

8.0 RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

8.1 EXISTING CONTEXT

8.1.1 MAIN CAMPUS

The Recreation and Open Space element includes narratives related to exterior areas used for sports activities, social gathering, and recreation. Previous goals of the 2001 Master Plan included maintaining the existing woodland character of the University, the desire to maintain recreational space, the use of native indigenous plantings, the development of Campus greens, development of a systematic trail system, creation of an arboretum and/or botanical garden, miscellaneous repairs and upgrades to existing facilities, and a policy to coordinate UWF activities with the local community for achievement of these goals.

Many of these goals are still appropriate. Recreational program features can be seen as opportunity to improve and enhance life on Campus, thus making the University a more inviting place for prospective students and faculty. The desire to maintain natural and undisturbed areas provides for a unique campus environment, and preserves an educational asset. The development of well defined “greens” on campus encourages student interaction as well as providing structure and beauty to the campus.

The University also shares a strong community relationship with the Pensacola Pelicans, a minor league Baseball Team located in Pensacola. Their home field, Pelican Park, is located on the eastern portion of the Main Campus property.

8.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

8.2.1 EAST CAMPUS

UWF offers a wide variety of athletic and recreational options and activities. There is a strong NCAA competitive athletic organization, intramural recreational sports, a semi-professional baseball complex, biking and walking trails, and nature park preserves, including University Park and Thompson Bayou.

Athletic and Recreational Facilities

The university is currently reporting the following Recreational and Athletic facilities, and associated square footage, as follows in **TABLE 8-1**, and as indicated in **FIGURE 8-A**:

**Table 8-1:
Existing Athletic and Recreational Facilities**

Bldg #	Description	Gross Sq. Ft.	Net Assign Sq. Ft.
72	Health, Leisure, and Sports Facility	108,358	80,910
73	Aquatic Center	36,571	30,003
113	Athletics Volley Ball Storage	248	226
200	Softball Field 1 Home Dugout	377	210
201	Softball Field 1 Visitor Dugout	335	192
202	Softball Field 1 Press Box	150	112
203	Baseball Home Dugout	370	206
204	Baseball Visitor Dugout	337	192
205	Baseball Press box	144	127
207	Pavilion at Oak Grove	880	0
208	Pavilion at Sports Complex	869	0
209	Handball/Racquetball Court	3,920	3,220
210	Baseball Locker Room	3,313	2,510
211	Public Restrooms	573	0
213	Tennis Clubhouse	1,057	741
214	Track Restrooms	194	0
216	Softball Field 2 Home Dugout	400	192
217	Softball Field 2 Visitor Dugout	360	186
218	Pavilion at Multipurpose Fields	644	0
219	Varsity Soccer Field Press Box	354	258
220	Varsity Soccer Field Home Dugout	320	196
221	Varsity Soccer Field Visitor Dugout	320	196
224	Sports Complex Pelican Ticket Booth	400	361
225	Sports Complex Pelican Merchandise Facility	400	361
226	Sports Complex Pelican Chalais Facility	248	216
227	Sports Complex Pelican Chalais Facility	248	216
228	Sports Complex Pelican Chalais Facility	248	216
281	Athletic Cross Country Support Facility	1,468	1,052
291	Athletic Offices at Sports Complex	936	650
T11	Temporary Building located at Softball Field 1	104	88
T2	Temporary Intramural Field Storage	162	145
T3	Temporary Track Storage	203	183
T4	Temporary Baseball Storage	203	183
T5	Temporary Intramural Field Storage	246	223
RECREATION SUB-TOTAL		164,960	123,571

Athletics

The University offers multiple competitive NCAA athletic programs including:

Baseball	Women's Basketball
Men's Cross Country	Women's Cross Country
Men's Basketball	Women's Golf
Men's Golf	Women's Soccer
Men's Soccer	Women's Tennis
Men's Tennis	Women's Track
Men's Track	Women's Volleyball
Softball	

Recreational Intramural Sports

The University offers multiple organized recreational intramural sports programs including:

Flag Football	Basketball
Volleyball	Softball
Outdoor Soccer	Floor Hockey
Indoor Soccer	

The Sport Club Program

Participants are offered a wide range of recreational, instructional or competitive teams to bridge the gap between intramural sports and intercollegiate athletics. Under the direction of the Graduate Assistant of Sport Clubs and Recreation & Sport Services, clubs are given the opportunity to shape their own unique atmosphere. Membership for any sport club is open to all current University of West Florida students. These clubs include:

Aquatic Racing	Scuba
Cheerleading	Shotokan Karate
Climbing Club	Sports Officials
Cycling Club	Surf Club
Dance Club	Table Tennis
Disc Golf	Volleyball
Fencing	Water Ski
Rugby	Wrestling
Sailing	

Pelican Park

This semi-professional baseball field was renovated in 2003 including a 2,500 seat stadium and associated dugouts, storage facilities, and public restrooms. While the park serves primarily as the home for the Pensacola Pelicans, the University has limited access to the fields and amenities as scheduling permits.

