

**State Parks Recreation, and Travel Commission**  
**Wyndham, 2 Riverfront Place, North Little Rock, AR 72114**  
**March 21, 2019**

**Commissioners Present**

Jim Shamburger, Chair

Austin Albers

Bill Barnes

Jeff Baskin

Mike Gibson

John Gill

Ron Gossage

Shash Goyal

Eric Jackson

Weston Lewey

Montine McNulty

Cindy Smith

Mike Wilson

Randy Wolfinbarger

**Commissioners Absent**

Kalene Griffith, Vice Chair

Bob Knight

Ness Sechrest

**Department Staff Present**

Cynthia Dunlap, Interim Executive Director

Jim Dailey, Tourism Director

Grady Spann, State Parks Director

Shea Lewis, Deputy State Parks Director

Kristine Puckett, Deputy Tourism Director

Tammy Boyce, Tourism Director Assistant

Zoie Clift, Travel Writer

Kelly Farrell, Program Services Manager

Colton Faull, Public Information Technician

Marcel Hanzlik, Region 3 Supervisor

Kayla Hardage, Welcome Center Manager

Theresa Helliwell, Agency Controller

Joe Jacobs, Marketing & Revenue Manager

Leigha Jones, Tourism Development Consultant

Jeff King, Project Manager / Government Liaison

Jessica Ledbetter, Sales Manager

Kris Richardson, ADPT Executive Assistant

Randy Roberson, Planning & Development  
Manager

Monika Rued, Public Information Officer

Mike Wilson, Operations Manager

**CJRW**

Darin Gray

Chris Ho

Jennifer Morgan

Dalaney Thomas

Keegan Wright

**Miles Partnership**

Susie Kardas

Amanda Stewart

Ryan Thompson

**Guests**

Corey Boelkins, RaftUp

Brant Collins, Tiger Law

Lucian Gilliam

Claude Legris, Ft Smith Convention & Visitors

Bureau

Bill Ott, Eureka Springs Chamber of  
Commerce

Kevin Sexton, Hot Springs Village

Luke Story, AR Broadcasters

Scott Sudduth, NLR Convention & Visitors  
Bureau

**Call to Order**

Chair Jim Shamburger called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. Kris Richardson called roll.

**Approval of Agenda**

Jim Shamburger requested approval of agenda.

**Austin Albers moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mike Wilson seconded and the motion carried.**

**Presentation of the Minutes from Previous Meeting**

Jim Shamburger requested approval of the minutes from the March meeting.

**Randy Wolfinbarger moved to approve the minutes from the March 21 meeting as presented. Weston Lewey seconded and the motion carried.**

**FINANCIAL REPORT – February 28, 2019**

Theresa Helliwell presented the FY 2019 Year-to-Date financial report for the Eight (8) month period ending February 28, 2019.

FY 2019 Year-to-Date Expenditures were:

- Department Total - \$73,976,717 an increase of 3.42%
- Parks Division (including Construction and Grants) - \$59,518,766
- Tourism Division - \$9,770,738
- Keep Arkansas Beautiful - \$288,866

- Administration Division - \$2,519,503
- War Memorial - \$1,878,844

FY 2019 Year-to-Date Revenues were:

- Parks Division Operating Revenue - \$16,305,558 a decrease of 6.54%
- War Memorial Operating Revenue - \$1,167,370 a decrease of 24.24%
- 1/8% Tax Revenues - \$22,331,968 an increase of 2.23%
- 2% Gross Tax collections - \$11,866,045 an increase of 2.37%
- Grocery Store Wine Revenue - \$15,989 a decrease of 95.00%

\* Please Note: percentages (%) are in comparison to the same period in the prior fiscal year

**Austin Albers moved to approved the financial report as presented. Eric Jackson seconded and the motion carried.**

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **2019 SPRTC Schedule**

Cynthia Dunlap requested approval of the 2019 SPRTC meeting schedule that had been put on hold pending changes to the Arkansas Hospitality Association meeting schedule. The new dates for September meeting are September 25 – 26, 2019.

