

# MARS HILL SMITH FARM MASTERPLAN





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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Town of Mars Hill's Parks and Recreation Master Plan was a cooperative effort of the Town of Mars Hill Alderman, Town Manager, Land of Sky Regional Council of Government, and local citizens who expressed an interest in providing a high level of park and recreation services to their community.

In particular, we acknowledge the efforts of the following individuals/groups for their leadership:

## TOWN ALDERMAN

John L Chandler - Mayor  
Nicholas Honeycutt - Vice-Mayor  
Robert Zink - Treasurer  
Stuart Jolley - Clerk  
Larry Davis - Secretary

## TOWN MANAGER

Darhyl Boone  
Nathan Bennett

## PARKS AND REC STEERING COMMITTEE

Bruce Murray  
Ryan Bell  
Lee Hoffman  
Darhyl Boone  
Stuart Jolley  
Nicholas Honeycutt  
Faye Chandler  
Will Hoffman

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

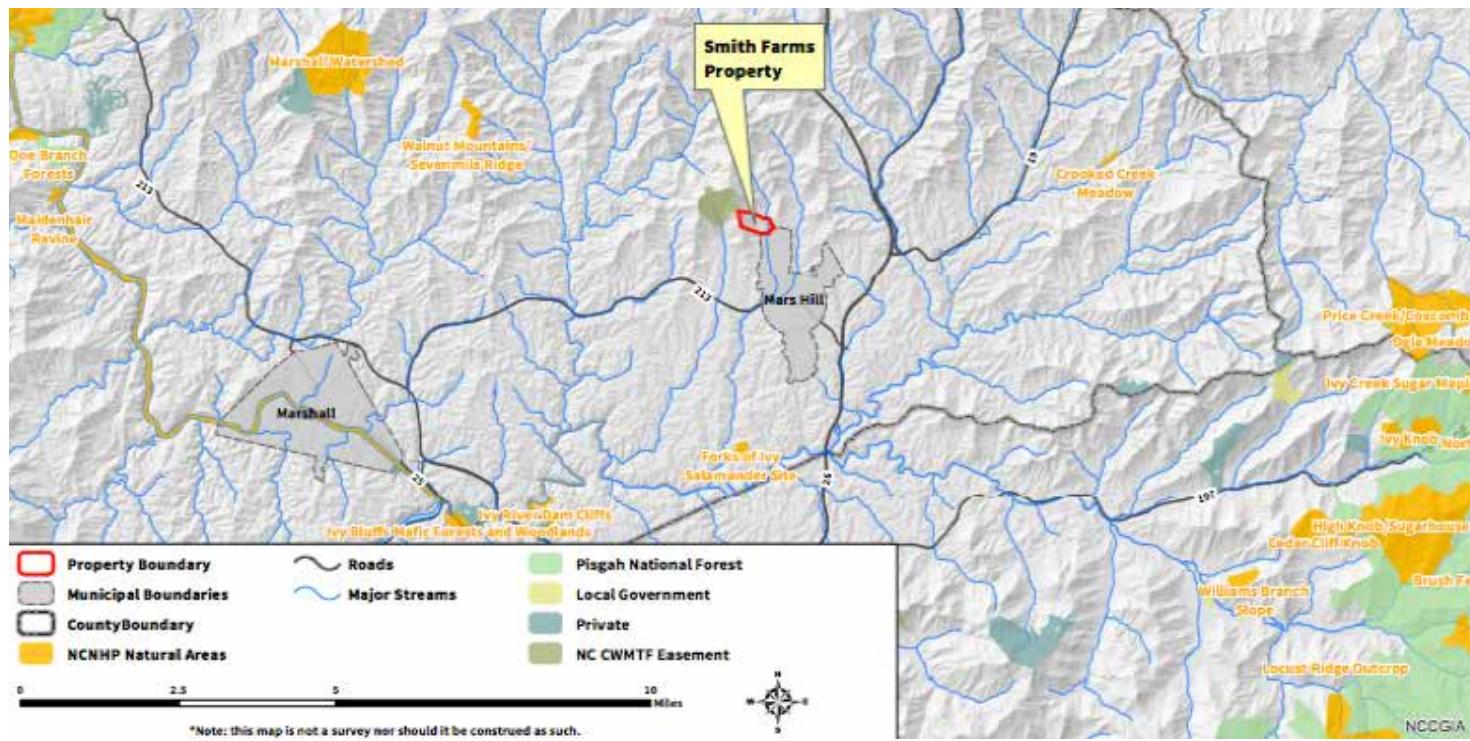
Mars Hill University  
Madison County Government  
Madison County Parks and Recreation  
Richard L Hoffman Foundation  
Land of Sky Regional Council of Government

# INTRODUCTION

Mars Hill Smith Farm is a park set in awe inspiring landscape located at the northwest corner of The Town of Mars Hill, NC a 889 Forest Street. The Town of Mars Hill acquired the Smith Farm property in 2019 through the generous support of Clean Water for North Carolina. This is after several years of planning and strategizing the future Parks and Recreational needs for the community as a leadership team. Greenways had previously been identified as a priority for the town in the Pedestrian Plan completed in 2007.

In Summer of 2018 the Town of Mars Hill partnered with Land of Sky Regional Council of Government to develop a community directed, town-wide comprehensive plan for Park and Recreation as well as this site specific master plan for the Mars Hill Smith Farm. This plan creates a vision for open space, recreation, and cultural preservation. The Mars Hill Smith Farm is 86.71 acres that is planned to be joined by an additional adjacent 197 acres owned by the Richard L Hoffman Foundation over a couple of phases in the coming years.

## MAP 1: SMITH FARM PROPERTY



The river access, historical barns, pastureland, homestead, and steep mountain terrain offer a rare glimpse into an ecological, geological, and cultural past of Western North Carolina. One of the prize features of this property is the access to Banjo Branch and the potential to promote, protect, preserve, and educate the public about this resource. The focus of this plan will concentrate on the 8 acres excluded from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund easement located at the southern portion of the Smith Farm property. As visitors travel from the central entrance on the Mars Hill Smith Farm the trails and gathering spaces transition from larger community scaled spaces to intimate trails that will engage topography and incredible views.

This plan highlights connection between the natural landscape and cultural aspect apparent to rural life with the goal to preserve open space into the future, improve ecological health and biodiversity, and addressing the challenges of managing large-scale landscape maintenance in congruence with the easement terms.



# PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In January 2019 the Town of Mars Hill fully acquisitioned the Smith Farm property. The site is 86.71 acres located in Madison County, bordering the Town of Mars Hill, and incorporating a significant portion of Bailey Mountain's eastern slope. This project is the first step in the expansion of the Bailey Mountain Park. The Smith Farm property is adjacent to the Bailey Mountain Park (BMP) conservation area owned by the Richard L Hoffman Foundation. The BMP land is currently available for public use and the Richard L Hoffman Foundation intends to donate a portion of this land to the Town of Mars Hill to expand recreational opportunities for the public. There has been immense community-wide support to raise funds and awareness for this acquisition. Funding for the purchase of the Smith Farm site was provided from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Due to the requirements of these funds the development options of the land will be restricted to options and opportunities more natural in nature. Both funders require the land be used as a public space and that the town agrees to keep it reasonably available into perpetuity. Through strategic planning exercises the Town of Mars Hill desires to create a combination of riparian and streetside passages for hiking greenways, environmental protection, and educational uses. This project represents an expansion of a greenway/riparian trail to connect with BMP.

Examples of types of development allowed by the CWMTF are maintaining existing unpaved road and trails, hiking, walking, animal observation, plant observation, and other passive recreational trails. Prior to any development the terms of the CWMTF easement should be evaluated. While no specific rare species have been recorded on the Smith Property, seven rare species have been recorded within a 4-mile radius of the property. These species include a salamander, two butterflies, and three rare plant species.

