Historical, Cultural and Natural Resources Management Plan

Summary: The Greenville County Parks, Recreation and Tourism Historical, Cultural and Natural Resources Management Plan was developed in 2010 to serve as a general guide for managing the natural, historic and cultural resources associated with the park system. These guidelines serve to set the standards expected for the various types of resources and should be interpreted considering the situation for their application.

In general, the Department’s park land falls into two categories: land that is mowed turf grass and land that is natural forest. It is the mission of the Department to protect and enhance these resources. Public input into the management practices of the Department is encouraged.

The Plan is a work in progress. As the Department’s resource management progresses, new perspectives, information, threats and opportunities occur; the plan will need to be revisited and adjusted. An annual review of the plan is recommended for September and October.

Goals:
- Improve the quality of the experience for visitors to GCPRT parks by enhancing the quality of the natural resources.
- Protect, restore and enhance historical and cultural resources.
- Protect, restore and enhance native vegetation that was on the landscape during the pre-settlement era (Circa 1670).
- Restore, protect and enhance native wildlife populations.
- Carefully balance recreational use with environmental responsibility and sustainability.
- Maintain a natural look to parkland not included in active use areas, emphasizing a pre-settlement visual quality.
- Protect endangered, threatened, and special concern vegetation and wildlife species.
- Protect and enhance viewsheds and scenic vistas and drives.

Historical, Cultural and Natural Resource Land Types:
1. Activity Lawns and Athletic Fields
2. Other Park Turf Grass Area
3. Park Entrances and Scenic Drives
4. Natural Area  
5. Protected Environmental Areas  
6. Non Park Land and Unusable Areas  

**Natural Resource Management Activities:**  
1. Tree planting, pruning, feeding, watering and removal  
2. Turf grass planting, amending, watering, mowing and weed control  
3. Other plant materials and native versus nonnative vegetation  
4. Disease and pest controls  
5. Surface water, retention ponds, lakes, streams and wetlands  
6. Soil erosion  
7. Wildlife management and habitat enhancement  
8. View sheds and scenic vistas  
9. Environmental and Interpretative Education  
10. Historic or Cultural Sites  
11. Park Patrols, User Safety and Security and operational activities  
12. Research and User Input  

**Recommended Natural Resource Management Activities by Land Type:**  

1. **Activity Lawns and Athletic Fields:**  

1.1 Tree care is essential to provide a balance between shade for user comfort and sun to grow high quality turf. All aspects of tree care (pruning, feeding, mulching, watering and removal) must be utilized to grow quality trees in the right places. Native hardwood trees are preferred.  

1.2 Complete turf grass care is essential and the top priority activity. To offset the wear and tear from high use, all aspects of turf maintenance must be employed. These include proper establishment, replacement, irrigation, soil amending, fertilization, weed control and mowing.  

1.3 Other vegetation in or adjoining activity lawns and athletic fields must be of the correct species, location and to serve a purpose such as: for beautification, screening, controlling pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Native plants are preferred but not required. Invasive plants can not be used in these areas. The aspects of care are the same as tree care in 1.1.  

1.4 Disease and pest controls are a necessary aspect of property maintenance and protection of the natural resources. All natural non invasive methods should be utilized before the minimum non natural methods are utilized. The goal is to utilize as few chemicals as possible.  

1.5 Generally issues with surface water, retention ponds, lakes, stream and wetlands do not exist in activity lawn and athletic field areas. If they are adjoining they should be treated as closely as natural areas as possible. See #4 Natural Areas
1.6 Soil erosion should never occur in activity lawns or athletic fields or in the immediate adjoining areas. If erosion occurs it must be immediately repaired to the standard of the area.

1.7 Wildlife management and habitat enhancement activities are not part of the turf grass management program.

1.8 View sheds and vistas should be considered and enhanced. Open turf grass areas provide an excellent venue. Maintaining adjoining vegetative growth to keep vistas from becoming blocked by maturing vegetation but allowing growth to block vista detractions.

1.9 Environmental and interpretative education activities can utilize activity lawns and athletic fields as long as they do not harm the natural resources.

1.10 If an activity lawn or athletic field is a historic or cultural site (Shoeless Joe Jackson baseball field) or adjoins a historic or cultural site an educational display is appropriate.

1.11 Park Patrols, User Safety and Operational Activities are very important in activity lawn and athletic field areas. Protection of the natural resources, proper maintenance and elimination of hazards are the three key activities.

