

State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission
Quality Inn, Harrison Arkansas
Thursday, May 21, 2015

Commissioners Present

Mike Mills, Chairman
LeRoy Dangeau

Weston Lewey
Jim Shamburger
Cindy Smith
Randy Wolfinbarger

Jay Bunyard
John Gill
Shash Goyal
Montine McNulty
Bill Barnes
Mike Wilson

Commissioners Absent

Danny Ford
Ness Sechrest
Jim Dailey

Jim Gaston
Bob Knight
Mark Givens

Department Staff Present

Richard Davies, Executive Director
Cynthia Dunlap, Director of Administration
Greg Butts, Director, Arkansas State Parks
Joe David Rice, Tourism Director
Ron Maxwell, Deputy Tourism Director
Gloria Robins, Executive Assistant
Jon Brown, Park Operations Manager
Randy Roberson, Planning & Development Manager
Kelly Farrell, Administrator of Program Services
Joe Jacobs, Marketing & Revenue Manager
Joan Ellison, Public Information Coordinator
Monica Rued, Public Information Officer
Leah DiPietro, Communications Manager
Kristine Puckett, Tourism Development Manager
Kris Richardson, Administrative Specialist, Parks Division
Erik Holbrooks, Administrative Specialist, Tourism Division
Marcel Hanzlik, Region 3 Supervisor
Shea Lewis, Region 4 Supervisor

Aristotle

Marla Johnson
Laura Kirk
Jennifer Pepper
Whitney Bailey

Hallie Shoffner
Matt McClellan
Adrian James

CJRW

Shelby Woods
Darin Gray
Joy Phillips
Jennifer Morgan
Amy Turpin

Wayne Woods
Brian Clark
Bill Fitzgerald
Brandi Childress

Guests

Kelly Link, State Representative
Steve Arrison, Hot Springs CVB
Lynette Xanders, Wild Alchemy
Jesse Cox, Prairie Grove Superintendent
Kym Hughes, Fayetteville CVB
Matt Bell, Harrison CVB
Norma Sims, Harrison CVB
Tess Constant, Eureka Springs Intern
Bill Ott, Eureka Springs
Karen Pryor, Eureka Springs
Hailey Harrell, Little Rock CVB
Kalene Griffith, Visit Bentonville
Josh Curtis, Governor's Liaison

Roll Call

Chairman Mike Mills called the meeting to order at 8:00 am on Thursday, May 21, 2015.
Gloria Robins called the roll.

Recognition of Guests

Chairman Mills recognized the guests that were in attendance.

Welcome

Matt Bell welcomed everyone to Harrison, Arkansas.

Approval of the Agenda

Cindy Smith asked to add the Song of Arkansas Contest to the Communications Section Report.

Cindy Smith moved to approve the amended agenda to include the Song of Arkansas contest. Mike Wilson seconded and the motion carried.

Presentation of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Jim Shamburger moved to approve the Minutes from the April meeting as presented. Shash Goyal seconded and the motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Cynthia Dunlap presented the year-to-date financial report for the period ended April 30, 2015. The expenditures were: Parks Division, \$62,270,445; including construction and grants; Tourism Division, \$13,329,076; Keep Arkansas Beautiful, \$455,350; Administration Division, \$2,608,746; and History Commission, \$1,575,298. Expenditures for the Department totaled \$80,238,915 an increase of 1% over the same period FY14. The year-to-date operating revenue Parks Division totaled \$18,865,843 an increase of 4% over the same period FY14; 1/8% Cent Tax \$24,714,438 an increase of 2.24% over the same period FY14; and 2% Tax \$11,614,197 an increase of 7.8% over the same period FY14.

Weston Lewey moved to approve the Financial Report. Randy Wolfenbarger seconded and the motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

State Agencies Committee Meeting – Queen Wilhelmina – June 15-16

Richard Davies shared that the State Agencies Committee Meeting will be held at the new Queen Wilhelmina lodge June 15-16. Davies stated that this will occur during the soft opening.

Miscellaneous

Richard Davies informed the Commission that he had a good meeting with Governor Hutchinson about the future of Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism in regards to Davies' retirement at the end of the year.

Chairman Mike Mills announced that Governor Hutchinson gave the okay to provide a small search committee in which they would advise the Governor on who might replace Richard Davies as the Executive Director of Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism upon his retirement.

