

**Crawford Pickleball Club (CPC)**  
**NFPPRD Board Meeting 9/16/24**  
**Proposal for Tennis/Pickleball Facilities at Crossroads Park**

- Intro/Thank You
- Popularity of pickleball has exploded both nationwide and in our local communities. There is a definite need for courts to serve Hotchkiss and Crawford.
- We propose to build 3 tennis courts and 4 dedicated pickleball courts, including a raised pad, fencing and sidewalks.
- Unique opportunity for Delta County, NFPPRD and the School District to work together in conjunction with CPC.
- GOCO Grant submitted by Delta County includes tennis and pickleball.
- County will provide all dirt work and gravel required for a 5' raised foundation.
- Because we are including tennis courts, the School Board is willing to contribute financial support.
- CPC is willing to write and/or administer grants, oversee construction, maintain courts on a long-term basis and/or anything else that the project may require.
- We're asking NFPPRD to provide enough land at Crossroads Park to accommodate this new tennis/pickleball facility. We've identified a possible location east of the existing parking lot and north of the Maintenance shop. See attached google map.
- For further information, we've included a synopsis of the latest Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) report which summarizes the growing popularity of pickleball.

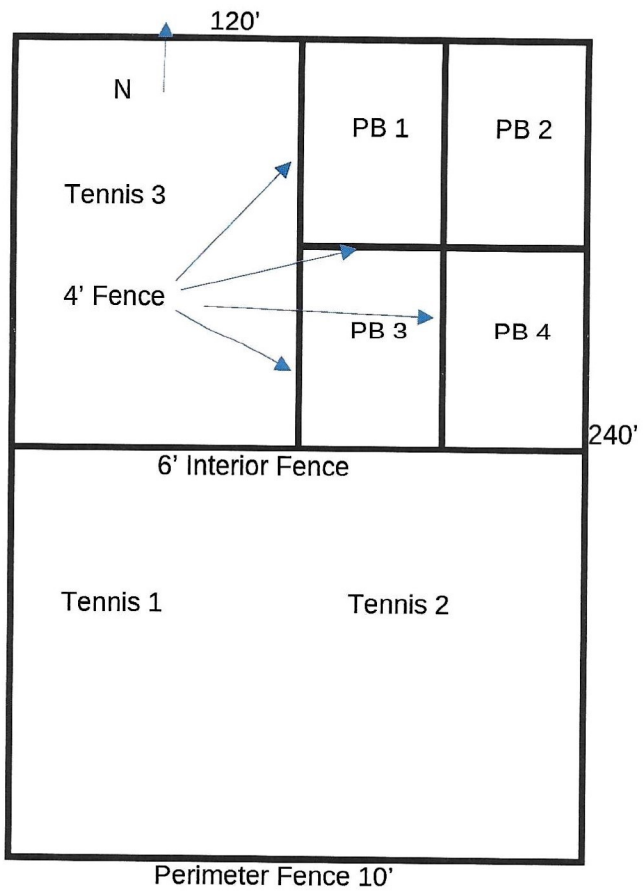
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## Recreation District Information

### Proposal to use Recreation District Land and Financial Support for 3 New Tennis Courts and 4 New Pickleball Courts

- Intro – Pickleball has been the fastest growing sport in the USA for the past 4 years. It is a great sport for all ages from young children to Seniors. It's very easy to learn and it is an ideal vehicle to foster health, wellness and community-wide camaraderie.
  - There are pickleball clubs in Crawford, Paonia, Cedaredge and Delta. Currently each location (except Crawford) consists of existing tennis courts lined for pickleball, which requires net set-up each time before play. There are no dedicated pickleball courts in Delta County.
  - The Crawford Pickleball Club has over 25 members. We play 4 times each week (including 2 days of instructional drills) with regular attendance of 8 to 12 players. We would have more players attending weekly however; people don't want to wait 15 to 30 minutes for their turn to play... we only have two places to play and each has one court.
- We have support from the School District and from Delta County
- Google Maps with court outline
- Cost Info (+/- 20%)
  - Evergreen Quote \$595,000. Includes 3 tennis courts, 4 pickleball courts, fencing and gates
  - Estimate for 5' elevated pad \$164,000
  - Estimate for sidewalks around court \$78,500
- GOCO grant application submitted by Delta County for courts. Includes additional work on the Miners Trail, additional work for the playgrounds and our proposal for 3 tennis, 4 pickleball courts, elevated pad and sidewalks





According to the latest [Sports & Fitness Industry Association \(SFIA\) report](#) recently published, a total of 13.6 million Americans played pickleball in 2023.

This is more than a 50 percent increase over the 9 million people who reportedly played in 2022. That's triple the number of people since 2020, when 4.2 million Americans reportedly played.

What else did we learn about our sport from this report? Plenty.

### **Who is playing, and how often?**

The SFIA report also provided statistics on key demographics for pickleball.

