

State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission
The Lodge at Mount Magazine, 577 Lodge Drive, Paris, AR 72855
November 21, 2019 8:30 a.m.

Commissioners Present

Jim Shamburger, Chair
Kalene Griffith, Vice Chair
Austin Albers
Bill Barnes
Mike Gibson
John Gill
Ron Gossage

Shash Goyal
Bob Knight
Eric Jackson
Weston Lewey
Cindy Smith
Mike Wilson
Randy Wolfinbarger

Absent

Jeff Baskin
Montine McNulty
Ness Sechrest

Department Staff Present

Stacy Hurst, Secretary (ADPHT)
Jim Andrews, General Counsel (ADPHT)
Elaine Lienhart, Exec. Asst. (ADPHT)
Tammy Boyce, Director's Assistant (T)
Shea Lewis, State Parks Deputy Director
Kristine Puckett, Tourism Deputy Director
LaJeana Carroll, Director's Assistant (SP)
Kayla Hardage, Welcome Center Administrator (T)

Leah DiPietro, Communications Mgr (T)
Jim Dailey, Tourism Director
Jill Rohrbach, Travel Writer (T)
Grady Spann, State Parks Director
Randy Roberson, Planning & Dev. Mgr (SP)
Jeff King, Project Manager (SP)
Jessica Ledbetter, Sales Manager (T)

CJRW

Darin Gray
Chris Ho
Jennifer Morgan
Dalaney Thomas
Keegan Wright

Miles Media

Susie Kardas
Ileana Frascone

Guests

Bill Ott, Eureka Springs
Luke Story, Arkansas Broadcasters Association

Chair Jim Shamburger called the meeting to order at 8:32 am. Elaine Lienhart called the roll.

Approval of Agenda

Austin Albers moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Kalene Griffith seconded, and the motion carried.

Presentation of Minutes from Previous Meeting

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

Austin Albers moved to approve the October minutes of the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission as presented. Mike Wilson seconded and the motion carried.

Financial Report

Cynthia Dunlap reported on the budget for October 2019 and projected budget for 2020.

Randy Wolfinbarger moved to approve the financial report as presented. Eric Jackson seconded and the motion carried.

SPRTC 2020 Meeting Schedule

January 15-16	SPRTC Meeting – Bentonville
February 19-20	SPRTC Meeting – Jonesboro
March 1-4	Governor’s Conference – Fort Smith
April 15-16	SPRTC Meeting – Hot Springs (legislative session)
May 20-21	SPRTC Meeting – Searcy (legislative session)
June 17-18	SPRTC Meeting – Queen Wilhelmina State Park, Mena
July 15-16	SPRTC Meeting – El Dorado
August 19-20*	SPRTC Meeting/Staff Apprec. – DeGray Lake Resort State Park, Bismarck
September 16-17*	SPRTC Meeting / AHA Event – Little Rock
October 14-15	SPRTC Meeting – Eureka Springs
November 18-19	SPRTC Meeting – Village Creek State Park, Wynne
December	No Meeting

*2 day meeting

Shash Goyal moved to approve the 2020 SPRTC meeting as presented. Weston Lewey seconded and the motion carried.

Secretary's Report

Secretary Stacy Hurst stated that she is enjoying learning more about Parks and Tourism and has attended several regional meetings with the parks superintendents. Secretary Hurst reported on transformation and looking at potential ways to relocate Parks and Tourism to better deliver services to the public, create a less costly government and combine shared services. Secretary Hurst stated that she is moving forward with the process of selecting a new tourism director and in Jim Dailey's absence, if a new director is not chosen before his last day, Kristine Puckett will serve as interim director.

Jim Andrews gave a resolution on the ratification of a grant agreement. A gift of \$20 million was given to the State Parks Division for a bike trail on the Delta Heritage Trail.

John Gill moved to adopt the resolution as presented. Cindy Smith seconded and the motion carried.

John Gill expressed concern with this being such a large funded project that in a worst-case scenario, the department would have to use \$4 million of its revenue to fund it; Grady Spann advised that we are prepared to do that if needed. Discussion ensued.

