



North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023-2024



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*Lillington River Park, Town of Lillington*

The North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) was established in July 1994 to provide a dedicated funding source for improvements in state parks, matching grants for local parks, and public access to the state's beaches and estuaries. PARTF is funded by annual appropriations as well as revenue from personalized license plates and is administered by the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation (Division).

Per N.C. General Statute §143B-135.56, PARTF is allocated as follows:

- 65% for the state parks system or a state recreational forest for capital projects, repairs, and renovations of facilities and to acquire land.
  - By resolution of the Parks and Recreation Authority, four percent (4%) of this allocation is allocated to the DuPont State Recreational Forest annually.
- 30% to provide grants to local governments on a matching dollar-for-dollar basis to establish or improve parks and recreational projects.
- 5% for the N.C. Division of Coastal Management's (DCM) Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program.
- 3% may be used by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) for the operating expenses associated with managing capital improvements projects, acquiring land, and administering the grants program for local governments.

The nine-member Parks and Recreation Authority allocates PARTF funding for projects in state parks and grants to local governments to actively acquire lands, renovate existing parks, and build new public recreation facilities. The Division transfers 5% of PARTF revenue to DCM for the Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program. DCM administers these funds and offers matching grants to local governments in 20 coastal counties.

2023-24  
Parks and Recreation  
Authority Members



**Margaret Newbold**  
Chairperson  
Watauga



**Doug Auer**  
Catawba



**Amber Brown**  
Cleveland



**Chad Brown**  
Gaston



**Mavis Gragg**  
Durham



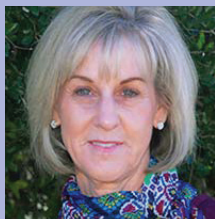
**Beth Heile**  
Burke



**Lewis Ledford**  
Forsyth



**Barnes Sutton**  
New Hanover



**Cynthia Tart**  
Pender

The nine-member N.C. Parks and Recreation Authority oversees PARTF. The Governor appoints five members, including the chair. The General Assembly appoints four members, two by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and two by the Speaker of the House. Members are appointed for 3-year terms.

The Authority is charged with six powers and duties:

- to allocate funds for land acquisition,
- to allocate funds for capital projects,
- to solicit financial and material support,
- to receive public and private donations and funds for deposit into the Trust Fund,
- to develop effective support for parks and recreation,
- and to advise the Secretary of DNCR on any matter referred to the body.

The Parks and Recreation Authority held six meetings during fiscal year 2023-2024.



Abernethy Park, Town of Huntersville

## 3.0 Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Revenue Summary



Rob Wallace Park, Cabarrus County



Kiwanis Family Park, City of Sanford

Total PARTF revenue available for state and local parks as well as coastal access projects was \$31,769,893 from appropriations, nonrecurring revenue, and personalized license plate fees. The state parks system received \$20,030,918; the local government matching grant program \$9,245,039; and the Coastal Access grant program \$1,588,495. Reserved for administrative expenses was \$905,441 (Table 3-1).

**Table 3-1: North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Deposits and Distribution of Revenues, Fiscal Year 2023-24**

Revenue	Amount
Recurring Appropriations	\$28,000,000
Non-recurring Revenue	\$2,000,000
License Plate Fees	\$1,769,893
<b>Total PARTF Revenue</b>	<b>\$31,769,893</b>

Distribution	Amount
State Parks System / DuPont State Recreational Forest <i>State Parks System: \$18,798,246 (61%)</i> <i>DuPont State Recreational Forest: \$1,232,672 (4%)</i>	\$20,030,918
Local Government Matching Grant Program	\$9,245,039
Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program	\$1,588,495
Administrative Expenses Reserve	\$905,441
<b>Total PARTF Allocation</b>	<b>\$31,769,893</b>



*Triad Park, Forsyth County*



*Magnolia Ernest Recreation Park, Warren County*



*Neuse River Greenway, City of Raleigh*



*Rob Wallace Park, Cabbarus County*

## 4.1 Program Description

The PARTF program provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants to local governments to acquire land for public parks and to build or renovate recreational facilities. N.C. counties and incorporated municipalities are eligible for PARTF grants. Public authorities, as defined by N.C.G.S. §159-7, are also eligible if they are authorized to acquire parkland or develop facilities for public recreation.

