Margins*
- *Southern Hilly Gulf Coastal Plain*
- *Northern Hilly Gulf Coastal Plain*
- *Southern Pine Plains and Hills*
- *Fall Line Hills*
- *Transition Hills*
- *Southeastern Floodplains and Low Terraces*
- *Buhrstone/Lime Hills*
- *Jackson Prairie*

Southern Coastal Plain

This ecoregion extends from the coastal areas of Mississippi across the Florida panhandle and into Georgia and South Carolina. The region is mostly low lying with less topographic change than the neighboring Southeastern Plains ecoregion. It contains barrier islands, coastal lagoons, marshes, and swamps with a flora mix of pines, oak-gum-cypress, and pasture.

The Southern Coastal Plain consists of the following subregions:

- *Gulf Coast Flatwoods*
- *Floodplains and Low Terraces*
- *Gulf Barrier Islands and Coastal Marshes*

⁶ 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP05
⁷ 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, S0101

DEMOGRAPHICS⁶

The most recent Census of 2020 recorded Mississippi to have a total population of 2,961,279. The population projection for 2022 estimates that the state's population decreased by 0.72% to 2,940,057. According to 2022 projections, only six of eighty-two counties have a residency count of over 100,000. These include Hinds (226,541); Harrison (208,748); DeSoto (186,214); Rankin (157,185); Jackson (143,721); and Madison (109,257). From 2018-2022, there was an estimated 0.93% decrease in population statewide. According to these population count estimates, although there is a slight decrease in the state's population, there is a shift occurring from rural to urban counties. Data revealed that most residents live in counties surrounding the capital, near the Memphis metro area, or along the coast. Counties with the smallest populations are rural and include Issaquena (1,206), Sharkey (3,910), Jefferson (7,207), Quitman (6,113), and Franklin (7,690).

Age and Gender⁷

Age and gender throughout the state is diversified and in close comparison to national demographics. Overall, Mississippi has a younger and higher female demographic than the nation.

Based on 2022 estimates, the median age in Mississippi is 38.1 years, nearly one year younger than the national median age. Seniors aged 65 and older account for only 16.5% of the state's population, compared to 17.3% nationally. Meanwhile, youth aged 17 or younger, total 23.4% of the state population with 6.0% under the age of five. Youth nationally account for 21.7% of the population with 5.5% under the age of five.

The state has a smaller ratio of males to females than the national average; there are 94.6 males per 100 females in Mississippi and 98.3 males per 100 females nationally.

Race and Ethnicity⁸

Compared to the nation, 2022 population estimates show that Mississippi has a lower White population and significantly higher African American population than other states while other races and ethnicities are very faintly represented.

Estimates show 55.7% of state residents to be White, whereas the national percentage is estimated to be 60.9%. Black or African American residents account for 36.6% statewide and 12.2% nationally. Additional

⁸ 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP05

⁹ 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP03

ethnicities and races identified within the state include persons of two or more races (4.6%), Asian (0.9%), American Indian or Alaska Native (0.5%), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.0%). 3.3% of Mississippians are Hispanic or Latino.

ECONOMY⁹

Manufacturing of products leads the state economy. Mississippi specializes in producing processed foods, furniture, and chemical products. Motor vehicle manufacturing is also present; Toyota, Nissan, Yokohama, and Paccar all have manufacturing facilities located in Mississippi. Agriculture and forestry are other major contributors to the state's income. The harvesting of cotton, rice, soybeans, and chickens drives agriculture, in addition to aquaculture. Forest resources cover over 62% of the state's total land area, allowing foresters to produce \$13.1 billion in forest products¹⁰. In addition, the southern portion of the state profits from its coastline where fishing of finfish and seafood processing of shellfish is prominent.

According to 2022 estimates, census data suggests that the state is poorer and experiencing higher unemployment than other states. The state's annual per capita income is \$29,045, much lower than the national average of \$41,804. The amount of income is somewhat balanced by a lower cost of living compared to other states. Still, unemployment is more extensive in Mississippi when compared to the country as a whole. The unemployment rate is 3.6% for the State of Mississippi, which is 0.2% higher than the national rate. Additionally, according to the American Community Survey, there is a higher percentage of families living below the poverty line in the state (19.1%) compared to the national percentage (12.8%)¹¹.



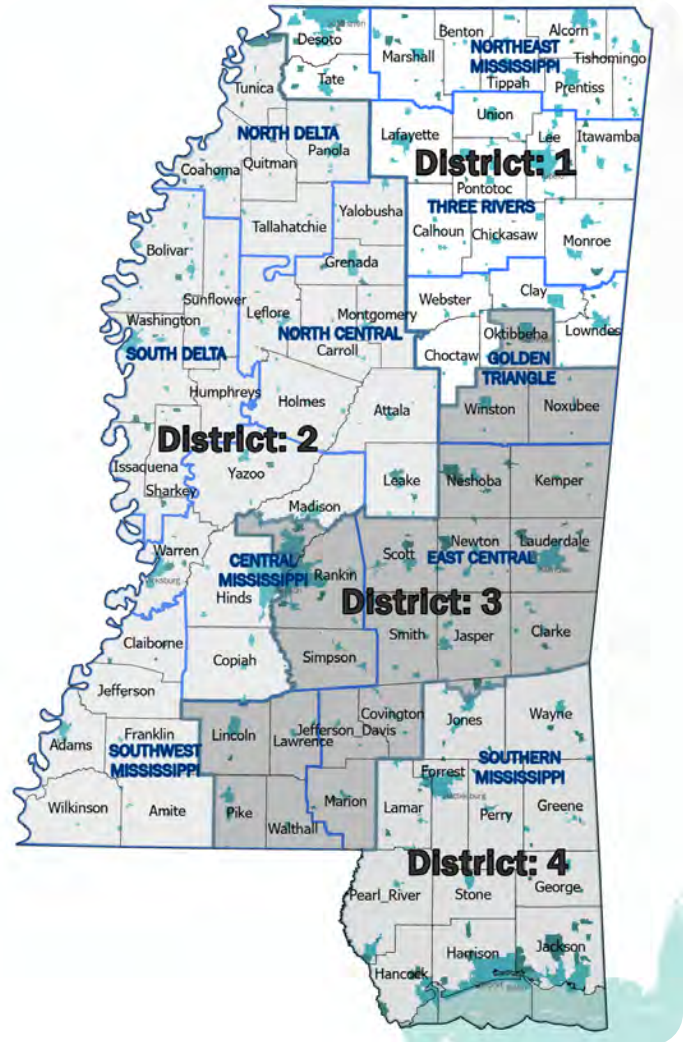
Cotton Blossom

¹⁰ MS Forestry Commission. Forest Action Plan, 2020

¹¹ 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, S1701

ADMINISTRATIVE AND GOVERNMENT BOUNDARIES

The state government in Mississippi is similar to other states in the United States. The state's legislative branch consists of a Senate and House of Representatives that include a total of 52 senators and 122 representatives. The executive branch includes other elected officials such as the Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, and State Treasurer. These officials, along with the Governor, are responsible for carrying out the day-to-day operations of the state government. The judiciary in Mississippi is headed by the Supreme Court, which is the highest court in the state. It consists of a Chief Justice and eight Associate Justices. The Supreme Court is responsible for interpreting the state's laws and ensuring that they are applied fairly. The state government of Mississippi is responsible for a wide range of functions, including education, healthcare, transportation, public safety, and economic development. The Governor and the legislature work together to establish policies and allocate funding for these areas. In addition to the state government, there are also local governments in Mississippi, including counties, municipalities, and school districts. These local governments have their own elected officials and are responsible for providing services to their respective communities.



Map of Mississippi Congressional Districts



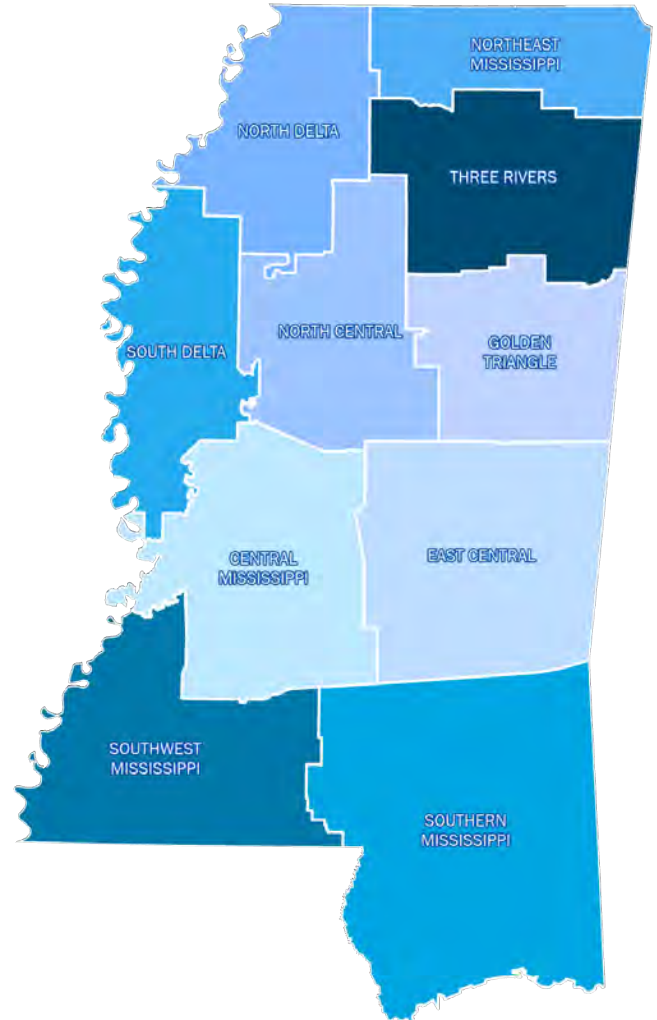
Rice Fields in the Mississippi Delta

Planning and Development Districts

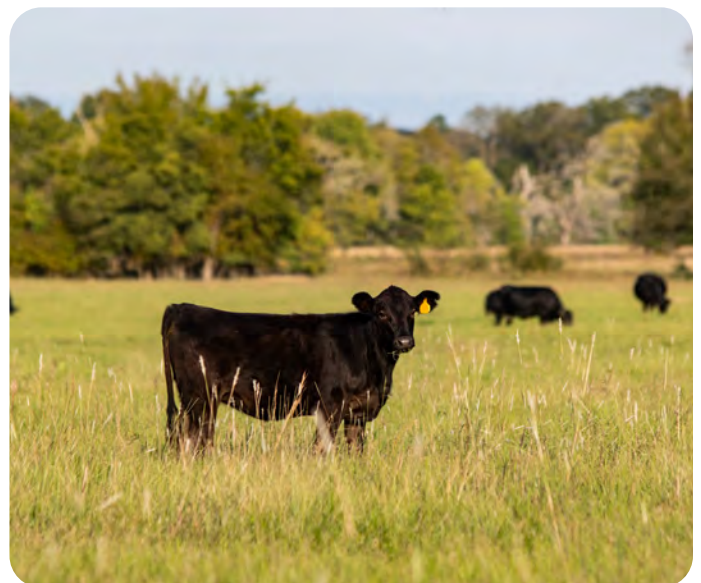
In Mississippi, a Planning and Development District (PDD) is an intergovernmental entity that addresses specific planning and development needs within its geographic area. Common PDD programs and services assist with aging, planning, community and economic development, and workforce development. The ten PDDs within Mississippi were mostly established and defined in the 1960s. Each is organized under the Mississippi Association of Planning and Development Districts and governed by a board of directors. PDDs assist with short- and long-term community planning and provide many services, such as grant writing and administration for economic development projects. PDDs in Mississippi include: North Delta, South Delta, Northeast Mississippi, Southwest Mississippi, Three Rivers, Golden Triangle, North Central, Central Mississippi, East Central Mississippi, and South Mississippi. The map shows locations for each.

CONCLUSION

Mississippi is similar to its Gulf Coast neighbors that include climates and elevations that vary in range from north to south. This setting provides opportunities for numerous outdoor recreation activities. Population projections show that state residents are increasingly living in urban counties or along the coast. As urban communities become denser and expanding development fills in, more open spaces, parks, and outdoor facilities should remain a priority within neighborhoods. Doing so will provide residents with convenient benefits for physical and mental health and transportation alternatives through walking and biking. Still, the state's economy relies on rural spaces for large-scale production to continue. Outdoor recreation through the presence of state parks, national forests, and community parks should continue to be made available for residents working and living in these locations.



Map of Planning and Development Districts



Black Angus Cattle in a Pasture

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3

THE BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

THE BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

From fishing and hunting to bird watching, camping, canoeing, or mountain bike riding, the pursuit of outdoor recreation has many forms and can be performed in a diverse range of settings. Whether exploring in city or state parks, outdoor recreation provides a venue for activities from team sports to nature play at a city playground that define the activities that shape outdoor recreation.

Following an overview of the state's environment, the report addresses each of the following categories based on current data, including state and national trends, and the presence of park facilities. Personal health and wellness, communities and equities, and economic opportunities and tourism. *Section 5: Recreation Supply and Demand provides further information on the extent of Mississippi recreation facilities.*

ENVIRONMENT

Outdoor recreation plays a vital role in fostering a sense of connection to the environment. When people engage in activities like hunting, hiking, or camping, they develop an appreciation and a heightened awareness of conservation efforts and stewardship of Mississippi's ecosystems.

One popular recreational activity throughout the state is hunting. The state has one of the highest populations of white-tailed deer in the nation and a high percentage of harvested bucks compared to other states¹². In 2023, there were 72,720 visits for deer hunting to Wildlife Management Areas (WMA)¹³. Mississippi also has one of the nation's strongest duck harvests, with 15,958 visits for waterfowl hunting to WMA¹⁴. The state's climate also allows for one of the longest hunting seasons, typically from October to February.

Fishing is one of the most popular recreational activities in Mississippi. Mississippi has the fifth richest freshwater native fish catalogues in the United States with roughly 292 species documented in 2017¹⁵. The Mississippi Fishing Index (MSFish) provides information on the size and number of fish in many of the state's lakes. The 2019 scores show that Pascagoula Marsh, Grenada Lake, and Lake Lamar Bruce have the highest number of largemouth bass, crappie, and bream, respectively¹⁶. The Gulf Coast hosts 200 saltwater species, 35 common to Mississippi, including flounder, redfish,

speckled trout, and king mackerel¹⁷. Additionally, two of the largest salamanders observed in the United States can only be found in Mississippi¹⁸.



Family Fishing



Hunting in a Wetland

¹² MSU Extension. White Tailed Deer Profile.

¹³ MDWFP. Wildlife Bureau. 2023 WMA Deer Harvest Report.

¹⁴ MDWFP. Wildlife Bureau. 2023 WMA Waterfowl Harvest Report.

¹⁵ Mississippi Encyclopedia. Native Fish.

¹⁶ MDWFP. "2019 MSFish Scores Ranked by Lake."

¹⁷ Visit Mississippi. "2024 MS Tour Guide.," Mississippi Department of Marine Resources.

Saltwater Fish Common to Mississippi.

¹⁸ Mississippi Encyclopedia. Amphibians.

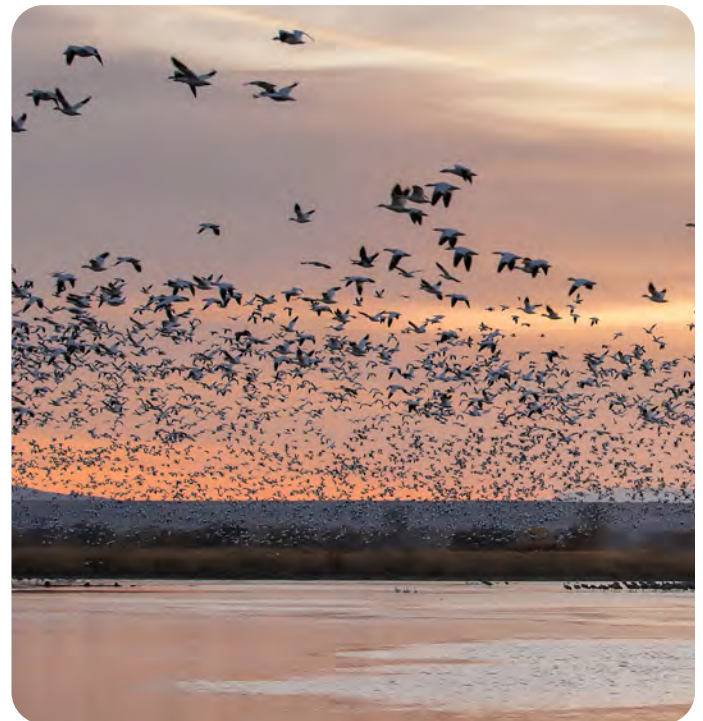
Birding is a recreational activity that thrives in the refuges of the state’s low-lying geographic areas. Lakes and reservoirs host several species of waterfowl, while the beaches and barrier islands see visits from shorebirds and seabirds. The state includes the Mississippi Flyway, which has observed over 400 species of bird¹⁹; a few common species according to the Audubon Society include the sandhill crane, least tern, red-cockaded woodpecker²⁰. Many trails, reserves, and refuges are accessible to birdwatchers, including the six-county-wide Mississippi Coastal Birding Trail which contains 40 birding sites²¹.

The table that follows provides the types and number of species, as well as a list of endangered species, found in Mississippi.

Environmental Integrity

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks is the state agency responsible for conserving, managing, and protecting natural resources and providing outdoor recreational opportunities. Efforts by MDWFP include acquiring lands and waters, providing technical information, educating the public, conducting research for future sustainability, and restoring and stocking wildlife populations. The mission of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks is to “conserve and enhance Mississippi’s wildlife, fisheries, and parks, provide quality outdoor recreation, and engage the public in natural resource conservation.”

MDWFP promotes several ways for residents to contribute to conservation. Some methods include purchasing a Conserving Wildlife car tag, Wildlife Management Area user permit, or waterfowl stamp; volunteering with a conservation organization; or developing habitat on personal property²².



Migrating Birds

VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE COUNT

	Mammal	Birds	Reptiles	Fish	Amphibians	Plants	Insects
Total Species	62	245	84	280	30	2986	
Nativeness							
Native	53	286	12	292	30	2700	
Non-Native	4	7	72	2	0	286	
Abundance							
Common	24	120	3	0	4	132	
Occasional	1	23	0	0	0	5	
Rare	3	48	4	8	0	43	
Uncommon	6	79	3	0	0	3	
Threatened and Endangered Status							
Endangered	3	2	4	1	1	4	1
Threatened	1	3	6	3	0	2	0

¹⁹ Anderson. 2020 Deviation Factors in the Mississippi Flyway.
²⁰ Audubon Society. <https://www.audubon.org/news/birding-mississippi>

²¹ MS Coastal Birding Trail. <https://www.gulfcoastrails.org/green-birding-trails/>
²² MDWFP. Conservation: Get Involved. <https://www.mdwfp.com/conservation/get-involved/>

Conservation is a continuous endeavor that requires a plan, dedicated practice, and necessary funding. Easements are available for the protection of habitats on private lands through the Mississippi Land Trust and Mississippi River Trust. Additional conservation resources include The Conservation Reserve Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program, and American Rivers' Blue Trails program. Moreover, handbooks provided by Wildlife Mississippi extend technical conservation information to landowners.

When possible, officials should develop natural resource management plans. These plans identify objectives and related activities that will support the management of natural resources. Plans should include a resource assessment and management recommendations based on best management practices.

Environmental Stewardship

Environmental stewardship refers to the responsible use of natural resources by its users. Stewardship is essential for the protection and sustainability of the natural environment. Educational programs, volunteer activities, and specialized funding can contribute to meeting this objective. Some popular programs that teach and enforce environmental stewardship include Outward Bound and the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS).

MDWFP and Corporate Sponsorship

MDWFP provides Lifetime Sportsman licenses to hunters and fishers who are Mississippi residents or natives. Funds generated from the sale of licenses are deposited in the Wildlife Endowment Fund which aids wildlife management and enforcement, research projects, and educational activities.



Parent Teaching Environmental Stewardship

²³ Mississippi Power. Renew Our Rivers.

²⁴ Mississippi Power. Program Partnerships: Bring It.

Mississippi Power frequently partners to support natural environments and its Renew Our Rivers program is a national award-winning program. The program, which began in 2005, brings together corporations, government agencies, and community volunteers in the promotion of environmental stewardship. The program scope is limited to Southeast Mississippi. Since the inception of the program, 362 tons of debris have been removed from Mississippi waters, and 14.5 tons were removed in 2019²³. MS Power also participates in collection days to discourage littering and improve the beautification of the environment. One annual event called BRING IT!, has collected over 400 tons of hazardous household materials²⁴.

The Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Act (OST), passed House Bill 606 in the Mississippi Legislatures' 2022 Regular Session, aims to foster investment in outdoor recreation and conservation projects. The act established the Outdoor Stewardship Fund which can be dispersed to state agencies, counties, municipalities, and nongovernmental organizations. These funds are designated for various purposes such as restoring habitats, improving state park features and trails, enhancing parks and trails at the local level, acquiring critical areas for conservation, facilitating access to public waters and lands, and conserving agricultural lands and forests.



Family Volunteering Together to Plant Trees



Fire on the Forty

The “Fire on the Forty” program has been an on-going partnership since its inception in 2011 between the MDWFP and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Foundation for Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, Wildlife Mississippi, The Nature Conservancy, Southern Company, and the National Wild Turkey Federation. The cost sharing program offers up to 50 percent of costs for implementing and performing a prescribed burn. Prescribed fire is a very important tool for forest and wildlife management and teaches environmental awareness while enhancing habitat benefits for wildlife.

Environmental Design Considerations

Outdoor recreation facilities that incorporate nature can provide benefits for the environment through intentional design that uses natural management systems. Development and expansion of park systems should consider the natural environments that it may be affecting. Forests, wetlands, and grasslands are important spaces to filter pollutants and cycle in clean oxygen. From the swamps of the Delta to the rolling hills of the Pine Belt, each region harbors unique species. By respecting wildlife habitats and minimizing disturbances, outdoor recreationists contribute to the preservation of biodiversity. During development, outdoor recreation facilities should take care to generate the least amount of impact on the environment, providing the most benefit to both the land and recreation area users. As a result, recreation area users can benefit from improved air and water quality. Plans for outdoor recreation facilities should consider ways to implement green infrastructure by planting trees and naturally managing stormwater.

²⁵ NRPA. “Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services.”

Stormwater management

Outdoor recreation facilities are not just places where people can interact with nature, they are also great locations to reestablish natural systems within an area previously disturbed by man. For example, the Trust for Public Lands declares that the water absorption rate of trees increases infiltration, which lessens the amount of runoff that enters stormwater drainage facilities. Integrating these natural water storage sites into the infrastructure system will decrease the frequency and extent to which stormwater management systems need to be managed and repaired. This is particularly useful in low-lying Mississippi where severe weather is common and often leads to localized flooding.

Air and water quality

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) asserts that “parks and protected public lands are proven to improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve the quality of the air we breathe, provide vegetative buffers to development, [and] produce habitat for wildlife.”²⁵



Youth Volunteering

Understanding the impact and extent of pollution in Mississippi

In 2021 the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) recorded air pollution in Mississippi to have a value of 9.03 for particulate matter and 57.8 for ozone²⁶. The measurements were based on average public exposure to particulate matter of 2.5 microns or less in size (PM2.5), and ozone at monitoring stations across the state. Both values were below the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS). The US News national rating places Mississippi in 7th nationally for air and water quality²⁷. Reducing this value can lower the risks to all-cause mortality, lung cancer, and cardiovascular disease²⁸.

Results of water quality assessments

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Mississippi has 84 miles of coastline, 82,154 miles of rivers and streams, and 1,629 acres of lakes and reservoirs²⁹. The MDEQ conducts water quality assessments for rivers and streams within the state. For the year 2022, MDEQ determined that the largest percentage of impairments (90%) were biological³⁰. Additional pollutants include contaminated sediments that nonpoint source activities (i.e. runoff) can carry into the site. One of the many benefits of trees is their ability to filter out pollutants, thus improving the water quality.

Best management practices to increase environmental integrity

The Environmental Protection Agency determined that non-structural or source control best management practices (BMP) consist of low-impact development solutions, such as limiting pesticide use and retaining rainwater on residential properties. Additional structural treatment BMPs according to the EPA consist of wet (retention) and dry (detention) ponds; infiltration basins; vegetated biofilters (bioswales and bioretention cells); and constructed wetlands³¹.

An efficient way to improve air and water quality is by using green infrastructure, such as the planting of and subsequent care for trees. According to the National Arbor Day Foundation, one 50-year-old tree can generate \$31,250 worth of oxygen, provide \$62,000 worth of air pollution control, recycle \$37,500 worth of water, and control \$31,250 worth of soil erosion³². Trees serve as natural filters for environmental pollutants, reduce the “heat island effect” of urban areas, and purify, clean, and store water. Local governments can support the inclusion of green infrastructure by developing

ordinances that mandate stormwater management systems. A 2017 EPA guide titled Green Infrastructure in Parks: A Guide to Collaboration, Funding, and Community Engagement provides information and resources for local governments looking to integrate stormwater management systems into parks.



Lake Hazel Pavilion



Shadow Lake Shoreline

²⁶ MDEQ. Air Quality Data Summary. 2017.

²⁷ US News. Overview of Mississippi: Natural Environment.

²⁸ Lee, Kim, and Lee. “Air Pollution Exposure and Cardiovascular Disease.” 2014.

²⁹ EPA. Mississippi by the Numbers

³⁰ MDEQ. Mississippi 2022 List of Impaired Water Bodies.

³¹ EPA. “Description and Performance of Storm Water Best Management Practices.”

³² National Arbor Day Foundation. “Tree Facts.”

PUBLIC ACCESS, CONNECTIVITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY

Public access to parks correlates with the intensity of park usage. The likelihood of community members using parks and facilities and being physically active within them is related to the resident's proximity to and universal access to facilities. This report uses the term universal access to describe parks and facilities that are accessible to users regardless of their age or ability. Users feel connected to a recreational area when it exists within their neighborhood or along a common commute. Familiarity also creates a sense of comfort and safety. Recreation area safety is concerned with the quality of equipment, as well as objective and perceived safety.

Accessibility is often limited in low socioeconomic areas. Unequal development of facilities and acceptable conditions of the facilities, as developed and maintained by local agencies, exist throughout the state and the country. Thus, aside from metro regions, the NRPA asserts that the majority of African-American communities have less access to recreational opportunities³³. This description strongly correlates with the setting and demographics of the state and should be carefully considered in the development of any additional outdoor recreation facilities.

In Mississippi, 51.9% of residents live in non-metro (rural) areas³⁴. The Mississippi State Rural Health Plan defines a rural area as: a Mississippi county that has a population of less than 50,000 individuals; or an area that has fewer than 500 individuals per square mile; or a municipality of fewer than 15,000 individuals. Rural Mississippians bear a larger burden of health disparities including high morbidity and mortality from chronic diseases where (17.3%) of rural residents have a diabetes diagnosis compared to (13.8%), and poor access to healthcare services where 10.8% of Mississippi residents lack health insurance³⁵. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) notes that rural communities operate on tighter budgets, with limited staff and resources which impacts planning and operations. Rural communities also must manage slower growth and communities that contribute fewer tax dollars according to the NRPA. The NRPA also asserts strategic planning is crucial, focusing on technology advancements and community impact with limited resources³⁶.

The 2022 Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) State Indicator Report on Physical Activity considered policy and environmental indicators at the state-level. One evaluated strategy considered the need for municipalities and townships to increase or enhance access to safe places for physical activity. It determined that only 42.3% of Mississippi youth have walking paths in their neighborhood, 42.8% have parks, and 28.2% have community centers. Compared to 76.2% for walking paths, 75.6% for parks, and 46.6% for community centers nationally according to the CDC³⁷.

However, some national programs, including the following, combat this issue and have developed precedents within Mississippi.

Safe Routes to Parks Program

Safe Routes to Parks is a national campaign that the NRPA launched in 2006. It seeks to ensure access to parks that are safe and equitable. The program highlights essential elements of safe routes, including comfort, convenience, access, design, and quality. Obstacles to walkability and park access include proximity, lack of infrastructure, crime, and traffic safety concerns, and partnership-building with government agencies and local organizations.

Creating safe routes is a shared responsibility between and within agencies and organizations. Potential program partners include transportation committees, planners, developers, schools, health departments, and law enforcement agencies.



Disc Golf Tee Marker

³³ NRPA. "Americans' Use and Perceptions of Local Recreation and Park Services: A Nationwide Reassessment."

³⁴ 2022 Mississippi Non-Metro Population. 2020 US Census ACS 5-year Estimate

³⁵ 2022 Mississippi Rural Health Plan; 2022 Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts. Health Coverage and Uninsured

³⁶ 2020 NRPA Article: Challenges Faced by Small Park Districts; 2018 NRPA Article: Addressing Health Disparities in Rural America

³⁷ CDC. 2022 National Survey of Children's Health for Mississippi

Rails-to-Trails Program

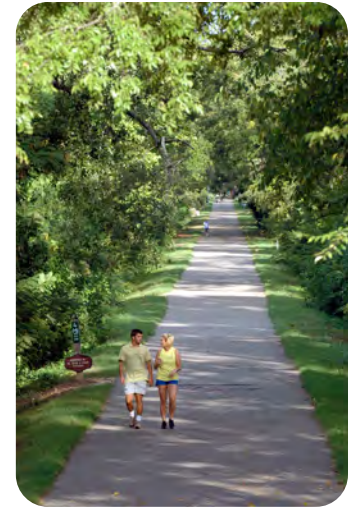
The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is a nationwide nonprofit organization started in 1986 that advocates and supports the development and transformation of former railroad lines into trail systems. Mississippi currently participates in the program to a limited degree. The state hosts 18 rail-trails that total 118 miles in length. There are 2 current projects, with a remaining 27 miles of potential rail-trail available³⁸.

The continued support and maintenance for the trail is provided by sponsorships, donations, grants, and the Gulf, Mobile, and Ohio (GM&O) Railroad Rails-to-Trails District that is formed by three counties and six municipalities' local member governments. Success of the trail has resulted in the opening of new businesses and a marked an increase in tourism along its route.

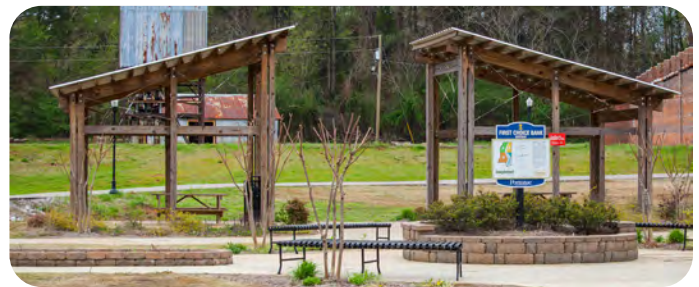
In recent years the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) has provided \$108 million in funding for rehabilitation for sites such as Natchez Trace Parkway. The GAOA authorizes \$900 million annually to provide full and permanent funding for the LWCF program filling gaps in funding at the local level that existed previously.



Longleaf Trace Bike Couple



Longleaf Trace Walking



Trailside Shelters and Small Park along Tanglefoot Trail

RAILS TO TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP) TRAILS IN MISSISSIPPI

Trail Name	Length (mi)	Destinations/City
Crosstie Walk	2	Cleveland
Longleaf Trace	45.5	Hattiesburg to Prentiss
Shaw Rail-Trail	0.3	Shaw
South Campus Rail-Trail	2.8	University of Oxford
Tanglefoot Trails	43.6	New Albany to Houston
Tuxachanie National Recreation Trail	12.1	Pow Camp Recreation Area to Saucier
Oxford Depot Trail	1	University of Oxford
Boyle Rail-Trail	0.7	Boyle
Kitty Bryan Dill Memorial Parkway National Recreation Trail	2.2	West Point
Renova Heritage Walking Trail	0.3	Renova
Duncan Walking Trail	0.2	Duncan
Greenwood Rail Spike Park	1.7	Greenwood
Hattiesburg Rail Trail	0.9	Hattiesburg
Hollandale Rail-Trail	0.7	Hollandale
Little J Rail Trail	0.5	West Jackson
Museum Trail	2.5	North Jackson
Raymond Battlefield Walking Trail	1.2	Raymond
Shelby Trails	0.1	Shelby

RTP Trails in Mississippi

³⁸ Rails to Trails Conservancy. "Mississippi."

³⁹ United Health Foundation. America's Health Rankings 2023 Annual Report

⁴⁰ University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings. 2018-2020 Ranking and Roadmaps Report for Mississippi

⁴¹ Behavior Risk Factor Survey, 2022; Behavior Risk Factor Survey, 2019

⁴² United Health Foundation. America's Health Rankings 2023 Annual Report

⁴³ Behavior Risk Factor Survey, 2021

PERSONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Outdoor recreation facilities provide many opportunities for physical activity. The CDC recommends every person participate in one hour of physical activity or exercise each day. This recommendation intends to apply its proven linkage to improved physical and mental health. Exercise and outdoor recreation also provide social activities for youth, keeping children safe and healthy.

Outdoor recreation participation can improve health scores in Mississippi.

For the past two years, Mississippi has ranked lowest in the United States for overall health according to the United Health Foundation³⁹. Specifically, the state's most vulnerable residents are suffering. The state remains ranked 50th for senior health and has the lowest life expectancy rate at 75.0 years, with a rate of 11,300 of 100,000 people dying before the age of 75 according to data from the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute⁴⁰. Overall, the United Health Foundation asserts that 16.8% of residents in the state are over 65, and 53.6% in rural areas.³⁸ In addition, the state ranked worst for the health of women and children and premature death. Participating in outdoor recreation is a healthy and sustainable life change that residents can make to improve their health.

Daily recreation can preclude lifelong impacts of poor physical health. Mississippi ranked 49th in 2023 for both physical inactivity and obesity, 30% of adults reported being physically inactive, and seniors show a greater level of inactivity at 36.2% according to the United Health Foundation.³⁸ CDC data from 2022 show that 39.5% of adults in Mississippi report being

overweight which is fifth-highest among states in the US but lower than reported in 2019 (40.8%)⁴¹. Data from the United Health Foundation shows that Mississippi has a high level of physical distress, where 14.8% of residents reported poor physical health for more than 14 days within the past 30 days, causing the state to rank fifth worst nationally⁴². Relatedly, 32% of those survey respondents did not report participating in physical activity during leisure time in the past 30 days according to the CDC⁴³. Roughly 18% of adults in Mississippi according to the CDC have a mobility disability and people who have disabilities are more likely to suffer from obesity, depression, and diabetes⁴⁴. In 2019, 30.8% of adults in Mississippi with disabilities participated in sufficient physical activity versus 43.3% for adults without disabilities based on data from the CDC's Disability and Health Data System (DHDS)⁴⁵.

Citizens who participate in outdoor recreation can lower their health care costs.

Health care costs can become a compounding issue for suffering patients. By beginning a carefully designed exercise routine, residents can improve these health scores and lower the accompanying financial responsibilities to health care costs.

The state and outdoor recreation providers should secure any resources available to extend recreational facilities to become more accessible and attractive to residents with the purpose of improving public health.

Outdoor experiences can improve mental well-being and development.

Mississippi also suffers from frequent mental distress. 14.4% of residents reported poor mental health for more than 14 days in the past 30 days, 1.1% lower compared to the CDC's 2017 Behavioral Risk Factor briefing. The CDC asserts that the percentage of poor mental health was higher among female respondents (18.8%) compared to males (9.6%)⁴⁶. Interactions with nature, such as "green exercise", can improve personal mental states. Green exercise is defined as the participation in exercise in a natural or outdoor environment and can involve hiking and trail running, cycling, outdoor fitness classes, or outdoor sports. A study by physiologists found that simple exposure to natural environments reduces endocrine markers in the body's two main stress systems, which lowers blood pressure and has stress-reducing properties⁴⁷.



Students Learning to Kayak at Roosevelt State Park

⁴⁴ CDC. Disability & Health U.S. State Profile Data for Mississippi for Adults 18+ years of age

⁴⁵ Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2019

⁴⁶ CDC. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Brief, 2020.

⁴⁷ The Great Outdoors: How a Green Exercise Environment Can Benefit All

Outdoor recreation has been linked to a variety of developmental and psychosocial benefits, including increased social skills, enhanced self-concept, improved social adjustment, self-confidence, tolerance of others, increased sense of well-being, and improved group involvement. Exposure to greenspace and the outdoors improves physical and developmental skills by fostering independence when a child successfully completes a run, jump, or team sport activity on their own⁴⁸. When playing with others, children learn cooperation, teamwork, conflict resolution, and understanding diverse perspectives by negotiating rules and sharing space⁴⁹.

Outdoor recreation and physical activity can mitigate youth risk behavior.

Youth risk behavior is a significant issue within the state. The CDC asserts that 76.6% of surveyed high school students do not participate in the recommended duration of at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity. This percentage has improved by 2.2% from 2015 to 2019 according to findings by the CDC⁵⁰. This trend can be related to youth leisure time choices. For example, according to the CDC, 27.6% of Mississippi students watch television three or more hours per day on an average school day, and 24.7% consume a sugary drink daily.⁴⁹ Positively, the percentage of children between age 0 and 17 who reportedly have asthma is improving, having decreased from 12.4% in 2018 to 6.7% in 2022



Meridian Wins Healthy Hometown Award



Families Participating in Volunteer Activity

according to data from the National Survey of Children's Health⁵¹. Physical education programs at schools and after-school activities can assist in increasing the health of children statewide and educate them on living active lifestyles.

State, national, and corporate initiative programs may support local objectives.

There are many organizations and companies located in Mississippi that give back to the community through funding, park development, or health programs. Some of these include:

- *Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Mississippi, Inc. supports environmental programs and funds requests that benefit a surplus of residents or target youth development*
- *AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities recognizes local elected officials' commitment to creating healthy communities for senior residents. The four chosen locations in 2018 included Holly Springs, Jackson, Southaven, and Vicksburg.*
- *Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation acknowledges community health and wellness through its Healthy Hometown Award and the Healthy School Award Programs. Awards for the Healthy Hometown Award, established in 2010, exist at the \$100,000 level for multiple hometowns regardless of population. 2023 winners include Meridian, Hernando, Mantachie, and the overall winner, Moss Point. Awards for the Healthy School Award, established in 2012, exist at the \$50,000 level. The 2023 winner was Itawamba Agricultural High School in Fulton⁵².*

COMMUNITIES AND EQUITY

Outdoor recreation facilities can have positive impacts on their surrounding environments and enhance socioeconomic factors. Community parks, in particular, provide accessible space for youth sports programs, hosting picnic gatherings, and initiating interactions among neighbors. Green spaces such as unpaved nature trails and fishing lakes and streams can grow community pride and result in citizens taking personal care for their neighborhood and their neighbors.

Outdoor recreation can improve the perception of these communities and strengthen social groups. The state in 2023 ranked worst for overall behaviors and 35th for the physical environment a nine-state rank improvement from the 2017 United Health Foundation's health

⁴⁸ Twohig-Bennett et al. 2018 The Health Benefits of The Great Outdoors
⁴⁹ DeVille et al. 2021, Time Spent in Nature Is Associated with Increased Pro-Environmental Attitudes and Behaviors; Strife et al. 2009 Childhood Development and Access to Nature

⁵⁰ Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2019
⁵¹ National Survey of Children's Health. Prevalence of Current Asthma
⁵² Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation. Healthy Awards Programs

report⁵³. Behavioral topics are based on the resident's nutrition and physical activity, sexual and sleep health, and tobacco usage. Physical environment topics are built by measuring air and water quality, climate and energy usage, and transportation. Integrating parks and outdoor recreation facilities can improve these rankings in the following ways:

- *Developing recreational facilities can be a method for utilizing vacant space or abandoned properties to provide a benefit to the community*
- *Parks can lead to the formation of social communities and promote interactions between residents who otherwise may not have the opportunity to meet*
- *The presence of recreational facilities can reduce crime by creating a sense of pride and ownership stake in the community and promotes the physical presence of people*

Nationwide, many sectors of the public, including minorities and physically challenged individuals, feel discouraged from participating in outdoor recreation, even though they may stand to gain the most from the benefits of outdoor recreational activities. The top barriers to inclusion are a shortage of federal funding for related initiatives and a lack of understanding of the needs of these community members.

The following are associations and programs that encourage the inclusion of people of all personal backgrounds and abilities to participate in outdoor recreation.

- *The National Recreation and Park Association, in partnership with the Lakeshore Foundation and National Centers for Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD), are committed to a pledge titled Parks for Inclusion. The pledge advocates for improved built environments, aims for better policy development, and supplies best practices related to inclusion.*
- *The Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education (AORE) addresses the lack of inclusion and diversity within outdoor recreation by developing social events and educational training that welcome and promote diversity. It uses direct outreach to connect with underrepresented populations of outdoor participants. Partnerships are available to access this organization's resources.*

- *The Mississippi Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA) supports members through leadership development, advocacy, and improved training opportunities.*
- *The Outdoor Recreation Grants Division (ORG), encourages applicants to seek grants from the Recreational Trails Program which provides funding assistance for trails including paved walking trails which provide one of the greatest benefits to seniors and the elderly.*
- *LWCF, provides funding assistance to units of government for outdoor recreation facilities and the conservation of public recreation.*
- *Archery in Mississippi Schools (AIMS) introduces 4th-12th grade students to International-Style Target Archery through a 10-hour in-school program. The program supports over 500 participating schools across 50 counties.*

As Mississippi continues to address these challenges, the state has made noteworthy accomplishments.

In Mississippi, physically-challenged or -impaired residents may be permitted special privileges at recreational facilities. These persons may also be exempt from the requirement to purchase a hunting or fishing license. Accessible amenities are available at 20 State Parks, 30 Wildlife Management Areas, and 18 State Lakes.



