

Minutes
State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission
Arkansas Hospitality Association
Little Rock, Arkansas
February 19-20, 2003

Commissioners Present

Billy Lindsey, Chairman
Steve Arrison
Polly Wood Crews
Debra Haak
Montine McNulty
Ness Sechrest
Wade Williams

Bill Barnes, Vice-Chairman
Jane Christenson
Danny Ford
Loretta House
Mike Mills
Jim Shamburger

Commissioners Absent

Jim Gaston - 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
Jon Brown, Region I Supervisor
Gloria Robins, Executive Assistant
Sandy Burch, Administrative Assistant
Jennifer Carson, Administrative Assistant

Agency Staff Present

Shelby Woods
Karen Mullikin
Libby Doss
Debbie Wilson
Jared Cowell

Wayne Woods
Kay Medlin
Pam Jones
Brian Kratkiewicz

Aristotle

Marla Johnson Norris
Jennifer Peper

Jonathan Eudy
Dina Crane

Guests Present

Dan O'Byrne, Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau
Kelley Linck, Ozark Mountain Region
Barbara King-Dozier, Eureka Springs City Advertising & Promotion Commission
Lynn Berry, Eureka Springs City Advertising & Promotion Commission
Barry Travis, Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau

Call to Order

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

Approval of the Agenda

Jane Christenson moved to approve the agenda. Debbie Haak seconded and the motion carried.

Presentation of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Mike Mills moved to approve the minutes. Wade Williams seconded and the motion carried.

Financial Report

Larry Cargile presented a financial report for the fiscal year-to-date period ended January 31, 2003. The Parks Division expenditures, including construction/grants, totaled \$28,625,848 or 32% of annual budget. Tourism Division expenditures totaled \$5,686,022 or 46% of annual budget. Keep Arkansas Beautiful expenditures were \$277,398, or 54% of budget. Administration Division expenditures totaled \$1,299,038 or 57% of budget. History Commission expenditures were \$779,168, or 62% of budget. Total Department expenditures - \$36,667,474 or 35% of annual budget.

Parks Division operating revenue for the fiscal year-to-date period ended January 31, 2003, totaled \$7,542,777, an increase of 3% over the same period last year. Operating revenue for the month of January was \$339,614, a decrease of 10% from last December.

Ness Sechrest moved to approve the financial report. Polly Wood Crews seconded and the motion carried.

Recognition of Guests

Chairman Lindsey recognized guests and Steve Arrison as a newly appointed Commissioner.

A plaque was presented to former Commissioner Ted Mullenix, who did not seek reappointment, for his service and dedication to the State Parks, Recreation & Travel Commission. Mr. Mullenix made a few comments in gratitude.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Legislative Issues

Richard Davies mentioned some of the proposed legislation that may impact the Department in some way. Commissioners discussed House Bill 1191, the re-appropriation for the Tourist Information Center rebuilding project. Mr. Davies explained that it re-appropriates the money for the next two years. He stated that he spoke to Dan Flowers, Arkansas State Highway & Transportation Department, and that he had the bill drafted for the next three TICs, Blytheville, West Memphis, and Lake Village. Mr. Davies also explained House Joint Resolution 1012 to Commissioners, which would take 50% of the 1/8th-cent and place it in the general revenue fund. He noted that out of the 48 resolutions, only 3 could be placed on the ballot to change the constitution. He believes the chances of it getting on the ballot, not to mention being passed are slim. Senate Bill 45, government reorganization, was also discussed. Mr. Davies explained how the reorganization would work, how it would impact the Commission, and the possible impacts to the Department budget. State agencies budgets in general were discussed.

Danny Ford moved to approve a Resolution in opposition of HJR 1012, which would take 50% of the 1/8th-cent collections and place them in the general revenue fund. Jane Christenson seconded and the motion carried.

Mr. Davies stated that the hosts for the legislative reception included Parks & Tourism, the Arkansas Hospitality Association, Game & Fish, the Department of Arkansas Heritage, and Keep Arkansas Beautiful. He thanked Gloria Robins and Sandy Burch for their hard work as well as Donna Beckham with Game & Fish. Mr. Davies noted that Cajun's Wharf donated the food, Barrett Hamilton donated the beverages, and the Historic Arkansas Museum provided the music. No tax dollars were spent on the reception outside of staff hours. He noted that the reception was one of the most attended by legislators ever. Mr. Davies showed the invitation that went to the legislators, which was a bottle of hot sauce. He feels that it's more popular than other receptions due to the casual nature of the affair and the fact that families are also invited.

Montine McNulty moved to approve a Resolution to Cajun's Wharf and a Resolution to Barrett Hamilton for their sponsorships of the legislative dinner. Loretta House seconded and the motion carried.

Washington Trip

Richard Davies reminded Commissioners about their request to go to Washington, D.C. He recommended May 3-6, May 17-20, June 2-6, or June 9-13 as possible dates and asked for guidance as to which date is preferred. He stated that Senator Lincoln's office volunteered to coordinate meetings. Chairman Lindsey stated that May 3-6 was far more preferable than the other dates because of the other dates closeness to the Memorial Day holiday. Bill Barnes agreed. He stated that the earlier the date the better. Commissioners agreed that May 3-6 were the best dates. Mike Mills asked if a list of issues had been compiled. Mr. Davies stated that it had not been developed. Mr. Mills stated that he was going on March 1st and already had a list of appointments with legislators. He also stated that the more people that talk about the issues the more credence behind them. Mr. Davies mentioned that the Dallas media trip would be held later that week. He asked if that would be more difficult to do both in one week rather than 2 separate weeks. Montine McNulty asked what the reasoning was for going on Saturday. Mr. Davies replied that going on Saturday saves money on airfare and hotel reservations. Ms. McNulty replied that the savings could also be seen by flying into Baltimore and taking the shuttle rather than staying on Saturday. Mr. Davies noted that he would look at the option of flying in on Sunday. Chairman Lindsey stated that he believed the general consensus was to do everything in the same week. Ness Sechrest stated that it is important to see Representative Marion Berry since he is on the Appropriations Committee.

Miscellaneous

Mr. Davies stated that he had just been informed that the budget had been cut 19.5 million dollars with a direct cut of \$363,000 to the Department between now and the end of the fiscal year, June 30th. He stated that Department staff has until February 28th to make the cuts. He noted that it was the second biggest budget cut ever.