TOURISM DIVISION

Director's Report

Jim Dailey gave recognition to Secretary Hurst for the work she is doing on behalf of the Department and the State of Arkansas. Dailey reported on the goals he set and accomplishments he made as tourism director. Kristine Puckett handed out the new Love Where You Live publication and the Arkansas Cycling Guide to the commissioners. Puckett reported that arkansas.com received a gold award from the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International.

Welcome Center Report – Kayla Hardage

Kayla Hardage gave an update on things happening with the Welcome Centers, the partnership with Arkansas Department of Transportation and how the two are working together. Hardage asked for a certificate of appreciation for Barbara King, Assistant Manager at Helena-West Helena Welcome Center, for her retirement.

John Gill moved to approve the certificate of appreciation. Randy Wolfenbarger seconded and the motion was approved.

Advertising – CJRW/Miles

Website/Social Media update

Darin Gray introduced Ileana Frascone as the new Account Director with Miles. Chris Ho reported that web traffic was up but partner referrals were down by 6.3%. Susie Kardas shared the plan that's been put into place to improve those numbers. A pop-up window will be served to site visitors who meet specific criteria – time on site, no other pop-ups during visit, and more. Results will be reported on in the future. There is a .03% decrease in guides ordered and a 1,111% increase in guides viewed online. Newsletter subscriptions are up by 2.3%. Keegan Wright reported on Facebook and Instagram and said that traffic saw almost one million people.

Dalaney Thomas reported on the diversity program, African-American outreach and the success of the Arkansas Soul Project that took place in the summer. Thomas stated that the organization will continue to build on the Arkansas Soul project for 2020 and is looking for ways to provide funding to the students. Thomas discussed additional campaigns being worked on such as Black Music Month, the U.S. Civil Rights Trail, and the Spanish outreach program.

PARKS DIVISION

Certificate of Appreciation

Grady Spann requested the approval for a Certificate of Appreciation for Ome Coleman for her 34 years of service to Arkansas State Parks (ASP).

Austin Albers moved to approve a certificate of appreciation for Ome Coleman for her 34 years of service to Arkansas State Parks. Eric Jackson seconded, and the motion carried.

Grady Spann highlighted the article “Class 3A Girls State Golf Tournament” (Krupshaw, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, October 3, 2019) DeGray Lake Resort State Park (DLRSP) hosted the 3A girls state golf tournament; this is just one of the many tournaments hosted at the DLRSP golf course. The park has an agreement to provide golf services for the local high schools and universities.

Spann mentioned the article “Halloween fun set at Crowley’s Ridge State Park” (Paragould Daily Press, October 2, 2019) this type of events are done in partnership with the local community and volunteers. Although this type of event is not directly mission based, they do attract visitors to the state park’s safe environment.

Spann highlighted the recent article, “Monumental mountain bike paths highlight lesser-known parts of state parks” (Robinson, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, October 7, 2019) the first two Monument Trails open built by the Arkansas Parks & Recreation Foundation and donated to the state parks.

Spann highlighted the article “Committee gathers for fall workshop” (Stone county Leader, October 9, 2019) Committee of One Hundred convened for their annual fall workshop at the Ozark Folk Center State Park. This committee supports the Ozark Folk Center educational programs, music roots program, and the Ozark Highlands Radio as well as raise funds to support the Ozark Folk Center.

Spann mentioned the article “Front & Center: Ed Thomas Emergency services program manager has love for outdoors” (Buffalo, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, October 13, 2019) highlights Ed’s character and history.

Spann highlighted the recent article, “Rx Burn School focuses on prescribed fire” (Carroll County News, October 15, 2019) cooperative agency training focuses on burn planning and implementation, forest management, firefighting, and conservation.

Spann highlighted the article “Travelers Today 5 Top-Rated attractions in Arkansas” (Travelers Today, October 17, 2019) three state parks, Petit Jean, Crater of Diamonds, and Mount Magazine, made the top five rated attractions in Arkansas according to Travelers Today.

Spann mentioned the article “Recreation and Parks Department awarded grant from Conagra Brands Inc,” (The Courier, October 18, 2019) Lake Dardanelle State Park received a \$5,000 grant to support boardwalk exhibit panels that will provide information on the natural resources existing on the lake’s shoreline. The Arkansas Parks & Recreation Foundation is aiding the park for this grant.

