

**STATE PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAVEL COMMISSION**  
**Durand Center**  
**Harrison, Arkansas**  
**October 21, 2010**

**Commissioners Present**

Montine McNulty, Chairman  
Bob Knight, Vice-Chairman  
Bill Barnes  
Jay Bunyard  
Danny Ford  
Jim Gaston  
Darin Gray  
Billy Lindsey  
Mike Mills  
Tom Schueck  
Ness Sechrest  
Jim Shamburger  
Cindy Smith

**Commissioners Absent**

Steve Arrison  
Debbie Haak

**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  
Donna Perrin, Tourism Development Manager  
Joanne Hinson, Research & Information Services Manager  
Tom Stolarz, Region I Supervisor  
Shea Lewis, Region IV Supervisor  
Dottie Boyles, Administrative Specialist  
Kris Richardson, Administrative Specialist  
Jill Rohrbach, Arkansas Travel Writer

**Aristotle**

Marla Johnson Norris  
Jonathan Eudy

**CJRW**

Shelby Woods  
Wayne Woods  
Karen Mullikin  
Carrie Orahood

**Guests**

Pat Moles, Mayor of Harrison  
Kathy Holt, Governor's Office  
Norma Sims, Manager, Harrison Welcome Center  
Bill Tanneberger, Assistant Manager, Harrison Welcome Center  
Jesse Cox, Superintendent, Prairie Grove Battle Field State Park  
Chris Ramsey, Harrison Convention & Visitors Bureau  
David Holsted, Harrison Daily Times  
Doug Krile, Executive Director, Arkansas Broadcasters Association  
Marilyn Wallis, President, Arkansas Broadcasters Association  
Tom Larimer, Executive Director, Arkansas Press Association  
Ashley Wimberley, Marketing Director, Arkansas Press Association

**Roll Call**

Chairman Montine McNulty called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. on Thursday, October 21, 2010. Mike Mills called the roll.

**Approval of the Agenda**

**Billy Lindsey moved to accept the Agenda. Jim Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.**

**Presentation of Minutes from Previous Meeting**

**Jim Shamburger moved to accept the Minutes from the September 2010 meeting. Bob Knight seconded and the motion carried.**

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Cynthia Dunlap presented the financial report for the period ending September 30, 2010. The expenditures were: Parks Division, \$18,700,915 including construction and grants; Tourism Division, \$2,409,948; Keep Arkansas Beautiful, \$55,788; Administration Division, \$912,295; History Commission, \$390,707; 1/8% Cent Tax \$2,337,015, an increase of 9.30% over the same period FY10; and 2% Tax 1,381,259, an increase of 12.4% over the same period FY10. Expenditures for the Department totaled \$22,469,654, a decrease of 1.75% over the same period FY10. The year-to-date operating revenue Parks Division totaled \$7,509,796, an increase of 2% over the same period FY10.

**Mike Mills moved to approve the financial report. Ness Sechrest seconded and the motion carried.**

## **RECOGNITION OF GUESTS**

Mayor Pat Moles welcomed Commissioners and guests to Harrison. He thanked them for coming and extended an invitation to come back.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Volunteers in State Government**

Richard Davies reported that of the 105 State Agencies, Organizations, and Institutions reporting on the utilization of volunteers in 2009, the Department of Parks and Tourism rated number one in the number of volunteers with 66,836, according to the report *The Economic Impact of Arkansas Volunteers*. The document lists the number of volunteers, the hours worked, and the value per hour for each state park and tourism division. Donations and grants received are also reported. The information is submitted each January to the Department of Human Services Division of Volunteerism. That office, in conjunction with the Institute for Economic Advancement Research Group at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, compiles the annual study.

### **Budget Hearing Report**

Mr. Davies stated that the budget for the department passed through the committee hearings and was not referred to a subcommittee.

## **TOURISM DIVISION**

### **Tourism Demonstration Projects: Update**

Joe David Rice and Nancy Clark reported on the Southeast Arkansas project. Arkansas's extreme southeastern corner – essentially the area from Arkansas Post south to the Louisiana line and bounded on the east by the Mississippi River and the west by Bayou Bartholomew – is rich in history and heritage. Yet, in many ways, it's among the most overlooked regions within The Natural State. To combat this, the department has drafted a long-term strategy for economic development, looking heavily at tourism. Chicot and Desha counties actually have less market share of Arkansas's overall tourism business than they did just a decade ago.

