

9 Parks and Recreation Facilities and Services

Introduction

This section provides an overview of existing conditions and planned improvements for publically owned and managed Parks and Recreation in Plaquemines Parish. Due to the linear nature of the parish and limited crossings between banks, connectivity between facilities is challenging. In addition to rebuilding damaged facilities in the wake of Katrina and Gustav, Plaquemines Parish must address the ongoing demand for recreation programming and a growing need to expand existing parks and recreation programs and facilities in population centers.

The existing parks and recreation facilities provide a wide range of programming options. In addition to traditional active recreation uses and playgrounds, the parish has passive recreation programs which highlight regionally significant resources, and a rather unique offering, the Plaquemines Off-road Park for ATV users. Plaquemines has a growing demand on the existing facilities and programs, and the need for more variety in programming to broaden the level of service to accommodate all members of the community.

Data evaluated for this component has been collected by various agencies and includes citizen input via public involvement such as Visioning Workshops and Questionnaires, input from local leadership via interview and strategic planning sessions, as well as published sources including government data.

9.1 Existing Park and Recreation Facilities

There are 18 Parish-owned facilities that make up the existing local park and recreation system:

- 1) Blackie Buras Park, 607 Epsilon Street, Belle Chasse
Neighborhood Park includes Tennis and recently renovated playground. It is well located within a residential neighborhood.
- 2) Caledonia Park, Caledonia Lane (off Highway 15), Pointe a la Hache.
- 3) Davant Park, 15575 Highway 15, Davant - Part of Project Rebuild plans including a swimming pool, amphitheatre, basketball courts, playground and walking trails. The park features views of the lake and room to expand.
- 4) Diamond Park, 25108 Diamond Road, Diamond - Part of Project Rebuild plans including basketball and walking trails; baseball and playground are in use The existing road is a barrier to accessing the river levee. Opportunities: much of park is cleared or paved allowing room for expansion.

- 5) Port Sulphur Park, 278 Civic Drive, Port Sulphur - This is a small park adjacent to the school and potential marina. No significant residential areas. Opportunities: direct access to back levee where potential trail can provide a Safe Route to School.
- 6) Empire Park and Ballfields, 34129 Highway 11, Empire. A future walking track is planned here.
- 7) Port Sulphur Golf Course, 28530 Highway 23, Port Sulphur – This nine-hole golf course is not currently in use. It provides possible future recreational use that is adjacent to a marina and provides a buffer between industrial and residential land uses. Opportunities: marina gateway park; water oriented recreation; potential center for planned mixed use development; direct access to potential levee trail.
- 8) Roger Halphen Park, 210 Cazezu Drive, Buras - Baseball fields within park are part of Project Rebuild plans including walking trails, picnic, area, passive open space, and water park. Opportunities: large park parcel with room for additional facilities, serves the southern end of parish; Harbor oriented uses in close proximity to Buras Boat Harbor. Lots of civic interest.
- 9) Cypress Park, 622 F. Edward Herbert Blvd, Belle Chasse - Well used park that is adjacent to Herbert Ball Fields, Elementary School, and Trails. Opportunities: focus active use and community events here; add pedestrian trail past ball fields to river levee; hub for active, passive, educational and cultural history uses. Adjacent to Cypress Park several ball fields serve north part of Parish. Linear layout along Herbert Blvd is sprawling. Portion of land currently used for bus parking. Opportunities: potential tournament facility; adjacent undeveloped land for potential expansion to update layout; linear aspect serves disc golf.
- 10) Medal of Honor Park, 1300 Barriere Road, Belle Chasse – A large memorial park with monument and open green space that overlooks the canal. Opportunities: memorial assemblies, tourism and access to potential future back levee bike trail. A walking track is planned to be built here.
- 11) Oakville Park, 217 W. Saint Peter Street, Oakville – Includes a baseball field adjacent to industrial, residential and vacant land. Opportunities: large park parcel with room for additional facilities; existing condition is suitable for wooded trail;
- 12) Plaquemines Off -Road Park, Walker Road, Belle Chasse - Unique All-wheel terrain vehicle (ATV) facility south of the U.S. Navy base and adjacent to landfill. Created to serve demand for safer alternative to riding in the Parish at large. Centers ATV use to designated area. Opportunities: compatible use to landfills; potential for high profile events; year round activity.