Spann highlighted the recent article, “Jacksonville woman finds 3.29-carat diamond at Crater of Diamonds State Park” (KATV, October 24, 2019) Mrs. Choate found the 3.29 carat diamond after searching for 30 minutes. One diamond like this one can significantly increase the park’s visitation numbers.

Spann highlighted the article “Jacksonport State Park Visitor Center recognized by AIA Arkansas” (The Independent, October 24, 2019) Jacksonport’s new Visitor Center was recognized by the Arkansas chapter of the American Institute of Architects as an Honor Award winner in the 2019 Design Awards.

Spann mentioned the article “Park to get bladesmithing school” (Adame, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, October 26, 2019) the University of Arkansas Community College at Hope-Texarkana will be operating the James Black School of Bladesmithing and Historic Trades at Historic Washington State Park. ASP has completely renovated the facility for the school.

Stacy Hurst announced Arkansas Code Annotated 1-4-139 designated Historic Washington State Park as an Arkansas Heritage site; Division of Arkansas Heritage does not currently have that designation in Arkansas. Grady Spann commented the Bowie knife was recognized in Arkansas Code Annotated 1-4-139 as the Arkansas State knife.

Jim Andrews advised the proposed ruling with an added criterion to add to the existing historic site program for an area to be designated as an Arkansas Heritage Site. The proposed rule will be passed through the Arkansas Legislative Council, the rule is out for public comment, and Andrews anticipates a hearing in January to pass the rule. This would make Historic Washington the first designated Heritage Site in Arkansas.

Spann highlighted the recent article, “We Are the River Valley: Lake Fort Smith State Park” (Bryan, Times Record, November 4, 2019) promotes the amenities and facilities available at the existing park location and lists the park as the gateway to the Ozark Highlands Trail.

Amended and Restated Exchange Agreement for Cedar Glen Conservation Easement at Pinnacle Mountain State Park

Jeff King reported ADPHT has been working with the Nature Conservancy to amend and restate the May 2018 approved exchange agreement for Cedar Glen Conservation Easement at Pinnacle Mountain State Park. King noted he has worked with Jim Andrews to update the language in the agreement. The Horns have expressed an interest to have exchanged closed by the end of 2019. John Gill noted this agreement amendment would be following through on the previous obligation. Discussion followed.

John Gill motioned for Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism, Parks Division to amend and restate the exchange agreement for the Cedar Glen Conservation Easement at Pinnacle Mountain State Park. Kalene Griffith seconded, and the motion carried.

Acceptance of Arkansas Parks & Recreation Foundation Improvements completed at Hobbs and Mount Nebo

King stated through Memorandums of Agreement with Arkansas State Parks, the Arkansas Parks & Recreation Foundation (APRF) has recently completed construction of Monument Trails at Hobbs State Park – Conservation Area and Mount Nebo State Park. The 17-mile Monument Trail (including the Karst Loop, Wolf Den Loop, Tunnel Connector Trail, Return Trail, Sawtooth Downhill Trail, and Timberjack Downhill Trail) at Hobbs State Park - Conservation Area was accepted as substantially complete on June 22nd, 2019 (see attached map). The first phase of Monument Trail development (including the 6.1-mile Chickalah Valley Loop) at Mount Nebo State Park was accepted as substantially complete on October 2nd, 2019. The previously mentioned Memorandums of Agreement call for transfer of exclusive right and ownership of the projects to Arkansas State Parks, upon final completion of the development projects. ASP

requested in conjunction with A.C.A. § 22-4-103 the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commissions accept the contributions of the Arkansas Parks and Recreation Foundation used to improve the state park system through a transfer of exclusive right and ownership of the projects to Arkansas State Parks, upon final completion of the development projects. Discussion ensued.

Austin Albers moved to formally to accept the gifts of the Arkansas Parks & Recreation Foundations improvements completed at Hobbs State Park – Conservation Area and Mount Nebo State Park. Weston Lewey seconded, John Gill abstained, and the motion carried.

Mount Nebo State Park - Use Permit Agreement

Jeff King reported a request from James R. Gray for a Use Permit Agreement for use of a portion of the state owned alleyway that runs between Lot 2, Block 7 of the Mount Nebo Improvement District and Lots 10,11,12, Block 7 of the Mount Nebo Improvement District for residential access drive to be constructed for a private residence in construction on lots 10, 11, and 12.

