

# 2018 Annual Report



Quality Recreation &  
Leisure Opportunities



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# OUR MISSION






We believe that **LEARNING AND PLAYING** are **LIFELONG ENDEAVORS** and vital to overall health and wellness.

Our department is dedicated to providing a variety of **QUALITY RECREATIONAL AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES** to the **CITIZENS OF AUGUSTA COUNTY.**

If you are looking for a creative outlet, a challenging adventure, a means to stay fit and healthy, or an activity to further your child's development, you have come to the right place! We maintain several parks and facilities throughout the county that can host a wide range of activities and our trip offerings take you to amazing places both within our state and beyond.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

-  540-245-5727
-  540-245-5732
-  [augustarec.com](http://augustarec.com)
-  [parksrec@co.augusta.va.us](mailto:parksrec@co.augusta.va.us)
-  PO Box 590 Verona, VA 24482

Thank you for taking the time to review our Annual Report for 2018. This past year has been a year of significant accomplishments for Augusta County's Parks & Recreation Department. Our dedication to providing quality recreational and leisure opportunities is made clear through those accomplishments. The department's goal is to enhance quality of life for all citizens by providing those opportunities in safe, well maintained environments. You will see in the following pages that the department has invested significantly in improving our parks and facilities to meet that goal. We strive to provide a wide variety of recreational, educational, and life-long learning activities on a seasonal basis in active and passive environments and we hope to ride that 2018 wave of success into 2019 and continue to invest our resources to accomplish even more.

This Annual Report is an ideal way to reflect on the accomplishments of 2018 and communicate the work being done in the community. There are many citizens and partners including community groups, organizations, and businesses that support this department's efforts and consistently work with us to improve the quality of life for all of Augusta County. An immeasurable amount of appreciation should be expressed to them and we look forward to maintaining those relationships for our future investment.

I consider myself incredibly fortunate to work with the collection of professional staff that serves your Department of Parks & Recreation. They are extremely dedicated, passionate, knowledgeable, and skilled. Being involved and connected to the community and understanding our community's needs is, has been, and always will be our priority.

As you review this report, know that you too can be involved with our department in so many ways. You can take a class, go on a trip, visit our parks, teach a class, volunteer, or attend a Parks & Recreation Commission meeting. I encourage you to take part in one or all of these opportunities in 2019!



Andy Wells, Director

# PARKS & RECREATION STAFF

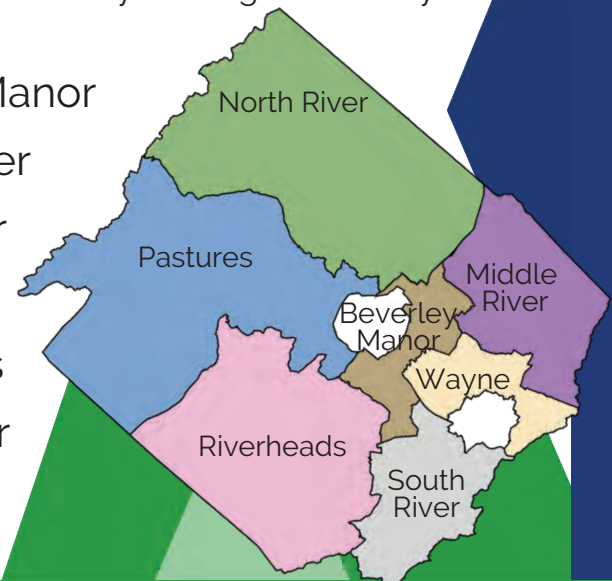
<b>Andy Wells</b>	Director
<b>Lettie Stickley</b>	Administrative Secretary
<b>Joyce Johnson</b>	Recreation Manager
<b>Alex Williams</b>	Programs Coordinator for Special Events
<b>Nick Grow</b>	Program Coordinator
<b>Pam Mowery</b>	Programs Coordinator for Senior Adults
<b>Kelly Rourke</b>	Natural Chimneys Park Coordinator
<b>Ashley Rhodes</b>	Program Technician
<b>Vicki York</b>	C.A.R.E. and Youth Camps Coordinator
<b>Lauren Jacobsen</b>	C.A.R.E. and Youth Camps Assistant

Numerous dedicated part time staff also provide vital support throughout the year in our C.A.R.E. Program, K.I.D.S. Camp Program, trips, and activities.

## PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

The Parks and Recreation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors in recommending policies relating to recreation programming, constantly assessing recreation needs to provide year-round supervised recreation for the citizens of Augusta County. The Commission is composed of seven (7) members appointed for four-year terms by the Augusta County Board of Supervisors.

<b>Frank Fenneran</b>	Beverley Manor
<b>Ronnie Ritchie</b>	Middle River
<b>Larry Curry</b>	North River
<b>Leon Bartley</b>	Pastures
<b>Sally Williams</b>	Riverheads
<b>Kirk Barley</b>	South River
<b>Samantha Bosserman</b>	Wayne



**↑ 3%**

Increase in participation hours

**C.A.R.E. & K.I.D.S. Camp Expansion**

Expanded C.A.R.E. program to North River Elementary and added Cassell Elementary as a K.I.D.S. Camp site.



**8,912**  
Participants



**246,053**  
Participation Hours



**3**  
Staff received County Administrator's Award of Excellence



**✓ 80%**

Programming Success Rate

Recovered **55%**

of all operating expenses through direct revenue



### Natural Chimneys Park & Campground

**\$263,800**

Invested in infrastructure and utilities at Natural Chimneys



### New Bus!



Replaced the first bus the department used to take trips.



