

# Marion County FLORIDA

PARKS & RECREATION



# Annual Report 2023



IT STARTS IN  
PARKS

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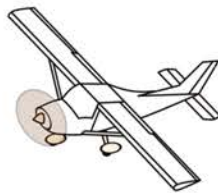
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# Parks & Recreation Making A Difference

## Forest Community Center Partners with Marion Senior Services

Forest Community Center has joined forces with Marion Senior Services and is now a hub for a handful of their services. The largest being their monthly Commodity Food Distribution, which provides Forest area seniors with access to healthy, nutritious food. Additionally, this program allows them to learn more about what other services Marion Senior Services provides.



## Hurricane Ida

As Idalia approached, Department staff joined other County employees and citizens to aid in sandbag operations. These efforts lasted two days and played a vital role in ensuring our citizens were safe and prepared for the oncoming storm. Together the Department helped disperse 12,748 sandbags before the storm.

## Carnival - Southeastern Livestock Pavilion

Our 5th Annual Marion County Parks & Recreation Carnival was an absolute success with over 8,000 people in attendance. This fun community event gives Marion County citizens a safe place to take their children trick or treating and celebrate fall fun activities. In addition to providing attendees with fall entertainment, this event acts as a large-scale fundraiser for our youth scholarship program, providing children with the ability to participate in our camps and other recreation activities.



# Parks & Recreation Making A Difference

## Back to School Bash

This year, Marion County Parks & Recreation partnered with the Community Foundation of Ocala/Marion County for their Community Giveback Drive. The Forest Community Center was selected as one of their locations for this annual back to school event where over 1,000 backpacks and school supplies were handed out to local children.



## Forest Jam

The Forest Jam is one of Forest Community Center's flagship programs and has been going strong for over 10 years. Every week, the Jam allows for Forest community members to come together for fellowship through music, strengthening the bonds of this proud community.

Throughout the year we have had numerous occasions where our department has made a profound impact on our community. We couldn't be prouder of the work our team has done when it comes to engaging with our citizens and striving to make a difference.



# Parks & Recreation Framework

1

## Department Mission & Goals

To provide recreational opportunities at park facilities that are safe, fun and accessible while protecting and interpreting our natural resources.

2

## Empowerment Framework

### HICARD

L  
A  
W

- A. Operate within you budget
- B. Be maters of providing excellent client experience
- C. Take care of your team (look down)
- D. Anticipate your supervisor's needs (look up)

P  
O  
L  
I  
C  
Y

..... Department Standards .....

3

## Accountability

It Starts with Yourself

# Director's Message

The Marion County Parks & Recreation Department is proud to present our first formal Annual Report for 2023. This report not only includes the measurable data and points that highlight our successes, it also provides an insight to the team that makes our delivery of services to residents and visitors of Marion County successful. We are excited to share this with you as we share our achievements and successes over this year.

Together with the Southeastern Livestock Pavilion and the Marion County Airport, 2023 was a great year for Parks & Recreation. We accomplished many great initiatives that will enrich and expand our current service level. Each group hit some significant milestones, completed some high-profile projects and hosted millions of visitors from both, our community and visitors from afar. None of these successes, or shall we say "wins", would not be possible without the relentless support provided to us by the Board of County Commissioners.

Throughout 2023, the Parks & Recreation team of dedicated professionals continued to deliver high-quality programs, events, and services to our community. We completed the complex process of creating and implementing the department's three Operational Plans which will serve as our blueprint for meeting the needs of our community and Department. Each plan was uniquely designed to tie directly to the County's Empowering Marion for Success II Plan while highlighting current industry trends and community needs.

So much of what makes Marion County great begins right here in Parks & Recreation and I'm so appreciative of the support we receive from our Commissioners and residents. I want to thank the amazing Parks & Recreation Department employees for their dedication and professionalism in delivering high-quality recreation programs and facilities to our community. Please enjoy reading this Annual Report of our department and the many accomplishments achieved this past year. It continues to be my honor to serve as the Director of Parks & Recreation.

Jim Couillard, PLA, ASLA  
Director



# At a Glance

Operating more than 57 parks & recreation facilities



**24**

Playgrounds



**16**

Hiking/Walking  
Trails



**57**

Sports Fields



**2,623**

Acres  
Managed



**2**

Activity/Community  
Centers



**9**

Kayak/Paddleboard  
hand launch



**31**

Sport Courts



**12**

Boat Ramps



**5**

Swimming  
Areas

# What is Parks & Recreation?

**VALUABLE  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

(Parks, Trails, Recreation Centers, Conservation Land, Waterways, Greenways, Open Spaces)



**VITAL  
PROGRAMS**

(Childcare, Youth Development, Emergency Response, Environmental Education, Health and Wellness and Physical Activity Programs)



**ESSENTIAL SERVICES**

## 2022 NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT WITH PARKS REPORT

**275  
MILLION**

people visit local parks & recreation facilities annually

**\$218  
BILLION**

parks & recreation agencies in economic activity

**84%  
US ADULTS**

seek high-quality parks & recreation facilities when choosing where to live

**9 IN 10  
PEOPLE**

agree that parks & recreation is an important service provided by their local government

**40  
MILLION**

youth participates in at least one local parks & recreation program annually

**3 IN 4  
PEOPLE**

agree equity should be an important goal for their local parks & recreation agency



# Achievements & Recognition

DEPARTMENT  
FUN FACTS

NUMBER OF  
EMPLOYEES

71

EMPLOYEES  
PROMOTED

8

PROFESSIONAL  
CERTIFICATIONS

14

AVAILABLE  
POSITONS

3



**Susan Heyen**

Susan Heyen, our Project Assistant was named Parks & Recreation's Employee of the Year.

**Charles Dobson**

Brick City Adventure Park has a new supervisor. Charles brings 15 years of recreation experience. When asked why recreation Charles said "The daily opportunity to inspire lives."



**Trevor Smith**

Was recently promoted to South Division Park Ranger. Trevor has been with Marion County for 5 years. We're so excited for Trevor to take on this role and look forward to watching him grow and lead.