Use Permit Agreements require a fee to cover administrative costs for research and preparation of documents. Mr. Gray provided a copy of a registered survey showing the proposed permitted area. I recommend waiving the fee due to the small size of the permit area and the fact that little to no research and document prep was required. This would also foster good relations between Arkansas State Parks and the private landowners on top of the mountain.

Mike Gibson moved to approve a Use Permit Agreement to new property owners James R Gray at Mount Nebo State Park as follows:

A Use-Area Description from Lot 2 of Block 7, Town of Mount Nebo, Yell County, Arkansas along 20' alley 49.88 feet in length and 20 feet in depth running between Lot 2 and Lot 11, Block 7 of the Mt. Nebo Improvement District.

Shash Goyal seconded, and the motion carried.

Expiring leases and forthcoming renewals at Cossatot River (U.S. Army Corp of Engineers) and Devil's Den / Lake Fort Smith (USDA Forest Service)

King advised leases with federal partners will be expiring at the end of 2019; park staff is communicating with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the lease renewal at Cossatot River State Park - Natural Area and USDA Forest Service regarding lease renewals for Devil's Den and Lake Fort Smith State Parks. Discussion ensued. Jim Shamburger requested ASP obtain a formal statement from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stating the lease will be renewed when the specific trail mileage is determined.

Structure Removals

Queen Wilhelmina State Park

King reported the following structure Heather Cliff House (Building No. 46.11/AASIS No. 120006457) is an 89-year-old 1,152 square foot rock and frame structure with asphalt shingles that was formerly used for employee housing. It does not meet ASP's minimum standards for employee housing and has been used as a storage building for many years. In September 2019, the Arkansas Insurance Department determined the structure was no longer insurable due to its deteriorated condition. The cost to renovate/expand the building as necessary to meet employee housing standards would be prohibitive. The structure is located at the back of the maintenance shop/employee road, so renovating it to serve as a rental cabin for public use would not be appropriate. An asbestos survey and a historic structure report for the structure will be completed before demolition takes place. The building will be demolished and disposed of in accordance with all Federal, State, and local regulations. Discussion ensued.

White Oak Lake State Park

King reported the following structures:

Bathhouse (Building No. 57.06/AASIS No. 120006533) is a 51-year-old, 780 square foot cinder block structure with asphalt shingles on a slab foundation.

Equipment Shed (Building No. 57.17/AASIS No. 120006543) is a 930 square foot open frame building with asphalt shingle roof and uneven gravel floor used to store park equipment such as lawn/garden equipment, chainsaws, and weed eaters.

Storage Building (Building No. 57.19/AASIS No. 120006545) is a 64 square foot wood frame building with wood floor. The wooden structure currently houses paint and supplies.

A new bathhouse and equipment shed will be constructed in FY20 to replace above referenced buildings. Removal of the existing structures will be accomplished as part of the general contractor's work to construct the new/replacement buildings. All three buildings will be demolished and disposed of in accordance with all Federal, State, and local regulations

Lake Dardanelle State Park

King reported the following structure (Building No. 25.05/AASIS No. 120005893) a 17-year-old 16 X 80 (1,280 square foot) Fleetwood Sunpointe singlewide mobile home with 3 bedrooms and 2 baths. This mobile home has outlived its usefulness, does not meet minimum standards for employee housing, and is scheduled for replacement. The mobile home will be sold as surplus via the Department of Finance and Administration's Division of Marketing and Redistribution. A new home will be constructed on the same site utilizing FY 20 ANCRC grant funds. Construction of the new home is slated to start in March 2020.

Jacksonport State Park

King reported the following structures:

Carriage House Restrooms (Building No. 22.02/AASIS No. 120005801) is a 625 square foot brick and cinderblock structure with concrete floors/pea gravel floor. The structure was built in the 1960's to house carriages and other farm/blacksmith tools. The building has now become obsolete. The restroom portion of the building does not meet ADA requirements. The building is no longer needed since the construction of the new visitor center, with restrooms, and the CMF building built in 2010 to house artifacts.

Storage Building (Building No. 22.26 / AASIS No. 120005819) is a 900 square foot storage building with wood siding and metal roof. The storage building is not needed anymore due to the warehouse building acquisition in 2013.