- 13) Braithwaite Hidden Oaks Golf Course, 200 Oak Drive, Braithwaite - East Bank
This is a +/-259 acre parcel owned by the Parish. It was formerly a public golf facility. Currently there is an ongoing project to provide improvements. The site is located on the East Bank and represents a major potential recreational facility for the area.
Opportunities: This site could become the northern link point for access to the proposed Levee Bike Trail.
- 14) Sherwood Park Site, Belle Chasse - An undeveloped parcel , (+/- .25 acres)located in residential neighborhood. Opportunities: potential playground and picnic area are needed in the neighborhood. Consider potential access easement to Cazalard Street and access to planned park area off Good News Road. The larger space is more accessible and it can support court and walking trail in addition to the playground.
- 15) Empire Park and Ballfields, 34129 Highway 11, Empire. A walking track is planned here.
- 16) Leroy Harvey Park, 40196 Highway 23, Boothville - Part of Project Rebuild plans including basketball, skate park, walking trail, and multi-use field. Walking distance to residential areas; highway barrier to high school and river levee. Opportunities: can support some school programming; multi-use park supports variety of programs to serve nearby residents.
- 17) Ironton Park, 150 Ironton Road, Ironton - This park consists of a single active baseball field adjacent to undeveloped land and a small neighborhood. Opportunities: acquire land, right of way or easement for direct access potential river levee trail; potential to expand park; potential to guide future land use.
- 18) Woodland Trail, 449 F. Edward Hebert Blvd, Belle Chasse - This is a well-known passive park providing extensive nature trails for walking.

In addition to these local park sites, there are two major wildlife conservation areas of national significance in Plaquemines Parish:

- 1) Delta National Wildlife Refuge, Southwest Pass, East Bank - Large protected parcel on the east bank. Not suitable for active recreation. Opportunities: continued research, and future educational aspects.
- 2) Pass a Loutre State Water Fowl Management Area – East Bank (Pilot Town)

These wildlife refuges are relatively remote and inaccessible except by boat. It consists of state and federal land located outside levee protected areas, and unsuitable for active recreation.

Another prominent site with notable national historic significance includes the twin forts in Plaquemines Parish, Fort Jackson on the west bank and Fort St. Phillip on the east bank of the Mississippi River in Triumph. These two forts are major historic sites made famous by Andrew

Jackson's confrontation with British warships in the War of 1812. Land adjacent to Fort Jackson has been used in the past as active recreation space in the Parish, but these fields are being relocated as part of an effort to refurbish the fort. There is a study going on at the federal level to determine the feasibility of creating a new National Park along the Mississippi River in Plaquemines Parish that would embrace both these parks and create appropriate interpretive facilities that would make this a major tourist destination. It also has potential to be connected by a regional multi-use trail system along the levee.

Plaquemines Parish currently operates four parks and recreation maintenance facilities that are distributed throughout the Parish:

- 15529 Highway 15, Davant on the East Bank
- 505 F. Edward Herbert Boulevard, Belle Chasse
- 499 F. Edward Hebert Boulevard, Belle Chasse; and
- 278 Civic Drive in Port Sulphur.

Aerial photo maps of most of the Plaquemines Parish Parks are provided at the end of this chapter.

9.2 On-Going Park Improvement Projects

After Hurricanes Katrina and Gustav, a major park rebuilding task was begun under the auspices of Project Rebuild Plaquemines which was formed in 2005 in response to the devastation of the area. The major effort of this group has been the planning and redevelopment of five parks which touch each of the major towns in the Parish. These are:

- Boothville-Venice Leroy Harvey Playground – opened in March, 2009
- Buras – Roger Halphen Playground and Water Park - opened in June, 2009
- Davant- Percy Griffin Playground – opened in September, 2009
- Port Sulphur – Community Center Playground – opened in January, 2010
- Belle Chasse – Cypress Park improvements – opened in May, 2010

Diamond Playground is an example of another park reconstruction project completed as a result of the organizational efforts of Project Rebuild Plaquemines, partnering with [Save the Children](#), [KaBOOM!](#), Plaquemines Parish Government and others. In the aftermath of Katrina, the previous playground was completely submerged underwater and later deemed to be unsafe. Following the storm the park became an emergency housing site with spaces for over 450 FEMA temporary trailers. In April 2007 volunteers came from near and far help restore the park to active use. Some came to help in the construction, others provided food and drinks to the workers, some worked on activities with the children of the community and still more provided support services for the activities of the day.

