

ROME-FLOYD PARKS AND RECREATION AUTHORITY

Services Overview

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The Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority was founded in 1973 as a semi-independent arm of the Rome and Floyd County governments. It was the first effort for governmental consolidation in the community and has led the way for the consolidation of many other city and county services. The Agency's mission is to develop, maintain, and operate a comprehensive parks and recreation service system. The Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority operates under the direction of a nine-member legal policy board and receives support from the countywide tax base. About 35% of the operating budget is generated by the agency's varied services (2005 operating budget is \$3.6 million). Rome and Floyd County have invested over \$20 million in parks and recreation capital projects in the past ten years.

The Authority employs 42 full-time employees in three service divisions, and over 200 part-time staff positions are filled each year. However, the work force does not stop there, as hundreds of volunteers assist with programs, and over 200,000 man-hours are recorded in youth sports services, alone, each year. The Parks Division also uses inmate and restitution worker labor to multiply their efforts and decrease labor costs.

RECREATION SERVICES...

For the most part, programs take the form of, but are not limited to, Sports and Athletics; Instructional and Enrichment; Special Events; Special Populations (Senior Citizens and Physically/Mentally Challenged); and Environmental Education. Programs are provided to all ages and population groups without regard to sex, creed, handicap, national origin, or socioeconomic status. The Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority also takes pride in services provided to the community through joint efforts with partners including the Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, local schools, youth and church groups, senior citizen organizations, the United Way, and more.

The Rome-Floyd Sports Hall of Fame is an ongoing service that enables the Authority to recognize those citizens that excel in Professional or Amateur Sports and Community Service. In conjunction with the program, the Authority recognizes volunteers that have dedicated themselves to helping provide quality recreation services with an annual Volunteers Recognition Program, and has recently added the Outstanding Student Athlete Scholarship Program to the Hall of Fame festivities.

Other ongoing services include: Rome-Floyd Golden Olympics (provides friendly competition for senior citizens and is adapted for different activity levels); Rome-Floyd Special Olympics; the Rome Tennis Club; Camp GoodTimes (summer daycamp program for the physically and mentally challenged youth of Northwest Georgia); Salute to Honor America Celebration (July 4th Community Celebration); Heritage Holidays (week-long celebration of local heritage); Chili Cook-Off (partnership with Trout Unlimited); Environmental Education Center at Lock and Dam Park (a partnership project between RFPRA, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Fernbank Science Center); and volunteer training of coaches, board appointees, senior citizens, and special event staff.

The Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority also provides: recreation planning and technical assistance to schools, hospitals, clubs, and community service organizations; public awareness and public education services in regard to recreation and parks opportunities; assistance with youth sports organizations whose services complement those of the Authority; organization and development of support groups for recreation and parks services, i.e. Senior Citizens Advisory County, Trails Advocacy Council, and Youth Sports Booster Clubs.

PARK SERVICES...

The Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority is responsible for maintaining 831 acres of developed park and recreation land. In 2001, a master plan was adopted to categorize different types of facilities at different levels of maintenance. This plan makes it possible for the Parks Division to maintain 2 regional parks, 11 community parks, 9 neighborhood parks, and 13 specialized facilities. Fifteen of these facilities are major public use buildings/centers (4 serve as voting sites.) Walking and jogging trails are maintained at 14 park locations. Two of these trails are of major significance. Heritage Park is the site of the first Rails-to-Trails conversion in the state of Georgia, as noted by the Georgia Conservancy. The second is also a Rails-to-Trails conversion -- the Simms Mountain Trail, and is the first leg of the Pinhoti Trail in the state of Georgia. This trail will eventually connect to the existing Pinhoti Trail in Alabama. The Parks Division also maintains 26 game level sports fields, 29 practice-level sports fields, and 53 tennis courts. Specialized facilities include a Gymnastics Center, Fitness Center, Stadium/Track, Nature Center, Skate Center, Farmer's Market, Greenways and Trails, RV Campground, Softball Center, Tennis Center, and a Golf Driving Range.

SUMMARY...

The Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority actively supports and embraces the concept of citizen-drive, participant-friendly services. Collaborative efforts, joint planning, open communications, and constituent-based services together generate agency support and produce happy customers. Additionally, the Authority strongly supports the Georgia Recreation and Park Association and the National Recreation and Park Association, and thereby recognizes the important leadership role of both professional organizations. Staff development is an important issue with the Authority Board. And, while the Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority is a young organization, it continually searches for maximum resource utilization in all phases of its operation.