**Keara Huebner**

Keara Huebner, our Administrative Staff Assistant was chosen as one of Marion County's Employee of the Quarter recipients. In the short time Keara has been with us she has proven herself to be invaluable.





# THE BEST EMPLOYEES WORK FOR MARION COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

## Jessica Halsey

This year, Jessica obtained her Aquatic Herbicide Applicator's License. Currently, Jessica is the only active Marion County Parks & Recreation employee to possess this license.



## Joey Amodo

This year, Joey was elected as the President of this area's ASLA Chapter. This is a huge honor in the Landscape Architect community and we're very proud.



## Sara Lambert

Sara Lambert was elected President of the Junior League of Ocala. This role alongside her position as Parks & Recreation's Community Engagement Coordinator led to a recent feature in Ocala Style magazine.



## Lewis "Kirk," Robinson

Kirk was hired as our first-ever Irrigation Technician this year and now serves as our Interim Athletics Superintendent.



## WHY DO YOU LOVE WORKING FOR MARION COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION?

"It's absolutely the people I work with and the relationships that I have built."

- Chris Falck, Turf Specialist

"I get to do what I love."

- Fred Riggs, Park Operations Specialist

"No two days are the same working in Parks & Recreation, the staff here are quick to adapt and to give a helping hand anytime without complaint. I could not ask for a better group of people to work with every day."

-Kelsey Mears, Assistant Director

# Marketing Annual Insights

## Facebook



**72,424**  
Reach



**163**  
Highest  
Reactions



**2,400**  
Engagement



**99**  
Posts

## Instagram



**632**  
Reach



**110**  
Highest  
Impressions



**92**  
Engagement



**56**  
Posts



# Customer Feedback

## Public Comment - Summer Camp 2023

**“Mr. Matt was loved by my son. He encouraged, challenged, and taught my son. I so appreciated Mr. Matt sending photos and videos through class dogo so I could see what my son was enjoying so much.”**

## Public Comment - Carney Island Recreation & Conservation Area

**“I enjoy walking amongst the beautiful tress. I came upon a family of deer & lots of wild turkeys.”**

## Public Comment - Pickleball Tournament 2023

**“Tournament was well-run, staff was friendly, engaged, and very professional, a positive representation of Marion County Parks & Recreation.”**



# Parks & Recreation Month



Since 1985, people in the United States have celebrated Parks and Recreation Month each July to promote building strong, vibrant and resilient communities through the power of parks and recreation and to recognize the more than 160,000 full-time park and recreation professionals – along with hundreds of thousands of part-time and seasonal workers and volunteers – that maintain our country’s local, state and community parks.

This year’s theme – “Where Community Grows” – celebrates the vital role park and recreation professionals play in bringing people together, providing essential services and fostering the growth of our communities.

Throughout the month of July, Marion County Parks & Recreation, showcased programs and facilities that promote health and wellness, environmental resilience, and economic impact. Through themed social media posts and activities at County parks and recreational facilities, citizens were able to join in celebrating the dedicated teams, conservation efforts and recreational facilities that provide fun and meaningful activities throughout Marion County.



Parks and recreation professionals provide vital services for our communities - from protecting open spaces and natural resources to helping fight obesity and providing activities and resources for all people. Parks and Recreation Month encourages everyone to reflect on the exponential value park and recreation facilities bring to communities while celebrating the more than 160,000 professionals nationwide who maintain our country's local, state, and community parks.

# Parks Performance Metrics

**FY22**

**FY23**

**PARKS  
ATTENDANCE**

**3,110,869**

**PARKS  
ATTENDANCE**

**3,038,514**

**ACRES  
MANAGED**

**2,519**

**ACRES  
MANAGED**

**2,623**

**OPERATING  
COST**

**\$1,740,295**

**OPERATING  
COST**

**\$1,779,956**

**PARKS FUN  
FACTS**

**RESIDENTS PER  
PARK**

**7,079**

**ACRES PER  
1,000  
RESIDENTS**

**6.6**

**FULL-TIME  
EMPLOYEES  
PER 10,000  
RESIDENTS**

**1.5**

**OPERATING  
EXPENSE  
PER CAPITA**

**\$4.49**

# Athletic Division



## Athletic Fields

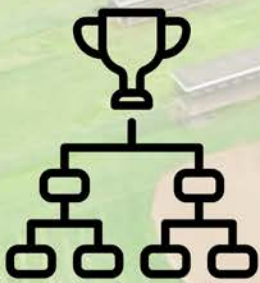
- Belleview Sportsplex
- Brick City Adventure Park
- John Van Fleet Sports Complex
- Ralph Russell Park
- Rotary Sportsplex
- Shocker Park
- Wrigley Fields



**14**  
Employees



**310**  
Acres  
Maintained  
(Approx.)



**10**  
Tournaments  
Hosted



**\$8.8 Million**  
Sports Tourism  
Economic Impact



**10**  
Recreation  
Leagues Utilizing  
Facilities

# Central Division



**10**  
Employees



**481**  
Acres  
Managed  
(Approx.)



**2**  
Boat Ramps



## Parks

- Baseline Road Trailhead
- Blue Run of Dunnellon Park
- KP Hole Park
- Liberty Park
- Marshall Swamp Trailhead
- McPherson Campus Memorials & Courtyard
- Rainbow Neighborhood Park
- Ray Wayside Park
- Silver Springs Conservation Area
- Veterans Park



**1**  
Tubing  
Operation



**2**  
Playgrounds





## Parks

- Carney Island Recreation & Conservation Area
- Hampton Beach
- Hope Boat Ramp
- Kiwanis Beach
- Moss Bluff (North & South)
- Ocklawaha Recreational Area
- Sandhill Park
- Silver Spring Shores Park
- Weirsdale Park
- Willoughby Park