Chairman Mills appointed the following commissioners to the search committee: Jim Shamburger, Randy Wolfenbarger, Jim Dailey, Montine McNulty and Mike Mills, Ex-Officio

TOURISM DIVISION

Directors Office

Joe David Rice informed the Commission that Audrey Preston, an entrepreneur from Franklin TN, is establishing the Americana Music Triangle. Riced stated that there was a week-long press tour that took place in which Helena was involved. The Americana Music Triangle will encompass Nashville, Memphis and New Orleans.

Ron Maxwell informed the Commission that the Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC) held its semi-annual National meeting in St. Cloud, Minnesota at the end of April. Maxwell stated that 4 of the 10 MRPC members of the Arkansas Commission were in attendance. Maxwell stated that over the 3 days of presentations, there were over 100 people. Joe St. Columbia, Chair of Arkansas's MRPC, gave a report regarding Arkansas's Great River Road to the St. Cloud audience.

Tourism Development

Kristine Puckett announced that all regional tourist associations met the monthly deadline requirements for April.

Puckett stated that Bentonville declined the grant awarded to the city for a feasibility study on building a convention center.

Puckett shared with the Commission various media coverage National Tourism Week received via Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and newspaper outlets.

Communications

Cindy Smith asked to revisit the topic of Barrett Baber's **A.R.K.A.N.S.A.S** song and if it could still be used in ads promoting the state. Joe David Rice informed the Commission that the Song of Arkansas contest rules only allowed ADPT to use the song until the end of that Fiscal Year. He stated that ADPT and CJRW wanted to extend the rights, but Barrett Baber and Kenny Lamb wanted more money than could be offered. Bill Barnes asked how much they wanted; Joy Phillips stated it was \$6,500 for use of the song for a 6 month period. Rice stated that the rules should have been written in more detail to encompass more time. A discussion ensued involving ideas such as a one-time buyout of **A.R.K.A.N.S.A.S**, new Song of Arkansas Contest every year or every other year, or not having a song at all.

LeRoy Dangeau moved that ADPT notify Barrett Baber and Kenny Lamb that the Department will no longer use the song in future advertising, and therefore declines the option to purchase usage rights. Bill Barnes seconded, Cindy Smith opposed, and the motion carried.

Leah DiPietro stated that the new Tourism Talk & Tips Newsletter will have a fresh look with great information for industry partners; she stated that the new e-newsletter will have the same look and feel.

DiPietro informed the Commission that BARKansas will be a late summer promotion. Arkansas is the #1 state that owns dogs in the US at 47.9%.

DiPietro announced that Kerry Kraus put together a Blues Trail for Arkansas.com; she stated that Kraus wanted to accomplish this before her retirement later in the year.

Lastly, DiPietro shared that the new Arkansas Water and Woods is getting attention for the wonderful cover photo taken by Chief Photographer, Chuck Haralson.

Group Travel

Joe David Rice informed the Commission that Tracy Morales is working with Grady Span and CJRW on the new Motorcycle Guide.

Research

Joe David Rice informed the Commission that the Department has narrowed down the candidates for the Research Project Analyst, formerly held by Jennifer Neubauer, to 6 individuals. Rice stated that interviews will be held on May 29.

Welcome Centers

Joe David Rice informed the Commission that construction has begun for the new Welcome Centers in Harrison and Red River.

2015 Focus Group Reports

Listed below, are highlights of Lynette Xanders findings during the 2015 Focus Groups, which took place in Dallas, Wichita and Chicago.

- 36 people, ages 25-60, with and without children
- Overall: an excellent place to be

- Key Elements: Arkansas Tourism has a platform that is powerful. While the campaign may change, the fundamental premise/promise remains the same. The funnel of decision making remains unchanged. There are many ways to reach travelers.
- Negatives: Lack of awareness is still an issue; poor image/stereotype is the greatest deterrent.
- Tools that need tweaking: The web plan is solid in intent, but not there yet. Past visitation does not ensure future visits/cross-selling opportunities. A calendar for natural events could help the experience such as waterfalls/fall foliage. Variety of examples in ads is ideal. An umbrella ad could help tie everything together.
- First time visitors want to do the “Signature Dish,” while repeat visitors want to try something new.
- Ads were very well received: variety, de-stressing, clear, emotional, motivational, visually arresting, informative, and easy to engage.
- Voice: All were lured by the narrator.
- Must have Tools: Easy to find links, easy navigability to key areas, fast load speeds, good visual aesthetics, legibility, trip planner, monthly calendar, mobile access, prominent meetings and events, streamlined text.

