

MINUTES

State Parks, Recreation & Travel Commission DeGray Lake Resort State Park - Arkansas September 15-16, 2005

Commissioners Present

Jane Christenson, Chairman - Thurs. Only
Bill Barnes
Polly Crews
Billy Lindsey – Thurs. Only
Mike Mills
Steve Arrison – Thurs. Only
Montine McNulty

Jim Shamburger, Vice Chairman
Danny Ford – Thurs. Only
Wade Williams
Jay Bunyard
Jim Gaston
Ness Sechrest

Commissioners Absent

Debbie Haak – Personal Conflict

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
Joan Ellison, Public Relations Officer
Donna Perrin, Manager, Tourism Development
Jana Greenbaum, Communications Manager
Melinda Hawes, Group Travel Manager
Jon Brown, Region I Supervisor
Tony Perrin, Region II Supervisor
Marcel Hanzlik, Region III Supervisor
Jim Cannon, Region IV Supervisor
Charles McLemore, Director, Research Information Services
Chris Snodgrass, Superintendent, DeGray Lake Resort State Park
Lee Howard, Superintendent, Lake Ouachita State Park
Gloria Robins, Executive Assistant
Sandy Burch, Administrative Assistant

Agency Staff Present

Shelby Woods
Karen Mullikin
Kay Medlin
Debbie Grace
Greg Harrison
Kelli McCrary
Erin Helms

Wayne Woods
Bill Fitzgerald
Brian Kratkiewicz
Chuck Robertson
Nancy Ferrara
Jennifer Morgan

Aristotle

Marla Johnson Norris
Paige Watson

Jonathan Eudy

Guests Present

Claude Legris, Ft. Smith CVB
Laurie Green, Little Rock CVB
Barry Travis, Little Rock CVB

Call to Order

Chairman Christenson called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and Gloria Robins called the roll.

Approval of the Agenda

Billy Lindsey moved to approve the agenda. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.

Presentation of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Montine McNulty moved to approve the Minutes. Wade Williams seconded and the motion carried.

Recognition of Guests

Chairman Christenson recognized and welcomed guests in attendance.

Financial Report

Larry Cargile presented a financial report for the fiscal year-to-date period ended August 31, 2005. The expenditures were: Parks Division, \$9,782,497, including construction and grants; Tourism Division, \$2,503,601; Keep Arkansas Beautiful, \$42,136; Administration Division, \$413,942; and History Commission, \$278,763. Expenditures for the Department totaled \$13,020,939. The Parks Division operating revenue totaled \$3,660,677, an increase of 7% over the same period last fiscal year.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve the Financial Report as presented.
Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Legislative Dinner – September 22nd at Lindsey's

Richard Davies reported the Legislative Joint Performance Review Committee will be meeting in Heber Springs on September 21-23. The Arkansas Tourism Development Foundation will host dinner for the Legislators on Thursday evening. On Friday morning, September 23, the Parks and Tourism Divisions will update Legislators on state parks and tourism in Arkansas.

Hurricane Katrina Report

Richard Davies said Arkansas had two waves of hurricane Katrina evacuees from the Gulf Coast. The first group of people drove here on their own and checked into hotels, motels and state park lodges and cabins. The second group were evacuees who had been unable to leave the areas on their own and had weathered the storm in the Convention Center and Super Dome in New Orleans. Mr. Davies gave an overview of events as the evacuees arrived at Ft. Chaffee and were then sent to church camps and shelters around the state. Our Park Rangers and Superintendents helped with security at Fort Chaffee when a large group arrived and the Governor's staff worked a-round-the-clock in coordinating housing and transportation to camps and shelters. Mr. Davies and Montine McNulty described programs that are being implemented nation-wide for long-term housing. Ms. McNulty said a number of facilities in Arkansas had applied to FEMA for assistance and that hotels and restaurants around the state worked together to accommodate the needs of the evacuees.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

2005-2006 Annual Marketing Presentation

Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods (CJRW) presented the 2005-2006 Annual Marketing Proposal to the members of the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission on Thursday, September 15. Last year, the campaign focused on "Expanding the Brand." This year, it's a

brand new day for The Natural State brand, for the marketing program and for the Arkansas tourism industry. Anchored by “The Indoor/Outdoor Vacation” strategy, this comprehensive marketing program showcases all that is unique and enjoyable about Arkansas. It pushes the Arkansas message out to key audiences in ways that are contemporary, vibrant, memorable and compelling. “The Natural State” is still a powerful brand position and message, and one that continues to nurture and broadcast with positive effect. Brand new marketing, advertising, promotional, public relations and communications strategies and tactics will position The Natural State as the ideal place for an ideal vacation – The indoor/Outdoor Vacation. “Arkansas Marketing: a BRAND new day” is the theme for the 2005-2006 Marketing Presentation.