**10**  
Employees



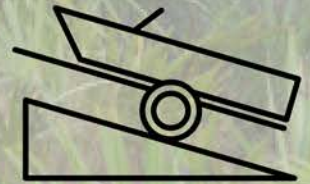
**791**  
Acres  
Managed



**6**  
Playgrounds



**2**  
Public Swim  
Beaches



**4**  
Boat Ramps

# North Division



**7**

**Employees**



**1,054**

**Acres  
Managed**



**6**

**Boat Ramps**



**9**

**Playgrounds**



**1**

**Public Swim  
Beaches**



**4**

**Cabin  
Rentals**



## Parks

- Benjamin Louis VanDuuren
- Coehadjoe Park
- Cougar Park
- Eureka Recreation Area (East & West)
- Flemington Community Park
- Gores Landing Park
- Heagy-Burry Boat Ramp
- Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat
- Moorhead Park
- Ocala Park Estates
- Orange Lake Community Park
- Orange Springs Boat Ramp
- Orange Springs Park
- Reddick Park (Coming Soon)
- Salt Springs Civic Park
- Norm Westbrook Park

# Parks Highlights

## News

- Flemington Park - new playground installed and pickleball lines have been added to the existing tennis courts.
- Moorhead Boat Ramp - parking lot and boat ramp repairs are completed.
- Carney Island Recreation & Conservation Area - floating dock repairs were completed after tropical storm Nicole.
- Little Lake Weir- new playground unit installed.
- KP Hole Park- new handrails installed.
- Rotary Sportsplex- Babe Ruth fields parking and driveway improvements.
- Coehadjoe Park- driveway repairs are completed.
- Dunnellon Fields- Marion County Parks & Recreation, Facilities Management Department and private donor completed multiple structures, fields, irrigation and maintenance repairs to ensure safe playable fields.
- Cougar Park- new playground installed.

## Innovations

- Purchase of robotic field painter (Turf Tank) has cut staff time by 60% and reduced the amount of paint utilized by 20%.



# Recreation Performance Metrics

**FY22**

**FY23**

**DIRECT COST RECOVERY**

**48%**

**DIRECT COST RECOVERY**

**54%**

**PROGRAM ATTENDANCE**

**15,796**

**PROGRAM ATTENDANCE**

**19,604**

**PROGRAMS OFFERED**

**147**

**PROGRAMS OFFERED**

**212**

**NEW PROGRAMS**

**MONDAY NIGHT SPORTS (ALL AGES)**

**LIT FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE (18+)**

**FOUR SQUARE CLUB (ALL AGES)**

**WALKS & TALKS (ACTIVE ADULTS & SENIORS)**

**KIDS NIGHT OUT (AGES 8-14)**

**THEMED NIGHT KAYAK OUTTINGS (18+)**

# Recreation Division



**10**

Employees



## Centers

- **Brick City Adventure Park**
- **Forest Community Center**



**212**

Recreation  
Programs



**19,021**

Program  
Attendance



**1,078**

Filled Camp  
Spots



**12**

Free Community  
Sponsored  
Programs/Events

# Forest Community Center Recreation

**FY22**

**FY23**

**DIRECT COVST  
RECOVERY**

**51%**

**DIRECT COST  
RECOVERY**

**60%**

**PROGRAM  
PARTICIPATION**

**7,145**

**PROGRAM  
PARTICIPATION**

**8,258**

**RECREATION  
PROGRAMS**

**102**

**RECREATION  
PROGRAMS**

**128**

# Brick City Recreation Analysis

**FY22**

**FY23**

**DIRECT COST RECOVERY**

**44%**

**DIRECT COST RECOVERY**

**46%**

**PROGRAM ATTENDANCE**

**9,553**

**PROGRAM ATTENDANCE**

**10,763**

**RECREATION PROGRAMS**

**45**

**RECREATION PROGRAMS**

**96**

# Recreation Highlights

## News

- Recreation is fully staffed, first time in two years.
- Forest Community Center increased hours of operations to the public; Monday - Saturday 10am-8pm.
- New partnerships established with East Marion Elementary, Marion Senior Services, Historic Ocala Preservation Society (HOPS) and the Marion Audubon Society.

## Events

- Back to School Bash gave away 1,000 fully supplied backpacks to children in the community.
- 5th annual Parks & Recreation Carnival event had over 8,000 people in attendance giving Marion County parents a safe trick or treating community event.

## Summer Camps

- Facilitated 6 summer camps between Brick City Adventure Park and Forest Community Center.
- Revenue generated from camps \$108,860.
- Impacted 927 Marion County children.
- 81% return rate for seasonal staff.





# Park Improvements

## New Parks

### Norm Westbrook Park Phase I

On October 1, 2023, the Department celebrated the soft opening of Norm Westbrook Park Phase I, located at 6400 NW 100th Street, west of I-75.

The park features 1.5 miles of equestrian trail and 0.5 miles of hiking trails, parking lots and picnic areas. The land for the park was donated by Mr. Norm Westbrook, who upon his passing wanted the land to become a park. The Department received a generous donation from an anonymous donor to extend the equestrian trail to 3.0 miles and build equine obstacles along the trail.

Phase I of the park, totaling \$363,000 was funded through the Parks Fee Fund. Phase II will consist of a restroom, picnic pavilion and a new playground. Phase II is expected to move forward by Fall of 2025 and completed Fall 2026.



# Park Improvements

## New Parks



### Ocala Park Estates

The Department celebrated the soft opening of Ocala Park Estates Park, located at 6371 NW 65th Street, west of I-75.

The approximate 1.5-acre park features a playground, parking lot, picnic pavilion and grass area for open play. The Department was donated the parcel by the developer for the intended use of a public park.

The \$194,500 cost of the park was funded through the Parks Fee Fund. The park is expected to open summer of 2024 upon the completion of a picnic pavilion.



# CIP Timeline



# Project Design



## Rotary Sportsplex -Turf Field

Bidding is due at the end of January 2024 on the synthetic turf fields for soccer fields 4 & 5 at Rotary Sportsplex. Project elements include the conversion of two existing soccer fields to synthetic turf fields, addition of paved parking, field lighting and enhanced spectator areas.

