

Canyon County Parks, Pathways, and Cultural Resources Plan

DRAFT – November 30, 2022



Acknowledgements

Thank you to all members of the public who participated in the survey and workshops and shared their ideas about the future of parks in Canyon County.

Thank you to our current Canyon County Commissioners:

- Keri Smith
- Leslie Van Beek
- Pam White

Thank you to the following staff of Canyon County Parks, Cultural & Natural Resources:

- Nicki Schwend, Director
- Laura Barbour, Assistant Director
- Alex Eells, Outdoor Recreation Planner

The Canyon County Parks, Pathways, and Cultural Resources Technical Advisory Group brought together County Departments, partner agencies and city leadership, land management agencies as well as representation from various recreational groups. Membership on the technical advisory group consisted of the following groups and organizations:

- Caldwell Chamber of Commerce
- Canyon County, Development Services
- City of Caldwell
- City of Greenleaf
- City of Kuna
- City of Melba
- City of Middleton
- City of Nampa
- City of Parma
- City of Wilder
- Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS)
- Destination Caldwell
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- Idaho Horse Council
- Idaho Military Division
- Living Independence Network Corporation (LINC) Idaho
- Nampa Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
- Return of the Boise Valley People
- Southwest Idaho Trails and Distance Riders
- Southwest Idaho Biking Association (SWIMBA)
- Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation
- Western Whitewater Association

Plan prepared by Agnew::Beck Consulting



Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Introduction	3
How to Use this Plan – A Quick Guide	3
Plan Purpose	4
Our Process	7
Key Themes	8
Our Vision, Values, and Goals	11
Vision Statement	11
Values.....	11
Goals.....	11
Priority Investment Areas	12
A. Snake River Recreational Corridor	12
B. Boise River Greenbelt.....	13
C. Lake Lowell Pathway and Improvements	14
Priority Investment Areas Map.....	15
Our Parks Today	16
Park Inventory.....	16
Park Assets Map.....	17
Policies and Actions	18
Goal 1: Parks, Cultural and Natural Resources	18
Goal 2: Pathways and Connectivity.....	20
Goal 3: Special Uses and Recreational Opportunities	22
Goal 4: Management and Policy.....	24
Appendices	26
Park Assets	27

List of Figures and Tables

1: County population growth 2010 to 2022, COMPASS estimates.....	4
2: Plan development timeline.....	7
3: Overview of priority investment areas.....	12
4: Primary investment areas map.....	15
5: Canyon County managed parks, open spaces, and special use inventory.....	16
6: Canyon County outdoor recreation map with park assets.....	17

Introduction

Canyon County is located in the State of Idaho with a land area of 604 square miles. The county is situated in the southwestern corner of the state and borders Owyhee County to the south, Ada County to the east, Payette County to the north and shares its western border with the state of Oregon. The Canyon County Parks system consists of both active and passive recreational areas that are owned and/or managed by the County. The current system contains community parks, natural open spaces, and special use areas including a gun range, boating, and fishing locations, museums, and cultural sites. In total Canyon County owns and manages nearly 1,100 acres of parks and open spaces throughout the County.

The Canyon County Parks, Pathways, and Cultural Resources Plan aims to help the County take strategic action to improve park assets and connectivity for users. The Plan will provide guiding priorities to help the County leverage resources and identify opportunities for investment that will result in improved services for Canyon County residents. The Plan establishes a vision and a set of associated goals that will provide the foundation to ensuring the long-term health and continued improvement of parks, open spaces, trails, and cultural assets throughout all of unincorporated Canyon County. It also identifies near-term actions and investments. The vision, values, goals, policies, and actions in this Plan are based on ideas and input from the community as well as land management partners, local nonprofits, community-based organizations, recreational user groups, and cities within Canyon County.

How to Use this Plan – A Quick Guide

The graphic below summarizes the information included in the four main sections of the Plan.



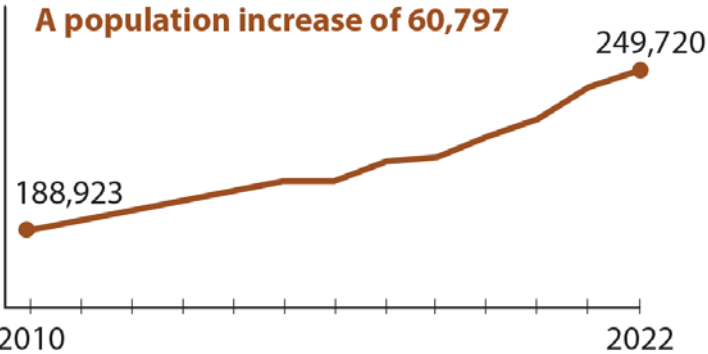
Plan Purpose

Now is the critical time for Canyon County to establish a set of goals and policies to support the development, maintenance and future investments into parks, pathways, and cultural resources. The following reasons highlight why now is the right time to create a Plan that sets forth a roadmap for the allocation of resources to preserve and improve trails, natural and cultural resources in Canyon County.

1. Canyon County is experiencing rapid population growth and higher rates of development across the incorporated cities and in unincorporated areas

Like many places in Idaho, Canyon County is experiencing unprecedented population growth and rapidly changing development patterns. By 2050, Canyon County is expected to grow in population by 32%, representing an increase of approximately 111,000 new residents, of which, approximately 25,000 will be in unincorporated County lands. This population increase will necessitate the construction of additional housing units, public facilities, and infrastructure to support the growing population. Traditional development patterns indicate that a significant amount of growth will move into currently undeveloped space and will create additional pressure on existing park facilities and pathways. Creating a Parks, Pathways and Cultural Resource Plan now will help the County identify priorities and enable action to react to development pressures and allow for the continuation of a level of parks and open space service that County residents have come to recognize as an important and characteristic aspect of Canyon County.¹

1: County population growth 2010 to 2022, COMPASS estimates



¹ For more information about development and population projections, see chapter 2 Population of the Canyon County 2030 Comprehensive Plan. <https://www.canyoncounty.id.gov/elected-officials/commissioners/development-services/growingtogether/>

2. Strong community support for more parks, pathways, and cultural resources.

The public has identified that continued investment and preservation of parks, pathways and cultural resources should be a priority for the County.

3. No long-range plan in place.

To date there has been no comprehensive effort to identify the opportunities and challenges that face the system of Canyon County Parks, Pathways and Cultural Resources system. A plan of this scale helps provide long-range visioning and coordination to ensure long-term health, value, and sustainability of the parks system.

