

Whitehall at Reservoir Park



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Master Plan
Adopted May 9, 2023

Whitehall at Reservoir Park

"Few are altogether deaf to the preaching of pine trees. Their sermons go to our hearts; and if people in general could be got into the woods, even for once, to hear the trees speak for themselves, all difficulties in the way of forest preservation would vanish."

-John Muir

in an 1895 speech to the Sierra Club



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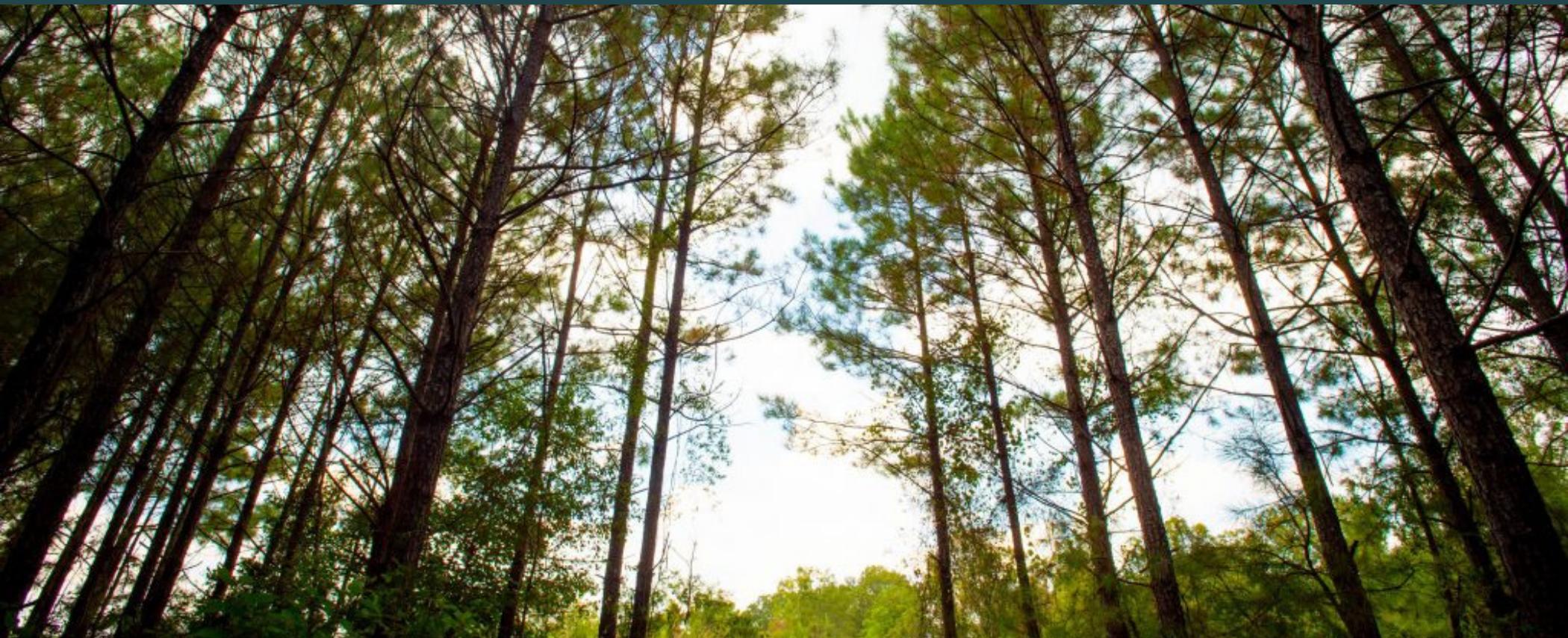
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Why is Whitehall special?

Project Purpose



Develop a parks & recreation master plan for the Town's Whitehall property.