TOURISM DIVISION

Heart of Arkansas Report

Joe David Rice introduced Debra Guyot, Sales Manager for the Little Rock Hilton, to Commissioners. Ms. Guyot first welcomed everyone to Little Rock and then presented the new Heart of Arkansas brochure. She stated that there were record sales for the brochures with approximately 91,000 printed and circulation about 85,000. The brochure has approximately 78 pages highlighting Pulaski, Saline, Faulkner, and Lonoke

counties. She stated that the intent of the brochure is to focus on events and activities in smaller counties that don't get as much publicity as Pulaski County. The history and the natural beauty of the state are also discussed as well as information on new tourism-related products. The brochure is distributed through Curran Hall (the Little Rock Visitors Bureau), the North Little Rock Visitors Information Center, member Chambers within the region as well as Parks & Tourism. The brochure is also available at ABA and NTA trade shows. Ms. Guyot also noted that the Heart of Arkansas website, HeartofArkansas.com, has recently been updated by Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods. About sixty inquiries a month are received through the web site.

Welcome Center Update

Joe David Rice stated that the term "Welcome Center" is being phased in as opposed to "Tourist Information Center" because it's more encouraging to travelers. The bid letting for the Van Buren center will be on April 2nd. The building will be located in approximately where the parking lot is located for the current center. The new building is scheduled to open in July or August of 2004. The center will be open and operation will continue through construction. Mr. Rice stated the bid letting for the Corning and El Dorado centers will be May 14th with tentative opening dates of August or September 2004. He also stated the ground work has been completed for the Texarkana Center and construction should begin within the next four to six weeks. Plans are also being formulated for the exhibits in the Center.

Governor's Conference on Tourism

Nancy Clark stated that the 29th Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism will be held in Fort Smith at the Fort Smith Convention Center, March 16-18th. She also stated that the Early Bird party, hosted by Fort Smith, will take place on the 16th and the people of Fort Smith are excited about the conference. Ms. Clark stated that, as of this morning, a little over 150 registrations were logged in and that the conference budget was based on a minimum of 400 full registrations. The theme is "Smart Marketing for Changing Times." She assured Commissioners that they all had rooms at the host hotel, the Holiday Inn Fort Smith, but that the block is full. Mr. Davies asked about the alternate hotels. Ms. Clark replied that they are listed in the registration packet and include the Hampton Inn and the Ramada Inn as alternate host hotels. Mr. Davies noted that the Hampton Inn was rated one of the top ten Hampton Inns in the country and was managed by Michael Sindelar who previously managed DeGray Lodge. Ms. Clark mentioned that Mr. Sindelar has registered a number of people for the conference. Polly Wood Crews stated that Fort Smithians are excited. She implored Commissioners to look at the art in the Convention Center.

Proposed Golf Trail Update

Joe David Rice thanked Jim Shamburger for attending the meeting regarding the proposed golf trail. A proposal has been received from Mr. Faggart, a concessionaire.

The committee will meet in the near future to discuss the proposal as well as to look at what some other states have done.

Section Reports

Research & Information Services

The section processed 20,386 requests for information during January 2003. Tourist Information Center visitation totaled 30,540 during January. Requests for retirement/relocation information totaled 1,670 and there were 243,496 visits to the five agency web sites.

Charles McLemore attended and participated in the Travel South Heritage Tourism conference as well as worked with the Travel Industry of America on a new County Travel Impact Model for Arkansas, which would be used as a benchmark for future estimates of the impact of tourism on the Arkansas economy. Work on the *2002 Annual Travel & Tourism* report has nearly concluded. The report will be presented at the Governor's Conference on Tourism. Mr. McLemore also participated in discussions regarding the Tourist Information Center rebuilding project.

The new literature for the 2003 Arkansas Vacation Planning kit was received. The travel show season is well underway. Shows left on the schedule include St. Louis, Memphis Sport Show, Wichita, and the Memphis Southern Women's Show.

Mike Mills stated that he would like to see more detail on the Internet usage, specifically what is driving consumers to the web site. He would like to know where the visitors are coming from, what link, what search engine, etc. Mr. Rice stated that he would consult with Aristotle to get that information.

Communications

Section members assisted in posting the January issue of Arkansastravel.com, finalized the 2003 Arkansas Media kit, and launched the "Picture Yourself in Arkansas" photography contest. Improvements for Arkansas.com, Arkansastravel.com, and Arkanasaskids.com were discussed for the next biennium and final preparations were made for the new and improved online media room.

Travel writers complied and filed releases, wrote items for the e-newsletter and Arkanasaskids.com. Work was also done on the Attraction, Lodging & Dining database.

Group Travel

This section responded to 129 inquiries in January. A customized group tour planner is offered on Arkansasgrouptravel.com. This new addition allows tour operators

to create a personal account and store up to three customized itineraries. The most notable part of the option is that an e-mail is sent to properties included on an itinerary so that they can contact the interested tour operator. A new quarterly e-newsletter for group travel also kicked off in January.

Group Travel events attended by Jane Ellen Frazier and Beth Weidower include the Tennessee Motorcoach Association Annual Marketplace, the Dan Dipert Travelworld marketplace, the Religious Conference Management Association Tradeshow and the Bank Travel Marketplace. Pre and post familiarization tours for the 2004 NTA Spring Meet in Little Rock are also being developed as well as the TIA Pow Wow post familiarization tour scheduled for May 2003.

Tourism Development

All regions met the monthly compliance deadline in January. Kristine Puckett attended the Delta Byways meeting in January. Section staffed has been heavily involved in the production of the Henry Awards for the Governor's Conference on Tourism. Hospitality Training sessions were presented in Altus, Jasper, Lewisville, Prescott, Yellville, and Stuttgart. Assistance was also given to the Arkansas Festival Association.

Wade Williams thanked Mr. Rice for changing the measure of days for the regional postcards.

Marketing/Communications Items

Spring/Summer 2003 Television Schedules

Kay Medlin and Jared Cowell presented the proposed recommendations for the Spring/Summer 2003 television schedules. She noted that the budget was approved at the September Commission meeting. More prime time programming is recommended to increase the impact of the schedules through higher profile programming. The late nighttime period has been added to expand reach and lower the cost-per-thousand. Early morning, daytime, prime access, early and late news will round out the daypart mix. The spring/summer television spots will be tagged the first week to heighten the awareness of the newspaper insert, which will be dropped the first weekend in April. A four-week flight is recommended in both the key in-state and out-of-state feeder markets. The schedule will appear March 31st through April 27th and feature the spots approved in September. This year's schedule will reach an average of 95.4% of adults aged 25-49 an average of 7.9 times.

In-state markets include El Dorado, Fort Smith, Jonesboro, and Little Rock at a cost of \$188,815.00. Out-of-state markets include Dallas/Fort Worth, Kansas City, Memphis, Oklahoma City, Shreveport, Springfield, and Tulsa at a cost of \$906,240.00.

