

West Park Master Plan

CITY OF DERIDDER, LOUISIANA

Proposed actions
and improvements

Restoring features and
improving amenities



Hurricane Laura

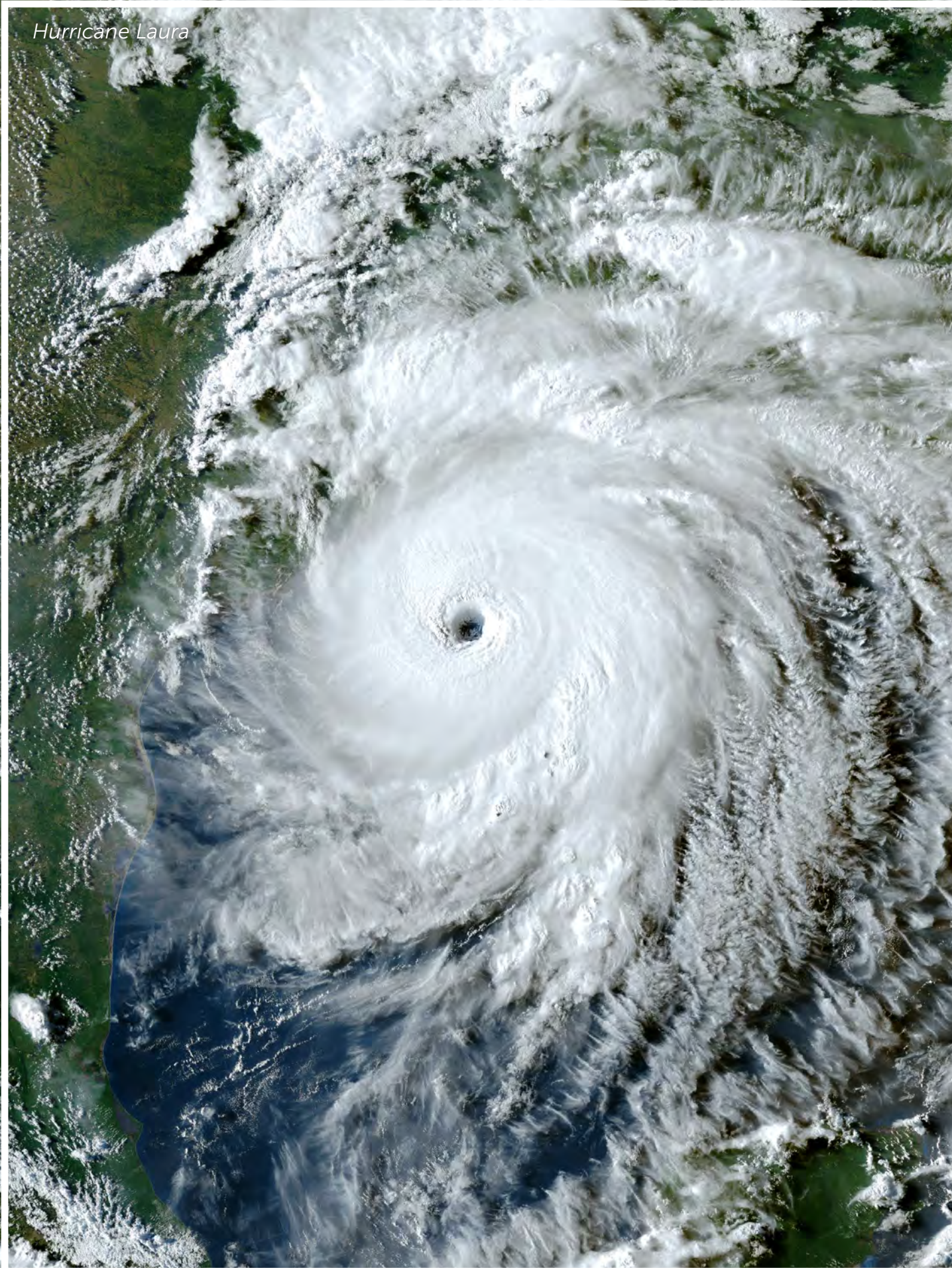


Photo: NOAA



FEMA



NPS-RTCA

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

FEBRUARY 2023

When the category 4 hurricanes, Laura and Delta, swept through southwestern Louisiana in August and October of 2020, their high winds, heavy rains, and extensive flooding left a pattern of destruction across southwest Louisiana reaching more than eighty miles inland.

Showing the generational resiliency arising from the impacts of numerous storms, the disaster-impacted communities of DeRidder and Lake Charles, along with representatives of Calcasieu, Cameron, and Allen parishes, requested natural disaster recovery assistance from the National Park Service – Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program (NPS-RTCA) to help with the development of long-term recovery plans.

Working closely with local partners, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Park Service helped facilitate six southwest Louisiana community-led projects focusing on natural and cultural resource conservation, outdoor recreation, and nature-based tourism.



