



OCCONEECHEE STATE PARK
1192 Occoneechee Park Road
Clarksville, VA 23927-9449

Occoneechee State Park MASTER PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2011 UPDATE



Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
203 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

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Reviewed by the Board of Conservation and Recreation on December 15, 2011.

Approved:

_____/S/_____
David A. Johnson, Director
Department of Conservation
and Recreation

December 20, 2011
Date

Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
203 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219



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This Occoneechee State Park Master Plan Executive Summary is an update to the official unabridged master plan document adopted in June 2003 and amended in March 2005 and again in September 2009 by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). It is the most recent five-year review as described in §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. This master plan update is intended to set forth a clear vision for the future (based on phased development), while fulfilling the narrative text requirements of Chapter IV of the Virginia Capital Outlay Manual. It outlines the desired future condition for Occoneechee State Park when it is fully developed. Both DCR (David A. Johnson, Director, December 20, 2011 signature on file) and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Michael A. Womack, Operations Project Manager, February 15, 2012 signature on file) have approved this master plan update.

Occoneechee State Park (2,695 acres) is situated on the north shore of Virginia's largest lake, Buggs Island Lake. The lake, which is also referred to as the John H. Kerr Reservoir covers approximately 48,000 acres. Occoneechee State Park was brought into the Virginia State Park System by execution in 1968 of a lease with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The park is situated on the south side of U.S. Route 58, approximately 1.5 miles east of Clarksville, in Mecklenburg County, in Southside Virginia. It is 100 miles southwest of Richmond, 160 miles west of Virginia Beach, and 75 miles east of Martinsville. It is located near the North Carolina border and is approximately 50 miles from Durham and 70 miles north of Raleigh.

Occoneechee State Park received Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) in 1978, 2001 and 2006 for park facility development. 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.

This 2011 update places value on connecting Occoneechee State Park to other resources in the community. Aside from Buggs Island Lake, Occoneechee State Park is in close proximity to the Staunton River and Dan River. The Dick Cross Wildlife Management Area is nearby. The Tobacco Heritage Trail and the proposed East Coast Greenway, as well as U.S. Bicycle Route 1, are in close proximity to the park. Staunton River State Park is not far away. Occoneechee is listed as a site on the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' Birding and Wildlife Trail. The Occoneechee State Park Regional Connectivity Map is an attachment to the full Master Plan document.

This comprehensive master plan provides revisions and updates to the original Occoneechee Master Plan. The original plan was prepared by the Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District, and approved in January 1965. The 2003 master plan provides for a full range of overnight and day-use facilities on the entire 2,695 acre park site. The 1965 plan allowed for the development of day-use and overnight facilities on approximately 600 acres of land. This included the establishment of campgrounds, picnic areas, interpretive facilities, administrative headquarters, and the necessary maintenance facilities, roads, utilities, and other infrastructure. During the Department of Conservation and Recreation's management of the property, a major lake access

facility has been developed near the entrance to the park, and the park has been connected to the Town of Clarksville water and sewage systems. Other improvements to the park include construction of a park residence, maintenance area expansion, renovations of campgrounds, development of a new boat launching facility and associated parking, construction of a new visitor center/park office, and picnic area and parking facility improvements. The 2,000 acres of undeveloped lands are used for hunting and a variety of educational and interpretive programs.

As a part of the 2011 master plan process, the 2003 park master plan was reviewed, along with the March 2005 and September 2009 master plan amendments. It was determined that no significant changes occurred to warrant a full revision of the master plan at this time. The goals and objectives and the desired future condition of the park have not changed since adoption of the 2003 plan and the March 2005 and September 2009 amendments. The phased development plan and costs have been revised to reflect projects that have been completed since 2003 and the park staffing and operations costs data have been also updated to reflect current conditions.

The adopted park purpose statement is stated below:

"The purpose of Occoneechee State Park is to provide now and conserve for future generations, the opportunity for visitors to experience and enjoy this 2,695 acre park, while providing access to and recreation opportunities on and along Virginia's largest lake and interpreting Southside Virginia's Native American Culture and Living History."

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

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
168,408	145,021	152,342	154,614	195,891	194,981	195,476	196,337	202,925	202,471

In 2010, Occoneechee State Park had 202,471 visitors; 30,347 were overnight guests, while 172,124 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 \$5,030,009. 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.

Existing park facilities include an office/visitor center, three residences, maintenance complex, contact station, a campground, an equestrian campground and a cabin area. The campground has two bathhouses with shower facilities and a laundry area. The park provides access to the lake by providing three boat access facilities. The boat ramp has three launching lanes, and has restroom and concession facilities. The two other facilities each have a concrete pad with two launching lanes. The park offers fairly extensive hiking, equestrian, and bike trails. The visitor center is the focus for the interpretive program. A major interpretive feature in the park is the remains of the antebellum Occoneechee plantation house and dependencies and its attendant terraced gardens. A marina facility is being constructed as this plan update is being written, and a meeting facility/conference center will soon follow.