4. Increased interest in partnership and management of key assets and connectivity.

City partners, land management agencies and recreational user groups have expressed interest in creating partnerships to preserve, protect and expand recreational assets, open spaces, natural habitats and key corridors for pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. This Plan helps establish a foundation for partnership on larger regional projects, investments, and management strategies.

Survey Spotlight

The community supported all the suggested investments and projects identified in the survey but indicated the following projects should be considered the highest priority:

1. Protecting natural habitats and ecosystems.
2. Protecting recreational opportunities along river corridors.
3. Creating a regional pathway system that connects non-automotive users to key destinations in the County.
4. Updating facilities and equipment to improve sustainability.
5. Improvements to existing park facilities and spaces.
6. Preservation and celebration of cultural and historic resources.



5. Opportunity to align with the County's 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update

Canyon County is in the process of finalizing an update to their Comprehensive Plan and has outlined a set of high-level goals, policies, and actions to support outdoor recreation, natural spaces, and pathways in the County. This Parks, Pathways and Cultural Resources Plan provides additional information, more specific goals and projects that support the ongoing implementation of the Canyon County Comprehensive Plan.

County Comprehensive Plan

This Plan aims to support the goals and policies established in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan sets for the following goals and policies that provide the foundation for the recommendations in this planning document.

Goal 9.01.00 – Expand and enhance the connectivity of trails and pathways systems within Canyon County.

- Policy 9.01.01 – Support city recreation expansions where they proposed facilities in unincorporated Canyon County.
- Policy 9.01.02 – Implement corridor preservation, acquisition and pathway construction along the Boise River.

Goal 9.02.00 – Expand outdoor recreation offerings and access in Canyon County.

- Policy 9.02.01 – Emphasize parks and recreation development around existing natural features.

Goal 9.03.00 – Support development of private recreation facilities as part of development



Our Process

The Canyon County Parks, Pathways and Cultural Resources Plan was developed through a participatory process that included the voices of Canyon County staff and officials, the community, as well as input from partner agencies including cities, land management agencies and recreational user groups. The Plan was developed over 12-months-starting in December of 2021 and is anticipated to be completed in December 2022.

Along with community and stakeholder input, development of the Plan included an investigation into land management best practices and comparative research as to what is working for similar parks systems. The following is a detailed description of the process used to develop the Plan.



Phase 1: Discovery

Phase 1 was designed to examine the existing conditions and assets of the Canyon County Parks system and to learn about ongoing efforts and opportunities for collaboration between partner agencies.



Phase 2: Outreach and Action Planning

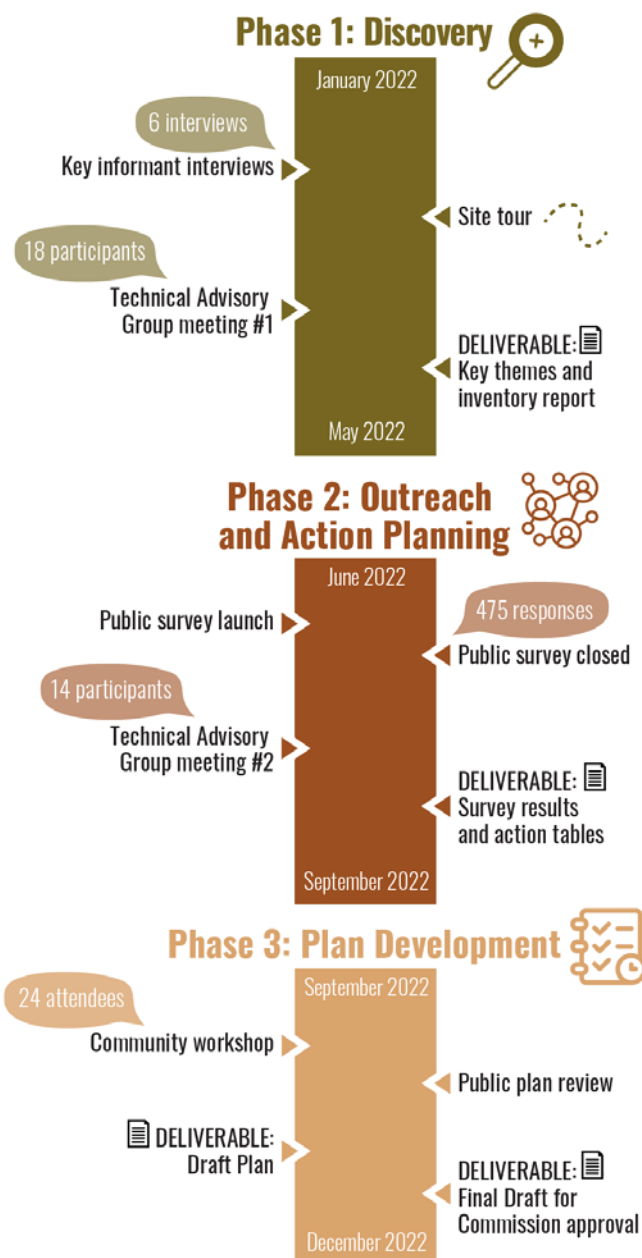
Phase 2 was designed to collect information from the public, key stakeholder groups and partner agencies to inform the goals, policies and actions that would become the final recommendations in this plan. This phase also helped establish an understanding of community priorities and identify use patterns for existing County assets.



Phase 3: Plan Development

Phase 3 synthesized the information collected in phases one and two into a core set of goal statements, policies, and actions. The Plan provides the County a roadmap for future investments, ongoing maintenance and informs management strategies, and provides the foundation for partnership on larger regional efforts around parks, pathways and cultural resources.

2: Plan development timeline



Key Themes

Engagement with members of the public, specific recreational user groups, city representatives, land management groups and other key stakeholders highlighted the following key themes. These themes represent an aggregation of input and interests that helped guide strategic decision making throughout this process.

1. Parks, Open Spaces, Trails, Cultural and Natural Resources are vital assets for Canyon County that improve quality of life and help define the character of the area. Survey respondents and interviewees indicated the importance of parks, trails, open spaces, cultural and natural resources to Canyon County’s culture. Most community parks are highly utilized, while existing trails and pathways help create connectivity within the incorporated cities. The community would like to see these assets protected, improved, and expanded throughout Canyon County.

Acquiring new recreational land should be a top priority. Once it is gone to development it is lost forever.

~ Survey Respondent

2. The Snake River, Boise River, Lake Lowell, and Celebration Park are popular recreational destinations within Canyon County and offer significant opportunities for more development and investment in community parks and pathways. The community broadly supported the creation of larger regional pathways along the Boise River, the Snake River and around Lake Lowell. These pathway systems could serve a diversity of recreational interests, improve connectivity and non-motorized means of transportation, and could provide protection for natural habitats and the rich riparian area ecosystems.