This sports field improvement is a Board of County Commissioners initiative that will serve the community by allowing a wider range of sports that can be played all year. Construction is projected to start by mid-2024. Funding for this project is through a combination of the General Fund and the Parks Fees Fund.

# Project Design



## Heagy-Burry Boat Ramp

Heagy-Burry Boat Ramp, located in north Marion County, is a popular boating and fishing destination that provides one of only two public access points to Orange Lake. This is an important boat ramp to the local community as it is also the only access point to the lake in Marion County. These improvements are one of the Department's "legacy" projects and we couldn't be happier to get this one underway. Funding for this project was made possible by the combination of a \$969,000 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission service grant, the Pennies for Parks Fund and the General Fund. This project includes the construction of a two-lane boat ramp, floating dock system and parking lot. Bidding is set to commence in January 2024 with construction projected to start by mid-2024 and completion in 2025.

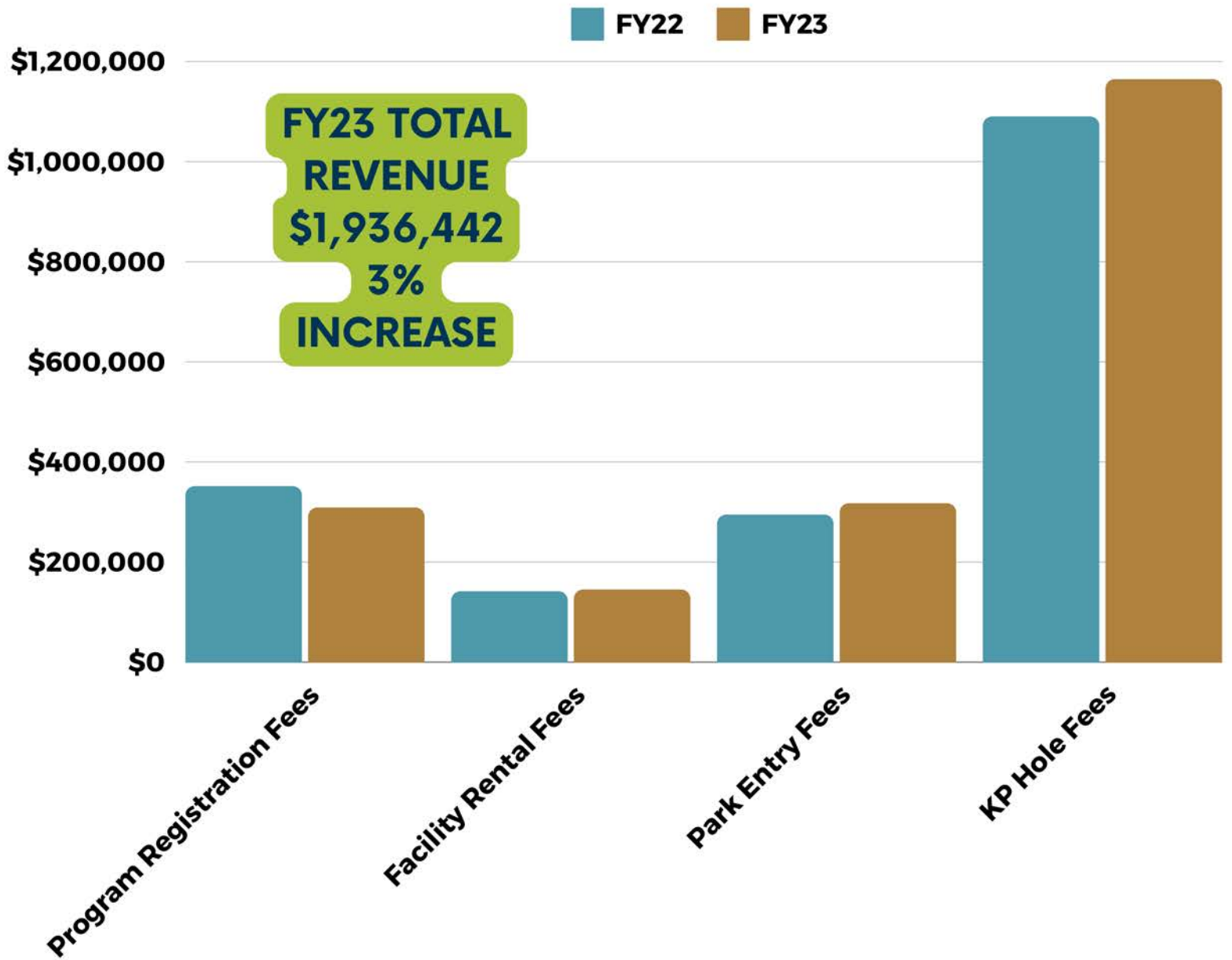
## Reddick Park

Marion County, together with the Town of Reddick, will begin the design of the Town's first public park in January of 2024. The park will be located at a former Marion County Sheriff substation site that has existing infrastructure in place, such as an asphalt parking lot and driveway, site lighting, large beautiful trees and utilities. Funding for this park was made possible by the Town of Reddick and the General Fund. This project will include the construction of a playground, restroom, parking lot restriping, sidewalk and a grass area for open play. Most importantly, this park will create a space for the community to enjoy outdoor recreation, gather for events and connect with nature. The park is scheduled to open in the fall of 2024.