LOUISIANA
Office of
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WEST PARK, DERIDDER • FEBRUARY 2023

The hurricanes that struck DeRidder, Louisiana in 2020, failed to diminish the resiliency of its residents and leaders. In response to the damage wrought by Laura and Delta, particularly the devastation of West Park, the City of DeRidder, with assistance from the National Park Service - Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program, and Baton Rouge's CARBO Landscape Architecture Firm, developed a master plan that will enhance this important community and regional resource.

Key elements of the proposed plan for West Park include:

- Replacing many of the 300 trees that were lost, creating a native tree grove, and establishing a wildflower meadow.
- Enhancing the park's northwest corner by extending the walking trail, and developing a nature play trail.
- Improving access and accessibility with new sidewalks and connections, the addition of crosswalks, three new footbridges, the paving and marking of parking lots, wayfinding and fitness signage, and improved lighting.
- Hickory Creek streambank and drainage improvements that will not only help mitigate flooding and reduce erosion, but result in the creation of a retention pond, complete with an island and gazebo.
- An expanded playground, and the addition of a skatepark, (completed in 2022), a bike pump track, and a covered and resurfaced basketball court.
- The renovation of the baseball complex, to be done in partnership with local nonprofit organizations.

To help turn the vision outlined above into reality, DeRidder can engage the Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana to establish a dedicated "West Park Fund" to provide opportunities for residents and businesses to support the project and augment the funds that may be available through government disaster relief programs and other grant sources.

As Mayor Misty Clanton told the American Press early in 2021, "I believe that if we are going to do this, then we need to take the time and make the effort to rebuild it bigger and better than it was before." The completion of the plan elements proposed above, would certainly result in a "bigger and better" West Park, and one that can serve as a catalyst for future development. Kudos to the city's residents and leadership for not being satisfied with just reopening the park but looking towards the role that a "new" West Park could play in improving the quality of life of DeRidder's residents.



NPS-RTCA
Rivers, Trails and Conservation
Assistance Program

This plan was prepared by the City of DeRidder, Louisiana, with assistance from the National Park Service - Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (NPS-RTCA) and Baton Rouge's CARBO Landscape Architecture Firm.



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INTRODUCTION

Located in the heart of the City of DeRidder, West Park has been the centerpiece of recreation in the community and surrounding area for decades.

The park was made possible by P.W. West, prominent DeRidder businessman, who donated the 48-acre site in 1942 in his father Mahlon's memory. One of the first settlers in the area, Mahlon is said to have petitioned the railroad to locate a depot and stopping point in what is now DeRidder.

The park is located on the city's busiest commercial thoroughfare, North Pine Street, and close to a popular retail area, the Park Terrace Shopping Center.

Historically, the multi-use park contained heavily forested tracts situated on Hickory Creek. Over the years, the park retained much of its natural beauty, providing not only recreation, but also flood relief for nearby housing areas.

Through the years, the city has made improvements to the park, including a ballpark complex, paved walking path, tennis courts, an outdoor pool facility, pavilion, restrooms, lighting, exercise equipment, children's play areas, and picnic areas. The park serves residents, both young and old, and attracts visitors across Beauregard Parish, and nearby Leesville and Fort Polk, as well. Many use the park on a daily basis.

In 2020, the impact of Hurricanes Laura and Delta changed much of the park's landscape. Trees, many estimated to be nearly 100 years old, were destroyed — uprooted by the winds and rains. The loss of trees, and the large stump holes left after their removal, not only changed the look of the park, but officials fear the changes may threaten the function of the natural drainage patterns.

Similarly, Hickory Creek suffered from the impacts of the storms, and is in dire need of attention. Parts of the waterway, which flows through West Park and the city, are now clogged with trees, limbs and debris.

In addition, the hurricanes damaged the park's baseball complex, paved walking path, electric infrastructure and lighting, restrooms, pavilion, picnic areas, play areas, and exercise equipment.

The people of southwest Louisiana, however, are known for their resiliency and the ability to "bounce back" from adversity. Regarding West Park, the folks in DeRidder are planning on doing much more than just "bouncing back."

As Mayor Misty Clanton told the American Press early in 2021, "I believe that if we are going to do this, then we need to take the time and make the effort to rebuild it bigger and better than it was before. It may take longer than if we just simply repaired it and reopened it, but I believe that the people of our city

will appreciate the planning and consideration that we are putting into this once it is completed."

With this in mind, the City of DeRidder requested assistance from the National Park Service - Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program. The National Park Service committed to help facilitate community engagement, review flood mitigation options, and work towards completing a master plan for the restoration and enhancement of West Park.

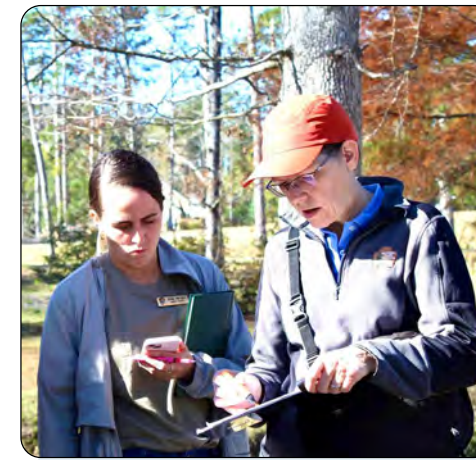
The resulting plan contains proposed actions and improvements meant to restore the features of the park and provide improved amenities for the community. The master plan was developed by Baton Rouge's CARBO Landscape Architecture Firm, in partnership with the National Park Service and with input from the City of DeRidder and residents of the community. The implementation of the plan would result in an essentially "new" West Park and show that DeRidder did not just bounce back but rebuilt bigger and better!


