

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of County Commissioners

From: Paul Laughton, Deputy Director, Finance and Administrative Services

Date: May 21, 2013

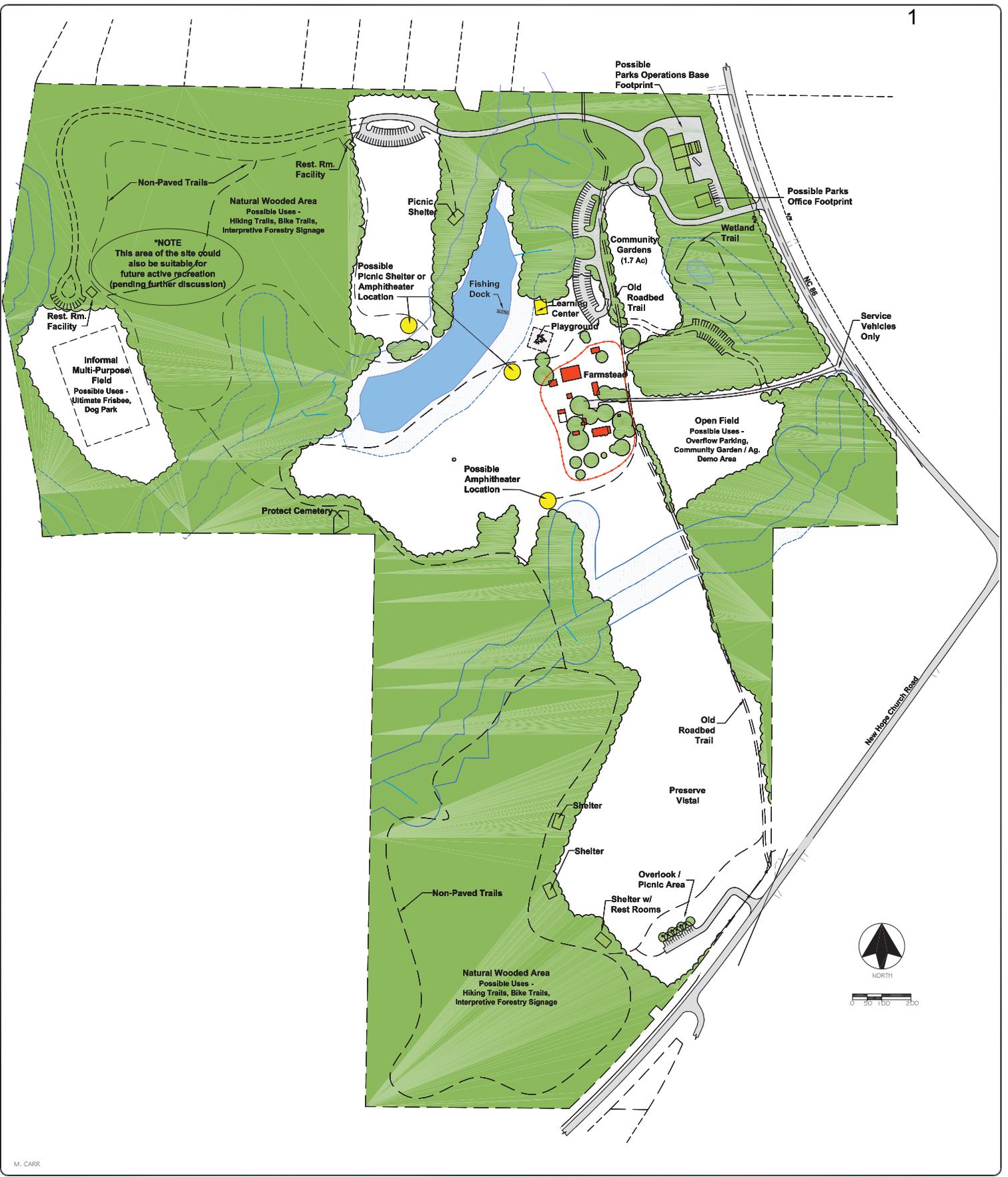
Re: Master Plan for Blackwood Farm Park

At the May 9, 2013 Capital Investment Plan (CIP) work session, the Board of County Commissioners requested staff to provide Commissioners a copy of the Master Plan for the Blackwood Farm Park.

Attached please find Attachment E (as mentioned on the May 23, 2013 agenda abstract) that will be part of the CIP discussion for the May 23rd meeting, following the Public Hearing.

The Master Plan was conveyed to the Board of County Commissioners in May 2008 as an informational item. It was reviewed at an April 2010 work session, and approved at a regular meeting on March 3, 2011.

Please feel free to contact Clarence Grier at 919-245-2453, or Paul Laughton at 919-245-2152 with any questions.