### The Trails at Mill Place

**\$231,000**

Invested in a brand new facility

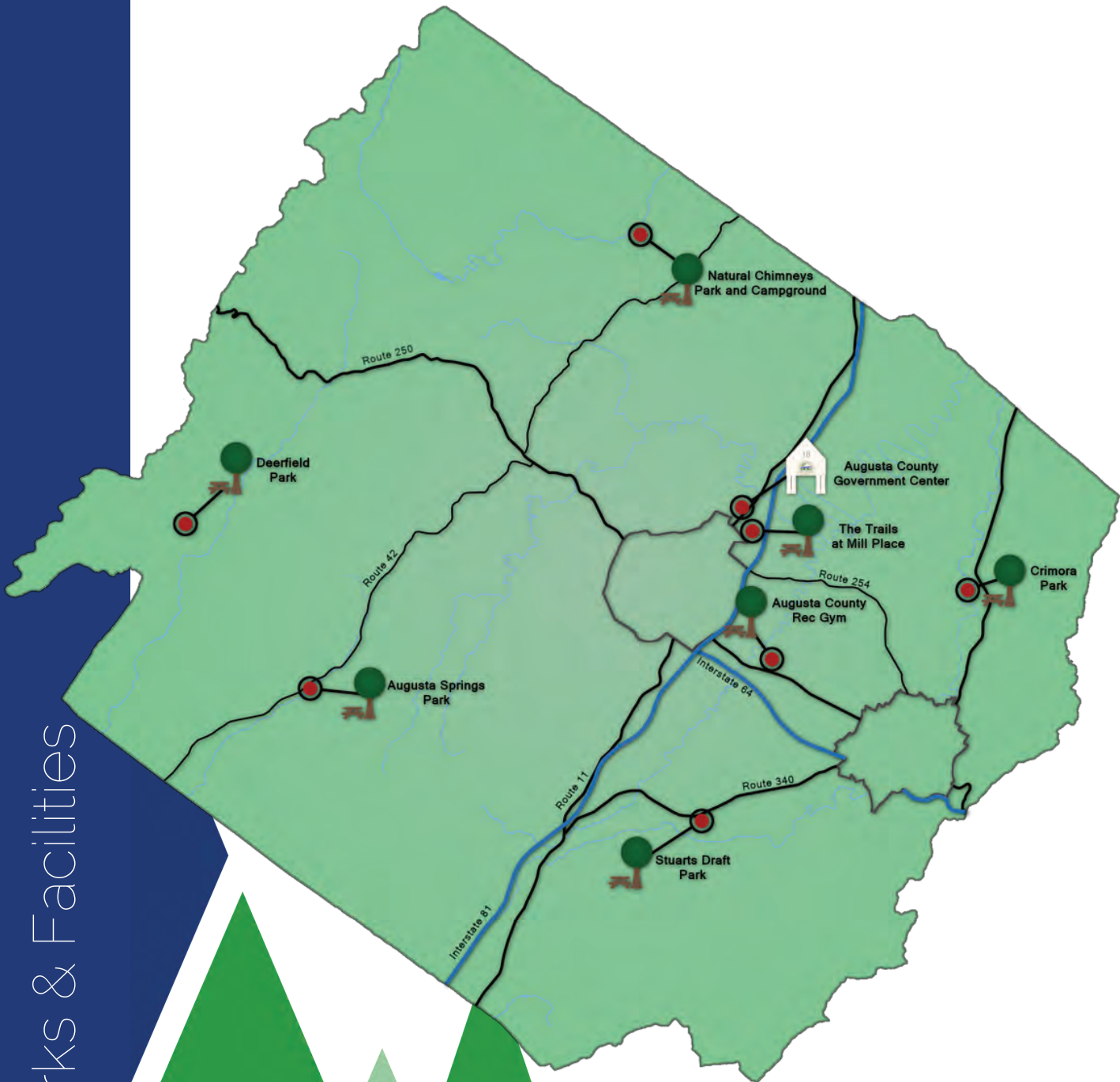


**\$32,952**

in Recreation Matching Grants towards improvements to recreational facilities in the County



Augusta County Parks and Recreation provides recreational and leisure opportunities at six parks and two indoor facilities of varying size throughout the County. Each park has been either built or acquired in the past 20 years and amenities within them have developed incrementally as funding has been provided. These parks are now anchors within communities around the County, providing convenient access to outdoor recreation. The two facilities managed by the department provide vital programming space wherein thousands of citizens of both Augusta County and surrounding localities participate in recreational activities annually.





## Augusta County Rec Gym

The Augusta County Rec Gym is located in Fishersville in the Woodrow Wilson complex off of Route 250. In the 1990s the department began providing programming in the building, originally the Wilson High School gymnasium. While it is still owned and lightly used by the Augusta County School Board, the majority of activities housed in the gym are provided by Parks and Recreation. It features a full size basketball court, metal bleachers, restrooms, and karate room. The space is also available for rent on Friday nights and weekends between September and April and does see a steady flow of rentals during that time. The building is not air-conditioned and is, therefore, not used during the summer.



## Activity Room

In 2013, the department moved its offices to a more central location within the Government Center. With that move, previous programming space in the building became unavailable. However, a space on the second floor of the Government Center was developed into what is now called the Activity Room. This space is where we host many of our fitness and dance programs. It is also used for some of our instructional, classroom based programs. This well-lit space features a laminated dance floor, ballet barres, mirror wall, and three large televisions.



# Augusta Springs Park

In 2006, Augusta Springs Park was added to the department. Located on Augusta Springs Road just off US Route 42, this park is 25 acres in size and includes a playground, basketball court, picnic shelter, seasonal restroom, multipurpose field, and walking trail almost one mile in length. This is a unique park as it is entirely flat, with most of its area in the Little Calfpasture River floodplain.



# Deerfield Park

Deerfield Park was acquired in 2010. This 4.5 acre park is located on Marble Valley Road in Deerfield. It features a picnic shelter, playground, volleyball net, basketball court and Community Center that houses the Deerfield Library Station.

