

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter combines three separate elements as they appeared in previous comprehensive plans including Recreation and Open Space, Agriculture, and Preservation. The importance of these resources cannot be understated and the need for them must be identified and accommodated as they contribute to the overall quality of life in Boone County. Active and passive recreation facilities and programs are needed to meet the changing demographics of Boone County. Furthermore, as development continues, it is vital to document and preserve the existing natural features, cultural resources, agricultural lands (and related uses), and open spaces.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Much of this section necessarily comes from the [2006 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update, Boone County, Kentucky](#), which is the most recent countywide plan of its type. It discusses the need for parks and open space and includes the numbers, types, and acreages of parks in Boone County as well as recommendations for future parks and open space based on the 2006 master plan update.

Local governments in Boone County manage approximately 1,965 acres of land designated for parks and recreation purposes. Schools operate additional campus and recreational areas. Boone County cooperates with the Cities of Walton, Florence and Union in the operations of parks within their jurisdictions. These agencies have the responsibility to manage this land efficiently and in a manner consistent with the health, safety and welfare of the community. For many residents, parks provide their only access to active recreational opportunities in the natural environment. Furthermore, the quality of a community's parks and recreation system is viewed as one of the indicators of the overall quality of life. Property values around parks tend to be considerably higher than other areas, thereby making an annual contribution to the community in the form of higher property tax revenues, as well as additional profits to the owners at point of sale. More valuable properties also tend to be maintained at a higher level, improving the appearance of the communities. Parks also preserve important cultural and natural features for future generations to enjoy.

Public and Private Recreation Facilities

The [Boone County Parks Department](#) manages over 30 properties on approximately 1,875 acres across Boone County. These properties range in size from small "neighborhood" parks such as the 1-acre Pete's Park in Burlington or 5-acre Petersburg landing to much larger parks like [Central Park & Arboretum](#) (122 acres), Middle Creek Park (230 acres), and England-Idlewild Park (290 acres). All of the larger parks have playgrounds, baseball fields, soccer fields, and shelters, with basketball courts (8 parks), tennis courts (4 parks), and paved and/or unpaved trails (12 parks) also available. Other amenities in the system include volleyball (3 parks), disc golf (4 parks), dog runs (2 parks), garden plots (2 parks), amphitheaters (3 parks), bocce ball (1 park), as well as swimming, fishing, horseshoes, river access, and even geocaching. The Union Park property features a 25-meter "L-shaped" swimming pool and concession stand.

A range of hiking, biking, and walking activities is available in the Boone County Park system. The trails at England-Idlewild and Central Park are the most popular paved trails in the county's system. The mountain bike trails at England-Idlewild are among the most well-known and frequently visited in the region falling under the [Cincinnati Off Road Alliance](#) chapter of the International Mountain Biking Association. Some of the most scenic recreational hiking in the region is found in the Middle Creek Valley at Dinsmore Woods, Middle Creek Park/Conservancy Park, and Boone County Cliffs. A new bridge recently opened at Middle Creek Park, where the trail system is a shared pedestrian/equestrian path and the parking area can accommodate vehicles with horse trailers. Boone County Cliffs reopened in May, 2018, after being closed for over a year for trail upgrading, new signage, and parking area redesign.

In addition to Parks Department facilities, Boone County also owns/operates [two public golf courses: Boone Links and Lassing Pointe](#). The Parks Department offers a broad range of programming and coordinates its efforts with both public and private entities including The Boone Conservancy, Arboretum at Central Park, school districts, and cities of Florence, Union, and Walton.

The [City of Florence Parks & Recreation Department](#) is wholly separate from County Parks and manages a number of facilities in Florence. These total approximately 100 acres and include 7 parks ranging in size from small neighborhood parks such as 2.5-acre Walnut Creek to 42-acre South Fork Park, which is the largest. Amenities in the system include playgrounds, ball fields, tennis, volleyball and basketball courts, paved paths and shelters. The Florence Nature Park includes the Evelyn M. Kalb Gathering House, a rentable retreat facility. The City of Florence also operates two unique facilities: the [Florence Family Aquatic Center](#) and Florence Skate Park. [World of Golf](#), the 3rd public golf course in the county, is also located in Florence. Florence has also developed an [online story map](#) for their trail system, as well as a [downloadable PDF map](#).

In addition to the facilities owned and/or managed by local governments, Boone County has state owned/operated and privately owned recreation facilities. The most noted among the State of Kentucky's properties is [Big Bone Lick State Historic Site](#) in the southwest part of the county. As mentioned below, the park's significant history and heritage is explored in the on-site museum and Discovery Trail. The 500-plus acre park also offers hiking trails, 62 camping sites with utility hookups, grills, swimming pool, playground areas and related amenities. To the north of Big Bone Lick, the state also owns the 635-acre [Dr. Norman and Martha Adair Wildlife Management Area](#) (WMA).

The largest private recreation sites in Boone County are [Sports of All Sorts](#) in Florence and the [R.C. Durr YMCA](#) in Burlington, both of which offer a wide array of primarily indoor recreation facilities and programming. Some of the many other privately-owned/operated recreation facilities in the county include:

- Baseball: Mountain Ballpark near Verona, [Rivershore Sports Park](#) in North Bend
- Golf: Traditions, Triple Crown
- Horse Racing: Turfway Park
- Auto Racing: Florence Speedway dirt track, annual 4-H Utopia Fair Demolition derbies
- Fishing: Camp Ernst YMCA, Crouch's Treasure Lake, England-Idlewild Park
- Ropes/Zip-Line Courses: Creation Museum, Potter Ranch
- Private Hunting/Fishing clubs such as Dutchman's and Moonlight
- Camping: YMCA Camp Ernst and Camp Michaels (Boy Scouts - Dan Beard Council)

Active and/or passive recreation is the primary function of most of the parks in Boone County, whether ownership is public or private. However, many of these facilities (especially the larger ones) serve other purposes such as protection of scenic or natural areas, parts of watersheds and cultural resources. Including nature preserves such as Carder-Dolwick, Dinsmore Woods and others, there is close to 4,000 acres of passive recreation property in Boone County.

Boone County has been proactive in acquiring properties with minimal development potential for conservation purposes and/or parks. Examples include the Gunpowder Creek Nature Park and the Volpenhein Property downstream on Gunpowder, which are not expected to develop for anything other than passive recreation. The largest National Register Historic District in the county is contiguous with Big Bone Lick State Historic Site, offering some protection to both archaeological sites and structures. Archaeological sites receive some protection on some recreational properties and even small family cemeteries find stewardship at Union Pool, Walton Park, Camp Ernst and Potters Ranch. Finally, it is important to note that most recreational facilities are subject to Planning Commission review/comment under local zoning through the [Recreation District of the Boone County Zoning Regulations](#). Planning Commission review is also one of the mechanisms that evaluates the appropriate siting of tourism facilities.

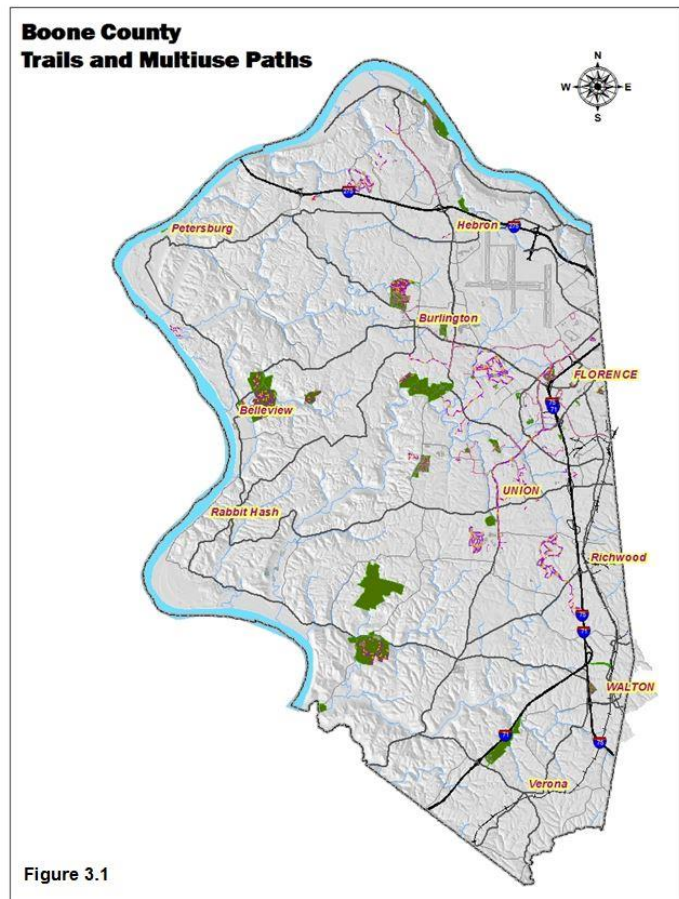
Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Sidewalks, multi-use paths, natural surface trails, and bike lanes are an important part of the recreation, active living, health, and transportation goals of Plan2040. As such, there is some overlap between this chapter and discussion elsewhere in the plan. According to GIS data, Boone County presently has approximately 700 miles of traditional Sidewalk, 41 miles of Multi-Use Trails and 33 miles of Natural Surface Trail (**Figure 3.1 – Trails & Multiuse Paths Map**). At present, on-road bike lanes are found only along Houston Road in Florence, US 42 through Union, and North Bend Road in Hebron.

Multi-Use Trails are designated in the GIS system as paved trails at least 8 feet in width. This captures closed loop recreational trails such as those at Central Park, England-Idlewild and Giles Conrad parks as well as privately owned trails in Orleans and Hearthstone subdivisions. Trails which serve a more inherent transportation function include those along Aero Parkway/Bushelman Blvd, Mall Road, Conrad Lane, and Industrial Road. Note that because they are less than 8 feet in width, some pedestrian facilities which experience significant recreational traffic are classed as Sidewalks, including those along North Bend Road and in the Oakbrook, Pebble Creek, Thornwilde, Bally Shannon and Triple Crown other subdivisions.

Natural Surface Trails are of earth and/or crushed stone construction and include hiking trails in parks such as Middle Creek, Gunpowder Creek Nature Park or Big Bone Lick. Also included in the total is the 11-mile E/I Hike/Bike Trail system at England-Idlewild Park, which was designed for mountain biking but is very popular with hikers.