1.12 Research and user input are important to GCPRT’s ability to provide quality services and facilities. Since activity lawn and athletic field areas are the most expensive to develop and maintain, it is important that these areas be productive for the park users.

2. Other Turf Grass Areas:

2.1 Trees in turf grass areas are important to the parks appearance and function. Native hardwood trees are preferred and along with the correct species and location for accent trees that are not native. The two required functions are proper pruning and removal of hazards.

2.2 Turf grass care is limited to mowing and reestablishment when necessary. All other maintenance aspects will be utilized only when necessary to protect the natural resources. Turf grass areas are encouraged around park facilities (picnic shelters, parking lots, buildings) for reasons including fire protection and visitor safety. Establish permanent precise boundaries between turf grass areas and wild land vegetation area to reduce weed control requirements. Proper mowing height is important to reduce the need for other turf grass maintenance functions.

2.3 Other vegetation – See 1.3
Additionally, strips of adjoining vegetation should be maintained when possible to form vegetative corridors for wildlife travel routes around the open turf grass areas.

2.4 Disease and Pest Control – See 1.4

2.5 Water Related Issues – See 1.5

2.6 Soil erosion is the enemy of turf grass areas and must be repaired in an appropriate manner and timeframe as determined by the situation. Cost effectiveness and use of the area should be balanced.

2.7 If appropriate for the turf grass area, wildlife management and habitat enhancement methods and techniques can be utilized.

2.8 View sheds and Vistas – See 1.8

2.9 Environmental and Interpretative Education Activities – See 1.9

2.10 Historic or Cultural Sites – See 1.10

2.11 Park Patrols, User Safety and Operational Activities – See 1.11

2.12 Research and user input are important to GCPRT’s ability to provide quality services and facilities.

3. Park Entrances and Scenic Drives:

3.1 Trees – See 2.1

3.2 Quality turf grass areas at and adjoining the park entrances and scenic drives are important to give the park user a positive impression of the parks and GCPRT. The maintenance activities are similar to #1.2

3.3 Other Vegetation – See 1.3

3.4 Disease and pest control – See 1.4

3.5 Water related issues – See 1.5

3.6 Soil erosion – See 1.6

3.7 Wildlife management and habitat enhancement – See 2.7

3.8 View sheds and vistas – See 1.8
3.9 Environmental and interpretative education activities – See 1.8

3.10 Historic or Cultural sites – See 1.10

3.11 Park patrols, user safety and operational activities – See 1.11

3.12 Research and user input – See 2.12

4. Natural Areas:

4.1 Tree Care in natural areas is limited to: elimination of hazards and harmful non-native plants, timber removal, reforestation, and disease and pest control. There should be as little enhancement and maintenance activities as possible to keep the area natural.

4.2 Turf grass areas do not naturally occur in GCPRT natural areas. Natural areas in the GCPRT parks have complete mature tree canopy shading out any native grasses. Open bodies of water and large exposed rock and escarpment areas may have native grasses and they should be considered protected environmental areas.

4.3 Other vegetation that is not native should be eliminated if it can be cost effective.

4.4 Disease and pest control – See 1.4

4.5 Water related issues in natural areas should be left alone unless there is a hazard to park users. Wildlife habitat enhancement is an acceptable function for the appropriate situation.

4.6 Soil erosion in natural areas should be left alone unless there is a hazard to park users, park facilities or there is siltation into wetlands, streams or protected environmental areas.

4.7 Wildlife management and habitat enhancement are acceptable functions in natural areas as long as they are appropriate for the situation. Feral animals shall be removed as necessary.

4.8 View sheds and vistas may require that vegetation in natural areas be controlled to maintain the view. Pruning and removal are acceptable.

4.9 Environmental and interpretative education activities are appropriate activities for natural areas and should be encouraged as long as they do not harm the natural resources.
4.10 Historic or cultural sites in natural areas should be protected. Where appropriate historic interpretative education displays can be provided as long as they do not harm the natural resources.

4.11 Park patrols, user safety and operational activities are important in natural areas to protect the natural resources. Park patrols are utilized to protect the natural resources. User safety in natural areas is dependent on the user’s abilities and their activity and therefore GCPRT cannot ensure their safety. All facilities built by GCPRT in natural areas; primarily trail; must be built to national standards. Operational activities are limited to elimination of hazards that affect park facilities, removal of litter and necessary maintenance functions to protect the natural resources.

