

Canyon County Parks, Pathways, and Cultural Resources Plan



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:

- Backcountry Horsemen of Idaho
- Caldwell Chamber of Commerce
- Canyon County Development Services Department
- 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)
- Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge
- Destination Caldwell
- Horses for Clean Water
- 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 Mountain Biking Association (SWIMBA)
- Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- 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

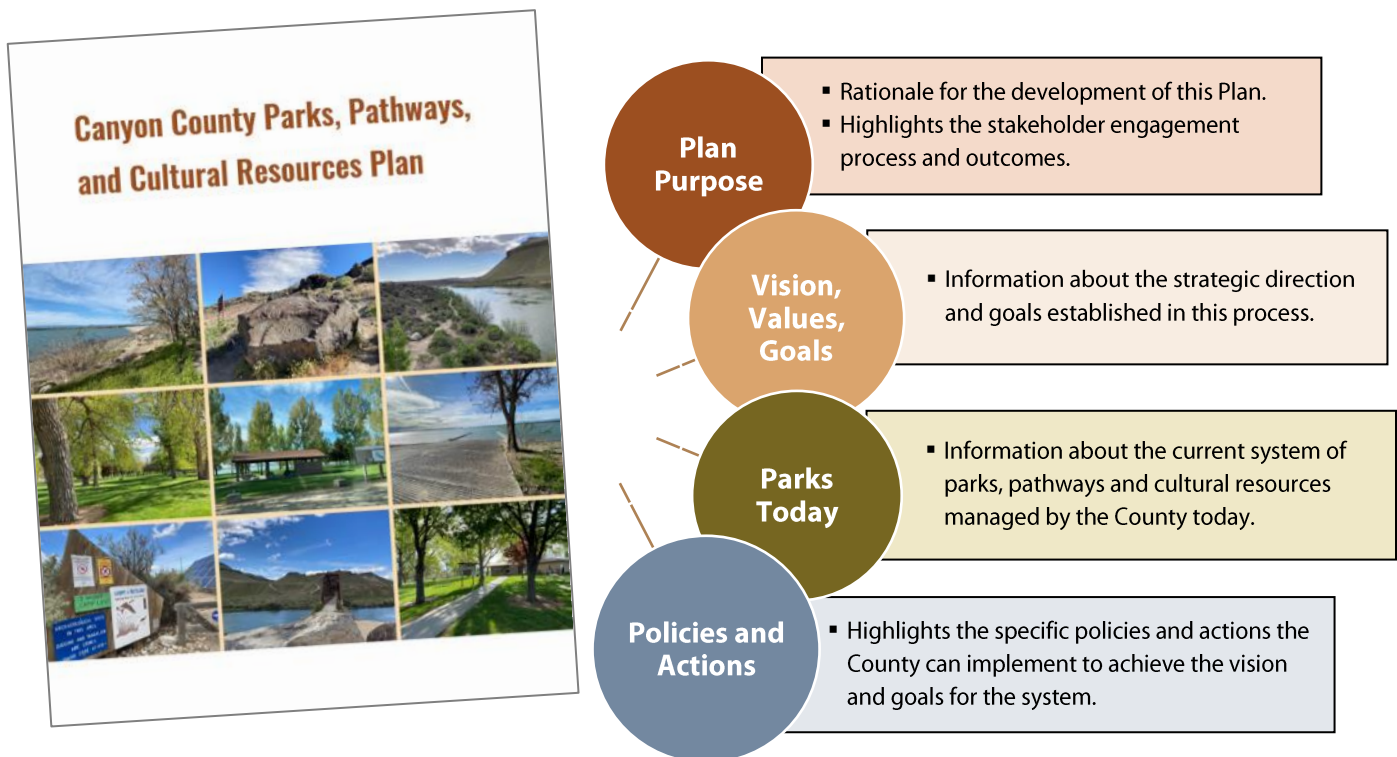
Introduction

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, a museum, 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.



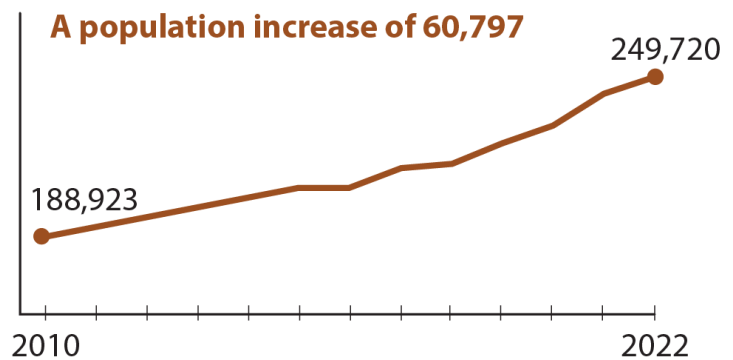
Plan Purpose

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 forth 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 processes.

- Policy 9.03.01 – Encourage the development of neighborhood trail systems into subdivision design.



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, the Lake Lowell Unit of Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge, 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

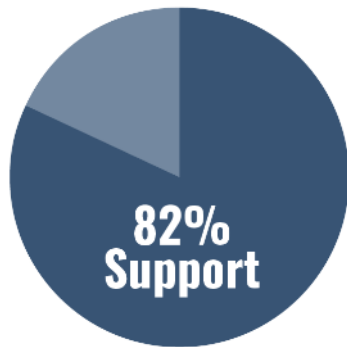
- 5. Rapid regional growth and development are anticipated to continue, putting a strain on existing facilities and posing a risk to undeveloped land that in many cases would be ideal for open space and pathway utilization.** The incorporated cities interviewed in this process noted that their park utilization 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.

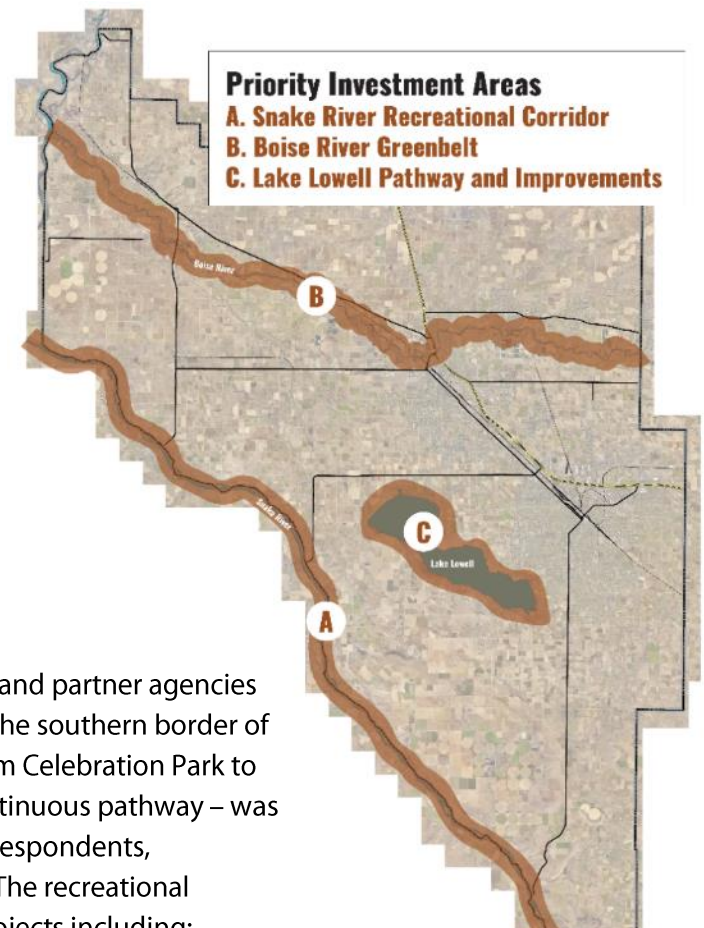
Priority Investment Areas

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

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 connecting the Boise River throughout Canyon County and 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. Because the Boise River riparian area is important habitat for many wildlife and game species, it will be important to balance recreational access with habitat preservation.