Each year, the Parks and Recreation Authority announces the availability of PARTF matching grants and the schedule for applying to local government officials. A local government can request a maximum grant amount of \$500,000 in PARTF assistance with each grant application.

The Division supports local governments in several ways. The Grants and Outreach staff post a PARTF Application Video Guide online where local governments can learn about the program and how to complete an application. The video is available on demand. The Division contracts with North Carolina State University to provide technical assistance to local governments through the Recreation Resources Service (RRS). RRS provides advice to local governments on preparing grant applications with five consultants in regional offices.

The members of the Parks and Recreation Authority vote to select grant recipients. The factors considered by the Authority include but are not limited to: the criteria contained in the PARTF scoring system, the population of the applicant community, the geographic distribution of projects across the state, the grant funds requested in comparison to the funds available, and compliance with prior grant agreements. Applications were due May 1, 2023. The Parks and Recreation Authority met Aug. 18, 2023, to award the matching grants.

## 4.2 Applications and Projects Rewarded

The PARTF revenue available to local grants for fiscal year 2023-24 was \$10,521,752, which includes returned and withdrawn grant funds. Fifty-two local governments submitted PARTF applications, requesting \$21,088,369 in PARTF assistance. The Authority awarded 25 grants totaling \$10,423,612 (Table 4-1).

**Table 4-1: Fiscal Year 2023-24 PARTF Matching Grants Awarded to Local Governments**

Applicant	County	Project	Funds Awarded	Local Matching Funds
Archdale	Randolph	Aldridge Park	\$500,000	\$1,912,375
Beulaville	Duplin	Humphrey Athletic Park Improvements – Phase I	\$258,100	\$258,100
Biscoe	Montgomery	Biscoe Town Park	\$500,000	\$2,056,809
Bladen County	Bladen	Bladen County Park – Phase III	\$197,925	\$158,428
Candor	Montgomery	Fitzgerald Park Community Revitalization Project	\$500,000	\$1,012,576
Cherokee County	Cherokee	Hiwassee Dam Park	\$500,000	\$660,600
China Grove	Rowan	Community Memorial Park	\$302,500	\$302,500
Ellenboro	Rutherford	Cotton Gin Park – Phase I	\$450,000	\$784,338
Johnston County	Johnston	Johnston County Regional Park – Phase 1	\$500,000	\$1,436,239
Jonesville	Yadkin	Double Bluff Recreation Area	\$500,000	\$500,000
Lansing	Ashe	Creeper Trail Park Additions	\$252,500	\$252,500
Lincolnton	Lincoln	City Park Redevelopment	\$500,000	\$3,557,440
Lowell	Gaston	Harold Rankin Park Revitalization	\$500,000	\$500,000
Marvin	Union	Village Hall Amphitheater	\$500,000	\$500,000
Monroe	Union	Creft Park / Bearskin Creek Greenway III	\$500,000	\$500,000
Nashville	Nash	J.W. Glover Park	\$316,380	\$316,380
Person County	Person	County Farm to Park	\$360,000	\$486,355
Pilot Mountain	Surry	Navigating Armfield Acquisition and Renovation	\$500,000	\$4,459,990
Rocky Mount	Nash	Sunset Park Renovation	\$500,000	\$760,000
Seven Devils	Watauga	The Park at Seven Devils	\$250,000	\$275,000
Spencer	Rowan	Spencer Town Park	\$500,000	\$1,225,000
Walnut Cove	Stokes	London Park	\$ 61,207	\$61,207
West Jefferson	Ashe	Paddy Mountain Park	\$500,000	\$1,403,149
Wilkes County	Wilkes	Roaring River Park and River Access	\$475,000	\$1,088,694
Zebulon	Wake	Little River Park – Phase I	\$500,000	\$598,050
<b>Total PARTF Funds</b>			<b>\$10,423,612</b>	



