

**MINUTES**  
**State Parks, Recreation & Travel Commission**  
**Ozark Folk Center**  
**Mountain View, Arkansas**  
**July 21-22, 2005**

**Commissioners Present**

Jane Christenson, Chairman  
Steve Arrison  
Danny Ford  
Jim Gaston  
Billy Lindsey  
Mike Mills  
Montine McNulty

Jim Shamburger, Vice Chairman  
Bill Barnes  
Polly Crews  
Wade Williams  
Jay Bunyard, Thursday Only  
Debbie Haak  
Ness Sechrest

**Department Staff Present**

Richard W. Davies, Executive Director  
Larry Cargile, Central Administration Director  
Greg Butts, State Parks Director  
Joe David Rice, Tourism Director  
Nancy Clark, Asst. Tourism Director  
Stan Graves, Manager, Planning & Development  
Mac Balkman, Manager, Operations  
Donna Perrin, Manager, Tourism Development  
Mindy Hawes, Group Travel Manager  
Charles McLemore, Director, Research Information Services  
Jana Greenbaum, Communications Manager  
Jon Brown, Region I Supervisor  
Tony Perrin, Region II Supervisor  
Jim Cannon, Region IV Supervisor  
Grady Spann, General Manager, Ozark Folk Center  
Gretchen Sacotnik Park Superintendent, Crowley's Ridge State Park  
Donna Spaght, Park Superintendent, Old Davidsonville State Park  
Tracy King, Park Superintendent, Bull Shoals-White River State Park  
Chuck Haralson, Tourism Photographer  
Lynn Warren, Landscape Architect  
Connie Adkins, Administrative Assistant, Region II  
Gloria Robins, Executive Assistant  
Sandy Burch, Administrative Assistant

**Agency Staff Present**

Shelby Woods  
Linda Scroggin

Wayne Woods  
Bill Fitzgerald

Karen Mullikin

Brian Kratkiewicz

**Aristotle**

Marla Johnson Norris                      Jonathan Eudy

**Guests Present**

Mayor Joe Wyatt, City of Mountain View  
Barry Travis, Little Rock CVB  
Laurie Green, Little Rock CVB  
David Russell, Little Rock CVB  
Peggy Tupper, Mountain View Chamber of Commerce  
Phyllis Holmes, Ozark Gateway Tourist Association  
Cathy Drew, Ozark Gateway Tourist Association  
Lenore Shoults, Vice Chair, Committee of 100  
Rusty Fraser, Stone County Leader  
Judy Duguid  
Sandra King  
Karen Murphy  
Jacque Alexander

**Call to Order**

Chairman Christenson called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. and Gloria Robins called the roll.

**Approval of the Agenda**

**Jay Bunyard moved to approve the agenda. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.**

**Presentation of Minutes from Previous Meeting**

**Jim Shamburger moved to approve the Minutes. Billy Lindsey seconded and the motion carried.**

**Recognition of Guests**

Chairman Christenson recognized and welcomed guests in attendance.

## **Financial Report**

Larry Cargile presented a fiscal year-to-date financial report for the period ended June 30, 2005. The fiscal year-to-date expenditures were: Parks Division, \$62,367,645, including construction and grants; Tourism Division, \$12,939,140; Keep Arkansas Beautiful, \$490,084; Administration Division, \$2,418,710; and History Commission, \$1,357,990. Fiscal Year 2005 expenditures for the Department totaled \$79,573,569. The Parks Division fiscal year-to-date operating revenue totaled \$14,614,837, an increase of 7% over the same period last year.

Mr. Davies thanked Larry Cargile and his staff for doing such a good job with the end of year. He reported that he had meet with the Legislative Auditors to go over the exit interview findings. The good news is that they didn't have anything to report. Mr. Davies also thanked Greg Butts and his people for doing a good job. Greg Butts said it was due to a lot of good weather last year.

Mike Mills asked if when Parks has an increase in unexpected cash revenue is there a plan on how to spend the increase. Greg Butts explained that it would be used to pay debit service of 2.7 million a year. Mr. Mills asked if Parks applied anything extra to Mount Magazine to get the debt down. Mr. Butts said that due to the bond indenture, we couldn't for the first 10 years. Mr. Mills asked if there were any other areas we could spend the money. Richard Davies reminded the commission that there are two issues with Mount Magazine --- debt service, and a minimum balance of \$1.4 million that we've never had to deal with before. Cash is pretty tight. Jim Shamburger also reminded the commission that at the interest rate we are paying, we don't want to pay it off early. Larry Cargile stated a certain amount of the excess funds are needed for cash flow purposes in the off season (January through March) and sometimes into April when cash flow is at its lowest. Also, the more excess cash funds we have the more of the capital improvement program we can fund. Mr. Butts reminded the commission the parks general revenue this biennium didn't grow to meet inflations. This which means in effect, that the cash fund or Amendment 75 is picking up 2 ½% COLA for state employees which is 2 or 3 million dollars...more than the increase in general revenues.

**Mike Mills moved to approve the financial report. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.**

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Ivory Billed Woodpecker/Bird Watching Update**

Richard Davies said he had reported at the last meeting the Governor had issued an executive order for all cabinet agencies involved to work together on the Ivory Billed Woodpecker. The initial meeting was held before the last commission meeting and recently a subcommittee meeting was held with the information and interpretive staff. We want to take

advantage of the Ivory Billed Woodpecker and the world's interest in Arkansas, but we don't want to do anything that would endanger the Ivory Billed Woodpecker. The plan the committee arrived at this week, is that Parks and Tourism will basically gather the data from the land managing agencies. We will develop a data base of all the bird watching and watchable wildlife things and then create a plan for this season, which would be Web based and paper based. In the meantime, all these agencies are willing to cooperate in creating a watchable wildlife/bird watching trail across Arkansas with the same logo.

Polly Crews asked if the several spotting in Sebastian and Crawford counties have been ruled out. Mr. Davies said he hadn't heard, but there was now an official reporting station to report sightings. There have been no additional sightings since the first group of sightings. Part of that is probably due to all the leaves on the trees and snakes in the water and there aren't a lot of people out looking for the woodpecker. There was an article in the paper some scientists are challenging the fact that it was ever seen.

One of the charges from this committee is that we are going to get a group of agency people and go visit with some of the towns especially in the big woods area...Clarendon, Stuttgart, Brinkley, and Augusta to find out their needs, what's happening in their areas, and what they can provide for visitors. There are four big duck lodges that have switched over to bird watching. Duck season is 60 days long and bird watching is year-around.