This 2011 master plan update describes proposed new facilities, as well as improvements to existing facilities. New facilities at this park should be designed and built with consideration to the original design and layout of facilities, 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.

To the greatest extent possible, Virginia State Parks strives to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All future phases of park construction will be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner. Building and site design will implement green energy standards using energy-efficient and sustainable materials and process to the greatest extent possible. These facilities will be carefully sited to minimize impacts to the views within the park and of the park from the adjacent lands and water bodies. Development activities will comply with the requirements set forth by the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Best Management Practices (BMP) Handbook for Erosion and Sediment Control in order to protect water quality.

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.

The location of proposed Native American Interpretive Sites requires additional study to determine the number of sites and the best location in the park. The 2003 master plan document suggests the possibility of moving the Native American Village to a more remote location on the peninsula.

The proposed developments for Occoneechee State Park are presented in priority order. 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.

Phase I

- Construct marina facility with fuel dock (due to be completed in 2011)
- Develop a conference center
- Develop picnic area near marina (old campground)
- Construct park office
- Construct bathhouse for equestrian campground
- Construct seven (7) cabins in cabin area (2-3br and 5-2br)
- Renovate park visitor center
- Develop Native American Village Sites
- Construct staff residence

The total estimated cost for Phase I development is \$12,456,007.

Phase II

- Enhance the Occoneechee Plantation interpretive site
- Construct a sprayground/pool
- Develop Occoneechee Island interpretive Station and settlement sites (5)
- Expand internal trail system, trail connections and interpretive trailhead.
- Construct campground at "Old Campground A" site

The total estimated cost for Phase II development is \$13,557,649.

Phase III

Construct amphitheater/performance center
Construct Discovery Center/Native American support center
Expand internal trail system and connections to external trails.
Construct two (2) dock facilities at Cabin Area (20 tie-ups)
Construct five (5) small boat landing/tie up facilities
Construct Lodge facility

The total estimated cost for Phase III development is \$27,017,836.

The total cost to bring Occoneechee State Park to its desired future condition is \$53,031,492.

STAFFING AND OPERATIONS

Staffing and operational costs at Occoneechee State Park are presently budgeted at \$793,000 annually, including salaries for 8 staff positions. With the current facilities and operational requirements, the park has an identified need for 6 additional positions and \$415,000 in funding. At complete build-out of the proposed 3 phases of development, 3 additional staff and an additional \$456,000 in operating funds will be needed. The staffing and operating costs for Phase III do not include estimates for the proposed lodge facility as it is unknown at this time whether it will be park operated or a public-private operation. In order for the park to operate effectively and efficiently at full build-out, the park must be provided with the projected staffing and operating cost identified as “existing additional needs” and the costs for the 3 development phases. The total budget for Occoneechee at full build-out is projected to be \$1,664,000 with 17 staff positions.

