

@ the Altamaha river

JAYCEE LANDING
STRATEGIC VISION & PLAN

MARCH 2017

Many thanks to those who provided input through focus groups, interviews, surveys, and other written comments. This is your vision.

The Jaycee Landing Strategic Vision and Plan would not have been possible without the generous support of the following:



JAYCEE LANDING

STRATEGIC VISION & PLAN

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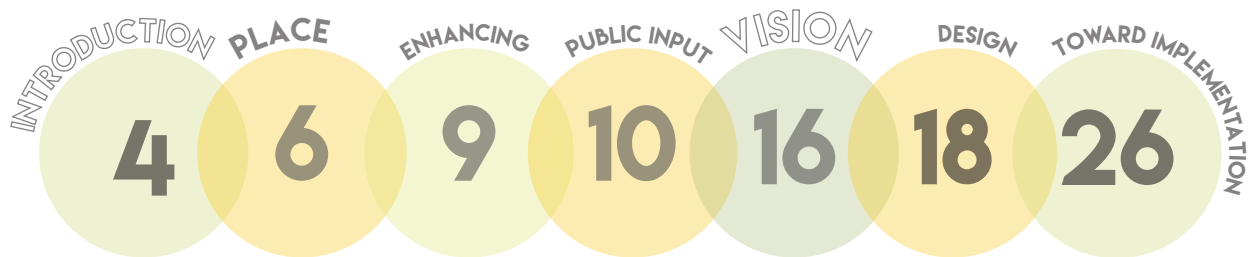
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INTRODUCTION

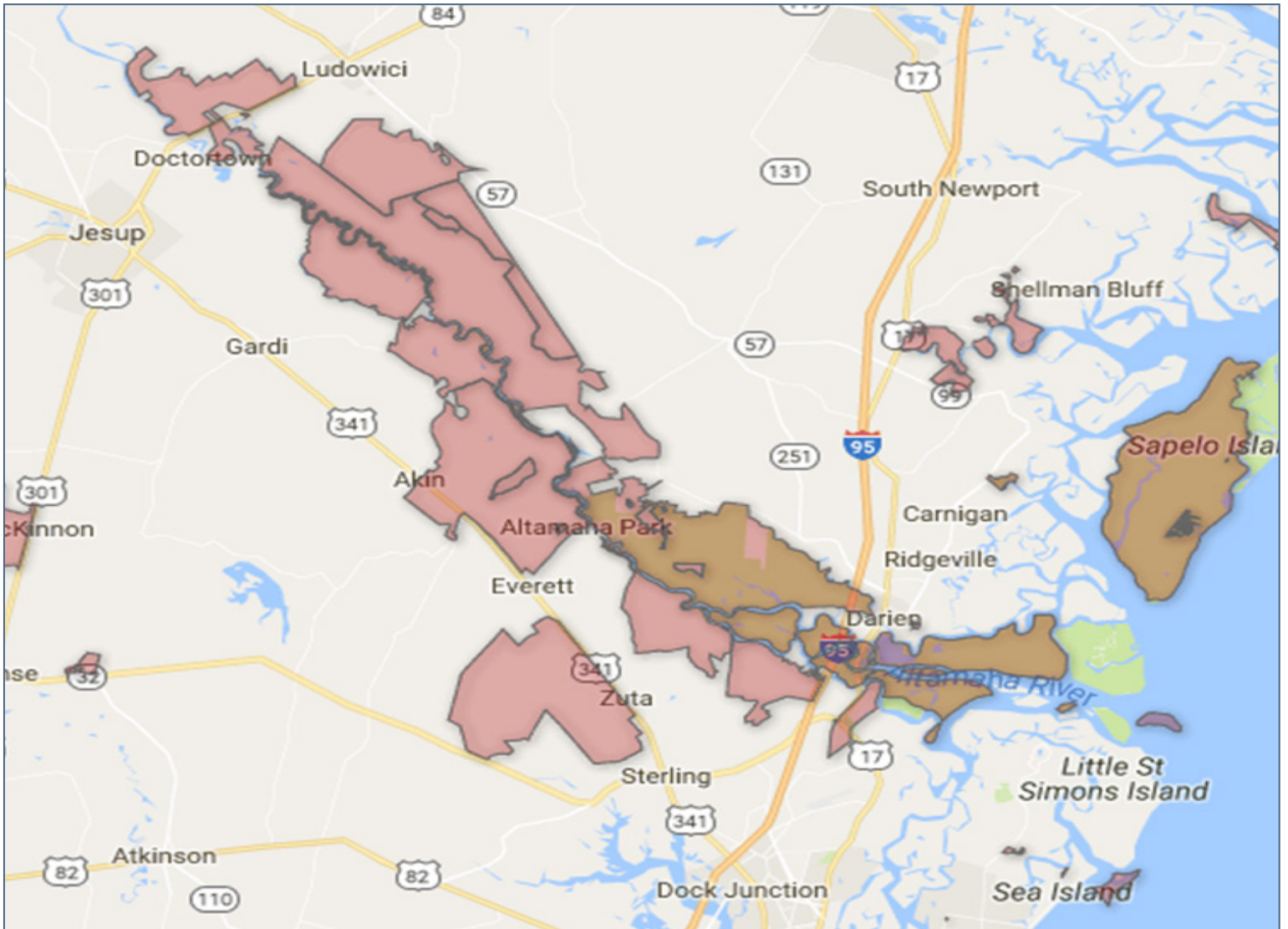
Many stories can be told about the Altamaha River: from its important ecological diversity, to the rich history that dots its banks, to its critical role in the economies of the counties through which it flows. Jaycee Landing is a perfect setting for telling those stories. It is already an active site known beyond the community for its events, festivals, and access to the river, and the development of the Altamaha Nature and History Center and other enhancements to the Landing will make this a truly remarkable venue.

