

Minutes
State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission
DeGray Lake Resort State Park
Bismarck, Arkansas
September 19-20, 2002

Commissioners Present

Debra Haak, Chairman	Billy Lindsey, Vice-Chairman, Thursday only
Bill Barnes, Thursday only	Polly Wood Crews
Danny Ford, Thursday only	Jim Gaston
Loretta Lever House	Montine McNulty
Mike Mills	Ted Mullenix, Thursday only
Ness Sechrest	J.D. "Bud" Shamburger
Wade Williams	

Commissioners Absent

Jane Christenson - Conflict

Department Staff Present

Richard W. Davies, Executive Director
Larry Cargile, Central Administration Director
Joe David Rice, Tourism Director
Greg Butts, State Parks Director
Nancy Clark, Assistant Tourism Director
Mac Balkman, Manager, Operations
Stan Graves, Manager, Planning & Development
Kristine Puckett, Tourism Development Consultant
Jay Harrod, Communications Manager
Marcel Hanzlik, Region III Supervisor
Joan Ellison, Public Information Officer
Jane Ellen Frazier, Group Travel Manager
Chris Peek, Manager, Parks Administration
Amber Garrett, Photography Section
Kerry Kraus, Communications Section
Kelly Farrell, DeGray Lake Resort State Park
Chris Snodgrass, Superintendent, DeGray Lake Resort State Park
Bill Young, Manager, Ozark Folk Center
Gloria Robins, Executive Assistant
Sandy Burch, Administrative Assistant
Jennifer Carson, Administrative Assistant

Agency Staff Present

Shelby Woods
Michael Dandurand
Libby Doss
Bill Fitzgerald
Rebecca Polk

Wayne Woods
Karen Mullikin
Linda Scroggin
Chuck Robertson
Jared Cowell

Tara Walker
Debbie Wilson
Simon Lee
Kay Medlin
Bryan Stafford

Aristotle

Marla Johnson Norris

Jonathan Eudy

Jennifer Peper

Guests Present

Mardell Bland, The Great Passion Play
Joseph Gies, The Great Passion Play
Vickie Egleston, Iron Mountain
Claude Legris, Fort Smith Convention & Visitors Bureau
Brian Clark, Sells/Clark
Elaine Burks, Burks & Parker
Mark Parker, Burks & Parker
Lori Cravens, Arkansas Arts Council
Ross Moore, Greers Ferry Lake/Little Red River Tourist Association
Bill Ott, Basin Park Hotel
Jack Moyer, Basin Park Hotel
Gary Heathcott, Heathcott Associates
Tanya Palmer, Heathcott Associates
Don Cassil
Mary Sue Whitelaw, Garvan Woodland Gardens
Steve Arrison, Hot Springs A&P Commission
Doug Fisher, Clinton Chamber of Commerce
Linda Fisher, Clinton Chamber of Commerce
Melissa Whitfield, Department of Arkansas Heritage
Diane Wingard, The Communications Group
Joy Blankenship, Arkansas's Land of Legends Tourist Association
Barbara King Dozier, Eureka Springs CAPC
Debi Barnes, Mountain Harbor Resort
Brandi Parker, Bentonville A&P Commission
Lenore Rhodney, Mountain View Chamber of Commerce
Bill F. Tannenberger, Wildflower Bed & Breakfast
Brent McCord, Williams-Crawford & Associates
Wrenette Stockton Tedder, Captain Henderson House
Pam Jones, Pine Bluff Convention & Visitors Bureau
Bob Purvis, Pine Bluff Convention & Visitors Bureau
Maryl Koeth, Van Buren A&P Commission

Bob Byers, Garvan Woodland Gardens
Allan Magee, Garvan Woodland Gardens

Call to Order

Chairman Debra Haak called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and Gloria Robins called the roll.

Approval of the Agenda

Polly Wood Crews moved to approve the agenda. Loretta Lever House seconded and the motion carried.

Presentation of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Wade Williams moved to approve the amended minutes. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.

Financial Report

Larry Cargile presented a financial report for the fiscal year-to-date period ended August 31, 2002. The Parks Division expenditures, including construction/grants, totaled \$7,881,944, or 9 % of annual budget. Tourism Division expenditures totaled \$1,620,328, or 13% of annual budget. Keep Arkansas Beautiful expenditures were \$40,774, or 8% of budget. Administration Division expenditures totaled \$368,388, or 16% of budget. History Commission expenditures were \$233,543, or 18% of budget. Total Department expenditures were \$10,144,977. or 9% of annual budget.

Parks Division revenue for the fiscal year-to-date period ended August 31, 2002, totaled \$3,314,040, an increase of 11% over the same period last year. Revenue for the month of August was \$1,416,631, an increase of 1% over last August.

The Tourism Promotion 2% gross tax collections for July and August totaled \$1,753,459, a 3.5% increase over the same period last year.

Ness Sechrest moved to approve the financial report. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.

Recognition of Guests

Chairman Haak recognized guests in attendance.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ness Sechrest questioned whether or not any thought had been put into the Commission's position on the repeal of the sales tax on food. Richard W. Davies stated that the Department would suffer if the tax were repealed. He noted that the 1/8th cent is on the base of everything that sales tax is paid on and if a significant portion of the base were removed from the base then the money received would decrease. The estimate he received from DFA stated that it would cost the Department's share of the 1/8th-cent approximately \$4 million per year. The only way that it could be made up is to increase the base. He further stated that increasing the sales tax would not help.

Ted Mullenix stated that although he would vote against the repeal of the tax, he cautioned Commissioners that people do have a right to oppose the sales tax. He further stated that they have the right to put something on the ballot and vote on it. Billy Lindsey asked Mr. Davies the Governor's position on the issue. Mr. Davies stated that he didn't know that the Governor had taken a position other than that the revenue would have to be replaced. Mr. Lindsey stated he agreed with Mr. Mullenix, but stated that just as people have a right to sign the petition to get the issue on the ballot, the Commission has a right to come out in opposition of it.

Mr. Barnes noted that promises had been made based on the 1/8th-cent, that those promises may not be fulfilled because due to the loss of funds, and that the people need to be aware of the far reaching consequences if the sales tax were repealed. He stated that he didn't know how the State could replace the estimated \$400 million in revenue.

Loretta Lever House asked Mr. Davies what his position is on the issue. Mr. Davies replied that the Commission could take a stance on the issue while Department staff could not and that it is important for people to understand the ramifications. He stated that unless items are added to the base tax, there would be no way to make up for the loss to the 1/8th cent. Joe David Rice stated that the repeal of the tax would also virtually bankrupt the Advertising & Promotion Commissions and that the Department counts on their partnership for the cooperative marketing campaigns. Mr. Davies explained that the Advertising & Promotions Commissions are funded from the sales tax.

Wade Williams wondered if the Commission should come out in opposition to the repeal or if it would be better to come out with a Commission statement of explanation on the estimated impact. Mr. Sechrest stated that he felt the Commission should come out against it. Mr. Ford stated that he feels this is an issue where the Commission needs to make its view known. Chairman Haak asked Mr. Davies if he knew of any other Commission that had taken a stance on the issue. Mr. Davies stated that he did not. Polly Wood Crews stated that most people would probably vote for the repeal of the tax on its face and suggested that the Commission give good reasons for opposing the tax so that people understand.

Ness Sechrest moved to approve the Commission's stance opposing the repeal of the food sales tax. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.

Chairman Haak inquired as to how the process would work. Mr. Davies explained that a statement would need to come from the Commission and he would need to think about to whom it should be sent. Ness Sechrest suggested that it be in the form of a news release and would include the reasons why the Commission was opposed.

Commission Schedule

Richard Davies reminded Commissioners that the October Commission meeting would be held in Jonesboro, October 17-18, 2002. He noted that Commissioners and Division Directors have been invited to a luncheon, which will be attended by the Governor, in Leachville on Thursday. Mr. Davies stated that he wanted Commissioners to be aware of the scheduling.

