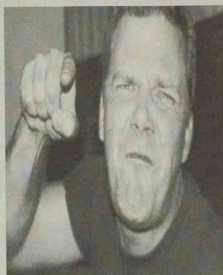


THE BLUE BANNER



Features

Slam poet Taylor Mali entertaining, yet cocky
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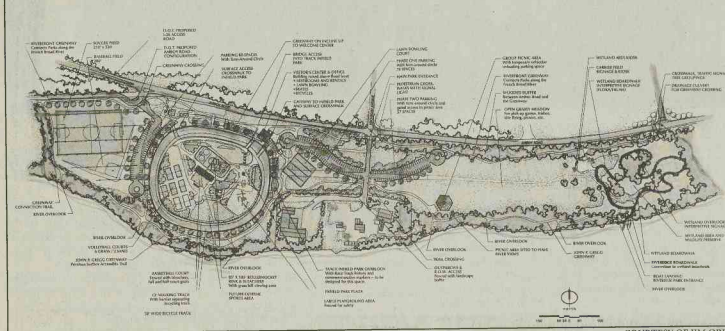
Burning the midnight oil: art students at work
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Phase IV expands Asheville park

Greenway to connect UNCA with downtown

FRENCH BROAD RIVER PARK

phase IV - park master plan



COURTESY OF JIM ORR

The Department of Parks and Recreation is currently adding more recreational space to the French Broad River Park.

French Broad park to offer recreational space to students

Sara Miller
News Reporter

The French Broad River Park doubled in size when Asheville's Department of Parks and Recreation began expansion projects. Their current project, Phase IV, entails the construction of recreational space for the park.

"In any given night, you (can) go down there, and every single one of the components of the park are being used," said Jim Orr, superintendent of parks.

"Phase IV, we've determined, has become the most popular park." The French Broad River, located on the Amboy Road exit of Interstate 240, sits on 14 acres of land.

The new section of the park, named Phase IV, was donated three or four years ago, and adds 18 acres to the park.

The French Broad River Park spreads across large areas of green space, and offers visitors recreation with gardens, picnic tables, a gazebo and fishing/observation deck. Phase IV provides more recreational areas.

Before the project began, the 1.3-mile racetrack on the property was in poor condition, according to Orr. The Department of Parks and Recreation re-paved the track, and now the track provides cyclists and pedestrians with a place to ride, walk and run.

"This place provides safety," said Chris Holmberg, a senior biology major. "I mostly ride mountain bikes, but now and then, it is fun to get out on the track with some friends and get a little race going without the worry of getting hit by cars."

To maximize space, the land within the track was used for several different sports spaces.

Inside the track, there are several volleyball courts, according to Orr.

"This place provides safety. I mostly ride mountain bikes, but now and then, it is fun to get out on the track with some friends and get a little race going without the worry of getting hit by cars."

- Chris Holmberg
senior biology major

"I used to play volleyball behind Mills Hall, but the balls always rolled down the hill," said Selissa Taylor, a junior sociology major. "The French Broad courts are so much nicer. You don't always have to run through the woods to find the ball."

A roller-hockey rink, basketball court and large play-ground facility also lie within the track.

Next, the Department of Parks and Recreation intends to add a multi-use sports field and a paved trail in the park, according to Orr. The sports field, not yet complete, already houses several different sport leagues, including soccer, women's and men's softball and ultimate Frisbee leagues.

"We are used to muddy, rocky fields that are strategically placed right beside briars in case we should ever throw a Frisbee out of bounds," said Shane Ambro, a junior history student.



COURTESY OF ASHEVILLE.COM

The park will support more athletic activities, such as inline skating.

and music major and ultimate Frisbee player. "Any field is better than no field. But when they finally finish working on the park, I think it will be really nice."

The Department of Parks and Recreation plan to build a welcome center, more green space, picnic pavilions and a wetland interpretation and education trail, according to Orr.

"It will have a wetland area... that will have a raised boardwalk, so that people can walk across without walking through it," said Orr. "It will look at native vegetation and species that are in and around that area that we can't disturb."