Provide guidance for recreation planning in these areas:

- Identify park facility needs for the Town of Southern Pines
- Prepare assessment of the Whitehall site
- Identify recreation program for the Whitehall site and buildings
- Protect the natural flora and fauna of the site
- Coordinate programs with the land management and burn program



“ Parks and trails are for the people. We can provide the functional facilities needed by the public without compromising the natural features of Whitehall. ”

History of Whitehall

The Town of Southern Pines purchased the 157-acre tract known as the Whitehall property in December 2020. The Town paid \$1.65 million for the land, home, and associated structures at 490 Pee Dee Road.

Reservoir Park directly abuts Whitehall to the north and includes access via an existing 2-mile walking/biking trail. There are also trail connections from Elizabeth Rounds playground.

Reservoir Park includes a 95-acre lake and permanently protected longleaf pine stands that provide habitats for the endangered red cockaded woodpecker. Recreation activities include an 18-acre disc golf course, Elizabeth Rounds playground, and exercise stations. Over 2 acres of trails connect to the Southern Pines greenway network.

The Town has been using the existing 6,000 square foot house for recreation and library programs, including a monthly book club, cooking classes, and environmental programs. The property also includes a carriage house and barn.



Land of the Longleaf Pine

Whitehall was thoughtfully cared for by its previous owners and the property's 157 acres highlight the native ecosystems of Southern Pines, particularly the longleaf pine forest (*Pinus palustris*).

Longleaf pines were once prominent through the southeastern United States, covering 90 million acres from Virginia to east Texas. The once-vast longleaf forests have almost all but disappeared, providing timber for Colonial homes and sailing ships as well as tar and turpentine. By most accounts, North Carolina's seaports were the leading exporters of naval stores across the world, rivaled only by those on the Baltic Sea.

As 19th century rail passengers traveled through North Carolina's pine forests, they commonly reported that they did not see a single tree that did not have the V-shaped scar that was associated with tapping.

More recently, longleaf pines have also been lost to clearcutting, development, and fire suppression, as they rely on fire to survive (and thrive). Today, less than 5% of the historic longleaf forest remains and we are lucky to find it in the Sandhills area.

Whitehall serves as a sanctuary for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW), the only woodpecker to nest in live trees. The RCW prefers the Longleaf Pines, carving out cavities that are filled with resinous sap to guard against predators. Ongoing conservation efforts, like the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Safe Harbor program, work to reverse the longleaf decline and ensure its future survival.

Healthy longleaf pine forests provide many benefits to both humans and wildlife. They support our freshwater systems, provide natural resilience to catastrophic storms, and help sustain the regional economy. In addition to the RCW, they also provide habitats for other threatened and endangered species like gopher tortoises, pine snakes, and dusky gopher frogs.



“ Here's to the land of the longleaf pine,
The summer land where the sun doth shine,
Where the weak grow strong and the strong grow
great, Here's to "Down Home," the Old North State!

Meet the Team



DESIGN TEAM



Mack Cain, Park Planner
Cyndee Bonacci, Project Manager

CREECH & ASSOCIATES
— Architecture of Place —

Brent Green, Architect
Michael Supino, Architect

Mike Wharton,
Forest Management



COMMUNITY

2 meetings: 100+ attendees
2 online surveys: 800 responses
Outreach via phone & e-mail

Arts Council of Moore County
Dr. J.H. Carter III & Assoc.
Moore County Chamber of Commerce
The Nature Conservancy
Pinehurst, Southern Pines, Aberdeen
CVB
Sandhills Ecological Institute
Sandhills Prescribed Burn Assoc.
Dr. Barbara Sherman
Three Rivers Land Trust
Appearance Commission
BPAC
Town Council
TOSP Leadership Team