The Town of Mars Hill has negotiated out 8 acres from the property included on easement property that will need to utilized for needs such as parking, offices, bathrooms, etc. that should not be on the remaining land, but rather fall into the areas designated as community gathering.

Throughout the acquisition process the local priority of protecting the site from future development and restoration of water quality remains key. The site has a history of being an agricultural livestock operation. The onsite stream has had significant degradation from previous activities and under this project Town of Mars Hill intends to protect over 12,000 linear feet of both sides of Banjo Branch. Streambanks are eroding and collapsing in several places, sediment clogs Banjo Branch downstream of this farm, and general trash/debris are in these areas. Due to the proximity to town the land would be threatened by potential residential development were it not for the thoughtful action of community members and their partnership with the Town of Mars Hill.

Needs for planning for outdoor venue or other event space planning for water and sewer infrastructure will need to be considered in future development of property. Municipal water infrastructure is currently run to front of property at fire hydrant. Sewer is within 1 mile of property boundary.

Decisions on existing structures such as house, barn, and shed will have to be made based on future planning of the park. Structures all have potential to be integrated into design and feasibility of future park planning.



# KEY CONCEPTS

Key concepts that emerged as the community priorities during the public engagement process and have evolved to explain core components of this master plan.

## STRATEGIC STEWARDSHIP

Through Strategic Stewardship maintenance of the land can be better addressed by corresponding community partnership, benefits they provide, and first steps to implementation.

## RESTORE AND GROW

Restore and Grow focuses on improving the health, biodiversity, and resilience of the park ecology and waterways. As in Strategic Stewardship, some of these initiatives would benefit from the formation of community partnerships for implementation and maintenance.

## EDUCATE AND ENGAGE

Educate and Engage identifies opportunities for learning from the landscape, including the site's history, plants, and animals. Locations for interpretative signage and design enrich the individuals user experience.

## ACCESS

Access describes how people get around and too the park. The plan describes the Town of Mars Hill interest in expansion of trails and greenways both to the site and on the site for people of all physical abilities.

## GATHER

Gather highlights area where people come together. The "scales of togetherness" vary from small overlooks for 1-2 people, picnic benches for shared meals, and a outdoor venue for larger events.



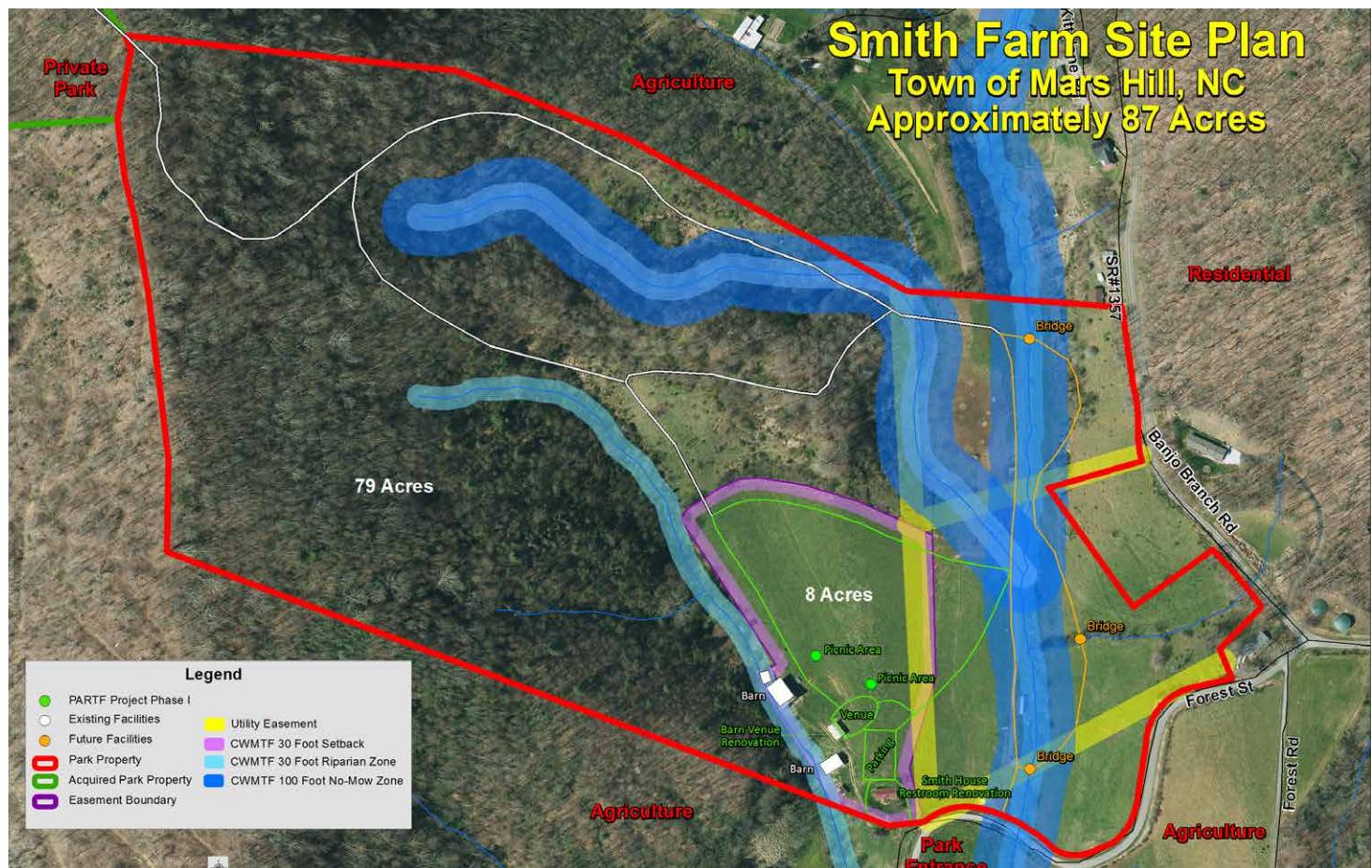


# SITE ANALYSIS

The Mars Hill Smith Farm property is 86.71 acres comprised of eastern bottomland area used for cattle grazing and woodland forest. The property is bordered by Banjo Branch and Forest Street. Surrounding the land are other farms, some residential areas, and a 197 acre public park owned by the Richard L Hoffman Foundation that is slated to be gifted to the Town of Mars Hill over the coming years. The property can be accessed by car on Forest Street or by hiking via the Bailey Mountain Park.

Due to restrictions on the easements from which a majority of the land was acquisitioned development options will be limited. The Town of Mars Hill was able to get 8 acres on the south end of the property out of the terms of the easement (indicated in purple boundary in map above). Terms of the Clean Water Management Trust Fund easement do allow greenways, trails, educational signage, etc.

MAP 2: SMITH FARM SITE PLAN



in their easement, but all developments will have to be preapproved by the agency prior to implementation. Both CWMTF and Land and Water easements are in perpetuity.

The development restrictions shown in Map 2 are explained as follows:

**Yellow** - 30 Ft Utility Easement held by French Broad Electric Membership Cooperative.

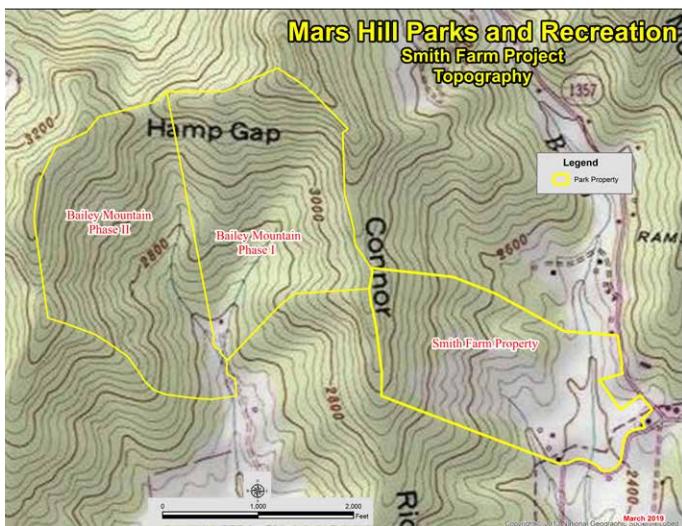
**Light Blue** - 30 Ft Riparian Zone from top of bank of any surface waters held by Clean Water Management Trust Fund.