3. Preservation and sustainability should guide decision making around parks, pathways, and open spaces. Preservation of open spaces, agricultural lands, and natural habitats were the most supported guiding values identified by the community that should be considered when making policy decisions and investments in Canyon County.



4. Creating a parks and pathways system that supports a diversity of user groups is of utmost importance. Ensuring that Canyon County residents and visitors have access to a diversity of opportunities for recreation was commonly noted as a high priority. Participants in the public survey noted many opportunities to improve experiences for special recreation groups such as bikers and equestrians through different management strategies and infrastructural investments.



Having better access from Caldwell and Nampa to Lake Lowell, including a pedestrian and cycling path around the lake, should be a high priority. Lots of federal funds available for such projects! Given the growth in the Treasure Valley, we need to act NOW to preserve open spaces and provide our citizens with better opportunities for recreation.

~ Survey Respondent

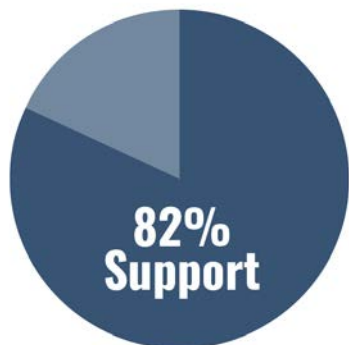
5. Rapid regional growth and development are anticipated to continue, putting a strain on existing facilities and posing a risk to undeveloped land that in many cases would be ideal for open space and pathway utilization. The incorporated cities interviewed in this process noted that their park utilization is going up and that they are needing to expand facilities to keep up with a growing demand. Additionally, new construction and development threatens opportunities to create regional pathways and protected open spaces. One new suburban development in the wrong area could shut off opportunities for pathway connections entirely.



6. Funding and staff capacity are challenged in the face of a growing population and expanded demand for assets and services. All interviewees stressed that they would love to be doing more to serve their population, but a limited staff capacity, difficulty hiring new staff, and ongoing funding for maintenance and capital improvements/acquisitions were limiting factors.

Parks really are a tangible reflection of the health of a community. When I go into a park, I feel grateful to the people who made it a reality.

~ Survey Respondent



7. There was a high level of support for the County to explore additional funding mechanisms to support Parks, Pathways and Cultural Resources. Interviewees and 82% of survey respondents indicated shared support for the County to seek additional means to fund important regional projects. Potential additional funding could come from the creation of non-profit land trusts to purchase or protect key areas, increases to user fees to cover increased recreation uses, voter-authorized levies to fund specific community projects, requesting grant funding and voter-authorized formation of recreation taxing districts.

Thank you for everything you are doing. This kind of planning is critical for planning for the future. I don't think any of us want to see endless suburban sprawl, so we need to plan well and protect our open spaces, recreational opportunities, and ag land.

~ Survey respondent



Our Vision, Values, and Goals

Based on expected growth patterns, community and stakeholder input, and best practice research, the following vision, values, and goals were developed to support parks, pathways, and cultural resources in Canyon County.

Vision Statement

Canyon County Parks, Cultural, and Natural Resources are well maintained and managed and provide County residents ample opportunity to engage in recreational activities and offers a sustainable interface with natural habitats and wildlife. Canyon County seeks to be connected through a wide range of pathways that help people enjoy parks, cultural, and natural resources while also increasing access through multimodal means of transportation throughout the County.

Values

Access for Everyone ◀ **Sustainable Places and Practices** ◀ **Build Community** ◀
Preserve and Share History, Culture, and Nature ◀ **Encourage Health** ◀ **Create Fun**

Goals



Goal Area 1: Parks, Cultural, and Natural Resources

Canyon County maintains and operates a robust inventory of parks, cultural, and natural resources that celebrate and protect the historic and cultural history of the area while ensuring all County residents have access to safe, clean, and diverse outdoor spaces.



Goal Area 2: Pathways and Connectivity

Canyon County is connected through a network of multi-use and single-use pathways that provide safe transportation corridors, recreational opportunities, and sustainable interfaces with the County's wildlife and natural resources.



Goal Area 3: Special Uses and Recreational Opportunities

Canyon County provides ample and diverse recreational opportunities for a wide variety of users and interests.



Goal Area 4: Management and Policy

Canyon County promotes policies and implementation that creates strong regional partnerships, sustainable natural spaces and a thriving environment of outdoor based recreational opportunities.

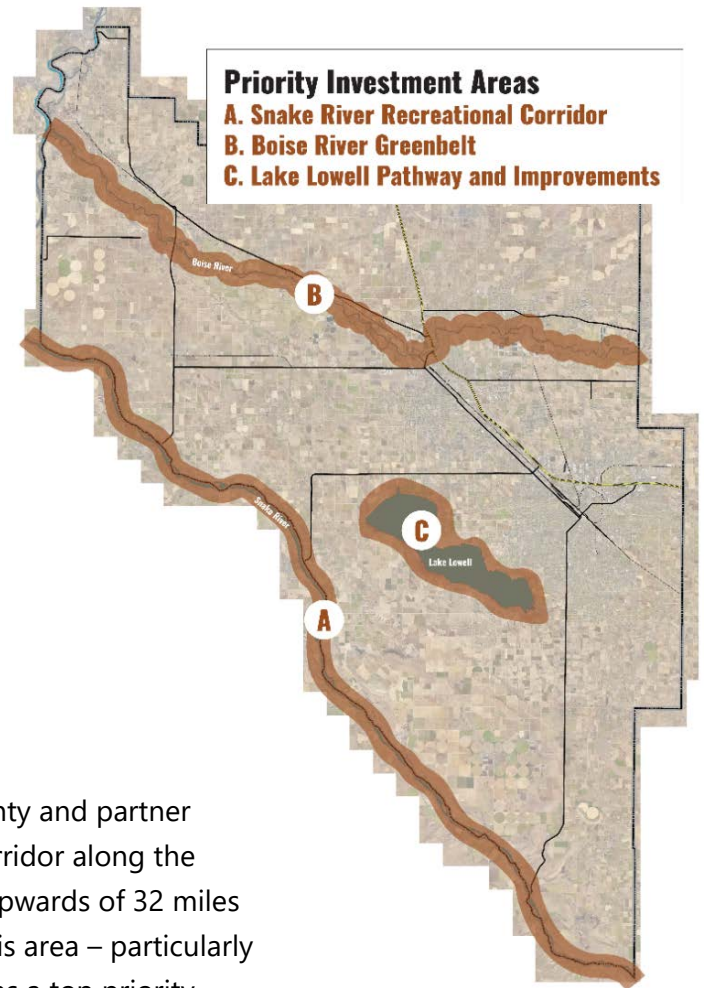
Priority Investment Areas

Throughout this planning process, the following three geographic areas were identified as important natural and recreational assets to the community. These areas are key opportunities for Canyon County (along with its partners) to advance the vision for parks, pathways, and cultural resources. There are many different kinds of opportunities for investments in these areas and implementation would require additional planning, partnership development, funding and acquisition, environmental review and ongoing engagement with the community.