A walking trail, approximately 0.32 miles in length runs around the perimeter of the park and several tables are scattered under numerous stately oak trees.



## Crimora Park

Crimora Park was acquired in 2000 and is one of two Augusta County parks that provide river access—Crimora being the only one to provide access year-round. Located on New Hope and Crimora Road, just west of the Crimora community, this park is about 18 acres and is split into two levels based on existing topography. It features two picnic shelters, two playgrounds, and a seasonal restroom on the elevated level. A walking trail, almost  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile in length, meanders through this level. On the lower level, the park features a large manicured grass area and over 1,000 feet of river frontage that provides ample access to the South River for kayaking, canoeing, and/or fishing. The Crimora Community Center, operated by the local Ruritan Club, and two lighted baseball fields, operated by the Crimora Baseball Association, are at the entrance to the park.



# Berry Farm

The department has been involved in the management of the Berry Farm property which was acquired by the County in 1964. The property has been managed with a relatively hands-off approach with conservation of watershed and aquifers, wildlife habitat and open space in mind. Over the years, several sections of the property have been parceled off and deeded to the Augusta County Service Authority for the purpose of establishing drinking water sources. Additionally, a portion of land has been leased to Project GROWS, a non-profit farm which strives to educate the local community regarding sustainable food production and access. The Berry Farm property presents numerous opportunities for recreation. The property already has an extensive trail system which is lightly maintained and has recently received enhancement from a local Boy Scout Eagle project. The Berry Farm is a textbook example of property that could be developed for both open space conservation and passive recreation opportunities in the future.



# Stuarts Draft Park

Stuarts Draft Park was the first of its kind for the department. The property was purchased in 1998 and was gradually developed in the following years. Located on Edgewood Lane, just off US Route 340, the park features a Junior Olympic size swimming pool, two picnic shelters, amphitheater and playground. There are also two soccer fields, two little league baseball fields, and a lengthy walking trail. The department's aquatics programming including swim lessons and the Dolphins Swim Team are held primarily at the Stuarts Draft pool. This park also hosts the very popular annual Sweet Dreams Festival, organized by Sweet Dreams, Inc.—a local 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.



**NEW!**

## The Trails at Mill Place

Augusta County Parks and Recreation officially opened The Trails at Mill Place at a Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on September 28th. The new walking trail is located in Augusta County's Mill Place Commerce Park in Verona just off of Route 612 and has been a long-term County project.

The paved trail is approximately two-thirds of a mile long and encircles a 2 acre storm water management pond which receives runoff from a large portion of the Commerce Park. A critical wetland area approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre in size is also situated immediately beside the storm water management pond, providing a great opportunity for wildlife viewing. The pond contains several freshwater fish species and is open for catch and release fishing. A picnic shelter with several picnic tables is just a few feet off the parking lot, and three benches are placed at intervals along the trail.

The opening of the trail adds a much needed outdoor recreation amenity for tenants of the Park as well as the residents of Verona. As both a space to enjoy the outdoors and exercise in a traffic-free, pedestrian-focused environment, the walking path is the first of its kind in the Verona area. The Trails at Mill Place moniker was strategically selected in order to provide for future trail expansion in the Park including integration with current and future businesses. The Master Plan for the Commerce Park calls for an extensive trail system which will likely be developed as more businesses enter the Park.

In addition to the approximately \$240,000 of local funds invested in the project, construction and completion of the trail was also greatly supported by numerous community partners and businesses. Several Commerce Park tenants neighboring the project provided construction access and cooperation throughout the entire process. The Greater Verona Business Association donated the picnic shelter and has pledged future support for the trail as well. Augusta County Parks and Recreation is excited to see the trail used by local residents who previously had to travel relatively long distances to find a similar opportunity. The trail is within a 5 to 10 minute drive of the majority of Verona residents. With the project complete, the County has made great strides towards meeting the four most-needed outdoor recreation activities in the Central Shenandoah region as identified by the 2013 Virginia Outdoors Plan—public access to waters for fishing, trails for hiking and walking, natural areas, and trails for wildlife watching and nature study.



# Shelter Rentals

Most of our park picnic shelters are available to rent between April 1 and October 31. They are great for family reunions, birthday parties, office gatherings or get-togethers with friends or teammates. Charcoal grills are provided at most shelters.



# 132

## Shelter Rentals





# Rec Gym Rentals

The Augusta County Rec Gym is located in Fishersville in the Woodrow Wilson complex off of Route 250. In the 1990s the department began providing programming in the building, originally the Wilson High School gymnasium. While it is still owned and lightly used by the Augusta County School Board, the majority of activities housed in the gym are provided by Parks and Recreation. It features a full size basketball court, metal bleachers, restrooms, and karate room. The space is also available for rent on Friday nights and weekends between September and April and does see a steady flow of rentals during that time. The building is not air-conditioned and is, therefore, not used during the summer.