**Dark Blue** - 100 Ft No-Mow Zone from top of bank of any surface waters held by Clean Water Management Trust Fund (the town will be able to design a trail inside this area and be able to mow 10 ft on each side of the trail).

**Dark Purple** - Area outside of easement owned by Town of Mars Hill.

**Light Purple** - 30 Ft setback from non-easement boundary held by Clean Water Management Trust Fund.

## MAP 3: SMITH FARM PROJECT TOPOGRAPHY



The Smith Farm land was historically a livestock operation with 3 barns, 1 house, and a couple small sheds. Vegetation is typical for historical farm in Western North Carolina.

Land on the south end of the property along the river and near the house is relatively flat. Along Banjo Branch is some floodplain area that will be taken into consideration when the Riverside Development is implemented.

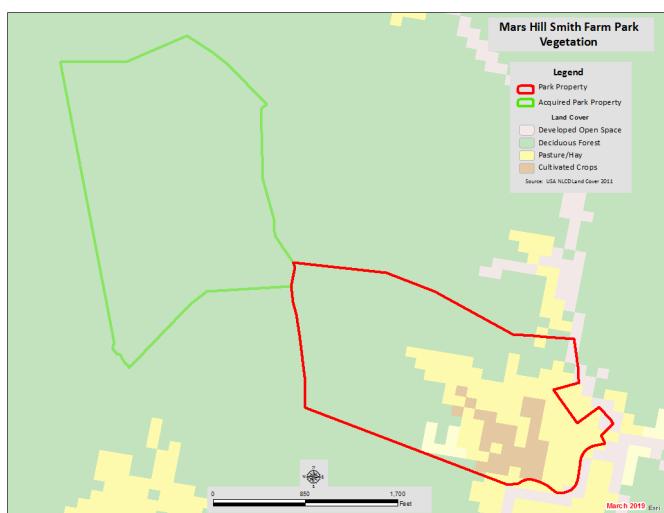
Land outside of the easement gets increasingly steeper the farther into the property you get. This will make development of property difficult and best use is to minimize any grading and improvements needed.

Trails should be carefully planned with a trail designer to minimize erosion and create an enjoyable hiking experience for the user. CWMTF has provided guidance on trail design (see attachment A). In order to comply with varying funding agencies switchbacks in trail design will need to be considered to reduce erosion and increase the hiker comfort.

Due to the relative steepness of the property there will be a number of natural places water will collect during rain events. These sites will need to be addressed with trail design and comfort in mind. Elevation range of the property is 2400 to 3200.

The soils for the area outside of the easement consist of CtD2, TaC, and CtC2. These soils are common soils for Madison County and are listed as somewhat limited in their development properties. Developments proposed for Phase I of the project are natural in nature and should have no impact. For Phase III developments engineering site plans are recommended.

The vegetation is comprised of a majority of deciduous forest with some pasture/hay and cultivated crops in the Smith Farm area of the property. Vegetation is typical for Western North Carolina farmland, but certain rare plants and animals have been identified on the property.





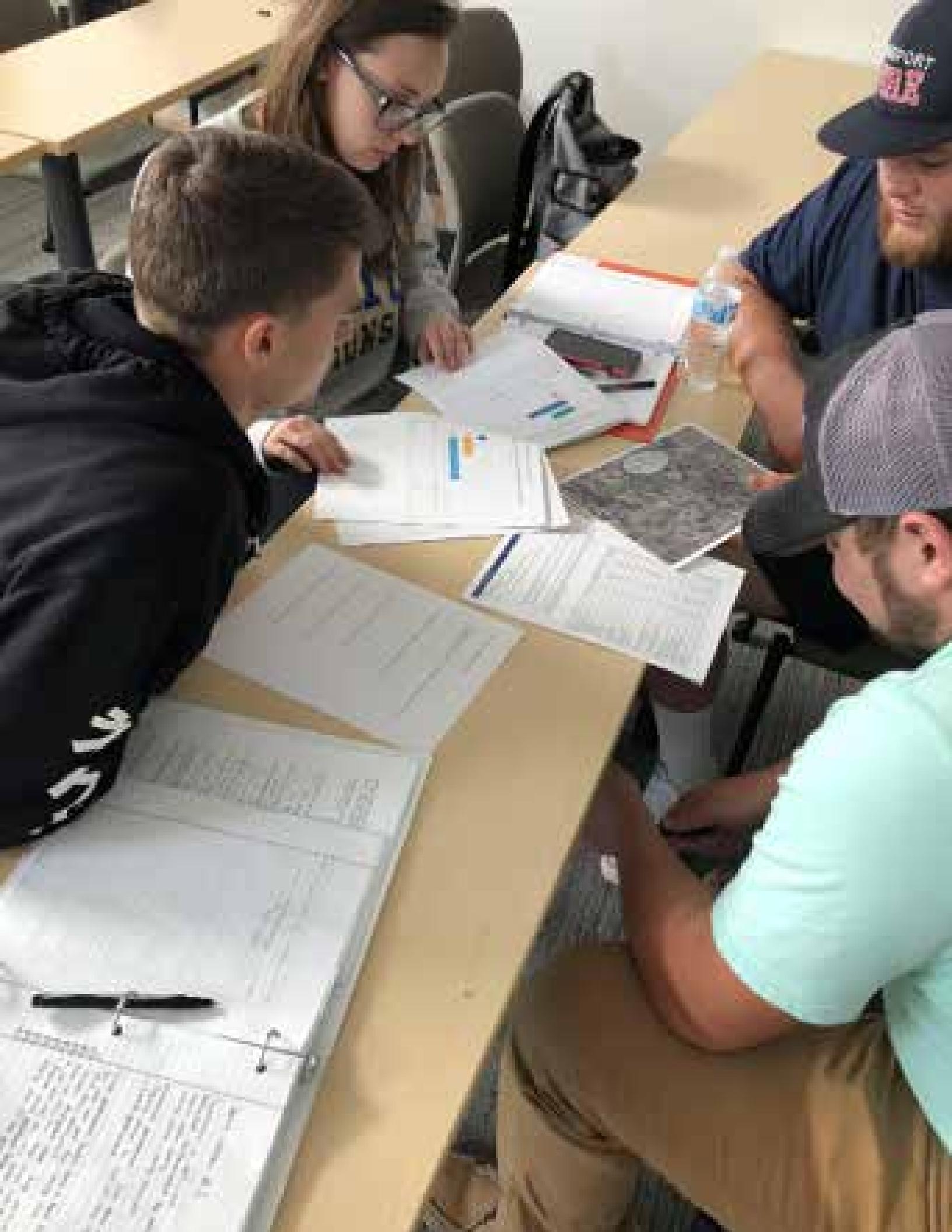
## INVENTORY OF BARNS ON PROPERTY

From the period of 1870 to 2004 the farm's primary cash crop was flue-cured, bright leaf tobacco. The farm later reinvented itself after 2004 for beef cattle. The farmstead would have had numerous structures over its lifespan and currently retains several mid-20th century barns and the ruin of a log and rock tobacco "casing" house. The casing house consists of a hewn log structure likely built in the 19th century, later enclosed by a rock veneer. The original log structure could have been a family cabin, smokehouse, or other hewn-log farm structure.

The largest barn is a typical mid-20th century burley tobacco barn. The other large barn is a classic livestock "bank" barn, built for access to the hay loft level, with animal stalls below on the ground level, as well as a tack room and other storage spaces. The loft level was adapted to hang burley tobacco later in its life.