#### **Total players**

According to the report, the breakdown of TOTAL pickleball participants (meaning they played at least one time in 2023) includes:

#### **Age Group - # of Participants**

- 6-12 year olds: 1.56 million
- 12-17 year olds: 1.27 million
- 18-24 year olds: 1.81 million
- **25-34 year olds: 2.27 million**
- 35-44 year olds: 1.61 million
- 45-54 year olds: 1.27 million
- 55-64 year olds: 1.7 million
- 65+ year olds: 2.09 million

This means the top three most common age groups that played at least once are 25-34-year-olds, 65+-year-olds, and 18-24-year-olds.

Also, the report shows that 59.1 percent of players are male, while 40.9 percent are female.

### **Casual player numbers**

In the casual player category – meaning they played 1-7 times in 2023 – the top age groups were:

- 25-34 year olds: 1.8 million
- 18-24 year olds: 1.42 million
- 6-12 year olds: 1.19 million

The male and female split remained the same at 59.1 and 40.9 percent, respectively.

### **CORE player numbers**

For the most pickleball-obsessed group – those who played at least eight times in '23 – the numbers skew a bit older.

The top groups that played pickleball the most were:

- 65+ year olds: 1.35 million
- 55-64 year olds: 921k
- 45-54 year olds: 538k

The male and female split was precisely the same as before.

### **Why pickleball gained popularity**

Pickleball's surge in popularity in the US began during the COVID-19

pandemic.

The pandemic caused widespread closures of gyms and recreational facilities, leaving people searching for ways to stay active and socially connected while adhering to social distancing guidelines. With its minimal equipment requirements, small court size, and ability to be played outdoors, pickleball quickly emerged as an ideal solution.

The sport's accessibility for players of all ages and skill levels made it even more attractive when people were looking for engaging activities. Moreover, the pandemic prompted a shift in how people value their leisure time, with many seeking activities that could be enjoyed close to home. Pickleball courts, which can be easily set up in driveways, backyards, and local parks, provide a convenient and enjoyable way for families and neighbors to come together safely.

The game's social aspect and ability to offer both competitive and casual play appealed to a wide audience, from retirees looking for a low-impact sport to younger adults seeking a fun way to stay active.

The sport's rapid growth was also fueled by its inclusivity.

Unlike many traditional sports, pickleball doesn't require significant prior athletic experience, making it accessible to a broader demographic. The ease with which new players can learn the game and start having fun almost immediately has led to a community-driven boom, with enthusiasts spreading the word and encouraging others to join in.

As a result, pickleball has transitioned from a niche activity to a mainstream sport. Its community of players has grown exponentially and is fostering a culture of health, wellness, and camaraderie that continues to thrive.

### **Will pickleball's growth continue?**

The continued growth of pickleball is a topic of much debate among sports enthusiasts and industry analysts. On one hand, the sport's rapid rise suggests that it has tapped into a genuine and enduring interest, with millions of new players picking up paddles each year.

Factors that contributed to its initial surge — such as its accessibility, low cost of entry, and broad appeal across age groups — remain strong, which bodes well for its sustained popularity.

Additionally, the sport's increasing visibility, with professional leagues, televised matches, and dedicated facilities being developed across the country, is helping to solidify its place in the American sports landscape.

As more people become aware of pickleball through these channels, it will likely continue to attract new players.

However, with the sport having grown so quickly in such a short period, some wonder whether it might eventually reach a point where the number of new players plateaus.

Another factor that could influence pickleball's future growth is the availability of space and resources. As the sport expands, the demand for courts and facilities could outpace supply, leading to overcrowded venues and potentially limiting opportunities for new players to join.

Communities and local governments must invest in building and maintaining sufficient infrastructure to support the growing pickleball community. Moreover, the sport's governing bodies and organizations must promote inclusivity, ensuring that pickleball remains accessible and appealing to a diverse range of players.

While there are valid concerns about the sustainability of pickleball's rapid growth, the sport's foundational strengths – and efforts to promote and develop it – suggest that it has the potential to continue thriving.

### **How you can get started in pickleball**

The first step is to find a local court, often located at community centers, parks, or even converted tennis courts. Many areas have growing pickleball communities, so joining a local club or group can be a great way to meet other players and learn the basics.

All you need is a pickleball paddle, a few balls, and a friend or two. Starter paddles and balls are inexpensive and can be found at most sporting goods stores or online, making it easy to start without a significant investment.

Once you have your gear, learning the rules and techniques is the next step.

Pickleball is a blend of elements from tennis, badminton, and ping pong, so if you've played any of these sports, you'll find some of the concepts familiar.

However, even if you're completely new to racket sports, pickleball's learning curve is still simple enough that many players can pick up the basics after just a few games.

Consider taking a beginner's class or watching instructional videos online to understand the fundamentals like serving, volleying, and scoring. As you gain confidence, practice with others, and participate in casual games, you'll quickly realize what makes pickleball so popular.