Born out of the confluence of the Oconee and Ocmulgee, the Altamaha River meanders 137 miles on its journey to the Atlantic. It is celebrated in history, literature, and folklore. Its waters flow past remarkable lands that are home to a diverse array of rare and endangered flora and fauna. The state of Georgia, along with myriad partners in land conservation, has recognized the need to protect the Altamaha and its watershed. Some 40 miles of lands, on both sides of the river, have been protected. This remarkable waterway and its critical adjacent landscapes provide a unique setting for the Altamaha Nature and History Center.

Wayne County and the city of Jesup, along with their partners, seek to build the Altamaha Nature and History Center at Jaycee Landing, an already popular site that provides river access and other amenities. The Altamaha Center would not only share the stories of the river and its rich history and ecology as it flows to the sea, but it would also provide a gateway to the many Wildlife Management Areas and other recreational opportunities that abound in the region. The Altamaha Nature and History Center would allow members of the community and those passing through to engage with the Altamaha, its history, and its ecology in a new way.



The Altamaha River Watershed,
www.bluemoon-emedial.com/altamaha/index.html



http://www.georgiawildlife.com/dnr_managed_lands_map?cat=10

As the Altamaha River empties into the Atlantic Ocean just above Little St. Simons Island, its last nearly 40 miles are spent meandering between lands managed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. These Wildlife Management Areas provide diverse recreational opportunities and enhance protection for a unique river system.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE

Wayne County, founded in 1805, was the 27th county established in Georgia. The 645 square miles of Wayne were once Creek Indian lands. The county has a rich and significant history, much of which is tightly connected to the Altamaha River.

The Native American history in the county is evidenced at Doctortown, whose name is thought to be from the Muskogean Indian word “Alecha,” which means doctor. Doctortown was the major crossing point of the Altamaha for the Alachua Indian path. Just downstream at Sansavilla Bluff, Jacob and Mary Musgrove set up a trading post in 1737, the site of the Fort Mount Venture Massacre just five years later.

When John Bartram journeyed through the Southeast and the Altamaha watershed, he observed and named the flowering *Franklinia alatamaha*, which has been lost in the wild but propagated from seeds Bartram collected.

During the Civil War, the Battle of Altamaha Bridge, also known as the Battle for the Doctortown Railroad Trestle, saw Confederate troops prevent General Sherman from destroying the trestle on his March to the Sea.

There are also the images and stories of log rafts floating down the river, early signs of a still important economic engine for the region: forestry.

