

State Parks Recreation, and Travel Commission
Lake Dardanelle State Park, 100 State Park Drive, Russellville, AR 72802
May 16, 2019

Commissioners present

Jim Shamburger, Chair	Eric Jackson
Kalene Griffith, Vice Chair	Bob Knight
Austin Albers	Weston Lewey
Bill Barnes	Montine McNulty
Jeff Baskin	Cindy Smith
Mike Gibson	Mike Wilson
Ron Gossage	Randy Wolfinbarger

Commissioners absent

John Gill
Shash Goyal
Ness Sechrest

Department Staff present

Cynthia Dunlap, Interim Executive Director	Randy Roberson, Planning & Development Mgr
Jim Dailey, Tourism Director	Marcel Hanzlik, Region 3 Supervisor
Grady Span, State Parks Director	Kayla Hardage, Welcome Center Administrator
Shea Lewis, Deputy State Parks Director	Bridget McLemore, Deputy Tourism Director
Kristine Puckett, Deputy Tourism Director	Assistant
Kris Richardson, ADPT Executive Assistant	Jill Rohrbach, Travel Writer
Kelly Farrell, Program Services Manager	Jeff King, Project Mgr, Government Liaison
Joe Jacobs, Marketing and Revenue Manager	LaJearna Carroll, Parks Executive Assistant

CJRW

Shelby Fisher	Jennifer Morgan
Darin Gray	Mark Raines
Chris Ho	Dalaney Thomas
Brian Kratkiewicz	Keegan Wright

Miles Partnership

Susie Kardas

Guests

Eddie Dixon, Morrilton
Senator Breanne Davis, Russellville
Kevin Sexton, Hot Springs Village
Brant Collins, Little Rock

Call to Order

Chair Jim Shamburger called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. Kris Richardson called roll.

Approval of Agenda

Jim Shamburger requested approval of agenda.

Austin Albers moved to approve the agenda as presented. Eric Jackson seconded and the motion carried.

Presentation of the Minutes from Previous Meeting

Jim Shamburger requested approval of the minutes from the April meeting.

Weston Lewey moved to approve the minutes from the April 18 meeting as presented. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Theresa Helliwell presented the FY 2019 Year-to-Date financial report for the ten (10) month period ending April 30, 2019.

FY 2019 Year-to-Date Expenditures were:

- Department Total - \$97,468,087 an increase of 5.06%
- Parks Division (including Construction and Grants) - \$76,807,335
- Tourism Division - \$14,928,286
- Keep Arkansas Beautiful - \$384,598
- Administration Division - \$3,224,141
- War Memorial - \$2,123,727

FY 2019 Year-to-Date Revenues were:

- Parks Division Operating Revenue - \$21,146,847 a decrease of 4.33%
- War Memorial Operating Revenue - \$1,212,421 a decrease of 25.00%
- 1/8% Tax Revenues - \$27,877,515 an increase of 1.92%
- 2% Gross Tax collections - \$13,933,329 an increase of 2.80%
- Grocery Store Wine Revenue - \$24,226 a decrease of 92.58%

* Please Note: percentages (%) are in comparison to the same period in the prior fiscal year

Randy Wolfinbarger moved to approve the financial report as presented. Eric Jackson seconded, and the motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Cynthia Dunlap noted that the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council met on May 5. There have been \$41.8 million in requests and \$8.2 million in approved requests. Due to the upcoming transformation, the Wine Council funds will be moving to a different agency in July. While there is currently no specific news on the transformation, more information is expected by the end of the month.

Dunlap also noted Jim Dailey and Tourism staff were recognized in an article in Business and Politics for their efforts during National Travel and Tourism Week welcoming visitors to Arkansas at the Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport in Little Rock.

TOURISM DIVISION

Director's Report

Jim Dailey mentioned that he is honored to hold his position in Tourism and to work with competent, committed, skilled staff and that tremendous progress has been made in staffing. Dailey also noted a change in staff; Shelbey Lisko will now be working as a sales consultant with Jessica Ledbetter. Dailey noted he attended the 2019 American Trails International Symposium in Syracuse, New York, April 28 - May 1.