Tall Glass of Water, Bertie County

## 4.3 Examples of Completed Local Government Projects



Archer Lodge Town Park, Town of Archer Lodge



ZooCity Sportsplex, City of Asheboro





Gaylord Perry Park, Town of Williamston

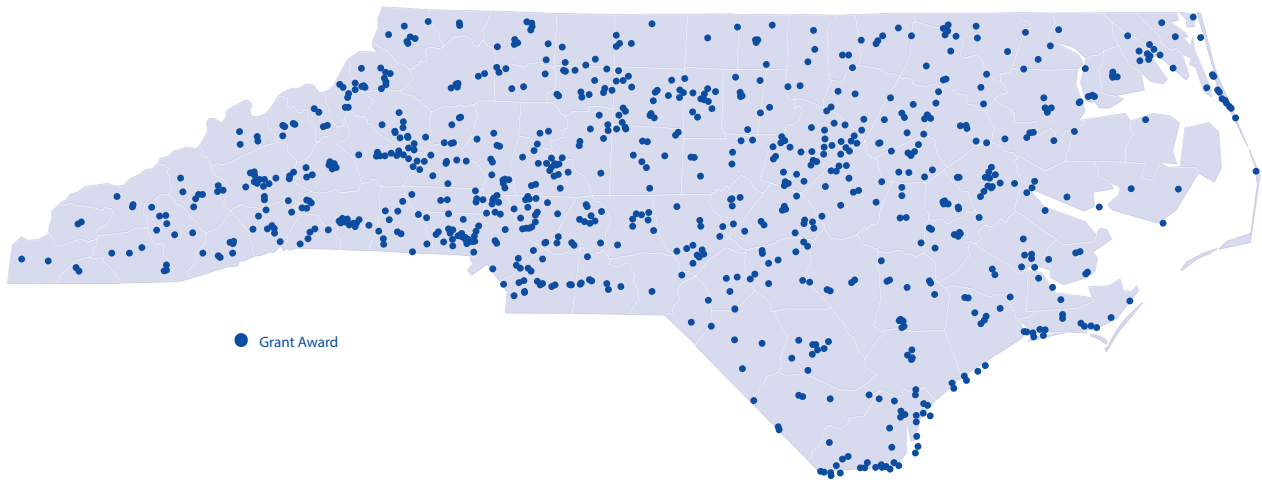


Madison River Park, Town of Madison

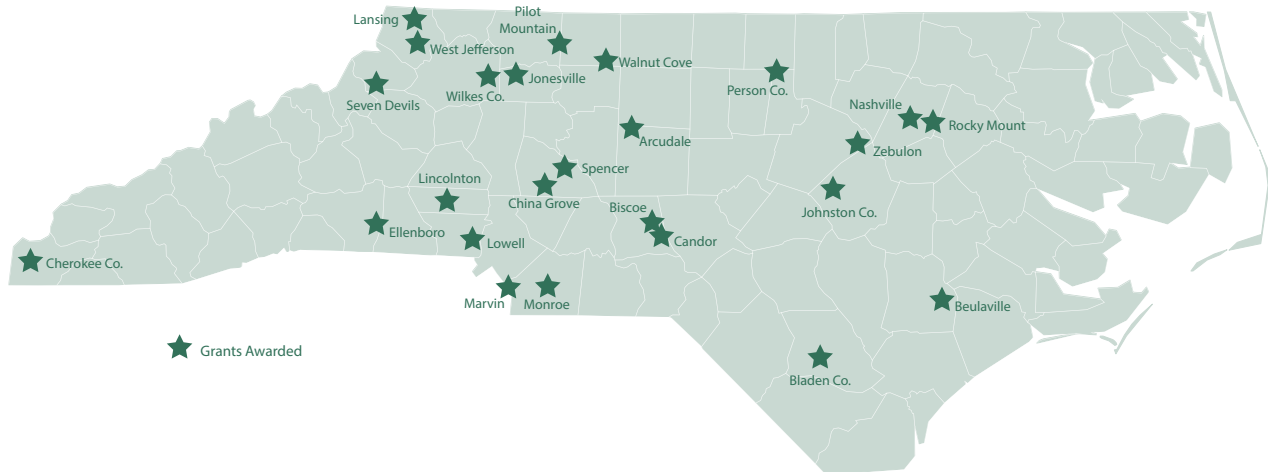
## 4.4 Geographic Distribution of Grants

Since 1995, the Parks and Recreation Authority has awarded 1,034 matching grants in all 100 counties across North Carolina.