4.12 Research and user input – See 2.12

5. Protected Environmental Areas:

General Statement: The Department shall resist by all appropriate means, including legal action, any attempt by any public agency, group or individual to destroy or encroach upon any historical, cultural and protected environmental area. The Department considers its role as a public trust for the protection of such areas and resources.

5.1 Tree care is limited to removal of hazards that may negatively impact park users and facilities. Removal of non native trees is appropriate. Down and dead trees should not be removed but can be cleared from trails.

5.2 Turf grass does not naturally grow in GCPRT protected environmental areas.

5.3 Other vegetation that is not native shall be removed. Introduction of appropriate endangered and threatened species is allowed under state and federal permitted activity.

5.4 Only natural methods and techniques can be used in protected environmental areas. Of special concern will be the removal of pests like beavers that can have a major negative impact on an environmental sensitive area.

5.5 Water related issues – See 4.5

5.6 Soil erosion – See 4.6

5.7 Wildlife management and habitat enhancement – See 4.7

5.8 View sheds and vistas from within a protected environmental areas should not be enhanced by removal or pruning of native plants within the protected area. But
vegetation outside the protected area that hinders the vista from within the protected area can and should be pruned and removed.

5.9 Environmental and interpretive education activities – See 4.9

5.10 Historic or Cultural sites – See 4.10

5.11 Park patrols, user safety, and operational activities must be kept to a minimum in protected environmental areas. The public’s use of these protected areas should be considered carefully and in some cases the public will not be allowed access into protected areas.

5.12 Research and user input – See 2.12

6. Non Park Land and Unusable Areas:

6.1 Tree work is limited to removing hazards that may impact park users or adjoining private property.

6.2 No turf grass maintenance activities will occur in these areas.

6.3 No vegetative maintenance activities will occur in these areas, except to remove public hazards or problems for adjoining properties.

6.4 No disease or pest controls will be used in these areas, except to remove public hazards or problems for adjoining properties.

6.5 Water related issues – See 4.5

6.6 Soil erosion – See 4.6

6.7 No wildlife management or habitat enhancement activities should occur in the areas.

6.8 View sheds and vistas should be protected and enhanced if necessary by vegetative pruning and removal. It should be kept to a minimum.

6.9 No environmental or interpretative educational activities should occur in these areas unless there are programmed benefits for park users.

6.10 Historic or Cultural sites – See 4.10

6.11 Park Patrols, user safety and operational activities should be kept to a minimum with the mission being to protect the park user or adjoining properties.

6.12 Research and User Input – See 2.12
Historic, Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan

Historic/Cultural Properties within the park system:

1. Blythe Goodwin Hagood House - structure
2. Campbell’s Covered Bridge Historic Site – structure
3. Cedar Falls Park – two dams and ruins
4. David Jackson Park - grave
5. Herdklotz Park – ruins
6. Lake Conestee - dam
7. Pelham Mill Historic Site – dam and office
8. Pleasant Ridge Park - site
9. Poinsett Bridge - bridge
10. Shoeless Joe Jackson Memorial Park - site
11. Slater Hall – structure
12. Sterling Community Center - structure
13. Swamp Rabbit Trail – railroad bed

Natural Water Resources in the park system:

1. Bushy Creek Soccer Complex – Brushy Creek
2. Campbell’s Cover Bridge – Beaverdam Creek
3. Cedar Falls Park – Reedy River (2-stone/concrete dams)
4. Conestee Park – Reedy River
5. Corey Burns Park – Enoree River
6. East Riverside Park – Enoree River
7. Jenkins Bridge Rd. River Access – Reedy River
8. Lake Holiday – Mountain Stream (earthen dam)
10. MeSA Soccer Complex – Retention and Irrigation Pond
11. Oak Grove Lake – Unnamed Creek (earthen dam)
12. Pavilion Recreation Complex – Brushy Creek
13. Pelham Mill Historic Site – Enoree River (stone/concrete dam)
14. Pleasant Ridge Park – Lake and Mt. Streams, head waters of the Saluda Watershed (earthen dam)
15. Poinsett Bridge – Callahan Mt. Stream
16. Riverbend Park – Reedy River
17. Swamp Rabbit Trail – Reedy River