



Public Aquatics Best Practices

Case studies from Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee

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UGA Archway Partnership

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This report identifies best practices for developing and managing public pools, water parks, and aquatic centers based on internet research and interviews. Case studies include Baldwin Drive Aquatic Center (Tifton, GA), Decatur Pools and Aquatic Programs (Decatur, GA), Lynch Park Pool (Newnan, GA), Memorial South West Lap Pool & North West Lap and Kiddie Pool (Moultrie, GA), Moss Farms Diving (Moultrie, GA), Splash in the Boro (Statesboro, GA), Point Mallard (Decatur, AL), and Wetlands at Persimmon Ridge (Jonesborough, TN).

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Executive Summary

This report presents case studies of publicly owned and operated pools, water parks and aquatic centers in Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee, as well as best practices gleaned from this research. This report is intended to provide information to local governments in the southeastern United States interested in developing or improving public aquatic facilities and programs.

Case studies included in this report were developed based on internet research and phone interviews with representatives of eight publicly owned and operated pools, water parks and aquatic centers. Research and interviews took place from August 2011 through March 2013. The appendices section of this report includes interview transcripts and profiles of the following eight publicly owned and operated aquatic facilities:

- Lynch Park Pool (Newnan, GA)
- Decatur Pools and Aquatic Programs (Decatur, GA)
- Baldwin Drive Aquatic Center (Tifton, GA)
- Memorial S.W. Lap Pool and N.W. Lap and Kiddie Pool (Moultrie, GA)
- Moss Farms Diving (Moultrie, GA)
- Splash in the Boro (Statesboro, GA)
- Wetlands at Persimmon Ridge (Jonesborough, TN)
- Point Mallard (Decatur, AL)

General comparison of public pools, water parks and aquatic centers

Information presented in order to compare attractions and admissions of regional pools, water parks and aquatic centers.

Facility	City	Season	Attractions	Admission Fee
Baldwin Drive Aquatic Center	Tifton, GA	May to early August	8 lane 25 meter X 25 yard pool lap pool zero to 2 foot kiddie fun pool concession area restrooms dressing facilities	Individual Admission Weekdays Individual: \$2.00 Individual Admission Saturdays Individual all ages: \$3.00 Individual Admission Sundays (Parent/Child/Grandchild or Adult Couple) Individual all ages: \$3.00 Family: \$10.00 Season Pass Family of 4 Pass: \$50.00 + \$5.00 for each additional family member Individual Pass: \$25.00 Camps/Church/Groups prior to afternoon hours Individual all ages (max 1.5 hours): \$1.50
Decatur Pools and Aquatic Programs	Decatur, GA	Memorial Day through early August	Glenlake pool Ebster pool McKoy pool Swim lessons Swim team	Daily Admissions General Admission: \$3 res, \$5 non-res Children 1 and under: Free res, \$3 non-res 2-17 years: \$2 res, \$3 non-res 60 & over: Free res, \$5 non-res Season Passes Individual 2-13 yrs: \$3 res, \$60 non-res Individual 14-59 yrs: \$45 res, \$90 non-res Household (5 or less): \$125 res, \$250 non-res Household (5 or more): \$125 + \$10 ea. add. res, \$250 + \$20 ea. add. non-res
Lynch Park Pool	Newnan, GA	Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day	4,200 sq. ft. pool 42 ft. wide zero entry Mushroom water feature 4 lanes of lap swimming Water slide with catch pool Splash fountain Tables and shade umbrellas	\$2 per person for the day or \$25 per person for the season
Memorial S.W. Lap Pool and N.W. Lap and Kiddie Pool	Moultrie, GA	May to September	8 lane 25 meter lap pool showers locker room handicapped access	swim team is \$35/month; lessons are \$30/session for 8 lessons; admission is \$2/adult and \$1/child

Facility	City	Season	Attractions	Admission Fee
Moss Diving Center	Moultrie, GA	year round	Diving well, camp, training facility	lessons cost \$65/month
Splash in the Boro	Statesboro, GA	Mid-May to Labor Day with competition and therapy pools available all year	Flowrider wave- only one in GA Spray Ground for all ages Mat Racer Water slides Lazy river Play Pool Leisure Pool Lane Pool & Therapy Pool Dome for indoor swimming	\$12 adult, \$10 children under 48", under 48" free, discounts available for residents First season pass only \$60 each, any additional passes only \$50 each.
Point Mallard	Decatur, AL	Late May to Labor Day	Wave pool Pro Bowl Slide Squirt Factory and Duck Pond Speed slides Water slides Olympic pool Sandy Beach with complimentary loungers Lazy River Splash pad	GENERAL ADMISSION: Children (Ages 5 - 11) \$13.00 Adults (12 and 61) \$18.00 Seniors (62+) \$13.00 Children 4 and under FREE HALF PRICE DAYS: Mondays - Thursdays* *Excluding Holidays. No discount coupons valid on half price days. SEASON PASSES: Individual: \$99.00 (ages 5+) Family of four (same household): \$300.00 Each additional family member is \$75.00 Senior (ages 62+): \$75.00 Military Discount Season Pass with ID: \$75.00
Wetlands at Persimmon Ridge	Jonesborough, TN	Late May to early August	Rain tree 80 foot enclosed fiberglass flume slide 100 foot open fiberglass flume slide 200 foot giant fiberglass flume slide Water Bubblers Tumble Buckets Lazy River with tube rental available for \$3 Zero depth wading area Children's Otter Slide Pavilions for shade Lounge/ Deck Chairs Full Service Café Covered Dining area Lockers for rent Sand Volleyball court	Admission–Day Passes: Adults (13 years and up) \$12 Children (4-12 years) \$9 Senior (55+) \$9 Children (3 and under) Free 1/2 price after 3 pm. *Discounts are available to non-profit groups (day passes only): Season Passes Adults (13 years and up) \$80 Children (4-12 years) \$60 Senior (55+) \$60 Children (3 and under) Free

Comparison of demographics, and financial and operational characteristics

Information presented to compare community demographics, management cost and revenue of regional pools, water parks and aquatic centers.

Waterpark	City (County)	County Population	County Median Household Income	Initial Start-up Cost	Estimated Average Annual Net Revenue	Waterpark Capacity	Estimated Average Annual Admissions	Number of Employees
Baldwin Drive Aquatic Center	Tifton, GA (Tift)	41,461	\$37,414	\$1.08 M pool \$1.1 M sun shade	\$70K loss	200	4700 pool & rentals 1700-5000 per competition	1 FT Parks & Rec 12-13 seasonal
Decatur Pools and Aquatic Programs	Decatur, GA (DeKalb)	699,893	\$51,712	The upgrades cost approximately: • McKoy: \$1 million • Glenlake: \$800K • Ebster: \$1 million	• McKoy \$40K • Glenlake: \$30 and \$50 for season passes • Ebster: \$4-5K • Swim lessons/camps: \$12K for lessons and \$8K for pool rentals	Unavailable	Ebster – 2892 McKoy - 19856 Glenlake -31425	1 FT, 1 PT, and approximately 50 seasonal employees
Lynch Park Pool	Newnan, GA (Coweta)	129,629	\$61,015	Unavailable	loss of less than 30K	Unavailable	Unavailable	1 FT 1 PT 10-15 seasonal
Memorial S.W. Lap Pool and N.W. Lap and Kiddie Poole and Moss Diving Center	Moultrie, GA (Colquitt)	46,137	\$33,345	Unavailable	\$26,000	100 people (SW and NW pools)	6,600 people (both pools) for 10 week season	27 aquatic staff from May-August; 10 staff September-October; 2 staff October-April
Splash in the Boro	Statesboro, GA (Bulloch)	70,217	\$33,838	\$5.4 million (\$4.2 million expansion in 2009)	\$200,000	2100	157,000	4 FTE 210 seasonal
Point Mallard	Decatur, AL (Morgan)	119,490	\$40,317	Unavailable	\$400,000-\$500,00 for the waterpark while complex attempts to break even each year	6000	150,000-180,000	2 FTE and 200 seasonal
Wetlands at Persimmon Ridge	Jonesborough, TN (Washington)	122979 City pop: 5,500 (pool is not funded by county)	\$39,876	Unavailable	\$100,000	Unavailable	Unavailable	1 FTE 80-100 seasonal

Baldwin Drive Aquatic Center

Tifton, GA

<http://www.tiftcounty.org/departmentPage.php?dp=2&pg=70&nm=GRPA%20State%20B/C%20Swim%20Meet>

Overview & History

Tifton has had a pool for a number of years, but by the late 1990's it was beginning to leak. Local government conducted a community needs assessment and realized that there were a lot of young people in the community involved in competitive swimming. This led local government to redevelop the pool for community use and to host competitive swim practices and meets.

Funding & Revenue

Renovations to the pool cost approximately \$1.08 million, and the later addition of a sun shade cost approximately \$55K. Both the renovation and sun shade addition were 99% SPLOST funded with the balance made up using swim competition fees, user fees, and other fees. Despite the high attendance (1700-5000 people) at competitive swim meets, the pool does not generate money, and typically operates at a \$70K loss. Nevertheless, the broader economic impact of having a pool with the capacity to host competitive meets has been extremely positive for the local community.



Management & Governance

The facilities are managed by full-time and seasonal employees from the County Parks and Recreation Department. Management of pool operations has been retained in-house as opposed to contracted out in order to ensure control over pool closures in inclement weather. The county assumes all liability for the pool.