Distribution of PARTF Grants by County, 1995-2024



Distribution of PARTF Grants, Fiscal Year 2023-24



## 5.0 State Parks

The Parks and Recreation Authority allocates PARTF revenue to capital improvement, maintenance and land acquisition projects for the state parks system. The Division develops priorities for the state parks system and recommends projects for the board's approval. The PARTF revenue for state park projects for fiscal year 2023-24 was \$20,030,918.

The total amount awarded to state park projects in fiscal year 2023-24 was \$21,762,398, which includes funds from projects from previous years completed under budget or postponed (Tables 5-1 and 5-2).

The Parks and Recreation Authority allocated \$1,232,672 for projects at DuPont State Recreational Forest (N.C.G.S. §143B-135.56 (b)(1)). Section 7.0 provides additional information about these projects.

### 5.1 Land Acquisition

**Table 5-1: Fiscal Year 2023-24 PARTF Funds for State Parks System  
Land Acquisition Projects**

State Park	Acres	PARTF Funding	Matching Funding	Project
Chimney Rock	1	\$230,000	None	Warehouse building previously being leased by the Division
Elk Knob	66	\$330,000	None	Tract that protects high value conservation land and may allow for trail expansion
Grandfather Mountain	402.3	\$850,000	NC Land and Water (NCLWF): \$850,000 donated value: \$1,276,667	Tract that protects high quality natural resources, water quality, and the viewshed along Peak Mountain
Haw River	240	\$1,935,907	NCLWF: \$1,935,907	Three tracts that protect water quality in a county with significant development pressures
Lake Norman	30	\$850,000	NCLWF: \$850,000	Tract that protects a bottomland hardwood forest and tributary flowing into Lake Norman
Mayo River	336	\$1,000,000	NCLWF: \$1,000,000	Tract that protects water quality along a 2-mile section of the Mayo River
Medoc Mountain	142	\$471,000	None	Tract that protects natural resources and water quality along a tributary of the Little River, one of the most biologically diverse rivers in the coastal plain
Merchants Millpond	44.5	\$1,700,000	None	Three inholdings that provide connectivity between the visitor center and the campground, provide housing for staff and storage for equipment, and aid in natural resource management by providing continuous land for prescribed fire
Mount Mitchell	215	\$2,000,000	NCLWF: \$2,000,000	Tracts with extremely high heritage value and help extend connections to thousands of acres of conservation land
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,476.8</b>	<b>\$9,366,907</b>		

## 5.2 Construction and Renovation

**Table 5-2: Fiscal Year 2023-24 PARTF Funds for State Parks System  
Capital Improvement Projects**

Park	Project	Funding
Lower Haw River	Day-use facilities at state natural area	\$1,592,274
Chimney Rock	Sky Lounge fire suppression system	\$560,000
Lumber River	Wire Pasture day-use access	\$2,333,090
Lake Waccamaw	New campground	\$4,160,127
Hammocks Beach	Design for visitor center floor repairs	\$500,000
<b>Total for Capital Projects</b>		<b>\$9,145,491</b>
Systemwide	Major maintenance statewide repairs and renovation to existing facilities throughout the park system including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Ranger residence repairs and improvements</li> <li>&gt; HVAC repairs and replacements</li> <li>&gt; Fire and security repairs and replacements</li> <li>&gt; Wastewater systems repairs and replacements</li> <li>&gt; Removal of hazardous trees</li> <li>&gt; Erosion control</li> </ul>	\$3,000,000
<b>Total Capital Projects and Major Maintenance</b>		<b>\$36,431,914</b>

## 5.3 Planning

**Table 5-3: Fiscal Year 2023-24 PARTF Funds for State Parks System  
Planning Project**

Park	Project	Funding
Systemwide	Develop and update "Parks for a New Century" plan	\$250,000



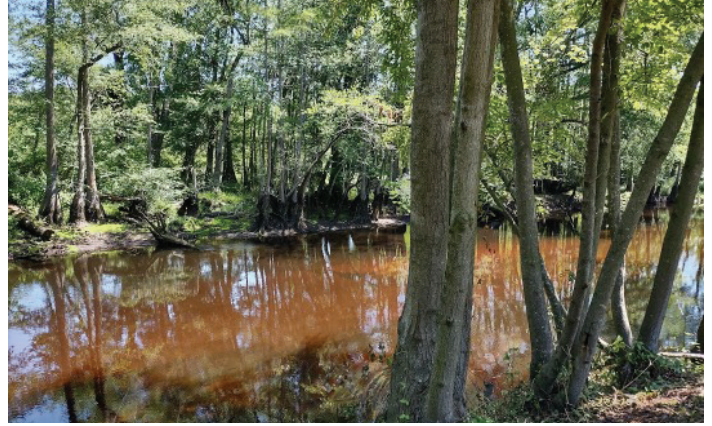
*Vietnam Veterans Park, Cabarrus County*