Universally Accessible Trail



Training Session at a Range

⁵³ United Health Foundation. America's Health Rankings Annual Report, 2017; United Health Foundation. America's Health Rankings Annual Report, 2023

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND TOURISM

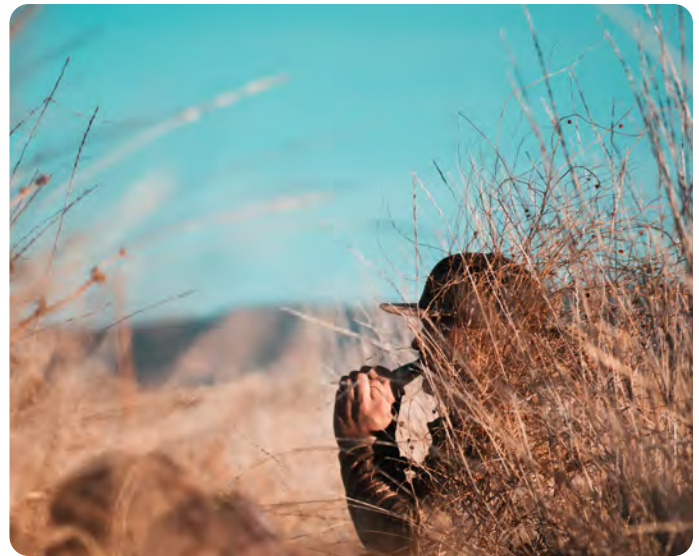
The federal Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act of 2016, or Outdoor REC Act, was passed to analyze the extent to which the outdoor industry affects the national economy. This act became a significant piece of legislation to recognize the expanding industry and its businesses, including outdoor recreation, tourism, and related activities. Officials should jointly consider tourism and outdoor recreation visitation to maximize the benefits of out-of-state resident expenditures.

Outdoor recreation facilities in close proximity to residences or agritourism farms can increase equity for landowners and improve local economic development. The American Planning Association (APA) determined that city parks can increase real property values thus increasing municipal tax revenues. It also found that parks located adjacent to a residential area can retain affluent retirees, attract knowledgeable workers and talent to live and work, and draw-in homebuyers to that area⁵⁴.

Economy of Outdoor Recreation

The Outdoor Industry Association states that outdoor recreation in Mississippi generates \$3.4 billion in consumer spending in 2022; 33,731 direct jobs; \$1.3 billion in wages and salaries; and \$138.7 million in state and local tax revenue⁵⁵. National Parks in the state had 6.9 million park visitors who spent an estimated \$470 million and supported a total of 6,680 jobs. This represents an added value of \$324 million according to the National Park Service⁵⁶.

The primary outdoor opportunities in Mississippi include fishing, hunting, and wildlife-related activities. These activities escalate sales of food, lodging, transportation, fuel, sports equipment, and auxiliary expenses. The state's 2020 NOAA Fisheries Economic Impact Report found that anglers alone contribute approximately \$117 million to the state's economy, supporting 1,317 jobs and landing 303,509 catches⁵⁷. The report documents that there were 8,020,415 visitors to the state's national and state parks in FY2022, creating an economic benefit of \$610,100,000 based on figures from the National Park Service⁵⁸. Between 2021 and 2022, state park visitation declined 10.99%⁵⁹. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Hunting and Fishing License data show that resident hunting and fishing license sales increased from \$8.9 million to \$9.5 million and for non-resident increased from \$9.5 million to \$10.8 million⁶⁰.



Hunter Behind Bird Blinds



Wild Turkey



Family Mountain Biking

⁵⁴ American Planning Association. "How cities use parks for economic development."

⁵⁵ Outdoor Industry Association. 2022 ORSA for Mississippi; US Bureau of Economic Analysis. 2022 Gross State Product Data.

⁵⁶ National Park Service. 2022 National Park Service Visitor Spending Effects Report.

⁵⁷ NOAA Fisheries. Fisheries Economics of the United States 2020 Report.

⁵⁸ National Park Service. "Working with Mississippi: By the Numbers." 2020.

⁵⁹ Visit Mississippi. "Tourism Economic Impact Report." 2022.

Tourism

Tourism is a major contributor to every state's economy. The arrival of visitors is an opportunity for Mississippi to show-off its natural beauty while encouraging tourists to spend money on outdoor activities. In Mississippi, total travel and tourism expenditures by visitors in the 2022 fiscal year sum to \$7,078,178,629.⁶³ Travel and tourism directly employ 80,517 persons or 6.9% of the state's employed population according to data from the Visit Mississippi 2022 Tourism Economic Impact Report⁶¹.

There are five tourism regions within the state: Capital/River, Coastal, Delta, Hills, and Pines⁶². *The table that follows lists the main attractions for each.*

TOURISM EXPENDITURE BY VISITOR

Visitors	23.95 Million
Money Spent	7 Billion

Tourism Expenditure by Visitors



Bear Creek Mound, Milepost 308.8

TOURISM REGIONS

Region	Main Attractions
Capital/River	Southern history; Battle of Vicksburg; Mississippi State Capitol
Coastal	Gulf Coast; National Seashore; University of Southern Mississippi; casinos
Delta	Native American Indian mounds; cotton fields; Mississippi River
Hills	Museums for Elvis Presley and William Faulkner; University of Mississippi; Rust College; Native American Indian Mounds
Pines	Jimmie Rodgers Museum; Clarkco State Park; Neshoba County Fair; Mississippi State University

Tourism Regions



Agritourism Farm Visit

⁶⁰ USFWS. 2023 Hunting and Fishing Licenses, Holders, and Costs by Apportionment Year
⁶¹ Visit Mississippi. "Tourism Economic Impact Report." 2022.



Mississippi Blues Highway

⁶² Mississippi Tourism Association. "Explore Mississippi."
⁶³ Mississippi State University. "Agritourism in Mississippi: Effects and Impacts." POD-04-14.

As shown, tourism attractions across the state are diverse; visitors can do everything from touring Native American Indian mounds to swimming in the Gulf of Mexico. For longer trips, tourists can connect many of these attractions by walking or biking along historic trails and scenic byways. The following tables list each of these route types.

SCENIC BYWAYS

Name	Length	Time to Allow
Beach Boulevard Scenic Byway	13	30 Mins
Brice's Crossroads Battlefield - Chief Tishomingo Scenic Byway	12.4	30 Mins
Byways to Space Scenic Byway	30	1.5 Hrs
Delta Bluffs Scenic Byway	31.7	1.5 Hrs
Gateway to History	32.8	1.5 Hrs
Grand Gulf - Raymond Scenic Byway	50	2 Hrs
Highway 67 Scenic Byway	20.68	45 Mins
Highway 605 Scenic Byway	15	30 Mins
Gulf Coast Scenic Byway	18	30 Mins
Mississippi Delta Great River Road	250	5 Hrs
Lower Mississippi Historic Byway	101	2 Hrs
Noxubee Hills Route	43	1 Hr
Natchez Trace Parkway	312	Two Days
William Faulkner Scenic Byway	15	30 Mins

Agritourism

Agritourism or nature-tourism is an expanding component of the tourism market. It provides a rural escape for city dwellers, and it is one of the state's fastest growing tourism markets. For Mississippi landowners, agritourism is an opportunity to supplement their household income. For recreationists, it provides rural outdoor exercise and food source education opportunities. Examples of activities include touring rice fields and participating in quail and duck hunts.

According to the Mississippi Division of Tourism, there are currently 28 agritourism-related farms or businesses in the state, ranging in attractions from wineries to alpaca farms⁶³. The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce estimates that the state's agritourism market contributes approximately \$150 million annually with roughly 20.8 million people traveling to and around the state to participate in agritourism. Agritourism in Mississippi likely has growth potential since the state is home to 31,290 farms in operation in 2022⁶⁴.

⁶⁴ Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. "Mississippi Agritourism."; USDA. 2022 Census of Agriculture.

HISTORIC AND TOURISM TRAILS

Trail Name	Length
Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail	64 miles
Rocky Springs Trail	10 miles
Tupelo Trail	6 miles
Ridgeland Trail	24 miles
Leipers Trail	24 miles
Grand Gulf-Raymond Scenic Byway	47 miles
The Great River Road	3000 miles (total)
US-45	1300 miles (total)
Mississippi Blues Trail	120 sites, non-linear
Hot Tamale Trail	48 sites, non-linear

Mississippi State University's Natural Resources Enterprises program assists landowners in understanding recreational opportunities for their properties. It provides resources on financial planning, operational methods, cost sharing, and other programs. Additionally, it addresses legal and insurance concerns on behalf of landowners.

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture has developed a mobile app to promote agritourism by inventorying operations across the state. It also celebrates Agritourism Month during October according to the Mississippi Business Journal⁶⁵.

CONCLUSION

Outdoor recreation and public health data show that residents statewide are experiencing difficulty maintaining healthy and active lifestyles. To combat this, in recent years the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) has provided \$108 million in funding for rehabilitation for sites such as Natchez Trace Parkway through the LWCF. Prior to GAOA, there were years without available funds to assist with outdoor recreation at the local level⁶⁶. Landowners can help facilitate outdoor recreation by donating their land or allowing for entry to it for recreational access. Moreover, local programs and facilities can incorporate existing, successful programs to continue increasing participation by youth and access for minorities.

⁶⁵ Mississippi Business Journal. "Department of Agriculture launches new agritourism mobile app." 2014.

⁶⁶ Great American Outdoors Act Legacy Restoration Fund. Mississippi Fact Sheet

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2024 - 2029 SCORP PLANNING PROCESS

2024 - 2029 SCORP PLANNING PROCESS

METHODOLOGY

The development of Improving Outdoor Recreation in Mississippi evolved from a thorough planning process that included research, public participation, and professional collaboration. For example, the goals evolved during Task Force Committee meetings, and public surveys contributed to the data that drives this report.

Task Force Committee

Planning for the SCORP update began with a kick-off meeting in June 2023. In this meeting, MDWFP and its consultants, Dana Brown & Associates (DBA), a New Orleans-based landscape architecture and planning firm, and Kimley-Horn and Associates' (KHA) Memphis office, a design and planning firm, developed a roster of members for the project's Task Force Committee (TFC). The TFC operated as the steering committee that guided the plan's development. Its fourteen members represent each of the state's planning and development districts (PDDs). MDWFP and its consultant hosted five meetings in total, three at the MDWFP office and two virtually. The TFC was invited to review and contribute to the plans' goals and development by offering diverse perspectives, informed recommendations, and insight into the conditions, issues, and needs for outdoor recreation in Mississippi. TFC meetings were held at the on the following dates:

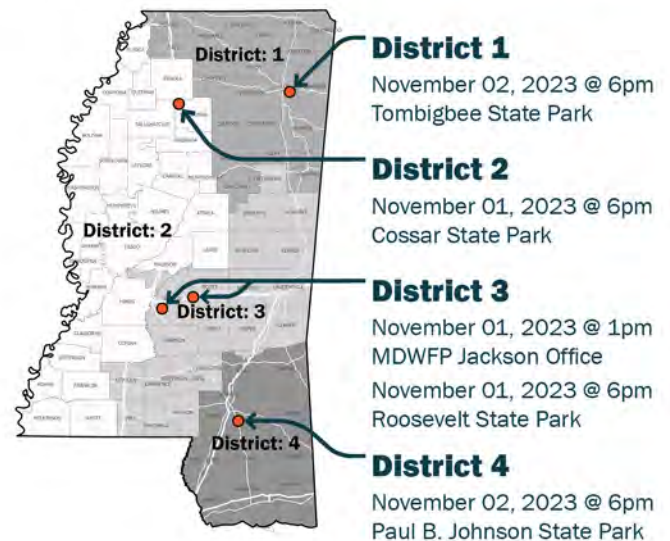
- August 08, 2023
- August 30, 2023
- January 30, 2024
- March 20, 2024
- April 18, 2024

PUBLIC OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

The plan showcases the opinions of the state's residents. The project team obtained resident input through a series of public meetings across the state, a project website, and a community input survey. The team also made an effort to coordinate with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to understand their recreational priorities. The team sent emails, flyers, and conducted several rounds of phone calls to their representative community leaders.

PUBLIC MEETING LOCATIONS

IMPROVING
OUTDOOR
RECREATION IN
MISSISSIPPI



Public Meeting Flyer

Public Meetings

The project team held five public meetings. Meetings were located at the MDWFP office in the state's capital and in each of the four congressional districts. The project team advertised the meetings through public notices, flyers, social media, and the project website. Public meeting dates and locations include the following:

- November 1, 2023 at MDWFP Office in Jackson
- November 1, 2023 at Roosevelt State Park in Morton (District 3)
- November 1, 2023 at George P. Cossar State Park in Oakland (District 2)
- November 2, 2023 at Paul B. Johnson State Park in Hattiesburg (District 4)
- November 2, 2023 at Tombigbee State Park in Tupelo (District 1)

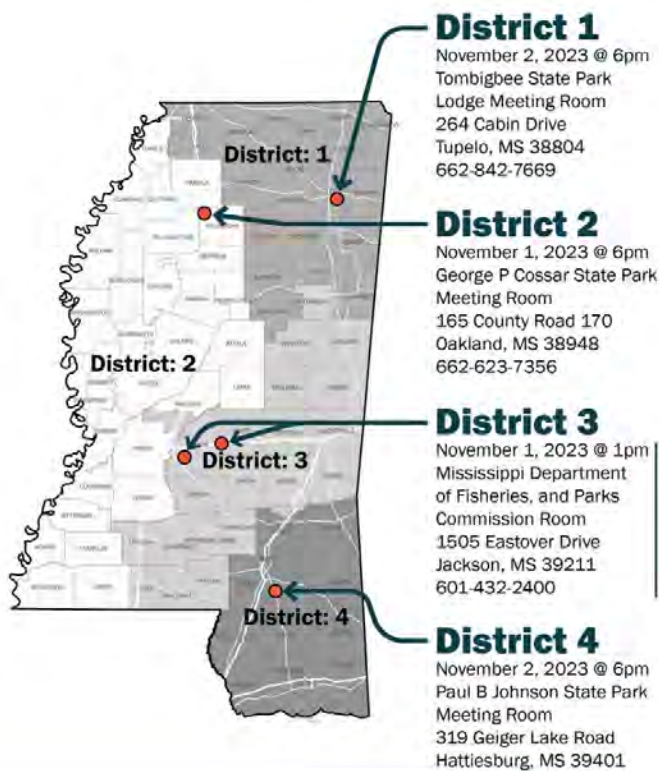
Website

The team developed a website, www.mississippicorp.com, to provide updated and accessible information to the public. The website included an overview of the SCORP process, links to the resident and provider surveys, and the location and times of public meetings. A contact link was provided for direct communication with the website and survey administrators.



TOTAL WEBSITE VISITS			1414
Source	Percentage	No. of Visits	
Direct	62.6%	885	
Social	30.6%	432	
Referral	4.1%	58	
Search	2.7%	38	
Email	0.1%	1	

SURVEY COMPLETED BY WEEK		
Week of	No. of Surveys Completed	
Aug 20	2	
Aug 27	6	
Sep 3	4	
Sep 10	1	
Sep 17	3	
Sep 24	8	
Sep 31	9	
Oct 8	149	
Oct 15	158	
Oct 22	302	
Oct 29	284	
Nov 5	118	
Nov 12	215	
Nov 19	64	
Nov 26	56	
Dec 3	92	
Dec 10	72	
Dec 17	15	
Dec 24	6	
Dec 31	5	



Website Page

SURVEYS

The team collected public input remotely through two survey types: provider and resident. The surveys were widely distributed and resulted in crucial feedback that guided the development of the SCORP. The surveys were available for four months from August 28, 2023 to January 8, 2024. The provider survey was opened again from February 5, 2024 to February 16, 2024. Distribution methods for both surveys included word-of-mouth, personal meetings, social media posts, website links, flyers, and emails.

Survey Results

During the active survey period, the website had 1,393 page views; 50% were from a desktop, 49% from a mobile device, and the remaining 1% were from a tablet or other device. Residents primarily accessed the website through direct links (62%), social media; Facebook/Instagram (31%), and the MDWFP website (4%). Pages with the surveys were those most often visited.

The provider survey resulted in 63 responses, while 1,569 residents completed the resident survey.

PROVIDER SURVEY OVERVIEW

The project team conducted surveys to obtain information from outdoor recreation area managers and recreation area users concerning needs, preferences, use, and availability. The team sent the provider survey only to managers of public recreational facilities and city officials; therefore, the provider survey was not visible on the project website without a direct link given to providers through email, and phone. 63 applicable responses were recorded for the provider survey. Providers are mostly from cities and state agencies across the state. Cumulatively, providers inventoried more than 2,870 facilities, accounting for facilities that have been added and abandoned in recent years. Providers also identified and ranked requests for new or improved facilities by users.

Provider Survey Methodology

The project team created the provider survey to obtain information from park managers and responsive public officials. A spreadsheet directly populated survey responses that the team used to analyze the data, develop graphics, and track responses. In an effort to get the largest response, the provider survey was extended and another email outreach was made to encourage providers to participate in the survey.

DBA reached out to local government offices to coordinate with park managers, while MDWFP encouraged state park agencies and the TFC encouraged local park agencies to complete the survey. The team also encouraged TFC members to promote the survey within their districts. TFC members distributed public notices in the Mississippi Municipal League (MML) newsletter, directly emailed members, and conducted an outreach campaign through the Mississippi Recreation and Parks Association.

Topics of provider survey questions included:

- *Name of your agency, department, or organization*
- *Type of organization respondents represented*
- *New and abandoned recreational facilities managed by that organization*
- *The total amount of individual facility types*
- *Ranking of requested facilities by users*
- *Greatest unmet recreational need*
- *Region organization represented*

PROVIDER ORGANIZATIONS

Type of Organization	Number of Type
City	31
County	5
Local Park Agency	1
State Agency	12
Non Profit	4
Total	53

AMOUNT OF FACILITIES

Total Facilities	2850
Identified Facility Types Added	555
Other Facility Types Added	16
Total Added	571
Facility Type Abandoned	292
Others Abandoned	2
Total Abandoned	294

Provider Survey Findings

Organization Type and Location

Providers represent 39 of 82 counties, with an even spatial distribution among those counties. The counties with the most responses were the following: Lee, Tishomingo, Hinds, Clarke, and Forrest. Providers were mostly from cities (57%) and state agencies (27%).

Facility Inventory

The provider survey asked providers to inventory facilities in their area, including the number of facilities added or abandoned since the previous SCORP. A total of 2,875 facilities are currently available in the 63 participating locations. Since 2019, responding parks added 537 facility types and abandoned 316. The top 3 facility types commonly added include campsites, picnic areas, and playgrounds, which remains unchanged from the 2014-2019 report. The top 3 facility types most commonly abandoned include campsites, baseball and softball fields, and tennis courts.

Recreational Needs

The provider survey asked providers to identify the greatest lacking recreational needs in their area. The table that follows shows the five most common needs as determined by respondents: trails (hiking/biking/jogging), tennis courts and pickleball courts, playgrounds, splash pads, and swimming pools.

The provider survey also asked providers to rank the strength of requests by recreation area users. Request strengths ranged from one (strongest) to twenty (weakest). Facility types with the strongest requests include baseball/softball fields (16.11); events, festivals, concerts, etc. (14.38); and biking trails (14.22), which differs from the 2019 survey results that included trails (8.25); picnic areas (6.65); and playgrounds (5.13) as the top 3 requested facilities.

The three listed facilities in the 2023 provider survey responses that had the greatest number of closures included baseball and softball fields, which also accounted for one of the facilities with the strongest requests by users. The number of closures ranking is based on the numerical number of facilities closed. In terms of the percentage of facilities closed swimming pools would out rank baseball and softball fields. There was not a strong correlation between facilities that were closed or opened, as one of the respondents who reported closing 6 baseball and softball fields also opened 17 baseball and softball field facilities.

Summary of Provider Input

Provider input is based on the 63 provider survey responses. Over the past five years, providers added or abandoned facilities, campsites being the primary facility type to be added or renovated. A large number of campsites were opened (200) and closed (100) at John Kyle State Park within the North Delta Planning and Development District. The project team considers this result to be due to differing needs in areas, a balancing of facility types across areas, and the replacement of facilities.

PROVIDER SURVEY GREATEST UNMET RECREATIONAL NEEDS

Facility Type	Total Reported
Playground equipment	11
Splash Pad	9
Pickleball	8
Nature Trails/Hiking	7
Swimming	7
Basketball	6
Soccer Fields	5
Tennis Court	4
Biking Trails	4
Paddling Trails	4
Football Fields	4
Volleyball	3
Dog Park	3
Elderly Activities	2
Amphitheater	2
RV Camping	2
Health/Fitness Area	2
Archery	1
Gym	1
Community Center	1
Shooting Range	1
Picnic Area	1
Cabins	1
Primitive Camping	1
Baseball	1
Disc Golf	1

Greatest Unmet Needs from Provider's Survey

A comparison of recreational demands from the 2019 - 2024 and the 2025 - 2029 SCORP reports shows that the highest demands for recreational facility needs have shifted slightly in the unmet needs category and remain the same in facility types added. In 2019, playgrounds, picnic areas, trails (hiking/biking/jogging), water parks, and campsites topped the list of recreational facility needs whereas in 2023 tennis and pickleball courts and specific water facilities including swimming pools and splash pads rose to the top of the list replacing picnic areas and campsites. Playgrounds and trails remained within the top 5 recreational facility needs in 2023.

A complete account of the Provider Survey can be found in Appendix A.

REQUEST FOR FACILITY TYPES	
Facility Type	Average Strength of Request
Baseball/Softball Fields	4.79
Events, Festivals & Concerts	6.49
Biking Trails	6.92
Playgrounds	7.04
Boating & Fishing Facilities	7.96
Picnic Areas/Pavilions	7.96
Campsites	8.02
Canoeing, Kayaking & Rafting	9.53
Splash Pads	9.89
Football Fields	10.21
Health/Fitness Facilities	10.7
Trails (Hiking/Biking/Jogging)	11.62
Tennis Courts/Pickleball Courts	11.94
Soccer Fields	12.08
Equestrian/Horse Facilities	12.49
Nature Centers	12.77
Off-Road (OHV) Trails	13.87
Swimming Pools	14.23
Skate Parks	15.38
Public Hunting	16.11

RESIDENT SURVEY OVERVIEW

Like the provider survey, the resident survey was available online through the project website. However, the resident survey was available publicly and heavily promoted. There were 1,569 responses to the resident survey. Not all respondents completed every question in the survey. According to the data received, more than half of the survey respondents spend 1-5 hours per week in a park. They most commonly visit state parks for the enjoyment of being outdoors and overwhelmingly perceive their parks to be safe. To participate in recreation, residents are willing to extend their travel distance into neighboring states. Most residents learn of recreational opportunities through word of mouth, websites, and social media. The addition of social media is a new trend emerging since the 2019 report. Over four-fifths stated that they would like to receive a newsletter about recreation either quarterly or monthly.

Resident Survey Methodology

The resident survey was available online and in hard copies available at public meetings. The team distributed a link to the resident survey through emails, social media, flyers, and the project website. The team managed a spreadsheet that populated survey responses, from which the team tracked and analyzed results. The team emailed and tagged in social media posts recreation clubs, libraries, schools, and other community leaders to extend outreach to popular organizations with strong community relationships.

Topics of resident survey questions included:

- *Hours per week that residents spend in parks*
- *Recreational facilities used and prioritized*
- *Recreational activities participated in*
- *Greatest unmet recreational need*
- *Reasons for participating; willingness to travel to recreation areas*
- *Typical travel distance; perceived safety of recreation areas*
- *General demographics*
- *Length of state residency*

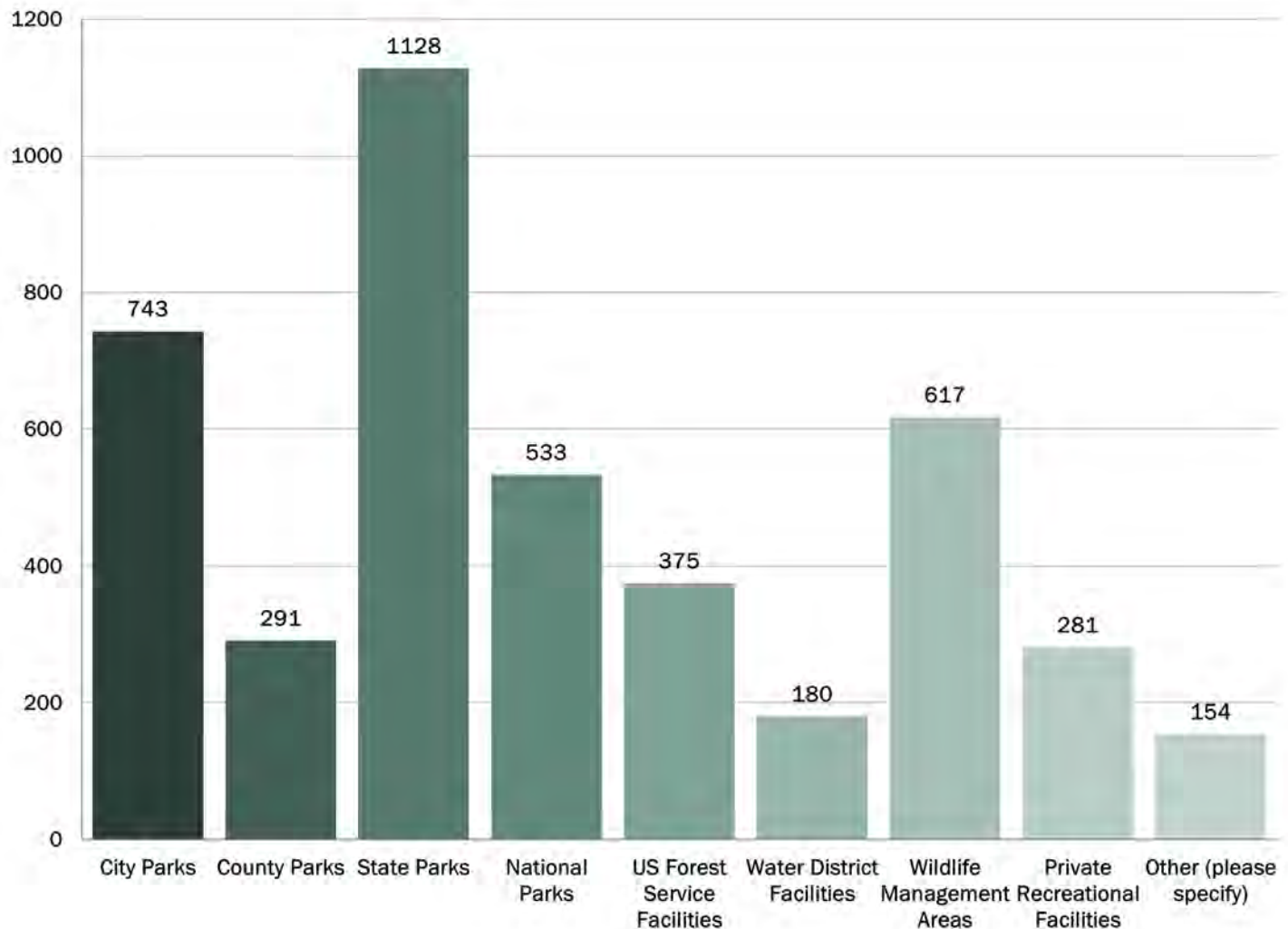
Resident Survey Findings

Location

Residents, who indicated their location, responded from 75 of 82 counties, with the exceptions of Choctaw, Claiborne, Humphreys, Issaquena, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, and Wilkinson. In 2019 only residents from Claiborne and DeSoto counties did not respond. The five counties with the most responses were Rankin (69), Hinds (46), Forrest (42), Madison (39), and Harrison (36). The majority of respondents (879; 56%) did not provide their county location.

Types of Recreation Areas Visited

The resident survey asked residents which types of recreation areas they most often visit. State parks were found to be visited most often (26%); followed by city parks (17%), wildlife management areas (14%), national parks (12%), US forest service recreation areas (9%), county parks (7%), water district recreation areas (4%), and county parks (7%). The remaining said that they visit recreation areas hosted by the US Forest Service, and none selected that they visit “other” recreation areas, the top write-in response for other was for a skate park facility. We found that respondents who noted that they only visited a single type of park visited state parks the most often, followed by city parks (25%) and wildlife management areas (15%).



Number of Respondents Who Visited Facilities by Type

Frequency of Use

The resident survey asked residents how many hours per week they spend in parks. Two-thirds responded that they spend 1-5 hours per week in parks, while less than one-fifth of respondents indicated they spend less than one hour in parks per week. The number of respondents who spend more than an hour in parks is up from the 2019 report, while the number who noted they spend less time in parks has decreased.

Recreational Priorities for Residents

The resident survey asked residents to indicate their priorities for recreational activities. Response totals varied among activities. The following table shows the top twenty activities with the highest percentage for each category.

TOP 20 ACTIVITIES BASED ON PRIORITIES OF RESIDENTS

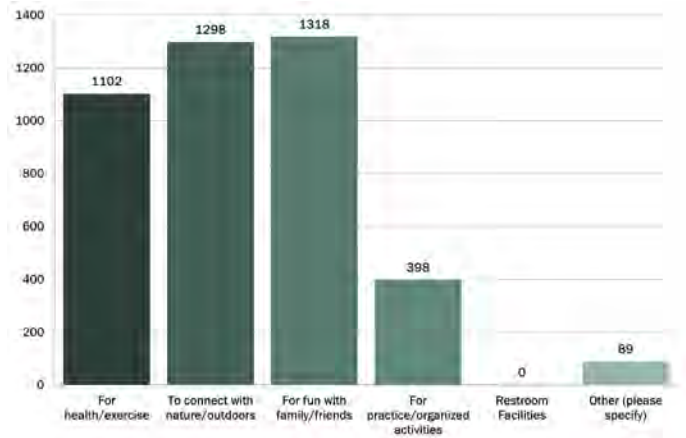
Activity Type

Hiking and Trails
Camping
Canoeing, Kayaking, Rafting, Tubing
Fishing (on a boat)
Fishing (on a bank/pier)
Jog, Run, Walk for Exercise
Bicycling
Hunting, Bow Hunting
Swimming
Events, Festivals, etc.
Playgrounds
Boating/Sailing
Picnicking
Visit Mississippi Beaches
Disc Golf
Outdoor Concerts, Cultural Events
Nature Photography
Backpacking
Off-Road Vehicle, ATV, Dirt Bike Riding
Birdwatching

Top Twenty Activities Based on Recreational Priorities for Residents

Reasons for Participation

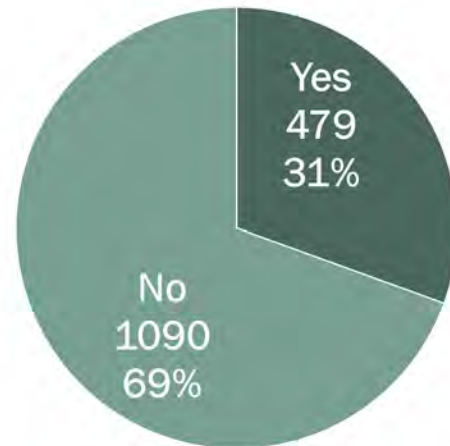
The resident survey asked residents why they choose to participate in park activities, multiple answers were allowed. The survey found that the main reasons (84%) were for fun with family and friends and to connect with nature and the outdoors (83%), followed by reasons including health and exercise (70%) and for fun or to practice organized sports or activities (25%).



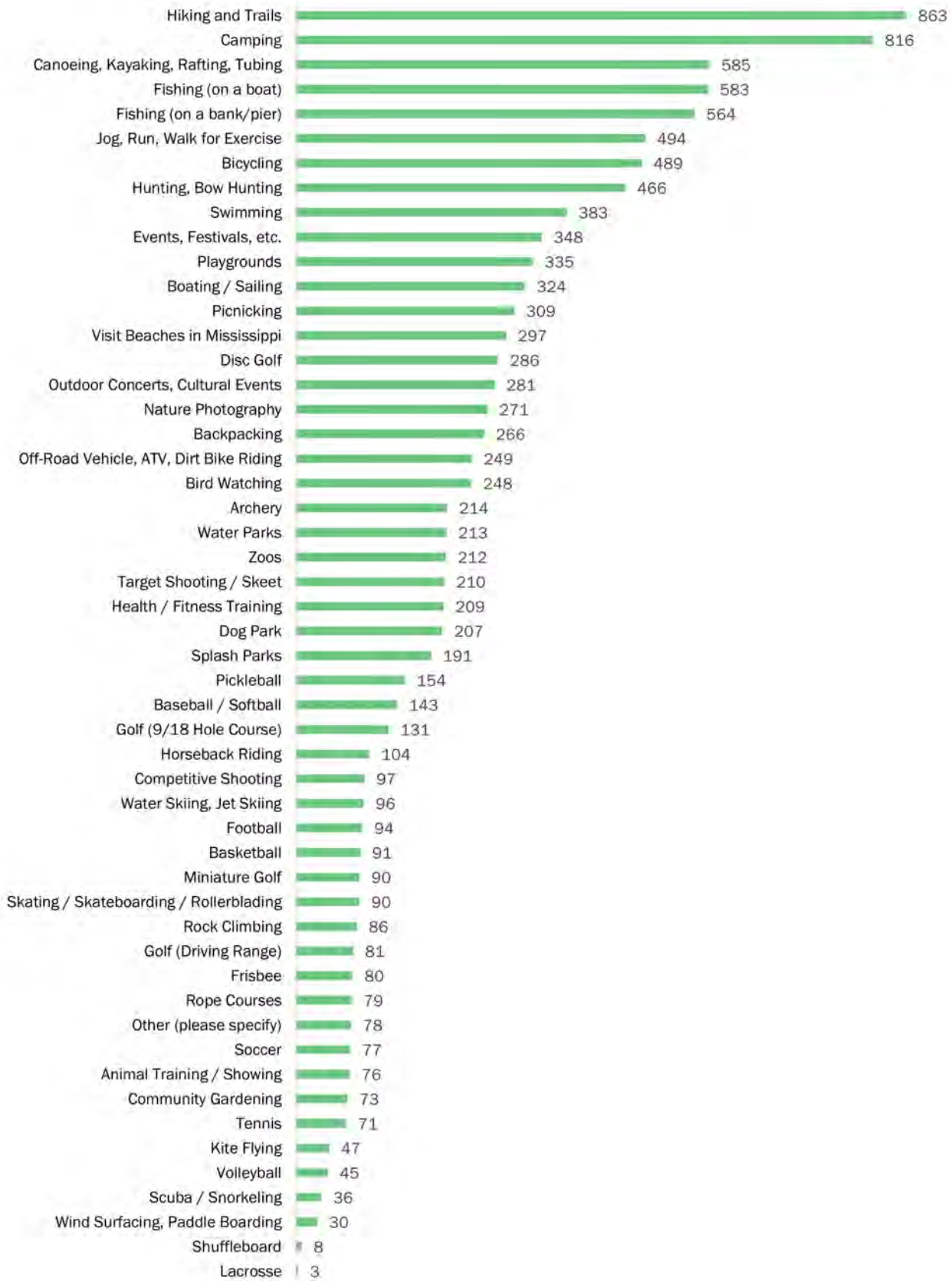
Reasons for Participating in Park Activities

Meeting Recreational Needs

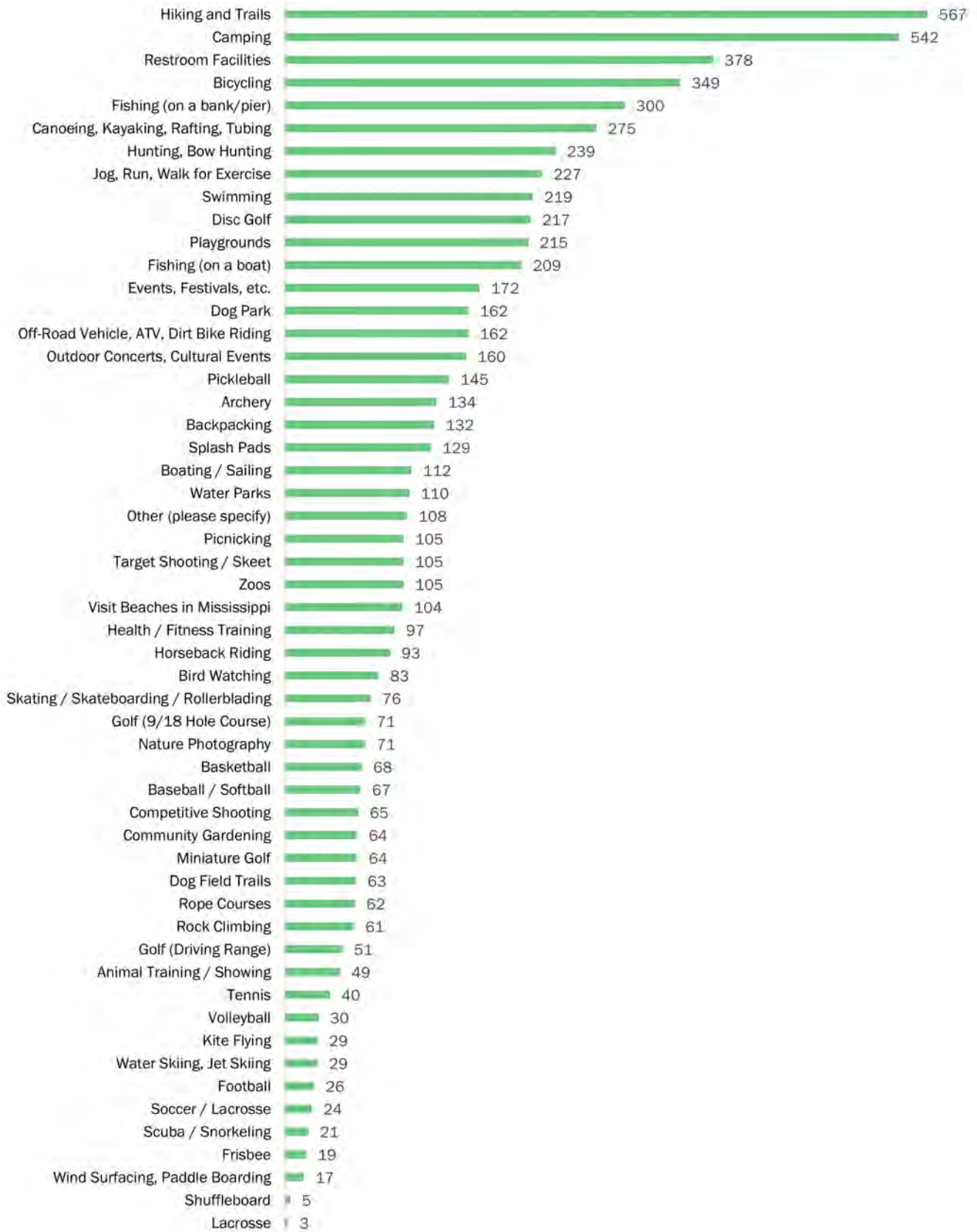
The resident survey asked residents if they felt their recreational needs were being met. A majority (69%) perceive facilities do not meet their recreational needs. If participants felt their needs were not being met the survey asked respondents the reason, multiple answers were allowed. The survey found that the main reasons were; recreational facilities were in poor condition (63%) or were not available to them (60%), followed by reasons including facilities being too far away (36%) and fees being too high at facilities (11%). The following table shows the perceived unmet recreational needs for each category.



Unmet Recreational Needs



Recreational Priorities for Residents



Recreational Activities that Need New or Improved Facilities

**Recreational Facilities Needing Improvement
Priority**

The resident survey asked residents about their priorities for recreational facilities that need improvement, multiple answers were allowed. The main consensus among participants was that both hiking trails and camping areas, each at 8%, were equally essential areas for improvement, followed by restroom and bicycling facilities (5%), and fishing (on a bank/pier) or canoeing, kayaking, rafting, tubing both at (4%). The following table shows the recreational facilities with the highest improvement priority for survey respondents in each category.

Recreational Desires and Expectations

The survey asked respondents to identify their desired and expected facilities at various types of parks. The resident survey asked residents what type of parks they would expect at the city, regional, and state levels; the following charts display the breakdown of responses.

TOP 20 BASED ON NEED OF NEW OR IMPROVED FACILITIES

Activity Type
Hiking and Trails
Camping
Restroom Facilities
Bicycling
Fishing (on a bank/pier)
Canoeing, Kayaking, Rafting, Tubing
Hunting, Bow Hunting
Jog, Run, Walk for Exercise
Swimming
Disc Golf
Playgrounds
Fishing (on a boat)
Events, Festivals, etc.
Dog Park
Off-Road Vehicle, ATV, Dirt Bike Riding
Outdoor Concerts, Cultural Events
Pickleball
Archery
Backpacking
Splash Pads

Top Twenty Activities Based on Recreational Activities that Need New or Improved Facilities

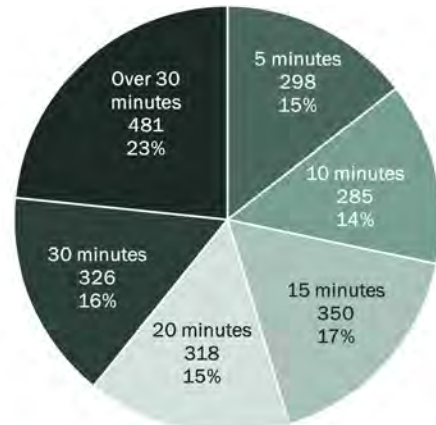
Travel

The survey asked respondents to identify their willingness, extent, and limitations to travel to parks. The resident survey asked residents how far they are willing to drive, bike, or walk to parks; the following charts display the breakdown of responses.

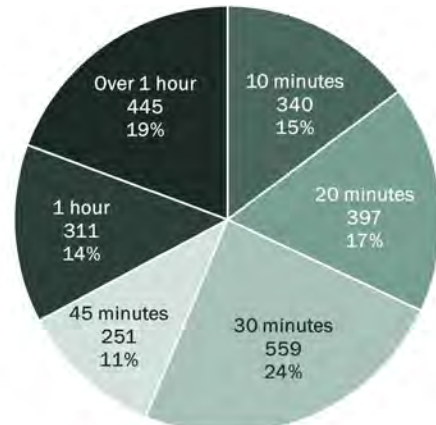
Beyond local parks, nearly three-quarters of resident respondents visit parks outside of Mississippi. The most popular locations include the nearby states of Alabama, Tennessee, Kansas, Arkansas, and Louisiana.