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

The Research and Information Services Section processed 12,221 requests for travel information during September 2010, a decrease of 79.4 percent from September 2009. The 2009 monthly total for September included lead generation which was eliminated from the 2010 campaign. When lead generation is excluded from the comparison there is a decrease of 27.4 percent.

Arkansas Welcome Centers received 75,166 visitors during September 2010, up 2.3 percent compared to September 2009. Year to date visitation is 697,651, up 4.1 percent from 2009.

Joanne Hinson reported on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for Hospitality job growth over the past five years. The study showed 36 states and the District of Columbia all made gains in hospitality jobs. Only 14 states suffered declines. Arkansas ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> overall with an increase of 2.34 percent. Texas ranked number one and Oklahoma ranked fourth.

### **Tourism Development Section**

Donna Perrin stated the Henry Award nomination forms for the 37th Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism have been mailed. The online form is available at [www.arkindustryinsider.com/henry-awards](http://www.arkindustryinsider.com/henry-awards). The deadline for all submissions is October 29, 2010. The Governor's Conference on Tourism is slated to be held in Little Rock, March 6-8, 2011.

### **Communications Section**

Dena Woerner reported that *Arkansas: The State of Fishing*, a familiarization tour is set for November 15-23, will include travel writers, photographers, trade publications and fishing companies. Norfolk and Bull Shoals lakes will be the main waters used. A small side trip by a smaller group will be on Lake Ouachita. Participants are Northland Fishing Tackle, Frabill, Marcum Technologies, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Arkansas Corps of Engineers, Gaston's White River Resort, Blue Lady Resort, St. Croix Rod, Diawa Reels, Ozark Mountain Regional Tourism Association, Traditions Media, and Ranger Boats.

### **Group Travel Section**

The Monthly Tracking Report indicated there were 30 inquires for September 2010 compared to 45 inquires for September 2009. Year to date inquiries are 835 compared to 864 for 2009. The majority of inquires came from the motorcycle market.

Joe David Rice announced that Group Travel Manager Renee Robison was in Charlotte, North Carolina attending a tradeshow focusing on meeting planners who host sporting events around the United States.

Heritage Club International, a bank club organization conducted a site visit November 4-7, 2010 with the conventions and visitors bureaus of Rogers, Bentonville, and Little Rock. Arkansas is a finalist for the March 23-26, 2012 convention for the motorcoach market. The conference highlights the city which is chosen and spends pre- and post-fam trips in the state selected.

### **Internet-Related Items**

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

There were 452,955 visitor sessions during the month of September, an increase of 17.8 percent over September 2009, and 86,019 links to industry partners. The Arkansas.com website placed number four among all 50 state tourism sites and number one amid the contiguous state sites. The *Hot Deals and Packages* iPhone application had 1,945 downloads from March 1 through October 10, with 656 upgrades May 31–October 10. During September 2010, there were 19,447 visits from mobile devices to *Arkansas.com*, by way of 14 operating systems.

Marla Johnson Norris reported on the industry trend “Augmented Reality.” She said it allows people to point their smartphones at something and see a data overlay show up with information on items such as restaurants or hotels that augment the reality they are seeing. Some of the applications with this technology include Zagat, Wikitude, and Yelp. On average, 35 augmented reality apps were published every month of 2010. Seventy two percent of these apps are under \$1.99 (a one-time fee) and 43 percent of them are free.

Ms. Norris presented the tourism division with the Web Marketing Association’s 2010 WebAward for Outstanding Achievement in Web Development. The award was for the *arkansaskids.com* website.

### **Advertising/Marketing**

#### **Trail of Holiday Lights Brochure**

The *2010 Arkansas Trail of Holiday Lights* brochure was distributed. There were 150,000 copies printed this year. Brochures will be available at Chambers of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureaus, and other traditional visitor information locals. Karen Mullikin announced that to encourage Arkansans to travel to numerous holiday lights sites, a Facebook page has been created. People who travel to at least three locations and post photos of the light displays will receive a limited edition *2010 Arkansas Trail of Holiday Lights* commemorative ornament. Only the first 250 people to post their photos will receive the ornament.

The *2010 Trail of Holiday Lights* television creative was presented. The television ads feature light displays from around the state.