**Austin Albers moved to approve the dates of September 25-26 for September meeting, as presented with the 2019 schedule as follows:**

<b>Jan 16 – 17</b>	<b>SPRTC Meeting – Little Rock</b>
<b>Feb 24 – 27</b>	<b>Governor's Conference – Hot Springs</b>
<b>Mar 20 – 21</b>	<b>SPRTC Meeting – North Little Rock</b>
<b>Apr 17 – 18</b>	<b>SPRTC Meeting – Conway</b>
<b>May 15 – 16</b>	<b>SPRTC Meeting – Lake Dardanelle State Park, Russellville</b>
<b>Jun 19 – 20</b>	<b>SPRTC Meeting – Pine Bluff</b>
<b>Jul 17 – 18</b>	<b>SPRTC Meeting – Ozark Folk Center, Mt View</b>
<b>Aug 15 – 16*</b>	<b>SPRTC Meeting / Staff Appreciation Event – DeGray, Bismarck</b>
<b>Sept 25 -26*</b>	<b>SPRTC Meeting / AHA Event – Little Rock</b>
<b>Oct 16 – 17</b>	<b>SPRTC Meeting – Helena - West Helena</b>
<b>Nov 20 – 21</b>	<b>SPRTC Meeting – Jonesboro</b>

**Shash Goyal seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Legislative Session Update**

Cynthia Dunlap reported on the summary of the bills that are being tracked for the legislative session. Kris Richardson posted a report of approximately 125 bills that are being reviewed by staff. Some will have a direct impact on the Department while others merely need to be watched so that the agency is aware of their content. A major one that is being monitored closely is the final version of HB 1763 / Transformation Act of 2019 that has been presented. Other things being monitored are bills ranging from sales tax, human resources issues, and changes in policy. One thing that has not been corrected is the Wine Tourism funds. Funds that have been coming to Parks and Tourism are still coming to Parks, Heritage and Tourism, even though the Wine Council has been moved to the Department of Commerce. Correction has been requested with the Transformation Review Committee.

Montine McNulty gave a report on a few bills that she is working with such as HB 1390 / School Start Bill and HB 1823 / Requires all restaurant workers to get inoculated for Hepatitis A.

### **TOURISM DIVISION**

#### **Director's Report**

Jim Dailey talked about his and Kristine Puckett's visit to Central High School that morning to meet with Mayor Frank Scott, who was being interviewed about the U.S. Civil Rights Trail. Mayor Scott was speaking to national audiences regarding Civil Rights efforts via both radio and television.

Jim Dailey gave updates on his and Kristine Puckett's Welcome Center visits that have taken place since January. He gave a brief overview of staff changes. Tamora Williams' last day was March 14; she was with Sales. She has taken a job with the Department of Health. He stressed the need for her replacement. Melissa Conley has replaced Harrison Maddox in Communications as Digital Content Specialist.

Claude Legris with the Fort Smith Convention & Visitors Bureau gave an overview of what's going on with the U.S. Marshals Museum. The tax did not pass; fundraising efforts are happening to complete the structure.

#### **Advertising Committee**

Austin Albers gave a brief summary on the Advertising Committee meeting with CJRW/Miles staff on March 20, where they presented an overview of the analytics reported on a monthly basis to Arkansas Tourism staff and commissioners. The presentation included definitions of terms used in reports. They also gave insight on how the agency monitors and adjusts elements

of the website and digital ads on a daily basis to optimize the website's value to the state and industry partners. The dashboard tool used by agency and Arkansas Tourism staff was shared with commissioners

### **Arkansas Governor's Conference on Tourism**

Kristine Puckett reflected on the partnership Arkansas Tourism has with CJRW/Miles and how effective the relationship is in its efforts to promote Arkansas. Governor's Conference was a huge success and there has been good feedback on the conference. One of the biggest things to come out of the conference was ArkTank. She invited the winner, Corey Boelkins from RaftUp, to speak about the impact it has already had on his business. He said it's been great exposure, they have already been in touch with several businesses and are growing their board of advisors.

### **Travel Guide Update**

Kristine Puckett gave an update on the new Travel Guide that has been produced, for which positive feedback has been received.

### **Sales**

Jessica Ledbetter talked about the international travel efforts being pursued. She talked briefly about her trip to Myrtle Beach for Travel South, February 14-18, and how they sold Arkansas to the crowd. Several countries, such as Australia and the United Kingdom, promoted Arkansas to people in their communities through trade shows, digital media, and travel guides.

### **Advertising**

Darin Gray introduced Ryan Thompson with Miles Partnership, who has replaced Bobby Taylor. Ryan Thompson gave an overview of his background. His focus is on how consumers can connect with brands and building the product.

Chris Ho and Susie Kardas gave an update on Arkansas.com and its analytic platform. They introduced a new definitions feature to help commissioners further understand what analytics are being monitored, evaluated and reported.

Dalaney Thomas gave an update on the Road Trip giveaway promotion. She informed the commission that 75% of the entries they have received are from 49 other states.

Chris Ho talked about the retirement/relocation marketing efforts.