Billy Lindsey questioned how this year's budget compared with what was spent last year. Ms. Medlin stated that the budget is about 6% more than last year. Wade Williams asked if the targeted demographic would be reached with the late night spots. Jared Cowell stated that it would extend the reach as well as bring in a bit more younger audience. Ms. Medlin agreed that the late night spots would reach the target demographic. Bill Barnes asked how late night program is. Ms. Medlin stated that the spots cut off at midnight. Steve Arrison questioned whether or not the Dallas stations were picked up by Direct TV and whether or not that increased our value. Mr. Cowell stated that it would be a small fraction, but that he would check into it.

Consumer Outdoor Media Update

Kay Medlin stated that the outdoor billboards had been approved for Chicago and Houston. A total of three bill boards will be utilized to target commuters coming into the city. The first billboard will be posted in April and May. The second board will be posted in June and the third board is yet to be determined. One board will be posted in Houston. A special web address, Arkansasvacations.com, will be found only on those boards and will be used for tracking purposes. All boards are in high profile places with high traffic counts.

Consumer Outdoor Creative

Karen Mullikin stated that the creative recommendation for the billboards would remind the viewer of the spring/summer creative that will also be in the market. They encourage the viewer to relax and reconnect and remind the viewer to remember what is most important. Richard Davies questioned whether or not the copy could be shorter and still grab the viewer's attention. He stated that the effectiveness would be diminished if the copy is longer. Commissioners made several suggestions.

Mike Mills moved to approve the creative outdoor recommendations with the discussed change in wording. Debbie Haak seconded and the motion carried.

Thunder on the Byways Update

Libby Doss updated Commissioners on this event. An event will take place in the spring to highlight Arkansas's national scenic byways, Crowley's Ridge and the Great River Road. It will be a motorcycle ride beginning in Piggott on Friday, May 30th at noon and ending in Lake Village on Sunday, June 1st. Stops will be made in Jonesboro, West Memphis, Helena, and at the Arkansas Post. Ms. Doss also noted that the Delta Byways Tourism Association has partnered with the Department for the event.

Arkansas Hits the Road Update

Ms. Doss stated that a trip to highlight Arkansas to the Dallas, Texas area media, group travel operators and travel agents will take place May 7th through the 9th. A reception will be held on Thursday evening. Lodging and transportation arrangements are currently being finalized. Selected media calls will be made to the Dallas area talk and news circuits. Invitees will include Governor Huckabee, Convention & Visitors Bureaus, A&P Commissions, Regional Associations, Chambers of Commerce, industry operators, and partner State Agencies.

See Arkansas First Update

Shelby Woods presented the recommendations for "See Arkansas First." KATV will partner with Parks & Tourism to promote the campaign, which will run May 15 – July 31, 2003. During the 5 and 6 pm weathercasts, May 15-July 24, "See Arkansas First" destinations around the state will be promoted. Viewers will be encouraged to visit the locations as well as to register to win a Chrysler, Jeep or Dodge vehicle. Travelers will also have an opportunity to register at any participating dealer. Viewers will also be able to log onto katv.com for the list of "See Arkansas First" destinations. Value received from the KATV partnership would be approximately \$292,700. The Department would be responsible for contributing \$100,000 to the advertising schedule, which will air May-July, 2003, and the printing and distribution of registration and counter cards to all participating Jeep, Chrysler, and Dodge dealerships. The Department would pick half of the locations to be visited and KATV would pick the other half.

Mr. Woods stated that he believes the private sector partners will be very enthusiastic about the project and that there is a possibility of raising at least fifty thousand dollars for the promotion and possibly more dependant upon the industry's involvement. Richard Davies asked whether or not this promotion would affect the TBA spots. Mr. Woods replied that it would not. Steve Arrison asked why the Department couldn't pay the \$100,000 and anything raised by the industry be added to it. Mr. Davies replied that it was not in the Department's budget. Mr. Woods agreed and noted that the contingency fund is to be used for co-op partnerships. Mr. Mills asked if the Department and KATV would consult about the locations before they were picked so that a destination would not be duplicated. He also noted that 2 of the most likely destinations, Hot Springs & Eureka Springs, might not be willing to participate in the \$100,000 if they already know they will be featured. Mr. Davies agreed that we have a responsibility to showcase the entire state. Commissioners discussed how to get locations to participate in the advertising schedule if they already know they will be featured. Mr. Davies stated that KATV needs to understand that we need to have the ability to raise the money for the advertising schedule for the campaign to work. Loretta House asked if already purchased advertising could be included in the \$100,000. Mr. Woods replied that the advertising must be new. Polly Wood Crews stated that it must be a statewide effort and the locations must be throughout Arkansas.

Mike Mills moved to approve \$50,000 from the contingency fund for the partnership agreement. Jim Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.

Travel & Win Update

Libby Doss stated that the Travel & Win game would run from March 1st through August 31st. There will be 33 "Must See" destinations and the card will be upgraded to a saddle-stitched book, which will be placed in all Vacation Planning Kits as well as being available at the destinations. Polly Wood Crews asked how many people participated in last year's game. Ms. Doss replied that over 1800 people, from 17 states, had signed log books. Coulson Oil, Shell Superstops, will again be distribution points for the cards. The grand prize for the game will be a 26-foot, fully-equipped Aloha party barge. The barge was obtained from WaCo Manufacturing at a cost of \$7,000 with an estimated retail value of over \$27,000. Bill Barnes stated that the Cox family had been building boats in North Little Rock for approximately 39 years. He further stated that they make a fine, well-built product. Mr. Davies suggested making them a Partner in Tourism next year since it is so close to the Governor's Conference this year. Chairman Lindsey suggested writing a letter of appreciation. Mr. Davies agreed.

Ms. Doss stated that media for the campaign would run April through June and include TBA partnership, in-state newspaper and Dallas and Memphis market newspapers.

"Song of Arkansas" Publicity Program Update

Pam Jones informed Commissioners that the "Song of Arkansas" again aired on AETN on February 5th and would continue to air as time permitted. Magnolia, Hope, Arkadelphia, Conway, Batesville, Heber Springs, and Hot Springs have all requested a copy of the video to air as a result of direct mailing. It will also be included in the Butler Center's Legacy and Legends series. Ms. Mullikin noted that they were trying to get as much exposure for the video as possible.

Four Cities Memphis Campaign Update

Ms. Jones introduced Barry Travis with the Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau and they presented an update on the four cities cooperative partnership. Little Rock, North Little Rock, Hot Springs, and Pine Bluff, in cooperation with the Department, have come together to produce a campaign entitled "Celebrate Arkansas!" The media campaign kicked off January 27th and will run through February and is targeted towards African Americans in the Memphis metropolitan area. Print ads ran in The Tri-State Defender and The Tennessee Tribune, whose primary readership is African Americans. The sets of 16-ounce iced tea glasses with the four-city logo, which are giveaways for the promotion, were used in the print ads. Ads were also run on radio stations with the highest African American listenership in Memphis. The schedule is 40%

morning drive, 6 am-10 am; 40% afternoon drive, 3 pm to 7 pm and 20% daytime, 10 am – 3pm on several differently formatted stations. Media releases were also sent to all outlets to support the campaign.

