

2023-  
2043

# WHITE LAKE NC COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Photo: Jamie Corbett

Lumber River Council of Governments  
March 2023

## Contents

---

Acknowledgments.....	3
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW.....	4
Process.....	5
Data Sources.....	6
Themes and Emerging Issues.....	6
MISSION and VISION.....	8
Mission Statement.....	8
Vision Statement.....	8
RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION STEPS.....	9
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN.....	13
CONCLUSION.....	14
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SURVEY.....	15
RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS.....	32
Land Use/Zoning Ordinance.....	32
White Lake Strategic Lake Management Plan.....	35
Bladen County Comprehensive Transportation Plan.....	35
Bladen County Resilient Recovery Plan.....	37
Bladen County Hazard Mitigation Plan.....	37
Healthy Places Robeson, Bladen, and Columbus Counties.....	37
Bladen County Strategic Plan.....	38
“UPLIFT” Program.....	38
COMMUNITY BACKGROUND.....	40
History.....	40
Location and Geography of the Area.....	40
Environmental Conditions.....	41
Climate.....	41
Endangered Species.....	42
Possible Hazards.....	43
Soils.....	43
Topography.....	45

Current Conditions.....	46
Broadband .....	47
Building Permit Activities.....	47
Education.....	47
Emergency Services: .....	47
Economy and Market Information .....	48
Economic Development.....	51
Employment .....	51
Population .....	52
Health Care .....	53
Housing.....	54
Recreation.....	57
Traffic .....	59
Transportation .....	60
Municipal Utilities .....	60
Community Resources and Assets .....	61
North Carolina Future Farmers of America (FFA) Camp Center .....	61
North Carolina State Parks.....	62
REGIONAL INFLUENCES, ASSETS AND ATTRACTIONS.....	64
Opportunities for Growth.....	64
Regional Partnerships .....	64
Regional Attractions .....	65
Carolina Bays .....	65
Future Land Use.....	69
APPENDICIS .....	73

## Acknowledgments

---

We extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the residents, business owners, visitors, elected officials, Town staff, and other stakeholders who participated in the planning process and guided the development of the White Lake Comprehensive Plan.

### **TOWN OF WHITE LAKE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

H. Goldston Womble, Jr., Mayor  
Thomas E. Riel, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Timothy G. Blount, Commissioner  
Timothy L. Clifton, Commissioner  
Paul A. Evans, Commissioner  
Dean C. Hilton, Commissioner  
Michael J. Suggs, Commissioner

### **PLANNING BOARD**

Jonathan Langston, Chairman  
Joy Warren, Vice Chairman  
Hope Campbell, Member  
Sarah Cook, Member  
Paul Norris, Member  
Sky Moore, Member  
Stephanie Ensminger, ETJ Member  
Wade Lowry, ETJ Member (Alternate)

### **Town of White Lake Staff**

Sean Martin, Town Administrator  
Patricia Kennedy, Town Clerk

[www.WhiteLakeNC.org](http://www.WhiteLakeNC.org)



## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

---

White Lake holds the memories of fun in the sun vacations for thousands of families. It has provided families with memories of swimming, boating and playing in what is sometimes called the “nation’s safest beach”. These families are the most loyal of visitors with many coming back for decades, bringing their children, their grandchildren and now their great grands to enjoy the clear waters that make White Lake so unusual and so attractive to water lovers. These visitors come in many different forms, from day trippers to those that have built second homes to be close to the lake; those that rent lake side cottages and those that stay in the small family owned motels. Campers are abundant and make up much of the summer population explosion, including campers that buy a camper and keep it permanently in one of the Lake’s many campgrounds or those renting spaces by the week or month.



Photo courtesy White Lake, White Lake, NC News & Memories: Past & Present Facebook

White Lake is unusual and faces several challenging situations, especially between the Town and the State of North Carolina. The Town developed around the Lake body with almost all water front property in private ownership, developed with private homes, campgrounds, motels and some retail/service businesses; while the lake itself is owned and controlled by the State of North Carolina and is considered a state park. Public access to the lake is extremely limited.

With growth and increased use, White Lake now finds itself at a crossroads. With major investments being made at the Lake and the Lake itself facing water quality issues, major decisions are ahead. The Town of White Lake Board of Commissioners has charged the White Lake Planning Board with completion of a comprehensive plan for 2022-2042. This plan will provide the basis for such decisions in the areas of:

***Future Land Use***  
***Preservation of Community Values***  
***Strengthening the Economy***  
***Protection and Conservation of Resources***  
***Fostering Mobility, Accessibility and Safety***  
***Provision of Services to Current and Future Residents***

This plan captures the goals of the community at the present time and incorporates the community's feelings and thoughts into a set of goals and action steps that will guide decision making for the next 10-20 years. The White Lake that we know and love today has developed through decisions made decades ago. This plan will help address areas that are of concern today and provide a basis for decisions to protect and prosper the White Lake we all will continue to love and enjoy for years to come.

Photo courtesy of Kenny Carter @pbase.com



**Process**

Developing such a plan requires substantial input from the community. The plan was developed during the spring, summer and fall of the year which are the busiest time.

However, this allowed input from visitors that frequent the lake and have done so for many years.

**Steering Committee:** The White Lake Planning Board served as the steering committee for this effort. The plan was developed through the regular meetings of the planning board.

**Survey:** The Planning Board decided to utilize surveys to gather input. Electronic and written community surveys were distributed in and around the community in efforts to gather comments from those that best “know” White Lake and are concerned about its future. Approximately 600 surveys were completed and the results are examined later in this plan.

**Public Meetings:** A public meeting was held in development of this plan with emphasis on the lake itself.

**Social Media:** Several social media sites are devoted to the community of White Lake. Such sites were monitored to determine interests and concerns of those utilizing these sites.

**Interviews:** Interviews were held with the town administrator, NC Department of Parks and Recreation and NC Department of Natural Resources staff.

### Data Sources

Data from the federal Decennial Census conducted by the Bureau of the Census was utilized in this plan as well as data from the Community Surveys. The Decennial Census is conducted every ten years while the American Community Survey gathers sample data between census counts. Other statistics, including estimates and projections, were supplied through a private data analysis company ESRI. ESRI is the global market leader in geographic information system software, location intelligence and mapping. The company utilizes geographic science and geospatial analytics to help increase the usefulness and relevance of projects such as this comprehensive plan. ESRI population estimates are based on analysis of the latest available decennial census as well as the American Community Survey. The Lumber River Council of Governments utilizes ESRI software for mapping and data purposes.

### Themes and Emerging Issues

The process clearly identified several issues. These issues will be evident in the survey results and will be addressed in the Recommendations section of the plan. They include:

#### Lake Water Quality Character of the Community

**Development needed outside of Lake Drive**  
**Public Access to the Lake / Public Purpose Access**  
**Family oriented attractions**  
**Affordability**  
**Communication**

The quality of the Lake water is the priority, whether a visitor or a full time resident. However, visitors/tourists and full time residents differ on several issues concerning future development. While family oriented opportunities were included as a priority for many, the true definition of what this means may differ between tourists and residents. Tourists may be more interested in the amusement rides they remember from childhood visits whereas permanent residents may be more interested in year round amenities and entertainment. Success lies in meshing these different views while maintaining the health and quality of the lake waters.

Work on the comprehensive plan as well as the strategic lake plan revealed issues in regulatory authority of the Lake. The relationship between the state departments having authority over the lake water and the authority and responsibility of the Town must be determined and accepted by all involved. The action steps included in this plan will address this issue.

While a wonderful place to visit and to live, White Lake has challenges ahead. These challenges will be met if the Town and its residents work together going forward.

## MISSION and VISION

---

### Mission Statement

*To preserve and protect the natural beauty of White Lake while encouraging responsible residential and commercial growth and ensuring an enriched quality of life for our residents and visitors.*

### Vision Statement

*White Lake is a year round destination with attractions for all. The clear healthy water of the lake provides endless recreational opportunities while the picturesque scenery beckons you to rest and relax. The serenity of its beauty feeds your soul and then a variety of restaurants feed the body. Shops are filled for your enjoyment with precious treasures you won't discover in other areas. Everyone wants to be at White Lake.*



Photo: Jamie Corbett, WLL Facebook

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION STEPS

---

### **Restoration and Preservation of body of water known as White Lake**

#### ***Action Steps***

- Adopt and enforce stormwater controls
- Develop a draft MOU between the Town and appropriate state agency (Department of Parks and Recreation and/or Department of Environmental Quality) to work cooperatively on the future management of the lake.
- Cooperatively develop a list of issues/tasks that could be taken on jointly or separately with one entity taking the lead and the other in a support role.
- Determine if a more comprehensive lake management plan is needed. If so, the Town should take the lead in this project, in cooperation with appropriate state agencies.
- Public acquisition of the Turtle Cove outlet or an alternate location for a new outlet.
- Identify and obtain conservation easements where possible.
- Identify possible public use/public access areas and open spaces and pursue public ownership.
- Identify the existing committees and work groups that deal with lake water issues. Establish a lead/steering committee which includes representation from each committee, including citizens of the Town, to insure a cohesive approach to issues concerning the lake body. This lead/steering committee will hold regular public meetings to inform interested parties of the work.
- Partner with NC Department of Environmental Quality to study the impacts of a lake recreational capacity plan to regulate boat traffic on the lake.
- Further study groundwater flow under and around the lake by utilizing the study proposal found in the Lake Management Strategic Plan produced by the Lumber River Council of Governments.
- Once a course of action for the Lake water is established, working committees should be formed that include elected officials, planning board members, town employees as well as other interested parties to help insure the work is completed.
- Attention should be given to the use of areas surrounding the Town and any effects such use, including agricultural uses, may have upon the Lake waters.

**Recommendation: Monitor Future Land Use and Revise Ordinances to accomplish future land use goals**

***Action Steps***

- Review and Revise the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Ordinance regularly for needed updates
- Review the zoning and building permit requests for any needed updates to the plans and codes
- Revise the current land use ordinance to help reduce impervious surfaces on or near the lake body and prevent, where possible, the increase of impervious surfaces in these same areas
- Revise the current land use ordinance to increase set-backs and increase minimum lots sizes to protect the lake body
- Preserve, protect and maintain the existing town character through wise development and land use decisions
- Complete survey of high water mark through cooperative efforts with appropriate state agencies
- Encourage lodging and tourism related activities while protecting existing residents and businesses
- Consider revisions to subdivision ordinance requiring bicycle paths and coordinated mail delivery in new developments
- Reduction and limiting of impervious surfaces should become a priority in future land use decision

**Recommendation: Enhance White Lake Drive**

***Action Steps***

- Enhance the “family friendly” feel and character of the commercial area of the Town through the development of a streetscape plan. The plan should include landscaping and other natural areas along White Lake Drive to improve aesthetics as well as to slow, absorb and help clean storm water
- Encourage the use of plantings along White Lake Drive to break up areas between paved parking facilities and the actual street



- Improve walkability and biking along White Lake Drive with priority given to pedestrian safety, connectivity, accessibility and comfort including the completion of the White Lake Multi-Use Path to loop around the lake
- Study the potential of streetscapes along White Lake Drive to improve pedestrian/bike safety
- Continue to build upon efforts to encourage year round tourism
- Pursue funding of new position within the Town that includes planning, marketing and public relations

**Strengthen the Economy of the Lake Community while protecting it's valued "family friendly" feel.**

***Action Steps***

- Determine market shortcomings in the area and encourage development of such commercial growth
- Identify potential areas of development for future commercial growth.
- Develop public transportation options that deliver visitors/residents to all areas of the lake
- Identify and apply for transportation grant opportunities
- Encourage the development of family oriented amusements and continuation of existing businesses that are safe and affordable.
- Pursue funding of new position within the Town that includes planning, marketing and public relations
- Build upon North Carolina's designation as "The Trail State" with White Lake as a designation.

**Increase Public Recreation Opportunities**

***Action Steps***

- Inventory available recreational opportunities, both private and public.
- Survey community to determine specific recreation opportunities desired.
- Develop relationship with Bladen County Recreation Department for partnership opportunities.
- Complete walking loop around the lake.
- Complete and adopt bike/pedestrian plan for the area.

- Establish relationship with NC State Parks and Recreation to further the use of the State Parks surrounding White Lake to increase use as recreation opportunities.
- Utilize the partnerships available through the “UPLIFT” program.

### **Improve Public Relations including communication and marketing**

#### ***Action Steps***

- Inventory the methods of news exchange in the community, including all social medias.
- Establish an independent system of distributing relevant information to both citizens and visitors.
- Update information regularly so that news is dependable and informative.
- Share such information with the identified news providers in the community so that a unified message is being shared.
- A position should be created within the Town organization that would include the responsibilities of public relations, marketing and planning.
- Utilize the partnerships available through the “UPLIFT” program.

### **Strengthening White Lake’s “Resort Community”**

#### ***Action Steps***

- Create a Sense of Arrival and Welcome by improving the existing Town of White Lake Sign areas and promote the feeling of entering a “relaxing, safe and welcoming way of life”. White Lake is different, build upon that.
- Market White Lake as a year round residential area with emphasis toward attracting all ages to White Lake
- Allow residential and mixed-use development in certain areas of the Town, allowing the area to become a more walkable community and assist in alleviation of parking and congestion issues
- Insure that the Zoning Ordinance permits and encourages this type of development
- Develop open spaces and public places that encourage residents to gather in groups to strengthen the community and promote sharing of ideas
- Utilizing the comprehensive transportation planning process, develop mobility plans to accommodate
- Insure that the zoning and land use plans allow development of lots that may not meet current ordinances to assist landowners to update/rehabilitate existing lots.

## **Strengthen the relationship between the markets of Elizabethtown and White Lake and surrounding areas**

### ***Action Steps***

- Recognition of the relationship between the economies of Elizabethtown and White Lake
- Determine methods to market this relationship while strengthening and improving both communities
- Include activities, shopping and other attractions in surrounding areas when marketing White Lake

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN**

---

### **Prioritizing Action Strategies**

This comprehensive plan should be treated as a living document, needing regular attention from the Town leaders and staff. To be successful, this vision of the future White Lake must be accepted by all involved or revised to reflect changes. The goals contained in the plan are not prioritized. Town Board could charge the Planning Board and other interested citizens with the prioritization. The accompanying implementation matrix can be used to begin the discussions and guide the actions.

### **Plan Monitoring**

Upon adoption, this plan requires immediate attention by the Town Board. Responsibility of each action strategy should be assigned with a time frame established so that residents can see improvements and actions being completed. The Town is limited with staff capacity and the success of these efforts will rely on having residents “buy-in” and willing to volunteer to assist with the strategies. Unlike other larger towns, White Lake does not have the departments available to assign responsibility for each of the strategies. This situation requires close communication between the Board, staff, planning board members and residents. The Board should consider forming a committee comprised of planning board members and other interested individuals willing to work toward this common vision.

A formal monitoring of the Plan should be scheduled for every three months for the first year, every 6 months for the second year and once every year thereafter. It is the responsibility of the Town Board to keep the vision and plan alive and in the minds of all residents and staff.

## Plan Updates and Amendments

All amendments to the plan must follow the rules and procedures for legislative decisions by the Board, including a public hearing with proper advertisement. Such amendments must be reviewed by the planning board for comment.

The following standards should be reviewed when updating and amending this plan:

- Does this align with this comprehensive plan or other adopted plans?
- Cost and funding sources?
- Is it an urgent need or has an opportunity presented itself?
- Level of community support
- Does it support a strength or address an identified weakness?

## CONCLUSION

---

White Lake is different. It's beautiful, the people are friendly and the water calms the spirit. This is what living in or visiting the Lake is all about. A successful future requires building upon and protecting all these qualities.

The quality of the water of the Lake itself is the priority facing the Town and the community. The interested parties in White Lake can be divided into three groups: Year Round Residents, Visitors and Business Owners/Operators. While all three may have differencing opinions on going forward, they all agree that the Lake must be the priority.

The Town is aggressively seeking to gather and comprehend the scientific data to better understand the Lake. Town leaders are addressing these findings through revised Town procedures and ordinances. The recently completed Lake Strategic Plan is a part of this Comprehensive Plan.

There are many private individuals that are not serving on the Town Board or the planning board that are dedicated to preserving and promoting the White Lake Community. They want to be heard and be involved in these efforts.

Communication within the Town relies heavily on social media which can be a mixture of truth and a little slanted truth. This style of communication often creates confusion and does not promote trust in the Town's leaders.

The Town's population is older and has experienced little growth over the past twenty years. Marketing that targets all ages will attract new residents and new visitors to the area.

The Lake itself is the primary draw to the Community, however, White Lake Community sits in the center of the vast system of state parks located nearby. This opens up a new market of visitors/residents that are attracted to the hiking, biking, paddling and boating

available at the state parks. This area represents Segment 13 in the North Carolina Mountain to Sea trail which attracts many to the area.

This Comprehensive Plan establishes priorities to address the opportunities for the Lake and its community. It provides a guide to the future that so many desire for this community.