Based on current plans, an additional 8 miles of Multi-Use Trail and nearly 6 miles of Sidewalk will be built in Boone County over in the next two years. This includes Multi-Use Trail along KY 237 from KY 18 north to Cougar Path, KY 237 from Rogers Lane south to Valley View, and over 5 miles of Mt. Zion Road from US 42 to I-71/75. Some other projects classed as Sidewalk will complete critical pedestrian links, including along KY 18 from Oakbrook to the existing walkway into Burlington and to the fairgrounds and England/Idlewild Park from Burlington. Together, these initiatives are realizing important pedestrian connections such as those between Boone Woods Park, Burlington, England/Idlewild Park and the Conner school campus. Continued movement in this direction will only strengthen Parks - School District coordination such as the Walton-Verona Sports Complex at Waller-Stephenson Park. Over the last decade, the county has proactively used the Federally funded Safe Routes to School program to make other key pedestrian connections.



After the KY 18 and KY 237 projects are finished, 7 miles of the proposed *CVG Trail* will be complete. Future completion of this 14-mile loop trail around the north and east sides of Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport will be a major accomplishment. It would function as a hub for non-motorized transportation within the county as well as a regional recreation draw with the potential for significant local economic impact.

Studies across the US and elsewhere have proven the economic impact of recreational trail systems. Links to several dozen such studies are available online at <https://www.americantrails.org/resources/benefits-of-trails/economic>. Two recent studies in the NKY/SW Ohio region looked at trails closer to Boone County, including

the [2018 Economic Analysis of the Devou Park Backcountry Trails](#). This study analyzed trail user surveys and concluded that Devou Park's Natural Surface Trail system generates 35,000 visits and \$1.8 million economic impact annually. On a larger scale, the [Miami Valley Trail User Survey Report](#) (2013) analyzed user data from points in a 240-mile paved trail system and concluded "regional economic impact from the network is estimated at just over \$13 million per year." An [older study completed in 2008](#) analyzed single family home values along the Little Miami Scenic Trail and concluded that "distance each foot increase in distance to the trail decreases the sale price of a sample property by \$7.05. In other words, being closer to the Little Miami Scenic Trail adds value to the single family residential properties."

Regional trail advocacy group [Tri-State Trails](#) (TST) actively supports bike & pedestrian initiatives in NKY, SW Ohio and SE Indiana. In addition to advocacy and education, the organization updates members on current regional initiatives, funding and other activities. In 2017, TST received funding to place trail counters along trails in the region, including AeroParkway. The results of the analysis of these data are expected soon.

Previous Studies And Surveys

The vision for much of the County's existing and proposed parks and recreation facilities is based on prior master plans, studies and citizen surveys. Some of the more recent and relevant ones are touched on here. Together, the [Natural Areas Inventory of Boone and Gallatin Counties](#) (1989) and [Natural Areas Inventory](#) (2001) identified over 50 Potential Natural Areas (PNAs) in Boone County. To date, only the italicized properties in the following list have been acquired and/or preserved as or parks or other green spaces:

- Middle Creek Valley, including *Boone County Cliffs*, *Dinsmore Woods*, Split Rock and adjacent areas
- *Big Bend of Gunpowder Creek*
- Belleview Woods
- *David T. Young Center*
- Bald Point, near Camp Michaels
- Steep Gut Creek, north of Belleview
- Petersburg Indian mound areas
- *Big Bone Lick*: land around existing state park
- Elijah's Creek: land around existing Carder-Dolwick Preserve
- Intact forested slopes of the Ohio River
- Existing Beech-Maple forest along East Bend Rd and near I-71/75 interchange

The [Western Boone County Study](#) (1998) evaluated development processes appropriate to the topography, urban services, river frontage, and access issues of the western part of Boone County (WBC). The study concluded that traditional land use planning is not the best way to guide the future of WBC and recommended a series of projects relating to parks and recreation services, including:

- *Creation of a non-profit foundation* to guide acquisition of riverfront access/recreation properties for the County through contributions to the foundation
- A preservation plan for the Middle Creek Valley
- Design of a conceptual path system for WBC to connect large green areas and stream valleys
- A plan for Big Bone Lick State Park to include park layout/theme, expansion, riverfront access, retreat facilities, etc.

The Boone Conservancy (TBC) formed in 1999 based on recommendations in the WBC Study and other prior recreation plans with the understanding that planning for appropriate land conservation improves the quality of life and increases economic prosperity in Boone County. TBC has a 10-member Board of Directors, 12-member Advisory Committee (all volunteers) and a small paid staff. The non-profit 501C(3) is funded through grants, private foundations, fundraising events and donations and accepts donations of land that meet mission goals. TBC works with county, local and state partners to achieve conservation of a particular area, with a focus in the County's major watersheds.

As of early 2018, TBC holds conservation easements over 465 acres in the Union, Petersburg, Florence, Burlington, and Walton areas and monitors a deed restriction over the 229-acre Piner Property in Big Bone Lick. The organization owns 173 acres in the Middle Creek watershed (including the 45-acre Conservancy Park at Belleview) and 117 acres in Hebron. Although TBC is the most active land trust in Boone County, the Hillside Trust owns a 34-acre preserve in the Dry Creek Watershed and monitors easements over 1,000+ acres in North Bend. Other land trusts which hold easements in Boone County include the NKY University Research Foundation, Kentucky Heritage Council, and Kentucky State Nature Preserves.

The 1997 report titled *A Strategy for Meeting Boone County's Recreation Future* included results of the *1996 Parks And Recreation Survey* mailed to 1,000 randomly selected Boone County residents. Respondents indicated that the preferred funding and acquisition methods for parks should be a combination of state and local taxes (28%) and land donation (24%). Top-rated needs included swimming pools, bike trails and horse trails.

The *2002 Florence Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan* guided the City of Florence in decision making for capital improvements in Bike/Ped infrastructure, recommending that the city prioritize sidewalk projects in work programs in the early stages of plan implementation and seek connections to adjacent parts of Boone County. The plan's data was later used to create the city's [online trails story map](#) and [downloadable PDF map](#).

The *2006 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update* is the county's most recent evaluation of countywide parks and recreation needs, resources, and services. While over 10 years old, it remains the guiding document for parks/rec planning in Boone County. A [PDF of the Plan's Executive Summary](#) is available on the county's website. Prepared by Brandstetter Carroll, Inc., the plan developed a Needs Analysis of existing facilities, distribution, programming, and past surveys, along with input from public workshops and new survey data.

In 2006, there were 1,906 acres of parkland in Boone County. Of this, 973 acres were considered developed and another 384 acres were scheduled for development on land already acquired. **Table 3.1** lists the existing and proposed parks recommended in the 2006 plan, updated to 2018 as follows: planning is at least underway for *italicized projects* and ***bold/italicized projects*** are completed. The 2006 Update recommended 1,668 acres of new parks throughout the County, 575 of which has been at least partially addressed. This table does not include Boone County Cliffs and Dinsmore Woods, acquired in 2009. The 117-acre Central Park Seven Hills property became the Boone County Extension Environmental and Nature Center, rather than an expansion of Central Park. While a number of the identified parks needs from the 2006 plan have been met, as of 2018 the following have not: 2 Neighborhood Parks, 7 Community Parks, 7 County Parks, and 3 Special Use Parks.

The *2006 Master Plan Update* included a web-based survey which was promoted and sent by mail

PARK TYPE	PARK/SITE NAME	ACRES
NEIGHBORHOOD	<i>Big Bone Landing addition</i>	5
	Florence Expand Nature Center Site	10
	Florence Glen Rose Site	13
	<i>North Pointe</i>	5
	Subtotal	33
COMMUNITY	Boone Woods east addition	10
	Bullittsville Community Park	25
	<i>Boone Conservancy Land</i>	45
	<i>Erpenbeck-Plantation Pointe</i>	20
	Frogtown Park	25
	<i>Mountain Ballpark (private)</i>	44
	Hopeful Church Road Area	50
	McEvoy Site	50
	North Bend Road Area	25
	Southwest Burlington	25
	<i>Union Park</i>	45
	Subtotal	364
COUNTY	Central Park east addition	100
	Central Park Seven Hills area	117
	England-Idlewild west addition	80
	Ethans Glen addition	100
	Future Union addition	150
	<i>Hempfling Park</i>	89
	Richwood Park	100
	Waller-Stephenson Mill future addition	100
	<i>Waller-Stephenson Mill Park</i>	225
	Subtotal	1,061
SPECIAL USE	Belleview River Park	5
	Hobby Park	50
	<i>Petersburg River Park</i>	5
	Power Plant Horse Trails	150
	Subtotal	210
TOTAL 2006:		1,668
TOTAL INCOMPLETE 2018:		1,210

Source: 2006 BC Parks/Rec Master Plan, updated per 2018 data

to residents as needed. Just over 1,100 households responded and for the most part were at least “Somewhat Satisfied” with current facilities. However, 64% replied that they did not feel that existing facilities were adequate to serve Boone County’s future needs. The top 4 most-desired amenities from the survey were (1) open space, (2) jogging/walking trails, (3) hiking trails, and (4) bike trails/paths. Written comments reaffirmed these results, with many citizens suggesting that Boone County has provided sufficient athletic fields and other active recreation, but that the county needs more publicly accessible open space and trail facilities.

Based on analysis of existing facilities, future needs, and citizen-driving priorities, the 2006 Parks Master Plan Update concluded the following:

- General shortage of park land in the areas of Hebron and north of I-275, southern part of Florence to Richwood and Union and the Verona areas.
- The need for a wide variety of specific recreation facilities in primarily the same locations.
- The strong desire for more open space and land preserved as future green space and natural areas.
- The development of non-traditional activities such as a dog park, hobby park, and others.
- The realization that the demand for park land, recreation facilities and programs will also need to expand alongside population growth to meet the County’s demands and expectations.
- High demand for all types of trails including jogging, walking, nature, bicycle and horseback.
- Demand for indoor activities including an indoor swimming pool, youth center, gymnasium and other activities.

The vision for Parks and Recreation in Boone County included in the 2006 Parks Master Plan Update is as follows:

- Land is acquired for the development of parks in the areas that currently need parks; land is also set aside for the expansion of these parks as population grows.
- Land will be acquired open space preservation.
- Develop a system of greenways, hike and bike ways, and linkages that connect the parks, schools, playgrounds, neighborhoods, and green spaces throughout the County.
- Unique or significant natural areas of Boone County are studied and preserved.
- The parks are developed for the most needed park and recreation facilities identified through public input.
- Indoor recreation facilities are developed to allow increased programming and provide for residents’ recreation and fitness needs.

Finally, the 2006 Plan recommended that the County revisit the watersheds and significant natural areas Significant Natural Areas Study concept to determine the most desirable areas for preservation. Several watershed areas have been studied and preliminary indications include recommendations to preserve many watershed areas for natural areas. Some specific items on the priority list include:

- Split Rock at the confluence of Woolper Creek and the Ohio River
- Bald Point in the Gunpowder Creek watershed
- Steep Gut Creek along the Ohio River
- Sand Run Creek watershed,
- North and East Gunpowder Creek watersheds
- The Woolper Creek/Ohio River quadrant area

Other areas recommended for preservation include the Ohio River waterfront near Federal Hall (just south of the I-275 Carroll Cropper Bridge), expansion of the Middle Creek watershed including the lands adjacent to Middle Creek Park and the lands adjacent to Boone Cliffs Nature Preserve.

