

State Parks, Recreation, and Travel Commission
Parks Committee
Harrison, AR
1:30 PM

Parks Committee Members Present

Gary Vernon
Mike Wilson (Stood in as Chair)
Bob Connell

Parks Committee Members Absent

Blair Allen - Chair
Weston Lewey

Other Commissioners Present

Jim Shamburger
Randy Wolfinbarger
Kalene Griffith
Austin Albers

Staff Present

Shea Lewis, Secretary, ADPHT
Jeff King, Deputy Director, Arkansas State Parks
Elaine Lienhart, Executive Assistant, ADPHT
Chris Myers, Planning & Development, Arkansas State Parks
Ed Thomas, Chief of Emergency Services, Arkansas State Parks
Mike Wilson, Assistant Director, Arkansas State Parks

CJRW

Darin Gray
Katherine Vasilos
Jill Joslin

Guests

Representative Ron McNair
Jeffrey Nielsen, President & CEO, Harrison Chamber of Commerce
Matt Bell, Explore Harrison
Lee Dunlap, Harrison Daily Times

Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:41pm by Commissioner Mike Wilson (acting chair for the day). Secretary Shea Lewis recognized Representative Ron McNair who said a few words and thanked the Commission for meeting in Harrison. Then, Jeffrey Nielsen, President & CEO Harrison Chamber of Commerce, and Matt Bell, Explore Harrison, introduced themselves and welcomed everyone to Harrison

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Wilson made a motion to approve the agenda.

Jim Shamburger made a motion to approve; Austin Albers seconded, and the motion carried.

Approval of September 2024 Minutes

Commissioner Wilson made a motion to approve the previous minutes.

Jim Shamburger made a motion to approve; Austin Albers seconded, and the motion carried.

Director's Office Report

Jeff King, Deputy Director, welcomed everyone and gave a few high-level updates on things that'd happened since the last Commission meeting in October.

The new Itinio POS/PMS system went live on November 12 and online reservations launched on Monday, November 18. 19,000 reservation records had to be uploaded into the new system. There were some hiccups along the way, but the Arkansas State Parks team had great support from the Itinio/Brandt team. The Brandt team had three people in Arkansas going to various locations for support and the Brandt team was making updates to the software as needed.

- Over 30,000 inventory items were loaded into the cloud-based system which allows the Revenue & Sales team to see inventories across all state parks. Inventory was previously tracked via submitted spreadsheets.
- The new POS system can take tap to touch payments and can look at how dynamic pricing impacts each lodging unit across the year. Pricing can be gaged based on occupancy and an algorithm can be used to adjust pricing rather than having it entered manually.
- The POS/PMS site has been branded to look like the updated Arkansas State Parks website. The CJRW team continues to work to get updated photos loaded onto the site for each individual campsite.
- The new site is more user friendly and allows guests to pinpoint which parks have openings that meet their specific needs. They can utilize park view or calendar view to make their reservations.
- Lodging still utilizes the Maestro system for now. Brandt/Itinio is developing an API interface that'll allow their technology to interface with the lodging reservation system. The estimated lead time is 6-9 months.
- Guests have access to a "my reservations page" tied to their email address that will allow them to view all their current and past reservations.

Capital Improvement Program – FY26 Proposed Projects

Chris Myers, Planning & Development Manager, gave a high-level update of proposed projects for FY26. There are currently 27 projects under construction totaling \$39M. 26 projects are under DBA review

and 63 projects are in various stages from pre-design up to about to submit to DBA. ASP currently has 24 active Federal and State grants worth \$55M.

Myers gave a few specific project updates for FY25:

- Lake Dardanelle bathhouse was completed on July 2. It's a 4-unit family style restroom typical of what is being built for campgrounds recently.
- The Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources received a new HVAC system. The equipment was purchased first and then the installation was bid out. Total price was \$635K.
- Daisy State Park's new visitor center is an ongoing project that should be completed by the end of month. The project included an expansion and total remodel of the existing visitor center. Price tag was just over \$1M. New furniture arrives this week and the new VIC increases the retail abilities of the park.
- A Wastewater Treatment Plant renovation is being carried out at Mount Magazine State Park. The park has 3 separate plants to help with capacity but one of these is being taken offline at a time to complete improvements. A meeting will be held tomorrow to do final inspection of the project. The cost of the project was \$854K. The new campground was factored into the improvements and there is some room for additional growth.
- Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park's historic church was built with historic materials. A lot of the materials have rotted and need replaced. All walls need to be shored up to take out and replace logs.
- Pinnacle Mountain State Park: The trail from the new visitor center to the day-use area is under construction. A lot of soil had to be removed and replaced due to water issues and flood damage.
- Delta Heritage Trail State Park: The river bridge is nearing completion about 7 months ahead of schedule. Camper cabins are being placed at the Yancopin trailhead. The White River to Arkansas River bridge just bid and is in contracting phase. The same contractor who completed the first bridge was awarded this new contract.
- The Devil's Den State Park cabin renovation project was just bid out. The contract price is just over \$4M.

A few upcoming projects include the following:

- The Cameron Bluff campground addition at Mount Magazine State Park will add 18 new sites onto the existing campground as well as a new bathhouse.
- The White River bridge to Snow Lake project at Delta Heritage Trail State Park will be bid on December 10, 2024.
- The Lake Chicot campground is being redone completely. 4 existing campgrounds are being removed, and the number of sites is being reduced but, the new sites will be AAA. There will be 44 RV sites and 5 walk-in tent sites once the project is completed.
- There is currently just over 69 miles of trail completed at Delta Heritage Trail State Park. 1.8 miles is under construction today (Yancopin). 3 more miles of trail have just been awarded.

Myers also went over the recommended projects for FY26 and explained the reason behind the selections. Items on the list include everything from projects that go with the Petit Jean Masterplan and Mena Trails Projects to wastewater plant improvements and regular maintenance.

Per Deputy Director King, the Commission isn't expected to approve this list today. The list will be placed in the "Box" for Commissioners to review and vote on at the January 2025 meeting.

Jim Shamburger made a motion to recommend the full Commission approve this list (as is); Kalene Griffin seconded, and the motion carried.

Emergency Services & Law Enforcement Update

Assistant Director Mike Wilson and Chief Ed Thomas gave a detailed presentation about the changes that are underway with the State Parks Law Enforcement program. This process is necessary to meet the reorganizational goals of transitioning all law enforcement activities to the newly developed Emergency Services Section. These goals include the creation of dedicated enforcement positions; the separation of personnel duties (enforcement and administration); shifting supervision and management of enforcement officers from the Operations Section to the Emergency Services Section; the improvement of career paths for all staff members; and the proper allocation of Division and Agency resources.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:26pm.

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I acknowledge these minutes are approved:

X 

Blair Allen
Chair