Several other sites are under consideration for development as future parks in the Parish:

- 1) Prea Park, Highway 23 (near Penny Dee Drive), Port Sulphur - This is an undeveloped/inactive park site. Its future use is under further consideration. It is located adjacent to a public school and potential marina. There are no significant residential areas nearby. However it provides direct access to the back levee. The parish may hold the land for future recreation needs or a land swap. It has potential as a landscape nursery for future Parish park improvements.
- 2) English Turn Park, Braithwaite - East Bank – This site is in the pre-planning stages. The park would be located on the east bank in the northern Parish. Access via Belle Chasse Ferry or from St. Bernard Highway. Locations currently being considered for cultural and historical value. This site offers the opportunity for ideal access to river and potential future levee bike trail; suitable for passive recreation; natural habitat; potential East bank interpretive center; overlook park.
- 3) Good News Avenue Passive Park – Plaquemines Parish recently acquired 400 acres of land adjacent to Callendar Field just outside the JRB-NAS Belle Chasse. The Trust for Public Land and the U.S. Navy cooperated with the Parish to purchase this land for conservation and forestall future development that could have been incompatible with operations of the Navy air base. The 200 acres closest to the runway will be restricted to allow no permanent structures because it is in the Accident Potential Zone. The best use for it may be for passive recreation and stormwater management. The remaining 200 acres adjacent to Good News Avenue could be developed for recreational uses such as bike and pedestrian paths and picnic areas, but not ballfields or any other use with lights.

Other redevelopment work is underway with assistance from FEMA. The FEMA projects and the current state of them are listed in **Table 9.1**

Table 9.1: FEMA Project Information

FEMA Project Name Facility Address	Facility Category – Constr. Class – Proj. Status
Boothville-Venice Consolidated Comm. Ctr. Building 112 Gille Lane, Boothville	Community Center - Consolidated - Construction
Braithwaite Hidden Oaks Golf Course Cart Paths & Bridges 200 Oak Drive, Braithwaite - East Bank	Recreation - Alternate - Design
Braithwaite Hidden Oaks Golf Course Club House 200 Oak Drive, Braithwaite - East Bank	Recreation - Alternate - Design
Buras Consolidated Comm. Ctr. Building 36342 Highway 11, Buras	Community Center - Consolidated - Complete
Cypress Park Athletic Field Lighting 622 F. Edward Herbert Blvd, Belle Chasse	Recreation - Repair - Complete
Cypress Park Athletic Field 622 F. Edward Herbert Blvd, Belle Chasse	Recreation - Replace - Complete
Davant Park Baseball Fields 15537 Highway 15, Davant	Recreation - Replace - Complete
Davant Park Concession Stand 15575 Highway 15, Davant	Community Center - Replace - Complete
Rev. Percy M. Griffin Comm. Ctr. Building 15535 Highway 15, Point a La Hache	Community Center - Consolidated - Complete
Davant Park Pool and Pool House 15537 Highway 15, Davant	Civic-Rec - Repair - Complete
Diamond Park Diamond Field 25108 Diamond Road, Diamond	Recreation - Replace - Complete
Fort Jackson Historical Site 220 Herbert Harvey Drive, Triumph	Fort - Repair - Construction
Fort Jackson Playing Fields 220 Herbert Harvey Drive, Triumph	Recreation - Improved - Planning
Leroy Harvey Park Playground 40196 Highway 23, Boothville	Recreation - Replace - Complete
Port Sulphur Consolidated Comm. Ctr. Building 278 Civic Drive, Port Sulphur	Community Center - Consolidated - Complete
Port Sulphur Golf Course & Club House Renovation 28530 Highway 23, Port Sulphur	Recreation - Alternate - Submitted for Review
Port Sulphur Park Playing Fields 278 Civic Drive, Port Sulphur	Recreation - Alternate - Submitted for Review
Recreation Dept. North Repair 499 F. Edward Herbert Blvd, Belle Chasse	Recreation - Repair - Complete
Oakville Park Athletic Fields 217 W. Saint Peter Street, Oakville	Recreation - Replace - Complete
Empire Ball Fields Repair Fields Highway 11 North, Empire (N. of Doratheas Ln)	Recreation - Alternate - Submitted for Review
Fort Jackson Football Change Location 220 Herbert Harvey Drive, Triumph	Recreation - Change of Location - Planning
Roger Halphen Park Field and Recreation Facilities 210 Cazezu Drive, Buras	Recreation - Replace - Complete
Ironton Park Replace Ballfield 150 Ironton Road, Ironton	Recreation- Replace - Complete
Davant Park Pool and Pool House 15537 Highway 15, Davant	Civic-Rec - Repair - Complete













