

Big Ridge State Park Strategic Management Plan

2023 – 2033

DRAFT



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Park Purpose, History and Description

Big Ridge State Park exists to preserve and protect the natural, cultural, and scenic resources within the park boundaries and to provide a variety of safe, quality, and educational outdoor experiences through a well-planned and professionally managed system. The park commemorates the work of the Civilian Conservation Corp in providing natural based recreational facilities and opportunities as well as provides visitors quality resource preservation and interpretation for a deep sense of the past and the world they live in. Big Ridge State Park was deeded to the State of Tennessee on September 7, 1949, by the United States of America acting by and through the Tennessee Valley Authority. The deed states, in part, that the park will be used for public use and recreation and conservation only. Additional acreage was acquired by the State of Tennessee in 1974 from private landowners.

Big Ridge State Park is a heavily wooded, 3687 acre park located in the rugged hills and valleys of upper, middle-east Tennessee within the valley and ridge province. It is located along the Clinch River / Norris Lake Reservoir in Union County, Tennessee and is approximately 20 miles north of Knoxville. Norris Lake is a 48,000 acre TVA reservoir used for flood control and hydro-electrical power which has endless opportunities for water sports and sport fishing. Big Ridge State Park was one of five demonstration parks developed by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) as an example of public recreation development possibilities along TVA lakeshores.

Although once heavily populated and used for agriculture, the park is now mostly forested. Prime examples of natural forest succession can be seen. The farm and pasture lands of years ago are showing the emergence of a young hardwood forest. The present pine and cedar stands are being overcome by an oak and hickory forest. The forest area provides an excellent habitat for a variety of birds and mammals. Migratory birds and waterfowl use Big Ridge and Norris Lake as a winter residence and feeding ground. Golden and Bald Eagles have been observed in the area.

The natural, historic, and cultural features of Big Ridge State Park provide an excellent source for educational programming and interpretation. An extensive trail system provides access to a variety of plant and animal species. The many cultural and historic sites provide an opportunity to learn and appreciate the early pioneers to this area. Although there are no known specific archaeological sites, the area has a rich history of Indian activity.

Goals, Objectives and Action Plans

THE RESOURCES: Exemplary Natural and Cultural Stewardship

Goal: Tennessee State Parks will be nationally recognized for exemplary stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

Objective - *More and better stewards:* Increase internal and external stewards who share Tennessee State Parks core values and can contribute to the State Parks mission to preserve, protect, and share Tennessee's natural and cultural resources.

Action Plan:

- Through an increase of interactions and programming with the general public and community leaders, engage participants to become further involved with the park with their time and support.
 - Develop and conduct an ongoing series of high quality, park specific programs designed with the goal of promoting TSP's core values, fostering awareness and appreciation for the park's unique natural and cultural resources, and educating the public on the responsible and sustainable use of Big Ridge State Park.
- Expand partnerships with Union and Knox County Schools to provide interpretive and educational programs that highlight the park's primary and secondary interpretive themes. Examples include:
 - Career Day Programs
 - Ranger visits to schools and support field trips to park
- Increase volunteer and internship opportunities.
 - Offer numerous volunteer opportunities
 - Develop a trail related volunteer group program to engage volunteers
 - Connect with local high schools to promote TN Promise
- Offer participatory events such as Weed Wrangle program and Norris Lake Project Cleanups.
- Meet with leadership with Union County regularly.
 - Serve on boards of JECDB and Tourism Committee

Objective - *Better resource management practices:* Identify, manage, and restore unique natural and cultural resources for generations to come.

Action Plan:

- Working through TSP leadership and Regional Facilities, inform with robust evidence of the existing conditions and rates of deterioration of the important cultural and natural resources within the park boundaries.
- As resource management occurs, document the progress and completed work in the proper data tracking software such as HIPPO.
- Assure ranger and maintenance staff are engaged in beneficial resource management activities throughout the year by incorporating this requirement in individual performance plans and monitoring progress in monthly activity reports.
- Provide training and educational opportunities for park staff to ensure they are educated and experienced with up-to-date resource management techniques.
- Provide educational and recreational opportunities for the public to promote a greater appreciation of resource preservation.
- Provide and promote the species list for the flora and fauna on the park.
- Continue partnership with Norris Area Trail System.
- Perform inspections of the park's boundary, cultural features and rare, threatened, or unique species to identify, document and address any issues or problems a minimum of once per year.

Objective: *Better data and technology:* Leverage data and technology to help inform and guide decisions on natural and cultural resources stewardship.

Action Plan:

- Working through the GIS Team, correlate the efforts of the Biking and Trail Study, the Boat Launch Study, and other studies into a master document to be utilized in the field for refining and implementation.
- Participate in all departmental GIS training events and work with GIS staff to develop a database inventory of the park's valuable cultural and natural resources.
- Continue to utilize HIPPO to document work orders and preventative maintenance on natural and cultural resources.
- Provide organized, effective, and welcoming information signage, inventory and replace, broadband services.
- Provide adequate EV infrastructure for guests to utilize.