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

City staff, with assistance from the National Park Service, developed a vision board exercise as a way to engage the public and collect information regarding preferences for park improvements. The vision boards were displayed at a booth at the Beauregard Parish Fair, collecting feedback from more than 400 people! Participants particularly liked the idea of nature-themed play areas, and kids were excited about the possibility of a zip line.




The city kept residents continuously informed through social media platforms regarding progress, and shared photos and information on site visits conducted by the National Park Service team. These social media posts were another way for the community to provide feedback to the city.





City of DeRidder - City Hall

13K likes • 14K followers





The City of #DeRidder is receiving guidance from the National Park Service in planning and imagining the possibilities of P.W. West Park following the devastation of the 2020 hurricanes. The National Park Service has contracted with Zachary Broussard, a landscape architect with Carbo Landscape Architecture of Baton Rouge, to complete a park master plan. Broussard is also a DeRidder native.

The city's Parks and Recreation Department, led by Ashley Craddock, Community Services Director, has been meeting with National Park Service and Federal Emergency Management Agency officials virtually for months on various planning aspects. Additionally, FEMA has contracted with The Water Institute of the Gulf to do an hydraulics and hydrology study at the park to help determine solutions for drainage and water storage there.

On Dec. 1, National Park Service representatives were able to see the park in-person, assess its needs and outline the groundwork for more in-depth planning. They captured drone footage and mapped out trails and walkways.

The next step will be the completion of the master plan. The city will rely on various funding sources to make the repairs and enhancements, including FEMA, insurance and city funds. Officials will also seek other funding opportunities such as grants.



163

18 Comments 26 Shares



MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS





- 1 NEW SIDEWALK CONNECTIONS
- 2 PARK SIGNAGE
- 3 NATIVE TREE GROVE
- 4 NATIVE WILDFLOWER MEADOW
- 5 THREE NEW BRIDGES
- 6 NEW PARKING AT TRAILHEADS
- 7 TRAILHEAD
- 8 SMALL AMPHITHEATER
- 9 WATER DETENTION AREA
- 10 ISLAND
- 11 GAZEBO AND LAWN AREA
- 12 EXISTING PLAY STRUCTURES
- 13 SMALL SHADE STRUCTURE
- 14 WEIR FOR WATER DETENTION
- 15 ROLLING HILL
- 16 OPEN LAWN PANELS
- 17 ENLARGED, INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND
- 18 SHADE STRUCTURES
- 19 MAIN ENTRY PLAZA
- 20 SKATEPARK
- 21 PUMP TRACK
- 22 COVERED BASKETBALL COURTS
- 23 NATURE PLAY TRAIL
- 24 ZIP LINE
- 25 PICNIC TABLES
- 26 CROSSWALK