The following strategies will be utilized in an effort to expand the “Natural State” brand:

- Continue to expand “The Natural State” brand through advertising images of scenic natural beauty contrasted with diverse activities, using the idea of the Indoor/Outdoor Vacation.
- Address these target audiences: Generation X (25-34) with and without children; Boomers (45-55) with high incomes, with and without children; and Seniors (55+) with high incomes, without children.
- Create awareness among special interest audiences, including motorcyclists, birdwatchers, golfers, and others using proven publicity tactics.
- Promote more heavily those aspects of Arkansas that are unique to The Natural State, including diverse cuisine, eclectic music and especially friendly natives.
- Take online ad campaigns to the next level with more video in the ads and wider placement of the Arkansas message on the Web.
- Try to reach persons headed to Arkansas for meetings, conventions, reunions, sporting events, etc., before they arrive, with an invitation to extend their stays.
- Present Arkansas as a value option for vacations that would cost more elsewhere, such as for spas, golf, shopping, etc.
- Optimize the attention brought to Arkansas by the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker sighting to build awareness of the overall birdwatching/watchable wildlife product among those who previously didn’t consider coming here.
- Continue to build golf travel through The Natural State Golf Trail, working with Fairways Golf and other partners to promote the state to those who seek out this specific activity.
- Re-invite fishermen who have purchased out-of-state fishing licenses here in the past to return to Arkansas for a vacation.
- Increase awareness and invite more multi-cultural audiences to vacation in Arkansas, including African-Americans, Hispanics and other ethnic groups.
- Continue to prepare for and promote international visitation.
- Build on the excitement generated by the new Clinton Presidential Center to encourage Little Rock visitors to travel the state, extending their stays.

- Seek out partners in tourism to create win-win promotions that meet our objectives, while maintaining existing partnerships.
- Incorporate research results, including the ImagePlus Study and the Department’s research data, in every promotional effort.
- Continue to invite Arkansas to travel the state through advertising and publicity programs.
- Invite meeting and reunion attendees and motorcoach tour travelers to Arkansas.
- Add e-mail marketing tactics to proactively close the sale.
- Send creative viral e-mails to reach the younger audience whose members may not receive Arkansas’s message through traditional advertising.
- Increase positive editorial coverage through intensive feature placement efforts and FAM tours.
- Continue keeping the Arkansas tourism industry informed through newsletters and special bulletins throughout the year.

Recommended programs for the 2005/2006 Fiscal Year include the 2006 Spring/Summer Consumer Campaign, the Arkansas Vacation Planning Kit, national media support, multicultural marketing, national/in-state publicity efforts, See Arkansas First, the Natural State Golf Trail, the Arkansas Fishing Trail, Destination: Arkansas, Trail of Holiday Lights, Arkansas Image Book, the 2006 Spring/Summer Group Travel, and the 2006 Spring/Summer Newcomers Campaign.

The budget for the 2005/2006 Annual Tourism Marketing Plan is as follows:

Research	\$ 134,420.00
National Publicity and Communications	\$ 52,922.00
In-State Publicity and Communications	\$ 22,800.00
Media	\$ 5,734,502.00
Newspaper	\$ 684,642.00
Radio	\$ 35,294.00
Television	\$ 2,273,182.00
Magazine	\$ 2,078,043.00
Online	\$ 650,000.00
Outdoor	\$ 13,341.00
Golf Trail	\$ 54,890.00
Fishing Trail	\$ 77,083.00
See Arkansas First	\$ 56,055.00
Trail of Holiday Lights	\$ 37,350.00
Destination: Arkansas	\$ 110,250.00
Group Travel Marketing	\$ 234,241.00
Broadcast/Print/Collateral Production	\$ 575,495.00

Image Book	\$ 62,500.00
Photography	\$ 25,000.00
Vacation Planning Kit Production	\$ 10,000.00
2005 Arkansas Tour Guide	\$ 535,000.00
Contingency	\$ 100,000.00
Earned Discounts*	\$ (\$71,865.00)
TOTAL	\$ 7,750,643.00
Newcomers Campaign	\$ 198,619.00
TOTAL Including Newcomers	\$ 7,949,262.00

*A benefit of the contract between Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods and the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism is a one percent discount on all media placement after the expenditure of one million dollars and a two percent discount after the second million.