Mr. Davies stated that the joint meeting with the Game & Fish Commission cannot be scheduled in February due to conflicts and will again be held in January. He noted that the dates might change to Wednesday/Thursday instead of Thursday/Friday to accommodate the various schedules. He also mentioned that a joint meeting would also be held sometime next year, outside of Little Rock, with the Arkansas Highway Commission. A schedule of locations for next year's meetings will be approved in January.

Parks & Tourism Legislative Subcommittee Meeting

The Subcommittee, part of the Agriculture and Economic Development committee, meeting will be held October 3-4, 2002. The members will be staying at Subiaco and will tour the wineries around Altus as well as Mount Magazine State Park.

Legislative Budget Hearing

The legislative budget hearing regarding the Department will be held October 16th at 1:30 p.m. Preliminary executive recommendations have been received and Department staff is still in "negotiations" with the budget division of the Department of Finance & Administration about some of the recommendations and is trying to understand the reasoning behind others.

Certificate of Appreciation

Mr. Davies stated that Jay Miller, Manager of Program Services of State Parks, has been with the Department since the seventies. He is in charge of all the interpretative programming and exhibitory as well as the artwork and brochure development for State Parks. He stated that Mr. Miller's entire staff had asked that the Commission award him a Certificate of Appreciation for his work and leadership.

Montine McNulty moved to approve a Certificate of Appreciation for Jay Miller. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.

Miscellaneous

Richard Davies informed Commissioners that J.E. Dunlap, father of Jane Christenson, would receive the Outstanding Older Worker in Arkansas award. He explained that Mr. Dunlap, as well as Ms. Christenson, has helped the Department's efforts over the years and suggested it might be appropriate for the Commission to send him a resolution congratulating him on his award.

Billy Lindsey moved to approve a resolution to J.E. Dunlap. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.

TOURISM DIVISION

2002-2003 Annual Marketing & Communications Plan Presentation

Joe David Rice opened the presentation, "Smart Marketing in Changing Times," with a few remarks and introduced Shelby Woods. The agency's recommended "smart marketing" objectives, strategies and tactics include print ads, radio and television spots, a strong Internet campaign and publicity efforts designed to garner favorable local, regional, and national exposure. Campaign strategies and tactics are both research-based and performance-oriented. Targeted audiences include general consumers; Arkansas residents; visitors to friends and relatives; in-state, regional, and national media; motorcoach operators; meeting and convention planners; and members of the Arkansas tourism industry.

Strategies for the campaign include: Maintaining and enhancing Arkansas's extraordinary brand of awareness as "The Natural State" through the use of outstanding photography portraying scenic natural beauty, diverse visitor activities, and attractions; address Arkansas's most important target audiences as identified in the annual D.K. Shifflet research: families, young couples without children and adults aged 45+; tighten the list of target markets, using several media with overlapping messages within similar timeframes, thus increasing the frequency with which audiences are reached via the Arkansas vacation message; lengthen the period of time the Arkansas message is in the marketplace in an effort to keep it top of mind as a vacation destination and capture planners who are planning trips within a shorter timeframe; continue advertising and publicity campaigns to invite Arkansans to vacation in their home state, and to travel with visiting friends and relatives; increase efforts to reach group travelers with messages regarding the unique Arkansas experience and the state's enhanced meeting facilities; expansion of the state's online promotion; establish a continuing relationship with new and existing arkansas.com visitors through regular customized e-mail messages addressing their special interests; to invite multi-cultural travelers to enjoy The Natural State with specific messages customized to address each multi-cultural audience; increase positive editorial coverage of Arkansas by members of the in-state, regional, national and outdoor media, both print and broadcast; expand communication with members of the Arkansas tourism industry to inform them of tourism news, events, and trends; seek, form, and maintain partnerships with

Arkansas corporations and other state agencies such as the Department of Arkansas Heritage, the Arkansas Highway & Transportation Department, the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, and the Arkansas Department of Economic Development.

Proposed campaigns in the marketing plan include :

2002 Trail of Holiday Lights - An integrated marketing campaign involving a driving guide, advertising, and publicity efforts targeted to Arkansans and their visiting friends and relatives. The program is designed to generate travel around the state to view holiday lighting displays.

Spring/Summer Consumer Advertising Campaign - A highly targeted advertising effort aimed at those revealed by research to be our most likely potential visitors. The campaign includes magazine, newspaper, television, pay-per-inquiry television, outdoor, and online advertising.

Vacation Planning Kit - The Natural State's number one selling tool is designed to provide all the information an inquirer needs to plan an Arkansas vacation. It is the piece used to fulfill the call to action issued in every advertising message.

Publicity Strategies: National Media Support - Communications tactics proposed to support advertising efforts include outdoor media support, media fact sheets, a reception for Dallas area media, customized familiarization tours and feature story placement.

Publicity Strategies: In-State Media Support - Communications tactics proposed to generate in-state editorial support include the "Song of Arkansas" promotion, "Coke, Arkansas & You," support of the Louisiana Bicentennial Celebration, promotion of the State's newest National Scenic Byway, tourism industry newsletters, support for the Governor's Conference on Tourism, and development of the tourism annual report.

Web Site Improvement/Maintenance/Promotion - Programs to enhance and update the web site and increase visitation include adding a search function, a media room, and expanding databases.

See Arkansas First - The continuation of an in-state advertising and publicity campaign to encourage Arkansans to vacation in their home state, which includes newspaper, radio, and television advertising. New this year, is the expansion of the Travel & Win game to out-of-state participants and stretching the media presence over a longer period of time.

Arkansas Wal-Mart Fishing Trail - A partnership program between Wal-Mart, the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, and the Arkansas tourism industry designed to move fishermen around the state to win prizes and increase the sale of fishing licenses.

Retirement and Relocation - A separate advertising campaign targeted to adults 45+, inviting them to consider Arkansas as a home after retirement.

2002/2003 Marketing Plan Budget Summary

Research	\$	106,445.00
National Publicity and Communications	\$	54,000.00
In-state Publicity and Communications	\$	45,600.00
Media	\$	4,635,690.00

Newspaper	\$	808,477.00
Radio	\$	72,000.00
Television	\$	1,382,317.00
Magazine	\$	1,742,646.00
Pay-Per-Inquiry Television	\$	235,000.00
Outdoor	\$	58,157.00
Online	\$	337,093.00

Wal-Mart Fishing Trail	\$	125,000.00
Group Travel Marketing	\$	200,000.00
Broadcast/Print/Collateral Production	\$	537,715.00
Photography	\$	25,000.00
Vacation Planning Kit Production	\$	10,000.00
2003 Arkansas Tour Guide	\$	549,651.00
Contingency	\$	100,000.00
Earned Discounts*	(\$	49,500.00)
TOTAL	\$	6,339,601.00

Web Site Maintenance & Improvement	\$	206,768.00
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* A one-percent discount on all media placement after the expenditure of one million dollars and a two-percent discount after the second million.

After the plan was presented, Commissioners commented that they liked the presentation and appreciated the fact that most of their suggestions had been incorporated. Commissioners discussed voting directly after the presentation or in the meeting room. Mr. Davies commented that the Commission discussion might be interesting, and valuable, to spectators. Commissioners decided to vote directly after the question and discussion period.

Wade Williams questioned what markets were included in the pay-per-inquiry recommendation. Ms. Mullikin stated that markets were listed on page 53 of the plan. She noted that markets change from year to year because of the stations. Ms. Medlin stated that it is the option of the station if it wants to participate in pay-per-inquiry or not. Ms. Mullikin asked if he wanted to add a particular market. Mr. Williams stated that he just wondered in what market spots would run on which network, the Weather Channel, for example. Ms. Mullikin stated that on national stations like the Weather Channel and A & E, the spots would be seen on a national level. The markets listed indicate where the independent stations are located. Mr. Woods stated

that pay-per-inquiry relies on unsold inventory and that is why it can't be relied upon to carry the message because there may not be any time for the spots. Mr. Williams stated that he appreciated the explanation.

