

**State Parks Recreation and Travel Commission
Dumas Community Center, 18 Belmont St, Dumas, AR 71639
October 17 - 18, 2018**

Commissioners Present

Jim Shamburger, Chair - Oct 17, 18
Austin Albers - Oct 17, 18
Bill Barnes - Oct 17, 18
Jeff Baskin - Oct 17, 18
John Gill - Oct 17, 18

Ron Gossage - Oct 17, 18
Eric Jackson - Oct 17, 18
Bob Knight - Oct 17, 18
Montine McNulty - Oct 17, 18
Cindy Smith - Oct 17, 18

Commissioners Absent

Danny Ford
Kalene Griffith, Vice Chair
Shash Goyal
Weston Lewey

Ness Sechrest
Mike Wilson
Randy Wolfinbarger

Department Staff Present

Grady Spann, Director, Arkansas State Parks
Jim Dailey, Tourism Director
Shea Lewis, Deputy Director, State Parks
Kristine Puckett, Deputy Director, Tourism
Cynthia Dunlap, Director Central Admin
Kim Williams, Director Great River Road
Theresa Helliwell, Agency Controller
Joy Barlogie, Tourism Development Manager
Kris Richardson, ADPT Executive Assistant
Randy Roberson, Planning & Dev Manager
Joe Jacobs, Marketing and Revenue Manager

Kelly Farrell, Program Services Manager
Marcel Hanzlik, Region 3 Supervisor
Jeff King, Parks Project Manager
Angela Allen, Administrative Analyst
Jessica Ledbetter, Group Travel Manager
Kayla Hardage, Welcome Center
Administrator
LaJeana Carroll, Executive Assistant, Parks
Division
Susan Brewczynski, Tourism Director
Assistant

CJRW

Jennifer Morgan
Delanie Thompson

Chris Ho
Keegan Wright

Miles Media

Susie Kardas

Bobby Taylor

Guests

Judy Day – Dumas Chamber of Commerce

Call to Order

Chair Jim Shamburger called the meeting to order at 2:15 pm on Wednesday, October 17, 2018.
Kris Richardson called roll.

Approval of Agenda

Jim Shamburger requested approval of the agenda.

Eric Jackson moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Cindy Smith seconded and the motion carried.

Presentation of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Jim Shamburger requested approval of the Minutes from the September meeting.

Eric Jackson moved to approve the Minutes from the September 19-20 meeting. Austin Albers seconded and the motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT – September 30, 2018

Cynthia Dunlap presented the year-to-date financial report for the period ended September 30, 2018. The expenditures were - Parks Division, \$26,550,669 - including Construction and Grants; Tourism Division, \$3,615,309; Keep Arkansas Beautiful, \$84,610; Administration Division, \$1,013,549; War Memorial, \$635,393. YTD expenditures for the Department totaled \$31,899,530 an increase of 12.04% over the same period FY18. The year-to-date revenues included - Operating Revenue for Parks Division of \$8,039,095 a decrease of (8.27)% over the same period FY18; War Memorial Operating Revenue of \$512,522 a decrease of (52.01)% over the same period FY18; 1/8% Tax Revenues of \$8,509,540 an increase of 3.54% over the same period FY18; 2% Gross Tax collections of \$5,167,655 an increase of 0.19% over the same period FY18; and Grocery store wine income revenue of \$9,206. **

**Note: Grocery store wine income is a new revenue source that represents Parks and Tourism's portion of revenue generated from retail off-premises permits for the sale of wine at grocery stores - established by Act 508 of 2017.

Austin Albers moved to approve the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism Financial Report as presented. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.

FY 2017 ADPT Audit Report

Cynthia Dunlap presented the findings for the ADPT 2017 Audit Report and reported there were four audit findings that have been addressed with corrective measures put in place.

Montine McNulty moved to approve the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism FY 2017 Audit Report as presented. Eric Jackson seconded and the motion carried.

McNulty requested interim reports on the progress as ADPT continues to work on controls for War Memorial Stadium.

PARKS DIVISION

Parks Directors Report

Grady Spann presented an overview of the 47th annual Arkansas State Park Superintendent's Conference held at Mount Magazine State Park on September 25 thru 27, 2018. The Regional Supervisors planned the Annual Conference with suggestions from the Superintendents to address leadership, communication needs, and issues in the parks. Thank you to the Commissioners who were able to attend; make plans to attend the 2019 conference at the Ozark Folk Center State Park.

Certificates of Appreciation

Grady Spann requested approval for a certificate of appreciation for Sue Pogue, Marina Manager at Millwood State Park, with 29 years of dedicated service to Arkansas State Parks.

John Gill moved to approve a certificate of appreciation for Sue Pogue with 29 years of service with Arkansas State Park. Austin Albers seconded and the motion passed.

