

**Minutes**  
**State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission**  
**Comfort Inn and Convention Center**  
**Harrison, Arkansas**  
**November 21-22, 2002**

**Commissioners Present**

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

**Commissioners Absent**

Jim Gaston - Conflict

**Department Staff Present**

Richard W. Davies, Executive Director  
Larry Cargile, Central Administration Director  
Joe David Rice, Tourism Director  
Greg Butts, State Parks Director  
Nancy Clark, Assistant Tourism Director  
Mac Balkman, Manager, Operations  
Stan Graves, Manager, Planning & Development  
Mark Clippinger, Superintendent, Beaver Lake State Park  
Steve Chyrchel, Interpreter, Beaver Lake State Park  
Al Knox, Volunteer Coordinator, Beaver Lake State Park  
Donna Perrin, Tourism Development Manager  
Charles McLemore, Director of Research & Information Services  
Norma Sims, Manager, Harrison Tourist Information Center  
Jay Harrod, Communications Manager  
Beth Wiedower, Group Travel Consultant  
Joan Ellison, Public Information Officer  
Chris Snodgrass, Superintendent, DeGray Lake Resort State Park  
Bill Young, Manager, Ozark Folk Center  
Gloria Robins, Executive Assistant  
Sandy Burch, Administrative Assistant  
Jennifer Carson, Administrative Assistant

**Agency Staff Present**

Shelby Woods	Wayne Woods
Karen Mullikin	

**Aristotle**

Marla Johnson Norris	Jonathan Eudy
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**Guests Present**

Ross Moore, Greer's Ferry Lake/Little Red River Tourism Association  
Kelley Linck, Ozark Mountain Region  
Brenda Rush, Ozark Mountain Region  
Steve Arrison, Hot Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Paul Vitale, Hot Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Sandra Lee King, Rock Ridge Riding Club, Fayetteville  
Janet Stanton, Cave Springs  
Judith Duguid, Cowgirl Up, Rogers  
Pat Sullivan, Cowgirl Up, Fayetteville  
Kitty Longino, Eureka Springs

**Call to Order**

Chairman Debra Haak called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and Gloria Robins called the roll.

**Approval of the Agenda**

**Wade Williams moved to approve the agenda. Jane Christenson seconded and the motion carried.**

**Presentation of Minutes from Previous Meeting**

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

**Financial Report**

Larry Cargile presented a financial report for the fiscal year-to-date period ended October 31, 2002. The Parks Division expenditures, including construction/grants, totaled \$17,258,356, or 20% of annual budget. Tourism Division expenditures totaled \$2,729,131, or 22% of annual budget. Keep Arkansas Beautiful expenditures were \$170,598, or 33% of budget. Administration Division expenditures totaled \$787,733, or 34% of budget. History Commission expenditures were \$490,499, or 39% of budget. Total Department expenditures - \$21,436,317. or 20% of annual budget.

Parks Division operating revenue for the fiscal year-to-date period ended October 31, 2002, totaled \$5,917,881, an increase of 6% over the same period last year. Operating revenue for the month of October was \$1,409,305, a decrease of 2% from last October.

**Billy Lindsey moved to approve the financial report. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Recognition of Guests**

Chairman Haak recognized guests in attendance.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Legislative Dinner – February 18, 2003**

Richard W. Davies informed Commissioners that the date of the legislative dinner was set for February 18, 2003. He noted that the February Commission meeting would be in Little Rock on February 19 and 20.

### **2003 Commission Schedule**

Mr. Davies stated that the proposed Commission meeting schedule would be presented at the January meeting and that the Commission would vote on locations for the meetings at that time.

### **Miscellaneous**

Mr. Davies stated that the State Cabinet met and toured Old Washington State Park and Grandview Plantation on November 14 and 15. He noted that the Grandview area was purchased by Game & Fish with 1/8th-cent money. It encompasses approximately 5,000 acres and includes a kid's educational center.

Mr. Davies stated that the Joint Budget committee had put the Department's budget "in committee" and that a meeting would be held next week to answer committee members' questions about the budget. He mentioned that the committee included the president of the Senate, Jim Hill; Speaker of the House, Herschel Cleveland; Senators Baker, Critcher, Faris, Miller, and Smith, as well as Representatives Haak, Milligan, Shoffner, and Weaver. Mr. Davies stated that he would send a copy of the information to Commissioners. He noted that the committee may change when the session begins.

## **TOURISM DIVISION**

### **Advertising Agency Presentations**

Joe David Rice opened with a few remarks on the selection process. He noted that several people had inquired as to each agency's staffing. Mr. Rice stated that since the contract did not begin until July 1, 2003, whichever agency was awarded the contract would have ample time to acquire staff. He also stated that the account, over a two-year period, is worth approximately 16-18 million dollars. Mr. Rice further stated that the agencies have been enthusiastic about their presentations and have spent hundreds of

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hours working on them. He noted that each agency's goals mirrored the Department's goals.