## **TOURISM DIVISION**

### **ESPN Bassmasters Legends Tournament Proposal**

Joe David Rice introduced Barry Travis, Laurie Green and David Russell from the Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau. Mr. Rice said they would present a proposal similar in nature to the one approved by the Commission for \$50,000 for Hot Springs and the FLW tournament. Mr. Rice said that if the proposal for the Bassmasters Legends Fishing Tournament is approved, the funds would come from the Fiscal Year 2007 advertising budget.

Barry Travis stated that if Little Rock is successful with its bid, the tournament will be held August 24-27, 2006, with fishing taking place on the Arkansas River from Conway to Pine Bluff. Mr. Travis said that the Legends Tournament is the second largest in the Bassmasters group, and would be a joint effort between Little Rock and North Little Rock. The final weigh-in for the tournament will be aired live on ESPN on August 27, 2006. The cities will be given 20 ten second spots on the show and will be mentioned on the Saturday morning shows for the next 13 months. The cities must show that they have \$60,000 to host the tournament before a final selection is made. Arkansas Game and Fish Commission has pledged \$20,000 and promised a substantial number of man hours to support the tournament. The cities need an additional \$40,000 to meet the financial requirements, and that is the amount being sought with the proposal. The City of Little Rock will be responsible for the convention center. The tournament

requires 90,000-square feet and the center is 85,000-square feet. The City will also cover the cost of the amphitheater, security, etc. Mr. Travis said that the Governor's office is very interested in having this tournament in the state.

Chairman Christenson asked about other cities vying to host the tournament. Mr. Travis said cities in North Carolina and South Carolina have expressed interest in hosting the tournament. Richard Davies asked for an explanation of the hierarchy of tournaments and where this Bassmasters tournament fits within that hierarchy. Mr. Russell explained that if the Classic is the Super Bowl, this is the Rose Bowl, or the second highest of their tournaments. The top prize for the Bassmasters Legends tournament is \$300,000 with a total purse for the tournament of \$1.2 million. This is the biggest tournament that these cities can manage with the facilities they have available.

Mr. Davies pointed out that there are two competing fishing groups – Bassmasters and FLW. Steve Arrison said the FLW tournament recently hosted in Hot Springs is one of the top four events in country and the Commission should decide where to draw the line because there are so many fishing circuits. Mr. Travis said the Classic generally draws close to 30,000 to 40,000 people to watch the weigh-in. Bill Barnes asked about attendance for the Hot Springs event. Mr. Arrison said that there were 16,000 people present the last day, with over 50,000 people counted coming to the event Wednesday through Saturday. Mr. Arrison stated that the winner of this tournament won over \$500,000 and the total purse for the tournament was \$1.5 million. Organizers of the FLW tournament said the economic impact of the tournament on the Hot Springs area was between \$30 and \$60 million. Mr. Arrison said that every RV park in the area was full, and *Time* magazine came to do a major story on bass fishing.

Mr. Arrison said that the Commission needs to look at special event funding, which he thinks is important, and believes events receive more “bang for the buck” than buying an ad. Mr. Arrison also expressed concern that the Department will be inundated with communities wanting funding for their events. He recommended the Commission develop criteria for what will be funded in the future, and suggested that \$1 million in prize money might be a good benchmark. Mr. Davies pointed out that hoteliers say events fill rooms. Mr. Gaston suggested contacting Forrest Wood for advice on setting criteria.

Danny Ford asked where money to fund the event would come from. Mr. Davies said since it is a special event promotion, it should come from next year's advertising budget.

**Jim Gaston moved to approve \$40,000 from the advertising budget to fund the proposal from Little Rock and North Little Rock to support the Bassmasters Legends tournament to be held August 24-27, 2006. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion passed.**

**Tourism Website Budget Advertising Sub-Committee Recommendation**

Joe David Rice reported on the Advertising Sub-Committee meeting which was held July 8. He said that 21 people met to go over internet issues. Most budget recommendations went unchanged with a couple of exceptions. (Attachment 1 – Detailed Budget Proposal)

**Internet Sub-Committee’s Recommendation on Internet Budget Proposal for FY2006**

**Goal 1: Provide for Infrastructure & Growth**

Goal 1, Numbers 1 & 2	Recommend as presented.	\$ 49,385
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**Goal 2: Keep Websites Up-To-Date**

Goal 2, Numbers 1, 2, 3 & 4	Recommend as presented.	\$ 15,750
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**Goal 3: Improve Travel Essentials**

Goal 3, Numbers 1, 2, & 3	Recommend as presented.	\$ 4,595
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**Goal 4: Meet Needs of Special Audiences**

Goal 4, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9	Recommend as presented.	\$ 59,035
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**Goal 5: Product Packaging & Promotion**

Goal 5, Number 1	Concentrate on fewer sites with recommendations from staff. <i>Placeholder</i>	\$ 42,250
Goal 5, Number 2	Recommend as presented.	\$ 5,600
Goal 5, Number 3	Update and change look of “Hot Deals” section. Back to SPRTC for approval. <i>Placeholder</i>	\$ 40,400
Goal 5, Number 4	Delete.	[\$ 26,400]

**Goal 6: Drive Traffic to the Site & Arkansas**

Goal 6, Number 1	Add \$26,400 deleted from Goal 5, Number 4	\$ 44,010
Goal 6, Number 2	Reduce by \$100,000.	\$200,000
Goal 6, Number 3	Recommend as presented.	\$ 5,745
Goal 6, Number 4	Recommend as presented.	\$ 1,000
Goal 6, Number 5	<i>Placeholder</i> Back to SPRTC for approval.	\$ 16,800

Goal 6, Numbers 6, 7, 8, & 9                      Recommend as presented.                      \$ 42,200

**Goal 7: Research, Track & Report**

Goal 7, Numbers 1, 2, 3, & 4                      Recommend as presented.                      \$ 39,580

<b>Total 1-year contract for Tourism</b>	<b>\$566,350</b>
<b>Contingency for 1-year contract for Tourism</b>	<b>\$ 56,635</b>
<b>Total Budget for FY06</b>	<b>\$622,985</b>

Wade Williams pointed out that at the last meeting the budget was approved, however, since that approval, major things – such as Goal 5 for promotional videos - were deleted and money moved to search engine optimization. Keyword buys caused discussion and it was lopped to \$200,000. The total budget was reduced by \$100,000. Mike Mills said three budget items were approved with the stipulation they be brought back to the Commission for approval before the projects were implemented. The “placeholder projects” include” Story Sections Promoting What is Special about Arkansas” for \$42,250; “Packages and Special Offers Expansion” for \$40,400; and “Call to Action Pages” for \$16,800. It was also pointed out that the difference between internet and advertising occurs because ads are built and internet is based on projects to be produced. Mr. Davies said a “placeholder” is an approval of a concept, with the idea that once a project is in production, it will be presented to the Commission again for final approval. Jim Gaston said everyone went into the meeting with open minds and some questions. He felt the meeting will serve as a catalyst for the Commission to understand what the Department staff does and to help improve the working relationship between the Commission and staff. Mr. Gaston said that the Commission did not set the budget, but it was the consensus of the group.