*Fisher River Park, Surry County*



*Peak Mountain tract added to Grandfather Mountain State Park*



*Morgan Heirs property added to Lumber River State Park*

## 5.4 Operating Expenses Associated with State Park Projects

In allocating PARTF funds to the state parks system, the Parks and Recreation Authority considered the operating expenses that may be associated with the projects (N.C.G.S. §143B-135.56 (e)). The Division estimated these costs and presented them for the board's consideration when the projects were proposed for funding. The estimated costs are based on conceptual plans for each project and are not funds allocated from PARTF.

**Table 5-4: Operating Expenses Associated with Awarded State Park Projects**

State Park	Project	Estimated Operating Expenses	
		Recurring	Nonrecurring
Lower Haw River	Day-use area	\$134,214	\$87,400
Lake Waccamaw	New campground	\$318,461	\$149,130
Grandfather Mountain	Land acquisition of the Peak property	\$194,095	\$250,700

## 6.1 Program Description

North Carolina's Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program was established by the General Assembly in 1981. The program began receiving 5% of the revenues from PARTF during fiscal year 1996-97. The program's enabling legislation (N.C.G.S. §113A-134.1) states that public interest would be served by providing increased access to coastal waters, public parking facilities, or other related public uses.

The program, administered by the Division of Coastal Management (DCM), offers matching grant funds primarily to local governments throughout the 20 coastal counties. Since 1981, over 497 public access sites have been acquired or improved at a cost of over \$53.8 million in grant funds. Local governments are responsible for the construction, operation, and long-term maintenance of the facilities. While most of the early projects were located along the oceanfront, more projects are now designed to improve access to estuarine shorelines, coastal rivers, and urban waterfronts.

DCM sends pre-application requests for proposals (RFPs) to local governments in the 20 coastal counties annually. Criteria developed by the Coastal Resources Commission are used to select grant recipients. Local governments are given 18 months to complete projects. Extensions may be granted for unforeseen events and delays, such as hurricanes, with a 3-year maximum life of a contract.

Local governments are required to match 10-25% of the project costs based on the type of project being funded and the community's economic status per the North Carolina Department of Commerce's Tier designations, as outlined by N.C.G.S. §143B-437.08. The required cash match may include federal and other state funds, provided these funds are not already being used as match funds for any other state or federal program.

## 6.2 Types of Projects Funded

Communities can apply for the following types of projects:

### Land Acquisition/Easement

- Purchase of land for future public access facilities
- Purchase of easements for public access

### Construction Projects

- Facilities such as dune crossovers, boardwalks, and piers that provide access to the water
- Support facilities such as parking areas, restrooms, and other facilities
- Boat launch facilities: Boat launch and ramp facilities, whether motorized or not, provided that pedestrian access is still a major component of the project

### Rehabilitation

- Urban waterfront access sites: Improved public access to deteriorating or underutilized urban waterfronts through reconstruction or rehabilitation
- Reconstruction or relocation of existing damaged public access facilities: Primarily for sites not originally funded by this program or for improvements to any sites at least 15 years old



Epstein Bathhouse, Town of Nags Head



Scuppernon River

### 6.3 Awards for Fiscal Year 2023-24

State appropriations are allocated to DCM through PARTF. The amount transferred from the PARTF to DCM during fiscal year 2023-24 was \$1,588,495. The amount budgeted for grants in addition to this allocation includes an added \$1,224,377 of funds unused from previous fiscal years and returned funds from previous grants. Table 6-1 provides the list of local governments that have been awarded grant funding. Additional information on current and past grants awarded can be found [here](#).

