BEAR CREEK LAKE STATE PARK
929 Oak Hill Road
Cumberland, Virginia 23040-9518

Bear Creek Lake State Park
MASTER PLAN
Executive Summary
2014 Update

Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
600 East Main Street, 24th Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Bear Creek State Park
MASTER PLAN
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2014 UPDATE

Presented for review at a public meeting September 24, 2014, then recommended for adoption by the Board of Conservation and Recreation on December 16, 2014, and scheduled for review for 30 days by the Virginia General Assembly.

Adopted:

_____
Clyde E. Cristman, Director
Department of Conservation and Recreation
xxxxxx xx, 2015

Department of Conservation & Recreation
CONSERVING VIRGINIA'S NATURAL & RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

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BEAR CREEK LAKE STATE PARK
MASTER PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Bear Creek Lake State Park Master Plan Executive Summary is an update to the official unabridged master plan document adopted on December 6, 2002, then amended on April 28, 2009, by DCR Director Joseph H. Maroon. This master plan update is intended to set forth a clear vision for the future (based on the phased development). This 2014 executive summary represents the most recent five-year review described in §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. It outlines the desired future condition for Bear Creek Lake State Park when it is fully developed.

Bear Creek Lake State Park consists of some 328.7 acres nestled in the heart of the 16,242- acre Cumberland State Forest in central Virginia's Cumberland County. The park is located 4.5 miles northwest of the Town of Cumberland. Access is from U.S. Route 60. A driver would turn north on Route 622 and then west (left) on Route 629 to the park entrance.

The property today known as Bear Creek Lake State Park was originally acquired from private citizens around 1932 by the United States Department of Agriculture under the Federal Resettlement Administration. In 1939 the State Forest Service took over management of the property. In 1940 it was opened as a "State Recreation Area" with concession, bathhouse facilities, and boat rental. In 1962 the property became a state park. Providing recreational opportunities to the public was a major consideration behind the establishment of Bear Creek Lake State Park in its earliest days, and this continues to be a focus of efforts today.

The table below reflects park attendance over the last ten years:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
50,665	51,143	46,781	62,918	70.059	77,172	77,134	79,126	78,952	78,288

In 2013 Bear Creek had 78,288 visitors: 41,856 were overnight guests, while 36,342 were day- use visitors. With this level of visitation, it is estimated that the park had an economic impact on the local economy of approximately $3,722,112. Master plan recommendations designed to increase visitation and improve the visitor experience, once implemented, should have a further positive impact on the region's economic vitality.

This 2014 update places value on connecting Bear Creek to other resources in the community. The park is adjacent to Cumberland State Forest, which has an extensive trail system—most notably the Willis River Trail and the Cumberland Multi-use Trail. South of the park, the Midland Trail runs along Route 60, and further south Lee's Retreat Driving Trail follows Scenic Byways 636 and 24 to the Town of Appomattox, where our nation reunited. Other points of interest along Lee's Retreat include Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park and High Bridge Trail State Park. The Jackson Davis home at Cumberland Courthouse is a stop on the Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail, and other points of interest along this trail are nearby. Bear Creek Lake and Cumberland Forest lakes are featured stops along the Fish Virginia First Trail. Other river recreation is available on Appomattox and James Rivers. The Bear Creek Lake State Park Regional Connectivity Map is an attachment to the full Master Plan document.

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Bear Creek State Park received Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) in 1978 for swimming facilities and in 2004 for utilities. In compliance with the LWCF Act of 1965 and amendments thereto, the Commonwealth of Virginia is required to maintain the park for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation Planners and State Park Staff conducted this master plan update in accordance with §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. This plan outlines the desired future condition of the park over a 20-year planning horizon. As required by the *Code of Virginia*, it must be revisited every five years to ensure that the development objectives outlined in the plan continue to meet the recreational, environmental and historic protection needs of the citizens of the Commonwealth. As a part of the 2014 master plan process, the 2002 park master plan and the 2009 amendment were reviewed. It was determined that significant changes occurred to the master plan to warrant a full revision. The executive summary and accompanying map have been updated. The phased development plan and costs have been revised to reflect current proposed projects. The park staffing and operations costs data have been also updated to reflect current conditions.