Mr. Williams questioned in regard to the timing of the ads and with the consumer planning period being much shorter, if the spring break season would be missed by moving things back with the newspaper insert (eight weeks). Mr. Woods replied that the season would be missed and that there is always a trade-off, but that the industry had been polled. He also stated that if the magazine insertions started in March instead of January or February, that there would be some trade-off, but that the insertions would carry through the summer. Mr. Woods stated that the agency made this recommendation because the summer months have softened up, and the industry would like to curb this trend. Ms. Mullikin reminded Commissioners that the message is in the market all year long with the pay-per-inquiry and the Television Broadcasters Association spots. She stated that there will be less presence in the spring market than in years past. Jim Gaston stated that he felt that spring break shouldn't be promoted anymore than Labor Day, Memorial Day or the 4th of July and that spring break varies from school to school system as well as from state to state. Mr. Woods stated that one thing to consider is that although the insertion is moving from January to March insertion, there would still be a magazine presence because most issues come out February 15th. He reiterated that the industry was polled and that most of them did not have a serious problem with moving the newspaper insert back eight weeks. Mr. Woods asked if that answered his question. Mr. Williams stated that it did, but that due to the timing, we would probably miss the spring break season.

Mr. Williams asked what is different about the meeting planner ads for Arkansas than any ad for another state. He stated that he did not see anything in the ads that would draw meeting planners to Arkansas. Mr. Woods stated that it has been determined by the A&P Roundtable and the Convention and Visitors Bureau organizations that the Department does not directly recruit conventions in the state, it is the individual city's responsibility to do that. He further stated that based on research by D.K. Shifflet, that the perception was that Arkansas does not have such meeting facilities and that those ads are to show that those facilities are available. The point was to show the state-of-the-art facilities that Arkansas has to offer. Bill Fitzgerald noted that the focus had been shifted from showing the more natural scenery to the showing the facilities because that's what meeting planners are interested in. Mr. Williams stated that he understood the Roundtable discussion, but questioned whether or not that was a correct assumption. Mr. Woods stated that is what he believes. Richard Davies stated that the state's role is to make it clear to people that Arkansas does have the state-of-the-art facilities because people perceive that Arkansas does not. He further stated that the Department's role is to showcase the facilities so that the cities can make the sale. Bob Purvis, Executive Director of the Pine Bluff A&P, stated that Richard Davies had reiterated the CVB concerns exactly.

Mr. Williams stated that he noticed that there is no recommendation for a second newspaper insert in the spring. Mr. Woods stated that an intensive evaluation was done after the second insert this year and that the results showed that people weren't really sure if it worked or how well it worked. He also stated that what was clear was that if the Department could not pay for it, the private industry didn't want to do it. He stated that the industry probably would want to

do it again, but since the insert was moved back it would eliminate the need for a second insert. Mr. Williams stated that his last concern is that he does not personally care for the part of the television spot where the PDA is being thrown away.

Bill Barnes stated that he has trouble with the newspaper insert being dropped in late April and he is concerned about missing the entire spring break. He stated that personally, his business was down during spring break. He proposed moving the insert drop back four weeks, to about March 20th, instead of eight weeks in order to pick up some spring vacation planning. Mr. Woods stated that the time for the newspaper insert could be changed and that the industry will have to help direct the timing. Joe David Rice stated that we might look at dropping the insert at different dates to coincide a little more with the season, earlier in the south, later in the north.

Mr. Barnes stated that his next concern is regarding the retirement and relocation program. He noted that people visit 3-5 times before relocating and that retirement and relocation is a significant area of benefit to the state. He proposed that \$75,000 to \$100,000 of the print media budget for general state marketing is shifted into a more targeted effort of retirement and relocation because he believes it would be a better investment. Mr. Woods stated that he agreed that more of an effort should be made to the retirement and relocation program, but asked that it be deferred for a year because there might be some future opportunities that will eliminate the need for reallocating money. Mr. Barnes restated that he hoped the money would be shifted and then if the program worked in the future, then the money could be reallocated. Mr. Barnes stated he hoped that some of the audience members would voice their comments so Commissioners will know their concerns.

Polly Wood Crews stated that she liked the billboard idea. Mr. Woods stated that the billboards around the state would be up for ninety days and that the two out-of-state billboards, one in Houston, one in Chicago, would be placed on routes into the city to garner the attention of commuters on their way to work. The idea behind that is that the Internet is most used between the hours of 9 and 5, which means it's at the office. Mr. Woods stated that a domain name, arkansasvacations.com will be used to track all the interest from Houston and Chicago and will drive those people to Arkansas.com.

Billy Lindsey stated that he is concerned, to some degree about the change in the insert date and that his business was down last spring, but attributed it to the weather. He stated that he thought it would miss the spring break in April, but that he wasn't sure if moving it back to late March would make much of a difference. He further stated that he would like to see something done in the future to focus the market on Arkansas for spring break. He also suggested using some of the retirement and relocation ads in the print media rather than reallocating the money to the program.

Jim Gaston stated that Commissioners should do what is best for the state and not necessarily what is best for any one segment of the population. He stated that he is for the retirement and relocation program, but that real estate agents don't pay the 2% tax. He questioned how many real estate agents support the retirement and relocation program overall. He stated that when money is pulled out of any one program (in response to Mr. Barnes's suggestion of

reallocating money to the program) there would be less inquiries meaning less visitors. He further stated that the marketing effort should focus on the research findings and not what is the best for any one group and that the money invested in marketing should be used to generate more 2% money.

Ted Mullenix asked whether or not the group travel portion reflected any increase in expenditure. Joe David Rice stated only the online marketing portion was increased. Mr. Woods responded that the budget is the same amount as last year. Mr. Mullenix stated that if group travel is going to be enhanced, that the budget will have to be larger and that some innovative things must be done. Mr. Mullenix asked that those options be looked at for next year.

Loretta Lever House commented that she liked that the presentation was more inclusive of the African American and Hispanic markets. She asked what was being specifically done in terms of inviting the minority market to Arkansas. Mr. Rice stated that a cooperative project would be presented the next day, which would be directed at the minority markets. Jay Harrod, the Communications manager, interjected that the 2003 media kit will be translated into Spanish, will be sent to Spanish newspapers, and will be accessible in the online media room.

Chairman Haak asked if anyone in the audience had comments on the timing of the newspaper insert. Barbara King Dozier stated that she liked Joe David's idea of splitting the insert drop so as not to miss the whole spring break. Shelby Woods commented that it's difficult to explain everything that went into the process of making the decision to drop the newspaper insert at a later date. He stated that the plans are to have a "crawl" on the television ads the week before the newspaper insert hits because they feel like it would grab more attention. He stated that the drop could be split up and markets could be divided, but that the implementation needs to generate the most business for the industry as well as maximize the investment. Richard Davies asked when the latest a date could be picked for the drop. Mr. Woods stated that a date would have to be decided upon before January because of the printing, coordination, and shipping. Wayne Woods stated that the insert is not generating as many inquiries as in the past and that if it continues to decline, the industry would not be interested in doing it. He further stated that it's not easy to sell now, but that if it were moved to April, that it may generate more inquiries.

Ness Sechrest moved to approve the budget as presented (a total of \$6,339,601.00). Polly Wood Crews seconded and the motion carried.

Advertising Agency Selection Process: Recommended Finalists

Joe David Rice stated that eight responses had been received for the Request for Proposal regarding the advertising agency contract. Letters were received from Brooks Jeffrey Marketing, Mangan Holcomb Rainwater Culpepper, and Fred Williams declining to send in a proposal. Five agencies sent in proposals: Burks & Parker, Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods, Heathcott Associates, Nicholson Communications, and Sells/Clark. Mr. Rice stated that Department staff spent about a week reviewing the proposals. A memorandum was distributed regarding the findings and recommended finalists.