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 the Lake Lowell Unit of Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge. 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.



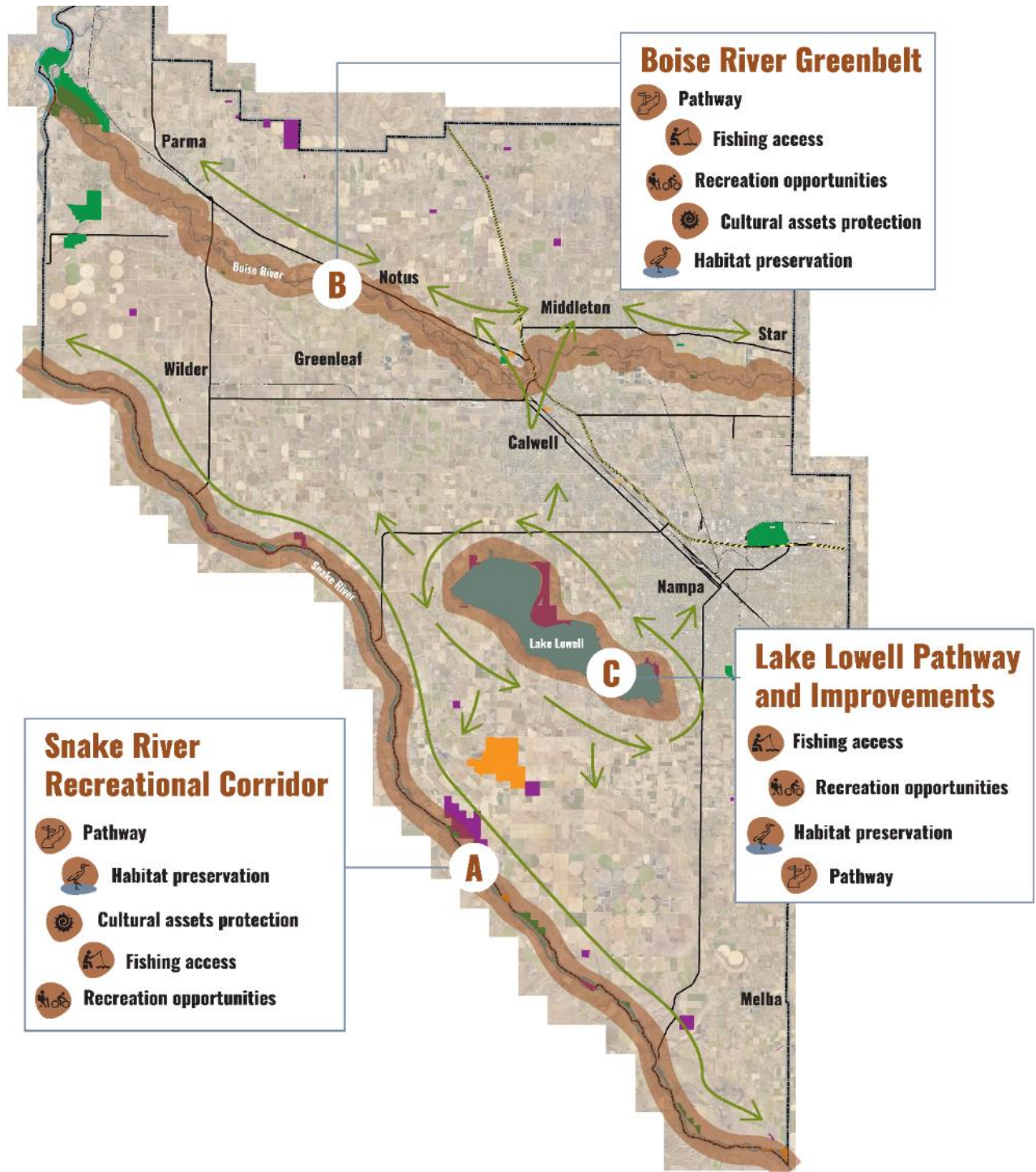
- Increased **recreational opportunity and access** around Lake Lowell.
- Opportunity to **interface with nature and wildlife**.
- Linkages from many points and neighborhoods within the County to **create a pathway “hub,”** improving connection throughout the County and to other recreational amenities.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

Considerations for 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 considerations for implementation include:

1. Thoughtful planning will be required to ensure that ensure recreational activities are compatible and sustainable with wildlife habitat concerns, particularly in ecologically sensitive areas.
2. Navigating connections through right of way agreements and irrigation company partnership.
3. Coordinating with developers to help create connections to pathways system with all new development.

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, a museum, 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, 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 table 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