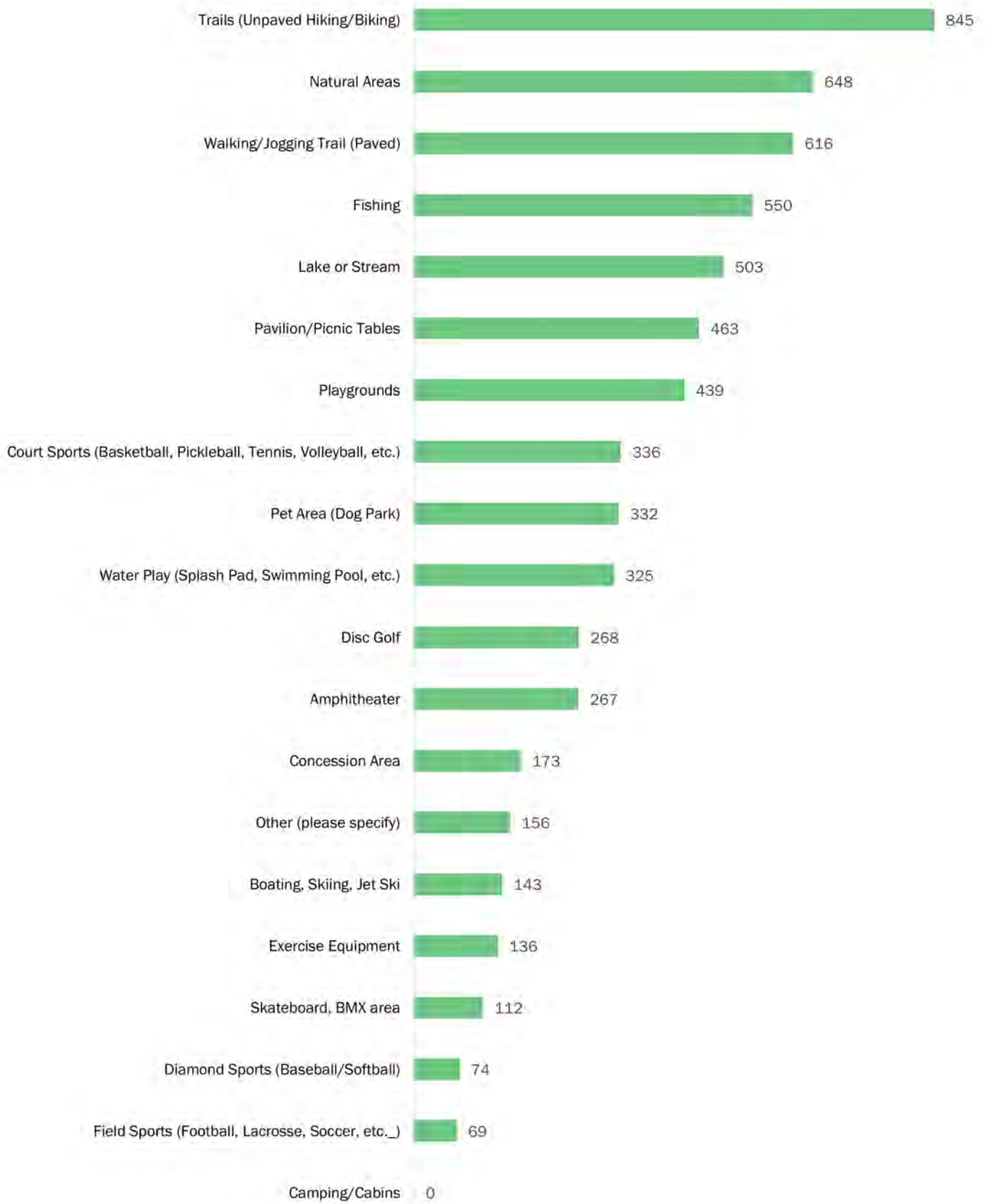
Time Willing to Travel by Walking



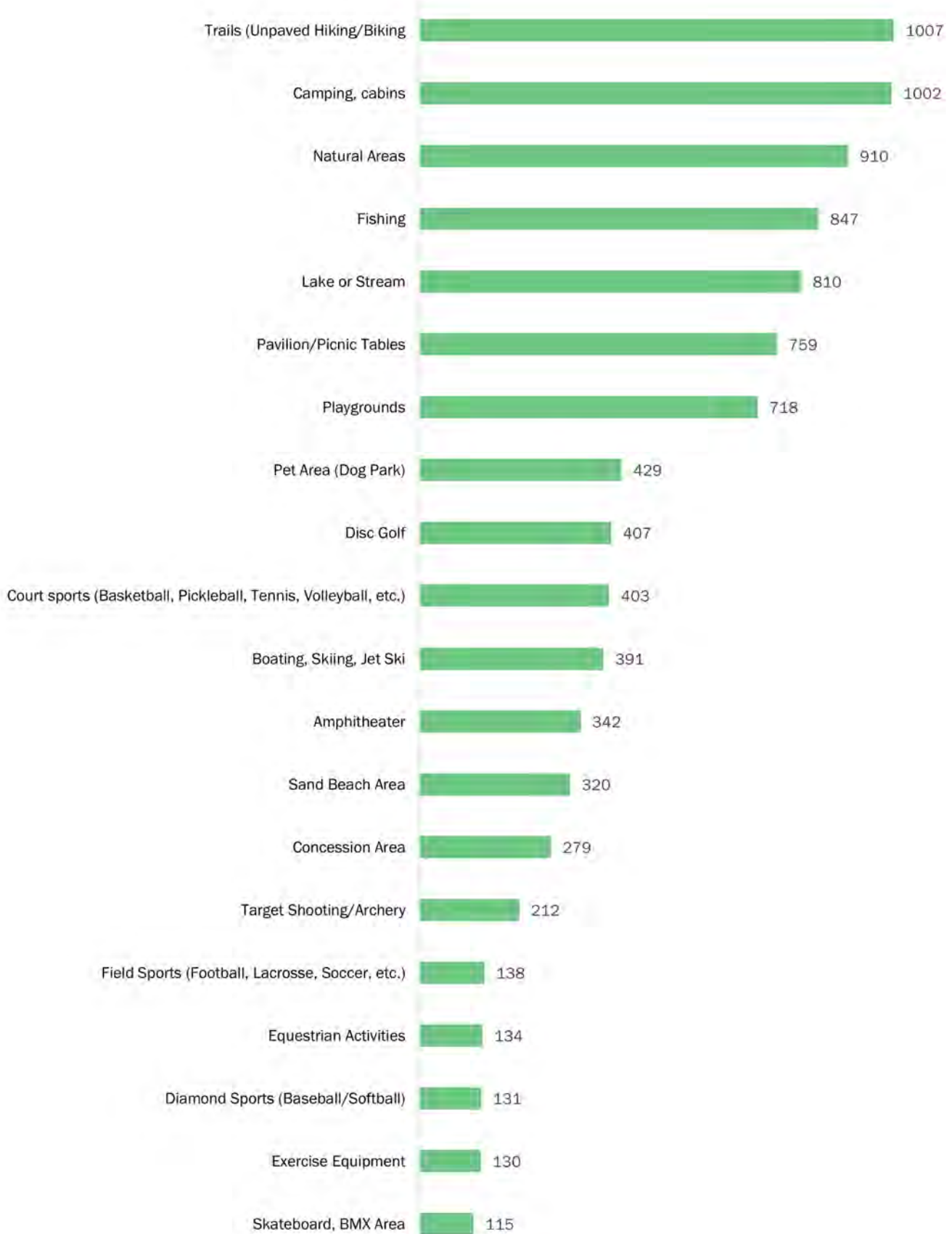
Time Willing to Travel by Biking



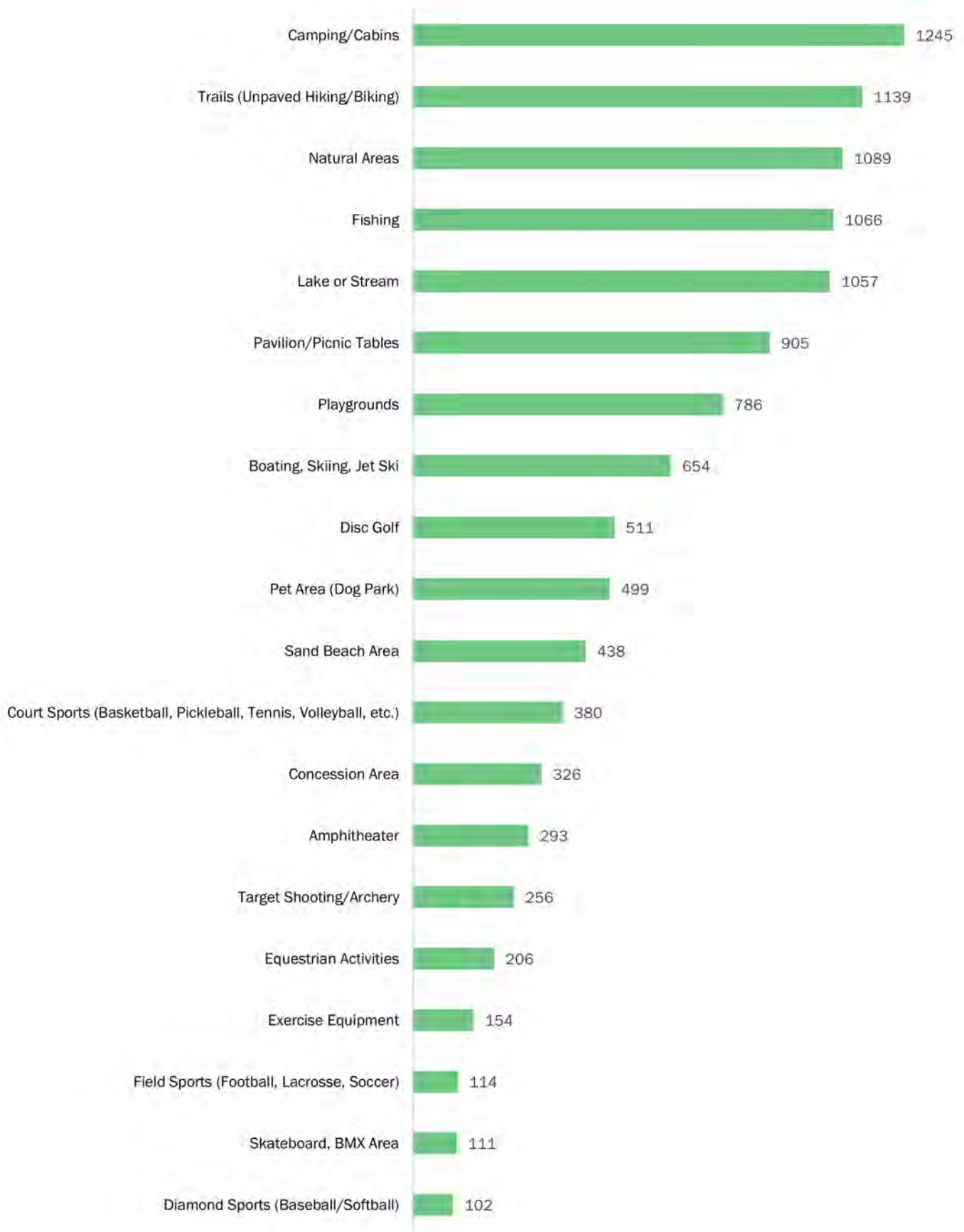
Time Willing to Travel by Driving



Desired Parks at City Level



Expected Parks at Regional Level

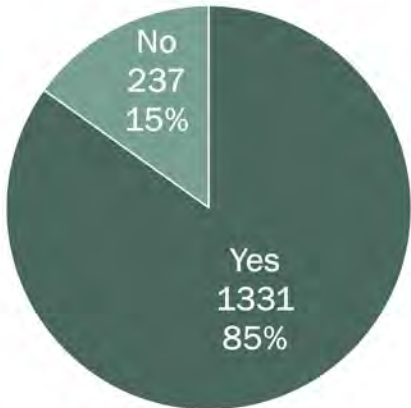


Expected Parks at State Level

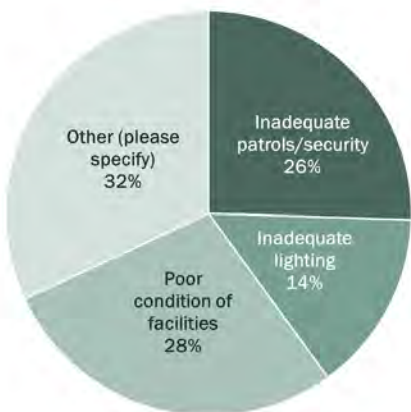
Safety

The survey also assessed the perception of safety for recreation areas. A majority (85%) perceive recreation areas to be safe.

The survey also asked those who indicated that they do not feel safe using public recreational facilities to explain their reasoning. The most common explanations include safety concerns due to poor condition of facilities; a lack of adequate patrol or security of facilities; or inadequate lighting of facilities.



Perceived Safety of Public Recreation Facilities

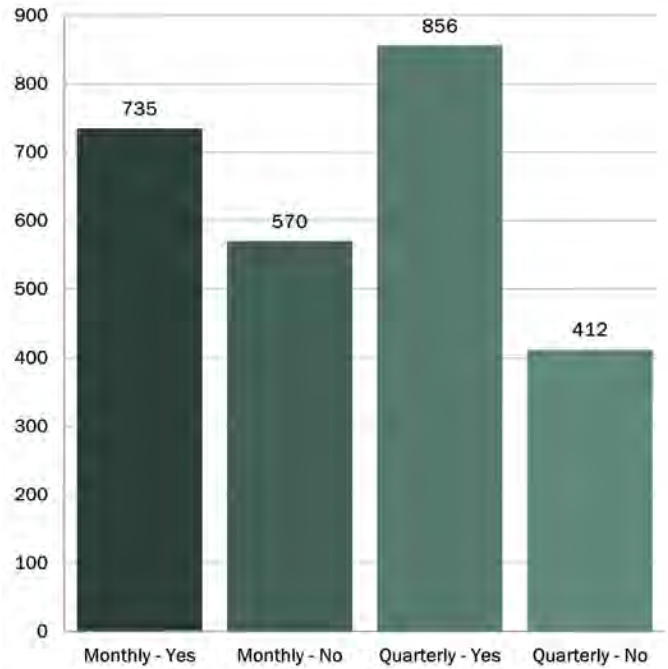


Perceived Safety of Public Recreation Facilities Type

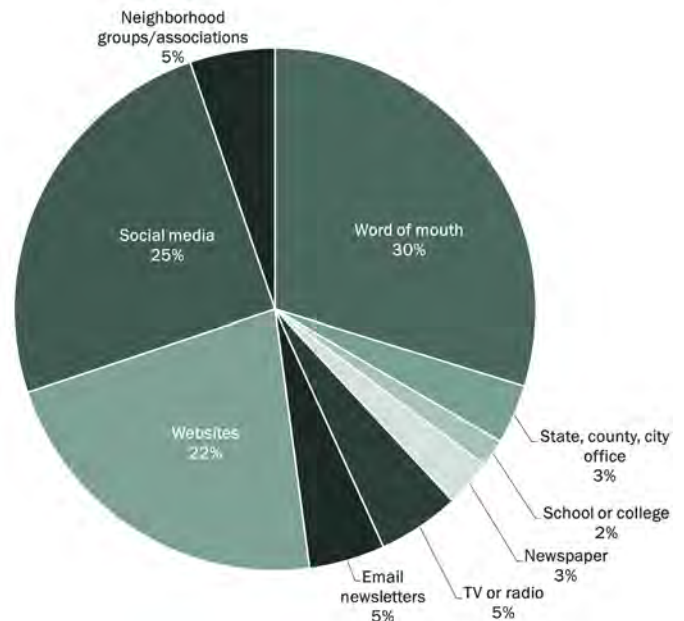
Marketing

The resident survey asked residents how they regularly find out about recreational area locations and activities. Respondents discover opportunities through word of mouth 30% of the time, social media 25%, and websites 22% of the time. In 2019, emails (electronic newsletters) were the most common source for recreational information at 77%, followed by websites at 75%.

The survey sought the level of interest for regular newsletters. 29% would receive one monthly; 33% quarterly; and 38% were not interested in either option. Compared to 2019, where 64% preferred to receive a newsletter monthly; 12% quarterly; and 23% were not interested.



MDWFP Subscription Preference



Recreational Marketing Opportunities

Resident Respondent Demographics

The resident survey recorded respondent demographics. The purpose of these questions was to identify who is responding, marginally represented outliers, and any skewed distributions. The following is a breakdown of the resident survey respondents' characteristics.

Age and Ethnicity

The ages of residents followed a typical bell-curve shape. One-third of all respondents were between 25 and 44 and another one-fourth were between 45-54, which tracks with the age of respondents in 2019, one-third being between the ages of 35 and 64 years old. (87%) of respondents were white, (4%) were Black, (1%) equally were American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or Multi-ethnic, and (6%) preferred not to answer.

The resident survey asked residents about the age of other household members who utilized parks. The distribution of age in the household was expectedly broader than the age of the respondents, with more than one-third (37%) of the respondents living with a household member under the age of 18, and (7%) above the age of 65. More than half (56%) of the respondent's household members were between 19 and 64 with the larger proportion of this group being between the ages of 25 and 44 (25%).

Background and Lifestyle

In 2019, respondents identified city parks as the most frequently used recreation area type, whereas in 2023 respondents identified state parks as the most used recreation area type.

Most respondents (81%) have been a state resident for over 20 years. (85%) of respondents have a household income of more than \$50,000, and more than one-third have an income between \$75,000 and \$125,000.

Summary of Resident Survey Input

The project team compared the results of the 2023 resident survey to responses in the previous 2019 SCORP report. According to the 2023 survey results, more residents are participating in park activities for fun with family and friends compared to the top result in 2019 for the enjoyment of being outdoors. Additionally, in 2023 residents visit parks for health benefits more than the top response in 2019 to participate in organized activities.

The most popular types of facilities visited changed from city, state, and national parks in 2019 to the following order in 2023 state then city parks, and third wildlife management areas. In 2023, travel preferences suggest that residents will visit highly desired recreation areas in a car for up to any time or by bike for up to 30 minutes. However, residents more frequently preferred to walk less than 15 minutes to a desired location in 2023. The willingness of residents to travel outside of the state for recreational opportunities continues to grow in 2023, up (3%) from the previous 2019 report. Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Tennessee remain within the top 5 places residents reported visiting and Kansas replaced Texas in 2023 compared to 2019 as one of the top locations visited by residents.

A large majority of resident survey respondents perceived their parks to be safe in 2023, alluding to their continued attractiveness to families as four-fifths of respondents say they visit parks to spend time with their friends and families. However, in 2023 residents do not feel that their recreational needs are being met provided that more than half feel that their recreation areas are in poor condition or were not available to them. Residents desired natural areas, trails, and fishing locations at the city level, and expected cabins for camping, trails, and natural areas at the regional and state levels.

A complete account of the Resident Survey can be found in Appendix B.

CONCLUSION

Engagement efforts through the website, survey, and personal contact were successful in generating public submissions and comments. Provider and resident surveys proved to be beneficial in understanding the present needs and state of outdoor recreation in Mississippi. The project team carried out the planning process to ensure that this report is representative of all areas of the state. The TFC provided local knowledge as well as professional experience to guide the plan's development. The project team used survey results as a direct source of information for analyses of recreation supply and demand that follow in *Section 5: Recreation Supply and Demand*.

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RECREATION SUPPLY & DEMAND

RECREATION SUPPLY & DEMAND

The project team determined recreation supply and demand from public engagement, provider input, and facility databases. The team reviewed information from provider survey responses, online recreation databases, and an MDWFP database of grant-funded projects. The team determined recreation demand by evaluating resident and provider survey responses. The team analyzed these findings and developed recommendations for providers to respond to public demand.

RECREATION SUPPLY

Recreation supply considers the amounts and types of facilities that are currently available within the state.

Input

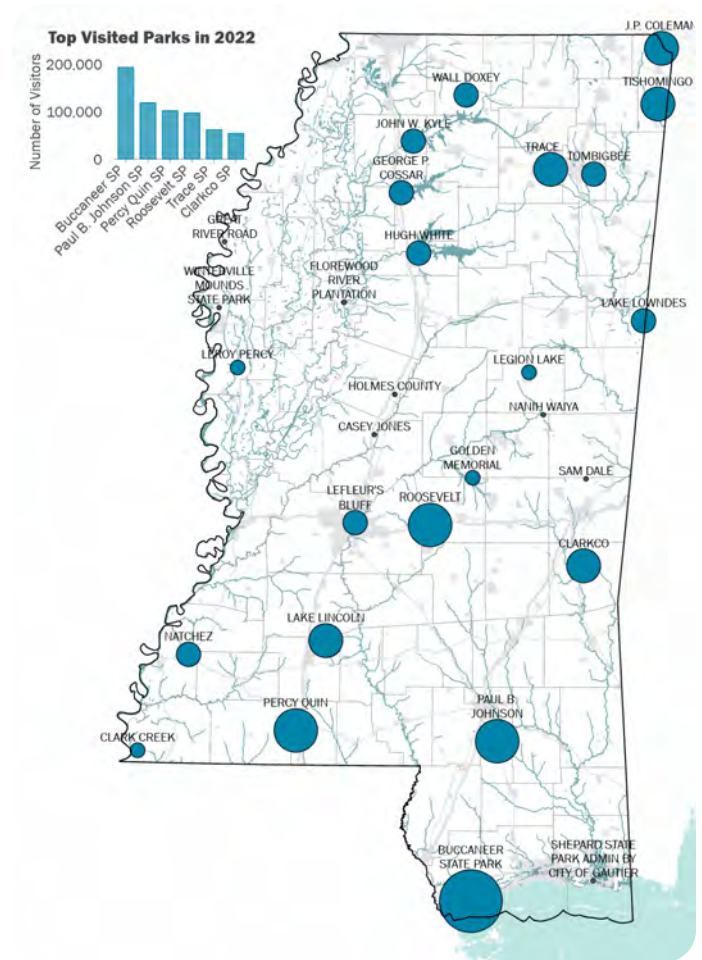
Research and databases show that Mississippi is home to many federal, state, and local lands and waters that are available for recreation. Mississippi has 25 state parks, most of which are distributed evenly throughout the state and near the interstate-highway system, in addition to 9 national parks.

STATE PARK VISITATION

Park	FY 21 Visits	FY 22 Visit	Change
Buccaneer	215,970	192,628	-10.8%
Clark Creek	12,924	17,555	35.8%
Clarko	58,406	53,981	-7.6%
George P. Cossar	23,190	22,888	-1.3%
Golden Memorial	1,195	672	-43.8%
Hugh White	32,865	28,099	-14.5%
J.P. Coleman	58,306	50,960	-12.6%
John W. Kyle	36,952	29,802	-19.3%
Lake Lincoln	61,473	44,530	-27.6%
Lake Lowndes	41,726	33,548	-19.6%
LeFleur's Bluff	42,953	33,857	-21.2%
Legion	5,207	6,628	27.3%
Leroy Percy	8,521	10,966	28.7%
Natchez	21,439	18,248	-14.9%
Paul B. Johnson	134,524	117,985	-12.3%
Percy Quinn	103,878	101,400	-2.4%
Roosevelt	89,937	96,573	7.4%
Tishomingo	72,243	43,987	-39.1%
Tombigbee	25,403	25,092	-1.2%
Trace	68,441	61,561	-10.1%
Wall Doxey	22,715	22,220	-2.2%

The three state parks with the highest visitation counts are all located in the southern region of the state: Buccaneer (192,628); Paul B. Johnson (117,985); and Percy Quin (101,400), each three remain the top visited state parks. Buccaneer and Paul B. Johnson both saw increases in visitation from the previous 2019 report, but Percy Quin saw a drop in visitation year over year. Additionally, between 2021 and 2022 all state parks saw declines in visitation.

Trails are a popular feature for any park. MDWFP lists a total of 51 recreational trails for state-owned parks. In addition, there are 28 trails in the state's National Forests. Types of trails include nature, mountain bike, equestrian, and all-terrain vehicle (ATV). Trail names, locations, and lengths can be found in the following tables, followed by a summary table for state, national, and river trails.



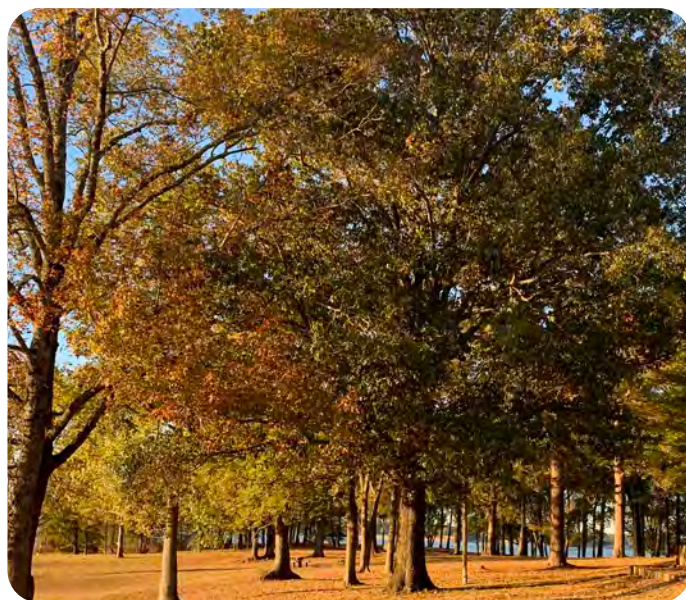
Mississippi State Parks and Visitation

STATE PARK TRAILS

Trail Name	State Park	Length
Aligator Lake Nature Trail	Leroy Percy State Park	1.5
Bear Creek Nature Trail	Tishomingo State Park	1.5
Black Bayou Nature Trail	Leroy Percy State Park	1.5
CCC Camp Nature Trail	Tishomingo State Park	3
CCC Pond Nature Trail	Tishomingo State Park	0.75
Clark Creek Nature Trail 1	Clark Creek State Park	6
Clark Creek Nature Trail 2	Clark Creek State Park	6
Clarko Nature Trail	Clarko State Park	5
Flat Rock Nature Trail	Tishomingo State Park	3
Florewood	Florewood State Park	
George P. Cossar Nature Trail	George P. Cossar State Park	2.5
Golden Memorial	Golden Memorial State Park	
Great River Road	Great River Road State Park	
Holmes County Nature Trail	Holmes County State Park	2.5
Hugh White Nature Trail	Hugh White State Park	0.8
J.P. Coleman Nature Trail	J.P. Coleman State Park	0.5
John Kyle	John Kyle State Park	
Lake Lincoln Nature Trail	Lake Lincoln State Park	1
Lake Lowndes Equestrian Trail	Lake Lowndes State Park	7
Lake Lowndes Mountain Bike Trail	Lake Lowndes State Park	7
Legion Nature Trail	Legion State Park	1.9
Natchez Park Nature Trail	Natchez State Park	0.75
Natchez Trace Nature Trail	Tishomingo State Park	2
Opossum Nature Trail	Lake Lowndes State Park	3.5
Outcropping Nature Trail	Tishomingo State Park	2
Percy Quin Nature Trail	Percy Quin State Park	4
Pirate's Alley Nature Trail	Buccaneer State Park	1.8
Roosevelt Park Nature Trail 1	Roosevelt State Park	4.6
Roosevelt Park Nature Trail 2	Roosevelt State Park	4.6
Roosevelt Park Nature Trail 3	Roosevelt State Park	4.6
Roosevelt Park Nature Trail 4	Roosevelt State Park	4.6
Roosevelt Park Nature Trail 5	Roosevelt State Park	4.6
Roosevelt Park Nature Trail 6	Roosevelt State Park	4.6
Saddleback Ridge Nature Trail	Tishomingo State Park	0.75
Shepard Park Nature Trail 1	Shepard State Park	8
Shepard Park Nature Trail 2	Shepard State Park	8
Shepard Park Nature Trail 3	Shepard State Park	8
Shepard Park Nature Trail 4	Shepard State Park	8
Shepard Park Nature Trail 5	Shepard State Park	8
The Blue Nature Trail	LeFleurs Bluff State Park	0.36
The Green Nature Trail	LeFleurs Bluff State Park	0.21
The Purple Nature Trail	LeFleurs Bluff State Park	0.49
The Red Nature Trail	LeFleurs Bluff State Park	0.32
The Yellow Nature Trail	LeFleurs Bluff State Park	0.16
Trace Park ATV Trail	Trace State Park	29.1
Trace Park Equestrian Trail	Trace State Park	29.1
Trace Park Mountain Bike Trail	Trace State Park	1.5
Trace Park Nature Trail	Trace State Park	1.5
Trail of Southern Pines Nature Trail	Paul B. Johnson State Park	1.5
Tree Trunk Nature Trail	Tombigbee State Park	1.5
Wall Doxey Nature Trail	Wall Doxey State Park	2.5

NATIONAL FOREST TRAILS

Trail Name	National Forest	Length
Clear Springs	Bienville	
Marathon Lake	Bienville	1.7
Shockaloe Horse/MTB Trail	Bienville	23
Shongelo Lake	Bienville	0.5
Little Tiger ATV/Motorcycle Trail	Chickasawhay	12
Longleaf Horse Trail (3 Loops)	Chickasawhay	21
Tall Pines	Chickasawhay	2
Turkey Fork	Chickasawhay	0.75
Airey Lake	Desoto	21
Ashe Lake	Desoto	43
Bethel OHV Trails (3 Trails)	Desoto	16.4
Bethel Mountain Bike Trails (4 Trails)	Desoto	20
Bethel South OHV Trails	Desoto	43
Big Creek Landing	Desoto	20
Big Foot Horse Trail and Camp (4 Loops)	Desoto	23.7
Black Creek Hiking Trail	Desoto	10
Black Creek National Wild and Scenic River	Desoto	42
Rattlesnake Bay ATV Trail (3 Loops)	Desoto	31.6
Tuxachanie National Hiking Trail	Desoto	11.9
Delta Multiple-Use Trails (19 from .75 - 4.5)	Delta	52.5
Chewalla Lake	Holly Springs	1
Puskus Lake	Holly Springs	1
Richardson Creek Trail	Homochitto	10
Brushy Creek Horse Trail	Homochitto	5.5
Choctaw Lake	Tombigbee	3
Noxubee Hills Mountain Bike Trail	Tombigbee	32
Witch Dance Horse Trail	Tombigbee	15
Chickasaw ATV/Motorcycle Trail	Tombigbee	12



George P Cossar Natural Area

Aside from state parks, Mississippi has 53 Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) that include over 528,048 acres. MDWFP finds that hunters are the primary users of WMAs⁶⁷.

There are also nine National Park Service⁶⁸ units within the state that include three National Heritage Areas, three National Park Trails, 40 National Historic Landmarks, and five National Natural Landmarks. Plus, the state has seven National Forests that encompass 1.2 million acres⁶⁹. The following tables list National Forests, NPS service units, and National Natural Landmarks.

Camping and recreational vehicles (RV) are a substantial part of travel and tourism in the state. The 2022 Mississippi Tourism Economic Report found that Mississippi has 8,335 RV spaces with on-site electrical hook-ups and water, and an additional 462 campsites without hook-ups or water. State parks host 1,586 of those campsites⁷⁰.

NATIONAL FOREST TRAILS

Trail Name	National Forest	Length
Clear Springs	Bienville	
Marathon Lake	Bienville	1.7
Shockaloe Horse/MTB Trail	Bienville	23
Shongelo Lake	Bienville	0.5
Little Tiger ATV/Motorcycle Trail	Chickasawhay	12
Longleaf Horse Trail (3 Loops)	Chickasawhay	21
Tall Pines	Chickasawhay	2
Turkey Fork	Chickasawhay	0.75

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UNITS

Service Unit Name	Location
Brices Cross Roads National Battlefield	Baldwyn
Gulf Islands National Seashore	Ocean Springs
Mississippi Delta National Heritage	Delta Region
Mississippi Gulf National Heritage Area	Gulf Coast Region
Natchez national Historical Park	Natchez
Natchez Trace Parkway	Varies
Shiloh National Military Park	Corinth
Tupelo National Battlefield	Tupelo
Vicksburg National Military Park	Vicksburg

STATE FISHING LAKES

Lake Name	Acreage
Bill Waller	168
Bogue Homa	882
Calling Panther	404
Claude Bennett	71
Columbia	84
Elvis Presley	322
English	45
Odum	14
Jeff Davis	100
Lamar Bruce	300
Mary Crawford	128
Mike Conner	79
Monroe	99
Neshoba County	138
Perry	68
Prentiss Walker	81
Simpson County	76
Tippah County	145
Tom Bailey	182
Walthall	55

NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARKS

Landmark Name	County	Acres	Ownership
Bienville Pines Scenic Area	Scott	223	Federal
Chestnut Oak Disjunct	Calhoun	12	Private
Green Ash-Overcup Oak-Sweetgum Research Natural Areas	Sharkey	181	Federal
Harrell Prairie Hill	Scott	122	Federal
Mississippi Petrified Forest	Madison	40	Private

⁶⁷ MARIS. 2019 Water Management Area Database.

⁶⁸ National Park Service. "Working with Mississippi: By the Numbers." 2020.

⁶⁹ US Forest Service. National Forests in Mississippi: Recreation; MARIS. 2017 National Forest Database

⁷⁰ Visit Mississippi. "Tourism Economic Impact" 2022.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Area Name	Region	Acreage
Canal Section	North East	30,000
Chickasaw	North East	1,342
Divide Section	North East	2,700
Harvey Moss at Tuscumbia	North East	2,600
Hell Creek	North East	12,675
John Bell Williams	North East	3,000
Charles Ray Nix	North West	3,046
Cossar State Park	North West	7,655
Malmaison	North West	9,483
O' Keefe	North West	5,914
Upper Sardis	North West	6,239
Black Prairie	East Central	15,337
Choctaw	East Central	1,400
John W. Starr	East Central	2,284
Nanih Waiya	East Central	2,420
Okatibbee	East Central	5152
Trim Cane	East Central	8,244
Yockanookany	East Central	8,383
Charlie Capps	North Delta	26,136
Leroy Percy	North Delta	1,940
Muscadine Farms	North Delta	700
Riverfront	North Delta	1,214
Sky Lake	North Delta	27,259
Stoneville	North Delta	2,500
William C. (Billy) Deviney	North Delta	650
Leaf River	South Central	36,549
Little Biloxi	South Central	6,925
Old River	South Central	1,000
Theodore Mars	South Central	3,642
Wolf River	South Central	2,500
Howard Miller	South Delta	2,400
Lake George	South Delta	8,383
Mahannah	South Delta	12,695
Phil Bryant	South Delta	N/A
Shipland	South Delta	600
Sunflower	South Delta	60,000
Twin Oaks	South Delta	5,847
Chickasawhay	South East	14,764
Mason Creek	South East	22,789
Pascagoula River	South East	16,407
Red Creek	South East	3,700

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Area Name	Region	Acreage
Ward Bayou	South East	4,306
Bienville	South West	58,480
Calling Panther Lake	South West	1,094
Canemount	South West	3,500
Caney Creek	South West	896
Caston Creek	South West	891
Copiah County	South West	2,436
Marion County	South West	42,274
Bob M. Dearing Natchez State Park	South West	13,234
Pearl River	South West	1,203
Sandy Creek	South West	10,881
Tallahala	South West	2,379



Hunting in Elevated Blind



Tombigbee State Park Lake

The state's geography provides extensive and popular opportunities to recreate in water bodies through boating, skiing, kayaking, swimming, tubing, and more. There are 119 public lakes, 123,000 miles of stream, and 225,000 acres of freshwater⁷¹. In addition, Mississippi has a total of 18 state lakes that encompass 3,133 acres of surface water⁷². All state lakes are in the southern or eastern portions of the state and include restrictions to recreation, such as allowing fishing but not water skiing. *The following tables list accessible lakes and rivers for recreation:*

STATE PARK LAKES

State Park	Lake Name	Acres
Clarkco State Park	Ivy	65
Golden Memorial State Park	Golden Memorial	15
Great River Road State Park	Perry Martin	25
Holmes County State Park	English	45
	Odum	16
Lake Lowndes State Park	Lowndes	50
LeFleur's Bluff State Park	Mayes	50
Legion State Park	Toppasha	12
	Palila	4
Leroy Percy State Park	Alligator	60
Lake Lincoln State Park	Lincoln	550
Natchez State Park	Natchez	230
Paul B. Johnson State Park	Geiger	225
Percy Quin State Park	Tangipahoa	490
Roosevelt State Park	Shadow	150
Tishomingo State Park	Haynes	45
Tombigbee State Park	Lee	120
Trace State Park	Trace	565
Wall Doxey State Park	Spring	60



Lake Lowndes



Paul B Johnson State Park Lake

⁷¹ MDWFP. Fishing and Boating: Public Waters Program.

⁷² MDWFP. Mississippi State Park Lakes

ANALYSIS

From the survey and database information, researchers identified parks at the county and PDD levels as either active or passive. Active parks often being found in urban areas with the development of recreational facilities and passive parks consisting of more open space and less development and consequent maintenance.

An MDWFP database provided totals for active and passive parks across the state. From this data, researchers determined that there are 1,731 total parks, 47% active and 53% passive. Based on the comparable calculation of parks to counties, there is an average of 21.1 parks in each county. The project team compared the amount of active and passive recreation facilities to population data to determine the percentage rates of parks that are available per 1,000 people. To represent the time since the most recent census, the team used population data from two sources, the 2020 US Census and 2022 ACS Annual Estimates⁷³. Based on the data, statewide there is an average of 0.29 active parks and 0.36 passive parks per 1,000 residents. The following table shows the breakdown of active and passive facilities per 1,000 residents, followed by a summary table of the facilities by type and averages.

The team further calculated the data to represent the PDD level and determine the amount and locations of the highest needs for additional facilities. It was found that the fewest active and passive parks are located in the PDDs of North Central, Northeast Mississippi, and South Delta. Moreover, three counties have a combined total of two or fewer active and passive parks: Issaquena, Benton, and Quitman.

Survey responses underscored that the greatest unmet recreational need was the poor condition of facilities. The recreational needs identified by providers suggest that there was strong demand by facility users for sports fields including baseball and softball fields, locations to host events, festivals and concerts, and biking trails. The provider responses also identified tennis and pickleball courts, playgrounds, and trails that were either for hiking, biking, or jogging as the greatest unmet needs that were currently not provided.

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE PARKS SUMMARY

Active Parks	812	47%
Passive Parks	918	53%
Total Parks	1730	
Average Parks per County	21.10	
Average Active Parks per County	9.90	
Average Passive Parks per County	11.20	
Average Parks per PDD	173.00	
Average Active Parks per PDD	81.20	
Average Passive Parks per PDD	91.80	

RIVERS AND CREEKS

River/Creek Name	Length (Mi)
Bayou Pierre	103
Big Black Creek	6
Big Black River	242
Black Creek	53
Black Creek	40
Bluff Creek	27
Bogue Chitto River	38
Bouie River	22
Buttachatchee River	45
Chickasawhay River	149
Chunky River	8
Chunky River	26
Hatchie River	10
Homochitto River	70
Jourdan River	16
Leaf River	51
Magees Creek	11
Noxubee River	114
Okatoma River	28
Pascagoula River	67
Pearl River	132
Red Creek	90
Strong River	86
Tchoutacabouffa River	22
Tuxachanie Creek	32
Wolf River	63

⁷³ 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, P1

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE FACILITIES BY COUNTY

County	Census Population (2020)	Population Projection (2022)	Total Active Facilities	Active Facilities per 1,000 Residents (2020)	Active Facilities per 1,000 Residents (2022)
Adams	29,538	28,408	10	0.34	0.35
Alcorn	34,740	34,204	7	0.20	0.20
Amite	12,720	12,619	3	0.24	0.24
Attala	17,889	17,509	4	0.22	0.23
Benton	7,646	7,550	1	0.13	0.13
Bolivar	30,985	29,370	13	0.42	0.44
Calhoun	13,266	12,781	2	0.15	0.16
Carroll	9,998	9,731	0	0.00	0.00
Chickasaw	17,106	16,812	0	0.00	0.00
Choctaw	8,246	8,037	4	0.49	0.50
Claiborne	9,135	8,805	0	0.00	0.00
Clarke	15,615	15,271	6	0.38	0.39
Clay	18,636	18,380	10	0.54	0.54
Coahoma	21,390	20,197	4	0.19	0.20
Copiah	28,368	27,719	6	0.21	0.22
Covington	18,340	18,098	5	0.27	0.28
DeSoto	185,314	191,723	44	0.24	0.23
Forrest	78,158	78,110	18	0.23	0.23
Franklin	7,675	7,642	1	0.13	0.13
George	24,350	25,206	5	0.21	0.20
Greene	13,530	13,552	1	0.07	0.07
Grenada	21,629	21,088	3	0.14	0.14
Hancock	46,053	46,094	10	0.22	0.22
Harrison	208,621	211,044	102	0.49	0.48
Hinds	227,742	217,730	81	0.36	0.37
Holmes	17,000	16,121	2	0.12	0.12
Humphreys	7,785	7,333	3	0.39	0.41
Issaquena	1,338	1,273	0	0.00	0.00
Itawamba	23,863	23,903	3	0.13	0.13
Jackson	143,252	144,975	37	0.26	0.26
Jasper	16,367	16,167	3	0.18	0.19
Jefferson	7,260	7,087	2	0.28	0.28
Jefferson Davis	11,321	11,088	1	0.09	0.09
Jones	67,246	66,569	12	0.18	0.18
Kemper	8,988	8,654	2	0.22	0.23
Lafayette	55,813	57,615	10	0.18	0.17
Lamar	64,222	65,783	12	0.19	0.18
Lauderdale	72,984	70,904	32	0.44	0.45
Lawrence	12,016	11,713	2	0.17	0.17
Leake	21,275	21,135	3	0.14	0.14
Lee	83,343	82,959	31	0.37	0.37

Active and Passive Facilities by County

County	Total Passive Facilities	Passive Facilities per 1,000 Residents (2020)	Passive Facilities per 1,000 Residents (2022)	Total Number of Facilities
Adams	12	0.41	0.42	22
Alcorn	8	0.23	0.23	15
Amite	3	0.24	0.24	6
Attala	7	0.39	0.40	11
Benton	0	0.00	0.00	1
Bolivar	13	0.42	0.44	26
Calhoun	4	0.30	0.31	6
Carroll	2	0.20	0.21	2
Chickasaw	9	0.53	0.54	9
Choctaw	7	0.85	0.87	11
Claiborne	5	0.55	0.57	5
Clarke	13	0.83	0.85	19
Clay	10	0.54	0.54	20
Coahoma	5	0.23	0.25	9
Copiah	8	0.28	0.29	14
Covington	7	0.38	0.39	12
DeSoto	30	0.16	0.16	74
Forrest	21	0.27	0.27	39
Franklin	7	0.91	0.92	8
George	4	0.16	0.16	9
Greene	2	0.15	0.15	3
Grenada	24	1.11	1.14	27
Hancock	28	0.61	0.61	38
Harrison	81	0.39	0.38	183
Hinds	48	0.21	0.22	129
Holmes	9	0.53	0.56	11
Humphreys	2	0.26	0.27	5
Issaquena	0	0.00	0.00	0
Itawamba	8	0.34	0.33	11
Jackson	44	0.31	0.30	81
Jasper	3	0.18	0.19	6
Jefferson	0	0.00	0.00	2
Jefferson Davis	5	0.44	0.45	6
Jones	17	0.25	0.26	29
Kemper	0	0.00	0.00	2
Lafayette	15	0.27	0.26	25
Lamar	9	0.14	0.14	21
Lauderdale	23	0.32	0.32	55
Lawrence	4	0.33	0.34	6
Leake	8	0.38	0.38	11
Lee	28	0.34	0.34	59

*Table to be read with table on pg.56

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE FACILITIES BY COUNTY, CONT.

