

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEETING DATE: July 20, 2016

SUBJECT: Riverwalk Park Development

PRESENTER: Rachel Kipar, Environmental Programs Coordinator

ATTACHMENTS: Yes,
1. Park Summary Presentation

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

In 1996, the Cadgene sisters gifted Henderson County 27.82 acres through the Henderson County Community Foundation to eventually be developed as a community park. The parcel (“the park”), located adjacent to Hwy. 280 and the French Broad River near Broadpointe Industrial Park, is bounded to the north by property owned by North Carolina State University (“NCSU;” approximately 16 acres).

Development of a larger community park is possible through a partnership of the two adjoining landowners at this location: Henderson County and the NCSU Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center in Mills River (“Research Station”). The two entities have been in discussions regarding the joint development and maintenance of a park area. Combined, these parcels would create an educational riverfront nature walk, highlighting the ecosystems in and around the French Broad River, as well as year-round agricultural practices and research performed by the Research Station.

The park is currently set to be developed over three phases, with the first mowed paths already underway on the Henderson County parcel. As grant funds are made available and sponsors or other partners are identified, development phases 2-3 will take place and will include further trail connection between the County and NCSU’s parcels along the French Broad River, thereby increasing accessibility.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

The Board is requested to direct staff to develop the park and seek grant funding to complete phases 2-3.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

I move that the Board direct staff to develop the property across from Westfeldt Park along the French Broad River into a park.

Henderson County Riverwalk Park Proposal



Location Map & Property Legacy



In 1996, 27.82 acres of land was donated to the Community Foundation of Henderson County by the Cadgene Family and subsequently deeded to Henderson County. As stipulated in the donation, the property, adjacent to Broadpointe Industrial Park and the French Broad River, was to be developed into a community park or designated for outdoor recreation.



Park Concept

Design and implement a riverwalk trail along the perimeter of the Henderson County parcel (Phase 1) and along the NCSU parcel (Phase 2) to connect with the Westfeldt Park trails across the French Broad River via pedestrian bridge

Partner with NCSU's Mountain Horticultural Crops Research Station to allow farming and crops research to take place on the adjoining parcels, **creating** unique natural and educational opportunities for visitors



Project Development

PHASE 1

Henderson County parcel



Design & permitting for riverwalk



Establish partnerships and identify local industry use



Stakeholder initial involvement



Identify funding opportunities and apply for grants



Stake pollinator/ native plant gardens

PHASE 2

Henderson County parcel + NCSU parcel



Finalize design/ permitting for pedestrian bridge; installation



Continue riverwalk along NCSU parcel, connect two parcel; lay gravel



Grant applications, reporting



Further stakeholder involvement

PHASE 3

both parcels + further enhancements



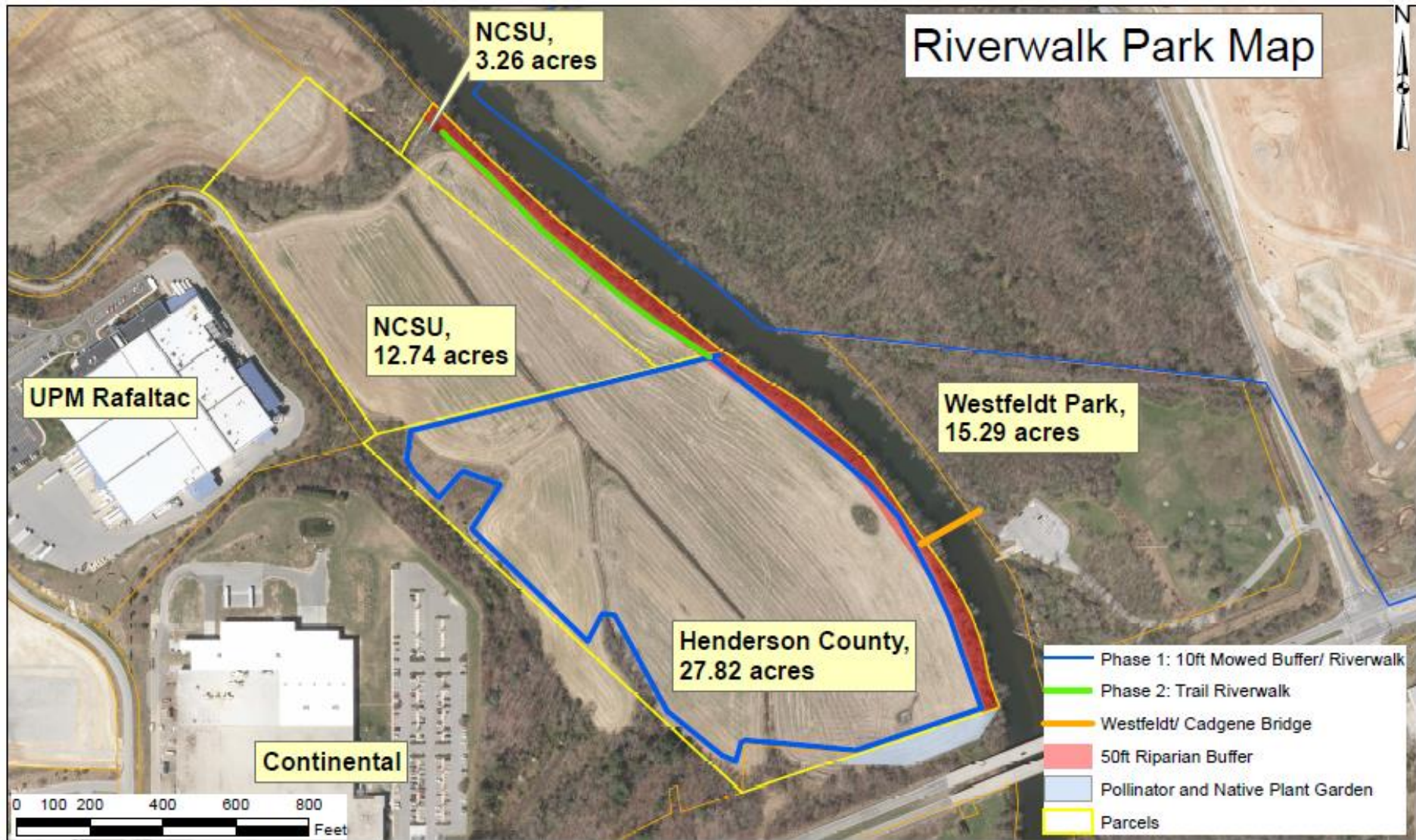
Riverwalk pavement installation



Project completion



Project Development











Projected Benefits

WELLNESS & RECREATION	CONSERVATION	EDUCATION
~1/3 mile ADA riverwalk	Agricultural land protection	NCSU education & research
Increased opportunities to connect with nature	Songbird & wildlife habitat, wildlife viewing and bird watching	Agricultural research & natural land signage available for public education
Walking trails for active lifestyles	Supports pollinator & native plant species	Educational observation, field trips for local youth and community college students
Westfeldt Park trail connections	Wetland protection	Citizen science opportunities
River access for recreation	Water quality protection	Potential WRC studies & projects