**Joey Amodo**  
Parks Designer



# Financial Snapshot



# SELP Performance Metrics

**FY22**

**EVENT  
ATTENDANCE**

**579,801**

**COMMUNITY  
SUPPORTED  
EVENTS**

**307**

**PAID EVENTS**

**227**

**FY23**

**EVENT  
ATTENDANCE**

**611,893**

**COMUNITY  
SUPPORTED  
EVENTS**

**326**

**PAID EVENTS**

**231**

**SELP  
FUN FACTS**

**SOUTHEASTERN  
PRO RODEO**

**31 years**

**HORSE  
STALLS**

**286**

**SOUTHEASTERN  
YOUTH  
LIVESTOCK FAIR  
EST.**

**1978**

**LARGEST  
EVENT  
ATTENDANCE**

**15,000**

# Southeastern Livestock Pavilion



**7**

**Employees**



## Event Venue

- **Dave Baillie, Jr. Arena**
- **North Arena**
- **Extension Auditorium**
- **Sales Arena**
- **Recreation Hall**
- **Campground (Coming Soon)**



**55**

**Acre Event  
Venue**



**55**

**RV  
Campsites**



**557**

**Events  
Hosted**



**611,893**

**Attendees**



# Marketing Annual Insights

## Facebook



**522,117**  
Reach



**976**  
Highest  
Reactions



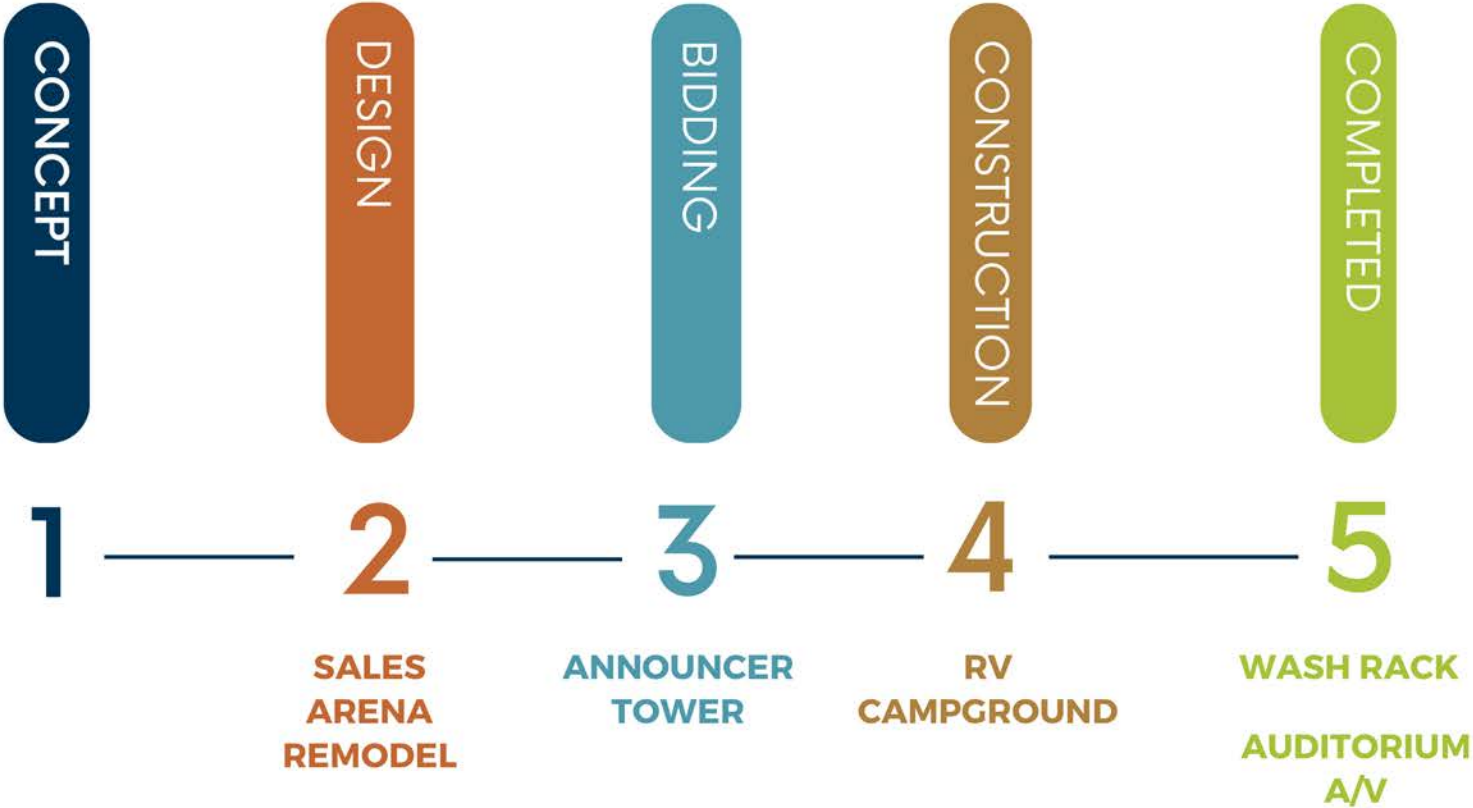
**2,200**  
Engagement



**52**  
Posts



# CIP Timeline



**\$2,624,535**  
**FY23**  
**CIP PROJECTS**

<b>CIP PROJECTS</b> <b>5</b>	<b>NEW PROJECTS</b> <b>1</b>
<b>CARRY FORWARD PROJECTS</b> <b>4</b>	<b>COMPLETED PROJECTS</b> <b>2</b>

# Southeastern Livestock Pavilion Improvements



## Wash Rack Project

In January 2023 the construction of the new wash rack was completed. The previous wash rack had been a longstanding problem. High usage in the area flooded not only the wash area, but the adjoining road, gate, and parking lot. The upgrades include replacing the rotted wood rails with stainless steel rails and installing a new drainage system. Clients are extremely satisfied with the improvements. This project was funded through the General Fund.

## Extension Auditorium A/V Improvements

The SELP Auditorium is used primarily for classes, graduations, meetings, weddings and banquets. The A/V system in the auditorium was outdated and insufficient for the level of service necessary to host these types of events. The Parks & Recreation Department, Facilities Management Department and the Information Technology Department, with the help of a professional acoustics consultant, created a plan to completely overhaul the system. The improvements included a new upgraded sound system with 15 microphones; replacing the old projectors and screen with two new high-resolution screens; and the addition of three new screens in the north hall. The new system in the north hall operates separately when the air wall is closed and syncs up with the main A/V system when it is open. Feedback from new and repeat customers alike in regards to the new A/V system have been overwhelmingly positive due to the quality of both sound and pictures. Customers who utilize our north hall also appreciate the viewing options provided by the additional screens.