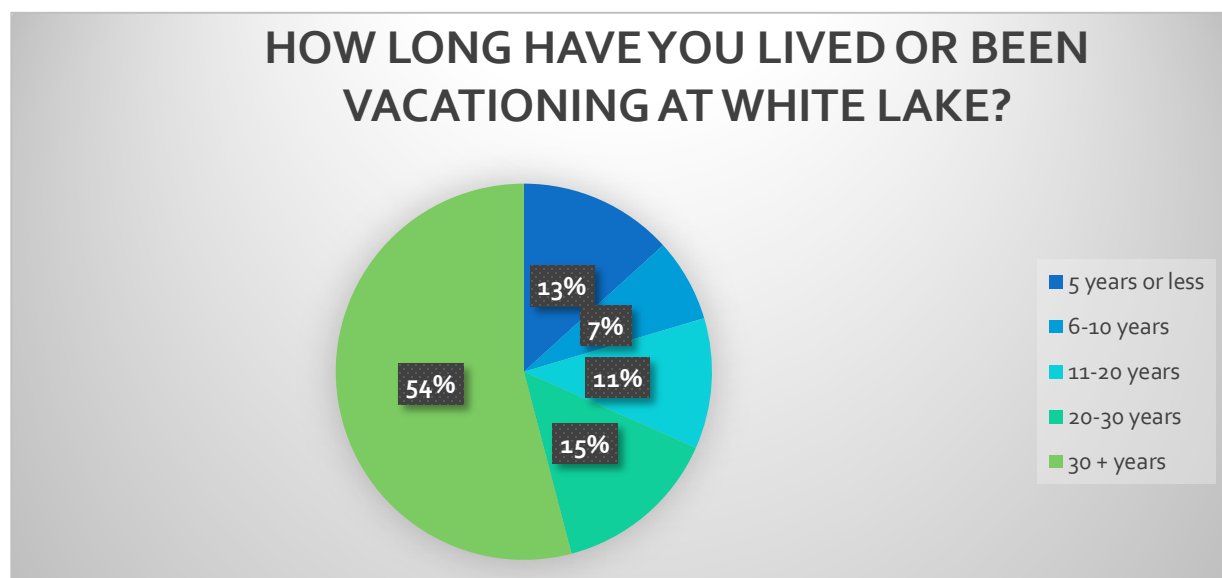
## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SURVEY

---

While the comprehensive plan is a responsibility of the Town, public input and participation is necessary to assure the success of the plan. Considering the Lake's population and its many visitors, the Planning Board determined that it would be best to distribute surveys to capture the opinion and comments of those concerned with the Lake and its future. During late winter and early spring, these surveys were provided through various social media outlets including Facebook and public and private websites. Surveys were available online by QR codes as well as written copies provided at various locations in Town. Results from over 550 surveys were received with results discussed in this narrative. Detailed results of the survey are included below. The response to the surveys were so tremendous, the Planning Board decided to include the results and comments in the body of this plan.

### Question 1:

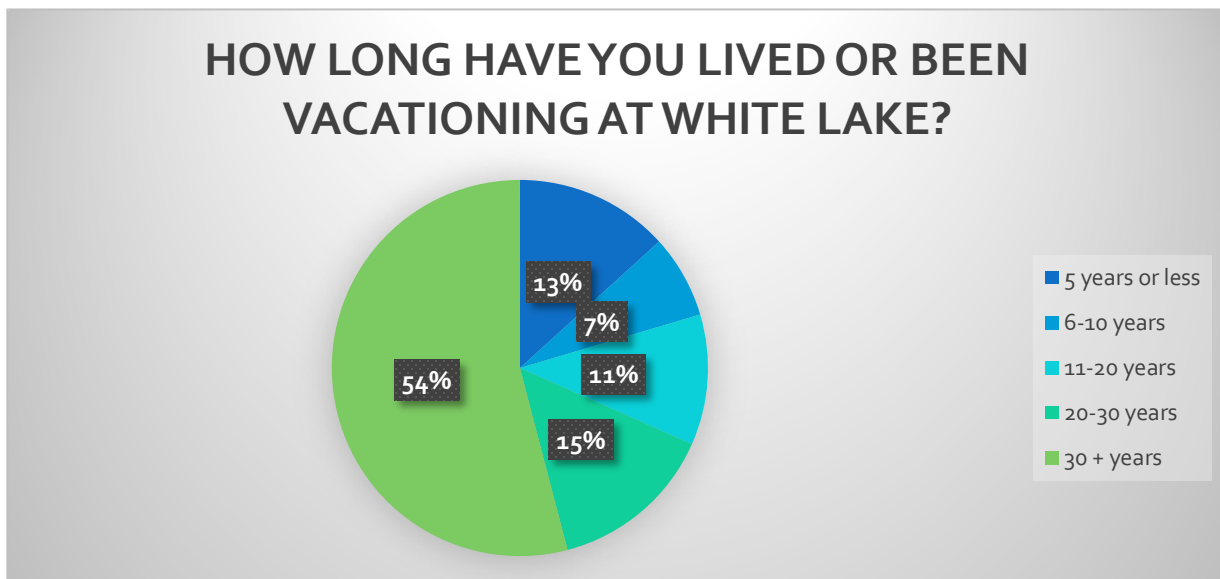
***We want to gather the opinions of everyone that considers themselves a part of the White Lake Community. How do you relate to the community?***



The majority of survey respondents identified themselves as frequent long term visitors to the White Lake community. The survey was completed by 37% frequent/long term tourists, 27%-part time resident/second home and 20% year round residents or commercial business owners.

**Question 2:**

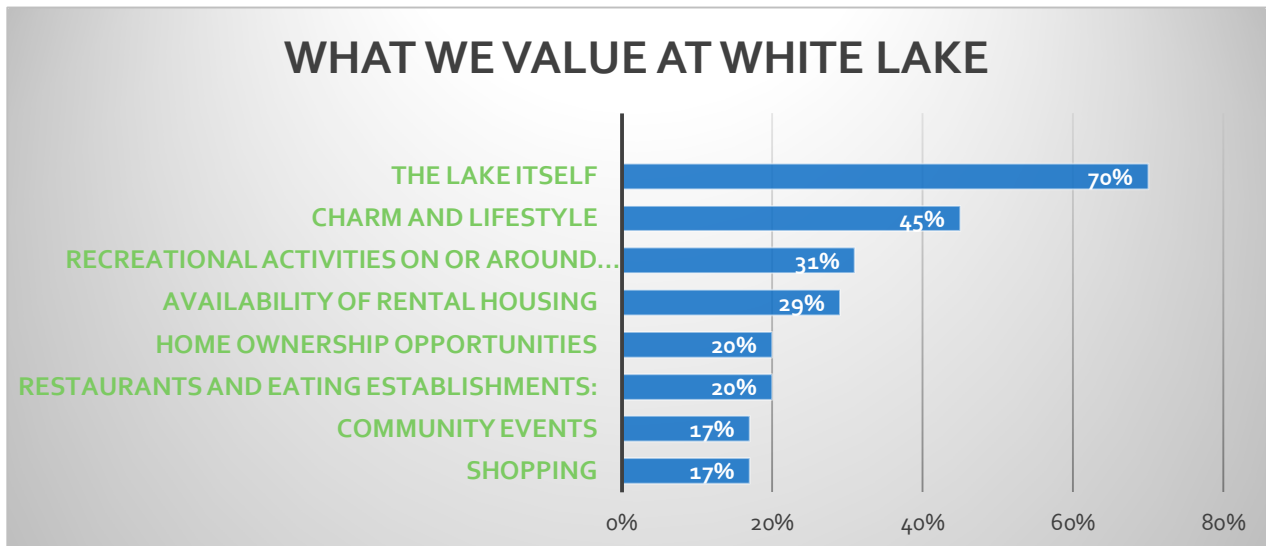
*How long have you lived or been vacationing at White Lake?*



Fifty-three percent (53%) have lived and or vacationed at White Lake for thirty (30) plus years. This is indicative of the long term visitors that love and continue to vacation at White Lake.

**Question 3:**

*Why do you live/vacation at White Lake? What is it that you value and want to protect in this community? **Please rank in importance to you.** Please add any other important valuable features.*



The Lake Itself: 70%

Charm and Lifestyle: 45%

Recreational activities on or around the Lake: 31%

Restaurants and eating establishments: 20%

Shopping: 17 %

Community Events: 17%

Home Ownership Opportunities: 20%

Availability of rental housing: 29%

Small town feel / family feel /low key 17

## COMMENTS



Nice Clean Quiet location  
Socializing with other renters 2  
Water – 25  
Facelift of community -1  
Affordable rental property 2  
Entertainment for kids 5  
Affordable – 11  
Safety 5  
Lake Festival  
Affordability 1  
Upgrades put people out 3  
Campgrounds 1  
Better grocery store  
Like upgrades 2  
Need public lake access  
County parks  
Better restaurants

**Question 4:**

***What would you like to see more of in the Town of White Lake? Please rank in order of importance to you.***

Almost 45% of survey respondents list more family oriented amusement opportunities as their number 1 desire. This is followed closely with 28% asking for more community parks, trails and activities that support the natural features of the area. Obviously the recreational opportunities offered by the Lake are of utmost importance to residents and visitors. As you review the survey results, please keep in mind that respondents were often asked to rank their answers. With that in mind, family oriented amusement and outside recreation top the list as both the first and second selections. Recreation such as more organized sporting events also shows up as the top fourth selection.

1<sup>st</sup>:

- More family oriented amusement opportunities – 43%
- More community parks, trails and activities that support natural features of area – 28%

2<sup>nd</sup>:

- More community parks, trails and activities that support natural features of area – 28%
- More family oriented amusement opportunities – 24%

3<sup>rd</sup>:

- More shopping – 25%
- More community parks, trails and activities that support natural features of area – 22%

4<sup>th</sup>:

- More organized sporting events – 24%
- More shopping – 20%

5<sup>th</sup>:

- More owner occupied homes available for purchase – 30 %
- More rental housing – 22 %

6<sup>th</sup>

- More Rental Housing – 29 %
- More owner occupied homes available for purchase – 23 %

## COMMENTS

Don't want to lose small town feel -4

Water quality – 16

More restaurants -15– year round -2 – variety of food (diet restrictions) – open when people want to eat/steak/vegetables

Arcades, putt-putt, ice cream shops open later in the year 1

Concerts – 1  
Transportation options to other areas – Uber/taxi – 1  
Public access to the lake – 3  
Entertainment / Amusement rides for the kids – 9  
Grocery stores - 5  
Fancy restaurants/shops in Elizabethtown – 1  
Completion of greenway – 3  
Clean places to stay -1  
Water sports, water skiing show – 1  
Young adult entertainment – 1  
Tennis and pickle ball courts – 1  
Splash pads  
Outdoor movies  
Return to natural shoreline, get rid of sea walls,  
Limit and number and type of boats  
Affordability - 4  
Small local shops 2  
Less rental and campgrounds. Lake is over populated  
Leave it alone – 2  
Safe walk along Hwy 53  
Sit down restaurants  
More year round residents  
Family oriented activities – 3  
Bars aren't appropriate next to kids' activities  
More compassion from new owners  
Parks-2  
Competition ski buoys  
Less RV and trailer parks  
Less high dollar resort community development  
Regulate use of the lake -3

- Concerts
- Protection of natural habitat
- Sewer and water upgrades for existing system
- Less development
- Owner occupied housing

**Question 5:**

*Which of the following issues should be given attention in the Town's Comprehensive Plan for the next 20 years? Please rank in order of importance to you.*

The Lake continues to rise to the top of almost every set of answers. Clearly the health and the continued health of the Lake is the most important issue for the community and must be included in any plan going forward.

**1<sup>st</sup>**

- Conservation and maintenance of the Lake 68%

**2<sup>nd</sup>**

- Natural Resource protection and open space preservation 25%
- Stormwater management 25%

**3<sup>rd</sup>**

- Bicycle and pedestrian walkways 18%
- Natural resource protection and open space preservation 18%
- Stormwater management 16%

**4<sup>th</sup>**

- Public Recreation Opportunities 19%
- Bicycle and pedestrian walkways 17%

**5<sup>th</sup>**

- Bicycle and pedestrian walkways 18%
- Public Recreation Opportunities 17%

**6<sup>th</sup>**

- Public Recreation Opportunities 14 %
- Job Opportunities 14 %

**7<sup>th</sup>**

- Job Opportunities 15%
- Parking and traffic congestion 14%
- Development of vacant properties 14 %

**8<sup>th</sup>**

- Housing Opportunities – ownership 17%
- Parking and Traffic congestion 15%

**9<sup>th</sup>**

- Housing Opportunities – ownership 24%

**10<sup>th</sup>**

- Housing Opportunities 26%
- Development of vacant properties 17 %

## COMMENTS

- Free access to lake for the public 2
- Water quality / conservation and maintenance 28
- Too much growth –
- Clean up vacant/ unused homes/lots 3
- Managed development
- Rental properties not owned by one conglomerate
- Keep lake open for skiing
- Resort community and should not be run by campground with weekenders polluting lake and not following rules
- Fix stormwater issues 2
- Remove seawalls to allow for natural filtration

- Bars and game rooms beside one another are not good
- Bar need another location
- Affordability
- Water rates, charging when house is vacant
- Route 701 traffic away from lake
- Upgrade rentals 2
- Less high dollar resort community development 3
- Use of golf carts on multi use paths and roads
- Less campground and mobile home development
- More single built structures
- Slow development
- Keep internet and cell phone towers
- Regulate boating
- Leave it alone/ not the Hampton's

**Question 6:**

***Which of the following factors would cause you to stay away from White Lake or not return here for vacation?***



Not keeping the lake clean and healthy 93%  
Becomes too expensive 68%  
Loss of a feeling of safety 65%  
Poor or run-down community appearance 60%  
Area becomes over developed 56%  
Too many people/too much traffic and congestion 45%  
Housing of any kind becomes too expensive 38%  
Lack of adequate rental housing 18 %  
Not enough parks and recreational opportunities 17%  
Other 17%  
Lack of retail and shopping opportunities 15 %  
Lack of adequate homes for sale 1 %

## COMMENTS

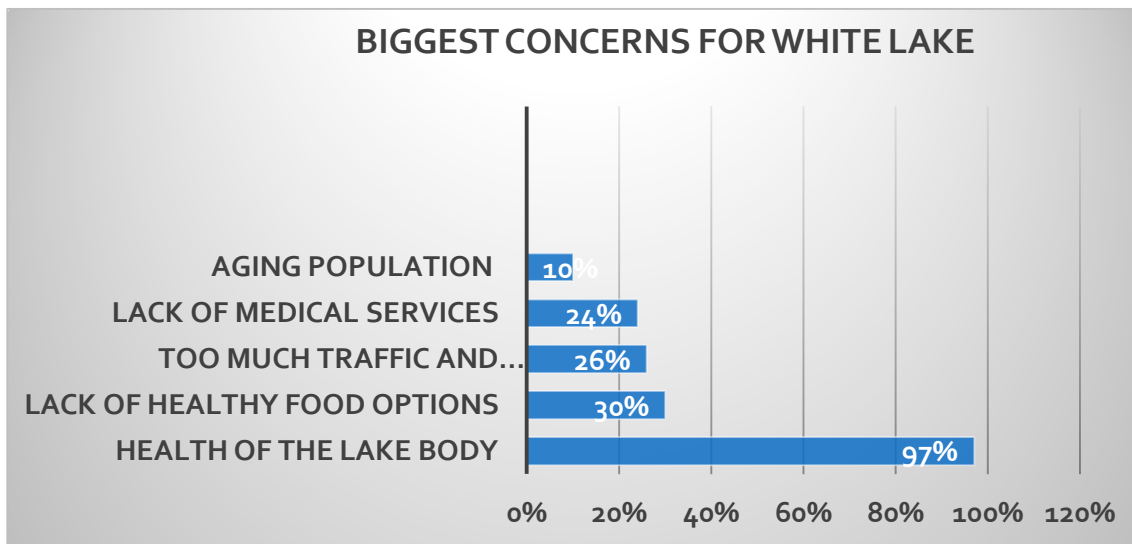
- Vacationers don't want to pay \$10 per person per day for one crappy beach – they say Myrtle Beach is a much better value
- Everything being owned by one or two companies
- Family Friendly atmosphere needs to stay. Last couple of years it seems to have been erased. Families com to White Lake to enjoy playing in the lake, rides and arcade. Rides need to be replaced and new one brought in.
- A Community that catered to the wealthy with activities that they prefer. I am against promoting alcohol around the lake. This is not family friendly and encourages participants to drive vehicles including boats and jet skis while drunk.
- Without clear, clean, healthy lake – there is no reason to come. Vacationers agree



- Nothing at the current time honestly –I love it & always will! I want to buy a vacation home there in the next couple years.

**Question 7:**

***Which of the following do you feel are the biggest concerns for White Lake? Choose your top three.***



The health of the lake body continues to rise to the top of any discussion concerning the White Lake community. For the second concern, the topic of available food options takes the lead followed closely by too much traffic and congestion and lack of medical services.

Health of the Lake Body	97%
Lack of healthy food options	30%
Too much traffic and congestion	26%
Lack of Medical services	24%
Aging Population	10%

Other	10%
Mental and emotional health concerns	5%

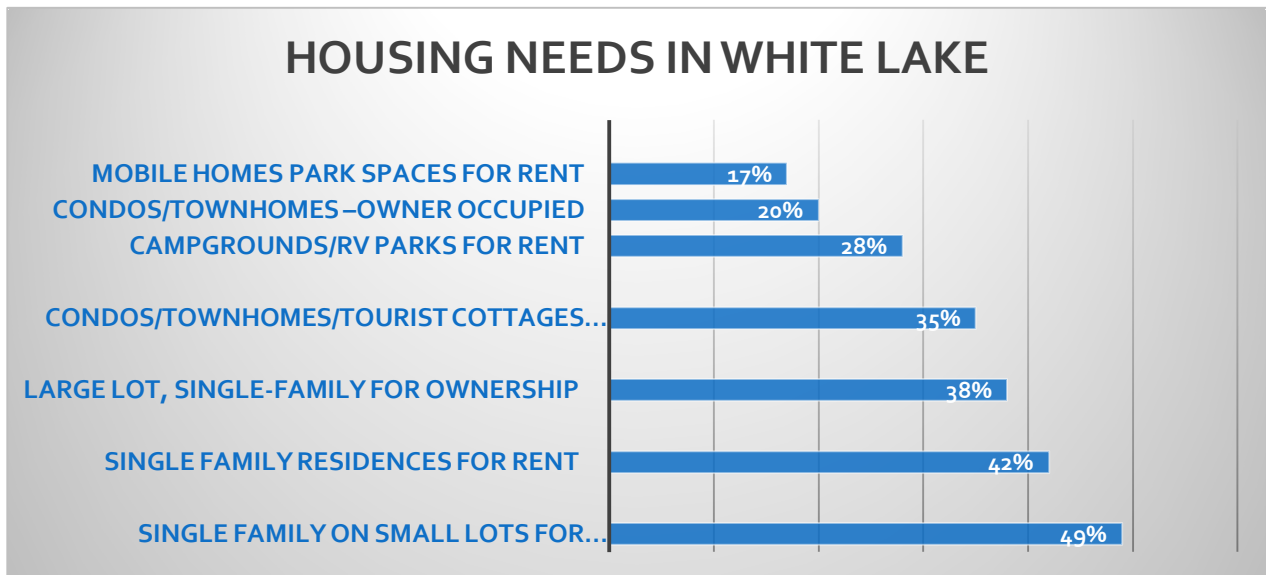
### COMMENTS

- Pricing People out/affordability 15
- Activities for kids/family 6
- Family feel community gone -5
- Getting rid of the nostalgic feel
- Lack of amusement rides 2
- Development controlled by few -7
- Complete the trail
- Monitor speed on highway 53
- Rental costs
- Entertainment
- Water Quality - 6
- Affordable hotels
- Lack of restaurants/shopping -4
- Property appearances continue to decline
- Lack of entertainment
- Lack of transparency in local government Board members without personal agendas/ 2
- Overpopulation 2
- Need for paths within the Town for pedestrians and bikers to lessen the vehicle traffic
- Public Lake Access 2
- Destruction of vegetation and habitat on and near lakeshore
- Wastewater/ stormwater issues 3
- Lack of sufficient staff for town police, fire and EMS
- Lack of full grocery store

- Development of bars
- Lack of enforcement of town regulations/ keep RV parks in check
- Attempts to make it an adult only development
- Attempts to make it a closed community
- Public safety
- Too commercialized

**Question 8:**

**What type of housing should be developed in White Lake develop? Choose your top three.**



Respondents chose owner occupied single family residences on small lots as their primary housing need, followed closely by the need for single family rental units.

