

- Goal:** Section 125.01, Florida Statutes, specifically authorizes the Board of County Commissioners to provide for parks, preserves, playgrounds, recreation areas and other recreation facilities and programs. The goals of the Board relative to recreation and open space are: to meet the recreation needs of a growing population; to plan for future improvements to recreation sites and facilities; ensure public access to beaches and shorelines; to provide recreation sites and facilities in a timely and cost-efficient manner including interagency coordination and developer exactions where appropriate, and; to further and promote State policies and laws relative to recreation and open space.
- Vision:** We will have a safe, healthy and family oriented community with self-sufficient, involved people and appropriate infrastructure to enhance its beauty, natural resources and environment.

General Strategy

The general strategy relative to recreation and open space is:

- Designate recreation sites and facilities as "User-Oriented" or "Resource-Based";
- Provide adequate parking, including handicapped accessibility, at all County recreation facilities;
- Implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan;
- Maintain and improve public access to beaches and shorelines;
- Work with other agencies to ensure that recreation sites and facilities are provided in a timely and cost-efficient manner;
- Maintain level of service standards for concurrency purposes, and;
- Establish procedures for the reservation of open space.

Objective 9.1: Provide public parks and recreation opportunities for a growing population that demands an increasingly wide variety of recreation facilities and services.

Policy 9.1.1: County recreation sites and facilities will be classified as "User-Oriented" or "Resource-Based." User-oriented facilities are those that are used for particular activities such as tennis, softball, football, soccer, and playgrounds. Resources-based sites are those used for access and enjoyment of a particular natural resource.

Policy 9.1.2: Provide the maximum amount of on-site parking at all County recreational facilities consistent with the Land Development Regulations.

Policy 9.1.3: Make informational brochures available to the public concerning the location of parks and available facilities.

Policy 9.1.4: Provide physical access to all County parks for the physically handicapped, and require developers of private recreational facilities to provide access facilities for the handicapped.

Objective 9.2: Use the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide improvements to recreation sites and facilities.

Policy 9.2.1: The Board will use the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as the basis for making improvements to recreation sites and/or facilities.

Objective 9.3: Improve existing public beach access and provide additional access sites and facilities.

Policy 9.3.1: The development review process shall consider impacts of development or redevelopment on publicly established access to the beach, including parking areas. Developments which would preclude such access shall not be approved unless a comparable alternative access and parking are provided as a condition of development, consistent with Chapter 161.55(6), Florida Statutes. The County shall also continue its efforts to acquire undeveloped land for use as public parking at beach access points.

Policy 9.3.2: Through negotiations with individual property owners, obtain title, easements, or other ownership interest in areas commonly used for public access and construct dune walkovers at these points.

Policy 9.3.3: Maintain and update annually an inventory of public access facilities in the County, including both saltwater and freshwater access facilities, and periodically survey and record conditions at those sites.

Policy 9.3.4: Utilize Boating Improvement Funds to improve access to County-maintained boat ramps by acquiring additional land for parking. The Grand Lagoon and Sandy Creek areas shall be a priority for such acquisition.

Policy 9.3.5: Develop, prioritize and update annually a list of shoreline sites for potential public acquisition. The County shall pursue all available funding programs for the acquisition of such sites.

Policy 9.3.6: Shoreline renourished at public expense shall have public access provided at intervals of every one-half mile or less.

Policy 9.3.7: Coordinate the need for public access and recreational facilities with the Coastal Management Element.

Objective 9.4: Establish and promote an intergovernmental process between Bay County, municipalities within Bay County, appropriate Federal, State, regional, and local agencies, such as the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Northwest Florida Water Management District, the Bay County Tourist Development Council, and the Parks and Recreation Departments of local government, and the private sector to provide recreational opportunities.

Policy 9.4.1: Establish communication through a direct liaison at appropriate Federal and State and local government entities regarding recreation and beach access.

Policy 9.4.2: Summaries of actions proposed by any of the identified appropriate agencies regarding recreation or beach access shall be forwarded to other appropriate entities.