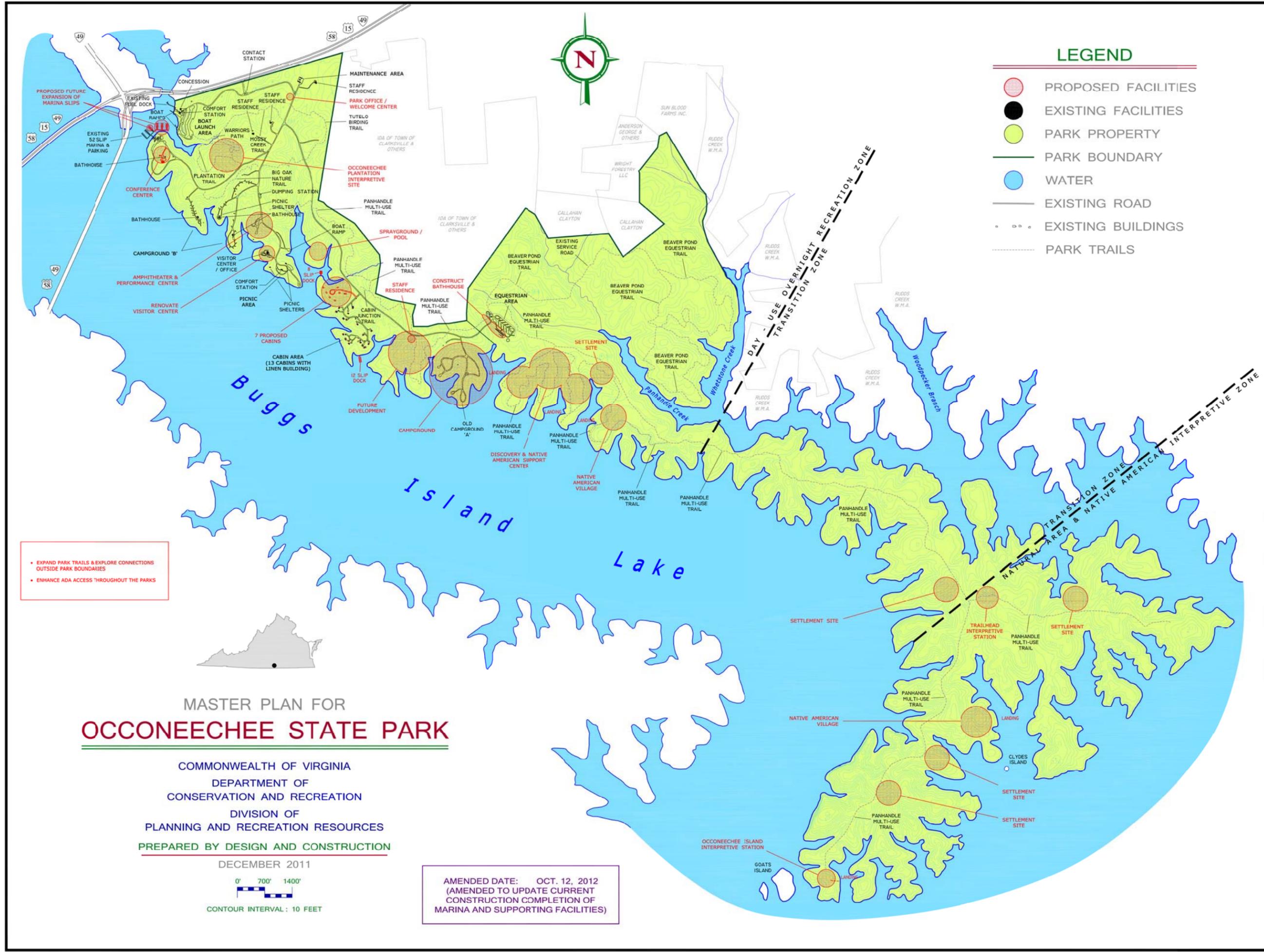
See Chart on next page.

OCCONEECHEE STAFFING AND OPERATING COSTS

EXISTING (FY 12)	EXISTING ADDITIONAL NEEDS *	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				Chief Ranger (2)
	Educ. Specialist				Educ. Specialist
Park Ranger (4)	Park Ranger	Park Ranger			Park Ranger (6)
	Housekeeper (2)	Housekeeper			Housekeeper (3)
Program Support Tech.	Program Support Tech.				Program Support Tech. (2)
		Business Manager			Business Manager
SALARY TOTAL					SALARY TOTAL
\$412,000	\$257,000	\$130,000			\$799,000
WAGE TOTAL					WAGE TOTAL
\$135,000	\$32,000	\$77,000	\$50,000	\$64,000	\$358,000
OTPS TOTAL					OTPS TOTAL
\$246,000	\$126,000	\$68,000	\$29,000	\$38,000	\$507,000
TOTAL BUDGET (FY12 dollars)					TOTAL BUDGET (FY12 dollars)
\$793,000	\$415,000	\$275,000	\$79,000	\$102,000	\$1,664,000

NOTE – All costs (salary, wage, OTPS (Other than Personnel Services)) are based on FY12 budget projections.

* Existing additional needs represents staff shortages that were identified as part of the 2002 re-benchmarking effort, and/or staff positions and operating costs not fully funded due to prior state wide budget reductions.



LEGEND

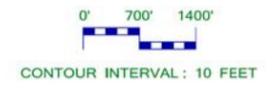
- PROPOSED FACILITIES
- EXISTING FACILITIES
- PARK PROPERTY
- PARK BOUNDARY
- WATER
- EXISTING ROAD
- EXISTING BUILDINGS
- PARK TRAILS

- EXPAND PARK TRAILS & EXPLORE CONNECTIONS OUTSIDE PARK BOUNDARIES
- ENHANCE ADA ACCESS THROUGHOUT THE PARKS

**MASTER PLAN FOR
OCCONEECHEE STATE PARK**

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION
DIVISION OF
PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES
PREPARED BY DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

DECEMBER 2011



AMENDED DATE: OCT. 12, 2012
(AMENDED TO UPDATE CURRENT
CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION OF
MARINA AND SUPPORTING FACILITIES)