Successes

- Popular with residents
- Large numbers of visitors from over 28 counties in Georgia have positive impact on local economy

Challenges

- Pool does not generate enough revenue to cover cost of operations
- Parking during swim meets can be a challenge

Decatur Pools & Aquatics Programs

Decatur, GA

<http://www.decaturga.com/index.aspx?page=179>

Overview & History

Decatur has had all three of its municipal pools for over thirty years, and by 2000 they were beginning to have problems. Around the same period, the city began to invest in downtown redevelopment and decided to include parks and recreation facilities in their plans. Access to clean, safe, affordable, and attractive pools were framed as a public health issue, and plans were made to redevelop the pools to meet this community need. The redevelopment plans did not include the addition of new water features, simply upgrades to the existing facilities. These upgrades were coupled with increased promotion of swim classes and competitive teams, so participation in swimming amongst youth and families grew tremendously.

Funding & Revenue

The City Manager developed a plan to pay for renovations that included a combination of bond sales, as well as residential and business taxes. These funds paid for close to \$3 M total in upgrades to the three pools. Since the renovations and increased participation in classes and teams, the aquatics program essentially breaks even, which is an accomplishment for a community this size.



Management & Governance

Around 2000, the city began to explore private contracting options for water quality and water safety management. Over the years they have contracted with a variety of companies. They are happy with this set-up, although they did choose to bring front office staff back in house to reduce the cost of, and increase quality control over the pool admissions process.

Successes

- Increased participation in swim classes and swim teams helps meet public health goals.
- Revenue from admissions covers the cost of operations.
- Efforts to promote swim classes and teams have proven successful.
- Flexible admissions fees and policies increase access to lower income residents.
- Contracting with private firm to provide for water quality (chemicals, etc.) and water safety (lifeguards, training, etc.).



Challenges

- Still need to keep an eye on break down of costs for specific functions (e.g. front office staff that handle pool admissions) to ensure that private firms are providing cost-effective services that meet the community's expectations for quality.

Lynch Park Pool

Newnan, GA

<http://www.coweta.ga.us/Index.aspx?page=1150>



Overview & History

For over forty years the City of Newnan and Coweta County have worked together to operate Lynch Park Pool. The original pool was built in Newnan several decades ago and had fallen into disrepair. Three to four years ago, the city rebuilt the facility using SPLOST funds, adding additional features including a water slide, and mushroom feature. The community supported the SPLOST and the plans to rebuild the facility from the beginning. The renovated facility is popular with local residents and attracts some out-of-town visitors.

Funding & Revenue

Renovations to the pool were paid for by the city using SPLOST funds. Admission to the pool is only \$2 for residents and non-residents alike, which is slightly less expensive than admission to similar facilities in the area. People are literally lined up to get into the pool throughout the summer. The pool continues to operate at a loss, however, with the city and county splitting the difference to cover operations.

Management & Governance

The pool was originally built on land owned by the city, and throughout its existence, the city has been financially responsible for the pool facilities and equipment. The County Commission of Coweta has provided the staff and supplies necessary to ensure day-to-day operations of the pool. A full-time county employee manages daily operations during the pool season (Memorial Day to Labor Day) with support from a part-time Pool Attendant, and 10-15 part-time seasonal workers.

Successes

- Popular with residents
- Renovation process took place during the off season and facility reopened the next summer
- City-County partnership

Challenges

- Low price admission popular with residents but means pool operates at a loss
- Could have “gone bigger” with renovation but based attendance projections on attendance prior to renovation, and underestimated increased popularity of facility

Memorial South West Lap Pool and North West Lap and Kiddie Pool

Moultrie, GA

Overview & History

Moultrie's South West Lap Pool is a 25 yard competitive outdoor pool with 8 lanes. The facility features a modern bath house with handicapped accessible facilities that include shower, rest rooms, locker rooms, offices and storage rooms. Onsite activities include lap swimming, invitational swim meets, competitive swim team practices and group swim lessons.

The North West pool also has a small bath house, lap pool with 2 diving boards, picnic shelter and a shallow kiddie pool that includes water features.

Funding & Revenue

Public pool admission is \$2 per adult and \$1 per child. Last year, the South West pool averaged approximately 45 visitors/day and the North West pool averaged approximately 65 visitors/day during public pool time.

In 2012, facility rentals for birthday parties, group outings, and other non-commercial events in both pools exceeded admission revenue 3 to 1. The pools are open to regular public use for 10 weeks of the year and are open for rental 5 months of the year. Facility usage is generally balanced between city and county residents.

The pools are operated by the City of Moultrie to provide safe and affordable leisure aquatics opportunities to the community and are not financially self-sustaining.



Management & Governance

The recreation director is a certified pool operator and oversees all aquatic operations including maintenance. He hires an aquatics director who in turn hires, schedules, trains and supervises lifeguards and other pool staff. City Public Works & Facilities departments assist with general maintenance tasks but specific pool repairs may either be made by the director and his staff or contracted to a local pool specialist.



Successes

- A SPLOST referendum was passed to fund pool repairs at each facility over the next 6 years.
- A competitive dive and swim program helps to draw visitors to the area during summer months to increase local revenue.
- Private pool rentals have helped increase revenue to offset operating deficits from public pool use.
- Schools and other organizations capitalize on pool rentals for day outings and parties.
- Resources such as consultant contacts, professional workshops and national publications have helped identify opportunities for the director to make improvements to the pool (including maintenance practices, upgrades and equipment modifications that increase operating efficiency).

Challenges

- There aren't many activity options for older kids in the pools. Water features such as slides would make the pools more interesting to a broader age range.
- Pool hours will be reduced this year due to budget constraints and below normal public attendance in 2012.
- It has been difficult to identify and accrue additional funding for needed pool renovations and expansion projects.

Moss Farms Diving Center

Moultrie, GA

<http://www.mossfarmsdiving.com/>



Overview & History

The construction of this world-class diving center was funded privately by Moss Farms Diving on a city owned property. The developed facility was donated to the city for ongoing maintenance. The space also houses an indoor training gym.

Funding & Revenue

The diving center hosts 3-4 national dive meets each year. Students purchase memberships as well as pay for lessons and camps. Private donations from businesses and other fundraising events help to support the dive program. This facility is not typically open to the public however it supports activities year round.

Management & Governance

The diving program is managed by a private nonprofit. However, the facility is partially staffed and fully maintained by the city recreation department.



Successes

- This is a world class diving facility and training center. It is well designed for major competitions.
- The diving center and program is a source of community pride. The local high school dive team is extremely successful as a result of access to this diving program. They have won state championships 35 out of the past 37 years.
- Competitions contribute economically to the community.
- The pool is of durable design and construction.

Point Mallard

Decatur, AL

<http://www.pointmallardpark.com/waterpark.php>

Overview & History

J. Gilmer Blackford, Decatur's Mayor during the 1960's, envisioned building Point Mallard as part of a larger complex. He had heard about wave pools, and after making a trip to Germany to see one for himself, he initiated plans to build the first wave pool in America. Today Point Mallard Park is a 500-acre family park that includes an 18 hole golf course, a 25-acre wooded campground, tennis courts, batting cages, a three mile hiking/jogging/biking trail, a driving range, an indoor ice rink and a water park featuring America's first wave pool. The golf course, campground and ice complex are open year round.

Funding & Revenue

Blackford approached the Tennessee Valley Authority and worked out a deal where the TVA granted the city a free lease on the property in perpetuity as long as the city continued to use it for recreational purposes. The water park was built with federal grants from the Land-Water Conservation Fund (LWCF); the city did not initially have to make any expenditure to build the park. Later, the city raised a bond to pay for an expansion to the complex. The complex functions as an enterprise fund.

Management & Governance

Point Mallard is owned and operated by the City of Decatur's Department of Parks & Recreation. The Decatur Parks and Recreation Department is operated by a permanent, full-time staff, with the assistance of a volunteer citizens' advisory board. Board appointments are made by the City Council for a term of five years. The park is operated by two full-time staff within the Parks and Recreation Department as well as 200-250 seasonal employees, mostly high school and college students. The park requires year-round maintenance and marketing. The water park is covered by the city's insurance policy.



Successes

- **Public Benefit:** The complex provides a fun, safe venue for family fun and serves as the, "focal point for the city."
- **Jobs:** 2 FT and 200-250 seasonal employees.
- **Revenue:** \$400,000 to \$500,000 annually
- **Promotions:** An initiative where half-price season passes were offered for a day generated \$220,000 in sales with only 40% of those who purchased passes entering the park.
- **Community Attraction:** The park attracts tourists and new residents.
- **Pride and Prestige:** People at national conferences identify Decatur with Point Mallard. The city is known for having the first wave pool in the US.

Challenges

- **Complex Revenue:** Although the water park has been in the black almost from the beginning, the complex overall is usually in the red and can become a "political hot potato."
- **Skeptics:** Some initially balked at the idea of the park or the water park, but when they realized the federal government was paying for the project they quickly got on board.
- **Accounting & Public Perception:** Although the complex functions as an enterprise fund, in reality it is integrated into the City's structure and budget. While the park has made money from the beginning, the overall complex has not generated revenue to cover expenses. This leads some critics to call for the closure of the park and makes the water park a point of controversy.

Splash in the Boro

Statesboro, GA

<http://www.splashintheboro.com/>

Overview & History

The original idea for Mill Creek Regional Park and Splash in the Boro began within local government in the 1990's. Splash in the Boro opened in 2004 within Mill Creek Regional Park. Multiple water features include the only Flowrider in Georgia. During the winter months, one of the pools is enclosed under a dome for year-round swimming.