AGRICULTURE

The Agriculture section summarizes data pertaining to farms, farmland and agricultural production in Boone County. Regarding agriculture, the [Boone County Cooperative Extension Service](#) describes Boone County as “rich in natural history with an outstanding agricultural presence...Similar to other industries...agriculture has transitioned over the years to a new dynamic as it has grown with the economy and culture.” The Extension

Service observes that while the “number of farms has decreased” and fewer people may be farming, the “size of the operations are significantly greater.” Agriculture in Boone County is diverse and ranges from “agritourism operations with a variety of farm commodities” to multiple operations specializing in one commodity [relied upon for] income.” There are also “equine operations with boarding stables...breeding operations...and the famous Turfway Park.”

Some of the more telling statistics in this section come from the “Agricultural Profile: Boone County, Kentucky” in the Boone County Conservation District’s 2010 study titled Rural Treasure – The State of Boone County Agriculture. That Agricultural Profile is based on data contained in the USDA’s [2007 Census of Agriculture](#), updated here where possible with [2012 Census of Agriculture](#) figures. The [2017 Census of Agriculture](#) is underway, but results are not expected until 2019. Also included in Rural Treasure are the results of a “Survey of Agricultural Land Owners in Boone County” and a “Boone County Cost of Community Services Study,” both of which are summarized here.

Farmland Inventory

A farm, as defined by the U.S. Census, is any place from which \$1,000+ worth of agricultural products was sold during the census year. From its founding into the mid-20th Century, Boone County’s economy was primarily agricultural. Most residents either farmed themselves or worked in an industry or supply-side business related to farming, a trend that began to decline between the World Wars. Average farm size fluctuated little during the 20th Century: 93 acres in 1900 and 102 acres in 1969. The 2012 Ag Census shows that farm acreage fell from 74,750 in 2007 to 67,211 acres in 2012. The number of farms declined slightly from 682 to 608 in that 5-year span, although average farm size remained consistent at about 110 acres. While the number of farms and total acreage devoted to agriculture in Boone County is declining, the Extension Service notes that “These numbers do not include the ever- increasing population of homeowners interested in the local food movement or producing their own food at home.”

Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance

Estimates by the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) indicate that 40,577 acres of Boone County land are classed as Prime Farmland (as of 2014). Prime Farmland is defined in the National Soils Handbook based on criteria of crop production potential, land availability, and climate. According to the Soil Conservation Service Soil Survey (1973 and 1989), historically, much of the best farm soils were located in the eastern half of Boone County, however, development has displaced many of these areas. Soils of Statewide Importance encompass an additional 23,987 acres in Boone County (**See Figure 3.2 – Prime Farmland Map**). Together, the two land classifications total 64,564 acres. However, the amount of impervious surface in Boone County continues to increase, much of it at the expense of farmland. According to GIS analysis, there are presently (2018) 15,328 acres of impervious surface in the county: 6,564 acres on Prime Farmland (16.2% of the total) and 3,870 acres on Farmland of Statewide Importance (16.1%). As of 2018, approximately 16.2% of Boone County’s best agricultural land is now impervious surface, which includes buildings, pavement, bridges, patios, swimming pools, etc. The Extension Service observes that many of Boone County farms thrive on lands which are not classed as either prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance.



Figure 3.2

Farms and Farm Tenure

Since 1940, Boone County has transitioned from a primarily agricultural community and economy to a much more diverse economy. Population has increased by over 100,000 since then and the percentage of people living on farms has dropped from 59% to 1%. The amount of available farmland has gradually declined as the population has risen since the mid-20th Century. Land zoned primarily for agricultural use has also declined. This is an on-going process assisted by the location of new sewer and water lines encroaching into existing farming regions.

Between 1969 and 2012 average farm size in Boone County fluctuated between 101 and 124 acres and was at 111 acres in 2012. Compared with Campbell and Kenton counties, Boone County had more farms with larger average size in 2012. Between 2002 and 2007, total farmland acreage in Boone County declined just 0.2%; but declined 8.5% in Kenton County and 6.0% in Campbell County. Farm acreage in Kentucky rose 1.1% during the same period. **Table 3.2** further describes Boone County farms by size in acres since 1909.

YEAR	FARMS	ACRES	AVG. AC.
1900	1,598	149,191	93
1909	1,540	145,693	95
1919	1,831	151,242	83
1929	1,563	149,159	95
1939	1,443	146,424	102
1949	1,314	134,105	102
1959	1,204	121,222	101
1969	1,245	126,706	102
1978	847	104,882	124
1982	962	105,390	110
1992	798	80,864	101
1997	783	83,258	106
2002	743	74,915	101
2007	682	74,750	110
2012	608	67,211	111
Kenton*	459	38,144	83
Campbell*	504	42,164	84
Kentucky*	77,064	13,049,347	169

Source: 2012 U.S. Census of Agriculture (* 2012 data)

ACRES	1909	1929	1949	1969	1978	1982	2002	2012
1-9	158	132	111	200	90	136	65	65
10-49	439	437	356	353	240	324	307	260
50-179	720	758	636	485	345	321	265	189
180-499	211	228	206	183	140	149	88	73
500-999	11	8	4	20	30	30	12	13
1000+	1	0	1	4	4	2	6	8
TOTAL	1540	1563	1314	1245	849	932	743	608

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

While farms and farmlands have decreased in Boone County (see **Tables 3.2** and **Table 3.3**), the county remains agriculturally viable. Through 2012, Boone County ranked within the top 72 counties out of the total 120 Kentucky counties in all major crop and livestock categories, including corn, soybean, tobacco, hay, cattle, and hogs. Boone County ranks 3rd in the state in numbers of acres of nursery stock crops, up from 4th in 2007, which shows the importance of nursery

stock in the county. [Agricultural statistics from 2017 show that Boone County reported](#) 10,000 head of Cattle & Calves and 33,600 tons of Hay (Other) were harvested from 15,700 acres. In addition, 2,620 acres of soybeans yielded 158,000 bushels and 259,000 bushels of corn were harvested from 1,730 acres. The Extension Service adds that “burley tobacco varieties are grown on over 3000 acres and sold at local markets...for over \$842,000 in sales for growers.” The County’s numbers in these categories are consistently higher than those reported from Kenton County and Campbell County. Boone County is also well represented with poultry growers with “multiple farmers raising upwards of several hundred chickens for meat and egg production” and a “multitude of grain crop producers who raise a variety of corn, soybeans, and other small grains and producers...receiving top production awards in the state in bushels grown per acre.”

As of 2010, 96.5% of Boone County's 658 farms were classified as Small Family Farms with \$100,000 to \$250,000 in sales (2010 U.S. Census). Of the 658 Small Family Farms in Boone County that year, 41.5% (n=273) were categorized as Residential/Lifestyle Farms where the operator reported their primary occupation as something other than farming. The next largest farm category (28.6%) in the county was Retirement Farms (n=188). These patterns are seen in neighboring northern Kentucky counties and across the state as well. The Extension Service notes that “many farmers found off farm jobs because of elevated self-insurance costs” and that retirement is often “the first time people have the financial capability and stability to return to the farm after saving throughout their off farm career.”

Further analyses of the 2012 Agriculture Census show that Boone County is tracking with state and national trends in terms of farmer age. Between 2002 and 2012, the average age of the Boone County farmer increased from 56.6 to 60.1 years. Regarding tenure, the numbers in Boone

TENURE	BOONE	KENTON	CAMPBELL	KY
Full Owners	81.6%	77.8%	78.6%	76.1%
Part Owners	15.5%	17.6%	20.2%	19.8%
Tenants	2.9%	4.6%	1.2%	4.1%

Source: 2012 U.S. Census of Agriculture

County vary somewhat from those of Kenton, Campbell and the state as a whole, with larger percentages of full ownership relative to part ownership seen in Boone (see **Table 3.4**). Tenant farming is down 1% from 2007 and remains below the state average.

Agricultural Zoning Districts

The Boone County Zoning Regulations allows farming as a permitted use in most zoning districts, but has two agriculturally oriented zoning districts: Agriculture (A-1) and Agricultural Estate (A-2), both of which allow all agricultural uses and sales of agricultural products. Residential construction is allowed on minimum 5-acre lots in the A-1 zone and 2-acre lots in the A-2 zone. The A-1 zoning district currently includes 49,420 acres, mostly in the rural western half of the county. Agricultural Estate (A-2) covers 48,686 acres, mainly between A-1 areas and more developed eastern Boone County. Together these two Agricultural districts cover approximately two-thirds of the county's 164,120 acres (see **Figure 3.3**).

Agricultural Districts

The Kentucky Division of Conservation's Agricultural (Ag) District Program is administered locally by the Boone County Conservation District under KRS 262.850 (enacted 1982). Agricultural Districts are distinct from zoning districts and are aimed at protecting the best agricultural land for food and fiber production and discouraging its conversion to non-agricultural uses. In addition, these Agricultural Districts are voluntary and offer members the following protection under the law:

- The right to have their land assessed at the land's agricultural use value;
- Protection against involuntary annexation;
- Deferred assessment of fees for water service extensions unless the land is sold for non-agricultural purposes;
- Right to a public hearing to contest condemnation by certain utilities.