Mr. Rice noted that Burks & Parker submitted an interesting proposal, which included handling "ONLY the media portion" of the account. As stated in the memo, Mr. Rice pointed out that although such an arrangement is not uncommon for a large account, it is counter to the RFP guidelines and staff members felt that it could create a problem in developing a fully integrated campaign. Mr. Rice pointed out that Nicholson Communications does not have experience in a tourism-related account. The staff recommended that Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods, Heathcott Associates, and Sells/Clark be invited to give presentations at the November Commission meeting.

Mark Parker, with Burks & Parker, stated that although he respects the thought process, Ms. Burks had worked on the Parks & Tourism account over an eight-year period, and that both she and he have plenty of national experience. He feels that they have the experience required for the job and noted that the fee structure, as presented, would have been able to save the Department a quarter of a million dollars without any negotiations or added value. He stated that the money could be allocated back into the media budget or to another area. Mr. Parker also stated that the Department's position is that it does not want to outsource portions of the account. He stated that production for print and video is already currently being outsourced by CJRW. He further stated that he didn't feel there was a need to worry about having a fully integrated campaign because they were prepared to accept the role of working with the creative agency in a partnership.

Joe David Rice stated that Mr. Parker is correct in that it would initially save money, but that CJRW provides a lot of account services including time with Shelby, Karen, Libby, and Kay which would make up for that cost.

Montine McNulty moved to approve the staff recommendations for the agency selection process finalists. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.

Wade Williams questioned if the Department would look at dividing up the contract in the future. Mr. Rice replied that he didn't see it being done anytime soon. He feels that everything should be carefully blended and that the account was not to the size that a division could be justified. Mr. Rice stated that he didn't know of any accounts of the Department's size that are divided to such an extent.

Mr. Rice stated that presentations would be held at three separate locations in Harrison at the November Commission meeting. Commissioners will be taken by trolley to each presentation, one of which will be scheduled before lunch and the other two after lunch. He explained that the agencies would be able to set-up about noon on Wednesday to rehearse. Commissioners will be asked to take notes throughout the presentations and discuss it after returning to the Comfort Inn, where the Commission meeting will be held. The Commission will vote to award the contract to one of the agencies that afternoon.

Cooperative Minority Marketing Proposal

Barry Travis, Executive Director of the Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau, presented an update on the Minority Marketing proposal, which includes a proposed budget of \$45,000. The intent of the campaign is to market the state of Arkansas, specifically Hot Springs, Little Rock, North Little Rock, and Pine Bluff, to the Memphis market beginning mid-January 2003 through February 2003, "Black History Month." Targeted radio and print media advertising will include directions to the visitor information center in each city. Approximately 5,000 brochures will be printed, which visitors will be able to pick up at the centers as well as a special gift, to be determined later. Attractions in each city will be highlighted in the brochure with an emphasis on those attractions appealing to the targeted market. Prospective visitors will also be able to call a dedicated 800 number, handled by the Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau, if they have any questions. The proposed budget is as follows:

Radio	\$11,868.00
Print	\$ 8,178.12
Production	\$ 8,000.00
Brochure	\$ 5,000.00
Production	\$ 3,000.00
Dedicated phone line & gifts	\$ 6,953.88
Public Relations	\$ 1,000.00
Internet	<u>\$ 1,000.00</u>
	\$45,000.00

Mr. Travis stated that each participating city would contribute \$9,000 and asked Commissioners to approve participation in the effort with a share of \$9,000. He noted that participants hope this campaign is a forerunner to other campaigns that will include other minorities and that other cities could be targeted if the Memphis campaign is successful.

Richard Davies inquired about the Internet connection portion of the budget. Mr. Travis replied that it would be a simple web page with necessary information for visitors that could be linked with other web sites, Arkansas.com, for example. Mr. Davies also asked if the campaign would focus on history. Mr. Travis explained that it could be taken either way, come see the history and while you're here see the attractions or come see the attractions and while you're here, see the history. Polly Wood Crews inquired if there was a particular route that would be suggested. Mr. Travis replied that there is not a particular route or order in which to see the participating cities.

Bud Shamburger moved to approve the Minority Marketing Proposal and budget as presented. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.

"Welcome Center" Project Status Report

Mr. Rice commended Chairman Haak for her presentation of the resolution to the Highway Department. He stated that the original bid for the Texarkana Information Center came in over budget and will be re-bid. He also stated that a contractor is currently doing groundwork for the project and that there is signage. The ribbon cutting for the Texarkana center should be in the fall of next year. Chairman Haak stated that she would like for the Commission meeting to be scheduled in the area, if not in Texarkana, once it's open. Mr. Rice stated that it might be as late as January 2004, since the schedule is behind.

Mr. Rice stated that negotiations for the land for the El Dorado Tourist Information Center are currently underway. Although he would like for it to be constructed just south of the Junction of Highways 7/167 and 82, it is considered to be the most valuable piece of property in Union County. As a consequence, the Department is looking into other options.

Section Reports

Communications

Section members helped to finalize plans for a familiarization tour organized, in part, by the Eureka Springs City Advertising & Promotion Commission. Plans were also developed for a photography workshop that will be held in October at the Elk Information Center located in Jasper. New media kit covers and CD inserts were finalized. A Request for Proposal for the web site development contract was written and released. Staff members met with CJRW and Aristotle staff regarding online marketing ideas. Work was also conducted on a possible motorcycle section that will be posted on Arkansas.com.

Research & Information Services Section

The section processed 23,320 requests for information during August. Tourist Information Center (TIC) visitation totaled 88,591 for the month. Year-to-date TIC visitation is 600,399, approximately the same number as in 2001. Requests for the *Arkansas Retirement/Relocation Guide* totaled 1,647. User sessions to the five agency web sites during August totaled 274,389.

The follow-up mail out for the Spring/Summer Conversion study has been completed. Data is being entered upon receipt and will be compiled as soon as enough information has been received.

Group Travel

Section members responded to 545 inquiries in August. Year-to-date requests for group-related information total 1,721. Staff members attended various meetings to promote group travel as well as were speakers at functions.

Tourism Development

All regional tourist associations met the monthly paperwork deadline. The 2003 Spring/Summer Calendar of Events portion of the web site closed August 30th. There are currently over 850 submissions. Staff members are currently proofing the text before forwarding it to Max Gilbert for formulation. The *Arkansas Retirement/Relocation Guide* was proofed and returned to Arkansas Business Publishing for corrections and changes on September 6. Henry Awards nomination forms have been mailed. Although the deadline is not until October 31, Thirty-one (31) nominations have been received so far.

Miscellaneous

Mr. Rice stated that the Governor's Conference internal planning committee has met and made preliminary plans for the next conference. Chairman Haak stated that the Governor's Conference committee needed to meet soon. Mr. Mullenix asked if any private enterprise individuals had been involved. Mr. Rice clarified that he meant the internal Department planning committee, but that when the other committee met, private enterprise individuals would be involved. He also assured Ms. Crews that she would be involved in the planning of the conference.

Mr. Gaston commented that the newspaper insert started approximately thirty years ago and that it had been a 50/50 private/state funded effort. He stated that it has basically remained unchanged for those thirty years. He questioned if the insert could be changed to do a better job and how much longer would the private enterprise be willing to pay the 50/50 because a lot of operations are moving towards putting their money into online. He also stated that if it's not changed with the times, it probably would not be a viable product down the road. Commissioners generally discussed how the times have changed and how it has affected their personal advertising efforts.

PARKS DIVISION

Gaston Wildflower Meadow

Greg Butts reminded the Commission that it had asked that an interpretive message and a monument be developed to recognize Jim Gaston's donation of land for the development of a wildflower area at Bull Shoals-White River State Park. Mr. Butts said proposals had been given to Mr. Gaston for his consideration and that he had made a selection. The entrance monument will be a carved Arkansas native stone and the interpretive panel will include a photograph of a purple coneflower.