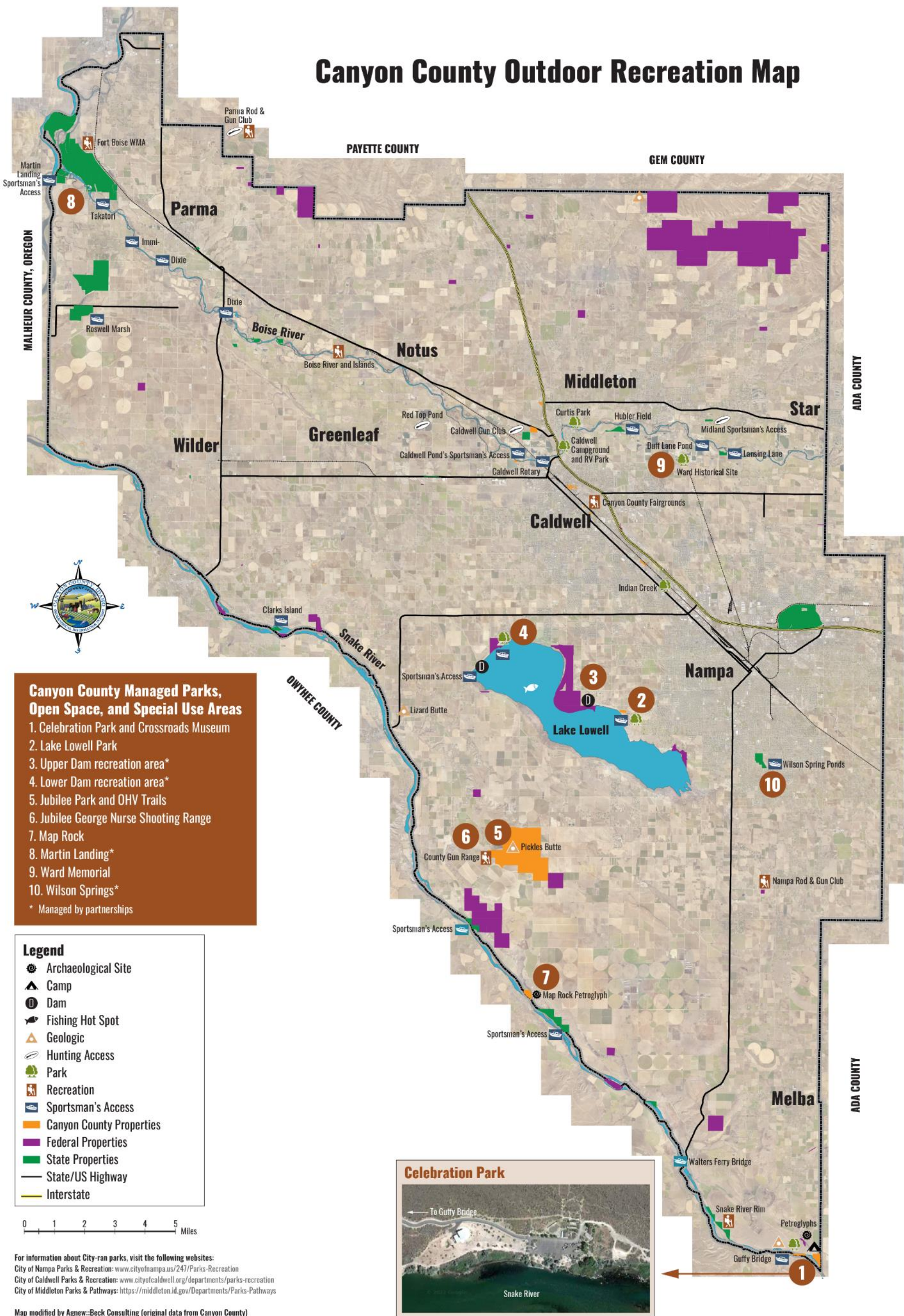
Map #	Inventory	Total Acreage	Category	Planned and Desired Improvements
1	Celebration Park and Crossroads Museum	56	Cultural Site and Specialized Recreation, Campground, Boater Access, Museum, Education	Upgrade boating infrastructure, additional non-motorized docks, replace aged decking, mezzanine for Crossroads Museum, Guffey Bridge decking, shade structures, improve ADA access to boat dock, update park signage
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 access, ADA accessibility
4	Lower Dam recreation area*	33.5	Picnic Area, Boating, Swimming	Accessible fishing dock and kayak launch, improve restroom facilities, repair parking lot, ADA accessibility
5	Jubilee Park and OHV Trails	528.5	Specialized Recreation	Improve signage and shade structures
6	Jubilee George Nourse Shooting Range	36.8	Specialized Recreation	Upgrade vault toilet, berm and lane improvements, install concrete pads and shade covers, update signage
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



This map is for illustrative purposes only and is intended to show relative locations of Canyon County Parks properties and partnership opportunities.

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.C** 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 1.3 Manage park lands to protect and enhance wildlife and habitat.

- **Policy 1.3.A** Create pollinator friendly spaces and corridors to preserve and protect critical species and ecosystems.
- **Policy 1.3.B** Enhance wildlife protections around sensitive habitat zones particularly in riparian (river and creek) areas.

Objective 1.4 Preserve and protect functional agricultural uses and cultural resources.

- **Policy 1.4.A** Develop an agricultural land preservation plan to create an Agritourism district around Sunnyslope.
- **Policy 1.4.B** Preserve and maintain historic farms and other agricultural heritage sites when opportunities arise.
- **Policy 1.4.C** 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 1.4.D** 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 pathway/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 other pathways and trails in Canyon County.
- **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 water trail access points and a 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 usability and safety while decreasing user conflicts.
- **Policy 3.4.B** Consider options to support creation of an equestrian-focused trail or facility.
- **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 usability.
- **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 create 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

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 southwest Idaho's early mining and railroad history.

Acreage: 56 acres

Facilities:

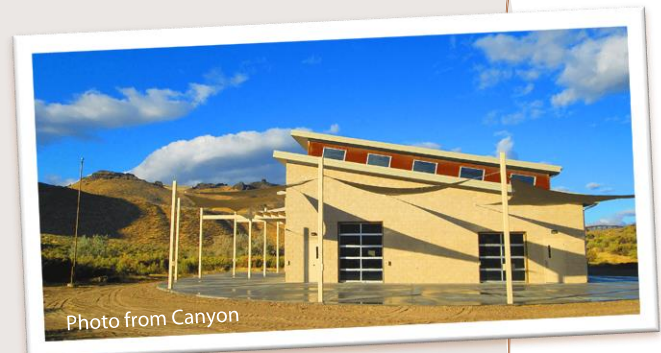
- Visitor center and information
- Museum and educational classroom
- Public restrooms
- Campsites (tent and RV)
- Fishing and river access
- Boater parking, boat ramp, and docks
- Interpretive hiking trails
- Paved multi-use trail

User Groups: School field trip groups, researchers, partner agencies, anglers, equestrians, 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
- Improve ADA access to boat dock
- Provide a mezzanine for Crossroads Museum



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



Photo from Canyon County



Upper Dam Recreation Area

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

Facilities:

- Public restrooms
- Boater parking, boat ramps, and docks
- ADA accessible fishing dock
- Swimming
- Lake Lowell access
- Leash and life jacket loaner stations

User Groups: Boaters, anglers, swimmers and equestrians.

Potential Park Improvements:

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



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
- Public restrooms
- Swimming
- Lake Lowell access
- Leash and life jacket loaner stations

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

Potential Park Improvements:

- Provide accessible fishing dock and kayak launch
- Improve restroom facilities
- Repair and expand parking lot
- Install fishing line disposal tubes

**Lake Lowell Unit of Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge**

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge is one of the oldest refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System. It was established in 1909 to designate the new irrigation reservoir as a refuge and breeding grounds for migratory birds and other wildlife. The refuge now serves as an urban oasis for both wildlife and Treasure Valley residents and visitors. Additional information about the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge can be found at <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/deer-flat/about-us>.

5

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.