County	Census Population (2020)	Population Projection (2022)	Total Active Facilities	Active Facilities per 1,000 Residents (2020)	Active Facilities per 1,000 Residents (2022)
Leflore	28,339	26,570	10	0.35	0.38
Lincoln	34,907	34,717	5	0.14	0.14
Lowndes	58,879	57,603	16	0.27	0.28
Madison	109,145	111,113	12	0.11	0.11
Marion	24,441	24,050	6	0.25	0.25
Marshall	33,752	34,110	5	0.15	0.15
Monroe	34,180	33,577	19	0.56	0.57
Montgomery	9,822	9,530	2	0.20	0.21
Neshoba	29,087	28,673	9	0.31	0.31
Newton	21,291	21,029	8	0.38	0.38
Noxubee	10,285	9,990	1	0.10	0.10
Oktibbeha	51,788	51,427	18	0.35	0.35
Panola	33,208	32,661	6	0.18	0.18
Pearl River	56,145	57,261	7	0.12	0.12
Perry	11,511	11,368	3	0.26	0.26
Pike	40,324	39,644	11	0.27	0.28
Pontotoc	31,184	31,389	9	0.29	0.29
Prentiss	25,008	24,792	6	0.24	0.24
Quitman	6,176	5,701	1	0.16	0.18
Rankin	157,031	158,979	32	0.20	0.20
Scott	27,990	27,707	6	0.21	0.22
Sharkey	3,800	3,488	2	0.53	0.57
Simpson	25,949	25,587	4	0.15	0.16
Smith	14,209	14,092	1	0.07	0.07
Stone	18,333	18,669	4	0.22	0.21
Sunflower	25,971	24,811	10	0.39	0.40
Tallahatchie	12,715	12,035	5	0.39	0.42
Tate	28,064	28,296	5	0.18	0.18
Tippah	21,815	21,431	3	0.14	0.14
Tishomingo	18,850	18,619	9	0.48	0.48
Tunica	9,782	9,458	6	0.61	0.63
Union	27,777	28,125	5	0.18	0.18
Walthall	13,884	13,761	2	0.14	0.15
Warren	44,722	42,649	15	0.34	0.35
Washington	44,922	42,514	38	0.85	0.89
Wayne	19,779	19,681	4	0.20	0.20
Webster	9,926	9,993	1	0.10	0.10
Wilkinson	8,587	8,143	1	0.12	0.12
Winston	17,714	17,543	4	0.23	0.23
Yalobusha	12,481	12,364	3	0.24	0.24
Yazoo	26,743	25,948	3	0.11	0.12

County	Total Passive Facilities	Passive Facilities per 1,000 Residents (2020)	Passive Facilities per 1,000 Residents (2022)	Total Number of Facilities
Leflore	15	0.53	0.56	25
Lincoln	6	0.17	0.17	11
Lowndes	17	0.29	0.30	33
Madison	19	0.17	0.17	31
Marion	5	0.20	0.21	11
Marshall	9	0.27	0.26	14
Monroe	14	0.41	0.42	33
Montgomery	1	0.10	0.10	3
Neshoba	9	0.31	0.31	18
Newton	7	0.33	0.33	15
Noxubee	2	0.19	0.20	3
Oktibbeha	13	0.25	0.25	31
Panola	22	0.66	0.67	28
Pearl River	4	0.07	0.07	11
Perry	13	1.13	1.14	16
Pike	11	0.27	0.28	22
Pontotoc	9	0.29	0.29	18
Prentiss	7	0.28	0.28	13
Quitman	0	0.00	0.00	1
Rankin	30	0.19	0.19	62
Scott	12	0.43	0.43	18
Sharkey	8	2.11	2.29	10
Simpson	5	0.19	0.20	9
Smith	7	0.49	0.50	8
Stone	13	0.71	0.70	17
Sunflower	8	0.31	0.32	18
Tallahatchie	1	0.08	0.08	6
Tate	6	0.21	0.21	11
Tippah	2	0.09	0.09	5
Tishomingo	22	1.17	1.18	31
Tunica	5	0.51	0.53	11
Union	6	0.22	0.21	11
Walthall	3	0.22	0.22	5
Warren	11	0.25	0.26	26
Washington	26	0.58	0.61	64
Wayne	8	0.40	0.41	12
Webster	3	0.30	0.30	4
Wilkinson	4	0.47	0.49	5
Winston	7	0.40	0.40	11
Yalobusha	12	0.96	0.97	15
Yazoo	3	0.11	0.12	6

*Table to be read with pg.58 and connects to tables on pg 56 & 57

RECREATION DEMAND

Recreation demand considers trends in license registrations and survey responses by both providers and residents.

Input

As previously mentioned, hunting and fishing are popular activities across the state. In 2023, there were 608,371 licensed hunters and fishermen, including 171,597 non-residents, generating an additional \$1.8 million in revenue compared to 2022⁷⁴. In 2022, 72% of hunters targeted white-tailed deer, while 62% of anglers caught fish in freshwater bodies⁷⁵. Furthermore, the resident and provider surveys show a heightened interest exist for playgrounds, picnic facilities, and trails.

Providers should expand on opportunities for participation within existing facilities and renovate existing facilities based on resident survey responses concerning activities. Residential survey respondents identified recreational expectations and desires at the city level which included natural areas, trails, and fishing, and at the regional and state levels included camping, trails, and natural areas. Providers should locate any new facilities for these activities evenly across the state to provide access to all state residents. Currently, (74%) of the residential survey respondents travel out of state to use recreational facilities, by providing these facilities there will be less need for residents to travel to out-of-state parks to participate in recreational activities.

ACTIVE FACILITIES BY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (PDD)

PDD	Census Population (2020)	Population Projection (2022)	Total Active Facilities	Active Facilities per 1,000 Residents (2020)	Active Facilities per 1,000 Residents (2022)
Central Mississippi	619,700	609,725	153	0.247	0.251
East Central	227,806	223,632	70	0.307	0.313
Golden Triangle	175,474	172,973	54	0.308	0.312
North Central	117,158	112,913	24	0.205	0.213
North Delta	296,649	300,071	71	0.239	0.237
Northeast Mississippi	141,811	140,706	31	0.219	0.220
South Delta	114,801	108,789	66	0.575	0.607
Southern Mississippi	805,302	811,548	227	0.282	0.280
Southwest Mississippi	176,046	172,539	37	0.210	0.214
Three Rivers	286,532	287,161	79	0.276	0.275

PASSIVE FACILITIES BY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (PDD)

PDD	Census Population (2020)	Population Projection (2022)	Total Passive Facilities	Passive Facilities per 1,000 Residents (2020)	Passive Facilities per 1,000 Residents (2022)
Central Mississippi	619,700	609,725	124	0.200	0.203
East Central	227,806	223,632	82	0.360	0.367
Golden Triangle	175,474	172,973	59	0.336	0.341
North Central	117,158	112,913	70	0.597	0.620
North Delta	296,649	300,071	69	0.233	0.230
Northeast Mississippi	141,811	140,706	48	0.338	0.341
South Delta	114,801	108,789	57	0.497	0.524
Southern Mississippi	805,302	811,548	261	0.324	0.322
Southwest Mississippi	176,046	172,539	55	0.312	0.319
Three Rivers	286,532	287,161	93	0.325	0.324

⁷⁴ USFWS. 2023 Hunting and Fishing Licenses, Holders, and Costs by Apportionment Year
⁷⁵ MDWFP. Hunter & Angler Surveys

RECOMMENDATIONS

Statewide, residents should be encouraged to participate in outdoor recreation through programs and events that promote various types of activities and strongly encourage participation by all residents. All methods should seek to increase the number of individuals engaging in outdoor activities and the duration of their participation.

Officials should conduct further outreach to determine which activities Mississippi residents seek outside of the state. Residents have noted that the following nearby states: Alabama, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, and Tennessee are their top five travel destinations. Based on this understanding, providers should identify interest in existing facilities that provide opportunities to participate in these activities to maintain and increase resident interest within the state and facilitates tourists or non-residents traveling to Mississippi to partake in them..

Many requests for improvements identified by providers and residents include proper facility maintenance and management of existing facilities. Section 6: Issues Affecting Outdoor Recreation and Section 8: Outdoor Recreation Priorities, Strategies and Actions include proposed solutions and further analysis of issues identified by the TFC in the current and previous SCORP report. However, providers may address some improvements through volunteer-based programs and events, such as fund raising events including outdoor adventure challenges to help raise funds; volunteer workdays where community members can assist with tasks like trail repair to implement improvements for individuals with disabilities; or recruiting volunteers to develop a public awareness campaign to highlight the importance of outdoor recreation.

CONCLUSION

The project team's study of outdoor recreation supply and demand found that there are many facilities available to residents across the state. In survey responses, residents and providers have highlighted maintenance as a driving factor in their facility usage and unmet recreational needs. Hunting and fishing opportunities are the most prevalent with 45 Wildlife Management Areas and 119 public or state-owned lakes. The resident survey highlights the need to focus on existing facilities that are in poor condition. Recommendations include creating a maintenance regime that suits the needs of the community and is attainable for the park staff.



Mile Marker at Tanglefoot Trail



Skate Park in Crystal Springs



Splash Pad at Theron Nichols Park

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6

ISSUES AFFECTING OUTDOOR RECREATION

ISSUES AFFECTING OUTDOOR RECREATION

The issues and actions plan illuminates current issues, as determined by the TFC, which impacts the use of outdoor recreation facilities and activity participation. These issues include:

- *Funding: difficulty coming up with matching grant funds; maintenance funding*
- *Maintenance: budget limitations; education/training on maintenance*
- *Programming: year-round programming; programming more difficult for smaller towns; lack of programming for small children and seniors*
- *Access: getting to recreational spaces; planning for open space during growth*
- *Advocacy: promoting health and wellness for all residents*

Following a description of each issue, actions are suggested in Section 8: Outdoor Recreation Priorities, Strategies and Actions to reduce or reconcile its impact. Additional prospective issues are included for further yet essential consideration.

FUNDING

All too often, governmental units typically do not have adequate funds to allocate for recreational development and for many the operation and maintenance of recreational facilities can also be difficult to fully fund. Grants are often sought out to assist with funding of recreational facilities. The grants usually include matching funds that are provided by the local governmental unit. Matching funds encourage collaboration and innovation and are a vital component for grant programs. Smaller entities may struggle to secure matching funds and are sometimes unaware of available private funding sources, missing out on grant opportunities. Additionally, meeting the criteria for matching funds can pose challenges, as certain grant programs prohibit the utilization of matching funds from certain sources, thereby restricting available funding avenues. The LWCF is a popular grant program for funding recreational development of recreational facilities. The LWCF requires a 1:1 funding ratio of federal to non-federal funds. The LWCF allows the local match to be by paying direct project cost or by utilizing in-kind construction such as government employees labor and equipment time for construction and donations.

Recreational areas often include facilities that require maintenance and upkeep. The strain on governmental budgets arises from maintenance needs categorized as cyclic or regular repairs and deferred which are postponed due to shortage of funds. Part of the maintenance problem stems from a lack of funding and resources at the local level. Volunteer groups or local garden clubs can offer limited assistance but are not set up in every community and do not provide routine maintenance. The Task Force Committee (TFC) noted that there is a lack of outside funding assistance for the operation and maintenance of recreation areas. Sponsors need to identify revenue sources, consider how private groups can help, and thoughtfully develop budgets to accept the responsibility to properly maintain their public infrastructure and facilities for the benefit of the community.



Tanglefoot Trail - Trailside Park at Pontotoc

MAINTENANCE

A substantial amount of money is required to keep parks operating at a satisfactory level. Moreover, the quality of a park is going to determine its likelihood of use. There are constant threats to the condition of a facility, including vandalism, littering, and maintenance. Therefore, it is essential for providers to uphold facility maintenance. In the residential survey, upkeep and the inability to use facilities emerged as common concerns in survey responses. Providers frequently cited planning and funding for maintenance in their survey responses as key priorities in ensuring facility functionality.

PROGRAMMING

Parks do not regularly have programs or activities that are geared towards the elderly or the disabled communities. Park programming in this context refers to organized events and services provided within recreational areas to engage visitors. A lack of specific programming can make it difficult for these groups to engage in recreational activities in parks. In rural areas, municipalities may lack the same infrastructure as urban areas such as transportation, or may have limited resources to cover the cost of developing and maintaining parks which can make it difficult to manage park programming. A focus group coordinated by UCLA notes that, when parks lack adequate facilities including benches, restrooms, water fountains, or signage and wayfinding information, it can make enjoying and navigating a park difficult⁷⁶. Additionally, residents are not always aware of the various programs available to them and as a result, may feel that their recreational needs are not being met.

ACCESS

In addition to physical and social barriers, limited or closed facilities create access issues for residents. Residents noted in survey responses that facilities not being available was the second highest reason they felt their recreational needs were not being met. Facilities closed for renovation or poorly maintained facilities create a strain on residents. For example, between 2021 to 2022, Mississippi lost an estimated 5,683 RV spaces with amenity connections according to the Mississippi Tourism Impact Report⁷⁷. In addition to facilities that have been closed, access to parks is hindered by a lack of reliable transportation for the elderly, children and teenagers, and the disabled community, especially in rural areas. These groups often depend on others to provide transportation to reach a park. Additional

⁷⁶ SMARTCities Dive. What Do Seniors Need in Parks?

⁷⁷ Visit Mississippi. "Tourism Economic Impact Report." 2022.



Playground and Restroom



Farmer's Market



Accessible Playground

outdoor recreational opportunities are necessary for senior citizens to encourage and facilitate more frequent social interactions. In particular, the TFC committee noted elderly are requesting pickleball courts at their facilities, a notion that is supported by responses in the provider survey.

According to the National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA), physical barriers are some of the greatest challenges to face for people who have disabilities, which often include the elderly.⁷⁸ Older parks that have fallen behind on renovations may not be ADA compliant including access barriers such as steep slopes or stairs or uneven surfaces can discourage people from visiting parks altogether. Poorly maintained facilities can also pose a safety risk for elderly people and people in the disabled community who are prone to falls or injuries. Additionally, inadequate seating or shade can make it difficult for visitors to spend extended periods in a park. The lack of information relevant to park accessibility is another barrier for the disabled community according to the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF)⁷⁹. The challenges include information related to accessible trails, restrooms, parking, and other park facilities. MDWFP provides a list of frequently asked questions that includes information about park accessibility.⁸⁰

ADVOCACY

The TFC has noted that hospitals in the past were more involved in helping advocate for health-related outdoor activities, but the advocacy from hospital groups has declined in recent years. The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation has had a positive impact on outdoor recreation and playgrounds through advocacy and grant funding. Advocacy for developing infrastructure in older communities has also proven to be more challenging than in developing communities. Advocating for infrastructure development in older communities presents challenges, notably due to limited space available for expansion or upgrades. This involves navigating existing development patterns and land use regulations, including historic preservation codes. Older communities often grapple with limited tax revenue, competing budget priorities, and the hefty expense of retrofitting or replacing outdated existing infrastructure to meet modern accessibility standards.

Increasingly, advocacy for the disabled community and elderly residents is recognized as an important consideration. A lack of representation in decision-making processes can lead to recreational facilities and developments that may not incorporate the needs of specific people groups such as the elderly and disabled. Though possibly unintended, this can exclude segments of the population from recreational opportunities. Additionally, developing specific recreational facilities like ballfields without considering accompanying amenities, such as playgrounds, may leave non-participating family members without activities to engage in while attending a game with the family.



Child Using Slide at Playground

Issue Trends Compared to Previous Reports 2019 SCORP Issues

- *Funding*
- *Maintenance*
- *Facility Infrastructure*
- *Shifts in Recreational Activities*
- *Technology*

⁷⁸ National Park and Recreation Association. Parks for Inclusion: Disability Inclusion in Parks and Recreation

⁷⁹ NEEF. Public Lands Engagement: Focus on Accessibility.

⁸⁰ MDWFP. MS State Parks Frequently Asked Questions

Comparison Between Previous Report

Funding and Maintenance have been identified as issues related to outdoor recreation again in public meetings. These two topics have been listed as issues in the previous three reports, and rated the top two issues in 2003 and 1995. The 2019 report noted funding issues related to the limited sources of financial assistance for recreation maintenance activities. Local community resources are stretched trying to provide the necessary infrastructure and lack resources to properly operate and maintain recreation areas. Maintaining existing facilities to keep parks in operating condition was again listed as a top issue. In the 2023 survey responses, residents noted that facilities being in poor condition was the top reason why they felt their recreational needs were not being met. Poorly maintained facilities pose safety threats for those who are mobility impaired or disabled.

Previously, facility infrastructure, shifts in recreational activities, and technology were listed as primary issues for access to outdoor recreation. In particular, issues related to facility infrastructure were highlighted, notably the limited presence of utility amenities such as sinks with running water, flushable toilets, and water fountains. Many residents indicated that the absence of these amenities would deter them from using the facilities altogether or would limit their time spent at a facility. Issues related to shifts in recreational activities included changes in chosen recreational activities and barriers that prevent outdoor recreation such as licensing fees. Additionally, young users were noted to have reduced their time outdoors due to the presence of technology and a difference in priorities. Technology, in the 2019 report, was noted as a topic of growing concern, and as an opportunity to enhance outdoor recreation. Feedback during the 2023 public meetings noted that technology could be used to inform travelers about outdoor recreational opportunities. Priorities identified in the 2019 SCORP have transitioned away from concerns regarding facility infrastructure, technology, and shifts in recreational activities, and now focus on programming, access, and advocacy issues. Concerns regarding programming and access, such as the lack of enjoyment or full utilization of park facilities, echo the issues previously discussed regarding facility infrastructure. The challenge is to find a way to develop a more effective, concerted effort to address reoccurring deficiencies.

The COVID-19 pandemic, its aftermath, and prevailing economic conditions have impacted the ability of communities to provide recreational opportunities. This impact, although diminishing, continues to affect certain communities. Various challenges have arisen, including the discouragement of group activities, even those conducted outdoors. The loss of workforce has been notable, with governmental units experiencing personnel losses, some of whom have not returned to work or have pursued alternative employment opportunities. Consequently, the reduced personnel capacity has affected the maintenance of facilities. Additionally, the inflation-induced rise in the cost of goods and services has further strained resources, negatively impacting the maintenance and development of recreational areas.

CONCLUSION

The issues currently impacting outdoor recreation in Mississippi have persisted in various forms from the previous report. Continued expansion of strategic programmatic planning based on national models and local needs can help to address some of the reoccurring issues. Park managers can consider and evaluate the listed issues to focus on those that apply locally. If park managers identify any, their input on and implementation of suggested action plans could lead to improved recreation opportunities for the public.



Accessible Lake Ramp

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ASSESSMENT & PROTECTION OF WETLANDS

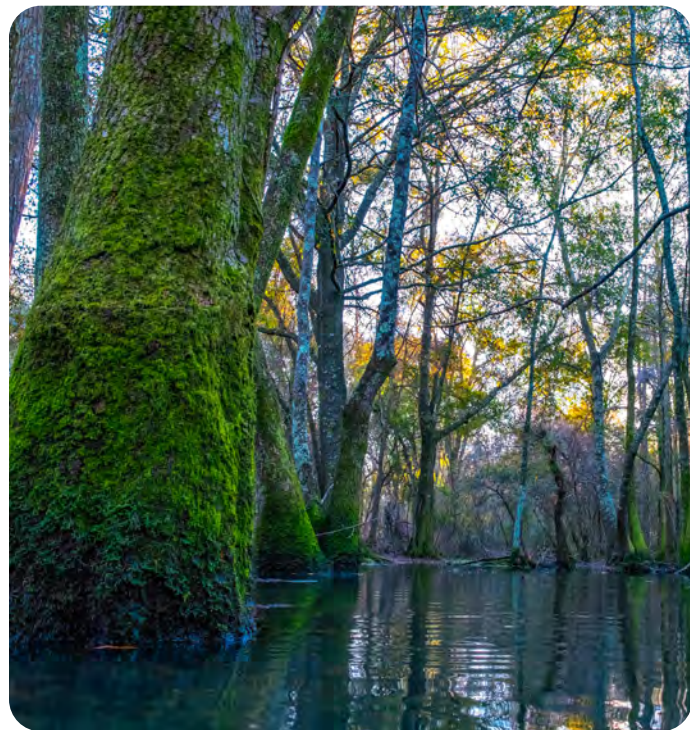
ASSESSMENT & PROTECTION OF WETLANDS

INTRODUCTION⁸¹

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Manual outlines that a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) must address a wetlands priority plan that is in accordance with Section 303 of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-645). “Section 301 of the Emergency Wetland Resources Act requires that the national wetland priority conservation plan shall specify the types of wetlands and interests in wetlands which should be given priority with respect to federal and state acquisition.”

The minimum goals outlined are:

- *Be consistent with the National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan, prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;*
- *Provide evidence of consultation with the State agency responsible for fish and wildlife resources;*
- *Contain a listing of those wetland types that should receive priority for acquisition; and*
- *Consider outdoor recreation opportunities associated with its wetlands resources for meeting the State’s public outdoor recreation needs.*



Flooded Swamp

⁸¹ LWCF. Federal Financial Assistance Manual - Volume 72, P9-10

⁸² Boyd. "Mississippi State Wetland Program Summary."

DESCRIPTION OF MISSISSIPPI WETLANDS

As a coastal state, Mississippi contains many types of wetland environments, including bogs, swamps, riverbank pioneer habitats, bottom-land forests, bayheads, coastal flatwoods, and savannahs. Palustrine and Estuarine wetlands are the two main types of wetlands found in the state of Mississippi. Palustrine wetlands are the most common. This type of wetland includes bogs, swamps, riverbank pioneer habitat, bottom-land forests, bayheads, coastal flatwoods, and savannahs. Bottom-land forests (forested wetlands), swamps (forested/scrub-shrub wetlands) and fresh marshes (emergent wetlands) make up most of the state’s wetland acreage. Estuarine wetlands are the second most common. This type of wetland is comprised of estuarine forested wetlands that includes coastal marsh, estuarine, fresh, mud flats and cypress-tupelo gum swamp.⁸²

The Coastal Wetlands Protection Act defines a coastal wetland as “all publicly owned lands subject to the ebb and flow of the tide; which are below the watermark of ordinary high tide; all publicly owned accretions above the watermark of ordinary high tide and all publicly owned submerged water-bottoms below the watermark of ordinary high tide. The term “coastal wetlands” shall be interpreted to include the flora and fauna on the wetlands and in the wetlands.”⁸³

The Coastal Zone Management Program is responsible for regulating tidal marsh, water bottoms, and major coastal rivers and streams including private lands. Tidal marshes are defined to include “areas of vegetated lands from the watermark of ordinary high tide seaward to a point where the vegetation ceases to exist.”⁸⁴

⁸³ Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. Title 49. Conservation and Ecology Chapter 27. Coastal Wetlands Protection Act. MISS CODE 49-27-1 - 49-27-71. 2003.

⁸⁴ Boyd. "Mississippi State Wetland Program Summary."

Wetland Uses

Mississippi contains many settings for outdoor recreation in water, including boating, swimming, fishing, and more. Mississippi's original (pre-1800s) wetland acreage was 9,872,000; its present acreage is less than half of that amount, at 4,067,000 acres, resulting in a 59% wetland acre loss. According to the National Wetland Priority Conservation plan this amount of wetland loss would be classified as a declining wetland type.⁸⁵ With each acre of wetlands that is lost, so are opportunities for water-based outdoor recreation. Major wetlands areas exist along the Mississippi River and near the Gulf Coast. Historically, major causes of land loss are due to the construction of levees and dams that manipulate the natural environment to sustain urban growth, and protect agricultural fields.

Wetland Functions

The existing tidal wetlands are home to natural landscapes, delicate ecological systems, and several diverse fauna and flora. Critical functions ranging from flood control, water storage to recharging groundwater are performed by these coastal wetlands. Wetlands along coastal Mississippi can lessen the impact of storm surge from tropical storms. Additionally, wetland habitats can serve as excellent educational opportunities, functioning as an outdoor classroom.

MAJOR REGIONAL HABITATS AND THREATS

Mississippi River

The sediment that the Mississippi River would supply the state's wetlands is being lost at the edge of the continental shelf rather than being allowed to build up wetland habitats. Shipping canals along the river permit saltwater intrusion and the extensive networks of oil and gas pipelines are disrupting these ecosystems.

Gulf Coast

Saltwater intrusion is also affecting the Gulf Coast's waterways and wetlands. According to NOAA, Mississippi has a coastline of 44 miles. The coast is experiencing erosion and seasonal hazards, including tropical storms and hurricanes. Since 1980, coastal hazards have totaled nearly \$70 billion.

Lands in the wetland regions should be a top priority for acquisition for outdoor recreation and wetland conservation given their importance for both the environment and public recreation.



Wetland in Lincoln County, MS

⁸⁵ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan." 1989

WETLANDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND EFFORTS

Wetland Conservation Tools

Advocates for conservation are continuously developing tools to manage wetlands and mitigate land loss. Some current technologies related to wetland management include:

- *Mississippi's Wetland Restoration Assessment Procedure; Modified-WRAP, and the Hydrogeomorphic model*
- *Wetland monitoring and assessment*
- *Mapping (National Wetlands Inventory)*

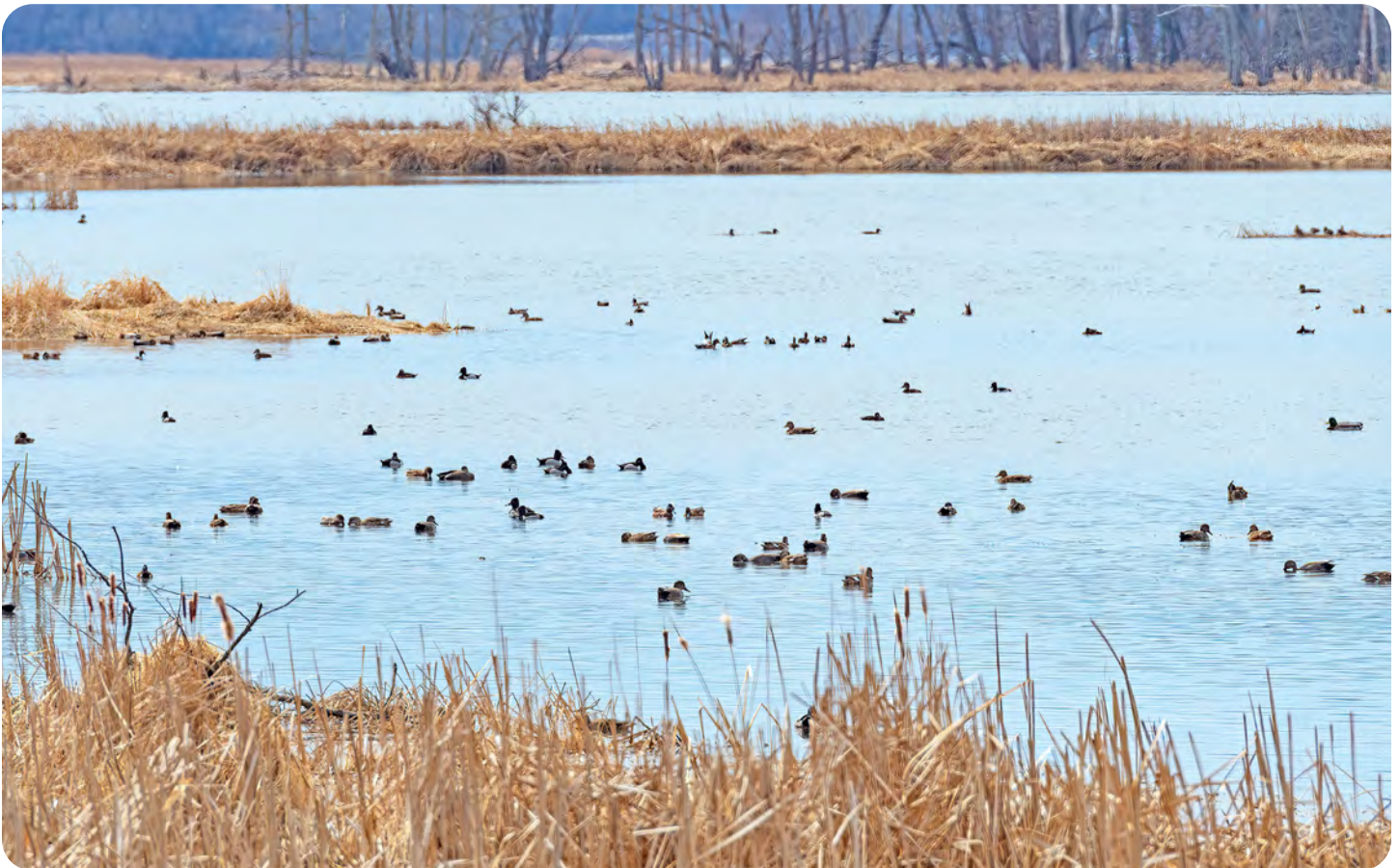
Mississippi's Wetland Rapid Assessment Procedure (WRAP) is used for all wetlands with the expectation of tidal fringe marsh, where Hydrogeomorphic (HGM) is used. HGM models have been developed for pine savanna and bayhead but are not used because of the USACE Mobile District requires use of WRAP. A M-WRAP (Modified WRAP can be used in pine savannas).⁸⁶

Restoration and Protection

The State oversees wetland conservation through its Coastal Wetlands Protection Act (§ 49-27). The Wetlands Reserve Program ranked Mississippi third nationally for wetland acres enrolled in its program. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the state, mostly its western portion, has 150,000 acres of wetlands located within 430 protected Wetland Reserve easements.⁸⁷

Mississippi's Wetlands Management District, located in the northern portion of the state, was established in 1989 and encompasses more than 30,000 acres.⁸⁸ The refuge provides habitat for migratory birds, as well as native endangered or threatened species. The land also aims to provide recreation and education opportunities.

Additional federal, state, and local regulations and incentives exist to encourage the restoration and protection of wetlands. Some of these programs are described in the table below.



Waterfowl on the Mississippi Flyway

⁸⁶ Boyd. "Mississippi State Wetland Program Summary."

⁸⁷ NCED. 2015 National Easement Conservation Database; Readus. Mississippi Annual NRCS Report. 2023

⁸⁸ Boyd. US Fish and Wildlife Service. "Mississippi Wetlands Management District."

Wetlands Regulations

Special Area Management Plans (SAMPs) provide protection for development on land that is near and impacts coastal waters. SAMPs are a joint effort that involve federal and state agencies determining future development provisions and providing policy framework for protections of potential impacts. The plans are backed by the national Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.

CONCLUSION

Wetlands act as the planet's kidneys by filtering out pollutants, trapping runoff sediment and recharging the water table. Protecting wetlands from excessive pollution and destruction is high priority. In addition, these areas create ideal places for people to experience passive outdoor recreation, including hiking, birding, wildlife viewing, photography, kayaking, and camping. They also serve as living outdoor classrooms, promoting understanding and awareness of these habitats.



Marsh in Ocean Springs, MS

WETLAND LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Program Title	Year Established	Description
Public use of state-owned coastal Preserve Areas (Title 22, Part 19)	2022	Established regulations for public use of state-owned Coastal Preserve Areas.
Mississippi Coastal Wetlands Protections Act (Title 49, Chapter 27)	2003	The Wetlands Act established public policy for the state to protect and prevent destruction of coastal wetlands.
Coastal Zone Management Program	1972	The CZMP is a federal program that was established to address uncontrolled use of marine resources and growth. This is a voluntary partnership between the federal government and coastal states. Some of its objectives include developing economic public resources and providing environmental protection. It encourages permit review, Sea Grant monitoring, and special projects.
Mississippi Coastal Program	1972	The program operates under the Office of Coastal Resources. Responsibilities include coastal management, administering the Coast Preserves Program, permitting of wetlands, and other special projects.
Mississippi Wetlands Reserve Program (Repealed by Agricultural Conservation Easement Program in 2014)	1990	The MWRP was a national voluntary program. The program obtained wetlands that have been drained and converted for agricultural use. It allowed landowners to control access and maintain ownership of the land. Additional benefits were realized, such as improved water quality, enhanced wildlife habitat, and reduced soil erosion and flooding. The validity and terms of its contracts are still honored.

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OUTDOOR RECREATION PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

OUTDOOR RECREATION PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

This section outlines the outdoor recreation priorities for the State, as set forth by the Task Force Committee (TFC) and public input. It covers strategies to enhance outdoor recreation including infrastructure and maintenance, advocacy, education, collaboration, programming, and safety. It also includes an action plan to address subjects outlined in previous chapters including Recreation Supply and Demand, Issues Affecting Outdoor Recreation, and Wetlands. A matrix is provided at the end of the chapter that summarizes each component of the action plan.

RECREATION PRIORITIES

The goals in the SCORP establish the priorities for the development and management of outdoor recreational resources within a state. These goals identify and address the needs and preferences of residents and visitors regarding outdoor recreational opportunities. Goals also provide a framework for measuring progress and evaluating the effectiveness of the plan in meeting the desired outcomes.

The goals of the SCORP, as outlined in previous chapters are:

- *Encourage residents to become active outdoors*
- *Attract more visitors, including seniors and youth, to parks statewide*
- *Increase universal access throughout state trails and outdoor recreation facilities*
- *Extend facilities with accessible, user-friendly, low-maintenance infrastructure that allows for year-round visitor use*

RECREATION STRATEGIES

Infrastructure and Maintenance:

Enhance and maintain outdoor recreation infrastructure such as trails, parks, and facilities. This includes repairing and upgrading existing infrastructure, creating new recreational opportunities, and ensuring that facilities are accessible and well-maintained. Investing in infrastructure improvements and maintenance will attract more visitors and provide better experiences for outdoor recreation users.

Advocacy:

Develop marketing campaigns to promote outdoor recreation opportunities. Utilize various channels such as social media, websites, brochures, and advertising to raise awareness about the benefits of outdoor recreation and highlight recreational opportunities. Collaborate with local tourism boards, outdoor organizations, and businesses to amplify marketing efforts and reach a wider audience.

Education:

Offer educational programs and resources that teach outdoor skills, safety practices, and environmental stewardship. This can include workshops, classes, guided tours, and online resources. By providing opportunities for individuals to learn and build confidence in outdoor activities, you can encourage more people to participate and feel comfortable.

Collaboration:

Partner with local community organizations, schools, and youth groups to develop outdoor recreation programs and events. This could involve organizing community clean-up days, hosting outdoor festivals or competitions, or supporting youth camps or after-school programs.

Programming:

Ensure that outdoor recreation opportunities cater to a wide range of interests, skill levels, and demographics. Offer specialized programs for specific groups, such as seniors, families, or individuals with disabilities. Emphasize inclusivity and make efforts to remove barriers to participation, such as providing equipment rentals, transportation options, or financial assistance.

Safety:

Prioritize safety by implementing and promoting safety guidelines and practices. This can involve installing signage and lighting, providing information on potential hazards, and offering training or workshops on outdoor safety. When people feel safe, they are more likely to participate in outdoor recreation activities.

ACTION PLAN

The following recommendations are defined in Section 5: Recreation Supply and Demand:

Statewide, residents should be encouraged to participate in outdoor recreation through programs and events that promote various types of activities and strongly encourage participation by all residents. All methods should seek to increase the number of people and the length of time spent partaking in outdoor activities.

Officials should conduct further outreach to determine which activities Mississippi residents seek outside of the state. Residents have noted that nearby states including Alabama, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, and Tennessee are their top five travel destinations. Based on this understanding, providers should identify what interests are not being met in Mississippi and plan for implementation or enhancement of existing facilities. The development of these facilities will increase resident interest within the state and promote tourists or non-residents to travel to Mississippi to participate.

ISSUES AFFECTING RECREATION

Chapter 6 – Issues Affecting Recreation describes current issues, as determined by the TFC and public input, which limit or prevent the use of outdoor recreation facilities and activity participation. These issues include:

- 1. Funding**
- 2. Maintenance**
- 3. Programming**
- 4. Access**
- 5. Advocacy**

The following is a description of actions to address the issues identified by the TFC and public input:

Funding

Funding through LWCF will allow the state to continue its progress in developing and improving parks. Funds have typically been used for adding amenities to existing parks and outdoor recreation facilities, including playground equipment, soccer fields, lighting, and more.

Providers can also leverage private funding opportunities to maximize benefits for neighborhood parks. One example of private funds may involve membership fees to mega-park facilities. Businesses are also becoming increasingly active in funding facilities and activities that are beneficial to the public, while at the same time, many are becoming more environmentally conscious. Moreover, whenever possible, private investments in outdoor recreation should be encouraged, particularly if efforts will result in an increase in accessibility or connectivity to existing facilities.

The following list includes additional funding mechanisms or strategies suggested for creating, improving, or operating parks:

Funding mechanisms to create or improve parks

- *Development Agreements*
- *Tourism Funds*
- *Bonds*
- *Gifts and Bequests*
- *Grants*

Funding mechanisms to create and operate parks

- *Special Taxes*
- *Parcel Taxes*
- *Transaction and Use Taxes*
- *Utility User Taxes, Transient Occupancy Taxes, and Business License Taxes*

Funding mechanisms to assist with the operation of parks

- *User Fees*
- *Volunteers*

Current NRPA Grant Opportunities

- *10-Minute Walk Technical Assistance*
- *Instructor Training Grants for Physical Activity Programs*

Other Grant Opportunities

- *Land and Water Conservation Fund*
- *Recreational Trails Program*
- *Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund*
- *GameTime Playground Grants*
- *Community Change Grant Program*
- *Powering Healthy Lives*
- *Inclusive Recreation: Tommy Wilson Memorial Grant*
- *American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) Shade Structure Program*
- *Baseball Tomorrow Fund (BTW) Grants*
- *Baseball Tomorrow Fund/Major League Baseball Field Maintenance Education Program*
- *Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program – Rural Communities*
- *Keep America Beautiful’s Community Restoration and Resiliency Fund*
- *United States Golf Association (USGA) Alliance Grant Program*
- *United States Tennis Association (USTA) Facility Assistance Program*

Other states have found funding through additional sources such as the Growing Smarter Program and the Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Fund Program. Partner agency grants include the Heritage Fund, Local Sportsmen’s Group, The Outdoor Foundation, Cabela’s Outdoor Fund, and Greenfield’s Outdoor Fitness.

Mississippi cities such as Houston, Carthage, and New Albany have all successfully used tourism funds to improve outdoor recreation in their neighborhoods.

Senate Bill 1723, as passed by the 2016 Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature, authorizes “a special 2% tax to be levied on the gross proceeds of hotel and motel room rentals and the gross proceeds of sales of restaurants on businesses located in the corporate limits of the City of Carthage, Mississippi.”

Maintenance

Maintenance is vital to ensure the preservation of recreation facilities and promote safe and enjoyable experiences for users. Poor maintenance can lead to the loss of recreational opportunities for the public.

The following is a list of actions to improve maintenance:

1. **Park and Recreation Facility Maintenance Standards should be developed and implemented.** These standards should include staffing and volunteer needs, an operations manual, training, performance measures, and user satisfaction goals. All municipalities should recommend these standards to ensure the conservation of current facilities and the highest use by residents.
2. **Jurisdictions should include recreational facilities maintenance costs in their annual expense budget for each fiscal year.** Maintenance costs and associated performance should be analyzed yearly in the formulation of the budget to determine if additional monies should be allocated toward maintenance.
3. **Officials and park managers should encourage volunteerism to not only aid maintenance and establish clean-up days, but to also fortify ownership by the residents which will reinforce the need to care for public amenities.**



Shared Walkway

Programming

Successful Parks and Recreation programming offers a variety of programs throughout the year for a wide range of target audiences with varying ages, interests, and abilities.

The following is a list of actions jurisdictions can utilize to improve programming:

1. Conduct comprehensive assessments of programming. This should include a life cycle analysis of programs to determine which programs are growing and declining. Age distribution should also be analyzed to determine if there are gaps in target audiences.
2. Develop a strategic plan for programming. This plan should include the findings of a comprehensive assessment and address any issues present. It should outline clear goals, objectives, and actions to improve programming within the department.
3. Invest in staff training and development to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of programming efforts. This can include workshops, seminars, and certifications to enhance skills and knowledge in areas such as event planning, community engagement, program evaluation, and marketing.
4. Host events that are tailored to the interests of local residents. Through community feedback and analysis, determine what local residents are interested in and tailor events to these interests for enhanced participation.
5. Promote park programming through social media efforts. Social media is a powerful tool for disseminating information quickly to a large audience. Entities responsible for parks and recreation should leverage the power of social media to increase awareness of programming efforts.

