

2023

Fiscal Year



ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY
LEISURE SERVICES

Leisure Services promotes lifelong recreation, cultural, environmental, and educational opportunities for Athens-Clarke County's diverse communities. We contribute to Athens' health and wellness by providing connections to parks, facilities, programs, and community.

Annual Report







Table of Contents

Our Facilities	_____	1
All Over Town	_____	2
By the Numbers	_____	3
What's New?	_____	5
Leisure Services at Work	_____	7
Awards	_____	8
Highlights	_____	9
What's Next?	_____	11



¹Our Facilities



Bear Hollow Zoo

Ben Burton Park

Bishop Park

Boulevard Woods Park

Dudley Park

East Athens

Educational Dance Center

Firefly Trail

Heard Park and
Community Center

Holland Youth
Sports Complex

Lay Park and
Community Center

Lyndon House
Arts Center

Memorial Park

Morton Theatre

North Oconee River
Greenway Trail

North Oconee
River Park

Pop up Park

Quinn Hall

Reese and Pope Park

Rocksprings Park

Sandy Creek
Nature Center

Sandy Creek Park

Satterfield Park

Southeast Clarke Park

Tennis Center

Walker Park

Ware-Lyndon
Historic House



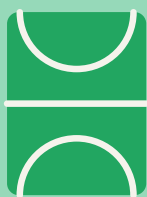


All Over Town

2



50 Miles
of Trails



35 Athletic
Fields



33 Tennis
Courts



20 Acres of
Dog Parks



24 Pavilions



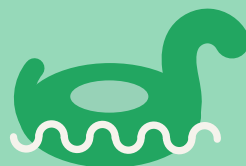
16 Playgrounds



15 Outdoor
Basketball Courts



6 Dedicated
Pickleball Courts



5 Pools



3 Teen Tech
Labs



3 Pétanque
Courts



2 Splash
Pads



2 Theatres



1 Arts Center



1 Dance Center



1 Historic
House Museum



1 Nature
Center



1 Planetarium



1 Pop-Up
Park



1 Skate Park



1 Zoo



1 Mountain
Bike Trail

3

By the Numbers



514,453

People walked
on trails



Athens Creative Theatre Presented
13 Performances

With
1,738

Tickets sold

WELCOMED

21,964

patrons to the five pools and two splash pads

626 Children
taught
to swim

22

exhibitions with

1,407

Pieces of art displayed at the
Lyndon House Arts Center.

682

Works displayed in the
juried show from

245

area artists.

4,133

Registrants
for mini and
day camps

73,444

Paid admissions to
Sandy Creek Park

14,266
patrons, participants,
and tourists hosted &

62
events at The
Morton Theatre

Completed
2,019
Work orders, and
performed
204
Playground
Inspections

What's New?!

New Zoo Friends

Dedicated the new Small Mammal Habitat at Bear Hollow Zoo. The small mammal habitat is approximately 1,250 square foot yard with up close viewing windows. It contains two night houses and has the ability to house two species at once if needed.



Welcome to our new friends:

Sandy Creek Nature Center:

- Corn Snake
- Eastern King Snake
- 2 Baby Yellow-Bellied Sliders
- Mud Turtle

Bear Hollow:

- Barn Owl
- Bob Cat
- Corn Snake
- Striped Skunk



Trails

Opened the next phase of the North Oconee River Greenway Trail System through the historic Oconee Hill Cemetery. This recently completed section includes a concrete multi-use trail generally following the banks of the North Oconee River approximately 0.68 miles connecting existing greenway trails on the east side of the North Oconee River.

Historic Lyndon House

Introduced Ware-Lyndon Historic House Museum's new exhibit including a short film providing insight into enslaved families who lived on the property and their descendants, charting a musical journey that suits the rich musical history of Athens. "Resilient Civic and Musical Life: Ware-Lyndon House Enslaved and Descendant Stories" exhibition and the Athens African American Heritage Pathway funded through an AARP Community Challenge Grant.





Firefly Bridge



Dedicated the newly completed 525-foot long Firefly Bridge over Trail Creek and “rebuilding” the iconic R.E.M.. Murmur Trestle originally built in 1883.

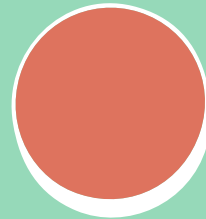
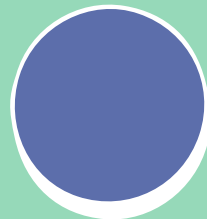
Arts Summit

Presented the two-day Arts Summit 2022 at the Morton Theatre. The Summit advocates, educates, and elevates local artists and creatives through career development and professional practices. This summit was free and open to the public and included panels, lectures, and sessions designed to educate and encourage professional advancement in the creative arts field. The event was perfect for the working artist, from visual to performing and any other creative activities, in any stage of their career.



Introduced the inaugural “Flight of the Fireflies Lantern Parade” along the Firefly Trail in Dudley Park. An estimated 300 people illuminated the park while being serenaded by a drumming circle and clarinet.