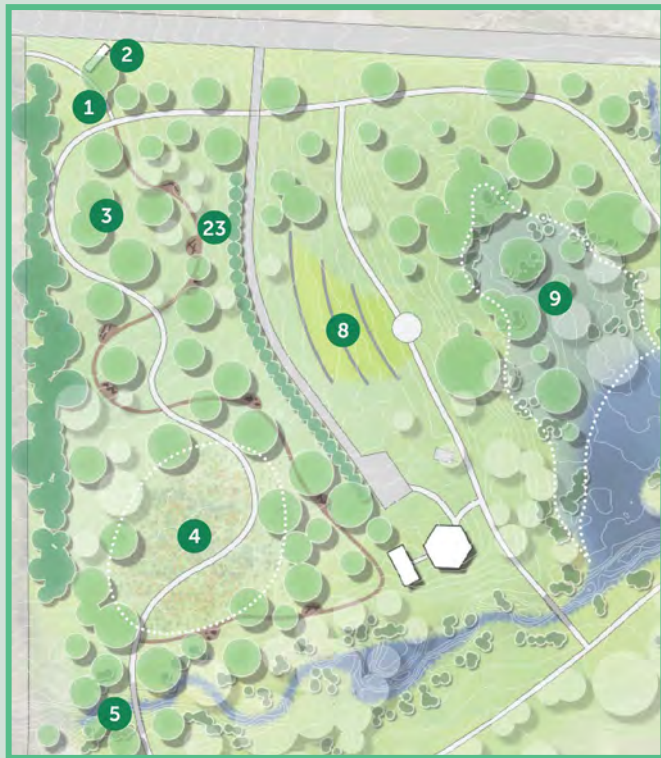
CITY OF
DERIDDER
LOUISIANA

NPS-RTCA
Rivers, Trails and Conservation
Assistance Program

CARBO

-  EXISTING TREE
-  NEW TREE
-  BUFFER TREE
-  UNDERSTORY/RIPARIAN EDGE

Native Tree Grove & Wildflower Meadow



The northwest corner of the park sustained much tree loss during the storms, and the pavilion was damaged as well. New trees and vegetation are needed to create a buffer between the park and the adjacent neighborhood. The master plan envisions this corner of West Park as a welcoming place of natural beauty, with native plants and trees, and a vibrant wildflower meadow. The sloping topography here provides a wonderful site for a small amphitheater that can host programs, special events, and casual gatherings. This section of the park also offers opportunities for the development of nature play areas and trails, incorporating surrounding landscape features and vegetation to bring nature to children’s outdoor play.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

- 1 NEW SIDEWALK CONNECTIONS
- 2 PARK SIGNAGE
- 3 NATIVE TREE GROVE
- 4 NATIVE WILDFLOWER MEADOW
- 5 THREE NEW BRIDGES
- 8 SMALL AMPHITHEATER
- 9 WATER DETENTION AREA
- 23 NATURE PLAY TRAIL

- Add new sidewalk connectors and park signage at northwest corner. 1
2
- Restore wooded area where many pine trees were lost. Replant with native trees and develop a wildflower meadow. 3
4
- Extend walking trail to create a loop. Add footbridge. 5
- Add a small-scale amphitheater on the slope near Hickory Branch. 8
- Create a nature play trail with a soft surface path and natural play elements. 23
- Repair damaged pavilion roof and post, and repaint. Consider replacement of the facility.

Fallen trees after Hurricane Laura



DESIGN EXAMPLES



Walking trail



Small-scale amphitheater



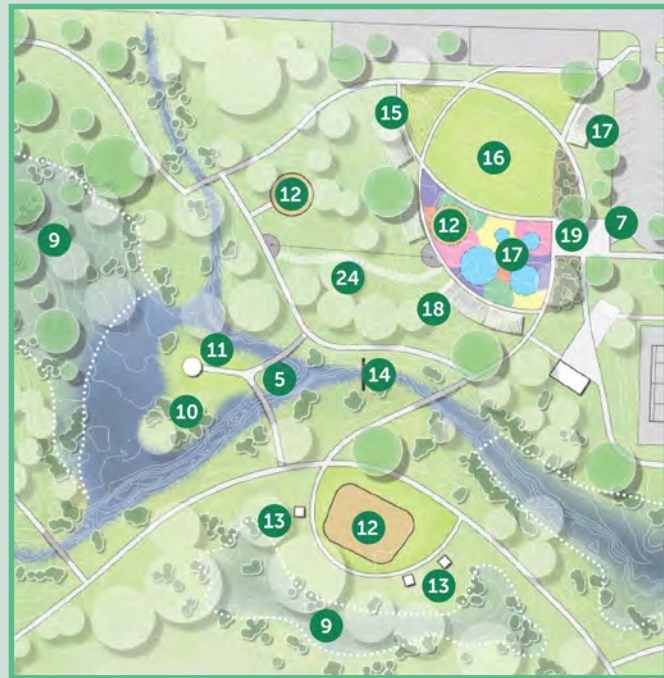
Wildflower meadow

Nature play trail



NORTH CENTRAL SECTION

New Playground Areas



- 1** NEW SIDEWALK CONNECTIONS
- 5** THREE NEW BRIDGES
- 12** EXISTING PLAY STRUCTURES
- 13** SMALL SHADE STRUCTURE
- 15** ROLLING HILL
- 16** OPEN LAWN PANELS
- 17** ENLARGED, INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND
- 18** SHADE STRUCTURES
- 19** MAIN ENTRY PLAZA
- 24** ZIP LINE
- 26** CROSSWALK

The north central section of the park features play areas, restrooms, picnic tables, and benches. The adjacent parking lot makes it very accessible, and a natural site for a new main entry plaza. Improvements to paths, picnic pads, play areas, and restrooms would all be made ADA accessible.

West Park features two play structures, one for ages 2-5 and one for ages 5-10. There is also a rather unique climbing rock area. This, the oldest area of the park, included swings, teeter totters, a merry-go-round and a metal car, all of which were destroyed by Hurricane Laura. The remaining play structures need to be updated or replaced to provide fun and inclusive experiences for all children.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Install new sidewalk connections and crosswalks for safer access to park facilities. **1 26**

Add new footbridges to provide access between playgrounds and walking trails. **5**

Provide small shade structures (the "parent pocket"). **13 18**

Add new areas and features for play such as a rolling hill, open lawn, and zip line. **15 16 24**

Enlarge and improve the main north playground area with accessible, inclusive play structures, swings, and other free standing play features. **17**

Establish a main entry plaza to provide central access to playgrounds and related amenities. **19**

Construct new, accessible restrooms with separate entry to accommodate family needs.

Add fall protection to the two play structures to replace what was lost in the storms.

Replace storm-damaged climbing rock.