Jane Christenson opened the floor to the commissioners for discussion. Chairman Christenson remarked that the music was the best ever used in the ads. She asked why in some ads the leaf was in the box and in others only a single leaf. Nancy Ferrara explained that the entire icon with the leaf in the frame is used where there is an indoor/outdoor vacation message. In the ads that are not necessarily a vacation, i.e. golf trail, and relocation, a single leaf will be used to give it a natural look.

Ms. Ferrara explained the icon is used to brand the campaign. Once you brand a campaign you own it or take further ownership of the concept. The frame and leaf illustrate the indoor/outdoor in a graphic way. The frame represents art, museums, and indoor activities, and the leaf represents the outdoor activities.

Mike Mills asked if the in-state newspaper insert drop was in the Pulaski edition of the Arkansas Democrat only. He was concerned the insert was being left out of the Northwest Arkansas edition. Greg Harrison stated the insert would be distributed in the Benton County Daily Record and the Northwest Arkansas Time both owned by the Democrat Gazette.

Jim Gaston stated he liked the program and theme but had some concerns with the branding of the indoor/outdoor logo. He would also like to see more or larger pictures and use the "Arkansas is a Natural" logo at the top. He asked why *Active Years* advertising was cut back when we need to keep our in-state visitors. He would like to see the agency restore the advertising in *Active Years*. Joe David Rice stated the Department and Agency would come back next month with a proposal for *Active Years*.

Polly Crews and Bill Barnes agreed type needed to be bigger on the call to action message. Mr. Barnes suggested changing or rewording the copy in the ads where it mentions “surprisingly high quality of life.” Barry Travis also suggested the rewording of “low crime” in the Newcomers ads.

Wade Williams moved to approve the 2005-2006 Advertising Campaign in the amount of \$7,949,262 with changes in type and to restore Active Years budget. Ness Sechrest seconded and the motion carried.

TOURISM DIVISION

Natural State Golf Trail – Update

Joe David Rice said there are five new courses on the golf trail: The course at Eagle Mountain in Batesville, Eaglecrest in Alma, Mountain Ranch in Fairfield Bay, and Tannebaum in Drasco and Glenwood Country Club. Mr. Rice said he was pleased because, due to the clustering of courses, several courses could be played in a of couple days in one area. It is important that we have a critical mass because visitors can stay at one location and play up to a week of golf without having to travel. A news conference was held at Greystone in Cabot, and though there wasn't a lot of media present, the golf trail did get good coverage in the Cabot newspaper. Jim Shamburger said with the five new courses, it added quality that will enhance the courses already on the trail.

Research & Information Services Section

Charles McLemore said 26,410 requests for information were processed in August which is an increase of 49.9% over August 2004. The number of inquiries for January through August 2005 was 311,005; an increase of 35.8% over the same period last year. Welcome Center visitation was 579,954 (up 4.9%). August retirement/relocation inquiries totaled 1,715; up 23.8% for the month and 38.2% for the year. Danny Ford asked the status of the Corning Welcome Center. Joe David Rice said as soon as he was able to get a date when Governor Huckabee was available for the dedication, he would alert the Commissioners. Ness Sechrest said the A&P in West Memphis had some funds they could invest in the Welcome Center in West Memphis. Mr. Rice said he would arrange a meeting in the next few weeks with representatives of the A&P and the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department to discuss it.

Communications Section

Jana Greenbaum reported on the Division's participation with housing for the hurricane evacuees. A page was posted on the Arkansas.com Web site that listed lodging information, any discounts and availability of hotel rooms to help the evacuees find lodging. In

the first 14 days of September there were 4,288 hits on that page. Ms. Greenbaum acknowledged Sarah Harper in her section for obtaining and maintaining the information. Ms. Greenbaum said she was proud that the Web site could do something that meaningful.

