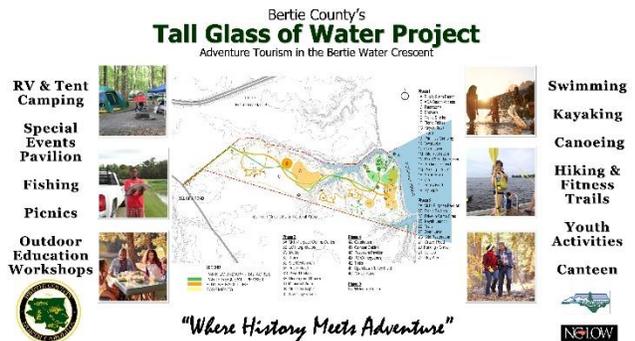


Bertie awarded \$500,000

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WINDSOR – Bertie County's Tall Glass of Water project received a big boost on Monday.

Governor Roy Cooper announced the N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund has awarded nearly \$5 million in grants to fund 16 local parks and recreation projects across the state. The North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Authority approved the grants at its meeting held Sept. 21 via conference call.



Among the grant recipients is Bertie County, who will receive \$500,000 for phase 1 of the Tall Glass of Water project, a 147-acre site off Bal Gra Road in the Merry Hill community right where the Chowan River spills into the Albemarle Sound. The site's most stunning feature is its 2,200 linear feet of sand beach, now open to the public, and shallow calm waters that overwatch impressive sand bluffs overlooking the scenic waterway.

The property was purchased by the Bertie County's Board of Commissioners with financial assistance from the N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

Once the vision for the property is fully realized, opportunities for Bertie residents and visitors will include swimming, canoeing & kayaking, hiking, camping, and environmental education field experiences for students and adults.

"We are so excited over the news from Monday's announcement by the governor that we will receive \$500,000," said Ron Wesson, Chairman of the Bertie County Board of Commissioners. "For a low wealth county like us, we're unable to tackle a project of this size and scope only with taxpayer dollars. We need help and we're so appreciative for this grant."

Wesson added that a master plan for the site has been developed.

"This gives us a roadmap to follow as we move forward with several phases of this project," Wesson stated. "This \$500,000 grant will assist us in building infrastructure on the property....things like restrooms and other amenities as well as improving the beachfront."

Wesson added that the county will continue to seek grants to support the project. Those grants, he said, serve as a supplement to what the county has already invested.

One of those other grants was awarded last month....\$150,000 from USDA Rural Development that will be used for technical assistance purposes such as architectural, engineering, and branding development fees associated with the project.

As for Monday's announcement, it was noted that the N.C. Parks and Recreation Authority considered 66 grant applications requesting \$20.5 million. Each year, the Authority is required to allocate 30 percent of its total funding to local government projects.

The maximum grant awarded for a single project under the program was \$500,000. Awardees must match funds dollar-for-dollar for the awarded amount.

"Local parks and greenways have been a safe place for North Carolinians to relax, exercise, and improve their quality of life during the stress of the pandemic," said Governor Cooper. "These grants will add and expand parks, trails, and recreational facilities to communities across our state, creating opportunities to enjoy North Carolina's natural beauty."

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund is administered through the state Division of Parks and Recreation.