THE VISITOR: Welcoming and Inviting to All

Goal: Tennessee State Parks will be the most accessible, welcoming, and inviting system of parks that enriches Tennesseans and visitors through excellent interpretation, education, and resource-based recreation.

Objective: *accessible, welcoming, and inviting to all:* create quality and varied programs of interpretation, recreation, and outreach so that all audiences feel welcome and invited.

Action Plan:

- Connect people with the park through telling full stories via programming, interpretation, recreation and outreach about the history and future of the park and geographic area.
- Park staff will work to provide interpretive programs to local schools in both Union and Knox Counties.
- Continue fostering partnerships that highlight the park's unique historical significance and shared stories with TVA and Union County Historical Museum.
- Develop strong communication channels between the park, local media, agencies with common missions and individuals to keep everyone informed about the park's programs and updates via varied online access to information.
- Park interpretive staff shall be required to participate in inclusivity, sensitivity, and interpretive training events such as Telling Full Stories: Understanding Bias, Train the Trainer, Volunteer Coordinator Workshop and Respectful Workplace provided by IEP, DOHR and other organizations.

Objective: *high quality programming:* develop and support mission-based and resource-relevant programs to engage visitors, empower staff, and develop community wellbeing.

Action Plan:

- Develop a collection of "stock" programs in a variety of delivery methods that can be pulled from to engage visitors regarding the natural, historic, and cultural offerings of the park to create unique and memorable experiences.
- Develop interpretive programs transcripts that would focus on interpreting life prior to the dam, creation of TVA and construction of Norris Dam, family removal, impact TVA had on region, creation of Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) and impact CCC had on the park and the nation.
- Develop and design interpretive wayside signs at all historic and cultural sites throughout the park to foster deeper understanding and appreciation of these park treasures.

- Utilize social media to provide engaging posts that encourage people to explore the park for both physical and mental well-being.

Objective: *resource-based outdoor recreation:* provide resource-based outdoor recreation opportunities that ensure representation of Tennessee’s natural, scenic, and cultural resources.

Action Plan:

- Develop and implement resource-based outdoor recreation opportunities that exemplify the park’s natural, scenic, and cultural resources.
- Develop a sustainable multi-use trails system that is professionally managed, blazed according to TSP trail standards with appropriate signage.
- Continue to offer high quality interpretive programs that offer recreational elements and programs that enhance outdoor skills including but limited to ranger led hikes, PWC programs, backcountry experiences and programs with themes such as fishing, canoeing, wilderness survival, astronomy, land navigation, campfire cooking, pioneering, foraging, tracking and wilderness first aid.
- Continue to foster partnerships with Norris Area Trail Systems to provide new and enhanced recreational opportunities.
- Continue to conduct Junior Ranger and Sprit of America Youth Boating Education camps at the park each summer.

THE AMENITIES: Well-Maintained Facilities and Amenities

Goal: Tennessee State Parks will be well maintained with facilities and amenities that delight visitors and make Tennesseans proud.

Objective: *Improve maintenance:* Improve overall maintenance and upkeep of all park facilities and amenities that contribute to meaningful visitor experiences.

Action Plan:

- Working through TSP leadership and Regional Facilities, inform with robust evidence of the existing conditions and rates of deterioration of the facilities and amenities within the park boundaries.
- Maintenance staff shall continue to utilize HIPPO CMMS as a tool to prioritize, schedule, perform and document all relevant preventative and routine work activities at the park, and will continue to load new locations, vehicles, buildings and building equipment into the system as necessary.
- Routine preventative maintenance will continue to include, but not limited to, quarterly inspections of all park facilities and cabins with follow up work completed as timely as possible.
- All plans, schematics, blueprints, operational, troubleshooting, repair and safety manuals, warranty, model, replacement part and service provider documents for park vehicles, equipment, buildings, and mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems will be well-organized and housed in a designated central location for easy access when needed.

- The park manager will commence weekly meetings with the maintenance supervisor to discuss maintenance priorities, concerns, and material and equipment needs to develop a plan for the subsequent week of work activities.

Objective: *Better park accessibility:* ensure all visitors have opportunities for meaningful experiences in every Tennessee State Park.

Action Plan:

- Through various methods, ensure all staff have knowledge of the limitations and challenges of each of the park's offerings.
- Continue to evaluate and improve facilities and services for ADA compliance that support the Access 2030 initiative.

Objective: *Quality and welcoming facilities and amenities:* provide high-quality and well-planned facilities and amenities that enrich the visitor experience.

Action Plan:

- When renovating or developing new experience opportunities, approach with a wholistic view and implementation to enrich the visitor activity in the best possible ways.
- Provided organized, effective, and welcoming information on signage and replace when needed.

THE OPERATIONS: Operational Excellence

Goal: Tennessee State Parks will be a national model for operational excellence in a state park system.

Objective: *Support and empower our people:* support and empower our workforce by creating a caring environment that encourages professional growth and great customer service.

