

**Arkansas State Parks, Recreation & Travel Commission
State House Convention Center
Little Rock, AR
September 22-23, 2010**

Commissioners Present

Montine McNulty, Chairman
Bob Knight, Vice-Chairman
Steve Arrison
Bill Barnes
Jay Bunyard
Darin Gray
Debbie Haak
Mike Mills
Tom Schueck
Ness Sechrest
Jim Shamburger
Cindy Smith

Commissioners Absent

Danny Ford
Jim Gaston
Billy Lindsey

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, Planning & Development Manager
Joe Jacobs, Marketing & Revenue Manager
Tom Stolarz, Region I Supervisor
Tony Perrin, Region II Supervisor
Marcel Hanzlik, Region III Supervisor
Renee Robison, Group Travel Manager
Donna Perrin, Tourism Development Manager
Joanne Hinson, Research & Information Services Manager
Kris Richardson, Administrative Specialist
Dottie Boyes, Administrative Specialist
Kerry Kraus, Arkansas Travel Writer

Guests

Ian Beard, Arkansas Living History Association
Cathy Drew, Ozark Gateway Tourist Council
Elizabeth Eggleston, Arkansas South Regional Association
Kalene Griffith, Bentonville Convention & Visitors Bureau
Kathy Holt, Governor office
Gene Higginbotham, Congressman Mike Ross' office
Ross Moore, Greers Ferry Lake / Little Red River Association
Matthew Miller, Bureau of Legislative Research
Meredith Rebsamen, Attorney General's office
Alison Sider, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Chris Snodgrass
Randall Watts, Superintendent, Lake Charles State Park

Aristotle

Marla Norris
Jonathan Eudy
Dina Pruitt

CJRW

Shelby Woods
Wayne Woods
Karen Mullikin
Chuck Robertson
Carie Orahood
Chance Woods
Jennifer Morgan
Brandi Childress
Amy Frazier
Kara Lee Ford
Ross Cranford
Lyuba Bugan

Roll Call

Chairman Montine McNulty called the meeting to order at 2:32 pm on Wednesday, September 22, 2010. Gloria Robins called the roll.

Approval of the Agenda

Steve Arrison moved to approve the Agenda. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.

Presentation of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Debbie Haak moved to approve the Minutes from the August 2010 meeting. Steve Arrison seconded and the motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Cynthia Dunlap presented the year-to-date financial report for the period ended August 31, 2010. The expenditures were: Parks Division, \$12,928,493 including construction and grants; Tourism Division, \$2,057,345; Keep Arkansas Beautiful, \$44,026; Administration Division, \$688,158; and History Commission, \$271,203. Expenditures for the Department totaled \$15,989,225, an increase of 7.1% over the same period FY10. The year-to-date operating revenue Parks Division totaled \$5,416,641, a decrease of 1% over the same period FY10; 1/8% Cent Tax \$ 4,722,080, a increase of 3.99% over the same period FY10; and 2% Tax 2,384,106, a increase of 1.4% over the same period FY10.

Ness Sechrest moved to accept the Financial Report as presented. Debbie Haak seconded and the motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Richard Davies reported the Budget Hearing is scheduled for October 13, 2010. Davies noted he anticipates a flat budget. Commissioners are invited to attend.

Richard Davies reported two issues from the FY09 Legislative Audit Report. P-card purchases (comparable to a corporate credit card) were not approved by supervisors within the required time period, which has been addressed with staff. The other long term issue is the lack of a point of sale computerized bar code system for retail sales (gift shop, stores, etc). It appears ADPT will be written up annually until that change is implemented. No shortages or problems were reported. Richard Davies stated the cost of converting to a bar code system is an estimated \$500,000. Davies advised ASP is researching a new reservation system that can combine a point of sale program with bar code capabilities and inventory system, accomplishing two tasks with one solution. Darin Gray recommended researching radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology which is extremely efficient and less expensive. Butts noted it would be worth researching to learn more.

PARKS DIVISION

Proposed Policy Directives – Public Hearing and Final Approval (3:30 pm)

Chairman McNulty called the Public Hearing to order at 3:30 pm regarding following proposed policy directives:

PD 3230 – Historic Weapons Rules and Regulations for State Parks Personnel and Volunteers Conducting Re-enactments or Living History in Arkansas State Parks

PD 3240 – Historic Weapons Safety Rules for History Participants

Greg Butts introduced Randall Watts, Superintendent of Lake Charles State Park, an expert in re-enactments and leader for putting together the policies for the re-enactments. Butts clarified there are two directives dealing with the topic, stating that PD 3230 is intended for park staff, volunteers, etc. who would be assisting with re-enactments and PD 3240 is intended for the public and those participating in the re-enactments.