**Jim Gaston moved to approve the Aristotle Fiscal Year 2006 Budget for Tourism at \$622,985. Steve Arrison seconded and the motion carried.**

**Group Travel Section**

**Current Trade Show News**

Melinda Hawes reported that Group Travel would be co-hosting the welcome dinner for the National Motorcoach Network’s “Invitational 100” in North Little Rock, as well as participating in the show as a supplier over the next three days. The welcome dinner will have a 1940’s theme and will include dinner at the Wyndham Hotel and an after dinner party on the deck and barge of the USS Razorback, with tours of the submarine, a live swing band, and the movie “Operation Petticoat” shown on a big screen on the deck of the submarine. Ms. Hawes participated in the open session business appointments, and met with several tour operators from

all over the country to help design tours to include Arkansas cities. She also was a participant in the open forum discussion during which both operators and suppliers raised and discussed various topics surrounding the motorcoach tour business.

### **Governor's Executive Order 05-01**

Ms. Hawes reported that Group Travel tallied the results so far as reported by various state agencies, boards, and commissions and submitted a report for the Governor's office to Mr. Davies. The report shows that the state stands to reap an estimated \$1.8 million from confirmed meetings booked as a result of the Executive Order. Additionally, the Department sent out approximately 200 pending invitations/leads to partners across the state, and we are working to support both the agencies in extending their invitations and the partners in following up on the leads, both by improving and automating the supporting websites and systems surrounding execution of this Executive Order. Our goal is to have the process automated in time for the May 1, 2006 annual reporting deadline.

### **Destination Arkansas FAM Tours**

Through the Destination Arkansas marketing initiative, Group Travel has, in conjunction with local CVB's and private guides and hosts, hosted six FAM tours, three of which took place in June, 2005. All were successful, and Ms. Hawes distributed copies of written reports, updates and follow-up as submitted by our British associates Roy Graves and David Ezra. Ms. Hawes verified that the UK interest in carp fishing is valid and viable. It is rumored that the state of New York is already hosting carp tournaments, and Group Travel will check into their plans and experiences to determine if this might be an important opportunity for Arkansas. Ms. Hawes reported that upon leaving, the leader of our most recent angling FAM tour stated that he had indeed secured enough product to fill a 7 or 8-day fishing holiday for his company's catalogue.

### **Group Travel Video**

Ms. Hawes showed the new 20-minute motorcoach-targeted Group Travel video to the Commission meeting attendees – the video's first public debut. She noted that Group Travel is working with CJRW (which produced the final product using old and new footage as well as stills shot by CJRW, Chuck Haralson and Amber Garrett) to be deliberate and cost-effective-conscious in determining the number of actual copies (DVD's) to be produced, and at this time the number looks to be around 1200 copies.

### **Other Group Travel News**

Group Travel has hired a new secretary, Ms. Julie Jones. Ms. Hawes indicated the level of support the section and Department stands to gain from this additional staff member and encouraged anyone who comes in contact with Ms. Jones in person or by telephone to welcome her.

### **Communications Section**

#### **Society of American Travel Writers Update (SATW)**

Jana Greenbaum reported on the results so far of stories placed by travel editors that attended the SATW Editors Council Meeting in March. To date, there have been stories placed from these writers that equal an advertising value in excess of \$500,000. The industry standard for determining publicity value is to multiply the advertising rate by a figure between 4 and 7. Using the smaller number in the range, Greenbaum presented a public relations value in excess of \$2 million for these placements. Ms. Greenbaum pointed out that these writers are frequently picked up by the service bureaus, and her contact at the *St. Petersburg Times* had reported to her that previously these stories have run in excess of two dozen times within a year in various publications around the country.

#### **Media Fam Tours**

Ms. Greenbaum reported that during the month of July the Department hosted two travel writers. Robert Montgomery was in Arkansas to fish Lake Millwood, Lake Greeson and the Kings River. Mr. Montgomery's stories will be placed in *Bassmaster* magazine in the future. The second writer, Bill Harper of *Tulsa World*, was in Arkansas as a guest of the commission's executive committee and was here to report on The Natural State Golf Trail. His articles ran in the publication in July. Mr. Harper will be returning on July 29 and his new article will run in the *Tulsa World* on August 15.

#### **Media Report**

Ms. Greenbaum reported that she has been working with Jennifer Wilson of CJRW to pitch and place stories about Arkansas with publications throughout the country. In the past year, publicity efforts have garnered story placement with an advertising value of over \$250,000 and a publicity value (using the same multiplier as the SATW update) of \$1 million.

## **Tourism Development Section**

### **New *Living in Arkansas* publication**

Donna Perrin reported that Arkansas Business Publishing Group recently completed the sixth edition of the publication and 50,000 copies were delivered to the Department warehouse. Arkansas Business has given a two-page summary of new things in the publication which is included in the Commissioners' folders. New features include profiles from people who moved to Arkansas from elsewhere. About one third of them were suggested by Parks and Tourism staff. The cover photo was provided by CJRW and was shot in Fayetteville.

### **Tourism Development Act**

Donna Perrin reported Act 291 of 1997 (Arkansas Tourism Development Act) has been amended, and is now Act 2308 of 2005. Arkansas Department of Economic Development (ADED) administers the program, but it is also accessible on the tourism development portion of Arkansas.com. A summary of the Act is included in the tourism development report distributed in Commission folders. Ms. Perrin said that questions about the program should be referred to her or Michael Alman at ADED. This Act provides incentives for new tourism facilities and attractions such as amusement parks, music shows, and cultural centers, etc.

To qualify a project must (1) cost a minimum of \$500,000 in a high unemployment county or \$1,000,000 in any other county; (2) must be open to the public on a regular basis; (3) must develop a marketing plan that targets at least 25% of its visitors from out-of-state residents; (4) must have a significant and positive economic impact on the state; and (5) must not adversely affect existing employment in the state.

Changes include a minimum \$500,000 in high unemployment counties and \$1,000,000 in other counties to qualify for incentive. Projects that qualify will receive 25 % credit in high unemployment counties, 15% credit in other counties. Mr. Davies said there was a move to do away with the Act and this was a compromise to keep the legislation.