Mr. Travis stated that the four-color brochure is being distributed at Curran Hall in Little Rock, the Pine Bluff Visitors Center, Hot Springs Visitors Center, and the North Little Rock Visitors Center. Other locations of distribution include the Statehouse Convention Center, Robinson Center, and the Little Rock Airport. A dedicated toll free number will be used, which will be staffed by employees of the Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau eight hours a day, seven days a week. They will also fulfill requests for information and help with the website. Vacation packages will also be given away by each city and can be registered for on the website. Mr. Travis stated that a full report will be presented at the April Commission meeting.

Wal-Mart Fishing Trail Update

Karen Mullikin distributed a handout to Commissioners. She noted that Wal-Mart Fishing Trail involves a partnership with the Department of Parks & Tourism, Game & Fish, and Wal-Mart. She noted that the Trail is really the “Arkansas Fishing Trail.” The campaign will be an eight-month event where participants will fish a number of selected Arkansas bodies of water to qualify for prizes provided by sponsors. Participants will purchase a copy of the “Arkansas Fishing Trail Guide,” which provides an official entry form, official rules, featured fishing sites, fishing tips, featured Arkansas resorts and lodging facilities, and other pertinent information about fishing. The guide will be available at 121 participating Wal-Mart locations. There are 32 bodies of water around the state that the fishermen can fish with multiple levels of participation. The grand prize is a sweepstakes drawing for a fully-rigged Ranger bass boat and trailer.

Objectives of the campaign include generating in-state travel, to increase fishing license sales, to promote selected bodies of water, and to increase sporting goods sales and overall in-store traffic for participating Wal-Mart stores.

The 112-page, full color guide will be displayed in specially designed holders within the sporting goods section of Wal-Mart stores beginning in March. The first printing is for 25,000 copies, which will be sold for \$3.55 through October. Copies will be reprinted on an as needed basis.

A kick off announcement will be held March 24 and include Richard Davies, key members of Wal-Mart staff, the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, and possibly Governor Huckabee or Attorney General Beebe. An in-state news release program will also be instituted as well as Regional/Outdoors publications publicity. It will also be promoted with the “Take A Kid Fishing” program and a statewide Grand prize display tour. A special event will be held in November to announce the grand prize winner.

Loretta House asked if the guide could be sold in other locations. Shelby Woods stated that it was being printed by Wal-Mart and that it couldn't really be placed in a store that is a competitor of Wal-Mart. Bill Barnes asked how the success of the program would be gauged. Wayne Woods stated that the number of guides sold would provide the number of participants.

Ms. Mullikin stated the budget for the Arkansas Fishing Trail campaign totaled \$250,000.

Aristotle Report

Jennifer Peper reviewed the web site performance over the last couple of months. The number of pages viewed increased dramatically over the pages viewed a year ago. The Attractions, Lodging, & Dining database continues to be the most viewed pages in the site. Ms. Peper discussed the performance of different portions of the site as well where the visitors that are requesting the information are located.

Jonathan Eudy informed Commissioners of the Spring/Summer images that had been incorporated into the web site. He also discussed the web site for "Celebrate Arkansas!" Mr. Eudy noted that portions of the web site that have been finished and updated are "Coke, Arkansas & You," "See Arkansas First." He also stated that a new video had been integrated and digitized and placed on the web site entitled "Arkansas in 30 Seconds." It's been created in both high resolution and low resolution formats in streaming video. Richard Davies asked if they were the thirty second ads. Mr. Eudy agreed that they are the ads and noted that the Mary Steenburgen video would also be digitized and placed on the web site.

Dina Crane discussed the results of the State Parks 2002 Online Conversion study. She stated that the age of the visitor was lower than anticipated and the median income was higher. A full report will be presented in April. Ms. Crane also presented the new Ozark Folk Center screen saver.

Miscellaneous

Libby Doss stated that the Louisiana Purchase program had just received a \$200,000 grant to promote the project, \$40,000 of which will be used to promote the Louisiana Passport program.

Karen Mullikin stated that a video had recently been shot that includes an interview with Mary Steenburgen highlighting Arkansas, which has been placed on the Internet. It's an innovative and attention getting invitation to visit Arkansas. Mr. Davies asked if the interest could be tracked. Karen Mullikin replied that it will be tracked.

Bill Barnes stated that he had received a request from Representative Roger Smith for the Department to make more of an effort towards retirement and relocation,

specifically a direct mail campaign. Mr. Barnes stated the Representative Smith had suggested using a more direct approach such as through Axciom. Richard Davies stated that although he believes more money should be spent on the program, that 2 questions should be answered. First, whether or not a direct mail campaign would be a viable solution and second, how much money should be spent on it. Bill Barnes stated that he is not sure that money should be redirected to the campaign but rather spent differently. Shelby Woods stated that it would take a minimum of \$11,000 to have Axciom look at the information and then it would need to be determined how much to spend on such a venture. Wade Williams stated that in the past, direct mail retirement and relocation campaigns were not just an invitation to move to the community, but were a free vacation to take a look at the community. He further stated that he was opposed to the idea of a direct mail campaign if there were not an incentive offered to the prospective retirees. Montine McNulty stated that she thought Representative Smith did not want just a redirection of money but a fully funded program with more money and a staff of at least 2 people. Richard Davies noted that the realtors were not even interested in helping promote retirement and relocation. Bill Barnes stated that he believes the retirement and relocation is good for the state. Chairman Lindsey agreed, but pointed out that the Department does not have the money for it and that the current advertising attracts people to Arkansas. Jonathan Eudy stated that a mini website could be specifically tailored towards retirement and relocation and that targeted e-mail could also be utilized.

PARKS DIVISION

A-75 Update

Greg Butts said that Debbie Haak had requested information on capital improvements, major maintenance, capital equipment expenditures, and projects remaining in the ten-year plan. Responding to that request, detailed reports on the three categories were compiled. Mr. Butts said he wanted to cover some key areas, what is left to accomplish, and what decisions need to be made. The ten-year spending plan was developed based on park staffs' estimated needs in 1993 and 1995. The original cost estimates are now nine years old.