Chairman Haak reminded Commissioners that each agency would have an hour for its presentation followed by a fifteen-minute question and answer period. She stated that there will be a two hour break after the presentations and asked whether or not Commissioners wanted agency staffs available for questions. It was determined that agency staff would be available after 3:30 for possible questions. Chairman Haak stated the Commission would reconvene at 4:30 and there would only be discussion among Commissioners. A vote would be taken shortly thereafter.

### **Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods**

Agency staff presented an hour long program in the Reddy Kilowatt Room at the Entergy Arkansas office in Harrison. It was followed by a fifteen minute question and answer period.

### **Heathcott Associates**

Gary Heathcott and his staff presented their hour long program at the First Presbyterian Church. It was also followed by a fifteen minute question and answer period.

### **Sells/Clark**

Their hour long presentation was held at the First Christian Church and was also followed by a fifteen minute question and answer period.

Commissioners recessed after the last presentation for an independent review of materials and reconvened at the Comfort Inn at approximately 4:30 p.m. Chairman Haak stated that she was very proud to be a part of the process and commended each agency for its presentation. Richard Davies stated that Joe David Rice did a wonderful job under the circumstances and that Arkansas will come out a winner, no matter which agency receives the contract, because they are all Arkansas companies who care about Arkansas and have put a lot of work into their presentations. Joe David Rice thanked Jane Christenson for her help in coordinating the locations.

Chairman Haak stated that after the discussion, the vote would be conducted by written ballot and the Commissioner's name must be on the vote because it will be a public document. Richard Davies stated that three different individuals would count the ballots, which will be available to the public after the announcement.

Polly Wood Crews stated that she felt there was not anything not to be liked about any of the programs and they were all splendidly done. She appreciated the effort that went into each program.

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Ted Mullenix stated that he also felt that all were wonderful presentations and he enjoyed them. He stated that regardless of which agency was selected, that he hoped the Commission would go through the process again in another two years. He stated that he felt he understood why the Commission allows the agency to make all the decisions, based on the research, but that he hopes that the agency understands that the Commission makes the decisions. He hoped the chosen agency understands that the Commission has a legitimate reason for making changes and that the agency contract is not a blanket contract where suggestions and changes could not be made.

Danny Ford stated he was impressed with all three groups and was proud that he is from Arkansas and having such a good choice. He further stated that there would be a lot of changes in the future as well as a lot of opportunities. He stated that he learned a lot from each presentation and it will be good for Arkansas.

Loretta Lever House stated that she was impressed by each agency. She noted that all agencies stated that it is time for a change because of 9/11. The people that will be invited to Arkansas will be different than before that date. A lot of visitors will come from surrounding states, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, and they represent a wonderful opportunity for diversity. She stated that we look at how to increase visitation to Arkansas and that a new market has not been tapped. Now is a wonderful opportunity to tap that market and look at diversity and people of color because millions of dollars are being missed as is the opportunity to invite those people to see how wonderful Arkansas is. She appreciates some of the changes she sees and wants to see those changes continue. She noted that she wants to see the campaigns continue to be inclusive of diversity and that the progress will be looked at again in two years. Richard Davies remarked that the Commission would be able to make a decision in two years to either open another agency selection process or reaffirm the existing contract. Montine McNulty asked when the last time the process had been done. Mr. Davies replied that the agency selection process was opened four years ago and only the existing agency had bid on the contract. He noted the last time there was an agency selection process with competing agencies was in 1989, shortly after the 2% Tourism Tax was passed.

Billy Lindsey stated that he feels very passionate about what he does, his business, the environment he grew up in, and he knows that everyone on the Commission is passionate about the work they do on the Commission. He stated that each agency exhibited a passion about Arkansas in its presentation. He agreed that Arkansas is the winner in this process. He stated that there are people who are overlooked such as the staff, Richard, Joe David, and everyone who has had a part in making Arkansas what it is, and thanked those people. He also stated that he is not concerned about Arkansas's image because it is headed in the right direction and is in good hands, whichever agency is chosen, and Arkansas is a winner as a result.

Bill Barnes stated that, if he could, he would blend the agencies because he liked some components of each. He also stated that he has a hard decision because of the quality of the agencies presenting. Although he is a little frustrated about the direction in SPRTC Minutes

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which we're headed, he agreed that he didn't know anything about marketing. He appreciates the quality and thought that went into each presentation. He stated that the selection process gives the opportunity to judge whether or not we are heading in the right direction or the time has come to change. He stated that he felt the time had come to be somewhat broader in scope. He believes the agencies presented tremendous ideas, all of which would benefit Arkansas that came from talented people who obviously love Arkansas. He noted that Arkansas would be aptly represented by any one of the agencies.

Montine McNulty stated that she was pleased to see so many representatives of the industry in attendance. She also noted that Arkansas will have an exciting future as evidenced by each agency presentation.