Ms. Perrin reported that the Feasibility Tourism grant application deadline is coming up at end of July. The same amount (\$22,588) is available. At the end of the month, her team will collect applications for the grant for review. This program enables counties to have feasibility studies done regarding tourism in their areas. The grant requires a 50-50 cash match, and does not accept in-kind contributions.

Ms. Perrin set up and presented a new trade show booth to the Commission. The booth displays thirty-three photos.

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

Charles McLemore reported that the good news is all numbers are up in the state in June. Inquiries are up 34.7 % to date. Unfortunately, postage costs are up and literature inventory is low; therefore, his section is trying to be more selective in distributing literature to people who need it.

Mr. Davies clarified the budget breakdown and how inquiries are fulfilled and funded. Maintenance and operation monies are used for fulfillment. The Department had seen a trend of inquiries going down, with not as much maintenance and operation monies needed, so that money was cut way back and moved to advertising. Now inquiries and fulfillment costs have gone up. Nancy Clark now has less maintenance and operational monies than she spent last year. Mr. Davies said that the budget cannot be changed until the next legislative session. Mr. Davies also stated an electronic response will be sent to a portion of the internet pay-per-inquiries for the fall, and Mr. McLemore will do a conversion study to see how the electronic responses convert

### **Inquiry Report**

Mr. McLemore estimated that inquiries could be up approximately 30% for the year. The Research and Information Services Section processed 47,795 requests for information during June, 2005, an increase of 109.3% over June, 2004. The number of inquiries for January – June, 2005 is 255,318, an increase of 34.7% over 2004. Last year the Department saw a 4-5% increase over the previous year. Montine McNulty asked if the Department would order more literature in response to increases in inquiries. Mr. Gaston asked if demand would level off. Mr. McLemore said that he expects demand to increase for another year or two before it begins to level off again. Mr. Davies said perhaps some pieces of literature can be purchased with advertising money. Mr. Davies expects inventory numbers to be determined and reflected in the September presentation. Mr. Lindsey said the Department is looking at big increases in 2% tax because everything is working, and he recommends that the Department avoid decreasing numbers when things are growing. Mr. Gaston said he likes to get literature in addition to having access to information via internet, and likes to have a state map and something to read in the vehicle while traveling. He does not want the Department to rely totally on electronic responses. Mr. McLemore stated that he believes an adjustment in Welcome Center literature distribution will take care of any shortage which might occur.

Mr. McLemore reported that retirement and relocation requests are up, and the Department will need approximately 15,000 more guides than last year.

### **Welcome Center Update**

Three new centers have been dedicated and the fourth formal dedication should be in September in Corning. After several years of slight decline, visitation was up in all centers and doing well for year to date. The Texarkana center is up 21.2%. Corning was up 5.7% for the year, and it has been under construction. Since the new building opened in Corning, the first month's (June) visitation is up 42.8%. Visitation in El Dorado's new Welcome Center was up 102.2% for month of June. The new Van Buren/Fort Smith Center's visitation is up 9.1% for the year and 39.6% for the month of June.

Mr. Rice, Mr. McLemore and staff from the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department traveled to look at potential locations for the three new welcome centers (Blytheville, West Memphis and Lake Village). While they are not through planning, all three of the centers scheduled for new construction might be rebuilt at their current locations.

### **Marketing Report**

#### **2005 Online Media and Creative Recommendation**

A discussion ensued as to whether this proposal should go to the internet sub-committee. Mr. Williams asked about it and Mr. Barnes stated it was his understanding that all internet-related items would go to the internet sub-committee. Mr. Williams mentioned that he tried to clarify last month that this would happen. Mr. Gaston said he doesn't think it is necessary for them to meet on every issue and meetings are a burden on committee members. Mr. Barnes said that the proposal is a six month recommendation for \$320,000 and is not a small issue. Mr. Davies said that technically, Mr. Williams was correct, but that it was his recommendation that Commission listen to the proposal now and in the future the internet committee could address the issues.

**Jim Gaston moved to approve the presentation of the Fall 2005 Online Media Strategy Recommendations. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.**

Karen Mullikin and Bill Fitzgerald reported that the fall online recommendations are made after evaluating the spring campaign. The fall online campaign is set to begin early to mid-August. Brian Kratkiewicz presented last year's program and discussed the recommendation for this year.

Bill Fitzgerald presented the banner ads for fall. The campaign is touting the indoor/outdoor vacation experience. Ads are designed to provide a quick read and taste of what is to come. There are two photos in each ad that show both sides of the creative. There are about 15 sizes and shapes of each ad that will be used. Regular banner ads are clickable anywhere on the ad.

### **Landing Pages**

Brian Kratkiewicz recommended testing three versions of a landing page to serve as the destination for users who click one version of the creative. The page would contain brief copy inviting the user into Arkansas.com at entry points mentioned in the banner ad (i.e., specific activity such as golf or fishing). Mr. Kratkiewicz will track clicks through the landing page to determine if this tactic increases visitation to the site. One out of the seven ads placed online will link to a landing page instead of the Arkansas.com home page. This tactic will provide information relevant to what users are choosing and direct them to additional information about that topic on the site.

Every ad does not link to the home page. If a banner is placed on ESPN Outdoors, for example, it would take the user to the outdoor section on the Web site. Seventy per cent of the ads go to the home page. Landing pages provide another option. Mr. Davies said landing pages are a way to rearrange organization of the Department's site without having to reorganize the site itself.

New tracking software currently being implemented will provide information as to where users go. Marla Johnson Norris said that cookie blockers will not affect tracking because tracking is link-based. Pictures on landing pages can be made clickable. Aristotle will turn the exit survey on for this. Only one of the test instruments will advertise the vacation kit. The logo at the top can also be clickable and take the user to the home page of Arkansas.com.

Mr. Kratkiewicz said point roll ads are seeing high click through rates. These ads cost more to produce, but no more to place, and will be designed to promote hot deals and packages. Mr. Arrison said that he doesn't care for banner ads. He prefers search engine optimization and key word buys.

CJRW stated that the conversion rate for the online campaign as a whole was 52.5%. The rate for vacation kits alone was 52.8%.

### **Electronic Fulfillment Component**

Karen Mullkin said because inquiries for the Vacation Planning Kit are up substantially over projections for the year, it is being recommended an electronic fulfillment be utilized for some of the pay-per-inquiry sites. When users see our logo and a sentence offering free

information about Arkansas on an ad, they will click to receive it. The vendor confirms they want the information before sending the leads to CJRW and Aristotle. Aristotle will send an e-mail message with a response similar to the one distributed to the Commission. Mr. Kratkiewicz stated that all vendors can provide the information in the format Aristotle needs. Mr. McLemore will do electronic conversion studies when the project concludes.