**Miscellaneous**

Cindy Smith advised she had received a request from Greg Zonner with the Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum (AIMM) for assistance with signage for AIMM with the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

**John Gill moved to create a resolution that the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission request that the Arkansas Department of Transportation Commission erect appropriate signage on I-30 in Little Rock for the vessels/Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.**

**RESOLUTION**

Whereas The USS Hoga is a national historic landmark and

Whereas The USS Razorback is a national historic site and

Whereas Visitors from 88 foreign countries and all 50 states have visited these unique tourism attractions, which can be found nowhere else in the US,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission requests that the Arkansas Department of Transportation Commission erect appropriate signage on I-30 in Little Rock for the vessels/Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum

That the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission is pleased to adopt and approve this resolution on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of March, 2019.

STATE PARKS RECREATION AND TRAVEL COMMISSION

/ S / James D "Jim" Shamburger Jr, Chair

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND TOURISM

/ S / Cynthia Dunlap, Interim Executive Director

**PARKS DIVISION**

**Director's Report**

### **CY 2019 Fees and Rates - Public Meeting**

Grady Spann opened the meeting at 10:30 am to receive any comments from the public regarding the proposed CY 19 Fees and Rates for Arkansas State Parks. No comments were received prior to or during the public meeting. Discussion ensued.

### **Certificate of Appreciation**

Grady Spann requested the approval for a Certificate of Appreciation for Mary Rasori for over 21 years of dedicated service to Arkansas State Parks.

**Ron Gossage moved to approve a certificate of appreciation for Mary Rasori for 21 years of service to Arkansas State Parks. Shash Goyal seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Miscellaneous**

Joe Jacobs spoke about a bill sponsored by Senator Missy Irvin, SB 388 / "Concerning Bicycle Safety; to allow Bicyclist to Yield at Stop Signs and Red Lights under Certain Circumstances; and to amend the Law Concerning the Use of Bicycles, Electric Bicycles, and Animals on Public Roads." SB 388, if passed, will increase Arkansas's ranking with the League of American Cyclists. SB 388 has passed the Arkansas Senate and the Arkansas House of Representatives and is currently awaiting Governor Hutchison's approval. Jacobs thanked the Commission for their support. Grady Spann noted SB 388 is significant for Arkansas Tourism with the increase and the growth in cycling in the state.

Grady Spann mentioned the article "Observations of Townsend's Solitaires (Myadestes Townsend) on Mount Magazine in Logan County, Arkansas" (Simons, Don R. and Smith, Kimberly G. (2018), Journal of the Arkansas Academy of Science: Vol. 72, Article 28). Don Simons is a treasure for Arkansas State Parks (ASP) and has been recognized statewide and nationally for birding. Spann asked Shea Lewis to highlight the Economic Impact of Birding article.

Shea Lewis mentioned the importance of Don Simon's article to ASP. The parks are living breathing spaces and unique things occur in the parks. Without park staff there to observe and notice the changes and record species visiting the parks, these changes would not be known. It is important for park staff to document the sightings in the Natural Resource Inventory Database (NRID). Don Simon's article was published in a scientific journal; the work of our park staff is published nationwide.

Lewis highlighted a recent article "Birding (Yes, Birding) is a multi-billion-dollar ecotourism industry" (Withrow, The Daily Beast, January 18, 2019). The article stated, estimates of over

\$800 billion spent yearly in outdoor recreation in the United States with birding's economic benefit estimated at \$41 billion dollars and \$17.3 billion dollars spent annually in wildlife-trip-related expenses with more than 20 million people taking birding-specific trips in the United States.

Grady Spann remarked he shared this article for a specific reason, a bill was introduced that would give the commissioner of lands the ability to sell state lands. ASP was concerned because this would take the SPRTC out of the process to authorize ASP to purchase or sell lands and the A.C.A. 22-4-106 process. When Spann visited with the senator, his remarks were that the state has millions of acres that are only good for birds to land on and the birds can land anywhere. Spann said this concerns him because part of the ASP mission is conservation and ASP needs to protect the lands. ASP needs to educate the legislators on the economic impact of the areas that add value to the state of Arkansas. Another bill, HB 1309, is for protecting resources, an Act to create the Arkansas nighttime environment protections act protecting dark sky. Discussion ensued.

Spann highlighted the article "Former police officer, ex-superintendent of Crater of Diamonds park to manage Little Rock's War Memorial Stadium" (Roberts, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, February 9, 2019). ASP is happy to have Justin Dorsey back on the team. Spann commented that Dorsey is well connected to the media. Spann noted the new field has been installed at War Memorial Stadium.