Ness Sechrest moved to approve the installation at the wildflower meadow at Bull Shoals-White River State Park a carved Arkansas native stone monument that reads *Welcome to the Gaston Wildflower Meadow donated by Jim & Jill Gaston in memory of their son Eric Gaston. "Speak to the Earth, and it will teach you"* and an interpretive panel that says *Gaston Wildflower Meadow. You are stepping into a*

meadow of wildflowers and grasses of the Ozark region. Butterfly weed, lance-leaved coreopsis, purple coneflower, rough blazing star, bee balm and black-eyed Susan are a few of the flowers found in an open Ozark meadow. Throughout the year, wildflowers and grasses will change. White, purple, orange and yellow flowers predominate throughout the summer until late fall. Then, flowers and grasses will be allowed to go to seed and re-propagate. The meadow will not be mowed until the end of winter to provide winter cover and food for wildlife. Sit a minute, feel the breeze, look and listen. The flowers attract birds, butterflies and other wildlife. "Speak to the Earth, and it will teach you" This wildflower meadow is in recognition of Commissioner Jim Gaston for his leadership in the development of wildflowers within the state park system, and in appreciation of the family's generous land donation made in memory of their son, Eric Gaston, which made this wildflower meadow possible. Designed and constructed with funding from Amendment 75 1/8¢ Arkansas's Conservation Tax. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.

Jim Gaston thanked the Commissioners.

Arkansas State Parks (ASP) Campground Operations/Policies – Proposed Changes

Greg Butts said he asked all park superintendents to provide input on the major campground policies. Staff discussed the suggestions and developed recommendations on some of the key areas in park directives. Mr. Butts discussed the following topic areas:

Campsites assigned at registration

Some states and some central reservation systems allow for a particular campsite to be selected at the time a reservation is made. ASP allows a camper to select a site upon arrival if it is available and will accommodate their equipment. Regarding the 50-amp sites, they need to be held back to accommodate the larger units that need more power. As campsites are being renovated, 50-amp service will be added throughout the system. Mr. Butts said the issue is with selecting a site when a reservation is made in advance. Because all campsites in parks are not equal, park staff need to manage assignment of sites to best accommodate campers' equipment needs.

Bud Shamburger said campsites need to be catalogued to indicate campsite types and sizes. He said this would make a reservation system work. When a camper is making a reservation and requests a specific site, the person taking the reservation may not promise the guest that he will get that site, but a notation can be made so the guest will get that site or a similar one upon arrival. Mr. Shamburger said the fee for a site should be taken at the time a person registers for a site, regardless of whether the camper has camping equipment with him or not at that moment. He added that if all sites can be reserved, it does not matter. Greg Butts said the issue is having to occupy a site immediately once it is rented. Mr. Butts said most state park systems, including federal campgrounds, have that requirement. He said in the past accusations have been made that a park superintendent was giving some campers special consideration. Chris Snodgrass said there are problems if a site is not initially occupied. He gave the example

of a camper who arrives at the park on Tuesday and pays for the site but does not bring his equipment to the site until Thursday. Meanwhile, a camper arrives at 10:00 p.m. on Tuesday and the Visitor Information Center (VIC) is closed. That camper sees an unoccupied site, sets up and goes to the VIC the next morning to register. It may be that all campsites are taken and there is not another campsite available for the camper to be moved to, and he must leave the park. The camper says park signage indicates that he was to set up on an unoccupied site and register in the morning. That camper is very unhappy and must leave the park. Mr. Shamburger said the answer to the problem is when a camper registers, he needs to go immediately to the site and post the card on the site post. Mr. Snodgrass said the card could be gone the next day. Mr. Shamburger said then the answer is the site must be occupied before dark of the day. Superintendent Snodgrass suggested that the site needs to be occupied before the VIC closes. Richard Davies said one thing he thinks is important is to allow three families to camp in adjacent sites when they request it. Mr. Shamburger said that is why it is important to make that notation at the time a reservation is made. Mac Balkman said through a reservation system that can be handled – the problems arise with “drop in” campers, especially in the summer after 5:00 p.m. Mr. Shamburger said drop-ins should get the least desirable sites, that the best sites should be assigned to campers who make reservations in advance. Richard Davies said the direction to parks has been to make the reservable sites not the best but not the worse either. Mr. Shamburger said the number of reservable sites should be evenly distributed throughout the park. Chris Snodgrass said many of the problems are with local campers who spend six weeks of the summer at the park. The camper who suffers is the out-of-state guest who arrives by 8:00 a.m. to register when the VIC opens. That camper puts his name on a waiting list, but he is behind the local people who already put their names on the waiting list. Bud Shamburger said that problem would be solved if 100% of the campsites were reservable, but hold back 10%. Chris Snodgrass said at least 30% of his campers are first time visitors who had intended to stay for only one or two days, but once they arrive they decide to stay for their entire two-week vacation.

Richard Davies recapped the discussion: All sites should be reservable, but 10% are held back. Regarding occupancy, a site can be paid for but equipment must be on the site before the VIC closes. Mr. Davies said a private business can make private business rules. However, Arkansas campers are also owners of the campgrounds and parks. Debbie Haak said when a campsite is paid for and occupied, all the support facilities benefit, i.e., the camp store and the marina. Ms. Haak said if a campground was 100% reservable, there are people who would pay for a full week and not arrive with their equipment until the weekend. Richard Davies said he likes the idea of being able to pay for a site but not occupy it until later in the day. Billy Lindsey said people who are new to an area and have a tow vehicle, will park their equipment and then drive around looking for a site. Mr. Lindsey said that a camper will come in and pay for a site for five nights but not have their camping equipment with them at that time. He said he understands Superintendent Snodgrass’s situation with campers arriving in the middle of the night and set up on a campsite that has been reserved for someone else. Stan Graves said all campsites are inventoried by length, width and slope. Mr. Lindsey said that he also holds back some sites for regular customers who show up and he wants to accommodate their needs.

Number of Reservable Sites

Greg Butts said if he was operating the campgrounds like the private sector, he would have all sites reservable. The Corps is saying the ideal number is 60%; however, a petition has been circulated at Lake Greeson indicating campers are upset with that amount. Mr. Butts said some states are at 100% and some states are first come, first served. ASP policy has allowed superintendents to go up to 50%. Mr. Butts said his recommendation is to mandate that 50% be reservable.

Bud Shamburger said he recommends 90% and hold back 10%. Wade Williams asked if the 50% would be designated; i.e., 50% of the 30 Class A sites at a park. Greg Butts said they would have to be scattered about the campground and place the reservable sign on sites so people will know which sites are reservable. Wade Williams asked, if the sites are the same and there are thirty of them and fifteen are reservable, why do the reservable ones need to be designated. Mr. Butts said because we are trying not to pick the best or the worse but to have them mixed. Richard Davies said he liked the idea of scattering the reservable sites. Bud Shamburger said if there was a low percentage (50%) of reservable sites, it would be necessary, but if it was 90% or 100%, it would not be necessary to have them signed "reservable." Wade Williams said he was trying to understand what is wrong with having sites 100% reservable and holding 10% back, other than someone coming in, seeing an empty site which they want and they might think a special arrangement was made for another camper. Chris Snodgrass said it is the camper who changes his mind – they did not know everything that was available at the park and now they want to stay fourteen days instead of two days. Bud Shamburger said the way it is right now, if someone is at the park at 8:00 a.m., he can pick out a site to rent for fourteen days – that camper is being treated differently than the person on the phone who wants to make a reservation. Richard Davies said a potential problem with 100% of the sites being reservable is there may not be any two-week stays available because every weekend in the middle of that two-week period would be reserved. Greg Butts said that is what the petition to the Corps at Lake Greeson was about. Polly Wood Crews said if you were in a hotel room and you decided you wanted to stay longer and a reservation from someone else had been made to move into that room, you would be asked to leave. Chris Snodgrass said that would be true if there was 100% occupancy. Ness Sechrest said in places like Disney World that is true. Wade Williams said that would be the same thing with a campground – if someone wanted to stay longer and another camper had a reservation to move onto a site, the first camper would have to leave (if the campground was 100% sold). However, if the campground is not 100% occupied, the first camper would be allowed to stay. Richard Davies asked Chris Snodgrass how many weekends in the summer months would be reserved if campsites were 100% reservable. Superintendent Snodgrass responded that it would be every weekend. Mr. Davies said that means nobody could stay longer than four days. Superintendent Snodgrass said "yes" and that would hurt the park. There are people who stay at sites longer just because family members visit different weekends. Camping at DeGray is totally different than camping at Petit Jean which is totally different than camping at Lake Dardanelle. He suggested that the number of reservable sites need to be increased at all parks and individual park superintendents need to increase the number and change the number to eventually get the percentage of reservable sites to the maximum that will work for each park. Richard Davies said that it then would be different at each park. Chris Snodgrass said a lot of

