

Process Documentation

Earth Design was selected to complete the master planning phase of the Nalley Brown Nature Park. The process began with a thorough inventory of the existing vegetation on site. Using a hand held GPS unit, the various vegetation types were delineated, site features located and major trees identified. All of this information was overlaid onto the available topography in a digital format to create a site inventory base map from which to work.

The next step was to create community surveys. With the help of the Nalley Brown Advisory Board and the City of Easley, a community and teacher survey were created and distributed. The surveys were written so that potential amenities listed were allowed under the conservation easement that dictates the development of the land as an environmental education nature park. Highlights from the results included an overwhelming positive response to the idea of preserving green spaces in Easley and to provide educational opportunities surrounding the flora and fauna of the Piedmont region. The most requested amenities from the community were walking trails for health and fitness, followed by environmental education exhibits and an environmental education facility. Traditional park amenities such as picnic shelters and benches were close behind these.

The majority of the teachers (76.9%) who responded teach K-5, while teachers from every discipline responded. Educational exhibits were the most important feature in the park, followed by an environmental education center building, then walking trails. Most teachers wanted information about the local plant and animal life of the Piedmont, environmental concerns, and local history. This information was suggested to be displayed in the environmental education center, as well as in educational exhibits throughout the park. All respondents were interested in taking their classes to the nature park and also felt that it could be incorporated into their curriculum. Only 3.6% of teachers felt that the park could not work with state standards in subjects that they taught.

Following the survey collection and compilation, an open community meeting was held to present the survey results and to solicit any additional input on the design and process. The community meeting was poorly attended, with only two attendees beyond members of the advisory board and the design team, but their ideas were helpful in continuing to shape the design. Design development followed, with meetings to present progress and solicit feedback from the advisory board and city administrator. The master plan and supporting documentation was completed and presented to the advisory board for final review on July 1, 2009.