Grady Spann requested approval for a certificate of appreciation for Mary Gillihan, Interpreter at Ozark Folk Center State Park, with 44 years of dedicated service to Arkansas State Parks.

John Gill moved to approve a certificate of appreciation for Mary Gillihan with 44 years of service with Arkansas State Park. Eric Jackson seconded and the motion passed.

FY 2018 ASP Park of the Year Awards

Grady Spann reported the Park of the Year (POY) selection process changed this year to include the park planners and sections managers who attended the regional sessions and voted on the regional POY. Superintendents Annual Conference attendees submitted their vote for the ASP Park of the Year.

PARK OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS

FY 18 Park of the Year, Region 1 - Lake Catherine State Park

FY 18 Park of the Year, Region 2 - Toltec Mounds Archeological State Park

FY 18 Park of the Year, Region 3 - Lake Frierson State Park

FY 18 Park of the Year, Region 4 - Moro Bay State Park

FY 18 Park of the Year, Region 5 - DeGray Lake Resort State Park

FY 18 Park of the Year - DeGray Lake Resort State Park

Miscellaneous

Grady Spann announced the Crater of Diamonds State Park Diamond Statistics Report for September 2018 included a 2.63 carat diamond that was found in the park by a visitor from Colorado. However, the guest wished to remain anonymous and requested her name not be reported.

Spann reported the article "Crews readying new Wilson Museum Archaeological facility spotlights thousands of centuries-old Delta artifacts" (Roberts, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, September 2, 2018). Spann reported how proud he was of the job by park staff and Kelly Farrell's team. This is an exceptional museum and a great addition to The Delta telling Arkansas's story of Native American history. The museum will host a soft opening reception on October 25, 2018, and will open to the public on October 26, 2018. The dedication-ribbon cutting will be on November 15, 2018.

Spann commented on the photograph "Hogs, Rebels to tangle in LR" (Sykes, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, September 11, 2018). War Memorial Stadium (WMS) staff received training to learn how to paint the field for football games; resulting in savings of \$8,000 per Razorback game for the department. WMS staff is doing a great job maintaining the stadium.

Spann mentioned the article "Arkansas Sightseeing: World War I hero Davis honored with state park" (Schnedler, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, September 18, 2018). Herman Davis was recognized for his service during World War I; he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and three awards from the French government. Following his death, Arkansas schoolchildren collected pennies and coins to help finance the obelisk and statue. Herman Davis State Park was Arkansas's sixth state park and it is also the smallest state park.

Spann remarked related to the article "Delta Trail offers chance to walk, run, or ride the old train route" (Deary, Hot Springs Sentinel-Record, September 25, 2018). The article is a guest review of the Delta Heritage Trail State Park rail-to-trail conversion between Helena Junction and Elaine consisting of 21 miles compacted gravel. Once complete, the Delta Heritage Trail will consist of 84.46 mile trail from Lexa to Arkansas City and be composed of compacted gravel to Rohwer and continue along the Mississippi River Levee to Arkansas City.

Spann mentioned the article “Arkansas Sightseeing: Roughing it in a camper cabin” (Schnedler, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, September 25, 2018). ASP currently has camper cabins in two parks; average occupancy rate for Lake Ouachita State Park is 58% and Devil’s Den State Park is 51%. A rustic experience for an affordable rate. Spann noted ASP plans to add camper cabins to other state parks in the future because they are popular with guests.

Grady Spann reported State Parks Recreation and Travel Commission (SPRTC) approved the naming of the Arkansas City Trailhead during the August 16, 2018, meeting. Park staff later discovered the proposed naming will not fall within guidelines until Robert Moore Jr. is 75, Spann has requested the SPRTC amend the motion to postpone until January 1, 2020. Discussion ensued.

Cindy Smith moved to amend the August 16, 2018, State Park Recreation and Travel Commission motion to name the Arkansas City Trailed at Delta Heritage Trail State Park the “Robert S. Moore Jr. Trailhead” effective January 1, 2020. Eric Jackson seconded and the motion carried.

Parks Committee Update

Eric Jackson summarized the Parks Committee meeting stating that Arkansas State Parks (ASP) revenue is soft across the system. September was a wet month and ASP is comparing to September 2017, the best September ever recorded. Miles reported the web traffic conversions are up. Park staff reported they will have to bid the reservation system through an RFP with an invitation to bid. The Razorback game was hosted at War Memorial Stadium on October 13, 2018. It was a very wet day and the golf course suffered significant damage. ASP will work with the City of Little Rock to repair the damages. Kelly Farrell presented the interpretation seasonal report and highlighted the variety of programs, events, and workshops held in the parks and in the communities. The Law Enforcement Officers report included 32 agency assists and six searches with four that ended well. Uniform park staff are first responders all across the state in remote areas. The significant personnel developments included new hires and key vacancies for parks.