# Southeastern Livestock Pavilion Improvements



## SELP Campground

Construction of the SELP Campground began in March of 2023 thanks to a one million dollar grant from the Florida Department of Agriculture. The campgrounds will be located on the north east corner of the SELP property next to the back arena and is a part of Phase III of the Master Plan. This project includes 66 campsites that will each have water, sewer, electric and WiFi. Each electrical box will include 30-amp, 50 amp and 110-amp outlets. A new dump station will be added near the entrance closest to the SELP auditorium and a new gated entrance will also be added off of Jacksonville Rd. The additional campsites will allow the facility to book larger events that could previously not be accommodated due to the limited number of campsites. This project is scheduled to be completed in April of 2024.

# Project Design

## Sales Arena Remodel

The remodel of the Sales Arena is part of the Marion County Administrative Strategic Plan with the goal of improving the overall customer experience and creating new event opportunities that cannot currently be accommodated. Improvements will include larger and ADA compliant restrooms, new paint, removal of drop tiles from the ceiling, improved climate control, improved acoustics and seating.

## Dave Baillie Jr. Announcer Tower

Construction of a new concrete block, 550 square foot announcer's tower in the Dave Baillie Jr. Arena began in late 2023 and is expected to be completed in April, 2024. The new announcer's tower will be located in the arena directly in front of the stairs to the old tower. This project will provide a tower that is more accessible to the arena that is secure and properly climate controlled for the A/V equipment. This project is also part of the overall initiative to improve the customer experience, as outlined in the Marion County Administrative Strategic Plan.

## Dave Baillie Jr. Arena Sound Upgrade

The sound system in the Dave Baillie Jr. arena is schedule to be replaced in late 2024 as part of the overall initiative to improve the customer experience at SELP, as outlined in the Marion County Administrative Strategic Plan. This new sound system will provide much needed A/V improvements to the arena, barn, sales arena and surrounding facilities.



# Highlights

## News

- Wash Rack project is completed.
- New fencing and privacy screens installed around maintenance facility.
- Upgraded barn lighting to LED lights.
- Fully-staffed

## Events

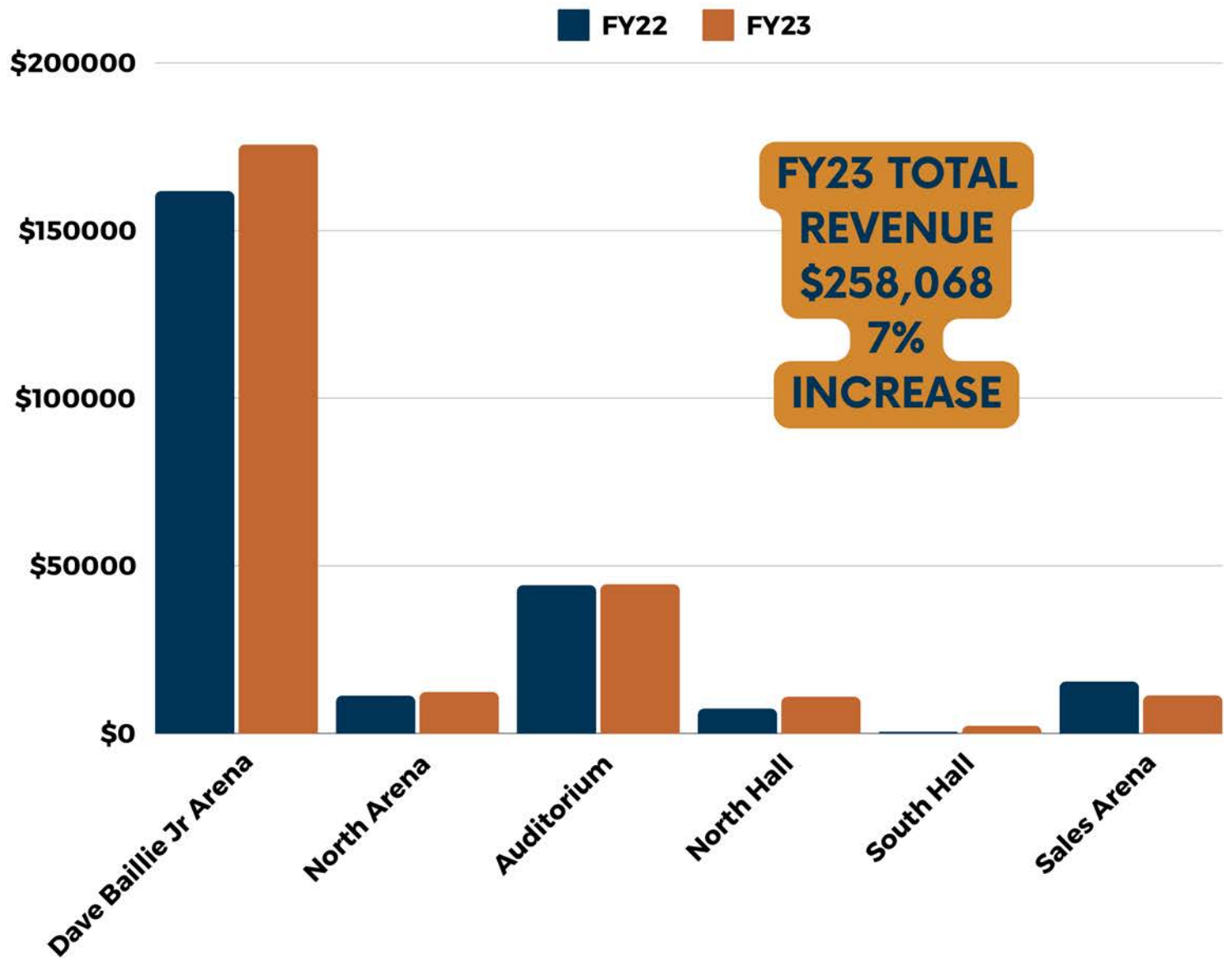
- Hosted The League of Agricultural and Equine Centers symposium.
- Hosted Sheriff's office K-9 event for state-wide training.
- Host location for multiple State-qualifying FFA judging competitions.

