

## Message from the Director

The benefits of parks and recreation can be a walk in the woods. It can be the sense of exhilaration for the child who hits the ball with a bat for the very first time. It can be the positive feeling of exhaustion that volunteers feel at the end of the day. Or it might be the sense of connection people feel when gathered with others to enjoy a fireworks display. So, whether you are an avid participant or occasional observer of parks and recreation, enjoy the benefits. Explore the links in this section to learn more about Asheville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts.



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## Asheville Parks & Recreation Department Overview

Open spaces, parks, recreation and cultural arts provide opportunities for living, learning and leading a full and productive life. Parks and recreation benefit individuals and neighborhoods while having a positive impact on economic growth and environmental preservation. Asheville Parks and Recreation maintains 54 public parks, 6 miles of greenways, 11 community centers, numerous programs for youth, seniors and outdoor enthusiasts, a comprehensive athletics program, and many facilities that provide resources for a range of activities.

Department staff are available to speak to community groups on a variety of topics. These may include: Park Planning and Development, Recreation Programs, and Senior Programs, to name a few. To request a speaker call us at 828-259-5800 or email us at [parks@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:parks@ashevillenc.gov). Please be specific in your request and provide at least a month of lead time for staff to adjust their schedules accordingly.

## Partnerships

Asheville Parks and Greenways Foundation  
Friends of the Nature Center

## Other Park Systems Historic Sites in the Asheville Region

Blue Ridge Parkway  
Buncombe County Parks, Greenways & Recreation  
National Parks Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
NC State Parks

## **Vision & Master Plan**

The City of Asheville Parks, Recreation, Cultural Arts and Greenways Master Plan was completed in 2009 to guide how the City provides these services over the next several years. For information about the master plan contact the City of Asheville Parks & Recreation Department at (828) 259-5800 or [parks@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:parks@ashevillenc.gov).

## **Master Plan Documents:**

Asheville FINAL Report  
Asheville FINAL Executive Summary  
2013 Greenway Master Plan Updates with Map

## **Appendices:**

Appendix I Demographics and Trends  
Appendix II Focus Groups Summary  
Appendix III Cost Recovery Pyramid Methodology  
Appendix IV GRASP History and Methodology  
Appendix V Asheville Park and Facility Inventory and GRASP A  
Appendix VII Alternative Funding  
Appendix VIII Sample Partnership Policy  
Appendix IX Sample Sponsorship Policy  
Appendix X Example Park Development Menu List and Walkability  
Appendix XI Description of Parks

## **Maps:**

Map A Asheville Regional  
Perspective A Neighborhood Access to Components  
Perspective B Walkable Access to Components  
Perspective C Neighborhood Access Indoor Facilities  
Perspective D Neighborhood Access Parks & Outdoor Facilities  
Perspective E Neighborhood Access Trails  
Recommendation Map  
Resource Map B System Inventory Map  
Resource Map C Sub Area Map  
Greenways Recommendation Map



## **Department History**

The City of Asheville began park and recreation services in the late 1890s with the construction of Riverside, Montford and Aston Parks. Shortly after, Recreation Park, McCormick Field and the Municipal Golf Course were added to the system. With a growing park system, the City developed the Parks and Playgrounds Division under the Public Works Department.

Augusta L. Barnett was appointed the first director of the Parks and Recreation Department in 1956. Although Barnett made significant improvements to recreation programs, she did not have the luxury of having quality facilities, and was forced to use schools and YMCA facilities to house programs.

After Barnett's retirement in 1971, Ray L. Kisiah became the director. During his tenure, Parks and Recreation experienced tremendous growth due to the abundance of federal funds to support public parks and recreation facilities throughout the United States. In all, over \$5.2 million of non-city funds renovated existing facilities and built new ones.

Kisiah retired in 1995 and Irby Brinson was named director. In 1994, Parks and Recreation became the first municipal recreation department to receive national accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies and was re-accredited in 2004.

In 1997, Parks and Recreation began upgrading Asheville's parks and recreation system by developing the first long-range comprehensive master plan, the Asheville Parks and Recreation 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan and the Asheville Greenways Master Plan in 1998. Both serve as the guide to improvements to existing facilities and addition of new, greenway development, land acquisition, expansion of services and staff, and development of funding opportunities.

The National Recreation and Parks Association named Asheville Parks and Recreation the Gold Medal winner in 2002. Top-notch departments from around the country vie for the award each year in four different categories based on population size.

In 2005, the City of Asheville received significant recreation facilities from Buncombe County as part of the water agreement negotiations. The Municipal Golf Course, Nature Center, McCormick Field, Aston Park and Recreation Park joined the Asheville Parks and Recreation family.