Wade Williams stated that each agency put a lot of work and effort into its presentation and that it is a difficult decision to make. He stated that one theme seemed to echo throughout the presentations and that was that changes are needed, which focused on what needs to be done about Arkansas's image. The only difference in the programs was how to accomplish that objective. He feels that each time an ad is run, it creates the image of Arkansas in the mind of the viewer. And how that advertising is formulated creates that image. He noted that the only control of Arkansas's image is the control over the dollars spent in the advertising campaign, that the Department or Commission cannot control any other business or advertisement. He believes it's critical to look at what we're saying, where we're saying it, whether we need to look at new markets, whether we need to look at new people in old markets, send a new message, a new call to action, new technology, what it is that needs to be done differently and how is the best way to approach it. Every agency agreed on that issue as well as agreed on the type of change that needs to be made. He feels the decision boils down to which agency has the best plan to implement those changes. He states that it's also important to be involved, not only in choosing the agency, but in the strategic development of those plans and it's critical that the Commission take a more involved role in the type of changes.

Jane Christenson noted that she agreed with the statements of other Commissioners. Chairman Haak stated that if there were no more comments, the vote would commence. Richard Davies stated that the vote would be conducted by written ballot and that the Commissioners' name also needed to be written on the ballot. He noted that it is a public vote. Richard W. Davies, Joe David Rice, and Gloria Robins counted the votes and presented the results to Chairman Haak.

Chairman Haak stated that twelve votes were cast for Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods and one vote was cast for Sells/Clark. She also stated that the votes were available for the public to view.

**Danny Ford moved to approve negotiating the advertising agency contract with Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.**

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Richard Davies congratulated Shelby Woods and his agency. He noted that Department and ad agency staff would get together to work out a contract. Polly Woods Crews congratulated staff of Heathcott Associates and Sells/Clark for their wonderful presentations. Bill Barnes stated that he wished that a decision didn't have to be made and that both Heathcott Associates and Sells/Clark did some wonderful work on behalf of the state of Arkansas.

## **Section Reports**

### **Research & Information Services**

The section processed 22,961 requests for information through the month of October 2002. Retirement/Relocation information requests totaled 2,151. User sessions for the web sites totaled 280,733 in October.

The annual Tourist Information Center (TIC) Managers meeting was held November 13th – 15th in El Dorado. Topics discussed included literature usage, sport show assignments, and TIC visitation statistics. Attendees also participated in a familiarization tour of the Arkansas' South tourism region. Managers also attended a Fire Safety and Emergency Response class at the Arkansas Fire Academy.

### **Tourism Development**

All regions met the monthly deadline for paperwork except for the Ozark Mountain Region.

The section participated in the Arkansas Hospitality Association Convention & Trade Show, the Americal Reunion in Arlington, Virginia, the American Association of Retirement Communities annual conference, and the International Festivals & Events conference.

A Tourism Attraction Feasibility Grant of \$15,000 has been awarded to the City of Fort Smith. The grant will be used to conduct a \$30,000 feasibility study for the John Paul Hammerschmidt Interpretive Center and Ground Transportation Center project. The study is slated to be complete by February 11, 2003.

### **Group Travel**

Section members responded to 125 inquiries during October. Year-to-date, 1,901 requests have been fulfilled for Arkansas Group Travel information.

Jane Ellen Frazier attended the Great Day! Tours annual Group Leader Marketplace in Ohio and extended an invitation to multi-day travel leaders to participate in a familiarization tour in June 2003, as a result. Ms. Frazier also attended Rhythms of the South Travel Marketplace in Atlanta, Georgia.

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Beth Wiedower made a site visit to the War Eagle Arts & Crafts Fair. Jane Ellen Frazier made site visits to Stuttgart and Piggott. Both attended the Arkansas Hospitality Association Tradeshow.

### **Communications**

Staff members continued to review and correct text on Arkansas.com. They also edited and proofed *2003 Arkansas Tour Guide* copy. Archived releases were added to the online media room and further preparations were made for the addition of photographs to the section. The site-wide search function for Arkansas.com was implemented and tested.

Contacts were made with the editor of *At Home In Arkansas*, the publisher of *At Home In Memphis*, and the interim editor for *Little Rock Monthly*.

Section members filed releases and submitted items for the e-newsletter, and *Arkansas Travelin'*. Captions were written for photos on the web site, sample packages were written for the "Hot Deals" portion of the web site, and work was done on the Attractions, Lodging, and Dining database.

### **Marketing Communications**

#### **Fall Shoot Update**

Karen Mullikin distributed a list of locations where footage has been gathered. Sites include Eureka Springs, Hot Springs, Garvan Woodland Gardens, and Village Creek State Park.

#### **Trail of Holiday Lights Update**

A statewide news release regarding the Trail of Holiday Lights was distributed on October 29th. Stories on the trail have been produced for publication on Arkansastravel.com. A full-page article was published in *Arkansas Business*. Additional information on parades, lighting ceremonies, and special events has also been distributed to print and broadcast media.

The television spot is currently running on Arkansas stations as part of the Television Broadcasters of Arkansas partnership. It was also featured on the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce "jumbotron." The lighting ceremony in Eureka Springs and the Little Rock Christmas parade were both mentioned on KARK programs.