The Fall 2005 Online Media Budget includes (1) Mass Sites—Yahoo at \$50,000; AOL at \$49,996; Accuweather at \$39,800; (2) Performance Sites—Away Network at \$17,750; CoolSavings at \$9,999; ValueClick at \$40,000; 24-7 Vacations at \$464; Innovation Ads at \$30,000; AJ Interactive/Excite at \$18,000; Relationserve (new) at \$20,000; (3) Niche Sites—AwayNetwork at \$25,275; Wildernet at \$5,000; GORP Birdwatching at \$5,000; Audubon.com at \$5,000 Coleman Outernet at \$0 (previously approved); Golflink.com at \$4,500 for a budget total of \$320,784.

Mr. Williams inquired about the total cost of the buy - including production. Karen Mullikin stated that production charges should be about \$16,300. Aristotle's charge for the three landing pages will cost about \$5,000. CJRW production costs are reflected in spring/summer presentation in September. They can also show this total in the fall if needed. Mr. Davies said it would be a good idea to show production costs for fall this year. Total budget, including media placement should be about \$343,000.

**Billy Lindsey moved to approve the Fall 2005 Online Media Budget of \$320,784. Ness Sechrest seconded and the motion passed.**

Mr. Williams inquired about the source for the glossary of terms for online marketing, and asked if these terms were to be used in the future. The glossary was designed by CJRW, and will be used for future reference.

Mr. Sechrest asked how difficult it would be for CJRW and Aristotle to show us how much time they spend that they don't bill for. He also said there is always staff time on everything. Mr. Rice thinks production costs are significant, but Tourism staff time might be burdensome to include because the staff is paid for this. Mr. Gaston said that on major projects it is interesting to know how much staff time is used. Mr. Davies used Destination Arkansas as an example. He said that the costs of bringing participants for a familiarization tour from the United Kingdom are paid from the Destination Arkansas budget. Once here, Group Travel's budget pays for handling the tour of Arkansas. Mr. Davies suggested that the Commission doesn't need to know how many hours are spent, but who might be the one from Parks & Tourism working on a project.

Shelby Woods said there is a tremendous amount of Tourism staff time involved in all of their projects. Staff spends time updating group travel planner. Staff writes the tour guide copy to ensure it is equitable to the industry. CJRW can break down to the last dollar what was spent, staff time, outside vendor cost, etc. and can provide Commissioners with documentation.

### **The Natural State Golf Trail Update**

Jim Shamburger reported that the Natural State Golf Trail Committee will meet next week to review new applications from courses interested in joining the trail. Mr. Shamburger reported five courses have applied: Mountain Ranch at Fairfield Bay, Glenwood Country Club, Eagle Crest at Alma, Tannenbaum at Drasco, and Eagle Mountain at Batesville. All of the courses meet criteria, and evaluations will determine if they will be allowed to join. All trail courses from last year have reapplied for the coming year. He also said that the feedback he is receiving indicates that the Golf Trail is working for participants. The Committee gets monthly sales reports from Fairways Golf and Arkansas seems to be ahead of Louisiana when comparing the same initial time frame for the two trails.

### **2005 Trail of Holiday Lights Brochure Recommendation**

Karen Mullikin presented the 2005 Trail of Holiday Lights recommendation. She said that the brochure will once again be the main component of the program. It will feature a state map with participating communities, descriptions of the lighting displays across Arkansas and four-color photography to showcase the state's sites. The Department has implemented the Trail of Holiday Lights for nine years and the goals and objectives have not changed. One of the objectives is to get people to move around the state during the holidays and generate in-state travel. The recommendation is to print 150,000 copies of the brochure at a cost of \$33,500. The partners for this year's project will be Shell, Coulson Oil and Bank of America. There will be more than 81 Shell stations carrying the brochure this year. The Department pays extra to Alexander for including the brochure in the vacation planning kit. Ms. Clark said the cost of the initial mailing is about \$1,000 and another \$1,000 is spent to drop ship to Welcome Centers and to fulfill second requests from chambers, etc. for brochures.

**Jim Shamburger moved to approve the recommendation to print 150,000 copies of the 2005 Holiday Lights Brochure at a cost of \$33,500. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Miscellaneous**

Billy Lindsey reminded the Commission and staff that a legislative caucus will be held at Lindsey's Rainbow Resort on September 21-22, 2005.

## **PARKS DIVISION**

### **Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area – Update on multi-use trail**

Greg Butts said he felt he had a solution to move forward on the proposed rule that would give the Commission authority over time to make adjustments in trail usage without having to change the rule. Regarding the status of the trails at the Visitor Center zone; staff from the Natural Heritage Commission are meeting with park staff to commence the natural resource review for both the Watcheable Wildlife Trail and the multi-use study trail area. More information will be available at the August meeting. The Watcheable Wildlife Trail can be built pretty quickly. The multi-use trail traverses rough terrain and there are concerns and issues about construction and long-term maintenance. Mr. Butts said he had a suggestion for the proposed regulation on managing the multi-use trail during hunting seasons. Over time, there needs to be the flexibility for some of the trails to remain open during hunting seasons. The revised proposed regulation uses the wording *designated trails* which would allow the Commission to determine in the future which trails would be closed and which would remain open during hunting seasons. The two permit hunts (modern gun and muzzle load) will remain approximately five days in length. Mr. Butts suggested adding the words *approximately five days* in the event the number of days for the permit hunts change in the future for herd management. Also, the number of permits could be increased from the current 150 to 170, 200, etc., in lieu of changing the number of days, based on Arkansas Game & Fish Commission's decision.

**Jim Gaston moved to approve changing Policy Directive 3070 to include the wording: Designated trails within open hunting zones at HSP-CA will be closed to all users except hunters during the modern gun hunt (approximately five days), the muzzle load hunt (approximately five days), and mornings until 12:00 p.m. noon during the spring turkey season. Billy Lindsey seconded and the motion carried.**

Wade Williams said that the way the policy directive is worded, it leaves most options open. Mr. Butts said separate Commission actions could be taken on the current 18 miles of multi-use trail on whether or not it be open or closed during hunting seasons. Even with approval with the full regulation a separate commission motion could direct staff to postpone implementing all or part of the approved regulation until additional trail is constructed.

