

Item Title: Develop Concept Plans for Three New County Nature Preserves

Specific Action Requested:

That the Board of Commissioners appropriates \$200,000 of Parks, Greenways, Recreation, and Open Space (PGROS) bond funding to develop concept plans for three new County Nature Preserves.

Item Summary:

Purpose: The Board of Commissioners approves revenues and expenditures.

Background: The County opened its first Nature Preserve in 2015 at Robertson Millpond with the goal of allowing public access and passive recreation while at the same time protecting unique natural and historical resources; Turnipseed and Sandy Pines preserves followed in 2017 and 2021.

During its February 21, 2021 meeting, the Growth and Sustainability Committee considered a proposal from Chair Hutchinson for new nature preserve projects. The committee advanced this proposal for full Board consideration. Staff briefed the full Board during its March 14, 2022 work session. In the work session, the Board asked staff to prepare an item that would allow staff to move forward with developing concept plans for three new nature preserves located in Little River, Buffalo Creek and Swift Creek.

Board Goal: This action supports Growth and Sustainability Goal 4: Preserve open space and expand access to parks, preserves, recreation resources, and greenways.

Fiscal Impact: The cost to develop conceptual plans for three new County nature preserves is \$200,000 and is appropriated from available PGROS bonds set aside for Future Open Space.

Additional Information:

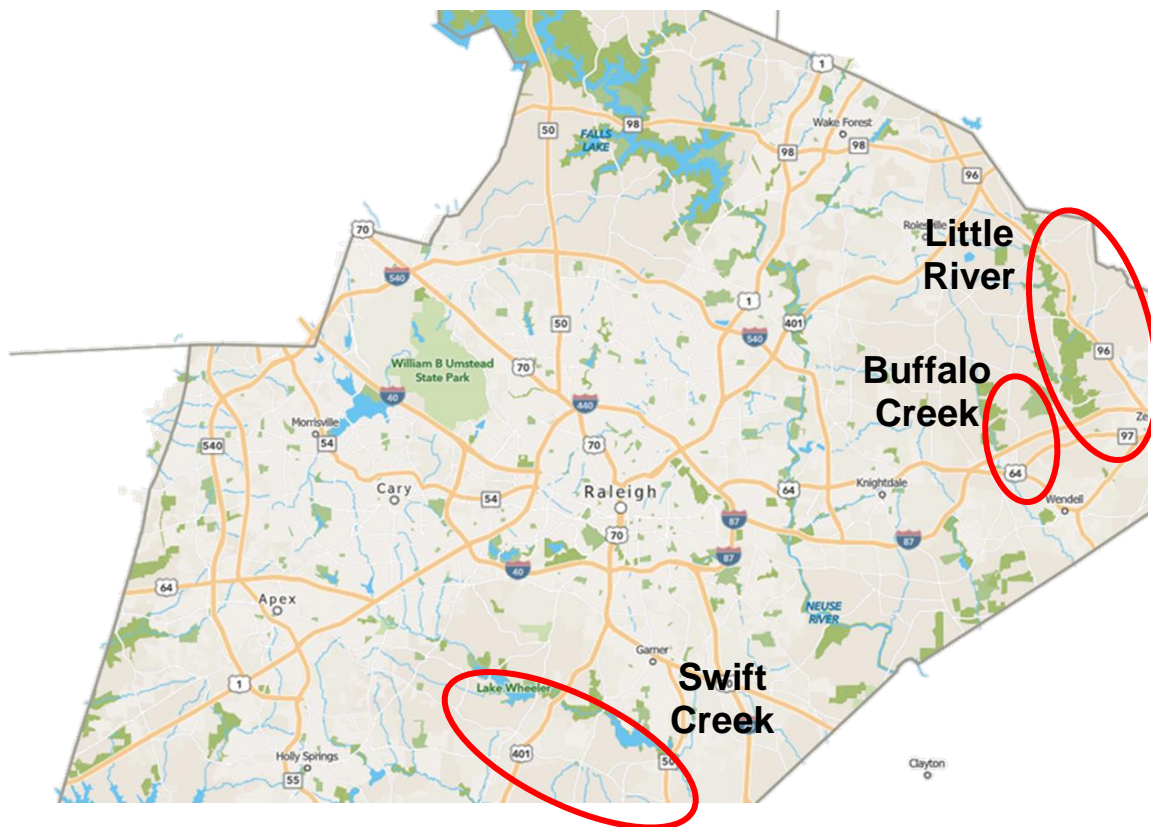
Wake County began acquiring open space in 2000 for the purposes of protecting and conserving land and water resources for current residents and future generations. This open space would: preserve natural resources, wildlife habitat, and historical and cultural properties; protect forest and farmland, scenic landscapes, riparian corridors and water quality; and provide venues for outdoor recreation. To date, the County has acquired, or assisted in the acquisition of 8,486 acres across the County.

At the October 2013 work session, the Board of Commissioners directed staff to move forward with plans for establishing public access at three open space areas: Robertson Millpond, Turnipseed and Procter Farm. Robertson Millpond Preserve (2015), Turnipseed

Nature Preserve (2017), and Sandy Pines Preserve, formerly known as the Procter property (2021) have since been completed and open to the public.

The goal of a nature preserve is to allow public access, typically by focusing on one or two types of passive recreation. Preserves are minimally developed while protecting significant natural resources and/or habitats.

At the February 21, 2022 Growth and Sustainability Committee, staff presented the idea of developing concept plans for three new nature preserves in Little River, Buffalo Creek and Swift Creek.



The concept plans will focus on exploring core programming ideas to be developed on the site. Site opportunities, constraints and connections will be developed during this concept planning process.

Wake County Facilities, Design and Construction will hire consultants who will help County staff lead partners and stakeholders through the concept planning process. A more detailed master planning process will be developed at a future date.

The Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee (OSAPAC) reviewed these projects at its March 28, 2022 meeting and support for the projects was unanimous.

Attachments:

1. Presentation
2. OS Bond and NC DOT Funding Tracker
3. CIP Budget Memo - FY 2022 County Capital Fund - PGROS