PROJECT MANAGERS



Southern
Pines

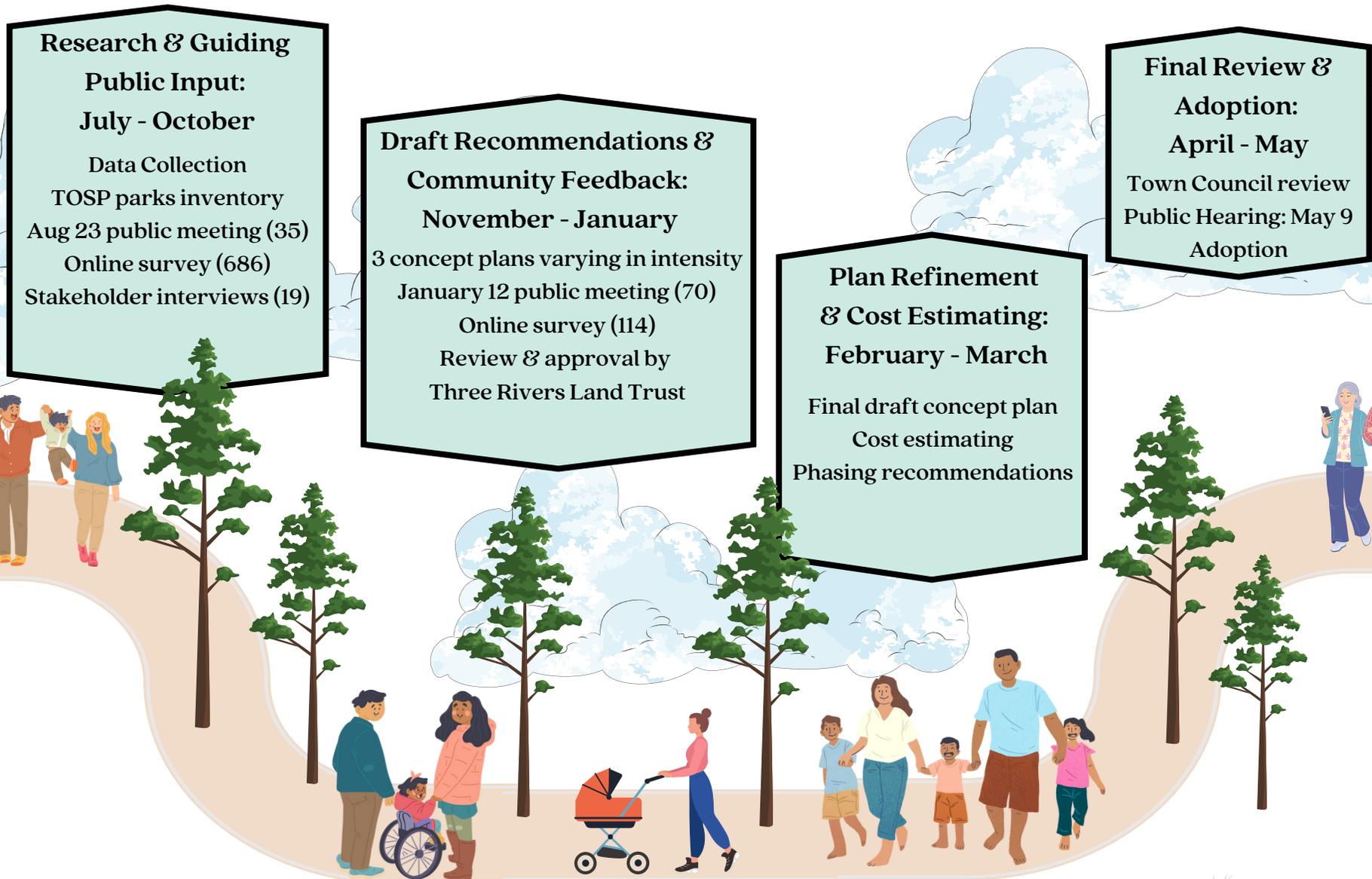
Reagan Parsons
Town Manager

Jessica Roth
Assistant Town Manager

Cindi King
Director of Parks & Recreation

Planning Process

The path we navigated as a community to create a master plan



We value and actively seek feedback from those we serve. It's

the *Southern Pines Way*