Access

Access to recreational facilities provides individuals of all ages and abilities opportunities for physical activity, social connections, and enjoyment. Lack of access to recreational facilities can hinder overall quality of life. It is important to recognize access for everyone as a crucial component of a parks and recreation system.

The following is a list of actions to improve access:

1. Increase the number and quality of pedestrian and cycling paths to provide alternative modes of transportation.
2. Implement universal design principles to ensure that facilities are accessible to people of all abilities.
3. Collaborate with community organizations and stakeholders to identify and address barriers to access and gaps in the level of service.
4. Develop and manage facilities that are affordable and offer a range of activities and programs that cater to diverse interests, age groups, and abilities.
5. Support programs that provide information about outdoor activities for children and teenagers including programs such as “Ticket To Ride”, a National Park Service program that makes efforts to improve transportation to parks for children.



Youth Kayaking on a Lake

Advocacy

Advocacy seeks to raise awareness and generate public support to influence decision makers to prioritize parks and recreation. This in turn will enhance the value and accessibility of parks and recreation to a wider audience. Advocating for parks and recreation ensures that resources are protected, maintained, and enhanced for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

1. Establish relationships with local community organizations, schools, and advocacy groups to leverage partnerships.
2. Facilitate open dialogue with elected officials and policymakers to educate them on the importance of recreation facilities. Advocate for increased funding and support for the development and maintenance of recreation facilities.
3. Mobilize community support with campaigns to raise awareness and generate advocacy for improved recreation facilities. Engage community members through public meetings, petitions, social media campaigns, and letter-writing campaigns.
4. Provide education and resources to community members about the benefits of recreation facilities and how to advocate for improved access. Empower community members to become advocates by providing them with the tools and knowledge.
5. Ensure efforts are made to connect will all segments of the population, including older communities and disadvantaged communities.
6. Promote bike and pedestrian infrastructure to increase access to parks facilities. Communities should target grant funding for multimodal infrastructure and include multimodal components in the development of larger traffic improvement plans.

Wetlands

Wetlands play a vital role in ecosystem health and offer an abundance of recreational opportunities. Wetlands are covered in detail in *Chapter 7 – Assessment and Protection of Wetlands*.

The following is a list of actions related to wetlands:

1. Collaboration with regional partners – Wetland reserve program through Ducks Unlimited
2. Promote water quality standards for streams and wetlands.
3. Increase opportunities to expand the restoration of endangered habitats and wetlands.
4. Enforce wetland mitigation policy – engaging the state and federal regulation agencies on how permitting impacts wetlands.
5. Evaluate programs that restore and preserve wetlands.
6. Promote agricultural programs that incentivize wetland protection in the region.
7. Educate – increasing awareness of the importance of wetlands and how climate and pollution impact wetlands.



Live Oaks on a Gravel Road

ACTION PLAN MATRIX

RECREATION SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Category	Action
Recreation Supply and Demand	<p>Encourage participation in outdoor recreation through programs and events that promote various types of activities</p> <p>Conduct further outreach to determine which activities Mississippi residents seek outside of the state. Plan and implement those opportunities and facilities within the state to retain residents and encourage tourism.</p>

ISSUES AFFECTING RECREATION

Category	Action
Maintenance	<p>Develop parks and recreation facility maintenance standards</p> <p>Account for facility maintenance in annual expense budgets for each</p> <p>Encourage volunteerism</p>
Programming	<p>Conduct comprehensive assessments of programming</p> <p>Develop a strategic plan for programming</p> <p>Invest in staff training and development to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of programming efforts</p> <p>Host events that are tailored to the interests of local residents</p> <p>Promote park programming through social media efforts</p>
Access	<p>Increase the number and quality of pedestrian and cycling paths to provide alternative modes of transportation</p> <p>Implement universal design principles to ensure that facilities are accessible to people of all abilities</p> <p>Collaborate with community organizations and stakeholders to identify and address barriers to access and gaps in level of service</p> <p>Develop and manage facilities that are affordable and offer a range of activities and programs that cater to diverse interests, age groups, and abilities</p> <p>Support programs that provide information about outdoor activities for children and teenagers</p>
Funding	<p>Explore a range of funding mechanisms for parks improvements, operations, and maintenance including:</p> <p><i>Development agreements</i></p> <p><i>Bonds</i></p> <p><i>Taxes</i></p> <p><i>Shared use</i></p> <p><i>Public private partnerships</i></p> <p><i>User Fees</i></p> <p><i>Grants</i></p>

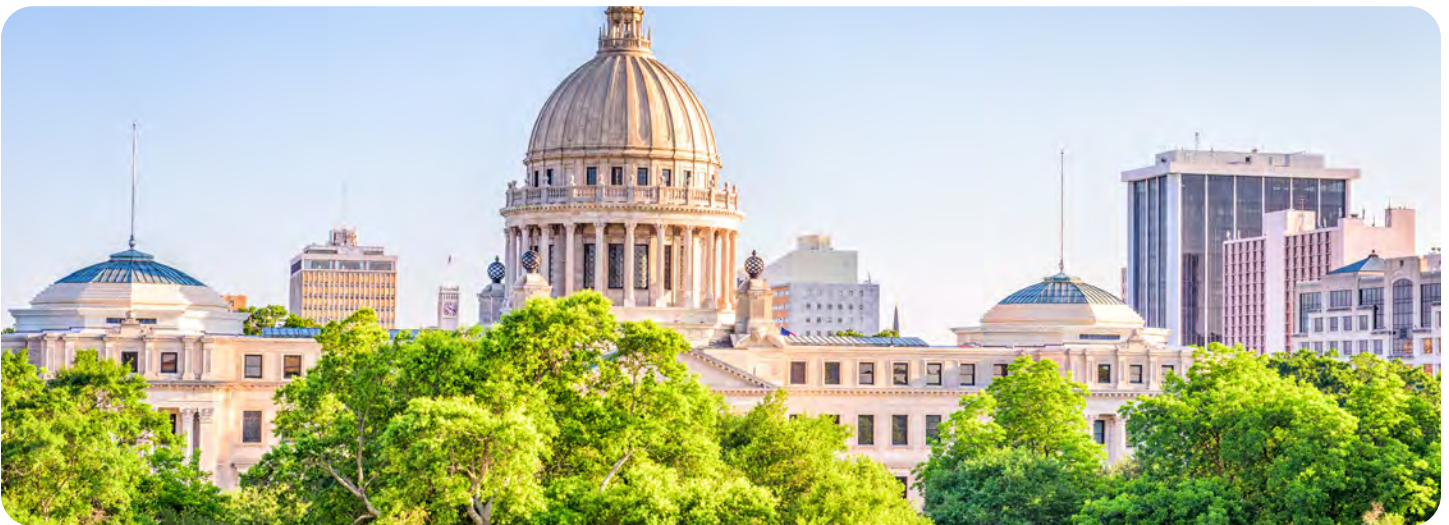
ISSUES AFFECTING RECREATION

Category	Action
Advocacy	<p>Educate decision makers and elected officials on the wide variety of public grants. Attend grant workshops and consult professionals to understand grant requirements and funding cycles</p> <p>Establish relationships with local community organizations, schools, and advocacy groups to leverage partnerships</p> <p>Facilitate open dialogue with elected officials and policymakers to educate them on the importance of recreation facilities</p> <p>Mobilize community support with campaigns to raise awareness and generate advocacy for improved recreation facilities</p> <p>Provide education and resources to community members about the benefits of recreation facilities and how to advocate for improved</p> <p>Ensure efforts are made to connect will all segments of the population, including older communities and disadvantaged communities</p> <p>Promote bike and pedestrian infrastructure to increase access to parks facilities</p>

WETLANDS

Category	Action
Wetlands	<p>Collaboration with regional partners – Wetland reserve program through Ducks Unlimited</p> <p>Promote water quality standards for streams and wetlands</p> <p>Increase opportunities to expand the restoration of endangered habitat and wetlands</p> <p>Evaluate programs that restore and preserve wetlands</p> <p>Encourage participation in outdoor recreation through programs and events that promote various types of activities</p> <p>Educate – increasing awareness of the importance of wetlands and how climate and pollution impact wetlands</p>

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State Capitol, Jackson, Mississippi

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9

LWCF STATE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

LWCF STATE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

LWCF OPEN PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS⁸⁹

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) awards Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies through its Outdoor Recreation Grants (ORG) Division. MDWFP works closely with the National Park Service (NPS), which administers LWCF funds to states, to identify and prioritize projects that align with LWCF goals. Project applications are submitted through the State's Open Project Selection Process (OPSP). More information and updates about the Mississippi's LWCF program can be found at MDWFP Outdoor Recreation Grants website.

The purpose of the LWCF OPSP is to allocate funding and resources to eligible projects that align with the goals and objectives of the LWCF program. This process allows for a fair and transparent evaluation of project proposals, ensuring that the most deserving projects receive financial support. By implementing an open project selection process, the LWCF aims to encourage competition and innovation among project applicants, as well as promote public participation and engagement in the decision-making process. Through the open project selection process, the LWCF ensures that funding is allocated to projects that align with its mission of protecting and enhancing our nation's natural resources for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

The LWCF State Assistance Program Manual sets the following goals for each State's Open Project Selection Process:

- *Provide for public knowledge of and participation in the formulation and application of the project selection process used by the State in allocating LWCF assistance;*
- *Ensure all potential state and local applicants are aware of the availability of and process for obtaining LWCF assistance, and provided opportunities for all eligible agencies to submit project application and have them considered on an equitable basis;*
- *Provide a measurable link, through published selection criteria, to the specific outdoor recreation needs and priorities identified in SCORP policies and implementation programs; and*

- *Assure the distribution of LWCF assistance is accomplished in a non-discriminatory manner, especially with regards to minority, elderly, disabled, and other underserved populations and ensure a fair and equitable evaluation of all applications for LWCF assistance.*
- *Support locally led and locally designed conservation efforts*
- *Create more parks in underserved communities*
- *Honor Tribal sovereignty and support the priorities of Federally-Recognized Tribes*

APPLICATION PROCESS

LWCF Grants in Mississippi are typically awarded on a two-year cycle depending on federal funds and state priorities. Announcements of Funding Opportunities are posted on the MDWFP Outdoor Recreational Grant web page and notifications of the funding opportunity are distributed to mayor offices, county board of supervisor's office, Mississippi Choctaw Office, eligible state agencies, state Planning and Development Districts, and other planners and consultants in the State. When a funding opportunity is open, applications are available for download at the same website as the announcement. A program manual is also available for download providing technical information related to the application and program. Application due dates are posted with the funding opportunity announcement and the application.



Magnolia in Bloom

⁸⁹ LWCF. Federal Financial Assistance Manual - Volume 72

When State funds are available to match federal funding, a funding round specific to state projects may be opened as a separate funding opportunity. Funding opportunities will be made to minimize state projects such as State Parks from competing against local units of government.

At the close of the funding opportunity, applications are reviewed by the ORG staff and necessary on-site inspections are made. If deficiencies are noted in the application, the local sponsor will be contacted to provide the necessary information, or the application may be returned for correction. If requested information is not provided or corrections made in a timely manner, the application may not advance in the process. Applications are scored using a standardized priority-rating system and are ranked according to score. At this point, all applications are evaluated, and selections are made for projects to be recommended for funding approval. The list of applicants and the recommended projects are reviewed by the State Liaison Officer and the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks executive staff. Upon approval, the State application is prepared on behalf of the local sponsor and is submitted to the National Park Service for review. After a successful preliminary review by the NPS, the State is authorized to formally submit the application to the NPS. After approval by the NPS, the State will notify the applicants and prepare a project agreement to be executed between the State and the local sponsor.

After award of a LWCF Project, if unexpected costs impact the project, requests can be submitted to the Outdoor Recreation Grants Office for consideration of increased funding. Requests for an increase of funds will be dependent on the availability of unobligated LWCF funds. Requests to amend a LWCF Project Agreement for an increase in cost may be approved by the State without further Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) competition. The increase in cost will be limited to the approved project scope and will include the corresponding local and/or state and federal share. Requests will include a revised budget and narrative describing the cost increase and justification for the increase. An Amended Project Agreement must be approved by the National Parks Service.



Hot-air Balloon Festival in Canton, MS

PRIORITY RATING SYSTEM

The priority rating system was revised and updated in 2024, after review by the SCORP Task Force Committee. Comments received from these participants were evaluated and incorporated into the revised rating process where feasible. The priority rating system used in evaluating applications for each fiscal year is divided into two sections: local governments and state agencies.

Local Governments

- *Minimum requirements are evaluated from data on the application forms. The project applications description on the following page includes a list of regulations, assurances of matching funds, citizen participation procedures, compliance with the SCORP, dated boundary map, and environmental assessment.*
- *Measured criteria allow a variable number of points for:*
 - *Per capita income, with more points awarded for the proposed project being aimed at serving lower income communities;*
 - *Planning considerations, including local and regional plans and factors effecting project area;*
 - *Degree of citizen participation, allowing for additional credit*

- *Incentive criteria allow bonus points for meeting criteria such as obtaining engineering or consultant services, land donations, projects in low-income and underserved areas, and multiple use facilities.*

State Agencies

- *Needs – containing evidence of statewide need in the SCORP, individual agency plans, and state legislation mandating specific development.*
- *Special consideration – including acquisition of land to expand project boundaries, land acquisition to preserve natural or endangered areas, acquisition of wetlands, emergency acquisition, and the public, including minority populations, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and other underserved populations.*

Outreach Program

The ORG staff has developed an active program to encourage participation in the LWCF grant program. An active mailing list of city and county government is maintained by the ORG. A Notice of Open Funding Opportunity is distributed to every mayor, president of the boards of supervisors, eligible state agency directors, and all planning and development districts, as well as anyone who requests a copy.

LWCF PROJECT APPLICATION

Minimum Assurances and Requirements

Before proceeding with the application, the applicant must be able to demonstrate compliance with the following:

- *Applicant Requirements - The applicant must be a legally constituted governmental entity responsible for administering local recreation program, such as cities/mayors, counties/presidents of the boards of supervisors, tribal governments/chiefs, and state agency directors.*
- *Application: The applicant must submit the completed application with all supplemental documentation as required.*
- *LWCF Boundary Map: The applicant must provide a signed LWCF Boundary Map as described in program documents delineating the property to be protected by the LWCF program*
- *Site Plan: A site plan is required depicting the proposed development and existing conditions.*

- *Budget: An itemized cost estimate is required showing LWCF (federal) share and Local (non-federal) share.*
- *Environmental Assessment - The applicant will be required to submit environmental assessment documentation with the application. An environmental assessment packet is provided with the application packet.*
- *106 Review: correspondence from the State Historic Preservation Office is required indicating compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.*
- *Public Participation – The LWCF program requires public participation in the formulation of the project. The applicant must ensure citizen participation in the formulation of the proposed project or have demonstrated significant and representative input into seeking recreation priorities. In the ranking criteria, additional credit is given if the potential sponsor has invited and received broad citizen input on determining priority recreation needs (sites and facilities). A detailed description of the procedure used to obtain local citizen input along with a summary of the results obtained must be submitted in writing. The applicant must ensure citizen participation in the formulation of the proposed project or have demonstrated significant and representative input into seeking recreational priorities.*
- *Local Funding: Since LWCF assistance is a reimbursable grant, the applicant must demonstrate and certify its financial ability to fully fund and complete the project, paying all vendors, and providing copies of invoices, and proof of payments prior to receiving reimbursement of the federal share.*



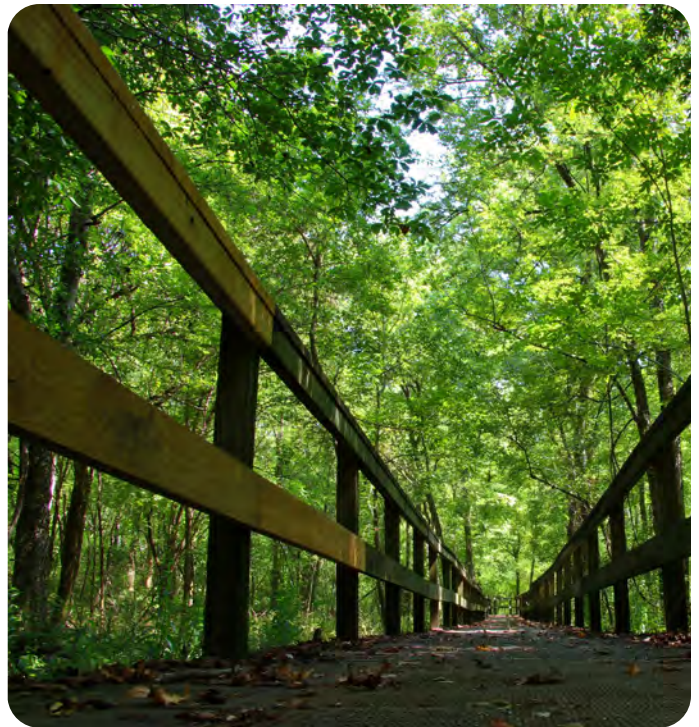
Mississippi Postage Stamp

- *Recreation Inventory* - The applicant must document that a need for the outdoor recreation grant exists. Need, as perceived by a small group of individuals, will not be considered sufficient documentation to meet this requirement. Applicant must identify local or regional recreational plan(s), if available.
- *SCORP Goals*: The applicant must clearly indicate that the proposed project is consistent with and promotes the goals of Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.
- *Checklist* - A checklist of the components of the application will be submitted along with the application. The checklist will be signed and dated by the applicant.
- *Sponsor's LWCF Compliance Eligibility*: For sponsors that have received prior LWCF assistance, the sponsor must be in compliance with LWCF Post Completion and Stewardship responsibilities to operate and maintain by acceptable standards the properties acquired or developed with LWCF assistance for public outdoor recreation use.

Additional Assurances

Submission of the application is evidence that the applicant has read and understands all applicable federal and state rules, regulations, and assurances pertaining to the LWCF supported projects. These requirements have either been detailed or incorporated by reference in this application document. Each of the following must be complied, with an agreement signed by the applicant to that effect before a project can be selected for funding.

- *The applicant must sign assurances that compliance with all federal and state laws and Outdoor Recreation Grants guidelines will be guaranteed, i.e. PL 88-352 Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Department of Interior Regulations (43-CFR 17), and all other assurances assigned to applicable federal and state law.*
- *Assurance of Limitation of Use* - To be recorded with the Deed after project award and prior to reimbursement. A copy of the recorded Limitation of Use must be submitted with project closeout documents

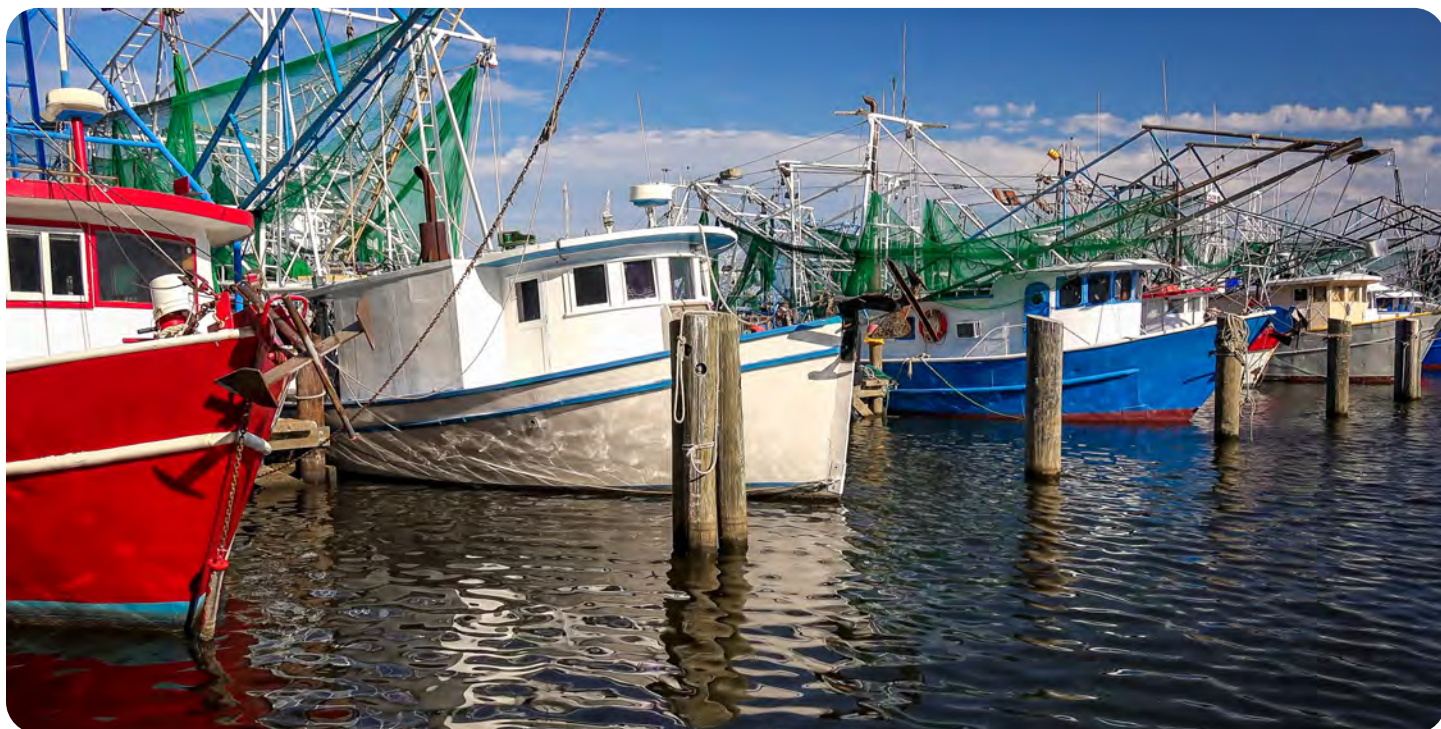


Boardwalk on the Natchez Trace Scenic Trail

The following language is to be incorporated into the deed and recorded in the city, town, or county court house of the project area after award and completion of the project:

The property identified below has been acquired or developed with federal assistance provided by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior in accordance with the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 45601-5 et seq. (170 ed.). Pursuant to a requirement of that law, this property may not be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses (whether by transfer, sale, or in any other manner) without the express written approval of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks and the Secretary of the Department of the Interior. By law, the Secretary shall approve such conversion only if it is in accord with the then existing Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and only upon such condition as the substitution of other recreation properties are of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location.

- *Audit Requirements: Pursuant to federal law, any entity that expends \$750,000 or more of combined federal funds in its fiscal year is required to have a Single Audit performed in accordance with OMB Circular A-133 and your grant agreement. Federal financial assistance includes funds received from all federal resources, not just funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (CFDA# 15.916) is subject to the Single Audit Act of 1984, P. L. 98-502, and the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996, P.L. 104-156. This Act set forth standards for obtain consistency and uniformity among Federal, State, and local governments, and non-profit organizations which are expending Federal awards (Grants).*
- *Accounting Requirements: The Sub-recipient must maintain an accounting system that accurately reflects fiscal transactions, with the necessary controls and safeguards. The system must provide accounting data so that the total cost of each individual Grant Project can be readily determined. Grantees must keep accurate records of all LWCF Project expenditures including, but not limited to, receipts, progress payments, invoices, and timecards. These records must be retained for a period of three years after final payment is made by the State.*
- *Each grant recipient agrees that project initiation will commence immediately upon notification by the National Park Service that the grant has been approved. This includes an immediate land appraisal (if applicable), design, construction documentation, bid advertisements, contract acceptance procedures and facility construction. Inability to adhere to this assurance can result in project withdrawal.*
- *Each grant recipient will operate and maintain the proposed development in a manner that is aesthetically pleasing, sanitary, safe, and open for public use. The recipient will also maintain an attractive LWCF site sign at all times and adhere to all guidelines included in the National Park Service regulations.*
- *Each grant recipient will agree to adhere to new federal regulations regarding lobbying, contractor debarment, federal grant notification procedures, and other federal guidelines deemed essential.*



Shrimp Boats in Biloxi



Bike Route on the Natchez Trace Parkway

- *Property acquired or developed with assistance from the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (under Section 6F3 of the LWCF Act), shall be retained and used for “public outdoor recreation” in perpetuity. In the event that this property is converted to other than outdoor recreation use, knowingly or unknowingly, by the project sponsor, it will constitute a conversion. In order to rectify such a conversion, the project sponsor must first notify the State Liaison Officer for assistance. Then a federal land appraisal will need to be conducted to determine the “fair market value” of the loss, and equal value replacement property must be acquired and developed at the Sponsors expense. The National Park Service will have final approval of this process. Limitation of use must become a part of the warranty deed and be recorded in the county courthouse.*

Underserved Populations

The open project selection process recognizes the need for proposed projects, to the greatest extent practicable, to be accessible to all segments of the general public including minority populations, seniors, and those with physical limitations. This information enables the ORG staff to analyze the need for the proposed site, as well as determine its accessibility to all segments of the general public.

Technical Assistance

Assistance is available to potential sponsors needing help to complete the application process. If a potential sponsor fails to comply with minimum requirements, technical assistance will be available to assure that they meet these requirements for the next funding cycle. Considerable effort is made to make personal contact with potential sponsors through meetings, pre-award inspections, and telephone communication. By providing help early in the grant process, ORG is able to develop high-quality projects while reducing later grant problems.

CONCLUSION

Mississippi has developed an open project selection process that emphasizes public involvement in the initial development of a project scope by the project sponsor. This process helps to ensure that a project evolves throughout the process with citizen input.

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10 REFERENCES

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LIST OF IMAGES

Cover Page

(Top Left) Skate Park in Crystal Springs
(Top Right) Theodore Mars WMA
(Bottom Left) Kosciusko Rabbit Hunt
(Middle) Kayak Fishing
(Bottom Right) Accessible Playground

Executive Summary

John W. Kyle State Park

Section 1

Birdwatching Outdoors
Road Cycling

Section 2

Mississippi River between Mississippi and
Arkansas
Cotton Blossom
Rice Fields in the Mississippi Delta
Black Angus Cattle in a Pasture

Section 3

Family Fishing
Hunting in a Wetland
Migrating Birds
Parent Teaching Environmental Stewardship
Family Volunteering Together to Plant Trees
Fire on the Forty
Youth Volunteering
Lake Hazel Pavilion
Shadow Lake Shoreline
Disc Golf Tee Marker
Longleaf Trace Bike Couple
Trailside Shelters and Small Park along
Tanglefoot Trail
Walking along Longleaf Trace
Students Learning to Kayak at Roosevelt State
Park
Meridian Wins Healthy Hometown Award
Family Participating in Volunteer Activity
Universally Accessible Trail
Training Session at a Range
Hunter Behind Bird Blinds
Wild Turkey
Family Mountain Biking

Bear Creek Mound, Milepost 308.8
Agritourism Farm Visit
Mississippi Blues Highway

Section 5

George P Cossar Natural Area
RV Camping in a Forest
Hunting in Elevated Blind
Tombigbee State Park Lake
Lake Lowndes
Paul B Johnson State Park Lake
Mile Marker at Tanglefoot Trail
Skate Park in Crystal Springs
Splash Pad at Theron Nichols Park

Section 6

Tanglefoot Trail - Trailside Park at Pontotoc
Playground and Restroom
Farmer's Market
Accessible Playground
Child Using Slide at Playground
Accessible Lake Ramp

Section 7

Flooded Swamp
Wetland in Lincoln County, MS
Waterfowl on the Mississippi Flyway
Marsh in Ocean Springs, MS

Section 8

Shared Walkway
Youth Kayaking on a Lake
Live Oaks on a Gravel Road
State Capitol, Jackson, Mississippi

Section 9

Magnolia in Bloom
Hot-air Balloon Festival in Canton, MS
Mississippi Postage Stamp
Boardwalk on the Natchez Trace Scenic Trail
Shrimp Boats in Biloxi
Bike Route on the Natchez Trace Parkway

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Section 2

Figures

Map of Mississippi Ecoregions	9
Map of Mississippi Congressional Districts	12
Map of Mississippi Planning and Development Districts	13

Section 3

Tables

Vegetative and Wildlife Species Table	17
RTP Trails in Mississippi	22
Tourism Expenditure by Visitors	27
Tourism Regions	27
Scenic Byways	28
Historic and Tourism Trails	28

Section 4

Figures

Public Meeting Flyer	32
Website Page	33
Number of Residents Who Visited Facilities by Type	37
Reasons for Participating in Park Activities	38
Unmet Recreational Needs	38
Recreational Priorities for Residents	39
Recreational Activities that Need New or Improved Facilities	40
Time Willing to Travel by Walking	41
Time Willing to Travel by Biking	41
Time Willing to Travel by Driving	41
Desired Parks at City Level	42
Expected Parks at Regional Level	43
Expected Parks at State Level	44
Perceived Safety of Public Recreation Facilities	45
Perceived Safety of Public Recreation Facilities Type	45
MDWFP Subscription Preference	45
Recreational Marketing Opportunities	45

7

Tables

Total Website Visits	33
Survey Completed by Week	33
Provider Organizations	34
Amount of Facilities	34
Provider Survey Greatest Unmet Needs	35
Requests for Facility by Type	36
Top Twenty Activities Based on Recreational Priorities for Residents	38
Top Twenty Activities Based on Recreational Activities that Need New or Improved Facilities	41

15

Section 5

Figures

Mississippi State Parks and Visitation	50
--	----

Tables

State Park Visitation Rank	50
State Park Trails	51
National Forest Trails	51
National Forests	52
National Park Service Units	52
State Fishing Lakes	52
National Natural Landmarks	52
Wildlife Management Areas	53
State Park Lakes	54
Active and Passive Parks Summary	55
Rivers and Creeks	55
Active and Passive Facilities by County	56-58
Active Facilities by Planning and Development District	60
Passive Facilities by Planning and Development District	60

Section 7

Tables

Wetland Laws and Regulations	73
------------------------------	----

Section 8

Tables

Action Plan Matrix	81-82
--------------------	-------

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ACS	American Community Survey
AORE	Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education
ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle
APA	American Planning Association
BMP	Best Management Practice
DBA	Dana Brown and Associates
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
KH or KHA	Kimley-Horn and Associates
GIS	Geographic Information System
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
MDEQ	Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
MDOT	Mississippi Department of Transportation
MDWFP	Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks
NPS	National Park Service
NRPA	National Recreation and Park Association
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
OPSP	Open Project Selection Process
ORG	Outdoor Recreation Grant
PCI	Physically Challenged or Impaired
PDD	Planning and Development District
RTC	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
RTP	Recreational Trails Program
RV	Recreational Vehicle
<i>SCORP</i>	<i>Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan</i>
TFC	Task Force Committee
WMA	Wildlife Management Area

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MS SCORP APPENDICES A-E

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Appendices

Appendix A Provider Survey

Appendix B Resident Survey

Appendix C Outreach

Outreach Schedule	A36
Magazine Advertisements	A37
Magazine Advertisement #1	A37
Magazine Advertisement #2	A37
Public Meeting Advertisements	A38
Public Meeting Advertisement #1	A38
Public Meeting Advertisement #2	A39
Public Meeting Advertisement #3	A40
Public Meeting Advertisement #4	A41
Public Meeting Advertisement #5	A42
Public Meeting Flyers	A43
Public Meeting Flyer #1	A43
Public Meeting Flyer #2	A44
Public Meeting Flyer #3	A45
Public Meeting Flyer #4	A46
Public Meeting Flyer #5	A47
Public Meeting Flyer #6	A48
Public Meeting Flyer #7	A49
Social Media Advertisement Captions	A50
Survey Advertisements	A51
Survey Advertisement #1	A51
Survey Advertisement #2	A52
Survey Advertisement #3	A53
Survey Advertisement #4	A54
Survey Advertisement #5	A55
Outreach Group Invitation Letter Example	A56
Survey Report	A57

Appendix D Additional Charts and Tables

Mississippi Recreation Facilities Type (2014 SCORP)	A87
Mississippi Active and Passive Recreation Facilities (2014 SCORP)	A88

Appendix E OPSP Measured and Incentive Criteria

Description of Scoring Criteria	A92
Measured Criteria	A93
Incentive Criteria	A95

A91

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Appendix A

PROVIDER SURVEY

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Mississippi Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Provider Survey

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks is currently updating the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). As a provider, we need your assistance in determining the number of new and/or abandoned facilities in the state in order to update the inventory list. Your help is greatly appreciated.

**Thank you,
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks**

* 1. Please provide the name of your agency, department, or organization.

* 2. Which type of organization do you represent?

- City
- College/University
- County
- School
- Local Park Agency
- State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Nonprofit
- Other (please specify)

* 3. Please provide your contact information.

Name	<input type="text"/>
Organization	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
Address 2	<input type="text"/>
City/Town	<input type="text"/>
State/Province	<input type="text"/>
ZIP/Postal Code	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>

* 4. Since 2019, has your organization opened any new recreational facilities in your area?

	Yes	No
Baseball / Softball Fields	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If yes, how many?	<input type="text"/>	
Basketball Courts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If yes, how many?	<input type="text"/>	
Boating / Canoeing Facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If yes, how many?	<input type="text"/>	
Campsites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If yes, how many?	<input type="text"/>	
Disc Golf Courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If yes, how many?	<input type="text"/>	
Football Fields	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If yes, how many?	<input type="text"/>	
Golf Courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If yes, how many?	<input type="text"/>	

Horseback Riding
Trails

If yes, how many?

Off-Road Trails

If yes, how many?

Outdoor Concert
Facilities

If yes, how many?

Picnic
Areas/Pavilions

If yes, how many?

Playgrounds

If yes, how many?

Soccer Fields

If yes, how many?

Skate Parks

If yes, how many?

Splash Pads

If yes, how many?

Swimming Pools

If yes, how many?

Target Shooting
Ranges

If yes, how many?

Tennis Courts

If yes, how many?

Paved Trails

If yes, how many?

Unpaved Trails

If yes, how many?

5. Since 2019, has your agency added any other types of new recreation facilities in your area?

Please specify the type of facility

How many?

* 6. Since 2019, has your organization abandoned / closed any recreational facilities in your area?

Yes

No

Baseball, Softball Fields

If yes, how many?

Basketball Courts

If yes, how many?

Boating / Canoeing Areas

If yes, how many?

Campsites

If yes, how many?

Disc Golf Courses

If yes, how many?

Football Fields

If yes, how many?

Golf Courses

If yes, how many?

Horseback Riding Trails

If yes, how many?

Off-Road Trails

If yes, how many?

Outdoor Concert Facilities

If yes, how many?

Picnic Areas/Pavilions

If yes, how many?

Playgrounds

If yes, how many?

Soccer Fields

If yes, how many?

Skate Parks

If yes, how many?

Splash Pads

If yes, how many?

Swimming Pools

If yes, how many?

Target Shooting Ranges

If yes, how many?

Tennis Courts

If yes, how many?

Paved Trails

If yes, how many?

Unpaved Trails

If yes, how many?

7. Since 2019, has your agency abandoned / closed other recreation facilities in your area?

Please specify the type
of facility

How many?

* 8. In order to have an accurate count, please list the TOTAL amount of the items below (i.e. number of fields, courts, etc.)

Baseball / Softball Fields	<input type="text"/>
Basketball Courts	<input type="text"/>
Boating / Canoeing Areas	<input type="text"/>
Campsites	<input type="text"/>
Disc Golf Courses	<input type="text"/>
Football Fields	<input type="text"/>
Golf Courses	<input type="text"/>
Horseback Riding Trails	<input type="text"/>
Off-Road (ORV) Trails	<input type="text"/>
Outdoor Concert Facilities	<input type="text"/>
Picnic Areas/Pavilions	<input type="text"/>
Playgrounds	<input type="text"/>
Soccer Fields	<input type="text"/>
Skate Parks	<input type="text"/>
Splash Pads	<input type="text"/>
Swimming Pools	<input type="text"/>
Target Shooting Ranges	<input type="text"/>
Tennis Courts	<input type="text"/>
Paved Trails / Greenways	<input type="text"/>
Unpaved Trails	<input type="text"/>

* 9. In addition, does your organization provide any of the following facilities? If so, please list the amount (i.e. number of fields, courts, etc.)

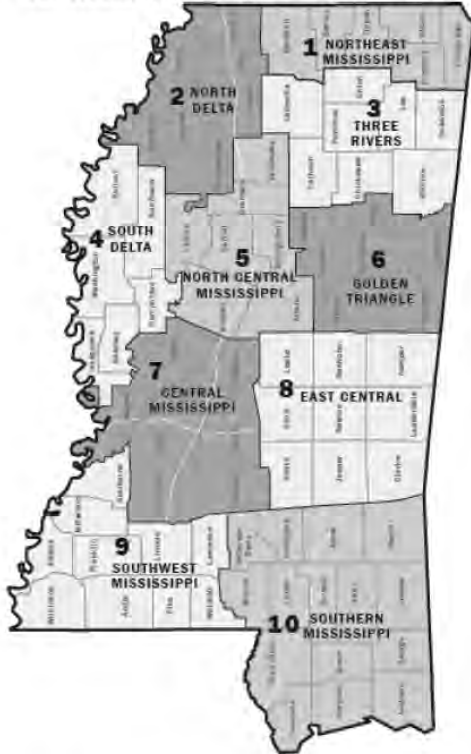
Archery Ranges	<input type="text"/>
BMX Tracks	<input type="text"/>
Community Gardens	<input type="text"/>
Conference Centers / Rental Facilities	<input type="text"/>
Dog Parks	<input type="text"/>
Fitness Centers / Stations	<input type="text"/>
Gardens / Arboreta	<input type="text"/>
Golf Driving Ranges	<input type="text"/>
Skating Rinks	<input type="text"/>
Lake / River Access Sites	<input type="text"/>
Libraries	<input type="text"/>
Marinas	<input type="text"/>
Miniature Golf Courses	<input type="text"/>
Mountain Biking Trails	<input type="text"/>
Museums / Historic Sites	<input type="text"/>
Nature Centers	<input type="text"/>
Ocean / Beach Access	<input type="text"/>
Pickle Ball Courts	<input type="text"/>
Rock Climbing Facilities	<input type="text"/>
Sports Stadiums/Arenas	<input type="text"/>
Theaters / Performing Arts Center	<input type="text"/>
Volleyball Courts	<input type="text"/>

* 10. Rank these facilities in order of MOST REQUESTED (1) to LEAST REQUESTED

- Baseball / Softball Fields
- Biking Trails
- Boating & Fishing Facilities
- Campsites
- Canoeing, Kayaking, Rafting, and Tubing Facilities
- Events, Festivals, Concerts, etc.
- Equestrian / Horse Facilities
- Football Fields
- Health / Fitness Facilities
- Nature Centers
- Off-Road (OHV) Trails
- Picnic Areas/Pavilions
- Playgrounds
- Public Hunting Areas
- Skate Parks
- Soccer Fields
- Splash Pads
- Swimming Pools
- Tennis Courts / Pickleball Courts
- Trails (Hiking / Biking / Jogging)

* 11. What are the greatest recreational needs in your area that are not currently provided?

* 12. Which region represents the region where your facility is located?



- 1. Northeast Mississippi
- 2. North Delta
- 3. Three Rivers
- 4. South Delta
- 5. North Central Mississippi
- 6. Golden Triangle
- 7. Central Mississippi
- 8. East Central
- 9. Southwest Mississippi
- 10. Southern Mississippi

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Appendix B

RESIDENT SURVEY

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Mississippi Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

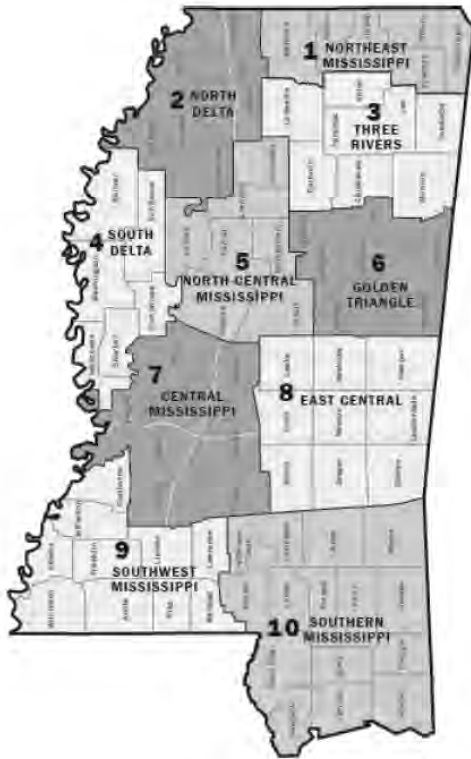
1. Resident Survey

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks is currently updating the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). This survey will help us understand what recreational activities are working or lacking in our state.

As a resident of Mississippi, we need your input!

This survey takes approximately 7 to 10 minutes to complete. Your help is greatly appreciated!

* 1. Which region is your household located in?



- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 - Northeast Mississippi | <input type="radio"/> 6 - Golden Triangle |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 - North Delta | <input type="radio"/> 7 - Central Mississippi |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 - Three Rivers | <input type="radio"/> 8 - East Central |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 - South Delta | <input type="radio"/> 9 - Southwest Mississippi |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 - North Central Mississippi | <input type="radio"/> 10 - Southern Mississippi |

* 2. On average, how often do you or your family visit a park?

- Daily
- A few times a week
- Once a week
- Every other week
- Once a month
- Every few months
- Quarterly
- A few times a year
- None of the above

* 3. On average, what is the amount of time you or your family spend per park visit?