"Each (new piece) has its own budget and it's own timeline from start to finish," said Orr. "Once that whole area is completed, we will probably name each section."

Prior to construction, the Department of Parks and Recreation held six open meetings to invite community ideas.

"Since we were given the property, we had a period of time to

decide how we were going to use it and how we were going to design it," said Orr. "We had a lot of public input, and then we also had to do some fundraising."

Grants, donations and money from fundraisers paid for construction. Phase IV will cost approximately \$2 million, according to Orr.

The Department of Parks and Recreation uses its own tools, workforce and funds for most operations. Orr said all the funds will go toward materials, allowing for more development with a lower cost.

"Everything else that you see down there is done by our crews, so the majority, 99 percent, of the funds we raise are basically for material," said Orr.

Jessica Hensley
News Reporter

The Broadway Connection project will provide a greenway trail from UNCA to downtown via Broadway.

"I think the connection will make life easier for UNCA students," said Meghna Shastri, a junior management major. "If I want to go downtown between classes, I can walk instead of driving. It will save gas and my parking space."

The new route will allow students to walk to and from their classes. The greenway trail will begin below the road level near the creek. Then, it will wind toward the intersection of W.T. Weaver Boulevard and Broadway Avenue.

"Greenways are corridors of natural land and/or water recognized for their ability to connect people and places together. Through greenways, people connect to nature; people connect to parks; home connects to work, school and shops; and city connects to countryside," said the Asheville's Department of Parks and Recreation Web site. "Trails are paths used for walking, running, bicycling or other forms of recreation or transportation."

UNCA and the Department of Parks and Recreation will work together to build the greenway. The Department of Parks and Recreation will use their own staff and partner with other departments, according to Superintendent of Parks Jim Orr.

UNCA and the Department of Parks and Recreation recently worked together to construct the new entrance to UNCA with help from a grant through the City Engineering Department of the Department of Transportation (DOT).

"Since the entrance was a greenway, we got involved with it, but it was all done by outside contractors," said Orr. "Our landscape architect and a lot of city staff were involved, but the money came basically from the state."

Sometimes when the state gets involved with construction, the costs can become more expensive. The state also requires the construction project to meet more regulations, according to Orr.

However, because each of the teams provided funds, the construction cost less and came to completion more quickly.

Orr said the Department of Parks and Recreation completes most projects with fewer economic demands and little state interference. The entrance breaks down into two pieces. The DOT funded the new one, which cost \$400,000.

The older one primarily operated

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"I think the connection will make life easier for UNCA students. If I want to go downtown between classes, I can walk instead of driving. It will save gas and my parking space."

- Meghna Shastri
junior management major

Wetlands provide research opportunities

Christina Clayton
News Reporter

The restoration of the Tullula Wetlands, a project that began in 1994, provides many students with opportunities for undergraduate research.

"Undergraduates have played a key role in the research, and several have published their research findings in national journals," said Jim Peranaka, a biology professor.

"The work has provided many students (with) opportunities to gain research experience as undergraduates before moving on to graduate programs in ecology and environmental biology."

With help from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT), the Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE), other state and federal agencies and environmental consultants, the UNCA team developed and implemented restoration plans.

According to Kevin Moorhead, associate professor in the depart-

ment of environmental studies and director of research for the Tullula Wetland Restoration Project, over 50 students have worked at Tullula. Some conducted senior research projects, and others collected data used to evaluate ecological conditions of the site.

According to the Tullula Wetlands Web site, Native Americans probably occupied the Tullula Wetlands before European settlers moved them in 1838. The Wetlands went through several owners before falling into the hands of the Graham County Industrial Authority in 1986.

Then, the Industrial Authority began developing the land into a golf course. Ownership passed to the Tallulah Valley Golf Course and Country Club, Inc. and then to a family for use in cattle grazing. "During the attempted golf course construction, approximately 40 percent of the wetlands were severely degraded," the Tullula Wetland project Web site reported. "From logging and grazing, from channeling Tullula Creek to reclaim-

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