#### **TIA Co-op: See America's Byways Insert**

Karen Mullikin distributed a media recommendation to Commissioners regarding the "See America's Byways" promotion. Its goal is to encourage US travelers to get out and see America's byways. An insert promoting the campaign will be placed in *USA SPRTC Minutes*

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*Today* during National Tourism Week, Friday, May 9, 2003. The eight-page, full-color insert will have a circulation of 2.6 million and a 50/50 ratio of editorial to advertising. Advertisers are guaranteed editorial coverage. Agency staff recommended participation in the form of a quarter-page ad contingent upon the fulfillment of editorial commitment at a cost of \$25,641.18. The deadline for space reservation is January 13, 2003.

Mike Mills asked how the promotion would be funded. Ms Mullikin replied that a portion would be funded from contingency monies and part of it would come from some miscellaneous media credits.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve participation in the “See America’s Byways” promotion at a cost of \$25,641.18. Bud Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Certificate of Appreciation**

Joe David Rice stated that Bob Spraggins would be leaving his position after approximately twelve years to join the Department of Arkansas Heritage. Mr. Rice asked the Commission to approve a Certificate of Appreciation for Mr. Spraggins.

**Mike Mills moved to approve a Certificate of Appreciation for Bob Spraggins. Loretta Lever House seconded and the motion carried.**

### **PARKS DIVISION**

#### **Arkansas Broadcasters Association - Winter 2002 TV & Radio Spots**

Joan Ellison said the advertising program with the Arkansas Broadcasters Association (ABA) has been in existence for fifteen years. In the first year of the non-commercial sustaining announcement program in 1987, television and radio stations in Arkansas donated over \$1.2 million, and the second year it was \$1 million in advertising spots. Ms. Ellison said the ABA always exceeds the four-to-one ratio as stated in the contract. During the past year, which was a period of numerous political ads, the ABA still ran over \$1 million in advertising Arkansas State Parks. Ms. Ellison then showed the new television spots and played the new radio ads.

**Jane Christenson moved to approve the 30-second television ads, “Cabin Fever” and “Quality Time” and the two new 60-second radio spots, “Cabin Fever” and “Quality Time” and one new 30-second radio ad “Quality Time.” Wade Williams seconded and the motion carried.**

**Annual Advertising Plan - Proposed 2002-2003 Budget**

Linda Scroggin with Cranford, Johnson, Robinson & Woods (CJRW) said the proposed media plan includes:

Continuation of the partnership with the Arkansas Broadcasters Association (ABA) with a \$75,000 grant that has an advertising value of a minimum \$300,000, and with the Arkansas Press Association (APA) with a grant of \$75,000 for the buy one-get one free advertising program. To date the APA had been paid \$750,000. The total budget for the ABA and APA, which includes production of print, is \$210,600.

The budget for Travel Shows, which are manned by state park staff, is \$48,176.

The magazine ad budget for state parks is \$133,193.47, production is \$5,000 and the Internet is \$56,297 for a total of \$194,490.47. This area also includes billboards.

Wade Williams asked if the magazines had been studied to see what they actually generate for visitation to state parks as opposed to just general inquiries. Ms. Scroggin said general inquiries are what CJRW has to go by as to whether or not the ads produce interest. CJRW receives inquiry reports from the parks. If it is determined that a magazine is not producing inquiries, then it is removed from the list where ads are placed.

- The budget for advertising, production and the internet for DeGray is \$76,116.62.
- The budget for advertising, production and the internet for the Ozark Folk Center is \$158,089.76.
- The budget amount for the State Park Guides is \$157,890.

Regarding the magazines in which ads will be placed for the OFC, Wade Williams expressed concern over four of them that have a circulation of less than 5,000. Mr. Williams asked if the \$600 we are spending for 3,000 subscribers is worth it. Bill Young explained the different publications, a couple of which are annual directories. Mr. Young said these are very targeted publications and many of the members are speakers at OFC seminars. Mr. Williams said many of the same people are probably subscribing to each of the magazines that focus on herbs and asked if there is a reason to be advertising in all of them. Mr. Young said the OFC has received a lot of free editorial from these publications. It is felt that the OFC needs to be included in these publications because of the herb programs and related activities. Richard Davies said what we are finding is that there are pockets of real enthusiasts in the herb and acoustic music areas that subscribe to these publications and really enjoy what the OFC provides. Wade Williams asked if we should think about shifting money out of the general consumer magazines and putting more into these specialty publications. Mr. Young said that because the OFC has so many different target markets that it is felt it needs to be represented in all of them.

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Unfortunately, there is not just one magazine that all of these various audiences read. Mr. Young said, over the years, the OFC is spending less in the general consumer magazines and more in the specialty publications. Mr. Williams asked if the OFC is going to track the effectiveness of each of the specialty magazines. Mr. Young said there will be different toll-free phone numbers for different interest groups, such as herbs, music publications, etc. Polly Wood Crews said one magazine she reads and subscribes to is *People*. Ms. Crews asked if that publication is too expensive. Ms. Scroggin said it is. Bill Barnes said we are seeing a trend of more people viewing products and services on the Internet. Mr. Barnes asked if there are niche marketing opportunities on the Internet and is the OFC in those areas. Mr. Young said yes, and they are currently investigating the possibility of "banner ads" on the Internet. Ms. Crews asked if writing a musical about Arkansas history has ever been discussed for presentation in the OFC auditorium. Mr. Young said OFC staff has been tasked with developing a scripted two-hour show that will travel the state. This will serve to keep some of the musicians employed through the winter months and be a good promotional effort for the OFC. Mr. Young listed some of the other things that are being done on the Internet for the OFC. Richard Davies said the amount in the proposed budget is more than Tourism used to spend in advertising and he remembers when the Commission directed state parks to advertise. Bud Shamburger said the upcoming "800" number for making campground reservations needs to be included in every advertising area. Greg Butts said that would be done and there will be a total media campaign on the reservation system when it is available.