Single family on small lots for ownership (stick framed or manufactured)	49%
Single family residences for rent (stick framed or manufactured)	42%
Large lot, single-family for ownership (stick framed or manufactured)	38%
Condos/townhomes/tourist cottages for rent	35%
Campgrounds/RV Parks for rent	28%

Condos/townhomes –owner occupied	20%
Mobile Homes Park Spaces for rent	17%
Apartments	7%
Other	7%

## COMMENTS

Pricing out people  
Balance of Housing  
Plenty of all housing  
Family oriented activities  
No more housing – lake is not big enough for more 12  
Existing houses should be granted lake access  
Leave White Lake alone!  
Enough big already! 2  
Affordable campgrounds  
Single Family home on medium lot  
More Options for out of towners to stay 2  
More Mobile Homes for rent  
Large family rentals (>12) 3  
Development/use ruining the lake  
Improve what's here 3  
Insure that future development doesn't harm the lake  
More rental affordable for all  
Motels and cottages to rent

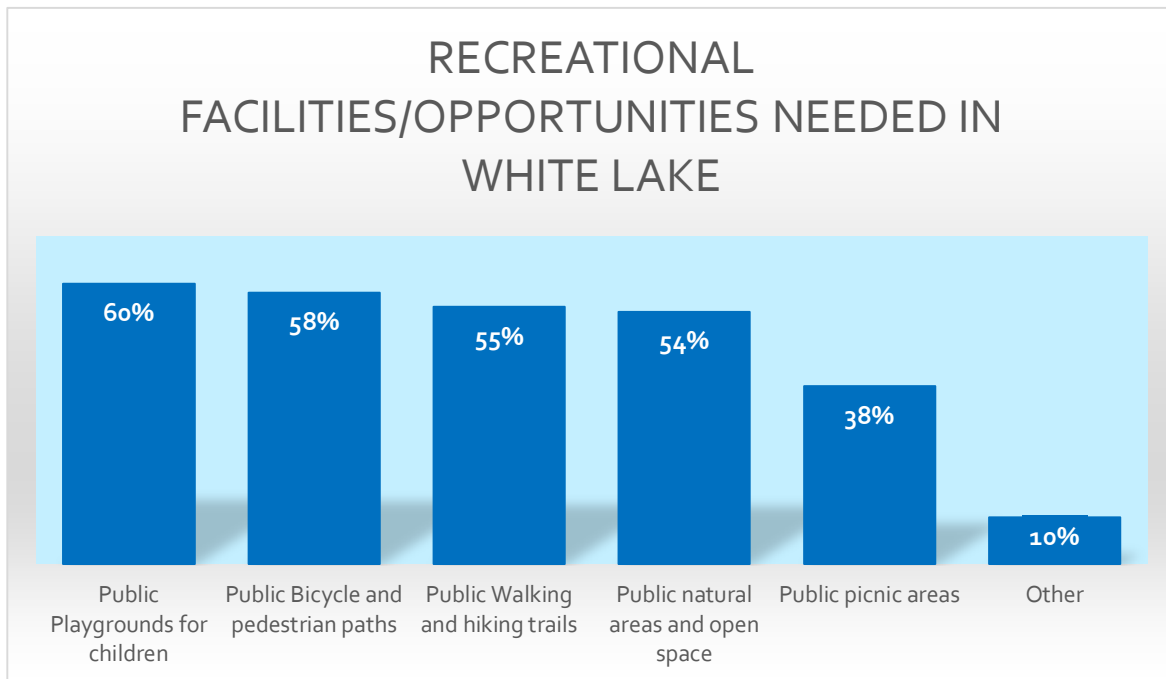
Nothing until lake is clean, clear and healthy



Photo: Jamie Corbett, WLLFacebook

Question 9:

*What type of recreational facilities/opportunities are needed in White Lake in the future?  
Choose your top three.*



Over half of the survey respondents identified public playgrounds for children, public bicycle and pedestrian paths, public walking and hiking trails as well as public natural

areas and open spaces as their recreation needs. Clearly the key to this set of needs should be the word “public”.

Public Bicycle and pedestrian paths	58%
Public Walking and hiking trails	55%
Public natural areas and open space	54%
Public picnic areas	38%
Other	10%

### COMMENTS

Amusement rides 8

Affordable public lake access with better hours -8

Family oriented recreation -6

Not right to pay State tax and then be expected to pay for lake access

Trampoline Park

Go Kart Tracks

Water slide in the lake

NEV (neighborhood electronic vehicles) accessibility in town of White Lake/parking -4

More activities like carnival, fairs, kids, crafts,

A local gym

Summer camps

Ball fields, skating, bowling, large event facility

Bands,

Food trucks

Shopping

Restaurants

Grocery stores

Entertainment/bands

Tennis courts

Go cart tracks

- Finish trail
- Recreation for toddlers
- Putt putt area
- Ice cream shop
- Bingo 2
- Outdoor theatre
- Clean water 2
- Jet ski rentals, boat rentals
- Basketball/volleyball areas

Question 10

*How do you get information about Town government and public events? Check all that apply.*

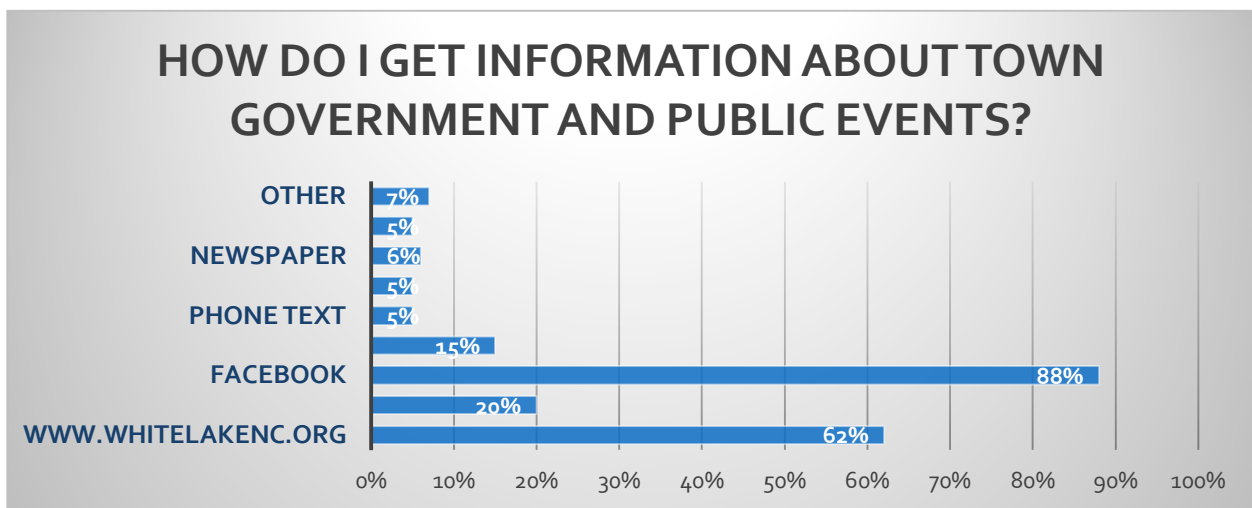


Photo: Jonathan Keith Langston, White Lake Holiday Resort



## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

---

This comprehensive plan, as well as all plans that have been adopted by the Town, must be considered prior to making any decision concerning future development and land use. All zoning amendments must be submitted to the Planning Board for review and comments. The Planning Board must submit written comments on plan consistency to the governing board. The Town Board must then approve written statements documenting their consideration of the plans when making decisions on proposed zoning amendments.

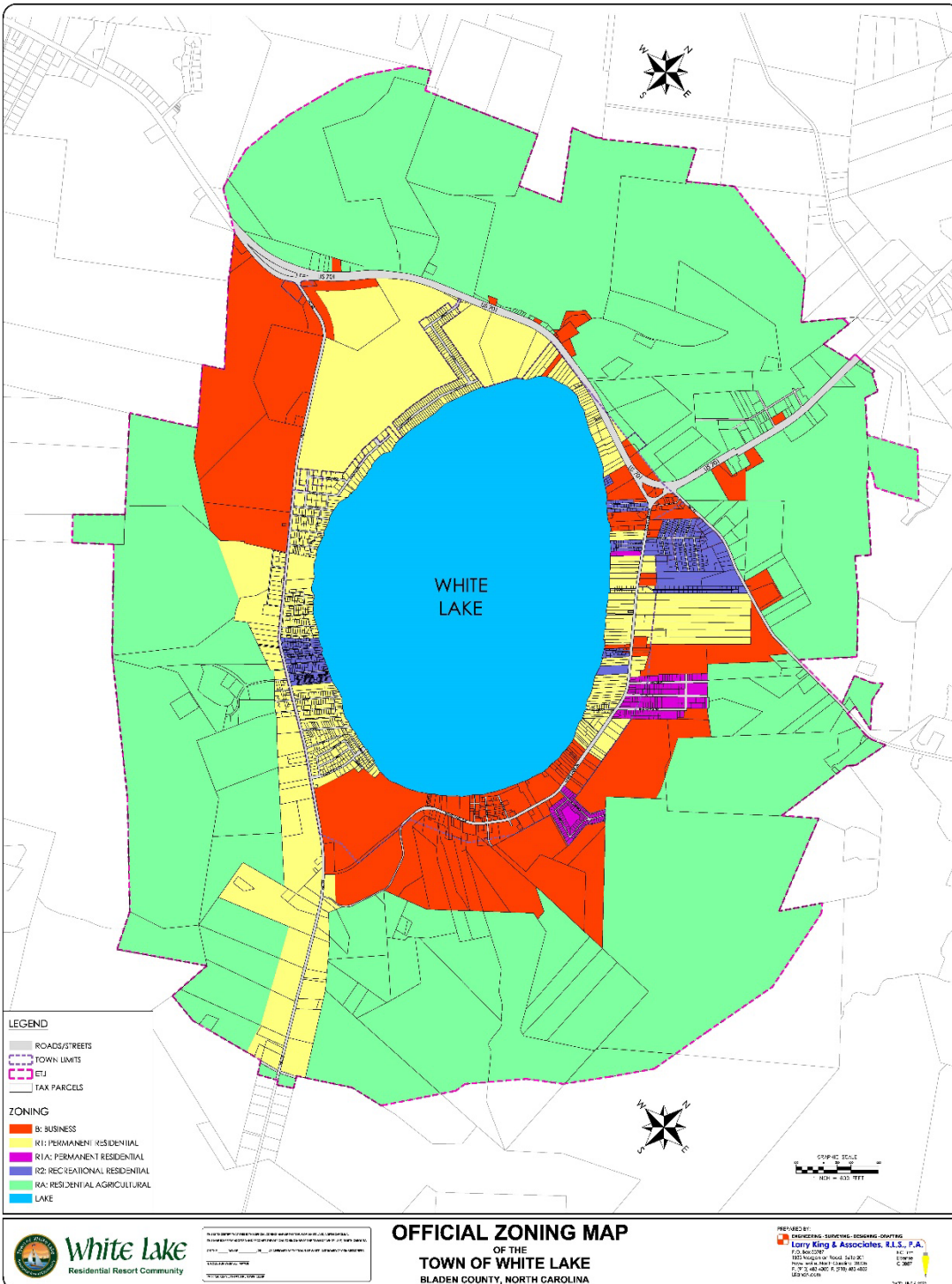
The following plans have been identified as adopted by the Town of White Lake:

### Land Use/Zoning Ordinance

Having been recently revised and adopted, the ordinance establishes five districts with four residential districts and one business district. The description for each district is included in the zoning ordinance and appears below.

- The R-A Residential Agricultural Zone is primarily intended to accommodate low density residential uses as well as agricultural uses. It is anticipated that the RA district will include the more rural areas of the town's ETJ. Such areas are expected to accommodate some of the town's future growth and development while at the same time allowing continued agricultural use until such time as more intensive urban development is appropriate. Limited institutional and recreational uses that complement low density residential and agricultural areas are also allowed in RA zone. (1)
- The R-1 Permanent Residential Zone is primarily intended to accommodate permanent detached single-family homes which are predominantly occupied by year-round residents. The R-1 district is intended to have the amenities of a well-designed residential area, including low population density and a complete separation from incompatible business and transient uses. Limited institutional and recreational uses that complement low density residential areas are also allowed in R-1 zones (1)
- The R-1A Permanent Residential Zone is primarily intended to accommodate permanent detached single-family and manufactured homes on individual lots which are predominantly occupied by year round residents. The R-1A district is intended to have the amenities of a well-designed residential area including low population density and a complete separation from incompatible business and transient uses. Limited institutional and recreational uses that complement low density residential areas are also allowed in R-1A zones. (1)
- The R-2 Recreational Residential Zone is primarily intended to accommodate permanent and seasonal homes including detached single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, manufactured homes on individual lots, manufactured home parks, multi-family dwellings, condominiums, townhouse dwellings, and tourist cottages. The R-2 district is intended to have the amenities of a well-designed residential area, including a wide variety of residential building types at a medium density and an adequate separation from business uses. A wide range of institutional and recreational uses that complement medium density residential areas are also allowed in R-2 zones. (1)

- The B Business Zone is primarily intended to accommodate moderate intensity retail, office, service, and recreational uses. Institutional and other nonresidential uses that complement business areas are also allowed in B zones. Limited medium density residential uses which are compatible with business uses are also permitted in B zones. (1)