## Customer Feedback

- "We would like to thank you for allowing us to use the facility. We appreciate your help and couldn't have done it without you." - Florida FFA District V
- "Everything was perfect. We want to do all of our events here moving forward." -Ocala Pride



# Financial Snapshot



# Marion County Airport Performance Metrics

**FY22**

**FY23**

**AIRCRAFT TAKE  
OFFS/LANDINGS**

**20,154**

**AIRCRAFT TAKE  
OFFS/LANDINGS**

**34,082**

**100LL FUEL**

**83,701  
gallons**

**100LL FUEL**

**80,306  
gallons**

**JET A FUEL**

**30,642  
gallons**

**JET A FUEL**

**7,816  
gallons**

**AIRPORT  
FUN FACTS**

**AIRPORT  
ESTABLISHED**

**1941**

**AIRPORT  
PRIVATE  
BUSINESSES**

**16**

**JOBS RELATED  
TO THE  
AIRPORT**

**784**

**ECONOMIC  
IMPACT**

**\$140  
Million**



# Marion County Airport: X-35



**3**

Employees



## Airfield

- Private & Public Hangars
- Private Businesses
- Aircraft Tie Downs
- Self Service Fuel System



**68**

Hangar  
Occupancy



**800**

Acres of  
Airfield  
Maintained



**140 Million**

X-35  
Economic  
Impact



**125K**

Gallons of  
Fuel Sales

# CIP Timeline

CONCEPT

DESIGN

BIDDING

CONSTRUCTION

COMPLETED

1

2

3

4

5

TAXIWAY &  
BEACON

MASTER PLAN  
T-HANGARS  
(20)

**\$724,596**  
**FY23**  
**CIP PROJECTS**

CIP  
PROJECTS  
**3**

NEW  
PROJECTS  
**1**

CARRY  
FORWARD  
PROJECTS  
**2**

COMPLETED  
PROJECTS  
**2**

# Project Design

## Airport Taxiway and Vault & Beacon Project

The Airport Taxiway and Vault & Beacon project is part of the Airport Master Plan and includes both state and federal grant match funding. Phase 1 (FY24) will consist of the design of a full-length parallel taxiway (5,000'x35) to the primary runway 5-23. The new power vault will supply the necessary power to the parallel taxiway which significantly increases safety for pilots by mitigating mid-air collisions. The project will include holding bays for aircraft run-up, LED taxiway lights, LED position and directional signs and a new L-828 regulator. Construction is planned for FY25.

## Airport T-Hangar Project

The multi-phase project will consist of the construction of 20 T-Hangar rental units. The completion of this project will increase the airport's economic impact for Marion County. Additionally, increasing the number of T-Hangars will meet the demand for quality multi-purpose, specialized facilities for both local and traveling customers. The design, engineering and permitting are planned to take place in FY25 while the construction is planned to take place in FY26.

## Airport Fuel Farm Project

In accordance with the Empowering Marion County Strategic Plan, the Airport is adding infrastructure to support the demand for the forecasted aviation growth in the County's transportation system,

The Marion County Airport fuel farm is over 20 years old; the expectant life cycle of a fuel system is 10-15 years. Aside from the foundational fuel components the absence of modern technology and customer interface makes it very difficult to remain competitive with neighboring airports. Repair costs associated with the maintenance of this system have greatly impacted the fuels profit margin. The Marion County Airport relies heavily on fuel sales for revenue; aviation fuel sales represent the second largest revenue stream for the Airport.