Damage to playground equipment



Existing restrooms

DESIGN EXAMPLES



Playground with nature-based theme and accessible features



Example of a "Parent Pocket"



Accessible restrooms with separate entry to accommodate family needs



NORTHEAST CORNER

New Activity Areas



1 NEW SIDEWALK CONNECTIONS

2 PARK SIGNAGE

20 SKATEPARK

21 PUMP TRACK

22 COVERED BASKETBALL COURTS

The plan for the northeast corner of West Park focuses on providing active recreation activities like skateboarding, basketball, and biking. Some of these activities take advantage of, and repurpose existing infrastructure, while the proposed pump track activates an underutilized corner of the park. Improvements to the basketball court would allow games to go on during the heat of summer and inclement weather. The skatepark, completed in March, 2022, is already popular enough that an expansion may be needed. The pump track would add an exciting element to the park, providing a great experience for all age groups. The combination of a skatepark and pump track would make West Park a regional destination for many.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Add sidewalk access and park signage at the northeast corner. 1 2

Add a skatepark in the existing court area (completed in March, 2022). There may be need for expansion in the future. 20

Add bike pump track. 21

Replace basketball court goals and nets and add lighting and fans. 22

Add a bike rack by the pool area.

Resurface, and expand the basketball court to regulation size, add a cover or shade structure, and fence or screening around the court.

Install a crosswalk from the pool to the shopping area across Park Road.

Add a new footbridge to expand access between park facilities and walking trails.

Completed skatepark



DESIGN EXAMPLES



Bike pump track



Covered basketball courts



PARK GATEWAYS

Parking & Trailheads



- 2** PARK SIGNAGE
- 5** THREE NEW BRIDGES
- 6** NEW PARKING AT TRAILHEADS
- 25** PICNIC TABLES
- 26** CROSSWALK

West Park currently provides five areas for public parking: west of the baseball complex; on High School Drive off Pine Street in the southeast corner; at the West Park pool; on Park Road just west of the pool; and by the pavilion. Two of these are currently dirt parking lots.

Better layouts and asphalt paving of the dirt lots will improve parking and create better ADA access. Parking lots can also function as trailheads for the walking trail, providing information and picnic tables for users.

DeRidder can consider using permeable pavement in these projects. Its use would reduce runoff, help mitigate flooding, and improve water quality.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

- Install new park signage at the southeast corner. **2**

- Pave the southeast lot in asphalt to increase parking capacity and efficiency. **6**

- Improve the layout and pave the baseball parking lot to increase capacity and efficiency. Add ADA parking spaces. **6**

- Install new picnic tables at the southeast trailhead. **25**

- Build new footbridges between trailheads and walking trails. **26**

- Create new sidewalk connectors and crosswalks for safer access. **26**

- Pave the parking lot by the pavilion in asphalt.



Existing parking lots

DESIGN EXAMPLES

Trailhead information signage



Trail length marker

Paved and marked parking lot



Streambank & Drainage Improvements



- 1** NEW SIDEWALK CONNECTIONS
- 5** THREE NEW BRIDGES
- 8** SMALL AMPHITHEATER
- 9** WATER DETENTION AREA
- 10** ISLAND
- 11** GAZEBO AND LAWN AREA
- 13** SMALL SHADE STRUCTURE
- 14** WEIR FOR WATER DETENTION

Hickory Creek runs through West Park with multiple branches that effectively divide the park into sections. Foot bridges provide multiple access points across the creek. As with the rest of the park, the creek corridor sustained significant damage in the 2020 hurricanes, including eroded stream banks and washed out sections of trail.

To help mitigate the effects of flooding, several streambank and drainage improvements have been suggested. The Water Institute of the Gulf will be conducting a hydraulic study of the impacts of the proposed improvements outlined below, and their potential for flood mitigation.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Construct weir structures, (small dams that control upstream water levels), for the temporary detention and permanent retention of stormwater in the low-lying bowl area located between two branches of the creek. 9 14

Create a new island in the retention pond, accessed by two new footbridges. A gazebo will be constructed on the newly created island offering a unique spot for events and a great place for wildlife observation. 10 11

Relocate trails and structures away from temporary water detention areas. 9

Plant native, low-maintenance vegetation on streambanks as needed for functionality and erosion control.

Consider adding interpretive signage describing the improvements listed above and their benefits.



Hickory Creek and footbridge after Hurricane Laura

DESIGN EXAMPLES



New footbridge



Island gazebo and footbridge

AMENITIES

Exercise Equipment

Prior to the hurricanes, West Park featured exercise equipment placed along the walking trail in intervals to encourage physical fitness. Many items were damaged in the storms and now need to be replaced. A proposed upgrade includes the establishment of a centrally located area for all the equipment.



Exercise equipment centralized in one location

Additional Amenities

In addition to exercise equipment, West Park features many amenities including covered and non-covered picnic tables, benches, grills, an adult swing area, and a gazebo. Many of these items were damaged and need to be updated or replaced.