Action Plan:

- Through staff development training and creating an inviting workplace, provide employees with opportunities for growth and advancement.
- When possible, expand the diversity of the workplace.
- All supervisors responsible for rating subordinates will be fully trained in the performance planning process and will consistently follow all steps in the process including the development of SMART work outcomes and action steps, drafting honest and constructive interim and final review comments, and conducting performance review meetings with subordinates.
- All employees will be required to participate in Respectful Workplace and Customer Service training courses yearly by incorporating this requirement in individual performance plans.
- The park manager will continue to conduct relevant and meaningful monthly staff meetings where employees are offered an opportunity to freely discuss work-related issues, concerns, and solutions.
- The park manager will continue to maintain an open-door policy for employees to discuss (discretely if necessary) their needs and concerns.

Objective: *Efficient and effective operations:* provide efficient, effective, and fiscally responsible service to Tennesseans and our visitors.

Action Plan:

- Through responsible management practices, engage in business practices in operations that promote cost savings and revenue growth.
- The park will continue to use EnergyCap to monitor trends in electricity and water consumption and as a tool for alerting the park to potential maintenance problems.
- Preventative maintenance schedules on park vehicles, equipment, mechanical, electrical, plumbing and HVAC systems will be strictly adhered to and repairs to those systems will be assigned top priority upon discovery.

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Park Overview

Site Fact Sheet

| | |
|--|---|
| Park Name | Big Ridge State Park |
| Site Manager | Keith Montgomery |
| Area Manager | Veronica Greear |
| Park acreage | 3,687 |
| Total number of visitors (FY 2022) | 593,764 |
| Total expenses before CO (FY 2022) | \$1,147,660 |
| Total revenues (FY 2022) | \$513,872 |
| Retail cost recovery % ¹ | 376% |
| Park cost recovery % | 45% |
| Average expense per visitor (FY 2022) | \$1.93 |
| Average revenue per visitor (FY 2022) | \$0.87 |
| Gross profit or loss | \$633,788 |
| Total full-time available positions / filled | 12/11 |
| Total part-time available positions / filled | 4/4 |
| Primary feeder markets | Knox County, Union County, Anderson County, Knoxville, KY, VA, GA, NC |
| Primary reasons people visit | Big Ridge Lake and Norris Lake recreation and access, hiking trails, camping, picnicking, venue rented events |
| Opportunities for improvement | Optimize lake related niches, adding and improving trail opportunities and experiences, improve park roadway and parking system, improve visitor amenities and comfort stations, replace playground with one that meets present codes and ADA, expand and upgrade existing camping opportunities, improve maintenance of CCC structures, improve boat launch facility, renovate and expand Visitor Center/Park Office, utility systems replacements |

¹ Based on T.C.A. 11-3-305, Cost recovery of revenue-generating facilities

Key Attractions

The amenities or features listed below are those that seem to be most popular for visitors.

- Campground
- Lakes – Norris Lake and Big Ridge Lake
- Kayaking
- Standup Paddleboarding
- Motorboating
- Fishing
- Swim Beach
- Hiking Trails
- Shelters / Rec Hall
- Playground
- Boat Rental
- Flora & Fauna
- Special Events
- Picnic Areas
- Tennis Courts/Pickleball
- Basketball Court
- Weddings / Baptisms / Private Special Events
- Bluegrass Festival

Site and Operations Assessment

This site and operations assessment is a culmination of analyses and findings from a review of the condition of facilities, infrastructure, and operations at Big Ridge State Park. The findings and observations are not intended to be an exhaustive review of all issues present, but provide a basic understanding of the predominant issues that contribute to the site’s current operating conditions. The assessment includes the following:

1. Site and Facilities Assessment
2. Operational Assessment
3. Financial Assessment

Site and Facility Assessment

Methodology

Facility and asset conditions are rated using a differential scale of excellent, good, fair, or poor. Descriptions of conditions that are attributed to each of these findings are also provided.

| Scale of Conditions | |
|---------------------|---|
| Rating | General Description |
| Excellent | Facilities/amenities are in ‘excellent’ condition when they show little or no maintenance or repair problems. Facilities do not feature any major design or operational issues or flaws that contribute to diminished use or increased maintenance or upkeep. Facilities are easy to clean and maintain in order to place them back into public use and the users perceive them to be in excellent shape. |
| Good | Facilities/amenities are in ‘good’ condition when they show only minor maintenance or repair problems. Most maintenance issues with these facilities typically appear to be the result of age and/or heavy use. Facilities may only feature minor design or operational issues that contribute to diminished use or increased maintenance or upkeep. Facilities are moderately easy to clean and maintain in order to place them back into service and the users perceive them to be adequate for their use, but probably not in excellent shape. |
| Fair | Facilities/amenities are in ‘fair’ condition when they show significant maintenance or repair problems. Facilities generally exhibit ongoing maintenance issues that appear to be the result of age, heavy use, or design or operational flaws. Some maintenance and repair needs may compound their fair condition by being deferred because of budget and/or resource limitations. Facilities require more effort to clean and maintain before placing them back into service and the users may perceive them as being less than adequate for their use and in a state of deterioration. The facility or structure may need of major repair or replacement. |
| Poor | Facilities/amenities are in ‘poor’ condition when they show significant, on-going maintenance or repair problems that ultimately may result in suspended use for repair/replacement. Maintenance and repair issues are possibly the result of poor maintenance and clearly the result of age, heavy use, or design or operational flaws. Problems with the facilities are often compounded over time due to consistently-deferred maintenance and repair because of budget and/or resource limitations. Facilities may feature major design or operational issues that contribute to diminished use or increased maintenance or upkeep. Facilities require excessive effort to clean and maintain before placing them back into service and the users often perceive them as being inadequate for their use and in a state of serious deterioration. The facility or structure may need of major repair or replacement. |