Advertising Items

Joy Phillips, Brian Fitzgerald, and Amy Turpin presented the Fall/Winter Budget Presentation to the Commission. Phillips stated that last year it was all about the journey and that this year the ads will continue on that journey.

Five (5) early summer radio spots were presented to the Commission, and will run May 25 – June 30.

Ads were recommended to run on EngageTV, TBA, Branson Vacation Channel, Branson Visitor TV and various magazines.

It was suggested that digital marketing billboards be utilized in the Dallas market. Renting outdoor billboards directing travelers to the Welcome Centers and for use during the Trail of Holiday Lights campaign was also suggested.

The total Media budget that was presented to the Commission was \$2,289,772.

Bill Fitzgerald presented the creative for fall, which featured 5 regional TV spots, magazine print ads, and radio spots.

Joy Phillips shared Meet the Locals and POV videos with the Commission, which will continue throughout the fall and winter.

It was announced that the Arkansas Mountain Biking and Arkansas Road Biking Guides will replace the on/off Road Bicycle Guide for 2016.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Trail of Holiday Lights which involves over 60 communities throughout the state.

It was recommended to print 500,000 copies of the 2016 Arkansas Tour Guide.

Phillips shared that the new Arkansas Image Book will contain 128 pages filled with photographs taken by Chuck Haralson, ADPT Chief Photographer and Drew Harris with CJRW.

The 2015/16 Fall/Winter Budget that was presented to the Commission was \$4,484,569.

Jay Bunyard moved to approve the 2015/16 Fall/Winter Budget of \$4,484,569 as it was presented to the Commission. Shash Goyal seconded and the motion carried.

Jim Shamburger noted that the industry partners need to make sure that deals and coupons are available on the deals and coupons landing page, since that is the call-to-action on several radio spots.

Internet-Related Items

Marla Johnson, Jennifer Pepper & Hallie Shoffner presented the Internet-Related Items to the Commission.

The Commission was informed that visitor sessions to Arkansas.com have increased 5% in April 2015 over April 2014. Mobile Traffic has increased 29% in April 2015 over April 2014.

Marla Johnson stated that the budget summary included new development, ongoing development, ongoing marketing, ongoing research and analysis and contingency. Johnson informed the Commission that new development included microsite designs, Industry Insider, Native American Culture and Heritage, Biking and Governor's Conference pages for both the administrative site and what the general public sees. Johnson stated that there is an average of 45,000 visitor sessions a month to the Arkansas Calendar of Events landing page; she stated that Aristotle will continue with the enhancement of Arkansas.com.

Hallie Shoffner informed the Commission that there were 75 million users on Pinterest, 80% of which are women. Shoffner stated that Arkansas Tourism will have rich pins. Rich pins are Pinterest pins that allow businesses to include additional information about the image they are pinning. Pinterest currently offers five different rich pin types: Place, Article, Product, Recipe and Film pins.

Shoffner stated that ongoing development will include maintenance, website monthly and seasonal content updates, content marketing, research and analysis. Ongoing marketing will include search engine optimization, keyword buys, email marketing and late summer integrated campaign. Ongoing research and analysis will include online conversion survey and analytics, tracking and reporting.

The total budget for July 1-December 31, 2015 is \$695,900, up 11% from 2014, which for the same time frame was \$624,475.

John Gill moved to approve Aristotle's total budget of \$695,900 for July 1-December 31, 2015 as it was presented to the Commission. Weston Lewey seconded, Jim Shamburger opposed, and the motion carried.

Jay Bunyard asked what has transpired in regards to the No Confidence Vote that the Commission passed at the April 2015 meeting. Richard Davies stated that the Department has a technical service contract with Aristotle; the contract is renewed on an annual basis. Davies stated that in order to have a new contract a request for proposal (RFP) must be submitted. The Department would create an RFP to send to the Governor's Office and get bids/proposals from other companies. Davies stated that the process would take 6 months at best. The new Department Director will have two choices: create an RFP, or have one internet provider for all sections under ADPT. Davies stated that he chose to have all sections under the umbrella of ADPT to have the same internet provider.