Logoly - Use Permit Agreement

Randy Roberson requested approval for a use permit request from David Braswell for use of an existing, unpaved road that provides access to his personal property located adjacent to the park. The existing road extends from County Road 47 and crosses park land to reach his property. The proposed Use Permit Agreement will allow Mr. Braswell to access the property and allow him to make improvements to the portion of unnamed road located between County Road 47 and his property (approximately 75 feet). Mr. Braswell intends to repair the worn

roadbed and install gravel at his expense. Staff recommends granting the Use Permit Agreement.

Eric Jackson moved to approve the Use Permit Agreement for David Braswell for the location as follows: One And One-Half (1 1/2) Acres Described As Beginning At The Southwest Corner Of Section 16, Run Thence South 88 Degrees 04 Minutes East 545 Feet, Thence North 1 Degree 08 Minutes East 119.88 Feet, Thence North 88 Degrees 04 Minutes West 545 Feet, Thence South 1 Degree 08 Minutes West 19.88 Feet To The Point Of Beginning, All Being In Section 16, Township 16 South, Range 20 West, Columbia County, Arkansas. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.

Hampson Museum Update

Randy Roberson reported the ASP ordered appraisal came in at \$3.6 million. The Lawrence Group disagreed and ordered their appraisal. The Lawrence Group's appraisal included the furniture, fixtures, and equipment items within the museum. A separate appraisal was done for the value of the real property of both the old site and new site without regard to the improvements to the land (museum buildings). The Lawrence Group is requesting that ASP pay appraised price of the combined ASP appraisal of \$3,600,000, the Lawrence Group appraisal of \$1,100,000 and the land appraisal of \$14,000 for a total of \$4,714,000. ASP recommends a third appraisal be ordered from a different appraisal company to get the value for purchase price. Discussion ensued.

The Hampson consummated lease dated March 16, 2015, states lessor grants lessee an option to purchase the premises for a purchase price based upon fair market value at the time of the purchase, mutually agreed by both parties and the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission. Upon timely execution of this purchase option, each of the parties shall promptly execute any and all further instruments or other documents which may be reasonably required for purchase of the premises. Lessee shall obtain the fair market value appraisal of the premises. Discussion ensued.

Eric Jackson moved for the State Parks Recreation and Travel Commission to appoint Commissioners Danny Ford, Cindy Smith, and John Gill to meet with Gaylon Lawrence and applicable park staff for a discussion. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.

CIP Quarterly Report

Randy Roberson reported the CIP quarterly report reflects 36 methods of finance are open for the 232 projects underway with \$66,317,713 funds remaining; with two methods of finance

closed and \$38,064,744 expended. The Amendment 75 expenditures to date shows \$162,773,371 million in projects completed with \$25,968,866 in projects currently underway.

Delta Heritage Trail; Structure Removals

Randy Roberson reported park staff has requested approval to remove two structures from the park's inventory at Watson, AR as follows:

Storage Shed (Building No. 15.27/AASIS No. 120007778) is a 150 square foot structure acquired with the Union Pacific Railroad property that comprises Delta Heritage Trail State Park. The date of its construction is unknown but it may have been constructed circa 1970. It is in an advanced state of deterioration and needs to be removed from inventory. The building is not being utilized and costs to repair outweigh the cost of removal.

Residence Watson (Building No. 15.07/AASIS No. 120005719) is a small residential structure acquired with the Union Pacific Railroad property that comprises Delta Heritage Trail State Park. The date of its construction is unknown but, based on its design and construction materials, is thought to date circa 1920-1930. The structure does not appear on the Missouri Pacific Track and Right of Way map dated June 30, 1918 which includes updates through August 10, 1972. This may indicate it was moved in from another location. It is in an advanced state of deterioration and needs to be removed from inventory.

Montine McNulty moved based on the information presented; the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission finds the following structure Delta Heritage Trail State Park Storage Shed (Building No. 15.27/AASIS No. 120007778) and Residence Watson (Building No. 15.07/AASIS No. 120005719) are obsolete notwithstanding the insured value and approves the removal from Arkansas State Park inventory. Eric Jackson seconded and the motion carried.

State Parks and Recreation Foundation of Arkansas Update

John Gill reported the State Parks and Recreation Foundation of Arkansas is a nonprofit formed in May of 2017, whose mission is to support, protect, enhance and add value to places that provide exceptional recreation experience and build on the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps by providing a conduit and opportunity for giving back and expediting development for today's generation. To date the foundation has received \$3,016,000 in donations. The foundation has contracted the Arkansas High Country Bicycle Project which will be a 1,171 mile

Global Positioning System (GPS) bicycle route across the state, which will include places to eat and stay. Other contracted projects include East Trail at Hobbs 14 miles with a tunnel under Arkansas Highway 12 and a bridge, Allsop Park north gateway project that will connect several communities through the park, and funds to raise the Louisiana Purchase monument and put the monument on a foundation. In addition, designers have been selected to design 100 miles of mountain bike trails (MBT) in seven state parks that will be known as the Monument Trails. Another foundation objective is to aid ASP with providing funds to purchase property and to hold the property for State Parks until the state property purchasing process is complete. Gill announced Jim Shamburger was selected as the new chairman of the board of trustees for the State Parks and Recreation Foundation of Arkansas.