Facility Inventory and Assessment

The table below is an inventory of facilities and amenities at Big Ridge State Park and provides the assessed condition of each as reviewed in 05/2023.

| Site Asset / Amenity | Quantity | Condition |
|--|----------|------------------|
| Amphitheater | 1 | Poor |
| Archery / Pistol - Rifle | 1 | Good |
| Basketball Courts | 1 | Good |
| Bathhouses | 3 | Good, Fair, Poor |
| Beachhouse | 1 | Poor |
| Boat Dock | 1 | Fair |
| Boat Ramp | 1 | Poor |
| Bridges (foot bridges) | 2 | Good, Fair |
| Cabins | 20 | 1 Good, 19 Poor |
| Campsites | 50 | Fair to Poor |
| Dam | 1 | Poor |
| Equipment Sheds | 2 | Fair |
| Grist Mill | 1 | Poor |
| Group Camp | 1 | Poor |
| Linen House | 1 | Poor |
| Maintenance Building | 1 | Fair |
| Old Office | 1 | Poor |
| Picnic Pavilions | 1 | Fair |
| Picnic Shelters | 3 | Fair |
| Playground | 1 | Poor |
| Rangers Residences | 4 | Good to Poor |
| Recreation Hall | 1 | Fair |
| Restrooms | 2 | Fair to Poor |
| Roads / Paving | | Fair to Poor |
| Swimming Area (lake) | 1 | Poor |
| Tennis Courts | 1 | Fair |
| Trails | | Good to Poor |
| Visitor Center / Park Office | 1 | Fair |
| Volleyball Courts | 1 | Fair |
| Utility Systems – Electric, Water, Sewer, Communications | | Poor |

Trail Inventory and Assessment

| Trail Name | Mileage | Condition |
|------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Big Valley Trail | 1.82 | Fair |
| Chestnut Ridge Trail | 0.68 | Good |
| Dark Hollow Trail | 3.30 | Fair |
| Fisherman's Trail | 0.33 | Fair |
| Ghost House Trail | 1.21 | Fair |
| Indian Rock Trail | 2.39 | Fair |
| Lake Trail | 1.74 | Fair |
| Loyston Point Trail | 0.31 | Good |
| Meditation Point Trail | 0.16 | Good |
| Old Mill Trail | 0.25 | Fair |
| Sharps Station Trail | 0.26 | Fair |
| Grand Total | 12.43 | Fair |

Big Ridge State Park's trail system covers only a select portion of the park as it exists today. Overall, most of the trails are in fair condition, however, bridges are at end of life and there is a moderate amount of erosion and deterioration in several areas. One of the largest downfalls to the trail system is the inability to access any of the trails via mechanical means, which prevents maintenance ease and frequency as well as hampers emergency operations. Big Ridge was part of an extensive independent study of the area trails system in which there were new trails suggested, including incorporating bike trails and adding access points for emergencies and maintenance. Within this study, most of the park property was incorporated to provide additional opportunities for visitors, both one-time visitors and regular users of the park.

New Assets Needed

List new assets and amenities that would fall under capital expenditures that are needed to improve visitor experience and operational efficiency.

| New Asset & Amenities | Description |
|--|---|
| Boat Launch Facility | New parking area, boat launch, courtesy dock |
| New Campground and Campground Upgraded | New campground built to specs of modern camping units and turn old campground into a tent only campground |
| Common Area Restrooms | Add restrooms to the common public day use areas of the park |
| Bike and Hiking Trails | Expand the trail system to cover the entire park property |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Parking Improvements | Provide improved and new parking opportunities throughout public areas |
| Group Lodge | As a supplement to or addition to group opportunities and meeting / venue space |
| Playground Upgrades and Replacements | Replace existing playground with one that meets modern requirements and build additional playground in separate area to provide more play space |
| Establish Blueway Opportunity | Optimize the unique niche opportunity that the layout of BRSP has with the surrounding lakes |

Prioritized Facility Needs

Based on the facility inventory and assessment, these prioritized needs have been identified.