Spann mentioned the article "Green Commitment Funding legacy supports state parks" (Waldon, Arkansas Business, February 18, 2019). A good opportunity to highlight what ASP is investing in and where the 1/8 cent or Amendment 75 funds are being invested in state parks. Park staff discussed Delta Heritage Trail State Park and included projects in other parks as well. However, the article focused on the DHTSP. Spann noted Jeff King and Jordan Thomas provided a lot of the data and information for this article.

Spann highlighted the recent article, "DeGray Lake Resort State Park takes 'Top Chef' honors" (The Sentinel-Record, February 25, 2019). DeGray was excited to win this year's competition. Spann remarked he would make sure SPRTC would receive the date for next year's competition. DeGray Lake Resort State Park's new menu item was a coffee encrusted duck. Discussion followed.

Shea Lewis provided an update for the National Association of State Parks Directors conference that will be held in Rogers and Bentonville, Arkansas in September 2019. Our conference team is working to organize and plan the conference. The final schedule will be ready this week and we will start placing deposits and signing contracts. Spann noted the board is so excited to visit



Arkansas and see what we have to offer that they have asked our team to find Arkansas keynote speakers for the conference. Discussion ensued

### **Crowley's Ridge – Use Permit Agreement Renewal; Western Greene County Fire District**

Randy Roberson requested approval to renew the Use Permit Agreement with The Western Greene County Fires District. In March 2014, ASP granted a Use Permit Agreement to the Western Greene County Fire District allowing the installation of a dry hydrant at Crowley's Ridge State Park. The dry hydrant water delivery system is located adjacent to Walcott Lake and is used for fire protection and fire protection training. The Use Permit Agreement is expiring and ASP recommends renewing for another five-year term.

**Austin Albers made a motion to approve the renewal Use Permit Agreement for The Western Greene County Fire District and Arkansas State Parks as follows: The Western Greene County Fire District is allowed to provide and maintain a dry hydrant located in the Northwest Quarter of Section Four, Township Sixteen North, Range Four East, Greene County, Arkansas.**

**Weston Lewey seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Hampson Archeological Museum State Park – Approval to Exercise the Purchase Option and Exchange for New Museum**

Randy Roberson reported the third appraisal for the new Hampson Archeological Museum building was received on February 12, 2019, from Ferstl Valuation Service. Per confirmation with Jason West, Executive Manager of the Lawrence Group on March 6, 2019, The Lawrence Group accepts the Fair Market Value prepared by Ferstl Valuation Services of \$4,510,000. ASP requests approval to exercise the purchase option for the new museum at Hampson Archeological Museum State Park, per the executed lease agreement dated February 12, 2015, and according to Item 10, Special Provisions, (j), ASP must seek approval of the SPRTC to exercise the purchase option. Discussion ensued. Spann remarked, the next step will be Governor Hutchison's approval to purchase 2.3 acres on the new site. Discussion followed.

**John Gill moved for Arkansas State Parks to exercise the purchase option per the executed lease agreement dated February 12, 2015, and according to Item 10, Special Provisions, (j) for the Hampson Museum Archeological Museum State Park located in Wilson, Arkansas. Eric Jackson seconded and the motion carried.**

**Lake Charles State Park - Preliminary Approval for Property Acquisition**

Randy Roberson requested SPRTC preliminary approval to pursue the A.C.A. 22-4-106 process for a small strip of land adjacent to the park owned by Kenny Whisnant and Michael Alan Sloan, Lake Charles State Park, Powhatan, Arkansas, Lawrence County as follows:

The property includes approximately 2.28 acre strip of land adjacent to Lake Charles State Park; acquisition of this property will control any potential development of this land between the park boundary and property controlled by Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. Discussion ensued.

**Bill Barnes moved for preliminary approval to pursue the A.C.A. 22-4-106 process for the Whisnant and Sloan property as follows:**

**Approximately 2.28 acres adjacent to Lake Charles State Park property**

**Shash Goyal seconded and the motion carried.**

**Delta Heritage Trail State Park Historical Marker – Yancopin Trail Head Site**

Randy Roberson reported a request has been made by Darlene Stevens, Secretary of Desha Historical Society, for site approval to place a historical marker at the Yancopin Trail Head site at no cost to ADPT. Desha Historical Society will apply for a matching funds grant with Department of Arkansas Heritage-Arkansas Historical Marker Program (DAH). This program seeks to acknowledge the historical significance of people, places, and events that have shaped the state and confirm the importance of educating the public about these Arkansas treasures on the Delta Heritage Trail State Park (DHT) in eastern Arkansas.