Today, Wayne County, with a population of just over 30,000, remains strongly connected to its

forestry and river roots. Rayonier Advanced Materials is the county’s largest employer, having an almost \$1 billion annual economic impact on the region. Two annual events in Wayne—a fishing tournament and wild hog hunting event— attract participants from all over the Southeast. Together, these events have more than a \$500,000 impact on the county. Jaycee Landing, which the county has had some ownership of since the late 1960s, draws fishing enthusiasts almost every day of the year. The site received funds from Georgia’s Go Fish Program in 2010 to expand its boat ramp, improving river access.

While the Altamaha River connects the past to the present throughout Wayne County and the region, it also creates a bridge to the future. The development of the Altamaha Nature and History Center would tell the stories of the region in an informative and accessible way, and it could also help visitors understand that protecting the river means protecting the environment and the economy of the region. More broadly, improvements to other amenities at Jaycee Landing would provide everyday users and first-time visitors with new and improved opportunities to interact with the Altamaha River and its surrounding landscape.



Franklinia alatamaha.

A beautiful flowering tree.

discovered growing near the banks of the R. Altamaha in Georgia.

Gordonia puberula

discovered from Will. Bartram. Delin. 1788.

B. M. (N. H.) L.



The Doctortown Trestle is the only still-active railroad bridge that spans the Altamaha River.



A typical log raft, circa 1890, being floated down the Altamaha to Darien (<http://www.pbase.com/image/83193432>).



ENHANCING JAYCEE LANDING

Wayne County, the city of Jesup, the Wayne County Board of Tourism, and others recognized what a valuable asset Jaycee Landing is for the community. However, there was a sense that opportunities to engage beyond the traditional users of the Landing were being missed. Discussions began about how to create educational environmental tourism opportunities and strengthen the connections to the Wildlife Management Areas and historic assets of the region. Community leaders sought the assistance of the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government to more formally explore how they could improve and enhance the site. Because the Landing plays such a prominent role in so many community events, a plan addressing its future would need to be developed with broad community input.

Institute of Government faculty recommended that the project partners use a strategic visioning process. Strategic visioning is a collaborative planning and decision-making process that relies on broad stakeholder participation with a focus on asset-based development to create a shared community vision, plan, and implementation strategy. Strategic visioning helps communities better understand their existing assets and more clearly identify priorities, both of which become the basis for planning.

There are three key steps in the strategic visioning process: building a better understanding of where the community is, creating a vision for where the community wants to go, and crafting a plan for how to get there.



PUBLIC INPUT

In order to develop a strategic vision for Jaycee Landing, it was critical to hear from those who live, work, and play in the community.

Public input is vital for discovering what draws people to the river and to this landing in particular, what is missing, and what else visitors and residents would like to see. Another important concern is what would draw visitors who might otherwise not stop. Jaycee Landing is already a well-visited, regularly used stop along the river. Consequently, it is an ideal location for additional amenities—key among them, the Altamaha Nature and History Center. To gather public input, a steering committee was formed, focus groups and individual interviews were conducted, and a survey was distributed.

The Jaycee Landing Steering Committee was made up of representatives from the city of Jesup and Wayne County (elected and administrative), the Board of Tourism, the Wayne County School System, the Wayne County Parks and Recreation Department, the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Development Authority, and the Industrial Development Authority as

well as other informal community leaders and river enthusiasts. The purpose of the steering committee was to assist in gathering public input, to serve as representative voices of the community by validating the priorities that were identified, and to help move any recommendations developed for Jaycee Landing forward. The steering committee convened as needed during the year-long process to review and discuss the progress of the project.

In developing the strategic vision, the steering committee focused on the entire 50+ acre Jaycee Landing site, which includes the riverside and upper bluff areas.

1

FOCUS GROUPS

Eight focus groups were held and included representatives from broad sectors of the community: elected officials, school board members, garden club members, Jaycees, industry, business, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development Authority, recreation groups, environmental organizations, and youth. The focus groups were held at the Depot, except the youth focus group, which took place at Wayne County High School. The following questions were used to frame the conversation and were developed with the steering committee:

- What takes you to Jaycee Landing now?
- What are the best things about the site?
- How else do you think it could be used?
- What else would you like to see there?
- If the county develops some sort of facility there that highlights the area's history, culture, and environment, what must be included? What stories should it tell?
- What else do we need to know about the Jaycee Landing site?