**Ted Mullenix moved to approve the state park 2002-2003 Advertising Budget as presented for a total of \$845,352.85. Jane Christenson seconded and the motion carried.**

Billy Lindsey said revenue numbers for the OFC have increased for the first time in several years. Mr. Lindsey said some of these niche marketing programs are working and it is encouraging to see the changes.

### **Hobbs State Management Area - Scenic Hwy. 12 Water Association Easement Request**

Stan Graves said in 1998 the Madison County Water District had wanted to extend water across the Hobbs State Management Area (HSMA) and the Commission approved it. However, it was only extended to the War Eagle Road area. Recently a request was received from the Scenic Highway 12 Water Association to construct an 8" water main across HSMA. Associated with this would be a temporary construction easement. In addition, the water association is requesting a temporary construction easement to run a new 8" line parallel to an existing 6" line. Mr. Graves recommended entering into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the water association for these requests based upon any necessary approvals from the National Park Service, the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission and the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission. Mr. Graves said approval of these requests will allow ASP to tie in all of its park facilities at no charge.

**Mike Mills moved to approve the easement requests at Hobbs State Management Area from the Scenic Highway 12 Water Association to construct a new 8" water line and upgrade an existing 6" water, and to direct the staff to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement based on any necessary approvals from the National Park Service, the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission and the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission. Bud Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Hobbs State Management Area - Long Range Development Plan**

Stan Graves said the park is located 12 miles east of Rogers, in an area of Northwest Arkansas that is experiencing tremendous growth. The park is 11,744 acres located on Beaver Lake. Mr. Graves said the park has numerous karst features, including caves, springs, and sinkholes. Limestone and shale underlie the entire area which has created challenges in locating planned facilities. The terrain is very rugged with a series of narrow ridges divided by steep sided ravines, and limits the areas that can be developed. The cultural history of the area is very interesting. Mr. Graves gave an overview of the Peter Van Winkle buildings that included a lumber mill. After Mr. Van Winkle's death in 1882, one of his daughters married into the Blackburn family who built the War Eagle grist mill. In 1928 the land was sold to the Hobbs family. In the will of Roscoe C. Hobbs, it was stated that he wanted the land to go to the state of Arkansas. The Trustees of the land made it be known in 1978 that 11,644 acres were available for sale. Richard Davies said the Trust chose not to honor the wishes of Roscoe C. Hobbs saying it was their responsibility to get "top dollar" for the property. The four heirs were upset with the Trust because they were getting offers for the property three to four times more than the state could pay. David Pryor and his Administrative Assistant, Ray Scott, persuaded one of the heirs to deed his ownership to the Arkansas Nature Conservancy and then told the other three heirs he was not selling to anybody but the state of Arkansas. Mr. Davies said that tied up the property so no one else could purchase it. The state could afford approximately \$272 per acre. Mr. Davies said David Pryor was the person who made it possible for the state to acquire the property. If it wasn't for that, the property would be a giant subdivision. Mr. Graves said the Nature Conservancy paid \$3,250,000 for the property. In 1979, Act 128 authorized ASP to acquire the property and appropriated \$2 million for its purchase. In April 1979 a Memorandum of Agreement was entered into by ASP, AG&FC and the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission (ANHC) for the management of the property which was intended to integrate the missions of the three agencies. In 1980 a Management Plan was approved by the Commission that covered the development of a visitor information center, a trail system, lake access, picnic areas, horse camp, walk-in camping, cabins, restaurants, etc. Mr. Graves described the different areas of the park and what the ANHC and AG&FC wanted to manage in each area.

Stan Graves discussed the original plans for the location of the 16,000 square foot Visitor Information Center and that the topography of the original site would not

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accommodate it. The location had to be moved to the south side of Highway 12. Mr. Graves pointed out the proposed locations of the maintenance facility and the water treatment plant. A location for cabins had been selected and a suitable location for camping has been identified at a proposed property acquisition. Mr. Graves described proposed plans for employee residences, trails, a day-use area, a boat launch, parking, firing range improvements, an archery course, land acquisitions, etc. Mike Mills asked if the plan includes a place to tie or corral horses. Mr. Graves said it will depend upon horse camp vs. day-use (trailer in horses). He said ASP is also looking at developing a stable where horses could be kept overnight.