Other changes were discussed such as Mike Maloney's appointment as part time executive director of Lowell Advertising and Promotion Commission and Scott Sudduth's new position as

Vice President of Tourism Development with the North Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Dailey noted his and Kristine Puckett's visit to Hardy and Cherokee Village. Joy Barlogie and Dailey visited Kingsland to discuss the development of the Johnny Cash museum.

Dailey transitioned to new ideas and tourism leadership. Last August's Tourism retreat yielded good results. Other new ideas include developing a tourism leadership program. Kristine Puckett said any ideas for the program would be appreciated and expanded on the program.

Welcome Centers

Kayla Hardage presented the Welcome Centers report. Mammoth Spring renovations are sixty percent complete. The United States Travel Counselor Exam has been updated. She announced a new employee, Katie Stehle, hired in January. Hardage also announced the Arkansas Department of Transportation's emergency preparedness program.

Over one million individuals were recorded as visiting Welcome Centers in 2018. Visitation is up in Siloam Springs and Harrison, while it is down in Mammoth Spring.

Twenty-three staff members participated in a Study Tour (formerly known as FAM tours) that took place in nine cities through south and southwest Arkansas. The fall Study Tour will take place in the north central part of the state.

Hardage remarked on National Travel and Tourism Week events in Little Rock. One such event was welcoming incoming travelers at the Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport with signs, cheers, dogs to pet, a local pep band, and local businesses. Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott also attended. Welcome Centers participated by having raffles and serving free food and beverages.

Advertising

Brian Kratkiewicz of CJRW began the advertising report. He expressed that the current strategy is a multi-media plan to maximize reach and frequency against demos and niche audiences, generating awareness of Arkansas marketing messages and driving visits to Arkansas and Arkansas.com. SMARI research will be used to concentrate support in key feeder states and markets. The recommended media mix is 37.4% television, 46.3% digital, 9% magazine, 6.4% radio, and 0.8% outdoor, with 76.9% being out of state and 23.1% in state.

Kratkiewicz continued, discussing television tactics. Television tactics will revolve around the same markets as the FW 18 media plan with consistent levels of support. Spanish language advertising will be utilized in Little Rock, northwest Arkansas, and Dallas. Digital tactics will

continue to use mass reach sites/networks, programmatic buys, vertical sites, and local sites. Podcast audio advertising will be tested. Print media advertising will decrease slightly. Radio levels of support will remain consistent with FW 18.

The presentation was turned over to Chris Ho and Susie Kardas, who introduced new CJRW team member, Shelby Fisher. Ho noted an increase of 64.9% in traffic on Arkansas.com from March to April of 2019. Partner referrals are down 15.4% from March to April. Travel guide orders have increased by 15.3%, while guides viewed online have increased by 108.2%. Newsletter signups decreased by 30.2%. Organic Google search results have decreased. Kardas noted that the drop in Google search results is related to Google answering general searches instead of leading to Arkansas.com.

Dalaney Thomas spoke about the Arkansas road trip campaign. Objectives of the campaign included receiving at least 5,000 entries, which was exceeded at a total of 11,124 entries. The campaign ran from March 1 – April 15 and \$24,587 was spent. More than 9,000,000 people were reached through the campaign. Ashley T. of Idaho won the contest.

Mark Raines talked about the satellite media tour of the United States Civil Rights Trail. It was broadcast live from Central High in Little Rock. Mayor Frank Scott was on camera from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Twenty-one different radio and television stations tuned in.

PARKS DIVISION

Certificates of Appreciation

Grady Spann requested the approval for a Certificate of Appreciation for Ocie Hunter for his 37 years of service to Arkansas State Parks (ASP).

Cindy Smith moved to approve a Certificate of Appreciation for Ocie Hunter for his 37 years of service to Arkansas State Parks. Austin Albers seconded and the motion carried.

Grady Spann requested the approval for a Certificate of Appreciation for Christy Murphy for her 20 years of service to ASP.

