



Introduction

Cacapon Institute (CI), in partnership with the USDA Forest Service (USFS), WV Division of Forestry (DOF), WV Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and Jefferson County Parks & Recreation (JCPRC), has completed an Urban Tree Canopy assessment for all of JCPRC parks.

Although JCPRC manages only a small percent of the county's total acreage, it plays a very large role in providing safe, healthy, and fun outdoor experiences for Jefferson County residents. It is JCPRC's responsibility to provide a wide range of activities at the ten parks it manages, including sports fields and recreation, wildlife habitat and viewing, hiking trails, parking for annual events, indoor recreation and events space, and more.

Under the recommendations of JCPRC staff, CI proposed areas for planting landscape trees, creating no-mow reforestation areas, and fostering low-mow grasslands that will help to increase tree canopy and reduce mowing costs.

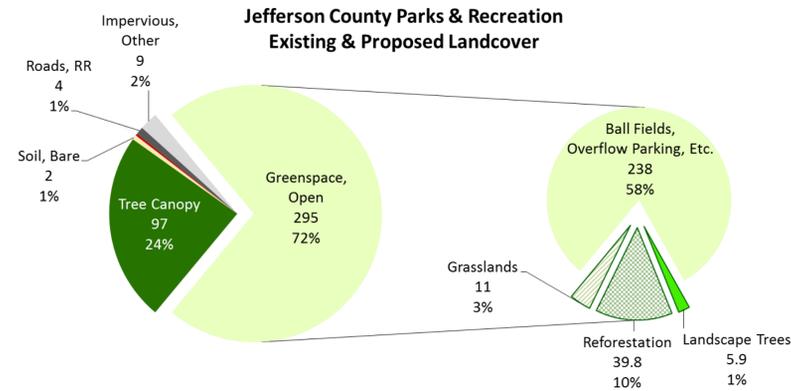


UTC Assessment

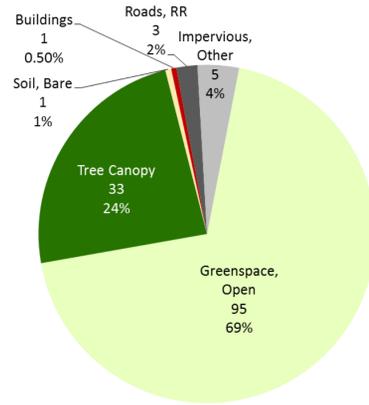
Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) is a measure of the leaves, stems, and branches of trees covering the ground when viewed from above. UTC is a valuable measurement when studying the urban forest—the trees we live with, the trees that grace our neighborhoods, towns, parks, schools, and roadsides. JCPRC's UTC Assessment will assist park managers in more efficiently and sustainably managing park lands and resources.

JCPRC parks occupy 0.3% of Jefferson County, WV (409 of 135,377 acres). Of the existing landcover, tree canopy is 24% (97 of 409 acres) and greenspace, open is 72% (295 of 409 acres). The majority of the greenspace and open areas, in most cases, are currently being mowed.

JCPRC's plan to convert landcover within their parks will decrease the amount of greenspace and open areas by 14% (295 acres down to 238 acres). Those 57 acres would be converted to landscape trees (6 acres, 1%), reforestation (40 acres, 10%), and grasslands (11 acres, 3%).



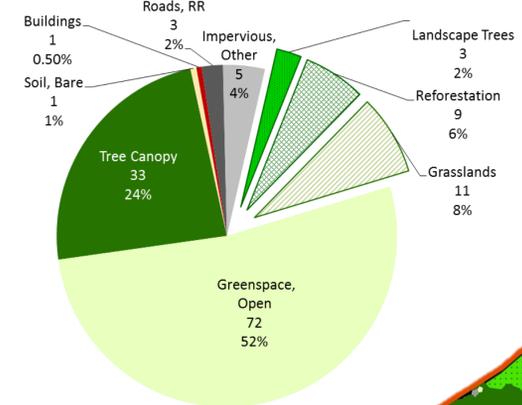
Sam Michaels Park Existing Landcover (138 acres)



Sam Michaels Park Existing Landcover

This park is the headquarters for JCPRC and is the largest park in the county. The majority landcover is greenspace, open (69%, 95 acres). There is also a significant amount of tree canopy (24%, 33 acres). JCPRC currently mows all 95 acres of greenspace and open areas at Sam Michaels Park at an estimated cost of \$31,558 annually.

Sam Michaels Park Proposed Landcover (138 acres)

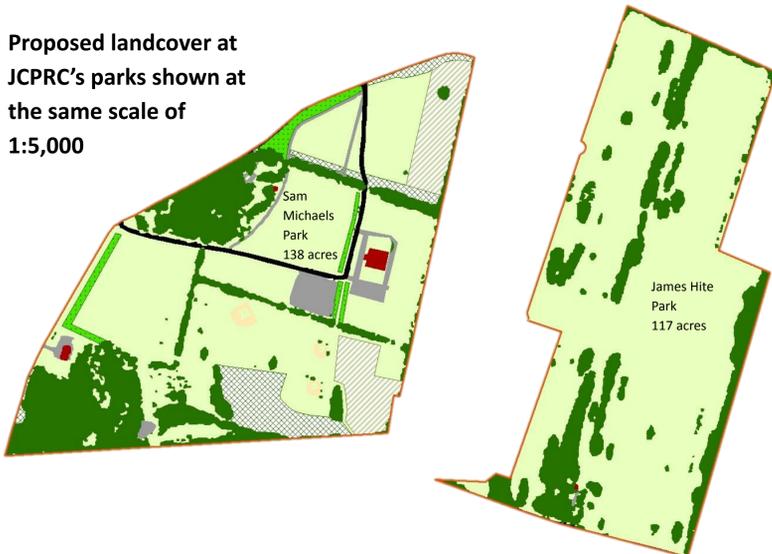


Sam Michaels Park Proposed Landcover

JCPRC plans to convert 23 acres of greenspace and other open areas to landscape trees, reforested areas, and grasslands. Converting 23 acres to more sustainable land management practices could save JCPRC \$7,636 in annual mowing costs.



Proposed landcover at JCPRC's parks shown at the same scale of 1:5,000



Benefits of Proposed Landcovers

Reforested areas and grasslands have the potential to reduce mowing costs at JCPRC parks. Even reducing mowing of existing greenspace and other open areas from 25 times per year to 15 times per year could provide an estimated savings of around \$16,000 annually. These funds could then be used for tree care and maintenance and environmental stewardship training for maintenance personnel. In the case of landscape trees and reforested areas, these land management practices will increase tree canopy and help Jefferson County meet the county-wide goal of increasing tree canopy from 38% to 40% by 2030. All of these proposed land management practices include varying degrees of costs and maintenance needs, both in the short-term and long-term.

