

## **New Riverside Regional Park Presentation at The Haven**

**November 7, 2018**

**6:30pm-8:00pm**

Over 100 people attended the meeting and asked a variety of questions. Below are some of the main points and highlights.

### Property Information

- The New Riverside passive park property is solely owned by the County, but there are a couple of parcels and a portion of the linear trail owned by the Town of Bluffton which the County and Town have agreed to discuss incorporating into a regional park conceptual plan.
- The property was acquired by the County in 2006 and 2008 through a few transactions and a substantial cash donation for the development of a park on the property was provided.
- The property is approximately 800 acres, of which ~60% are protected forested wetlands.
- The property has a legal access easement off of New Riverside Drive where the map indicates the main entrance to be located. There is a possibility for an access point off of Hwy 46, but that would require further discussions with the Town of Bluffton since that parcel is Town owned.

### Process Information

- A stakeholder workshop was held on October 10<sup>th</sup> for public input.
- A passive park ordinance is going to be heard for 3<sup>rd</sup> reading and public hearing at County Council on December 10<sup>th</sup>. This ordinance details the rules and regulations for passive parks and will govern public use of the New Riverside property.
- The park conceptual plan will be completed by May 2019. Civil engineering drawings will be completed by May 2020. A bid for construction could go out in summer 2020. Construction may or may not be phased.
- The conceptual plan will be presented to the County Council Natural Resource Committee (NRC) prior to completion in spring 2019. The construction bid will be presented to the NRC and full County Council prior to execution of a contract in summer 2020.

### Security Information

- Currently, the County Sheriff's office provides patrols for the Rural and Critical properties through the Environmental Crimes Unit. That will continue. Additionally, since this property is in the Town of Bluffton's limits, the Bluffton Police Department will conduct routine patrols as they do for all Bluffton communities.
- There will be one main entrance for the park and it could have an automatic timed gate and security camera.
- Additional fencing, gates, and signage may be installed at other points of access or at areas of the property where trespass may be an issue.
- The Fire Marshall will need to approve any conceptual and engineered plans, therefore his feedback regarding hazards and emergency access will be taken into consideration during all planning phases.

- Insurance and liability for the park property is covered under the County's existing insurance policy.

#### Park Information

- Specific park rules will include no public hunting, no motorcycles or ATVs allowed, no alcohol allowed, and open hours will be from dawn to dusk. The passive park ordinance will be heard at 3<sup>rd</sup> reading and public hearing on December 10<sup>th</sup> and will apply to this property upon its approval.
- The park will consist of a main entrance with a small parking area (~40 spaces) and restroom, but it will be mainly natural earthen trails for hiking and biking, as well as "blueways" for kayaking and canoeing.
- A couple of camping areas would provide a unique opportunity for the citizens of the County, but the regulation of camping needs to be thoroughly planned and would be similar to what other state and federal parks allow. Camping locations would be pack-in/pack-out scenarios and limited to a small number of tents (possibly 5 or less). Camp sites would be permitted and reserved through the County Passive Parks Manager. Discussions with the Fire Marshall during the planning phase of the project would include whether camp fires could be allowed or not.

#### Specific Questions

- Will there be a first aid station? – Yes.
- Will there be an onsite park ranger? – Not in the plans at this time.
- What kind of landscaping will there be? – No landscaping is to be done within the park, but if there is any needed at the entrance area, then it will be as native and sparse as possible.
- How will the park be monitored? – The Sheriff's Office and Town of Bluffton Police Department provide routine patrols as they do any other community. Additionally, the Passive Parks Manager will monitor periodically. There is additional opportunity to discuss this with the Town of Bluffton as well as the potential formation of a "Friends" group.
- How will trash be handled? – The property will be a pack-in/pack-out similar to other state and federal parks, however there will be trash cans provided at the entrance location.
- Will the property be rented for events? – Not for events like concerts, however there may be environmental or natural resource based events that could occur (i.e. Audubon bird walks, school groups).
- What will the stormwater impact of park development be? – Minimal to none. The proposed improvements will be pervious surfaces to every extent possible.
- Will the property be fenced? – Only in areas that are necessary to prevent trespassing.
- What about the cemetery? – The cemetery is not on park property.
- Will the County pay for maintenance of New Riverside Drive? – That will depend on what the various development and management agreements state. Further discussions with the Town of Bluffton and the County attorney are needed.
- Where can we go to follow the project progress? – Please visit <https://www.bcgov.net/departments/Planning-and-Development/planning/passive-park.php>.