Funding & Revenue

The construction of Mill Creek Regional Park and the development, renovation and expansion of Splash in the Boro have been paid for through a 1% SPLOST. Although some officials were initially concerned about the potential burden on tax payers, supporters convinced the county commissioners to make the project part of a SPLOST referendum in 1994. In 1997, voters approved another SPLOST which paid for the construction of Splash in the Boro. Admission fees and concessions revenue have made the park profitable almost every year. Splash in the Boro is set up as an enterprise account and contributes to the bottom line of the municipal and county government.



Management & Governance

Mill Creek Regional Park is part of the Statesboro-Bulloch County Parks and Recreation Department (SBCPRD) whose mission is to provide quality, diversity, wholesome parks and recreation services to meet the needs of the citizens of Bulloch County. A seven member Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (RAC) provides guidance for the department.

The park is owned and operated by the SBCPRD. Splash staff members include a full-time Director, Assistant, Maintenance Supervisor and Guest Service Marketing Supervisor. All other staff are seasonal employees (15 life guards, 25 guest service attendance staff, 40 concession workers, 10 maintenance).



Liability insurance is included in the county policy and costs approximately \$60,000 annually. Government also pays for a third-party risk management study each season to ensure that the park has adequate policies and procedures, staff training, and maintenance to provide a safe environment for staff and guests.

Successes

- **Attendance:** 90,000 guests in first season and about 160,000 guests per season thereafter.
- **Tourism:** 25% of the guests are local residents and over 75% are from outside the local area. Splash has become a destination for people from Macon, Florida and South Carolina. The economic impact of the park has been "wonderful."
- **Expansion:** A \$4 million expansion in 2008 grew capacity and increased attendance (expansion financed by borrowing against the value of Splash).
- **Community Attraction:** The Park has drawn industry, businesses and residents which allowed the county to grow over the past eight years.
- **Pride:** Community members and elected officials speak about the Park with pride.

Challenges

- **Staffing:** Attendance exceeded expectations during the first summer of operations and standard hiring procedures made it difficult to hire the additional staff needed.
- **Maintenance:** Year-round maintenance, especially preventative maintenance is incredibly important.

Wetlands Water Park at Persimmon Ridge

Jonesborough, TN

<http://wetlandsjonesborough.com/index.html>

Overview & History

Bob Browning, Jonesborough's Town Administrator, originally conceived of the Wetlands Water Park at Persimmon Ridge after observing the positive family and community atmosphere created during a family trip to Disney World. The Wetlands Water Park is thus designed to provide guests with a relaxing, enjoyable, and safe family experience.



Wetlands Water Park was built inside of the 130 acre Persimmon Ridge Park, a municipal park with hiking trails and a small campground.

Funding & Revenue

Jonesborough applied for and received a 50/50 matching state grant to pay for the initial development of the park. Tennessee offers matching grants to support small municipalities with local projects. Jonesborough was able to count materials, labor from municipal water and sewage departments, and donated services from a local architect as in kind matches for state funds. Admission fees and concessions revenue have made the park profitable almost every year. Since the initial development of the water park, the city has made an additional capital outlay of about \$300,000 to pay for upgrades and major maintenance. The water park is an enterprise fund and revenue is deposited in the general fund. Recently the city has begun to consider setting aside a percentage of revenues each year to pay for maintenance and upgrades (an additional water feature would cost about \$1,000,000).

Management & Governance



Jonesborough has a standing Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to advise city leadership on an on-going basis. The Park is managed by a full-time Director under the supervision of the Jonesboro Director of Parks and Recreation. The park also employs 80-100 seasonal staff over the summer- mostly high school and college aged youth. The city uses staff from several other departments to maintain the water park throughout the year and prepare for the season beginning in January.

The water park is included in the city's insurance policy (TML). The staff have up-to-date training, and take precautions to ensure that the facility is properly maintained. A daily safety check list is used to review all water features, pools, and every room to make sure that nothing is being overlooked.

Successes

- **Public Benefit:** The Park fulfills its intended purpose of providing a positive, safe venue for family fun. Late day admission is half price to give a break to local residents. Local non-profits and youth-focused government programs are also offered discounts or free admission. This builds goodwill with the community.
- **Jobs:** 1 FT and 80-100 seasonal employees.
- **Revenue:** \$100,000 last year
- **Tourism:** 20% of guests are from out of state and approximately 80% are from Tennessee.

- **Pride:** According to the Director of Parks and Recreation, constructing and operating a successful water park has “given our community confidence that we can achieve whatever we set our minds to.”

Challenges

- **Safety:** Remaining vigilant to prevent accidents is a constant focus.
- **Skeptics:** Initially some residents were skeptical about this use of public funds, but they have been won over.
- **Capacity:** Other water parks have less capacity than needed in order to cover operational costs with admission fees.

Best Practices & Lessons Learned

Development

- Clearly define the mission of the project (i.e. public health, revenue generation, community asset, etc.) and frame public discussions, budget numbers and designs in terms of the mission.
- Consider “the market” so that needs are met, a niche can be carved out and services aren’t duplicated.
- Design the park so that capacity aligns with revenue goals. If the park is too small it will not have the capacity to pay for itself through admission fees and concessions.
- Ensure access issues such as parking are considered early in the design process.
- As possible, plan space that will accommodate future needs and equipment additions in years to come.
- Involve community members in the planning process before funding comes to a vote.
- If possible, use in-kind services (e.g. architect designs) or inter-government transfers to offset design and construction costs. Using funding streams outside of local tax revenue may help win over skeptics.
- Use municipal labor (pipe fitters, electricians, etc.) to off-set construction costs.

Management

- Have a plan for on-going maintenance that makes use of staff from other municipal and county departments.
- Plan for flexible staffing in case park attendance exceeds expectations.
- Invest in continuous staff training.
- Utilize professional memberships and consultants to ensure current management practices that reduce liability and costs.
- Explore contracting with private companies to reduce costs of management and liability coverage.
- Set aside a percentage of park revenue to pay for maintenance, regular upgrades and expansions.
- Allow private rentals of the facility to increase revenue.
- Develop seasonal schedule around personnel availability.

Marketing and Outreach

- If revenue is a major consideration, invest in marketing geared toward out-of-town visitors (e.g. radio, TV, interstate welcome centers, magazines, website, social media, interstate billboard).
- To produce revenue, consider special offers geared toward local residents to foster continued support (e.g. half-price admission after 3pm, half-price admission Monday-Thursday, etc.)
- If public health is a focus, ensure advertising to and access for targeted residents.
- Market the program according to its mission (for example, internet and billboards are more likely to reach out-of-county residents while flyers through the schools may promote local usage).
- Maintain contact information from group sales for yearly follow-up.
- Track usage of the pool (particularly visitors’ county of residence, frequency of use and the efficacy of specific marketing tools).
- Track and publish park outcomes to foster continued community support.
- Incorporate features that appeal to a wide age range of users such as slides and diving boards.
- As possible, link facilities into neighborhoods, parks and other resources.

APPENDICES

Baldwin Drive Aquatic Center



204 Baldwin Drive
Tifton, GA 31794

229-387-7464

<http://www.tiftcounty.org/departmentPage.php?dp=2&pg=70&nm=GRPA%20State%20B/C%20Swim%20Meet>

Baldwin Drive Aquatic Center is a 25 m x 25 yard competition pool, with a 0' entry depth fun pool, locker rooms, concessions area, and showers. The facility is a GRPA District and State annual host site. The pool is open May through early August to the public. The Tift County Recreation Department offers open, lap swim, lifeguard training at the facility. The pool is also available for rental for private parties.

Budget info at:

<http://www.tiftcounty.org/departmentHome.php?dp=6>

1. To start with, would you please confirm your name, title, phone number and e-mail in case I have any follow up questions?

Craig Sowell
Recreation Director
229-382-3262
craig.sowell@tiftcounty.org

2. How did plans for the waterpark initially develop? What was the initial impetus for the city/county to develop a water park (e.g. citizen or government official proposed the idea, approached by private developer)?

Tifton has had an outdoor Olympic size pool for a while, but it was beginning to leak. We conducted an assessment of the community's needs and realized that there were a lot of children involved in swimming and participating with swim teams. We decided to tear out the old pools and re-build a competition pool.

The redevelopment took place from 2000 to 2002, and we reopened the pool in 2002. The renovations to the pool cost about \$1.08 million. We later added a sun shade to the pool that cost another \$55K. We currently have an L shaped pool that meets competition and public needs; this includes an 8 lane (25 yards) by 6 lane (25 meters) pool with a capacity of 234,000 gallons, and a fun pool with zero depth entry with a capacity of 19,000 gallons.

3. How do you manage the water park (in-house, private contractor, etc.)? What factors did you consider when you were deciding on this approach? How have you addressed the liability inherent in running a water park?

From pretty much the beginning, we committed to managing day-to-day operations in-house. Local government and department staff have been managing this pool since the 1940's, so although we have looked into third party contractors, so far we have chosen not to go this route because we have well-trained staff who can meet our needs. Also, managing the pool in-house allows us to maintain control over pool closure decision due to inclement weather.

The facilities are managed by employees from the Parks and Recreation Department of the County, and are under the control of the County Board of Commissioners. Pretty much all of our pool staff are PT, and they handle both swim programming and pool maintenance. We have about 12-13 lifeguards during the summer who have 7-8 guards per shift. We rotate lifeguards between different stations regularly.

Our user group profile changes depending on day and the time of day. Our facility is open to minors only on Tuesday through Friday each week. Saturdays we are open to everyone, Sundays are family days, and Mondays and Wednesdays we are closed for maintenance. We charge admission for individuals, and rent the pool out for private parties. We close the gate when we reach about 200 people in the pool area; the area can actually hold more people, but we are concerned with functionality, and our ability to observe swimmers and control for safety.

