

**Arkansas State Parks, Recreation & Travel Commission  
Mt. Magazine State Park  
Paris, Arkansas  
February 18, 2010**

**Commission Present**

Montine McNulty, Chairman  
Bill Barnes  
Jay Bunyard  
Danny Ford  
Jim Gaston  
Darin Gray

Billy Lindsey  
Mike Mills  
Ness Sechrest  
Jim Shamburger  
Cindy Smith

**Commission Absent**

Bob Knight, Vice-Chairman  
Steve Arrison  
Debbie Haak  
Tom Schueck

**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  
Mac Balkman, Operations Manager  
Stan Graves, 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  
Jon Brown, Region I Supervisor  
Marcel Hanzlik, Region III Supervisor  
Dottie Boyles, Administrative Specialist  
Kris Richardson, Administrative Specialist

**CJRW**

Shelby Woods  
Karen Mullikin  
Carrie Orahood  
Chance Woods  
Ross Cranford  
Amy Frazier

**Aristotle**

Marla Norris  
Jonathan Eudy  
Dina Pruitt

**Guests**

Kathy Holt – Governor’s Office  
Becky Bariola – Park Superintendent, Mt. Magazine State Park  
Patricia Brown – Ft. Smith Golf Classic  
Jessie Cox – Park Superintendent, Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park  
Billy Dooly – Ft. Smith Golf Classic  
Rusty Garrett – Southwest Times Record  
Ron Gossage – Superintendent, Lake Ft. Smith State Park  
Claude LeGris – Ft. Smith Convention Visitors Bureau  
Jane Malton-Mages – Little Rock Convention Visitors Bureau  
Dennis Tracy – Little Rock Convention Visitors Bureau

**Roll Call**

Chairman Montine McNulty called the meeting to order at 8:32 am on Thursday, February 21, 2010. Gloria Robins called the roll.

**Approval of Agenda**

**Jay Bunyard made a motion to approve the Agenda. Jim Shamburger seconded and the motion passed.**

**Presentation of Minutes**

**Billy Lindsey made a motion to approve the Minutes from the January 2010 meeting. Danny Ford seconded and the motion passed.**

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Cynthia Dunlap presented the financial report for the fiscal year-to-date period ended January 31, 2010. Parks Division expenditures totaled \$40,599,071; Tourism Division, \$7,021,952; Keep Arkansas Beautiful, \$350,036; Administration Division, \$1,894,145; and History Commission, \$1,006,752. Expenditures for the Department totaled \$50,871,957, which included construction and grants. Fiscal year-to-date operating revenue for the Parks Division totaled \$12,750,955, an decrease of -2.0% from last year's total.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve the January Financial Report. Jay Bunyard seconded and the motion passed.**

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Legislative Session**

Richard Davies reported the 2010 Arkansas Legislative Session has begun and the Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism (ADPT) Appropriation Bill and Re-appropriation Bills are in joint budget committee.

### **Department Newsletters**

Richard W. Davies reported there is a host of ADPT newsletters to which the commissioners will be included in the distribution list. Commissioners will receive all ADPT newsletters or can unsubscribe if not interested.

### **Ouachita National Forest Transportation Plan Update**

Richard W. Davies advised he had received correspondence from U.S. Senator Mark Pryor and U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln sent to the Chief of the Forest Service in regards to the Ouachita National Forest Transportation Plan for Off Highway Vehicles (OHV). Mr. Davies advised there has not been any changes to the plan, other than many people are very upset with the situation. Bill Barnes commented there are a number of formal appeals.

### **Miscellaneous**

Richard W. Davies reported that ADPT will proceed with the office relocation in the Multiple Agency Complex (Big "MAC" building) as discussed in the January meeting. The Arkansas Building Authority has agreed to pay for wall changes and deferred rent to begin next fiscal year. Based on these factors and that the opportunity comes around only every 30 years,

the office relocation will proceed. All office space for ASP staff will be relocated to the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) north segment space on the fourth floor of the building to include the Planning and Development section from the second floor and Outdoor Recreation Grants section from the sixth floor. Former ASP office space will be utilized by ADPT staff requiring additional office space. Once the AEDC moves out of the building in March, the relocation process will commence.

### **U.S. Marshals Museum Update**

Claude Legris reported that the U.S. Marshals Museum kicked off the national capital campaign with a reception hosted at the Arkansas Governor's Mansion on December 18<sup>th</sup>. The event hosted by President Bill Clinton and Governor Mike Beebe was very successful.

Mr. Legris advised Congressman Boozman introduced House Bill 2799 to produce a coin commemorating the 225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the U.S. Marshals Service. The first \$5 million from the sale of the coin will go to the U.S. Marshals Museum. Senators Lincoln and Pryor introduced Senate Bill 2106.

He noted The Robert Westphal Family donated an additional 2.36 acres adjacent to the museum, ensuring easy access parking for the museum. Legris advised the design of the museum is complete and architects are on board. The museum will be in the shape of a marshal's badge and will include a Hall of Honor paying tribute to all of the fallen marshals. Although a completion time has not been determined yet, plans for the U.S. Marshals Museum are moving forward with continued interest and anticipation.

### **PARKS DIVISION**

#### **Spring TV & Radio Spots Presented**

The spring TV and radio spots were presented to the commission for review. Joe Jacobs presented previously approved spots that will be utilized in the Spring campaign as follows:

##### **TV Spots (30-second spots)**

**TV Cut #1:** "LakeandRiverStateParks.com"

**TV Cut #2:** "Arkansas's State Parks... So Close and So Much to Do"

**TV Cut #3:** "ArkansasStateParks.com"

##### **Radio Spots (60-second spots)**

**Radio Cut #1:** "Arkansas's State Parks...So Close and So Much to Do"

**Radio Cut #2:** "ArkansasStateParks.com"

Richard Davies noted the shot of the Mary Woods II was included in the TV spot #2 and should be removed with the vessel out of commission. Joe Jacobs confirmed the Mary Woods II shot will be removed from the ad and replaced with a historic shot. Jacobs added that \$1.4 million in TV and radio spots in air time was donated by Arkansas TV and radio stations last year through the Arkansas Broadcaster's Association partnership. He advised new footage will be shot for future ad campaigns, commenting inclement weather had been a challenge within the last several months for shooting new footage.

### **Park Brochure Rack Guidelines**

Greg Butts reported there is not a policy directive in place for the display of non-department related brochures in ASP. At a few locations, private operators have requested to display brochures at the Visitors Information Center (VIC) at the various state parks. He advised the brochure racks in the VICs have limited space and were not designed to have a large display or quantities of brochures displayed, unlike the Tourism Division's policy at Welcome Centers. Some parks are in areas with numerous Attractions, Lodging, and Dining (ALD) opportunities, (i.e. Lake Ouachita State Park, Bull Shoals State Park, DeGray Lake Resort State Park) while other parks in more remote areas do not have as many ALD (i.e. Mt. Magazine State Park, Petit Jean State Park) opportunities. After much discussion with operators, he has approved operators to display through the distribution company, at selected locations.

Avid Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area supporter Ken Zey traveled to some parks that are permitting operators to display in the VIC brochure racks while operators in other parks were not permitted to display. After continued discussions, Greg Butts determined it was time to develop a policy directive to maintain consistent guidelines throughout the park system. The challenge came from so many variables with different park VIC sizes, available display space and number of ALDs in the vicinity. After meeting with Senator Bledsoe and Mr. Zey, Butts used the tourism proposed policy as a basis and modified it to create a proposed policy directive specific for ASP. He presented proposed PD 1160 – Policy on the Display of Tourism Industry Brochures - to commission for review. With marked differences in number of ALDs and the interest of fairness, Mr. Butts would establish a radius for each state park to determine the number of operators permitted, depending on the area, and number of ALDs in the vicinity. Discussion ensued regarding the many variables involved with the operators, ALDs, parks, etc. and how many possible issues and challenges could result from creating a firm policy that may not have flexibility required for various park sizes and areas. Bill Barnes suggested that due to the complexity of the subject, that a pilot policy be instituted for a year and evaluated.

**Cindy Smith made a motion to approve the proposed draft policy on the Display of Tourism Industry Brochures as a “pilot” study for one year and to bring final recommendations back to the commission. Jay Bunyard seconded and the motion passed.**

### **Village Creek – VCR Loan Foreclosure Sale Update**

Greg Butts reported that the foreclosure sale on Village Creek Resort's development loan default that began in September will take place at the Cross County Courthouse on February 22. Included in the five acres is: one acre of land at the entrance of the golf course; and the leasehold interest for the maintenance building and resort development areas. David Dowd, President of Cross County Bank (CCB) does not anticipate any interested party to take over the debt. Once the foreclosure process is complete, staff will meet with CCB and evaluate development and operation options.

Mr. Butts reported he directed staff to analyze the golf course to see what is required to have the golf course operational and will report to the commission in April with an estimated dollar amount.

### **Jacksonport – Mary Woods II Update**

Greg Butts provided an update on the status of the sunken Mary Woods II sternwheeler at Jacksonport State Park. Staff met with five salvage companies and are expecting to receive four "no cure, no pay" emergency bids by February 25 to raise the vessel. Bids requested "no cure, no pay" meaning if vessel is not recovered, payment will not be charged. Stan Graves reported that the vessel was insured for \$300,000, the maximum amount allowed, with a \$2,500 deductible. Two people have been arrested for trespassing prior to the sinking of the vessel, but the investigation is ongoing and the cause has not been determined yet. More information will be available once the vessel has been raised and will update the commission again in April.

### **Miscellaneous**

Greg Butts reported Mt. Magazine State Park shines brightly through a great piece published by AAA Southern Traveler as a resort for all seasons, offering exceptional recreation, accommodations and beauty.

A news release from Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area boasts high numbers of eagles spotted on recent eagle watch cruises with overcast and rainy weather bringing in the numerous birds of prey.

Mr. Butts noted the power of citizen advocacy - Harriman State Park is a valuable resource to Fremont County and the state of Idaho and should remain under state Department of Parks and Recreation management, as should all Idaho state parks – that was the consensus of the area residents at a public forum in Ashton, Idaho.

Democrat-Gazette reporter Cathy Frye was glad to report her daughter (third generation) asked to go to Pinnacle Mountain State Park to “look for nature.” Reporter/Mom urges families to enjoy the lessons parks have to offer – in history, environment, biology, preservation and respect.

Information Officer Joan Ellison reported a recent diamond find at the Crater of Diamonds was a light brown 2.13 karat diamond named “Brown Rice Diamond” by avid diamond hunter, Glenn Worthington.

## **TOURISM DIVISION**

### **International Women’s Forum**

Joe David Rice reported on the International Women’s Forum board meeting held in Little Rock, January 28-29, which were inclement weather days. This was the first time their meeting was held in Arkansas. The women represent countries from all over the world, and for many it was their first time to experience snow and ice. Dennis Tracy, Director of Marketing & Sales, Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau, commented because of the bad weather the women could not attend the Clinton Presidential Library, Heifer International Headquarters, or go shopping. Instead a representative from the Library, Heifer International, and several local stores came to the hotel to present programs. However, the event at the Governor’s Mansion went on as scheduled.

### **Economic Research Associates Strategic Plan**

Richard Davies and Joe David Rice reviewed the Economic Research Associates Report. Phase three of this report was completed in January which included a growth strategy plan suitable for immediate implementation and specific action steps based on research analysis.

Mr. Davies explained that the goal is to maximize tourism development and economic benefits by increasing local awareness of tourism funding opportunities. One of the ways to do this is through a selection of demonstration projects in areas with growth potential that express an interest in working together. Projects may involve tourism product creation and/or enhancement.

Mr. Davies stated the Department will work to maximize relationships with other state and federal agencies to address trails, access to land and water, and historic preservation, which the survey identified as high priorities. The Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism will also develop a process to better communicate the economic value of tourism to local business and civic leaders who could help the cause of tourism growth.

**Ness Sechrest moved to proceed with the recommendations outlined in the Economic Research Associates Report. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.**

### **36<sup>th</sup> Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism**

Assistant Director of Tourism Nancy Clark reported on the 36th Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism. She stated that 184 registrations have been received to date. Ms. Clark also reported Governor Mike Beebe will speak at the conference on Monday, March 8, during lunch. The program and a list of speakers have been posted on Arkansas.com.

### **Research and Information Services Section**

The Research and Information Services Section processed 8,710 requests for travel information during January 2010, a decrease of 22.3 percent from January 2009. Arkansas Welcome Centers received 37,302 visitors in January 2010, up 4.5 percent from January last year.

Joanne Hinson attended the Center for Business and Economic Research. Ms. Hinson stated the performance of the Arkansas economy depends on the performance of the U.S. economy. Sectors that are expected to lead are Leisure and Hospitality, Education and Health, and Construction.

### **Tourism Development Section**

Donna Perrin reported all of the video interviews for the Tourism Hall of Fame and Tourism Person of the Year recipients have been completed and delivered to Debbie Grace at CJRW.

Ms. Perrin planned and hosted an informal, interagency networking meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to field questions about financial assistance and to share information in order to help direct public queries. Representatives from 15 agencies delivered brief outlines covering what their agencies offer in the way of financial assistance, thereby expanding the group's knowledge of what is available to Arkansas businesses in the way of initiatives, tax credits, grants, and loans.

### **Communications Section**

Dena Woerner reported on the Little Rock Tweet-up meeting held January 30 at Prost located in the downtown Little Rock River Market area. The purpose of the meeting was so friends and followers on Twitter could meet face to face.

VisitmyArkansas.com launched in January during the Tweet-up meeting. The Web site allows travel writers for the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism to have their own blog pages.

Ms. Woerner also stated that *Film South* magazine took two articles written by ADPT travel writers, put its name on them, and used the pieces as if they were the magazine's own articles.

### **Group Travel Section**

Renee Robison stated that inquiries for the month of January 2010 were 83 compared to 151 for January 2009. However, inquiries are up for motorcyclists who are already planning their spring trips.

Ms. Robison reported the Ozark Medieval Fortress is being now promoted by Branson, Missouri. An article appeared in *Connect* magazine promoting the Fortress and Ms. Robison also stated the motor coach industry is beginning to take an interest. The ribbon cutting for the first phase of the Fortress will be held on April 29.

### **Aristotle**

Marla Johnson Norris presented the concept of Cloud Computing, a process in which computers would be able to share information and files through a common source or bandwidth.

Ms. Norris reported there were 427,005 visitor sessions to Arkansas.com for January 2010, an increase of 15.4% from January 2009, total impressions were 1.5 million for keyword buys, and Arkansas.com remains number one among contiguous state tourism sites.

Travel trends for 2010 include hotels providing great package deals through the internet, all-inclusive resorts at bargain rates, Haycations, Driving and Traincations, and Eco Luxe. Research shows people are searching an average of 22 travel Web sites before making a booking.

Jonathan Eudy and Dena Woerner presented an update regarding the Hot Deals and Packages iPhone Application. The estimated launch window of the iPhone application is expected to be mid-to-late March. Beta tests are being performed at this time.

**CJRW**

**Arts and Culture, Spring/Summer 2010 Television TBA Marketing Campaign**

Karen Mullikin and Ross Cranford presented the new Arts and Culture Video Creative featuring areas around the state.

The marketing strategy for Spring/Summer 2010 Television Broadcasters of Arkansas marketing campaign was presented to the Commissioner's. Three new 30-second spots featuring Agritourism, Arts and Culture, and Take a Tour Around The Natural State were presented.

**Mike Mills moved to accept the Arts and Culture Video Creative and the Spring/Summer 2010 TBA Television Creative. Jim Gaston second and motion carried.**

With no further business, the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m. on February 18, 2010 at Mount Magazine State Park.