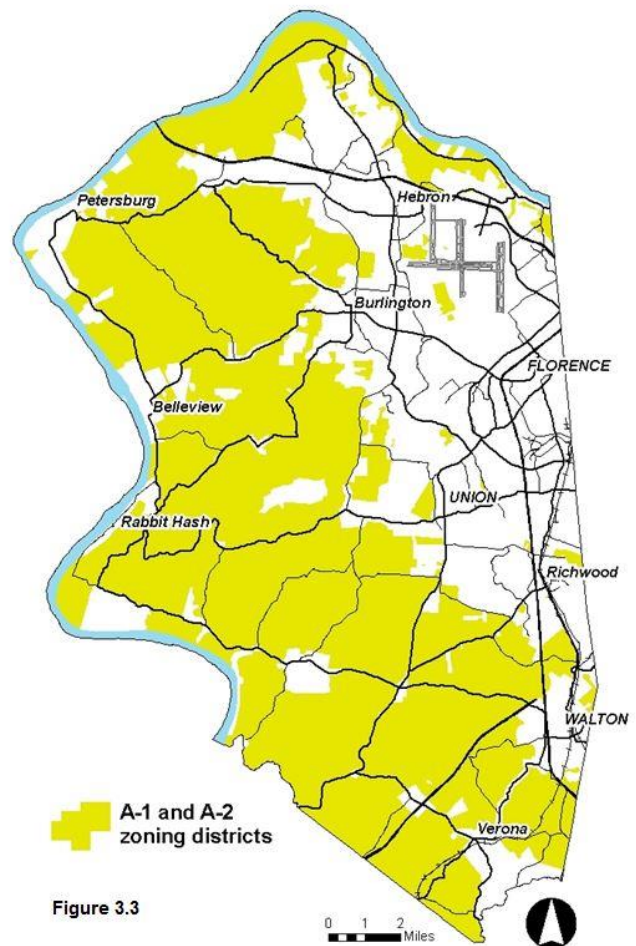


Figure 3.3

An Agricultural District must include a minimum of 250 contiguous acres, with certain parcel size requirements, and must meet the state definition of agricultural land in KRS 132.010. In 1995, Boone County had five Agricultural Districts totaling 3,343 acres. In 2004, there were 13 districts comprising 6,770 acres. There are currently 16 districts encompassing 8,227 acres of land owned by 80 families (Boone County Conservation District Annual Report 6/30/10; Boone County GIS 2017).

Farm Assistance Programs

As mentioned in the Environment Element, the 1994 Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act protects surface and ground water from potential pollutants from agriculture and forestry operations. The Act also requires that all agriculture and forestry operations of 10+ acres develop and implement a water quality plan by 2001. As of March, 2018, 558 water quality plan certificates have been received by the Boone County Conservation District (BCCD 5/30/18).

In addition to water quality, the Boone County Conservation District assists landowners with conservation measures under various programs. As of 2010, district staff is assisting nine farmers who have begun or completed Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts under the Federal Farm Security and

Rural Investment Act of 2002 (2002 Farm Bill). Program goals include reduction of soil erosion, reduction of non-point source pollution, and promotion of habitat conservation for at-risk species. EQIP has helped fund nearly \$255,000 in conservation practices on 2,685 acres in Boone County. Under the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill), “21 contracts have been obligated for \$374,161.12 on 12,481.2 acres” (BCCD 6/30/10). In addition to the EQIP program, eight other Boone County landowners are implementing conservation practices on 1,256 acres under the Federal Conservation Security Program. As of May 30, 2010, the conservation district reports that conservation plans have been written on 3,250 acres, soil quality improvement practices have been applied to 1,312 acres of cropland, and water quality improvement practices have been applied to 1,599 acres in Boone County (BCCD 5/30/10).

2010 Survey Of Agricultural Land Owners

The 2010 [Rural Treasure: The State of Boone County Agriculture](#) study included a [Survey of Agricultural Land Owners](#) and an analysis of the cost of community services in Boone County. The survey was designed to gather data on farmer and farm demographics and tenure, as well as opinions on farmland preservation and future plans. A total 340 valid surveys were received, a return rate of 20.4% considered “above average” by the researcher.

The survey results are consistent with 2012 Agricultural Census figures, but go into greater detail about some aspects of farming. The typical survey respondent is a 62-year old male with some college and annual income of \$50,000 to \$100,000. Less than \$1,000 of that income comes from agriculture and he is employed at least part-time off the farm. Collectively, respondents own 48% (17,356) of Boone County’s cropland, although 62.4% of this land is in active production. Most respondents had learned farming as children and had been farming for at least 20 years. The survey also asked farmers to classify their type of farming in the form of self-perception, future plans, views on the importance of farming, and willingness to participate in farm incentive programs. These and other data available in the online [Rural Treasure report \(PDF\)](#).

Cost of Community Services Study

The *Cost of Community Services Study* included in *Rural Treasure* was a stand-alone report completed by Associate Professor Alison F. Davis, UK Department of Agricultural Economics. The purpose of the study was to answer the question: “Do property taxes and other revenues generated by residential land uses exceed the amount of publicly-provided services required by them?” The analysis employed a methodology used by the American Farmland Trust in hundreds of communities in the US and used tax data to define three land use classes: Residential, Commercial and Farmland. The county budget for Fiscal Year 2009 (7/1/09 – 6/30/10) was analyzed to determine the amount of revenue generated and expenditures used by each land use class. The results are presented in **Table 3.5**.

TABLE 3.5 –REVENUES/EXPENDITURES BY LAND USE TYPE (2009)		
LAND USE CATEGORY	REVENUE %	EXPENDITURE %
RESIDENTIAL	64.8%	93.9%
COMMERCIAL	32.3%	5.0%
AGRICULTURE	2.9%	1.1%
Source: 2010 Boone County Cost of Community Services Study		

Recent Agricultural Trends in Boone County

The Boone County Extension Service is working to help farmers extend the growing season and explore different crops in Boone County. The agency is encouraging farmers to utilize “high tunnels” and/or “low tunnels” to push the growing season up into late winter. They built a 30 x 96-foot demonstration high tunnel – a sturdy skeleton frame covered with clear plastic (**Figure 3.4**) – at the Boone County Extension Environmental and Nature Center on Camp Ernst Road in 2017. A dozen local growers attended to learn how to build and use the technique. Compared to greenhouses, high tunnels are meant to be temporary, less expensive, unheated, and provide less climate control. Low tunnels are a smaller scale version meant to cover perhaps just a single row of low growth crops at a time.

The Extension Service noted that Boone County has “many growers utilizing high and low tunnels to...grow conventional vegetables...and get them to market earlier. Tomatoes, lettuce, greens, and peppers are all being grown in them.” Growing high quality produce and extending the growing season are key concepts endorsed by the Extension Center.



Figure 3.4

Truck farming flourished in Boone County through the mid-20th Century, and there has been a resurgence of that in recent years. Scott Farms in Bellevue and McGlasson Farms on Rt. 8 market apples, peaches, and vegetables on site and/or to local farm markets. Other crops being grown on a small scale in Boone County include 3 wine grape growers, 2 wineries, paw paws and a grower in Verona who grows only sun sugar cherry tomatoes marketed exclusively to Kroger. Going forward, Koester is planning a demonstration on Shittake mushroom production and is actively encouraging more growers to take interest in small fruit production (blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, blueberries), which “are much less demanding than tree fruit” if pests can be controlled.

Many of Boone County’s farms are adaptable to visitation and tours, as are some of the horse farms and other non-traditional operations such as Eagle Bend Alpacas. Together, these agricultural operations are a viable source of locally grown foods and a solid foundation for agritourism, which has flourished in part due to “a population separated from the farm and interested in educating themselves and their families on the importance of production agriculture” (Extension Service). The [Boone County Farm Tour](#) takes place annually in June, usually with self-guided stops at 8 to 10 local farms, along with the [Boone County Farmers Market](#) in Burlington, which serves as Tour Headquarters. Elsewhere, [The Friendly Market of Northern Kentucky](#) off Mt. Zion Rd. in Florence has several small businesses operating indoors along with a seasonal outdoor pavilion for local farm produce and vendors.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Historic Preservation section offers guidance for preserving and enhancing Boone County's Cultural Resources, which include historic, architectural, and archaeological sites and cemeteries, as well as other resources such as documents, cultural traditions, and oral histories. As with the county's Environmental, Agricultural, and Recreational resources, these Cultural Resources impact quality of life and give the county a sense of identity, making their preservation essential.

Historic Preservation in Boone County: A Collaborative Approach

No single agency or group is responsible for all preservation activities in Boone County. Rather, preservation and local heritage initiatives are carried out by a number of organizations with overlapping missions and scopes ranging from countywide to site-specific. Many positive outcomes and successful projects are a result of strong partnerships between local preservation groups working together and with others at the regional and state levels.

At the local government level, the [Boone County Historic Preservation Review Board \(Review Board\)](#)'s mission is “To lead and educate Boone County government and its citizens in the preservation and protection of Boone County's prehistoric and historic resources.” The Review Board is a 7-member volunteer board appointed by Fiscal Court established when Boone County became a Certified Local Government (CLG) in 1986. With staff assistance from the Planning Commission, the board follows the recommendations of the [Boone County Historic Preservation Plan](#), adopted in 1999. The Preservation Plan provides information and suggests guidelines for recommendations of the REVIEW BOARD to the Boone County Planning Commission and the four legislative units concerning historic preservation issues. The REVIEW BOARD's tasks include:

- Oversee historic preservation policy in the county
- Monitor projects that require Federal Section 106 Review
- Enforce of the county's family cemetery ordinance

- Maintain inventories of cultural resources
- Review National Register nominations
- Provide technical assistance to owners of historic properties
- Provide heritage education
- Develop publications about local heritage.

The REVIEW BOARD meets monthly and sponsors special events such as the annual Boone County Preservation Awards, although its primary role is to advocate for preservation at the local level.

Boone County's status as a CLG helped Fiscal Court to secure nearly \$200,000 in Federal Survey & Planning matching grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 between 1986-2013 for historic preservation activities. These projects have funded:

- Comprehensive architectural survey of Boone County
- Publication of Historic Structures of Boone County, Kentucky
- National Register nominations for Big Bone Lick, Rabbit Hash, Walton, Burlington and numerous individual properties around the county
- Archaeological surveys of numerous properties around the county
- A GIS cemetery mapping project
- *River Born, Kentucky Bred*, an elementary level heritage education curriculum
- Multiple Cemetery preservation workshops

The [Local History and Genealogy Department of the Boone County Public Library \(BCPL\)](#) is the most active and wide-reaching local heritage organization in the county. Local History has the most comprehensive collection of historical information on Boone County. The collection is available at the Main Branch in Burlington and much of it is available through the online catalog or through [Chronicles of Boone County](#). Library staff provide local history reference and genealogy reference service. Since 2010, the BCPL has been very active with heritage programming, including Underground Railroad and Civil War tours and "ghost walks" of various historic communities. The Main Branch of the BCPL has also become the default recipient of documents which might otherwise be lost. Since the Library lacks the space and resources of a dedicated archival facility, it has actively pursued archiving these materials digitally.

In addition to the government-sponsored REVIEW BOARD and BCPL, Boone County's heritage is stewarded by numerous local private non-profits, some of which include:

- The [Boone County Historical Society \(BCHS\)](#) has the largest membership and has its roots in the initial creation of Big Bone Lick State Park in the late 1950s. The group meets regularly in the Old Boone County Clerk's Building, which they maintain as a small museum of local history. The society also sponsors presentations and special event relating to local history.
- The [Rabbit Hash Historical Society \(RHHS\)](#) is dedicated primarily to the preservation of Rabbit Hash. The RHHS's leadership and dedicated membership led to the unprecedented total reconstruction of the centerpiece Rabbit Hash General Store. Nearly destroyed by fire in early 2016, the store was rebuilt using historic materials and techniques in just 13 months.
- The **Friends of Big Bone (FOBB)** (www.friendsofbigbone.org) "purpose is to promote, preserve, research, and memorialize the history and prehistory of the Big Bone Lick Valley." The group focuses primarily on advocacy and education and is a valuable partner in the preservation and interpretation of Big Bone.
- The [Dinsmore Homestead Foundation](#) maintains the c. 1842 Greek Revival James Dinsmore House, surrounding buildings, acreage, and collection. The Dinsmore Homestead is a living history farm with regular and a variety of special.