Open Green Space and Outdoor Amenities

While open green spaces do exist on campus, they appear to be limited in scope and use due to roads, walks, natural vegetation and lack of clarity. The most prominent space is the Cannon Lawn located between the Commons Building and the Library. This is a formal space often utilized for ceremonial functions, with limited extemporaneous activity.

University Park

In March, 2006, the University formally designated the University Park; an area which had been previously known as the Oak Grove. University Park occupies the southwestern zone of the main campus, located inside the existing campus drive loop, and encompasses the Oak Grove and associated picnic area, the intramural field, tennis courts, other outdoor courts, and the Field house, HLS Facility, and Aquatic Center.

The anchor for this park remains the area formally known as the Oak Grove, which contains several mature hardwood trees, and serves as a point of gathering and relaxation. However this stand of trees was severely impacted by Hurricane Ivan in 2004. Considerable damage and debris from this storm still remains.

Environmental and Recreational Trails

Biking Trails

While not formally designated or developed, extensive off road biking trails have been established in wooded areas on both the eastern edge and western edge of the main campus, as well as in the West campus beyond the bayou. There appears to be active use of these trails by the students, faculty, and community.

Walking Trails

Multiple formal and informal walking trails have been developed within the campus to celebrate its natural and ecological assets. A portion of these walks have been designated the “**University of West Florida Edward Ball Nature Trail**”, and were adopted as part of the **Great Florida Birding Trail** by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Gaming Commission in 2006. Part of this trail extends out into and over the Thompson Bayou in the form of a looped boardwalk.

Thompson Bayou Waterfront

There is an existing undeveloped roadway (four wheel drive only) extending from the northern terminus of Campus Drive which leads to a dock facility in Thomson Bayou. There appears to be very limited use of this facility.

8.2.2 WEST CAMPUS

The majority of the West Campus is currently undeveloped, at least in any formal sense, and remains a future asset to the University for future athletic and recreation growth. However, there is currently an active and highly utilized system of “off-road” bicycle paths located throughout the area, which are constantly redefined by weather, erosion, and the spontaneous creation of new paths. While the biking activity is not an organized or controlled event, both the university and local community seem to be well served.

8.3 ANALYSIS

8.3.1 EAST CAMPUS

Athletic and Recreational Facilities

In general, the campus contains adequate recreational facilities to support the current student population, as well as the anticipated growth within the next 10 years. Accordingly this Master Plan does not anticipate the near term needs for new facilities based on the 10 years growth projections. However, maintenance and upgrading of current facilities will be required.

In the current **UWF Amended Five Year Plan: 2007/08 – 2011/12**, the following Recreational facilities are proposed (see **FIGURE 8-B**):

	Add	Complete In
Expansion of the Field House (Bldg. 54)	4,000 gsf	2009
New Intramural Field Storage Building	2,500 gsf	2009

Pelican Park

The current home of the Pensacola Pelicans is located on the eastern Main Campus property. However, the University is also currently partnering with the City, County, and community in the creation of the new Maritime Park Complex to be constructed in downtown Pensacola. Phase one of this complex is scheduled to be completed in 2009. Within this new park, will be a new baseball stadium, which will become the future home for the Pensacola Pelicans. Following this move, the existing facilities located on the campus will revert to full ownership, use, and scheduling by the UWF.

Open Green Space

There is clearly a need for more open and discernable green space to support a variety of use and spontaneous activities. As the campus grows and expands, the design of new facilities should become a partner in this endeavor to create and form outdoor space. Furthermore, as facilities are located, respect should be given to existing green space, and the protection thereof. This issue is further addressed in Elements 4 and 16 of this plan.

University Park

The area previously known as the Oak Grove was severely impacted by Hurricane Ivan in 2004, resulting in the loss and/or breakage of many of the trees. The evidence of this damage and resulting debris is still evident today. It is recommended that remedial action be taken to remove debris, and to replant as necessary to return this area to its previous state.

Trails

While the existing bike trails are not officially recognized or protected in any formal manner, they remain a vibrant part of University and student life. Many of trails are located in or near designated wetlands and conservation areas, which should protect their future longevity and viability. However, as future development ensues, particularly in the West Campus, there needs to be recognition of these trails, and areas of protection for them.