81

Rec Gym  
Rentals



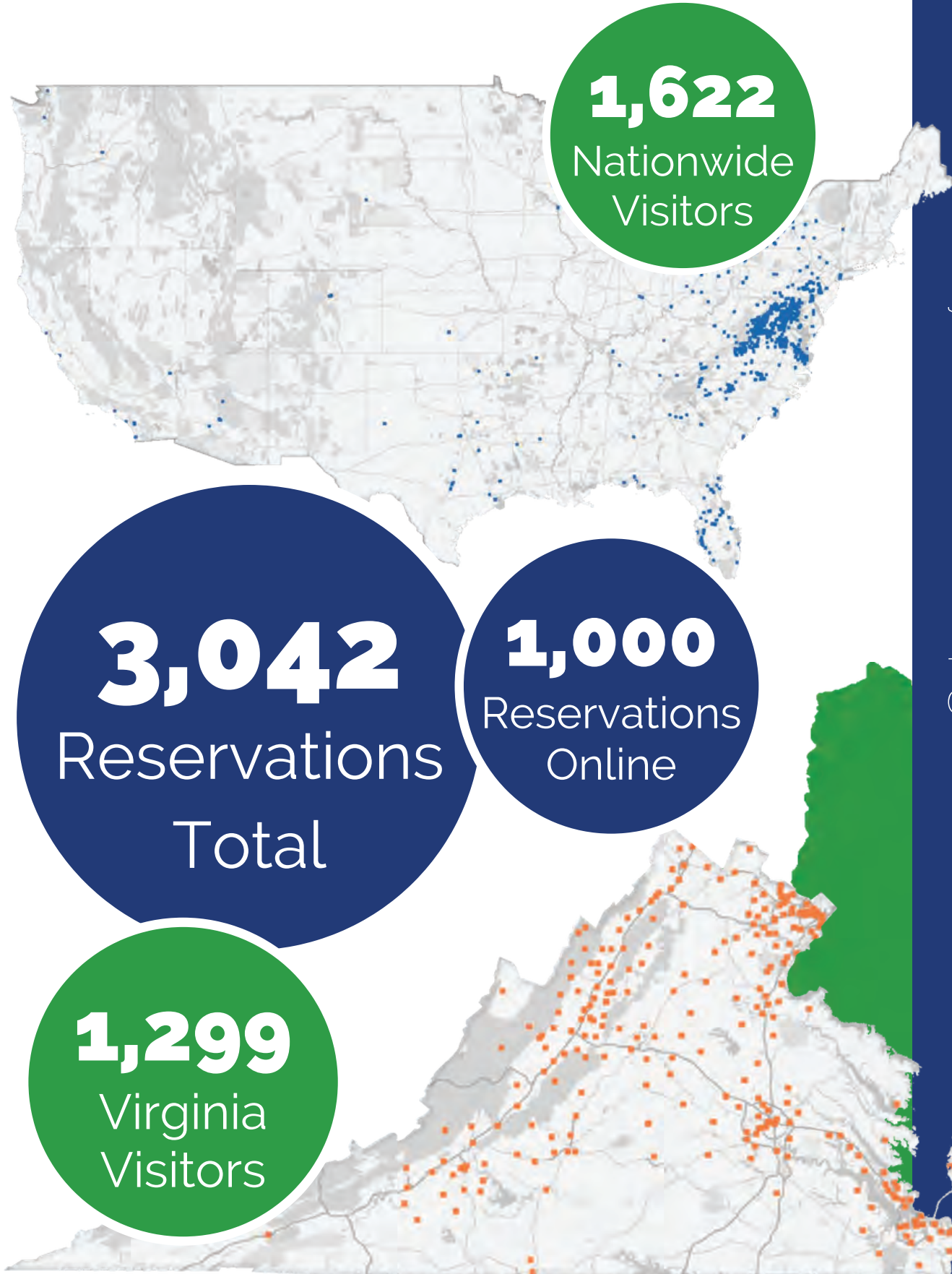
# NATURAL CHIMNEYS

## PARK & CAMPGROUND

The County acquired Natural Chimneys Park and Campground in 2009 and it remains the department's largest and most popular park. Located in Mt. Solon, this 135 acre park offers many recreational opportunities to county citizens and other visitors from across the state and nation. It features the towering limestone formations for which it is named, trails, picnic shelters, performance stage, swimming pool, seasonal access to the North River, and a very popular seasonal campground that is experiencing its fourth generation of campers. Both day visitors and those who choose to stay overnight in the campground find plenty of space and opportunities for recreation, relaxation and fellowship. The facility is managed by Department staff. This park's annual remote operation, including the available camping program, has been designed to be at least revenue neutral since it was gifted to the County by the now-dissolved Upper Valley Regional Park Authority.



# Campground Performance



# Capital Improvements

Natural Chimneys Park and Campground received significant infrastructure and facility improvements in 2018. These improvements were completed largely due to aging and deteriorated existing infrastructure and to provide expansion of the services offered at the park.



A graphic for the 'NEW WELL' project. It features a large dark blue circle with the words 'NEW WELL' in white. Above it is a green circle with '50 gpm Yield' and a blue water drop icon. Below it is another green circle with '\$175,000 Investment'.