2

INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with 21 key stakeholders who provided background information on how Jaycee Landing is currently used and what improvements or additions would be beneficial to the community. The interview questions were similar to those used in the focus groups, and conversations provided good insight into just how popular Jaycee Landing is.

3

SURVEYS

To provide additional opportunities for feedback, the steering committee also distributed a survey in both electronic and print formats. There were approximately 40 responses to the survey, and the feedback was very similar to that received during the focus groups and interviews.

WHAT WE HEARD

Jaycee Landing is a well-loved and extremely popular community asset. During the public input process, many residents said they visit it almost daily to connect with the river. Others reflected on the popular events that take place on the upper bluff. But in all the praise for the Landing, there were numerous recommendations for improvements, expansions, and additions that fell into three overarching categories:

- 1) The Landing: defined as the area that currently includes the boat ramp, boat basin, bait shop, pavilion, and parking lot
- 2) The Bluff: the area above the river that currently has acres of open space, a tractor pull, an RV campground, and an old ball field
- 3) Other amenities: trails, camping options, signage, and other items that might be located throughout the site

Taking the ideas and desires expressed during the public input phase and vetting that information through the steering committee, the Institute of Government team developed a set of recommendations that addresses the landing, the bluff, and other amenities. Although many of these recommendations would require significant time and investment to implement, others can be addressed almost immediately. The county should identify areas where it can achieve desired changes and concurrently move those items forward while the organizational and operational structures for Jaycee Landing are more fully developed.

WHAT WE HEARD

“I love the big events at the Landing like Hog Jam and the Catfish tournament and all the excitement. Those are awesome.”

-Wayne County student



WHAT WE HEARD



“I would go to the river every day if I could.”

-Wayne County resident

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF JAYCEE LANDING

THE LANDING

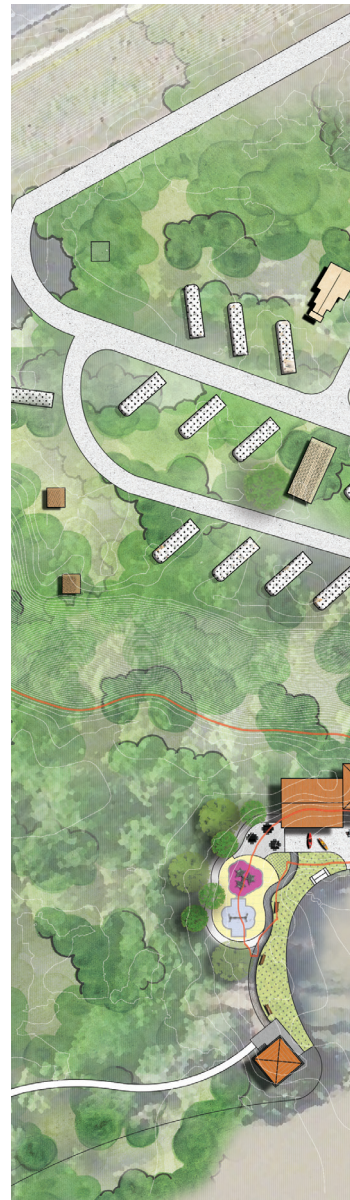
At the landing, a few key changes would improve the riverside amenities offered, attracting a wider variety of visitors. Recommended improvements include the following:

- Increase parking for vehicles towing trailers;
- Improve the bait shop;
- Add a gas pump back to the landing;
- Develop a snack shop;
- Add kayak and/or canoe rentals;
- Develop a kayak/canoe launch;
- Improve and provide additional gathering spaces (picnic tables, pavilions, etc.); and
- Connect the upper and lower bluff as well as “beach” with maintained trails.

THE BLUFF

On the bluff, establish the Altamaha Nature and History Center at Jaycee Landing would help educate people about and them to the important Altamaha River corridor. The center can be an important resource to:

- Provide visitors with an overview of the rich history of the region;
- Recognize the important ecological assets of the region;
- Highlight Georgia’s significant investment in protecting the Altamaha through land acquisition;
- Serve as a welcome center and gateway to the many Wildlife Management Areas and other state assets along the river; and
- Serve as an environmental education asset for the region, connecting with schools, youth organizations, and others.





DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING

DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS WERE DEVELOPED FOLLOWING A THOROUGH REVIEW OF PUBLIC INPUT AND FLESHED OUT BY THE STEERING COMMITTEE AND THE INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT PROJECT TEAM.