Regarding the equestrian trails, Bill Barnes asked for confirmation that those trails will be developed. Greg Butts said, yes. Mr. Butts said that because development of equestrian trails had to be delayed due to lack of funding, it had allowed time to thoroughly study the park for the best location for the trail system. Fourteen miles of horse trails were approved at Village Creek State Park. Staff at Village Creek worked with riding groups and worked through a variety of issues having to do with protecting the resources and balance public use. Due to the type of soil at Village Creek, the horse trails are closed for specific months each year because of the potential of erosion. Mr. Butts said the horse riding groups had agreed to that. He said when ASP gets into the horse trail business we take on a lot of responsibilities to manage, provide opportunities and also maintain a quality resource and not harm what ASP is charged to protect. Mr. Butts said what has to be done now is locate the trails, work with the horse groups on how they are regulated and serve their needs, how the resource is preserved, and work with AG&FC and ANHC to have a compatible facility meeting their goals too. He said he is confident ASP can have a successful venture. Bill Barnes asked if one could ride the old logging trails today. Superintendent Clippinger said it had been allowed but it is now conflicting with future development plans. Mr. Barnes asked for a definition of "karst." Superintendent Clippinger said, simply, it is water soluble limestone. Wade Williams asked how many sink holes and caves have been identified. Superintendent Clippinger said between 12 and 16 caves and in excess of 100 sink holes scattered throughout the property. All the recreational facilities will have to be placed in the right location with consideration of the long-term impact. Wade Williams said access to these activities will have to be controlled because of the other two partner agencies. Richard Davies said when ASP originally acquired the property it was thought that we really didn't need almost 12,000 acres. It is our job as park managers to determine how to best manage the resource and still serve the needs of the people. Mr. Davies said he feels it is ASP's responsibility to work with the horse groups to determine how best to develop equestrian trails.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve the Long Range Development Plan for the Hobbs State Management Area as presented. Bud Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.**

Chairman Haak recognized Janet Stanton to address the Commission on behalf of representatives of equestrian groups who were present at the meeting.  
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Janet Stanton said she was one of the original people who started working with the park and would like to see the equestrian trails developed. Ms. Stanton said it is her observation that in the park plan she did not see the word "horse" mentioned in any of the day-use areas, etc. She said the riders have not been given equal status. Chairman Haak said there is a section in the plan that is devoted to "equestrian." She asked Ms. Stanton if she had read that section. Ms. Stanton said she had. Ms. Haak asked if Ms. Stanton still felt as if that wasn't sufficient. Ms. Stanton said she did not because it had been said since 1980 that there would be trails and we still find that nothing has ever been done. She said that since 1980 there are designated hiking trails and a designated shooting range. Greg Butts said he will be working with the equestrian groups to find the final locations. Mr. Butts said there are limitations on where certain facilities can be placed, such as cabins with a view of the lake, a boat ramp accessing the lake, a visitor center. Equestrian trails are in the plan and they are approved. Chairman Haak thanked Ms. Stanton for her comments, and for the other interested horse riders for attending.

### **Hobbs State Management Area - Name Change**

Greg Butts said several things have changed since the Commission approved the name "Beaver Lake State Park." It made sense at the time because ASP was looking at one particular area on the lake. By reference, the area had been called "The Hobbs Estate" and "The Hobbs Area." In the state park system there are 18 parks that are named after someone. Most of them are historical names or names of those involved in projects. As Mr. Davies had said, the project would not have happened if an heir hadn't agreed with what Mr. Hobbs wished which was to keep the property intact. Mr. Butts said it is his recommendation that the park be named "Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area." The reason for adding the words "conservation area" is that it is a partnership project with the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission and Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission. Polly Woods Crews said Mr. Hobbs was an Arkansan who really cared about his state and included his wishes in his will.

**Billy Lindsey moved to approve *Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area* as the name for the entire Hobbs property. Bud Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.**

Wade Williams said he prefers using the Van Winkle name but in talking with people regarding the name, most don't know where Beaver Lake State Park is located or who Van Winkle was. But if the name Hobbs is mentioned, they recognize it.

### **Geocaching**

Greg Butts said the proposed new policy directive on Geocaching that was requested by the Commission would be worked through the Administrative Rules process along with the policy on camping and reservations. Mr. Butts said the policy permits Geocaching through a permit process.

**Jane Christenson moved to approve the policy directive permitting Geocaching in state parks as presented. Wade Williams seconded and the motion carried.**

**Pinnacle Mountain State Park - Memorial Bench**

Greg Butts said he had received a request from Mr. and Mrs. William Adair who would like to place a memorial bench at the park. The bench would be in memory of their deceased son, Bo, and be placed at the East Quarry Overlook Trail. Mr. Butts said they would pay for the bench and base.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve the placement of a memorial bench at the East Quarry Overlook Trail at Pinnacle Mountain State Park. The bench and base to be paid for by Mr. and Mrs. William Adair, and is in memory of their son, Bo. Bud Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.**

**Queen Wilhelmina State Park - Arkansas Native Plant & Wildlife Center (ANPWC)**

Greg Butts reminded the Commission that in February 2002, an agreement had been signed with ANPWC for the operation of the zoo, and about the removal of Scott Fite from the organization's Board of Directors. On July 27, 2002 the ANPWC opened for business. The first lump sum payment of \$2,500 was due July 1, 2002. Because it did not open until the 27<sup>th</sup>, they did not have any revenue. The next scheduled payment of \$2,500 was due November 1, 2002. Howard Davies, President ANPWC, and Tom Young, Manager of the zoo, have requested that because of the newness of their operation, that the first \$2,500 be waived, and they pay 10% gross on their admissions which would be approximately \$900. Mr. Butts said he has spoken with Superintendent Tinsley who reported very good comments from the public regarding the new non-profit's operation and interpretive programs. Mr. Butts said his recommendation is to waive the July 1, 2002 payment of \$2,500 and require ANPWC make the \$2,500 for the second half of the year but allow until March 1, 2003 to do so.