The county has liability coverage for the pool. We make sure that our lifeguards are Red-Cross certified; that the head guards do skills assessments/checklists every day, and that all lifeguards practice with torpedoes and do other drills on a weekly basis.

4. Looking back, what would you say were your greatest successes in developing and managing a water park? Is there anything that caught you off guard or that you would have done differently in retrospect?

Day to day, a typical pool is not going to be a money maker. We are not like some other pools that have attractions and can charge higher admission fees. We do have a 0-18" Fun Pool, but we would actually prefer to have a splashpad because they are easier to maintain. We only charge \$3/day or \$1/day for summer camp participants, although we do have a higher fee for competitions.

Competitions draw about 1700-5000 people into the area at one time, so they are a huge boon to the local economy. We have been fortunate to host district and state competitions that attract people from almost every county and 28 agencies. We estimate that this brings in almost one million dollars in direct revenue to the area. One challenging aspect of competitions has been ensuring adequate parking. We need room for 200-300 cars for competitions, so we have people park their cars at additional sites near the pool.

In terms of pool design, there are several important lessons from our experience. I think it is important to make sure that you understand all instructions for the storage and use of chemicals to maintain water quality prior to any development project. Depending on what part of country and even state you are in, the chemicals that you need to use may be different. In our case, I wish that we would have made storage arrangements to house chemicals so that we would not have to deal with some of the issues we currently face.

Accessibility is also an important and ever changing consideration based on linear footage and water capacity. We have decks for people in wheelchairs and a lift.

Finally, explore different types of pump design; think about chemical distribution; consider whether or not to automate the capacity to monitor all aspects of water quality, so that when critical staff are limited, you can still receive alerts.

5. What strategies did you use to finance the development of the water park? What were the original start-up capital costs and how was the project financed? Did you already have land for the park or did you have to acquire some?

Capital improvements and construction were 99% SPLOST funded. The rest of this cost was covered by swim competition user fees, swim team fees, and other fees.

6. If possible, please give me a sense of revenues and expense for the park for the past few years. Are you satisfied with the return on investment? Why or why not?

Overall, our pool is not successful financially because we lose about \$70K annually. To operate the pool it costs about \$20K to purchase chemicals, \$30K for electricity, and \$35K for labor from Memorial Day through August.

We get about 175-200 patrons every day, but our admission fees are low. We also generate some revenue from birthday parties, day cares and summer camp activities, water aerobics, and swim meets.

7. What has the public's reaction been throughout the process?

There has been minimal pushback from the community because of the positive economic impact of large events like competitive meets. I think this also has to do with the way that we went through the planning process too though; we had two years of down-time focused on planning, during which we made sure to solicit a lot of public input and buy-in. During the down-time period, when the pool was closed, we had people swimming in ditches and the like, and this underscored the fact that access to a clean pool was a public health concern. Also during this phase when the discussion turned to whether or not the pool should be re-built at all there was a large outcry in support of rebuilding the pool. Still, there are some community members who do not think that swimming is important, but I believe this would be the case regardless of the sport.

Public info sessions, SPLOST hearings, listening sessions, and other vehicles for public involvement helped to make the redevelopment project a success. It is also important to ensure that the RFP process is fair and that qualifications for vendors are clear.

8. Are there any other reflections that you would like to share?

You may want to contact the following people to get further insight into public pool development and management:

- Dalton Parks and Rec: Steve Card 706-278-5404 or scard@cityofdalton-ga.gov
- Douglas
- Albany
- Thomasville
- Moultrie
- Bainbridge
- Fitzgerald (old pool)
- Columbus building Natatorium
- Gainseville: Francis Meadows (newer facility)
- Cobb: Bob McAllister (numerous staff/day)

Decatur Pools & Aquatics Programs



Ebster Park Pool
404 W. Trinity Pl.
404-378-4303



Glenlake Pool
1121 Church St.
404-378-7671



McKoy Pool
534 McKoy St.
Decatur, GA 30030

<http://www.decaturga.com/index.aspx?page=179>

City of Decatur pools are designed to provide fun and safe family recreation. All city pools are open Memorial Day weekend through early August.

Ebster Pool offers a pool deck, snack area, shade shelter, morning swim lessons and Decatur's only diving board. Ebster is also the home of the Decatur Gators swim team. Constructed in the summer of 1981, it is the newest of Decatur's pools.

Glenlake Pool is the largest pool in Decatur, and also the busiest. It offers snack areas, a sun patio, shade shelter, and shallow water area for young children.

McKoy Pool reopened in 2007 with a new pool and bathhouse after being closed for five years due to a major water leak. The pool incorporates a zero depth entry area to increase access for elderly and handicapped swimmers, a bubbler for young children, and dedicated lap lanes that can be scheduled for adult-only lap swimming.

Budget info at:

<http://www.decaturga.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=3256>

1. To start with, would you please confirm your name, title, phone number and e-mail in case I have any follow up questions?

Greg White
Director of Active Living
404-377-0494
Greg.white@decaturga.com

Jabari Cole
Program Supervisor for Tennis and Aquatics
Jabari.cole@decaturga.com

2. How did plans for the waterpark initially develop? What was the initial impetus for the city/county to develop a water park (e.g. citizen or government official proposed the idea, approached by private developer)?

Decatur has had all three of its municipal pools for over thirty years. By 2000, the pools were quite old and had pump and plumbing issues. Decatur is a progressive city, however, and about that time our leaders decided to invest in the redevelopment of downtown and the municipal parks and recreation system. For parks and recreation, the redevelopment process began with the creation of an Athletic Master Plan; in the plan, access to public pools was framed as a public safety and active living issue.

The pools have become a social hub; a place where people can meet one another and spend time together. Good facilities help people to connect, and it is important to our community that we have such facilities. Our pools are located in neighborhoods so people can walk them, rather than drive, which cuts down on car traffic. They are also close to picnic shelters, baseball diamonds, skate parks, playgrounds, basketball courts, and green spaces, so people can participate in different activities at the same time.

Here is where things stand currently in terms of our pool redevelopment process:

- **McKoy** underwent renovation 5 years ago. It has a mom and tot pool with a 0' depth entrance, gets up to 4' deep and has a small waterfall feature. Another section of the pool includes lap lanes. Before the renovations this pool generated about \$1000 in revenue over a 3 month time frame. It now generates about \$40k over the same 3 month period.
- **Glenlake** is our largest pool with 300,000 gallons of water and a length of 50 meters. Since we redeveloped the bathhouse in 2010, it has become a more welcoming space.
- **Ebster** is a 180,000 gallon, 25m pool that serves as home base for our swim team. Currently, we are discussing upgrades to make it larger for swim competitions because we have seen a surge in swim team participation. Several years ago we began initiatives to teach young people how to swim, and since then our swim team has grown to 240 members. While this is a great problem to have, making a pool larger is nevertheless costly.

3. How do you manage the water park (in-house, private contractor, etc.)? What factors did you consider when you were deciding on this approach? How have you addressed the liability inherent in running a water park?

In the past, employees from the Recreation Department managed all of the municipal pools. They went to trainings fairly regularly since at least one employee had to be a Certified Pool Operator (CPO) for legal reasons, and the certification had to be renewed every five years. At a training in 1999, one of our employees talked to another public employee who had contracted a private pool manager to take care of their facilities. Upon further investigation, it made a lot of sense for us to go the same route since it was more cost effective for contractors to purchase chemicals, take on the liability of water quality management, and assume water management duties so that our employees could focus on other things.

Over the years we have worked with USA pools, Alpha Pools, Sears Pools, and now Dynamo Pools. We are very satisfied with Dynamo, and in fact were also happy with Sears; they just got a little too big for us.

Currently Dynamo Pools manages the chemicals and personnel needed to ensure water quality, provides lifeguards, and assumes liability for water quality and pool safety. The city has 15 front desk attendants in place so that we can ensure customer service, and maintain control over pool revenue (e.g. admission fees). We also hire swim instructors and other swim team staff to run our teams and camps. All municipal staff are covered by the city's insurance policy.

4. Looking back, what would you say were your greatest successes in developing and managing a water park? Is there anything that caught you off guard or that you would have done differently in retrospect?

I think our greatest success has been the development of our swim program, starting with lessons for younger children and leading to the expansion of our swim team. Our team has grown from 140 to 260 kids. I am also happy that we brought our front desk attendants back in-house. For a while they were staff from the pool management company, but I felt that we could save money if we brought them back in-house, and this has turned out to be the case. This move also allowed us to retain more control over customer service and the management of revenue from the pools.

5. What strategies did you use to finance the development of the water park? What were the original start-up capital costs and how was the project financed? Did you already have land for the park or did you have to acquire some?

This piece of the puzzle is really a testament to the genius of our City Manager who I believe used a combination of bonds, and residential and business taxes to pay for the renovations.

The upgrades cost approximately:

- McKoy \$1 million
- Glenlake: \$800K
- Ebster: \$1 million

The money did not alter our swimming pools very much it was mostly used to build new modern bathhouses and to repair our existing aquatic facilities. A full renovation of the pools would have cost about \$2-3 million.

6. If possible, please give me a sense of revenues and expense for the park for the past few years. Are you satisfied with the return on investment? Why or why not?

- McKoy \$40K
- Glenlake: \$30 and \$50 for season passes
- Ebster: \$4-5K
- Swim lessons/camps: \$12K for lessons and \$8K for pool rentals
- Expenses: \$65 including personnel

We began to look at the demographics of pool attendance in more detail last year and discovered that about 70% of the people coming to our pools are residents and 30% are non-residents. There has been some push-back around the non-resident admission fees since there is confusion about who actually pays city taxes, versus who has “Decatur” on their license plate, but we think we’re doing a good job educating people and this shouldn’t be a big issue next year. Our total attendance was down last year because of new pool in Clarkston.