A. Snake River Recreational Corridor

The Snake River presents an opportunity for the County and partner agencies to create a multi-use regional recreation corridor along the southern border of Canyon County that could span upwards of 32 miles from Celebration Park to Homedale. Investment in this area – particularly in a continuous pathway – was repeatedly identified as a top priority project by survey respondents, interviewees, and members of the advisory committee. The recreational corridor offers a wide range of potential benefits and projects including:

- A **regional pathway** along the Snake River and/or within the Snake River Scenic Byway can connect communities from Nyssa to Melba. The creation of a multi-use pathway provides recreational value to walkers, runners, bikers, and other users and also serve as a transportation corridor for bike commuters.
- Preserve habitats and increase river and riparian area protection through **restoration programs** and coordinated, codified land and water **management practices** along the Snake River.
- **Cultural resource protection** for nearby archeological sites and landmarks of cultural or historic significance, as well as opportunities to build strong relationships or co-manage assets with indigenous inhabitants of the Boise Valley.
- **Preservation and acquisition of public access** to the Snake River for fishing, wildlife viewing, boating and floating as well as developing new access points on the Idaho-Oregon Snake River Water Trail in Canyon County.
- **Linkages to nearby public lands and trails** would increase recreation opportunities in and around the Snake River and help build a framework for a regional “Canyons to Calderas” trail system.



3: Overview of priority investment areas

- **Other projects as identified.**

B. Boise River Greenbelt



The Boise River represents an opportunity to help create regional connectivity on the northern side of Canyon County. The westward extension of the Boise River Greenbelt was strongly supported by the community in this planning process. Community members and partners alike were enthusiastic about development of a recreational amenity tying Lake Lowell through Canyon County, linking Idaho’s most populous region by a continuous riverine

pathway. The Boise River Greenbelt in Canyon County could provide up to 16 miles of connected pathways between Star and Caldwell and beyond. This pathway project ties in with ongoing efforts in the City of Caldwell and City of Middleton, which are investing in “riverwalk” environments to drive economic development and improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Canyon County’s role could be one of a convener and/or investing in “filling gaps” along the Greenbelt that do not fall within cities’ jurisdiction.

This potential pathway represents the following project assets and benefits:

- Builds regional **connectivity between Middleton and Caldwell** and could potentially link into the existing Boise River Greenbelt pathway system in Ada County, building **connectivity east to the City of Star and beyond**. Additionally, expansion to the west may be possible.
- Linking and **creating better access to existing fishing** access and other riverside recreational amenities.
- Provides a backbone for **pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure** that supports both commuters and recreational users.
- Helps build **connectivity to cultural assets** including Ward Memorial.
- **Preserves habitats and increases river and water protection** through restoration programs and coordinated, codified management practices along the Boise River.

C. Lake Lowell Pathway and Improvements

Canyon County residents expressed significant interest in the creation of a continuous pathway system circumnavigating Lake Lowell. This circulating pathway would provide an approximately 20-mile route around one of Canyon County's most utilized recreational assets. This potential pathway would provide space for a diversity of recreational users ranging from walkers and runners to equestrians and bikers. Because Lake Lowell provides critical habitats for migrating and wintering wildlife this pathway would need to be designed and managed in a way that complements the natural value of the area. This potential investment represents numerous potential benefits.



- Increased **recreational opportunity and access** around Lake Lowell.
- Opportunity to **interface with nature and wildlife**.
- Linkages from many points and neighborhoods within the County to **create a pathway "hub,"** improving connection throughout the County and to other recreational amenities.
- Support ongoing land management and **urban habitat preservation** efforts of the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge and other partners.

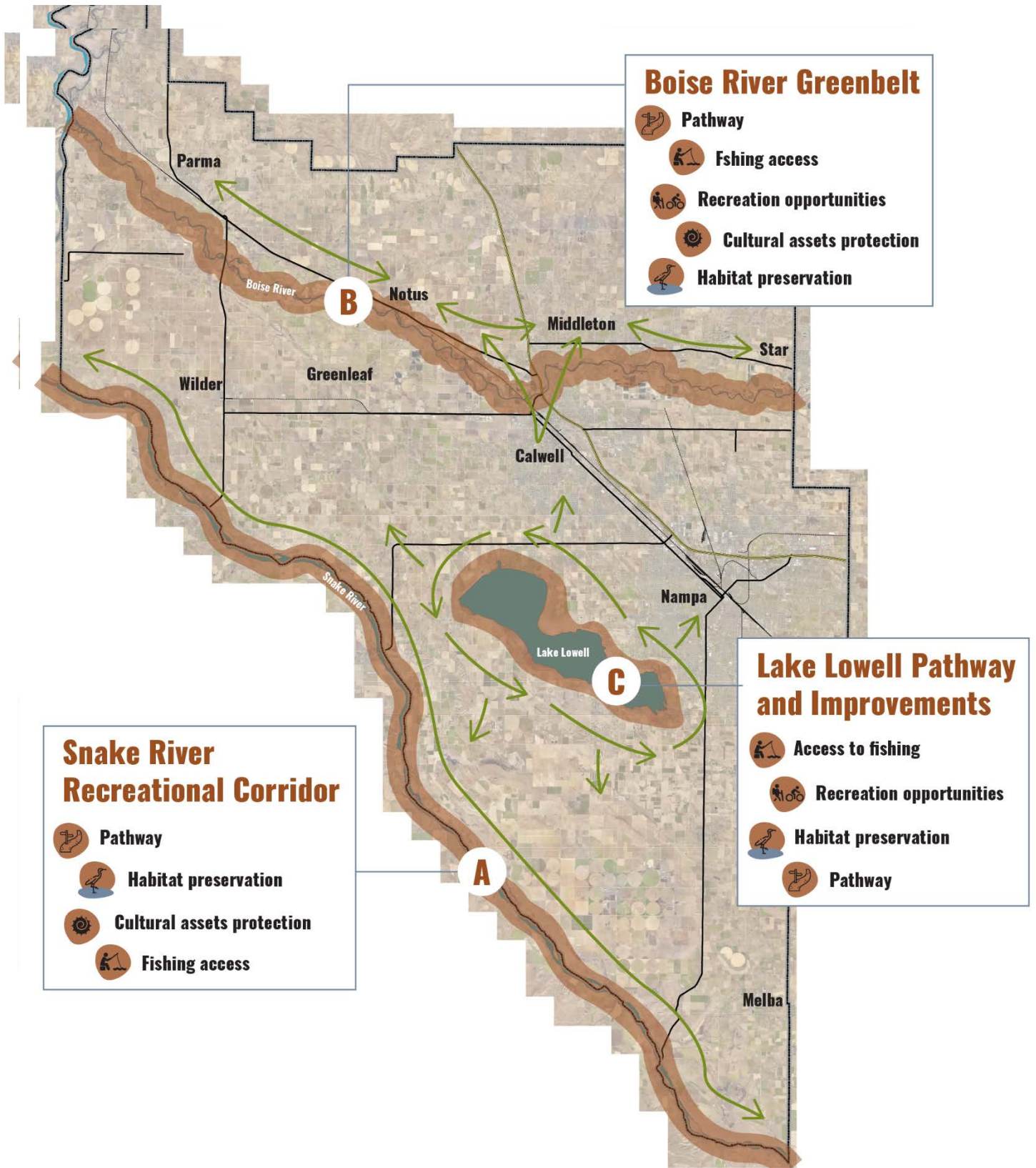
Barriers to Regional Project Implementation:

Turning these priority investment areas into highly regarded and well utilized recreational corridors and protected natural areas will require significant investment from the County and partner agencies. These corridors and pathways will require established partnerships and shared management and maintenance operations. Other barriers to implementation include:

1. Balancing recreational interests with protecting natural habitats, particularly around federally managed areas including the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge.
2. Navigating connections through right of way agreements and irrigation company partnership.

Priority Investment Areas Map

4: Primary investment areas map



Our Parks Today

The Canyon County Parks system consists of both active and passive recreational areas that are owned and/or managed by the County. The current system contains community parks, natural open spaces, and special use areas including a gun range, boating, and fishing locations, museums, and cultural sites. In total Canyon County owns and manages nearly 1,100 acres of parks and open spaces throughout the County. Unlike many other Counties in Idaho, there is very little publicly owned and managed land in Canyon County. Only 6 percent of Canyon County is publicly held and managed by compared to nearly 44% in Ada County, most of which is land in the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area and in the Boise Foothills. The tables below outline the parks, open spaces, trails, and special use areas that are currently present within the Canyon County Parks system.

Park Inventory

5: Canyon County managed parks, open spaces, and special use inventory

Map #	Inventory	Total Acreage	Category	Planned and Desired Improvements
1	Celebration Park and Crossroads Museum	56	Cultural Site and Specialized Recreation, Campground, Boater Access, Museum, Education	Upgrade boating infrastructure, Additional Non-Motorized Docks, Replace Aged Decking, Mezzanine for Crossroads Museum, Guffey Bridge Decking, Shade Structures, Improve ADA access to boat dock
2	Lake Lowell Park	10.5	Picnic Area Frisbee Golf	Covered Picnic Areas, Story Trail Renovation, Parking Lot Lighting Improvements, Park Perimeter Pathway
3	Upper Dam recreation area*	279.3	Specialized Recreation Boater Access	Repair and Replace gangways, docks, and buoys. Accessible Boat Launch, Improve Parking, Improve Bathroom, Improve Beach Area
4	Lower Dam recreation area*	33.5	Picnic Area, Boating, Swimming	Accessible fishing dock and kayak launch. Improve restroom facilities. Repair Parking lot
5	Jubilee Park and OHV Trails	528.5	Specialized Recreation	Improve Signage and Shade Structures
6	Jubilee George Nurse Shooting	36.8	Specialized Recreation	Upgrade Vault Toilet, Berm and Lane Improvements, Install Concrete Pads and Shade Covers
7	Map Rock	34.1	Cultural Site	Interpretive Signage
8	Martin Landing**	82.4	Campground, Boater/Sportsman's Access	Add Sprinkler System
9	Ward Memorial	1.1	Cultural Site, Picnic Area	Vault Toilet Replacement, Update Site Signage
10	Wilson Springs**	55	Natural Area, Fishing Access, Walking Path	No Planned Improvements

