Residents get new paths to recreation

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Residents and visitors to Greenville County will find nine newly expanded park facilities open this year, which represent an investment of $48.6 million.

They range from seven athletic fields in Berea to a 95-acre passive park at Cedar Falls to Pleasant Ridge Camp and Retreat Center, to a section of the Swamp Rabbit Trail, water parks, dog parks and more.

"I'm just thrilled with the Swamp Rabbit Trail," said Cathy Ronald, chair of the Greater Greenville Parks Foundation. "I'm looking forward not only to walking on it but riding my bike from Travelers Rest to Greenville."

"We've never had that many open in one year before," said Gene Smith, Greenville County Recreation District executive director.

Of the $48.6 million, $31.8 million came from the hospitality tax allocated in 2006 by Greenville County Council, Smith said.

Other sources were a $4 million county supplemental appropriation; $2.3 million from state Department of National Resources/Colonial Oil pipeline spill settlement; $1 million in a state Budget and Control Board competitive grant; $2.6 million in gifts and grants; $6.3 million in loans; and a $500,000 self-generated fund reserve, according to Chanell Moore, district deputy director.

A 2009 Strom Thurmond Institute study showed that every 10 county recreation jobs create two to three jobs and every dollar the district spends generates an additional $1.19 in the broader county economy, according to Dr. Bob Brookover, director of Clemson International Institute for Tourism Research and Development.



The facilities are:

- Greenville Hospital System Swamp Rabbit Trail four-mile segment opens May 7, and completes the paved Greenville-Travelers Rest greenway.
- Seven athletic fields open this spring at Greenville Technical College Northwest campus, Berea.
- Pleasant Ridge Camp and Retreat Center opens in May. Camp Spearhead is for individuals with special needs, Greenville Children's Hospital System's Camp Courage is for children with cancer and blood disorders.
- Northside Park's Otter Creek Water Park opens in May.
- Lakeside Park's Seventh Inning Splash Water Park opens in May.
- Cedar Falls 95-acre passive park on Reedy River paddling trail may open this year.
- Dog parks at Pelham Mill Park and The Pavilion open this spring. Pavilion improvements include a lighted athletic field, playground, Bounce House (indoor children's play area), and upgraded parking.
- 13.5-acre Loretta Wood Park opens this spring in Princeton.
- A park showcasing 101-year-old Campbell's Covered Bridge opens this spring.

LOCAL NEWS

Nine expanded parks to open



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Currently unimproved portions of the Greenville Hospital System Swamp Rabbit Tram Trail will be paved and expanded as part of a nine-park expansion.