We essentially break even. We made a commitment to keep our admission fees low because we see swimming as public safety issue and we’re tax payer funded. Although Decatur is a walking city, with a lot of free activities, so our residents tend to be in fairly good shape, we want to control for obesity.

The fact that we are a walkable community, with free things to do, and good infrastructure including parks and green spaces has transformed Decatur into a very active and family friendly city. We have actually won awards for the work we’ve done in these areas.

7. What has the public’s reaction been throughout the process?

The public wants the pools to stay open longer (currently they are open from Memorial Day to Labor Day). We decided to keep the pools open after the beginning of the school year on a limited basis so that parents could bring their small children. The problem with keeping the pools open for too long is that it is difficult to retain our seasonal staff; a lot of seasonal staff are high school and college students that have to go back to school themselves. Also, keeping the pools open is expensive in terms of upkeep because maintenance costs are constant while attendance revenue goes down.

8. Are there any other reflections that you would like to share?

We feel that it is important to provide access to swim lessons to lower-income youth and adults, and our efforts in this area have made a difference. Swim lessons, and admission are often free at Ebster (with a release from parents). This is important because we see access to pools as a public safety, and active living issue.

The fact that we break even is a testament to Jabari’s work promoting pools online and through a quarterly brochure.

Lynch Park Pool



The Lynch Park Pool is at Willie Lynch Park
23 Richard Allen Drive
Newnan, Georgia

770-254-3750



<http://www.coweta.ga.us/Index.aspx?page=1150>

The Lynch Park Pool is open for 14 weeks from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. The 4,200 sq. ft. pool includes a 42-foot-wide zero entry, a mushroom water feature, four lanes for recreational lap swimming, a dedicated catch pool for the water slide, a splash fountain for kids, and several tables and shade umbrellas.

The pool was funded through the City of Newnan's 2007 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax. The city and the county have worked together on the pool for almost 40 years. The city owns and maintains the pool, while the county provides for daily operations.

Budget: <http://www.coweta.ga.us/index.aspx?page=138>

1. To start with, would you please confirm your name, title, phone number and e-mail in case I have any follow up questions?

Melanie Gramling
Program Director at County Recreation Department
770-254-3750
mgramling@coweta.ga.us

2. How did plans for the waterpark initially develop? What was the initial impetus for the city/county to develop a water park (e.g. citizen or government official proposed the idea, approached by private developer)?

Originally Lynch Park Pool was just a pool. It went from 3.5ft to 10ft, and while it was not Olympic size, it did have a diving board. Before the renovation the pool was in pretty bad shape and it was clear that something needed to be done. It simply cost too much to maintain as it was.

Then 3-4 years ago the city rebuilt the entire facility. Since the City of Newnan did not have the necessary funds to pay for the rebuild and management of the facility on their own, the city and county worked out an agreement to make the renovation happen. The city built the new facility with SPLOST funds; there was no struggle to pass the SPLOST because the community saw the need, and the plans included a brand new park area alongside the pool, as well as renovated pipe structures for the field by pool, so the idea had a lot of support. The county pays for staff, namely me (Melanie), to manage the pool even though the facility is owned by the city.

3. How do you manage the water park (in-house, private contractor, etc.)? What factors did you consider when you were deciding on this approach? How have you addressed the liability inherent in running a water park?

As I said before I (Melanie) am a county employee. The joint agreement the city and county reached was that the city would continue to own and maintain the pool, while the county would staff it and maintain water quality. Funds to pay for lifeguards and treatment chemicals come from the county. If the building needs any sort of upkeep (e.g. painting) the city takes care of it. New equipment (e.g. wheelchair lift) is purchased by city. There is some discussion when new things need to happen- for example I informed the City that we were going to need to change the sand filter soon, but that we could also opt to purchase a more expensive glass filter. In this case the county is waiting for a decision from the city because equipment falls in their purview.

4. Looking back, what would you say were your greatest successes in developing and managing a water park? Is there anything that caught you off guard or that you would have done differently in retrospect?

I do not believe either the city or county realized how many people would end up using the renovated pool. People always seem to say, "We should have gone bigger," but in this case we really should have opted to build a bigger pool. The problem was that we projected attendance rates for the upgraded facility off of rates for the old pool; instead of remaining constant we saw an increase of more than 100% in terms of attendance.

There are a couple of days during the summer when we get excessive amounts of people, when I think it would be helpful to have more space available for people to sit around the pool, but for the most part the deck area is sufficient. I also think our picnic area and parking are adequate since the city developed more parking adjacent to and behind pool.

5. What strategies did you use to finance the development of the water park? What were the original start-up capital costs and how was the project financed? Did you already have land for the park or did you have to acquire some?

The city already owned the land, and as far as I know no additional land was purchased for the renovation.

The city actually had the funds available to pay for the expansion, and they planned to reimburse this fund with SPLOST revenue. As soon as the SPLOST passed they were able to start construction. The city did all of the sub-contracting for the new facility without county support. They closed the facility at end of one summer and redeveloped it in off season so they were able to reopen the pool next summer.

I (Melanie) have been working for the county for 15 years, so when I took on managing the pool these duties were just added to my other responsibilities. I actually had a hand in the management of the pool before the renovation, but had a pool attendant in place to oversee day to day operations. With the renovation, they wanted a FT person to oversee operation in the summer. I hire seasonal employees (e.g. life guards) and handle daily management. The county takes care of the supplies needed for day to day operations, but if I need any equipment (e.g. sun umbrellas, etc.) I have to go through the city. It takes about 10-15 seasonal employees to run pool, plus pool attendant (a PT county employee) who is my back up when I can't be there.

6. If possible, please give me a sense of revenues and expense for the park for the past few years. Are you satisfied with the return on investment? Why or why not?

With admission set at \$2/person, the pool is not a money maker. It does not typically operate in the black, and the city and county split the cost of making up the difference. When we first opened we were only charging \$1/person and our losses were more significant (around 30K). We decided to raise admission to \$2/person and saw less of a loss; I'm actually not sure exactly how much, but it was significant. Since then, we have not discussed raising admission fees anymore, but so far this has not happened.

7. What has the public's reaction been throughout the process?

The pool has become much more popular with people and attendance has gone up. With admission fees set at \$2/day we literally have people lined up to get in to the pool. The only negative thing that I have heard is that the pool should have a deep area reserved for adults. Right now the deepest area is 4ft and goes down to a 0ft clearance. We are super strict on swim wear rules because of our water pumps, but we do not get a lot of pushback on this. We have a lot of out of county residents who come in. Our admission fees are cheaper than those of other county pools because we don't charge out-of-county residents a higher fee.

The city-county partnership is critical for the pool, and it works well for our area. There are places where such a partnership might not work well (e.g. Fulton). Here it works because Newnan is small and has no Recreation Department of its own, so there is room for a partnership with the county.

Moultrie Pools and Aquatic Programs



Memorial South West Lap Pool
5th St. Southwest
229-890-5460

North West Lap and Kiddie Pool
1020 4th Ave. Southwest
229-668-0161

Moss Diving Center
1120 4th St. Southwest
229-798-8173
<http://www.mossfarmsdiving.com/>

Moultrie operates three separate facilities. The Memorial South West Lap Pool and the North West Kiddie and Lap Pool are fully public while the Moss Diving Center is a public-private partnership.

The South West pool has changing facilities and practice space for the swim team. The North West pool has two diving boards and a shallow kiddie pool with some features for play in addition to showers and a locker room. The Diving Center has a 400,000 gallon heated dive well with four one meter boards, four three meter boards, one five meter platform, one eight meter platform, one ten meter platform and a covered bleacher seating. It also has an indoor training facility with an office, conference/kitchen area, rest rooms, indoor diving boards, a dive pit and trampolines.

Adults are charged \$2 admission to the North West and South West pools and children are charged \$1. Scuba diving and swimming lessons are offered. Access to the Moss Diving Center is restricted to diving students, scuba classes or special events.

The North West and South West pools are open for a 10 week season and are open for rental 5 months of the year. Neither public pool has a significant online presence. Information for the Moss Center can be found on their website and in a NY Times article linked below:

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/11/sports/11diving.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Memorial Southwest Lap Pool and Northwest Lap and Kiddie Pool Moultrie

1. To start with, would you please confirm your name, title, phone number and e-mail in case I have any follow up questions?

Terry Peek
Recreation Director
terry.peek@moultriega.com
229-668-0028

2. How did plans for the aquatic center initially develop? What was the initial impetus for the city/county to develop a pool (e.g. citizen or government official proposed the idea, approached by private developer)?

Northwest Lap and Kiddie Pool,
Memorial Southwest Lap Pool
Dive well with 10 Meter tower (used for training in the Atlanta Olympics)
All pools developed were before my time... when I arrived 9 years ago, all 3 complexes were already open.

3. How do you manage the aquatic center (in-house, private contractor, etc.)? What factors did you consider when you were deciding on this approach? How have you addressed the liability inherent in running an aquatic center?

We manage and maintain the pools ourselves. We hire a seasonal aquatics coordinator who supervises and schedules the aquatic staff of approximately 27 seasonal employees. The coordinator makes sure that pool are operated within state and federal guidelines and adequate staff are trained and available for public pool operations as well as swim and dive meets.

The Recreation Department administrative coordinator handles pool facility rentals.

Terry (who is the certified pool operator as well as the Recreation Director) coordinates all pool maintenance.

Public works and facility maintenance completes most maintenance projects.