| Facility Need | Priority Assignment |
|--|---------------------|
| Cabins Renovations | 1 |
| Campground Bathhouse Replacement | 2 |
| Boat Ramp Launch Facility | 3 |
| Utility Systems – Electric, Water, Sewer, Communications, Drainage | 4 |
| Office / Visitor Center Renovation | 5 |
| Dam Repairs and Maintenance | 6 |
| Parking Improvements and Paving | 7 |
| Swim Beach Area Renovations | 8 |
| Group Camp Renovation | 9 |
| Maintenance Shop Renovation | 10 |
| Existing Campground Renovations | 11 |
| Replace Guardrails and Fencing | 12 |
| Amphitheater Renovations | 13 |
| Old Office Renovation | 14 |
| Grist Mill Renovations | 15 |
| Beach House Renovation | 16 |
| Linen House Renovation | 17 |

Operational Assessment

The Operational Assessment includes:

1. An inventory and classification of programs and services being provided at the site,
2. A review of staffing at the site,
3. A review of concessionaires and partners operating at the site,
4. Visitation and customer satisfaction, and
5. Professional development and training.

Inventory and Classification of Programs and Services

Programs and services are classified into one of three major categories:

- 1) Core or Essential Services;**
- 2) Important Services; and**
- 3) Value added or Visitor Supported Services.**

Functions of the site are classified into these categories based in part on the mission and public mandates for both the site and the agency. For the programs and services in each of these categories, there are financial performance expectations that will define how services are funded and evaluated.

CATEGORY 1 – CORE SERVICES *[Largely supported by public subsidies]*

Core programs, services and facilities are those the agency must provide and/or are essential in order to capably govern and meet statutory requirements. The failure of the agency to provide Category 1 services at adequate levels could result in significant negative consequences for the public and the resources under protection. The criteria for programs or services to be classified as core or essential are:

- The services are mandated by the agency’s law or charter or are contractually obligated by agreement to provide the services.
- The services are essential to protecting and supporting the public’s health and safety.
- The services protect and maintain valuable assets and infrastructure.
- The services would generally and reasonably be expected and supported by residents, businesses, customers and partners.
- The services are those that cannot or should not be provided by the private sector.
- The services provide a sound investment of public funds.

The following programs and services offered at Big Ridge State Park have been identified as **core services**:

- Support the mission of Tennessee State Parks which is “To preserve, protect, and share Tennessee’s natural and cultural resources while providing safe, quality outdoor experiences.”
- Provide for public access to the park, the facilities, and the grounds.
- Provide for public safety for visitors and protection of natural and cultural resources.
- Provide for maintenance of grounds, facilities, and infrastructure.
- Maintain facilities developed through the LWCF program to required standards.
- Provide for basic, non-staff supported day-use activities (such as hiking and picnicking) with trails, informational signage, picnic tables, trash cans and restroom facilities.
- Maintain drinking water and wastewater programs to state standards.
- Maintain Big Ridge Dam
- Maintain access to cemeteries

- Maintain and protect land and facilities for use as a state park for public recreation
- Maintain established roadways

CATEGORY 2 – IMPORTANT SERVICES *[Supported by a balance of revenues and public subsidy]*

Important programs, services and facilities are those the agency should provide, and are important to governing and effectively serving residents, businesses, customers and partners. Providing Category 2 services expands or enhances the agency's ability to provide and sustain its core services. The criteria for programs or services to be classified as important are:

- The services expand, enhance or support identified core services.
- These services are broadly supported and utilized by the community, and are considered an appropriate, important, and valuable public good. Public support may be conditional upon the manner by which the services are paid for or funded.
- The services generate income or revenue that offsets some or all of the operating cost and/or are deemed to provide economic, social or environmental outcomes or results.

The following programs and services offered at Big Ridge State Park have been identified as **important services**:

- Provide a full range of environmental, cultural, and recreational programs.
- Offer park-specific information at the Visitor Center.
- Provide educational programs for visitors, schools, and organized groups.
- Provide for basic, non-staff supported day use activities (such as hiking and picnicking) with trails and picnic tables
- Conduct annual Junior Ranger and Sprit of America camps to educate youth on outdoor skills and boating safety.

CATEGORY 3 – VISITOR SUPPORTED SERVICES *[Almost exclusively supported by earned revenue]*

Visitor supported programs, services and facilities are those discretionary services that the agency may provide when additional funding or revenue exists to offset the cost of providing those services. Category 3 services provide added value above and beyond what is required or expected. The criteria for programs or services to be classified as visitor supported are:

- The services expand, enhance or support Core Services, Important Services and the quality of life of the visitors, community or stakeholders.
- The services are supported, valued and well utilized and provide an appropriate and valuable public benefit.
- The services generate income or funding from sponsorships, grants, user fees or other sources that offset some or all of their cost and/or provides a meaningful return on investment.
- The Services can possibly be provided through outsourcing or use of concessionaires, providing opportunities for community enterprise or services that may not otherwise be provided by the agency.

