

**Arkansas State Parks, Recreation & Travel Commission**  
**La Quinta Inn, Russellville, AR**  
**July 21-22, 2011**

**Commissioners Present**

Bob Knight, Chairman	John Gill
Darin Gray, Vice Chairman	Debbie Haak
Steve Arrison	Barbara Harvel
Bill Barnes	Montine McNulty
LeRoy Dangeau	Mike Mills
Danny Ford	Jim Shamburger
Cindy Smith	

**Commissioners Absent**

Jay Bunyard	Billy Lindsey
Jim Gaston	Ness Sechrest

**Department Staff Present**

Richard Davies, Executive Director  
Greg Butts, Director, Arkansas State Parks  
Joe David Rice, Tourism Director  
Nancy Clark, Assistant Tourism Director  
Gloria Robins, Executive Assistant  
Jon Brown, Operations Manager  
Stan Graves, Planning & Development Manager  
Joe Jacobs, Marketing & Revenue Manager  
Tom Stolarz, Region I Supervisor  
Marcel Hanzlik, Region III Supervisor  
Shea Lewis, Region IV Supervisor  
Renee Robison, Group Travel Manager  
Donna Perrin, Tourism Development Manager  
Joanne Hinson, Research & Information Services Manager  
Kris Richardson, Administrative Specialist  
Dottie Boyes, Administrative Specialist

**Aristotle**

Jonathan Eudy

**CJRW**

Shelby Woods	Karen Mullikin
Wayne Woods	Joy Phillips

### **Guests**

Mayor Bill Eaton, Mayor of Russellville  
Jeff Pipkin, President & CEO, Russellville Chamber of Commerce  
Ross Moore, Executive Director, Greers Ferry Lake & Little Red River Association  
Ron Nost, Tri Peaks/Russellville Chamber of Commerce  
Andy Thomas, Superintendent, Lake Dardanelle State Park  
Sarah Keating, Assistant Superintendent, Lake Dardanelle State Park  
Kathy Holt, Governor's Office

### **Roll Call**

Chairman Bob Knight called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm on Thursday, July 21, 2011.  
Gloria Robins called the roll.

### **Approval of Agenda**

**Jim Shamburger moved to accept the Agenda as presented.  
Darin Gray seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Presentation of Minutes from Previous Minutes**

**Mike Mills moved to accept the Minutes from June 2011 meeting.  
Jim Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Recognition of Guests**

Chairman Knight introduced Mayor Bill Eaton to the Commission. Mayor Eaton welcomed the Commission to Russellville, stated he was glad to have the meeting in the city and noted that Lake Dardanelle State Park is one of the best kept secrets in Arkansas.

Chairman Knight introduced Andy Thomas, Superintendent of Lake Dardanelle State Park (LDSP), to the Commission. Superintendent Thomas welcomed the Commission and staff and introduced Sarah Keating, Assistant Superintendent. He provided an overview of the park and its history. The mission of the park is to promote tourism and provide recreational and educational opportunities for visitors to enrich their lives with outdoor activities. Superintendent Thomas noted LDSP has a very strong interpretive program with two excellent interpreters and many award winning programs. The park enjoys a great relationship with the Russellville community with 40 schools participating in curriculum based programs, providing various

special events, many summer camps, is a Certified Trail of Tears park, and an outstanding fishing pavilion hosting numerous events, just to name a few of the services and facilities that LDSP has to offer. Superintendent Thomas invited the Commissioners to stop by anytime for a visit and/or tour of the park.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Cynthia Dunlap presented the year-to-date financial report for the period ended June 30, 2011. The expenditures were: Parks Division, \$71,120,081 including construction and grants; Tourism Division, \$15,544,732; Keep Arkansas Beautiful, \$643,879; Administration Division, \$3,258,979; and History Commission, \$1,676,915. Expenditures for the Department totaled \$92,244,586, a decrease of 4.5% over the same period FY10. The year-to-date operating revenue Parks Division totaled \$22,556,685, an increase of 0.0% over the same period FY10; 1/8% Cent Tax \$26,825,318, a increase of 5.2% over the same period FY10; and 2% Tax \$11,805,074, a increase of 3.3% over the same period FY10.

**Steve Arrison moved to approve the Financial Report. Debbie Haak seconded and the motion carried.**

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

#### **Miscellaneous**

Richard Davies reminded the Commission that the Staff Appreciation dinner will take place at Lake Dardanelle State Park following the meeting.

### **PARKS DIVISION**

#### **CY 2012 Proposed Fees and Rates**

Greg Butts stated this meeting the Commission would review, discuss and modify if necessary, the proposed CY 2012 fees and rates for Arkansas State Parks (ASP) with a vote for preliminary approval. The August meeting will provide a forum for public comments with a final vote taken at that time. Mr. Butts noted two revisions since June's presentation of proposed CY 2012 fees and rates. Bull Shoals-White River scenic johnboat float trips revised to \$15 per person per trip vs. \$15 per person per hour, as the length of the tour may vary depending on river flows. Petit Jean offers a season pass for swimming and has requested a pool pass that offers a discount for multiple uses. There are other parks offering the pool pass and would benefit Petit Jean's visitors who have extended stays. Mr. Butts advised he has implemented the pool pass at

Petit Jean State Park as a special promotion for 2011 and would like to include it permanently for the 2012 rates, at \$68 for 20 admissions.

**Montine McNulty moved to tentatively approve the CY 2012 fees and rates for Arkansas State Parks with revisions noted at Bull Shoals-White River and Petit Jean State Parks. Debbie Haak seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Prairie Grove – West Land Acquisition Amendment**

Stan Graves noted one of the best things ever done in the park system was Prairie Grove's Battlefield Protection Plan and that Arkansas was one of the first states west of the Mississippi to implement such a plan. He stated that the West property land acquisition was approved earlier in the year as part of the ANCRC grant, in the amount of \$680,000 for 100 acres. Since that time, Randy West (land owner) advised he is interested in selling an additional 50-80 acres. Mr. Graves relayed he had spoken with Tom Gilmore with the Civil War Trust in Washington, D.C. who advised ASP could leverage the \$680,000 to \$1.4 million in the form of a grant. Mr. Graves noted this additional acreage would square up the park boundary and preserve the view shed from the park's overlook area, therefore requested permission to pursue the acquisition for the additional acreage.

**Montine McNulty moved to amend the West land acquisition proposal at Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park, to include the following property:**

**The Northwest Quarter of Section 7, Township 15 North, Range 31 West, LESS and EXCEPT the North 264 feet thereof; and the East Half of the East Half of the Northeast Quarter of Section 12, Township 15 North, Range 32 West, LESS and EXCEPT the North 264 feet thereof, in Washington County, Arkansas, containing 184.42 acres, more or less.**

**Debbie Haak seconded and the motion carried.**

Greg Butts advised the Commission that ASP would seek favorable advice from the governor, Department of Finance and Administration and the Arkansas Legislative Council as required in A.C.A. 22-4-106.

### **Pinnacle – Removal of Structure**

Stan Graves requested approval to remove a concession booth structure, located in the picnic area, which was swept away by flood waters. The structure sustained severe structural and water damage and is beyond repair.

**Jim Shamburger moved to approve removal of concession booth structure (Building No. 42.17/AASIS 120001960) from Pinnacle Mountain State Park inventory. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Scooters in ASP – Update**

Richard Davies stated that major roads in State Parks are part of the 600 series of state highways that are managed and maintained by Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD). AHTD maintains the highways and therefore AHTD laws dictate usage and allowable vehicle types. Thus ASP has to abide by laws established for those highways. The new scooters that are under 50 ccs or similar electric models are not permitted on state highways at this time. Davies advised AHTD have motor vehicles defined by engine size into categories: motor vehicles; motorcycles; motorized bicycles, ATVs, and “other vehicles.” Scooters fall in the “other vehicle” category and are prohibited on state highways and discussion ensued. Richard Davies stated AHTD has been excellent partners through the years for both divisions of Parks and Tourism. He advised AHTD is willing to discuss “other vehicles” on state park roads only but no changes could be made until the 2013 legislative session. Mr. Davies stated AHTD may provide the Commission the authority to deal with “other vehicles” only on state park roads. Jim Shamburger stated ASP should begin discussions with AHTD on this matter as it may soon be an issue for AHTD as well.

Greg Butts reported feedback from a survey taken from state parks nationwide in regards to their policies with scooters in state parks. With 19 states responding out of 49 states, the results showed 6% did allow scooters in state parks and 33% did not allow scooters in state parks.

Chairman Knight requested ASP staff to continue discussions with AHTD in regards to allowing scooters on state parks roads and report back to the Commission. John Gill requested a written report with results of discussions including the staff’s recommendation.

### **America’s State Parks**

Greg Butts reported there are many articles and stories in the national media noting park system temporary closures, individual park closures, cutbacks and the related ramifications of a slow economy impacting America’s State Parks. He presented a clip from CBS demonstrating Washington State Parks is charging \$10 daily fees to offset operating costs. He then presented a follow-up clip of a local news KARK story that interviewed Richard Davies comparing national parks to state parks and how they are faring in the current economy.

### **CIP Quarterly Report**

Stan Graves reported currently \$63.2 million is encumbered in methods of finance with various projects throughout the park system. He reported \$14.4 million closed in projects for the last quarter with \$10.4 million at Lake Fort Smith State Park for park relocation and construction. Mr. Graves reported \$131.4 million in projects completed or underway from Amendment 75 funding.

Bids were opened for the Mississippi River State Park Visitor Information Center, with hopes of awarding a contract and getting work underway in August.

The Wildlife Observation Trail Grants approved earlier in the year, with awards of \$100,000: \$60,000 to Mississippi River State Park; \$20,000 to Bull Shoals-White River State Park; and \$20,000 to Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area.

### **Miscellaneous**

Greg Butts reported Margi Jenks, Interpreter at Crater of Diamonds State Park, will speak at the Arkansas Jewelers Association Convention on August 13, 2011.

There will be a co-op diamond exhibit at the Pink Palace Museum in Memphis from July 23 – October 16, 2011. The Crater of Diamonds State Park portion will include exhibits about diamonds and diamond mine here in “our backyard.”

A great success from an ASP partnership and a school’s unique program to boosts Benchmark scores. When Benchmark scores in science were below state average, Monitor Elementary Principal Childress and Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area (HSPCA) staff, developed a year-long program for 5<sup>th</sup> graders to “see and feel” science at the park via monthly field trips. Principal Childress says Benchmark scores went up 19 points since the program started in November. In less than one year of working with HSPCA they’ve cut the gap by more than half. Not only do they plan to keep going with the program but plan to expand to other grade levels as well. Debbie Haak recommended ASP partner with the Department of Education to offer a similar program to all public schools. She advised with new technology, information can be forwarded to a central location and distributed to all public schools with applicable technology, noting these programs should be shared throughout the state.

Jay Miller reported a new History Hub website, [www.arhistoryhub.com](http://www.arhistoryhub.com), was unveiled last week by the Department of Arkansas Heritage to assist teachers accessing information. The History Hub website will pull together numerous history websites, resources, and links to one location allowing teachers to access various information and resources more quickly and efficiently.

Greg Butts reported Hindman Hall, located at Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park (PGBSP), celebrated its Grand Re-opening event on June 18, 2011. He thanked Darin Gray and Richard Davies for speaking at the event, along with Jay Miller for his efforts and hard work for a successful historical endeavor. Mr. Butts showed a presentation of event photos including activities and exhibits of the celebration enjoyed by guests and staff. He advised with Civil War history and preservation the primary focus of the PGBSP, this state-of-the-art facility will offer numerous options for enjoyment and education for students, residents and visitors in the area.

## **TOURISM**

### **Event Sponsorship Policy: Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism**

Joe David Rice presented the revised Event Sponsorship Policy for the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism.

#### **Event Sponsorship Policy: Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism**

In principle, the Arkansas State Parks, Recreation & Travel Commission holds that the Tourism Division's tourism promotional funds should be reserved for marketing rather than sponsorships. As a matter of policy, the Commission is of the opinion that the Tourism Division should not be in the business of subsidizing local or regional events, because its function is marketing and promoting these events rather than paying for them.

In order for the Commission to consider a partnership proposal, it must offer a demonstrated advertising value for the state in targeted markets equal to or exceeding the proposed cost of the state's contribution. The resulting exposure must be measurable and consistent with the state's marketing plan.

When considering such proposals, criteria shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. The event must be officially sanctioned by a recognized national organization.
2. A project plan for the event containing the community's specific request must be submitted to the Commission via the Tourism Director for approval no later than six months prior to its planned implementation.
3. Program elements must include the potential for significant regional and national publicity resulting in increased awareness and positive media exposure for Arkansas tourism.
4. The event must have the support of private businesses and organizations (e.g., tourist attractions, lodging facilities, and other service providers) and the applicable local and regional tourism promotion associations and

agencies. It should also be supported by volunteers from the community who are committed to the project's success.

5. The event must contain elements designed to boost visitation to the destination, including local entertainment venues and other tourism attractions and businesses.
6. The Department's portion of the budget may not exceed 5% of the total project costs. For events offering prize money, the prize money awarded must total at least \$500,000 – and the Department's share shall not exceed 3%. State funds will come from the annual advertising budget.
7. Within two months of the event's completion, the Tourism Director must receive a thorough written report detailing the publicity received, its value, and the economic impact of the event. The report will be then forwarded to the Commission.
8. Any funding commitment from the Commission shall be viewed as a one-time commitment, and applications for funding assistance for subsequent years of the event shall not be considered.

This policy, approved by the Arkansas State Parks, Recreation & Travel Commission on July 21, 2011, replaces earlier Tourism Division policies on sponsorships and partnerships.

**Steve Arrison moved to accept the revised Event Sponsorship Policy for the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. Jim Shamburger seconded and motion carried.**

### **2013 and 2014 Arkansas Governor's Conferences on Tourism: Upcoming Presentations**

Joe David Rice announced that bid letters to host the 2013 and 2014 Arkansas Governor's Conferences on Tourism have been mailed. Forms are to be completed and returned to the Tourism office no later than Friday, October 7, 2011, and will be reviewed at the October Commission meeting. Nancy Clark announced that letters were mailed to Bentonville, Hot Springs, Fayetteville, Pine Bluff, Springdale, Jonesboro, and Rogers. The Conference may not be held in the same city more than once in a five-year period. Since Rogers hosted the Conference in 2008, the city will not be eligible to host it again until 2014.

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

The Research and Information Services Section processed 9,182 requests for travel information during June 2011, a decrease of 27.6% from June 2010. Year-to-date inquiries for 2011 are 72,267, a decrease of 15.3% over 2010. They received 572 requests for retirement and relocation information in June, down 32.8% from June 2010. Year-to-date requests for 2011 are 4,726, down 15.7% over 2010.

Arkansas Welcome Centers received 102,418 visitors during June 2011, down 9.9% compared to June 2010. January – June visitation is 378,999, down 8.3% over 2010.

Joanne Hinson stated that on June 27 a couple traveling through the state stopped by the West Memphis Welcome Center. The lady was injured when her foot caught on some metal edging, causing her to fall. Welcome Center employees were quick to attend to her injuries. The couple wrote a letter thanking them for their kindness and assistance.

**John Gill moved for the Commission to write a letter of commendation to the West Memphis Welcome Center personnel for outstanding customer service and assistance in response to a visitor emergency that occurred at the Center on June 27, 2011. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Tourism Development Section**

Donna Perrin reported that the *2011/2012 Fall/Winter Calendar of Events* cover art features a rendering of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art with the opening date of November 11, 2011 on the front cover. On the back, an image of the late Pine Top Perkins is featured performing at the King Biscuit Blues Festival. Tourism artist Max Gilbert prepared the contents of the publication and will send the completed project to the printer the week of July 25.

Copies of the 12th edition of *Living in Arkansas* were distributed. P. Allen Smith, host of *P. Allen Smith's Garden Home*, appears on the cover holding one of his Silver Laced Wyandotte roosters.

Applications for the Tourism Attraction Feasibility Study Grant were mailed to county judges, city mayors, chambers of commerce, and Advertising and Promotions throughout the state. Application information is posted at [www.adptfoi.com](http://www.adptfoi.com). The first grant application deadline for the 2012 fiscal year is July 29, 2011. If the entire grant balance of \$22,588.00 is not dispersed in July, then the last two deadlines will be September 30 and November 25.

Event submissions for the *Spring/Summer 2012 Calendar of Events* are being posted to Arkansas.com. The deadline for submissions is August 29, 2011.

### **Communications Section**

Joe David Rice reported that the Tourism Division hosted the “Tales from the Rock ‘N’ Roll Highway” event as part of the Clinton Presidential Center’s speaker series, “A Little More Conversation.” During this event the Rock ‘N’ Roll Highway video podcast series was premiered. These podcasts can be viewed at [www.arkansas.com/podcast](http://www.arkansas.com/podcast).

ABC News has been running a series for several months called “Made in America”. The series highlights businesses that still make products in America. A recent program showcased businesses in Arkansas from around the Delta. A video clip from ABC.com was shown and featured Miller’s Mud Mill Pottery, Dumas; Granny Clay’s Chocolate Gravy, Marked Tree; Southern Soy Scents, Marion; Peace Bee Farm, Proctor; and Maureen Jones – Dressmaker, Helena-West Helena.

### **Group Travel Section**

The Monthly Tracking Report indicated there were 68 inquires for June 2011 compared to 60 inquires for June 2010. Year to date inquiries area 654 for 2011 compared to 571 for 2010. The majority of inquiries received were from motorcycle leads, as well as, the group travel industry.

Renee Robison attended the Texas Eagle Marketing and Promotion Organization (TEMPO) meeting that was held on June 10<sup>th</sup> in St. Louis, MO. Ms. Robison made a formal presentation to the marketing group on Arkansas, The Natural State.

### **Internet-Related Items**

There were 530,995 visitor sessions during the month of June 2011, an increase of 3% over June 2010, and 126,951 links to industry partners. The Arkansas.com website placed number two among all 50 state tourism sites and number one amid the contiguous state sites. The *Hot Deals and Packages* iPhone application had 3,332 downloads from March 1, 2010 through July 10, 2011, with 766 visits in June and 6,453 page views. During June 2011, there were 59,053 visits from mobile devices to *Arkansas.com*, by way of 15 operating systems, an increase of 23.1% over May 2011.

## **Advertising/Marketing**

### **Fall Outdoor Creative**

Karen Mullikin presented the recommendations for replacement of the directional billboards for the Texarkana, Blytheville, and Fort Smith Welcome Centers. The vinyl on the billboards lasts about a year and is in need of replacing. Each billboard advertises free coffee, travel information, rest area ahead, plus distance to and a photo of the Center.

**Danny moved to accept the Fall Outdoor Creative. Barbara Harvel seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Partners in Tourism Update**

KATV-Channel 7 will produce a new series of feature segments called *Adventure Arkansas*. One of their reporters, Chris Kane, is going to be doing some backpack journalism around Arkansas. CJRW has given him a list of things to do such as biking on Mt. Nebo, off roading in Hot Springs, ziplines at the Ozark Folk Center, motorcycling around Petit Jean State Park, fishing, and geocaching. The series will air during the September and October newscasts.

### **Arkansas River Flotilla**

Commissioner Montine McNulty reported on the Arkansas River Connection Project and the *Good News Cruise Flotilla*. The project is made up of communities that have been working together for over two years developing assets around and on the river. The flotilla is a 10 day project that will take place October 20 – 29, 2011 along the Arkansas River. The Arkansas River Connection will be hosting events for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the McClellan Lock and Dam system. The U. S. Corps of Engineers will also be a part of the flotilla and will have a barge available. Attendees will hear messages about the locks and dams, ports, and wildlife along the Arkansas River.

**Jim Shamburger moved the Commission endorse the Arkansas River Connection Project, *Good News Cruise Flotilla*, which will take place October 20 – 29, 2011, along the Arkansas River. Bill Barns seconded and the motion carried.**

**Tourism Miscellaneous**

Commissioner Mike Mills stated that the Buffalo Outdoor Center (BOC) in the Arkansas Ozarks has a growing problem. Global Positioning System (GPS) databases are sending people to the wrong location. BOC is located in Ponca, a small town in Newton County – which has no 911 system and street addresses will not guide people to their business. Out of 25,000 customers that visit BOC per year, hundreds, even thousands, are trying to use GPS to find them. There are most likely several hundred other businesses in rural Arkansas having the same problem. We need to identify those businesses and correct the data bases most commonly used by the automobile manufacturing industry. Factory installed GPS units are regularly sending people to the wrong locations. Buffalo Outdoor Center has been receiving calls every day from customers saying, that according to their GPS they are at the front door, when in fact they are several miles away.

Joe David Rice said he would look into the matter and see if anything could be done to correct the situation. He will report back to the Commission at the August meeting.

**Darin Gray moved to adjourn. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.**

Without any further business, the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission adjourned at 8:36 a.m. at the La Quinta Inn & Suites, Russellville, Arkansas.