The Landing

The need for additional truck/trailer parking is evident and a priority. Expanding the parking area near the boat ramp by cutting into the bluff behind the current bait shop was recommended (1). Many residents also expressed a strong desire for an improved bait shop, which has been relocated to the back bank of the boat basin in the rendering (2). It now includes a grill or snack bar for casual dining (3). By adding a playground and picnic area, those who enjoy spending time along the riverbank now have more seating and activity options (4).

Improvements to this area are designed to enhance current popular activities such as fishing and boating and provide more intentional access to hunting areas. Other improvements promote new recreational activities. The addition of a kayak/canoe storage (or rental) space, along with a launch opposite the boat ramp, improves access for non-motorized boaters (5).

Frequent users of the landing also recommended improving the pavilion and adding a gas dock, which could be located in front of the new bait shop. Other users would like to see a fish cleaning station, which could be located on the right outer bank of the basin near the existing pavilion.

4



1

2

3

5



DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING

The Bluff

Two overarching sentiments were expressed by nearly everyone who provided input to this project. First, residents have a deep love and appreciation for the Altamaha River. Second, Wayne County residents are proud of their community and its rich history. Because of this, the idea of an Altamaha Nature and History Center that would reflect the stories of the region and the river, its environment, and its economy met with enthusiasm. The center could become a new and engaging regional hub for environmental education, historic information, and economic development.

Outside, numerous features could create opportunities for learning and enjoying the site. Design recommendations include the following: a trail that connects the bluff to the landing; an interpretive trail that leads visitors in a loop around the center and provides a snapshot of the Altamaha River Watershed; an overlook platform that offers an unobstructed view to the river; and the Play and Explore outdoor area to enhance ecosystem education. Beyond the bluff, Wildlife Management Areas provide numerous opportunities for outdoor recreation, and the Altamaha Nature and History Center could serve as the gateway to those properties.



TRAIL TO THE LANDING



**INTERPRETIVE
WATERSHED
WALK**

**ALTAMAHA
OVERLOOK
WALK**

**PLAY AND
EXPLORE**

DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING

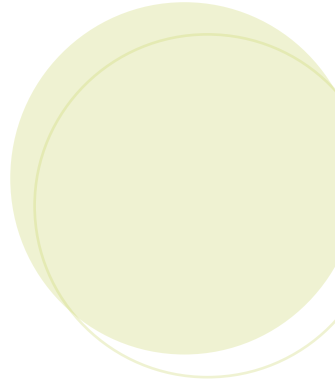
CANOE
PITCHER PLANT
BOG

The Landscape

Interactive, engaging, and informative, the Altamaha Nature and History Center could give visitors an overview of the region, its ecological diversity, and its rich history. The landscape of the center would engage visitors with nature in a playful but purposeful way and allow them to more fully explore and understand the numerous habitats of the Altamaha River region and their unique and important functions in the broader landscape. Example ecosystems would include a Long-leaf Pine-Wiregrass community, Pitcher Plant bogs, and butterfly gardens.

LONGLEAF
PINE-WIREGRASS
COMMUNITY





DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING

Other Amenities

Community members had a strong interest in improving the RV campground, potentially adding small cabins to the area to expand the user base. These would be limited short-term rentals and would not be seen or used as permanent residences. Many residents also expressed the desire for more camping opportunities. Recommendations included developing tent platforms and establishing treehouse camp sites. These structures could range from very simple to elaborate facilities that would be available for rent.

Another recommendation was to add bird-watching platforms, which could attract new user groups to the area. The Altamaha River can be a birdwatcher's paradise, and providing simple amenities can bring new economic activity to the landing.

Connecting the upper and lower areas of the property was also a high priority. Trails and boardwalks could connect the proposed site of the Altamaha Nature and History Center to the popular beach area south of the boat basin.

Adding educational and informational signage that has a uniform look and style would create a cohesiveness throughout the area. Signs can provide information on birds and other wildlife in the area, guide visitors along a boardwalk or trail, or share dates of upcoming events.