Prior to September 2001, the country was experiencing a robust economy. The Department was paying higher prices for construction projects than were envisioned with the original plan estimates. Consequently, the available funds did not cover as much of the costs as was first thought. When each park plan was compiled, the Department did not have the advantage of having a detailed asset management inventory and a real property assessment. We now have an inventory of our 800 structures that are insured at approximately a quarter of a billion dollars. Unfortunately, we did not have a lot of information about electrical systems, sewer lift stations, water systems and other related facilities that date back to the 1930s. Part of the big push for getting streamlined and organized after Amendment 75 passed was to hire Carter Burgess. There are a lot of items in parks, such as sewer treatment plants, lift stations, motors on wells, etc., that were not counted on the original list, that were twenty-five to thirty years old. Based on

federal regulations and the need to keep parks operating, it was necessary to spend 1/8¢ funds on items that had not been identified in the original ten-year plan.

There have been changes with water systems and federal regulations – changes in the law that had to do with wells located in parks and their influence by surface water. Fortunately, many parks have been able to tie-in to rural water systems which has been a good investment. Taking parks out of the water treatment business will save money over time. However, in many situations the costs were not originally budgeted in the legacy plan.

Part of the 1/8¢ fund's purpose was to provide funding for those parks that had been previously authorized by the Legislature, but had not been funded. Examples: Cossatot River, Delta Heritage Trail, Mississippi River and Hobbs. This also includes the plan for the new Lake Fort Smith State Park which had an original estimate of \$7 million in "betterments" which are the Department's responsibility. Estimates from the City of Fort Smith now may be \$10 million for the Department's share to re-construct the park.

Mr. Butts summarized by saying, looking at the new parks and projects that have been approved, the ten-year plan will not be completed in ten years. If we are to do everything we said we were going to do in the original plan, we are looking at a nineteen year program. Besides what we promised, there are a lot of additional demands. Examples: a Clover Bend project and the public's desire for a lodge at Lake Chicot which will require a feasibility study. Mr. Butts said that without additional funding sources, it will not all be accomplished within ten years. Regarding the Mt. Magazine project, bond financing will either be a ten-year program at about \$4 million annually or twenty years of up to \$2.5 million annually. That funding will have to be taken from Capital Improvements and moved into the M & O budget to make up the difference in cash to pay off bonds. Tax funds cannot be used to pay off bonds, but cash funds can be used. The cost of this one project will lengthen the timetable on all the other projects.

Billy Lindsey said he did not think any of the Commissioners believed the ten-year plan would remain a simple ten-year plan. The disappointing thing is that some of the things we thought would take place within the ten-year time period will not take place. Mr. Lindsey said the main thing is that the Commission remains true to the promises that were made to Arkansans – that we were going to take care of and fix what we have. We need to keep Legislators aware of where we are in the plan as well as the people of Arkansas. Richard Davies said he thinks people will understand about price inflation and some of the projects we didn't list originally. The best thing we ever did was obtain the Carter Burgess surveys on each park. Mr. Lindsey said, aside from connecting parks into rural water systems, we have stayed with the plan and it is important for people to know that. Richard Davies said the perception is that the Department has abundant funding. There is constant pressure for more projects and facilities. Six years into the ten year plan we are behind, and we need to be careful with future expenditures.

Greg Butts said the \$7 million committed for the Lake Fort Smith State Park, that will probably be \$10 million, was not in the ten-year plan. If the City is finished building the park either in December 2004 or January 2005, we will receive an invoice for the \$10 million. Richard Davies asked if time payments could be made. Polly Wood Crews said we should ask. Danny Ford said Legislators always bring up the 1/8¢ tax money the Department gets – we will have to keep telling them that money is already allocated. Richard Davies said that is correct. He added that before we had those funds, if we were faced with the budget cut we learned of today, we would be closing state parks tomorrow. Mr. Davies said we are so much better off than we used to be, but we are not near as well off as everyone thinks.

Bill Barnes said he feels the Department has done a wonderful job. The problems have come up with the maintenance needs that were not previously identified. The priorities to Arkansans is to repair what we currently have, and to make sure we don't commit any funds that could take away the ability to maintain facilities in the future. Mr. Barnes said it would be wrong to allow parks to fall back into the shape they once were. Once we catch up with repair of existing facilities, we could identify and build the new facilities that have proven to be the greatest demand from our citizens.

Richard Davies said when the 1/8¢ funds were calculated, assumptions were made that general revenue would grow and that we would always receive \$3 to \$4 million from ANCRC. Therefore, every time one of the fund sources, other than the 1/8¢, is reduced, it affects the entire budget. Parks, after the latest budget cut, had \$1.5 million less in general revenues than two years ago – that is operating money. Mr. Davies said that means that some other fund source will be used to operate which means something won't be repaired or built. And, the Legislature is discussing holding agency budgets to the current year levels.

Wade Williams said an earlier comment was made that prior to 1/8¢ funds being available; we would have been closing parks tomorrow because of the latest budget cut. Mr. Williams said that indicates that we are keeping some facilities open that maybe we could do without. Richard Davies said we made promises to make repairs system-wide and not to close smaller parks or less used facilities. It would be an absolute last resort to change from that promise.

Polly Wood Crews said it would be helpful if she had a ten-point summary on where we are in the ten-year plan. It would be useful in communicating to Legislators that the Department does not have excess funds. Greg Butts said he will provide the bullet-point information Ms. Crews requested.

Billy Lindsey said it is very important that each Commissioner visits with his or her Legislators. He reminded the Commission that most of the current Legislators were not around when A-75 was passed. It is incumbent upon the Commission to let the Legislators know how important it is and about the promises that were made to

Arkansans by us and their predecessors. Mr. Lindsey said that applies to the 2% Tourism Tax, also.

Arkansas Broadcasters Association – Spring 2003 TV & Radio Spots

Joan Ellison said the television Cut #2 is the spot entitled “Quality Time” that started airing in the winter. It is a gentle reminder that we all need to take the time to spend some quality time with family and friends. It is an important message we want to continue. Ms. Ellison said the television Cut #1 is the most beautiful spot we’ve done in sixteen years. It is being done to get the Arkansas State Parks guide in peoples’ hands. If we can get the guide in their hands, we will get the entire vacation planning kit in their hands. Ms. Ellison said the spot is a reminder that Arkansas and the state parks are so beautiful, scenic destinations. It shows three of the facilities that have enhanced the park system because Amendment 75 is making so many improvements. It shows the 1865 Courthouse at Jacksonville State Park that was renovated, the new barrier free fishing pier at Lake Chicot State Park and the lodge at DeGray Lake Resort State Park. It is a very important reminder of the talents of some people, Debbie Wilson and Gary Jones, that we have the two best photographers in America, and that we have a gifted graphic artist named Kim Pawelczak who designed the State Park Guide. Ms. Ellison played the two television spots and three radio spots.