This 2014 master plan update describes both proposed facilities and improvements to existing facilities. New facilities are sited to minimize impact to the park, and in keeping with the prescriptive management areas as defined by the Park Resource Management Plan and the guidelines of the Park Visitor Experience Plan, when available. New facilities at this park should be designed and built with consideration to the original design and layout of facilities. These facilities will be carefully sited to minimize impacts to the views in the park and of the park from adjacent lands and water bodies to the greatest extent possible. Consideration will be given to eliminate excessive, misdirected, or obtrusive artificial light in the park in order to maximize the dark sky effect and encourage astronomy and night-sky viewing. Virginia State Parks strives to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards. Building and site design will implement green energy standards using energy-efficient and sustainable materials and process to the greatest extent possible. Green design initiatives will be considered during the design process for park renovations and new construction. Development activities will comply with requirements set forth by the Department of Environmental Quality's best management practices for erosion, sediment control and stormwater management in order to protect water quality. A setback guideline of 100 feet from the reservoir shoreline has been established by DCR, and trails and water dependent facilities such as fishing stations, piers, and other water access facilities will be the only developments permitted within the 100-foot setback.

Additional land acquisition is recommended to enhance park offerings, establish connective trail easements/corridors, buffer the park from inappropriate development or protect valued viewsheds. Future land acquisitions will only be negotiated with willing property owners. The placement of conservation easements on adjacent property to preserve the natural resources, cultural landscapes, and scenic resources in close proximity to the park will be encouraged. In working cooperatively with neighboring landowners, the park will be enhanced and protected over time.

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Phased Development Plan

Completion of all of the projects in this list will represent total build-out (completion of the master plan), and covers a 20-year timeframe. The phasing costs are based on 2014 estimates.

Phase I
Cabins (three – 3 bedroom cabins have been funded, not included in cost estimate)
Replace contact station
Redesign and construct Black Oak and Chestnut Campground Loops, Bathhouses, camp host site and (3) camping cabins
Replace bathhouse at Acorn Campground Loop
Expand linen building for storage/operations
Large Gazebo with deck at Bear Creek Hall
Remove inactive water tanks, and connect entire park to public water system
Remove all sewage holding tanks and connect fully to public sewer system
Staff residence
Improve trailheads (2)
Expand trail system
The total estimated cost for Phase I development is $5,962,367

Phase II
Visitor center and office/contact station park entrance/parking/dump station
Renovate beach bathhouse and concession building and deck
Play equipment at beach (water-based)
Replace boathouse and renovate docks (2)
Redesign beach area parking
Accessible trail
Expand day-use parking
Expand trail system
The total estimated cost for Phase II development is $5,300,100

Phase III
Extend boat launch and add dock
Large picnic shelter
Large picnic shelter in Group Camp
Comfort Station in Group Camp
Footbridges (2) along Lakeside Connector Trail
Relocate utility wires underground
Expand trail system
The total estimated cost for Phase III development is $2,050,121
The total cost to bring Bear Creek Lake State Park to its desired future condition is $13,312,588

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Staffing and Operations

Staffing and operational costs at Bear Creek lake State Park are presently budgeted at $739,000 annually, including salaries for 7 staff positions. Two additional staff positions are identified in Phase 1 which are either vacant positions or would bring the current park staffing to standard base level. At complete build out of the proposed 3 phases of development, 3 additional staff will be needed and an additional $270,000 in operating funds. In order for the park to operate effectively and efficiently at full build out, the park must be provided the projected staffing and operating costs for the 3 development phases. The total budget for Bear Creek Lake at full build out is projected to be $1,009,000 with 10 staff positions.

BEAR CREEK LAKE STAFFING AND OPERATING COSTS

EXISTING (FY 15)	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	**FULL BUILD OUT**
STAFFING				**STAFFING**
Park Manager				Park Manager
Asst. Park Mgr				Asst. Park Mgr
Chief Ranger				Chief Ranger
	Educ. Specialist*			Educ. Specialist
Park Ranger (3)	Park Ranger*			Park Ranger (4)
	Housekeeper			Housekeeper
Office Manager				Office Manager
SALARY TOTAL				**SALARY TOTAL**
$414,000	$150,000			$564,000
WAGE TOTAL				**WAGE TOTAL**
$138,000	$33,000	$15,000	$5,000	$191,000
OTPS TOTAL				**OTPS TOTAL**
$187,000	$34,000	$30,000	$3,000	$254,000
TOTAL BUDGET **(FY15 dollars)**				TOTAL BUDGET **(FY15 dollars)**
$739,000	$217,000	$45,000	$8,000	$1,009,000

NOTE – All costs (salary, wage, OTPS (Other than Personnel Services)) are based on FY15 budget projections.
* Additional positions which are vacant and/or will bring park to standard base level staffing.

