

STATE PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAVEL COMMISSION

**Cosmopolitan Hotel
Fayetteville, Arkansas**

April 21, 2011

Commissioners Present

Bob Knight, Chairman
Darin Gray, Vice-Chairman
Steve Arrison
Bill Barnes
Jay Bunyard
LeRoy Dangeau
Danny Ford
Cindy Smith

John Gill
Jim Gaston
Debbie Haak
Barbara Harvel
Montine McNulty
Mike Mills
Ness Sechrest
Jim Shamburger

Commissioners Absent

Billy Lindsey

Department Staff Present

Richard W. Davies, Executive Director
Gloria Robins, Executive Assistant
Cynthia Dunlap, Director of Administration
Greg Butts, Director, Arkansas State Parks
Joe David Rice, Tourism Director
Nancy Clark, Assistant Tourism Director
Jon Brown, Operations Manager
Stan Graves, Parks Planning & Development Manager
Joe Jacobs, Marketing & Revenue Manager
Joan Ellison, Public Information Officer
Dena Woerner, Communications Manager
Renee Robison, Group Travel Manager
Donna Perrin, Tourism Development Manager
Joanne Hinson, Research & Information Services Manager
Tom Stolarz, Region I, Supervisor
Marcel Hanzlik, Region III Supervisor
Tiffany Knox, Administrative Specialist
Kris Richardson, Administrative Specialist

Aristotle

Marla Johnson Norris
Dina Pruitt

CJRW

Wayne Woods
Shelby Woods
Karen Mullikin
Joy Phillips
Chuck Robertson

Ross Cranford
Brandi Childers
Kyle Pralor
Luba Bogan

Governor's Office

Kathy Holt

Guests

Marilyn Heifner, Fayetteville A&P
Claude Legris, Fort Smith CVB
Jennifer Boulden, Fort Smith CVB
Kalene Griffin, Bentonville A&P
Jane Mages, Little Rock CVB
Dan Hough, Alan Newman Research

Roll Call

Chairman Bob Knight called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m. on Thursday, April 21, 2011. Gloria Robins called the roll.

Chairman Bob Knight congratulated Jay Bunyard for being re-appointed to the commission as well as Montine McNulty who is now emeritus. Chairman Bob Knight welcomed the new Commissioners Barbara Harvel, John Gill and LeRoy Dangeau.

Approval of the Agenda

Steve Arrison moved to accept the Agenda as presented. Debbie Haak seconded and the motion carried.

Presentation of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Danny Ford moved to accept the Minutes from the February 2011 meeting. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Cynthia Dunlap presented the year-to-date financial report for the period ended March 31, 2011. The expenditures were: Parks Division, \$52,058,325, including construction and grants; Tourism Division, \$8,471,412; Keep Arkansas Beautiful, \$417,185; Administration Division, \$2,500,266; and History Commission, \$1,229,954. Expenditures for the Department totaled \$64,677,140, a decrease of 3.25% over the same period FY10. The year-to-date operating revenue Parks Division totaled \$15,857,411, an increase of 4% over the same period FY10; 1/8% Cent Tax \$20,238,290, a increase of 6.3% over the same period FY10; and 2% Tax \$9,060,859, a increase of 3.5% over the same period FY10.

Steve Arrison moved to approve the financial report. Debbie Haak seconded and the motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Richard Davies reported on the 2011 legislative session report. He gave a brief overview of the acts that affect Parks and Tourism. Mr. Davies stated that all the acts can be found online at

<http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2011/2011R/Pages/Home.aspx>

Claude Legris with the Fort Smith CVB invited the Commission to Fort Smith May 2012 for the monthly meeting. He introduced Jennifer Boulden to report on an event called "Gritapalooza." Jennifer wrote the essay "The Truth Behind True Grit," which led to several "True Grit" themed events in Fort Smith to harness the people's excitement locally and generate buzz with the movie re-make *True Grit*. In January and February alone, visitation to the national historic site went up 52%. The total cost for "Gritapalooza" to date was only \$288. Everything else was donated or done by volunteers.

TOURISM DIVISION

37th Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism

Nancy Clark reported on the 37th Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism. The conference was held in Little Rock, March 6-8. Ms. Clark stated that 594 delegates were registered for the conference. She presented the 2011 evaluations from the conference for the Commission to review.

Southeast Arkansas Geocaching Report

Nancy Clark reported on the Southeast Arkansas Geocaching Event called “April Fools and Ghouls” held in Arkansas City April 1-2, 2011. Travel Writer Kim Williams planted over 120 caches on the Great River Road. This generated more buzz about geocaching in Arkansas and will hopefully bring more people into our state.

Mississippi River Commission

Joe David Rice reported Commissioner Cindy Smith went to Greenville, Mississippi to speak to the Mississippi River Commission (MRC) on behalf of Arkansas Tourism and to thank the MPC for its efficiency in protecting our water resources which are central to our region’s prosperity.

Research and Information Services Section

Joanne Hinson Reported the Research and Information Services Section processed 9,910 requests for travel information during February 2011, a decrease of 3.7% from February 2010. The number of requests for March 2011 was 17,118, a 7.8% increase over March 2010. Year-to-date inquires for 2011 are 34,988, an increase of 0.3% increase over 2010.

Arkansas Welcome Centers received 33,933 visitors during February 2011, down 10.0% compared to February 2010. March 2011 visitation totaled 69,030, a decrease of 5.6% from March 2010. Year-to-date visitation is 139,395, down 6.1% over 2010.

Ms. Hinson reported on the progress of the new West Memphis Welcome Center and the new Helena Welcome Center. Construction on the foundation has started in West Memphis and is scheduled to be completed next year. No actual work has begun on the Helena Welcome Center, but a location has been chosen.

Ms. Hinson requested a Certificate of Appreciation for Phyllis Spradlin, Manager of the Bentonville Welcome Center, who is retiring after 19 years of service to the tourism industry.

Mike Mills moved to approve Phyllis Spradlin’s certificate of appreciation for 19 years of service. Debbie Haak seconded and the motion carried.

Tourism Development Section

Donna Perrin reported on the Tourism Development Section. The Fall/Winter Calendar of Events forms were mailed in late March. Event sponsors have until April 29 to submit events

that will occur between Labor Day weekend and February 29, 2012. Reminder cards will be mailed mid-April. All events posted to date may be proofed online at www.arkansas.com/calendar.

Ms. Perrin reported that Jefferson County completed a Tourism Attraction Feasibility Study and Planning Report for an "Outdoor Historical Drama-Saracen in Pine Bluff." The feasibility study and request for payment for half of the project (\$10,457.35) were delivered to the Tourism Division on March 9.

The City of Hot Springs completed a Tourism Attraction Feasibility Study for a "Sports Complex." The feasibility study and request for payment for half of the project (\$10,000.00) were delivered to the Tourism Division on March 11.

Communications Section

Dena Woerner reported on the Communications Section. She familiarized the new commissioners with her staff and her staff's roles and responsibilities.

Ms. Woerner reported on the statistics and results of the Arkansas Fishing Sweepstakes, which took place from Jan 31, 2011-March 17, 2011. The sweepstakes generated over 6,000 visits to Arkansas.com.

The Communications Section worked with the Arkansas Hospitality Association as well as the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management on the CVER (Communication of Vacancies Emergency Response). This system allows people to find vacancies and shelters along with mapping and pet-friendly information, for anyone displaced by an emergency. You can find it at <http://www.arkansas.com/cover/>. Dena Woerner will attend the Mississippi Broadcasters Association/Louisiana Association of Broadcasters Joint Meeting on May 3-5, 2011 to discuss CVER.

Group Travel Section

Renee Robison reported that 10,000 Civil War Brochures "I Rode The Civil War Trail" will go in all the Welcome Centers. The email blast went to 16,661 people and had a 25% open rate, resulting in 4,204 views and 1,417 clicks. Total views on the brochure are 5,519 since Friday, March 21, 2011.

She reported there is a niche market proposal with mid-south RV dealers AmeriDream (<http://www.ameridream-rv.com/>) and its Canadian counterpart Canadream (<http://www.ameridream-rv.com/>), to cross-sell multiple itineraries into the United States, in particular, Arkansas. She and Dena Woerner created multiple-state itineraries and a PowerPoint presentation.

The Monthly Tracking Report indicated there were 156 inquires for February 2011 compared to 160 inquires for February 2010. The March tracking report indicated 171 inquiries for 2011 compared to 107 for March 2010. Year-to-date inquiries are 367 for 2011.

Internet-Related Items

Marla Johnson-Norris reported that there were 461,167 visitor sessions during the month of March 2011, an increase of 1.5% over March 2010, and 95,078 links to industry partners. The Arkansas.com website placed fourth among all 50 state tourism sites and number one amid the contiguous state sites. The *Hot Deals and Packages* iPhone application had 2,911 downloads from March 1, 2010 through April 10, 2011, with 959 visits in March and 8,312 page views. During March 2011, there were 31,777 visits from mobile devices to *Arkansas.com*, by way of 12 operating systems, an increase of 74% over February 2011.

The Fishing Promotion generated 6,508 page views. Out of those, 4,133 went on to the Fishing page. Total 2010 Fishing Site Visitors were 7,764 and 2011 Fishing Site Visitors are already at 14,503. The sweepstakes promotion drew 4,640 entries.

Aristotle is in the process of re-designing the website. Marla Johnson Norris asked the Commission to approve or reinstate the \$60,950 of the previous budget cut.

Mike Mills moved to approve (reinstate) the budget Rollout. Debbie Haak seconded and the motion carried.

The Arkansas Arcade won Best Family Website and the AR State Parks App won Best General Interest Mobile Application.

Focus Group Report

Joanne Hinson introduced Dan Hough from Alan Newman Research. Mr. Hough presented the 2011 Arkansas Tourism Advertising Focus Groups Report. Two focus groups were held in each of the following cities: Oklahoma City, Dallas and Houston. Mr. Hough gave several recommendations in his conclusion, noting the fact that all six groups preferred the same speculative campaign. There seems to be continued distrust/lack of interest regarding banner ads. In all the groups, there were participants believe such ads carry viruses or will take them to

a questionable site. QR codes still suffer from a lack of understanding and awareness, although there was more awareness of their function than one year ago. Several participants indicated they found the female voice in one of the campaigns to be irritating. Many of the participants love the 'pins' and the outline maps showing the location of attractions in the photos. This was positive and informative feedback. Many participants showed great interest, but little awareness, of the upcoming opening of Crystal Bridges. The new attraction promises to have broad appeal. It was stated in various itineraries that show them a variety of things to do in a localized area. Although they know they can search for this information themselves online, they want us to make it easy for them to plan a weekend or a weeklong trip where they can do a number of things without spending a lot of time driving from attraction to attraction.

Advertising/Marketing

Karen Mullikin reported on the Fall/Winter Post-Buy Television Campaign. Of the seven markets purchased as part of the Fall/Winter 2010-2011 schedule, all but two posted at 90% or better. The overall average across all markets was 85%, with one market coming in over 100%. The two markets that performed below the industry standard were Fort Smith/Fayetteville (66%) and Memphis (60%). As a result of the post-buy analysis, the under-performing stations in both markets will run additional schedules in May to make up the deficit.

Karen Mullikin reported that The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission will not be participating in the Arkansas Fishing & Outdoor Guide this year due to budget restraints. She recommended reducing the pages from 100 to 68 and had asked for Parks & Tourism to increase the budget from \$100,000 to \$125,000.

PARKS DIVISION

FY 2012 Internet Budget

Dina Pruitt, Account Manager with Aristotle, reported on FY 2011 updates including: Mt. Magazine State Park redesign; State Parks iphone app updates; Expansion of trails data and search capabilities; Droid version of parks app currently underway.

Ms. Pruitt presented the FY 2012 internet budget for approval, consisting of: Redesign of the ArkansasStateParks.com website; Updates and maintenance; Individual park sites and micro-sites updates; Internet marketing and reporting, Kiosks updates and maintenance; Hosting, bandwidth and renewals.

Budget Summary

ArkansasStateParks.com Updates and Maintenance	\$119,045.00
Individual Park Sites and Micro-Sites Updates	\$ 8,000.00
Internet Marketing & Reporting	\$ 53,290.00
Kiosks Updates & Maintenance	\$ 13,100.00
Hosting, Bandwidth and Renewals	\$ 14,480.00
Sub-total	\$207,915.00
5% Contingency	\$ 10,395.00
Total Budget FY 2012	\$218,310.00

When questioned the comparison for last year's internet budget, Ms. Pruitt replied there is an 8.6% increase from the previous budget, with Greg Butts noting there had not been an increase in the last two years.

Steve Arrison moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2012 internet budget in the amount of \$218,310.00 as presented by Aristotle. Cindy Smith seconded and the motion carried.

FY 2012 Advertising Plan Budget

Jennifer Morgan, Account Executive with CJRW, presented the FY 2012 advertising budget for approval. Ms. Morgan proposed freshening the look of State Parks print and online ads by utilizing short technology terms, while keeping the iconic scenic beauty of state parks as the focal point. The headlines are easily recognizable terms that complement the particular photos used in the ads. Recent focus groups conducted for tourism confirmed that scenic beauty remains a top motivator for people to travel to Arkansas and the photography selected for this year's campaign will capture that essence. The new iPhone app will also be featured on the new advertising.

Ms. Morgan advised new media recommendation for FY 2012 will include increasing online advertising to target very specific interest groups that include outdoor adventure, golf, fishing and music. A separate media plan is proposed to promote Village Creek's golf course and will include prints ads, outdoor, newspaper and online advertising. CJRW recommends adding business publications to the media plan for DeGray Lake Resort State Park to target corporate golf and business travelers. The motorcycling niche continues to be an important

market for State Parks and CJRW recommends the addition of a new motorcycling ad to promote DeGray while continuing current presence in motorcycling publications for Arkansas State Parks, Mt. Magazine and the Ozark Folk Center.

Budget Summary Fiscal Year 2012

Media

Arkansas State Parks (including Village Creek Golf Course)	\$218,364.14	
DeGray Lake Resort State Park	\$ 94,119.94	
Mt. Magazine State Park	\$ 73,203.76	
Ozark Folk Center State Park	\$111,353.99	
Ad Production	\$ 24,156.17	
Contingency	\$ 11,400.00	
Media and Production Subtotal		\$ 532,598.00
Park Brochures	\$ 150,500.00	
Partners in Parks		
Arkansas Broadcasters Program	\$135,000.00	
Arkansas Press Association Program	\$ 95,000.00	
	\$230,000.00	
Travel Shows	\$ 55,000.00	
Promotional Items	\$ 5,000.00	
Aristotle Internet (previously approved)	\$218,310.00	
Total Budget		\$1,191,408.00

When questioned the comparison for last year's internet budget, Ms. Morgan replied there is a 7.55% increase from the previous budget, which includes advertising for Village Creek Golf Course. Greg Butts noted the ad budget is basically flat, with the exception of the necessary marketing efforts for the Village Creek Golf Course.

Ness Sechrest moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2012 advertising budget in the amount of \$1,191,408.00 as presented by CJRW. Steve Arrison seconded and the motion carried.

Village Creek – Structure Removal

Stan Graves, Manager of Planning & Development, requested approval to remove a substandard employee residence from Village Creek's inventory, built circa 1964. A sub-standard residence, the level of deterioration makes the house unsuitable for renovation.

Mike Mills moved to approve removal of an employee residence (Building No. 55.14 / AASIS No. 120006494) from the Village Creek State Park inventory. Steve Arrison seconded and the motion carried.

Queen Wilhelmina – Structure Removals

Stan Graves requested approval to remove two identical prefabricated well houses which are no longer needed since the park water distribution system has been connected to the Freedom Water Association. As a result, the wells must be abandoned and capped to meet federal requirements and the structures that house the wells will no longer be needed.

Jim Shamburger moved to approve removal of two well houses (Building no. 46.02 and 46.22 / AASIS No. 120006453 and No. 120006465) from Queen Wilhelmina State Park inventory. Debbie Haak seconded and the motion carried.

NASPD Annual Information Exchange Report; FY 2010

Greg Butts presented the National Association of State Parks Directors (NASPD) FY 2010 annual report which provides a comparison by category and how ASP ranks nationally with other park systems. Mr. Butts noted it a useful tool, especially where Arkansas ranks with the other states. As the state park systems vary from emphasis, organization, priorities and faculties, the report's statistics are not necessarily a measure of success. He highlighted areas of campsites, cabins, and lodge rooms, stating ASP does not have the largest number of facilities but does get a good return on revenue facilities. Ranked 18th in number for cabins, 14th in nights rented, but ranked 10th for cabin revenue. Lodge rooms ranks 12th in number 9th in number of rooms rented but 6th in lodge room revenue. ASP does well in returns for a medium size park system in comparison with other state park systems.

ASP Emergency Rule – Department of Justice ADA Regulation on Mobility Devices

Greg Butts reported details of an emergency rule implemented by ASP as authorized by the SPRTC during the February 2011 meeting. The Department of Justice (DOJ) ruling determined the public should have greater access to facilities, programs and trails for disabled visitors, categorized by wheelchairs, manually powered devices, and other power driven mobility devices, to be implemented by March 15, 2011. ASP staff has reviewed all trails in all parks based on criteria and designated trails accordingly. The trail information is posted on the ADPT Freedom of Information (FOI) website for the public. Mr. Butts advised he anticipates some nationally generated litigation regarding the ruling, which will be subject to interpretation. Commissioner John Gill inquired if liability insurance will be required due to the possible dangers involved. Mr. Butts replied ASP does not carry liability insurance and it is not required; it would not be any different than a mountain biker who is injured while riding the trails. He noted the DOJ ruling is more concerned with access than liability. Commissioner Gill inquired if the Attorney General's office had reviewed the information to which Mr. Butts replied he would forward for their information.

CIP Quarterly Report

Stan Graves reported \$69,137,680 is underway in construction related work. He reported \$23,375,092 in projects were closed out this quarter. He reported \$126 million in capital improvements have been completed system wide with the 1/8¢ Conservation Tax Program.

Miscellaneous

Greg Butts reported that Oklahoma State Parks is facing seven state park closures with opposition from legislators.

Results from Arkansasports360.com annual Reader's Poll voted DeGray State Park Golf Course from 14th spot last year to 5th position in 2011 for "Best Public-Access Course."

A 3.36 carat diamond was found at the Crater of Diamonds State Park in April, named the "Heart of Arkansas."

Mr. Butts relayed positive feedback from guests that visited Lake DeGray Resort State Park and enjoyed the programs and were appreciative of a great staff. Visitors say "keep up the good work; they will be back."

Negotiations are in progress with two production companies interested in filming reality TV programs at the Crater of Diamonds State Park.

Bids for the sale of the Mary Woods No. 2 will open May 12, 2011. A meeting has been scheduled with the Jackson County Historic Society to begin the planning process of the display items from the Mary Woods No. 2 for the planned visitor center.

Fact sheets were distributed for area parks prepared by Planning & Development providing great information and overview of the work underway and completed for these parks.

Jon Brown, Manager of Operations, provided a report of storm damage received by parks during the April 14 and 19 storms. Toltec had roof damage to the Education Pavilion. Lake Dardanelle had wind damage and lost approximately 20 trees. He advised severe weather emergency plans are in place for parks. Each park has a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) radio located in staff residences to receive weather information 24/7 in order to assist park visitors; in addition to internet access.

The State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission adjourned at 3:30 on April 21 at the Fayetteville Town Center in Fayetteville, Arkansas.