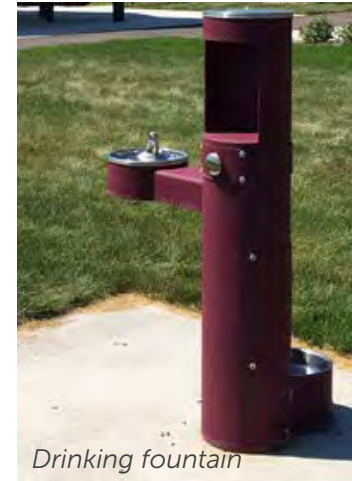
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Replace exercise equipment that was lost in the storm.

Replace exercise-related signage.

Group the exercise equipment in a centralized circuit training area near the pool parking lot or north central play area.

DESIGN EXAMPLES



Drinking fountain



Dog waste station



Adult swings



Shade structure roof



Leaf lounge

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Replace benches along Hickory Creek that were lost during the storm.

Replace gazebo at the front of the park.

Repair the popular adult swing octagon and replace swings.

Rebuild covered picnic awnings and replace picnic tables.

Replace grills.

Add bike racks near all park facilities.

Provide dog waste bag dispensers at trailheads and entrances, with appropriate signage.



Shade structure for picnic tables

Signage & Electrical

The many signs scattered throughout West Park lack consistency. A signage plan is needed to provide a consistent and branded design with information about the park and its elements, a trail map, and park rules and regulations. Upgrades to the lighting and Wi-Fi systems are also needed.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Repair or replace the digital sign at the front of the park.

Create a branded signage plan with consistent imagery, messaging, and wayfinding that reduces the number of existing signs and includes new ones where needed.

Install orientation kiosks with a park map and key information at the pool parking area and trailhead parking lots.

Place distance markers along the walking trail.

Install lamps on new sections of walking trail that match existing lamps.

Add electrical outlets to street lamp poles for seasonal display use.

Add Wi-Fi hotspots along walking trails to extend existing Wi-Fi service throughout the park.

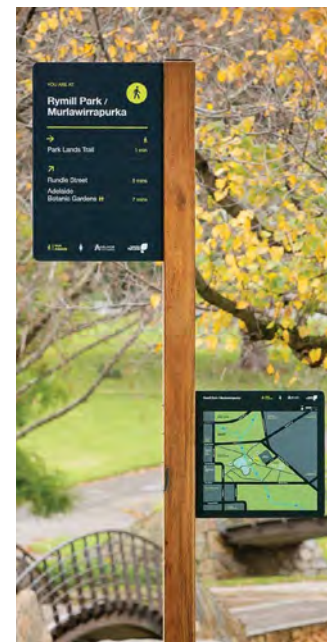
DESIGN EXAMPLES



Trail informational signage



Digital information sign



Wayfinding signage



Park entrance sign

WALKING TRAIL

West Park's popular walking trail was heavily damaged by Hurricane Laura, and by the subsequent removal of fallen trees and stumps after the storm. The walking trail currently measures a little over half a mile and circles the park, following the creek and crossing it over three foot bridges.

The master plan proposes a longer, more inclusive, and more durable walking trail. Adding new sections to the existing trail will result in the creation of a one mile walking loop. Distance markers can be added to the loop so that walkers and runners can track their progress. A secondary loop avoids grade changes, creating an option for people with mobility issues or those pushing strollers.

Along with the addition of new sidewalks and connections, multiple crosswalks, and improved signage, the park's extensive trail system would help West Park become the "trail hub" for the entire community, serving ideally as the catalyst for development and implementation of a Bike and Pedestrian Plan for the city. Safe connections between the downtown area, parks, schools, residential areas, and business corridors, would make DeRidder less car dependent, its residents healthier, and the city more attractive to potential residents who are increasingly looking for bike and pedestrian friendly communities.

Walking trail after Hurricane Laura



Proposed walking trail



PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Remove the hurricane damaged sections of the existing trail.

Remove trail sections that are too close to the creek and in danger of further erosion from future flood events.

To improve accessibility, relocate the trail next to the tennis courts and connect it to the pool parking lot, the north playground, and restrooms.

Install trail extensions to playgrounds, restrooms, benches, and parking areas to provide increased ADA accessibility.


Surface existing and new sections of walking trail with asphalt.

Place distance and wayfinding signage on walking trails.


Parking lots will also serve as trailheads with the addition of informational and wayfinding signage.


WALKING TRAIL


 EXISTING TRAIL

 TRAIL EXPANSION
(ASPHALT OR CONCRETE)

 NEW CITY SIDEWALKS


 MAIN WALKING LOOP
(5,435 LF; 1.03 MI.)

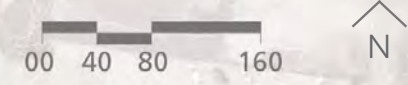
 ACCESSIBLE WALKING LOOP
(4,235 LF; 0.80 MI.)