**Bill Barnes moved to approve the *2010 Trail of Holiday Lights* television creative recommendation. Jim Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.**

### **PARKS DIVISION**

#### **Arkansas Broadcasters Association Partnership Grant Renewal**

Greg Butts introduced Doug Krile, Executive Director of Arkansas Broadcasters Association (ABA) and Marilyn Wallis, President of ABA to the Commission. Mr. Krile thanked the Commission for their partnership and support. Ms. Wallis advised that the ABA had generated \$20.1 million in advertising since 1987 over the course of the partnership. Both expressed their appreciation of the partnership and hope it will be extended another year.

**Jim Gaston made a motion to renew the Arkansas Broadcaster's Association Partnership Grant for one year. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Arkansas Press Association Partnership Grant Renewal**

Greg Butts introduced Tom Larimer, Executive Director of the Arkansas Press Association (APA) and Ashley Wimberley, APA Marketing Director to the Commission. Mr. Larimer commented the partnership has been in effect since 1988 and believed it to be mutually agreeable for all, including Tourism, conveying the activities, events, and messages from ASP and Tourism to readers statewide. The local newspapers recognize the importance of the economic impact of state parks and tourism around the state. Mr. Larimer noted APA is happy to continue this partnership for another year.

**Ness Sechrest made a motion to renew the Arkansas Press Association Partnership Grant for one year. Bob Knight seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Mississippi River State Park**

Stan Graves reported in conjunction with the overall development of the Ranger Station Area at Mississippi River State Park, State Parks has been notified by Lee County Water Association, Inc. (LCWA) that the water line that serves this area will need to be upgraded and a booster pump station added to provide the desired amount of water at the required pressure. Graves advised ASP has worked with the LCWA to draft a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The proposed MOA has LCWA's consulting engineers preparing the plans and specifications for the work followed by them bidding the project and providing construction oversight. State Parks will be responsible for the payment of the actual construction cost, estimated at \$190,000 to \$200,000. State Parks would pay for the cost of the upgrade while LCWA would be responsible to maintain the system. Based on engineering studies completed recently, this upgrade will meet the water supply needs at the desired pressure for the Ranger Station and the proposed Visitor Information Center (VIC). However, long range development plans, i.e. cabins, etc. may require additional upgrades at a later time. Staff recommends approval to obtain the water required at the VIC.

**Jim Gaston made a motion to approve Arkansas State Parks entering into a Memorandum of Agreement with Lee County Water Association to provide the required water service to the Ranger Station and Visitor Information Center areas at the Mississippi River State Park. Bob Knight seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Property Acquisitions**

Greg Butts reported ASP has received preliminary approval to proceed with two property acquisitions as the SPRTC August meeting. As required by law (ACA 22-4-106) ASP has received favorable advice from the Governor's Office, the Arkansas Legislative Council and the Department of Finance and Administration to proceed with the acquisition of the land at Davidsonville Historic State Park and the residence near the Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources.

**Billy Lindsey moved for final approval to proceed with the acquisition of the land at Davidsonville Historic State Park and the residence near the Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources, as follows:**

**Davidsonville: The Southeast (SE) Quarter of Section Thirty-five (35), Township Eighteen (18) North, Range One (1) West, and a Part of the Northeast (NE) Quarter of Section Two (2), Township Seventeen (17) North, Range One (1) West, lying in Randolph County, Arkansas, containing 180.00 acres, more or less.**

**Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources: Lot One (1), Lot Fourteen (14), and the North thirty-one (31) feet of Lot Thirteen (13) , of Block Two (2), Tennyson Subdivision of the City of Smackover, Union County, Arkansas, containing 0.389 acres, more or less.**

**Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.**

### **White Oak Lake – Structure Removal**

Stan Graves requested permission to remove a structure from White Oak Lake State Park. The structure is a mobile home circa 1978 which has been used as a seasonal employee residence for several years. The structure is in a deteriorated condition.

**Billy Lindsey made a motion to remove a mobile home structure (Building No. 57.02/AASIS No. 120006530) from White Oak Lake State Park inventory which has deteriorated. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Bull Shoals VIC – Water Feature / Garden Options Update**

Stan Graves reported ongoing problems with one component of the water feature at the Bull Shoals-White River State Park VIC. It appears the problems stem from a design flaw. The drains and pumps are located on the bottom of the feature. Waterfalls Unlimited reviewed the issue and determined leaks are occurring from the drainage system, not around the perimeter as originally thought. The water feature is four years old and no longer under warranty. There was a 12 month construction warranty which has expired. The feature was repaired and working correctly during the warranty period. Discussion ensued regarding pursuing the construction warranty but decided that legally the department had no recourse three years after the warranty expired. Jim Gaston advised the water feature was a great idea originally but commented repairing the feature is futile with the design flaw and would be a waste to spend more money repairing a bad design. He would like to see a portion of the water feature turned into a landscape feature.

