



## APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2020.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Orange  
Program Title: Orange County Disc Golf Course  
Program Category: Parks and Recreation

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Tim Moubray  
Title: Parks and Recreation Director  
Department: Parks and Recreation  
Telephone: (540) 672-5435 Website: www.orangecountyva.gov  
Email: tmoubray@orangecountyva.gov

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Theodore L. Voorhees  
Title: County Administrator  
Signature: Theodore L. Voorhees

## **Brief Overview:**

Orange County Parks & Recreation, with the support of the Orange County Economic Development Authority and Economic Development Department, installed a new disc golf course in the Thomas E. Lee Industrial Park over the winter and spring of 2019. Parks & Recreation staff made the course a true

in-house project, handling as much of the development as possible directly. Expenses were covered through funds raised through our 501c3 partner organization rather



than budgeted from county coffers. Despite disc golf being a relatively new sport to many of our residents, it has been taken up quickly and the course has received significant use and positive feedback for more than a year, even when compared to more established courses nearby. As an added bonus, we've welcomed non-residents who've made the trip specifically to experience playing our course.

### **Executive Summary:**

Having identified a need for a free recreation opportunity, and with the support of economic development agencies, the Orange County Parks & Recreation Department installed a new disc golf course in the Thomas E. Lee Industrial Park in the winter and spring of 2019. A grand opening was held on June 18, 2019, and the course has enjoyed consistent use and strong ratings over the entirety of the ensuing year.

Our course was a true Parks & Recreation project. Staff were hands-on throughout to reduce costs and ensure the result met the needs of our residents and our own high standards. This meant handling as much of the work as possible in-house, including: course layout & planning, fundraising, graphic design of signs & promotional materials, brush clearing & grass cutting, physical installation of baskets and signage, and more. The OCPR Foundation (a 501c3) oversaw the sale of hole sponsorships to businesses and organizations and “Founder’s Club” memberships to individuals and families. Both fundraising initiatives sold out!

The number of reviews on third party platforms, combined with first-hand observations and reactions at our first tournament, indicate that the course is heavily utilized and has met and exceeded the needs of the community.

### **Full Nomination Description:**

Humidity reigned on the afternoon of June 18, 2019, as organizers anticipated a break in the passing showers long enough to officially open Orange County's new disc golf course. Finally, the sun appeared, and following a brief speech by OCPR Director Tim Moubray, it was time. Rather than a ribbon cutting, the best way to ring in the facility was the sweet jingle of chains courtesy of a grand opening toss. Tim, along with District 1 Supervisor Mark Johnson, Economic Development Authority (EDA) Chairperson Doug Rogers, and OCPR Programs & Facilities Supervisor Jayson Woods, combined to release a volley of discs for this toss with an impressive 75% success rate. A great start, but we believe the course has enjoyed even greater success as our newest recreational facility.

Creating the course had its ups and downs. It's located on a lot in the Thomas E. Lee Industrial Park. Due to uneven terrain, the site wasn't ideal for business use. That being the case, an amenity that could appeal to both the citizens of Orange County as well as the tenants in the Industrial Park was the best utilization of the space. Being predominantly greenspace, our course project could preserve the aesthetic appeal of the area while providing a healthy and free

recreational opportunity. Given these positives, approval was received to make a course.

Without an allocated budget, fundraising was a necessity, typical of many projects in rural communities. While disc golf courses are comparatively low-cost, the parking lot expense presented an early hurdle; this challenge remained even after we secured donations of gravel and railroad ties. However, it seemed the land itself wanted to help, since a solution was found in the logging of select walnut trees from the property. The \$13,000 raised from this sale were held by the EDA in partnership with the OCPR Foundation to cover the parking lot installation.

With parking lot plans now laid (figuratively) on a walnut foundation; the baskets fittingly became the fundraising goal. The OCPR Foundation, our 501c3, spearheaded this effort. Fundraising activities for course equipment were two-fold. The first was intended for individuals/families, taking the form of the sale of 100 Founder's Club discs. Along with the unique disc, "Founders" also received permanent recognition on a sign near the practice basket, which was fitting since it was funded in a direct sense from the sale of the Founder's Club memberships. The second initiative was intended for businesses and took the form of hole

sponsorships. For \$500, a business could become a “Hole Sponsor” for three years and receive substantial recognition on a tee box sign. We sold out both initiatives, despite having to explain to many prospective supporters exactly what “disc golf” was. All hole sponsors were local businesses or organizations, most of them small, testifying to the sense of pride found in Orange County, and the desire for a free recreation opportunity available to all ages. The Founder’s Club and Hole Sponsorship initiatives raised over \$11,000. Other sponsors donated in-kind services or supplies and were recognized as “Course Sponsors.”

