

**PARKS COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Pine Bluff Convention Center – Banquet Hall #2**

**500 East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Pine Bluff**

**Wed., June 19, 2019, 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM**

**Committee Members Present**

Eric Jackson, Chair

Jim Shamburger

Kalene Griffith

John Gill

Ron Gossage

Ness Sechrest

Cindy Smith

**Committee Members Absent**

Mike Gibson

**Advertising Committee Members Present**

Austin Albers

Mike Wilson

**ADPT Staff Present**

Cynthia Dunlap

Grady Spann

Shea Lewis

Kim Williams

Marcel Hanzlik

Jeff King

Randy Roberson

Mike Wilson

Chad Fougrousse

LaJeana Carroll

Kris Richardson

**CJRW**

Jennifer Morgan

Keegan Wright

**Miles Media**

Susie Kardas

**Call to Order**

Chair Eric Jackson called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

**Presentation of Minutes from Parks Committee Meeting**

Eric Jackson requested approval for the April 17, 2019, Parks Committee Meeting minutes.

**Jim Shamburger moved to approve the minutes from the April 17, 2019, Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.**

**General high-level overview:**

**Positive Developments**

Grady Spann reported Arkansas State Parks (ASP) and the Arkansas Parks and Recreation Foundation opened and dedicated the Monument Trail at Hobbs State Park – Conservation Area on June 7, 2019. The dedication was well attended. Thank you to commissioners Jim Shamburger, Kalene Griffith, Ron Gossage, and John Gill for attending the dedication. ASP hopes to request International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) epic trail status for the trails at Hobbs. Discussion ensued.

Spann announced ASP completed the purchase of the new Hampson Museum Archeological State Park.

Spann reported ASP is moving forward with transitioning the reservation system from Aspira back to Maestro. Staff are rebuilding the entire reservation inventory and will start entering existing reservations. ASP anticipates a go live date of July 17, 2019. Maestro software has been upgraded to a web-based system, understands ASP’s group lodging needs, and caters to campers. Discussion followed.

Jeff King reported War Memorial Stadium Phase II is progressing ahead of schedule with an end of August 2019 completion date. A change order was needed for offsetting a block for the locker rooms and the existing windows were leaking. Discussion ensued.

Spann reported the Village Creek State Park interior cabin renovations are substantially complete and the final roof replacements for four of the cabins will be completed by June 24, 2019.

Spann announced the Museum of Automobiles at Petit Jean State Park was added to the National Historic Register. APS has 152 properties listed on the registry located in 25 of Arkansas state parks.

**Negative Development**

Grady Spann reported flood damage and clean up at Pinnacle Mountain State Park and Devil’s Den State Park.

Spann stated DeGray Lake Resort State Park (DLRSP) DeRoche Ridge Campground remains closed. ASP continues to work with the Attorney General’s Office and the bonding company to negotiate rebuilding of the campsite.

Spann noted no significant diamond finds at Crater of Diamonds State Park.

**High-level financial overview**

Grady Spann noted the state parks have been impacted by the wet spring and DeGray Lake Resort State Park and Queen Wilhelmina State Park had significantly lower revenue. Pinnacle

Mountain State Park was impacted by road closures and many of the parks were affected because visitors thought the parks were impacted by the Arkansas River Valley flooding. Spann reported a total revenue of \$2,846,467, this is the fourth highest revenue reported for May.

### **Revenue and Expense snapshot, top 10 revenue parks**

Grady Spann reported the top 11 revenue parks reported \$2,056,203 total revenue. This accounts for 72.24 percent of the ASP total revenue. The top 11 revenue producing parks were Mount Magazine, DeGray, Petit Jean (PJSP), Crater of Diamonds (COD), Queen Wilhelmina, Ozark Folk Center (OFC), Lake Catherine (LCSP), Devil's Den, Village Creek, Bull Shoals, and Mount Nebo State Parks. Crater of Diamonds State Park year to date is in the black despite decreased visitation.

### **Revenue snapshot, top 10 revenue buckets**

Spann reported a total revenue of \$2,846,467, this is the fourth highest revenue reported for May, camping reported their best revenue for the month of May with \$593,252, and the second-best May for restaurant revenue with \$463,733. Spann remarked OFC numbers are down and in a decline. The OFC room renovations have been completed. Discussion ensued. ASP reported positive revenue in May for PJSP, COD, DDSP and LCSP.

### **ASP Social Media Response to May Flooding**

Monika Rued reported the Marketing and Revenue section reached out to the park superintendents and added special notices and media requests. Rued produced a video to share on social media with the message that most of the state parks were open and not affected by the flooding of the Arkansas River Valley. Messages were updated as the flood waters receded. CJRW added radio spots about summer get-a-ways and Arkansas is open for business and addressed google searches for flood related concerns.