- 1-29 minutes
- 30-59 minutes
- 1 - 2 hours
- 3 - 5 hours
- 6+ hours

* 4. Which of the following types of recreational facilities do you visit most often? (select all that apply)

- City Parks
- County Parks
- State Parks
- National Parks
- US Forest Service Facilities
- Water District Facilities
- Wildlife Management Areas
- Private Recreational Facilities
- Other (please specify)

* 5. Which recreational activities are a priority for you and your family? Select all that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Training / Showing | <input type="checkbox"/> Kite Flying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archery | <input type="checkbox"/> Lacrosse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Backpacking | <input type="checkbox"/> Miniature Golf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball / Softball | <input type="checkbox"/> Nature Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball | <input type="checkbox"/> Off-Road Vehicle, ATV, Dirt Bike Riding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycling | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Concerts, Cultural Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird Watching | <input type="checkbox"/> Pickleball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boating / Sailing | <input type="checkbox"/> Picnicking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camping | <input type="checkbox"/> Playgrounds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing, Kayaking, Rafting, Tubing | <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Climbing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> Rope Courses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive Shooting | <input type="checkbox"/> Scuba / Snorkeling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disc Golf | <input type="checkbox"/> Shuffleboard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Skating / Skateboarding / Rollerblading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events, Festivals, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing (on a boat) | <input type="checkbox"/> Splash Parks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing (on a bank/pier) | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football | <input type="checkbox"/> Target Shooting / Skeet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frisbee | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf (9/18 Hole Course) | <input type="checkbox"/> Visit Beaches in Mississippi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf (Driving Range) | <input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health / Fitness Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Parks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking and Trails | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Skiing, Jet Skiing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horseback Riding | <input type="checkbox"/> Wind Surfing, Paddle Boarding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting, Bow Hunting | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jog, Run, Walk for Exercise | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

* 6. Which activities need new or improved facilities to meet you and/or your family's needs?

Select all that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Training / Showing | <input type="checkbox"/> Kite Flying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archery | <input type="checkbox"/> Lacrosse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Backpacking | <input type="checkbox"/> Miniature Golf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball / Softball | <input type="checkbox"/> Nature Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball | <input type="checkbox"/> Off-Road Vehicle, ATV, Dirt Bike Riding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycling | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Concerts, Cultural Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird Watching | <input type="checkbox"/> Pickleball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boating / Sailing | <input type="checkbox"/> Picnicking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camping | <input type="checkbox"/> Playgrounds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing, Kayaking, Rafting, Tubing | <input type="checkbox"/> Restroom Facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Climbing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive Shooting | <input type="checkbox"/> Rope Courses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disc Golf | <input type="checkbox"/> Scuba / Snorkeling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Field Trails | <input type="checkbox"/> Shuffleboard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Skating / Skateboarding / Rollerblading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events, Festivals, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer / Lacrosse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing (on a boat) | <input type="checkbox"/> Splash Pads |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing (on a bank/pier) | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football | <input type="checkbox"/> Target Shooting / Skeet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frisbee | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf (9/18 Hole Course) | <input type="checkbox"/> Visit Beaches in Mississippi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf (Driving Range) | <input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health / Fitness Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Parks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking and Trails | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Skiing, Jet Skiing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horseback Riding | <input type="checkbox"/> Wind Surfacing, Paddle Boarding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting, Bow Hunting | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jog, Run, Walk for Exercise | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

* 7. What are the reasons you and/or your family participate in activities? Select all that apply.

- For health/exercise
- To connect with nature/outdoors
- For fun with family/friends
- For practice/organized activities
- Other (please specify)

* 8. Do you feel that your recreational needs are being met?

- Yes
- No

9. If you answered "NO" to the question above, please tell us why you feel that your recreational needs aren't being met.

- Recreational activities/facilities aren't available
- Recreational facility is in poor condition
- Recreational activities/facilities are too far away
- Hours of operation are restrictive
- Fees are too high
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of personal time
- Other (please specify)

* 10. Do you travel outside of Mississippi to use other parks or recreational facilities? If so, where?

- Yes
- No

11. If you answered yes to the above question, where have you traveled?

* 12. How long would you be willing to walk to a park if trails and/or sidewalks were available for your commute to the park? Select all that apply.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> 20 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> 30 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 30 minutes |

* 13. How long would you be willing to bike to a park if trails and/or bike lanes were available for your commute to the park? Select all that apply.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> 20 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> 30 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 30 minutes |

* 14. How long would you be willing to drive to a community park? Select all that apply.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> 45 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 hour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 1 hour |

* 15. Do you and your family feel safe while using public recreational facilities?

- Yes
 No

16. If you answered "NO" to the question above, please state why the facilities feel unsafe.

- Inadequate patrols/security
 Inadequate lighting
 Poor condition of facilities
 Other (please specify)

* 17. Select up to **five** items that you or your family would want to be provided at a community or city park.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amphitheater | <input type="checkbox"/> Lake or Stream |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boating, Skiing, Jet Ski | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Areas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession Area | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet Area (Dog Park) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Court Sports (Basketball, Pickleball, Tennis, Volleyball, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pavilion/Picnic Tables |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diamond Sports (Baseball/Softball) | <input type="checkbox"/> Playgrounds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disc Golf | <input type="checkbox"/> Skateboard, BMX area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise Equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Trails (Unpaved Hiking/Biking) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field Sports (Football, Lacrosse, Soccer, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking/Jogging Trail (Paved) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Play (Splash Pad, Swimming Pool, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

* 18. What types of outdoor areas or activities do you expect at a regional park? Select all that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amphitheater | <input type="checkbox"/> Lake or Stream |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boating, Skiing, Jet Ski | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Areas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camping, cabins | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet Area (Dog Park) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession Area | <input type="checkbox"/> Pavilion/Picnic Tables |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Court sports (Basketball, Pickleball, Tennis, Volleyball, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Playgrounds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diamond Sports (Baseball/Softball) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sand Beach Area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disc Golf | <input type="checkbox"/> Skateboard, BMX Area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equestrian Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Target Shooting/Archery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise Equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Trails (Unpaved Hiking/Biking) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field Sports (Football, Lacrosse, Soccer, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking/Jogging Trail (Paved) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Play (Splash Pad, Swimming Pool, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

* 19. What types of outdoor areas or activities do you expect at a state park? Select all that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amphitheater | <input type="checkbox"/> Lake or Stream |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boating, Skiing, Jet Ski | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Areas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camping/Cabins | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet Area (Dog Park) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concession Area | <input type="checkbox"/> Pavilion/Picnic Tables |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Court Sports (Basketball, Pickleball, Tennis, Volleyball, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Playgrounds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diamond Sports (Baseball/Softball) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sand Beach Area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disc Golf | <input type="checkbox"/> Skateboard, BMX Area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equestrian Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Target Shooting/Archery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise Equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Trails (Unpaved Hiking/Biking) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field Sports (Football, Lacrosse, Soccer) | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking/Jogging Trail (Paved) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Play (Splash Pad, Swimming Pool, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

* 20. Please indicate your age.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 14 and under | <input type="radio"/> 45-54 |
| <input type="radio"/> 15-18 | <input type="radio"/> 55-64 |
| <input type="radio"/> 19-24 | <input type="radio"/> 65-74 |
| <input type="radio"/> 25-34 | <input type="radio"/> 75+ |
| <input type="radio"/> 35-44 | |

* 21. Please indicate the age/s of others in your family or household who use park facilities. Select all that apply.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5-8 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9-14 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15-18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65-74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |

* 22. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian / Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic
- White / Caucasian
- Multiple ethnicity / Other (please specify)

- Prefer not to answer.

* 23. What is your approximate average household income?

- \$0-\$24,999
- \$25,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000-\$124,999
- \$125,000-\$149,999
- \$150,000-\$174,999
- \$175,000-\$199,999
- \$200,000 and up

* 24. How long have you lived in Mississippi?

- 0 - 5 years
- 6 - 10 years
- 11 - 20 years
- Over 20 years

* 25. How do you typically find out about recreational facilities and/or activities? Select all that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth | <input type="checkbox"/> Email newsletters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State, county, city office | <input type="checkbox"/> Websites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School or college | <input type="checkbox"/> Social media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood groups/associations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TV or radio | |

* 26. Would you be interested in receiving a newsletter via email to inform you and/or your family of upcoming recreational programs and/or special events?

	Yes	No
Monthly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quarterly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 27. If you would like to be kept updated about upcoming public hearings regarding the Mississippi Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, please provide your contact information below.

Name	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
Address 2	<input type="text"/>
City/Town	<input type="text"/>
State	<input type="text"/>
ZIP/Postal Code	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>

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Appendix C

OUTREACH

PROVIDER SURVEY

Open Periods:

August 28, 2023 to January 8, 2024

February 5, 2024 to February 15, 2024

Mass Emails:

October 9, 2023

February 2, 2024

Phone Calls:

February 6, 2024

February 7, 2024

February 27, 2024

RESIDENT SURVEY

Open Period:

August 28, 2023 to January 8, 2024

MDWFP Social Media Posts:

October 19, 2023

October 31, 2023

November 13, 2023

December 11, 2023

DBA Social Media Posts:

October 13, 2023

October 16, 2023

(Boost Period)

October 16, 2023 to November 30, 2023

Mass Emails:

(Outreach Group & MS Band of Choctaw Indians)

October 9, 2023

(MS Band of Choctaw Indians)

November 30, 2023

Phone Calls:

(MS Band of Choctaw Indians)

November 30, 2023

MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENT #1



STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

**HELP YOUR PARKS
WE NEED YOUR INPUT!**

WWW.MISSISSIPPISCORP.COM/SURVEY

FEDERAL GRANTS ARE AVAILABLE TO DEVELOP OUTDOOR RECREATION

THIS SURVEY WILL HELP
THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
UPDATE THE STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP)
TO RECEIVE FEDERAL FUNDS FOR PUBLIC PARKS ACROSS THE STATE

MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENT #2



STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

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PUBLIC MEETING ADVERTISEMENT #1



**PUBLIC MEETING
ON OUTDOOR RECREATION**

**NOVEMBER 01, 2023 @ 1PM
MDWFP JACKSON
OFFICE**



Graphic Credit: TeddyandMia

PUBLIC MEETING ADVERTISEMENT #2



**NOVEMBER 01, 2023 @ 6PM
ROOSEVELT STATE PARK**

**PUBLIC
MEETING**

**ON OUTDOOR
RECREATION**

Photo Credit: AI Gen



PUBLIC MEETING ON OUTDOOR RECREATION

**GEORGE P COSSAR STATE PARK
ON NOVEMBER 01, 2023
@ 6PM**



Photo Credit: Chris

PUBLIC MEETING ADVERTISEMENT #4



**NOVEMBER 01, 2023 @ 6PM
PAUL B JOHNSON STATE PARK**

**PUBLIC
MEETING**

**WE WANT TO HEAR
YOUR THOUGHTS ON OUTDOOR
RECREATION**

Photo Credit: Zack Frank

PUBLIC MEETING ON OUTDOOR RECREATION

SWING BY
TOMBIGBEE STATE PARK
ON NOVEMBER 02, 2023
@ 6PM



Photo Credit: Shawn10/Wirestock

PUBLIC MEETING FLYER #1

UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS

IMPROVING OUTDOOR RECREATION IN MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks (MDWFP) is actively assembling the 2025-2029 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The SCORP is critical for understanding Mississippi's current recreational assets and determining future recreational project needs. Listed below is information on upcoming public meetings regarding the SCORP. Please attend, participate, and help improve outdoor recreation in Mississippi!

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 01 @ 1:00 p.m.

*Mississippi Department of Fisheries, and Parks
Commission Room
1505 Eastover Dr.
Jackson, MS 39211
601-432-2400*

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 01 @ 6:00 p.m.

*George P Cossar State Park Meeting Room
165 County Road 170
Oakland, MS 38948
662-623-7356*

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 01 @ 6:00 p.m.

*Roosevelt State Park Commons Meeting Room
2149 Highway 13 S.
Morton, MS 39117
601-732-6316*

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 02 @ 6:00 p.m.

*Tombigbee State Park Lodge Meeting Room
264 Cabin Dr.
Tupelo, MS 38804
662-842-7669*

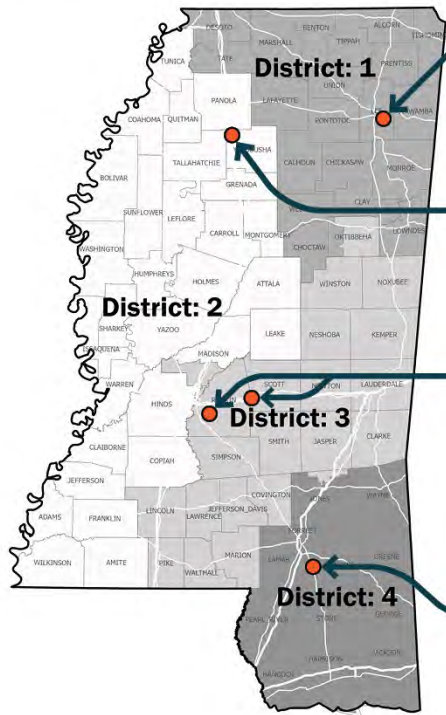
WEDNESDAY, NOV. 02 @ 6:00 p.m.

*Paul B Johnson State Park Meeting Room
319 Geiger Lake Rd., Hattiesburg, MS 39401
601-582-7721*



PUBLIC MEETING LOCATIONS

IMPROVING OUTDOOR RECREATION IN MISSISSIPPI



District 1

November 02, 2023 @ 6pm
Tombigbee State Park

District 2

November 01, 2023 @ 6pm
Cossar State Park

District 3

November 01, 2023 @ 1pm
MDWFP Jackson Office
November 01, 2023 @ 6pm
Roosevelt State Park

District 4

November 02, 2023 @ 6pm
Paul B. Johnson State Park



UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETING

IMPROVING OUTDOOR RECREATION IN MISSISSIPPI

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1505 Eastover Dr.
Jackson, MS 39211
601-432-2400*



UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETING

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WEDNESDAY, NOV. 01 @ 6:00 p.m.

*George P Cossar State Park
Meeting Room
165 County Road 170
Oakland, MS 38948
662-623-7356*



UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETING

IMPROVING OUTDOOR RECREATION IN MISSISSIPPI

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Roosevelt State Park
Commons Meeting Room
2149 Highway 13 S.
Morton, MS 39117
601-732-6316



UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETING

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WEDNESDAY, NOV. 02 @ 6:00 p.m.

*Tombigbee State Park
Lodge Meeting Room
264 Cabin Dr.
Tupelo, MS 38804
662-842-7669*



UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETING

IMPROVING OUTDOOR RECREATION IN MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks (MDWFP) is actively assembling the 2025-2029 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Listed below is information on an upcoming public meeting regarding the SCORP. Please attend, participate, and help improve outdoor recreation in Mississippi!

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 02 @ 6:00 p.m.

*Paul B Johnson State Park
Meeting Room
319 Geiger Lake Rd.
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
601-582-7721*



SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISEMENT CAPTIONS

FACEBOOK

GRAPHIC: Image #

TEXT:

1. How far do you travel to enjoy outdoor recreation?
2. MDWFP is updating the SCORP and this survey will help us identify what recreational activities are working or lacking in our state! By taking the survey below, you will be providing us with suggestions on how to improve our existing facilities, as well as where to build new ones.
3. This is an opportunity that comes along once every five years! It is a chance to tell park managers and federal officials which outdoor recreation facilities you want in your neighborhood.
4. Take the Mississippi SCORP survey, now, and let your voice be heard!

LINK:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SCORP2025>

Get updates and take the survey on the SCORP website: www.mississippicorp.com

HANDLES: @VISITMS @MDWFPONLINE @MSRECPARK @LWCFCOALITION

INSTAGRAM

GRAPHIC: Image #

TEXT:

1. MDWFP is updating Mississippi's Recreation Plan and we need your help! You can share your input by taking the survey or by joining us at one of the public meetings we're hosting across the state! Check out the link in our bio for the survey!

HANDLES: @VISITMS @MDWFPONLINE @MSRECPARK @LWCFCOALITION

SURVEY ADVERTISEMENT #1

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! TAKE OUR RECREATION SURVEY!



SCAN ME

- MDWFP is updating Mississippi's Recreation Plan and this survey will help us identify what recreational activities are working or lacking in our state
- Visit to take the survey and to learn more: www.mississippiscorp.com



SURVEY ADVERTISEMENT #2



SCAN ME

Do you enjoy outdoor recreation?

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!
TAKE OUR SURVEY!**

MDWFP is updating the SCORP and this survey will help us identify what recreational activities are working or lacking in our state

Get updates and take the survey on the SCORP website:
www.mississippiscorp.com



SURVEY ADVERTISEMENT #3

WE ARE UPDATING MISSISSIPPI'S RECREATION PLAN!

Take our short survey by
visiting the SCORP website:
www.mississippiscorp.com or
scanning the QR code below.



This survey will help us identify
what recreational activities
are working or lacking in our
state.



SURVEY ADVERTISEMENT #4

WHERE DO YOU ENJOY OUTDOOR RECREATION?

MDWFP is updating Mississippi's Recreation Plan. Take our short survey by visiting the SCORP website: www.mississippicorp.com or scanning the QR code below.



SCAN ME

This survey will help us identify what recreational activities are working or lacking in our state.



RECREATION SURVEY

- MDWFP is updating the SCORP and this survey will help us identify what recreational activities are working or lacking in our state
- Complete our survey by visiting the SCORP website or by scanning the QR code
- Survey takes 5-10 minutes to complete.



**SCAN
ME**



www.mississippiscorp.com/survey

OUTREACH GROUP INVITATION LETTER EXAMPLE

Greetings,

WE NEED YOUR HELP

The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks (MDWFP) recognizes the 2025– 2029 Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) needs intensive research, data collection, analysis, and outreach. MDWFP has contracted Dana Brown & Associates (DBA) to assist in the development of the 2025–2029 SCORP.

Over the course of the next several months, we will conduct a number of surveys and public meetings across the state. Information on the dates, times, and locations of these events is available to the public on the SCORP website. We need strong participation in these events to gather the most accurate data and input for the SCORP.

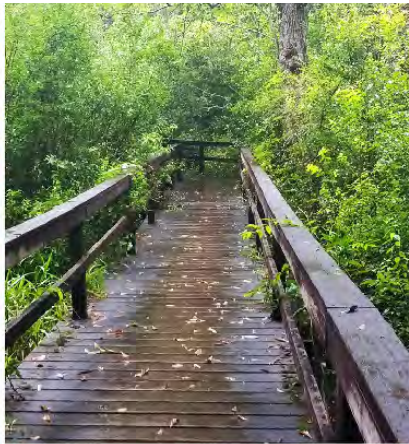
We understand you are an active member and leader in the community. Would you assist us in our efforts to engage the public and enhance the outdoor recreational areas and facilities in Mississippi? Attached in this email is a public outreach zip package that has prepared public flyers and social media ads created for our public outreach efforts. Also included are links to the SCORP website complete with all the public facing information for events and updates, and the surveys for residents and providers. We would greatly appreciate if you could communicate the dates, times, and locations of our events to your constituents/ members/neighbors/community and ask that you let us know your willingness to be involved.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.
Thank you!

Links to the website and survey information below:

SCORP website: <https://www.mississippiscorp.com/>

Resident's Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SCORP2025>



PROVIDER AND RESIDENT SURVEY REPORT

SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT



Residents taking part in the survey presentation at Cossar SP.

INTRODUCTION

The 2025-2029 Mississippi SCORP provider and resident surveys were available for four months from August 28, 2023 to January 8, 2024. The provider survey was opened again from February 5, 2024 to February 16, 2024 to collect additional provider responses. The team developed a website, www.mississippicorp.com, to provide updated and accessible information to the public. During the active survey period, the website had 1,393 page views. Residents primarily accessed the website through direct links, social media, Facebook/Instagram, and the MDWFP website. The project team held five public meetings in the state capital and in each of the four congressional districts at state parks between November 1st and 2nd, 2023.

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY

The series of meetings, led by Dana Brown & Associates (DBA) and Kimley-Horn Associates (KHA), focused on the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and solicited input from attendees regarding outdoor recreation needs in Mississippi. Participants across various locations emphasized the importance of encouraging outdoor activity, enhancing existing park infrastructure, and improving accessibility to park facilities. Key concerns included the programming, funding issues, lack of advocacy of existing amenities not involving hunting, and disparities in park maintenance compared to neighboring states. Funding, maintenance, and advocacy emerged as a recurring theme throughout the discussions.



Resident survey presentation in Tombigbee State Park

Discussions highlighted the desire for educational initiatives, such as interpretive signage and partnerships with schools, to promote awareness and engagement in outdoor recreation. Attendees advocated for the development of user-friendly apps for niche recreational activities like birding trails and disc golf to boost tourism. There was a consensus against park closures or privatization, with attendees advocating for continued state control and prioritizing park funding. Suggestions for the SCORP survey included providing more space for open-ended responses, utilizing list-serves for outreach, and assessing the success of previous initiatives.

PROVIDER SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The project team created the provider survey to obtain information from park managers and responsive public officials. The team sent the provider survey only to managers of public recreational facilities and city officials; therefore, the provider survey was not visible on the project website without a direct link given to providers through email, and phone. The provider survey received 63 applicable responses.

Provider survey findings reveal a broad representation across 39 out of 82 counties, primarily from city and state agencies. Currently, 2,875 facilities were reported to be available, with 537 added and 316 abandoned since 2019. Top added facilities include campsites, picnic areas, and playgrounds. Recreational needs highlight the demand for tennis and pickleball courts,

PROVIDER SURVEY RESULTS

Q1: What was the name of your agency, department, or organization?

MDWFP Town Parks Recreation
 County Board Supervisors City MS State Park Mississippi
 Parks

Figure 1 - Typical respondents agency from the provider survey

Q12: Which region represents the region where your facility is located?

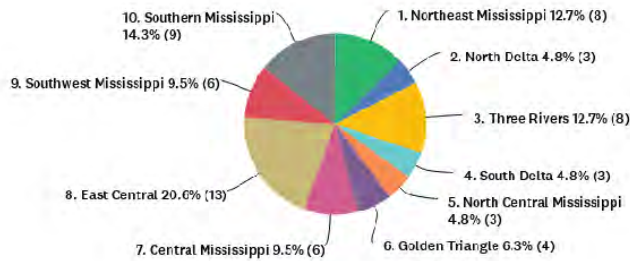


Figure 2 - Respondents regional representation

playgrounds, trails, splash pads, and swimming pools. Strongest user requests prioritize baseball/softball fields, events, festivals, and biking trails, differing from previous surveys.

PROVIDER SURVEY FINDINGS

Topics of provider survey questions included:

- name of your agency, department, or organization
- type of organization respondents represented
- new and abandoned recreational facilities managed by that organization
- the total amount of individual facility types
- ranking of requested facilities by users
- greatest unmet recreational need
- region organization represented

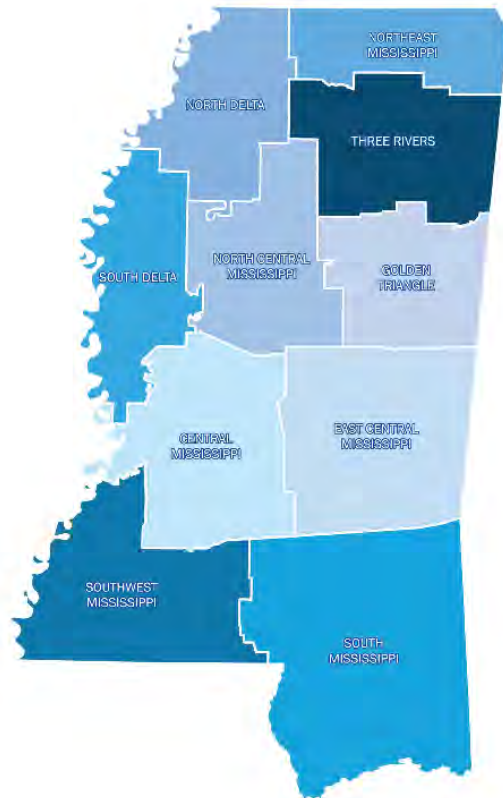


Figure 3 - Respondents organizational hierarchy

PROVIDER SURVEY RESULTS

Q4: Since 2019, has your organization opened any new recreational facilities in your area?

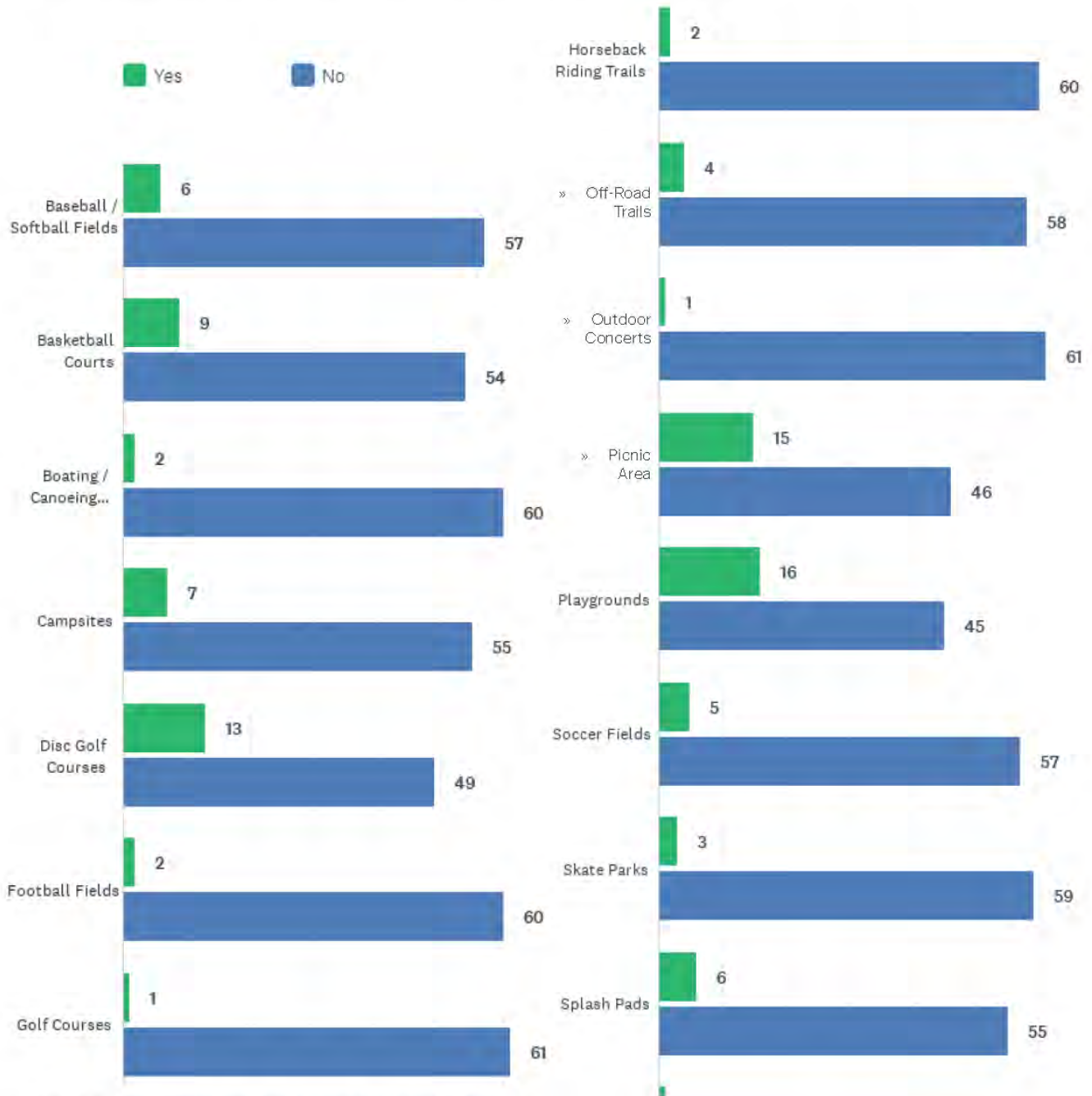


Figure 4 - Respondent reported opened facilities since 2019

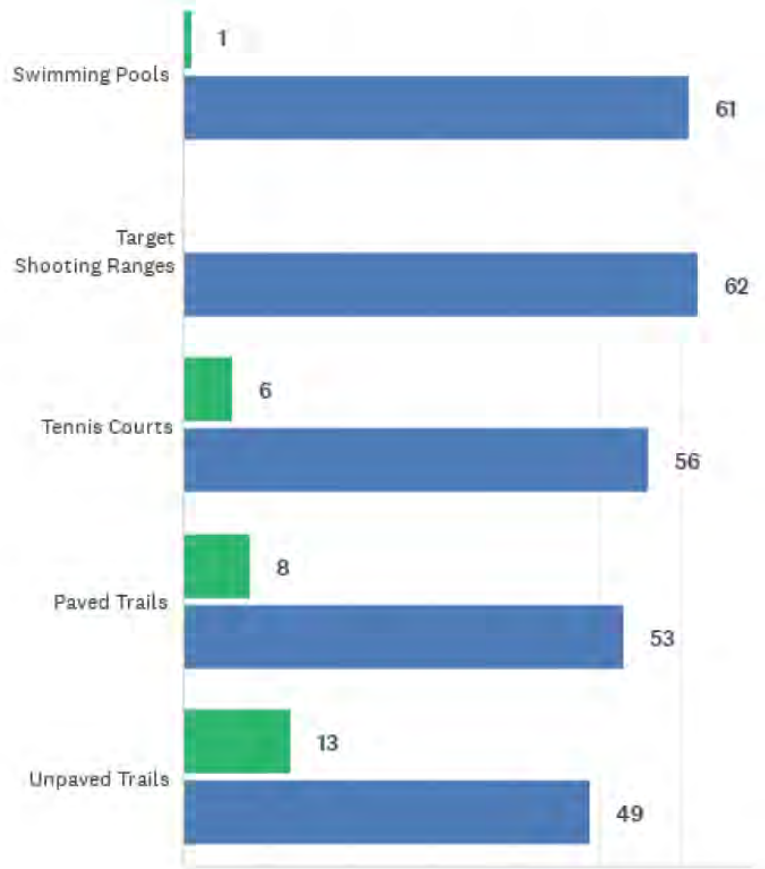


Figure 4 - Respondent reported opened facilities since 2019, cont.

PROVIDER SURVEY RESULTS

Q6: Since 2019, has your organization abandoned/closed any new recreational facilities in your area?

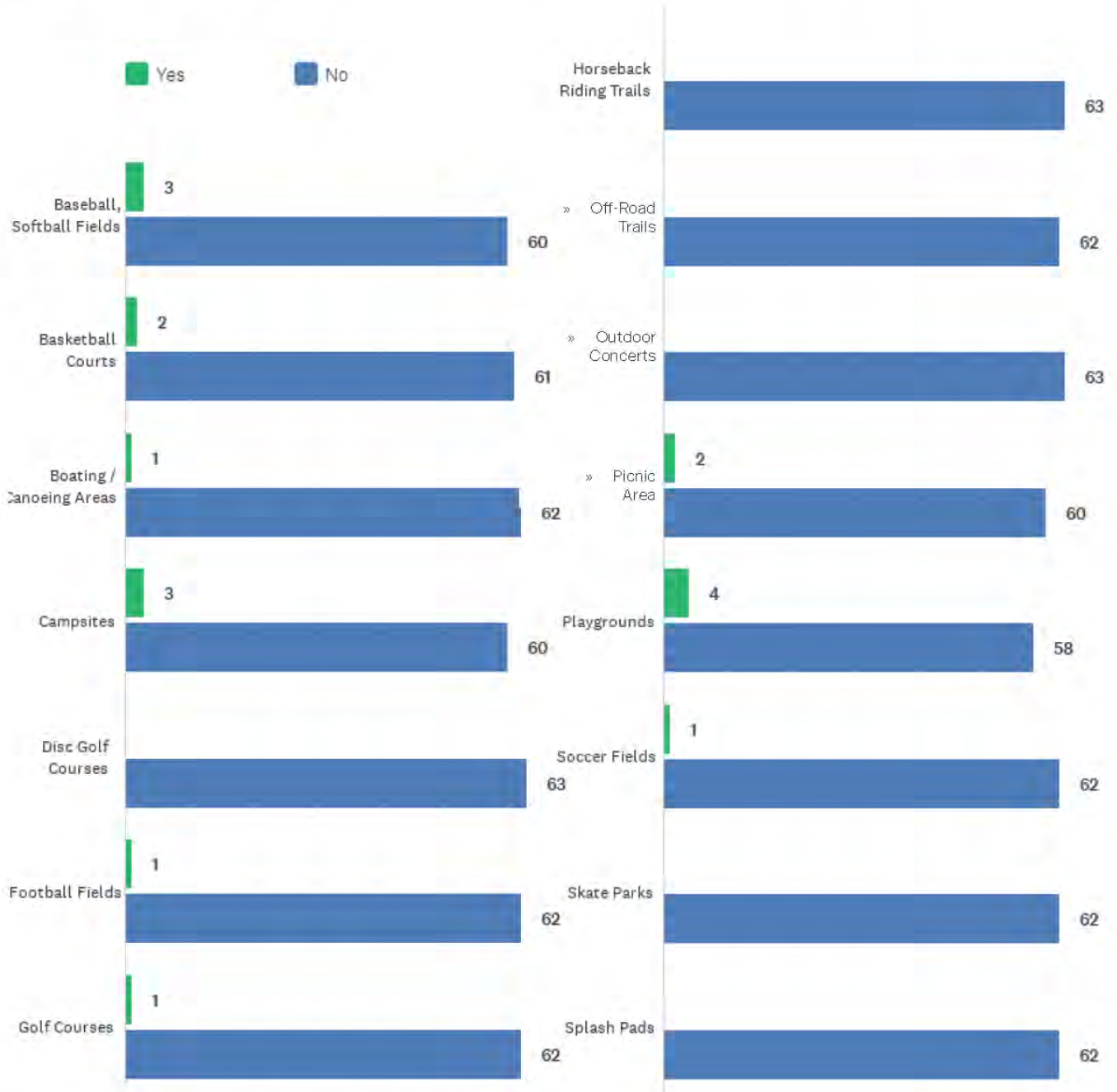


Figure 5 - Respondent reported closed facilities since 2019

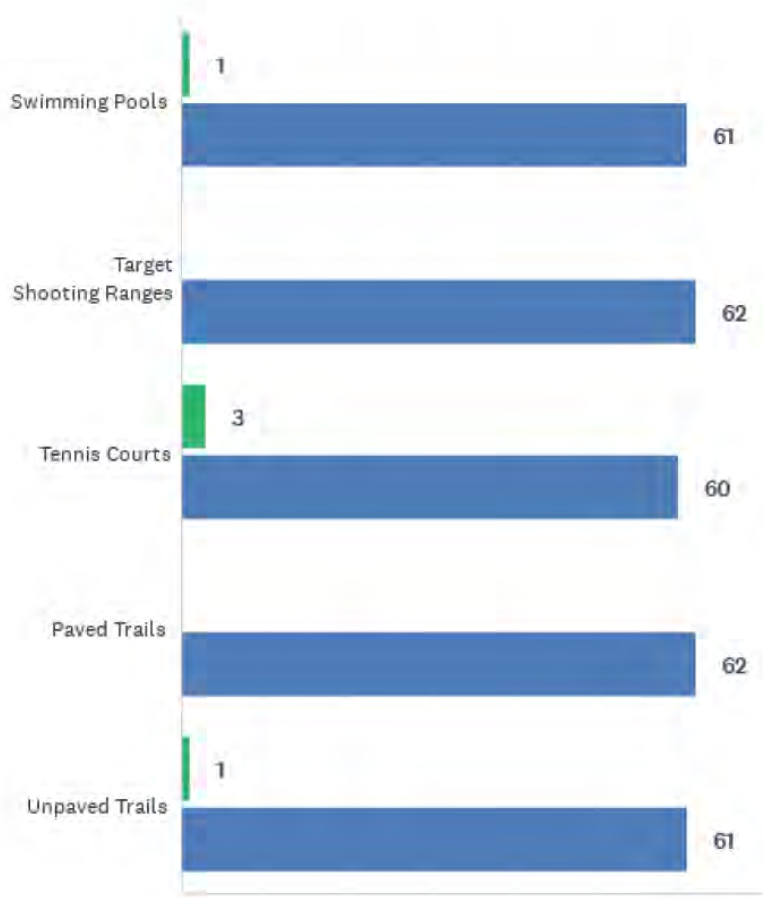


Figure 5 - Respondent reported closed facilities since 2019, cont.

PROVIDER SURVEY RESULTS

In 2023, the total number of provider survey respondents fell from 94 in 2019 to 63. In 2023 it was reported that 537 facilities were added and 316 abandoned compared to 282 additions and 114 abandonments reported in 2019. Notably, the most commonly abandoned facility types shifted from picnic areas, campsites, and playgrounds in 2019 to campsites, picnic areas, and baseball and softball fields and tennis courts in 2023, reflecting changing usage patterns or maintenance priorities.

Recreational needs also evolved, with demands for tennis courts, pickleball courts, splash pads, and swimming pools increasing in 2023, replacing trails and playgrounds as the top priorities from 2019. Additionally, the strength of user requests changed, with baseball or softball fields, and events spaces ranking highest in 2023, contrasting with the prominence of playgrounds, and picnic areas in 2019.

Q2: Which type of organization do you represent?

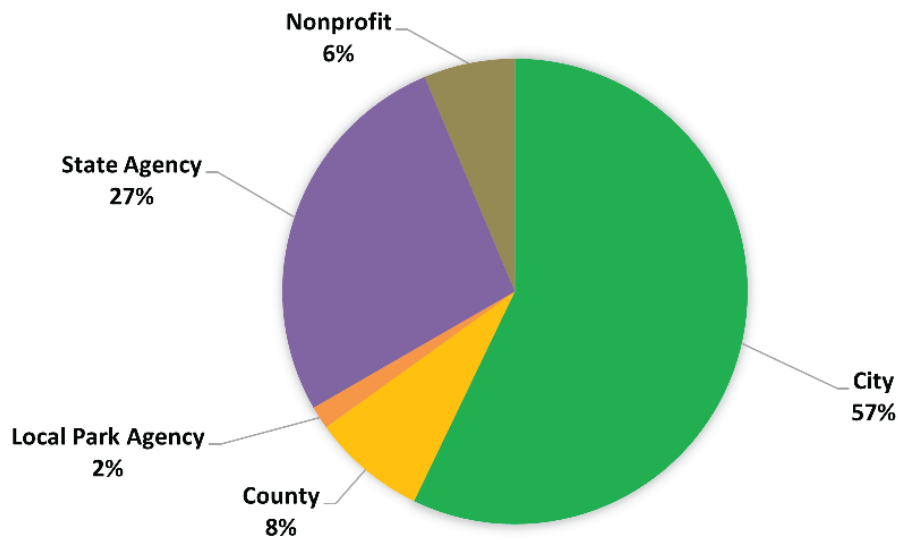


Figure 6 - Respondents organizational hierarchy

RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

RESIDENT SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The resident survey was made available Online through the project website which was heavily promoted, and hard copies were available at public meetings. There were 1,569 responses to the resident survey. Not all respondents completed every question in the survey. The team emailed and tagged in social media posts recreation clubs, libraries, schools, and other community leaders to extend outreach to popular organizations with strong community relationships.

The project team compared current resident survey data with the previous SCORP report, noting a shift in park usage towards socializing and health benefits rather than outdoor enjoyment alone. Residents from 75 of 82 counties participated in the survey. State parks now outrank city parks in popularity followed by Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). Residents prefer shorter walks to desired locations. There is a continued willingness to travel out of state for recreation, with surrounding states: Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Tennessee remaining popular destinations. Despite perceived safety, many residents feel their recreational needs aren't met due to poor facility conditions or unavailability.

A comparison of recreational demands from the 2019-2024 and the 2025-2029 SCORP reports shows that the highest demands for recreational facility needs have shifted slightly in the unmet needs and remain the same in facility types added.

RESIDENT SURVEY FINDINGS

Topics of provider survey questions included:

- hours per week that residents spend in parks
- recreational facilities used and prioritized
- recreational activities participated in
- greatest unmet recreational need
- reasons for participating; willingness to travel to facilities
- typical travel distance; perceived safety of facilities
- general demographics
- length of state residency

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2023 the total number of provider survey respondents rose from 1,213 in 2019 to 1,569. Comparing the residential survey demographic results between the two years, both exhibit a typical bell-curve age distribution, with a significant portion between 25 and 54 years old. However, the proportion of respondents between 25 and 44 increased slightly in 2023, indicating potential changes in the age demographics of survey respondents.

Q20: What is your age?

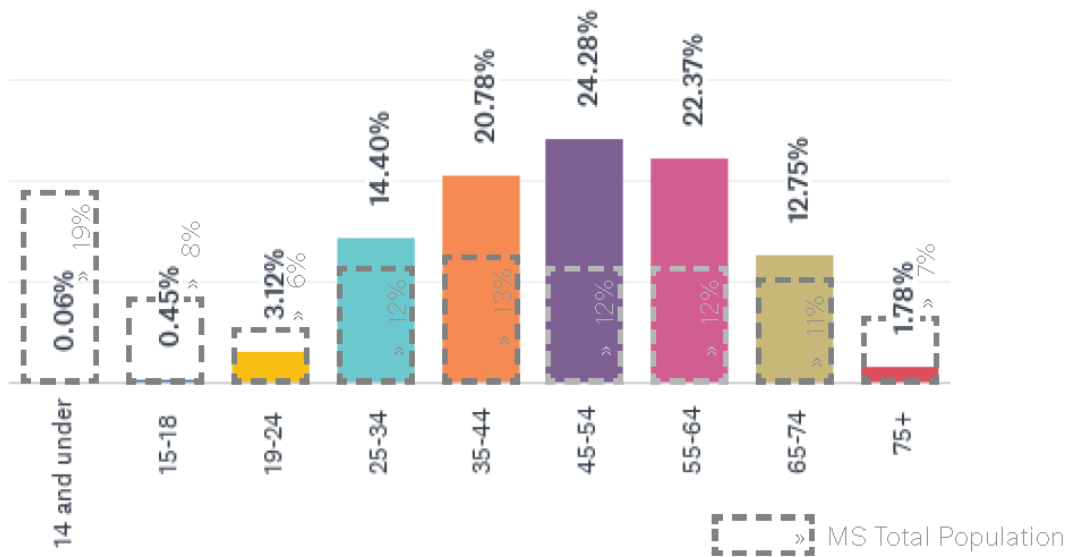


Figure 7 - Age distribution of respondents

RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

The 2023 household demographics revealed a broader age distribution, with a majority of respondents living with children under 18 or seniors. There was an increase in the proportion of respondents with higher household incomes in 2023, suggesting potential economic growth or changes in financial circumstances.