Montine McNulty asked if the new website would be finished by the end of June and if it has already been paid for. Davies stated that Aristotle has reported the new website will be completed and live by the end of June, and that it has already been paid for in the previous budget. Davies stated that the Department would not pay for new development until ADPT is happy with the outcome of the new Arkansas.com.

Shash Goyal asked when the current contract with Aristotle expires; Davies stated June 30, 2015. Goyal asked that the budget for new development would be contingent upon the outcome of the new Arkansas.com; Davies informed everyone that he had already made that clear to Aristotle. The new development budget for July 1-December 31, 2015 is \$223,000.

PARKS DIVISION

ASP Summer TV and Radio Spots

Joan Ellison presented the Arkansas State Parks (ASP) summer TV and radio spots for consideration.

Jay Bunyard moved to approve the Arkansas State Parks summer TV and radio spots as presented:

TV Cut #1: “Arkansas State Parks: Come Outside & Play in Your Backyard”

TV Cut # 2: “Arkansas’s State Parks: So Close & So Much to Do”

Radio Cut #1: “Plan a Getaway to DeGray”

Radio Cut # 2: “Arkansas’s State Parks ... So Close & So Much to Do”

Radio Cut #3: “Enjoy an Instant Vacation in an Arkansas State Park”

Shash Goyal seconded and the motion carried.

Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park

A. Land Acquisition (Randy West Property)

Randy Roberson reported that ASP has been interested in acquiring property adjacent to Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park (PGBSP) for several years. The West property was identified in the 1996 Master Plan as a priority acquisition tract for the protection of the battlefield. In 2010, ASP was in negotiations with Mr. West but the property appraisal did not meet the fair market value expectations of Mr. West.

In 2015, Mr. West contacted ASP with a renewed interest in selling 40 acres. Mr. West proposed a life estate property acquisition for the 40 acres of property along with subsequent acquisitions. He proposed to divide the property into tracks to be sold over several years. The West family would like to continue to use the property for grazing and haying in conjunction with the continued operation of West Farms. The property (40 acres) has been appraised at \$10,000 per acre per the Uniform Appraisals Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions (aka Yellow-book appraisal) in order to meet acquisition standards of the National Parks Service and

American Battlefield Protection Program. It is ASP's goal to have a 50/50 cost share partnership with the Civil War Trust on this acquisition, along with future park acquisitions, focused on battlefield preservation at Prairie Grove. Roberson requested approval to proceed with acquisition of the West property.

John Gill moved to approve a life estate property acquisition for the West property described as: All of the South one-half of the South one-half of the Northwest one-quarter of Section 7, Township 15 North, Range 31 West, situated in the County of Washington, Arkansas, 40 acres, more or less. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.

In response if the rest of the land would be sold to ASP, Greg Butts replied yes it would be sold to ASP later on for appraised market value at time of sale.

B. Pasture Lease Agreement Renewal

Randy Roberson requested permission to enter into a Pasture Lease Agreement on property Tract 8 within PGBSP. The current lease expires June 30, 2015. As a result of the required advertisement, the winning bid is from the current lessee, Gary Stearman. He has bid to lease the tract for \$4,000 per year; the previous lease amount was \$3,572 per year.

Jim Shamburger moved to approve the renewal of a Pasture Lease Agreement at Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park to Gary Stearman for a period of five years as follows: A part of the Southwest Quarter (SE ¼) of Section 7, Township 15 North, Range 31 West, Washington County, 89.29 acres, more or less. Shash Goyal seconded and the motion carried.

C. Women's Auxiliary Concession and Operating Agreement

Greg Butts reported that the Women's Auxiliary Agreement will expire June 19, 2015, and is due for renewal. Originating in 1975, the agreement is unique to this park. ASP approves capital improvements and projects for the park provided by the Women's Auxiliary funding. In addition, the Women's Auxiliary secures antiques and Civil War items for the park. Butts requested renewal of the agreement.

Shash Goyal moved to approve the renewal of the Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park Women's Auxiliary with Arkansas State Parks for a five year period. Jim Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.