**Debbie Haak moved to close the 18-mile multi-use trail at Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area, the Pigeon Roost and Shaddox Hollow trails to all users except hunters during the modern gun hunt (approximately five days) and the muzzle load hunt (approximately five days) and remain open to all users during the spring turkey season. Montine McNulty seconded the motion.**

Wade Williams asked what other trails currently exist at the park. Mr. Butts said it was the staff recommendation that Pigeon Roost and Shaddox Hollow trails also be closed during hunting seasons because they are located in the hunting areas. The 150 yard from center line rule will apply to the Historic Van Winkle Trail (hunting will not be permitted in a 300 yard corridor along the trail). In the future additional trails that will be open during hunting seasons will include the four-mile Watcheable Wildlife Trail in the Visitor Center zone with the first phase being started in August that will be approximately 1 ½ miles in length.

**Wade Williams moved to amend the motion that the closure not take place until a minimum of four miles of hiking trails are available in areas that would remain open during hunting seasons. Bill Barnes seconded the amendment.**

Ms. Haak said she would agree with Mr. Williams except that she was trying to come up with a compromise solution. There are 150 hunters and thousands of taxpayers that should have access. Ms. Haak said she wanted to provide a good experience for everybody. But when it is said that within 12,000 acres a place cannot be found for horseback riding or all-terrain vehicles or hikers because during a certain time there will be hunters on the park – it does not make sense and the Commissioners are not being good stewards of funds or the land that belongs to the state.

Richard Davies said when the state took over the Hobbs property it was discussed how it would be divided between Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, Arkansas State Parks, Arkansas Forestry Commission and the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission. The decision was made that state parks had more flexibility in rule making and land management, and could make arrangements for other uses within its authority. There isn't any other place like Hobbs in the park system where considerations for hunters need to be made. Mr. Davies asked how long it would be before four miles of hiking trails would be available in the park. Stan Graves said, subject to the outcome of the Visitor Center trail study area, it would be April 2006. Mr. Butts said our mission is preservation, conservation of natural and cultural resources, and about providing quality recreational and educational experiences and tourism. Our job is also about protecting people from the resources, the resources from the people and people from each other. The park system offers other alternatives to hikers, bikers and horseback riders. The 1981 state park plan noted that no one state park has to or should accomplish all the recreational needs of citizens and visitors. That was the basis for staff's recommendation for Hobbs. Ms. Haak said she thought before it was safety. Mr. Butts said, all along, it has been safety issues, parks' mission which includes quality recreational experiences for all visitors. Mr. Williams said he was not asking that a trail be built that was not already planned, but that before the general public was deprived of the use of the park, that a minimum level of year-round access be created for them. Mr. Williams said he was not opposed to having the trails closed half days during the spring turkey season as long as other guests were not excluded. If there is the desire to build the trail it may be able to be done in less than nine months. If the Commission prohibits the closing of the other trails until the four-mile hiking trail is built, perhaps adequate resources could be shifted to have it completed prior to hunting seasons this year. Mr. Gaston asked what purpose it

served for staff to say the trail could not be completed until April. If staff said it couldn't be completed until April, Mr. Gaston said he felt that it could not be built until April 2006. Jay Bunyard asked if the turkey season issue was irrelevant since the trail would be open in April. Mr. Davies said Commissioner Haak's motion would keep the trail open for all users during spring turkey season. Mr. Bunyard asked if the four to six mile hiking trail would be built before the start of turkey season. Mr. Graves said it would probably not be built by then. The projected completion date of the multi-use trail in the Visitor Center area is April 26, 2006. Mr. Bunyard said he was trying to differentiate between what staff recommended and the motion. Mr. Davies said the motion does not close the trail during turkey season.

**A vote was taken on the amendment. It failed to pass with a vote of five in favor of the amendment and eight voting against the amendment.**

**A vote was taken on the motion. The motion carried with nine voting in favor of the motion and four voting against the motion.**

#### **Crater of Diamonds State Park - Removal of shed from inventory**

Stan Graves said a new clean-up shed with a concrete pad foundation is under construction at the park making the old structure obsolete and posing a safety hazard. Mr. Graves requested approved to remove the old shed from inventory.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve removing the old clean-up pavilion # 23.16 (AASIS #120001772) from inventory at Crater of Diamonds State Park. Wade Williams seconded and the motion carried.**

#### **Ozark Folk Center - Update on park operations**

Grady Spann, General Manager of the Ozark Folk Center (OFC), updated the Commissioners on the status of the various elements of the plan to "Broaden the Appeal" of the park. Highlights of Mr. Spann's report included: there has been an average increase of 31 guests per evening shows over last year, the ability to purchase Celebrity Concert tickets on-line has been well received, corporate sponsorships are being solicited, more interpretation of the music and instruments is becoming a part of evening performances, major maintenance funds will be available to upgrade lighting in the auditorium during the winter season, a very beneficial workshop was held for crafts demonstrators to increase their skills in marketing and selling their products, to-date 14 booths have been reserved for the *Fall Crafts Fair Weekend*, there has been an increase in radio and print media advertising in a one and two-hour radius drive of the park, underwriting Garrison Keeler's radio program, key words and phrases have been added to the website – Aristotle has been gathering statistics on impact which has been very successful. From May 13 until May 31, 2005 there were 251,000 impressions. Following inclusion of the key words and phrases there was a tremendous increase in impressions. During the period from June

1 until June 30, 2005 there were 634,000. An information kiosk is being assembled and will in place in town by the end of August, restaurant staff is wearing *Ask me about.....* buttons advertising upcoming shows and events in the park and tickets are available at restaurant front desk, and the park was closed 12 additional days in June as compared to June 2004 but revenues were up \$13,918. Mr. Spann also gave an overview of plans for the future which includes the children's garden the Committee of 100 will help fund and extending the season.

Steve Arrison asked what the operating deficit had been the previous year. Mr. Spann said it was \$1.2 million. Jim Shamburger said revenues were up approximately \$116,000 and he was glad the revenue was heading in the right direction. Mr. Spann said the deficit was reduced approximately \$110,000. The OFC's greatest challenge currently is that it needs to be re-introduced to Arkansans.

Stan Graves said part of the plan to "Broaden the Appeal" is reconfiguring the entrance to the craft grounds through the auditorium to enhance the visitor's experience and provide better orientation to the park. Mr. Graves displayed architectural drawings of different ways the auditorium entry and hallways could be changed.