OHV Training Area

Acreage: 528.5 acres

Facilities:

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

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

Potential Park Improvements:

- Improve signage and shade structures

George Nourse Shooting Range

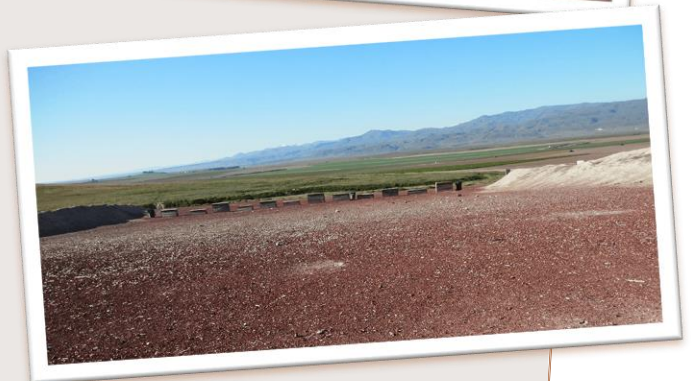
Acreage: 36.8 acres

Facilities:

- Vault toilet
- Twelve shooting lanes

Potential Park Improvements:

- Upgrade vault toilet
- Improvement to berms and lanes
- 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



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 docks
- Pit toilets
- Walking path

User Groups: Anglers, walkers, and wildlife watchers.



Photos on this page are from Canyon County

Appendix 2: Stakeholder and Public Engagement Summary

Canyon County Parks, Open Spaces and Pathways Plan Advisory Group Meeting #1

Overview

On May 26th, 2022, Agnew::Beck alongside the Canyon County Parks, Cultural and Natural Resources department hosted the first of three Advisory Groups to help inform the development and recommendations of the Parks, Open Spaces and Pathways Plan. This first advisory group meeting was focused around two main topics (1) laying the foundation for regional partnerships and communication and (2) identifying priority focus areas for the plan (key user groups, challenges and opportunities/actions).



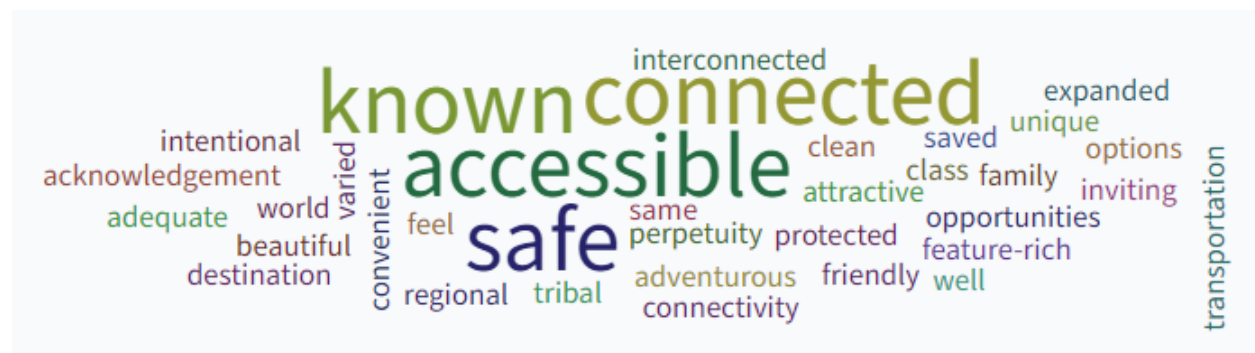
This first Advisory Group meeting was held at the Canyon County Administration Building from 4:00-6:00pm and was attended by the following groups/individuals.

- Canyon County – Laura Barbour and Nicole Schwend
- City of Caldwell – Denise Milburn and Jason Hardy
- City of Greenleaf – Lee C. Belt
- City of Melba – Noni Stapleton
- City of Middleton – Becky Croft and Tim O'Meara
- City of Nampa – Kristi Watkins, Doug Critchfield and Cody Swander
- City of Parma – Brett Laird
- City of Wilder – Wendy Severy
- COMPASS Idaho – Braden Cervetti
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game – Art Butts and Brad Lowe
- LINC Idaho – Jeremy Maxand
- Nampa Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee – Kasey Ketterling
- SWIMBA – John Palumbo
- Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation – Scott Hauser

What words does the Advisory Committee use to describe the current system of parks, open spaces, cultural resources and pathways?



What words does the Advisory Committee use to describe the future system of parks, open spaces, cultural resources, and pathway (ten years out)s?



Who are the primary users of recreation amenities and programs today and in the future that need to be engaged in the process of creating a shared vision for parks, open spaces, pathways and cultural resources in Canyon County?

The following groups and interests were discussed by

- Bikers – both recreation and transportation riders
- Walkers and hikers
- Dog walkers
- Equestrians
- Non-automotive users
- Campers
- Kayakers
- Boaters
- Disc golfers
- Hunters and fishers
- Decision and policy makers
- Wilson Creek User Group
- Whitewater association
- Birders and wildlife preservationists
- Adaptive recreation users
- Children and families
- Agritourists
- RV Users
- Sport shooters

What data does the Parks, Open Spaces and Pathways Planning Team need to review and include in the planning process?

- COMPASS Data – Bicycle and pedestrian counts *opportunity for targeted counters if requested.*
- City of Nampa – Bicycle and pedestrian counts, park utilization, Parks and Recreation Plan survey results
- SWIMBA bi-annual surveys

- Lake Lowell interpretive center visitation numbers
- Camping data at Martin Landing and Celebration Point
- Highway Districts – Golden Gate, Parma Notus, Nampa, Canyon

What are the challenges facing parks, open spaces, pathways and cultural assets throughout Canyon County?

- Severe lack of funding and budgetary distribution to parks programming, maintenance, and future projects.
 - Grant fundings is often very limited in scope and is not a catch-all solution.
 - Often it is easier to get capital funding for projects, but difficult to get the funding necessary to maintain and operate the new facility.
- Sever issues with staffing – currently it is very hard to hire and maintain a workforce that matches the needs of the existing system of assets.
- Increasing property values makes acquisition more difficult.
- Subdivision development and mismatched pathway development standards
- House Bill 389
- Water rights
- Disconnection between assets, cities and existing pathways
- Park branding is not consistent throughout the region
- Limited vision from City leadership – Parks can be a huge economic driver if activated correctly
- Short-sighted community decisions
- Conflicts between agencies
- Conflicts between users
- Community leaders privatizing many aspects of the community
- Difficulties maintaining existing facilities and operations
- Overcrowding of recreational spaces – camping is booked out all year – not enough spaces

What opportunities the advisory committee discussed for improvements and specific projects to parks, open spaces, pathways and cultural resources in the County

There were many suggestions and ideas provided by Advisory Group members. The specific opportunities and projects are listed below and loosely grouped by topic area. Not all of these projects are feasible or match the scale of this Parks, Open Spaces and Pathways Plan.

- **Pathways and Connectivity**
 - Regional pathway along the Boise River – Rails to trails
 - Regional Pathways along the Snake River – Water Trail
 - Regional pathway connecting to Indian Creek and the City of Kuna
 - Broad Right of Way acquisition strategy County wide.
 - R.R. Bridge
 - Additional and improved bike lanes and bike facilities
 - Winery Trail – focused on economic development
 - Lake Lowell Bike Loop
 - Connection at Teal to avoid biking Highway 95
 - Highway 19 to connect Greenleaf to Caldwell

- **Parks and Recreation Facilities**
 - Links style golf course with natural elements
 - Indoor bike park for year round access
 - Whitewater park
 - Additional urban fisheries – former gravel pits
 - More campgrounds and camping facilities
- **Cultural resources**
 - Highlight and celebrate Oregon Trail sites
 - Expand the Ward Memorial historical site
 - Cultural trail connecting Ward Memorial to historic sites in the City of Middleton
 - Botanical gardens and pollinator pathways
- **Funding Opportunities and Policy**
 - Parks and Recreation Districts – City level and in the broader county
 - Foster partnerships between private developers and the County/incorporated Cities
 - Partnership with local non-profits and private entities, e.g. Duck's Unlimited
 - ADA accessibility in all things

Key informant interview questions.