The following programs and services offered at Big Ridge State Park have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- Boat Dock operation – provides seasonal rental of personal watercraft
- Operate a Gift Shop out of the Visitor Center
- Provide quality programming opportunities
- Provide opportunities for overnight stays within the park

- Provide opportunities for event rentals areas and facilities

Personnel / Staffing Review

Personnel and staffing at Big Ridge State Park represent the largest area of budgetary expense at an average of 64% of the total operating budget each year for the last three complete years, which is 1% less than the target of labor costs not exceeding 65% of total operating expenditures. The tables below and on the following page provide a basic review of the current staffing at the site.

Full Time Equivalent Employees

| Position / Title | Quantity (FTE) | Compensation Total |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| PARK MANAGER 2 | 1 | * |
| PARK RANGER 2 | 3 | * |
| ADMIN ASSISTANT 1 | 1 | \$ 42,924.00 |
| SECRETARY | 1 | \$ 33,900.00 |
| FACILITIES SUPERVISOR | 1 | \$ 60,300.00 |
| CONSERVATION WORKER 2 | 2 | \$ 70,068.00 |
| CONSERVATION WORKER 1 | 2 | \$ 61,008.00 |
| CUSTODIAL WORKER SUPV 1 | 1 | \$ 34,236.00 |
| TOTAL | 12 | \$ 534,504.00 |

*Law enforcement compensation confidential by TN law.

Part Time Employees

| Position / Title | Quantity | Compensation Total |
|-----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| CONSERVATION WORKER 2 | 1 | \$ 30,498.00 |
| CONSERVATION WORKER 1 | 1 | \$ 24,999.00 |
| CUSTODIAL WORKER 1 | 1 | \$ 24,999.00 |
| LIFEGUARD 1 | 1 | \$ 13,893.00 |
| TOTAL | 4 | \$ 103,290.00 |

Areas Worked per Position

| Position / Title | Quantity | Area |
|--------------------------|----------|----------------|
| PARK MANAGER 2 | 1 | Administration |
| PARK RANGER 2 | 3 | Ranger |
| ADMIN ASSISTANT 1 | 1 | Office |
| SECRETARY | 1 | Office |
| FACILITIES SUPERVISOR | 1 | Maintenance |
| CONSERVATION WORKER 2 | 2 | Maintenance |
| CONSERVATION WORKER 1 | 1 | Maintenance |
| CONSERVATION WORKER 1 | 1 | Housekeeping |
| CUSTODIAL WORKER SUPV 1 | 1 | Housekeeping |
| CONSERVATION WORKER 2 JS | 1 | Boat Dock |
| CONSERVATION WORKER 1 JS | 1 | Maintenance |
| CUSTODIAL WORKER 1 JS | 1 | Housekeeping |
| LIFEGUARD 1 JS | 1 | Office |

Labor Support

| Labor Support | Annual Hours |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Volunteers | 100 |
| Community Service Workers | 100 |
| Engineering and Construction Crews | 5,000 |
| Resource Management Crews | 500 |
| Other: _____ | 0 |
| TOTAL | 5,700 |

Total Labor Compensation Expense

| Labor Type | Labor Expense |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Full Time Equivalent Employees | \$ 534,504.00 |
| Part Time Employees | \$ 103,290.00 |
| TOTAL Annual Labor Expense | \$ 637,794.00 |

Additional Future Positions Needed

| Position / Title | Quantity | FTE or PT | Year Needed | Justification |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------|-------------|--|
| CONSERVATION WORKER 2 | 2 | FTE | 2025/2026 | <p>Maintenance staffing – for many years now, BRSP has been understaffed in the maintenance department. Many positions were cut from the park years ago because of budget cuts and these positions were never regained. As a result, the standard of care for the grounds and facilities have suffered severely over the years. These positions are necessary to bring the quality of care back up to standard and to be able to cover the park seven days a week for visitor support.</p> <p>Additionally, as facilities are reconstructed, we want to be able to maintain them to a higher degree of quality so the park does not get into the same condition again.</p> |
| CONSERVATION WORKER 1 | 2 | PT | 2024/2026 | <p>Maintenance staffing – likewise from the CW2 needs, two additional jobshare positions for maintenance are needed to cover litter and trash removal, trail maintenance, general grounds care and mowing. These are areas now that are severely understaffed for a park of this size and visitation level. As a result, many tasks get put on the delayed list of work to be completed. This causes many negative customer comments that are unnecessary but are a direct result of being understaffed.</p> |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----|-----------|---|
| CONSERVATION WORKER 1 | 1.5 | PT | 2024 | Boat Rental operations staffing – presently, the park has one jobshare to cover the boat rental operation. For safety and to cover the operation the hours and days to legitimately serve visitors, this staffing needs to be increased by 1.5 jobshares to provide the hours necessary to deliver an acceptable level of service. |
| CUSTODIAL WORKER 2 | 2 | FTE | 2025/2028 | Cabin operations – with the rebuilding of the cabins, the level of care must rise to hospitality standards. Presently, with the limited staff that exists, it is all that housekeeping can do to keep up with arrivals. There is not time to spend doing the true thorough cleanings that should be done regularly. Frequently, maintenance and boat dock staff must be pulled to assist on heavy workload days. Additional, with the cabins’ reconstruction, it is anticipated that reservations will increase dramatically and therefore taxing an already understaffed area. This will also serve to create a career path for persons in this field. |
| CUSTODIAL WORKER 1 | 2 | PT | 2024/2028 | Cabin operations - likewise from the CustW1 needs, two addition jobshare positions for housekeeping staff are needed to cover higher levels of care and workload increases. |
| CLERK | 1 | PT | 2024 | Office operations – the office is presently staffed with two persons. With the volume of calls, walk-ins, and administrative work that must transpire at a minimum, it takes two people every day during the week. Additional help is needed to cover weekend days. Additionally, the office is only open 8-4:30, so on heavier days and weekends, a great number of visitors are not being served after 4:30, which is a real need in this park. This additional FT staff would allow to remedy these problems. |
| TOTAL | 10.5 | | | |