**John Gill moved to approve the historical marker as follows:**

**Delta Heritage Trail State Park – Desha Historical Society and Department of Arkansas Heritage-Arkansas Historical Marker Program to place a historical marker on the Delta Heritage Trail at the Yancopin Trail Head. Randy Wolfinbarger seconded and the motion carried.**

**Structure Removals**

**Devil's Den State Park**

Randy Roberson reported structures:

Well House (Building Bo. 16.35/AASIS No. 120005782) is a 68 square foot wooden structure with asphalt shingle roof that was used for several years as a pump house. It is no longer needed due to park connecting with the rural water department in 2007.

Storage Building (Building No. 16.49/AASIS No. 120005768) is a 96 square foot wooden building on rock pier foundation with asphalt shingled room constructed in the 1970's. The building has become obsolete and is no longer being utilized.

### **Lake Charles State Park**

Randy Roberson reported the Nature Center (Building No. 24.03/ASSIS No. 120005873) is an 840 square foot masonry structure with pitched shingled room over a flat roof built that was constructed circa 1963. The original use of this building was a bathhouse serving bathers and a snack bar. The bathhouse was later converted for use as a nature center. The building has outlived its usefulness.

### **Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park**

Randy Roberson reported structures:

Stearman Residence (Building No. 45.53/AASIS No. 120006440) is part of Tract #12 acquisition that was purchased with the assistance of the American Battlefield Protection program in January 2000. Of the 95.34 acres that were acquired, the property also included a 3,445 square foot brick and frame residence and a small brick well house adjacent to the structure that does not have a building number. The main residential structure was vacated in 2017 due to the presence of black mold as well as major plumbing issues and foundation failure.

780 square foot wood framed two car garage (Building No. 45.54/AASIS No. 120006441)

135 square foot storage building adjacent to the residence (Building No. 45.55/AASIS No. 120006442)

768 square foot antique/craft house (Building No. 45.57/AASIS No. 120006444) that was utilized as a guest house.

Removal of all structures are consistent with the intent and purpose of the American Battlefield Protection program to restore the property prior to the battle. The approved Prairie Grove Battlefield Master Plan also call for removal of these structures. These structure serve no purpose to the park's mission or management plan.

**Shash Goyal moved to approve based on the information presented; the Commission finds the following structures obsolete, notwithstanding the insured value and approves the removal from Arkansas State Park inventory as follows:**

**Devil's Den State Park Well House (Building Bo. 16.35/AASIS No. 120005782)  
and Storage Building (Building No. 16.49/AASIS No. 120005768)**

**Lake Charles State Park Nature Center (Building No. 24.03/ASSIS No.  
120005873)**

**Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park Stearman Residence (Building No.  
45.53/AASIS No. 120006440), 780 square foot wood framed two car garage  
(Building No. 45.54/AASIS No. 120006441), 135 square foot storage building  
(Building No. 45.55/AASIS No. 120006442), and 768 square foot antique/craft  
house (Building No. 45.57/AASIS No. 120006444)**

**Austin Albers seconded and the motion carried.**

Grady Spann provided an update on the Tanyard Springs property on Petit Jean. ASP has received approval from the governor to proceed and anticipates favorable review from Legislative Council in May. Funding could be a challenge and park staff are looking at different types of funding sources for the purchase. If approved, where this property fits in the timeline for acquiring and managing effectively could be an issue. ASP is looking at phasing in acquisition of other properties. John Gill is concerned about the purchase process without the owner not aware its being discussed. Spann noted this is the process that is required by state laws and the A.C.A. 22-4-106 process. Unless the property owner comes to ASP willingly, this is the process to use.

Spann remarked several people have inquired about the Petit Jean Visitor Center and when the existing structures would be removed. July of 2019, the contract will be finalized for maximum price on the alternative delivery contract. Demolition in July or August of 2019. Construction is tentatively planned to begin on October 2019 and completion scheduled by December 2020 with installation of the furnishings and exhibits in January through February 2021. Anticipated opening for the new Visitor Center in March of 2021. Discussion followed.

### **Law Enforcement**

#### **Park Law Enforcement Association Awards**

Fougerousse reported ASP attends the Park Law Enforcement Association (PLEA) Conference, which includes training that park staff takes back to share with the other rangers. This is the second year in a row that ASP has received the highest award, The President's Award; and ASP has been recognized for the past three years. This year Brad DePriest was recognized at the

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national level as the Distinguished Service Award officer of the year. PLEA includes all parks in the nation; so Arkansas continues to be recognized at the national level. Discussion ensued.

**Adjournment**

The State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission adjourned at 11:52 am on March 21, 2019, at the Wyndham Riverfront, #2 Riverfront Place, North Little Rock, AR.