Mt. Nebo – Use Permit Agreement; Hughes & Schanink

Randy Roberson reported that Use Permits have been requested for the subject property by adjacent landowners, Mr. Hughes and Mr. Schanink. In order to resolve an ongoing property dispute over the use of the platted Fourth Street right-of-way (ROW) owned by ASP, ASP is proposing the division of said ROW into equal halves, containing approximately 0.14 acres each, for permitted residential use by the adjacent owners. The Use Permit Agreements would allow for quiet enjoyment of the stated property and shall restrict land improvements to fence construction, not to exceed six feet in height, as the only allowable construction improvement within the permitted area. Greg Butts noted that the Use Permits are not transferable to new landowners.

Shash Goyal moved to approve the Use Permit Agreements with divided use of Arkansas State Property between Mr. Hughes and Mr. Schanink at Mt. Nebo State Park as follows:

Hughes

The Northwesterly Half of Part of Platted Fourth Street lying between Block 4 and Block 3 of Improvement Company Addition to Mount Nebo, Yell County, Arkansas and being more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the Southeast Corner (SE Cor.) of Block 3 of said Improvement Company Addition to Mount Nebo and run thence S 55°01'34" E along the Northerly Right of Way Line of "Platted Central Ave." for 20.05' to a point; Thence run N 38°56'39" E along the Centerline of said Fourth Street for 284.54' to a point on the "Rim of the Mountain"; Thence run S 77°04'43" W along said "Rim of Mountain" for 32.39' to a point; Thence run S 38°56'39" W along the Northerly Line of said Fourth Street for 260.46' to the Point of Beginning (P.O.B.), Containing 0.13 Acres and is Subject to All Easements, Public or Private which may exist thereon.

Schanink

The Southeasterly Half of Part of Platted Fourth Street lying between Block 4 and Block 3 of Improvement Company Addition to Mount Nebo, Yell County, Arkansas and being more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the Southwest Corner (SW Cor.) of Block 4 of said Improvement Company Addition to Mount Nebo and run thence N 55°01'34" W along the Northerly Right of Way Line of "Platted Central Ave." for 20.05' to a point; Thence run N 38°56'39" E along the Centerline of said Fourth Street for 284.54' to a point on the "Rim of the Mountain"; Thence run N 77°04'43" E along said "Rim of Mountain" for 32.39' to a

point; Thence run S 38°56'39" W along the Southeasterly Line of said Fourth Street for 308.63' to the Point of Beginning (P.O.B.), Containing 0.14 Acres and is Subject to All Easements, Public or Private which may exist thereon.

Randy Wolfinbarger seconded and the motion carried.

Mammoth Spring – VFW Concession & Operating Agreement Renewal

Greg Butts reported that this is the 119th year reunion of the soldiers and sailors of Post Number 7831, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) at Mammoth Spring, with agreement due to expire May 30, 2015. The event serves as a community fundraiser and Butts requested approval to renew the agreement for a five year period.

Cindy Smith moved to approve the renewal of the agreement with Arkansas State Parks and Post Number 7831, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Mammoth Springs for a period of five years. Mike Wilson seconded and the motion carried.

Certificates of Appreciation

Greg Butts requested certificates of appreciation for following staff upon retirement:

- Brenda Mans, Davidsonville State Park, retiring with 33 years of outstanding service
- Rosiland Thrasher, Lake Catherine State Park, retiring with 37 years of outstanding service
- Mike Hall, Mt. Nebo State Park, retiring with 37 years of outstanding service

Shash Goyal moved to approve certificates of appreciation for Brenda Mans, Rosiland Thrasher and Mike Hall for outstanding service within Arkansas State Parks. LeRoy Dangeau seconded and the motion carried.

Toltec – Structure Removals

Randy Roberson reported that building 54.05 is a well/pump house located on the right side of the Visitor Center, comprised of a concrete block and poured concrete foundation, stick frame, wood siding and asphalt shingles. The facility is no longer in use.

Roberson reported that building 54.07 is a fuel pump shed located inside of the maintenance compound. The structure is comprised of a concrete foundation, concrete knee walls, wood post frame, wood siding and asphalt shingles. The facility is no longer in use; the building is in poor shape and no longer stable. Roberson requested removal of the two structures.