Financial Performance

Revenue per available unit for the last four years in park facilities is detailed in the table below.

Current RevPAR

| Fiscal Year | Cabins Rev Per Unit | Campground Rev Per Unit | Day Use Rev Per Unit | Group Camp Rev Per Unit |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 2019 | 26.44 | 7.05 | 9.35 | 37.08 |
| 2020 | 33.46 | 7.32 | 6.5 | 18.08 |
| 2021 | 50.01 | 11.04 | 9.09 | 19.23 |
| 2022 | 57.42 | 11.66 | 12.11 | 27.48 |

Projected RevPAR - Based on current RevPAR trends at the park and any known developments over the next four years.

| Fiscal Year | Cabins Rev Per Unit | Campground Rev Per Unit | Day Use Rev Per Unit | Group Camp Rev Per Unit |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 2023 | 60 | 13 | 12 | 25 |
| 2024 | 65 | 15 | 13 | 25 |
| 2025 | 70 | 17 | 14 | 25 |
| 2026 | 75 | 19 | 15 | 25 |

Customer Service

| Platform / Site | Year | Customer Satisfaction Level |
|-----------------|------|-----------------------------|
| Yelp | 2023 | 3.5/14 Reviews |
| Google | 2023 | 4.6/1376 Reviews |
| Facebook | 2023 | 3.7/2003 Reviews |
| AllTrails | 2023 | 4.3/720 Reviews |
| NPS Cabins | 2022 | 48 |
| NPS Campsite | 2022 | 59 |
| NPS Day Rentals | 2022 | 67 |

Professional Development and Training

The following professional development and training opportunities are being explored and planned for the staff and volunteers at this park:

- Respectful Workplace
- Title VI
- Cyber Security
- Great Customer Service
- Other courses of the Level 1 and Level 2 of the TDEC Training Pyramid
- Law Enforcement routine, CEU, and training to maintain certifications
- First Aid & CPR
- Park history education training for staff
- Routine management training
- Understanding Bias Training for all front-line staff
- Master Trail Building Certification
- Playground Inspector Certification
- Advanced chainsaw training
- Spirit of America yearly training

Summary of Key Recommendations

Please provide short-term, mid-term, and long-term recommendations for addressing operational issues at the park and improving overall park performance.

Short Term Recommendations (Less than 1 year)

1. **Site and Facilities**
 - a. Proceed with Cabin Reconstruction Capital Project
 - b. Begin construction of biking opportunities
 - c. Addition of CXT Bath house in the campground – Blanket Capital Project
 - d. Install traffic calming devices (speedbumps)
 - e. Continue with trail improvements and establishing first bike trail
 - f. Provide electric vehicle charging stations for visitors
 - g. Initiate repairs to Big Ridge Dam
2. **Operations and Staffing**
 - a. Address poor internet connections for business operations
 - b. Convert Conservation Worker 1 to a Conservation Worker 2
 - c. Offer professional development with staff
3. **Customer Service / Visitor Experience**
 - a. Increase program offerings
 - b. Continue signage replacement project
 - c. Maximize Boat Dock Operation hours within present staffing constraints

Mid Term Recommendations (2–5 years)

4. **Site and Facilities**
 - a. Construct better, comprehensive trail system; continue with trail improvements and establishing additional bike trails
 - b. Address poor utility services inside the park