people reserve a site so they have the peace of mind of knowing they have a site and they will come to the park. Once the reservable sites include the preferred and the lakefront, Superintendent Snodgrass did not think he would have the same amount of guests. Bud Shamburger said now if someone calls to make a reservation and all the reservable sites are taken, the camper has two options – go someplace else or hope there is a site available when he arrives. Loretta Lever House said she was thinking of the airline industry when they are reserving seats. They will reserve up to a certain point and at that point they will say you have to get your seat when you get to the airport. Ms. House said that is what she is hearing Mr. Shamburger saying. Wade Williams asked Superintendent Snodgrass if the reason he is saying 100% reservable wouldn't work at DeGray is because of local people on the weekends. Superintendent Snodgrass said there is another issue that cannot be stressed enough, because he hears it at least three or four times a week. A person calls and makes a reservation with a non-refundable deposit. That person calls later and says his factory was originally going to be closed during the time they made the reservation but now the factory has changed the dates and they have to change their vacation dates. He said he allows them to transfer the dates. If the campsites were 100% reservable, a lot of the people who have these kinds of change in plans could not be accommodated. However, they would have the chance to come if we retain some first come, first served sites. Jim Gaston explained his cancellation policy and said if a factory changes its closure dates, it is not his problem. Mr. Gaston said he would make exceptions if there were a death in the family or an emergency. Danny Ford said while each park may be different, we have to have a policy that is consistent across the system. Richard Davies said he agrees with Mr. Ford and we need to be customer friendly without hurting the parks. Bill Barnes said one of his frustrations with the Corps is they are trying to make a policy fit all of its recreation areas and they don't give the people who manage a facility any flexibility. A manager has to be allowed to make some changes to fit the situation at his campground. Mr. Barnes asked if it would work if the Commission said that the initial standard for a campground was 50% reservable sites spread equitably among all sites, and the park superintendent was given the flexibility to request to Mr. Butts that the percentage could go down as low as 25% and up as high as 75%. Mr. Butts said with that situation, one of the perceptions could be that some park staff will work with campers more than others. He said there are good reasons for have the same rules for every park. Mr. Butts said park staff is empowered to make judgement calls for different situations. However, if there is a wide disparity about how many sites can be reserved it will create problems. Bill Barnes said the southern Corp facility managers want a lesser number of reservable sites than managers of northern campgrounds because they feel they have a higher rate of local drop-in campers. Bud Shamburger said that is the problem now – there is not a policy that is the same across the entire park system. Greg Butts said the need for more flexibility is to accommodate groups like the Good Sam clubs that might have thirty campers that want to stay in the same park. The park they choose might have thirty-eight campsites. There needs to be flexibility so a park superintendent can accommodate them. Chris Snodgrass said maybe it is time to challenge park superintendents to service guests better, and they will need to develop a program to educate their campers that changes are coming. Superintendent Snodgrass told about a new way some campers are assured they have a desired site – they pay for fourteen nights knowing they are going to spend thirteen days. They move off the site at 9:00 p.m. and their friend moves onto the site and registers in the morning for two weeks and that camper leaves on the thirteenth night and someone else moves on. Jim Gaston asked what difference it

makes between his facility being 100% reservable and a campground being 100% reservable. Chris Snodgrass said Mr. Gaston has a lock on the door and there are no locks on campsites. Mr. Gaston asked if it would be a problem with 100% why hasn't it been a problem with 50%. Superintendent Snodgrass said it has never been a problem.

When Reservation Fee Must Be Received

Greg Butts said the policy has been that a deposit for one night's stay must be received five days prior to the arrival date. The recommendation is to obtain the non-refundable deposit immediately when a reservation is made. Bill Barnes says he requires one night's rental paid, and processed, by credit card at the time the reservation is made. Mr. Barnes said there is very little resistance. Greg Butts said ASP accepts payment of the deposit by check or credit card. Bill Barnes asked if there would be a problem if the payment could be made by credit card only. Mr. Butts said it would be for some people. Chris Snodgrass said he has two employees that do not have credit cards. Superintendent Snodgrass said he feels it would be acceptable if the deposit could be made immediately by credit card or a check mailed postmarked within 24-hours of the day the reservation is made. Bill Barnes said the national reservation system requires payment by credit card. Bud Shamburger asked if the site is reserved during the time Superintendent Snodgrass is waiting for a check to arrive. Superintendent Snodgrass said it is reserved. Mr. Shamburger said if the check does not clear the bank it means a site was unavailable to be reserved by someone else for over a week. Bill Barnes said the current system requires a lot of monitoring. Mr. Barnes said he suggests that all reservations require a credit card for payment of the deposit, and the credit card be processed immediately and the customer is made aware of that. Jim Gaston said we really need to look at this policy.

Check-out Time

Greg Butts said campers have two different opinions on what should be the campground checkout time. On weekends, particularly families, campers want to stay in the park later on Sundays. At Bull Shoals-White River State Park, approximately 75% of the campers are gone by 11:00 a.m., and 25% stay around the river past the normal checkout time of 3:00 p.m. Bud Shamburger asked where the camper that stays until 3:00 p.m. goes. Greg Butts said he is going home. Bud Shamburger said the campsite needs to be vacated by noon to make it available to rent that night. Mr. Shamburger said the policy should state that a campsite cannot be occupied before 1:00 p.m. except at the discretion of the park staff, and the checkout time should be closer to noon. Jim Gaston suggested the occupancy rate of the reservable sites at Bull Shoals be tracked for one year. The result could indicate that the percentage should be increased. Mr. Gaston added that he thinks we should only accept credit cards for the payment of a reservation deposit. Mr. Gaston asked how long it would take to implement the policy changes that were being discussed. Regarding the changes in policies that are being considered, because it is a rule change, it will require about three months, just like the changes in fees for CY2003, which includes the public comment period. Mr. Butts said new policies could be in place in February 2003. Richard Davies asked if it would be better to slowly increase the percentage of reservable sites instead of immediately jumping to 90%. Jim Gaston said it might be better to take it in

small steps. Bud Shamburger said increasing the percentage will not decrease the number of walk-ins. Richard Davies said the only thing that bothers him is the locals blocking every weekend. Bud Shamburger said they won't do that if their credit cards are charged.

Greg Butts said he is not opposed to moving the checkout time to 1:00 p.m. Regarding the time when a site can be occupied by a new camper, Mr. Butts said if a site is empty and available, it can be occupied at 8:05 a.m. Bud Shamburger said he is proposing that cannot happen until 1:00 p.m. Superintendent Snodgrass said he needs some amount of time available to mow and trim a campsite, but that is handled by notifying the VIC personnel in advance to hold a site until maintenance completes its work at the site.

Refund for Early Departure

Greg Butts said the current policy states no refund for early departure for a two-day reservation. Mr. Butts recommended that the policy be revised to include three-day holiday weekends, understanding that emergencies arise and the park superintendent would have the flexibility to make the determination on how those will be handled.