1. What is your title and role?
2. What do you have planned for future parks, open spaces and trails improvements and expansion?
3. What are your larger aspirations for the regional parks and open spaces system?
4. What do you see as the greatest assets in Canyon County when it comes to creating a well-regarded and functional outdoor recreation environment?
5. What are the challenges facing parks and recreation facilities in the County?
6. What trends are you seeing with parks, trails, and open space utilization? Are you having any difficulty serving an increasing population?
7. What opportunities for partnership do you see with the County and other cities?
8. What are the most successful ways for you/other jurisdictions to for infrastructure development, maintenance and asset management?
9. Who else should we be talking with throughout this process?
10. Would you be willing to participate in an Advisory Group to inform this Canyon County Parks, Open Spaces and Trails Plan?
11. Anything else we should know about as we move forward with the development of a Canyon County Parks, Opens Spaces and Trails Plan

Key Informant Interview Summary

Between May 6th and May 23rd, Agnew::Beck conducted six key informant interviews to help gain critical information regarding the existing conditions, asset use, regional challenges and opportunities for improvement and partnership. This round of key informant interviews was aimed at creating connections between potential partner agencies and incorporated cities in Canyon County. Interviews to date have included:

- City of Melba – Noni Stapleton, City Clerk
- City of Middleton – Becky Crofts, City Administrator and Roberta Stewart, Planning and Zoning Official
- City of Nampa – Darrin Johnson, Parks Director and Cody Swanders, Assistant Park Director
- City of Wilder – Wendy Sverly, City Clerk and Chelsea Johnson, Superintendent of Public Works
- Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge – Eddie Owens, Refuge Manager
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game – Art Butts, Regional Fishery Manager and Brady Lowe, Regional Habitat Manager
- *Additional interviews may occur in phase 2 of this planning process*

Key Themes and Findings

1. **There is a lot of interest in creating meaningful partnerships that improve access to open spaces and outdoor recreation.** All interviewees expressed some level of interest in participating in regional planning around open spaces, trails and recreation. These partnerships could help create connections to resources and assets with pathways and informational distribution. Partnerships to date have been limited, but shared asset management, particularly with IDFG and U.S. Fish and Wildlife services have allowed for recreational opportunities and education that would not have happened without partnerships with the County and other agencies.
2. **Parks, Open Spaces, Trails and Natural Areas are vital assets for Canyon County that improve quality of life and help define the character of the area.** All interviewees indicated the importance of these spaces in some form or another – most regional parks are highly utilized, existing trails and pathways help create connectivity within the incorporated cities, and everyone would like to see these assets protected, improved, and expanded in some capacity.
3. **The incorporated cities in Canyon County are actively investing in and expanding their parks, trails, and open spaces.** The City of Nampa and the City of Middleton both have large ongoing planning and construction plans, while the other smaller cities are trying to create smaller community spaces within their more limited budgets.
4. **Continued regional growth and development are anticipated to continue, which puts a strain on existing facilities and imposes 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 many interviewees noted that opportunities to create regional pathways and protected open spaces are at risk of new construction and development – one new suburban development in the wrong area could shut off opportunities for pathway connections entirely. It was also noted that as land becomes privatized and developed it is harder to secure right of way and easements.

5. **Funding and staff capacity are challenging 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. In Canyon County there is not a lot of political will to fund major parks and pathways projects through traditional budgetary means, which requires innovation and a lot of work from staff who are trying to see projects through from start to finish to ongoing maintenance and operation.
6. **The Snake River and The Boise River offer a strong opportunity for the development of regional pathways similar to the Boise River Greenbelt.**



Canyon County Parks, Pathways and Cultural Resources Community Survey

Summary and Analysis

Overview

The Canyon County Parks, Pathways and Cultural Resources Survey was designed to collect high level input regarding the future of the parks, trails, open spaces, and cultural resources in the County. The survey was open from July 18th to August 19th, 2022 and received 475 responses.

The survey was distributed online via the SurveyMonkey platform and was promoted through numerous public channels, the County webpage, social media, email list serves, and through flyers posted around the County Parks system. The survey was available in both English and Spanish in an attempt to get as diverse of a sampling as possible and to remove any barriers to participation. Paper surveys were available upon request.

Key Themes

Analysis of survey responses resulted in the following key themes.

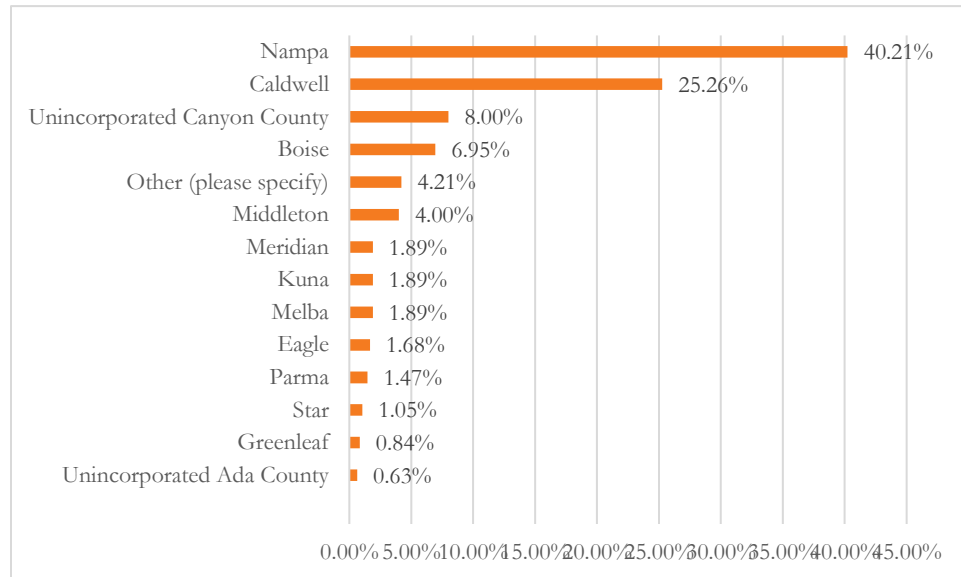
1. **User Satisfaction** – Respondents were generally happy with existing facilities and management efforts but would love to see more investments to expand access throughout the County.
2. **Preservation and Sustainability** – Preservation of open spaces, agricultural lands and natural habitats are guiding values that should be considered when making decisions and investments.
3. **Snake River Pathway** – Respondents were very supportive of creating a regional pathways system, particularly along the Snake River.
4. **Addressing Conflict** – Steps should be taken to minimize user conflicts and the impacts of population growth throughout county and partner managed assets.
5. **Opportunities and Investments** – This plan should attempt to provide resources and opportunities to all of the unique user groups and demographics represented throughout Canyon County.
6. **Financing and Resource Allocation** – Respondents largely supported exploring additional funding methods to support Parks, Pathways and Cultural Resources managed by Canyon County.