Greg Butts stated one public comment had been received providing suggestions on the policy, including age limits that have been addressed in the revision. Butts referred Commissioners to a revision in the policy with the following age limits revisions:

“Age Limits – participants must be at least 14 years old to carry a historic long arm or pistol, 16 years old to load and fire a long arm, and 18 years old to load and fire a pistol.”

Ian Beard, President of Arkansas Living History Association, noted that he brought his concerns to the attention of park management for consideration regarding the age limits. Mr. Beard noted his concerns have been addressed and his organization supports the policy with the proposed changes.

In regards to age limits, Randall Watts recounted an example where the inexperience of a 14 year old overloading a rifle led to injuries during a firing at a re-enactment. Even though youth are exposed to firearms and begin to hunt in Arkansas at an early age; hunting from a stationary stand is quite different than being involved in a re-enactment of 100 or more people rushing into a mock battle, with high energy and motion. Watts noted there are other re-enactment duties available to young people to be involved that do not include firearms.

Randall Watts noted that if you belong to a unit, are familiar with the process, you move as a unit helping keep everyone safe. Richard Davies noted re-enactments are involved with units whereas demonstrations deal with individuals.

Mike Mills made a motion to approve Policy Directive 3230 – Historic Weapons Rules and Regulations for State Parks Personnel and Volunteers Conducting Re-enactments or Living History in Arkansas State Parks and PD 3240 – Historic Weapons Safety Rules for History Participants with age revisions and approval of the Waiver of Liability/Indemnification (subject to approval by the Attorney General’s Office). Ness Sechrest seconded and the motion carried.

2012-2013 Biennium General Improvement Fund (GIF) CIP Request

Stan Graves requested approval to submit proposed projects from the GIF for FY 2012-2013. An amount of \$13,499,665 is comprised of building repairs, renovations, and new construction for Lake Fort Smith, Mississippi River and Queen Wilhelmina State Parks. An amount of \$1,248,759 is comprised of erosion control, landscape and trails for Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources, Delta Heritage Trail, and Petit Jean State Parks. A total amount of \$14,748,424 will be submitted for proposed projects.

Jay Bunyard moved approval to submit the proposed projects in the amount of \$14,748,424 for consideration by the Department of Finance & Administration and the Governor from the General Improvement Fund for FY 2012-2013. Bob Knight seconded and the motion carried.

Lake Frierson – Proposed Land Acquisition

Stan Graves requested preliminary approval of one of three parts of the land acquisition process involving the Legislative Council, the Governor, and DFA. After a 60 day review period, final approval by the SPRTC will occur at the November meeting. Park staff at Lake Frierson state park has located a tract of land and residence adjacent to the park that would be suitable for uniformed employee housing. The 10.4 acre tract is surrounded on the north, west and south by land controlled by Arkansas State Parks (ASP) through a permanent Easement granted in February of 1977 by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. The property lies directly east of the park’s maintenance facility. The 1,744 square foot brick residence located on the property was built in 1959. The house is in good condition but would need updated (estimated \$50,000) which is significantly less expensive than building a new residence. Currently a uniformed staff member is occupying a 1930’s era Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) cabin in the Group Area at Crowley’s Ridge. By purchasing the proposed property, this staff member could be relocated out of the CCC cabin, which could then be converted for rental by park visitors. Staff recommends moving forward with the land acquisition.

Jim Shamburger made a motion for preliminary approval to proceed with the priority land acquisition at Lake Frierson State Park. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.

Miscellaneous

Stan Graves noted park fact sheets are posted online for Pinnacle, Plantation Agriculture, and Toltec State Parks for review.

Greg Butts reported that the Forestry Commission has measured and awarded a Southern Catalpa tree in Historic Washington State Park as the largest Southern Catalpa on record, therefore the State Champion.

Butts invited Commissioners and staff to attend the grand opening of mountain bike trails at Pinnacle Mountain State Park on October 2, 2010, 9:00 am in the VIC. There will be two mountain bike trails dedicated on the day - Rabbit Ridge and the Jackfork Trails. Commissioners and staff are invited to attend.

Greg Butts noted the annual Superintendent's Conference and training will be held at Mt. Magazine State Park, September 28-30, 2010, and will include the park achievement awards. Commissioners are invited to attend.

TOURISM DIVISION

Industry Report

Tourism Director Joe David Rice reported on the yields of advertising investments from selected states. Of the 50 state tourism offices contacted by the U.S. Travel Association, around one third responded. Longwoods International and Strategic Marketing and Research, Inc. were the two companies used the most by state agencies to monitor the effectiveness of advertising campaigns. The responses indicated that the rates of return in tourism revenue more than offset the investments.

Tourism Model Projects Update

Several meetings have been held on the demonstration projects. The Arkansas River Project is still in the inventory stage.

Nancy Clark, Donna Perrin and team have put together a short-term agenda and short-term options for the southeast project. The Tourism Division will assemble a quick plan for Chicot and Desha counties and the immediate surrounding area.