Many of the existing walking trails have been designated by the University, community, and state as protected areas. Future development of the campus must recognize and respect these areas as protected and no build zones.

A portion of the Edward Ball Walking trail is the boardwalk which extends out into Thompson Bayou. This walk allows close and intimate interaction of the bayou, which is unique ecological and environmental experience. However, the physical condition of the boardwalk, and its protective rails, has seriously deteriorated to the point of being unsafe.

Thompson Bayou Waterfront

There are plans for future development of this amenity to improve this roadway, and to provide a boat launch, mooring, and storage facilities. Recreation areas with toilet facilities are also proposed. Development of this asset will allow educational opportunities and unique recreation activities as well as provide waterfront access for skiing and sailing teams.

8.4 PLAN FRAMEWORK**GOAL 801**

Further enhance student life and educational experiences through maintenance and development of recreational and sports areas and environmental programs within the University.

Objective 801.1

Provide waterfront recreation areas on Campus that enhance student life and that supports sports activities including skiing and sailing.

Policy 801.1.1

Develop the area for a future waterfront recreation area to include: an accessible improved access road, boat dock, storage, launching facilities; recreation area, equipment rental facility, toilet rooms; and storage facilities.

Policy 801.1.2

Study proposed recreation area to determine feasibility of integrating facility with: Ski team needs, Sail team needs, Biology department research vessel mooring.

Policy 801.1.3

Develop full program for recreations area with input from Student representatives, sports program leaders, and University marketing staff.

Policy 801.1.4

Repair the Boardwalk portion of the Edward Ball Trail over Thompson Bayou to meet current code and safety requirements.

Policy 801.1.5

Designate protected off road Biking areas within the West Campus.

Objective 801.2

Maintain adequate areas in support of recreation and sports related activities to serve the projected student enrollment of the University

Policy 801.2.1

Establish planning budget for required upgrades to existing sports fields and facilities.

Policy 801.2.2

Completion of ongoing design and construction related to existing Field House, and new construction of the Intramural Field storage facility.

Policy 801.2.3

Coordinate placement of open space and informal recreation areas with Student housing to ensure appropriate open spaces are established adjacent areas of high student use.

Objective 801.3

Develop additional recreation and sports activities to enhance student programs

Policy 801.3.1

Include low impact programs such as high and low ropes courses.

Policy 801.3.2

Evaluate existing programs and potential future additions to respond to student needs.

Policy 801.3.3

Identify, designate, and protect biking trails located on the East Campus; as the West Campus is developed, maintain conscious decision regarding impact to the existing bike trails.

GOAL 802

Development of a Campus plan that includes areas that serve to clarify and organize the Campus as a means of improving student understanding of the Campus environment (more user friendly) and to foster interaction between students.

Objective 802.1

To develop clearly defined gathering and meeting spaces within the Campus

Policy 802.1.1

Enhance existing open space areas to include seating and shade.

Objective 802.2

Creation of Campus Center

Policy 802.2.1

As planning for a new University Commons Building is undertaken, evaluate recreational needs as part of the design.

GOAL 803

To sustain and preserve the open space and natural woodland character of the campus

Objective 803.1

To maintain sufficient open space woodland area, preserve the woodland character of the campus, create a balance between the developed and existing natural environment within the built areas, and establish an efficient use of open space in campus development.

Policy 803.1.1

Infrastructure and development of new buildings shall be sited respect the existing woodlands and topography. Where existing woodlands are impacted, they should be improved in accordance with the Goals and Objectives of this Plan.

Policy 803.1.2

Sustain and preserve natural woodland setting areas at various conservation levels to ensure access to undisturbed natural settings

Policy 803.1.3

Restore the "Oaks" to the pre Hurricane Ivan condition and status.

GOAL 804

To provide recreational facilities that meets the projected demand and population increase of the University.

Objective 804.1

To coordinate with the host community to ensure adequate recreation and open space facilities to meet the needs of the campus and the local community

Policy 804.1.1

The University shall coordinate, on an annual basis, with local Community and County Parks and Recreation Departments in order to ascertain common open space and recreation needs.

Objective 804.2

To improve recreation and open space facilities by correcting existing deficiencies or adding new amenities

Policy 804.2.1

Develop locations for an Arboretum and/or Botanic Garden which would be a catalyst for a campus-wide showcase and education program for native species and plant communities.

Policy 804.2.2

Provide lighting systems for Intramural fields and exterior courts as needed to improve game scheduling hours including play during evening hours.

Policy 804.2.3

Develop specific programs and use for the Pelican Park once the team relocates to the new Maritime Park facilities.