Wade Williams asked if he was correct in recalling that the money to be paid was a reduction from what was originally going to be paid by the Fites. Mr. Butts said it is the same amount. He said when the Commission in February 2002 approved splitting the two businesses, the agreement called for two \$2,500 payments from both operations. Mr. Williams said he is talking about two to three years ago when the operation changed hands the first time and we made some concessions and we ended up losing some money. We are talking about two \$2,500 payments for a total of \$5,000 and your recommendation is that instead of having \$5,000 in hand by November 1<sup>st</sup>, which is past, we accept \$2,500 next March. Mr. Butts said, yes. Mr. Williams said he is opposed to that. Ness Sechrest asked what the alternative is - do we run the operation? Mr. Williams said if there is not enough demand that they can't generate \$5,000 or if they

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don't have enough support, do we really need it? Do we need to look at doing something else? Billy Lindsey asked how important the operation is to the park. Greg Butts said both operations have existed for approximately 25 years. There have been very positive comments about the zoo side – it is another attraction, it offers guests something different to do while visiting the park. Mr. Butts said it was not the non-profit's total fault the operation could not open until July 27<sup>th</sup>. The Fites filed a complaint against ANPWC concerning the removal of property and there were a lot of legal issues to work through. ANPWC did not want all the old cages that were deteriorated and it took them time to remove most of them. They kept the new ones they had built with Scott Fite. They had to work through the issues to get the Fites to remove all the old debris. Mr. Butts said if ANPWC had been open March 1, 2002, they would have generated revenue. They worked hard at it and it couldn't open until July 27<sup>th</sup>. This year, allowing them to get their feet on the ground, requiring the second payment makes sense because they were in business from August through October. The contract does not count donations towards the fee calculations. Mr. Butts said had he not received very good comments from the public, he would feel different about it. Ted Mullenix asked if Greg Butts was proposing to do what ANPWC had requested. Mr. Butts said no, and he is recommending one \$2,500 payment. Mr. Butts said he had told Howard Davis that the July 1<sup>st</sup> payment had not been received. Mr. Davis's response was that ANPWC had not opened until July 27<sup>th</sup> and they lost four months of operation. Mr. Butts said he is proposing to waive just the first \$2,500 payment. Bud Shamburger said, considering the remoteness of the park and the investment ASP has in the lodge, restaurant and other facilities, we owe our guests something to do even if it means subsidizing a concessionaire to keep them open. Wade Williams agreed saying there is a need for things guests can do while at the park. Mr. Shamburger said Mr. Butts' proposal is not something we are going to do every year. Mr. Williams said it is actually something we've been doing every year – we have been making concessions to the operators every single year. Mr. Shamburger said, but not the same operators. The same logic applies – if we did it for the others because we needed the operation at the park, we have to do it for this operator. Billy Lindsey said another way to look at it is that if we decide we are going to keep the operation at the park and want to run it ourselves, we could not run it for \$2,500.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve waiving the July 1, 2002 payment of \$2,500, and require ANPWC to remit the \$2,500 for the second half of the year by paying \$1,000 now and the balance of \$1,500 by March 1, 2003. Danny Ford seconded the motion.**

Polly Wood Crews said she had always voted against the operation. She said she feels it is poorly run and handled, and we have made every concession. Ms. Crews said she thinks ASP should do something better at the park if we want to attract guests. Ness Sechrest said we should go along with this just one time and then if it doesn't improve, he agrees with Ms. Crews. Wade Williams said it is just a difference in you saying go along with it this one time and I'm saying we've worked out plans with concessionaires. Remember that these people are the result of a previous problem with a previous concessionaire. Mr. Williams said he has only been on the Commission six years, so he

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does not know all the history but there has been some issue with the operators just about every year he's been on the Commission. Loretta Lever House said she agrees with Mr. Williams – if we continue to make concessions we will continue to be asked to make concessions.

**A vote was taken on the motion. The motion carried with three opposed.**

Chairman Haak said a serious conversation needs to take place with Howard Davis because the Commission will not be favorable to making a concession in 2003.