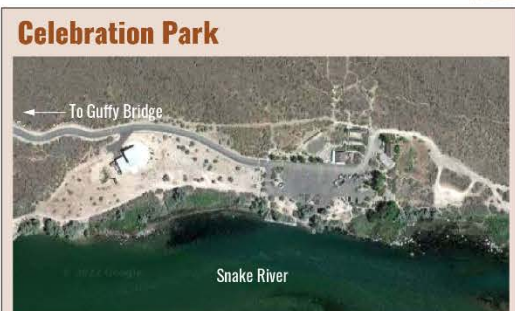
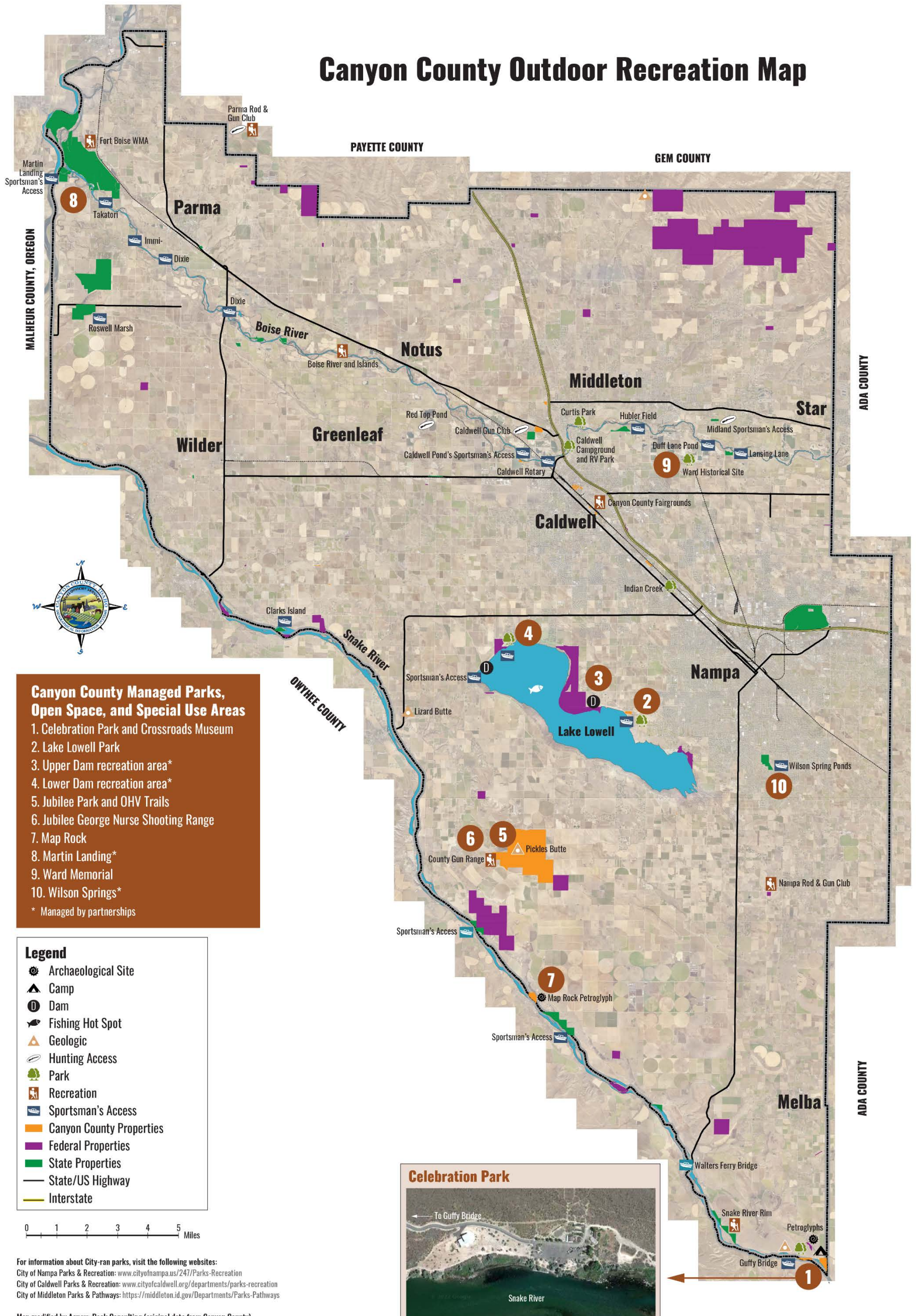
*These park locations are made possible by partnerships with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge.

**These park locations are made possible by partnerships with Idaho Fish & Game.

Park Assets Map

6: Canyon County outdoor recreation map with park assets

Canyon County Outdoor Recreation Map



Policies and Actions



Goal 1: Parks, Cultural and Natural Resources

Canyon County maintains and operates a robust inventory of parks, cultural and natural resources that celebrates and protects the history and culture of the area while ensuring all County residents have access to safe, clean, and diverse outdoor spaces.

Objective 1.1 Continue to maintain and improve existing park facilities

- **Policy 1.1.a** Develop park-specific management plans that identify specific maintenance and new investment priorities.
- **Policy 1.1.b** Create additional interpretive and educational elements at existing parks and culturally significant areas.
- **Policy 1.1.c** Expand and improve historic sites and/or create a cultural trail system connecting historic sites to cities.
- **Policy 1.1.d** Develop and support a more developed tree canopy and other structures that provide shade, wind breaks and other benefits at County parks and along pathways.

Objective 1.2 Acquire new land and develop additional park sites to serve a broad (and growing) set of users throughout Canyon County

- **Policy 1.2.a** Assess and inventory potential sites that are viable for park development with a particular focus on improving access to underserved areas and user groups.
- **Policy 1.2.b** Work to ensure that new development provides, protects and preserves open and natural spaces for Canyon County.
- **Policy 1.2.** Acquire undeveloped land in strategic areas throughout the County, to preserve open space and to ensure an adequate “level of service” (park acreage per person) is reserved as development and growth continue in the County.

Objective 1.C Manage park lands to protect and enhance wildlife and habitat.

- **Policy 1.C.1** Create pollinator friendly spaces and corridors to preserve and protect critical species and ecosystems.
- **Policy 1.C.2** Enhance wildlife protections around sensitive habitat zones particularly in riparian (river and creek) areas.

Objective 1.D Preserve and protect functional agricultural uses and cultural resources.

- **Policy 1.D.1** Develop an agricultural land preservation plan to create an Agritourism district around Sunnyslope.
- **Policy 1.D.2** Preserve and maintain historic farms and other agricultural heritage sites when opportunities arise.
- **Policy 1.D.3** Protect and preserve archaeological resources such as petroglyphs on County lands in accordance with historic and cultural preservation best practices and in partnership with tribes and other cultural or historic preservation groups.
- **Policy 1.D.4** Highlight historic Oregon Trail sites.

Goal Area 1: Priority Actions

Implement and fund improvements to existing parks facilities as identified in table 1.

Identify specific parcels, assets, infrastructure or other resources to acquiring or negotiate management rights. Develop a parks acquisition plan that identifies, evaluates, prioritizes, and plans for the strategic acquisition/development of land, easements, rights or other mechanisms that provide parks, pathways, open space, cultural, and natural resources as identified in this plan.

Identify and apply for grant funding or other funding sources for cultural resource protection efforts. Meet with groups associated with cultural resources to discuss and identify best practices for preservation.



Goal 2: Pathways and Connectivity

Canyon County is connected through a network of multi-use and single-use pathways that provide safe transportation corridors, recreational opportunities, and sustainable interfaces with the County's wildlife and natural resources.

Objective 2.1 Create a regional trails and pathways system that includes branding elements and greenbelt style pathways.

- **Policy 2.1.A** Develop the Stoddard Line Railway corridor as a north-south bike route that connects Nampa to Celebration Park (via Track Road).
- **Policy 2.1.B** Develop an east-west pathway/bike route that connects Ustick to the Snake River between Homedale and Marsing.
- **Policy 2.1.C** Create a recreational pathway/corridor connecting Sunnyslope area to the Snake River and other recreational destinations.
- **Policy 2.1.D** Develop a circulating pathway "greenbelt" around Lake Lowell.
- **Policy 2.1.E** Continue/connect the Boise River Greenbelt system west through Canyon County.

Objective 2.2 Develop a Snake River recreational corridor in Canyon County.

- **Policy 2.2.A** Improve the Snake River Canyon Scenic Byway by developing safe multi-use pathways that help create regional connections (potentially as far as Melba to Nyssa).
- **Policy 2.2.B** Continue to develop the Idaho-Oregon Snake River Water Trail and river float corridor with hardened put-in areas starting from Celebration Park.
- **Policy 2.2.C** Acquire land along the Snake River to maintain public access for recreation.
- **Policy 2.2.D** Adopt river protection and restoration programs and management practices along the Snake River.