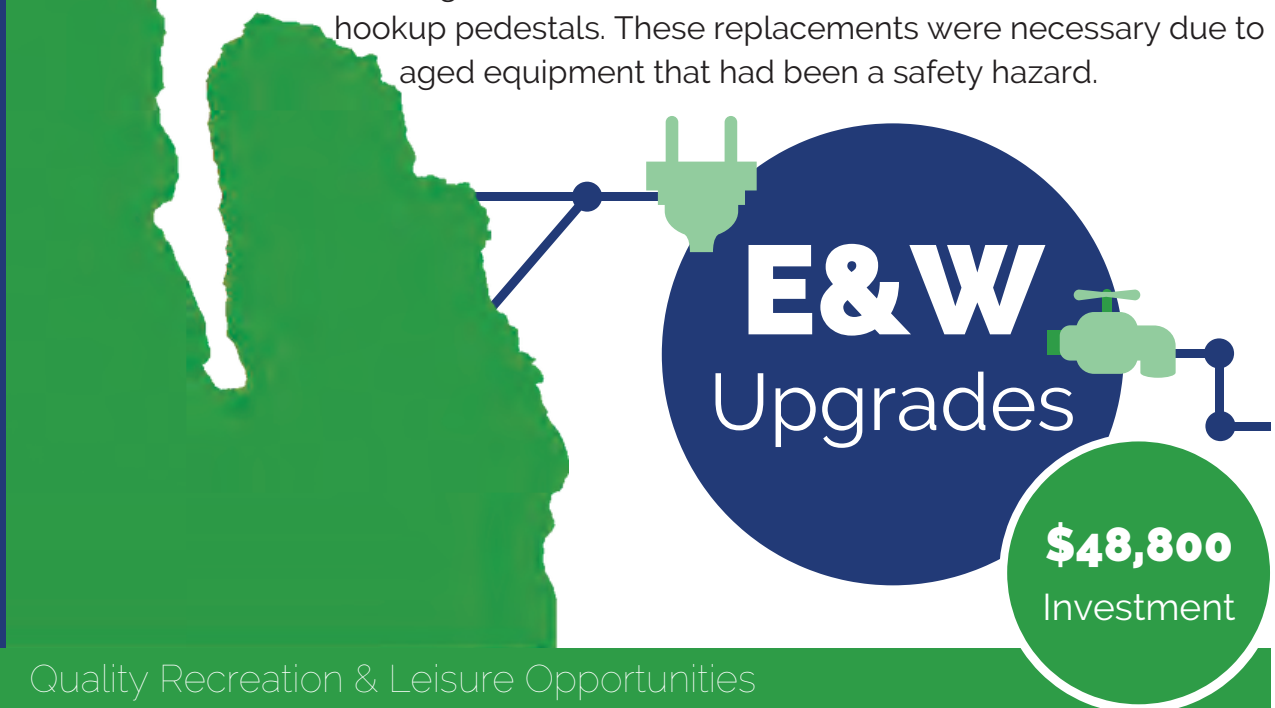
**50 gpm**  
Yield

**NEW WELL**

**\$175,000**  
Investment

The largest single improvement in terms of investment was digging and connecting a new well to the existing water system. This project became a necessity when the existing two shallow wells began to fail/collapse and run dry. The campground had also routinely had problems with the water storage tank running dry during peak times of the season when the campground was full. The total cost for the project was \$175,000 and staff immediately noticed a significant improvement in both water quality and supply. Of particular note, this new well is configured to yield 50 gallons per minute, with a safe maximum yield of 100 gallons per minute. This effectively replaces two previously used wells and almost triples the yield rate.

Major electrical and water upgrades were also completed throughout the campground. \$48,800 in utility improvements were completed to Shelter #4 and camping loop J. This work involved replacing an 800 amp distribution panel, 16 campsite utility hookup pedestals and electrical outlets and running new electrical feeder lines and water lines for these hookup pedestals. These replacements were necessary due to aged equipment that had been a safety hazard.



A graphic for 'E&W Upgrades'. It features a large dark blue circle with 'E&W Upgrades' in white. To the left is a green silhouette of a tree with a blue line representing an electrical wire leading to a green plug icon. To the right is a green water tap icon with a blue line representing a water line. Below the circle is a green circle with '\$48,800 Investment'.

**E&W Upgrades**

**\$48,800**  
Investment

A \$40,000 plus renovation of the stage at Natural Chimneys Park was completed with donated supplies, materials, and labor through the park's partnership with Black Bear Productions for the annual Red Wing Roots Music Festival. This renovation converted the stage to a more timber frame appearance and greatly improved the acoustics and aesthetic appeal.



# Programming

Augusta County Parks and Recreation provides programs and activities that span a wide range of interests and abilities, offering something for everyone. Depending on the subject matter, some programs may be seasonal while others are offered every quarter. Programmers are constantly evaluating interest and adjusting our offerings accordingly so that we always have something new to offer. Even with a significant staffing shortage for much of 2018, our programming staff provided a full range of activities. In the course of a year, our programs are entirely self-sustaining and are expected to at least break even. Evaluating the financial standing of our programs on the whole provides the flexibility for profit on some programs to compensate for loss on a limited number of individual programs. In effect, this allows us to offer a maximum number of programs to our citizens while still satisfying more broad departmental constraints.