**INTERACTIVE AND
INFORMATIVE
SIGNAGE**



**CABINS AND TREE
HOUSES WOULD ALLOW
VISITORS TO LINGER
LONGER AT JAYCEE
LANDING.**



**BIRDWATCHING
PLATFORM**

MOVING TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION

The Altamaha River is in many ways the lifeblood of Wayne County. Its economic significance, its environmental importance, and its contributions to the culture and heritage of the community are significant drivers behind the desire to improve Jaycee Landing. As the steering committee determines how to move forward with the improvements and additions to Jaycee Landing, several steps should be taken first to ensure that the future operations of the Landing and its associated facilities are clearly thought out and appropriately prioritized.

1

Organizational Structure

2

Operational Structure

3

Promote the Vision





MOVING TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION

1

Organizational Structure

Wayne County and the city of Jesup should officially form a joint organization to oversee the development and operation of Jaycee Landing. Other government and quasi-government partners should include, but not be limited to, the Board of Tourism, the Chamber of Commerce, the Wayne County School Board, and citizen representation.

2

Operational Structure

As the county and city determine how to organize their efforts, they must also decide on an operational structure. Appendix A includes several case studies that provide a glimpse of various operational structures by entities with similar, though not identical, purposes: a traditional nonprofit, an authority, a nonprofit and school board partnership, a nonprofit with a long-term lease from a park commission, and a county-operated facility. These case studies provide insight into the potential future operations of Jaycee Landing.

3

Promote the Vision

To realize the vision for Jaycee Landing, significant investment will have to be made in upgrading existing facilities and adding new ones. Promoting the vision to potential users and funders would not only build excitement but also drive a fundraising campaign.

The Institute of Government created a separate brochure, included in Appendix B, that can be used to introduce the community's vision for Jaycee Landing to those familiar and unfamiliar with the site.

Tasks to Complete

- ☑ Secure commitment to project from Wayne County and the city of Jesup
- ☑ Determine board make-up
- ☑ Draft charter
- ☑ Draft by-laws
- ☑ Finalize project list
- ☑ Prioritize projects
- ☑ Set budget
- ☑ Create fundraising campaign

Key Questions to Answer

- ☑ Who are potential funders?
- ☑ Who are the project champions?
- ☑ What kind of educational programs might start before a facility is built?
- ☑ Should a full-time director be hired?
- ☑ Who will direct fundraising?
- ☑ What other fundraising materials are needed?
- ☑ Who will prioritize improvements and additions to Jaycee Landing?

MOVING TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION

CONCLUSIONS

There is significant enthusiasm surrounding the creation of the Altamaha Nature and History Center and adding and improving other amenities at Jaycee Landing. It is a well-known and popular community location already, and could certainly increase its regional draw with a broader program of activities. The Altamaha Center would serve as a resource to educate visitors about the coastal plain ecosystem, tell the story of the region, and show how the environment and economy connect. The center would elevate Jaycee Landing as a destination point on the Altamaha River, provide a gathering space for events, enhance the connection to the larger community, and serve as an important asset for the state. Wayne County and the city of Jesup are well positioned to move forward with developing a formal partnership to work together to realize the potential of this site.





APPENDIX A

CASE STUDIES

One of the earliest and most critical decisions is to determine how Jaycee Landing will operate. Currently it is owned and maintained by Wayne County. The bait shop and campground are operated by a private contractor who is responsible for all aspects of operations. To establish a Nature and History Center at Jaycee Landing and to improve existing amenities and add new ones, Wayne County must consider several factors beyond the content and displays within the center and the architectural design of the physical structures. How it be will be funded and operated must be carefully considered to ensure its long-term viability. Who will visit, how will they know about the center, and what other amenities will they find at the larger Jaycee Landing site? There are many examples of similar endeavors in other regions of Georgia. This section provides case studies to help Wayne County determine its operational priorities.

Elachee Nature Science Center

The nonprofit Elachee Nature Science Center, founded in 1978, entered into a long-term lease agreement with Chicopee Woods Area Park Commission in 1984. That year, the commission gave Elachee permission to build a nature center in Chicopee Woods, which has become its permanent home. Through its innovative outdoor classroom experience, Elachee served more than 16,000 students from Gainesville and Hall County schools in 1986, its inaugural year at Chicopee Woods. In 1989, Hall County special purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST) funding included funds to build phase one of the Elachee Nature Science Center, which included the visitor center and classroom complex. In 1990, the Elachee Nature Science Center opened to the public. In 1996, Elachee inaugurated the Mark Trail Endowment Fund, and it expanded its programming with the Aquatic Studies Center at Chicopee Lake in 1998. A floating classroom program at Lake Lanier, in partnership with Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, was later developed.