The small barn structure 24 feet x 36 feet, was likely built as a multi-purpose, equipment storage building. It appears to be recently adapted as a calving barn as part of the beef cattle operation.





# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Effective community engagement is the foundation for successful place-making. It ensures that the new space will meet the needs of those it serves.

For the Mars Hill Smith Farm project the Town of Mars Hill and Land of Sky Regional Council of Government planned a series of open houses, surveys, discussions, and interviews inviting the community to express their vision of what this new public space could become.

## PUBLIC SURVEY

October 5th, 2018 Land of Sky Regional Council of Governments and Town of Mars Hill launched a survey to the community to receive community input regarding the future of the Smith Farm property. Paper copies of the survey were distributed at several public areas around town. An online survey was distributed to the community. The survey was closed in November 2018 and had 232 responses. 100% of citizens who started the online survey completed it. Additionally a very basic survey regarding the Bailey Mountain Project was completed in March 2017.

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

October 10th, 2018 Land of Sky Regional Council of Government and Town of Mars Hill hosted a public meeting to the community. Over 30 people participated in the activities to provide input regarding what kinds of Smith Farm activities they were interested in and not interested in.

## TARGETED OUTREACH

October 19th, 2018 Land of Sky Regional Council of Government discussed the project and involvement of Mars Hill University with MHU staff. Staff worked collaboratively to make decisions about what MHU amenities would be available for community-wide usage and are a part of the asset inventory in this plan.

October 19th, 2018 Land of Sky Regional Council of Government presented the planning process with a MHU Political Science class and received feedback on what kinds of ideas should be included in the plan.

February 2019 Muddy Sneakers took a group of 5th graders from Mars Hill Elementary to visit the property and learn about the preservation of the land. Students were excited to have this new park developing near their school.

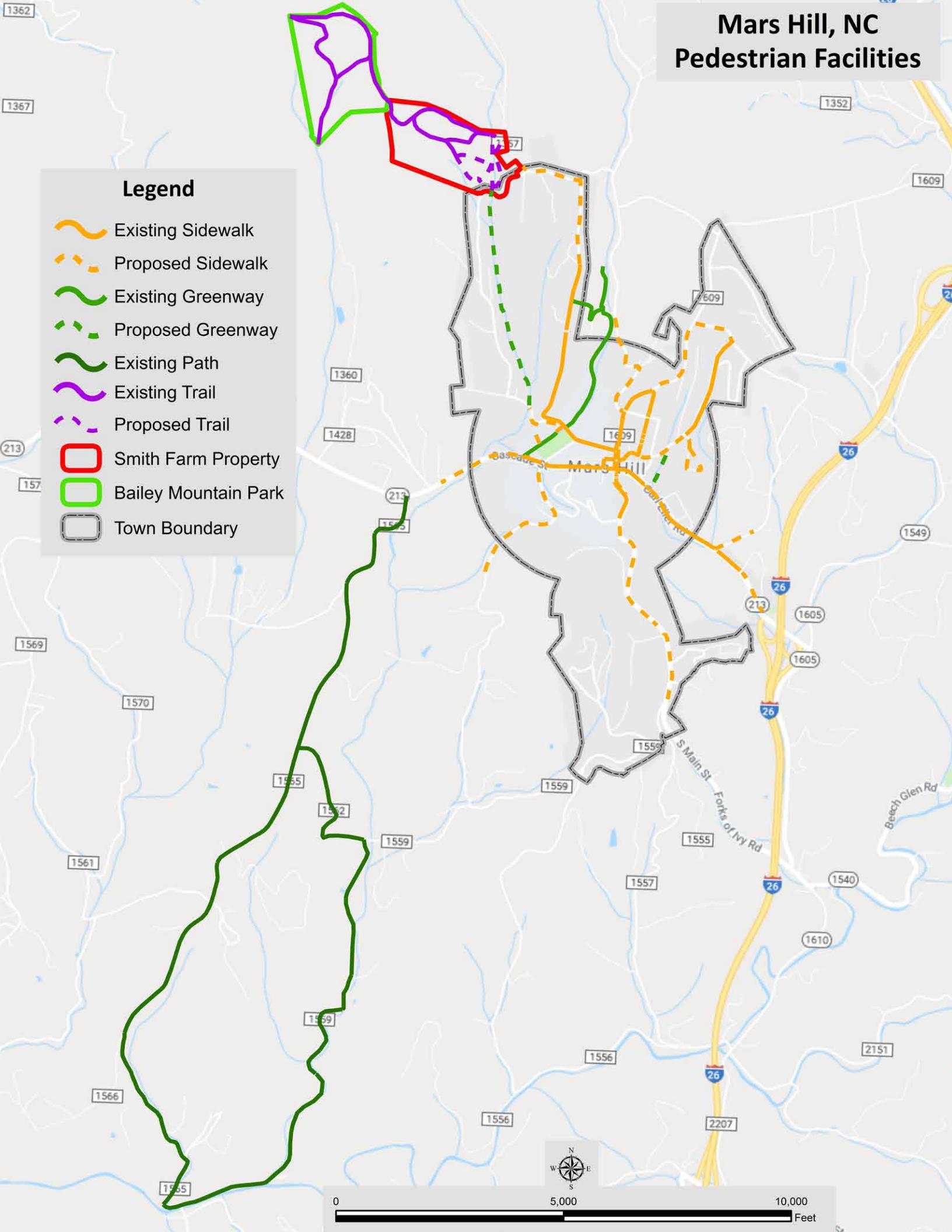
March 2019 a team of local community members came to help clean some of the debris from the park. This kind of community activity has happened in the past and will be a best practice moving forward on sustainable maintenance of the site.



## Mars Hill, NC Pedestrian Facilities

## Legend

- Existing Sidewalk
  - Proposed Sidewalk
  - Existing Greenway
  - Proposed Greenway
  - Existing Path
  - Existing Trail
  - Proposed Trail
  - Smith Farm Property
  - Bailey Mountain Park
  - Town Boundary



# RECREATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## RECREATIONAL NEEDS

According to responses to the 2018 survey most people in the community were most supportive about the possibilities for additional unpaved trails and picnic areas as part of the Smith Farm planning. Significant numbers of people were interested in common areas and an outdoor venue for future planning in the Smith Farm property. Additional opportunities of interest to the Mars Hill community include a common areas, gardens, and heritage farming. See appendix for additional information from survey results.

# CONNECT SMITH FARM TO OTIS T. DUCK GREENWAY

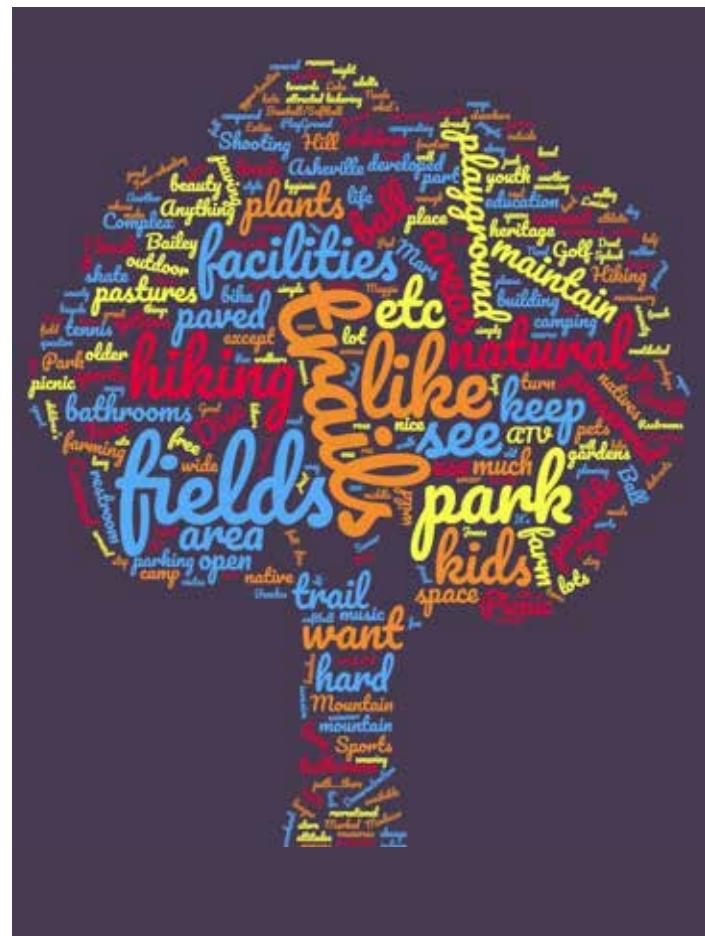
71% of survey responses said that they would access the Smith Farm property by walking and 37% said they would access by bike if the greenway connected it from the town. Long term planning for recreation in the Town of Mars Hill would like to connect the greenway system to the site either by access on Forest Street or up Bailey Street. Potential state funding through grants and DOT could help fund connecting these, but currently there is no timeline for connection.