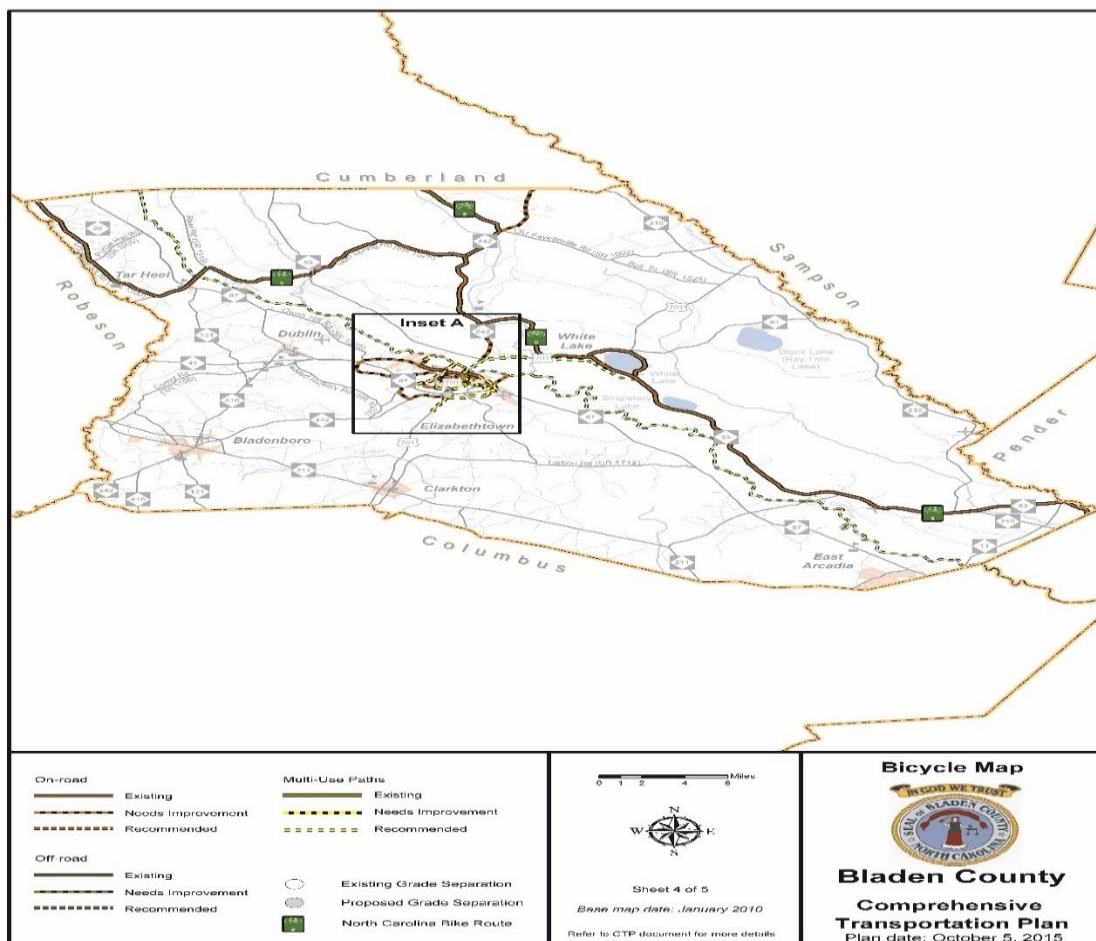


### White Lake Strategic Lake Management Plan

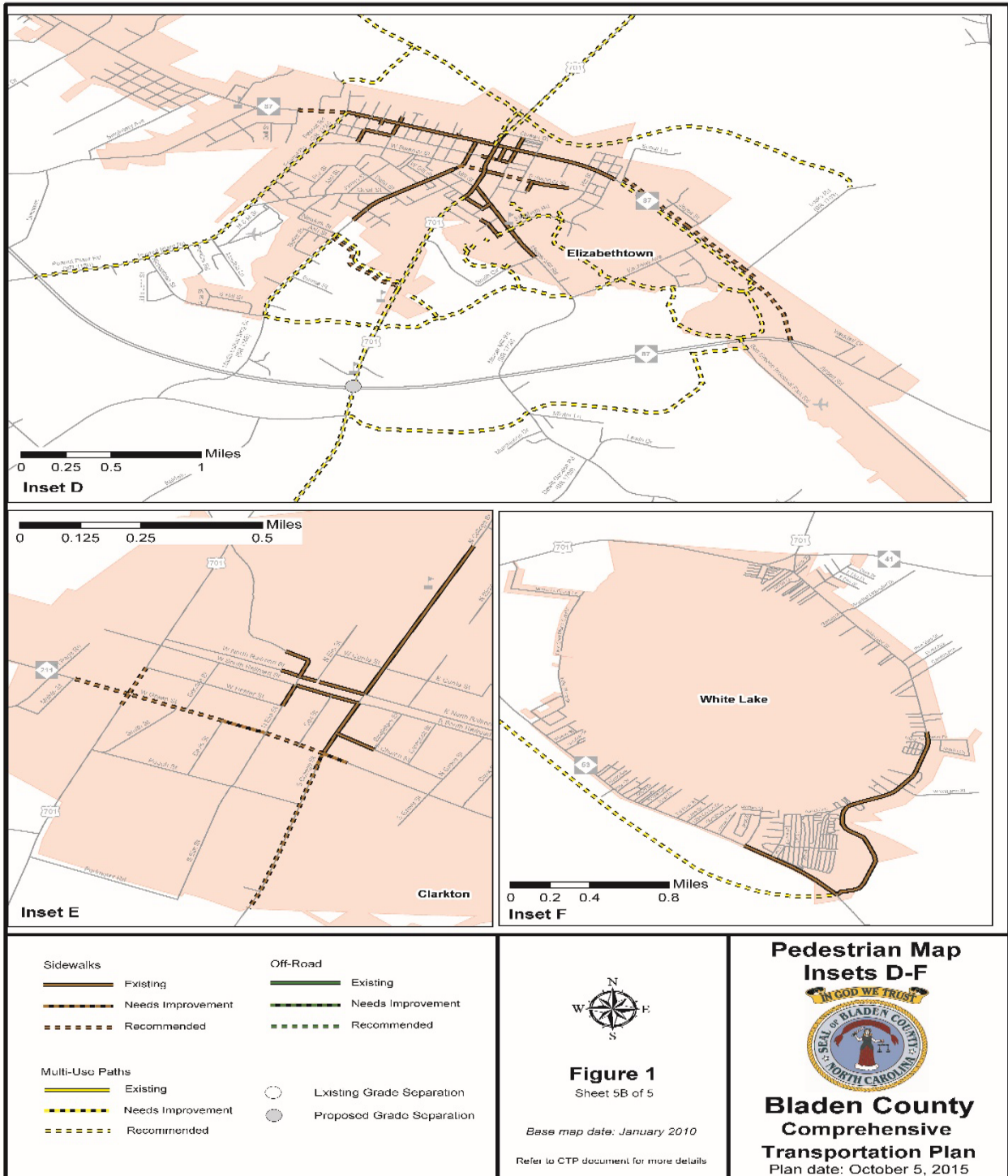
This Strategic Management Plan has been adopted by the Town of White Lake. The action steps included in the management plan have been included in the recommendations and action steps of this Comprehensive Plan. The Management Plan is included in its entirety as a part of the Comprehensive Plan and is included as Appendix “A”.

### Bladen County Comprehensive Transportation Plan

White Lake, along with the Towns of Tar Heel, Clarkton, Dublin Bladenboro, Elizabethtown, White Lake and East Arcadia, is included in the Bladen County Comprehensive Transportation Plan. This is a long range plan that identifies major transportation needs as well as solutions to those needs for the next 25 to 30 years. The plan was adopted by Bladen County and the North Carolina Department of Transportation in April of 2016. The plan includes roads, bikes and pedestrian modes of transportation.



### Pedestrian Transportation Improvement Map



NCDOT Map



### **Bladen County Resilient Recovery Plan**

White Lake, as well as the other municipalities in Bladen County are included in the Bladen County Resilient Recovery Plan. This plan was developed after Hurricane Matthew devastated parts of Bladen County in October of 2018.

Several situations in and around the Lake are included in the Resilient Recovery Plan. The two public issues are the quality of the Lake water and the need for a stormwater plan. Both of these issues are included in this comprehensive plan. Also included in the resiliency plan is the need for generators at the medical facility in Town. This facility was closed for a week following Hurricane Matthew. This was a major health and safety concern since many prescriptions are handled directly through these offices. Loss of operation at these facilities drastically reduced the amount of medical service available to the local population.

### **Bladen County Hazard Mitigation Plan**

The jurisdictions participating in this plan are the Unincorporated Areas of Bladen County: Towns of Bladenboro, Clarkton, Dublin, East Arcadia, Elizabethtown, Tar Heel, White Lake; Columbus County: Towns of Boardman, Bolton, Brunswick, Cerro Gordo, Chadbourn, Fair Bluff, Lake Waccamaw, Sandyfield and cities of Tabor and Whiteville; Robeson County: the City of Lumberton; and the Towns of Fairmont, Lumber Bridge, Marietta, Maxton, McDonald, Orrum, Parkton, Pembroke, Proctorville, Raynham, Red Springs, Rennert, Rowland, and St. Pauls. These plan identifies and examines the potential hazards to White Lake with suggested resiliency steps.

### **Healthy Places Robeson, Bladen, and Columbus Counties**

Healthy Places is a program developed and supported by the Kate B. Reynolds Trust\*. Bladen became a member in 2019. The primary goals of the program for Bladen County are reduction in obesity, addressing adverse childhood experiences and substance misuse. The goal of obesity reduction relates to land use as it supports youth

engagement and active living programs through recreation and local farming for more availability of healthy eating options

### Bladen County Strategic Plan

While the County's Strategic Plan does not directly address the incorporated areas of the County, it is helpful to understand the direction of the County moving forward. The plan includes six focus areas:

- environment and agriculture
- healthy community
- quality education
- prosperous economy
- safe and prepared community
- community infrastructure, housing, and transit

The vision, mission and values established in the strategic plan are:

**Vision:**

Bladen County is a safe, welcoming community known for our outdoor amenities and growing, rural atmosphere. We promote a vibrant economy, healthy and active lifestyles, and nurture a love of lifelong learning for all our diverse residents.

**Mission:**

Bladen County is dedicated to providing customer focused county services efficiently and responsibly.

**Values:**

- Safety: Being proactive in our efforts to insure safe work environments.
- Integrity: Being honest, trustworthy, and forthright
- Respect: Valuing people and treating them in a professional manner.
- Communication: Providing useful information in an effort to encourage and foster community involvement.
- Punctuality and Timeliness: Being prompt in daily activities and service to customers.
- 
- Reliability: Consistently providing high quality services.
- Accountability: Being responsible stewards of public resources.

### "UPLIFT" Program

Bladen, Columbus, Robeson and Sampson counties are partners in the newly created "UPLIFT" program. This program is supported by the American Rescue Plan Act and

represents one project of several designed to address the impact from COVID-19 on the hospitality, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries. The program has several partners including the N.C. Department of Commerce’s Rural Economic Development Division, the N.C. Pandemic Recovery Office, the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, and the N.C. Restaurant and Lodging Association.

According to “UPLIFT” materials, the goal of the program is to “boost tourism in rural North Carolina communities. UPLIFT works regionally - across county borders - to support local tourism leaders and practitioners in realizing their vision for tourism in their community, including natural, recreational, cultural, agricultural, culinary, built and other tourism.” More details concerning UPLIFT may be found in Appendix “D “

Understanding that the size of White Lake’s economy makes it dependent on surrounding areas to provide for needs of residents and visitors and that borders do not exist in an economy, UPLIFT may offer valuable opportunities to further promote the Town as a designation.



Photo: Jamie Corbett, White Lake Life Facebook



## COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

---

### History

The Town of White Lake, a residential resort community, was incorporated in 1951. Its history, however, goes back much further. Originally known as Granston Lake (Collet Map 1770), it later became known as Bartram Lake. Bartram was a property owner around the lake who operated a grist mill. The name White Lake appeared on a map titled the Shaffer Township Map.

Prior to 1900, the area around White Lake was predominantly used for agriculture and logging. The soils on that side of Bladen County are sandy which lend themselves to growing pine trees and blueberries among other flora native to the area.

White Lake is one of five lakes in the Bladen Lakes region which also include Bay Tree, Singletary, Jones and Salter. Due to its unique geologic construction, and lack of an inlet for surface water intrusion, White Lake's waters are generally clear. Due to surface water inflow from adjacent wetlands the other lakes experience dark waters. This unique clarity and shallow depth enhanced White Lake's attraction as a place to visit and enjoy recreation. With its white sandy shores and its clear waters, White Lake became known as the "Nation's Safest Beach".

In 1901, the first commercial operation was opened. By 1912, a sightseeing boat named the "Lady of the Lakes" was put into service, and by 1918, private cottages had begun to appear along the shoreline. By late 1920 and the early 1930s, amusement parks were opened.

The Town of White Lake was first chartered by the NC General Assembly in 1923, but the charter was repealed in 1925. In 1951, the Town of White Lake received its second municipal charter from the NC General Assembly. Residential and commercial development continued, and in 1964, a municipal water supply and wastewater collection and treatment system was constructed.

The Town has approximately 1,000 year-round residents, with a seasonal population slightly less than 6,000, and an estimated 200,000 visitors from April through the end of August.

### Location and Geography of the Area

While located in a very rural area within a rural county, White Lake is a convenient location for those that wish to be near big name entertainment such as the Broadway Shows that frequent the Raleigh Civic Center, the headliners at the Durham Performing Arts Center or the expanding Wilson Center in downtown Wilmington. It is a convenient 45-minute drive to Fayetteville, a military city of approximately 210,000 people. Fayetteville offers

many entertainment and shopping options, including the Fayetteville Little Theatre, the annual Dogwood Festival as well as the Dickens Christmas Festival held in the historical Haymount area. With an hour's drive, one can be in Wilmington, a coastal area that includes Wrightsville Beach and Carolina Beach as well as a beautifully developed river walk with popular shopping and dining options.

Two of the largest employers in the area, Smithfield Foods and Chemours Chemical are also located within a quick commute of White Lake.

The following chart offers mileage totals for such designations:

Designation	Mileage
Interstate 95	36
Interstate 40	37
Wilmington	55
Fayetteville	43
Raleigh	93
Myrtle Beach	87
Clinton	28
Tar Heel	23
Chemour Chemical	31
Durham	119

## Environmental Conditions

---

### Climate

Bladen County, North Carolina gets 49 inches of rain, on average, per year. The US average is 38 inches of rain per year. Bladen County averages 1 inches of snow per year. The US average is 28 inches of snow per year. On average, there are 215 sunny days per year in Bladen County. The US average is 205 sunny days. Bladen County gets some kind of precipitation, on average, 108 days per year. Precipitation is rain, snow, sleet, or hail that falls to the ground. In order for precipitation to be counted you have to get at least .01 inches on the ground to measure.

The 12-month average temperature increased 1.8°F from December 1900 to November 2022. From December 1900 to November 2022, the 12-month average temperature was 61.9°F.(NCEI,2022)

## WEATHER HIGHLIGHTS

Summer High: the July high is around 90 degrees

Winter Low: the January low is 32

Rain: averages 49 inches of rain a year

Snow: averages 1 inches of snow a year

Source: BestPlaces.net,2022

## Endangered Species

The following is a list of species considered “E” or endangered in Bladen County. A complete list including habitat and scientific name may be found at [Species/Community Search | NHP \(ncnhp.org\)](#)

Freshwater Fish	Twisted Leaf Goldenrod
Freshwater Fish	Atlantic Sturgeon
Freshwater Bivalve	Barrel Floater
Freshwater Bivalve	Yellow Lampmussel
Vascular Plant	Savanna Indian-plantain
Vascular Plant	Carolina Spleenwort
Vascular Plant	Purple Honeycomb-head
Vascular Plant	Peelbark St. John's-wort
Vascular Plant	Pondberry
Vascular Plant	Boykin's Lobelia
Vascular Plant	Globe-fruit Seedbox
Vascular Plant	Lady Lupine
Vascular Plant	Rough-leaf Loosestrife
Vascular Plant	Carolina Bogmint
Vascular Plant	Leafless Water-milfoil
Vascular Plant	Running Oak
Vascular Plant	Spiked Medusa
Vascular Plant	Hairy Smartweed
Vascular Plant	Chapman's Arrowhead
Vascular Plant	Grassleaf Arrowhead
Vascular Plant	Chaffseed
Vascular Plant	Snowy Orchid
Vascular Plant	Dwarf Live Oak
Vascular Plant	Solidago tortifolia
Vascular Plant	Giant Spiral Orchid

Amphibian	Ornate Chorus Frog
Amphibian	Carolina Gopher Frog
Reptile	Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake
Reptile	Eastern Coralsnake
Reptile	Mimic Glass Lizard
Bird	Red-cockaded Woodpecker
Bird	Red-cockaded Woodpecker
Bird	Wayne's Black-throated Green Warbler

### Possible Hazards

The Bladen County Hazard Mitigation Plan is a combined plan for Bladen, Columbus and Robeson Counties. The following is a list of all major disaster declarations that have occurred in the County since 1953:

- DR-724 09/11/1984 Hurricane Diana
  - DR-1127 07/18/1996 Hurricane Bertha
  - DR-1134 09/06/1996 Hurricane Fran
  - DR-1240 08/27/1998 Hurricane Bonnie
  - DR-1292 09/16/1999 Hurricane Floyd & Irene
  - DR-1490 09/18/2003 Hurricane Isabel
  - DR-1546 09/10/2004 Tropical Storm Frances
  - DR-1969 04/19/2011 Severe Storms, Tornadoes and Flooding
  - DR-4019 08/31/2011 Hurricane Irene
  - DR-4285 10/10/2016 Hurricane Matthew
  - DR-4393 09/04/2018 Hurricane Florence
- Source: Bladen, Columbus and Robeson Counties Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2020

Dam and levee failure, drought, earthquake, hurricane/tropical storm, inland flooding (100-/500 year), severe weather (thunderstorm wind, lightning & hail) and tornado are hazards identified in the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. (BC&R HMP,2020).

### Soils

The following soil description and accompany soil map is an excerpt of the lake monitoring efforts by the Town of White Lake and is available in totality at [White Lake Watch](#).

### *Soil Types Around White Lake*

The first soil survey of Bladen County was published more than a century ago; this survey was updated upon completion of fieldwork in 1983 and was published by the USDA Soil Conservation Service. It identifies the major soil series that surrounds much of the lake as the Centenary-Lakeland-Wakulla series. Permeability ranges from moderate to very rapid depending on soil type (all are sandy soils), while available water capacity is low. For Lakeland and Wakulla soils (found on ridges, terraces and the rims of Carolina Bays) the seasonal high-water table is over 6 feet in depth, while Centenary soils (found on broad flats) have a seasonal high-water table at a depth of 3.5 to 5 feet from winter to early spring (USDA NRCS 1985).

The minor soil series include the Lynn Haven-Pamlico-Leon series; these soils are found on the broad flats and within Carolina Bays and are poorly drained to very poorly drained. Permeability ranges from moderate to rapid, while available water capacity is low. The seasonal high-water table is at or near the surface for long periods from winter to early spring (or in the case of the sandy and organic Pamlico soils, for most of the year). A second minor soil series is the Roanoke-Wahee; Roanoke soils tend to be poorly drained with a seasonal (winter to spring) high water table depth of 0 to 1 foot, while the Wahee soils are somewhat poorly drained with a seasonal water table depth of 0.5 to 1.5 feet (USDA NRCS 1985). The updated soils map (Fig.9) shows a finer scale in comparison to Fig. 3)

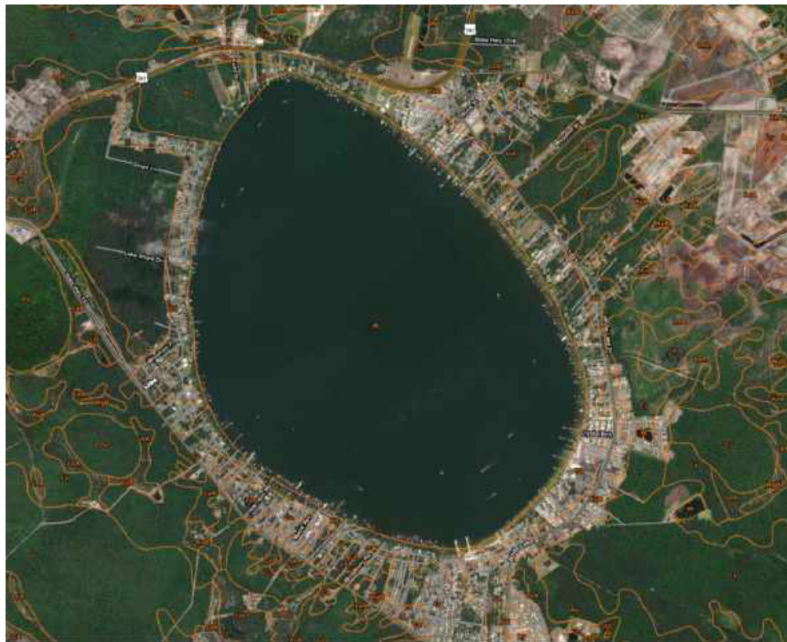


Figure 9. Soils map overlay for the region around White Lake, from the Bladen County 1983 Soil Survey, USDA Soil Conservation Service.

### *White Lake Hydrology and Water Budget*

### Topography

White Lake is located in North Carolina's Coastal Plain region. It is located at a longitude of -78,483895 and latitude of 34.6404489 with an elevation of 21m/69 feet.

The area is mostly flat and sandy with very little sloping.