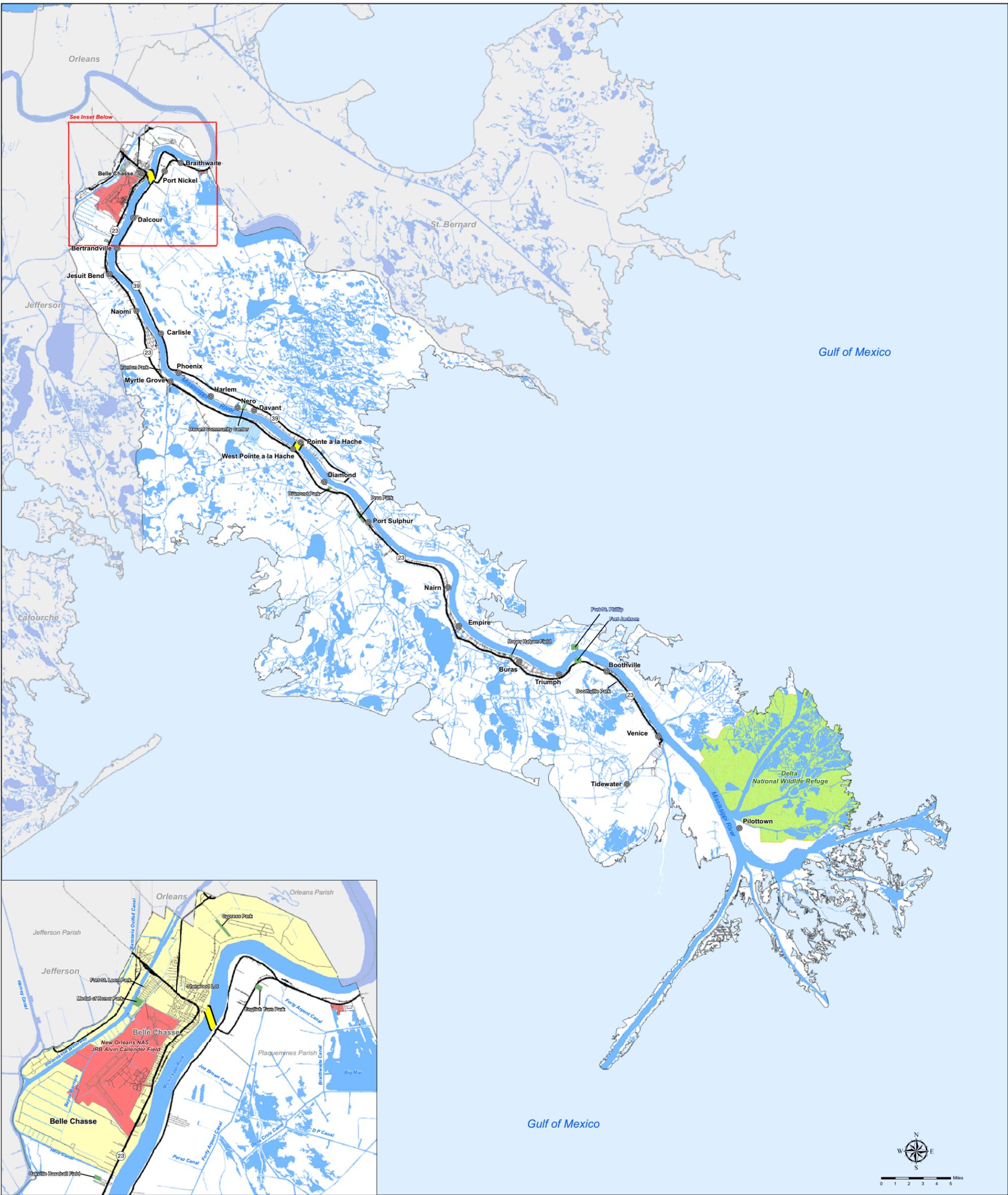












Comprehensive Master Plan
Plaquemines Parish,
Louisiana

Parks & Recreation Map

LEGEND		
State Highway	Ferry Crossings	Parks
Local Roads	Airport	Lakes, Ponds, Rivers
Railroad	Cities & Towns	National Wildlife Refuge

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