Respondent Information

The Canyon County Parks Survey received a diverse range of respondent participation. The following section highlights some important demographic information for each survey.

- **Age** – All age groups are represented in the survey responses, however there was an underrepresentation of individuals under the age of 25, who represented only 4% of total responses.
- **Race** – Survey respondents reflect a racial distribution similar to that of Canyon County overall, however there was an underrepresentation from Canyon County's Hispanic community. Only 7% of survey respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino, however Census estimates indicate that nearly 25% of the Canyon County population is Hispanic or Latino.
- **Household income** – Approximately 40% of respondents self-reported an annual household income between \$50,000 to \$100,000. 16% of respondents reported earning under \$50,000 annually, while the remaining 44% were somewhere over \$100,000 annually. Canyon County has an annual median household income of \$56,916, which means that respondents on average earn more than the median annual household income.

- **Household Size** – 70% of respondents indicated that they live in two-adult households and 59% of respondents indicated that they did not have children living at home.
- **Geographic location** – Responses to the survey came in from many places in Canyon County and Ada County. A full distribution of locations is displayed in the chart below.



Guiding Values

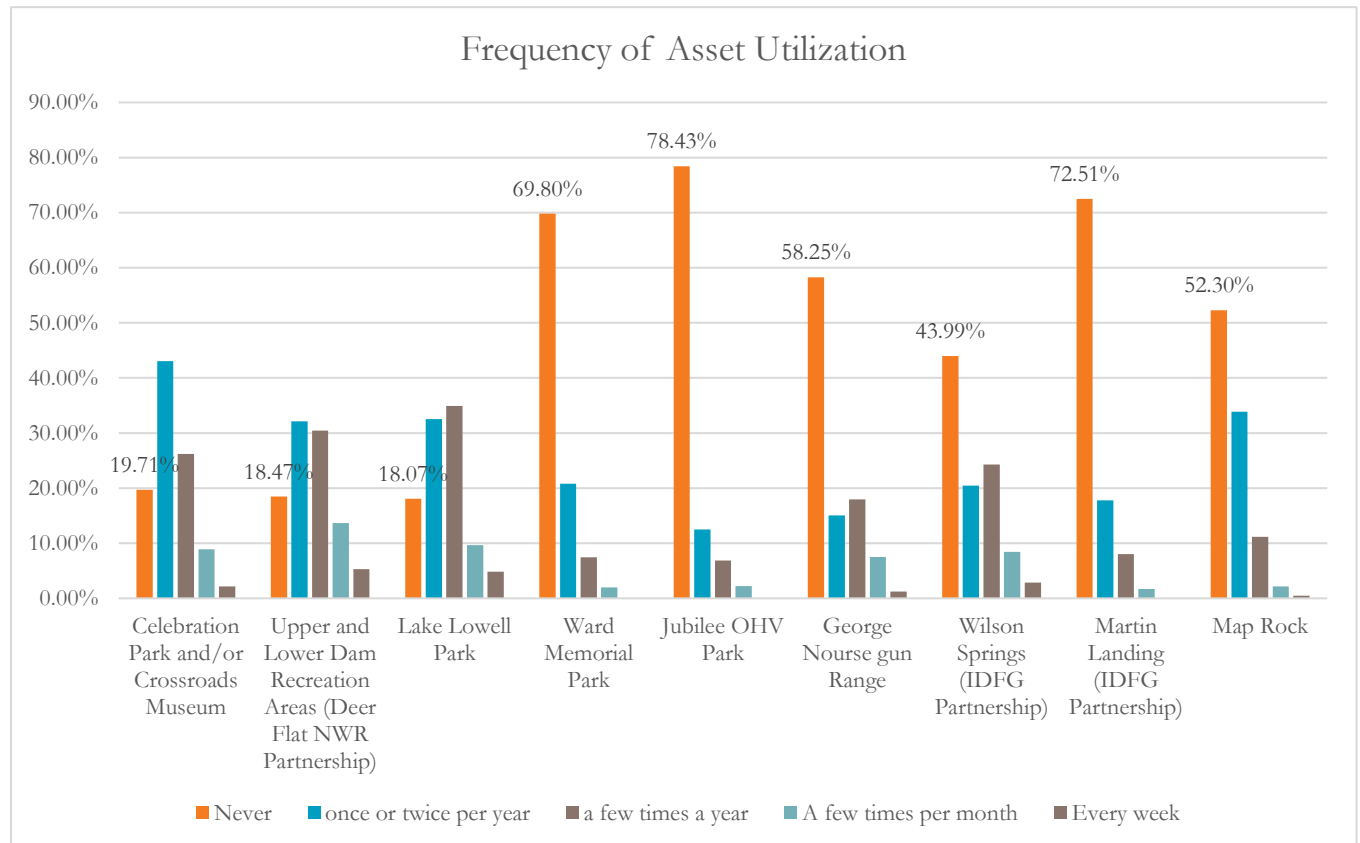
Respondents were asked to identify which value-based statements they believed should be considered when making decisions about the future of parks, pathways, and public spaces. The top identified guiding values were:

1. **Preservation of Agricultural Land** - Protect and preserve land that is viable for agricultural functions including farming, ranching, irrigation, and farm stands.
2. **Preservation of Open Space** - Protect and preserve the undeveloped spaces in Canyon County.
3. **Preservation of Wildlife Habitat - Equity and Inclusion:** Ensure the long-term health of wildlife populations and their natural habitats.
4. **Connectivity** – Ensure that parks, pathways, and cultural resources are connected to population centers with accessible roadways and pathways.
5. **Environmental and Ecological Sustainability** - Ensure the long-term viability of Canyon County's environment and natural resources.
6. **Recreational Value** - Preserve and expand recreational uses throughout Canyon County parks and open spaces.

Four of the top six guiding values dealt with a preservation or sustainability focused approach. This represents a strong desire for the long-term preservation of resources and natural spaces that have long been a defining characteristic of Canyon County. This also indicates that residents in Canyon County would be amenable to investments into preservation efforts and infrastructure that supports these beloved resources.