TRAILS

For the future of the site survey results and community engagement all favored a majority of passive recreation such as unpaved trails and picnic areas. The Smith Farm site is an ideal picturesque spot to enjoy the mountain landscape. The site has several trails planned for the site including developing some to provide access into the adjoining Bailey Mountain property. Additionally development around Banjo Branch is allowable through CWMTF. This area will make an excellent spot for a low impact trail with educational sites and stream crossings along both sides of the river. This development is recommended after a stream restoration to maximize funding.

**TABLE 1: SMITH FARM PARK DESIRES**

Recreational Needs	Percentage
Unpaved Trails	83.18%
Picnic Areas	73.64%
Outdoors Music Venue	57.27%
Playground	54.09%
Common Areas	54.09%
Gardens & Outdoor	50.45%
Heritage Farming	35.45%
Disc Golf	15%





## OUTDOOR VENUE

Town of Mars Hill is proud of its cultural heritage and desires a place to gather around common interests for the community. Through conversation with partners and the town leadership this idea has taken shape to become a multipurpose gathering space for music, educational opportunities, weddings, and other community events.

The area behind the house towards the back of the easement provides a natural knoll for a low impact development amphitheater. Depending on the type of outdoor venue the Town of Mars Hill desires they could consider some of these styles as potential designs to accommodate a general gathering space by renovating the barn and an outdoor venue outside of the barn.

In Phase I- building into the natural landscape around the second barn could provide a space for a small amphitheater. The barn will need some stabilization for public usage, gutters, and concrete flooring. Creating a space outside the barn that could be used as a stage and provide access to the barn would help provide an enjoyable musical experience.

## VENUE EXAMPLES

Adding the amphitheater space to the exterior of the barn like in this example could be minimal earth moving for added design elements and practicality. This design allows

for some built in seating aesthetic to the eye with some coverage. Also allows visual of the surrounding mountains and trees.

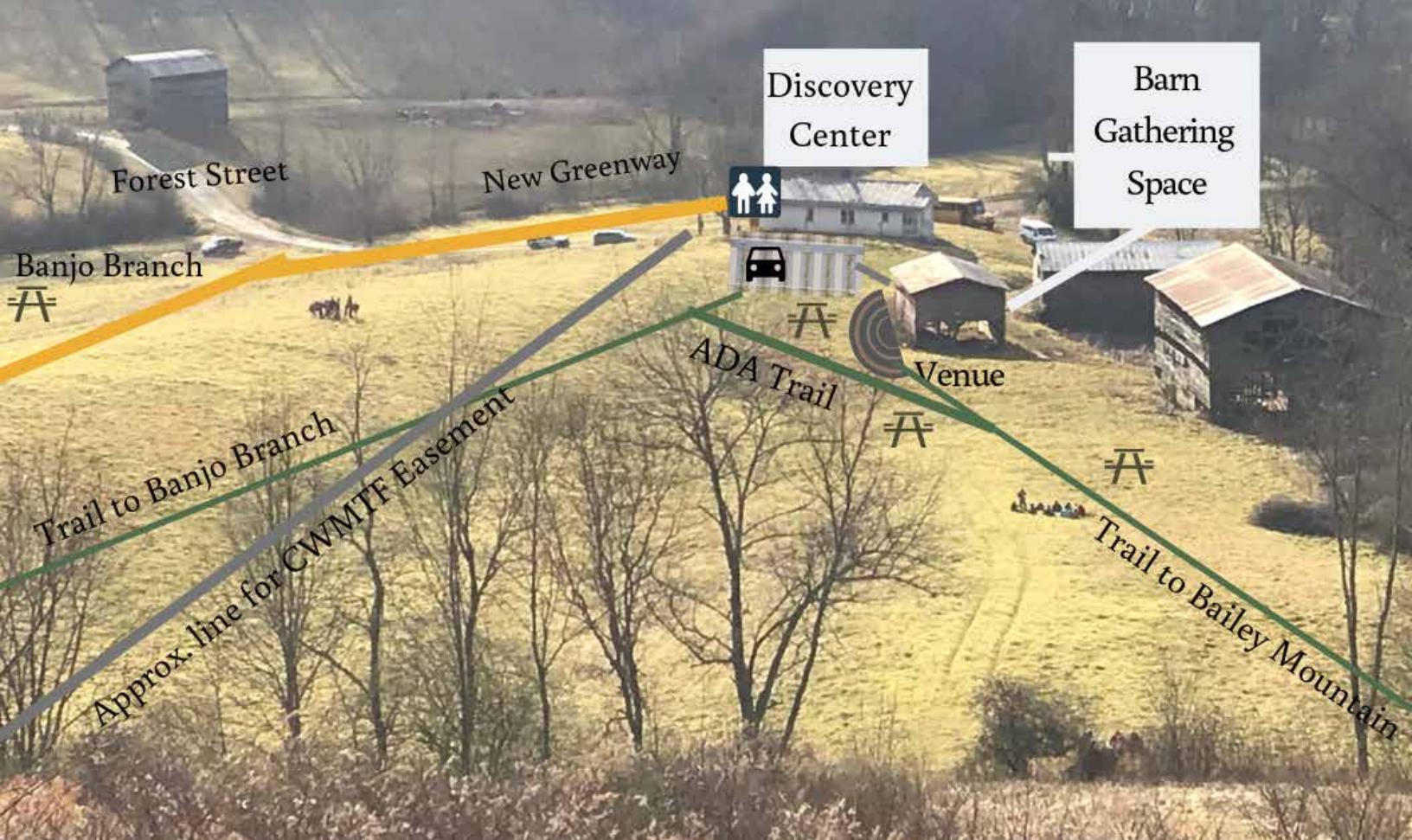
Keeping with the history and heritage of the community one of the existing barns could be upgraded to public specifications to become a mixed use venue for concerts, educational opportunities, and storage. There is planning to connect an ADA trail from parking lot behind the house.

## PHYSICAL NEEDS

Due to restrictions from conservation easement primary development of site will remain on the 8 acres of land on the south end of the property. The previously disturbed area around the old home site and barns is already generally flat and will be an ideal spot to use for parking and bathroom development.

In order to accommodate the communities interest in additional trails the acquisition of both parcels of the Bailey Mountain Park will need to be completed for the permanent placement of this land into public hands. There is additional adjoining land that could be acquisition in the future for the town in order to complete some of the other amenities the community has identified since the current land is has development restrictions, but no current plan is in place to do so.