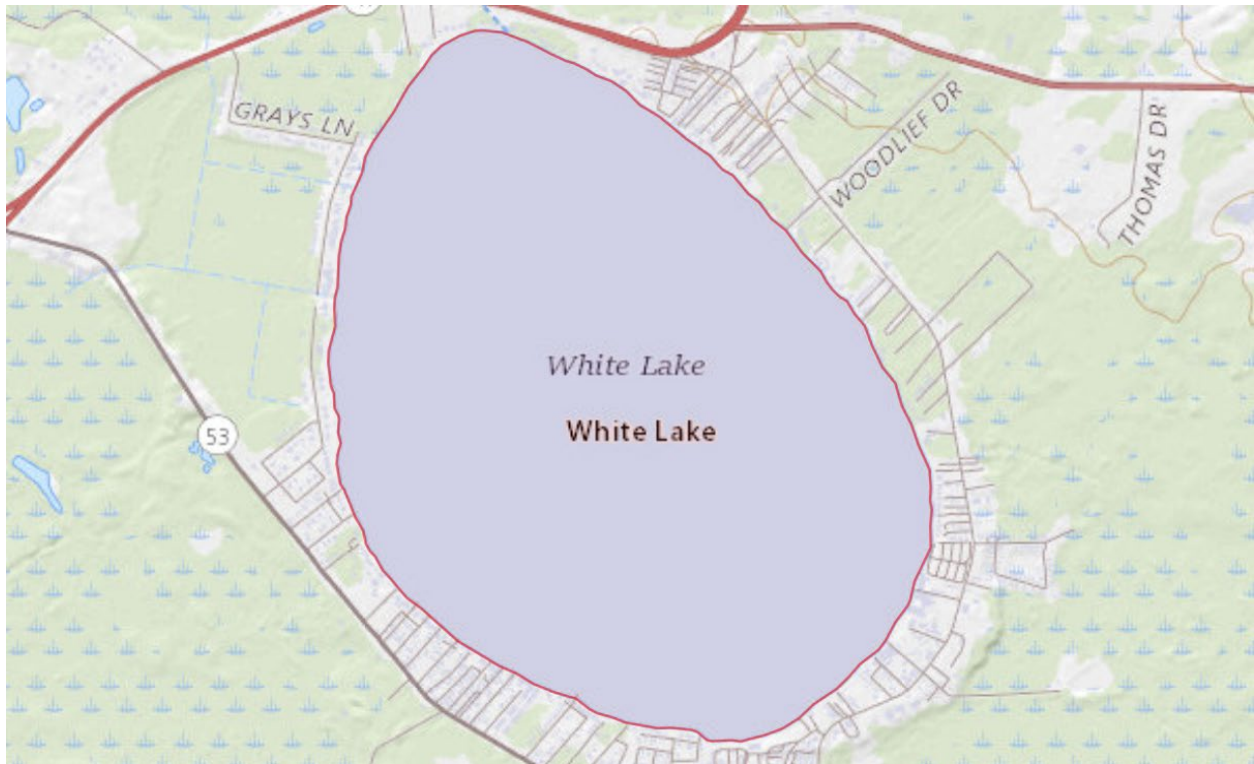
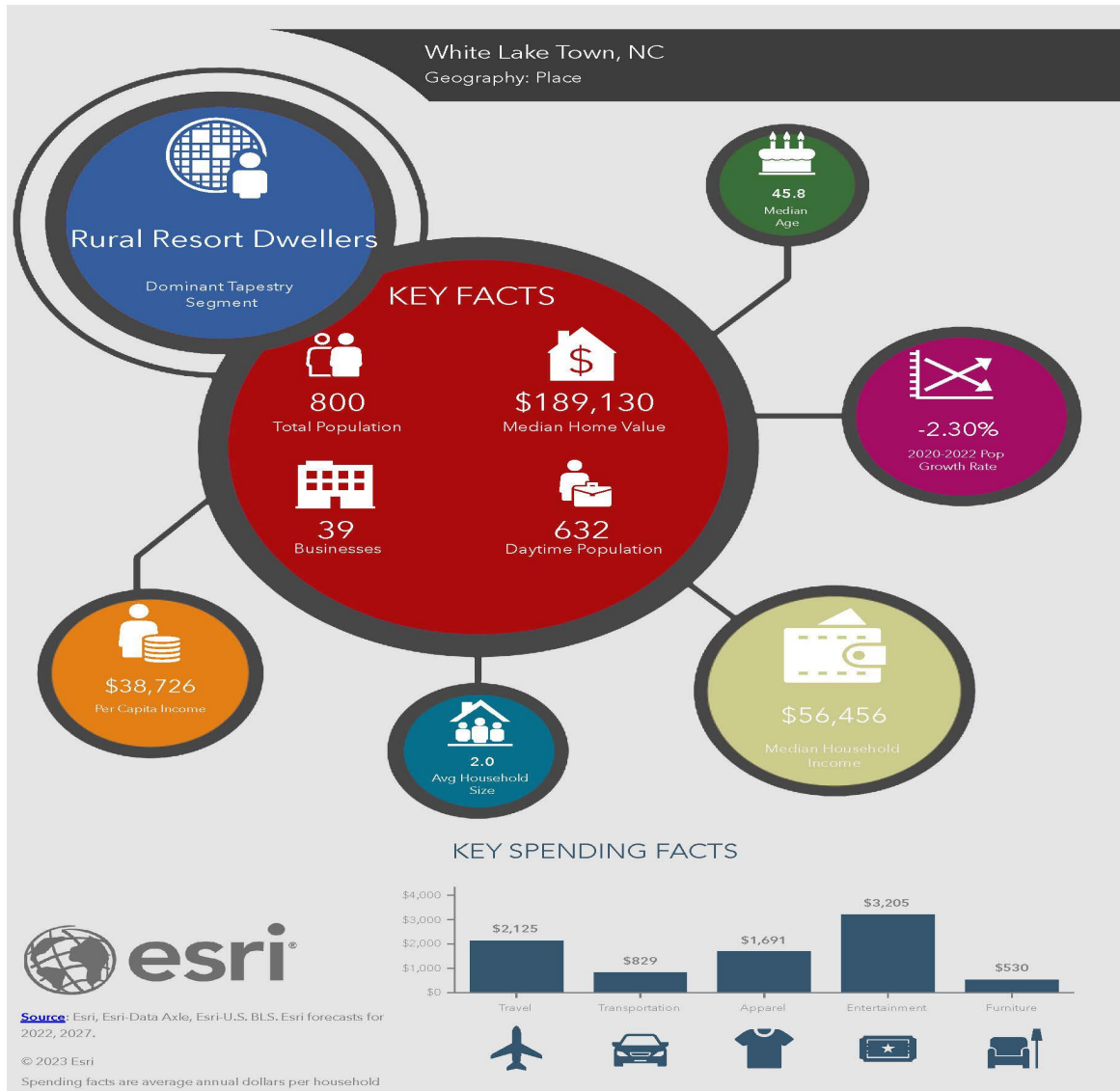


Photo: AnyplaceAmerica.com



## Current Conditions

The following infographic gives a quick look at White Lake and its population.



This infographic includes a tapestry designation. This is a new tool that describes segmentation of areas by their market behavior. Esri Tapestry Segmentation classifies US neighborhoods into 14 unique LifeMode groups. These groups are then further classified as 67 different consumer-segments with commonly shared traits. This give us added insight on the habits and the demographics of consumers. (Schroeder, 2021)

White Lake residents are classified as “rural resort dwellers”. An in-depth look at this tapestry and its identifiers may be found in Appendix “C”.

### Broadband

According to the Broadbandnow website, almost 80% of Bladen County has access to at least 25 mega bites per second(mbps) of broadband speed. Simply put, this speed measures how quickly data and information can be downloaded and uploaded on your electronic devices. According to information from Consumer Reports, most home with average internet usage would need between 45 mbps-100 mbps.

### Building Permit Activities

The Bladen County Building Inspections Department completes housing inspections and issues permits for the Town of White Lake. According to their records, 6 nonresidential permits have been issued since May of 2017. Work has been completed on 5 of these permits with the other having expired without completion. In the residential sector, 4 single family houses, attached, were permitted with 2 completed and 2 expired; 7-2 family buildings permitted but not completed as of this time; 2 off frame modular permitted and completed; and 4 single family homes yet to be completed and 1 duplex completed.

### Education

Bladen County provides public education under the direction of the Bladen County Board of Education. The system is comprised of 6 primary schools, 4 middle schools and two high schools. The system also operates an Early College Program housed at Bladen Community College. There are also several charter and private schools within convenient distances of the Lake.

Bladen Community College (BCC) is located within 20 miles of the Town. The college currently offers 36 degree programs, 16 diploma programs and 58 certificates.

White Lake is also convenient to three University of North Carolina campuses including Pembroke and Wilmington and Fayetteville State University. Methodist University, a private university is located in nearby Fayetteville and offers over 80 different degree programs.

### Emergency Services:

The Town and community are served by the White Lake Volunteer Fire Department (WLVFD), with one fire station and approximately 41 volunteers. The WLVFD holds a fire rating of "4" out of a possible 10 with 1 being the highest. The WLVFD also has interlocal agreements with 16 other local fire departments, including volunteers and paid staff. In case of storms or other emergency situations, the community is served by the emergency services shelter located at Bladen Lakes Primary School 9554 Johnstontown Road Elizabethtown, NC 28337. The community is also served by the White Lake Water Rescue Unit, a well-trained volunteer unit that serves the surrounding areas in situations requiring water rescue expertise.



Bladen County provides emergency medical services through its paid staff supervised by the Bladen County Emergency Medical Services department.

The White Lake Police Department serves and protects the community through a municipal funded department. This department is immediately backed up by the services of the Bladen County Sheriff's Department. For major emergency situations, the department is also assisted by the North Carolina State Patrol.

Visitors and residents that wish to stay in the immediate area can enjoy the beauty of Jones Lake and Singletary Lakes, both beautiful serene state parks offering swimming and boating activities

### **Economy and Market Information**

According to the following Esri profile, there are 39 businesses within the Town of White Lake, generating 253 employment opportunities. The majority of jobs in Town are in the service sector (40%) followed by the retail sector and the finance sector (including insurance and real estate).

Elizabethtown, located approximately 8 miles from White Lake, should be considered when examining the economy of the Lake area. Elizabethtown is the county seat and the site of most county offices and operations as well as the location of the county court system. The Town has a total of almost 600 businesses with approximately 5,000 employees. The largest percentage of these businesses represent retail trade, including grocery stores and clothing establishments. Several of these businesses are well known throughout the area and attract repeat customers from outside the County.

The location of White Lake lends itself to benefit from attractions in surrounding areas, even other counties. This asset should be capitalized when marketing the Town.



Business Summary

White Lake Town, NC  
White Lake Town, NC (3773300)  
Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri

Data for all businesses in area		White Lake to...			
Total Businesses:		39			
Total Employees:		253			
Total Residential Population:		800			
Employee/Residential Population Ratio (per 100 Residents)		32			
by SIC Codes		Businesses		Employees	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture & Mining		1	2.6%	1	0.4%
Construction		1	2.6%	5	2.0%
Manufacturing		0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Transportation		1	2.6%	2	0.8%
Communication		0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Utility		0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Wholesale Trade		0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Retail Trade Summary</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>16.6%</b>
Home Improvement		0	0.0%	0	0.0%
General Merchandise Stores		0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Food Stores		3	7.7%	15	5.9%
Auto Dealers, Gas Stations, Auto Aftermarket		1	2.6%	2	0.8%
Apparel & Accessory Stores		0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Furniture & Home Furnishings		0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Eating & Drinking Places		2	5.1%	23	9.1%
Miscellaneous Retail		1	2.6%	2	0.8%
<b>Finance, Insurance, Real Estate Summary</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
Banks, Savings & Lending Institutions		1	2.6%	5	2.0%
Securities Brokers		0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Insurance Carriers & Agents		1	2.6%	2	0.8%
Real Estate, Holding, Other Investment Offices		2	5.1%	4	1.6%
<b>Services Summary</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>41.0%</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>67.2%</b>
Hotels & Lodging		12	30.8%	158	62.5%
Automotive Services		0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Motion Pictures & Amusements		1	2.6%	0	0.0%
Health Services		1	2.6%	7	2.8%
Legal Services		0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Education Institutions & Libraries		0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Other Services		2	5.1%	5	2.0%
<b>Government</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8.7%</b>
<b>Unclassified Establishments</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Totals</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Copyright 2022 Data Axle, Inc. All rights reserved. Esri Total Residential Population forecasts for 2022.

Date Note: Data on the Business Summary report is calculated using Esri's Data allocation method which uses census block groups to allocate business summary data to custom areas.

December 09, 2022



Business Summary

White Lake Town, NC  
White Lake Town, NC (3773300)  
Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri

by NAICS Codes	Businesses		Employees	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Mining	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Utilities	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Construction	1	2.6%	5	2.0%
Manufacturing	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Wholesale Trade	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Retail Trade	5	12.8%	19	7.5%
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	1	2.6%	2	0.8%
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Electronics & Appliance Stores	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Bldg Material & Garden Equipment & Supplies Dealers	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Food & Beverage Stores	3	7.7%	15	5.9%
Health & Personal Care Stores	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Gasoline Stations	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Sport Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
General Merchandise Stores	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	1	2.6%	2	0.8%
Nonstore Retailers	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Information	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Finance & Insurance	2	5.1%	7	2.8%
Central Bank/Credit Intermediation & Related Activities	1	2.6%	5	2.0%
Securities, Commodity Contracts & Other Financial	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Insurance Carriers & Related Activities; Funds, Trusts &	1	2.6%	2	0.8%
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	4	10.3%	6	2.4%
Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Legal Services	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation	1	2.6%	2	0.8%
Educational Services	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1	2.6%	7	2.8%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Accommodation & Food Services	14	35.9%	181	71.5%
Accommodation	12	30.8%	158	62.5%
Food Services & Drinking Places	2	5.1%	23	9.1%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	2	5.1%	4	1.6%
Automotive Repair & Maintenance	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Public Administration	4	10.3%	22	8.7%
Unclassified Establishments	5	12.8%	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Copyright 2022 Data Axle, Inc. All rights reserved. Esri Total Residential Population forecasts for 2022.

Date Note: Data on the Business Summary report is calculated using Esri's Data allocation method which uses census block groups to allocate business summary data to custom areas.

December 09, 2022

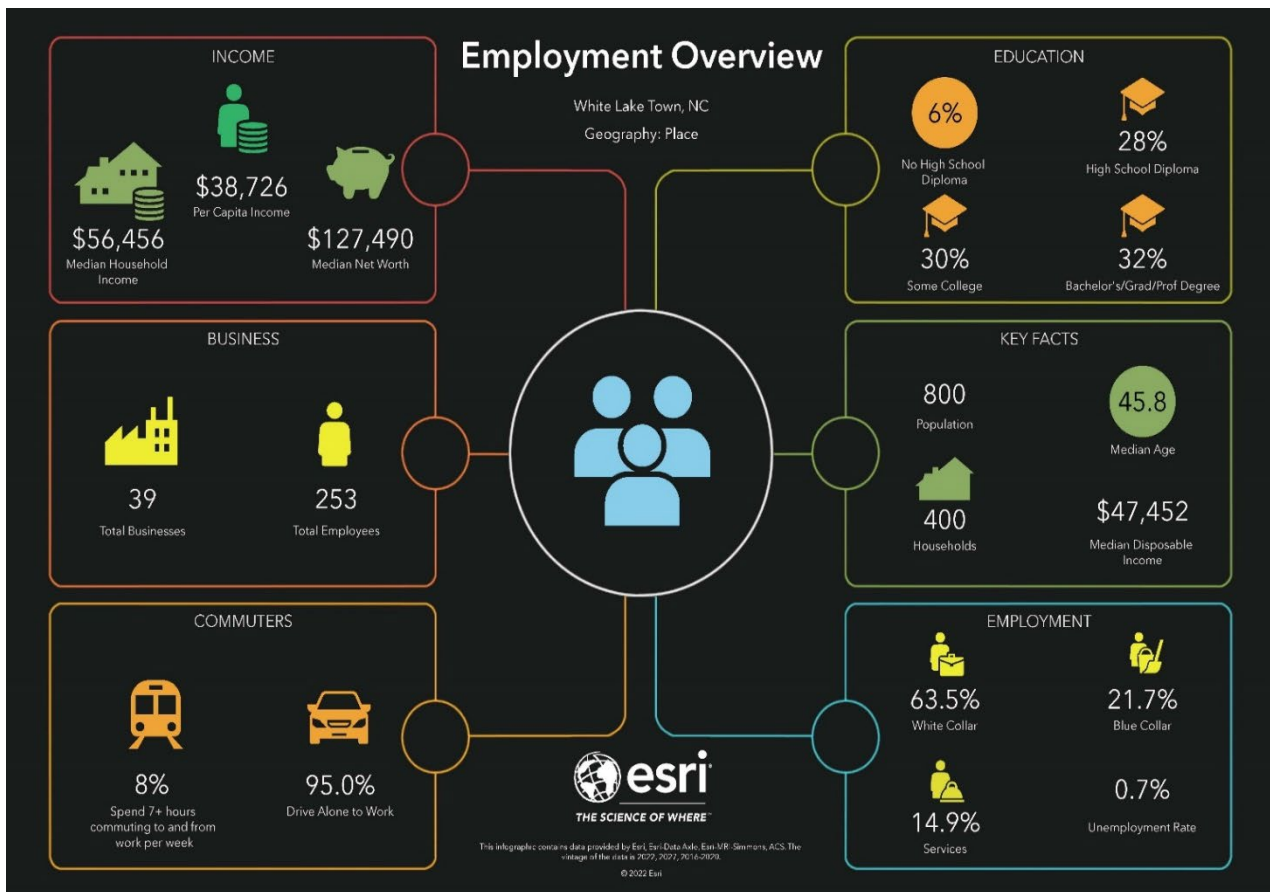
A detailed market summary of the Town may be found in Appendix "B".