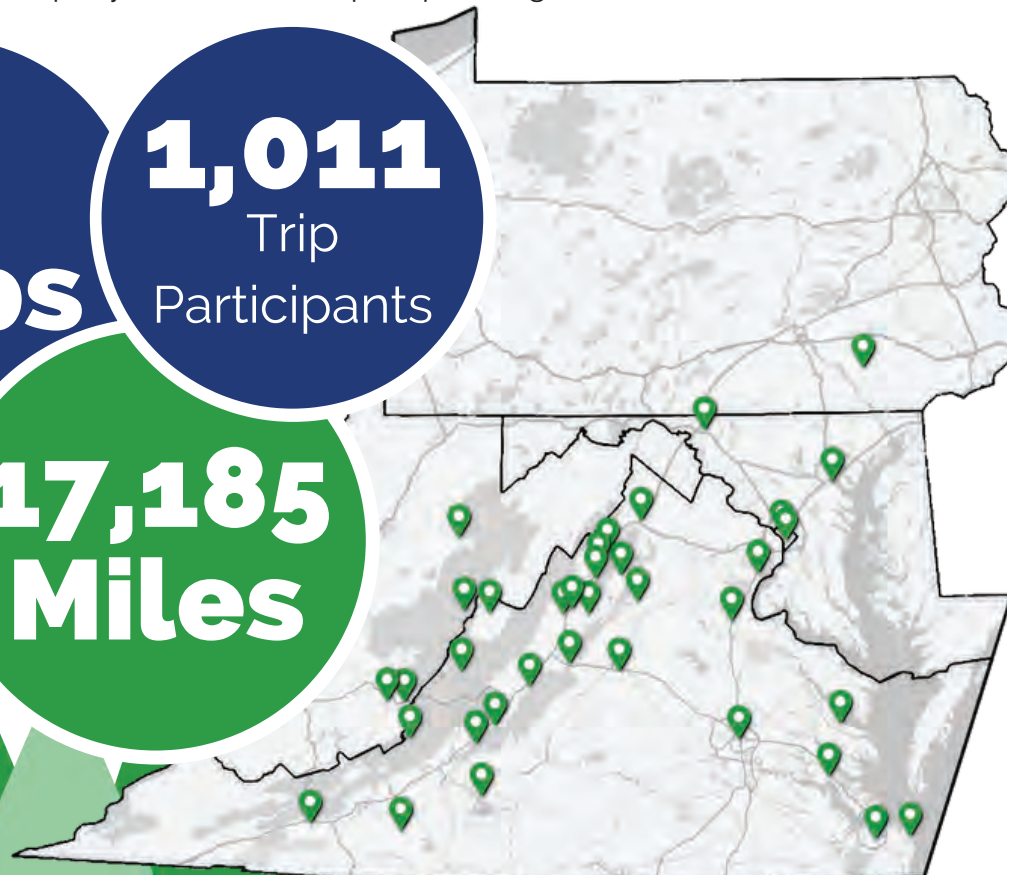
## Trips

For more than 15 years, Augusta County Parks and Recreation has offered bus trips to events and attractions around Augusta County, throughout Virginia, and across the nation. We have a fleet of two 15 passenger buses and a dedicated group of trip drivers and escorts that help facilitate these trips. On occasion, a trip will have more interest than we can fit on a 15 passenger bus. In these cases and depending on the venue, staff will either take both of the department buses or contract with a local transportation company to secure a 48 plus passenger motor coach.

**59**  
**Trips**

**1,011**  
Trip  
Participants

**17,185**  
**Miles**



# Classes

We pride ourselves on both the quantity and quality of classes we offer throughout the year. From tried and true classics to innovative new activities, we offer a wide range of classes. Our programming staff works with a number of contracted instructors who are willing to share their talents, skills, and knowledge with the community. We are regularly introducing new classes in an effort to provide the best quality activities to our citizens. Most classes take place in the Government Center building in various spaces and classrooms.



# Aquatics

Our department operates two outdoor swimming pools with seasons running between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Both pools host a daily public swim period while Stuarts Draft Pool also hosts swim lessons and the Dolphins Swim Team. Both pools can be rented for parties on Fridays, Saturdays, or Sundays from 6:30pm to 8pm.

**41**

Dolphins Swim Team Participants

**5,402**

Stuarts Draft Public Swim Attendance

**5,214**

Natural Chimneys Public Swim Attendance

**110**

Swim Lessons Participants

**13**

Pool Rentals





# C.A.R.E. Program

## Children's Afterschool Recreation Experience

The C.A.R.E. program is by far the most popular program or activity that our department offers. With 8 locations throughout the county, it also has the widest reach of any. The program operates within elementary schools, utilizing the cafeterias, playgrounds, and gyms. The schedule for the program is also determined by the school calendar. The C.A.R.E. program is designed to be a place where children can interact with each other and our staff in a constructive environment and includes activities like games, crafts, and outdoor recreation. Staff successfully expanded the program to include North River Elementary School for the 2018-19 school year. This is also a program where we rely heavily on part time staff who are dedicated to our mission of providing quality opportunities, particularly to elementary-age children.



# K.I.D.S. Camp

## Kids Involved During Summer

K.I.D.S. Camp is a summer camp we offer in June and July at several elementary schools throughout the county. Our goal in this program is to provide a safe and fun environment for children during the summer months while also exposing them to various fun and education experiences. In 2018, our staff put together a phenomenal schedule of field trips and activities so that each day was an adventure. Again, this program relies heavily on our dedicated part time staff who help us provide these opportunities.

**4**  
Sites

**188**  
Enrolled

**28**  
Staff

# 26

## Field Trips

(per site)



# Activities Guide

The department prints a quarterly activities guide that is distributed to all Augusta County residents and is unquestionably the widest reaching communication for the department. This guide includes all Parks & Recreation activities and programs for a three month period as well as announcements and information for various County departments, non-profits, and state agencies. In the spring of 2018, we began a partnership with the Augusta County Library which involved providing dedicated space for their programs and activities. Library content is conspicuously placed in the rear of the publication and flipped so that the "back" page acts as their front cover. This change has been attributed to significant increase in interest for Library programs.

**141,785**  
Activities Guides  
Mailed



## Rec Report

The Rec Report is the department's email newsletter that is sent out monthly. Each issue provides information for programs which have registration deadlines in the next 30 days. Occasionally, large or new programs will also be featured. The newsletter was started in 2016 and has gradually improved and increased readership since then.

**336**  
Contacts  
(at end of 2018)

**3,741**  
Emails  
Sent

**47.5%**  
Open Rate  
(21.17% Industry Avg)

## Facebook

The department manages three Facebook pages—Augusta County Parks and Recreation, Natural Chimneys Park & Campground, and Stuarts Draft Pool. Each of these pages are updated regularly and receive moderate engagement from followers. This social media presence has proved to be an important aspect of the department’s communications as more and more citizens look for information through these channels.

### @augustacountyparksandrecreation



### @stuartsdraftpool



### @naturalchimneyspark



## Website

A significant amount of department information is available on our website. Anything from Parks and Recreation Commission meeting minutes to staff contact information can be found within our array of pages. Additionally, our website acts as the portal to our online registration software. This system has seen tremendous growth in usage since its introduction and is used for a large proportion of activity registrations. In 2018, we also introduced a short URL ([augustarec.com](http://augustarec.com)) that redirects users to our main page. This change provided a direct route to our page within the County website and also shortened the web address by more than half, making it tremendously easier to access our content.