Boone County's local preservation groups frequently collaborate with and seek assistance from others at the regional and state levels. The most active regional group is the [Cincinnati Preservation Association](#), which offers technical support and opportunities for hands-on training to residents and agencies in the area, but also holds conservation easements on several significant cultural resources in Boone County. Kentucky's State Historic Preservation Office is the [Kentucky Heritage Council \(KHC\)](#), which has provided invaluable guidance to agencies and property owners in Boone County since before Boone County became a CLG in 1986. The KHC just

completed an update to state's preservation plan titled [A Map Made of Memory: Kentucky's State Historic Preservation Plan 2017-2021](#).

Historic Context

A summary of historic (and prehistoric) occupation of Boone County is presented here. For a more extensive discussion of historic context, see the Preservation Element of the 2010 Boone County Comprehensive Plan (online here). The best source for more in depth discussion about local history is the BCPL's [Chronicles of Boone County](#).

Prior to contact with European explorers and settlers, Boone County was occupied by successive groups of Native Americans starting with highly mobile hunters and gatherers referred to as the Paleo-Indian culture (c. 9500 – 8000 B.C). Later Archaic peoples (c. 8000 – 1,000 B.C) were more diversified, relying on choices from a variety of local options. The use of cultivated plants for food began during the Woodland period (c. 1000 B.C. - A.D. 1000) when people began living in larger communities for longer periods. Late Woodland activities and social organization elaborated further during the Late Prehistoric or Fort Ancient period (c. A.D. 1000-1700). Settlements were large villages located mostly in valley bottoms with smaller seasonal sites on tributary streams. Remnants of these large villages were first encountered in the early 18th Century by Europeans exploring the Ohio River and visiting Big Bone Lick. Evidence of European contact has been found through archaeology at some Fort Ancient village sites.

Historic period settlement in what would become Boone County began in the late 18th Century. Boone County was formalized in 1799 when a 74-acre tract near the county's center was chosen as the county seat. Originally called Craig's Camp and later Wilmington, the town was renamed Burlington in 1816. Although Burlington was the county seat, Boone County's earliest major town was Petersburg. First settled in 1789 as Tanner's Station, it was renamed Petersburg in 1816. Petersburg was an economic powerhouse throughout much of the 19th Century thanks to the Petersburg Distillery, which grew to become Kentucky's largest.

In the southeast part of Boone County another early settlement grew along the Lexington Pike around a stagecoach stop at Gaines Tavern. Begun in the 1790's, it became Walton in 1840. Another settlement north of Walton along the pike became Florence in 1830. The town of Union also grew up around a crossroads, gaining its current name in 1830. Other early historic period communities included Rabbit Hash, Belleview, Constance, Taylorsport, and Big Bone Springs.

Although just a few miles downriver from Cincinnati, Boone County's 19th Century growth was largely isolated from that of its large urban neighbor. Boone County's agrarian economy benefitted from proximity to the large Cincinnati markets and industry, but remained a farming community into the mid-20th Century. Boone County's population reached 10,000 by 1840 and fluctuated up to about 13,000 for more than a century (see **Figure 3.5**). The population began to rise consistently in the 1950's

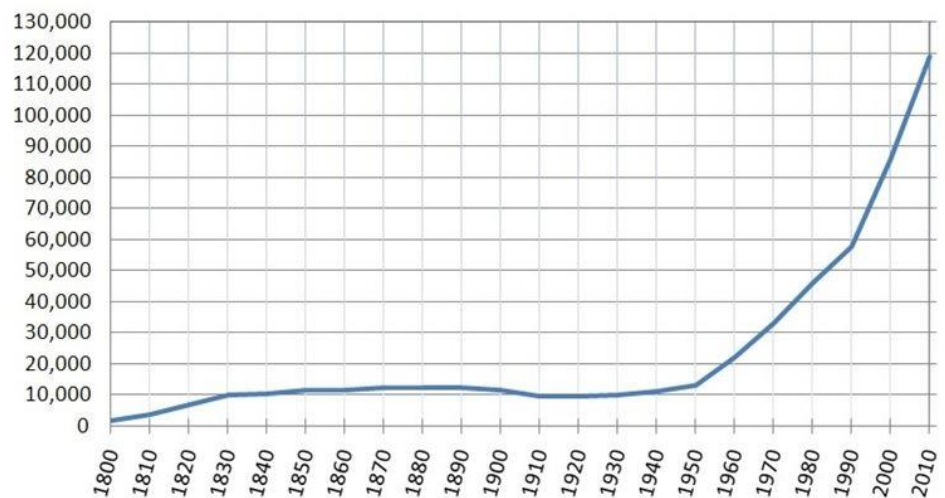


Figure 3.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

and has been doubling roughly every 20 years since 1960. In 1946 the airport for Cincinnati was dedicated in northeastern Boone County. The population of Boone County grew by twenty percent from 1940 to 1950. With the construction of Interstates 71 and 75 in the 1960s, Boone County became one of the fastest growing counties in the nation.

Resource Inventory

The combination of 10,000 plus years of human occupation (particularly the last 225+ years) has resulted in a range of cultural resources in Boone County, many of which have implications for land use planning. The most numerous of these are archaeological sites (both prehistoric and historic), architectural sites (buildings, bridges, etc.) and small cemeteries. Other resources include historic documents, traditions and stories and also natural features (e.g., Big Bone Lick) and viewsheds such as those of major stream valleys that have gained at least local cultural significance. The level to which these resource types have been documented and studied varies but is discussed here.

Geological/Natural Sites and Viewsheds

The bedrock of Boone County is primarily limestone and shale with glacial deposits occurring in northern and western parts of the county. Notable remnants of glacial terraces are visible at Boone Cliffs in Middle Creek and at Split Rock at the confluence of Woolper Creek and the Ohio River. The oxbow of Woolper Creek just upstream from this confluence is recognized as very unusual and was restored in the last few years. Boone County is also noted for its numerous mineral springs. The most famous of these is Big Bone Lick but others are noted on early maps of the county.

The relevance of viewsheds in Boone County was first explored in the Western Boone County Study (1998), which considered “prominent views of stream valleys and hillsides...characteristic agricultural scenery...rural highways with vistas” and other visual criteria in the planning process. Viewshed is a factor considered in the evaluation of a property’s Integrity of Setting relative to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). See https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_8.htm for National Park Service guidelines for Integrity. Viewshed impact must also be considered relative to certain Native American sites containing human remains. The sites chosen by Native Americans for burial mounds have sacred significance and, for example, placement of a cellular tower (or similar visual intrusion) within the viewshed of such a site is considered an indirect impact under Federal environmental guidelines.

Archaeological Resources

The Kentucky Archaeological Survey (KAS) at [Kentucky Office of State Archaeology](#) (OSA) currently lists over 590 archaeological sites in Boone County, most of which have not been studied beyond the survey level. Archaeological sites in Boone County are known to include (but are not limited to): cemeteries, the communities or camps of Native Americans, the remains of demolished or deteriorated buildings, former community sites (now obscured on the surface), former industrial sites such as grist mills, former commercial sites such as toll houses, sites of Civil War activity, and the yards of existing historic structures.

Several Boone County archaeological sites are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), including those within the 500-acre Big Bone Lick Archaeological District as well as one of the most significant Paleo-Indian sites in the region. Also listed are two Fort Ancient village sites (Arrasmith and Cleek-McCabe), a Woodland mound and habitation complex (the Rogers Site), and the Adena-era Reeves Mound. Other potentially eligible sites include a multi-component Fort Ancient village site in Petersburg and the ruins of a Crisler-Gulley Mill on Gunpowder Creek. The 2 volume set titled [The Archaeology of Kentucky](#) presents detailed contexts and recommendations for archaeological sites across the state.

Over the years, many sites in the KAS database were reported by amateurs collecting artifacts from the surface; some have also been excavated by amateurs operating without a permit. The [OSA administers excavation permits](#) for archaeology on publicly owned lands and all publicly or privately owned caves. The Review Board does not recommend or support archaeology anywhere in Boone County without such permits.

Boone County has been the focus of archaeological investigation by professionals and amateurs since at least the 1930s (see [Archaeological Survey of Kentucky](#), Funkhouser and Webb, 1932). During the Works Progress Administration (WPA) era (1938-1941), seven Adena mounds and a Fort Ancient mound/village site were excavated. The Northern Kentucky Archaeological Society under the direction of Ellis Crawford conducted investigations at the Rogers mound and village site in the 1950s.

In compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, formal archaeological surveys have been performed in Boone County since the late 1960s. Archaeological surveys (and sometimes testing) have been conducted for projects involving road construction, airport expansion, power plant development, sewer lines, cell towers, and other undertakings requiring Federal permits or funding.

Since the 1730s, Big Bone Lick has been noted as a place where bones of extinct megafauna could be found and has received national and international attention for its significant role in vertebrate paleontology. In 2009, Big Bone Lick was designated a National Natural Landmark; a National Historic Landmark nomination is still in the works.

The first phase of a new museum at Big Bone Lick was dedicated in November, 2004. Subsequent phases of construction depend on funding through the State Department of Parks. Ongoing archaeological and paleontological research remains the core of the facility's interpretive mission.

The Boone County Historic Preservation Review Board (Review Board) has initiated a number of archaeological projects using Federal Survey and Planning Grants available to Certified Local Governments (CLG). Among them was an extensive survey and testing program in Petersburg in 1990-1992, designed to help define the extent of the prehistoric site beneath the historic town. Over 1,200 school children and adults benefitted from on-site visits, workshops, and classroom presentations. Periodic archaeological surveys have been completed elsewhere in the county since 1992, including the watersheds of Gunpowder Creek (2007), Mud Lick (2007) and Woolper Creek (2007 and 2008). The goals were to identify and document unknown sites as well as others previously reported by county residents and amateur archaeologists. In 1996, another CLG project focused exclusively on documenting Native American burial mounds. In 2008, an intensive survey of the Gaines Tavern Site in Walton produced a much better understanding of the site's archaeology, which in turn led to the expansion of the property's National Register boundary and including of archaeology as one of the site's criteria for listing. In 2004, archaeologists from the Kentucky Heritage Council, Kentucky Archaeological Survey and University of Kentucky returned to the Petersburg Site following the accidental discovery of human remains during construction of a house foundation. These organizations were assisted by the volunteer efforts of nearly 20 trained archaeologists. Over a period of 10 days, 35 prehistoric burials representing 38 individuals were excavated from the area impacted by the house foundation. Analysis of the remains and associated artifacts helped redefine archaeologists' understanding of the Fort Ancient occupation of Petersburg and the Ohio Valley. The cemetery excavation was a key element of the interpretations of late prehistoric life presented in [The Prehistoric Farmers of Boone County, Kentucky](#) (2006).