Ms. Greenbaum said she had been asked by Mr. Rice to represent Tourism on the planning committee for the celebration of the 175th Anniversary of Hot Springs National Park. The park has a lot of artifacts but no display space. Greg Butts had said perhaps a traveling exhibit could travel around state parks. Ms. Greenbaum said the national park will also need help with funding for a gazebo that will be placed at the bath houses. The Hot Springs National Park staff is also looking for a new film about the park that Communications may be able to help produce and also post on our Web site.

Tourism Development Section

Donna Perrin said the national AARP convention that had been scheduled for the end of September had been cancelled due to the hurricane. It was to have been held in New Orleans.

The City of Maumelle decided not to conduct the feasibility study for which they had been awarded a grant. Therefore, the money that had been allotted is available. The deadlines for submitting requests for the grant will be the last Fridays in September and November. Richard Davies asked why the City of Maumelle made its decision. The City has another grant they have received to actually implement the tourism project.

The calendar of events is open on-line. The text is being proofed now and will be sent for printing in October. Ms. Perrin asked the Commissioners to check their communities' entries for spring/summer of 2006 to be sure they are correct.

The silent auction for the United Way will be on November 9, in the event Commissioners would like to assist with items for the auction.

Nomination forms for the Henry awards are being mailed. Entries must be submitted by the end of October.

Group Travel Section

Mindy Hawes distributed copies of a twenty-minute Group Travel video. The next event Ms. Hawes will attend will be a Travel South show in Toronto, Canada. Attendees will be employees of CAA (Canada's version of AAA), tour operators and the general public.

Aristotle – Tourism Web site Update

Jonathan Eudy provided an update on the Arkansas.com Web site to include the information on Hurricane Katrina, the work done on the mini-sites, Shop Arkansas Products, and fall color updates.

Miscellaneous

Nancy Clark said at the August meeting the Commission had discussed the Wine Trail highway signs. There will not be a glass on the signs, but will have a bottle and cluster of grapes. Jim Shamburger asked if a picture could be brought to the next meeting.

Polly Crews asked if we were having success in soliciting British tourists. Joe David Rice said staff was staying in touch with representatives of Salt-Marsh and we expect more groups to visit. Karen Mullikin said the “Fam Tours” will have an affect and she would have a full report at the October meeting.

PARKS DIVISION

Mt. Magazine State Park - Ductwork Design

Greg Butts said that as a follow-up to the Commissioners’ request during the August meeting, the Parks’ Committee met with Ken Sims, Sims Grisham & Blair (SGB) Architects and Ed Tinsley, TME, Inc. to review ductwork modifications for the dining and hearth rooms at the lodge. Mr. Sims showed photographs and architectural drawings that would conceal the ductwork with the installation wood decking stained to match the ceiling, and sidewall diffusers. Mr. Tinsley said that though the alternate design is not as efficient as the original over-head distribution system, the alternate solution is well within the range of what would be expected in terms of noise and comfort level. The cost to modify the ductwork that is in place now would be approximately \$50,000. Recognizing that the state should only pay one time for an air distribution system and not for two, the design team is going to reimburse the contractor for \$15,000 of the \$50,000, which is an estimate at this time. The net cost to the state would be approximately \$35,000. Parks’ Committee Chairman, Billy Lindsey said the committee’s recommendation was to approve implementing the ductwork design changes as presented. Polly Crews asked why the state would pay \$35,000 and SGB would pay \$15,000. Mr. Lindsey said we would be paying for one system. Had the Commissioners been given the choice originally between the two systems, we would have selected this system that had been presented today. Therefore, the additional cost is what we would have paid originally for this system. We are not paying the total cost for retrofitting; only the difference between the alternate and original designs.

Jay Bunyard moved to approve implementing the ductwork design changes in the restaurant and hearth room at Mt. Magazine State Park as presented. The full cost to implement the change will be approximately \$50,000. Sims, Grisham & Blair Architects (SGB) and TME, Inc. will pay approximately \$15,000 toward the cost to implement the change, which reflects the cost of the existing ductwork in the subject rooms. Arkansas State Parks will pay the balance of approximately \$35,000. SGB and TME will be responsible for all redesign costs. Jim Gaston seconded and the motion carried.