100,591  
Main Page  
Visits

# 15th Annual Sweet Dreams Festival

Augusta County Parks and Recreation cooperatively sponsored, administered, and hosted the 15th Annual Sweet Dreams Festival which attracted over 3,500 attendees. This 501(c)(3) non-profit event is a multi-award-winning National and State festival for Best New Special Event. Sweet Dreams is a family friendly event and is free to all who attend! Families can enjoy the wide range of activities in the Children's Area that include a craft tent, rock climbing wall, laser tag, inflatables, entertainment and so much more.



**3,500+**  
Attendees

# Red Wing Roots Music Festival

The department hosted the sixth annual Red Wing Roots Music Festival at Natural Chimneys Park in cooperation with Black Bear Productions ([www.redwingroots.com](http://www.redwingroots.com)). This festival is a one-of-a-kind event for the region that attracts visitors from across the country to experience a weekend of music, adventure, and family fun. The event sold 4,185 tickets—most of which sold out in seconds within becoming available online. The event had its greatest attendance yet and sold out admission tickets for all three days of the event. This year's festival had a different dynamic as the production company had purchased the tract of land bordering the park to the north and made that available for additional camping. This was also the event's first use of the renovated stage.

**4,185**  
Tickets  
Sold



## 14th Senior Health Fair

The 14th Annual Senior Health Fair for our county's senior adult population was hosted at the Augusta County Government Center. There were 41 total vendors including public agencies, private businesses, and healthcare professionals and more than 210 attendees.



**210+**  
Attendees

**41**  
Vendors

## Community Halloween

The department held the first Community Halloween celebration on Saturday, October 27 at Natural Chimneys Park. The approximate attendance was 1,550 people with roughly 425 of those already camping at the park for the weekend. This event replaced a previously smaller celebration within the campground by expanding both the quantity and quality of activities offered.



**COMMUNITY  
HALLOWEEN**

**1,550+**  
Attendees

# Recreation Matching Grant Program

The Recreation Matching Grant Program offers assistance to organizations with a 501(c)(3) designation to aid in constructing, replacing or repairing recreation facilities or land for use by the general public. The Program sets guidelines for funds to be received from the county and matched by the organization, understanding that recreation is important for our county residents and visitors. Applications and approval of funds are reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Department, Parks and Recreation Commission and Augusta County Board of Supervisors.

**Sangerville  
Towers Ruritan  
Club Homerun  
Fence**

\$1,280

**Verona  
Community  
Sports  
Association  
Ball Fields**

\$2,907.50

**Weyers Cave  
Recreation  
Association  
Homerun  
Fence**

\$3,647

**Cassell  
Elementary  
Playground**

\$30,000

**Stewart  
Middle  
School  
Baseball  
Field**

\$14,448

**\$52,282.50**  
in Grants



## Infrastructure Recreation Projects

Each magisterial district in the County has a revolving infrastructure account which is funded annually in varying amounts. Any disbursements from these accounts must be approved by a majority vote from the Board of Supervisors. These infrastructure accounts allow Board members the flexibility to address unique problems and needs in their magisterial districts and have also been used to study problems, leverage other funding sources and expedite projects. Often, these funds are used to support projects related to recreational opportunities in the County.