The demonstrated potential for prehistoric human burials in Petersburg led to the preemptive excavation in 2013 of over 1 mile of 3-foot wide trenches prior to water line installation in the town. That project documented over 1000 archaeological features, including 28 human burials, 1 prehistoric dog burial and over 11,660 artifacts. Although 7 of the 28 burials were excavated and later reburied, the other 21 burials were avoided and preserved in place. The project succeeded in providing public water and fire protection to much of Petersburg while minimizing impacts to prehistoric burials. The extent of the burial grounds in Petersburg is now also much better understood.

Family Cemeteries

Cemetery preservation has been an issue in Boone County since the 1980s. An inventory of known family cemeteries is maintained by the Boone County Historic Preservation Review Board (REVIEW BOARD). Location, site size and other data are mapped in the [Boone County GIS](#). Copies of Cemetery forms may be obtained from the county's Historic Preservation Office or from the Boone County Public Library. As of 2018, the locations of 211 of 225 previously recorded family cemeteries are plotted in the GIS. Detailed information such as known names and birth/death dates of those interred is shared with [the Boone County Public Library](#), which is the community's most accessible genealogical resource. Fifty or more additional small family cemeteries are believed to be located across the county, a few of which were recorded in the 1960s (without reliable location information).

A thesis prepared by a graduate student in community planning in 2002 studied the cemetery preservation issue, comparing cemetery preservation strategies and results in Boone County with those of Cobb County, Georgia.

The thesis compiled information about Boone County cemeteries that have been relocated and/or preserved in place as a result of the cemetery regulations adopted in 1990. The thesis made a number of recommendations, including:

- Boone County should develop an Adopt-a-Cemetery Program and offer small grants to encourage cleanup and maintenance of cemeteries on private property;
- Cemetery relocations should be managed by a licensed archaeologist;
- An oversight organization (with authority to review site plans and zone change applications) dedicated to cemetery preservation issues should be formed.

The Review Board should be notified and involved in any matter affecting the status of a family cemetery. While a non-profit cemetery advocacy group (Johnson-Wilson Cemetery Stewards Association) was active in Boone County from 2003 to 2009, it dissolved largely due to a lack of reliable funding. The Boone County Cemetery Preservation Plan approved in 1990 was one of the first of its kind in the country and has been copied elsewhere in the nation. Key recommendations of the plan included buffer and maintenance requirements for cemeteries preserved within developments, which are codified in the Boone County Zoning Regulations (2013, Section 3166) (and Boone County Subdivision Regulations (2014, Section 315(f))). These local requirements apply only to cemeteries preserved within subdivided properties in Boone County and do not supersede the Kentucky Revised Statutes pertaining to cemetery maintenance and relocation. To date, 20 cemeteries have been preserved in Boone County under Section 3166; failure to follow maintenance requirements is a zoning violation.

While local regulations can govern the disposition of cemeteries preserved in Boone County, State law includes procedures for relocating burials and cemeteries (see KRS 381:755). That process was administered by the Kentucky Office of Vital Records until sometime in 2016 but is now left to counties to oversee. Interest in the cemetery relocation process has increased in Boone County in the last few years, especially in previously undeveloped property near the airport. With the approval of County Administration, the REVIEW BOARD developed a set of [recommended guidelines for those seeking to relocate graves in Boone County](#).

Architectural Resources

The initial architectural survey of Boone County was conducted in 1976-1977 by the Kentucky Heritage Council (or KHC, then known as the Kentucky Heritage Commission). The survey documented 353 resources and was comprehensive in that every passable road was traveled. Twentieth century resources, barns and outbuildings, and simple vernacular structures were largely neglected. In 1979, the KHC published the results of that survey in [Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky: Boone County](#).

In 1988, all of the original 353 resources surveyed were re-examined, and 60 sites were listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) through a multiple resource nomination. In 2000, 14 additional properties were listed in the NRHP. A new Multiple Properties Documentation Form entitled Historic and Architectural Resources of the County of Boone, Kentucky, 1789-1950 was also developed. In 2005, 10 more Boone County properties were listed individually in the NRHP.

Between 1992 and 1996, a countywide architectural survey (funded by a county-matched CLG grant) inventoried nearly all Boone County buildings and structures build before c. 1945. The final report, titled [Comprehensive Architectural Survey of Boone County, Kentucky](#) made recommendations for potential NRHP Districts in Petersburg, Belleview, Rabbit Hash, Verona and Walton. The inventory is continually added to, primarily due to publicly funded development projects, including road construction, airport expansion and cellular tower installation.

As of 2017, 1,628 Kentucky Historic Inventory numbers have been assigned in Boone County, although the true number of sites documented since the survey in the 1990s is estimated at around 1,600. Of those, approximately 250 have been lost (primarily to demolition) putting the current estimated number of properties in the Historic Inventory at 1,350. The inventory provides a foundation for the 1999 county-wide [Preservation Plan](#), and gives documented evidence of the wealth of historic resources found across the county. This information is used in the review of plans for development, by citizens completing historic or genealogical research, and as a guideline for future historic preservation projects and initiatives in Boone County.

In 2002, the Boone County Historic Preservation Review Board published Historic Structures of Boone County, Kentucky as a follow-up to the KHC's 1979 Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky: Boone County. Based on data from the mid-1990s survey, Historic Structures showcases 192 of Boone County's historic properties. The book is a glossy paper bound volume with black and white photographs. It is available through the Boone County Planning Commission; all of the images in the book are available online at the Boone County Public Library's Chronicles of Boone County wiki.

Kentucky Historic Resources inventory forms, as well as the final report are public information and copies can be obtained from the Boone County Historic Preservation Office or the KHC office in Frankfort. The location and basic information about each inventory site is maintained in the Boone County GIS. Some of that information, including site location, is readily available to the public through the online [Boone County GIS Interactive Mapping Services](#).

Burlington National Register Historic District

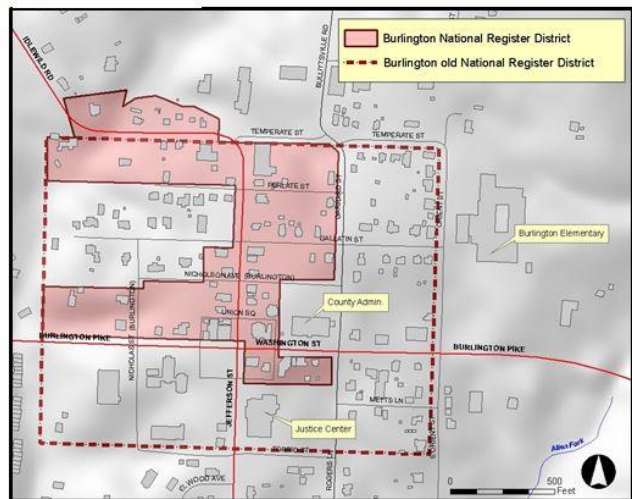
Burlington, the county seat of Boone County, was originally listed in the NRHP in 1979 as a grid rectangle of 74 acres comprising the original town. The Burlington district was revised in 2005 and the boundary redrawn to reflect current NRHP criteria (see **Figure 3.6**). The 33-acre district has 71 resources, 63 of which were previously listed in the NRHP. The district is significant under NRHP criteria for its reflection of patterns of politics/government in Boone County and for architecture, which includes fine examples of Greek Revival, Federal and Bungalow styles. The period of significance extends from c. 1790 to c. 1950.

Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of National Register buildings in Burlington began in the early 1990's, with the pace of activity increasing in the early 2000's. Most of this activity has been in the form of private sector projects along North Jefferson Street, with the rehabilitation of three restaurants, a Bed & Breakfast Inn, and several other shops specializing in crafts, books and/or antiques. Public involvement has included the rehabilitation by the county of the former Burlington Presbyterian Church as a maintenance garage and rehabilitation projects for the Old Courthouse in 2003 and again in 2017. The 1889 Boone County Courthouse is arguably the centerpiece of the Burlington NRHP district. It was designed by the McDonald Brothers of Louisville, who specialized in courthouse designs. The original clock tower was replaced in 1898 with the cupola designed by the renowned Cincinnati architectural firm Samuel Hannaford and Sons. A [history of the Old Courthouse](#) is online here..

In 2015, the county initiated a feasibility study for rehabilitation of the Old Courthouse. Based on community input, the 2017 rehabilitation of the building was much more comprehensive than the 2003 project. The building houses offices as it did before (Child Support, Historic Preservation), but also functions as a community center. A conference room on the first floor can be reserved and two other rooms are available for pre-event space. Rehabilitation of the upstairs courtroom into a community hall included leveling the floor, restoring the original pressed tin ceiling and rebuilding one of the 12-foot arched windows removed in the 1960s for a fire escape. The hall holds 125 to 200 people depending on seating and can be reserved through the county's [Property Maintenance Department](#).

The Burlington Historic District presents a crucial preservation challenge. Efforts should be made to insure that a mixture of governmental, commercial, and residential activity continues to function in Burlington. Burlington has the rare opportunity to capitalize on its unique architectural landscape, small town charm and rural atmosphere. Poorly designed new construction, already apparent in several Burlington locations, will destroy this valuable character. Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the town's historic buildings should be encouraged to meet the realities of a rapidly changing county.

Figure 3.6



The [Burlington Town Strategic Plan](#) (2003) was developed with the mission statement “to energize the central town of Burlington into a healthy business and residential center of Boone County by using the public services, special events activity, and historical character of the town as a foundation.” The plan includes recommendations designed to enhance the infrastructure, streetscape, architectural design, marketing and tourism potential of Burlington. To date, a number of the plan’s recommendations have been completed or initiated, including:

- Update the Burlington National Register District nomination
- The relocated Boone County Clerk’s Building serves as a local history museum
- A design review procedure is now in place
- Reconstruction of the Temperate St/Idlewild Rd. intersection (2018)
- Numerous sidewalk improvements, including pedestrian access (in 2018) to the Fairgrounds and England-Idlewild Park on Idlewild Rd. and Boone Woods Park along Burlington Pike
- Planting of street trees in cooperation with the Urban Forest Commission
- Adaptive Reuse/Rehabilitation of the Old Boone Courthouse (2017)
- Improved wayfinding signage and lighting in part thanks to a 2008 Preserve America Communities Grant (for \$22,500).