Wade Williams asked if the amount stated to make the changes as shown on drawing "C" (\$334,677) was for construction only. Mr. Graves said that figure was just for construction and did not include anything for exhibits. It had hoped that the existing corridor could have been used and the changes made with park staff. Mr. Graves said there currently is no funding designated for this project. Perhaps an Arkansas Natural & Cultural Resource Council (ANCRC) grant could be requested in the FY2007 grant cycle, or when the next biennium projects are reviewed, this project could be considered. Jim Shamburger said this would be a good ANCRC project. Bill Barnes asked how this space would be used later if a new Visitor Center was constructed at the entrance to the park. Mr. Graves said it could be used for workshops. Danny Ford said the current lower parking level entry to the park is confusing, and suggested that a map of buildings and facilities could be posted to help guests become oriented to the park when they first enter. Debbie Haak said she had entered the craft grounds from the Administration Building and found it difficult to locate the gift shop. It would be helpful if there was a map at each craft shop with its location noted on the map so guests would know where they were in the park. Mr. Butts said that would be easy to accomplish. Ms. Haak said she found the craft grounds to be drab – there is nothing to stimulate the guest upon entry. Also, it is difficult to determine whether or not a craft shop is open. Ms. Haak suggested that a flag could be flown at each building that says it is open. Lynn Warren suggested that the flags could be personalized with the symbol of the craft being demonstrated in the shop. Mr. Shamburger said the new blue directional signs throughout the park are excellent. Regarding changing the auditorium entry, Bill Barnes said he was concerned about spending almost \$400,000 modifying the building when the funds could be spent in other ways at the park. However, the auditorium modifications proposed are the best option with what staff has to work with in the park. Mr. Spann said another benefit to the proposed changes is that guests to the craft grounds would see

the auditorium and lighted stage as they enter. It would cross-sell another activity and encourage guests to stay for the evening performances. Mr. Barnes said that was an excellent point. Jim Gaston said the Commission had taken an active stand on turning the OFC around. It cannot be done with just management; there has to be facilities supporting management.

**Jim Gaston moved to approve Plan C of the proposed changes in the entry to the auditorium at the Ozark Folk Center, and consider putting the outdoor deck/pavilion back into the plan. Ness Sechrest seconded and the motion carried.**

Mr. Graves said the park has a landscaping plan for the lodge that would require \$647,000 to implement. The plan includes irrigation and improving the patios. Mr. Graves said that perhaps staff could select some of the salient features of the plan do the work in-house this winter. Ms. Haak said the current patios outside the lodge rooms could be made more usable with the addition of furniture. Guests want to congregate outside when the weather is pleasant. Mr. Shamburger suggested that two or three small gazebos could serve that purpose. Ms. Haak said the lodge rooms are dark and suggested that some of the drapes be left open. Other suggestions were to put a higher wattage bulb in the lamp by the chairs and table for guests who wish to read and to add a small, narrow table in the bathroom where guests can set personal items. Polly Crews asked if a bus ran to pick up guests at the lodge. Mr. Spann said guests are told when they check in that if they need transportation, to call the lodge office and a bus would be dispatched to pick them up. Mr. Barnes suggested that information of that kind be posted in the guest rooms. Mr. Butts said transportation information could be added to the binder that lists guests' services that is in each room. Referring to the previous evening's show, Ms. Haak said it needs more audience participation and information on the instruments that are being played. Mr. Spann said staff had discussed putting exhibits of both instruments and crafts in the back portion of the auditorium. The modifications that have been approved will include those exhibits. Polly Crews suggested that the hand railing along the walkway to the accessible lodge room be extended to the room. Ms. Haak said the second half of the previous evening's performance was much better than the first half. There needs to be a better mix of performers. Mr. Spann said staff is working on ways to improve the shows next season. Every performance is video taped and performers are given a copy so they can analyze themselves. Mr. Shamburger asked how many paid guests did it take to break even on an evening performance. Mr. Spann it was a little over 100 full price guests for a regular show.

### **Mt. Magazine State Park - Construction Update**

Stan Graves showed photographs of the lodge and cabins that are under construction at the park. Jim Shamburger asked if the exposed piping he saw in one of the photographs of the lodge was duck work. Mr. Graves said it was. Mr. Shamburger asked if it could not have been put in the floor and added that he did not remember it being in the plans the way it was showing in the photograph. Mr. Graves said he did not realize the duck work was not in the floor until

just recently and felt it could have been constructed in a heating/cooling chase. Mr. Shamburger said he could not believe it was exposed that way. Mr. Graves said he felt staff should have noticed it during plan review. It will be painted and will blend with the ceiling. There is also some sprinkler piping that will have to be painted. Wade Williams asked what the architect said about the exposed duck work. Mr. Graves said he had not had the opportunity to speak with the architect yet. Bill Barnes asked if it was too late to change it. Mr. Graves said it was. Mr. Shamburger suggested that if it didn't look good after it was painted, perhaps it could be encased with something that looked like logs. Debbie Haak asked if reservations were being taken yet. Greg Butts said park staff had a list of people who wanted to make a reservation. It is planned that reservations would start in April 2006. Mr. Shamburger said without good climate control in the swimming pool area, the chemicals in the water will corrode the piping. Ms. Crews asked what could be done about the exposed duck work. Mr. Graves there wasn't anything that could be done at this point except to paint it. Mr. Butts said trying to enclose it with wood may draw more attention to it. Ms. Crews asked about the architect attending a Commission meeting to talk about the duck work. Mr. Shamburger said there wasn't any excuse for it being exposed. Ms. Crews said that since it turns out that the architect is making an additional \$750,000 because of an earlier error on square footage, he should answer to the Commission for this error. Mr. Butts said the project went through a review process by the department and Arkansas Building Authority (ABA) and everyone had plans for review and comment. Though it was not what was expected, the architect was not instructed to hide the duck work; therefore, he is under no legal obligation to do anything about it now. Mr. Shamburger said he should have known; that is why an architect is hired. Mr. Williams said we are now finding out from Commissioner Shamburger that having the duck work in the swimming pool area will add to maintenance costs. Why was it put there to start with? Mr. Williams asked if the architect could answer that question. Mr. Butts said he would discuss these issues with the architect and have a report for the Commission. Mr. Shamburger asked if ABA shouldn't have caught it. Mr. Graves said the exposed duck work is standard building practice for many commercial establishments, including restaurants. A lot of time was spent in programming meetings with the architect talking about the vision of what the lodge should be – the CCC rustic flavor that needed to be retained. Mr. Graves said that is where common sense comes in – having the duck work exposed doesn't work in that structure. Mr. Davies said that for all the money that was spent on the tongue-in-groove vaulted ceiling with the exposed log beams, having the duck work conflicts with CCC era architecture. Ms. Haak said she understood the exposed sprinkler piping but not the duck work being visible.

### **Proposed CY2006 Fees & Rates**

Greg Butts said this meeting starts the process to review and approve fees and rates for CY2006. During the August meeting the proposed fees will be discussed in detail followed by a preliminary vote by the Commission. The public meeting will take place at the September meeting followed by the final decision by the Commission. More information will be available at the August meeting on the lodges and a depreciation schedule. Mr. Butts asked the Commissioners to bring the packet of information back with them to the August meeting.