## Economic Development

Currently, data shows a total of 39 businesses within the Town with a total employment of 253. The majority of the businesses as well as employees are found within the service classification, in the local hotels and campgrounds. Due to the lack of employment opportunities within the Town, many residents commute for work. The Town does not employ an economic developer and relies on the services of the Bladen County Economic Development Department and its partner non-profit “Bladen is Bloomin’” to bring potential economic developers to the area. The County and its nonprofit own and operate industrial parks within the County and convenient to White Lake.

## Employment

Below is a quick look at the employment profile for the Town. The low unemployment rate, below 1 %, relates to the high number of retirees within the Town.



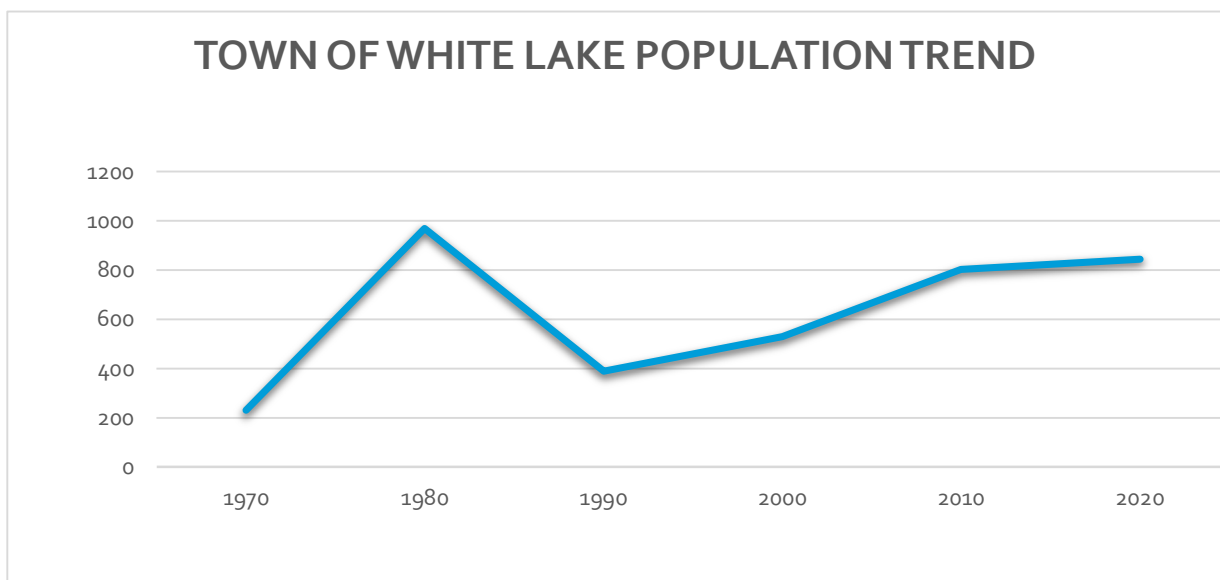
## Population

White Lake enjoys an estimated 200,000 visitors from April through the end of August each year and a seasonal population slightly less than 6,000. During the remaining months of the year, the permanent population of less than 850 persons enjoys the peaceful beauty of the quiet lake.

This permanent population of the lake self-identifies as 89% white, 4% Black or African American, 3.5% two or more races and 2.3% some other race and 1.4% American Indian/Alaskan Native. Approximately 4% of the population identifies as Hispanic.

The Town's population doubled between 1990 and 2010 and has remained steady with growth in the 2020 Decennial Census. White Lake was one of only two towns in Bladen County experiencing growth over the past decade with the County losing approximately 15% of its total population. This loss is thought to be a result of damages sustained in several areas of the County during Hurricanes Matthew and Florence in 2016 2018 respectively.

In examining population estimates of the latest American Community Survey, the population climbs to 978, a growth of over 15%. This is encouraging but planners should notice that the population is aging and there is little indication that younger populations are moving into the area. Other estimates from private data providers indicate a decline in the population.



Source: Decennial Census, US Census Bureau  
Source: Decennial Census 2020

The following table illustrates the differences of the Town’s permanent population compared to those of Bladen County and the State of North Carolina:

	<b>Bladen County</b>	<b>White Lake Town</b>	<b>North Carolina</b>
Median Age	44.8	60.2	39.4
Under 5 years of age	5.20%	1.90%	5.50%
65 and over years of age	22%	35.00%	17%
English Language spoken at home	92%	98.00%	87.60%
Poverty among all people	24.30%	20.00%	13.40%
Employment Rate	46%	38%	57.40%
Median Household Income	37,188	51,827	\$61,972
Education-Bachelor’s Degree	18.20%	29.30%	34.90%
Without Health Care Coverage	11.50%	3.70%	10.40%

*Source: American Community Survey*

The median age of the population is 60.2 years, well above the state median age of 39.4. This should be noted in future development of White Lake. This draws us back to the two White Lakes, one that attracts tourists and one that attracts full time residents. Attention should be given to the fact that almost 40% of the current population is 65 years of age or older. This populace may require/desire services that are of less importance to a younger tourist populace.

### Health Care

White Lake is located approximately eight miles from the Town of Elizabethtown, the county seat for Bladen. Cape Fear Valley Medical, headquartered in nearby Fayetteville, NC, owns and operates the Bladen Healthcare Hospital, located in Elizabethtown. The hospital is a modern, up-to-date 25-bed facility with a 24-hour emergency department, staffed on a full-time basis with specially trained physicians and nurses, a 23-bed Medical-Surgical Unit, and an Intensive Care Unit. Bladen Healthcare also operates an outpatient/family practice clinic within the Town of White Lake.

The nearest Trauma Level I hospital is located less than 100 miles at Wake Med in Raleigh, NC. New Hanover Memorial Hospital, a Level 2 Trauma Hospital, is approximately 50 miles from White Lake.

Many of the country’s top health care providers are also available with a short drive to Durham, Raleigh and Wilmington.

## Housing

According to the 2020 Census, there are 1,146 housing units within the Town and 437 households, indicating the high number of housing units reserved for rental and vacation homes.

Following is a housing profile provided by Esri's Community Analysis program. Esri is a private provider and is considered a market leader in the areas of Geographic Information System software, location intelligence and mapping. The report contains the latest detail Census information as well as American Community Survey data and Esri's projections for 2027.



## Housing Profile

White Lake Town, NC  
White Lake Town, NC (3773300)  
Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri

Population		Households	
2010 Total Population	887	2022 Median Household Income	\$56,456
2020 Total Population	843	2027 Median Household Income	\$64,310
2022 Total Population	800	2022-2027 Annual Rate	2.64%
2027 Total Population	768		
2022-2027 Annual Rate	-0.81%		

Housing Units by Occupancy Status and Tenure	Census 2010		2022		2027	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Housing Units	1,416	100.0%	1,120	100.0%	1,084	100.0%
Occupied	383	27.0%	399	35.6%	386	35.6%
Owner	265	18.7%	301	26.9%	293	27.0%
Renter	118	8.3%	98	8.8%	93	8.6%
Vacant	1,033	73.0%	720	64.3%	698	64.4%

Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value	2022		2027	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	300	100.0%	293	100.0%
<\$50,000	57	19.0%	47	16.0%
\$50,000-\$99,999	31	10.3%	26	8.9%
\$100,000-\$149,999	44	14.7%	37	12.6%
\$150,000-\$199,999	23	7.7%	23	7.8%
\$200,000-\$249,999	42	14.0%	45	15.4%
\$250,000-\$299,999	27	9.0%	30	10.2%
\$300,000-\$399,999	29	9.7%	33	11.3%
\$400,000-\$499,999	7	2.3%	8	2.7%
\$500,000-\$749,999	34	11.3%	39	13.3%
\$750,000-\$999,999	5	1.7%	5	1.7%
\$1,000,000-\$1,499,999	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
\$1,500,000-\$1,999,999	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
\$2,000,000+	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Median Value		\$189,130		\$215,000
Average Value		\$234,417		\$252,730

Census 2010 Housing Units	Number	Percent
Total	1,416	100.0%
In Urbanized Areas	0	0.0%
In Urban Clusters	0	0.0%
Rural Housing Units	1,416	100.0%

**Data Note:** Persons of Hispanic Origin may be of any race.

**Source:** Esri forecasts for 2022 and 2027. U.S. Census Bureau 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.

December 09, 2022



**Natural Resources and Hazards**

## Recreation

The Lake itself offers a wealth of recreational opportunities including swimming, paddling, boating, water skiing and some fishing. While the Town does not have a funded recreation department, it is served by the Bladen County Parks and Recreation Department. The department provides activities such as softball, basketball, volleyball, football and soccer for youth and volleyball for adults. Equipment and facilities are also available for rent. These include gymnasium, baseball/softball fields, tennis courts, picnic shelters, soccer fields, football field and outdoor basketball courts.

For golfers, Vineyard Golf Course is located less than 3 miles from the Lake. The course offers an 18-hole course, a practice chipping green and a driving range. Shopping is available at the Pro Shop, stocked with all season hats and shirts as well as other golfing paraphernalia.



Photo: [Vineyardgolfatwhitelake.com](http://Vineyardgolfatwhitelake.com)

## Mountain to Sea Trail

The North Carolina Mountain to Sea Trail encompasses 1175 miles of trails from the Great Smoky Mountains to the Outer Banks with stops in the State's most beautiful places along the way, including White Lake. The route includes trail, connecting backroads and optional paddle trail, thus allowing hikers to cross the entire State.

White Lake is included in Segment 13 and is known as "Carolina Bay Country". The trail is from Suggs Mill Pond Game Land to Singletary Lake State Park. It is a distance of 38.9 miles (1.9 on single-track trail, 11.8 miles on unpaved or forest roads and 25.2 miles on paved roads. This segment of the trail is classified as easy for hikers with White Lake the designated community.

The following description of the White Lake Segment is found on the Mountain to Sea website:

"This 39-mile segment allows hikers to explore one of the most diverse and intriguing ecological areas in the nation as well as a Revolutionary War site and the resort community of White Lake.

The route covers public lands that protect many "Carolina Bays," elliptical depressions all aligned in a northwest to southeast direction. The bays provide habitat for many rare and endangered species, and theories abound about how they were originally formed. Some of the more famous bays along the trail route, including Jones, White, and Singletary, are large lakes. In other places, hikers should look for bays without standing water—still with the same shape and directional alignment. The bays are named for the bay tree which grows in many of them.

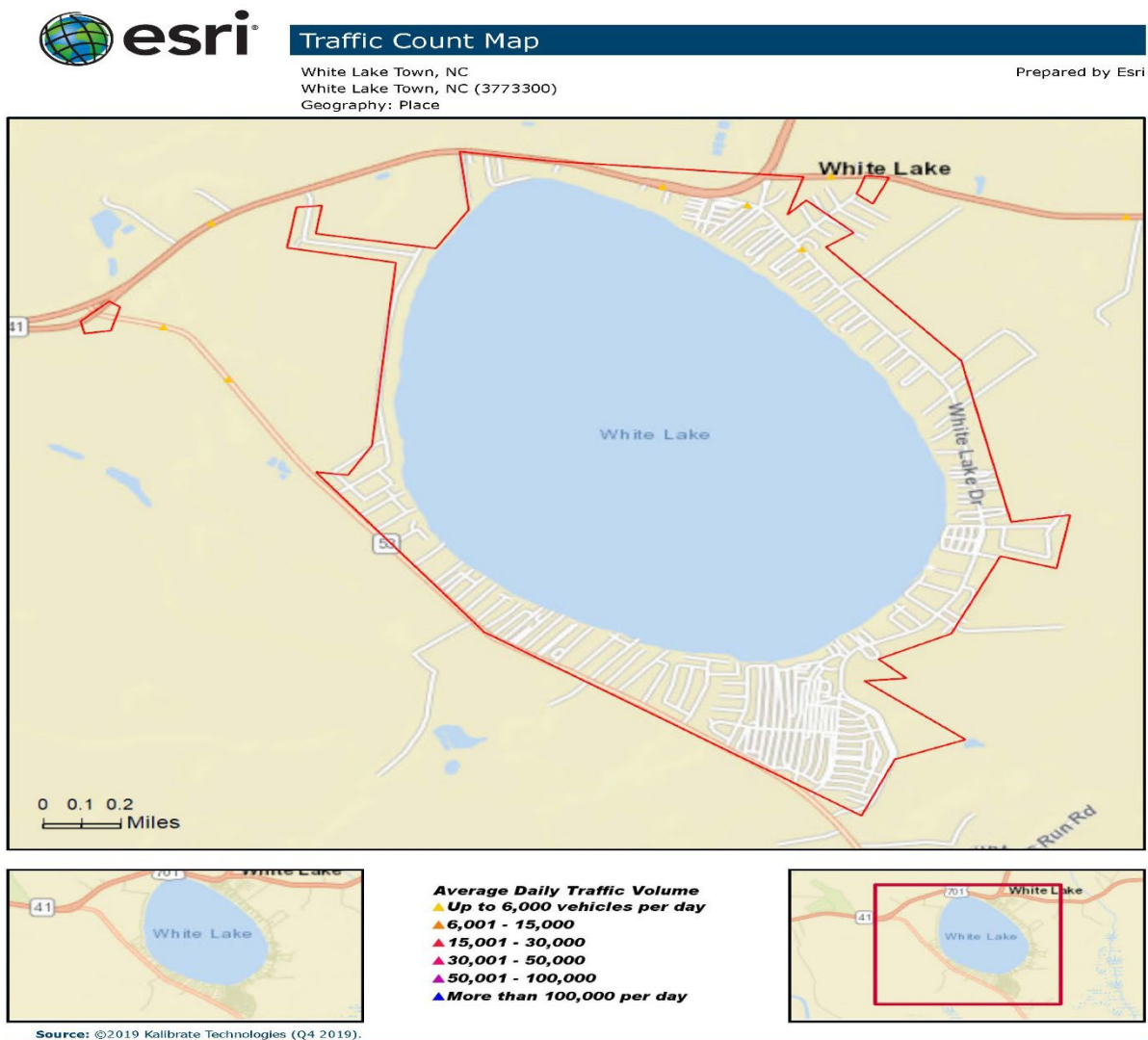
At Turnbull Creek Educational State Forest, hikers can also learn about the naval stores industry, which tapped longleaf pine for tar and turpentine until the Civil War, and about the role that public-land managers in Bladen County are playing today to revive the population of endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers.

This segment includes several stretches through game lands and state forests that may be closed to hikers because of hunting, timbering, or burning. See the "Special Considerations" sections and hiking directions for this segment for more information about possible closures and alternate routes." (Dixon & Grode, 2022)

## Traffic

During the summer tourist season, White Lake has tremendous traffic of all modes along White Lake Drive. White Lake Drive parallels the Lake's commercial center, with hotels, campgrounds, homes, restaurants, shopping and pay to park lake access.

The Town is bordered by US Highway 701 on the North with an average daily traffic count between 6, 000 and 15, 000 cars; NC Highway 53 on the East with an average daily count of less than 6,000 vehicles, and White Lake Drive on the West and South. These three roads surround the lake. The following map illustrates daily traffic counts in and around the Lake:



June 15, 2020

## Transportation

The Town is bordered by US Highway 701 on the North, NC Highway 53 on the East, and White Lake Drive on the West and South. These three roads surround the lake. Development can be found on each side of these roads, with the heaviest development along White Lake Drive.

Long range transportation needs for the Town of White Lake are a part of The Bladen County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). This plan and an accompanying map are discussed in an earlier component of this plan.

Bladen Area Rural Transportation System (BARTS) is a fee based community transportation system operated by the County of Bladen. BARTS operates from 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday thru Friday. It provides general and medical transportation for adults as well as some employment transportation. BARTS is subsidized by grants to maintain this low cost option for the citizens of Bladen.

A privately owned and operated Lake Trolley operates at various times in White Lake, providing transportation to and from the main commercial area of the Lake. A public trolley operating on a regular schedule would provide much needed transportation for visitors and residents and would ease the traffic congestion in the commercial area of the Lake.

## Municipal Utilities

The Town of White Lake owns and operates both a drinking water and wastewater system. Both systems were installed around 1964.

The drinking water system contains approximately 18 miles of distribution lines with a deep well as its water source. It also has an emergency connection with the Bladen County water system. There is an elevated storage tank with a capacity of 225,000 gallons.

The wastewater collection, treatment and discharge system has approximately 15 miles of collection lines, and another 6.7 miles of force mains that move wastewater from 10 lift stations towards the wastewater treatment plant. The wastewater treatment plant handles about 350,000 gallons of wastewater per day and discharges it's treated water into Colly Swamp. The system has about 2,290 customers.

The wastewater system was evaluated in 2021 as part of an asset inventory and assessment project. The water system was evaluated in 2016, but an update is currently underway.

Consideration should be given to the ability of the utility systems to handle future growth. Discharge into Colly Swamp may be limited due to the flow of the swamp. In the past, municipalities within Bladen County have researched consolidating services into a



regional system. This should be pursued by the Town in order to accommodate future demands.

## Community Resources and Assets

---

### North Carolina Future Farmers of America (FFA) Camp Center

The North Carolina FFA Camp at White Lake is the country's second oldest FFA camp. Operating since 1928, the Camp offers leadership and personal growth experiences for students around North Carolina. Most of the activities involve some type of recreation including swimming and many other water sports as well as basketball, cornhole and volleyball. The Camp is also open for private rentals, offering accommodations for church groups, organizations and family reunions among other uses.



Photo courtesy of NC FFA Camp. com

### North Carolina State Parks

White Lake, with limited public access, is a part of the North Carolina State Park System. It is surrounded by Jones Lake State Park, Singletary State Park and limited access to Bay Tree Lake. These parks offer the best of the natural beauty of the area and offer White Lake the opportunity to market itself as the destination from which to fully enjoy all their beauty. A brief description of each of the local state parks follows.

#### Singletary State Park

Singletary State Park is located less than 8 miles from White Lake. Singletary's offers swimming, fishing hiking and paddling. Two group cabins are available for rent and can accommodate 84 campers and 48 campers, respectively. There is also a rental cabin available that can accommodate 11 campers. Singletary's offers a quiet paradise to those that are lucky enough to visit.