Village Creek State Park – Update on Lodge & Golf Course/Wellington, Int'l.

Greg Butts said staff had met with the Arkansas Department of Finance Authority (ADFA), Pete Hoover and Michele Allgood of Williams Anderson Law Firm and Crews and Associates (bond firm). From June 2005, up until the last few months, Wellington, Int'l. (W.I.) tried unsuccessfully to obtain a standard loan for the lodge and golf course project at the park. It was decided that a taxable bond issue was a viable alternative to obtain the funds needed to proceed with the project. The taxable bond issue will be handled by the Recreation and Tourism Public Facilities Board of Cross County. Because of Arkansas Constitutional Amendment 65, any bonds that are sold and proceeds used by a private developer requires an election. Subject to other approvals, the election will be held in Cross County on October 18th. ASP is also subject to Amendment 65. We cannot use tax funds (1/8¢ Conservation Tax) to pay off bonds without an election. Mr. Butts explained the Series A bonds that would be sold, the pledging of revenues from the project and the leasehold mortgage interest. ADFA would purchase \$7 million Series B bonds to make funds available to W.I. for construction of the golf course. ADFA has said that ASP would not have to pay debt service until July 1, 2007. Subject to all the costs involved in the sale, the estimates are between \$1.6 million a year over five years to \$1.2 million over seven years. The Public Facilities Board would enter into a loan agreement with W.I. and ASP. Mr. Butts reviewed a financing timeline schedule and the election approval process to move forward with the bond issue. The original RFP-RFQ requires ASP information regarding members of board, their assets, references, etc, but does not require we be notified of any changes. Mr. Butts said staff would not move forward until that information from W.I. is provided to the Department and the Commission, and the Commissioners are comfortable with the changes. Also, there are other documents, Memorandum of Agreements, etc., that will have to be entered into as the project moves forward. Mr. Butts suggested that the Parks Committee be given the authority to review any changes. We will also need to discuss these changes with Senators and Representatives in the Cross County area and the Legislative Council so they are aware of the ASP's appropriation requests in the next biennium to free up cash in order to make payments to ADFA for the golf course construction.

Wade Williams said he was concerned that we have committed to W.I.'s timeline because of its urgency yet W.I. has not moved forward in a timely manner. ASP is about to invest \$7 million in a golf course and we don't know the make-up of the corporation with whom we're doing business. The individuals who first met with us are no longer involved. Mr. Williams said he is concerned that we have assurance that those who are the "Wellington entity" have the qualifications to proceed with construction and management of this project. Also, according to their memo, W.I. wants to write the bond indenture so the proceeds from each series of bonds can be used for other things. We need to be careful as to how the indenture is drafted because we committed to the funds we put into the project need to be used for the golf course. What if it is built for less than \$7 million? Are we required to spend \$7 million if it can be built for less? Mr. Butts said the \$7 million would have to go to that project. Jim Gaston asked for assurance that we would not be building the golf course until the lodge was constructed. Mr. Butts said nothing would happen until the sale of bonds is approved by Cross County voters. Mr. Gaston asked what the contingency plan was if W.I. leaves after only a few years. Mr. Butts said it is covered in the lease. Also, the Public Facilities Board will have the lease hold interest because it is their money that will be invested in the project. Mr. Gaston asked who would operate the lodge. Mr. Butts said that he has requested that information from W.I. Mr. Davies said the Public Facilities Board would have the right to complete the project and find an operator, with ASP's approval and a new lease, should WI default. If the Public Facilities Board abandoned the project, we would own it, finished or not, and either lease or operate it ourselves. Mr. Gaston said if the project was abandoned and we became owners, who would be liable for the \$25 million in bonds. Jim Shamburger said we would be liable only for the \$7 million for the golf course. Mr. Butts said the Public Facilities Board would want to have someone operate the facility in order to have cash flow to pay them back. Mr. Gaston asked, other than the \$7 million, where could ASP be hurt. Mr. Davies said there could be a bond holder lawsuit against the Public Facility Board or Wellington, Int'l. that could hold up the uncompleted project for some time. Or we could have an uncompleted project, no funds to complete it and no operator. Larry Carlyle said the bond monies would not be given to anyone in a lump sum. They will be issued by a trustee based on a percentage of construction completed. Therefore, if the project is abandoned, there will still be funds available to complete it. Mr. Gaston asked if the only thing that was built was the golf course, could it be operated without the lodge. Mr. Davies said it would be possible but it would be more difficult without an overnight facility. Ness Sechrest said the feasibility study concluded the golf course would not be successful without a lodge. Mr. Williams asked how much we will have paid Andy Dye by the end of 2005. Stan Graves said we have paid \$148,000 to-date. Mr. Davies said what we pay Andy Dye will be credited against the \$7 million for the golf course. Mr. Williams asked, if that was the case, would we still issue \$7 million in bonds. Mr. Davies said that was a good point. Mr. Gaston asked Mr. Davies if he was comfortable with the present situation. Mr. Davies said he was not for all the reasons discussed by Mr. Butts. Mr. Williams said we had already signed an agreement to proceed with this project. We are committed but are concerned because of the change in the Wellington, Int'l.