Objective 2.3 Create improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure (bike lanes, sidewalks, pathways, etc.) connecting key destinations in Canyon County.

- **Policy 2.3.A** Work with the highway districts, planning and public works departments, and hearing examiner, to ensure separated bike paths are incorporated into construction and developer-constructed road and frontage improvements.
- **Policy 2.3.B** Foster partnerships between private developers and the County/incorporated cities to help develop pedestrian infrastructure with new development and ensure access to open spaces and County parks.

- **Policy 2.3.C** Utilize easements and canal ways to create pathways and corridors wherever possible and beneficial.
- **Policy 2.3.D** Work with local jurisdictions to identify and install wayfinding signage and plan for safe access routes connecting cyclists and pedestrians to park destinations.

Goal Area 2: Priority Actions

Convene local jurisdictions to identify and request inclusion of additional bike routes in official on-street inventory in accordance with the policies in this plan. Routes or connections of priority importance are identified in Objective 2.1.

Convene technical advisory groups or partake in existing cross-collaborative meetings of local jurisdictions, land managers, community members, etc. to establish recreational corridors on the Snake River and Boise River.

Work with Canyon County Planning and Development services and local jurisdictions to update policies and create incentives for pathways along existing canals and when new development occurs. Ensure that development applications are reviewed to incorporate and address the connectivity intentions of this plan.

Identify potential grant funding or other funding sources for connectivity priorities.



Goal 3: Special Uses and Recreational Opportunities

Canyon County provides ample recreational opportunities for a wide variety of users and interests.

Objective 3.1 Regularly Evaluate and Consult with the Community

- **Policy 3.1.A** Systematically collect or review user data in recreational areas.
- **Policy 3.1.B** Seek input from users and specific user groups regularly to monitor use patterns, identify emerging needs and engage users in caring, planning and investing in amenities and programs.
- **Policy 3.1.C** Manage park assets and programs to accommodate a wide variety of uses throughout the County.

Objective 3.2 Implement Bike Specific Projects and Improvements

- **Policy 3.2.A** Evaluate the feasibility and interest in creating an indoor bike park for year-round use.
- **Policy 3.2.B** Develop a “pump track” and bike skills park.

Objective 3.3 Implement Water Sports and Recreation (Swimming, Fishing, Boating, etc.) Specific Projects and Improvements

- **Policy 3.3.A** Support and develop additional urban fisheries and boat docks for fishing, including more ADA accessible docks.
- **Policy 3.3.B** Develop a water trail and river float corridor from Walter’s Ferry.
- **Policy 3.3.C** Evaluate the feasibility and interest in creating a whitewater park.

Objective 3.4 Equestrian Specific Projects and Improvements

- **Policy 3.4.A** Consider options to improve parking and trail access for equestrians at specific locations to increase useability and safety while decreasing user conflicts.
- **Policy 3.4.B** Consider options to support creation of an equestrian-focused facility in the Sunnyslope area.
- **Policy 3.4.C** Utilize the Equestrian Design Guidebook for trails, trailheads and campgrounds when considering improvements to existing park infrastructure and trails.

Objective 3.5 Support other recreational uses throughout Canyon County

- **Policy 3.5.A** Identify opportunities for additional campsites to serve a growing demand in Canyon County.

- **Policy 3.5.B** Consider additional improvements to support a variety of user-specific activities, as identified by regular, ongoing communications and feedback from the community.
- **Policy 3.5.C** Continue improvements to the George Nourse Gun Range to increase safety and useability.
- **Policy 3.5.D** Consider future improvement plans for Jubilee OHV Park.

Goal 3: Priority Actions

Identify locations and begin collecting baseline visitation and use data.

Meet with specific user groups to discuss potential investments, partnerships or issues to be addressed, based on public input for this plan and from other County efforts (e.g., cyclists, equestrians, campers, adaptive recreationalists).



Goal 4: Management and Policy

Canyon County promotes policies and implementation that creates strong regional partnerships, sustainable natural spaces, and a thriving environment of outdoor-based recreational opportunities.

Objective 4.1 Develop strong regional partnerships around parks, pathways and cultural resources

- **Policy 4.1.A** Create strong partnerships with private and non-profit organizations and governmental agencies/local jurisdictions to fund, promote and invest in Canyon County Parks, regional open spaces, and trails.
- **Policy 4.1.B** Continue to consult with regional Tribes in planning and land use decisions related to parks, open space, and cultural resources.
- **Policy 4.1.C** Create an easy on-ramp for community volunteers to help maintain and improve parks, pathways, and cultural resources in Canyon County.
- **Policy 4.1.D** Create opportunities for regular, ongoing communications and feedback from the general community and specific user groups.

Objective 4.2 Develop and maintain strong management policy to guide the long-term health of the Canyon County Parks system.

- **Policy 4.2.A** Develop and update a general parks, pathways and cultural resources maintenance plan that outlines specific actions, investments, and partnerships to keep resources clean, safe, and functional.
- **Policy 4.2. B** Evaluate ADA accessibility for all current and future facilities/assets and make improvements as necessary to ensure broad accessibility to all users.
- **Policy 4.2.C** Consider creating a recreational overlay district that can help protect and fund open space and recreational opportunities in the County.

Objective 4.3 Maximize the impact of available resources and funding while seeking additional sources of funding for continued system improvements

- **Policy 4.3.A** Develop a funding plan and implement specific funding mechanisms to support the management, maintenance and expansion of County parks, pathways, and cultural resources.
- **Policy 4.3.B** Utilize a land trust approach to protect and acquire undeveloped and open space in Canyon County.

- **Policy 4.3.C** Explore the possibility of increasing funding to improve parks, pathways, and open spaces through normal budget allocation.
- **Policy 4.3.D** Seek additional funding for parks, pathways and cultural resources through increased user fees, voter authorized levies, grant applications and recreational taxing districts.

Goal 4: Priority Actions

Evaluate existing staffing levels with regards to recent populations and visitation increases, and strong public support for increased park amenities. Plan for staffing increases in conjunction with anticipated growth.

Examine funding sources (e.g., impact fees, use fees, recreation district formation, grants, levy or general fund) and develop a funding and implementation plan to increase and diversify capital and operations/maintenance revenue to parks, pathways and cultural resources.

Evaluate increase in user fees at Celebration Park.