Guests Under 18-Years of Age

Greg Butts said the current policy states that a parent or guardian must be present when renting a campsite but does not say the adult must stay on the site. Mr. Butts recommended the policy be changed to require an adult must stay on the site. Mike Mills asked if this would apply to scout groups. Mr. Butts said those groups have adults with them. Mr. Mills said it is often not one adult on each site. Mr. Butts said groups would be treated differently. He said the issue has been when an adult registers for the site and leaves minors on the site for several days. Richard Davies asked if having minors on a site is a problem. Chris Snodgrass said it is a problem if no adult is there and damage is done at the site. Jim Gaston said he is more concerned about a child being hurt than damage to a campsite. Superintendent Snodgrass said park staff make the decision about immediate treatment in the event of an injury to a minor. Wade Williams said a minor cannot enter into a contract. Richard Davies said that is the issue, but it needs to be made clear that there does not have to be an adult on each site when a scout group is camping. Greg Butts said the only problem with that is if five campsites are rented and minors are camping and only one adult is with the group.

Extended Stay

Greg Butts said ASP has rented to people for periods longer than 14 days when they are working in the area, have health problems, etc. The recommendation is to give superintendents additional authority to extend days.

Number of Camping Units Per Site

Greg Butts said the current policy states that a maximum of two camping units can be on one campsite but it is not specific on the definition of the camping units. Currently, two

motorhomes can be on one site if they will fit. Richard Davies said that was never the intent. The recommendation is to change the policy limiting the camping units to one RV and one tent, or one large tent, or two small tents. Jim Gaston asked when a small tent becomes large. Superintendent Snodgrass said a two-person tent is a small tent. A tent that can accommodate more than two people is large.

Number of People Per Site

Greg Butts said the current policy does not limit the number of people that can be on one campsite. The recommendation is to limit the number of people per site to eight. Mr. Butts said this is not intended to prevent people from other sites visiting during the day or to limit day-use visitors. It is to limit the number of people who spend the night to eight.

Chairman Haak asked Greg Butts to meet with Bud Shamburger before Friday morning to discuss all the policies and come back to the Commission with recommendations.

Greg Butts said his recommendation is to accept the changes to the policies as presented, with the following modifications:

- a) Reservable Sites - The recommendation is to increase the percent mandated to 90%.
- b) Reservation Fee - The recommendation is to mandate that the first night, non-refundable reservation deposit can be made by credit card or debit card only and the credit card will be processed at the time the reservation is made when the reservation is made by phone. A check will be accepted when a reservation is made in person.
- c) Check-out Time - The recommendation is that sites are to be vacated by noon on the day of departure.
- d) Premature departure lists, etc. - These policies will be re-evaluated by staff.
- e) Guest under 18-years of age - The recommendation is to change the policy to require that a minimum of one adult registers and occupies the campsite.
- f) Occupying the site - The recommendation is that on the day of registering for a campsite, campers must occupy the site by the time the VIC closes. The registration card must be posted on the post at the campsite immediately after registration.
- g) Check-in time - The recommendation is that campers may not occupy a campsite earlier than 1:00 p.m. unless it is vacant and available.

Ness Sechrest moved to approve the campground policy revisions as presented and modified. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.

CY2003 Fees & Rates & Public Hearing & Final Approval

Greg Butts reported that during the public comment period, which ended at 5:00 p.m. on September 18, 2002, he had not received any comments on the proposals made available in July on the CY2003 Fees & Rates.

Chairman Haak said the floor was open for public comment and asked if there was anyone present who wished to offer comment. No comments were made.

Bud Shamburger moved to approve the 2003 Fees and Rates, as amended at the August 2002 Commission meeting. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.

General Improvement Fund Request - 2003-2005 Biennium

Stan Graves requested General Improvement Funds for three projects not currently slated for funding from the Amendment 75 Program: connection to Acorn Water District at Queen Wilhelmina State Park, relocation of the park and construction of new facilities at Lake Fort Smith State Park, and acquisition of 25 acres at Pinnacle Mountain State Park.

Mike Mills moved to approve the staff requesting 2003-2005 Biennium General Improvement Funds for connection to the Acorn Water District at Queen Wilhelmina State Park (\$800,000), relocation of Lake Ft. Smith State Park (\$7,000,000) and acquisition of 25 acres on Highway 300 at Pinnacle Mountain State Park (\$557,500) for a total of \$8,357,500. Wade Williams seconded and the motion carried.

Woolly Hollow State Park - Proposed MOA with Community Water System, Inc.

Stan Graves requested authorization to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to connect the park with the Community Water System, Inc. This will enable the park to get out of the water treatment business. The cost will be approximately \$73,000.

Jim Gaston moved to authorize staff to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Community Water System, Inc. to connect Woolly Hollow State Park to the water system. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.

Beaver Lake State Park - Ken & Amanda Ballou Request for Access Permit

Stan Graves said a Residential Use Permit Agreement had been issued in 1983 granting Gary and Brenda Jarvis access to their property that is adjacent to the park. A portion of their property has been deeded to their children, Ken and Amanda Ballou, to construct a residence. The Ballous are requesting the Use Permit be granted to them.

Wade Williams asked if the entire tract or a portion of the property was deeded to the Ballous. Mr. Graves said it is a portion. Mr. Williams asked if anything was paid for the original access, or if anything is being paid now. Mr. Graves said no. Mr. Graves said, though there has been discussion in the past, ASP has never charged for access to property. Mike Mills asked if ASP provides maintenance. Mr. Graves said no. Jim Gaston said we need to weigh the income versus public relations. Mr. Graves said this particular access is approximately 170 feet long and 15 feet wide. Wade Williams said he does not know if this is the time to make a change, but his concern is how many more people could potentially purchase property in the area. And, is ASP providing access for possible subdivision development. Mr. Graves said that all owners would have to request a permit. Mr. Williams said he understands that but there was one use permit, now another and maybe there may be more. Greg Butts said the position the Commission has taken is that we don't grant use permits or access permits if it is going to impede or negatively affect the park resources through an area that is planned for future development, if there is another way for access to private property, or it is negatively effects public use of park land. Mr. Butts said what Mr. Williams may be asking is that staff review and determine if there should be a charge for access and how much. Mr. Williams said he is willing to approve this request but he thinks the Commission needs to review the policy. Greg Butts said one of the things ASP inherited with the Hobbs estate deed is numerous easements. Wade Williams said the difference here is we are granting a use permit, not an easement. But it does have a value. Mr. Williams said he thinks on a new permit, when there is not an existing road, we need to look at it very carefully on whether there is a value, and whether the requesting party should pay. Jim Gaston said if the Hobbs area is going to be a problem, shouldn't we look at use permits before we have to address it one-by-one. Debbie Haak suggested developing a recommendation on how to handle it in the future.

Wade Williams moved to authorize staff to enter into Use Permit Agreement to Ken & Amanda Ballou for residential access to their property that is adjacent to the Hobbs State Management Area. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.

Delta Heritage Trail State Park - Proposed Acquisition of Jimmy & Faye Holland Property

Stan Graves said in 1999 ASP acquired 3 ½ acres to establish a trailhead. That property included a 3,400 sq. ft. gin and it was hoped at that time it could become a staff residence and possibly a visitor center. Staff have determined it will not be useful as a residence but it may have application in the future as a VIC. Mr. Graves said he was made aware of the Holland property that is available for sale. The property includes a 2,500 sq. ft. residence and a maintenance garage. Due to its proximity to the trail and the fact that a staff residence is needed, Mr. Graves requested approval to purchase the property for approximately \$255,000. The park plan includes constructing a residence and maintenance building using A-75 funding. Debbie Haak asked how much money would be needed to bring it up to park standards. Marcel Hanzlik said the house is in very good condition. Mr. Graves said it will only need some cosmetic work

and the acquisition would save the department approximately \$170,000 over constructing comparable facilities.