 TRAIL EXPANSION
(MULCH / GRAVEL)

 TRAILHEAD

 NEW BRIDGES

 EXISTING BRIDGES
(TO BE REPLACED OR MODIFIED
TO BRING UP TO CODE)



CARBO

BASEBALL COMPLEX

The West Park Baseball Complex is a five field facility with two bathrooms, batting cages, a concession stand, and storage buildings. There is only one paved parking lot for the facility and limited parking. The city works in partnership with a local nonprofit organization to run youth leagues at this complex. Multiple travel teams practice here, and Incrediball tournaments are also played on these fields. The complex draws teams and their families to West Park and DeRidder from far and wide.

Hurricane damage has been fixed, but the following improvements are needed for the baseball complex to better serve park users.



PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Rebuild baseball fields with improved drainage, grass, and field mix.

Add a new concession stand, bleachers, dugouts, awnings, netting, batting cages, and walkways.

Remove the existing storage buildings and build one larger facility to provide meeting space and storage for equipment and field materials.

Repave the parking lot and add additional parking areas with ADA access (see parking section).

Add a play area just outside the fenced complex.



Baseball complex in 2018



Baseball complex after Hurricane Laura



RECOMMENDATIONS

from the National Park Service

In addition to resiliency, it will take dollars, and certainly some time, to make the “leap forward” that DeRidder is proposing for West Park. However, the support from the community and region is already there. DeRidder can begin capitalizing on this by tackling the following:

IMMEDIATE ACTION ITEMS

Engage the Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana to establish and administer a dedicated West Park Fund. The city would benefit from the foundation’s concentrated efforts and their expertise in increasing public support. This fund should include opportunities for all levels of donors and participants.

The formation of a “Friends of West Park” group may be beneficial as well. The group could be part of, or work in concert with the foundation’s dedicated fund.

Begin researching the grant and funding opportunities listed in the “Resources” section.

Prioritize the components of the master plan, taking into consideration the timing for completion of the Water Institute of the Gulf’s Hydraulic Study. Consider each component’s potential impact on future construction, and/or future construction’s potential impact on that component. DeRidder has already identified the following key priorities:

- Completing creek mitigation work
- Planting new trees to replace those lost, especially where they serve as a buffer on the northwest side
- Replacing damaged trail sections and building the new sections, as well.
- Rebuilding the “parent pocket” and replacing play equipment at the north playground area
- Establish the wildflower meadow and construct the amphitheater

DeRidder, or the Foundation, can consider the development of a “Big, Little Projects” program to provide opportunities for individuals, groups, or small businesses, who may not have large sums to give to a cause.

“Little Projects” can have “Big Impacts,” and their sheer number will help generate a wider range of public support and enhance the sense of community.

Participants could choose from a list of projects, or propose their own. They could involve the West Park plan or efforts throughout the community, as well. Some West Park-specific opportunities could include:

- Funding the planting of trees to replace those lost, or supplying plants for the wildflower meadow.
- Providing a bike rack or repair/pump station.
- Funding picnic tables, benches, grills, and animal-proof trash containers.
- Contributing to the individual pieces of West Park’s nature play equipment, or a group effort involving the entire project. The new basketball court backboards would provide a great “logo opportunity” for a local business.
- Each footbridge and gazebo could be funded by a partnership of civic groups.
- Funding the pieces of equipment in the proposed centralized exercise area, or again, an opportunity for a group to fund the area in its entirety.
- The bike pump track may provide a marketing/ sponsorship opportunity for companies like Red Bull.
- The climbing rocks would offer great opportunities as would the multitude of shade structures.

In addition to signage or plaques on items that are funded or donated, a highly recognizable logo and sign, and a sticker for a storefront, office, or resident window, would provide recognition and a show of appreciation for participants.

Big projects certainly make communities great places to live. To a regular park user however, who every morning saw that once again, raccoons had emptied the trash can overnight, the discovery one day of the “Little” addition of an animal-proof container, would have a “Big” impact. Just imagine one day having hundreds of “Big, Little” projects throughout DeRidder!



ADDITIONAL ACTION ITEMS

Take advantage of the excellent resources offered by the [League of American Bicyclists](#) and take the first steps towards the development and implementation of a Bike Pedestrian Plan, and becoming a bike/ pedestrian-friendly community. Having an approved Bike Pedestrian Plan will also help significantly when seeking future grant funding.

Visit [America Walks](#) for similar information related to pedestrian access.

Reach out to the following non-profits specializing in engaging youth in conservation. They may be able to provide assistance with conservation-related efforts at West Park.

- [American Youthworks - Louisiana Conservation Corps](#) Teams do controlled fire burning, check dams/swales, invasive species removal, among many other tasks.
- [LA Green Corps](#), good opportunity for a training partnership for local Beauregard Parish youth.
- [AmeriCorps NCCC](#) offers countless environmental stewardship opportunities for team-based projects.

Check with the [SOWELA Forestry Program](#) and [McNeese State University’s Natural Resource Management Program](#). Both feature internship opportunities involving day-to-day tasks and research, such as vegetation control, soil & erosion monitoring, while also taking on unique larger projects each year.

Explore the possibility of bringing art and history programming to West Park, by working with Real Art DeRidder and the Beauregard Museum.