board members and officers, who we know nothing about. Billy Lindsey said Wellington needs to re-establish a comfort level with the Commissioners and staff. Mr. Gaston said he is concerned because everyone involved could abandon the project except us. Ness Sechrest said he has the same concerns as everyone else. Every time Wellington has tried to come up with their funding, there has been a problem. This is a project the Cross County area needs but we must know more about the board and officers before we proceed.

Jim Gaston moved for preliminary approval for staff to proceed with the lodge and golf course project at Village Creek State Park subject to the Commission being provided with all the information it requires about the officers and members of the board of directors of Wellington, International (their assets, names, credentials, and management team to operate the lodge and golf course) and the Parks Committee be given the authority to make decisions on any issues that come up between now and the October Commission meeting. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.

Old Washington Historic state Park – SW Arkansas Regional Archives

Greg Butts said since 1995 we have had a cooperative agreement with Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives (SARA). Under provisions of Act 2099 of 2005, the Arkansas History Commission (AHC) was authorized two personnel positions to staff and operate the SARA facility and will become a direct partner in program. The AHC was appropriated funding and has the expertise and ability to manage the program. Mr. Butts asked approval to enter into a new agreement with SARA and AHC. The agreement has already been approved by both SARA and AHC.

Danny Ford moved to approve a Memorandum of Agreement with the Arkansas History Commission and Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives, Inc. for the collection, preservation and servicing of archival materials at Old Washington Historic State Park. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.

Powhatan Historic State Park – Lawrence County Historical Society

Greg Butts said staff is negotiating with the Lawrence County Historical Society (LCHS) for storage of its archival collection. An MOA with LCHS had been in effect from 6/22/87 until 6/30/02 under which the collection was stored in vaults at the Courthouse. Because of the renovation of the Powhatan Courthouse interior, the LCHS was required to move the collection to Arkansas State University. A former church will be renovated and become a new research facility and a new vault will be constructed for the storage of the archival collection. The new facility will be named the Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives (NARA). Upon completion the collection will be moved to the new facility under the ownership of the Arkansas History

Commission (AHC). AHC will seek funding for staff to assist in the cataloging and storage of the collection. AHC would be a lessee to ASP as the owner and lessor of the NARA facility. This is all subject to securing funding through a variety of sources. The AHC met on 9/1/05 and approved the MOA. The MOA has been sent to the LCHS Board for its approval.

Danny Ford moved to approve a Memorandum of Agreement with the Arkansas History Commission and the Lawrence County Historical Society for the management of the Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives at Powhatan Historic State Park. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.

CY2006 Fees & Rates

Parks Committee Chairman, Billy Lindsey, said it was the committee's recommendation that the senior camping discount be changed as follows: Arkansas Citizens 50% camping discount on weekdays (Sunday through Thursday) and 25% discount on weekends and holiday weekends. Out-of-state seniors 25% discount weekdays (Sunday through Thursday) and no discount on weekends and holiday weekends.

Jay Bunyard moved to accept the Parks Committee's recommendation on changing the senior camping discount to: Arkansas Citizens 50% camping discount on weekdays (Sunday through Thursday) and 25% discount on weekends and holiday weekends. Out-of-state seniors 25% discount weekdays (Sunday through Thursday) and no discount on weekends and holiday weekends. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.