### **Delta Heritage Trail State Park - Update on removal of rail**

Greg Butts said that during the May 20-21, 2004 meeting the Commission approved removing the excursion train option from the 1997 Master Plan, and to dispose of approximately 31.6 miles of rail. During that meeting, presentations were made by Brian Holtz with Arkansas Midland Railroad (AMR) and John Lipton, president of the Southeast Arkansas Regional Intermodal Authority (SARIA), who proposed that AMR be given the rail in exchange for building trail after the rail, ties, spikes, etc., were removed. The rail would be used to improve AMR's short track from Warren to Yellow Bend. Following their presentations, the Commission moved to develop a recommendation for presentation to the Commission regarding the disposal of the rail. Approval from the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (ASHTD) and the Federal Highway Administration, was requested for the proposed exchange. Appraisals on the rail came in from \$1.6 million to \$3.3 million and a certificate of disposal from ASHTD was received. Based on statutes on how the ASHTD disposes of real property, which includes the rail, ties, etc., we cannot transfer the rail to AMR in exchange for labor or services. Part of the statutes include giving the original owner, Union Pacific Railroad, 60 days to re-acquire the rails. Union Pacific Railroad said they were interested. Both Mr. Lipton and Mr. Holtz have been informed that the law will not allow the trade with AMR or SARIA. Mr. Butts asked for approval to proceed with bidding the rail for sale.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve permitting staff to begin the bidding process for the sale of approximately 33 miles of rail at the Delta Heritage Trail State Park. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.**

Jim Gaston said when the rail is sold; he hoped it would not be sold to China. Richard Davies said the Department did not have an option – the bidding process must be open to everyone. We have tried to work out a solution with SARIA and AMR; however, the law is clear that the rail must be put out for bid. Mr. Butts said, from the park's prospective, this is a great opportunity to have funds to construct a significant amount of trail.

### **National Association of State Park Directors - Annual Information Exchange (AIX)**

Greg Butts called the Commissioners' attention to a summary in of the AIX report that lets us look at our system against other park systems across the country, though it is an apples-to-oranges comparison. The entire 55-page report was not copied, but if a Commissioner wants a copy it will be mailed to them.

### **Capital Improvements Quarterly Report**

Stan Graves said during the fourth quarter (April, May and June 2005) there were \$2,310,000 in projects underway throughout the park system in addition to \$35,047,999 for the Mt. Magazine lodge and cabin project. Projects funded by Amendment 75 (1/8¢ Conservation

Tax) funds completed or underway total \$84.5 million. Mr. Graves said some major campground projects have recently been completed at Withrow Springs (a new campground), renovations at Village Creek; Petit Jean campground renovations will be completed in the next few months and Area A at Lake Ouachita is underway.

### **Miscellaneous**

Greg Butts called the Commissioners' attention to the booklet on the *Diamond Discovery Center* at Crater of Diamonds State Park, and a newspaper article about the media event that took place when the center opened June 28<sup>th</sup>. Today's THV aired coverage on the Ozark Folk Center July 21<sup>st</sup>, and KATV had coverage on construction of the lodge and cabins at Mt. Magazine State Park.

Mac Balkman said there had been a storm July 21<sup>st</sup> at Lake Catherine State Park. A triplex used for employee quarters was struck by lightning causing extensive damage. An insurance estimator will visit the park and give us a report. Mr. Balkman said it was fortunate that no one was living in the portion of the building that was struck – it was being used for storage.

Jim Shamburger asked the status of the Bauer land acquisition at Pinnacle Mountain State Park. Mr. Butts said the process on approvals had just begun with Legislative Council, the Department of Finance & Administration and the Governor. Acquisitions not previously authorized by the legislature must go through an approval process.

### **Village Creek State Park**

Debbie Haak asked for an update on the lodge and golf course project at the park. Greg Butts said a meeting is scheduled July 27<sup>th</sup> with Wellington International, Andy Dye, Pete Hoover and others. Cruise & Associates will be the financing avenue for taxable bonds. Wellington is anxious and ready to move forward with the project. Mr. Butts said the cultural and natural resource surveys still need to be completed.

### **Lake Ouachita State Park**

Commissioner Christenson thanked staff for inviting her to attend the July 1<sup>st</sup> 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of Lake Ouachita State Park. Ms. Christenson said she and her family had stayed in one of the new cabins which was wonderful and they enjoyed it very much.

### **Bull Shoals-White River State Park**

Jim Gaston said he had talked with Tracy King regarding the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers campground near the new Visitor Center, and asked him to update the Commission on

what he learned about the park. Superintendent King said the dam site park is approximately 23 acres and has 35 campsites. At some point there would need to be some improvements. There is 30-amp electricity at each site; it has a group shelter, basketball court and a bathhouse. The property has a boat ramp which would give the park access to the lake, which is something the park does not have right now. A lot of the business at this campground is from the park's overflow demand. Jim Shamburger said he felt the area would enhance the Visitor Center and it would be great to have as part of the park. Greg Butts said he agreed that lake access was needed. Staff would need to look at the campground from an operational standpoint – the projected revenues and costs and then come back to the Commission with that information. Mr. Shamburger said with the connection it has to the Visitor Center; usage will grow.

### **Park Ranger Firearm Policy**

Jim Gaston said he would like staff to review the policy. Mr. Gaston said he felt Park Rangers should be able to carry a back-up weapon on or off-duty because in many areas the Rangers are law enforcement for the area. Greg Butts said staff had discussed the policy in recent years. The ammunition for the personal weapons would have to be compatible with the primary duty weapon. Wade Williams said he thought the law permitted commissioned officers to carry a weapon off-duty. Mac Balkman said that was correct but there are some jurisdictional issues that needed to be reviewed. The only time our commissioned law enforcement officers can go out of the park is when they are requested by the county sheriff or state police to assist in a situation. Mr. Williams said Mr. Gaston is not saying they should be given jurisdictional authority outside the park. Mr. Butts said currently Park Rangers are only authorized to carry their primary duty weapon while on-duty. Off-duty, they do not have to have a concealed weapon permit to carry their own weapon. The discussion is about having a back-up weapon while on-duty. Bill Barnes said officers need to be able to carry their duty-weapon off-duty. Mr. Butts said the purpose of the weapon for Park Rangers is their job at the park – not at Wal-Mart. Mr. Gaston asked staff to look at all the options; however, we should be as liberal as possible for our trained officers. Mr. Butts said staff would research other agencies' policies.

The State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m. on July 22, 2005 at the Ozark Folk Center State Park in Mountain View, Arkansas.