In 2000, Elachee entered into a 50-year lease agreement with the Chicopee Woods Area Park Commission. In 2001, Elachee became legal trustee of the conservation easement protecting over 1,900 acres in the Chicopee Woods Area Park from development.

Volunteers are critical to Elachee and serve in diverse capacities to supplement the efforts of Elachee’s professional staff. They help maintain hiking trails, keep streams in the nature preserve clean, and prevent invasive plant species from gaining ground. Volunteers also spend hours each year on fundraising and friend-raising activities and serve as advisors on governance issues. Elachee is a privately owned and operated 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. It relies on earned income and tax-deductible donations, planned gifts, grants, and fundraising events to fund operations. (Sixty-five percent of operating revenue comes from earned income, i.e., program fees, and the remainder comes from donations, etc.) More than 87% of the annual budget supports programming. In fiscal year (FY) 2016, more than 34,000 students participated in Elachee programs, representing 21 school systems.

Note that the development of the center in Chicopee Woods was a long process. The center received permission to build in 1984, but the building did not open until 1990. Programming began well before there was a physical structure and was critical to its success.

Oatland Island Wildlife Center

Owned by the Savannah–Chatham County Public School System since 1973, the Oatland Island Wildlife Center provides visitors with unique experiences with wildlife, education, and trails. Each year more than 25,000 students participate in a variety of programs from marsh ecology to star labs to activities involving local wildlife. Program revenue is generated through a per-student charge. One program a year, per school, per grade level is free for Chatham County Public Schools, with a fee (\$4 per student) for additional programs. Private schools or groups, and out-of-county schools or groups pay a per-student fee of \$6 and \$8, respectively, according to the center’s website. A 15-student minimum is required for each program. In addition to school field trips, more than 40,000 other visitors walk the trails and attend festivals and special events at the center each year.

A nonprofit partner organization, Friends of Oatland Island, Inc., was established to support Oatland Island Wildlife Center’s staff and animal residents, and to raise funds to maintain the visitor’s center. The volunteer board members not only raise money through donations, gift shop sales, and events, but they also volunteer at the center, helping with educational programs. Memberships to the Wildlife Center are available for \$45 per year for a family membership, which allows the family to visit the facility an unlimited numbers of times during business hours. Individual memberships (\$25), donor memberships (\$125), and patron memberships (\$250) are also available. Benefits of membership range from unlimited general admission to passes to special events to an engraved board that is used on the center’s trail boardwalks.

In March 2011, a \$4.2 million renovation funded by ESPLOST was completed.

Towns Bluff Park and Heritage Center

Towns Bluff Park and Heritage Center is located on the Altamaha River, a mile below the confluence of the Oconee and Ocmulgee rivers, just eight miles north of Hazlehurst, Georgia, and adjacent to Bullard Creek Wildlife Management Area. The park, which is maintained by Jeff Davis County, has a boat ramp for river access as well as access to horse trails in Wildlife Management Areas. The campground has 24 RV and tent camping sites with a bathhouse, walking trails with river views, picnic shelters, a playground, and a beach. Camping sites are \$25 for an RV site and \$19 for a tent. A rental RV is available for \$45. The Heritage Center houses a small museum with a growing collection of river and Indian artifacts. The center also has a meeting room that is available for rent.

In FY 2017, the Jeff Davis County budget includes \$72,800 in expenditures at Towns Bluff and \$61,600 in projected revenue.

Augusta Canal Trail and Discovery Center

The Augusta Canal Authority is a special purpose government created by an act of the Georgia General Assembly in 1989. It is led by an executive director and a 12-member board. The day-to-day operations are handled by both full- and part-time staff who are responsible for the management of the Discovery Center, boat tours, and the daily recreational and hydroelectric operations of the canal.