# PHASE I FARM CENTER

Mars Hill  
Smith Farm  
Park

- 1,980 ft trail connecting to Bailey Mountain site
- House renovations for Discovery Center and ADA restrooms
- 400 ft of ADA trails
- Renovations for barn for community gathering space
- Development of outdoor venue outside of barn
- Road improvements for bus access
- 10,000 sq ft parking area behind house
- Acquisition of 100 acres of Bailey Mountain Park
- 2 picnic areas

Phase I "Farm Center" for the Smith Farm park includes development of some of the most supported amenities from the community. This project will provide ideal access to the existing trails located at Bailey Mountain by connecting them with a convenient trail entrance at the new site. The renovation of the barn and addition of

the venue space honors the local cultural heritage while maximizing existing resources. The community is delighted to have additional ADA trails that will help provide safe access to the parking, restrooms, and venue space meeting the desire to have more diverse amenities in the town.

The small house on the property would be an excellent office or site headquarters. It has recently had a new roof and proximity to Forest Street makes it a central location for good access to amenities such as restrooms, first aid, storage, etc. Town of Mars Hill water is close by and house is currently on a septic system. The drainfield will need to be identified before land development occurs. Inside repairs and updates would be required before using, but has potential to



be very useful to the site with little immediate infrastructure needs. For future development it may be necessary for municipal water and sewer to be brought on site.

Access to the Smith Farm property will have to be determined. There are currently two pathways from Forest Street onto the land. The paved road provided access to the house and barns. The road is currently in need of repair and a new road is proposed to go from Forest Street behind the house to the parking area and circled out on the other side of the house wide enough to properly accommodate school bus traffic.





The Banjo Branch section of the property offers enjoyable waterfront experiences and wonderful educational opportunities. The Clean Water Management Trust Fund easement will allow careful restricted development of this area.

1. Native grass planting for erosion control and CWMFT compliance- no mowing in 100 ft riparian zone from river
2. Riverside ADA trail- minimum 40 ft from top of bank of river.
3. Stream Restoration along both sides of river
4. Stream Crossings
5. Greenway access from both directions of Forest Street.
6. Streamside Education Centers

## PHASE II RIVERSIDE DEVELOPMENT

Mars Hill  
Smith Farm  
Park

A 30 ft riparian area around Banjo Branch will need to be developed for stream protection required from Clean Water Management Trust Fund. CWMFT will allow a mow area of 10 feet on either side of a trail along this river, but there is no other mowing or clearing within 100ft of this and all surface waters on the site. Banjo Branch and other creeks on the property will need some clean up from debris that could be done with local volunteers. Banjo Branch would benefit from a proper restoration that could potentially be funded with funding from Division of Water Resources. It is recommended to pursue and implement this restoration prior to applying for more funds to develop the trails along Riverside area.

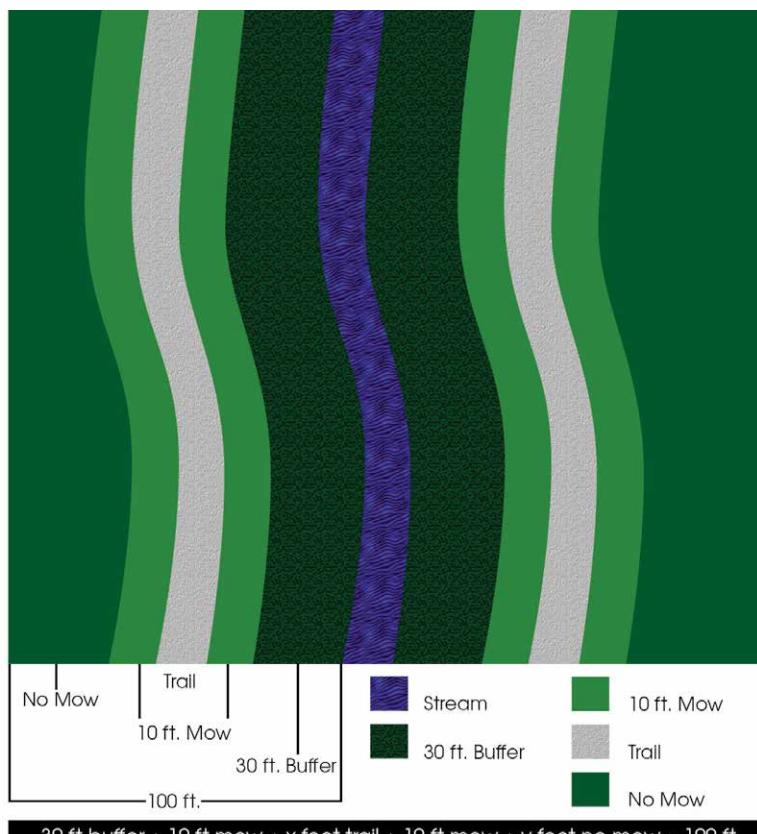
Additional adjoining land in the private Bailey Mountain Park will need to be acquisitioned to add additional trails to the existing property

The road at Banjo Branch is a dirt road that was likely used only for farm traffic. This road is in the flattest part of the land along Banjo Branch. This land could make for a good spot for the ADA trail in the Riverside Development. If this road is not utilized as a trail or road the land should be seeded to further protect the adjacent Banjo Branch.

Opportunities for funding Phase II include potentially working with Division of Water Resources and Pigeon River Fund to pursue water quality and educational aspects of this project.



**FIGURE 1: DUE TO RESTRICTIONS WITH CLEAN WATER MANAGEMENT TRUST FUND DEVELOPMENT AROUND ANY SURFACE WATERS REQUIRES ADDITIONAL PROTECTIONS.**





# PHASE III

# CONNECTIVITY &

# DEVELOPMENT

Mars Hill  
Smith Farm  
Park

The Town of Mars Hill Pedestrian plan, current leadership, and the community have identified connectivity of the businesses and residential areas in Mars Hill. Additionally, the Town could benefit by having access to the Smith Farm site through extending the Otis T. Duck Greenway via Forest Street. Extension of this project is an estimated \$1.5 Million, but may have funding support from NC DOT. Funding potential from DOT could offset costs for implementation.

For the 8 developable acres on the Smith Farm property to take on larger events it should invest in a conceptual site plan that would include additional parking areas, water/sewer extension on the site for public restrooms, grading/site prep, and engineering.

# PROJECT COSTS

<b>Phase I - Farm Center</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Unit Cost</b>	<b>Total Item Cost</b>
<b>Building and/or Renovating Costs</b>			
Contractor Mobilization	Lump Sum	\$5,000	\$5,000
Hiking Trail (screenings, natural surface, no pavement)	1980 ft	\$17/Linear ft	\$33,600
ADA accessible trail (asphalt surface, 8-ft width)	340	\$55/Linear ft	\$18,700
Parking Area (screenings, natural surface, no pavement) 10,200 sq ft	Lump Sum	\$12,500	\$12,500
2 Picnic areas with benches, outdoor grills	2	\$3,250 per site	\$6.500
Park Office rehab- ADA restrooms, gutting. Work mostly complete by town staff	Lump Sum	\$76,991	\$76,991
Barn Center upgrades (roof, gutters, poured slab, structural upgrades, plumbing) some work completed by town staff	Lump Sum	\$47,500	\$47,500
Outdoor Amphitheater Venue (landscaping, grading, natural materials) some work completed by town staff	Lump Sum	\$13,500	\$13,500
Road Improvements	Lump Sum	\$25,000	\$25,000
<b>Cost to Build or Renovate</b>			<b>\$239,291</b>
<b>Contingency for the Cost of Building / Renovating</b>			
Contingency		\$12,989	\$12,989
<b>Value of Land to be Purchased or Donated</b>			
Land Acquisition (donation)	100 acres	\$2,597.80 per acre	\$259,780
<b>Planning and Incidental Land Acquisition Costs</b>			
Construction management, site planning, preliminary design, survey and appraisals, or the cost of preparing the application		\$7,500	\$7,500
<b>Total Project Cost</b>			<b>\$519,560</b>

# APPENDIX A



## POLICY MANUAL

### Acquisition (ACQ-006) Construction of Natural Surface Trails

#### Background:

The CWMTF has allowed for construction of hiking trails as a standard right and on occasion other trails approved on a case-by-case basis, such as mountain bike trails. Staff and trustees recognize that proper trail construction is as, if not more, important than the impacts of the trail users. This policy is to ensure that new trails, when intended for general public use, or subject to frequent use by large numbers of individuals, are planned and constructed to the most up-to-date, sustainable standards and prioritize protection of the conservation values. This policy will apply to State-held conservation easements and other conservation instruments that CWMTF must approve, such as restrictive covenants. Private trails for personal use by the landowner and a small number of guests that will not have more than a de minimis impact on the land, water quality, or environment are excepted from the application of this policy. Trails on land outside of the CWMTF easement area(s) are also excluded from the application of this policy.