Cindy Smith moved to approve a Certificate of Appreciation for Christy Murphy for her 20 years of service to Arkansas State Parks. Eric Jackson seconded and the motion carried.

Bull Shoals – Chili Cook-off Agreement Renewal

Grady Spann reported that the Bull Shoals-Lakeview Rotary operates the Arkansas State Chili Cook-off as a fundraiser at Bull Shoals-White River State Park annually. He requested renewal of the agreement between the Bull Shoals-Lakeview Rotary Club and the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism for an additional five years.

Bob Knight moved to approve the renewal of an agreement for the Arkansas State Chili Cook-off between the Lakeview Rotary Club and Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism for an additional five years. Ron Gossage seconded and the motion carried.

Mississippi River State Park –Donation/Memorial Bike Repair Station

Grady Spann reported that ASP has received two bike repair stations donated at Mississippi River State Park (MRSP) in eastern Arkansas, this donation requires Commission approval.

Tour de Delta Bike Ride donated two bicycle repair stations to MRSP in memory of Tom Kinnebrew, who passed away in 2007. He was the CEO of the Helena Regional Medical Center in Helena and a community leader. Tom was a bicycle enthusiast and a vigorous promoter of bicycling in the Eastern region of Arkansas. The park has requested to place the repair stations near Bear Creek Lake and Storm Creek Lake. The bike repair stations would include a plaque that has the Tour de Delta Bike Ride emblem and the following wording, "In Memory of Tom Kinnebrew."

Eric Jackson moved to approve the two donated bike repair stations and plaques at Mississippi River State Park –Tour de Delta Bike Ride; the memorial plaque will have the Tour de Delta Bike Ride emblem and the following wording: "In Memory of Tom Kinnebrew." The two bike repair stations are to be installed at Mississippi River State Park near Bear Creek Lake and near Storm Creek Lake. Austin Albers seconded and the motion carried.

Miscellaneous

Mike Wilson presented samples of the signs produced by the new Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machine purchased to produce 2D carved signs for the parks. The Sign Committee has worked to standardize park wide sign standards. Devil's Den State Park will be the first prototype park; ASP staff plans for the new signs to be installed at all 52 parks within five years. The hand routed wooden signs were touched six times and took over 48 hours to produce, require yearly touched up or repainting, and require replacement every three years or so. The

CNC machine will produce the same signs in 50 minutes. The new sign material is a colorcore polymer material that is weather resistant, only requires yearly cleaning, and will last at least at least 10 years. Discussion ensued.

Monument Trails

Grady Spann presented the Monument Trails' identity and branding guide with the logo and approved uses. Spann then shared the new trails video and Hobbs Monument Trail video. Spann invited Commissioners to attend the Monument Trail dedication at Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area on June 7 at 2:00 p.m. Discussion ensued.

Spann announced Rebecca Rusch completed the Arkansas High Country Trail, a new 1,041-mile bike trail across the state. She is the first cyclist to every ride straight through the entire trail in 8 days, 3 hours and 33 minutes. Rusch sent Spann a photo of her washing her bike in the spa tub at Queen Wilhelmina State Park. Discussion followed.

ASP Field Trip Grants

Spann shared the Arkansas Humanities Council's report for the ASP Field Trip Grants from March 2018, through April 2019, which bestowed 46 grants totaling \$25,387. Twenty-nine schools in 19 Arkansas cities have participated in 121 programs in 13 Arkansas State Parks with 9,014 attendees.

Spann highlighted the article "Arkansas sightseeing: State's largest natural lake replete with history, sights" (Schnedler, The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, April 2, 2019). Lake Chicot covers about 5,000 acres and is the state's largest natural lake and the largest oxbow lake in North America. Lake Chicot was formed six centuries ago by the meandering of the Mississippi River. Lake Chicot attracts fishing enthusiasts and birdwatchers. Exhibits in the Lake Chicot State Park's Visitor Center highlight the various recreations activities available in the area.