Flight of the Fireflies Lantern Parade



7 Leisure Services at Work

76

Full Time
Employees

95

Part Time
Employees

147

Seasonal
Staff

16

Promotions
& New Hires

Benefited from the service of 665 volunteers who contributed 11,481.36 hours of service The Independent Sector estimates the value of one hour of volunteer service at \$29.95. Using that statistic, the Department's value of volunteerism in 2022 totals **\$343,866.73!**



Finances

Operating Budget

\$9,425,097

Total Revenue

\$1,091,840.10

Total Expenditure

\$7,916,502.41

SPLOST Total

\$5,299,733

Total Scholarships*

\$63,063.59

* Provided Scholarship Subsidies to 535 qualifying Athens-Clarke County children. The Scholarships were used 1,804 times for program residents

Awards



Georgia Recreation and Park Association:

State Volunteer Award presented to Trail Ambassadors for their years of service.

Georgia Recreation and Park Association:

Marketing and Publication Award for Multi Event Publication for “The Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services Department FY21 Annual Report”.



**Historic
Athens**

Historic Athens:

“Resilient Civic and Musical Life: Ware-Lyndon House Enslaved and Descendant Stories” Publications & Programs Preservation Award presented to the Lyndon House Arts Center.

What People are Saying On Google Reviews



World of Wonder Playground

“We love this park so much! We’ve been coming for about 10 years before they did the remodel. The remodel is awesome so much fun for the kids to have and we love that there’s a trail that goes to the skatepark from the playground my boys ride their bikes or skateboards there.”

Satterfield Park:

“Awesome place to watch or play baseball also has playground for small kids and a tennis court. It’s a all around friendly environment for elderly and all age groups. Excellent playground for small children very clean and safe environment. Very clean and sanitary bathrooms.”

Memorial Park

“Been going here since I was a elementary school kids. This place will never get old!!!”

Dudley Park

“Favorite place to walk, or just get some fresh air, I feel safe.”

Firefly Trail

“The addition of the Firefly Trail really makes this one of Athens best parks. The views along the river combined with the history of the area are incredible.”



Highlights



- Hosted the annual “Deck the Hollow” holiday event at Bear Hollow Zoo. Over the course of five nights, more than 1,500 people attended and enjoyed seeing the zoo decorated in holiday lights and displays.
- Hosted the Bear’s Birthday Party at Bear Hollow Zoo with approximately 300 participants in attendance.
- Presented the East Athens Educational Dance Center’s annual production at the Morton Theatre. School shows took place on Thursday, February 23 with seven local schools in attendance. Over the course of three days, 1000+ individuals enjoyed the performances.
- Celebrated the 50th anniversary of Sandy Creek Nature Center. A variety of events took place including art show, book signings, the donation of fifty books to the public library, time capsule, volunteer work day, and more. A special brochure was created providing fifty ways that individuals could celebrate the golden anniversary of the center.
- Presented four performances of the musical production, “Jekyll & Hyde the Musical” on the Morton Theatre stage in downtown Athens. The main-stage production was Athens Creative Theatre’s largest project of the calendar year and featured a cast of 35, 12-piece orchestra, and a crew of more than 13 production team members and support staff.

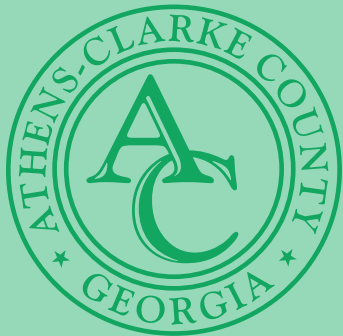


- Introduced “Broadway Outings,” focusing on providing theatrical experiences for teens. Teens participated on field trips to the Classic Center to see touring Broadway productions such as “Chicago” and “Legally Blonde.” The experience included a pre-performance group activity, dinner, and a take-home study guide prepared by Athens Creative Theatre staff.
- Coordinated the selection and installation for the 2022 Athens Music Walk of Fame plaques around downtown Athens. Five inductees were honored in this exciting program created to celebrate Athens’ music of all genres, past and present. Honorees included Bloodkin, Tituss Burgess, The Glands, Ishues, and Love Tractor.
- Coordinated the “Star Spangled Classic” at the Athens Ben Epps Airport. Department staff organized the community’s official Independence Day celebration involving six other government departments. The evening featured a 25-minute fireworks display with the public socially distancing in cars to enjoy the event.
- Operated the ACCGov Warming Center over the Christmas 2022 weekend. The Lay Park Community Center was open to a maximum of 120 homeless individuals and those who did not have power or heat in their homes. Leisure Services staff worked with the American Red Cross and Athens-Clarke County Fire and Emergency Services to establish and helped staff it with department employees.

Looking Ahead



- The Leisure Services Department Master Plan development will begin in fiscal year 2024.
- The new Sandy Creek Park playground will open in spring and feature Athens-Clarke County's first fully inclusive play equipment.
- Carr's Creek Greenway Expansion will add $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of paved trail and directly connect with the bike trails on Barnett Shoals Road, and should open Spring 2024.
- The revamped Memorial Park Dog Park is expected to open in Fall 2023. It will be ADA accessible and address the previous erosion issues.
- Four pieces of public art will be installed including two along the Greenway and two more along the Firefly Trail.
- Construction begins on a new pool at Bishop Park.
- Hot Air Balloon Festival, Saturday, September 30, at Sandy Creek Park.



Athens-Clarke County

Leisure Services Department

Design

Caleb James Burke

Photography

Andrew Sticha

706.613.3800

accgov.com/leisure

leisureservices@accgov.com