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#### Policy:

1. Easements recorded after July 1, 2017 will include language that requires all new trail construction and realignment requiring soil disturbance to follow best practices for sustainable trail design and construction and to have prior written approval by CWMTF staff, per the guidance below. Private trails for personal use by the landowner and a small number of guests that will not have more than a de minimis impact on the land, water quality, or environment are excepted from the application of this policy.
2. Design and Construction Guidance:
  - a. Trails must be constructed so as to have minimal adverse impact on the Conservation Values of the easement area either during or after construction;
  - b. Boardwalks, ramps, and handrails are permitted as required by terrain;
  - c. Park benches, litter receptacles, and trail/feature signs may be constructed along trails; and
  - d. CWMTF does not require trails to be built to ADA standards, but will allow trails to be constructed to ADA standards if required by local ordinances or other funding sources or if desired by the landowner(s).
3. In approving trail design, CWMTF staff will consider:
  - Designer qualifications – The trail design should be prepared by a qualified trail designer, approved by staff. In determining qualifications, staff will review previous trails designed by the trail designer and must see a proven track record of sustainably designed trails.
  - Builder qualifications – The building team should be led by a qualified builder, approved by staff. In determining qualifications, staff will review previous trails constructed by the trail builder and must see a proven track record of sustainably constructed trails. CWMTF prefers a member of a recognized trail building group, such as the Professional Trail Building Association.

- Trail alignment - The trails should be a minimum of 30 feet from the top of bank of any streams except at stream crossings and should avoid other sensitive areas, such as wetlands, natural heritage elements, and historic and cultural sites. Planned access points to streams and other features of interest are permitted where appropriate.
  - Planned trail width - Current design standards and equipment are not more than 48" for a single track trail; paved greenways should follow guidelines established by local ordinances or other requirements set by funding sources such as Dept. of Transportation.
  - Stream crossings - The number of stream crossings will be minimized as will the impact to the stream and they shall be located and constructed in such a way as to maximize water quality protection.
  - Trail length – Trails should be long enough to distribute impact. For biking trails, the suggested minimum is a trail length of at least 5 miles on the subject tract or connection to a trail network of at least 5 miles.
  - Topography – Trails shall be constructed utilizing the then-current best practices. For example, current sustainable trails guidelines include:
    1. Trail grade less than half of the side slope grade;
    2. Average trail slope not more than 10%;
    3. Maximum sustainable grade;
    4. Frequent grade reversals; and
    5. Outsloping trails.
  - Management and maintenance – A trail management plan that includes regular inspection and maintenance activities, such as de-berming, shall be submitted with the design and construction request.
  - Subject matter experts – Staff will utilize available resources to assist in trail design review. These can include NC Division of Parks and Recreation Trail Planners, Natural Heritage Program staff, and State Historic and Cultural resources staff, among others.
4. CWMTF will retain the right to deny new trails or require maintenance or closing of any existing trails that are considered detrimental to conservation values.

### **Easements recorded after July 1, 2017**

1. Easements will continue to have construction of walking and hiking trails as a standard reserved right. Mountain biking trails will be a standard optional right. Any other uses of trails must be requested and approved by the board at the time of grant award.
2. The prohibition on uses of motorized vehicles except for management and stewardship will remain as standard language in the easement.
3. Any grant recipient or landowner may ask that biking, or other trail use be excluded from the conservation easement.

### **Easements recorded prior to the passage of this policy**

When an existing easement is silent on construction of biking trails as a reserved right, staff will have full discretion in allowing trail rights not explicitly reserved under the terms of the easement. Staff will consider all of the requirements listed above, and any additional information specific to the easement, including intent of the original landowner if the fee ownership has changed.

#### **Effective Date**

<b>Versions</b>	<b>Revisions</b>
3/1/2017	Original Effective Date
6/5/2018	Revised and Adopted

#### **Acquisition (ACQ-006)**

# APPENDIX B

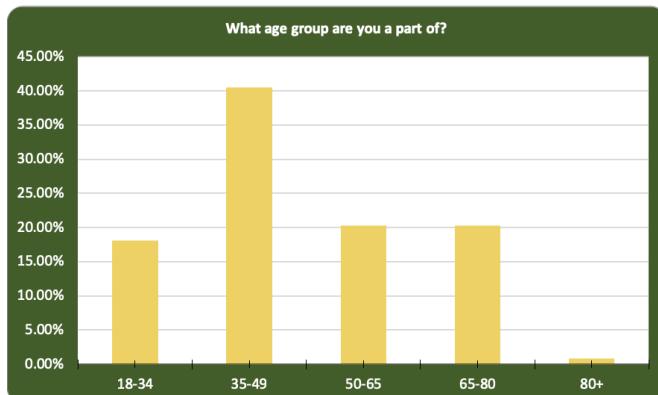
## RECREATION SURVEY RESPONSES

The Mars Hill Smith Farm project requires community support to be successful. In the fall of 2018 the town participated in a survey that lasted for approximately 6 weeks.

### THE FIRST SECTION OF THE SURVEY FOCUSED ON DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FROM THE POPULATION WHO RESPONDED

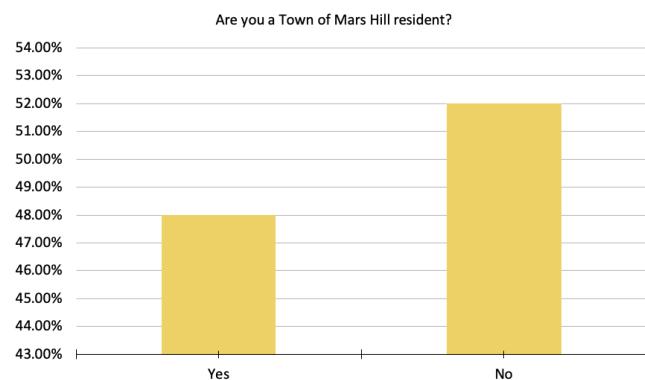
#### What age group are you a part of?

The highest percentage of survey respondents (40.52%) categorized themselves between the ages of 35-49. Other categories of 18-34, 50-65, and 65-80 all responded around 20% of the population. The least participation was in a demographic of 80+ (.86%).



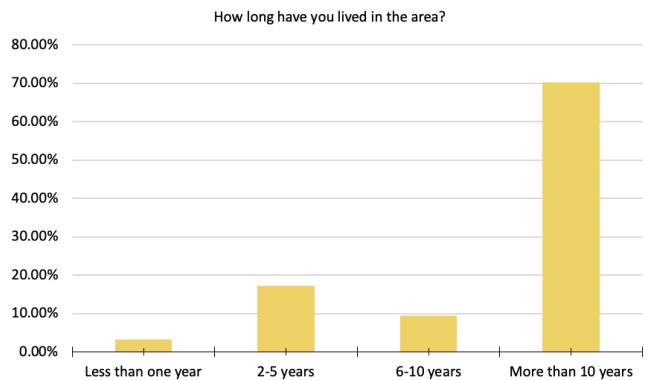
#### Are you a Town of Mars Hill resident?