M. CARR

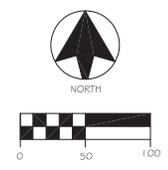


"Future" Blackwood Farm Park

Adopted Master Plan

March 3, 2011

Enlarged Northeast Area of: "Future" Blackwood Farm Park



Option 1 Location

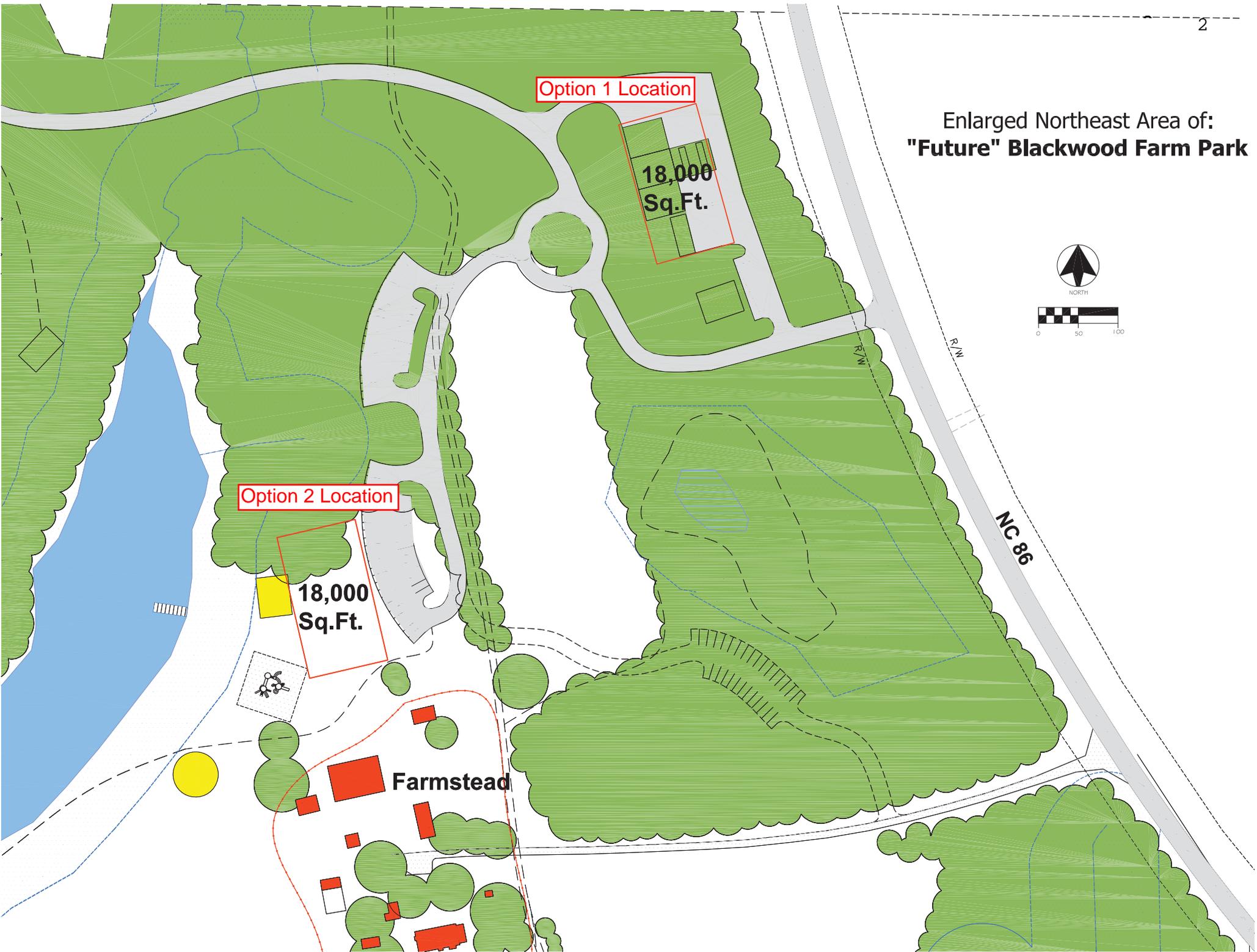
18,000
Sq.Ft.

Option 2 Location

18,000
Sq.Ft.

Farmstead

NC 86





New Hope Park at Blackwood Farm

*Master Plan Committee
Report*

May 31, 2007

**New Hope Park at Blackwood Farm
Master Plan Committee**

Tom Allison

Keith Coleman

Denise Dickinson

Spence Dickinson

Alice Gordon (County Commissioner)

Sally Goerner

Geoffrey Hathaway

Barry Jacobs (County Commissioner)

Bill Kaiser

Joel Knight

Anne Loeb

Whit Morrow

Trish Rafalow

Holly Reid

Staff: David Stancil, Marabeth Carr, Lori Taft, Dianne Reid, Fletcher Barber, Paul Thames, Perdita Holtz, Dan Derby, Tina Moon, Rich Shaw

I. Background

In late 2001, Orange County's Lands Legacy Program acquired a 152-acre tract of land in northern Chapel Hill Township, bordering NC 86 and New Hope Church Road, for a future park site. This acquisition culminated several months of negotiations with the Blackwood family trustees, owners of the property. By 2001, the two surviving children of Herbert and Alice Blackwood, Nannie and Mary Blackwood¹, were both in their eighties and the family was looking to sell the property. The opportunity to sell the land for a future County park was embraced by the family, and the land was acquired.