Asset Utilization

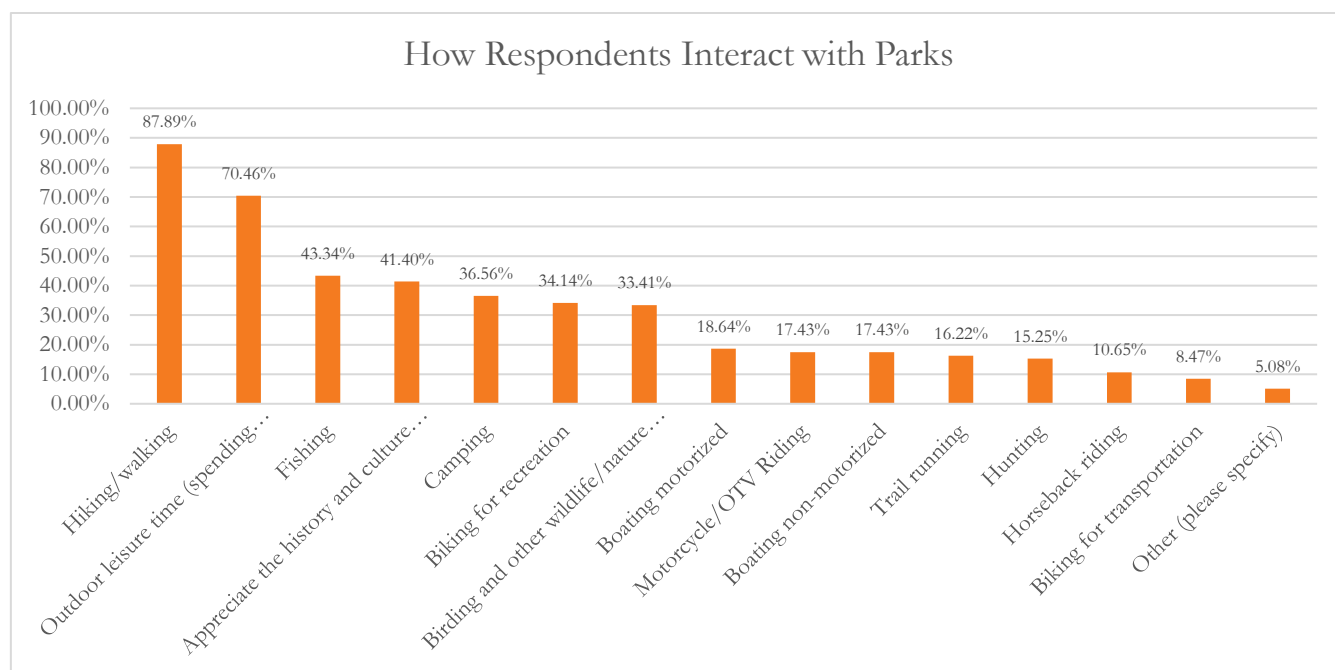
Of the assets managed by the Canyon County Parks, Cultural and Natural Resources Department Celebration Park and the Upper and Lower Recreation Areas at Lake Lowell were the most utilized assets based on frequency of visits. The chart below shows participant utilization of each parks asset, with many respondents indicating that they never use certain assets including the Ward Memorial Park, Jubilee OHV Park, Martin Landing and the George Nourse Gun Range. The assets with the least amount of user engagement are typical of more niche activities or locations that are further away from major population centers.



How participants engage with parks, pathways, open spaces, and cultural resources.

Respondents indicated a wide range of activities that they participate in throughout Canyon County Parks Spaces, with the most common activities being:

1. Hiking/Walking
2. Outdoor leisure time
3. Fishing
4. Appreciating the history and culture of Canyon County
5. Camping



Primary mode of interacting with Parks

To further narrow in on how respondents utilize Canyon County's park assets, we asked respondents to identify their primary mode of interaction. The top five primary user groups represented in the survey results were:

1. Hiking/Walking
2. Trail Running
3. Biking for Recreation
4. Biking for Transportation
5. Horseback Riding

This list differs from the overall user patterns represented in the previous section, which indicates that while these user groups are smaller than individuals who are generally recreating in Canyon County, they are important user groups who need to be considered in all planning efforts around park assets.

Satisfaction with Canyon County Parks, Pathways, Open Spaces and Cultural Resources

Generally, respondents indicated that they were quite satisfied with the Canyon County Parks System with 54% of respondents indicating that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the system overall and 33% of respondents had neutral feelings towards the system. 11.5% of respondents however indicated that they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with parks overall. Respondents who indicated that they were dissatisfied listed the following reasons:

1. Activities they wanted to participate in were not supported by existing infrastructure
2. Spaces and resources were too far away from their residence
3. Spaces and resources were not well maintained
4. Space and resources were too busy

5. Other open-ended comments listed for **dissatisfaction** included:
 - a. Spaces are disconnected and difficult to access
 - b. Pathways are not sufficient for extended recreation and are often too short
 - c. Lack of ADA accessible resources, particularly fishing docks.
 - d. Reduced equestrian parking and access to formerly used routes.
 - e. Safety concerns with biking and walking along roadways and on trails

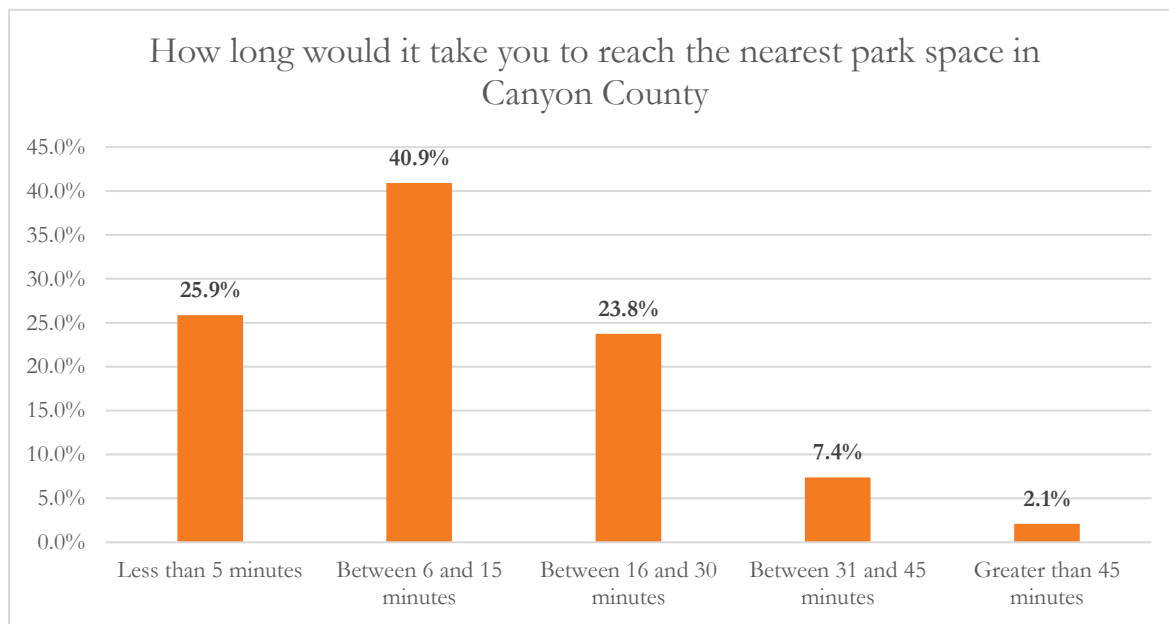
Opportunities for Improvement

Respondents identified many opportunities for improvement related to the Canyon County system of parks, pathways, open spaces, and cultural resources. The most prominent themes and recommendations were:

- Improvements to trails and connectivity with a desire for a larger regional “greenbelt”
- Investment into additional park spaces to increase access
- More programming and community-led activities
- Improvements to overall maintenance and safety
- Focus on creating and preserving natural spaces, green spaces, and wildlife
- Better promotion and awareness of park resources

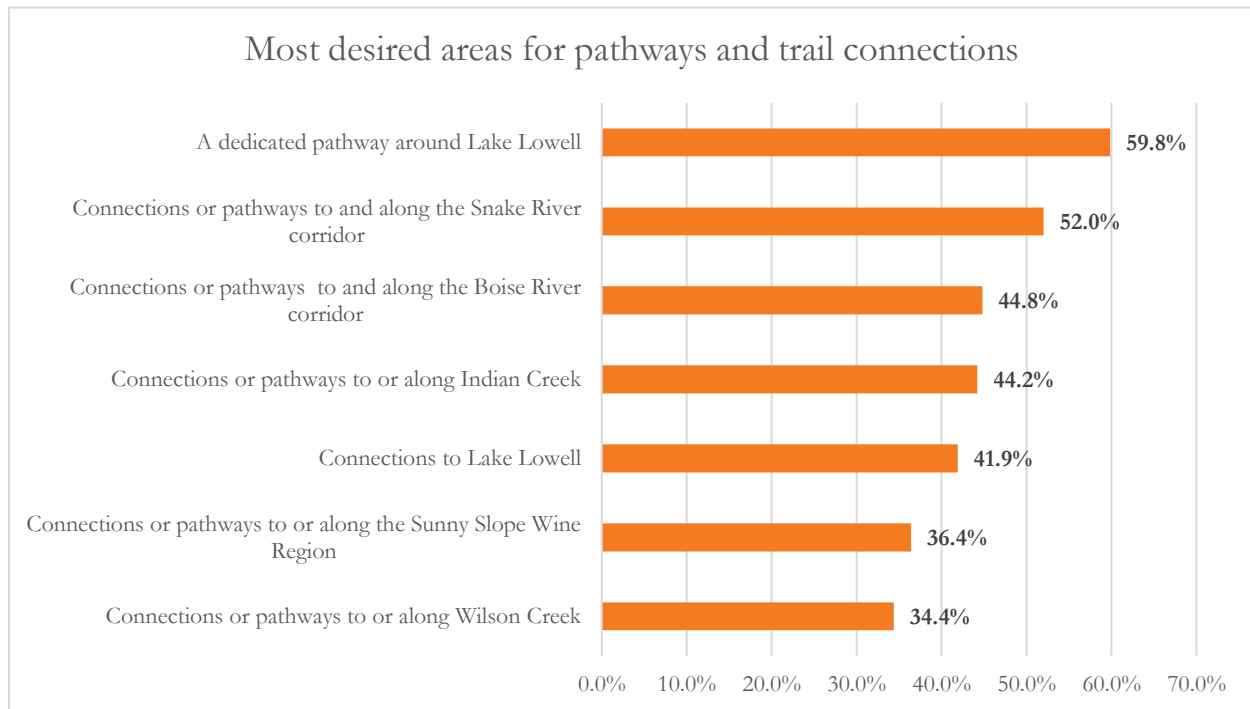
Connectivity and Access

Survey respondents largely felt that unincorporated Canyon County was not well connected through a system of pathways and trails. On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is very disconnected 5 is very connected, the average respondent score was 2.18 indicating a perceived lack of connectivity. Despite this lack of connectivity most respondents (66%) indicated that they could reach a park space within 15 minutes. This level of access combined with the perception of low connectivity indicates that there are likely barriers to access, particularly non-automotive access throughout the County that could be addressed through pathway and sidewalk improvements.



Desired Connections

Respondents were asked to identify locations that they most wanted to see additional connectivity created through pathways, trails and additional infrastructural investment. Respondents were most interested in seeing pathways around Lake Lowell and the Snake River Corridor but were generally supportive of a larger system of connected pathways county wide. 70% of respondents indicated that they would support the use of canals and other public right-of-way areas to help increase connectivity and access.



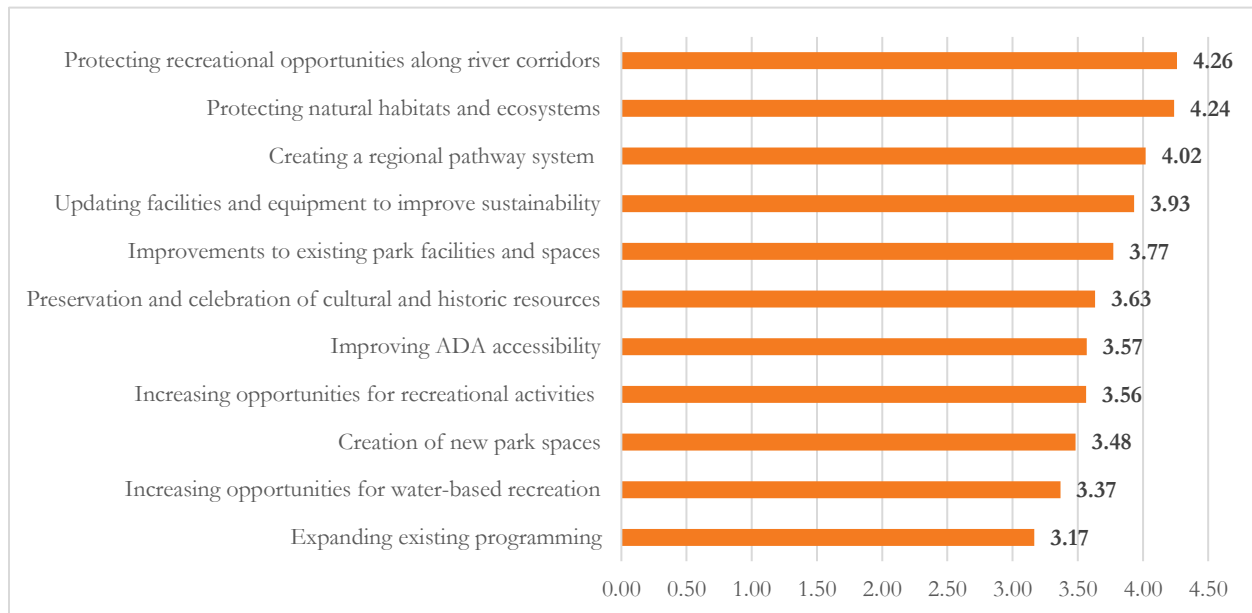
Funding Support

83% of respondents generally supported expanding funding to improve parks, pathway and open spaces in Canyon County. 70% of respondents supported exploring additional funding opportunities including:

- Creation of nonprofit 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



Priority Investments



Respondents were asked to identify to what degree they believe Canyon County should prioritize a wide range of potential investments with 5 being a very high priority. While all projects were generally supported, projects focused on protecting recreational opportunities along waterways and protecting natural habitats and ecosystems were identified as the highest priority. There was also substantial support for the creation of a larger regional pathway system that would require partnership between the County, incorporated cities and other partner agencies