View of Singletary Lake from pier. Photo courtesy of NC State Parks

## Jones Lake State Park

Jones Lake State Park is located less than 9 miles from White Lake and offers camping sites to both campers and tents as well as some recreation vehicle sites. First designated as a state park for Black residents, the park is now enjoyed by all. Visitors can enjoy 6 miles of hiking trails, swimming, paddling, fishing and picnicking. During the summer season, life guards are provided as well as concessions. Park rangers operate the visitors center and provide educational classes throughout the year. A large Easter Egg Hunt is hosted by the park which draws hundreds of children and parents each year.

## Bay Tree State Park

This park's original master plan called for facilities, the park remains undeveloped since 1979. During the 1960s, approval was given by the State of North Carolina to develop portions of the lake's shoreline. Many beautiful private residences were built in the restricted area of the park. Developers drained the lake in 1966 to remove tannins which gave the lake a swampy brown color. This was done in hopes of creating the clear waters enjoyed by the neighboring White Lake. However, breach of the refilled lake resulted in a return to its original condition which remains today. The lake's original name, Black Lake, was changed to Bay Tree when the park was established in 1979 and reflects the sweet bay, loblolly bay and red bay trees growing around the lake.

## Elwell Ferry

Located a few miles from White Lake, is one of the last remaining inland river ferries.

The Elwell Ferry has shuttled local residents and farmers across the Cape Fear River between the tiny crossroad communities of Kelly and Carvers. The Ferry attracts travelers who have heard stories of the ferry and want to experience this quaint river crossing. The ferry is operated by the NC Department of Transportation. With a maximum capacity of two passenger vehicles or about four tons in total weight capacity, the Ferry operates as weather and river depths allow, carrying an average of 60 to 80 vehicles per day.



Photo: NCDOT



## REGIONAL INFLUENCES, ASSETS AND ATTRACTIONS

---

White Lake lies in Southeastern North Carolina within Bladen County. Bladen is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest county (887 square miles) in the State but is very rural with a 2020 Census population of less than 30,000 people. However, the County and White Lake benefit from neighboring counties that are growing at rapid rates. Bladen shares a border with Pender County, one of the four fastest growing counties in the State. Due to its rural agricultural nature, Bladen offers large parcels of property which will eventually attract developers from neighboring areas.

White Lake is located within convenient distances to a wide variety of attractions, including educational, and recreational. It lies within Bladen County which is known for its natural beauty and offers a plethora of opportunities to its residents. The State of North Carolina has purchased and developed several state owned parks as well as a large state maintained forest in the County. These sites serve as enticements for those looking for a new convenient and interesting location to call home.

White Lake is in an ideal location for commuters and those working remotely. Allowing workers to live in such an idyllic environment while being able to work or home or enjoy a short commute. This should be considered in future development. Considering the advantages of the region, there are many opportunities for influencing the development in and around White Lake.

### Opportunities for Growth

While White Lake has maintained its population in the last two census counts, the County has suffered significant population loss. Located adjacent to Cumberland County, Sampson and Pender counties, the community will eventually be affected by growth in these counties. Also, the popularity of remote work will give White Lake an added advantage in attracting new residents.

### Regional Partnerships

Due to its small county wide populations, municipalities within Bladen County have discussed the possibility of forming a regional utility system. Several plans have been completed including possible routes and various partnerships. While meetings and conversations have been productive, the project has never come to fruition. As the costs of operating utility systems continue to rise, it is important to all the county municipalities to pursue a regional system. The issues of ownership and costs bog the process down with no agreement found. While waiting for the opportunity to completely regionalize utility systems, the Town should seek opportunities to partner with other municipalities for cooperative agreements for equipment, staff and joint purchasing.

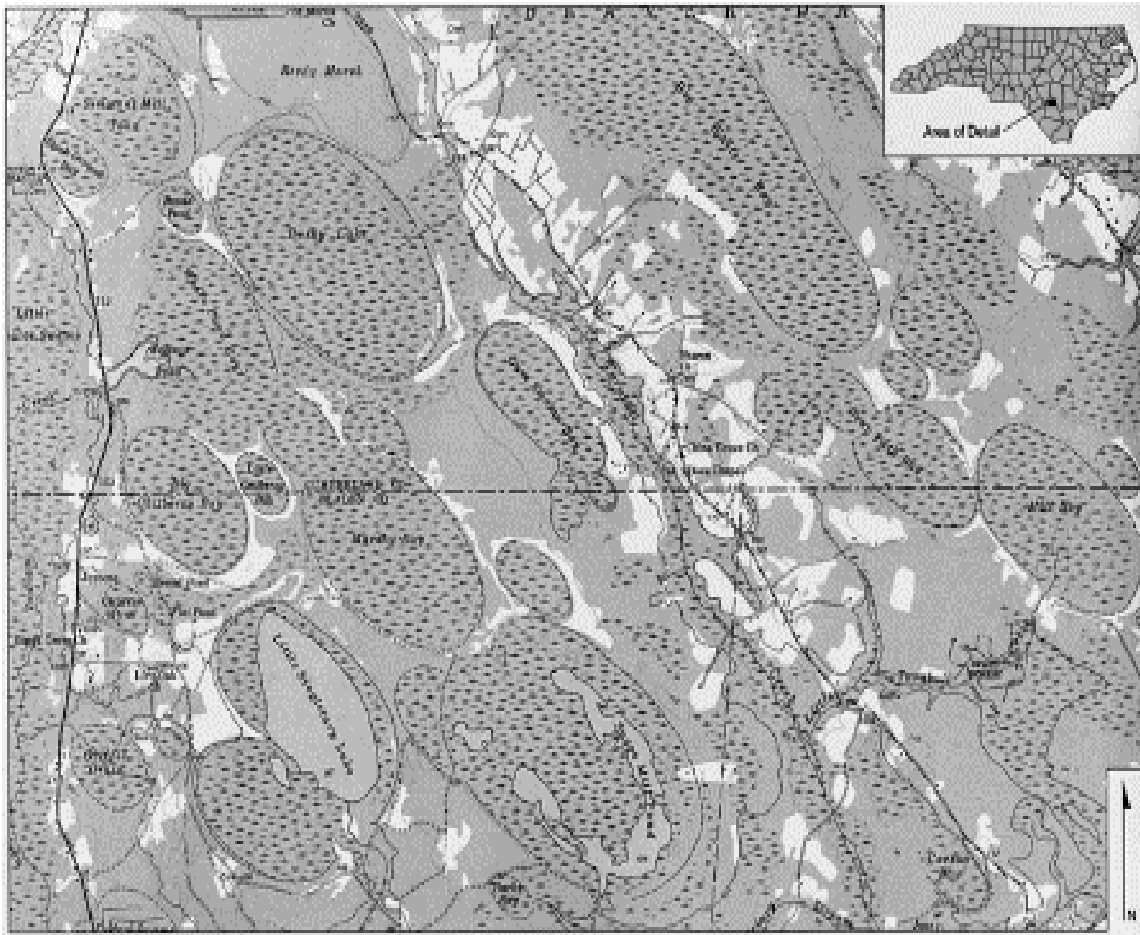
Understanding the true economy of White Lake requires ignoring jurisdictional boundaries. Residents and visitors to White Lake contribute to economies of all surrounding areas such as all towns with the County as well as Clinton, Fayetteville and Wilmington. The convenient location of White Lake also allows quick easy shopping trips to other places such as area beaches and the larger cities of Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill and Charlotte.

## Regional Attractions

### Carolina Bays

Fascinating elliptically depressions that abound in Bladen County, these “holes” are known as the Carolina Bays. Folks have long believed that the bays were formed as a result of a shower or successive showers of meteorites hitting the earth at an angle, although other theories of their origin included ice fragments from a Hudson River basin meteor impact and the tail-fanning of a huge fish. Current formation theory holds that the wave-motion of the receding ocean created pools of standing water that were then elliptically shaped by winds blowing in the same direction for a long period of time. (Powell, 2006) Several of the depressions in and near White Lake continue to hold water. Others have turned into bogs while some have dried and are sometimes farmed.

The bays that still contain water offer wonderful recreational opportunities within a quick drive or hike from White Lake and are a part of the state of North Carolina’s State Park System. More information and an interactive tool for viewing the Carolina Bays is available at <https://cbaysurvey.cintos.org>



Source: Carolina Bays, 1959, USGS



Photo:Earth.com

## Rivers

Three rivers  
Cape Fear  
The Cape  
just outside  
American  
Cape Fear  
Even the  
Heel State –  
plantations  
history of  
joining of the  
Cape Fear



Source: Cape Fear River, Army Corp of Engineers Photo

The water of the Cape Fear provides drinking water to many of the major cities in North Carolina, including Greensboro, Durham, Fayetteville and Wilmington. There is no water supply protected area near White Lake. Three locks and dams, maintained by the US Army Corp of Engineers have historically passed commercial traffic up and down the river. Today, the locks and dams rarely lock large vessels through but instead help protect water intakes for cities and industries along the river by backing up the water and they have become popular recreation spots.

course through Bladen County, River, Black River and South River. Fear River is the largest and flows White Lake. According to the River website “The story of the River is the story of North Carolina. nickname for the state – the Tar has its origin from the pine that lined the river in the early North Carolina”. Formed by the Haw River and the Deep River, the then flows 202 miles, making it the

There are a variety of recreational facilities and opportunities at each lock including a boat ramp, restrooms, picnic tables, charcoal grills, and large picnic shelters. Fishing is a favorite activity along the Cape Fear River. Visitors of all ages will enjoy fishing from the shoreline or the fishing pier completed by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission at Lock and Dam #1. The river contains a variety of fish species but the most closely associated with these projects is the American or white shad, striped bass, and very large catfish. The American shad is primarily an ocean fish that enters fresh water and moves upstream to spawn. The spawning run usually occurs in spring.

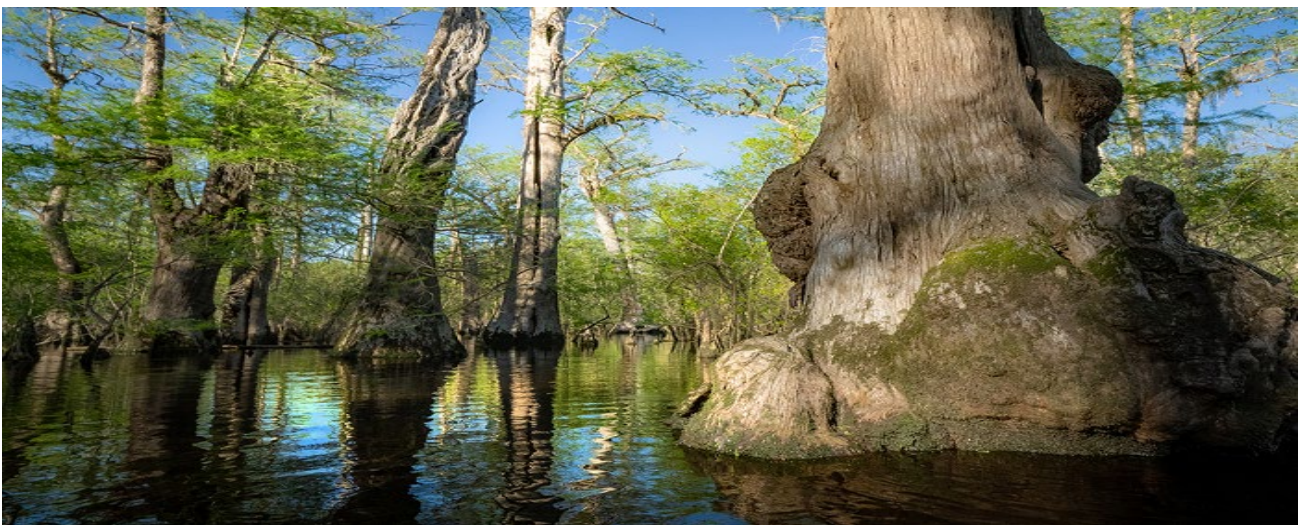




Source: Locks and Dams, Cape Fear River, USACE

Visitors of all ages will also enjoy viewing the rock arch rapids at Lock and Dam 1. This project allows migratory fish to swim over the Lock and Dam and is the first one of its kind on the east coast.

A short drive from White Lake flows the Black River. Due to its high water quality, the Black River is designated as an outstanding resource water by the State of North Carolina. As all four seasons in Bladen County are usually mild, recreation on the Black River is a year round attraction. One of the biggest attractions to the Black River for visitors are the ancient bald cypress trees that line the river. The oldest stand has been dated to at least 605 B.C.E., the time of the Babylonian empire, making these bald cypresses the fifth oldest tree species in the world. These are the oldest trees in North America east of the Great Basin (North Carolina 100,2022). Scheduled kayak and canoe trips are available along this part of the Black River.



Source: Sisters, Black River, Duke Energy, USACE

Bladen County has over 125 lakes, rivers and other fishing spots, making fishing a hobby of most every citizen. Fishing is abundant in the County with a variety of species available including shad, bass, catfish, bream, perch, crappie and trout.

Hunting is a popular activity in Bladen County. Large parcels are often rented by hunting clubs from other areas. Designated hunting areas are also available in Bladen Lakes State Forest and require a special hunting permit. Most desired hunting includes deer, wild turkey, bear, fox and rabbit.

## Future Land Use

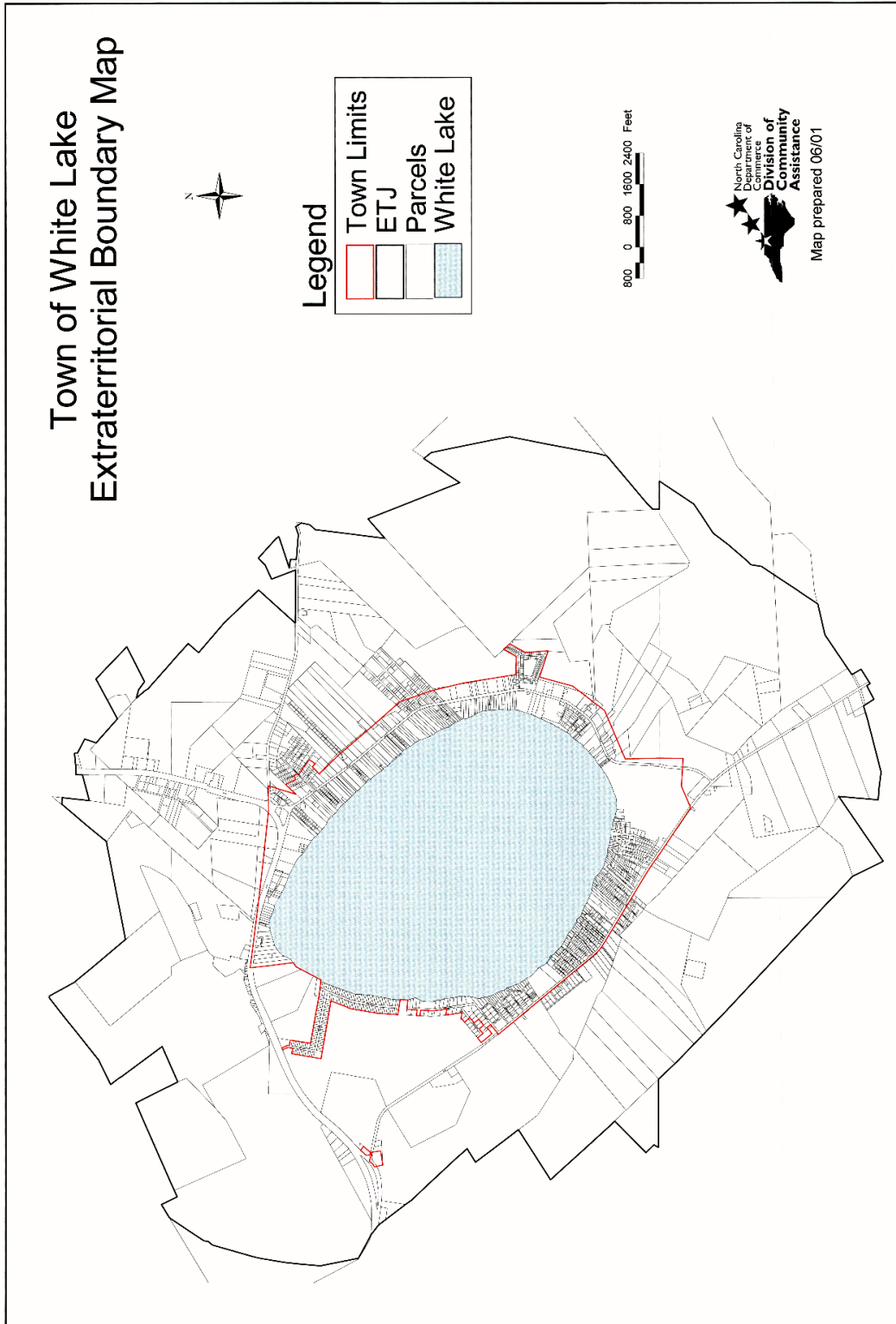
---

The Town of White Lake is comprised of 1,732 acres. There are 5,008 acres included in the Town's extraterritorial jurisdiction which are governed by the Town's zoning ordinance. Much of the land surrounding the Town are sandy and many parcels are utilized as berry farms and other agricultural uses.

The Town has completed several annexations during the past five-year period and as a result, the original one-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) has decreased with the corporate limits being extended. Town leaders may want to communicate with the county commissioners on re-examining the ETJ boundary.

Very little land is available within the Town's corporate limits for future development. Improvements in the existing housing stock and within the commercial areas has been observed, including the development of more town homes and renovations to existing commercial enterprises. Future development should look at remaining areas in the ETJ as well as contiguous properties where water and sewer resources can be easily extended. Infill and renovation of existing properties should be actively pursued by the Town and ordinances should accommodate such activities if at all possible.