Q20: What is the age(s) of others in your family or household who use park facilities?

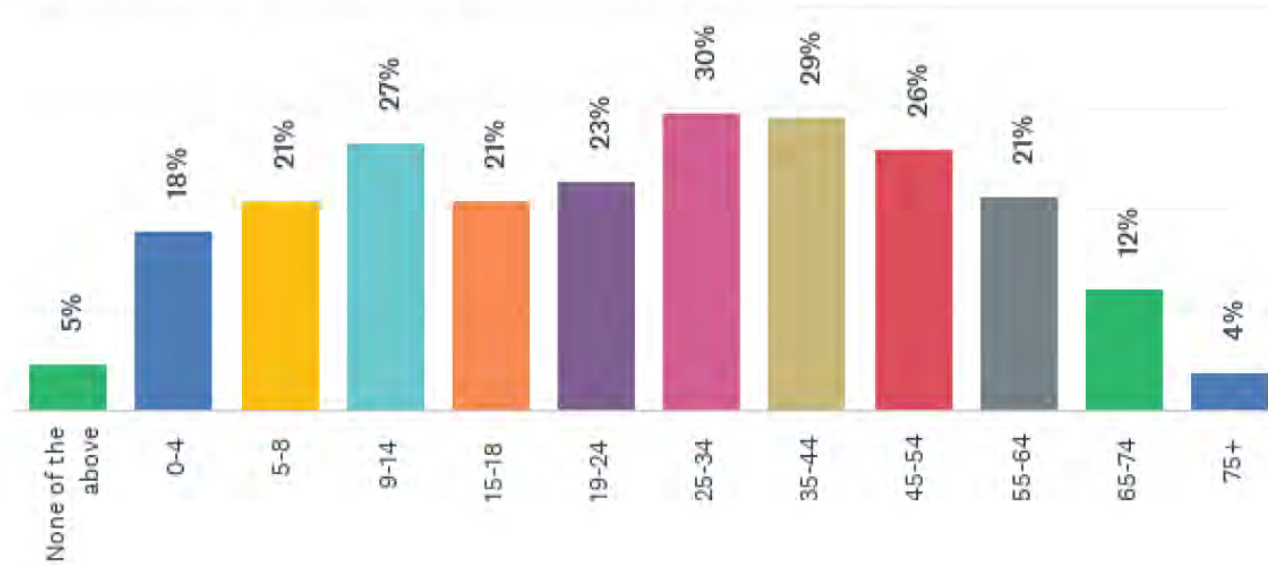


Figure 8 - Age distribution of respondent household/family members

Q20: What is your approximate average household income?

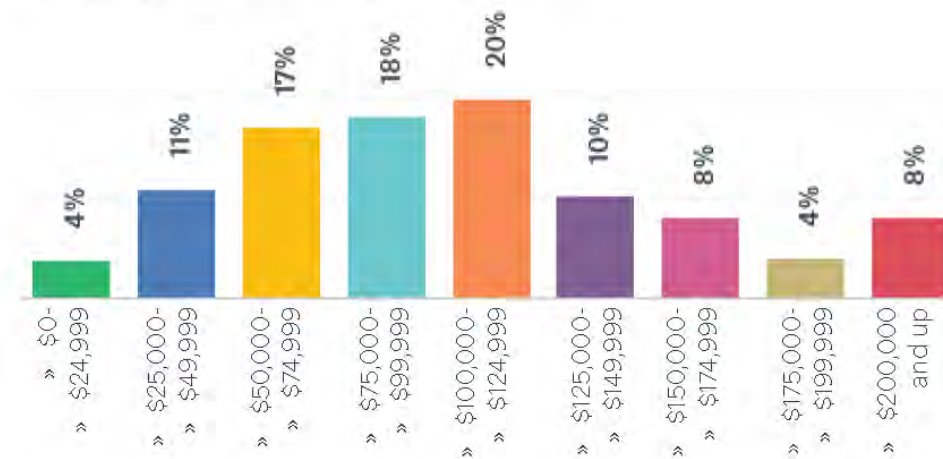


Figure 9 - Income distribution of respondents

The survey also highlighted the longevity of residency, with a majority of respondents residing in the state for over two decades. The racial composition remained largely unchanged, with the majority being white respondents in both years.

Q1: Which region is your household located in?

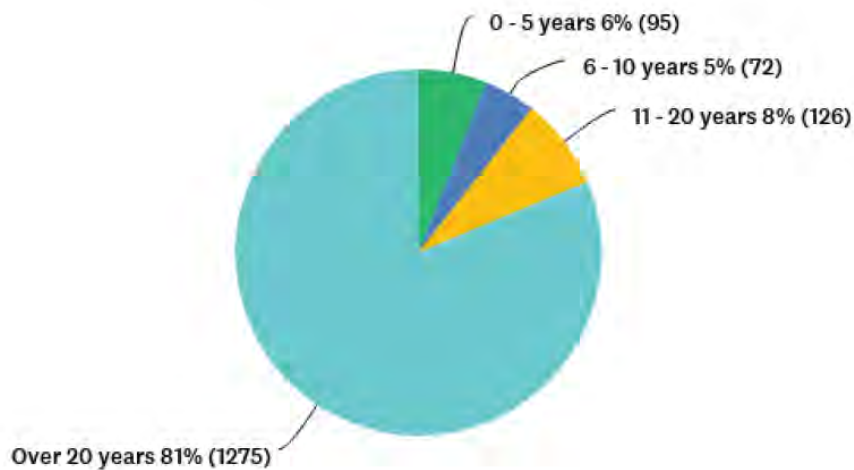
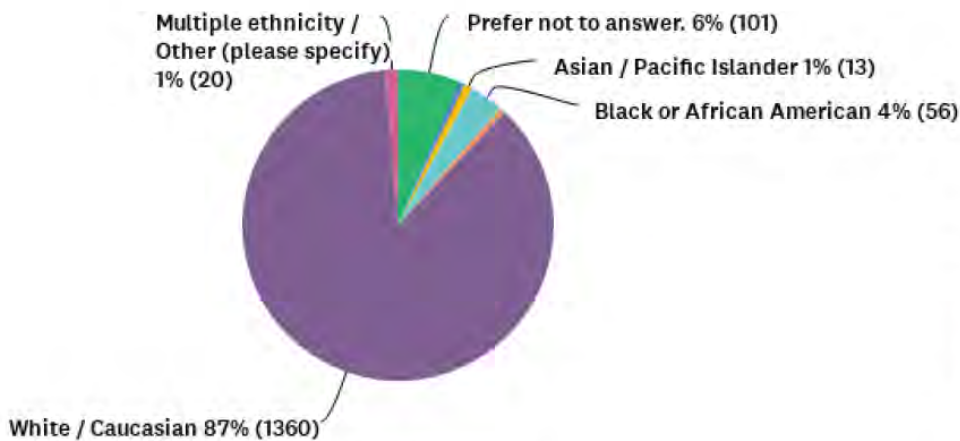


Figure 10 - PDD regional representation of respondents

Q22: Which race/ethnicity best describes you? Please choose only one.



The majority of respondents were white, (4%) were Black, (1%) equally were American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or Multi-ethnic, and (6%) preferred not to answer.

Figure 11 - Racial/ethnic distribution of respondents

RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

There was a shift in park preference, with state parks being identified as the most frequently used facility type in 2023, replacing city parks from 2019. Notably, certain respondents who lived in cities like Brandon, Petal, and Tupelo showed the highest preference for visiting state parks exclusively.

The responses primarily came from the Central Planning and Development District (PDD) (which includes Vicksburg, Jackson and its surrounding areas), South PDD (which includes Hattiesburg, the Gulfport-Biloxi metro area, and Poplarville), and the Three Rivers PDD (which includes Tupelo, Oxford, and Fulton). There was a decrease in location-based participation in 2023. Responses were more widespread geographically in 2019 with only Claiborne and DeSoto not responding to the survey. Whereas in 2023, Choctaw, Claiborne, Humphreys, Issaquena, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, and Wilkinson counties did not respond.

Q1: Which region is your household located in?

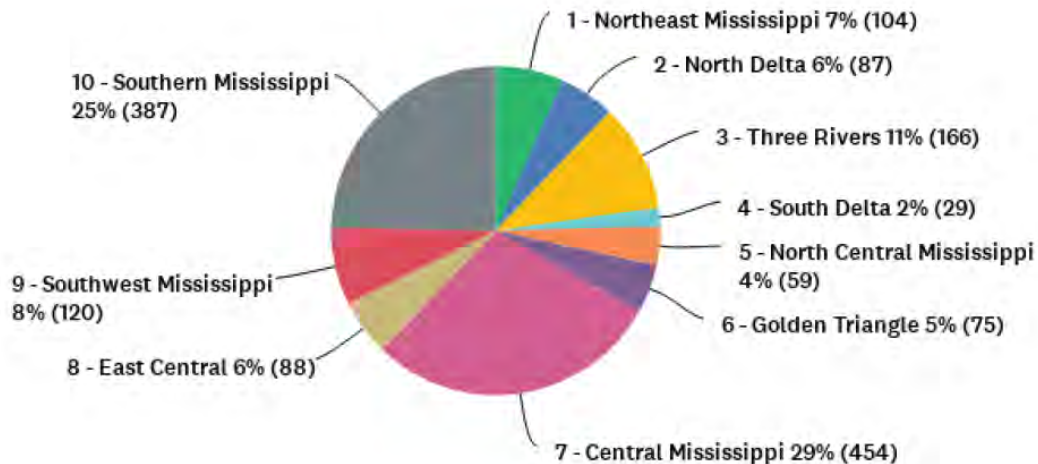


Figure 12 - PDD regional representation of respondents

MATCHING RECREATIONAL NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

The resident survey asked residents if they felt their recreational needs were being met. A majority perceive facilities do not meet their recreational needs. The survey found that the main reasons were; recreational facilities were in poor condition or were not available to them, followed by reasons including facilities being too far away and fees being too high at facilities.

Survey respondents do continue to report that the parks that they visit do feel safe. Respondents who do not feel that parks are safe commonly report the reasons include safety concerns due to poor condition of facilities; a lack of adequate patrol or security of facilities; or inadequate lighting of facilities.

Q15: Do you and your family feel safe while using public recreational facilities?

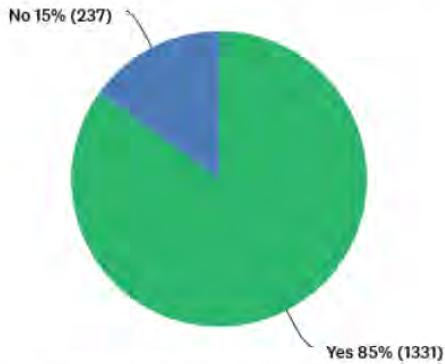


Figure 13 - Respondent response to if they feel recreational facilities are safe in the state

Q8: Do you feel your recreational needs are being met?

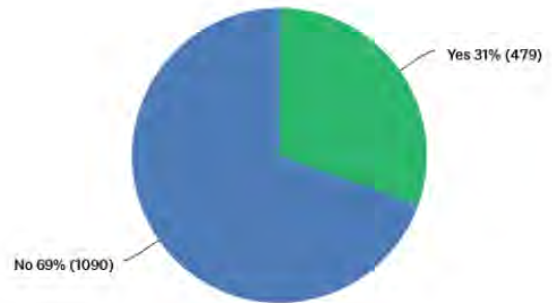


Figure 15 - Respondent response to if their recreational needs are being met by the recreational opportunities in the state

Q16: If you answered no to the question above, please state why the facilities feel unsafe.

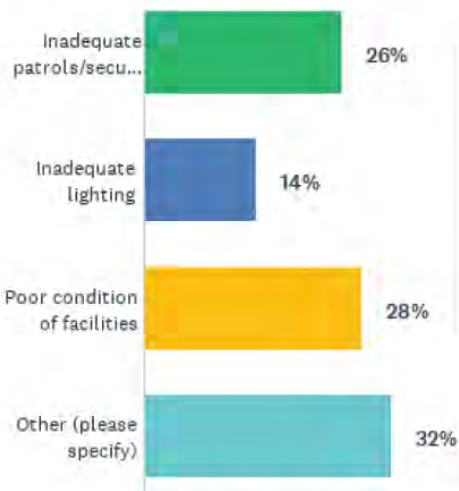


Figure 14 Respondent reasons they feel facilities are unsafe

Q9: If you answered no to the question above, please tell us why you feel your recreational needs aren't being met.

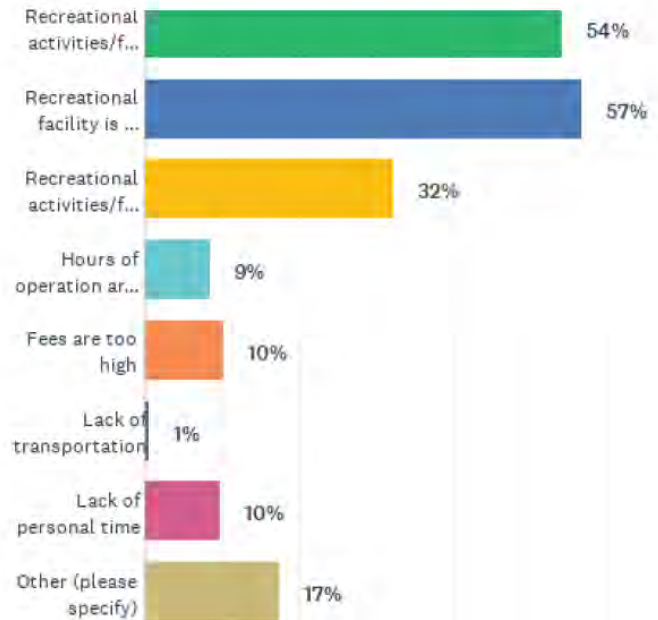


Figure 16 - Respondent reasons they feel their needs are not being met

RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Beyond local parks, nearly three-quarters of resident respondents are willing to visit parks outside of Mississippi. The most popular locations include the neighboring states of Alabama, Tennessee, Kansas, Arkansas, and Louisiana.

State Name	Total Visitation
Alabama	636
Alaska	8
Arizona	17
Arkansas	364
California	34
Colorado	79
Connecticut	0
Delaware	0
Florida	245
Georgia	170
Hawaii	2
Idaho	8
Illinois	20
Indiana	6
Iowa	14
Kansas	326
Kentucky	36
Louisiana	293
Maine	12
Maryland	3
Massachusetts	12
Michigan	9
Minnesota	8
Mississippi	23
Missouri	58
Montana	26
Nebraska	7
Nevada	9
New Hampshire	4
New Jersey	1
New Mexico	20
New York	7
North Carolina	105
North Dakota	5
Ohio	15
Oklahoma	8
Oregon	15
Pennsylvania	3
Rhode Island	6
South Carolina	31
South Dakota	13
Tennessee	424
Texas	118
Utah	35
Vermont	2
Virginia	22
Washington	17
West Virginia	10
Wisconsin	6
Wyoming	24

Q10: Do you travel outside of Mississippi to use other parks and recreational facilities?

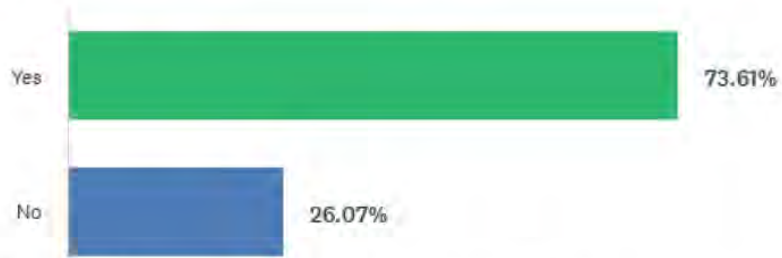


Figure 17 - Respondent willingness to travel outside of the state for recreation

Q11: If you answered yes to the above question, where have you traveled?

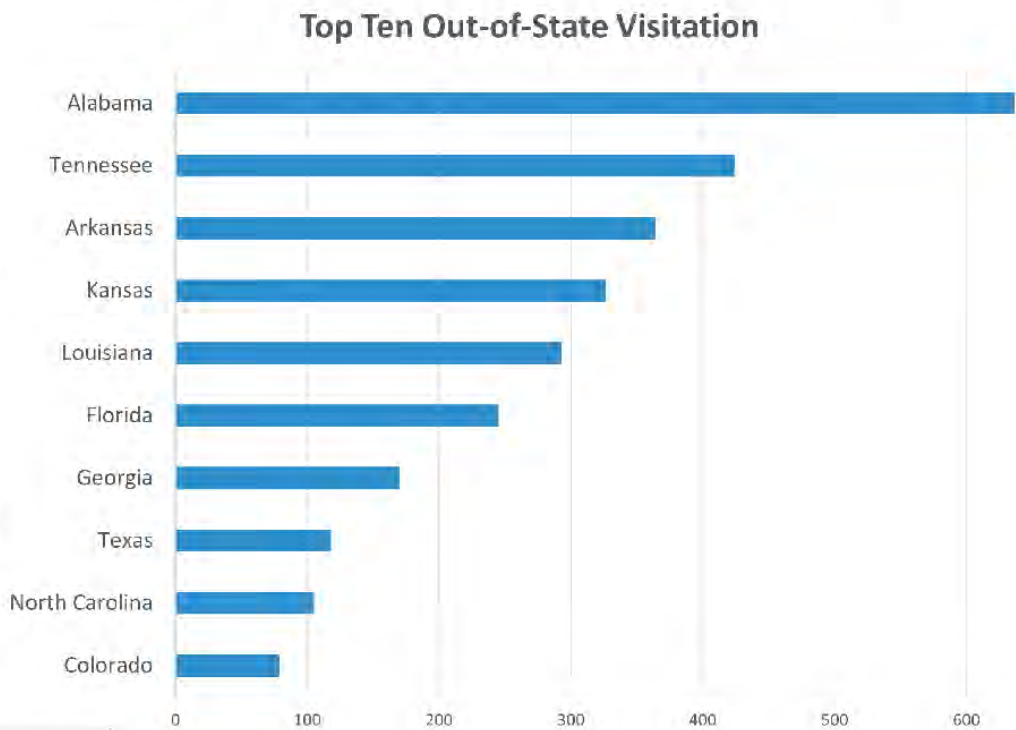


Figure 18 - Locations respondents frequently visited outside of Mississippi

Residents were asked what recreational opportunities they wanted to be provided at the city and community park level, unpaved hiking and biking trails are the most desired amenity, followed by natural areas and paved walking and jogging trails. Fishing, lake access, and pavilion and picnic tables are also popular choices. Conversely, among the respondents amenities like camping and cabins and field sports are less desired at the city and community park level.

Q17: Select up to five items you or your family would want to be provided at a community or city park ?

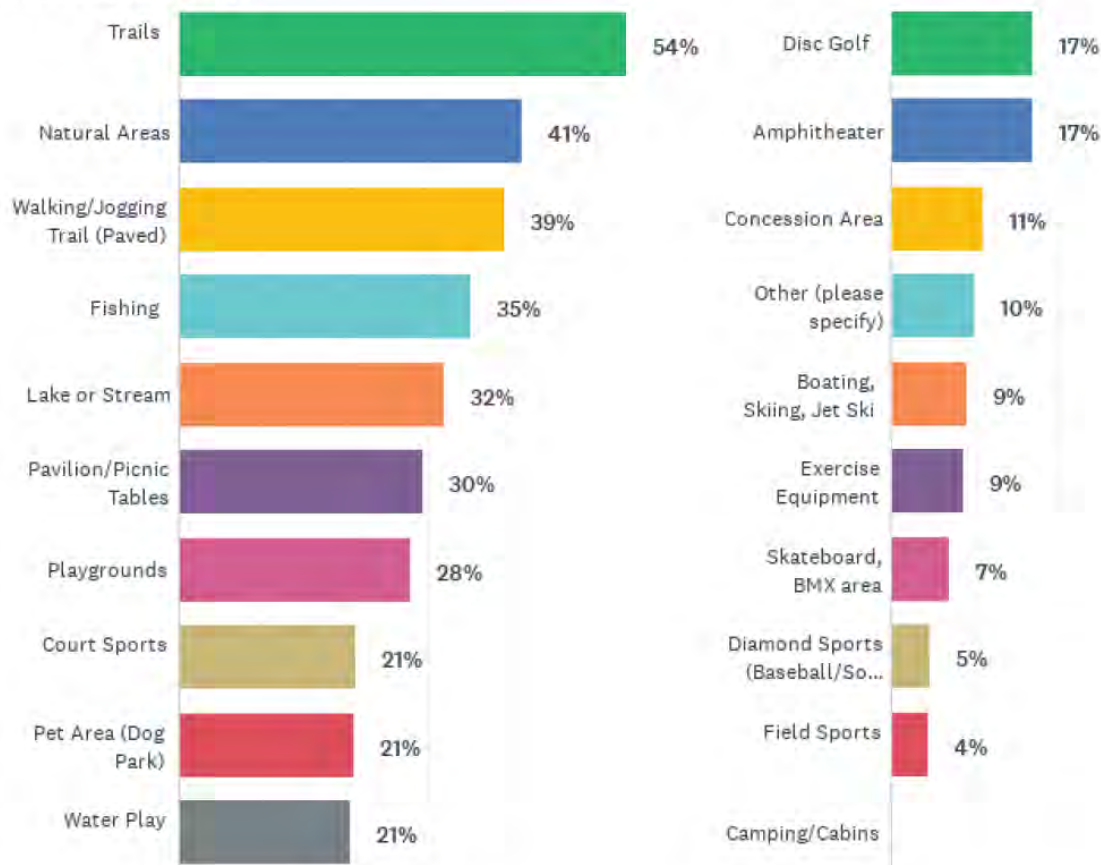


Figure 19 - Respondents recreational preference at city or community parks

RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

At the regional and state level, camping and cabins, natural areas, and unpaved hiking and biking trails are the most expected amenities. Fishing, lakes, and pavilion and picnic tables are also expected at both levels. Recreational amenities such as amenities such as diamond sports, exercise equipment, and skateboard and BMX areas were less anticipated at both the regional and state levels.

Q18: What types of outdoor areas or activities do you expect at a regional park?

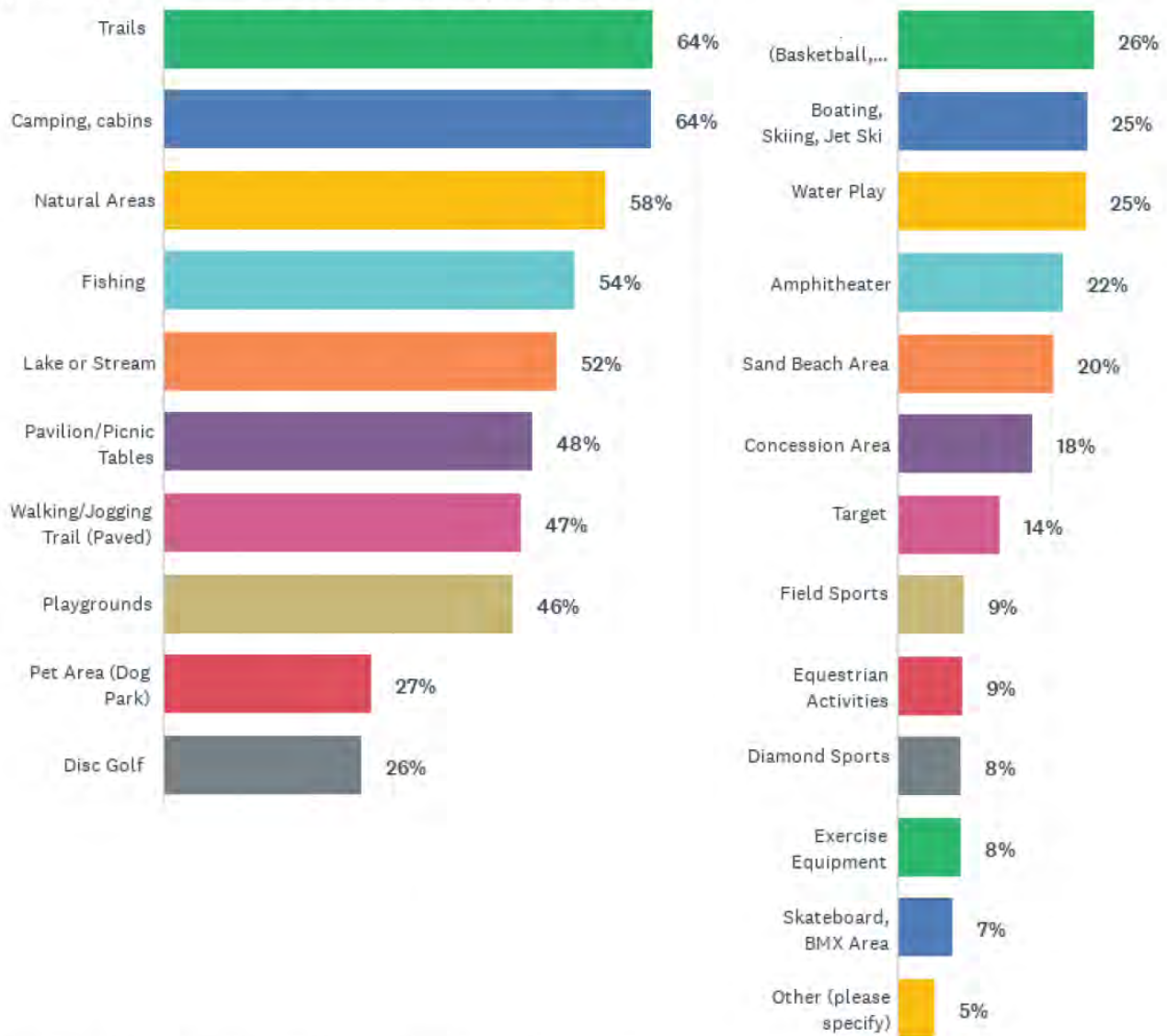


Figure 20 - Respondents recreational expectations at a regional park

Q19: What types of outdoor areas or activities do you expect at a state park?

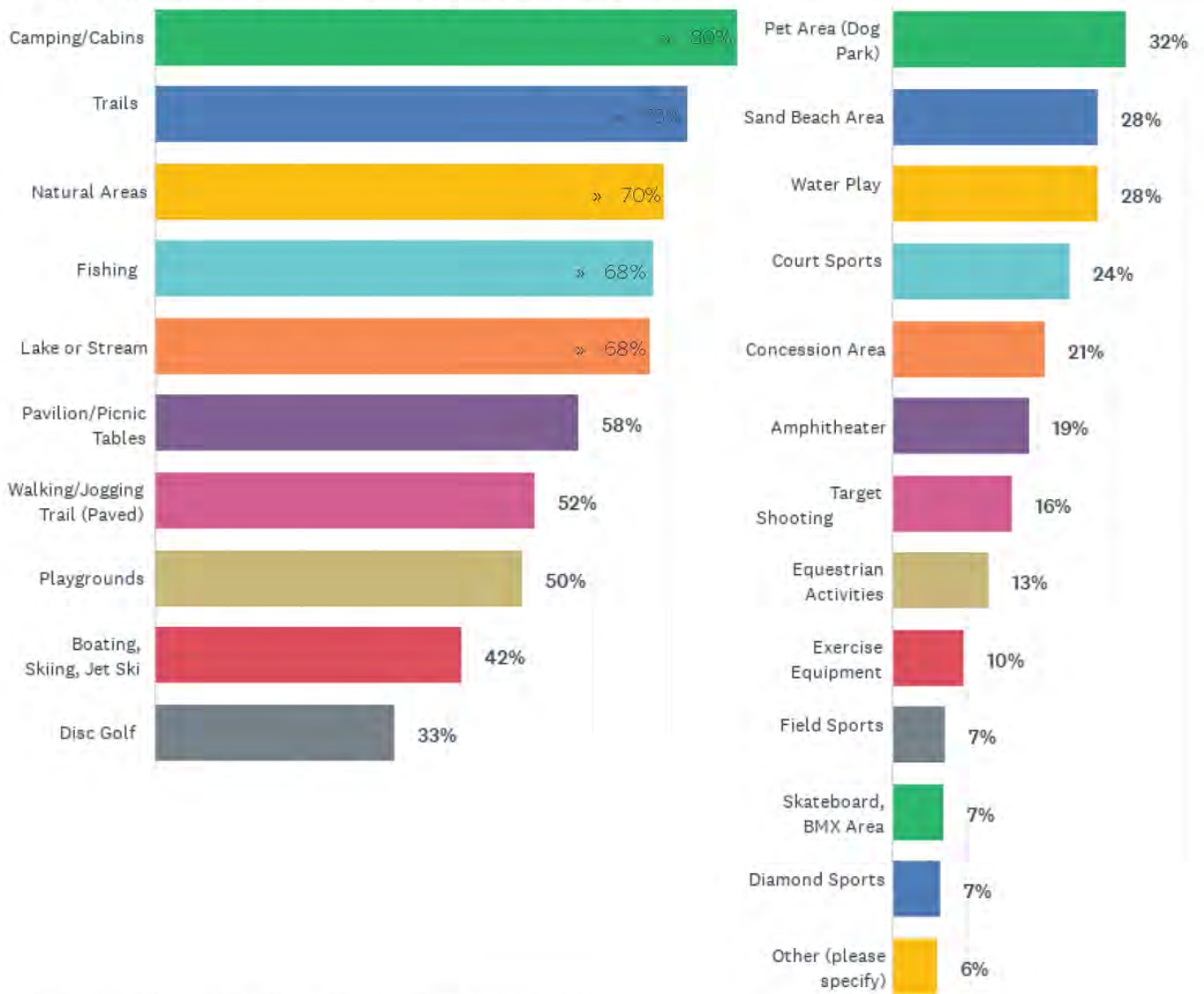


Figure 21 - Respondents recreational expectations at a state park

RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

RESPONDENT RECREATIONAL FOLLOW-UP PREFERENCES

In 2019, email newsletters and websites were the primary sources for residents to discover recreational opportunities. Instead, word of mouth, social media, and websites became more prominent, indicating a shift towards digital and social channels for information gathering. There was also a change in the preferences for regular newsletters. Fewer respondents in 2023 were interested in receiving them monthly, compared to respondents in 2019. However, quarterly newsletters saw a slight increase in preference from 2019 to 2023. Additionally, there was an increase in the proportion of respondents not interested in regular newsletters at all, which 2019 to 2023.

Q26: Would you be interested in receiving a newsletter via email to inform you and/or your family of upcoming recreational programs and/or special events?

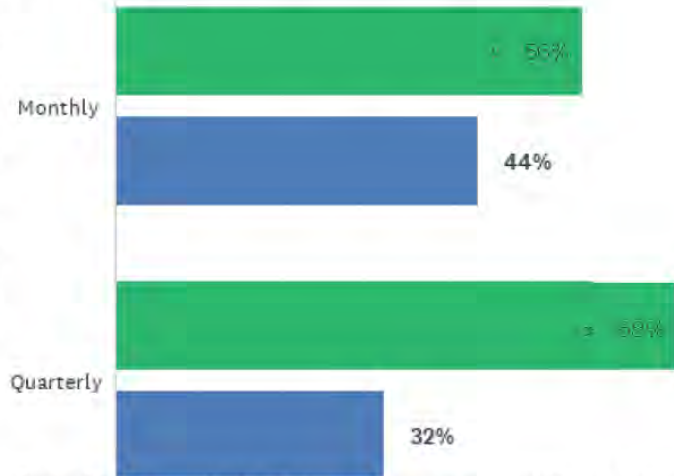


Figure 22 - Respondent willingness to receive a newsletter quarterly or monthly

Q25: How do you typically find out about recreational facilities and/or activities? ?

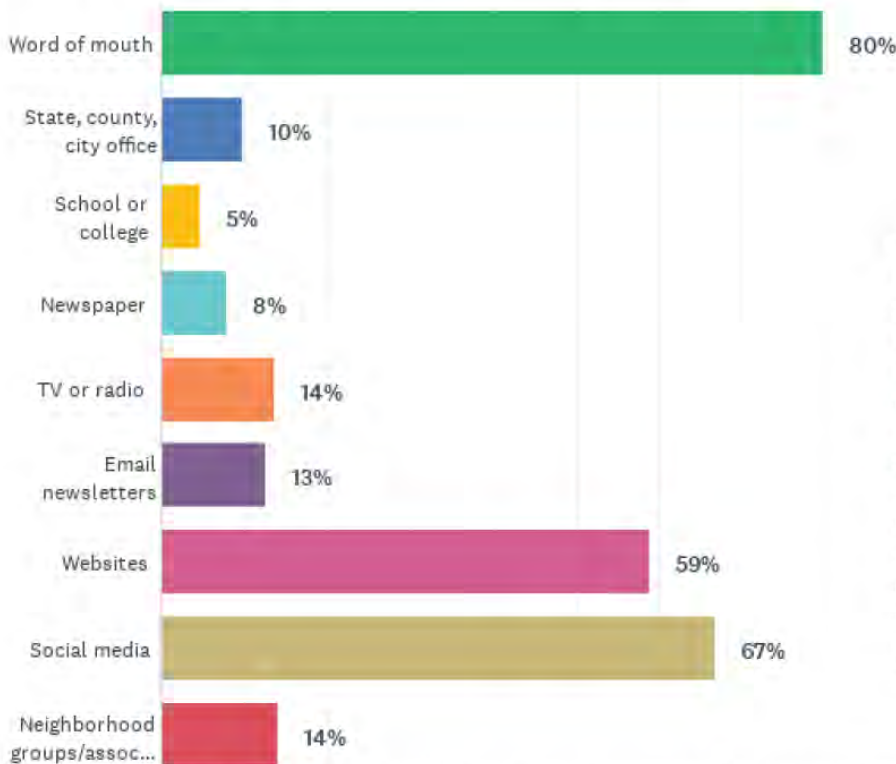


Figure 23 - Methods respondents typically are made aware of recreational facilities or opportunities/activities

These changes suggest a shift in residents' communication preferences and highlight the increasing influence of social media and digital platforms for accessing information about recreational activities. Parks and recreational facilities may need to adapt their marketing strategies to effectively reach residents through these evolving channels and tailor their communication frequency to align with changing preferences.

In terms of duration, the nearly one-third of the respondents in the survey report spending 1 to 2 hours during their park visits which involve a short to moderate durations activities such as walks, picnics, or casual recreation. Additionally, another third report spending 3 to 5 hours during their visits to a park, possibly engaging in activities such as hiking, birdwatching, or participating in events.

Relative to the motivations behind park visits, many respondents report visiting parks for social and recreational purposes, emphasizing the need for spaces that promote community engagement and leisure activities. Followed by participating for health and exercise purposes, highlighting the importance to have spaces for physical activity and wellness.

Q3: On average, what is the amount of time you or your family spend per park visit?

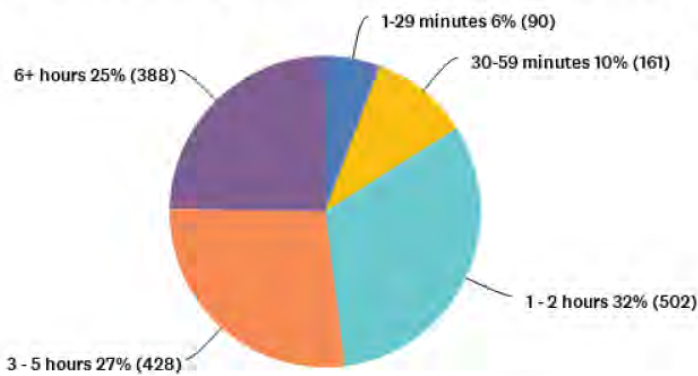


Figure 24 - Length of time respondents spent per park visit

Q7: What are the reasons you and/or your family participate in activities?

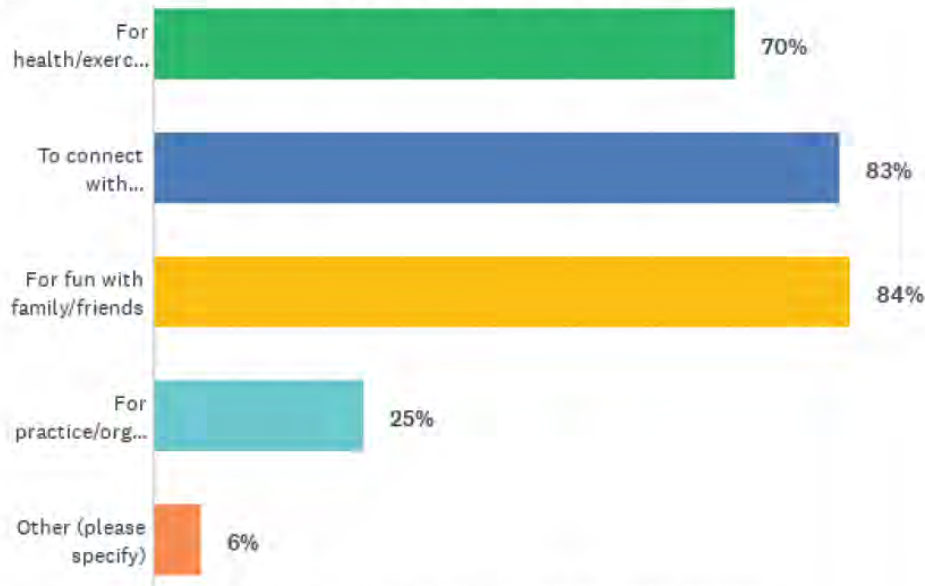


Figure 25 - Reasons respondents provided for participating in park activities.

RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Q5: Which recreational activities are a priority for you and your family?

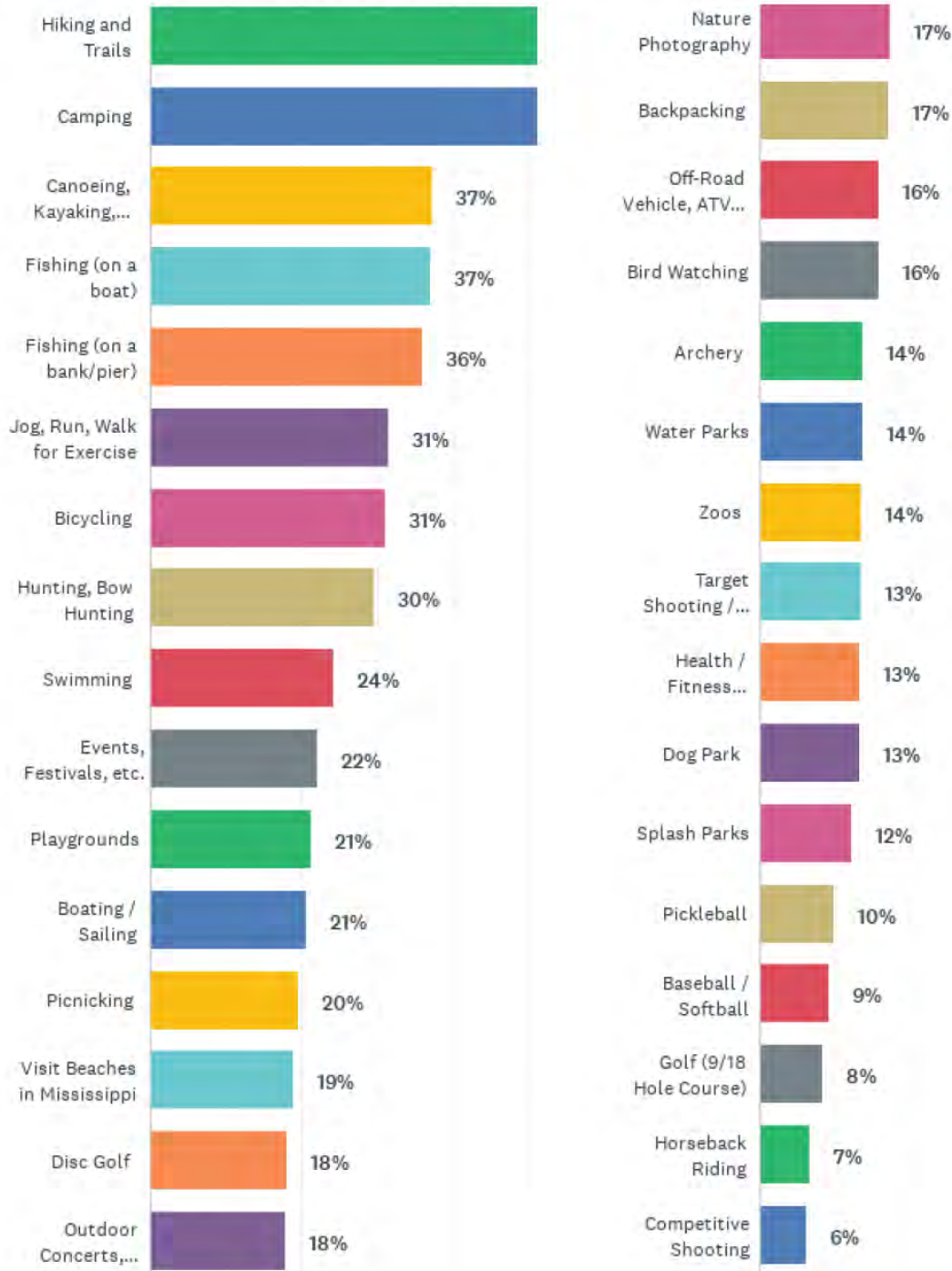
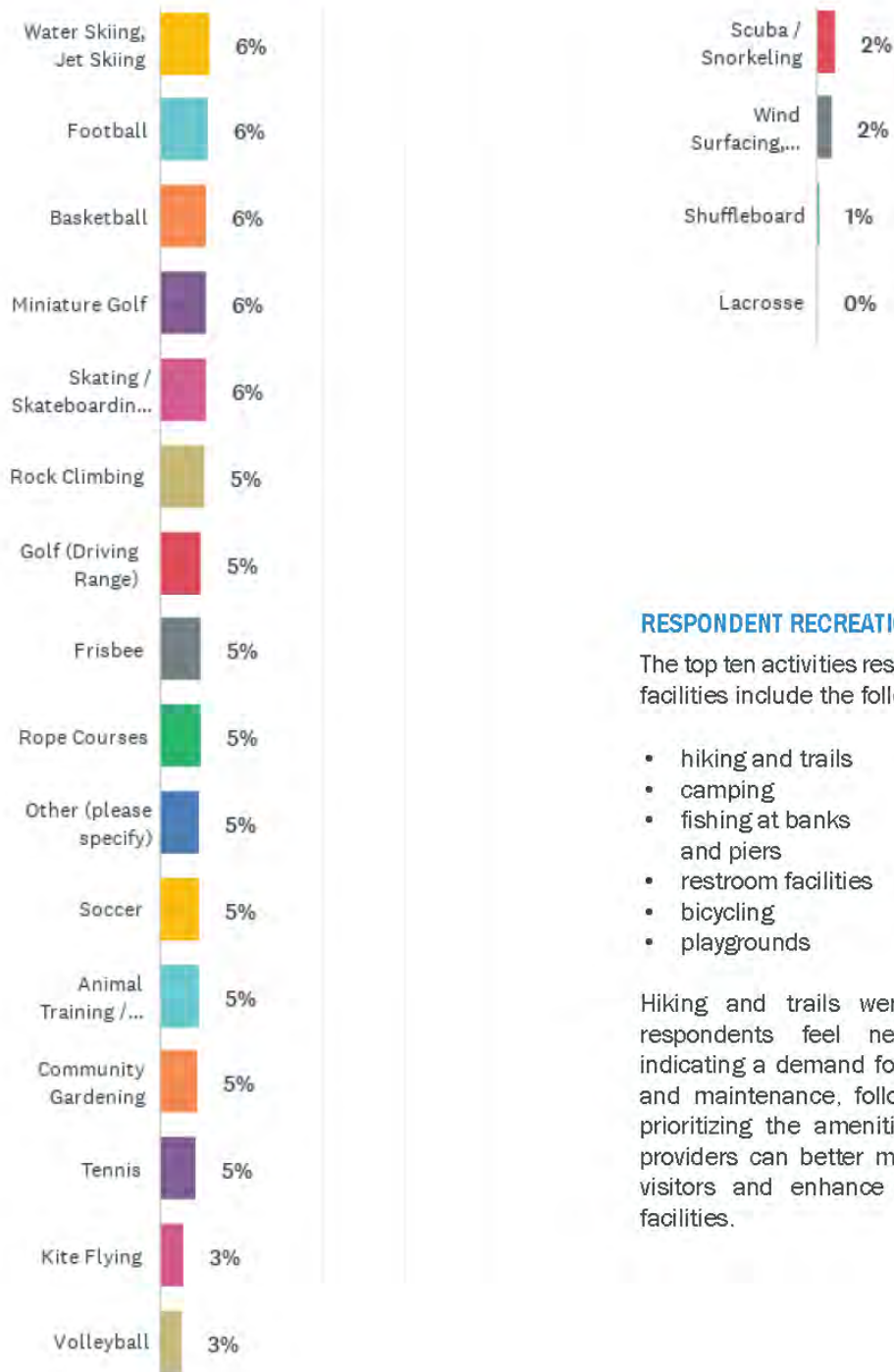


Figure 26 - Respondent recreational priorities



RESPONDENT RECREATIONAL FACILITY USAGE TRENDS

The top ten activities respondents felt required improved facilities include the following :

- hiking and trails
- camping
- fishing at banks and piers
- restroom facilities
- bicycling
- playgrounds
- swimming
- canoeing, kayaking, rafting, or tubing
- disc golf
- event and festival spaces

Hiking and trails were identified as critical area respondents feel need the most improvement indicating a demand for enhancements in trail quality and maintenance, followed by camping facilities. By prioritizing the amenities residents listed previously, providers can better meet the diverse needs of park visitors and enhance satisfaction with recreational facilities.