Appendices

1. Park Assets

2. Stakeholder and Public Engagement Summary Results

- Phase 1 Summary Report
- Survey Results Summary
- Phase 2 Summary Report (includes workshop results)

Appendix 1: Park Assets

1 Celebration Park and Crossroads Museum

Situated along the Snake River, Celebration Park was established as Idaho's only archaeological park in 1989. A walk through the huge basalt melon gravels deposited by the Bonneville flood reveals petroglyphs 100 to 10,000 years old. Visitors learn about the Paleolithic and Archaic lifeways and enjoy throwing a dart with an atlatl. Experience a walking tour of historic Guffey Railroad Bridge and be captivated by southern Idaho's early mining and railroad history.

Acreage: 56 acres

Facilities:

- Visitor center and information
- Museum and educational classroom
- Public restrooms
- Campsites (tent and RV)
- Fishing and river access
- Boater parking, boat ramp, and docks
- Interpretive hiking trails
- Paved multi-use trail

User Groups: School field trip groups, researchers, partner agencies, anglers, hunters, campers, bird watchers, hikers, and bikers. Events for educational purposes can be held at the classroom in the museum, and dorms can be used for limited agency retreats, as well as for students working on research.

Visitation: Annually, approximately 10,000 school kids and 100,000+ visitors come to the park, many of whom visit the museum.

Potential Park Improvements:

- Upgrades to existing boating infrastructure that is aging and outdated
- Provide additional non-motorized docks
- Replacement of the aging decking system
- Replacement of aging decking on Guffey Bridge
- Strategic shade structures suited to the desert environment
- Upgrades/replacements to picnic tables and benches



2

Lake Lowell Park

Acreage: 10.5 acres

Facilities:

- Picnic area
- Public restrooms
- Disc golf course
- Story Trail
- Lake Lowell access

User Groups: School field trip groups, summer camp kids, boaters, swimmers, picnickers, disk golfers, bird watchers, hikers, and boaters.

Potential Park Improvements:

- Provide and improve covered picnic areas
- Renovations to Story Trail
- Improvements to parking lot lighting
- Provide pathway around park perimeter



3

Upper Dam Recreation Area

Upper Dam East and West are U.S. FWS partnerships – owned by Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge but maintained by Canyon County Park for the recreating public.

Facilities:

- Boater parking, boat ramps, and docks
- ADA accessible fishing dock
- Swimming
- Lake Lowell access

User Groups: Boaters, anglers, and swimmers.

Potential Park Improvements:

- Repair and replace gangways, docks, and buoys
- Provide an accessible boat launch
- Improve parking, bathroom and beach area



4

Lower Dam Recreation Area

Lower Dam is a U.S. FWS partnership – owned by Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge but maintained by Canyon County Park for the recreating public.

Facilities:

- Boater parking, boat ramps, and docks
- Picnic areas including BBQ grills and picnic shelter
- Restrooms
- Swimming
- Lake Lowell access

User Groups: Picknickers, boaters, anglers, and swimmers.

Potential Park Improvements:

- Provide accessible fishing dock and kayak launch
- Improve restroom facilities
- Repair parking lot



Lake Lowell

Built by the Bureau of Reclamation to provide irrigation water for Canyon County agriculture, Lake Lowell opened in 1909 and is one of the largest off-stream reservoirs in the American West, with the capacity to irrigate over 200,000 acres of land. It has also become a popular recreation destination for the county's citizens and visitors. Boating, swimming and fishing are among the many activities that folks enjoy at this beautiful oasis in southwest Idaho. Bird watching, hiking and hunting are other recreation options due to the presence of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge, also established in 1909. As part of the wildlife refuge, recreation on Lake Lowell's shoreline and waters may be subject to seasonal restrictions.

Source: <https://www.canyoncounty.id.gov/project/lake-lowell-park/>

Jubilee Park

Jubilee Park has 1,350 acres of open space, featuring breathtaking views of the Snake River Canyon, Owyhee Mountains, and the Boise Front. This close to home desert landscape provides a unique setting to enjoy many recreational opportunities. With over 350 acres of trails, a shooting range, and an off-highway vehicle (OHV) training area, Jubilee Park is a fun place to play. The 350 acres of trails accommodate OHV, horseback riders, mountain bikers, hikers, and even hang gliders. The terrain is diverse, from flat lands to hills, making it an enjoyable place for novices and experts.

5

OHV Training Area

Acreage: 528.5 acres

Facilities:

- Variety of trails for riding
- Shade canopies with picnic tables
- Pit toilets

User Groups: OHV riders, horseback riders, mountain, hikers, and hang gliders.

6

Potential Park Improvements:

- Improve signage and shade structures

George Nourse Shooting Range

Acreage: 36.8 acres

Facilities:

- Vault toilet
- Nine shooting lanes

Potential Park Improvements:

- Upgrade vault toilet
- Improvement to berm and lane
- Install concrete pads and shade covers



All four photos on this page are from Canyon County

7

Map Rock

In 2012, Canyon County acquired Map Rock, a famous Idaho petroglyph, and 34 acres of surrounding cliff-side property. This is an undeveloped site on Map Rock Road with very limited roadside parking due to property ownership constraints and difficulty of terrain. Canyon County Parks plans to develop interpretive information about the Map Rock petroglyph, which will be available at Celebration Park in the future.

Acres: 34.12 acres

Potential Park Improvements:

- Provide interpretive signage



8

Martin Landing

Martin Landing is located at the confluence of the Boise, Owyhee, and Snake Rivers. This recreational area is made possible through a cooperative agreement between Canyon County Parks and Idaho Fish and Game.

Acres: 82.4 acres

Facilities:

- Campsites (10 vehicle-accessible; 5 walk-in)
- Pit toilets
- Water spigots
- Fire pits
- Camp host
- Picnic tables for both day use and camping

User Groups: Campers, anglers, hunters, and bird watchers.

Potential Park Improvements:

- Add sprinkler system



Photos on this page are from Canyon County

9

Ward Memorial Park

Ward Memorial Park is a historical site with day-use picnic tables and a walking path.

Acres: 1.1 acres

Facilities:

- Picnic tables
- Vault toilets
- 300-foot concrete walking path

User Groups: Picnickers and walkers.

Potential Park Improvements:

- Replace vault toilet
- Update site signage



Photos on this page are from Canyon County

10

Wilson Springs

Wilson Springs is a 55-acre nature area – home to many birds, both resident and migratory. It is also a popular urban fishing destination. This recreational area is made possible through a cooperative agreement between Canyon County Parks and Idaho Fish and Game.

Acres: 55 acres

Facilities:

- Fishing docs
- Pit toilets
- Walking path

User Groups: Anglers, walkers



Photos on this page are from Canyon County