Work with the adjacent Kingdom Center to promote use of the park and the potential for joint programming.

Continuously keep the public informed as to progress being made at West Park.

RELEVANT RESOURCES

[The Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana](#)

[Louisiana Outdoors Forever](#), a new state program helping communities leverage matching funds.

[Land and Water Conservation Fund \(LWCF\)](#), a federal grant program promoting outdoor recreation, and development of park facilities. The LWCF is administered by Louisiana's Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, Office of State Parks, Division of Outdoor Recreation.

[Recreation Trails Program](#), funding opportunities for all types of trails.

[Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development](#), administers several programs that provide funding for water resource issues and projects, and watershed management.

[Building Community Resilience with Nature-Based Solutions: A Guide for Local Officials](#). This FEMA publication provides context and solutions to leverage nature-based solutions for adaptation and climate resilience.

Several playground retailers and manufacturers offer grant funding and/or assistance with pursuing grants. Some of these include:

- [Landscape Structures](#)
- [GameTime](#)
- [Kaboom](#). Grant funding, Build a Playground Toolkit, and good information on the benefits of inclusive and equitable projects and programs.
- [Playground Equipment.Com](#), playground grants in Louisiana.

[U.S. Economic Development Administration](#), grants for outdoor recreation sectors to invest in infrastructure, workforce, or other projects to support the recovery of the industry and the economic resilience of the community in the future.

[Rebuilding America's Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity \(RAISE\) Grant Program](#), see page 55 for the \$1.7 million award notice for Natchitoches, involving, among other aspects, the funding of designated bike and pedestrian lanes and sidewalks. Having a Bike Pedestrian Plan in place helped the city obtain these funds.

[The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation \(NFWF\)](#), grant funding opportunities for new voluntary conservation and restoration projects around the United States.

[IMCAL Regional Planning Commission](#), the agency's Community Development Division can help with planning, funding, and technical analysis of demographic, environmental, and economic issues.

[Arts and Humanities Council of Southwest Louisiana](#), Funds projects and arts organizations in five parishes, (including Beauregard), through the Louisiana Project Grants (LPG) program. Visit the LPG grant webpage.

[The Grantsmanship Center](#), On-line training programs.

[Safe Routes Partnership](#), an informative yet easy to read introduction to bike and pedestrian planning.

[Alta](#), examples of other Bike and Pedestrian plans from around the country.

[Lake Charles Bike and Pedestrian Plan](#), the Executive Summary gives a good outline of nearby Lake Charles' excellent and ambitious plan.

[Louisiana Recreation and Parks Association](#), Louisiana's organization for park and recreational professionals.

[National Recreation and Parks Association](#), planning for and providing inclusive facilities in parks.

[General Recreation](#), an excellent source of information on designing, funding, and building an inclusive playground.

[Louisiana Land Conservation Assistance Network](#), technical assistance for a wide range of land use, conservation, green energy, and water resource issues.

[Strava](#), Interesting "heat maps" show where people are cycling in and around DeRidder.

[www.ebird.org](#). A nation-wide birding website with information on local hotspots and sightings, provided by area birders. West Park could eventually provide several different habitat areas, attractive to many species of birds. The proposed trail system will provide a wonderful birding experience for residents.

[Neat article, published in 1963](#), about P.W. West, who donated the 48 acres for West Park.



MOVING FORWARD

Daniel Burnham, Chicago's city planner and one of America's most important architects, who helped to rebuild Chicago after the Chicago Fire of 1871, once said:

"Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die."

DeRidder's officials and residents are certainly taking Mr. Burnham's advice to heart, making "big plans and aiming high," and with the West Park Master Plan, a "noble and logical diagram," solidly in place.

Thank you for inviting our team to help in the planning efforts to restore West Park. It did not take long for us to realize the importance of the facility to your community, and the region, as well. Please stay in touch regarding your progress, and when you are ready, consider an application for technical planning assistance from the National Park Service. The Team would welcome the opportunity to help turn your vision of a "bigger and better" West Park into reality.



FEMA

Federal Emergency Management Agency-Community Planning and Capacity Building Recovery Support Function (CPCB RSF): The mission of the CPCB RSF is to enable local governments to effectively and efficiently carry out community-based recovery planning and management in a post-disaster environment. CPCB also supports state or territorial governments in developing programs of support for local recovery planning.



NPS-RTCA

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

The National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program (NPS-RTCA) supports locally-led conservation and outdoor recreation projects and assists communities with natural disaster recovery across the United States. NPS-RTCA assists communities and public land managers in developing or restoring parks, conservation areas, rivers, and wildlife habitats, as well as creating outdoor recreation opportunities and programs that engage future generations in the outdoors.



The Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness leads and supports Louisiana and its citizens to prevent, prepare for, respond to, recover from and mitigate against man-made or natural disasters that threaten our State.



LOUISIANA
Office of
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

The Louisiana Office of Community Development creates a safer and stronger Louisiana by leading the state’s disaster recovery and long-term community resilience planning efforts with a great sense of urgency through innovation, partnerships and best practices.