Ness Sechrest moved to approve the following Spring advertising spots to air beginning March 1, 2003 and run until further notice: two 30-second television spots entitled, “Arkansas State Parks 2003 Guidebook” and “Quality Time” and three 60-second radio spots entitled, “Arkansas State Parks 2003 Guidebook”, “One of the Finest in the Nation” and “Quality Time.” Jane Christenson seconded and the motion carried.

FY04 ANCRC Grant Request

Greg Butts called the Commissioners’ attention to the FY04 ANCRC grant request that lists projects throughout the park system. He said he does not know if the grant request will be awarded. On average, parks had received approximately \$3 million annually in ANCRC funding since 1988. Three projects are a part of the ten-year plan: a land acquisition at Prairie Grove, interior exhibit design and conservation work on vault doors at the courthouse at Powhatan, and continuation of the barrier-free boardwalk at Mammoth Spring. Richard Davies explained that the other projects were ones that were not listed in the ten-year spending plan. Mr. Butts said the projects are categorized for similarity of types of projects, not numbered by priority. Stan Graves said this is the first time there has not been water and sewer projects on the grant request list.

Bill Barnes moved to approve the FY04 grant request to the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council totaling \$4,108,714 as presented. The grant request is for repair and renovation of historic and other structures, property acquisitions, exhibit design, and erosion and vegetation control throughout the park system. Wade Williams seconded and the motion carried.

Devil's Den State Park - Pavilion Sign

Greg Butts said the Washington County Mounted Search and Rescue (WCMSAR) is a volunteer group that helps out with numerous of projects at the park. The WCMSAR had made repairs to an old structure that was part of the Mayfield property acquisition. They donated the labor and over \$2,000 in materials for the renovation of a metal framed structure that is used as a staging area for search and rescue operations, and is used by the park for day-use equestrian activities. Park Superintendent Jessie Cox had requested that a small sign be placed on the renovated pavilion recognizing their contribution to the park.

Danny Ford moved to approve placing a small sign on the structure that was renovated by the Washington County Mounted Search and Rescue volunteers in recognition of their contribution to Devil's Den State Park. Ness Sechrest seconded and the motion carried.

Bill Barnes said that type of recognition is invaluable and he complimented Mr. Butts on his continuing awareness of the need to acknowledge volunteer contributions and support.

Good Sam Camp Host Agreement

Greg Butts said approval is needed to renew the agreement with the Arkansas Good Sam Club that provides camp hosts at state parks. The original agreement was approved by the Commission in 1981 and included Bull Shoals-White River, Lake Catherine, and Millwood State Parks. The Good Sams would like to include Petit Jean State Park in the new five-year agreement. Mr. Butts said the Good Sam Club members are great ambassadors for parks. Bill Barnes asked if it is the same club members who will be doing more, or are there new members. Greg Butts said there some younger people joining the organization and the club feels they have enough Arkansas members to staff the four parks. Richard Davies said one of the great things about the agreement is that the Good Sam Host Coordinator is responsible for scheduling volunteers. The Park Superintendents do not need to find a replacement if one of the scheduled couples is unable to host a park.

Debbie Haak moved to renew for five years the Good Sam Camp Host Agreement with the Arkansas Good Sams to provide camp hosts at Bull Shoals-White River, Lake Catherine, Millwood and Petit Jean State Parks. The term of the agreement is from May 1, 2003 through April 30, 2008. Ness Sechrest seconded and the motion carried.

Certificate of Appreciation

Billy Lindsey said Hank Mabry is retiring after serving the Department for ten years as a carpenter and carpenter supervisor of an in-house force account crew. He has worked on numerous repair and renovation projects as well as new construction. Mr. Mabry was a very dedicated employee and always had the Department's best interest at heart. He will be missed.

Mike Mills moved to approve a Certificate of Appreciation for Mr. Hank Mabry who is retiring following ten years of dedicated service to state parks. Loretta House seconded and the motion carried.

Village Creek State Park - Lodge/Golf Course Update

Greg Butts reminded the Commission that the Department had advertised for a Request for Proposal/Request for Qualifications (RFP/RFQ) for a private designer, developer and operator for a golf course and lodge at the park. Due to the soft economy, there was not a lot of interest in the project. Staff has been working with Bill Thomas who is on the Board of Directors of the Cross County Economic Development Corp., and State Representatives Dangeau and Ferguson in pursuing other alternatives. One of the people who responded to the RFP/RFQ was Carl Kernodle with KPG Architects of Austin, TX. Mr. Kernodle contacted Bill Thomas and they called to set up a meeting to learn if the Department would be interested in meeting businessmen who are doing a similar project in Kentucky. On February 5th, Greg and Richard met with the group that is partnering with the state park system in Kentucky at Green River Lake State Park on a Corps of Engineers lease. Mr. Butts called the Commissioners' attention to a copy of the draft agreement that will be used in Kentucky.

Greg Butts said that the park, planning and development staff, and he had met with Andy Dye who is a golf course architect. It was Mr. Dye's uncle, Pete Dye, and father, Richard Dye, who started designing golf courses in the 1920s. Andy Dye has his own firm building signature courses world-wide. Mr. Butts said what he likes about Mr. Dye is that his whole approach is working with the environment, not against it. Referring back to the Kentucky project, Mr. Butts said it consists of a consortium of people the Killian Group out of Springfield, MO who is in the construction business and is comprised of several different companies, and Wellington Int'l. out of Dublin, GA. Part of their organization includes Earl Worsham of the Worsham Group and Worsham

Watkins Int'l. out of Gatlinburg and Knoxville, TN. This company is a world-wide expert involved in real estate and leisure property developments, hotels, and recreational properties. Mr. Butts said the Kentucky project consists of 600 acres from the state park that is on a Corps of Engineers lease on a Corps reservoir. That property has been sub-leased to a county government's Park & Recreation Board. That Board has issued bonds and will spend nearly \$5 million on a signature golf course on the lake. The consortium of companies plan to build a 132 room lodge, an 800-900 capacity theater, conference facility and, in part, manage the golf course. We met with them to find out what the consortium's interest might be, what they thought of Village Creek State Park, and if there was a possibility of going forward with the project.

Greg Butts said no one has said "yes" to the project at Village Creek. The Commission needs to review the arrangement in Kentucky and for staff to do some research on the companies. Mr. Butts said staff will study the concept and discuss a feasibility study. If all this is positive, we can begin working out the details of a 40-50 year agreement, if it is acceptable to the Commission. Mr. Butts said if the Commission does not like the idea, a decision should be made at the April meeting.