Miscellaneous

Joe David Rice and Richard Davies attended a Sneak Peak Preview of the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Mr. Rice took several photographs of the progress being made at the construction site. A date for completion has not been set. The museum will feature art from the 18th century to modern times as well as one of the largest American art libraries in the country. Multiple trails around the museum have been planned that include walking, biking, hiking, and a children's interactive art trail.

Research and Information Services Section

The Research and Information Services Section processed 11,470 requests for travel information during August 2010, a decrease of 43.3 percent from August 2009. The 2009 monthly total for August included lead generation which was eliminated from the 2010 campaign. When lead generation is excluded from the comparison there is a increase of 24.1% percent.

Arkansas Welcome Centers received 85,703 visitors during August 2010, down 7.3 percent compared to August 2009. Year to date visitation is 622,485, up 4.3 percent from 2009.

Research and Information Services Manager Joanne Hinson reported the architects have begun work on the design of the Helena/West Helena Welcome Center.

Group Travel Section

The Monthly Tracking Report indicated there were 127 inquires for August 2010 compared to 58 inquires for August 2009. The majority of inquires came from the motorcoach market as a result of tradeshow held in Oklahoma and Kentucky.

Renee Robison reported the American Bus Association recently announced its Top 100 Events to see in 2011. There were three events chosen in Arkansas: the *World's Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade* in Hot Springs; *Riverfront Blues Fest* in Fort Smith; and *Arkansas Trail of Holiday Lights*.

Internet-Related Items

Online Trends and Statistics

There were 409,624 visitor sessions during the month of August, an increase of 9.9 percent over August 2009, and 94,300 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 1,686 downloads from March 1 through September 5, with 651 upgrades May 31–September 5. During August 2010, there were 22,905 visits from mobile devices to *Arkansas.com*, by way of 14 operating systems.

Marla Johnson Norris reported the *Places to Stay* Web page has been updated with an Interactive Lodging Map. It features a lodging and activity map that allows for a customized search for lodging and activities within a 5 to 50-mile radius of a chosen address or city.

Haunted Arkansas has also been updated with an interactive map featuring events, activities, and attractions within a specific date range and/or location. Other online additions include the *Retirement and Relocation Guide*, print ads, and Fall 2010 television ads.

Advertising/Marketing

Spring/Summer 2011 Advertising and Marketing Recommendations

Joe David Rice welcomed members and guests to the presentation of the Spring/Summer 2011 Advertising and Marketing Proposal. Mr. Rice and Wayne Woods, President and Director of Travel and Tourism Division with Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods, reported on trends in the tourism industry.

The overall look and feel of the 2011 Spring/Summer campaign communicates an exciting, contemporary style that travels across all types of media: print, television, radio, online, and social – conveying the natural beauty and wonder available throughout Arkansas.

A series of six magazine ads provide an overall view of the state, while additional ads promote specific cities and destinations including: Little Rock, Hot Springs, Eureka Springs, Fort Smith, Northwest Arkansas, and the Delta.

Group Travel ads are built around several specific themes: Civil War history, student travel, and motorcoach tours.

Television ads feature a sleek high-tech look. New film and high-definition video footage features scenes from around the state. There are eight spots in all – two :30 spots, five :15 spots, and one :60 spot.

New for the campaign are outdoor boards to be placed in several urban feeder markets. Short headlines are combined with stunning photographs and a large logo featuring “.com” to steer people to the Web site.

Spring/Summer 2011 Budget Summary

Research		\$ 120,700.00
Media		\$4,583,373.00
Newspaper	\$ 302,879.00	
Radio	\$ 155,000.00	
Television	\$1,829,667.00	
Magazine	\$1,155,097.00	
Out-of-Home	\$ 390,730.00	
Online	\$ 750,000.00	
Group Travel Marketing		\$ 138,838.00
Creative/Production		\$ 495,849.00
Publicity and Communications		\$ 100,119.00
Partners in Tourism		\$ 163,512.00
See Arkansas First		\$ 20,440.00
Fishing & Outdoor Guide and Campaign		\$ 100,000.00
The Natural State Golf Trail		\$ 31,921.00
Vacation Planning Kit Production		\$ 10,000.00
Photography		\$ 15,000.00
Contingency		\$ 22,500.00
Earned Discounts		\$ -98,413.00
TOTAL		\$5,703,839.00
<u>Newcomers Campaign</u>		<u>\$ 131,933.00</u>
TOTAL Including Newcomers		\$5,835,772.00

Ness Sechrest moved to accept the Spring/Summer 2011 Advertising and Marketing Recommendations for \$5,835,772.00. Darin Gray seconded and motion carried.

With no further business the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission adjourned at 11:30 a.m. on September 23, 2010 at the State House Convention Center in Little Rock, Arkansas.