Being familiar with the sport of disc golf, staff took on designing the course, the Founder’s Disc, and all signs in-house, saving costs and making this a true Parks & Recreation project. Directly involved throughout, staff cleared land and cut high grass, installed signs and baskets, filled groundhog holes, watched burn piles into the night, and have maintained exceptional maintenance standards since. For additional manpower, we drew on the invaluable help of the Central Virginia Regional Jail Workforce and the Orange County Public Works Department.

Though lacking specific experience planning disc golf courses, we felt we had a stronger connection with the needs of our residents than outside designers

interested in creating a PDGA-level course. We also knew we wanted independent front and back nines that looped to the parking lot to facilitate lunchbreak use by industrial park employees. Course layout began using Google Earth. This perspective allowed us to make measurements and develop a mental picture. Next, we used a portable basket to refine the design, moving between location options and testing. Minding our goal of creating a course with appeal even to novices, we enlisted the help of staff unfamiliar with the sport. Watching them, we tuned the holes to create a course personality that's friendly to newcomers but isn't a pushover for intermediate players. It's distinctly open, with small tree groves and elevation changes featuring as obstacles rather than dense forest. We used that to our advantage, since we wanted to present the player with choices of proceeding safely for a relatively easy par or taking a risk for a birdie with the potential for big setbacks. We believe we succeeded. For example, the 16<sup>th</sup> hole uses a corner of trees to create a blind drive with a hard-left dogleg that seemingly lends itself to an average right-handed backhand throw. The basket is unobstructed but positioned on a steep incline. Gutsy birdie putts can result in lengthy, painful, rolls downhill followed by scrambles to save bogey. We've seen it play out firsthand, even during our tournament.

Speaking of use, we believe this has truly told the tale of its reception. When launched, most of our community was unfamiliar with the sport. That's changing. We often see multiple groups when mowing on weekday mornings, which is hardly prime time. Some of our first and most regular players come over from industrial park businesses to play, as intended; and we received nine teams for our first tournament in November. The PDGA's UDisc app has also demonstrated frequent use. Even while representing only more serious players who actually use the app to record scores, there are frequently twenty or more unique players on the leaderboard in any given month. As the anniversary of the course opening approached, we took the opportunity to compare our facility to a sampling of five nearby courses. Ratings on the app illustrate strong usage proportional to those locations. Despite being open for less than a year, our course had already received 59 ratings. The comparison group averaged 58 ratings over nine years of operation. Feedback from the ratings reinforces that we achieved our intended goals. Comments note the course is "fun," "family friendly," "well maintained," and features "excellent signage." As we continue to maintain high standards and expand its role, we believe this facility is, and will continue to be a benefit to Orange County residents and visitors.



## Testimonials

- “Fun course! A little muddy today but very playable. Great signs, nice parking, good use of the terrain.”

- Review by ***critterbug*** on December 31, 2019, accessed through UDISC Smartphone App.

- “Course is mowed. Family friendly and fun course for all skill levels.”

- Review by ***stanley4*** on April 5, 2020, accessed through UDISC Smartphone App.

- “Solid beginner course, tight acreage, great use of space, mostly-open fairways with little chance for losing discs. Not the most challenging, but the beautiful countryside and top-notch maintenance made this course a pleasure. If you're like us and vacationing at nearby Lake Anna, it made for a perfect afternoon excursion. Enjoy!”

- Review by ***milehighdiscclub*** on Jun 25, 2020, accessed through [www.PDGA.com](http://www.PDGA.com).

- “Uninspiring but not unenjoyable. All open holes with only a few stands of trees in play. Great for family or to practice control shots. Very short holes. Well maintained with excellent signage and baskets. Nice to see all of the sponsors listed. Being wide open, no shade. Not a bad course. They weren’t trying for a PDGA rated course but something family friendly and that is exactly what it is.”

- Review by ***hurler23*** on May 26, 2020, accessed through UDISC Smartphone App.

**We expected that advanced players might have some criticisms related to the difficulty level of the course, but we appreciated that even our more “negative” reviews have acknowledged that we succeeded in our initial goals of creating a well-maintained course that is accessible to complete beginners!**

VACO ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS, 2019 AWARD YEAR, PARKS & RECREATION CATEGORY  
NOMINEE: ORANGE COUNTY DISC GOLF COURSE  
ORANGE COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION



- A view from the parking lot looking past a sponsorship recognition sign onto hole number one.



- Participants take aim for their putts during our inaugural tournament, the 2019 Turkey Toss!



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- Thanks to help from the CVRJ Workforce, baskets were assembled and stored until installation time.



- Parks & Recreation Director Tim Moubray operates a skid steer with an auger to dig basket holes.



VACO ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS, 2019 AWARD YEAR, PARKS & RECREATION CATEGORY  
NOMINEE: ORANGE COUNTY DISC GOLF COURSE  
ORANGE COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION



- Hole sponsors were presented with draft copies of their signs. Photo taken at the site of the 18th basket.



- 100 Founder's Club memberships were sold, which included permanent recognition and a unique commemorative disc.