Richard Davies said what makes him uncomfortable at this stage is that he does not know anything about the companies. Also, if one reads the Kentucky agreement it is really a 100 year agreement because of the right to renew for an additional 50 years. Mr. Davies said there is a difference between allowing the use of 600 acres on a Corps lease and taking several hundred acres of a state park. Another component of the Kentucky plan is an entertainment venue - an auditorium or theater. They are doing that because it is located on the circuit between Nashville, Tunica, and Branson for entertainers. The developers feel they will be able to get big-name entertainment at reasonable prices with the goal of making the development more of an attraction. The consortium thinks the same thing could apply to Village Creek. In exchange for all of this, the consortium would spend \$36-\$38 million of their money. Mr. Davies said the major thing that concerns him is what happens if the operator fails and the financiers own the improvements, etc. He said the details of the agreement would be crucial.

Ness Sechrest said we do not have the funds to do the project ourselves. We need to investigate the companies to learn everything we can about them. Mr. Sechrest said if that proves positive, then we can talk about it. Richard Davies said the Commission has always felt that if we had an arrangement with private investment that is this big, we wanted to find someone with as much to lose as us.

Bill Barnes said this could be a facility that the people in eastern Arkansas have dreamed about for years. Jim Shamburger said this could be a way to make our 1/8¢ funds go farther and it is probably something we need to look into. Richard Davies said that at the April meeting, the Commissioners need to decide if this is something we need to pursue. Ness Sechrest said, after staff does its investigation, have someone in the Attorney General's office check it out, also. Loretta House asked if Greg Butts had talked with Kentucky State Parks about their arrangement. Mr. Butts said that will be the

next thing he will do. Bill Barnes said he thinks it is a great concept and bears a lot of pursuit, at this point. Ms. House suggested that if Kentucky is already moving forward with their project, that they probably have all the financial information of the companies. She asked why we could not just obtain that information and then just need to conduct verifications. Mr. Butts said he will ask that question but he does not feel they will share that information because it may be considered confidential.

Billy Lindsey clarified that staff will begin investigating the companies. He added that if this is a legitimate group with a valid proposal, it must be given every consideration because that is the only way the project will happen. Greg Butts said he would like the Commissioners to read the Kentucky agreement, especially members of the Parks Committee.

Queen Wilhelmina State Park - Update on Queen's Backyard

Greg Butts said the Bank of Tennessee had foreclosed on Scott and Becky Fite, owners of the train and miniature golf operation. There has been some interest expressed from someone in the gravel and trucking business in the area in purchasing and operating the railroad. The Bank of Tennessee and the Small Business Administration, who made the loans to the Fites, have the right to be a part of the decision process on a new lessee. Mr. Butts said he had written to the Fites regarding their payments. The response from the Fites was, "when we get paid, you'll get paid." The Bank of Tennessee wants to locate an operator, someone to purchase the business, but they have not found anyone yet. The individual who has said he is interested in purchasing it has said he would like to partner with the Arkansas Native Plant & Wildlife Center (ANPWC).

Wade Williams asked if ANPWC had made their payment as they agreed. Greg Butts said their payment is not due until March 1, 2003. Mr. Williams said he thought a payment was due in December with a second payment due March 1st. Mr. Butts said the Commission waived the first payment because the zoo did not open for business until July 1, 2002. Mr. Williams said that is not the way he recalls it. Greg Butts said he would send Mr. Williams the information regarding the approved payments.

Petit Jean State Park - Long Range Development Plan

Stan Graves said Petit Jean State Park is the flagship of the park system. Mr. Graves gave an overview of some of the unique aspects of the park: Cedar Falls, the topography of Petit Jean Mountain, and the Cedar Creek Canyon and Seven Hollows area, both of which are listed on the Registry of Natural Areas. The park covers 2,500 acres, with an additional 100 acres that are leased, which is the location of Petit Jean's grave. Covering the history of the park, Mr. Graves gave details on the pictographs, the 40 recorded archaeological sites, the French explorers, the legend of Petit Jean, early settlers, and the CCC work constructing the roads, buildings, bridges, lakes and trails that are still in use today. Richard Davies added that what makes Cedar Creek and Seven

Hollows so special is that at one time, all but those two areas had been cleared for cotton fields. Stan Graves said Act 276 of 1923 authorized the acceptance of donated lands for state parks.

Stan Graves discussed the following improvements that are needed: The barrier-free parking area at Mather Lodge needs to accommodate increased capacity and larger recreational vehicles. The Davies Bridge needs structural repairs to ensure its preservation, and have the 40 ton weight limit reduced. Employee parking is currently located in a highly visible area and needs to be relocated behind the maintenance compound. Mr. Graves said trails and overlooks are a major part of the park and very popular with visitors. An intra-park trail system, containing two barrier-free trails, is proposed to provide pedestrian linkages within the park. One of the main features of the park is the Rock House Cave Trail. Improvements that are proposed include interpretive signage, trail repair, gates to control access to the parking area, and replacement of two deteriorated pit toilets. Mr. Graves said that Amendment 75 funds were used to provide barrier-free access to both the Cedar Falls Overlook and Stout's Point Overlook. The Visitor Information Center was built in 1938. Though it is an excellent example of CCC architecture, it is undersized and does not meet current needs of park visitors. This plan proposes to replace the existing VIC with a new facility located on the opposite side of State Highway 154. Mr. Graves said the existing VIC will become either a museum or a museum combined with administrative offices. Greg Butts said one of the ideas for use of the structure is to make it a CCC museum for the state of Arkansas. Mr. Butts said there is the potential to have partners and foundations involved.

Other areas addressed by the plan include additional employee residences, renovation of the kitchen and dining area in the Mather Lodge, additional parking, campground upgrades, improvements to the maintenance compound, dam and spillway repair at Lake Bailey and proposed property acquisitions. Mr. Graves said another major structure in the park is Hardison Hall that was constructed in 1948. The architecture has more of a modern look than the other structures in the park. The plan proposes removing both Hardison Hall and the nearby Recreation Hall, and replace them with new structures. Staff feels the best use of the area would be to construct a building that would house 100 people, with meeting and dining areas. Richard Davies said if the original building wasn't named, "Hardison", no one would have a problem with its removal. Ness Sechrest said the Commissioners had toured the building three years ago and it is in bad shape. Greg Butts said the project will take a lot of study and funding. He said it should be removed from inventory, after it is discussed with people in the community and the Legislature. Billy Lindsey said the building is unattractive and he agrees it should be listed for removal from inventory in the not too distant future. He said we also should keep in mind when we are talking to people about this, we insure them we have other priorities and replacement of the structures will not happen immediately. Greg Butts said a major priority is to get all the campsites upgraded. Richard Davies said, because of politics, we might not want to remove the building until we are in a position to build a new structure. Polly Wood Crews asked why the building is so special. Mr. Davies said Hardison was the first Chairman of the State Parks Commission, the "Father" of the state

parks system. Regarding the Fly-In Campground, Bill Barnes asked if we have ever suggested to Morrilton Aviation if they would consider having a couple of rental cars available. Greg Butts said they are providing a shuttle service. They can be contacted anytime for shuttle service and that is part of our agreement with them. Mr. Barnes said that when he was flying, he was attracted a lot more to an airport with a campground and all of the attractions of Petit Jean if he could rent a vehicle.