Human History of the Site

This land has been farmed since the mid- to late-1700s by some of the early European settlers of Orange County. This area was settled by Scots-Irish and German immigrants, who by 1745 had arrived in what was to become Orange County. After a brief period living in the Hawfields area (now Alamance County), members of six families—among them the Strayhorns and the Blackwoods—purchased land along a creek of the Haw River system, which they named “New Hope Creek.”

According to deed research, the Strayhorn family has been associated with the property as early as 1817, and it is likely that Samuel Strayhorn was responsible for the construction of the earliest portion of the house dating to 1827. The farm was later owned by William F. Strayhorn (Samuel's son) and his heirs.

Herbert and Alice Blackwood purchased the farm from Mary Strayhorn Berry and her husband Dr. John Berry in 1906, and operated a dairy (along with their eight children) until their deaths in 1958-59. According to Nannie Blackwood, from whom the County purchased the property, the family raised corn, wheat, sweet potatoes and cotton. They took milk, butter, eggs, and vegetables to sell in Durham until the 1950s. Most agricultural activities were phased out by the 1980s, and for the past 20 years or more farming on this site has been limited to hay production.

Purpose and Characteristics of the Site

Orange County's purchase of the Blackwood Farm was to protect this historic and scenic farm property for a future park site in a location (the New Hope/University Station area) that was consistent with the County's recreation and parks master plan and strategically located between Hillsborough and Chapel Hill. The stated intent at the time of acquisition was to provide for a park that was primarily low-impact recreation (trails, picnic areas) in nature, retaining components of the natural, scenic, agricultural and historic character of the farm.

¹ Both Blackwood sisters have since passed away, in 2005 and 2006.

In 2006, the Board of Commissioners decided to create a master plan for the future park, and appointed a committee to develop a proposed plan.



New Hope Park at Blackwood Farm
Figure 1. Aerial Map

Legend

-  Streams
 -  New Hope Park at Blackwood Farm
- 2003 Orthophoto

 0 220 440 Feet

Orange County
Environment & Resource
Conservation Department
MNJ 5/29/07



II. Site Analysis / Opportunities & Constraints Report

In order to adequately develop a master plan for the site, it is helpful to understand the context, setting and resources that exist on the property. To this end, an Opportunities and Constraints Report was created that explored the natural and cultural setting of the property, its history, and the challenges and opportunities that will be found in designing a park. Prior to this report, three surveys were conducted in July-September 2006 to specifically assess certain attributes and resources. These were:

- A biological resources assessment, to evaluate the flora and fauna of the site along with other natural resources,
- A cultural/archaeological survey, to explore and evaluate the historic and archaeological resources present, and
- A topographic/tree location survey, to provide detailed information about the lay of the land and all trees of 18-inch caliper and greater (for future design purposes).

This section summarizes the findings in the Opportunities and Constraints Report, which in turn used the findings of the three surveys. (The full report is provided as Appendix 1).

Most of the original farm remains intact with the old farmhouse and outbuildings surrounded by agricultural fields and mature woodlands. Some of the rural character and setting was compromised by the construction of NC 86 in the early 1950s and Interstate 40 in the early 1990s. The land was not actively farmed after the 1980s, other than hay production by a nearby farmer. Despite those changes, the general character of the neighborhood remains much as it was over the past century.

From a planning and zoning perspective, the property is located within the Orange County-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Joint Planning Area, inside the *Rural Buffer* that surrounds Chapel Hill and Carrboro on the north and west. Surrounding land uses include New Hope Church Road to the south, NC 86 to the east (across from New Hope Elementary School), a large-lot residential subdivision to the north, and Interstate 40 and a large undeveloped tract to the west.

The 152-acre site is a mixture of woodland and open farm fields, on which hay continues to be grown. The old Chapel Hill-Hillsborough Road ran directly in front of the farmhouse and is still clearly visible as a sunken travel way traversing the property from south to north. The original house (ca 1827) has been remodeled many times over the generations. Several farm outbuildings remain, including a large barn, smokehouse, milking shed, corncrib and garage.

In terms of natural resources, around half of the existing vegetation on the property is mixed-age hardwoods, part of which includes an identified Natural

Heritage site, the “New Hope Church Road Basic Forest,” in the southwest corner of the property. Another portion of woodlands to the northwest was planted in pine around 20 years ago. Two unnamed streams flow through the property and separate farm fields and forests, with one of the streams feeding a three-acre pond. A wetland “seep” also exists along the eastern edge of the site, north of the existing driveway entrance from NC 86.

The cultural and archaeological survey identified and evaluated significant cultural resources located on the property so that they will be protected from development and available for future interpretation of the site.

The survey identified six previously unrecorded archaeological sites, including the historic roadbed, the building complex and cemetery, and five “high probability” areas. A summary of the survey findings and report recommendations is provided as Appendix 2.

Two sites were determined to be “potentially eligible” for the National Register of Historic Places. The first site, a ceramic scatter, is located north of the large pond, near the northern property boundary. The second site is the former Chapel Hill-Hillsborough roadbed.

In addition to the archaeological sites and cultural landscape features, such as agricultural field terracing, the report states that the entire Blackwood Farm property may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because its “rural historic” and/or “historic vernacular” landscape is representative of the type of farms operating in Orange County during the early-twentieth century, many of which are no longer extant or have lost most of their landscape features due to commercial and or residential development.

Challenges and Opportunities

When Orange County acquired the Blackwood Farm property in 2001 the site was envisioned as a future park with a combination of recreational and educational uses. The County determined that portions of the forest and open land (agricultural fields) could support a variety of low-impact activities without compromising the more historic features of the property (farmstead, old roadway and scenic vistas) and the more significant natural features including the New Hope Basic Forest natural area.

The historic house and farm structures provide unusual opportunities and challenges. The house could, with substantial upgrades, be used for a variety of purposes. The restored farm buildings could include exhibits and demonstration areas showing traditional farming practices from the region. Interpretive signs could describe the old stagecoach road, the farmstead, and traditional farming practices that have occurred on this site (and surrounding areas).

Some of the agricultural fields could continue to be used for production of hay and/or row crops, and the possibility for smaller garden plots may exist, perhaps using old farm equipment to demonstrate traditional farming techniques.

The pond, woods, meadows and natural areas could be used for outdoor recreation programming and environmental study. Examples of potential programs include birding, pond study, wildlife discovery, reptiles and amphibians, butterflies and caterpillars, natural composters, and ecological landscaping. Facilities supporting such programs would serve to foster a greater understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the natural world through environmental education.

The Opportunities and Constraints Report listed the following specific opportunities and constraints/challenges for consideration by the group created to develop a master plan. Please note that some items are listed under *both* categories.

Opportunities:

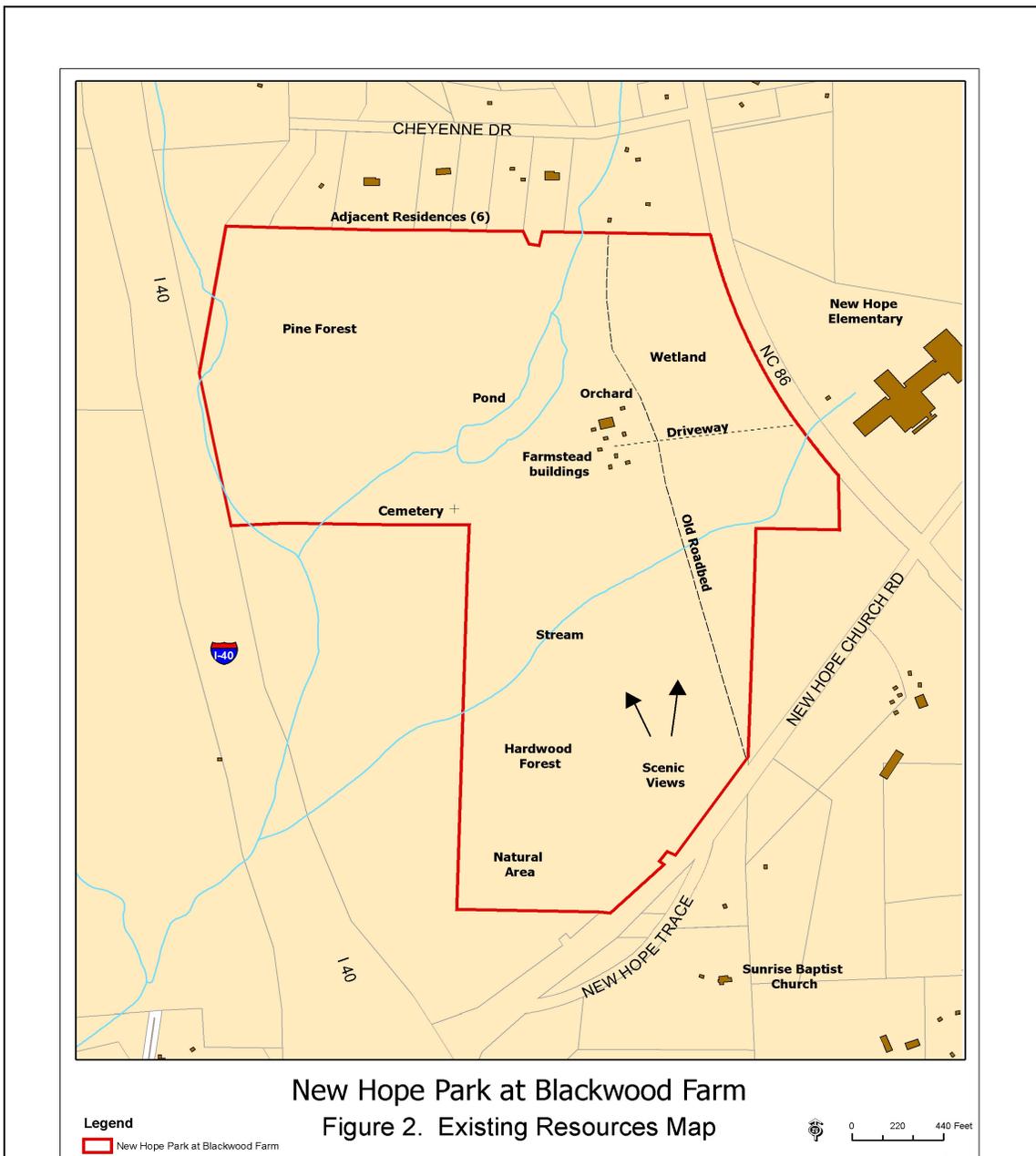
1. Access – The site is directly between the two largest population centers in Orange County, and is highly accessible via NC 86, New Hope Church Road and is close to I-40 interchange (exit 263). A TTA bus between Hillsborough and Chapel Hill runs right by the entrance.
2. Rural Setting / Scenic Views – the setting has remained largely unchanged for several decades (I-40 and NC 86 notwithstanding), and has several scenic vistas.
3. Proximity to other Facilities – Nearby facilities include New Hope Elementary School, A.L. Stanback Middle School, Camp New Hope, the future Durham Technical Community College satellite campus, and two churches.
4. Existing Structures – A farm building complex is clustered at the end of the existing driveway (former residence and outbuildings that could serve a variety of uses). All of the structures are in need of improvements prior to being available for future use.
5. Old Roadbed (former Hillsborough-Chapel Hill road) – The former road is a significant cultural resource, suitable for protection and interpretation.
6. Cemetery – The old cemetery, possibly with the remains of former slaves, is a significant cultural resource, suitable for protection and interpretation.
7. Historic and Archaeological Sites – The information gathered from the sites identified by the survey can be used to interpret the property and the

- surrounding areas. These sites should be protected and available for further research.
8. Orchard – The old orchard is an asset to the farmstead, and could be revitalized for educational and interpretation purposes.
 9. Pond – The large pond is a visual asset to the farmstead, and could be used for educational, interpretive and possibly recreational (fishing or canoeing) purposes.
 10. Mature Hardwood Forest – Many of the forested areas are suitable for nature trails, environmental education, and other low-impact uses. Perimeter forest areas will also help to buffer adjacent properties from future park activities.
 11. Pine Forest – The pine forest located in the northwest section of the property is in need of some management (e.g., thinning), but would be suitable for low-impact recreational uses.
 12. Natural Area – the southwest corner of the property includes a state-recognized natural area, which should be preserved in its natural state. Nature trails would not compromise the natural area, as long as they are properly designed and maintained. Signage restricting access to the area may be needed.

Constraints:

1. Existing Driveway – The current entrance road from NC 86 leads directly to the historic farmstead area and was built atop a narrow “causeway” of fill materials with steep banks on both sides. The width allows passage of one vehicle at a time. This driveway will likely not be adequate as a park entrance. The existing entrance could be retained as a service road.
2. Adjacent Residences (northern boundary) – There are six existing homes adjacent to the north. Design of the park and its facilities should take this into consideration.
3. Scenic Views – Sections of the property are highly notable for their scenic views of the farmstead area and agricultural fields, but this also makes them less likely as candidates for other uses.
4. Historic and Archaeological Resources – The cultural and archaeological survey identified a number of significant resources and “high-probability areas” that should be protected. The County may wish to pursue additional survey work on these “high-probability areas” prior to the final design.

5. Existing Structures – State Building Code requirements may restrict the use of some or all of the existing structures. The extensive renovation work required for some potential uses may be cost prohibitive. While the County continues its stabilization and maintenance work, it may wish to develop a long-term preservation plan for re-using the existing buildings and phasing the cost of the work over several budget years.
6. Natural Area – It is important to keep all activities outside of the identified natural area, except for properly designed nature trails with signage.
7. Streams – Two perennial streams and several intermittent feeder streams flow through the park property. A 65-foot-wide undisturbed buffer is required along both sides of the streams.
8. Noise – Traffic noise from Interstate 40 should be considered when designing facilities and activities on the property, especially in the westernmost portions of the property.



III. Committee Meetings and the Design Process

In May 2006, the Orange County Board of Commissioners appointed a 14-member citizen committee to develop a master plan for the future park site. The New Hope Park at Blackwood Farm Master Plan Committee included representatives from agricultural, recreation, historic, educational, economic and other interests.

Prior to the committee’s appointment, a process for the master plan, a preliminary concept plan, and a charge to the committee had been adopted in March 2006.

The adopted process and charge included instructions to the committee as well as operating principles for the master plan design, which were used by the committee in creating this plan. The adopted process and charge along with Preliminary Concept Plan are provided as Appendix 3.

Between September 2006 and April 2007, the committee met on seven occasions to create the master plan. In addition, the committee participated in site walks of the property; site visits to two other parks in Wake and Alamance counties, and an information sharing email list-serve. Representatives from the Orange County School Board also participated in some of the meetings.

The following table provides additional detail about the committee’s activities:

Date of Meeting	Activities
September 18, 2006	Initial committee meeting. Report on cultural/archaeological, biological and topo/tree survey findings. “Opportunities and Constraints” report on the site presented. Site visits planned
Late-September, 2006	Site walks of the property held for committee members.
October 6, 2006	Site visits to Blue Jay Point Park (Wake County) and Cedarrock Park (Alamance County).
October 16, 2006	Committee meeting #2. Debrief on site walks and site visits. Discussion of needs and preferences for the park. Information-gathering process outlined.
October-November	Information-gathering email list-serve.
November 27, 2006	Committee meeting #3. Results of information gathering. Reports on proximity of playing fields, potential collaboration with schools on facilities, plans for the Breeze Farm, sustainable agriculture and the Orange County Space Study. Preparation for design charette – begin pre-charette exercise with maps and small groups.
December 18, 2006	Committee meeting #4. Design charette conducted and completed – groups share their thoughts and sketches with each other.
December-January	Initial draft charette sketches conveyed by email, groups have opportunity to make changes and revisions.
January 29, 2007	Committee meeting #5. Review of the charette sketches, and four design schemes (A-D) with basic infrastructure

	and locations created by the Landscape Architect based on the sketches. Schemes A and C selected for further consideration. Thoughts and ideas for the Master Plan document.
February 19, 2007	Committee meeting #6. Review revised Schemes A and C, identify preferred scheme, identify and agree to additional facilities. Review outline of master plan report.
April 18, 2007	Committee meeting #7. Review draft master plan and document, changes made. Identify points of emphasis for report. Agree to review final report and map by email.



Committee members review a facility preference activity.

IV. Findings

After learning about the site, visiting other similar parks, sharing information electronically and at meetings, and participating in a design charette, there were several “findings” that the committee identified and used as instruments in crafting the master plan:

1. *In keeping with the preliminary concept plan and the guiding principles for the master plan, there are several themes to the park (listed alphabetically):*
 - a. *Agricultural Heritage*
 - b. *Environmental and Education*
 - c. *Historic and Cultural Resources*
 - d. *Low-impact Recreation*
 - e. *Natural Resources*
2. *The property is perfectly situated to foster interaction among populations, whether school children for education (from all schools, including the new Durham Technical Community College) or in bringing together citizens from northern and southern Orange County to share and appreciate different perspectives and understanding of rural and urban livelihoods.*
3. *This site offers opportunities for experiential education for both children and adults. This can enhance community building and understanding of the County’s agricultural and natural/historical heritage.*
4. *The farmstead, house and outbuildings should be incorporated into the overall design of the park.*
5. *Protection of important vistas and resources will mean siting some facilities in the northern portion of the site. These should be designed in a way that minimizes impact on the neighbors to the north.*
6. *The scenic vista from New Hope Church Road is an important amenity and should be protected (as noted in the operating*

principles) and utilized as a feature of the park, perhaps with an “overlook.”

- 7. In keeping with green energy, self-sufficiency and environmental education themes, future buildings at the park should use “green building” standards. The potential exists for educational exhibits on the uses of sustainable energy, which was a foregone conclusion on 19th century farms such as the Blackwood Farm.*

- 8. A pedestrian crossing for NC 86 is important for visits from neighboring New Hope Elementary School (and nearby Stanback Middle School) and the potential co-use of facilities (parking, etc). NCDOT should be asked to further investigate the potential for a pedestrian crossing for NC 86, which would help with parking for large events and safety for school children. Off-site connectivity between the schools is also important.*

- 9. The historic Chapel Hill-Hillsborough Road is an asset for the park and should be protected and incorporated into the park.*

- 10. The park should retain the agricultural and horticultural heritage of the site as a part of the park experience, which could include exhibits about the County’s agricultural heritage, areas for demonstration of agricultural practices, and community gardens.*

- 11. The County should continue to have dialogue with both school systems about the potential for working together on educational opportunities at the site.*

- 12. The site’s location offers a chance to site and create a Nature Center, with outdoor classrooms and interpretive trails.*

V. Recommended Master Plan and Rationale

In its deliberations about the master plan for the park, the Committee discussed a wide range of possible uses and activities. This future park is in a unique central location between our largest population centers in Orange County. This makes it a key destination and resource for many Orange County residents by foot, bike, auto and transit. As a unique site, this discussion required considerable definition of terms and explanation of potential uses that go beyond the typical park master plan list of facilities. The nature of the discussions required some degree of consideration of the eventual themes and uses of the park. This master plan was also unique in another way – in that this is a plan for a park that does not have current funding for construction.

The Master Plan Committee proposes the following as “**givens**” – facilities or themes that are understood or cross many different topics and facility discussions:

“Givens”

1. The park should retain and rehabilitate the historic farmstead buildings as a key component of the park.
2. Natural resources, including streams and buffer areas, should be preserved within the site, as shown in the plan.
3. The future park entrance road and future Parks Operation Base should be located in the northeast corner of the site, both for ease of access and to provide visual and physical separation from the scenic vista and farmstead. Future road connections to the north and south are also provided for in the design.
4. The existing driveway on NC 86 is constructed on a narrow causeway from fill material and has line of sight concerns. This driveway is proposed to be used as a service entrance only (except for special occasions as a secondary exit).
5. To the extent possible, the historic Chapel Hill-Hillsborough Road should be left undisturbed, with signage to denote its location and where trails and other amenities cross the road or are nearby.
6. The scenic vista between New Hope Church Road and the farmstead should be retained and kept in some type of agricultural use that reflects the scenic nature of the viewshed and site.
7. The natural area in the southwest corner of the site should be protected and left in its current state, with a loop trail around the site.
8. Some portions of the site should be left available for as yet undetermined use(s), as other opportunities and facilities become desired in the future.
9. Pedestrian access among the different nodes of activity on the site should be provided by connecting trails and loop trails.
10. Picnic tables, benches and small open spaces should be interspersed at strategic locations across the site.

11. The overhead power line running through the scenic vista should be buried during park development.

In terms of more specific facility and use recommendations for the New Hope Park at Blackwood Farm, the Master Plan Committee proposes the following:

1. An **amphitheatre** (at one of three possible locations),
2. **Community Gardens**,
3. An **entry road** with roundabout and adjoining **parking**,
4. A **“Learning Center”** for nature, agricultural and cultural education,
5. A **Playground** near the Learning Center,
6. An informal **multi-purpose field** on the western edge of the property (the “I-40” field),
7. A series of **loop hiking trails** (including the historic roadbed trail and a trail circling the Natural Heritage site), as well as pedestrian trails connecting different pods of activity within the park,
8. A **potential bike trail** through the pine forest wooded area to the northwest,
9. A **fishing dock** on the pond,
10. A series of **picnic shelters** in different locations,
11. An **overlook** off of New Hope Church Road, with a nearby picnic shelter,
12. An open field east of the farmstead for possible use for **agricultural demonstration**,
13. Retention and enhancement of the existing **“orchard”** north of the farmstead,
14. Protection and signage about the **old cemetery** on the western portion of the future park.

The following paragraphs provide further elaboration on the facilities listed above:

- The committee felt it was important to not over-design the site, knowing that future opportunities and ideas may arise that will need space, and that there is currently no funding for the park.

- The proposed entry road to the park is sited at the northeastern portion of the park, in proximity to the planned Parks Operation Base and an improved line of sight for traffic.
- The proposed amphitheatre (defined here as a “covered performance shell with surrounding grassy seating”) would be an important park amenity and should be constructed in one of the three locations identified on the master plan, pending further assessment. A report on a recommended location for this facility would be forthcoming, using the 2007 Cool Jazz festival as a barometer. Staff will also test the decibel level for I-40 traffic noise at the three spots, and looking at orientation toward the sun and handicap-accessibility.
- The primary parking for the park would be located off of a roundabout near the Parks Operation Base, and run north-south along the edge of the northeastern farm field. A future connection to the proposed service road would be available for special events or as needed. One spur from the roundabout would run north to a second parking area north of the pond and the north-central field.
- It is recommended that the northeastern field (south of the roundabout) be dedicated for use as a community garden, the details of which will need to be addressed in the future.
- With much potential for education at this park, the Committee felt that this would be a good location for a Learning Center (i.e., educational facility). The proposed Learning Center would be located near the pond and wetlands, along with an adjoining playground. The Learning Center is envisioned as a structure that could include exhibits about farm life, environmental education, energy use, historic resources, and a variety of other activities, with indoor/outdoor classrooms and perhaps an office.
- An informal multi-purpose field would be provided for in the westernmost part of the site, along I-40. This field would be open for a variety of uses.
- Pedestrian access is very important within the park. Some of the proposed activity centers require a substantial walk, necessitating careful planning of the trail network. The planned trails are primarily natural surface and connect the different components of the park or loop certain features (such as the pond or vista). Signage (interpretive and other) is suggested to make the trails a learning experience as well as recreational. The trail network should serve to discourage unnecessary driving within the site. External access (NC 86 pedestrian and bike access) is a concern and will need to be addressed with NCDOT, which has to date expressed concerns about any pedestrian access across NC 86. Bike lanes approaching the park would also be helpful.