Lifeguards sometimes help with the maintenance such as adding chemicals to the pools. If more specialized labor and knowledge is needed, a local pool maintenance company is contracted for repairs.

Being a certified pool operator, the Recreation Director has a working knowledge of state and federal pool regulations and standard operation procedures. Additionally, he has access to pool consultants and other aquatic professionals that assist with troubleshooting water chemistry and more complex pool issues. Professional memberships, monthly newsletters, publications, and networking among other recreation and pool industry professionals has also assisted the Director in identifying and implementing pool management decisions.

4. Looking back, what would you say were your greatest successes in developing and managing a water park? Is there anything that caught you off guard or that you would have done differently in retrospect?

We've been able to streamline pools and make repairs that have helped us lower the operational budget for each pool. For instance, we've installed variable frequency drives and other components that have increased energy efficiency. Keeping up on new practices in pool management has increased efficiencies.

5. What strategies did you use to finance the development of the water park? What were the original start-up capital costs and how was the project funded/financed? Did you already have land for the park or did you have to acquire some?

Unable to answer. Land for all facilities was owned by the City of Moultrie.

6. If possible, please give me a sense of revenues and expense for the park for the past few years. Are you satisfied with the return on investment? Why or why not?

Our return is really low. I'm not sure why. Participation numbers are down at both pools. Due to budget cuts, we're reducing hours – instead of 2 pools running 6 days/week in season, we'll have only one open 6 days/weeks. It amounts to a catch 22: we can increase fees but fewer people will come. Entry is \$2/adult; \$1/child. We can't be self-supporting at those rates. We average 45 people/day at the Southwest pool and 65 people/day at the Northwest pool. No more than 100 visitors allowed in a pool at a given time. The pools are typically open 1-5pm daily so we can rent the pool and offer swim lessons in the mornings. Swim teams use the pools to practice in the afternoons. The pools are closed on Sunday to allow chemicals to balance. Both pools are in needs of repair.

“We have found that facility rentals for birthday parties, group outings, and other non-commercial events have greatly assisted our revenue production (excluding the Dive Well which we do not rent). During the 10 week public admission season, pool rentals are only offered during non-public pool hours from 10-12 AM or from 5:30 -7:30 PM. During the off season, from May until June or from August until October 1, we rent the pools throughout the day. We close for all public pool use from October 1 until May 1. The Dive Well is again the exception since it is heated and used for Dive Team training and meets only. Pool rental revenues in 2012 exceeded daily admission fees by a ratio of approximately 3 to 1.”

7. What has the public's reaction been throughout the process?

We've not had complaints about the pools. People do want them open longer in the summer (we currently open 10 weeks/ year due to the limitations of staff funding). Our public appreciates the aquatic facilities. Most of the people who use our public pool hours are local. However people do come from other counties to dive on the dive team.

I'd love to renovate the pools and add other features such as water slides. Currently there are opportunities to play at the interactive pool at Northwest and kids love it. Schools come in and rent the facilities and bring students in the spring. However, there is nothing for older kids to do at Southwest pool except to swim laps, dive off deep water starting blocks, or stand around in the water. There are two dive boards at the Northwest pool but not at Southwest. There are no slides at either pool. I would love to add a feature (slides, etc.) for at least one of the facilities. Unfortunately we are landlocked and out of space with no more room to add features at either facility.

Moss Farms Diving Center

Moultrie

1. To start with, would you please confirm your name, title, phone number and e-mail in case I have any follow up questions?

Ed Goodman
Diving Coach
229-798-8173
divegoodman@gmail.com

2. How did plans for the aquatic center initially develop? What was the initial impetus for the city/county to develop a pool (e.g. citizen or government official proposed the idea, approached by private developer)?

Robert "Moose" Moss was a WWII Flying Tigers pilot. He invested in agriculture and became a wealthy farmer. He loved diving though never really was a diver himself. He started reading books and coaching kids for free. He became very successful and built a pool at his farm. He started hosting competitions and became well known in the diving community. In fact, there is now a national junior diving award named after him. He raised money and purchased land in Moultrie where he built one of the best outdoor pools in the country. He donated the pool to the city after it was completed. The city maintains the pool and pays for utilities. The team uses the pool exclusively unless a public organization seeks permission to use it. The programming at the pool is managed by a private nonprofit.

3. How do you manage the aquatic center (in-house, private contractor, etc.)? What factors did you consider when you were deciding on this approach? How have you addressed the liability inherent in running an aquatic center?

Most of the pools that have USA diving programs are covered through USA diving. As a certified coach with team members enrolled in USA diving, everyone has insurance coverage. The club is managed by a parent group (by a board). The facility and equipment are run by the city recreation department.

4. Looking back, what would you say were your greatest successes in developing and managing a water park? Is there anything that caught you off guard or that you would have done differently in retrospect?

One of the best things I've observed (as a coach who has traveled around the country): The Moss center doubled the typical number of platform diving boards. We have four one meter and four three meter boards which are all the same: concrete platforms, no rails. As a diving coach, I haven't seen any other pool like that. Arizona State, University of Tennessee and Ohio State have a competition station on concrete platforms with short stands and have other boards in other parts of the pool on A frames (not concrete) but they can't compete effectively on those boards because they're not the same quality as the platforms. At Moss center, we can spread out competitions since all boards are equivalent.

For any outdoor pool, railings should be aluminum to decrease maintenance. The railings only get shinier with age.

There are no ladders on the pool, only steps.

Diving is year round (the pool is heated, there is a hot tub) with a dry land training center. If the weather is too cold, we go to the YMCA to practice.

5. What strategies did you use to finance the development of the water park? What were the original start-up capital costs and how was the project funded/financed? Did you already have land for the park or did you have to acquire some?

This pool was created by the “dynamic personality of a certain influential individual.”

6. If possible, please give me a sense of revenues and expense for the park for the past few years. Are you satisfied with the return on investment? Why or why not?

I am satisfied. I'm paid a salary determined as a percentage of new students to the club. The club itself is a nonprofit. Businesses in town contribute to the nonprofit.

The center is an asset to the community. When we host competitions, we fill up hotels and restaurants. It definitely provides an economic impact to the community. It is also gives status to the community. In a typical season the Moss Center hosts three to four competitions.

7. What has the public's reaction been throughout the process?

The team has a relationship with the public: it's in the paper all the time. High school diving is a big deal. The local high school has won the state championship 35 out of 37 years. There is a sense of pride to that. The team is well known. The diving platforms are probably the highest structure in town other than the courthouse.

If interested in learning about a diving center under construction:

Legendary pool: Ft. Lauderdale “Hall of Fame pool” hosts world class meets each year. They are getting ready to build a new pool. Contact: Dave Burgering dave@ftldiveteam.com

Point Mallard

Decatur, AL

(256) 341-4902

<http://www.pointmallardpark.com/waterpark.php>



Point Mallard Park is a 500-acre family park located in piney North Alabama. The Point Mallard complex includes an 18 hole golf course, a 25-acre wooded campground, tennis courts, batting cages, a 3 mile hiking/jogging/biking trail, a driving range an indoor ice rink and a water park featuring America's first wave pool. The golf course, campground and ice complex are open year round.

The park is open 365 days a year and is owned and operated by The City of Decatur, Department of Parks & Recreation.

The Decatur Parks and Recreation Department is a department of the local municipal government operated by a permanent, full-time staff, with the assistance of a volunteer citizens' advisory board. Board appointments are made by the City Council for a term of five years.

The Parks and Recreation Department operates four community recreation centers, one outdoor and one indoor swimming pool, Wilson Morgan Softball Complex, Jimmy Johns Tennis Center, Jack Allen Recreation Complex, and 41 parks encompassing 500 acres. These include 27 developed parks, 17 developed playgrounds, 16 picnic shelters, 1 splash pad, 46 lighted tennis courts, numerous lighted and unlighted softball and baseball fields and a soccer complex composed of 10 international soccer fields, which are laser graded, irrigated and lighted. Three historic sites, the Old State Bank, the Decatur City Cemetery, and the Garth Cemetery, are also proudly maintained by the Department.

The Decatur Parks and Recreation Department is associated with the Alabama Recreation and Parks Association, the National Recreation and Parks Association, and the American Parks and Recreation Society.

Budget info at:

http://www.decaturalabamausa.com/pdf/financialservices_dept/City%20of%20Decatur%20Point%20Mallard%202010%20Fund%20080.pdf

1. To start with, would you please confirm your name, title, phone number and e-mail in case I have any follow up questions?

Jeff Dunlap

Director, Parks & Recreation

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(256) 341-4931

2. How did plans for the water park initially develop? What was the initial impetus for the city/county to develop a water park (e.g. citizen or government official proposed the idea, approached by private developer)?

J. Gilmer Blackford, our very progressive Mayor with a law degree in late 60's envisioned building the water park as part of a complex. The city continues to pursue his vision by expanding and developing Point Mallard. He had heard about wave pools and set up a trip to Germany to see one for himself. When he came back he decided to build the first wave pool in America.

He went to the TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority- federal government) and asked about property on the Tennessee River. He worked out a deal so that the federal government gave them the land to lease for free in perpetuity as long as the city uses it for recreation (we would have to renegotiate the lease and the Feds could possibly take it back if we decided to use it for another purpose).

The water park was built with federal grants; specifically from the Land Water Conservation fund (LWCF) - the city didn't have to pay anything. Later on the city raised a bond to pay for an expansion to the complex, and we're still working with Blackford's daughter to develop a marina on the property currently owned by GE and a large plant.

We contracted out all of the construction work to build the park with the exception of one of the waterslides. The construction started in the late 60's or 70's.