In Burlington, Union, and throughout the county, it is imperative that more of a balance between old and new be encouraged and supported. Boone County deserves to retain its own unique identity as it continues to grow and prosper.

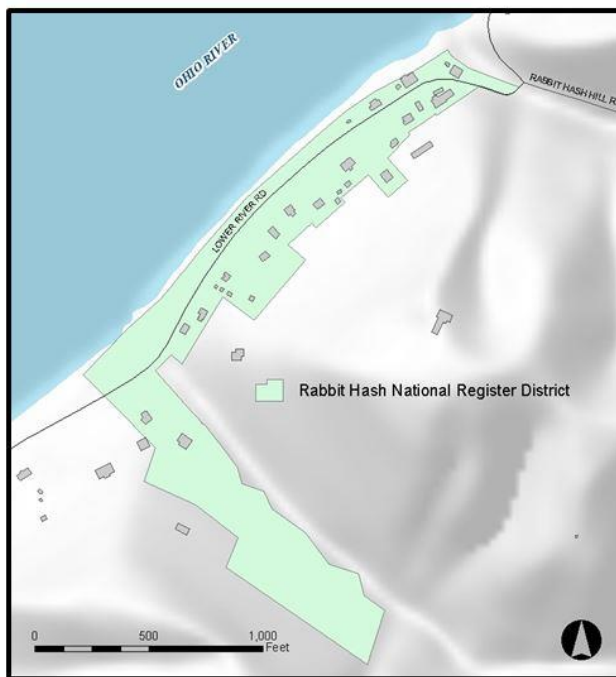
Rabbit Hash National Register Historic District

The Rabbit Hash NRHP District was listed in 2003 and (see **Figure 3.7**) is anchored by the c. 1831 Rabbit Hash General Store. The 33-acre district includes the General Store and 11 other structures and extends from Parks Branch north of the General Store to 10410 Lower River Road. The district nomination is based on Rabbit Hash’s significance in the context of ‘Boone County River Towns, c. 1814-1945.’ The General Store and late 19th Century B.C. Calvert House were previously listed in the NRHP in 1989. The 3.5 acres at the core of Rabbit Hash (including the General Store and 7 other buildings) are also designated a Boone County Local Historic Landmark District, subject to design review under the Zoning Regulations.

In February, 2016, the General Store was nearly destroyed by a catastrophic fire. Originally thought to be a total loss, the store was completely restored to its pre-fire state in 13 months. The unprecedented project used period materials and construction techniques and maintained the store’s National Register status. It was funded largely through crowd-sourced donations and supported by thousands of hours of volunteer labor. This was just one in a long list of preservation initiatives spearheaded by the RHHS, which has included erection of signage and a historic marker in town, and rehabilitation and maintenance of historic buildings. Rabbit Hash remains one of Boone County’s most well-known tourist destinations and was the subject of a full-length documentary film entitled “Rabbit Hash: Center of the Universe.” In 2004, Rabbit Hash joined Boone County on the list of 50 Kentucky communities recognized by the Federal government as Preserve America Communities.

The popularity of Rabbit Hash as a unique tourist destination has resulted in some noise and traffic impacts that the RHHS continues to try and address. The future success of the society’s efforts could serve as an example for other historic places in Boone County experiencing heavy visitation.

Figure 3.7

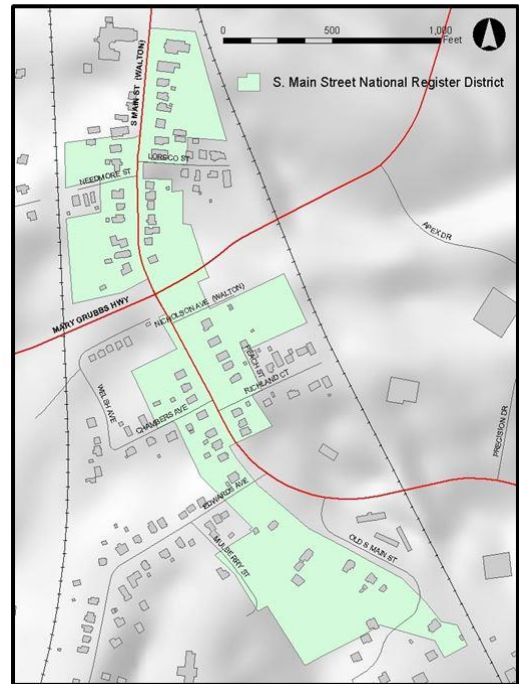


Walton South Main Street National Register Historic District

In 2005, a NRHP District nomination for the residential portion of South Main Street in Walton was approved by the National Park Service. Three Walton residences on (or adjacent to) North Main Street were nominated separately in the NRHP that same year. The Walton South Main Street Historic District (see **Figure 3.8**) is a linear district straddling Walton's primary thoroughfare - US 25. The 31-acre district includes 47 primary buildings, mostly residences built between c. 1900 and 1925 and also 2 churches. Three houses previously listed in the NR fall within the district as well. The district is bounded by Depot Street on the north and the Norfolk Southern overpass on the south. The district is significant in the area of Community Development from 1868 to 1950.

The City of Walton purchased bronze plaques to designate every historic property in the South Main Street district. The City also acquired the Abner Gaines House and rehabilitated it as the Gaines Tavern History Center. Walton was recognized for celebrating its history with Boone County Preservation Awards in 1999, 2005, and 2007. Continuation of the mixed-use development that characterizes Walton's Main Street is encouraged by a special Walton Downtown District in the Boone County Zoning Regulations, which does not include design guidelines.

Figure 3.8



Main Street in Walton is the most intact and functional historic downtown in Boone County. Like Burlington, new development along Walton's Main Street should be carefully reviewed to encourage development that is compatible with the mixed-use character of this historic downtown. Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic structures should be strongly encouraged. In 2010, the Boone County Historic Preservation Review Board prepared a draft set of design guidelines for Walton's Main Street Business District although they were not adopted by the City. In December 2015, the city passed a resolution supporting the [Walton Main Street Strategic Plan](#) prepared by the Planning Commission.

Preservation Strategies For Boone County

Many of the recommendations here derive from the Boone County Historic Preservation Plan (1999) which clarifies the role of historic preservation efforts in Boone County. The Plan provides specific guidelines and recommendations as well as pertinent background information for the preservation program in Boone County. The plan establishes preservation priorities for natural and cultural features, recommends appropriate regulatory tools, incentives, and strategies. Historic preservation efforts should focus on balancing new development with preserving the history and character of Boone County. This could include strategies such as adapting a historic building for a modern commercial or retail use, including an existing building in plans for a new subdivision, or a creative building design that blends with the existing landscape.

While Boone County has changed in the nearly 20 years since the Preservation Plan's adoption, its goals remain relevant, and include:

1. **Promote** cultural resources as a viable part of the county's lively past and vibrant future
2. **Identify** cultural resources as valuable assets to the county and to its citizens
3. **Protect** cultural resources from physical threats, which endanger their preservation
4. **Preserve** cultural resources through a variety of economic and other programs

Promotion and education are key themes of the Preservation Plan, reflected in the first goal. The Review Board has addressed this goal in the past through educational workshops, lectures, publications, and by developing a heritage education curriculum for use in local elementary schools. Other preservation partners meet this goal in various ways such as the BCHS bi-monthly lecture series, BCPL's Underground Railroad tours or lectures sponsored by the FOBB. While some printed brochures, maps and publications remain available, their digital

counterparts are more accessible today. These include Facebook pages, websites such as [Chronicles of Boone County](#), [Northern Kentucky Views](#), and [Kentucky Libraries Unbound](#), online story maps, the [History in Your Own Backyard](#) video series, and even QR codes attached to historical markers/sites that link to additional online information.

Identification and documentation of cultural resources in Boone County has been going on since before the Review Board formed. As discussed above, archaeologists have been active in Boone County since the Depression and the first countywide survey of historic structures was completed in the 1970s. In fact, survey results from the 1990s formed the basis for the Boone County Preservation Plan. Surveys and subsequent Multiple Resource nominations to the NRHP include historic contexts and themes which place resources in appropriate historic or architectural perspectives and help in evaluating their significance. The Review Board continues to advocate for identification and documentation of historic resources, including cemeteries, archaeological sites, and buildings. An Review Board also recognizes the need to update the countywide survey, although the logistics of recording every structure built prior to 1968 are daunting.

The Preservation Plan does not propose specific regulatory measures for the protection and preservation of historic resources. Rather, it provides guidelines the Review Board and others may use in making decisions and recommendations regarding potential impacts to historic resources. The Plan suggests ways historic preservation can be a part of the planning process and outlines research questions that support specific Goals and Objectives. In terms of regulation, Boone County Zoning Regulations includes a Historic Landmark/Overlay (H) District, but the central portion of Rabbit Hash is the only area so designated. By comparison, the Cemeteries section of the zoning code is utilized much more frequently. A non-regulatory administrative agreement between the Planning Commission and Building Department pertaining to demolition permits also exists. This provides an opportunity for Review Board staff to review demolition permits and at a minimum document historic properties prior to demolition. In 2012, this procedure led to the successful salvage and relocation of an early 19th Century log house located near the intersection of Burlington Pike and KY 237.

Preservation strategies recommended for Boone County are varied and integral to the above promotion, identification and regulatory goals. While to date the Local Landmark/Overlay (H) District has only been used in Rabbit Hash, it remains an available tool that includes design review. Design review processes are in place along Florence's Main Street and in Burlington, although to a limited extent. To date, there has not been sufficient support for more comprehensive design review processes elsewhere in the county. Local governments have taken steps to preserve resources through acquisition and stewardship. Examples include the Gaines Tavern in Walton and Renaker House in Burlington. Some cemeteries and archaeological sites are preserved within county owned parks. Some of the most viable and potentially successful preservation strategies are discussed separately below.

Heritage Tourism

The 2000 Boone County Comprehensive Plan recognized the importance of heritage tourism in Boone County and in 2002, the Boone County, Kentucky, Heritage Tourism Plan was developed and adopted by the Historic Preservation Review Board. The Heritage Tourism Plan catalogued Boone County's numerous heritage resources into seven categories "considered representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of" Boone County, Kentucky. The plan recommended that the county's existing heritage-oriented businesses and organizations should coordinate their efforts to market local heritage and utilize potential heritage tourism markets. Markets identified in the plan included the Cincinnati, Dayton, and Columbus, Ohio, metropolitan areas, southeast Indiana, central Kentucky, and the rapidly growing population of Boone County. The plan argued that the economic benefits of heritage tourism might be realized if an area's heritage is conserved and shared with visitors. Many recommendations of the plan were implemented, including development of the Boone County Heritage Tourism Council, creation of a heritage tourism website and shared event calendar, and printing and distribution of 3 editions (totaling over 67,000 copies) of the Boone County Heritage Tourism Map. The Heritage Tourism Council met on a regular basis for two years before disbanding in late 2005.