Storage Building (Building No. 22.27 / AASIS No. 120005820) is a 280 square foot storage building with wood siding and metal roof. This storage building is not needed anymore due to the warehouse building acquisition in 2013.

The buildings will be demolished and disposed of in accordance with all Federal, State, and local regulations.

John Gill requested postponed consideration for Queen Wilhelmina State Park Heather Cliff House (Building No. 46.11/AASIS No. 120006457).

Eric Jackson moved the adoption of a motion which, after debate and amendment, was adopted as follows: the Commission finds the following structures at White Oak Lake State Park Bathhouse (Building No. 57.06/AASIS No. 120006533), Equipment Shed (Building No. 57.17/AASIS No. 120006543), and Storage Building (Building No. 57.19/AASIS No. 120006545); Lake Dardanelle State Park Fleetwood Sunpointe singlewide mobile home (Building No. 25.05/AASIS No. 120005893); and Jacksonport State Park Carriage House Restrooms (Building No. 22.02/AASIS No. 120005801), Storage Building (Building No. 22.26 / AASIS No. 120005819), and Storage Building (Building No. 22.27 / AASIS No. 120005820) are obsolete notwithstanding the insured value and approves the removal from Arkansas State Park inventory. Kalene Griffith seconded and the motion carried.

Jeff King reported DeGray Lake Resort State Park Lodge siding and window renovations have a tentative completion date of June 9, 2020.

Miniature Railroad, Gift Shop/Snack Bar, and Miniature Golf Course Concession and Operating Agreement at Queen Wilhelmina – Performance Review and Report

Grady Spann communicated a recent phone call with Mr. Waggoner and will schedule a meeting in December to go over the operation; Mr. Waggoner agrees they have had some problems. Spann notified Mr. Waggoner of the late fees and he has agreed to send payment. Spann noted other issues are the signage and reliability of the stations' operating hours. Discussion followed.

Arkansas Broadcasters Association Agreement renewal

Grady Spann reported on the nearly 30-year public private partnerships with Arkansas Broadcasters Association (ABA) and Arkansas Press Association (APA) promoting the diverse facilities and activities of the state park system. Grady Spann requested renewal of the agreement for one year.

Luke Story thanked the SPRTC commission for the invitation to attend SPRTC meetings and for the continued partnership with Arkansas State Parks. Story also stated he has been encouraged by this legendary partnership. One of the upcoming changes will be converting the media to a digital product to be shared digitally. The return of investment of 15 to 1, for the value of \$300,000 currently running advertisements on 20 commercial tv stations and 240 commercial radio stations.

Bill Barnes moved to approve the renewal of the grant partnership between Arkansas State Parks and the Arkansas Broadcasters Association for one year. Weston Lewey seconded, and the motion carried.

Arkansas Press Association Agreement renewal

Grady Spann reported that the agreement with APA began in 1988 and inspired Arkansas pride in the state park system and encouraging Arkansans to travel in-state and visit other Arkansas travel destinations. Grady noted this is an effective way to advertise special events across the state. Grady Spann requested renewal of the agreement for one year.

Weston Lewey moved to approve the renewal of the grant partnership between Arkansas State Parks and the Arkansas Press Association for one year. Cindy Smith seconded, and the motion carried.

CJRW Update

Jennifer Morgan presented the recent ASP video ads utilizing footage from Mount Nebo State Park Monument Trail. The videos will be branded for Monument Trails and segments will be branded for general state parks. The 30 second and 15 second digital advertisements will utilize music from a local artist Little Buffalo River Band. Discussion ensued.

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

Jim Shamburger reported that the Nominating Committee nominated Kalene Griffith as chair and Eric Jackson as vice chair of the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission for 2019, in the SPRTC meeting held on November 14, 2018. The motion was postponed at a special meeting held on December 27, 2018, the upcoming Legislative Session and Transformation Plan.

Shash Goyal moved to approve nominations of Kalene Griffith as chair and Eric Jackson as vice chair of the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission for 2020. John Gill seconded, and the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

The State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission adjourned at 12:12 pm on November 21, 2019, The Lodge at Mount Magazine, 577 Lodge Drive, Paris, AR 72855.

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