Montine McNulty moved to authorize staff to acquire the Jimmy & Faye Holland property, Tract C, 3.15 acres in Phillips County that includes a residence and maintenance building. Wade Williams seconded and the motion carried.

Mt. Nebo State Park - Randy Guthrie Request for Access Permit

Stan Graves said a letter had been received from Randy Guthrie stating he wanted to sell 120 acres that joins the park. We declined the offer to purchase the property. Mr. Guthrie came back with the request that he be granted access to his property via the bench trail. Mr. Guthrie was informed that this had historically been a hiking trail, not a road. Mr. Guthrie then requested an easement to access his property. Mr. Graves requested that the Commission give approval to grant Mr. Guthrie two use permits. One of the use permits would be a temporary use permit that would allow Mr. Guthrie to access his property and remove timber. The other use permit would be a permanent permit to access the property. Mr. Guthrie has said it is an open county road. A preliminary review by Yell County officials indicates no county right-of-way exists. Mr. Graves said he does not know if Mr. Guthrie has received written approval from other landowners in the area to access their property. The use permit would be granted dependent on Mr. Guthrie obtaining the appropriate permits from the other landowners.

Jim Gaston asked if the road in question had been used for seven years and maintained by the County. Mr. Graves said it has been used but there is a question as to whether or not the County has been maintaining it. Mr. Gaston asked how much property would be timbered. Stan Graves said it is on the 120 acres that joins the park. Mr. Gaston suggested that part of the contingency include viewshed protection. Stan Graves said Mr. Guthrie would be required to clean and revegetate the access road that will be used for removing the timber. Mr. Graves said the point Mr. Gaston raises is the whole issue. As a long-term goal, ASP would like to purchase the property but does not have the funds at this point. Mr. Graves said Mr. Guthrie is looking at potentially developing the property. Looking from Sunset Point it would leave an eyesore on the landscape and from the viewshed from what will ultimately be a campground. Mr. Gaston we are talking about granting a permit that is going to be detrimental to the park down the road. Mr. Graves said it would be difficult to buffer the viewshed because it is looking down over the property.

Wade Williams said the only way to protect the view is to purchase the property – it is the only way to prevent Mr. Guthrie from clear-cutting it. Mr. Williams said we cannot grant a permit for access and prevent him from cutting timber. If there is an historical road, a judge can say we must grant access. Mr. Williams said, regarding whether or not it is a County road, mere county maintenance does not make it a County road.

Greg Butts said if we had the funds available and we had cooperating neighbors, we could purchase scenic easements as far as the eye could see. There is a lot more land next to this

property that we will never be able to control or afford to purchase. Mr. Butts said wherever one looks off the mountain some timbering activity can be seen somewhere. Mr. Graves said there are two other tracts just off the mountain that are of higher acquisition priority than Mr. Guthrie's property.

Wade Williams said he would determine whether or not there is a County road. If there is not a County road, the value of access needs to be determined and Mr. Guthrie should be charged. But if it is an historical road, he probably ought to have the right to use it. Regarding the temporary permit, Mr. Williams suggested talking with Mr. Guthrie to see if he would be willing to accommodate some of our concerns and grant him a permit in exchange for leaving a few trees to protect our view.

Wade Williams moved to authorize staff to determine whether or not a residential permit is needed to access the property owned by Randy Guthrie (the N1/2 of the NE ¼ and the NE ¼ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 30, T8N, R21W, Yell County, Arkansas), and determine its value. Additionally, the staff is authorized to negotiate a timber easement with Mr. Guthrie in exchange for a use permit to access his property. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.

Old Washington Historic State Park - Proposed Acquisition of Phil & Mary Anne Matthews Property

Stan Graves said Phil & Mary Anne Matthews contacted ASP about their residence that is available for purchase. Mr. Graves said it is a 2,500-sq. ft. house that was constructed in 1895 and rebuilt in 1995 with all new electric, plumbing, etc. Mr. Graves requested approval to acquire the property for use as staff residence at an estimated cost of \$155,000. Mr. Graves said the property would be appraised and an offer would be made based on that appraisal. Greg Butts said he is not sure the Matthews want to move immediately. He would like to have an appraisal done, agree on a price and obtain a first right of refusal, and then address the acquisition as an ANCRC grant request for FY04, which would be presented to the Commission in February 2003.

Mike Mills moved to authorize staff to negotiate with Phil & Mary Anne Matthews for the acquisition of their property at Old Washington State Park. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.

CCC Film Project - Proposal by Jack Hill

Greg Butts said he had received a letter from Jack Hill who is a filmmaker of Arkansas stories that preserves history for future generations. Mr. Hill has learned about the CCC state park projects and feels the story about the CCC in Arkansas needs to be made available to schools. Mr. Hill's proposal is to produce a film about the CCC with ASP partnering along with UALR Butler Center and the Department of Arkansas Heritage. The amount ASP would provide would be \$15,000. Mr. Butts said he would like to include that amount in ASP's ad plan for 2003. Richard Davies said Mr. Hill works with Wal-Mart to sponsor the film by copying it for

distribution to all public school and libraries in Arkansas. Greg Butts said he is not aware of anyone who had done a film on the CCC and their contributions to the state.

Montine McNulty moved to authorize staff to use \$15,000 from ASPs advertising budget to support the production of a film about the CCC by Jack Hill. Jim Gaston seconded and the motion carried.

Long Range Development Plan

a) DeGray Lake Resort State Park

Stan Graves gave the history of the development and construction of the park. The Long Range Development Plan addresses the need to adapt the current VIC or construct a new VIC, the replacement of current restrooms with new barrier-free facilities, the addition of a day-use pavilion/restroom at Lakeside Vista, renovation and expansion of the golf course pro shop, the addition of houseboat and party barge slips at the marina, the construction of a new breakwater structure, a barrier free fishing pier, parking improvements, campground improvements with the addition of more campsites, additional roadway paving, wastewater treatment facility replacement. etc. Future consideration will be given to constructing cabins if demand dictates.

Mike Mills moved to approve the Long Range Development Plan for DeGray Lake Resort State Park as presented. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.

Debbie Haak said the park and the facilities look excellent. Polly Woods Crews asked how many conventions are booked at the park. Superintendent Snodgrass said the park averages three to four each week in a slow season and approximately eight per week in the Spring and Fall. In the Summer there are a lot of family reunions. Polly Woods Crews said the food at the lodge had been excellent.

b) Queen Wilhelmina State Park

Stan Graves gave the history of the park area. Mr. Graves said the park entry is one of the major problems in the park. The Long Range Development Plan addresses the problem with the entry, includes a small VIC at the entry, a group pavilion for interpretive programs, renovation of the 1931 *Wonder House*, improvements to the trails, an addition of approximately 65 lodge rooms, 25-30 new Class A campsites, improvements to the park infrastructure and utilities, and an employee residence.

Wade Williams asked for an update on the concessionaires at the park. Greg Butts updated the Commissioners (on the difficulties between the Fites and the non-profit organization). Mr. Butts said both facilities are open to the public. Mike Mills asked what the occupancy is at the lodge. Mr. Butts said it has the highest lodge occupancy in the system, running at about 61.8%.

Mike Mills said more meeting space would be needed. Greg Butts said a high priority is the addition of an elevator. Polly Wood Crews asked how long ASP is contracted with the zoo and the Queen's Backyard. Mr. Butts said he believes there is an additional two years on the contracts. Ms. Crews said she never hears anything but good reports about the lodge, how its run and the food in the restaurant. Mr. Butts said Superintendent Tinsley and her staff "live and breathe" hospitality.

Ness Sechrest moved to approve the Long Range Development Plan for Queen Wilhelmina State Park as presented. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.

Miscellaneous

Greg Butts said the Delta Heritage Trail State Park would be dedicated on October 25, 2002 at 11:00 a.m. It will be the first rails-to-trails project in the state park system.

The meeting of the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission adjourned at 9:50 on September 20, 2002.