



Enhancing the natural resource-based outdoor experiences in McDuffie County with a wide variety of users in mind will provide value far beyond the local market, extending opportunities to a regional audience.

GEORGIA

MCDUFFIE CO. TRAILS CHARRETTE WASHINGTON COUNTY, GA

DATES: SPRING 2021

The McDuffie County Archway Partnership enlisted design assistance from the College of Environment and Design (CED) in order to increase recreational opportunities around Clark's Hill Lake. Led by the CED Center for Community Design and Preservation, graduate students from the college's landscape architecture and urban planning programs have provided a master plan that includes concepts tailored to kayaking enthusiasts, hikers, campers, recreational cyclists, and equestrians.

The McDuffie County Archway Partnership asked the Center for Community Design and Preservation to develop concepts and an illustrative master plan that considers broad improvements, such as adding amenities to current boat launches and considering improvements to county-managed campgrounds as well as exploring concepts for hiking, biking, and equestrian trails.

CCDP used a design charrette – a multi-day brainstorming session between design experts and local stakeholders – to bring together a team of CED students in landscape architecture and planning to explore potential improvements. The goal of the charrette was to envision how to satisfy the county's desire



THIS OUTREACH PROJECT WAS CONDUCTED BY

students and faculty of the University of Georgia College of Environment + Design.

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PARTNERS: UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA COLLEGE OF ENVIRONMENT + DESIGN, CENTER FOR COMMUNITY DESIGN AND PRESERVATION, AND MCDUFFIE COUNTY ARCHWAY PARTNERSHIP

for recreational economic development with DNR's priority to serve hunters and fishermen, and to incorporate best practices between different types of trail users. The charrette concentrated on the Little River Water Trail between Highway 80 and Highway 78 within the Clarks Hill Wildlife Management Area, as well as the McDuffie County campgrounds at Big Hart and Raysville. Due to Covid-19, this charrette was conducted with virtual meetings, two on-campus workdays, and extended periods of public input solicited through YouTube presentations and online surveys.

The final design concept for Big Hart Campground included a formalized entrance, general store, indoor shooting range and bike/hiking trails. The final concept for the Raysville Campground includes hiking/biking trails and an equestrian trails/camping facility. Furthermore, the inclusion a rental facility for kayaks and other recreational gear will increase activity at the site. All of these changes will have a large impact on the ability for the community to participate in outdoor recreational activities. These new ideas are meant to increase accessibility for a wider segment of the public.

During the survey portion of the charrette, local citizens were asked which of the ideas in the recreation plan they would like to see become a reality. One family stated, "We think the upgrades to Big Hart would make it a regional camping destination which would bring more visitors to the area. We are a multigenerational family living minutes from Big Hart and Little River and we really like the ideas presented The suggested upgrades would increase our use of the areas." Another respondent expressed enthusiasm over making outdoor leisure more attainable to those in the community, stating, "...It seems like the community would use this [water trail] the most, and it seems like the easiest to upkeep. McDuffie is a lower income community, so having kayaks available to rent would be a cheap and easy way to get out and have fun in the summer."

The McDuffie County Trails charrette presents the idea that enhancing the natural resource-based outdoor experiences in McDuffie County with a wide variety of users in mind will provide value far beyond the local market, extending opportunities to a regional audience. Feedback from the public further showed the community's support for investment in recreation tourism and the generous returns in the form of natural resource protection, economic development, and health promotion.



College of
Environment + Design
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



Charrette Day One

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Respondent of Survey



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