3. How do you manage the water park (in-house, private contractor, etc.)? What factors did you consider when you were deciding on this approach? How have you addressed the liability inherent in running a water park?

We used to have a Director of Point Mallard to go along with the idea that the park was a government enterprise, but then the city made it part of Parks and Rec. The complex and water park are completely staffed by municipal employees. We have 2 FT staff for the water park that are year-round but during the summer we have 200-250 PT people, mostly high school and college students, who run the park. The water park does require year-round maintenance and marketing.

The rest of the complex doesn't take as many staff to run. During the summer we have about 275 people total because the camp ground doesn't require anything and the strike zone and ice rink are light staff. The Park Supervisor is a city employee.

When it comes to liability coverage, the city just purchases the amount we think we need. We're required to submit all of the properties and their uses to the insurance company and they give us a quote for coverage.

4. Looking back, what would you say were your greatest successes in developing and managing a water park? Is there anything that caught you off guard or that you would have done differently in retrospect?

Point Mallard has done a lot to make Decatur an attractive place to live. I'm always amazed at the Mayor's vision to create this complex in the 60's. The complex has had an impact on the city because it has attracted both tourists and residents- there are lots of campers, walkers, bikers, golfers. If you look at hard dollars for the complex overall, it didn't made a profit until last year (the water park has pretty much been in the black since it was created), but it provides quality of life for the city.

I'm thankful and proud that we have continued to develop the park. When I go to national conferences and people ask where I'm from, and I say Decatur, people say, "That's where Point Mallard is!" We're well known for having the first wave pool in the US. Point Mallard is something that you just don't see all that often- the complex is the focal point of the city.

As far as what I would do differently- I'm not the person who has been in this job all these years. One of major things is that the park has been a political hot potato over the years. When Point Mallard was first created, there was this idea that the complex was going to generate large amounts of money, so it was created as enterprise account. While the water park has always paid for itself and then some, the complex overall hasn't made money.

Looking at the complex as an enterprise account just doesn't really fit. Upkeep that the city provides to Point Mallard (e.g. grass cutting, etc.) is not being charged to the enterprise account because we're just looking for ways to maximize the city's money; the fact that the complex has zones that are in the enterprise account right next to zones that are not in the enterprise account, and it just makes things confusing. The auditor will probably recommend keeping the park as an enterprise account so that the city's credit rating is not affected if we go to the bond market again. But even the auditor agrees that this is not an enterprise account.

Because it was created as an enterprise account, there is this reoccurring idea that it is drain on the general fund. Each year the Decatur Daily wants to know if Point Mallard made money- then they write an article. Then the public reacts (although not many protest) Then it becomes a political issue.

We're fortunate enough to have this complex for our citizens. It almost pays for itself in contrast to things like the soccer fields which we charge nothing for and have to pay for. As an example, I'm about to go into a meeting with an auditor about the pros and cons of keeping the complex as an enterprise account.

5. What strategies did you use to finance the development of the water park? What were the original start-up capital costs and how was the project financed? Did you already have land for the park or did you have to acquire some?

See Question 2. We have continued development of the park through bonds because we had the popular support for the complex.

6. If possible, please give me a sense of revenues and expense for the park for the past few years. Are you satisfied with the return on investment? Why or why not?

The park nets \$4-500,000 every year.

Our Marketing Director has been instrumental in making the complex a success. Marketing strategies were invaluable to making the park more financially viable. She was actually asked to speak for the last two years at conferences on water park marketing.

One idea that was particularly successful was selling half-price season passes for one day; this year we sold \$220,000 worth of passes. 40% of those people never entered the gate and we were able to capture everyone's contact info though because we made everyone go through our website. Revenue from attendance, rentals and food all jumped. She started this initiative last year and continued it this year. We promoted through Facebook and radio advertisements outside the immediate marketing area (Birmingham, southern Tennessee, Georgia). We tried not to market to locals and in fact, we didn't spend a lot of money marketing it at all.

7. What has the public's reaction been throughout the process?

At the very beginning, there was a lot of skepticism. But then people started to realize the government was going to give us this land for free and pay for construction; then everyone jumped on board. After that there was more support from the public when we decided to use bonds to develop the complex even more.

Starting with water park before building the rest of the complex was very smart because it is the most successful aspect of complex.

Splash in the Boro Water Park



1388 Hwy 24 East
Statesboro, GA 30459

(912) 489-3000

<http://www.splashintheboro.com/>

Part of Mill Creek Regional Park, Splash in the Boro Water Park and aquatic center has two serpentine body slides, five-lane mat racer, lazy river, interactive activity pool, leisure pool and 25-meter lane & therapy pool. The water park also has the only Flowrider in Georgia. During the winter months, one of the pools is enclosed under a dome for year-round swimming. Splash in the Boro also has a concession stand that sells food & drinks during the summer months.

Mill Creek Regional Park is part of the Statesboro-Bulloch County Parks and Recreation Department (SBCPRD) whose mission is to provide quality, diversity, wholesome parks and recreation services to meet the needs of the citizens of Bulloch County.

The SBCPRD is a public recreation department funded by the Bulloch County Commission, the City of Statesboro and fees and charges collected by the department. A seven member Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (RAC) provides guidance for the department. The board members are appointed by the Bulloch County Commission and serve two-year terms. The board is made up of citizens throughout Bulloch County, each having a common interest in providing the best parks and recreation services possible to the citizens of Bulloch County.

Mill Creek Regional Park opened in 1993 as a state-of-the-art recreational complex funded through a 1% Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax. Mill Creek, 1996 USSSA Complex of the Year, has hosted more than 200 tournaments including four national tournaments.

Budget info on pages 211 at:

<http://bullochcounty.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/FY-2012-BC-General-Appropriations-Budget.pdf>

1. To start with, would you please confirm your name, title, phone number and e-mail in case I have any follow up questions?

Steve Brown

Aquatic Division Manager

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(912) 489-9047

2. How did plans for the water park initially develop? What was the initial impetus for the city/county to develop a water park (e.g. citizen or government official proposed the idea, approached by private developer)?

The initial vision for the park started within the local government in the 90's who worked with multiple consultants to develop and explore their ideas. I was brought on in May 2004 for the park opening in June 2004 so I wasn't personally around then. From what I hear there was some resistance because some people thought the park would be a drain on the local economy and a burden on tax payers. Supporters convinced the county commission chair to move forward with the plan.

In 1997 there was a SPLOST referendum to raise funds for several projects including an aquatic facility that would be family centered, geared towards local people and ball park visitors. The SPLOST vote for an extra .01 on the dollar was talked up by local public officials and passed.

Splash in the 'Boro is inside of Mill Creek Park which was built to include a ball field, trails, campground etc. Originally the plan was to build the water park first but I think it is better that that came later. At the time the trend in water parks included a pool, splash pad, etc. We had a feasibility and design study done and planned to have 50-60,000 attendees each year with the park open year-round

3. How do you manage the water park (in-house, private contractor, etc.)? What factors did you consider when you were deciding on this approach? How have you addressed the liability inherent in running a water park?

Before the park opening, the city employed one FT person who managed two pools that were only open in summer and handled other duties within the parks and recreation department.

I was not personally there for the discussions around management proposals that ultimately led to the decision to hire me. I believe that because this was such a large-scale project, with recommendations from consultants, they decided that they needed to hire a FT person just for the aquatic facility. This is now my main responsibility and other employees handle the other parks, special needs, etc.

For the first seven years there was just an aquatic facility Director and FT assistant. This year I convinced everyone that we needed more FT staff so we hired a Maintenance Supervisor and Guest Service Marketing Supervisor. All of our other staff are PT seasonal employees (15 life guards, 25 guest service attendance staff, 40 concession workers, 10 maintenance)

Liability- we piggy back on the county insurance policy (\$60,000 per year on insurance for the aquatic division alone). We also conduct 3rd party risk management studies throughout the year to ensure that we have adequate policies and procedures, staff training, and maintenance to provide a safe environment for staff and guests. Splash is set up as an enterprise account.

4. Looking back, what would you say were your greatest successes in developing and managing a water park? Is there anything that caught you off guard or that you would have done differently in retrospect?

I would say that we have been able to exceed expectations from the beginning; we had 90,000 guests in our first season and we've had about 160,000 guests per season since then. We draw people from outside of Bulloch County so the economic impact of the park has been wonderful. In 2008 we did a \$4 million expansion to grow our capacity and increase attendance (we were able to finance this expansion against the value of Splash).

We have had studies done on the economic impact of the park; anytime you have special amenities, it increases the draw of the community. I'll go through the material and look for what I think may be useful for you; we've done attendance analyses of the park.¹

The park has drawn industry, businesses and residents to the county and we've grown over the past eight years. 25% of our guests are local residents and over 75% are from outside the local area- Splash has become a destination for people from Macon, Florida and South Carolina. We help foster this by advertising on the radio, TV, at interstate welcome centers, in magazines, and through our website. We also have a billboard on the interstate. Most of our marketing targets a region within a 1 hr radius of the park. We do one-on-one follow up with individuals and groups from farther away. Word of mouth and social media are helpful; we post videos, etc.

In retrospect, one of our greatest challenges was dealing with county operations procedures to hire more staff. Our first year attendance was actually larger than what we had planned for, so we had to adjust on the fly to maintain pools, etc. Now we are able to plan much more based on attendance numbers. I also would have liked additional FT staff earlier to cover year-round maintenance, especially preventative maintenance. Our ability to make adjustments on the fly and be both pro and reactive contributed a lot to our success. We needed the support of community to implement the project.

¹ Information unavailable.