Of three options presented by Stan Graves the Commission and staff agreed the best option was to rehabilitate the “Lake” Fountain; demolish the “River” Fountain and replace with landscape materials. Although staff suggested removing the wall around the feature, after further discussion it was agreed the wall was attractive and would complement the Lake Fountain wall. Greg Butts advised the process could be handled “in house” with staff utilizing regional equipment, Master Gardeners, and Force Account staff to reduce the cost of the project.

**Danny Ford made a motion to rehabilitate the “Lake” Fountain; demolish the “River” Fountain and replace with landscape materials at the Visitor Information Center at the Bull Shoals-White River State Park. Jim Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.**

When questioned when the project would be completed, staff replied it should be completed this fiscal year.

### **Energy Savings & Green Programs Update**

Greg Butts reported the State Parks division is actively planning and implementing energy conservation plans and programs to meet requirements under the Arkansas’s Sustainable Energy Program enacted in 2009, along with the Governor’s Executive Order to reduce energy consumption in Arkansas state agencies’ buildings. Butts advised Act 1372 was a program established to provide funding to state agencies to reduce energy consumption. An estimated \$13 million came from President Obama’s stimulus plan offering revolving loans funds for state agencies. Mr. Butts reported that ASP has earmarked \$1 million to energy conservations efforts. ASP has 10 years - interest free - to pay back the loan based on projected savings and

implementation of various measures. ASP had an April deadline to create a database creating baseline of all utilities, which has been completed. The next step will be to evaluate all utility systems and recommendations to reduce energy consumption.

Staff presented a power point presentation with efforts that have been completed thus far and future plans that will be implemented with the State Parks division to reduce energy costs and consumption, and reduce the carbon footprint of state parks and its visitors.

Stan Graves and Jon Brown presented the green efforts implemented by state parks in the areas of Planning and Development and Operations, elaborating on highlights:

### **Solutions**

- Use downed trees for firewood and mulch.
- Use “green” cleaning solutions and bio-degradable products.
- Use hybrid vehicles, mirco-vehicles and utility vehicles.
- Use lake water for irrigation.
- Use low energy light bulbs (L.E.D.).
- Use less sulfur diesel fuel (less pollutants); Use bio-fuel; Purchase flex-fuel vehicles.
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Use solar energy where possible.

### **Construction**

- Install water saving fixtures and appliances.
- Install energy efficient water heaters.
- Use geo-thermal technology in new facilities.
- Use “timed” water valves in public facilities to conserve water.

### **Operational Efforts**

- Carpool / Combine trips for supplies / Have products delivered when possible.
- Convert from gas to electric golf carts.
- Convert outboard motors from 2-cycle to 4-stroke for pollution control and fuel efficiency purposes.
- Maintain constant building temperatures (i.e. 72° in summer / 68° in winter).
- Participate in tree planting programs.
- Practice equipment / engine maintenance to optimum operating levels to pro-long the life of equipment, i.e. vehicles, mowers, tractors, etc.
- Practice erosion control measures.
- Purchase recycled products / Purchase products in bulk when available to reduce packaging waste.
- Turn off lights / Set security lights on timers.

### **Recycling**

- Recycle aluminum cans and plastic bottles.
- Recycle brass and lead (firing range).
- Recycle cell phones.
- Recycle fluorescent bulbs.
- Recycle oil and batteries.
- Recycle paper and cardboard.
- Recycle printer cartridges.
- Recycle scrap metal.
- Recycle tires.

### **Education / Environmental Efforts**

- Annual participation in the Great Arkansas Clean-Up, Arbor Day, Earth Day and Public Lands Day events.
- Educate visitors through Interpretive Programming on conservation methods to apply at home.
- Encourage visitors to conserve energy during park visits by re-using towels and linens.
- Provide mesh bags for use on rivers, so waste is returned with boats.
- Communicate the benefits of “Leave No Trace” ethics and guidelines to park visitors.