Jim Shamburger asked if the maintenance buildings can be seen from the highway. Stan Graves said they could. Mr. Graves said there is an immediate need for fencing and vegetation. Mike Mills said he feels that building a fence by the sign shop and maintenance area does not accomplish much. Everyone has lived with them for so long that a few more years won't matter. Mr. Mills said he hates to think of spending money on fencing. Stan Graves said it will be about eight or ten years before the buildings will be replaced. Mike Mills said he does not have a problem with planting trees. Mr. Graves said maybe relocating employee parking will help the appearance. Jim Shamburger asked how soon the picnic area would be upgraded. Mr. Graves said it will be soon and it will cost approximately \$500,000. This will include a new restroom and picnic site renovation including barrier-free sites. Mr. Graves discussed plans for upgrading camp sites and the establishment of a tent camping area. Bill Barnes suggested that if a new tent camping area was built it would cost less and we could still utilize the sites we have and upgrade them. Greg Butts said he had authorized the use of locks on campsite electrical boxes and use them as Class B sites. That is in the plan as an alternative to building more sites. Mr. Butts said tenters want water in the area but not all of them want water at their site. Bill Barnes, pointing out areas on the park map, asked if short trail access could take campers to more isolated sites. Mr. Barnes said what he had heard from his tent camping guests, is they would like to be away from other camping areas; they don't mind walking a short distance in order to have a more private site. Mr. Barnes said there would not be a lot of site preparation to accomplish that. Stan Graves said what Mr. Barnes described is like the walk-in tent camping area at Daisy State Park. Greg Butts said, with a walk-in tent camping area, there would still need to be a bathhouse and parking area. Bill Barnes asked if park maintenance could create six sites like he had described. Mr. Butts said staff would look at that.

Bill Barnes asked if the statement about the Commission reviewing the addition of new cabins prior to construction was in the Long Range Development Plan. Greg Butts said the plan does not propose any new cabins.

Ness Sechrest moved to approve the Long Range Development Plan for Petit Jean State Park as presented. Debbie Haak seconded and the motion carried.

Clover Bend - Presentation by Representative Don House

Chairman Lindsey welcomed Representative House. Rep. House said he appreciated the opportunity to speak to the Commission. He introduced Ms. Viola C. Meadows, President of the Clover Bend Historical Presentation Association Board (CBHPAB). Rep. House said he had always been a strong supporter of the park system and would continue that support.

Rep. House said he would like to request that a feasibility study be conducted of adding the historic Clover Bend preservation project as an extension or branch of Powhatan Courthouse State Park. Former State Representative Tom Baker and he had served as early chairmen and presidents of the CBHPAB that held the project together because of its historical significance. The state had contributed money through the years to help preserve the project. Clover Bend has a twenty year history of strong local support. Rep. House said Clover Bend consists of about ten acres, and several buildings that are generally in good repair. He gave a brief history of the area up to the point when it was purchased by the Farm Security Administration under a resettlement project during the depression. It was one of the most successful projects of this type that continued into the late 1940s.

Ms. Viola Meadows said she had been a part of the project for twenty years, and a lot of progress had been made. Ms. Meadows said she is a child of one of the families that resettled as part of the resettlement project. The project reflects what the Roosevelt era did for people who had fallen through the cracks after the depression. Clover Bend was one of 99 projects in the country. Eighty-eight farm houses were built in Clover Bend with barns, chicken houses, toilets, smoke houses, etc. The current preservation project includes a school and five other buildings in an historic district. Ms. Meadows asked the Commissioners if they would accept an invitation to visit Clover Bend, and see what had been done in the last twenty years. Richard Davies said the farmsteads were like "issued farms." Everyone got the same thing which included forty acres.

Ness Sechrest asked how far Clover Bend is from Pocahontas. Representative House said it is approximately twenty miles. Mr. Sechrest said the reason he asked is because the August Commission meeting is scheduled in Pocahontas.

Jane Christenson moved that the Commission visit Clover Bend during the August 21-22, 2003 meeting for consideration as an extension of the Powhatan Courthouse State Park. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.

Richard Davies suggested that staff visit Clover Bend prior to the August meeting. Chairman Lindsey said that was a good idea, and then staff could have recommendations for Commissioners at the August meeting. Polly Wood Crews asked

how people in Lawrence County feel about Clover Bend. Representative House said they feel very strongly about it, and State Senator Tim Woodridge has been very supportive of the project and has helped with funding.

Miscellaneous

Debbie Haak asked the status of the water play area at Crater of Diamonds State Park. Stan Graves said it had been coming along very well in January, but has slowed down because of February's snow and ice storms. A Memorial Day opening is planned. Greg Butts said there will be an analysis regarding weather days and liquidated damages at the next Commission meeting. Mr. Graves said the soil condition has made it a very difficult project. Staff will be opening bids on March 6th on the new Diamond Discovery Center.

Bill Barnes asked the status of the new Geocaching policy and how staff feels about it. Greg Butts said he feels most staff are comfortable with it. Regarding implementing the policy, it will go through the Administrative Rules Sub-Committee in either April or May, depending on when the Legislative Session ends. Therefore, we cannot implement the policy until it goes through the Sub-Committee. Mac Balkman added that he does not anticipate any problems with the policy, rules or use of ammo boxes. Bill Barnes asked if thought had been given to marketing this to the geocaching community. Greg Butts said it will be on the parks' website. Also, Jim Gaston had contacted Richard Davies about developing a geocaching trail. It will be turned over to park interpreters for programming. Richard Davies said Jim Gaston suggested giving the coordinates of park visitor centers for travelers. Bill Barnes said that if a geocaching trail is done, to consider giving private sector the opportunity to become involved, not make it just a state park trail.

Bill Barnes asked if area businesses wanted to put their brochures in park visitor centers, would that be allowed. Greg Butts said that is permitted as long as there is available space.

Polly Wood Crews said the City of Ft. Smith is looking forward to hosting the Governor's Conference on Tourism.

Loretta House said everyone had an absolutely wonderful time at Shelby Woods' home. Chairman Lindsey said he wanted to thank Gloria Robins and Sandy Burch and others who worked hard making the Legislative Dinner so successful. Debbie Haak said, and Chairman Lindsey agreed, that Montine McNulty always goes above and beyond, and it is appreciated.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.