# Highlights

## News

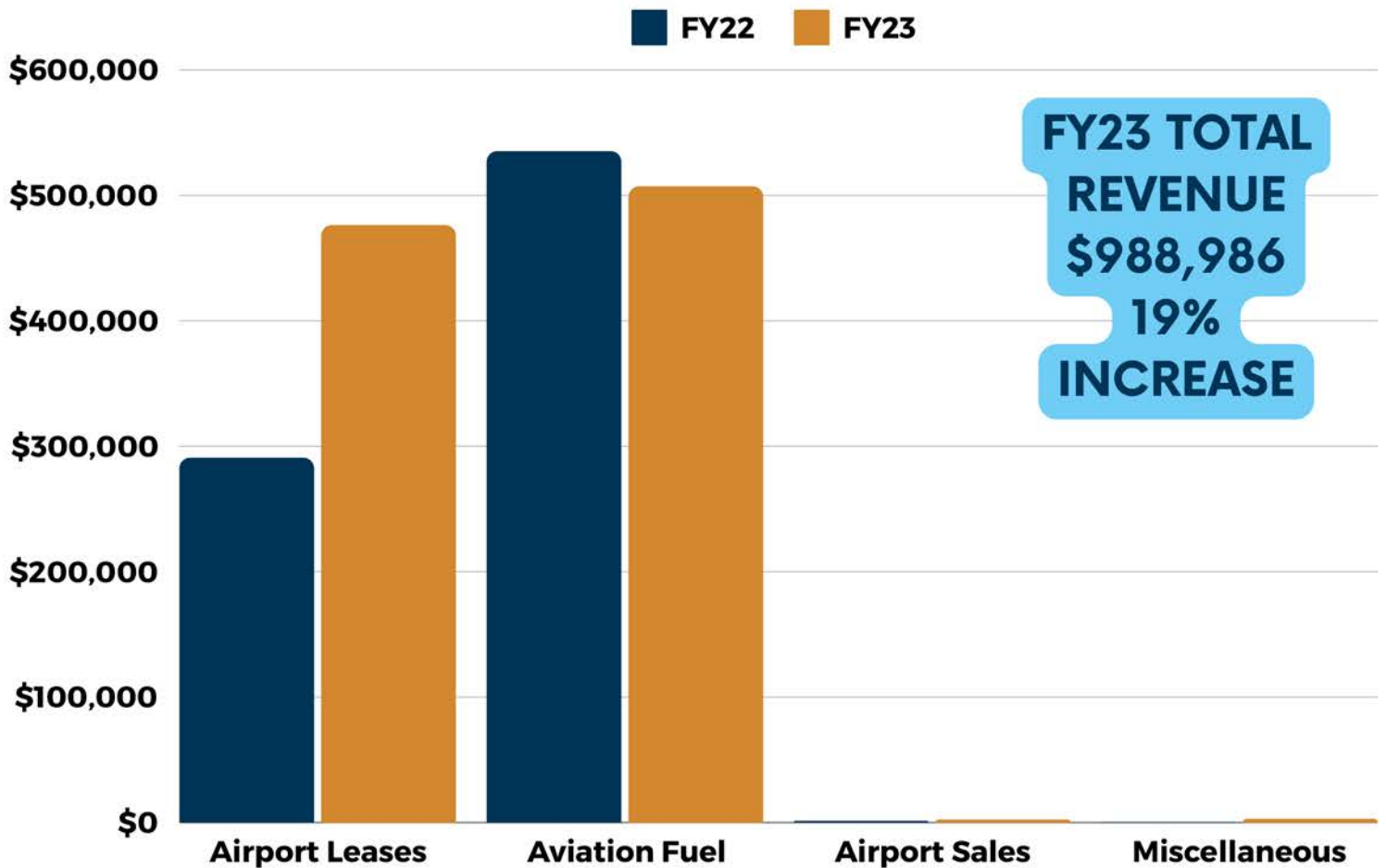
- Executed first-ever X35 annual lease over \$100K annually.
- Several new businesses have made X35 their home base.
- Improved fencing perimeter, added security and usability.
- Painted pilot lounge, offices and public reception facility.
- Revamped 3,000' grass runway for multi-operational use.
- Added second security access point for hangar customers.
- Completed runway and lighting and pavement repairs.
- Secured \$16,000,000 in grant funding from FAA and FDOT for projects through 2028 at the airfield.
- PAPI light system repairs completed.
- Updated security plans for FDOT and Homeland Security.
- Airfield environmental study was completed.

## Events

- Hosted multiple Airborne events.
- Attended X-Potential Aviation Expo, this has worldwide exposure.
- Staging area for FEMA relief efforts.
- Hosted Blue Tide aviation training program.



# Financial Snapshot



# Empowering Marion For Success II

Marion County adopted “Empowering Marion For Success II” Strategic Plan in 2022, this document reflects the County’s initiatives for the next 5 years; such as organizational experience, resources and public facilities, planning and future growth, public infrastructure and public safety, Below are different ways the Department has met multiple goals over the year.

## Organizational Experience

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- Employee workload has been evaluated and all changes have been added to the Department’s Operational Plans.
- Staff development has been the focus as multiple training plans have been addressed and future succession planning has been addresses in the Operational Plans.
- Each area has worked with staff to improve work experience and address workload.
- Addressing Department staffing needs; Airport fully staffed, SELP fully staffed, Recreation fully staffed, 3 vacancies in Parks.

## Resources and Facilities

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- The Department has identified and prioritized new/expanded facility needs these have been incorporated into the Department Operational Plans.
- The Department is identifying diverse funding sources based on current service gaps and future needs of a growing population in Marion County.

## Planning and Future Growth

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- The department is currently looking for available land to expand upon current park service levels and increase sports tourism in Marion County.
- An update to the current Parks & Recreation Master Plan is due.
- Marion County Airport will continue to prioritize new and expanded improvements to address the growth of the facility through partnerships with the FDOT and FAA.
- The Southeastern Livestock Pavilion will prioritize updating the current Master Plan to align with the future success of the the event venue and meeting the needs of their event holders.

# Parks & Recreation Operational Plans

In February the Parks & Recreation Department presented three separate operational plans for Parks & Recreation, Southeastern Livestock Pavilion and the Marion County Airport. Each operational plan clearly addresses work load, future staffing needs, capital improvement projects, funding strategies, facility improvements, equipment needs and community opportunities that current and future residents will be needing from the Parks & Recreation Department.

## **Parks & Recreation Operational Plan Highlights**

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- Capital replacement and renovation of multiple existing parks within the current park system
- Expansion and addition of future parks that serve an ever growing and diverse community.
- Destination/Tourism parks and venues that serve the community and drive sports tourism to Marion County.
- Potential funding sources for consistent capital improvements projects for the Department.
- Expansion of the current staffing for workload and future expansion projects.

## **Southeastern Livestock Pavilion Operational Plan Highlights**

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- Capital replacement plan for current facilities that will improve current amenities and enhance customer experience.
- Investment in improvement projects that will add revenue streams and increase capacity of the venue.
- Improve current facility signage with a dynamic branding strategy that represents Marion County.
- Expansion of the current staffing do to workload and future venue/event expansion.

## **Marion County Airport Operational Plan Highlights**

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- Expansion and investment of facilities that will meet the ever growing need for hangar space within the airfield.
- Investment in infrastructure projects that will increase capacity and improve safety at the airport.
- Expand current reoccurring revenue streams to successfully fund capital improvement projects.
- Expand current staffing to help with current and future workload.

# Marion County FLORIDA

PARKS & RECREATION



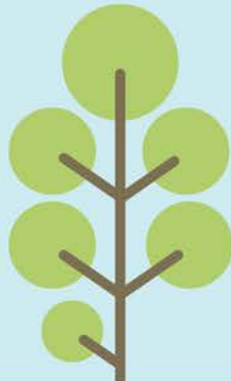




Marion  
County  
FLORIDA  
PARKS & RECREATION



## Connect With Us!



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# Marion County FLORIDA

PARKS & RECREATION



IT STARTS IN  
PARKS