Greg Butts said the Fites made their \$2,500 payment July 1, 2002 but have not made the November 1<sup>st</sup> payment. Mr. Butts said he believes the Fites are in default with their Bank of Tennessee and SBA loans. In October the Fites had a good opportunity to generate income. Their operation was open only about six days in October. Scott Fite now has a full-time job in the insurance industry. Superintendent Tinsley is under the impression that the Fite's operation is for sale. When Becky Fite was told about the overdue payment, her response was that when their operation is sold, ASP will get paid. Mr. Butts said that is not acceptable. There is a party in California interested in buying the operation. ASP's contract says we approve a change in ownership. The lending institutions that made the Fite's loans have some authority with regard to the property. Richard Davies asked what the Fites paid for their operation. Mr. Butts said it was \$180,000 for the train and the Fites also have that much invested in the new building and in cage renovation when they owned the zoo. Billy Lindsey asked what the revenue has been during a good year. Mr. Butts said the gross operation was approximately \$80,000 this year for train, miniature golf and store sales. Polly Wood Crews said we should purchase the operation and run it ourselves.

### **Certificate of Appreciation**

Greg Butts said Don Lambert, Director of the Museum of Natural Resources for the past 18 years, is retiring. Mr. Lambert has done an outstanding job creating an outstanding friends group in the park system and the foundation that has contributed over \$100,000 for a variety of projects.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve a Certificate of Appreciation for Don Lambert recognizing 18 years of outstanding service as Director of the Museum of Natural Resources. Jane Christenson seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Jacksonport State Park - Access Use Permit**

Stan Graves said a request had been received from Kinder-Morgan Natural Gas Pipeline Co. for an access permit for vegetative management for their pipeline.

**Bud Shamburger moved to approve a Use Permit Agreement with the Kinder-Morgan Natural Gas Pipeline Co. for vegetative management for their pipeline at Jacksonport State Park. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.**

#### **Devil's Den State Park - Easement Request**

Stan Graves said a request had been received from the Ozarks Electric Cooperative Corp. for an easement for the construction of underground electric service to new employee residences.

**Bud Shamburger moved to approve a Right-Of-Way Easement to the Ozarks Electric Cooperative Corp. for the installation of underground electric service to new employee residences at Devil's Den State Park. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.**

#### **Miscellaneous**

Bill Barnes reported on his visit to the Lake Dardanelle marinas. He said he and Greg Butts had looked at the two marinas that are on opposite sides of the lake. Each one is contiguous to the state park. On the Russellville side the park literally wraps the marina. In both cases the marinas are not part of the park – they are both separate Corps of Engineers leases that ASP has no control over. Both marinas are for sale. We might look at acquiring the marina on the Russellville side because it would be in the best interest of the park. Mr. Barnes said he and Mr. Butts agree the acquisitions would not be a good deal at this time because the owners want too much money for them. The marinas won't begin good cash flow in their present condition and significant maintenance and renovations costs would be incurred to bring them up to a condition we would be proud to operate or offer them for lease. Mr. Barnes said his recommendation is that ASP declines both offers. If they could be acquired at about 20% to 30% less than what the owners are wanting, it might be something to revisit.

Chairman Haak said Superintendent Snodgrass had told her about the problem with mold at DeGray Lake Resort State Park. Greg Butts said the discovery of mold in some of the lodge rooms was a surprise. We have taken quick action to determine the cause and correct the situation. Mr. Butts said it is not just park facilities. The Capitol Hill Apartments building has a mold problem, there is mold behind the wallpaper in this room, and recently several school systems have reported mold problems. The problem has a lot to do with vinyl wallpaper and air balance. Crews are working on the problem at DeGray. Stan Graves said Farmers' Insurance in Texas has had a lot of losses because of mold. Bill Barnes said it was his understanding that one entire wing of the lodge would have to be taken out-of-service while the problem with mold is corrected. Stan Graves said 17 rooms are out-of-service. It appears that all 36 rooms in the south wing

will have to be taken out-of-service and all the rooms in the north wing will have to have remediation of some sort – which means removing the wallpaper and following the EPA remediation guidelines on cleaning. Mr. Barnes asked if the entire lodge will be in service for the 2003 season or will part of it be out-of-service. Mac Balkman said, hopefully, the necessary work should be completed by the end of January 2003.

Polly Wood Crews said the Commission has had extraordinary leadership in 2002. Ms. Crews said Chairman Haak has done a remarkable job in some very difficult situations. The Commissioners rose and applauded Chairman Haak. Ms. Haak said she would never have dreamed that she would have done what she has been doing for the last few years for the state of Arkansas. Ms. Haak said she loves Arkansas and loves what she has been doing. She thanked everyone for giving her the opportunity to serve and learn and accept her mistakes when she made them.

Bud Shamburger said this would be his last Commission meeting. He said he had met with Governor Huckabee and told him he was resigning his position on the Commission. Mr. Shamburger said he had thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship the past 17 years. He said he and Margaret were going to enjoy their seven grandchildren, and do some traveling in their motorhome, and see the U.S.A.

### **Report by Nominating Committee**

Jane Christenson said the Nominating Committee had consisted of Ness Sechrest, Wade Williams and herself as Chairman. She said the Committee would like to present the following slate of officers for 2003 for consideration:

Chairman, Billy Lindsey  
Vice-Chairman, Bill Barnes

**Ness Sechrest moved to accept the Nominating Committee's recommendation for Billy Lindsey as Chairman and Bill Barnes as Vice-Chairman for CY2003. Wade Williams seconded and the motion carried.**

Chairman Haak thanked Jane Christenson for hosting the Commission in Harrison. The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.