In 1993, the authority adopted a master plan that has guided the development and preservation of the canal as a natural, historic, and economic resource. Today, the authority's mission is to execute the master plan. In 1996, the Augusta Canal was designated a National Heritage Area for the story it tells of the industrial revolution in the South. National Heritage Areas, according to the US Department of the Interior, are places where "natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally-distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These areas tell nationally important stories about our nation and are representative of the national experience through both the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved within them." In 1998, the authority was named the official management entity for the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area; however, the authority does not own the canal. Rather, it is public property owned by the city of Augusta, and the water supply and flood control functions of the canal remain the responsibility of the Augusta Utilities Department.

The Augusta Canal Authority does not receive operating funds from the city's general revenue, and much like a development authority, the Augusta Canal Authority can enter into contracts and issue bonds. It derives most of its funding from hydropower revenue, tour boat tickets, and other operations. It also receives a federal appropriation administered through the National Park Service because of its Heritage Area designation.

Locally, the authority has received SPLOST funding for specific improvement projects, including the Petersburg Tour Boats, pedestrian bridges, and trail improvements. The authority has also received federal and state grants to support its work.

The authority also receives funding for its activities through the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area, Inc. and its Augusta Canal Keepers Society, a nonprofit membership organization that supports the operations of the Augusta Canal Authority. Memberships begin at \$30 per year for students and teachers, which provides a variety of benefits. Memberships generated approximately \$16,000 in support in FY 2015 according to the organization's IRS Form 990. The Canal Authority also notes that it has corporate and foundation sponsors as well as funds that specifically support school field trips to the canal.

Okefenokee Swamp Park

The Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1936, assuring the preservation of the awesome Okefenokee Swamp. Soon after in 1945, the Okefenokee Association, Inc., a nonprofit organization, was established to develop and oversee Okefenokee Swamp Park on Cowhouse Island, near Waycross. The Tourist Bureau of the Waycross and Ware County Chamber of Commerce organized the nonprofit, and the association remains significant to the protection and understanding of the Okefenokee. The park serves as a convenient gateway to the wildlife refuge.

Okefenokee Swamp Park, Inc. does not receive any local, state, or federal funding. Its mission is "to promote ecological tourism and education by providing-as a convenient point of entry in to the Okefenokee-an authentic opportunity for the public to develop an appreciation for the wildlife, culture, and natural beauty of the 'Land of the Trembling Earth.'" The vast majority of its revenue, based on its 2014 IRS Form 990, came from program services (\$655,536), and contributions accounted for more than \$175,000 in revenue. Total expenses, including program services and administration for FY 2014 were approximately \$784,000. Nearly 89,000 people visited Okefenokee Swamp Park in 2014. Today, the park serves as an entry point to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

APPENDIX B

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

A four-page document was created so that members of the project steering committee and others could easily share information about the community's vision with interested parties and potential funders. The front and back pages are below, and the center pages are on the opposite page.



Play and Explore



Engaging with nature in a playful but purposeful way will help visitors more fully explore and understand the numerous habitats of the Altamaha River region and their unique and important functions in the broader landscape. From the Longleaf Pine-Wiregrass community to Pitcher Plant bogs, indoor and outdoor displays and activities will inform and inspire.



Building a series of Pitcher Plant bogs out of old canoes creates a bit of whimsy in the landscape but also provides an opportunity to introduce visitors to the Altamaha Nature and History Center to the habitat of the various species of Pitcher Plant found in the Coastal Plain region.



Butterfly Garden

A Butterfly Garden greets visitors to the Altamaha Nature and History Center as they enter. The garden is filled with local wildflowers, which are blooming with seasonal colors and forms.



Canoe Pitcher Bog

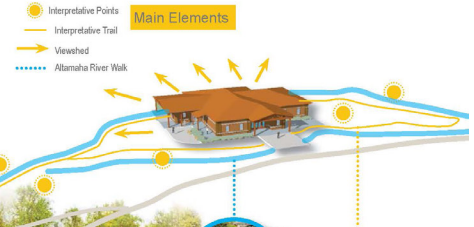


Interactive, engaging, and informative, the Altamaha Nature and History Center will seek to provide visitors with a snapshot of the region, its ecological diversity, and its rich history.

Section View



Main Elements



The Altamaha Nature and History Center will serve as a resource to educate visitors about the Coastal Plain ecosystem, tell the story of the region, and show how the environment and economy connect. It will be a destination point on the Altamaha River, a gathering space for events, a connection to the larger community, and an important asset for the state.





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