Spann mentioned the article "1.52 carat chocolate diamond found at Crater of Diamonds State Park" (Erdman, WSB-TV Atlanta GA CH2, April 4, 2019). A 1.52-carat chocolate diamond was recently found at the park; calendar year to date 177 diamonds have been found. ASP worked with Christopher Crane, film commissioner, to grant a filming permit to Caitlyn Green; who is currently filming a documentary about The Crater of Diamonds.

Spann highlighted the recent article, "Purdy to open OFC season April 19" (April 17, 2019, Stone County Leader, January 2, 2019). Joe Purdy performed at Ozark Folk Center State Park (OFC) during the 57th Annual Arkansas Folk Festival. This was a great opportunity to hear some great

music and storytelling. ASP is seeing a trend of other venues taking advantage of artists scheduled visits to OFC to schedule shows. Joe Purdy is performing in Little Rock and Eureka Springs, which can have a negative impact on the number of people, attending our concerts at OFC.

Spann shared the recent article, "Governor signs legislation to boost feral hog control" (Harris, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, April 2, 2019). Governor Hutchison's Arkansas Feral Hog Eradication Task Force composed of 22 state and federal partners to fight the growing battle of feral hogs in Arkansas. Senate Bill 460 was signed into law as ACT 991 of the Arkansas General assembly; in attendance were Tourism Director, Jim Daily; Deputy Parks Director, Shea Lewis; and Moro Bay State Park Superintendent, Paul Butler.

Spann mentioned the recent article, "Suspects that led police on chase in stolen car along U.S. 1 now in custody" (5 News Web Staff, April 30, 2019). This incident occurred near Lake Fort Smith State Park and Park Rangers responded to assist.

Spann highlighted the recent article, "Withdraw bids return 'significantly high;' negotiations on going" (Harrington, Record Reporting, May1, 2019). ASP Planning and Development is negotiating with the contractor to negotiate the project bid down closer to the estimated project cost.

Spann presented images from the recent OFC Smokehouse renovation completed during the off-season by park maintenance staff. The renovations have opened up the space to accommodate additional seating and to make the area more inviting to guests.

Bull Shoals White River Campground Renovation Review

Randy Roberson reported the campground renovation is completed and guests are enjoying the longer camping spurs, ten additional campsites, and the new family style bathhouse. The renovation also replaced the rent-a-camp sites with two tent campsites. In addition, this renovation has expanded the spaces for parking boats, trailers, and RVs. Discussion ensued.

DeGray Lake Resort Lodge Renovation Update

Roberson reported the DeGray Lake Resort State Park (DLRSP) maintenance shop and laundry room addition and foundation repairs for the conference center projects were completed. The current phase of projects includes replacing the exterior siding and updating windows starting with the lodge wings and then moving on to the restaurant and conference center. Also

included with this phase of renovation, ASP will create some suites in the short wing of the lodge to improve occupancy. Discussion ensued.

DeGray Lake Resort DeRoche Ridge Campground Update

Shea Lewis reported ASP would soon settle on an agreement for the repairs to the DeRoche Campground, following a year of negotiations with the bonding company. ASP is currently evaluating a counter offer from the construction company. Discussion ensued.

Hampson Museum Update

Roberson remarked Director Grady Spann has signed the offer and acceptance letter for the Hampson Museum building and ASP anticipates a closing date of June 10, 2019. Discussion followed.

Withrow Springs Pool

Roberson reported ASP has negotiated with Baldwin Shell Construction Company to lower the bid amount by \$60,000 for the Withrow State Park swimming pool contract. The project will work on the shell of the pool and address the safety concerns; the negotiations included some substitutions of equipment, relocating the electrical panel and reuse of some existing materials. Discussion followed.

Village Creek State Park Cabin Renovation update

Marcel Hanzlik remarked the Village Creek State Park cabins anticipated opening would be on July 7, 2019, for all ten cabins. The furniture has been delivered and the metal roofs are being installed, some siding repairs are being completed, and then the exteriors will be painted. Discussion ensued.

Adjournment

The State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission adjourned at 11:34 am on May 16, 2019, Lake Dardanelle State Park, 100 State Park Dr., Russellville, AR 72082.