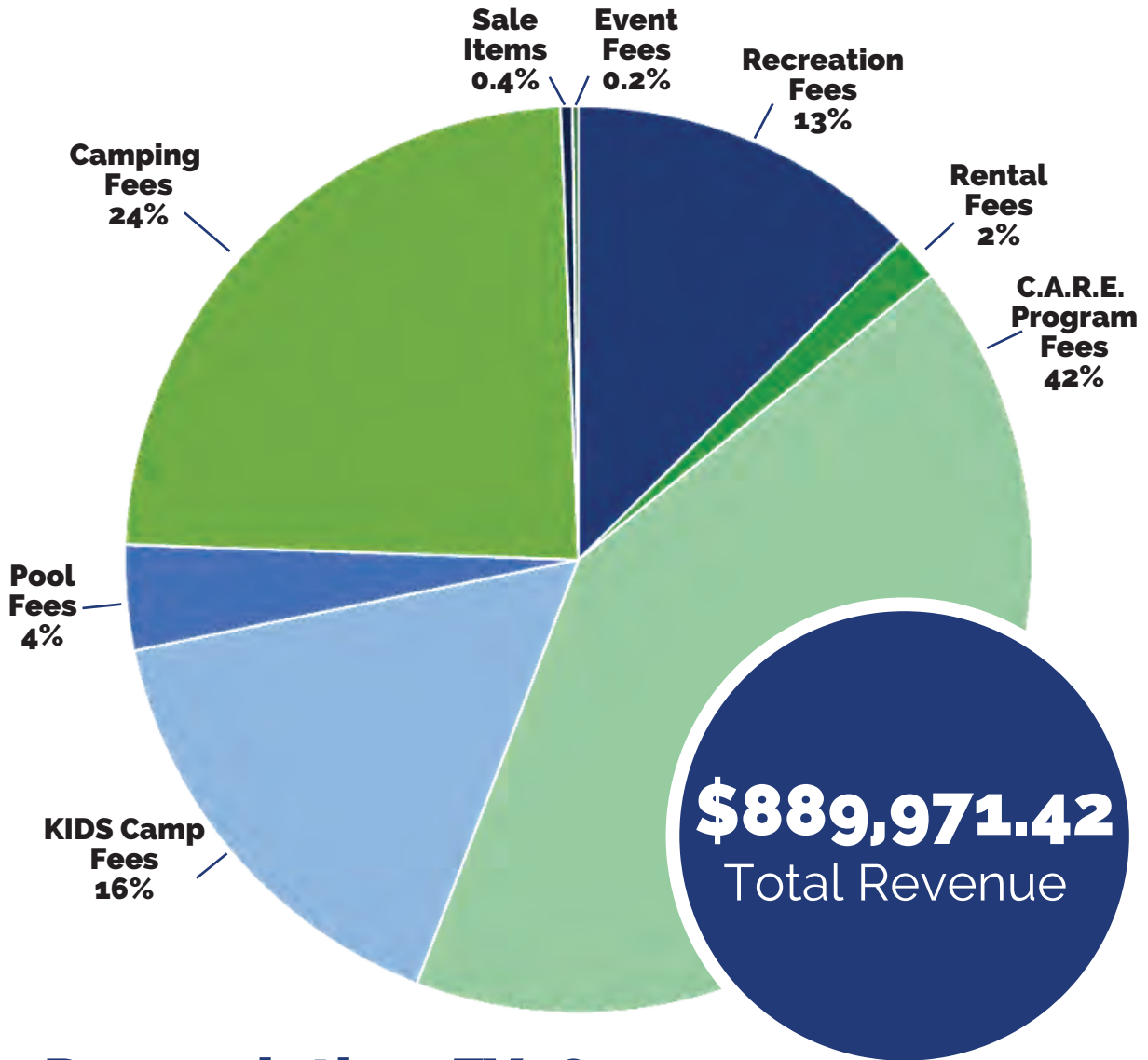
# County-owned Recreation Facilities

Augusta County owns several properties and facilities that directly support recreational opportunities in the County but are not managed or operated by Parks and Recreation. These properties have either been acquired or gifted to the County in the past and have been leased out to various community groups with the understanding that the properties are to be used for recreation. This has proved to be an effective way for the County to provide recreational opportunities which does not require active management.





# Revenues-FY18

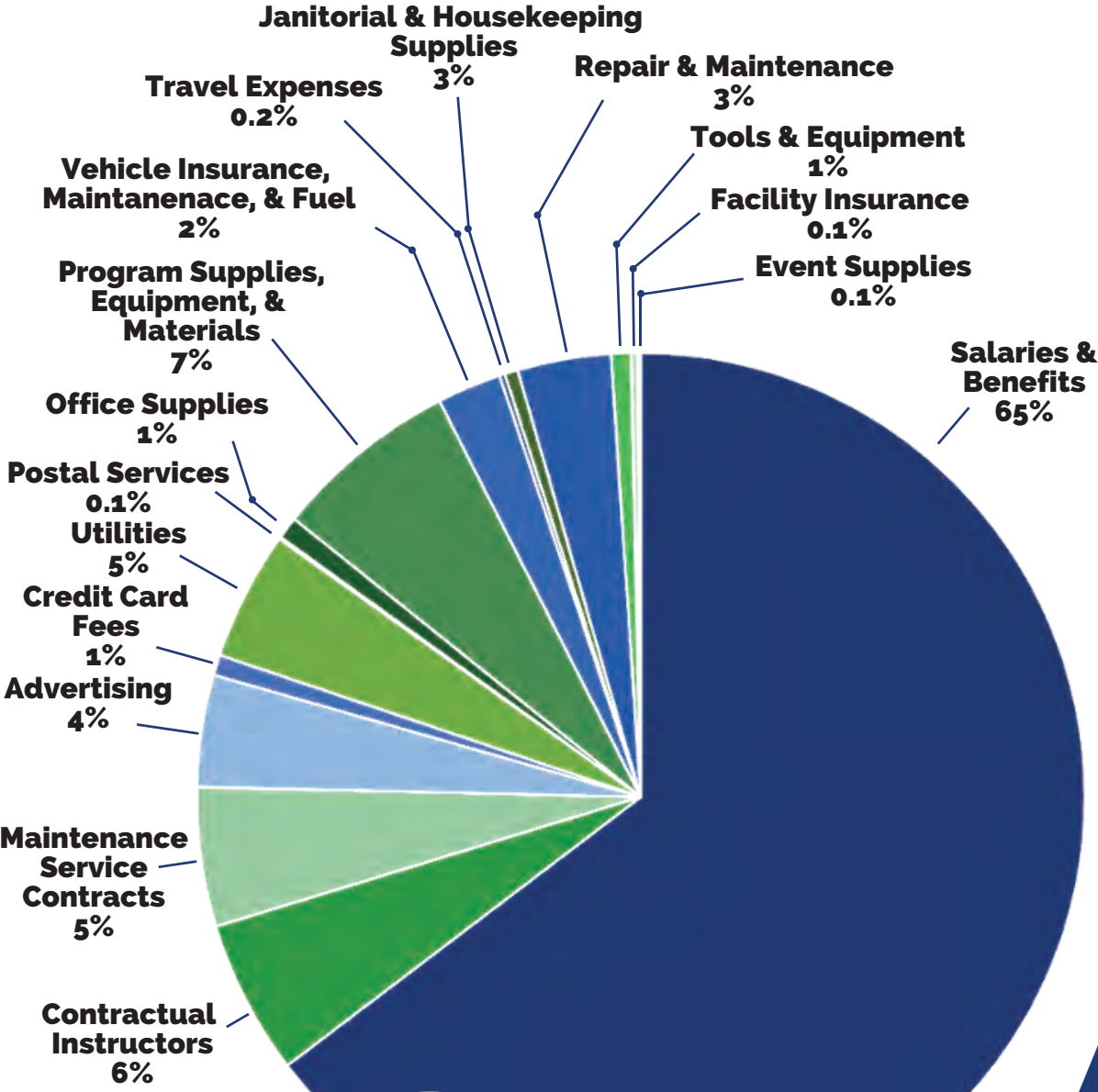


# Depreciation-FY18

In order to properly replace park infrastructure as it ages, the County has a depreciation schedule specific to Parks and Recreation. This fund is set up to plan for and cover the replacement cost for anything from benches to entire buildings. Allocations are made to the depreciation schedule at the end of the fiscal year based on various budgetary factors.



# Expenses-FY18



**\$1,506,193.60**  
Total Expenses

# Connect with us!



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