

Blackjack Mountain Master Plan

Typical Observatory



Interpretive panels should have comprehensive information about the views, history, geology and ecology of the mountain. Areas of trees surrounding the overlooks should be selectively cleared to open the best views.

PAVILIONS AND SHELTERS:

The summit will be a popular place for family gatherings and picnics. A series of shelters will be located around the flat summit area, with a central open space for free play.

Typical Group Shelter

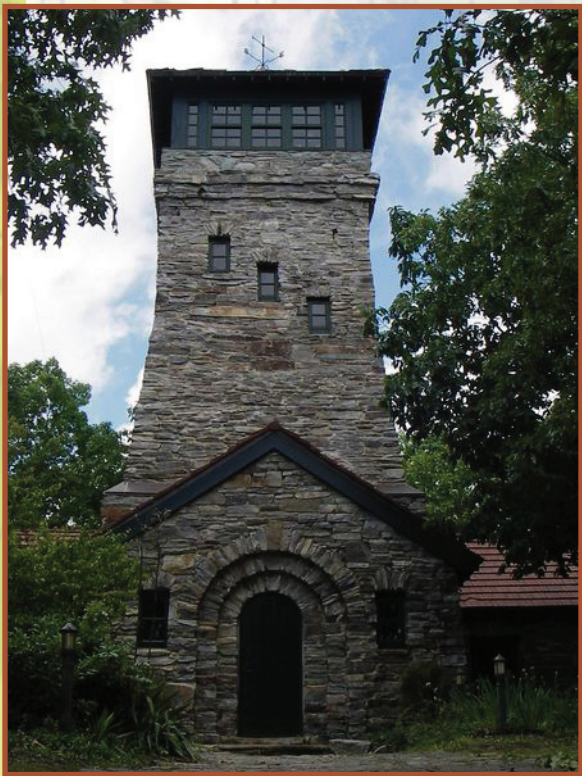


Inside the tower will be a for rent space for classes and group events or weddings. A restroom facility is recommended if a septic system can be developed on the mountain top. On busy days when volunteer or park staffing allows, a visitor contact station could be staffed.

OBSERVATORY:

A medium sized observatory should be considered for the summit of the mountain. The observatory could be used in conjunction with West Georgia University for research and classes, and by area Astronomy Clubs. The observatory will be used at night by permit only as the remainder of the park will need to be closed at nightfall. Great care will need to be taken with any security lighting design at the summit to avoid interface with the dark sky. The roadway to the summit from the visitor center will not require lighting, but could utilize reflective safety markers as needed.

Lookout Tower And Classroom Building



LOOKOUT TOWER:

As a destination for all Carroll County residents, a substantial lookout tower built at the summit will serve as an icon for the beauty of West Georgia. This lookout tower should be patterned after the stone and timber towers of the 1930's, when parks on mountain summits were developed to make the fire lookout a major destination. Several examples of these rustic lookouts exist in Alabama and Georgia, including the lookout towers at Cheaha Mountain State Park, Weofulga State Park in Alabama, Chenocetah tower in Cornelia, and Rock Eagle Mound in Eatonton, Georgia. Cheaha Mountain is part of the same mountain chain of which Blackjack Mountain is a part, so the structure is recommended to be closely patterned after the Cheaha tower. The tower will have stair access to the top, with disabled access on a raised platform at the parking and overlook level in order to meet ADA guidelines.



Typical Overlook

UTILITY DEVELOPMENT:

As Blackjack Mountain is currently isolated and undeveloped, development of even minimal park facilities will require the installation of all utilities for visitor use and safety. County water should be extended to the park entrance, equestrian area and to the summit. Septic fields should be developed at the entrance area pasture and in the summit open space for restroom facilities. A pit toilet at the summit could be an option but will require periodic maintenance. Electrical power and communications will be required at the summit and entrance, and should be placed underground to maintain the aesthetic value of the park. The utilities could be installed at the same time as the summit road.



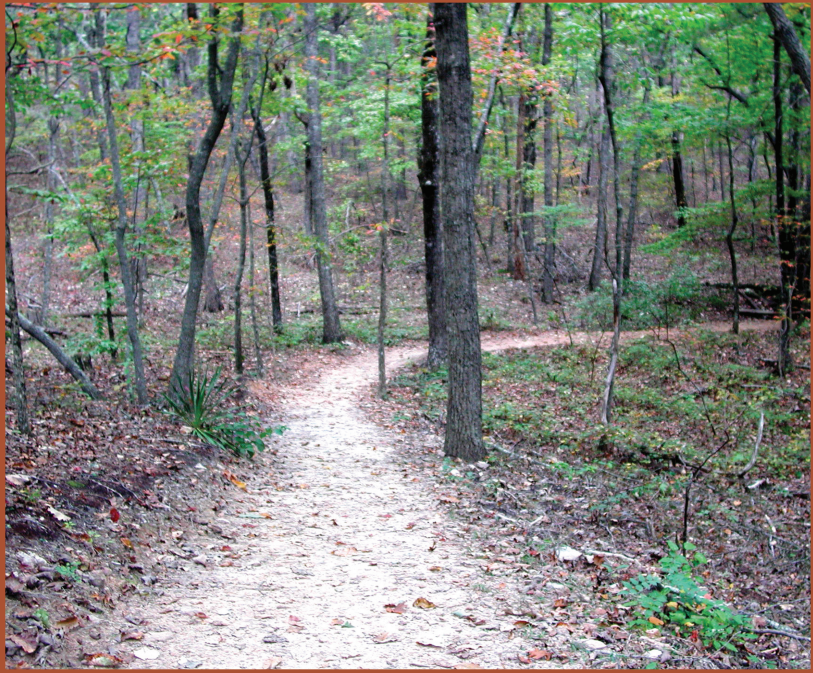
Typical Council Ring / Fire Pit

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT:

The pine and oak-hickory forests on Blackjack Mountain are in excellent condition and only a few invasive species have made inroads into the forests. The County should consult with ecologists and forest management specialists on continued management for the health of these woodlands. This may be accomplished by determining the need for periodic controlled burns that will benefit growth of the forest floor and prevent the spread of exotic species. Areas for plant rescues and native plantings should be established along the trail system.

EQUESTRIAN AREA:

The best location for equestrian parking and access is the open are at the northern foot of the mountain located off of Blackjack Mountain Road, and would need to be accessed by a new paved access road. However, this location is isolated from the proposed park entrance and Visitor Center. An option for access management is to control access to the area with an electronic privacy gate. The gate will need a phone connection to the Visitor Center to facilitate access. Another option, should access need to be restricted further, will require equestrian users to make a temporary stop at the Visitor Center, obtain an



Typical Equestrian /Hiking Trails



Typical Equestrian Parking

equestrian riding permit and the code to the control gate, to the equestrian area. The codes would have to be changed on a regular basis. Trailer parking would be unpaved or gravel surface in the equestrian area, and a trailhead for the trail system located at the foot of the mountain. Additional equestrian features, such as holding paddocks, a group shelter with a council ring and a water source, are also considered for the equestrian area. As the county adds more property to the park, additional equestrian access points can be considered.