- The potential for a mountain bike trail within the northwestern forested area is recommended for further exploration. There is also substantial road bicycle traffic along New Hope Church Road and this park would be an inviting destination and/or opportunity for a comfort stop.
- In the cases of amphitheatre events or special activities, the parking areas are located in a fashion that allows for overflow parking and a secondary exit point along the narrow existing driveway.
- There is an existing small orchard of fruit trees north of the farmstead. This is proposed to be enhanced, perhaps working in conjunction with the Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardeners program.
- The agricultural heritage component of the park, whether exhibits, community gardens or demonstration fields, should educate about all agricultural heritage (pre-European, African-American).
- Partnership with the schools (both those nearby and others in the County) is important to help make the educational possibilities happen.
- The agricultural demonstration area offers an opportunity to display historic farm techniques and technology (e.g., draft horses and mules) and possibly to grow heirloom crops.
- The beauty of the scenic vista from New Hope Church Road is an amenity unto itself, and an informal pull-off has been used for years by citizens to pause and enjoy the view. The proposed overlook has been designed in conjunction with NCDOT standards, the topography, and proximity to a nearby picnic shelter with restrooms. This overlook could be used by the public, and also by public safety vehicles as a way station for communication and on-road paperwork. This could help address security at this point of the park, which is removed from most of the activity centers. The vista would be protected by siting the entrance as far west as possible (given the terrain). A bike rack would also be a good amenity to have at this spot, given the frequent bike traffic along New Hope Church Road. Care in design will be needed for these reasons.
- A small cemetery, with primarily unmarked graves, is located southwest from the farmstead in the woods. This may be a slave cemetery, based on preliminary archaeological study. The committee recommends this the cemetery be preserved, researched and have signage to display its significance in a respectful manner.

The Farmstead Buildings

As previously noted, substantial work is underway to stabilize and secure the existing farmstead buildings – and substantial further work will be required to use the buildings as part of the park.

The Committee considered the role of the farmstead within the park, and whether the complex was seen as a group of buildings to be preserved and experienced as external exhibits, or whether they should be utilized as part of the park facilities.

Engineering estimates to date indicate that the cost of renovating buildings for public use such as the farmhouse and barn may run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Decisions about whether to commit this level of resources will need to be made by the Board of County Commissioners.

The committee offers the following ideas about the farmstead:

- ❑ Keeping the farmstead as a focal point of the park is important...we should not fence people out.
- ❑ Consider what the historic fencing pattern might have been for the farm and perhaps replicate that. It is unlikely that the house would have been within the same enclosure as the barn, for example.
- ❑ A sequential or gradual restoration of the outbuildings, in accordance with available funds and possible uses, would be preferred.
- ❑ The farmstead could represent or replicate the 1920's agricultural heritage of the County, within the context of other Orange County farming practices at other times.
- ❑ Discuss with State and federal agency partners the potential for collaboration on the farmstead exhibits and demonstration areas.

VI. ISSUES FOR FURTHER STUDY

In addition to the findings and proposed master plan, the Committee would like to suggest the following issues for further study and investigation:

- ❑ Continued dialogue with NCDOT about pedestrian access and crossing on NC 86, and also bike lane access from Chapel Hill and Hillsborough.
- ❑ The future preservation and use of the farmstead, as discussed
- ❑ Pedestrian and bike access to the park from the two nearby schools,
- ❑ The potential for acquisition of adjoining properties to the southeast and west (adding to the New Hope Basic Forest Natural Area and pedestrian access at the intersection of NC 86 and New Hope Church Road).

- Consider the purchase of easements or encourage protective stewardship of the old Chapel Hill-Hillsborough roadbed beyond the farm (such as Stagecoach Road and Camp New Hope).

VI. CONCLUSION

The New Hope Park at Blackwood Farm offers an excellent opportunity to create a place that transcends conventional park and recreation facilities. The site offers natural and cultural resources of many different types, covering nearly every range of the spectrum of resources.

This master plan attempts to use and enhance the existing features of the site, as directed in the guiding principles to the committee, to create a park experience that is outside of the norm. It also does not “over-design” the site, recognizing that in future years, when funding is available to construct and open the park, flexibility may be needed to address new and different concepts and ideas that have not yet been identified.

The Committee thanks the Board of Commissioners for the opportunity to create a design for this beautiful and unique property, and looks forward to continued dialogue and consideration of the master plan, culminating in the day when this site can be made available for public use.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Opportunities and Constraints Report

Appendix 2 – Excerpts from Cultural/Archaeological Survey

Appendix 3 – Charge to the Committee

Appendix 4 – Cost Estimates and Priority Facilities Identified