Jim Shamburger thanked John Gill for his service as chairman of the foundation and praised his efforts this past year for providing the leadership in establishing the foundation.

Razorback Game Report

Shea Lewis presented photos of the Arkansas vs Ole Miss football game held at War Memorial Stadium on September 13. This game was the third Razorback football game played at WMS since the stadium was transferred to ADPT. Lewis noted this has been a learning process and it takes a team to successfully manage an event of this size. The real victory is the success of the event and how this has brought the department together.

ASP Interpretation Quarterly Report

Kelly Farrell reported between the months of January thru August of 2018, 25,381 programs were given to 341,000 people. The programs consisted of day camps, daily programs, summer holiday weekend programs, explorers, and workshops. Farrell acknowledged Robin Gabe and her efforts compiling the numbers for this report. Other programs include accredited workshops for educators, and statewide mandated programs for clean-up with Keep Arkansas Beautiful. Farrell also included a summary of the Annual Interpreters workshop held in August.

Jim Shamburger thanked the Arkansas State Park's staff for hosting the activities and meals at Cane Creek State Park for the SPRTC and ADPT staff.

TOURISM DIVISION

Director's Report

Jim Dailey advised he was impressed was with the Cane Creek State Park Halloween display tour taken previous evening. Dailey discussed the opportunity for tourism promotion if crowd control logistics could be resolved. Discussion ensued.

Dailey advised that he will be introducing Rodney Slater, former Secretary of Transportation, at the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission annual conference in West Memphis, October 23-25, 2018.

Dailey stated that the name of the Group Travel section has been changed to Tourism Sales section to better reflect the section's job duties. He also introduced the new Sales Manager, Jessica Ledbetter. In addition, Dailey announced the resignations of Mary Osteen and Susan Brewczynski from the Tourism division.

Dailey stated that the Harrison Welcome Center official opening is scheduled for November 2, at 11:00 am and everyone is invited.

Governor's Conference Update

Kristine Puckett reported a change in venue and date for the Governor's Conference on Tourism which was initially scheduled to be held over March 3-5, 2019 in El Dorado. However, due to an unforeseen inability for the host city to secure the required number of sleeping rooms for the conference, the event has been relocated to Hot Springs, along with new date scheduled for February 24-26, 2019. Discussion ensued. Puckett requested a motion for approval to change the location and date to accommodate the conference needs.

Bill Barnes moved to approve relocating the 45th annual Governor's Conference on Tourism to Hot Springs, February 24-26, 2019. Eric Jackson seconded and the motion carried.

Communications Report

Kim Williams presented the new Tourism road bike jersey, noting jerseys are available in the Little Rock gift shop. Discussion ensued.

Williams mentioned that Peter Hannaford from the United Kingdom is a new international partner and discussed the familiarization tour that covered the entire state of Arkansas, September 11-17, 2018.

Williams reported that the King Biscuit Blues Festival was held in Helena over October 4-7, 2018 and was a success.

Williams announced the Johnny Cash Heritage Festival is slated to be held in Dyess over October 18-20, 2018.

Great River Road Update

Kim Williams reported that Arkansas will host the annual National Mississippi River Parkway Conference over October 23-25, 2018 in West Memphis. Williams and staff are looking forward to hosting the group in West Memphis.

Website Metrics Update

Bobby Taylor presented the Arkansas.com metrics update. He mentioned that organic traffic has slowed down due to Google changing its algorithms. He stated that the focus has been a shift from quantity of content to quality of content on Arkansas.com.

Chris Ho mentioned that the effectiveness of the tourism ads is increasing.

Taylor mentioned that although the traffic has decreased, the conversion rate has increased; meaning that the site is doing more with less. He showed that the e-newsletter subscriptions and travel guide requests have increased. Discussion ensued.

Taylor stated that partner referrals on the site are down by half, noting that the commitment of Miles to improve these numbers is strong. Discussion ensued.

Special Order of Business; Committee Formed to Nominate 2019 Chair and Vice Chair

Jim Shamburger stated that he requested Bob Knight and Montine McNulty report back to the Commission next month with nominations for SPRTC Chair and Vice Chair for 2019.

Adjournment

The State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission adjourned at 10:00 am on October 18, at the Dumas Community Center, Dumas, AR.