5. What strategies did you use to finance the development of the water park? What were the original start-up capital costs and was the project financed? Did you already have land for the park or did you have to acquire some?
- County owned land prior to development
 - David Markey and Assoc. were architects
 - Private Swim Pro Pools worked on first build
 - Lavendar and Assoc. (a local company) worked on expansion
6. If possible, please give me a sense of revenues and expense for the park for the past few years. Are you satisfied with the return on investment? Why or why not?
- Financially the park has been very successful; we've made money every year. We continue to have more revenue than expenses; the money we make we put back into the park because it is expensive to operate, and we need to pay for repairs and future development. Some also goes into a reserve fund and has been used to pay for the fire dept., etc. They're supposed to pay this back but we'll see.
7. What has the public's reaction been throughout the process?
- Our elected officials and the public seem satisfied with the return on investment. People who objected at first are now on the band wagon. People in the community know about it and are proud of it. I get more questions about free passes for public. Elected officials are patting themselves on the back for the project.

Wetlands Water Park at Persimmon Ridge



1523 Persimmon Ridge Road
Jonesborough, TN 37659

423-753-1550
423-753-1558

<http://wetlandsjonesborough.com>

The Wetlands Water Park provides guests with a relaxing and enjoyable family experience. Families can splash around a rain tree, water bubblers, tumble buckets, tubes, and a zero depth wading area. Then, guests can slide down an 80- foot enclosed fiberglass flume slide, a 200-foot giant fiberglass flume slide, or a children's otter slide. When visitors need to take a rest from water fun, they can enjoy a full service café, shaded pavilions, or a covered dining area. After a rigorous game of volleyball on our sandy court, guests can wash off in the water park's shower facilities.

Visitors can purchase a season pass to come and enjoy the park every day. In addition, guests can host a private party after hours.

The Wetlands Water Park is the only water park in the state of Tennessee that is not commercially owned. The town of Jonesborough is committed to Wetlands and encouraging the entire family to participate together in an enjoyable and safe water experience.

Located in East Tennessee and just minutes from Johnson City, Bristol and Kingsport, Wetlands is the closest theme park within miles.

Budget info at: http://www.jonesboroughtn.org/files/FY2011-12_Budget-Final.pdf

1. To start with, would you please confirm your name, title, phone number and e-mail in case I have any follow up questions?

Rachel Conger

Director, Parks & Recreation

rachelc@jonesboroughtn.org

(423) 791-3869

2. How did plans for the water park initially develop? What was the initial impetus for the city/county to develop a water park (e.g. citizen or government official proposed the idea, approached by private developer)?

The initial idea for the water park came from our Town Administrator, Bob Browning. During a family trip to Disney World he was impressed by the family experience created at the water park. He suggested that Jonesborough develop a water park to provide local families with a safe way to spend time together. At the time, the closest water park was an hour and a half drive from Jonesborough. Given the size of Jonesboro (5,500 people) and the fact that we receive no funding from the county, it is rather remarkable that Wetlands exists.

I was not around during the initial development process around 1994, so I cannot tell you all of the conversations that went into it. I know that there were some skeptics. When considering any kind of project like this we hold a community meeting to get input from our citizens. We then form a sub-committee of citizens who come with some knowledge of the topic at hand and this sub-committee does research and reaches out to other community members to get their opinions. We have a standing Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee which we use. We also talk to leadership about this type of project.

3. How do you manage the water park (in-house, private contractor, etc.)? What factors did you consider when you were deciding on this approach? How have you addressed the liability inherent in running a water park?

As I said, I was not around for the initial conversations, but I don't believe the city gave much thought to contracting a private entity to manage the water park. We try to do as much as we can in house to keep costs down. The first year the city covered the cost of hiring staff but now the park pays for itself.

I was hired in 2007 as the water park Director and was later promoted to my current position as Director of Parks and Recreation. We are in the process of hiring another Director right now. In addition to this position, we employ 80-100 seasonal staff over the summer, mostly high school and college aged youth. We work with several other departments to maintain the water park throughout the year and prepare for the season beginning in January.

As for liability, the water park is covered by the city's insurance (TML). We go to great lengths to take every precaution with our staff to ensure that the facility is maintained. Our staff goes through a daily safety check list which includes reviewing all of the water features, the pools, and every room to make sure that nothing is being overlooked. We over-train our staff beyond what is required by the state and in some cases require prior certification. We also have regular in-

services so that staff have the opportunity to practice their skills (e.g. CPR). The insurance company loves this. Our staff do “saves” (pulling kids from the water) almost every day but we have never had to perform CPR on someone. We just want to make sure that our staff is on top of things every day.

4. Looking back, what would you say were your greatest successes in developing and managing a water park? Is there anything that caught you off guard or that you would have done differently in retrospect?

Overall the park has been a huge success. The original goal of the park was to provide a safe environment for local families to spend time together and we have definitely achieved that. We provide a great service for our community. We have also been able to provide seasonal jobs for mostly young people in our community which has also been great. The water park, which functions as an enterprise fund, not only pays for itself, it makes a profit every year.

We also serve visitors from outside of Jonesborough (we try to regularly check license plates in the parking lot to get a gauge of this). We market to out-of-state customers through TV and newspaper ads before the start of the season. It is simple because our local channel goes to parts of Virginia and NC. We also have ads at visitor and welcome center. I would estimate that about 20% of our customers on a given day are from out of state. We are very close to Virginia and North Carolina. We regularly get youth groups and school groups who drive 45 minutes to 3 hours to get to us. We provide coupons to our out-of-state visitors to encourage them to go and eat and shop in the downtown district. Currently the closest water park is about an hour and a half away, but Kingsport, which is about 30 min northwest of us is in the process of building a water park.

Besides the economic benefit of the water park, I would say it has given our community confidence that we can achieve whatever we set our minds to. Being able to construct and operate a successful water park is an accomplishment that makes people proud to be a part of this community.

As for things that caught us off guard...I wouldn't say this is a problem so much as it is something that we just try to pay attention to all the time- safety. When we get the new Director in place that person is going to go through a thorough training process to make sure that they know how to pay attention to the details.

5. What strategies did you use to finance the development of the water park? What were the original start-up capital costs and how was the project funded/financed? Did you already have land for the park or did you have to acquire some?

We owned the land for the water park before the project began. It was part of the 130 acre Persimmon Ridge Park. I'm not sure what the initial costs were but I can find out.

We used a matching grant (50/50) from the state to pay for the initial development of the park. The state has grants that are designated for projects in smaller municipalities and we applied and received one. The nice thing about the matching grant is that we could match money from the

state with material, labor and in-kind as well as money from the city. This is how we were able to build the park.

We used a local architect who donated some of services in-kind. His name is Ken Ross and he has allowed us to do a lot of these kinds of projects. We did a lot of the work ourselves. Our water and sewage departments did the digging and laid all of the pipes. We contracted out to construct the actual building but specified in our bidding process that we would do all of the water, electricity, etc. ourselves. I'm not sure who we contracted for construction, but I could find out.

All in all, the state money paid to construct the building while the city paid to build the pool and water features. We even made one of the water features ourselves.

Since then we have used a capital outlay of about \$300,000 to pay for upgrades and major maintenance. Since the park opened revenues have gone back into the general fund but recently we started talking about setting aside a percentage of revenues each year to pay for maintenance and upgrades. We would like to add a water feature but this would be about \$1,000,000.

6. If possible, please give me a sense of revenues and expense for the park for the past few years. Are you satisfied with the return on investment? Why or why not?

Last year we brought in \$100,000 in revenue. I would say that leaders and the community are very happy with the return on investment.

7. What has the public's reaction been throughout the process?

Initially there were some skeptics, but I don't think there are many now. There are things that we do to make sure that the community is happy with the water park beyond just revenue. We have days throughout the season when admission for city residents is free. Also, starting at 3pm every day until the park closes at 6pm, admission is half-priced and this is basically geared toward local people. We also host private parties at the water park for other parks and recs programs or local non-profits at reduced fees or no charge. This is all part of the service we provide to the community.

Something else to think about is the capacity of the water park. I visited a municipal water park while I was at a conference and their water features and staff size were comparable to ours but they couldn't turn a profit because their capacity was about 200-300 people. This was an easy fix, they just needed to move the fences back and expand the area around the water features. Also, adding a café helps to supplement income.

Author Bios

Megan Miller

Megan Miller is a graduate of Oberlin College and a second year Master of Public Administration (MPA) candidate at the University of Georgia. Megan moved to Georgia with her family from Detroit, Michigan where she served as the Director of Programs at Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit. Mosaic is an internationally acclaimed youth development organization that has performed with artists such as Maya Angelou, Aretha Franklin, Al Green, Sweet Honey in the Rock, and the Temptations for audiences in North America, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Kennedy Center. While at Mosaic, Megan grew satellite program participation from 230 to more than 1000 youth served each year, and represented Mosaic in an inter-agency collaboration recognized as a model for collaborative youth arts programming. In 2009 Megan was selected to represent Mosaic as the organization's Emerging Leader at a nine-month Neighborhood Excellence Initiative Program sponsored by the Bank of America Foundation.

Samara Scheckler

Samara Scheckler is a Master of Public Administration student at the University of Georgia. Samara earned her undergraduate degree in psychology from Guilford College in North Carolina and her graduate certificate in gerontology from Western Carolina University. Samara has served her community as a social worker in various capacities. As an assisted living facility activities director, she oversaw the conversion of her building into a memory care unit. As a qualified developmental disabilities professional in the state of North Carolina, Samara worked as a case manager and a certified North Carolina Interventions instructor. As a staff supervisor, Samara ensured individuals with mental illness received needed community based services. Samara has sat on numerous city and county planning committees and her poetry has been published in a variety of journals.