Then as now, the most recognized heritage tourism resources include the Burlington Historic District, Dinsmore Homestead, Big Bone Lick State Historic Site, and Rabbit Hash. According to the NKY Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Creation Museum near Petersburg and Ark Encounter (near Williamstown, Gallatin County) are the

primary drivers of a burgeoning “faith-based” tourism in the region. Together, they have helped generate increased demand for hotel rooms in spurred the creation of a significant number of Airbnb and VRBO (Vacation Rental By Owner) properties in Boone County. A number of houses and other buildings in Petersburg and elsewhere in Boone County have been rehabilitated for rental through these online booking sites.

Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits

Tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic structures were first created by the Federal Tax Reform Act of 1986, which established a 20% tax credit for certified expenses on income-producing properties. The law also allowed a 10% credit for rehabilitation of non-historic structures built prior to 1936. Program details are modified periodically but current information is available through the [National Park Service website](#). Generally speaking, qualifying rehabilitation must follow the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#). In Fiscal Year 2016, 50 projects in Kentucky successfully earned Federal tax credits with investment totaling \$74,235,891. Kentucky ranked 6th in the nation in numbers of successfully completed projects. The [Fiscal Year 2017 report of the Federal Tax Incentive program](#) indicates that the program has generated nearly \$90 billion in rehabilitation investment since 1977.

Kentucky Historic Preservation Tax Credits

Created in 2005, the [Kentucky Historic Preservation Tax Credit program](#) also requires NRHP listing or eligibility as a prerequisite. However, the Kentucky program allows credits for owner-occupied residential properties at a 30% rate, with a minimum investment of \$20,000 and total credit cap of \$60,000. For all other properties, 20% of rehabilitation expenses may receive credits, with a \$20,000 minimum investment and total credit not to exceed \$400,000. These credits are transferrable, which is an incentive for non-profits and governmental agencies to adhere to Secretary of the Interior Standards when work is performed on their historic properties. The 2016-2017 Old Boone County Courthouse Rehabilitation project was awarded \$147,000 in Kentucky tax credits under this program. Kentucky's application process and paperwork are designed to allow projects simultaneously apply for both state and Federal 20% tax credits for income-producing properties.

In 2016, 131 of 138 applications for the state tax credit (from 27 counties) were approved by the KHC pending completion of the work. Thee approved projects represent nearly \$92 million in private investment in rehabilitation. Since the program began in 2005, 738 buildings in Kentucky have been rehabilitated, representing \$433 million in private funds invested in historic buildings. The average investment has been \$1.2 million for commercial projects and \$120,000 for residential.

Historic Conservation Easements

An easement is a legal document through which a property owner grants limited rights in his or her property to another. Easements for driveways and utilities have existed for some time. Conservation easements, under Kentucky law, can now be utilized to protect natural, scenic or open space areas and natural resources or to preserve historically and architecturally significant properties and archaeological sites. Such an easement limits the right of the owner to alter the historic or natural character of the property. Because the easement is given in perpetuity, it continues to protect the property even after ownership changes hands. Easements can be complex and owners interested in pursuing one should consult a tax professional or attorney. The National Park Service publication [Easements to Protect Historic Properties: A Useful Historic Preservation Tool with Potential Tax Benefits is an excellent resource](#).

The KHC currently holds or administers easements on several NRHP properties in Boone County. Other organizations holding conservation easements on historic properties in Boone County include The Archaeological Conservancy, Hillside Trust, The Boone Conservancy and the Cincinnati Preservation Association. The continued use of conservation easement programs should be encouraged for Boone County.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Agricultural land has value beyond the production of goods and services, according to the Boone County Conservation District, including benefits for storm water filtration, ground water recharge, flood reduction, soil retention, wildlife habitat, air purification, historic sites, scenic corridors, as well as the economic benefit of visual

character. However, recent statistics show that development of the county's rural areas continues. To protect farming, a combination of tax structures, planning efforts, incentive programs, conservation easements, and utility expansions should continue to be explored. New residential development should be correlated with sufficient infrastructure, including sewer, adequate roads, fire hydrant water pressure, storm water management, and emergency response are necessary to support residential development in the long term. This adds to the cost of providing community services. Agriculture, on the other hand, enables an economic use of the land and requires relatively little infrastructure support or public expenditure.

New residential development can conflict with existing farming in the form of trespassing, vandalism, and complaints about agricultural odors and noises. Farmers also face transportation challenges accessing fields located away from their equipment storage locations because of increased suburban traffic, driver impatience, and lack of knowledge about proper passing techniques. However, large, concentrated agricultural production of livestock and similar operations (aka “mega-farms”) should still be treated as industrial uses per state law, because of potential noise, visual, traffic, and other impacts on surrounding land uses.

Existing Right to Farm statutes and the Agricultural District program mitigate but do not alleviate farming-housing conflicts. The [County's Agricultural Grievance Board](#) can help mediate conflicts between farmers and their neighbors and provide assistance to a farmer dealing with trespassing or vandalism. Other mechanisms are already in place in the [Boone County Zoning Regulations](#) (Section 3158) and the [Boone County Subdivision Regulations](#) (Section 308) to help minimize negative impacts of development locating next to farmland.

In the post-tobacco agricultural economy, efforts to promote innovation and crop diversification such as those pursued by the Extension Service are helping to preserve existing farmlands as economically viable. Other potential crop alternatives include herbal crops, hay, timber (wood products), textiles, aquaculture, medical industry crops and even ostrich, bison or mink. A good farmer's market network can supplement the successful Boone County Farmer's Market to link farmers with consumers and promote regional sustainability by meeting local food demand with local supply.

The [2010 Comprehensive Plan](#) notes that Boone County conducted a series of open space plans, citizen surveys, parks/rec master plans and related documents between the late 1980s and late 2000s,. The parks system made notable progress toward meeting the needs of a population that began growing significantly in the early 1960s. A number of large parks and properties were developed or at least acquired, including England-Idlewild Park, Central Park, Conrad Park, Gunpowder Creek Nature Park, and the Volpenhein and Waller-Stephenson properties. Much of the land for these facilities came from opportunities that presented themselves during site development. Since 2006, only a few proposed projects (**see Table 3.1**) have been addressed, the most notable being The Conservancy Park in Belleview. Boone County's growing population is increasing the need parks and recreational opportunities, while the resources adequate to meet those needs have not increased proportionally. Continued rising land costs and development pressure further complicates land acquisition for parks facilities. According to Boone County Park's Director, the Department's top priorities for the immediate future are:

- Additional park land in the Hebron Area and North of 275
- Additional park land in the Richwood, Union and Verona Area
- Concentrating on Non recreational Open Space (for environmental purposes)

Feedback collected during the public involvement process for Plan2040 provides some insight into current citizen sentiment about parks and recreation in Boone County. Survey responses were relatively neutral to the question *“The existing parks and recreation facilities are sufficient to meet the needs of Boone County.”* Of 248 people responding, 103 either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Ninety disagreed or strongly disagreed and 55 neither agreed nor disagreed. This seems to suggest that most residents are at least satisfied with the amount and quality of existing parks and recreation facilities.

However, when asked to complete the following open-ended statement: “My vision for the future of Boone County is_____.” The top responses fell into three categories:

- Family Friendly/Friendly to Live In/Happy Community” (n=67; 15.2%)
- Plenty of Parks & Recreation/More Green Spaces/Public Facilities (n=58; 13.2%)
- Better Roads/Lack of Congestion/Less Traffic (n=46; 10.5%)

The open-ended statement “What do you feel is needed in Boone County to improve the quality of life for businesses and residents?” generated top responses broken down as follows:

- Better Roads/Lack of Congestion/Less Traffic (n=86; 19.3%)
- Plenty of Parks & Recreation/More Green Spaces/Public Facilities (n=67; 15.1%)
- Sustainability in Construction/Protect the Environment/Renewable Resources (n=28; 6.3%)

Comments received during the planning process align with these percentages. Most public input focused on transportation issues, particularly roads and vehicular traffic. The next most common category of comments related in some way to open space, parks or recreation. Comments about bicycling and good pedestrian access were also prominent, with the following examples being typical:

“A community that has sufficient areas set aside for recreation, green spaces, cycling opportunities, walking trails that are easily accessible throughout the county.” and “I would like to see Boone County add more safe lanes and paths for bicyclists and runners. I would also like to see some green space preserved for the growth of our parks just as our population grows. We also need some regulations that keep heavy trucks (18 wheelers) off of our residential neighborhood streets. This has become a real safety problem lately.”

Also of note, both Tri-State Trails and the Building Industry of Northern Kentucky encouraged connectivity between existing facilities and cooperation among jurisdictions to develop a more regional parks system.

Regarding parks, recreation and open space, this plan recommends that Boone County should:

- Complete another Parks and Recreation assessment, either an update or a new plan
- Partner with other jurisdictions and agencies (e.g., Healthcare) to maximize resources on a broader scale
- Seek all opportunities to connect existing parks via pedestrian and bike-friendly facilities with the goal of establishing a system which meets both recreational and transportation needs.

Historic preservation in Boone Continues to benefit from collaboration between government, non-profit, and private entities, working in their own way to meet the broad goals of preservation. Recommendations to address issues which need attention going forward include:

- Update the 1999 Preservation Plan, which is nearly 20 years old
- Update the countywide survey of historic structures, with particular emphasis on documenting the large number of Post-WWII resources built in the eastern Boone County
- Work toward developing an archival location capable of storing artifacts and materials not suitable for digital archiving
- Investigate ways to address threats to prehistoric cemeteries before the development process begins
- Continue to promote heritage tourism and agritourism as tools for conservation, preservation and economic development and encourage completion of studies by agencies such as the BCCD or NKYCVB to evaluate their economic benefit
- Encourage additional National Register listings of eligible properties and the potential benefits of rehabilitation tax credits available at the State and Federal levels
- Find ways to establish local incentive programs to encourage preservation of family cemeteries and historic buildings.

Boone County’s natural and cultural resources must be properly and accurately identified in order to continue contributing to the overall quality of life in Boone County. Recreation facilities and programs of all kinds are needed to meet the changing demographics of Boone County. As this development continues, it is vital to document and preserve cultural resources, natural features, agricultural lands (and related uses), and open spaces.