### **Significant personnel developments**

Shea Lewis summarized the Human Resource cap of 750 positions is below the 805 total allocated positions; Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism currently has 25 positions available to hire.

### **Promotions/transfers/departures**

Shea Lewis announced that Ed Thomas is the new Emergency Services Section Manager, Molly Elders is the new Superintendent at Delta Heritage Trail, Carolyn Barbee is the new Lodge Manager at Mount Magazine and Kathy Zakrzewski is the new Administrative Specialist III for Outdoor Grants.

## **Key Vacancies**

Lewis reported the following key vacancies: Park Superintendent at Arkansas Post Museum; Assistant Superintendents at Delta Heritage Trail State Park, Millwood and Mont Nebo; Interpreters at Mississippi River, Historic Washington, Petit Jean, and Prairie Grove Battlefield; Operations – Operations Task Force Skilled Tradesman, Trail Crew and Superintendent Trainees; Program Services – Commercial Graphic Artist and Administrative Specialist II; Administrative Specialist II in Planning and Development; park wide 14 various maintenance positions, 26 various facility specific positions and 4 various desk clerks. Currently advertising 31 Parks Division positions. Discussion followed.

## **Capital Projects**

Jeff King presented an overview of the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) dashboard that was created as a tool to better track ASP projects. The dashboard provides a snapshot of the current projects across the state. ASP is currently managing approximately 500 projects (CIP and MM) with the major maintenance budget at \$3.68 million.

## **Significant Repair and Maintenance Items**

Shea Lewis reported Pinnacle Mountain State Park flooded due to the Arkansas River flooding and was declared a disaster area and Devil's Den State Park were affected by recent flooding due to rainfall (not in the declared disaster area).

## **Property Developments**

Randy Roberson gave updates on the following parks:

### **Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park**

West Acquisition - Closing completed on February 28, 2019 and the Phase IV funds were requested from FY 20 ANCRC grant.

### **Petit Jean State Park**

Tanyard Springs - ASP received ALC approval on May 17, 2019, received DFA approval on May 23, 2019, pending final SPRTC approval at June 2019 meeting.

### **Hampson Archeological Museum State Park**

New Museum Property closed on date is June 11, 2019.

### Pinnacle Mountain State Park

Cedar Glen Exchange homes and 10 acres marketed for sale by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Received draft Baseline Documentation Report of Retained Conservation Easement from TNC on June 12, 2019. Final edits to be made and document to be resubmitted to ASP,

### Jacksonport State Park

Seymore Property (Town of Jacksonport – Block 6, Lot 9) received ALC approval on May 17, 2019, received DFA approval on May 23, 2019, pending final SPRTC approval at June SPRTC meeting.

### Lake Charles State Park

Sloan & Whisnant Tract (2.28 acres) ASP Initiation of 22-4-106 process occurred at the March 21, 2019, meeting of the SPRTC. Pending future 22-4-106 letter to Governor in the start of the next fiscal year

## **Emergency Services**

### LE Update

Chad Fougerousse provided updates for Emergency Services during the month of April 2019. ASP staff responded to 95 total incidents including agency assist, vehicle accidents, ejections from the park, search and rescues, and a fatality. During the month of May 2019, staff responded to 132 total incidents including agency assists including, arrests, suicide threats, domestic disputes, vehicle accidents, and personal injuries. ASP participated in the recent search and rescue from an overdue camper from Queen Wilhelmina State Park. The Search and Rescue Team was mobilized to assist with the search for the lost hiker on the Buckeye Trail in the Cane Creek Wilderness Area. ASP was called to assist on Monday, June 3, 2019 and was part of the team that found and rescued the lost hiker on June 8, 2019. Discussion ensued.

## **Other**

Cindy Smith mentioned Hardison Hall naming and the emails Commissioners have received. Jim Shamburger stated he responded to the initial email. ASP is funding a statue of Hardison to be displayed in front of the visitor center and the new rentable facility located next to the visitor center. Discussion ensued.

John Gill remarked the Clarendon Bridge is still standing, this process to save the bridge was started four years ago by Stacy Hurst. The Supreme Court has dismissed the lawsuit and the Arkansas Highway Commission passed a resolution to reevaluate the compatibility determination and determine whether keeping the White River Bridge would be consistent under existing conditions with The Cache River and White River National Wildlife Refuges. The State

Parks Committee moved to support a resolution from the SPRTC to reevaluate the compatibility determination and determine whether keeping the White River Bridge would be consistent under existing conditions with The Cache River and White River National Wildlife Refuges.

Discussion ensued.

**Ness Sechrest moved to request a resolution for the Clarendon Bridge at the June 20, 2019, State Parks, Recreational and Travel Commission meeting, to express full support from the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission for Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, Parks Division's Cindy Smith seconded and the motion carried unanimously.**

The Parks Committee meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 19, 2019.