Policy 9.4.3: Promote coordination and cooperation through interlocal agreements which would enhance public access and recreation sites and facilities.

Policy 9.4.4: Adopt incentives for developers to provide recreation facilities in their developments.

Policy 9.4.5: Increase the availability of County recreation facilities to civic and other semi-public and private organizations, but not to the detriment of the recreation needs of the general public.

Policy 9.4.6: Develop standard County policies and procedures to allow for use of County recreation facilities by groups and organizations.

Policy 9.4.7: Coordinate public and private resources to meet recreation needs through joint ventures, tax incentives, and other cooperative relationships, including the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands with recreation resources for use as passive recreation facilities.

Policy 9.4.8: Coordinate and work with the Board of County Commissioners and the Bay County Tourist Development Council to implement and maintain and Lifeguard Program for Rick Seltzer Park and the MP Miller County Pier.

Objective 9.5: Provide open space and recreational facilities in a cost-effective manner.

Policy 9.5.1: Use private resources such as volunteers, agreements with groups and organizations, and donations in the development and maintenance of appropriate furnishings in recreation areas, including both public art and recreation equipment.

Policy 9.5.2: Consider development costs when determining the feasibility of recreational land acquisition. This analysis shall consider soil suitability, topography and vegetation type, access, and other constraints to developing the site for its intended purpose.

Policy 9.5.3: Reduce maintenance costs in developing new facilities and improving existing facilities by including the installation of low-maintenance landscaping, facilities, and site design.

Policy 9.5.4: All acquisitions of and physical improvements to park and recreation facilities shall be consistent with the Capital Improvements Element of this plan to the extent possible considering availability of funds.

Objective 9.6: Preserve the unique natural qualities of Econfina Creek while improving its potential as a recreational resource.

Policy 9.6.1: Designate the first 100 feet along both sides of Econfina Creek as a scenic corridor prohibiting all construction except for piers, docks, and landscaping.

Policy 9.6.2: Coordinate with the Northwest Florida Water Management District to identify parcels of land for priority purchase. They would include the possible purchase of conservation easements either with "Save Our Rivers" funds or in exchange for County property tax considerations.

Policy 9.6.3: Investigate further protection of Econfina Creek through State programs such as outstanding Florida Waters, Scenic and Wild Rivers, and the Recreational Trails Act of 1979.

Objective 9.7: Provide active recreational opportunities in accordance with adopted County standards for level of service.

Policy 9.7.1: The following level of service standards shall be adopted:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Acres/1,000 Population</u>
Local Parks	2.3
Regional Parks	4.0
Beach Access Points	0.29

Policy 9.7.2: Use the Strategic Plan for Leisure Services to identify expenditures for acquisition of new facilities and development and maintenance of existing County facilities.

Policy 9.7.3: In selecting sites for future parks, give high priority to sites that can serve multiple uses such as recreation, wildlife habitat, water conservation and unique natural systems or communities, shorelines, open spaces within urban areas, and historic sites.

Policy 9.7.4: Inventory all open space and recreational lands and facilities annually. Evaluate current and future land use patterns within the county and identify areas of the county where open space or recreational lands are needed.

Objective 9.8: Maintain procedures for the maintenance of open space in the County.

Policy 9.8.1: The County will ensure the availability of open space by:

- (1) Requiring minimum open space criteria in the Land Development Regulations;
- (2) Acquiring land through conservation easements, mitigation, or other means for conservation and open space purposes;
- (3) Working with other agencies for purposes of acquiring or managing lands for conservation and open space purposes;
- (4) Encouraging open space through density transfers, clustering, or other similar means, and;
- (5) Maintaining the rural and agricultural nature of northern Bay County through the Wide Open Spaces strategy.

Objective 9.9: Promote the availability of opportunity for recreation through acquisition of property adjacent to existing recreational facilities.

Policy 9.9.1: Expand existing recreational facilities through acquisition of property adjacent to existing recreation facilities.