Figure 26 - Respondent recreational priorities, cont.

RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

Q6: Which activities need new or improved facilities to meet you and/or your family's needs?

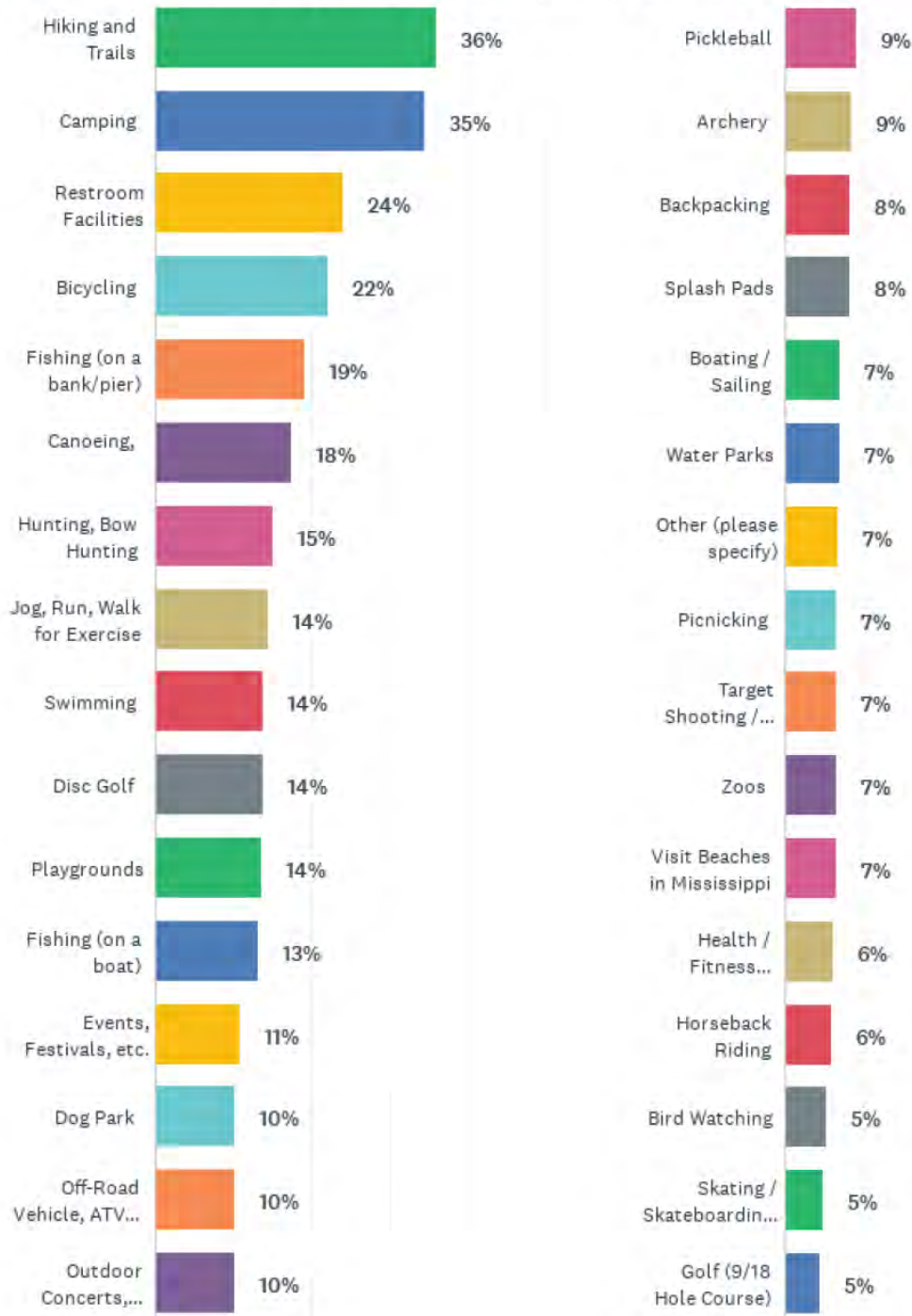
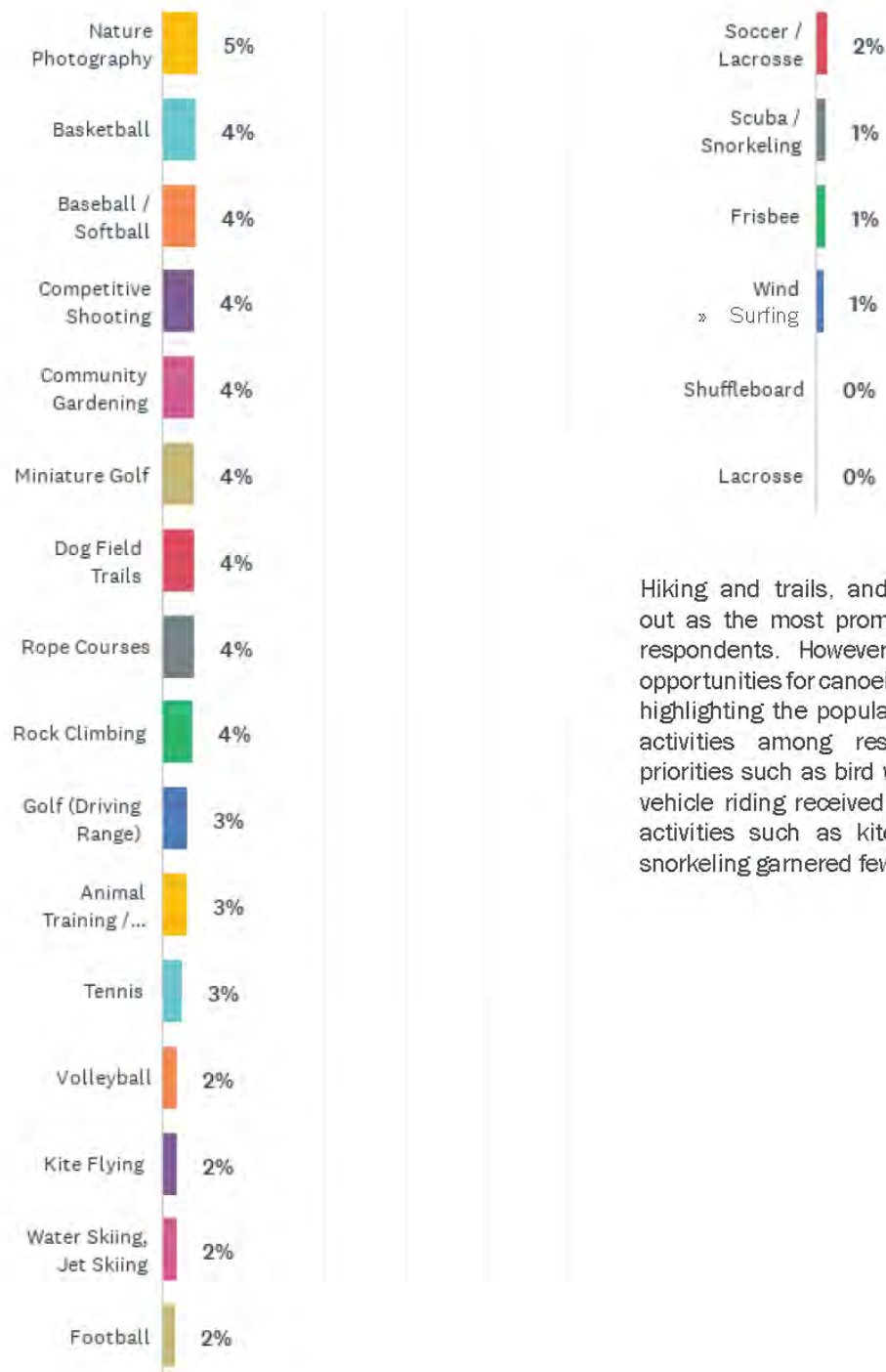


Figure 27 - Recreational activities respondents feel need improvements



Hiking and trails, and camping unsurprisingly stand out as the most prominent recreational priorities for respondents. However, respondents also prioritized opportunities for canoeing, kayaking, rafting, and tubing, highlighting the popularity of water-based recreational activities among respondents. Other recreational priorities such as bird watching, disc golf, and off-road vehicle riding received moderate attention, and niche activities such as kite flying, lacrosse, and scuba/snorkeling garnered fewer responses.

Figure 27 - Recreational activities respondents feel need improvements, cont.

RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

The survey revealed state parks as the most frequented recreation areas (26%), followed by city parks (17%), wildlife management areas (14%), and national parks (12%). US Forest Service areas, county parks, and water district recreation areas also saw visits. Notably, no respondents mentioned visiting “other” areas, though a write-in response highlighted interest in skate parks. Among those who visited only one type of park, state parks were the top choice (25%), followed by city parks (25%) and wildlife management areas (15%).

Q4: Which of the following types of recreational facilities do you visit most often?

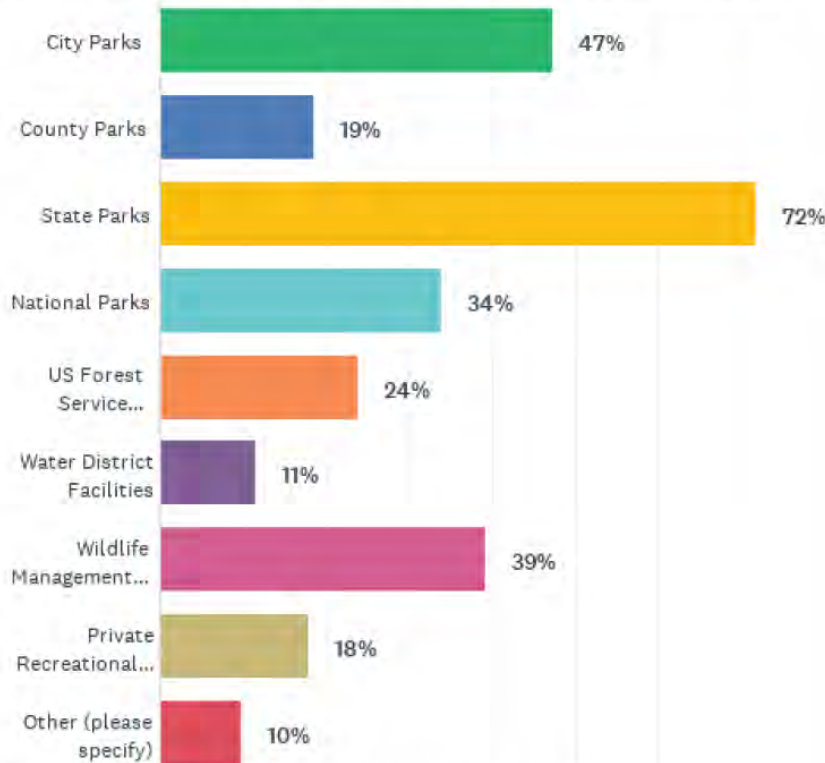


Figure 28 - Types of parks respondents visited most often

Q2: On average how often do you or your family visit a park?

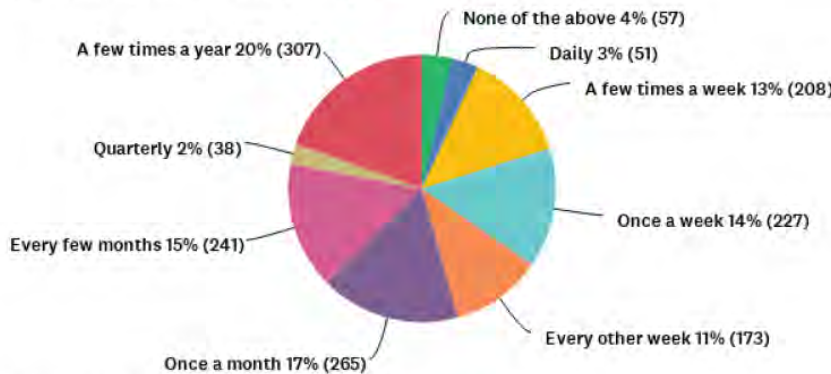


Figure 29 - Respondents frequency of visiting parks

Q12: How long would you be willing to walk to a park if trails and/or sidewalks were available for your commute to that park? ?

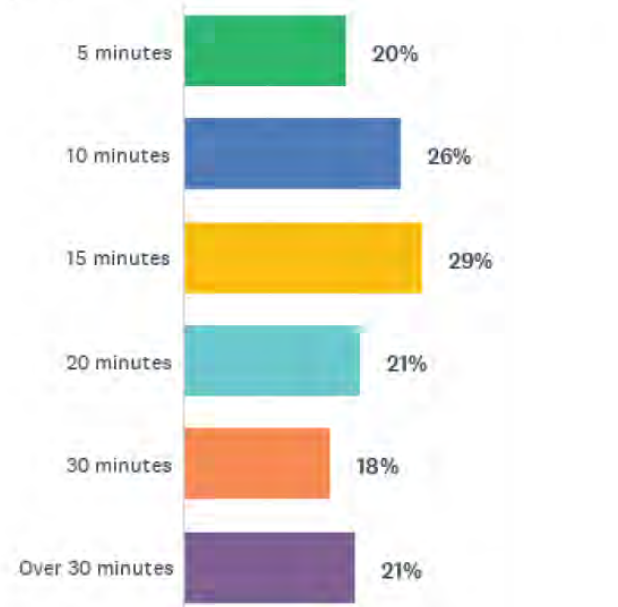


Figure 30 - Respondents willingness to walk to park facilities

Roughly a quarter of respondents are willing to walk or bike for up to 10-15 minutes to a park, and are willing to drive up to 30 minutes. Here are the top three distance respondents are willing to travel to reach parks:

- Time Willing - Walk:
 1. 15 minutes
 2. 10 minutes
 3. 5 minutes
- Time Willing - Ride a Bicycle:
 1. 30+ minutes
 2. 15 minutes
 3. 30 minutes
- Time Willing - Drive:
 1. 30 minutes
 2. 1+ hour
 3. 20 minutes

Q13: How long would you be willing to walk to a park if trails and/or bike lanes were available for your commute to that park?

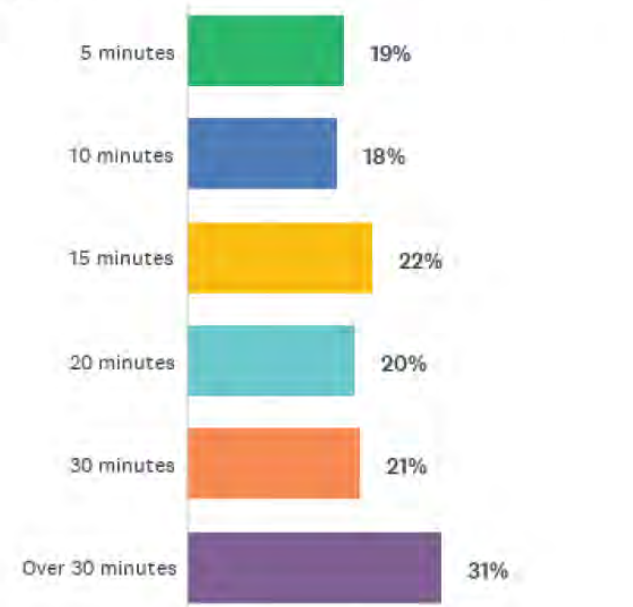


Figure 31 - Respondents willingness to bike to park facilities

Q14: How long would you be willing to drive to a community park?

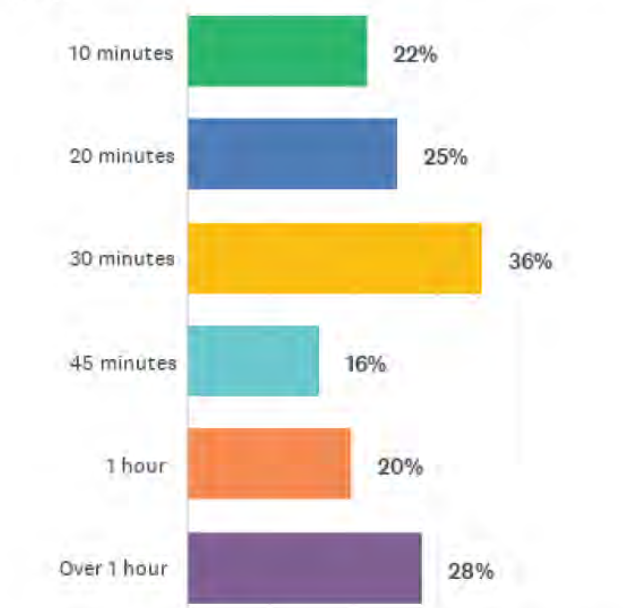


Figure 32 - Respondents willingness to drive to park facilities

RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

CONCLUSION

Engagement efforts through the website, survey, and personal contact were successful in generating public submissions and comments. Provider and resident surveys proved to be beneficial in understanding the present needs and state of outdoor recreation in Mississippi.

The provider survey solicited input on unmet recreational needs, revealing trails (hiking/biking/jogging), tennis/pickleball courts, playgrounds, splash pads, and swimming pools as top priorities. In terms of user requests, baseball/softball fields, events/festivals, and biking trails emerged as strongest, contrasting with 2019's emphasis on trails, picnic areas, and playgrounds. Notably, baseball/softball fields faced significant closures, despite high user demand. Swimming pools surpassed baseball/softball fields in closure percentage. However, facility closures and openings showed no clear correlation, with instances of simultaneous closures and openings reported.

The resident survey indicated dissatisfaction, with 69% feeling their recreational needs were unmet. Reasons included poor facility conditions (63%), lack of availability (60%), distance from facilities (36%), and high fees (11%). Priority areas for improvement, according to residents, were hiking trails, camping areas, restrooms, bicycling facilities, and fishing/kayaking spots.

Residents expressed expectations for park types at city, regional, and state levels. Specific desires varied, with a need for diverse amenities such as green spaces, sports facilities, and natural areas. Charts display residents' preferences for park types across different administrative levels.

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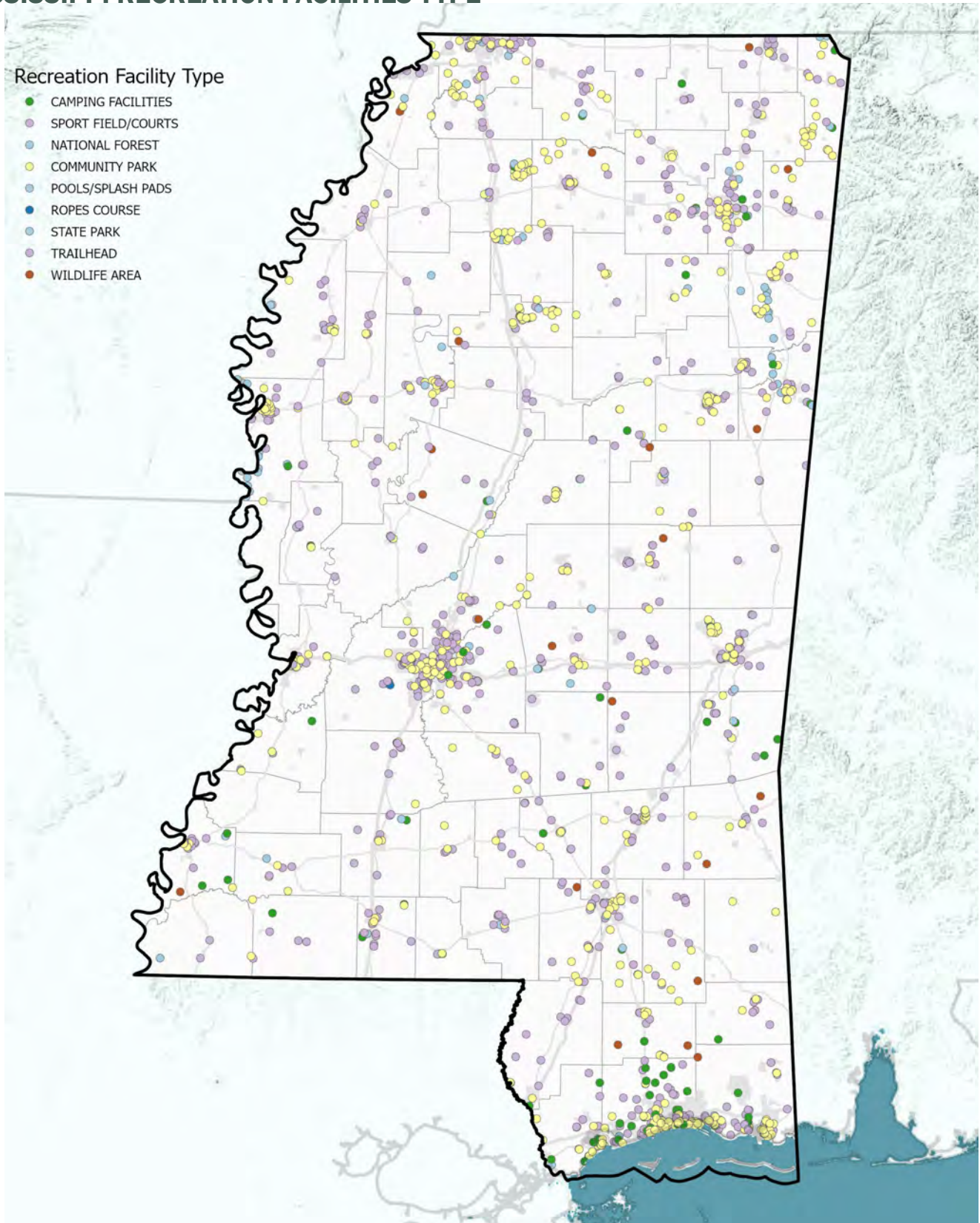
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Appendix D

ADDITIONAL CHARTS AND TABLES

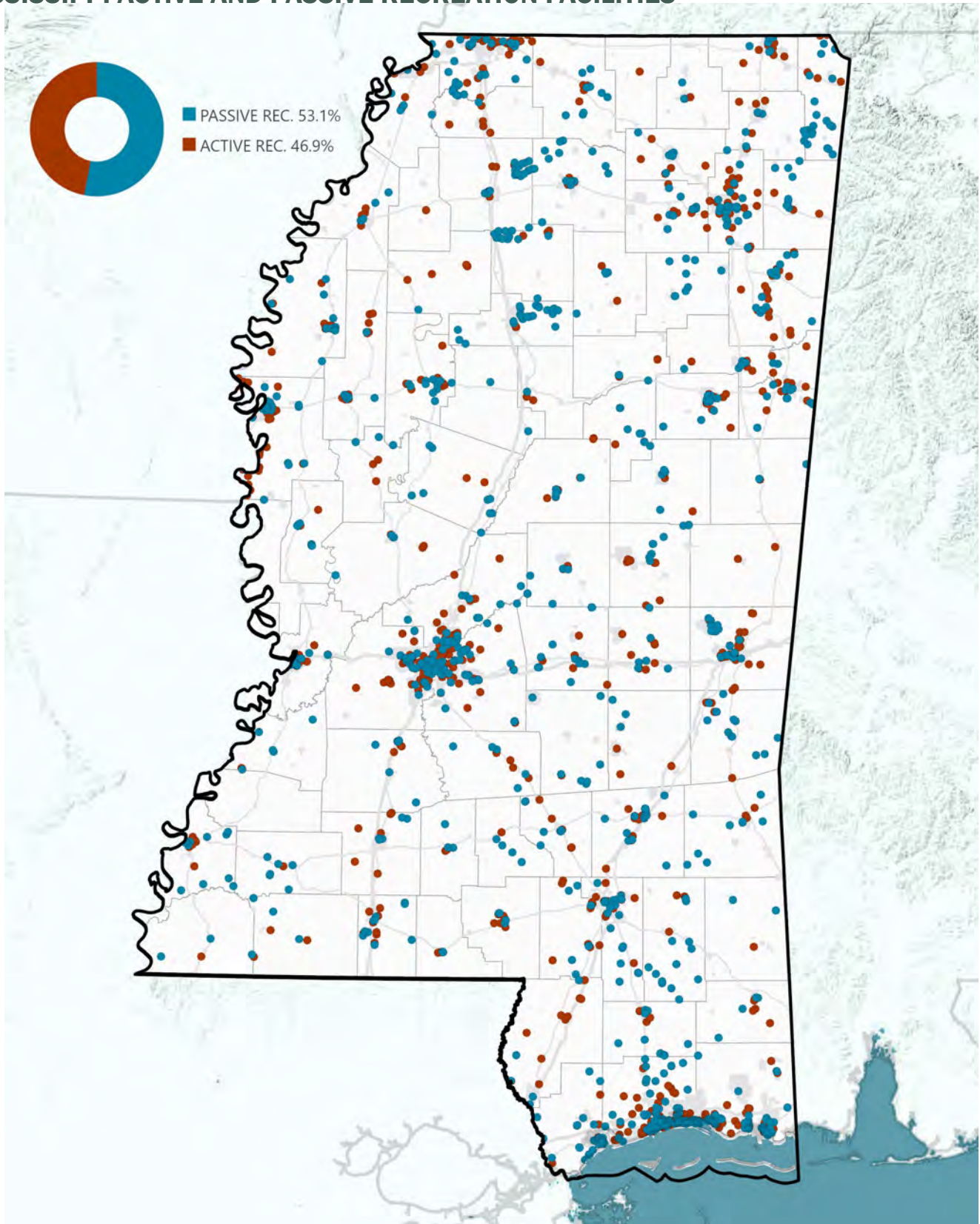
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MISSISSIPPI RECREATION FACILITIES TYPE



Data Sources:
[MARIS] MS Recreation Facilities, MS County Outlines and MS Designated Highways
[ESRI] State Outlines and Hillshade

MISSISSIPPI ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATION FACILITIES



Data Sources:
[MARIS] MS Recreation Facilities, MS County Outlines and MS Designated Highways
[ESRI] State Outlines and Hillshade

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Appendix E

OPSP MEASURED AND INCENTIVE CRITERIA

OPSP MEASURED AND INCENTIVE CRITERIA

DESCRIPTION OF SCORING CRITERIA

Measured and incentive criteria in the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) ensure that projects are evaluated and ranked based on specific measurable factors. Measured criteria are objective criteria that can be quantified and assessed to evaluate the merit and feasibility of a project. Incentive criteria are additional criteria that can provide advantages to projects that meet specific goals or objectives. These criteria are used to encourage certain desired outcomes and prioritize projects that align with the specific priorities and objectives of the SCORP. This helps guide the allocation of funding towards projects that provide the most significant conservation and recreational benefits.

Points Chart

Category	Metric	Points - Local Governments	Points - State Agencies
Measured Criteria	Income Per Capita	10	N/A
	Planning Considerations	30	15
	Maintenance	10 (-10)	10 (-10)
	Public Input	15	15
	LWCF Assistance	15	10
	Total Available (Measured)	80	50
	Incentive Criteria	Recreation Entity	2
New Recreation Opportunity		5	5
Unmet Need Index		10	10
Government Coordination		4	8
Acquisition		8	20
Multi-Use Facility		4	4
No In-Kind Match		2	N/A
Professional Services		4	4
Special Site Considerations		15	3
Accessibility		8	4
Total Available (Incentive)		62	58
Overall Total		142	108

MEASURED CRITERIA

Income per capita: 10 Points (Local Governments), N/A (State Agencies)

Points are awarded based on the income per capita of either the applicant's county or city of the project service area. The baseline for points begins at the current federal poverty level for a family of four.

INCOME PER CAPITA	
Income Per Capita	Points Awarded
\$18,719 or less	10
\$18,720 - \$21,839	8
\$21,840 - \$24,959	6
\$24,960 - \$28,079	4
\$28,080 - \$31,199	2
\$31,200 or more	0

Planning Considerations: 30 Points (Local Governments), 15 Points (State Agencies)

Compliance with SCORP: 10 Points (Local Governments)

Points are awarded for compliance with the SCORP to encourage the implementation of projects that contribute to the overall enhancement and sustainability of outdoor recreation in the state of Mississippi.

Local or Regional Recreation Plan: 10 Points (Local Governments)

Points are awarded for jurisdictions that have developed a local or regional recreation plan. A local or regional recreation plan provides a framework for the development and management of recreational resources. Jurisdictions that have developed a local or regional recreation plan demonstrate their commitment to ensuring the recreational needs of their community.

Other planning considerations: 10 Points (Local Governments)

Planning as evidenced by a capital improvement or development plan for recreation facilities resulting from citizen participation. (8-10 points)

Planning the location of a project in relation to the overall park systems, surrounding land use, accessibility to users, and proximity to primary user groups. (4-6 Points)

Compliance with SCORP: 5 Points (State Agencies)

State agencies proposing to provide specific facilities or upgrading existing facilities must be sure that the need is identified in the SCORP. The proposed project should be of statewide significance, available to all citizens, and have a definite impact on the out-of-state visitors. (Minimum requirements)

Long Range Agency Plan: 5 Points (State Agencies)

Each agency must provide a recent acquisition/development plan that specifically indicates the needs for the proposed project request. This will include site plans, facilities for development, status of project site, estimated cost, and other pertinent information. Agencies representing specifically identified sections of the state must have a regional plan that specifically identifies the need for the project request. (Regional and agency plans could be one-in-the-same.)

Capital Improvement Plans: 5 Points (State Agencies)

Evaluation of plan quality includes such consideration as completeness of community and inventory data, identification of goals, assessment of needs, rationale for establishing needs, evidence of public input, financial planning (capital improvement and operations), evidence of implementation and cohesiveness. The plan must be up to date.

Maintenance: -10/10 points

Proper maintenance ensures the preservation of recreation facilities and promotes safe and enjoyable experiences for users. Prior to the issuance of an award, ORG staff will perform an inspection of parks and facilities in the applicant's jurisdiction to determine if proper maintenance standards are upheld. This will help to ensure funded projects will be properly maintained.

If the sponsor has a LWCF funded site that is non-compliant to the point of loss of public recreation, the applicant will not be eligible to be considered for LWCF funds until compliance requirements are adequately addressed.

MAINTENANCE

Level of Maintenance	Points Awarded
Excellent Parks and recreation maintenance is of the highest quality, with well-maintained facilities and regularly scheduled inspections and maintenance. All amenities are fully functional and meet or exceed industry standards, providing a superior experience for park visitors.	6 to 10
Good Parks and recreation maintenance is generally well-executed, with regular maintenance and inspections conducted to ensure the functionality and safety of facilities. While some minor issues may be present, they are promptly addressed. Overall, the parks and recreation areas are well-kept and enjoyable for visitors	1 to 5
Average Parks and recreation maintenance is adequate, with basic upkeep and maintenance performed regularly. Facilities and amenities are generally functional but may show signs of wear and tear. While some maintenance issues may take longer to address, the overall condition of the parks and recreation areas is satisfactory for visitors.	0
Below Average Parks and recreation maintenance is below the desired standard, with noticeable signs of neglect and inadequate upkeep. Facilities may have significant maintenance issues, and amenities may be poorly maintained or non-functional. Visitors may encounter challenges or limitations in their use and enjoyment of the parks and recreation areas.	-1 to -5
Poor Parks and recreation maintenance is severely lacking, with significant neglect and a lack of regular upkeep. Facilities may be in disrepair, posing safety hazards and limiting visitor access. Amenities may be non-functional or unusable. The overall condition of the parks and recreation areas is unsatisfactory, negatively impacting the visitor experience.	-6 to -10

Degree of Citizen Participation: 15 Points

Public participation is required in the formulation of project to be eligible for LWCF funding. Points are awarded to jurisdictions that demonstrate a high level of public input throughout the design process of the proposed site. Ways to provide public input include, but are not limited to, public surveys, public meetings, and focus groups.

Public Participation	
Public Input Type	Year Established
Public Survey	5
Public Meeting(s) and/or Focus	5
Recreation Commission or Board	5

Previous LWCF Assistance: 15 Points (Local Governments), 10 Points (State Agencies)

Points are awarded based on the previous amount of LWCF funding. If an applicant has never received LWCF funding, that applicant will receive 10 points.

If an applicant has not received LWCF funding in the past five years, that applicant will receive 5 points. This time frame is measured from project completion.

INCENTIVE CRITERIA

Recreation Board or Department: 2 Points (Local Governments), N/A (State Agencies)

An established recreation board or department plans and programs recreational activities, maintains facilities and equipment, promotes community engagement, and ensures a good quality of life for residents. Points are awarded to applicants with a recreation department or commission that is responsible for planning and receiving citizen input. (Jurisdictions that do not own recreational facilities will receive full points)

New Recreational Opportunity: 5 Points

Additional Points are awarded to project applications that offer a new recreational opportunity within the jurisdiction of the applicant. This promotes more diverse recreational opportunities.

Unmet Need Index: 10 Points

Additional points are awarded to projects that incorporate the development or enhancement of facilities that address unmet needs based on the Public Survey. The table below lists all recreational needs from the public survey Question 6: 'Which activities need new or improved facilities to meet you and/or your family's needs?' and ranks them by number of responses. Calculate the total number of Unmet Demand Index points with a maximum of ten points awarded.

UNMET DEMAND INDEX			
Answer Choices	Response Rate	Rank	Unmet Need Index
Hiking and Trails	36.14%	1	5
Camping	34.54%	2	5
Restroom Facilities	24.09%	3	5
Bicycling	22.24%	4	5
Fishing (on a bank/pier)	19.12%	5	5
Canoeing, Kayaking, Rafting, Tubing	17.53%	6	4.5
Hunting, Bow Hunting	15.23%	7	4.5
Jog, Run, Walk for Exercise	14.47%	8	4.5
Swimming	13.96%	9	4.5
Disc Golf	13.83%	10	4.5
Playgrounds	13.70%	11	4
Fishing (on a boat)	13.32%	12	4
Events, Festivals, etc.	10.96%	13	4
Dog Park	10.33%	14	4
Off-Road Vehicle, ATV, Dirt Bike Riding	10.33%	14	4
Outdoor Concerts, Cultural Events	10.20%	16	3.5
Pickleball	9.24%	17	3.5
Archery	8.54%	18	3.5
Backpacking	8.41%	19	3.5
Splash Pads	8.22%	20	3.5
Boating / Sailing	7.14%	21	3
Water Parks	7.01%	22	3
Picnicking	6.69%	24	3
Target Shooting / Skeet	6.69%	24	3
Zoos	6.69%	24	3
Visit Beaches in Mississippi	6.63%	27	2.5
Health / Fitness Training	6.18%	28	2.5
Horseback Riding	5.93%	29	2.5
Bird Watching	5.29%	30	2.5
Skating / Skateboarding / Rollerblading	4.84%	31	2
Golf (9/18 Hole Course)	4.53%	32	2
Nature Photography	4.53%	32	2
Basketball	4.33%	34	2
Baseball / Softball	4.27%	35	2
Competitive Shooting	4.14%	36	1.5

UNMET DEMAND INDEX

Answer Choices	Response Rate	Rank	Unmet Need Index
Community Gardening	4.08%	37	1.5
Miniature Golf	4.08%	37	1.5
Dog Field Trails	4.02%	39	1.5
Rope Courses	3.95%	40	1.5
Rock Climbing	3.89%	41	1
Golf (Driving Range)	3.25%	42	1
Animal Training / Showing	3.12%	44	1
Tennis	2.55%	44	1
Volleyball	1.91%	45	1
Kite Flying	1.85%	46	0.5
Water Skiing, Jet Skiing	1.85%	46	0.5
Football	1.66%	48	0.5
Soccer / Lacrosse	1.53%	49	0.5
Scuba / Snorkeling	1.34%	50	0.5
Frisbee	1.21%	51	0.5
Wind Surfing, Paddle Boarding	1.08%	52	0.5
Shuffleboard	0.32%	53	0.5
Lacrosse	0.19%	54	0.5

Coordination Between Levels of Government: 4 Points (Local Governments), 8 Points (State Agencies)

Joint Use Agreement: 2 Points (Local Governments)

Additional points are awarded to jurisdictions that have a joint use agreement for the use of recreational facilities in the community. An example of an eligible joint use agreement is a city and school-board having an agreement to co-use of sports facility.

City/County Agreement: 2 Points (Local Governments), 3 Points (State Agencies)

Points are awarded for City and county facilities that are used jointly and have a written agreement.

Legislative: 5 Points (State Agencies)

Need for a specific project is mandated through legislative action. Occasions arise where the state legislature approves a statute that mandated an agency to acquire and/or develop a facility that has statewide significance and would be an asset to the citizens of the state. Funds are appropriated for such projects with a request that federal funds be secured when available.

Acquisition: 8 Points (Local Governments), 20 Points (State Agencies)

Land Contiguous to Existing Facility: 2 Points (Local Governments), 5 Points (State Agencies)

Additional points are awarded to applicants that propose the acquisition of land contiguous to an existing recreational area.

Gift of Land: 2 Points (Local Governments), 5 Points (State Agencies)

Additional points are awarded if the application receives a gift of land to be dedicated for the recreational use.

Preservation of endangered areas by acquisition: 2 Points (Local Governments), 5 Points (State Agencies)

Additional points are awarded to applicants that propose the acquisition of land to protect areas that are known to harbor endangered species.

Preservation of wetlands by acquisition: 2 Points (Local Governments), 5 Points (State Agencies)

Additional points are awarded to applicants that propose the acquisition and protection of wetlands. Refer to the wetlands priority component for more information.

Multi-use Facility: 4 Points

Additional points are awarded to projects whose scope includes the development or enhancement of recreational facilities with multiple uses.

No In-kind Match exclude acquisition donation: 2 Points (Local Governments), N/A (State Agencies)

No part of the applicant's match is comprised of in-kind match (excluding acquisition donation)

Professional Services: 4 Points

Additional points are awarded to applicants that demonstrate the inclusion of professional consultant services (engineer, architect, landscape architect, etc) in the preliminary design phase of the project.

Special Site Considerations: 15 Points (Local Governments), 3 Points (State Agencies)

Underserved Populations: 10 Points (Local Governments), 2 Points (State Agencies)

Additional points are awarded to applicants that propose the development or enhancement of recreational facilities in an area with predominately underserved populations including minority, elderly and disabled. The award will be allocated based on the applicant's adequate documentation and affirmative response that the proposed development will benefit an underserved community.

Enhancement of and Existing Site: 5 Points (Local Governments), 1 Point (State Agencies)

Additional points are awarded to applicants that proposed the enhancement of an existing recreational amenity.

Accessibility: 8 Points (Local Governments), 4 Points (State Agencies)

Accessible Design: 4 Points (Local Governments), 2 Points (State Agencies)

Additional points are awarded to applicants that demonstrate a clear focus on inclusive and universal design.

Retrofitting Existing Facilities: 4 Points (Local Governments), 2 Points (State Agencies)

Additional points are awarded to applicants that propose retrofitting existing facilities to accommodate accessibility.

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