Jay Bunyard moved to approve based on the information presented; the commission finds the structures obsolete notwithstanding their insured value and approves the removal of the well/pump house (Building 54.05/AASIS No. 120006475) and fuel pump shed (Building 54.07/AASIS No. 120006477) from Toltec Mounds State Park inventory. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.

Spring Storm Damage

Jon Brown reported two storm events have occurred this spring, resulting in damages to various state parks. The March 31, 2015, storm reported estimated damages of \$125,000 to Arkansas Post Museum, consisting of damage to eight structures and one vehicle. Windows have been repaired and the roof is currently out to bid, to be repaired soon. He stated that all property is covered by insurance and with a \$25,000 deductible, the balance for repairs will be covered by insurance.

Brown stated that the April 19, 2015, storm reported estimated damages of \$600,000 to \$1,000,000,000 to Mt. Magazine State Park, consisting of 35 out of 36 roofs damaged and five vehicles. ASP is awaiting the final report from the insurance company. Again, all property is covered by insurance and with a \$25,000 deductible; the balance for repairs will be covered by insurance.

Jon Brown stated flood damage locations included: Jacksonport; Millwood; Moro Bay; Daisy; and Pinnacle Mountain state parks. Current closures include: Jacksonport (boat launch ramp on the White River); Millwood (entire park); and Moro Bay (low-water trail and playground).

Brown provided an overview of the ADEM/FEMA information:

- FEMA Outstanding accounts - \$224,487
- 2003-2014 Reimbursements from ADEM and FEMA programs totaled \$852,100
- 2015 Flood was declared a disaster in ten Arkansas counties by Governor Hutchinson with reimbursement amounts to be determined

Outdoor Recreation Grant Program Overview and Update

John Beneke presented an overview of the Outdoor Recreation Grant Program (ORGP), a section of the State Parks division, which is responsible for local outdoor recreation grants that affect communities and citizens. He reported that the section administers three grant programs:

- Matching Grant (Land & Water Conservation Fund and Arkansas Real Estate Transfer Tax)
 - \$2 million program per year
 - Eligible cities and counties may apply for \$250,000 per project (grant funds half and applicant funds half)

- Fun Park Grant
 - Maximum of 10 grants awarded per year
 - \$45,000 per grant (typical grant: pavilion, half-court basketball and playground)
 - Designed for municipalities of 2,500 people or less, or unincorporated communities sponsored by counties

- Trails for Life Grant
 - \$175,000 per year (funded by proceeds from the tobacco settlement fund)
 - Partnership with the Arkansas Department of Health
 - Two options include:
 - \$35,000 Grant (Standard Health & Fitness; ¼ mile ADA paved trail)
 - \$70,000 Maximum Grant (Custom Health and Fitness; trail length varies)

Beneke advised that the grant applications are reviewed by a Recreation Advisory Board, which is a governor appointed committee. Recommendations are forwarded to the Executive Director who forwards applicants onto the governor for review. Greg Butts stated that the ORGP is 10% of the Real Estate Transfer Tax program that funds ANCRC (80%), Historic Preservation (10%) and ORGP (10%), an example of how the Real Estate Transfer Tax impacts local communities and citizens.

ANCRC FY 16 Grant Award

Greg Butts reported that the ANCRC met May 6 and awarded \$18,050,523 to 19 agencies, colleges, and universities. ASP is the recipient of \$5.7 million for FY 16.

Miscellaneous

Greg Butts advised that June 11, 2015, has been scheduled for Media Day at Queen Wilhelmina State Park (QWSP) to preview the renovation of the lodge. The media, along with SPRTC, is invited to tour the property, have lunch and preview the lodge before opening to the public. Butts advised that Representative Nate Bell will hold a House State Agencies and Governmental Affairs Committee meeting at QWSP June 15-16. Grady Spann reported that the hiring process is ongoing. New staff is being trained at the other lodge parks in housekeeping, kitchen services and front desk operations. Sleeping rooms look great and kitchen is wonderful; all systems are going as soon as we receive possession of the building. Greg Butts confirmed that the lodge will be re-opening summer 2015.

The State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission adjourned at approximately 12:15 p.m. on May 21, 2015 at the Quality Inn Convention Center in Harrison, Arkansas.