**Table 6-1: Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Program Communities Awarded or Prioritized for Fiscal Year 2023-24 Funding Based on Earlier Deposits and Other Available Funds**

Local Government	Project Description	Grant Amount	Total Project Cost
Carolina Beach	Canal Drive parcels for parking and access to beach and Freeman Park	\$600,000	\$1,000,000
City of Washington	Renovation of approximately 1,981 ft. boardwalk at Washington Wetlands Boardwalk	\$800,000	\$1,333,000
Holden Beach	Block Q Development	\$420,000	\$560,000
Hyde County <sup>†</sup>	Englehard Far Creek Boardwalk Renovation Phase II	\$108,900	\$121,000
Kure Beach	Public Beach Accesses #99 and #140 Improvements	\$133,725	\$185,955
Nags Head	Governor Street Public Beach Access Improvements	\$89,313	\$130,048
Surf City	Broadway Street Access Improvements	\$10,875	\$14,500
Washington	Renovation of Washington Wetlands Boardwalk	\$800,000	\$1,333,000
Winton <sup>†</sup>	Winton Town Park	\$189,325	\$210,361
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$2,812,872</b>	

<sup>†</sup> Denotes communities that are Tier 1 jurisdictions. \$298,225 or about 10.5% of the grant awards are proposed for Tier 1 communities.

The above project list does not include any direct partnerships with other state agencies. The only non-award use of the funds is providing access site signs made by the Department of Adult Correction. Signs are provided to local governments for new sites and for replacement of weathered signs.

# 7.0

## DuPont State Recreational Forest

Since 2017, in keeping with N.C.G.S. §143B-135.56, the Parks and Recreation Authority allocated 4% of the annual appropriation for state parks for capital projects, repairs, renovations, and land acquisitions at DuPont State Recreational Forest (DSRF). The amount transferred was \$1,232,672. In fiscal year 2023-24, state forest staff made progress on capital projects supported by PARTF funds, expending a total of \$452,314. Table 7-1 provides a summary of expenditures.

**Table 7-1: DuPont State Recreational Forest PART Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2023-24**

Capital Project	Expenditures
Briery Fork, Turkey Knob, Grassy Creek and Wintergreen Falls Trail renovation	\$117,942
Conservation Road renovation	\$167,182
Fiber internet installation	\$150,000
Law enforcement cabin chimney renovation	\$5,800
Lake DERA and Lake Julia Dam engineering analyses	\$11,390
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$452,314</b>



*Vietnam Veterans Park, Cabarrus County*



## 8.0 PARTF 30th Anniversary



*Past and present authority members*



*Bayard Alcorn presented with Order of the Long Leaf Pine*

On July 16, 1994, the North Carolina General Assembly established PARTF to fund improvements in the state parks system, to fund grants for parks managed by local governments, and to increase the public's access to beaches and estuaries along the Atlantic Coast. Over the last 30 years, PARTF has provided over \$500 million to the state parks system for land acquisition, facility development, and maintenance; over \$262 million to 1,055 local projects across all 100 counties to help local governments reach their park and public access goals to improve the quality of life in their communities; and over \$53.8 million in grants for nearly 500 public beach and coastal waterfront access projects through the Division of Coastal Management.

Governor Roy Cooper issued a proclamation July 16, 2024, in recognition of the 30th anniversary of the creation of PARTF.

On June 11, 2024, the North Carolina Recreation and Park Association and Friends for State Parks hosted a celebration to celebrate PARTF's 30 years and share the value of the dedicated fund. More than the numbers though, the true impact of PARTF is reflected in the enjoyment of residents and the vibrancy of communities across the state. These investments promote recreation, education, environmental stewardship, and economic growth.

**Order of the Long Leaf Pine:** Bayard Alcorn, a retired Division employee, was awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine at the PARTF 30th anniversary celebration. His leadership in developing and managing the NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund is central to his legacy.

A native of North Carolina, Bayard graduated from Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and continued his education earning a master's degree from the N.C. State University Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management. This led to a career with the Division, where he quietly made an impact for both state and local parks.

Bayard's service to the public and his commitment to the profession was exemplified in the standard to which he upheld PARTF. He never saw the fund as an entitlement. He believed a PARTF grant is earned through past stewardship, visionary planning, innovative design, and creative partnerships. The ability of the Parks and Recreation Authority to thoughtfully choose grant awards is dependent upon Division staff who provide them with all the information they need. Throughout his tenure, Bayard always made sure that information the Authority received was rigorously accurate, unbiased, and clearly presented.