**Map of Corporate Limits and ETJ follows:**



## SOURCES

- [White Lake town, North Carolina - Census Bureau Profile](#) November 2, 2022
- [White Lake, North Carolina Population History | 1990 - 2021 \(biggestuscities.com\)](#) October 3, 2022
- [Town of White Lake \(whitelakenc.org\)](#) November 7, 2022 Fire Department rating and number of volunteers.  
[https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/Pages/CTP-Details.aspx?study\\_id=Bladen+County#:~:text=The Bladen County Comprehensive Transportation Plan%28CTP%29 is,solutions for the next 25 to 30 years.](https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/Pages/CTP-Details.aspx?study_id=Bladen+County#:~:text=The Bladen County Comprehensive Transportation Plan%28CTP%29 is,solutions for the next 25 to 30 years.) November 7, 2022
- <https://www.mapquest.com> September 18, 2022
- (n.d.). *View of Vineyard*. Vineyard Golf at White Lake. Retrieved September 21, 2022, from <https://vineyardgolfatwhitelake.com>
- Corbett, J. (n.d.). *White Lake Life*. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/WhiteLakeLife>
- Langston, J. K. (n.d.). *White Lake View*. White Lake Holiday Resort.  
<https://www.whitelakeholidayresort.com/>
- Town of White Lake (n.d.). *Zoning Ordinance*. White Lake, NC. Retrieved December 13, 2022, from *Zoning-Ordinance-7-13-21.pdf* (whitelakenc.org)December 13, 2022
- [Internet Access in North Carolina: Stats & Figures \(broadbandnow.com\)](#)
- [Mbps Meaning | Learn What Mbps Internet Speed You Need | Service Reviews](#)
- [How Much Internet Speed Do You Need? - Consumer Reports](#)
- [\(67\) Pinterest](#) Lake photo with chairs
- [NC FFA Center | NC FFA | North Carolina Future Farmers of America](#)
- <https://elevation.maplogs.com> photo of Jones and Singletary lakes
- Friends of the Mountain to Sea Trail (n.d.). *Segment 13: Carolina Bay Country*. Mountain to Sea Trail. Retrieved January 13, 2023, from <https://mountaintoseatrail.org/segment/13/>
- Powell, W. S. (2022). *Carolina Bays*. North Carolina Encyclopedia. Retrieved January 13, 2023, from <https://www.ncpedia.org/carolina-bays>
- Schroeder, K. (2021, July 7). *Esri Data 101: Tapestry Segmentation*. Esri Blog. Retrieved February 2, 2022, from <https://www.esri.com/arcgis-blog/products/esri-demographics/announcements/esri-data-101-tapestry-segmentation/>



Earth.com (n.d.). *Carolina Bays in and Around Bladen Lakes*. Earth. Retrieved February 21, 2023, from <https://www.earth.com/image/a-collection-of-carolina-bays/>

(2006, September 6). *Elwell Ferry*. Gribblenation. Retrieved January 28, 2023, from <http://www.gribblenation.com/ncpics/ferry/elwell.html#:~:text=It%20runs%20from%206%3A00%20AM%20to%206%3A00%20PM,There%20is%20no%20ferry%20service%20on%20Christmas%20Day.>

## APPENDICIS

---

Appendix “A”: White Lake –Lake Strategic Plan

Appendix “B” : Market Summary

Appendix “C”: Rural Resort Dwellers

Appendix “D” : Project Uplift















Appendix "B"



Market Profile

White Lake Town, NC  
White Lake Town, NC (3773300)  
Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri

	White Lake to...
<b>Top 3 Tapestry Segments</b>	
1.	Rural Resort Dwellers (6E)
2.	Top Tier (1A)
3.	Professional Pride (1B)
<b>2019 Consumer Spending</b>	
Apparel & Services: Total \$	\$595,676
Average Spent	\$1,559.36
Spending Potential Index	73
Education: Total \$	\$362,001
Average Spent	\$947.65
Spending Potential Index	59
Entertainment/Recreation: Total \$	\$1,163,976
Average Spent	\$3,047.06
Spending Potential Index	93
Food at Home: Total \$	\$1,770,200
Average Spent	\$4,634.03
Spending Potential Index	90
Food Away from Home: Total \$	\$1,073,203
Average Spent	\$2,809.43
Spending Potential Index	76
Health Care: Total \$	\$2,257,056
Average Spent	\$5,908.52
Spending Potential Index	100
HH Furnishings & Equipment: Total \$	\$649,477
Average Spent	\$1,700.20
Spending Potential Index	80
Personal Care Products & Services: Total \$	\$240,460
Average Spent	\$629.48
Spending Potential Index	71
Shelter: Total \$	\$5,185,295
Average Spent	\$13,574.07
Spending Potential Index	73
Support Payments/Cash Contributions/Gifts in Kind: Total \$	\$795,825
Average Spent	\$2,083.31
Spending Potential Index	84
Travel: Total \$	\$665,617
Average Spent	\$1,742.45
Spending Potential Index	78
Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs: Total \$	\$393,540
Average Spent	\$1,030.21
Spending Potential Index	90


**Data Note:** Consumer spending shows the amount spent on a variety of goods and services by households that reside in the area. Expenditures are shown by broad budget categories that are not mutually exclusive. Consumer spending does not equal business revenue. Total and Average Amount Spent Per Household represent annual figures. The Spending Potential Index represents the amount spent in the area relative to a national average of 100.

**Source:** Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2016 and 2017 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Esri.

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography.

June 15, 2020

Appendix "C"

LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

## Rural Resort Dwellers

6E

Households: 1,227,200

Average Household Size: 2.22

Median Age: 54.1

Median Household Income: \$50,400

**WHO ARE WE?**

Although the Great Recession forced many owners of second homes to sell, *Rural Resort Dwellers* residents remain an active market, just a bit smaller. These communities are centered in resort areas, many in the Midwest, where the change in seasons supports a variety of outdoor activities. Retirement looms for many of these blue collar, older householders, but workers are postponing retirement or returning to work to maintain their current lifestyles. Workers are traveling further to maintain employment. They are passionate about their hobbies, like freshwater fishing and hunting.

**OUR NEIGHBORHOOD**

- Housing is owner-occupied, single-family homes, with some mobile homes. A strong market for second homes, these rural areas contain homes valued near the US median. Over half of the housing units are vacant due to a high seasonal vacancy rate.
- In this older market, 42% of households consist of married couples with no children at home, while another 28% are single person. Married couples with children at home have older school-age children.
- Set in scenic rural locations with proximity to outdoor activities, two vehicles are essential to get around.

**SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS**

- *Rural Resort Dwellers* residents are close to retirement. They've accumulated wealth and begun to shift their portfolios to low-risk assets. These active residents continue to work in skilled occupations.
- Simple tastes and modesty characterize these blue-collar residents. They shop for timeless, comfortable clothing but only when something must be replaced. They pay little attention to advertising and usually stick to the brands they know.
- They spend time with their spouses and also maintain a social calendar.



Note: This index represents the ratio of the segment size to the US population, scaled by 100. Data and probabilities are estimated from data by M4-B-Insights.

6E

LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

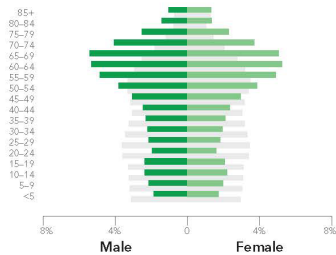
# Rural Resort Dwellers



esri.com/tapestry

### AGE BY SEX (Esri data)

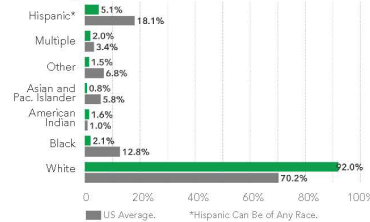
Median Age: **54.1** US: 38.2  
■ Indicates US



### RACE AND ETHNICITY (Esri data)

The Diversity Index summarizes racial and ethnic diversity. The index shows the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. The index ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity).

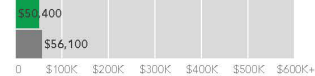
Diversity Index: **23.4** US: 64.0



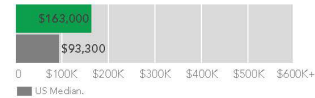
### INCOME AND NET WORTH

Net worth measures total household assets (homes, vehicles, investments, etc.) less any debts, secured (e.g., mortgages) or unsecured (credit cards). Household income and net worth are estimated by Esri.

#### Median Household Income

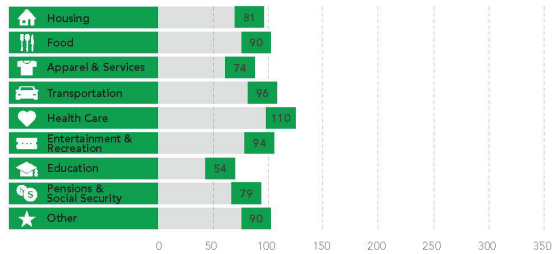


#### Median Net Worth



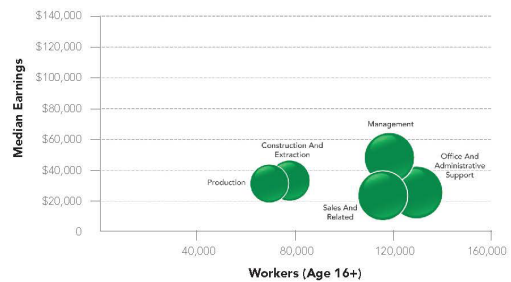
### AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD BUDGET INDEX

The index compares the average amount spent in this market's household budgets for housing, food, apparel, etc., to the average amount spent by all US households. An index of 100 is average. An index of 120 shows that average spending by consumers in this market is 20 percent above the national average. Consumer expenditures are estimated by Esri.



### OCCUPATION BY EARNINGS

The five occupations with the highest number of workers in the market are displayed by median earnings. Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.





LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

# Rural Resort Dwellers



**TAPESTRY**  
SEGMENTATION  
[esri.com/tapestry](http://esri.com/tapestry)

## MARKET PROFILE

(Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.)

- Residents drive older domestic vehicles and prefer to spend their disposable income on gear to support their hobbies, which include freshwater fishing, hunting, and motorcycling.
- At home, *Rural Resort Dwellers* residents spend any free time working on their vehicles and maintaining their gear. They make frequent trips to their local hardware store for parts and tools. These hands-on consumers are also passionate about vegetable gardening.
- Due to their remote locations, these neighborhoods have satellite dishes. A few residents still rely on dial-up modems to stay connected. They don't access the internet often but will make online purchases for items difficult to find in nearby stores.
- Their taste in TV shows reflects their hobbies—National Geographic, Discovery Channel, and the Weather Channel.

## HOUSING

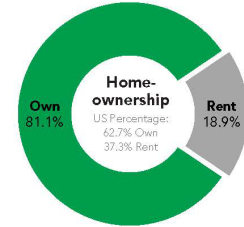
Median home value is displayed for markets that are primarily owner occupied; average rent is shown for renter-occupied markets. Tenure and home value are estimated by Esri. Housing type and average rent are from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.



**Typical Housing:**  
Single Family/Seasonal

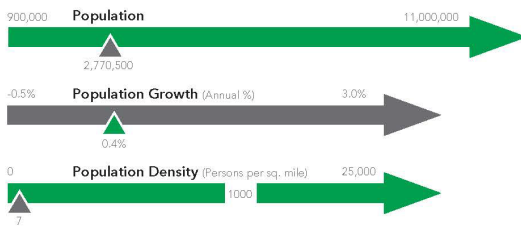
**Median Value:**  
\$209,200

US Median: \$207,300



## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Total population, average annual population change since Census 2010, and average density (population per square mile) are displayed for the market relative to the size and change among all Tapestry markets. Data estimated by Esri.



## ESRI INDEXES

Esri developed three indexes to display average household wealth, socioeconomic status, and housing affordability for the market relative to US standards.





LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

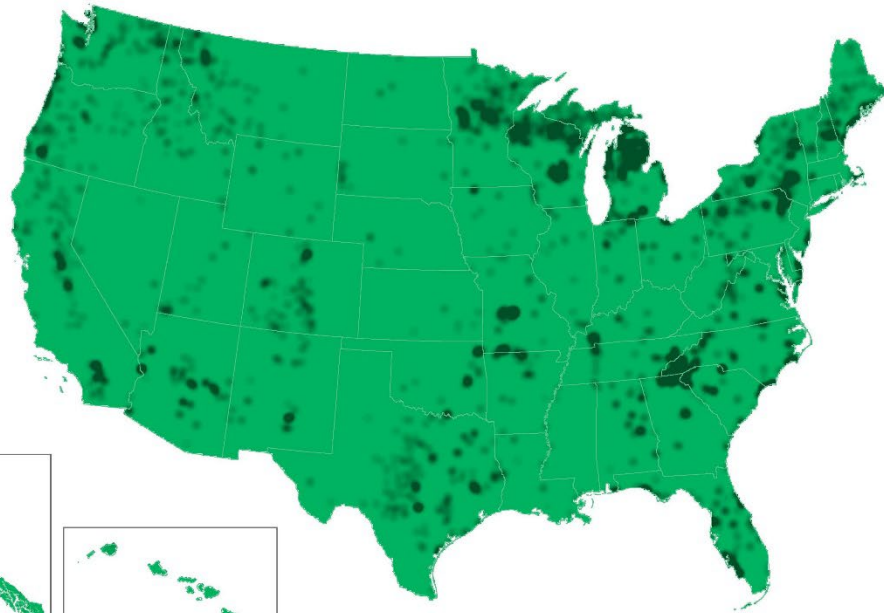
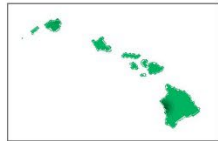
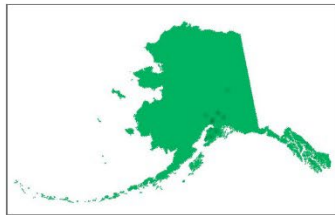
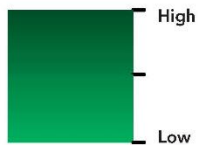
# Rural Resort Dwellers



**TAPESTRY**  
SEGMENTATION  
[esri.com/tapestry](https://esri.com/tapestry)

## SEGMENT DENSITY

This map illustrates the density and distribution of the *Rural Resort Dwellers* Tapestry Segment by households.



Copyright © 2022 Esri. All rights reserved. Esri, the Esri logo, ArcGIS, the ArcGIS logo, and other marks contained herein are trademarks of Esri and/or its subsidiaries. All other marks contained herein are trademarks of their respective owners. ©20221429

For more information  
1 800 447 9778  
[info@esri.com](mailto:info@esri.com)  
[esri.com](https://esri.com)



**esri** | THE  
SCIENCE  
OF  
WHERE®

Appendix "D"

# UPLIFT NC

## STRENGTHENING TOURISM IN RURAL & UNDER-RESOURCED NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITIES

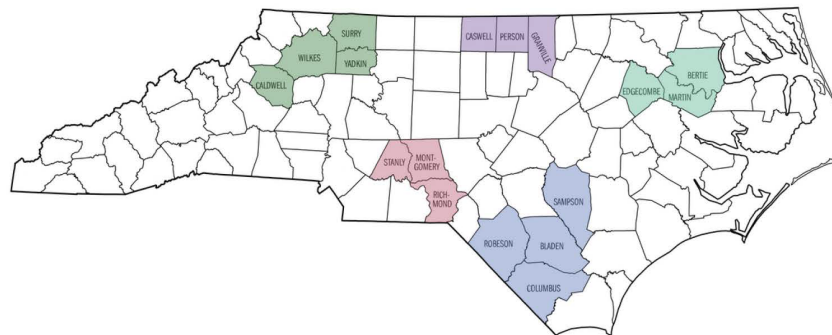
The goal of UPLIFT is to boost tourism in rural North Carolina communities. UPLIFT works regionally - across county borders - to support local tourism leaders and practitioners in realizing their vision for tourism in their community, including natural, recreational, cultural, agricultural, culinary, built and other tourism.

### OUR OBJECTIVES

- Develop multi-night itineraries that connect sites within UPLIFT target regions to strengthen the overall tourism offer, retain visitors for longer, increase spending and make it easier for travelers to visit
- Enhance, innovate and scale the tourism experiences offered within the regions, working with new and existing tourism providers
- Strengthen tourism economies, skills and capacities that stimulate entrepreneurship, grow businesses and create or retain jobs
- Tell the stories of the regions, their communities and individual tourism experiences to attract and retain visitors
- Integrate sustainability principles & practices into the tourism experiences supported

### WHERE WE WORK

The program will focus in the counties listed below as well as counties bordering them, where opportunities for connections to regional itineraries exist.



[www.UPLIFTtourism.com](http://www.UPLIFTtourism.com)

This brief was prepared by Appalachian State University using Federal funds under award 04-79-07689 from Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Economic Development Administration or the U.S. Department of Commerce.



## UPLIFT ACTIVITIES

The first step with each region will be to identify what has already been done, what's currently happening and exists as well as what's planned. The starting point for where UPLIFT can add value in each region will be different, depending on the needs of the communities. The program offers a suite of 'building blocks' to develop tourism through festivals, attractions, businesses and DMO's/government. Partners in each region will help to identify what the optimal mix of UPLIFT 'building blocks' are for their specific needs. These include, but may also be added to:

### **U**nderstanding the tourism context

- Tourism knowledge center (online resource for tourism businesses)
- Learning labs (covering market trends, sustainability, etc.)
- Market research

### **P**lanning around UPLIFT activities & travel itineraries within each region

### **L**ink tourism sites, services and businesses within each region

- Story-telling (For external promotion and internal staff knowledge)
- Building itineraries

### **I**nnovate and enhance the tourism experiences

- Tourism business incubator
- Festivals & event program with the Smithsonian Institution
- DMO and tourism leaders professional development
- Virtual tourism development

### **F**inance projects by helping tourism organizations with grant and loan applications

### **T**ell the story of the regions to travelers

- First impressions count (website, collateral materials, etc.)
- Promotional content

## EXPECTED IMPACT

- Increase average length of stay by 1-day/night in each region
- Over 200 businesses with strengthened skills, products or operational models
- More than 250 jobs created or retained
- Over 1,000 people engaged in professional development or technical assistance
- 25 virtual tourism experiences developed
- 100 grant/loan applications supported for local partners
- 3,000,000 people reached with information about tourism in the UPLIFT regions
- Video and image assets for each UPLIFT region to help tell their story

## TIMEFRAME

UPLIFT is a three year program:

- **Phase 1** began in October 2022 and will last six months, focusing on understanding where UPLIFT can provide the most value for communities in each region.
- **Phase 2** involves technical assistance and professional development programs in each region and will last up to 15 months. Two cycles of Phase 2 will be conducted, one starting in 2023 and the second in 2024.
- **Phase 3** will culminate with familiarization tours.

**THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK**