

**STATE PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAVEL COMMISSION**  
**Garvan Woodland Gardens**  
**Hot Springs, Arkansas**  
**February 17, 2011**

**Commissioners Present**

Cindy Smith, Chairman State Parks Committee  
Steve Arrison  
Bill Barnes  
Jay Bunyard  
Danny Ford  
Jim Gaston  
Debbie Haak  
Billy Lindsey  
Mike Mills  
Ness Sechrest  
Jim Shamburger

**Commissioners Absent**

Bob Knight, Chairman  
Darin Gray, Vice Chairman  
Montine McNulty

**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  
Dena Woerner, Communications Manager  
Donna Perrin, Tourism Development Manager  
Shea Lewis, Region IV Supervisor  
Tom Stolarz, Region I, Supervisor  
Dottie Boyles, Administrative Specialist  
Kris Richardson, Administrative Specialist  
Zoie Clift, Arkansas Travel Writer

**Aristotle**

Marla Johnson Norris  
Morgan Long

**CJRW**

Wayne Woods  
Karen Mullikin  
Shelby Woods  
Chance Woods  
Drew Harris  
Amy Frazier  
Linda Scroggins  
Shanon Williams  
Brandi Childress

**Guests**

Bob Bledsoe, Executive Director, Garvan Woodland Gardens  
Bob Byers, Associate Executive Director, Garvan Woodland Gardens  
Marla Crider, Marketing Director, Garvan Woodland Gardens  
James Starkel, Sound Technician, Garvan Woodland Gardens  
Mara Kuhn, The Sentinel Record

**Roll Call**

Commissioner Cindy Smith called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. on Thursday, February 17, 2011. Gloria Robins called the roll.

Bob Bledsoe, Executive Director of Garvan Woodland Gardens, welcomed the Commission to Garvan Woodland Gardens. Mr. Bledsoe introduced his staff and gave a positive report advising attendance is good, along with the gift shop revenue and expressed his hopes this is a positive sign for travel and tourism.

**Approval of the Agenda**

**Steve Arrison moved to approve the agenda as presented. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.**

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

**Debbie Haak moved to approve the minutes from the January 2011 meeting. Billy Lindsey seconded and the motion carried.**

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Cynthia Dunlap presented the year-to-date financial report for the period ended January 31, 2011. The expenditures were: Parks Division, \$40,664,281 including construction and grants; Tourism Division, \$6,654,526; Keep Arkansas Beautiful, \$291,494; Administration Division, \$2,034,070; and History Commission, \$1,012,655. Expenditures for the Department totaled \$50,657,025, a decrease of .50% over the same period FY10. The year-to-date operating revenue Parks Division totaled \$13,250,393, an increase of 4% over the same period FY10; 1/8% Cent Tax \$16,369,490, a increase of 7.20% over the same period FY10; and 2% Tax \$7,761,015, a increase of 4.0% over the same period FY10.

**Mike Mills moved to approve the financial report. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.**

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

#### **Legislative Session**

Executive Director Richard Davies reported of a looming budget cut for the Norfolk and Greers Ferry Trout Hatcheries, as part of the President's budget cut, noting there is probably not an operation that returns more to the federal government than the trout hatcheries. Billy Lindsey stated a \$7 million cut was expected for the Southeast region. The total budget for the area is \$1.6 million and generates a 200% return, an extremely good program. He advised closing the hatcheries would cause a huge uproar so it is being camouflaged, forcing a full reimbursement from the sister agency, causing a burden. Mr. Davies advised information has been forwarded to the Arkansas Congressional delegation so they may oppose the proposed cut and noted staff will monitor the situation.

Richard Davies advised that the bill to change the state slogan from "The Natural State" to the "Land Of Opportunity" did not pass committee. He reported several bills are being monitored for their impact on parks and tourism. House Bill 1402 (Renaming Arkansas Game and Fish Commission management areas, nature centers, and state parks for fallen military service personnel) is a concern for the agency. In strong opposition of the bill, he reported that Greg Butts is compiling data to determine the fiscal impact of new marketing and advertising programs (physical and online), highway signage throughout the state, reworking exhibits throughout the park system and the ramifications a change of this magnitude would have on the park system and tourism in Arkansas.

**Jim Gaston moved that the State Parks, Recreation & Travel Commission go on record as strongly opposed to renaming the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission management areas, nature centers, and state parks for fallen military service personnel. Debbie Haak seconded the motion.**

Richard Davies reported SB335 that would allow the use of all-terrain vehicles and golf carts on Arkansas State Parks roads by persons with disabilities is now being considered. He reported two additional bills that will be considered on behalf of ASP: HB1558 (Creation of ASP license plates for park profession college scholarships and education programs in state parks); HB1693 (Expanding fines for park violations from \$100 to \$500, which has not been increased since 1937).

### **Miscellaneous**

Richard Davies reminded the Commission there would not be a State Parks, Recreation & Travel Commission meeting in March. The Governor's Conference on Tourism will be held March 6-8, 2011 in Little Rock.

He advised that the NorthEast Arkansas Regional Archives (NEARA), a joint project with Arkansas State Parks and the Arkansas History Commission, will have a Grand Opening and Dedication at 1:00 pm, March 3, 2011 at Powhatan Historic State Park. All are invited to attend.

### **PARKS DIVISION**

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

Joe Jacobs presented previously approved TV and radio spots to be utilized for the spring TV and radio campaign.

TV Spots (30 second spots)

TV Cut # 1: "LakeandRiverStateparks.com"

TV Cut # 2: "Arkansas State Park: Come Outside and Play in Your Backyard"

Radio Spots (60-second spots)

Radio Cut # 1: "Arkansas State Parks Adventure and Accommodations"

Radio Cut # 2: "Historic Washington State Park"

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve the TV and radio spots as presented for the spring ad campaign. Billy Lindsey seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Arkansas Wildlife Observation Trail Pilot Grant Request**

Stan Graves presented a list of projects to submit for the new Wildlife Observation Trail Grant Program. This new grant program is a cooperative effort between the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. The objective of the Wildlife Observation Trail Grant Program is to provide grants to construct, enhance, extend or renovate trails and support facilities that provide enhanced opportunities for the enjoyment and observation of Arkansas's wildlife by the general public. This grant program is funded by proceeds the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission have received from gas leases in specific management areas. A maximum of \$200,000 is available to award to eligible state agencies annually. The maximum grant amount available to a single applicant is \$100,000 annually. Criteria for selection/approval of grant projects include a requirement that all developed facilities shall provide barrier-free access as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Graves discussed three projects, totaling \$140,000.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve the following projects to be submitted for the Wildlife Observation Trail Grant Pilot Program, described as:**

**Bull Shoals-White River – construct a barrier-free wildlife observation area on the existing Visitor Center Trail (\$20,000); Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area – construct a barrier-free wildlife observation deck/blind near the Visitor Center (\$20,000); and Mississippi River – construct watchable wildlife improvements on the proposed barrier-free visitor center trail (\$100,000). Debbie Haak seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Mt. Nebo – Use Permit Agreement (Gilbert Cornwell)**

Stan Graves reported at the January 20, 2011 commission meeting, approval was granted to issue a Use Permit Agreement (UPA) to Gilbert and Ann Cornwell at Mount Nebo State Park. After further review, the Cornwells are requesting to extend beyond the 70 feet to 525 feet in order to allow vehicular access as well as to allow installation of water and electrical service. In addition, Selma Ratley's property south of the Cornwell property is also accessed along the same route being proposed for the Cornwell UPA. The Ratleys have been using this area without a UPA for several decades. ASP feels that a separate UPA should be issued to the Ratleys allowing legal access to their property as well.

**Debbie Haak moved to approve an amended Use Permit Agreement for Gilbert and Ann Cornwell at Mount Nebo State Park, described as:**

**A Use-Area Description running from Lots 9 and 10 of Block 1, Town of Mt. Nebo, Yell County, Arkansas along "Arkansas Avenue" (Platted-Not Open) and along "Cave Avenue" (Platted-Part Developed) to Arkansas State Highway #155 being more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the Southwest Corner (SW Cor.) of Lot 9, Block 1, Town of Mt. Nebo, Yell County, Arkansas and run thence N 05°39'00" E along the West Line of said Lots 9 and 10 for 100.00' to a point; Thence run N 84°21'47" W for 25.00' to a point; Thence run S 05°39'00" W for 73.81' to a point; Thence run S 23°42'52" W for 80.74' to a point at the Southeast Corner (SE Cor.) of Lot 8, Block 2; Thence run S 52°43'58" W for 51.72' to a point; Thence run N 84°50'14" W for 49.99' to a point; Thence run N 80°18'52" W for 90.09' to a point; Thence run N 84°47'49" W for 164.50' to a point in the Centerline of Arkansas State Highway #155; Thence run S 04°26'51" W along said Centerline for 20.00' to a point; Thence run S 84°47'49" E for 163.45' to a point; Thence run S 80°18'52" E for 89.92' to a point; Thence run S 83°50'14" E for 57.69' to a point; Thence run N 57°08'22" E for 33.86' to a point; Thence run S 04°15'51" W for 22.27' to a point; Thence run S 86°58'13" E for 10.00' to a point; Thence run N 04°15'51" E for 29.57' to a point; Thence run N 57°08'22" E for 17.23' to a point; Thence run N 28°30'12" E for 38.24' to a point; Thence run N 33°28'14" E for 35.06' to the Point of Beginning (P.O.B.), Containing 0.27 Acres and being Subject to All Other Easements, Public or Private which may exist thereon.**

**In addition, approval for Selma Ratley for a separate Use Permit Agreement allowing legal access to their property, also at Mount Nebo State Park, described as:**

**A Use-Area Description running from Lot 8 of Block 1, Town of Mt. Nebo, Yell County, Arkansas along "Arkansas Avenue" (Platted-Not Open) and along "Cave Avenue" (Platted-Part Developed) to Arkansas State Highway #155 being more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the Northwest Corner (NW Cor.) of Lot 8, Block 1, Town of Mt. Nebo, Yell County, Arkansas and run thence N 84°21'47" W for 33.54' to a point; Thence run S 23°42'52" W for 53.20' to a point at the Southeast Corner (SE Cor.) of Lot 8, Block 2; Thence run S 52°43'58" W for 51.72' to a point; Thence run N 83°50'14" W for 49.99' to a point; Thence run N 80°18'52" W for 90.09' to a point; Thence run N 84°47'49" W for 164.50' to a point in the Centerline of Arkansas State Highway #155; Thence run S 04°26'51" W along said Centerline for 20.00' to a point; Thence run S 84°47'49" E for 163.45' to a point; Thence run S 80°18'52" E for 89.92' to a point; Thence run S 83°50'14" E for 57.69' to a point; Thence run N 57°08'22" E for 33.86' to a point; Thence run S 04°15'51" W for 22.27' to a point; Thence run S 86°58'13" E for 10.00' to a point; Thence run N 04°15'51" E for 29.57' to a point; Thence run N 57°08'22" E for 17.23' to a point; Thence run N 28°30'12" E for 38.24' to a point; Thence run S 84°21'47" E for 16.36' to a point on the West Line of Lot 8, Block 1; Thence run N 05°39'00" E along the said West Line for 31.00' to the Point of Beginning (P.O.B.), Containing 0.22 Acres and being Subject to All Other Easements, Public or Private which may exist thereon. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Lake Fort Smith – Kiwanis Club Agreement**

Greg Butts reported that the Kiwanis Club of Fort Smith has had an agreement for a summer camp with the city of Fort Smith for underprivileged boys since the 1940s, at Lake Fort Smith. In 1971, the state park was established and in 1973 an agreement to continue the summer camp was entered into by ASP and the Kiwanis Club with the same conditions: six weeks camp with free lodging, free utilities, and swimming charged at 10 cents per person. This agreement continued until 2002 with the closing of the state park due to the expansion of the dam at Lake Fort Smith. With the completion of the second group lodge, Butts advised he has met with the Kiwanis Club board members to establish a new agreement, noting with the amount of investment completed, the terms of the agreement would change. Revisions in the agreement are: the new contract is not perpetual but will be renewable every five or ten years; the use period will be three weeks (last week of July and first two weeks of August) rather than six weeks each year; and option of waiving pool party rates with lifeguards provided by the Kiwanis Club outside pool hours or half price during pool hours with lifeguards provided by ASP. Mr. Butts noted the free utilities did not change.

**Mike Mills moved to approve the new agreement between the Kiwanis Club of Fort Smith and Arkansas State Parks to operate a camp for underprivileged boys for the period of five years. Jim Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Jacksonport – Recommendation for Mary Woods No. 2**

Greg Butts reported that the Mary Woods No. 2 cost an estimated \$71,000 when built in 1931. The restoration after the 1997 tornado damage cost \$870,000. As reported in a previous meeting, the estimated cost to reconstruct the vessel after sinking (January 2010) ranges from \$1.8 million to \$2.7 million, depending on the restoration effort. Mr. Butts met and discussed with the Jackson County Historical Society board members and Representative Jody Dickinson (Newport) to explain the cost of rebuilding the vessel again. Reviewing the cost of reconstruction in addition to the low visitation numbers, the parties are in agreement the damages are beyond repair. The historical elements were destroyed; therefore constructing a replica would not be a feasible investment and the historic structure is gone. He recommended removing the barge from inventory and salvaging any small components available for exhibits in the planned visitor center. Any proceeds from its sale would be invested in the planned park visitor center construction project, exhibits, and furnishings.

**Danny Ford moved to remove the Mary Woods No. 2 from Jacksonport State Park inventory due to the loss of the historical elements of the vessel. Any proceeds from its sale will be invested in the planned park visitor center construction project, exhibits, and furnishings. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Americans with Disabilities Act – Department of Justice Revised Rules**

Greg Butts provided an update on the Americans with Disability Act-Department of Justice Revised Rules to the Commission. Some of the final rules will take effect March 15, 2011. The rules apply to public agencies and public accommodations and commercial facilities and include minor changes to standards for accessible design, element by element safe harbor, guidance on the sale of tickets for accessible seating, final rules on service animals, rules on the use of wheelchairs and other power-driven mobility devices on trails and at facilities, provisions for effective communication and requirements for reservations made by places of lodging.

Mr. Butts advised there was a significant change with mobility devices affecting ASP, stating trails may be open to all mobility devices, effective March 15, 2011, based on criteria decided by agencies. ASP cannot allow all mobility devices to have access to all trails for safety reasons and natural and cultural resource protection. Staff will evaluate all trails and advise which will be accessible, however the majority of the trails will not be accessible for safety and other reasons.

**Debbie Haak moved to allow the State Parks Director to place emergency rules into effect in order to comply with the 2010 Department of Justice Revised Regulations Title II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act to be implemented by March 15, 2011. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Miscellaneous**

Greg Butts reviewed an article reporting a 20% budget cut for Iowa State Parks over three years has resulted in a non-sustainable budget for their state park's mission.

He reviewed an article noting Memphis has a greenway with a proposed plan to have a pedestrian and bike trail from West Memphis to New Orleans, tying in to the levee system in Arkansas, hopefully to Horseshoe Lake and then into the White River Refuge, creating a regional system of trails. It could eventually link up with the 120 mile pedestrian and bike trail being developed between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. If so, the trail could run from New Orleans to St. Louis, a total of over 600 miles.

Mr. Butts reviewed an article reporting Bob Martineau, new commissioner of Tennessee State Parks, proposed replacing six state parks swimming pools with splash parks in effort to weather the budget crunch over the next fiscal year.

Commissioner Haak requested an update on the Village Creek Golf Course. Mr. Butts advised the target date of May 1, 2011 will not be obtainable, due to the requirement to replace some greens and dwarf Bermuda grass growing season. The new target date to re-open the golf course is August 1-15, 2011.

Stan Graves provided fact sheets for Lake Ouachita and Lake Catherine outlining capital improvements that have occurred in each park since 1998.

Greg Butts introduced a news clip showcasing the education component of the park's mission occurring at Hobbs State Parks-Conservation Area. With declining science scores at Monitor Elementary School in Springdale, a teacher has implemented a new monthly field trip program to Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area. The students receive classroom instruction followed by a field trip to the park each month re-enforcing the classroom instruction. Students learn science theories in class and experience them in action while visiting the park. In the eyes of teachers and students alike, the School of Rocks Program rocks!

## **TOURISM DIVISION**

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

Nancy Clark reported on the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism. The conference will be held in Little Rock, March 6-8, at the Statehouse Convention Center. Governor Mike Beebe is scheduled to speak Tuesday evening before the Henry Awards presentation. Other speakers include Byron Carlock, Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer of CNL Lifestyle Companies, Inc. and Television Producer and Personality Jerry McKinnis. To date 130 registrations have been received.

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

The Research and Information Services Section processed 7,960 requests for travel information during January 2011, a decrease of 8.6% from January 2010. Arkansas Welcome Centers received 36,432 visitors during January 2011, down 3.1% compared to January 2010.

Joanne Hinson reported that fulfillment for literature and the 2011 Arkansas Vacation Kit has successfully been moved from the Alexander Human Development Center to the Arkadelphia Human Development Center.

Ms. Hinson announced LaJeana Jackson is the new manager for the Red River Welcome Center. The completion date for construction of the new West Memphis Welcome Center is scheduled for mid-2012.

### **Tourism Development Section**

Donna Perrin reported the finalists for the Henry Awards have all been notified. Videos and program production for the ceremony have been completed.

Ms. Perrin distributed copies of the *2011 Spring/Summer Calendar of Events*. The front cover features an aerial scene above Fort Smith River Park along the Arkansas River in downtown Fort Smith. The back cover features the San Diego Chicken's appearance at the First

Ever Eighth Annual World's Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade in Hot Springs. Copies have been delivered to the warehouse and are ready for distribution.

The Laura P. Nichols Penguin Point exhibit is scheduled to open on March 5 at the Little Rock Zoo. The exhibit is designed to showcase African Penguins on a sandy beach and an underwater pool.

### **Communications Section**

Dena Woerner reported on the Arkansas.com Family Fishing Sweepstakes. A variety of prizes are being offered including a DeGray Lake Resort State Park package as the grand prize. Contestants can enter through Arkansas.com, Arkansas Tourism Facebook, or by mailing in an entry form.

### **Group Travel Section**

The Monthly Tracking Report indicated there were 86 inquires for January 2011 compared to 83 inquires for January 2010. The majority of inquiries were received as a result of tradeshow.

The Group Travel Section applied for and received a \$2,000.00 grant from the Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission to help produce motorcycle brochures and patches promoting riding the Civil War Trails of Arkansas during 2011- 2015. Riders will receive the patches after they have completed the ride.

### **Internet-Related Items**

#### **Online Trends and Statistics**

There were 320,879 visitor sessions during the month of January 2011, an increase of 7.3% over January 2010, and 77,296 links to industry partners. The Arkansas.com website placed number seven among all 50 state tourism sites and number one amid the contiguous state sites. The *Hot Deals and Packages* iPhone application had 2,552 downloads from February 6 2011 through March 1, 2010, with 929 visits in January and 8,130 page views. During January 2011, there were 18,240 visits from mobile devices to *Arkansas.com* by way of 13 operating systems, an increase of 14% over December 2010.

### **Production**

The quick response website, Communication of Vacancies Emergency Response (COVER), is scheduled to launch soon. The site will display vacancies and shelters along with mapping and pet friendly information for those displaced by an emergency, such as Hurricane Katrina. Information is displayed by geographic region of the state.

The Arkansas Industry Insider website has been updated and is scheduled to launch in a few weeks.

**Advertising/Marketing**

**See Arkansas First Radio and Television Creative, and Television Broadcasters of Arkansas of Arkansas Partnership Creative Recommendations**

The See Arkansas First Radio and Television Creative, and the Television Broadcasters of Arkansas Partnership Creative were presented. This 15-market buy targets an audience of adults ages 25-54 reaching primarily Gen-Xers and Baby Boomers. A five-week flight targets key in-state and out-of-state markets. Schedules will be flighted to air from April 11 to May 29, 2011. Spring/Summer broadcast schedules reach an average of 60% of adults ages 25-54 about 4.7 times over the five-week period.

**Debbie Haak moved to approve the See Arkansas First Radio and Television Creative and Television Broadcasters of Arkansas Partnership Creative. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.**

**2011 Spring/Summer Television Schedules and Rollout Strategy Recommendations**

The 2011 Spring/Summer Television Schedules and Media Rollout Strategy were presented.

**Rollout Phase 1**

**Cable TV (additional week)**

Out-of-State Spot Cable TV	\$ 196,200.00	
Add Victoria, TX Cable TV	<u>\$ 20,000.00</u>	
TOTAL:		\$216,200.00

**Rollout Phase 2**

**Broadcast TV (additional week)**

Out-of-State Broadcast TV	\$ 87,831.00	
Add Victoria, TX Broadcast TV	\$ 22,000.00	

**Online**

Targeted Online	<u>\$ 80,000.00</u>	
-increase existing online		
TOTAL:		\$189,831.00

**Rollout Phase 3**

**Cable TV (two additional weeks)**

In-State Spot Cable TV	\$ 69,600.00	
<b>Broadcast TV (two additional weeks)</b>		
In-State Spot Broadcast TV	\$ 41,438.00	

Targeted Online	\$ 83,000.00
–increase existing online	
TOTAL:	<u>\$194,038.00</u>

Total additional media roll-out for Spring/Summer 2011: \$600,069.00

**Debbie Haak moved to accept the 2011 Spring/Summer Television Schedules and Rollout Strategy Recommendations for \$600,069.00. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Miscellaneous**

Nancy Clark reported on several articles featuring the Delta and the Lower Mississippi River Water Trail. In the Winter 2011 addition of *fresh Home*, the article *Get Hot for Cold* featured an article on John Rusky with the Quapaw Canoe Company about paddling the Mississippi River near Helena/West Helena. Out of the five adventurous excursions, Paddle the Mighty Mississippi was the number one listing. In the March 2011 issue of *Canoe and Kayak*, the article *Mississippi Crossroads* featured a 9-page spread on a canoe trip with the Quapaw Canoe Company from Island 64 to Helena/West Helena.

With no further business the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission adjourned at 12:35 p.m. on February 17, 2011 at Garvan Woodland Gardens in Hot Springs, Arkansas.