The Town of Mars Hill decided to include the population of people who both live in town limits, but understands that they provide recreational services to more than those who live in the town. Of survey respondents 48% claim to live in town limits and 52% do not live in town limits.



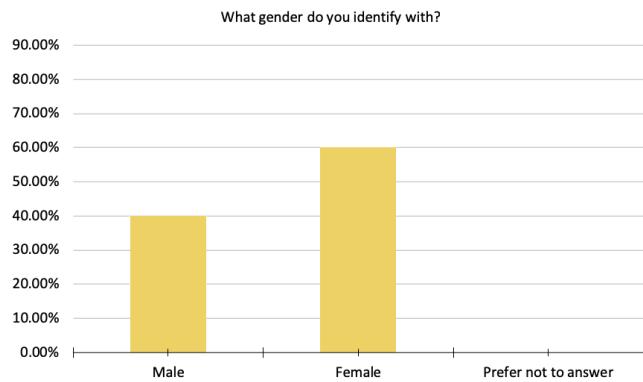
#### How long have you lived in the area?

People who responded to the survey have a long investment in Mars Hill as a large majority of the survey population claim to have lived in Mars Hill over 10 years (69%). This reflects that most of the results did not come from Mars Hill University students, but rather less transient communities. Some newer residents responded at the 2-5 range (17.26%), people who have lived in the town for 6-10 years represented 9.29% of the population, and less than 4% have lived in the town for less than 1 year.



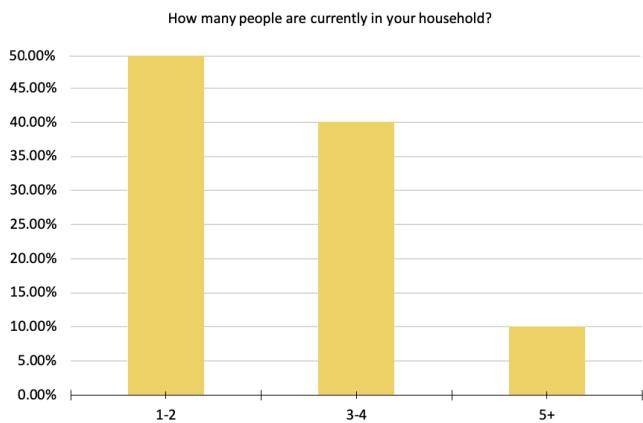
## What gender do you identify with?

60% of the population surveyed claimed to be female and 40% male. This data corresponds equally with recent American Community Survey Data showing that the Town's population is 60% female.



## How many people are currently in your household?

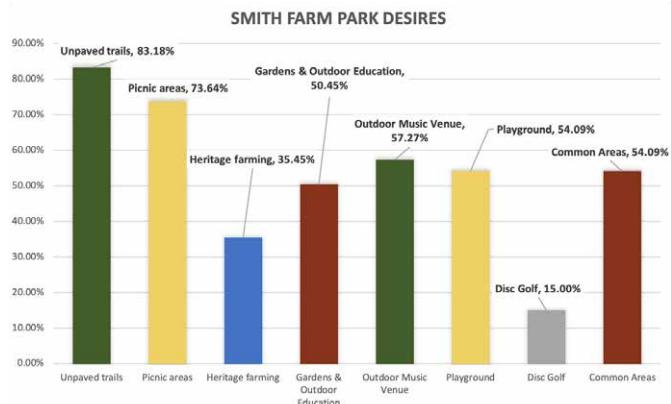
Half of the surveyed population have small household sizes (1-2 people), 40% claimed to have 3-4 people in their household, while only 10% of the population had 5 or more people in their household.



## THE SECOND SET OF QUESTIONS ASKED QUESTIONS REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO REFERENCING THE SMITH PARK PROPERTY.

### If the Smith Farm property becomes a public park, what amenities would be the most desirable? Check all that apply.

Overwhelmingly (83%) the community responded that they wanted the Smith Farm site to have unpaved trails on the property. Survey respondents favored many passive recreational ideas such as picnic areas (73%) and common areas (54%). The community also supports the creation of an outdoor music venue on the property (57%).



### If the Smith Farm property becomes a public park, what amenities do you not want to see?

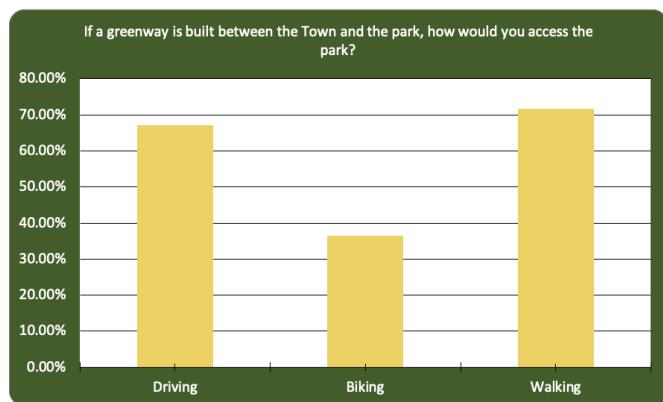
People were asked an open ended question about what kinds of amenities they would not want to see. Responses were diverse from the community. Based on the language received it appeared that people were confused by the wording of the question.

Listed below are ideas that two or more people respond with:

- Paved trails
- Ball fields
- Pool
- Concessions
- Hard to maintain facilities
- Tennis
- Basketball

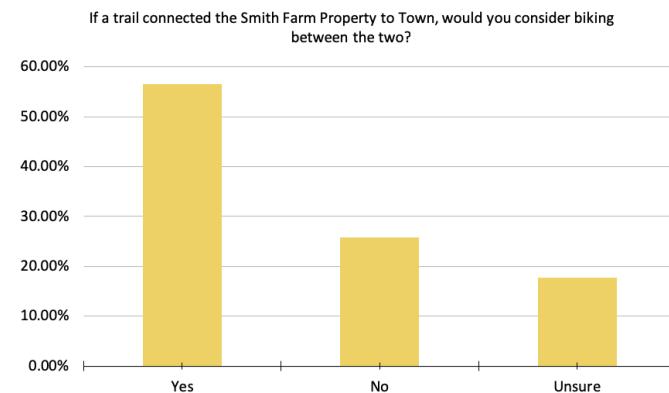
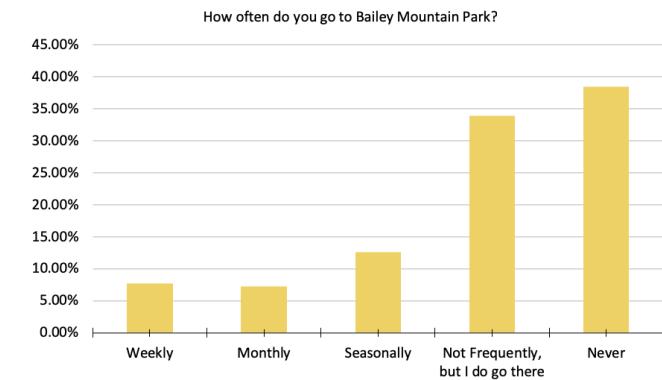
**If a trail is built between the Town and the park, how would you access the park? Check all that apply.**

People who responded to this question in the survey were willing to access the park a variety of ways. Over 72% said they would be willing to walk to the park, 66% said they would drive to the park, and 37% said they would bike to the park. A later question in the survey asks specifically if one would be willing to bike between the Smith Park and town. 57% of survey respondents said they would be willing to bike between the two.



**How often do you go to Bailey Mountain Park?**

Since this project combines the existing private Bailey Mountain Park with the Smith Farm site we were interested in how many of the survey respondents already utilize the options at Bailey Mountain. 37% of the population says they never go there and 33% say they do go, but not often. Based on the public interest in trails we presume that making Bailey Mountain a better marketing public facility will improve user activity at this site and aligns with adding additional trails to the community.





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