### **ASP Internet Update**

Joe Jacobs reported that state parks internet web visitation has increased 18% year to date. He advised the state park application (app) will be ready to preview in November and state parks has chosen the iphone app which currently dominates the market, compatible with the ipad and ipod.

There were 2,000 visitors referred from FaceBook, a 238% increase from September 2009. He anticipates 50,000 FaceBook “friends” by late 2010. The State Parks division has a new Twitter page after the previous page crashed, along with 6,000 fans lost. Twitter does not generate as much traffic as FaceBook.

The Adventure Park Web pages have been updated with a cleaner and younger look to promote the “adventure” opportunities (mountain biking, kayaking, etc.). The trails data base has been updated adding a very user friendly search by city or zip code. This information is very accessible with all state park trails available, including trail locations, length, degree of difficulty, GSP coordinates, photos and more. This trail data base will also be incorporated in the new iphone app and will be a great resource for park visitors.

The Geocache Program is still going strong since July 2008. Geocaching is very popular with families in various parks creating additional traffic. A geo-coin will be used as souvenirs. Geocoins have traveled throughout the US and overseas promoting geo-caching and has become a great marketing tool.

### **CIP Quarterly Report**

Stan Graves reported \$53.5 million in Methods of Finance (MOF) currently underway. He reported \$10 million in projects were closed out this quarter. Graves reported that \$125.6 million in capital improvements have been completed system wide with the 1/8¢ Conservation Tax. Graves noted campground renovations have been completed at Bull Shoals, Crater of Diamonds, and Woolly Hollow State Parks creating nice additions to the campground inventory of state parks.

### **Miscellaneous**

Tom Schueck asked about the status of Village Creek State Park's golf course. Stan Graves reported that progress is being made on the golf course. Staff is working on the cart path extensions and bridges. ASP is waiting for responses to RFQs for architect firms to design the clubhouse and cart storage buildings with interviews scheduled November 1. Jon Brown reported that Ricky Self, with 25 years of experience, has been hired for the golf superintendent with interviews continuing for the remaining full time staff positions. ASP Staff has utilized regional equipment to remove 300 stumps and 140 trees. Massive manual clearing will get underway in November with inmate laborers. Greg Butts advised four greens have been reworked on the first 18 holes (west and north). The east nine will hopefully be opened by fall of 2011. The majority of the cart path extensions and repairs have been constructed. A marketing plan will be developed targeting a late spring or early summer opening for the first 18 holes.

Greg Butts introduced Shea Lewis as the new Regional IV Supervisor. Shea Lewis comes to this position with over 13 years experience with ASP, most recently as Superintendent of Parkin State Park. Under his leadership Parkin received many awards. Mr. Butts noted he is pleased to welcome him to this position.

Mr. Butts reported that FY2010 Arkansas State Parks Awards were announced at the Park Superintendents Meeting in September at Mount Magazine State Park. He thanked Chairman McNulty for speaking at the meeting and being part of the awards ceremony.

Winners for Park of the Year: Region I – Lake Fort Smith State Park; Region II – Toltec Mounds Archeological State Park (Overall Winner); Region III – Lake Poinsett State Park, and Region IV – Historic Washington State Park. Congratulations to the superintendents and their staffs for being selected the best of the best.

There were additional awards selected by categories that excelled in specialized areas: Interpretive Program of the Year – Parkin Archeological State Park; Outstanding Hospitality – Lake Poinsett and Petit Jean State Park (co-winners); Outstanding Park Maintenance – Mount Nebo State Park; Outstanding Special Event – Butterfly Festival, Mount Magazine State Park, Resource Management – Toltec Archeological State Park, and Volunteer Program – Bull Shoals-White River State Park. Congratulations to the superintendents and their staffs for jobs well done.

Greg Butts noted an article highlighting Superintendent Gretchen Sacotnik from Crowley’s Ridge State Park. The article was great recognition for Superintendent Sacotnik and positive exposure for Crowley’s Ridge.

Mr. Butts noted positive feedback from visitors to Historic Washington State Park, as the “best kept secret” in Arkansas.

### **Special Order of Business**

Chairman McNulty reported the nominating committee for 2011 would be comprised of Jim Shamburger, Mike Mills, and Ness Sechrest.

With no further business, the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission meeting adjourned at 11:50 am on October 21, 2010, at The Durand Center, in Harrison, Arkansas.