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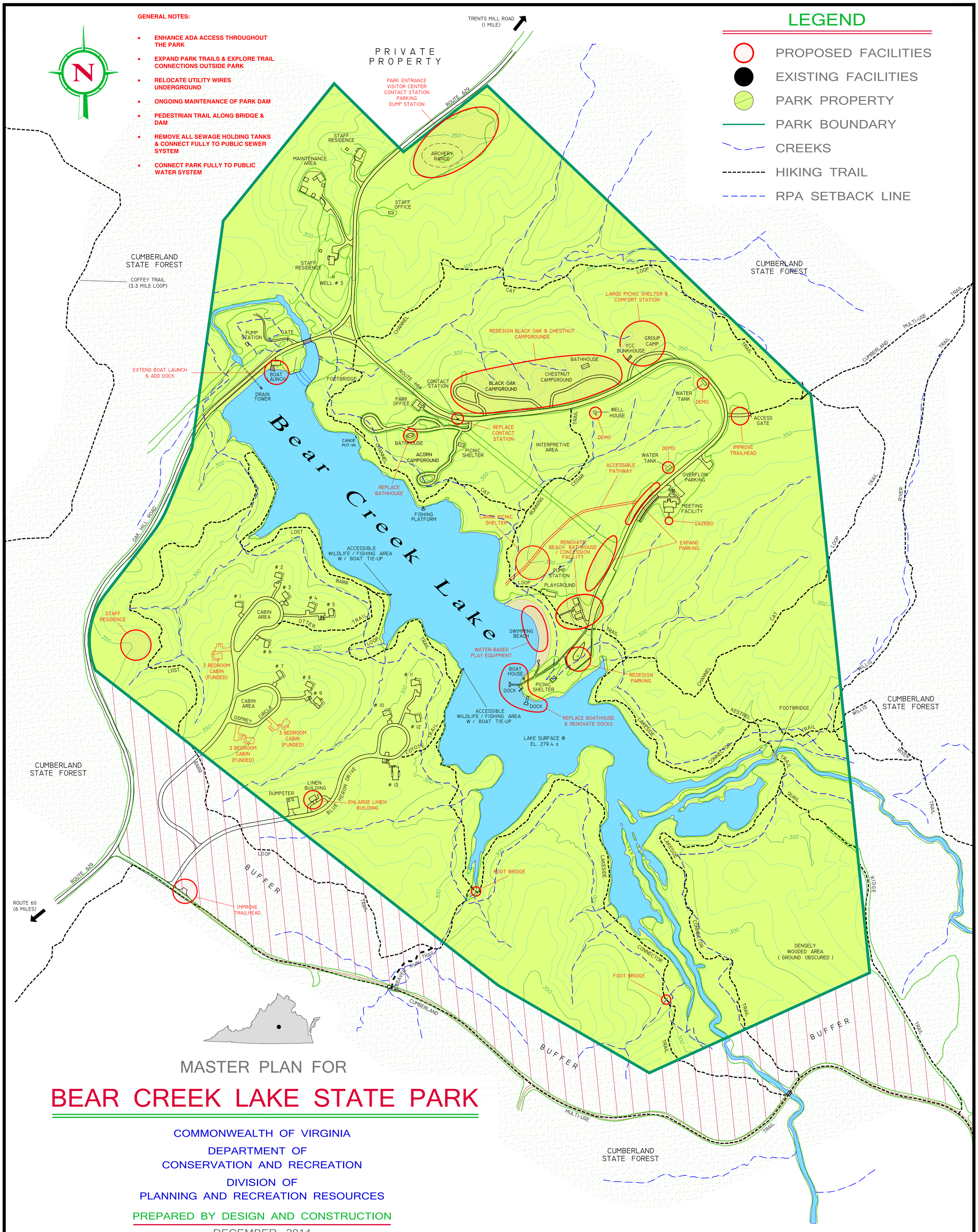
GENERAL NOTES:

- ENHANCE ADA ACCESS THROUGHOUT THE PARK
- EXPAND PARK TRAILS & EXPLORE TRAIL CONNECTIONS OUTSIDE PARK
- RELOCATE UTILITY WIRES UNDERGROUND
- ONGOING MAINTENANCE OF PARK DAM
- PEDESTRIAN TRAIL ALONG BRIDGE & DAM
- REMOVE ALL SEWAGE HOLDING TANKS & CONNECT FULLY TO PUBLIC SEWER SYSTEM
- CONNECT PARK FULLY TO PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM

LEGEND

- PROPOSED FACILITIES
- EXISTING FACILITIES
- PARK PROPERTY
- PARK BOUNDARY
- CREEKS
- HIKING TRAIL
- RPA SETBACK LINE



MASTER PLAN FOR

BEAR CREEK LAKE STATE PARK

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

DIVISION OF PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES

PREPARED BY DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

DECEMBER 2014

0' 150' 300'

CONTOUR INTERVAL : 10 FEET