Chairman Christenson opened the meeting for public comment on the proposed CY06 Fees and Rates, and asked if there were comments. There were none.

Montine McNulty moved to approve the CY2006 Fees & Rates for Arkansas State Parks to include the changes in the senior camping discounts. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.

Lake Ft. Smith State Park – Construction Bid Update

A spreadsheet and other information was distributed to the Commissioners that indicated the work that has been completed on the new park, work that is under consideration based on recent bids, and the work left to be done with future bids. Greg Butts said decisions need to be made about continuing with the project and providing a quality facility or having to make some additional cuts beyond those that have already been approved by the Commission. Stan Graves said between the city and ASP there is \$22 million available for this project; \$12 million from the City of Ft. Smith and \$10 million from ASP. With the bids that have been received, the total

cost for the project is now estimated at \$25.1 million, a deficit of almost \$3.2 million. Mr. Graves indicated a list of items that could be eliminated as cost reduction measures but said many of them are detrimental to providing a quality park. The list included deleting the dining hall, deleting the swimming pool and constructing a "Spray Park". Jim Shamburger asked if the City was willing to pay more. Mr. Graves said, based on previous Board of Directors' decisions, no. The City's staff are waiting to see what the Commissioners' feeling was about this so they could relay that to their Board. Richard Davies said he was of the opinion that the Commissioners' patience with the project is almost exhausted and it needs to be brought to conclusion. Mr. Davies said he agreed with Mr. Graves that the items on the cost reduction list take too much out of the park to keep it a viable facility. Mr. Davies suggested that we could go forward with what everyone believes is a useful park if the City of Ft. Smith will split the cost with us. Jim Shamburger said there are still items that have not been bid yet – with those bids it could cost even more because of the hurricanes. Mr. Graves said that was his concern. Billy Lindsey said if the Commission didn't take action to get the project underway, it will continue to cost more money. Mr. Davies said we should give the City the opportunity to split the difference with us. Jim Gaston said we should either build a first-class park or not build it at all. The other Commissioners agreed.

Montine McNulty moved to authorize staff to inform the City of Ft. Smith that Arkansas State Parks is requesting that the City share by paying fifty percent of all costs over the agreed upon \$22,006,376 construction cost of the new Lake Ft. Smith State Park as currently designed. The Parks Committee is also authorized to negotiate with the City if a meeting is necessary prior to the next Commission meeting. Jim Gaston seconded and the motion carried.

Aristotle – State Parks' Web site Update

Paige Watson updated the Commission on the state parks' Web site:

- ◆ Visits to the Web site, the number of page views and new subscribers to E-Newsletters continue to increase.
- ◆ Integrated on-line reservations are available at Lake Charles, DeGray, Lake Ouachita, Millwood, Old Davidsonville and Petit Jean.
- ◆ Virtual tours and many cabin photos have been added.
- ◆ There have been many updates to individual park Web sites that include Ozark Folk Center and Old Washington.
- ◆ The new Mt. Magazine Web site was launched.
- ◆ A mini-site devoted to lake and river parks is in progress.
- ◆ Still to come will be mapping upgrades, hiking trail photos, new photo tour images, maps for trip ideas, an interactive map for the Ozark Folk Center and a rates & fees content management tool.

Miscellaneous

Greg Butts said the state parks law enforcement policy will be revised to permit State Park Law Enforcement Officers to carry their duty weapon off-duty and allow an approved personal back-up weapon. Training for use of back-up weapons will begin spring 2006. Jim Gaston asked when the change would become effective. Mr. Butts said use of the back-up weapon would be after training next spring. The Officers will be permitted to carry their duty weapon off-duty beginning this fall, subject to revision of the policy.

Greg Butts requested a Certificate of Appreciation for Prairie Grove Battlefield Park Superintendent, Ed Smith who is retiring after 28 years of service.

Ness Sechrest moved to approve a Certificate of Appreciation for Park Superintendent, Ed Smith, recognizing his years of service to Arkansas State Parks. Jim Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.

Greg Butts requested a Certificate of Appreciation for Devil's Den Maintenance Supervisor, Brent Daugherity who is retiring after 31 years of service.

Ness Sechrest moved to approve a Certificate of Appreciation for Mr. Brent Daugherity in recognition of his years of service to Arkansas State Parks. Wade Williams seconded and the motion carried.