- i. Water supply systems
- ii. Wastewater systems
- iii. Electrical systems
 - 1. Supply network
 - 2. Individual buildings and facilities
- iv. Lack of sewer hookups in campground
- v. Communications systems
- vi. Drainage tiles under roadways
- c. Address inadequate boat launch for park and community needs
 - i. Acquire additional property for access
- d. Office / Visitor Center renovation
- e. Address parking inadequacies
 - i. Cabin area
 - ii. Grist Mill area
 - iii. Shelter areas
 - iv. Campground overflow
- f. Address paving, repaving, and relining needs
- g. Address deterioration and lack of maintenance of buildings and structures
 - i. Swim Beach Area Renovations
 - ii. Group Camp Renovation
 - iii. Existing Campground Renovations
 - iv. Amphitheater Renovations
 - v. Grist Mill Renovations
 - vi. Beach House Renovation
 - vii. Linen House Renovation
- h. Parkwide fencing and guardrail replacement
- i. BRSP Dam stabilization and maintenance / walkway replacement
- j. Replace existing playground and add new play opportunities
- k. Address visitor amenity deficiencies
 - i. Repair / replace grills and tables in picnic areas
 - ii. Improve lack of water fountains
 - iii. Additional restrooms in needed areas
- l. Add overnight stay opportunities as in additional camping locations
- m. Address bank erosion on Norris Lake
- n. Acquire way to access property for SW section of property
- o. Maintenance Shop renovation and energy upgrades
- p. Historic restoration and preservation of CCC structures and other historic buildings (Continuous Effort)

5. Operations and Staffing

- a. Add Conservation Worker 2 positions for Maintenance for Maintenance Operations
- b. Add Conservation Worker 1 Jobshare positions for Maintenance Operations
- c. Add Conservation Worker 1 Jobshare positions for Boat Dock Operation
- d. Add Custodial Worker 2 positions for Housekeeping Operation
- e. Add Custodial Worker 1 Jobshare position for Housekeeping Operation
- f. Add Clerk position for Office Operation

- g. Add Clerk Jobshare position for Office Operation
- h. Continue and offer new professional development
- i. If cabin renovations are successful, change cabin operation to year-round rather than seasonal and adjust staffing as recommended
- j. Expand Boat Dock operational dates and adjust staffing as recommended
- k. Expand Gift Shop operational hours and adjust staffing as recommended

6. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Explore and expand Blueway opportunities to capitalize on
- b. Increase program offerings

Long Term Recommendations (5+ years)

1. Site and Facilities

- a. Continue construction of improved trail system
- b. Parkwide fencing and guardrail replacement
- c. Address deterioration and lack of maintenance of buildings and structures
- d. Historic restoration and preservation of CCC structures and other historic buildings (continuous effort)
- e. Continue to develop maintenance standards and preventive maintenance
- f. Add new play opportunities
- g. Add overnight stay opportunities
- h. Add meeting / venue spaces

2. Operations and Staffing

- a. No long term operational or staffing recommendations????

3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Team with Union and Anderson Counties for promotions and offerings to guests

Resource Management Plan

A resource management plan is a specific statement of the objectives you have for your land and natural resources, as well as any significant cultural and historic resources stewarded by the state park. This includes a defined series of priorities and activities that will take place in order to meet those objectives. This can include future potential land acquisitions or divestitures that are necessary to meet the park's resource management goals and objectives.

Big Ridge State Park exists to preserve and protect the natural, cultural, and scenic resources within the park boundaries and to provide a variety of safe, quality and educational outdoor experiences through a well-planned and professionally managed system. The park commemorates the work of the Civilian Conservation Corp in providing natural based recreational facilities and opportunities as well as provides visitors quality resource preservation and interpretation for a deep sense of the past and the world they live in. Big Ridge State Park was one of five demonstration parks developed by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in cooperation with the National Park Service (NPS) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) as an example of public recreation development possibilities along TVA lakeshores.

Although once heavily populated and used for agriculture, the park is now mostly forested. Prime examples of natural forest succession can be seen. The farm and pasture lands of years ago are showing the emergence of a young hardwood forest. The present pine and cedar stands are being overcome by an oak and hickory forest. The forest area provides an excellent habitat for a variety of birds and mammals. Migratory birds

and waterfowl use Big Ridge and Norris Lake as a winter residence and feeding ground. Golden and Bald Eagles have been observed in the area.

The park has numerous buildings and structures that were built by the CCC and still on the park, although some have been heavily modified over the years. These are:

- Stone Office / Information Booth
- Rec Hall
- Swim Beach House
- Picnic Shelters
- Staff House
- One-room cabins (13)
- Two-room cabin (1)
- Three-room cabins (5)
- Superintendent's dwelling
- Linen House
- Group Camp with
 - (13) cabins
 - (2) wash houses
 - Dining hall
- Waterplant retaining wall
- Drinking fountains
- Numerous drainage head and tail walls
- Swimming area wall
- Walking bridge
- Big Ridge Dam

In addition, the park contains five cemeteries that remain after TVA acquired the property. These are:

- Langley Cemetery
- Branam Cemetery
- Snodderly Cemetery
- Hutchison Cemetery
- Norton Cemetery

As for pre-TVA structures that were on the property or in close proximity of the area which their locations are now under the 1020 water elevation line, only the Norton Grist Mill remains. Otherwise, occasional evidence and remnants of the following can be found:

- 95 Houses
- 86 Barns
- 211 Sheds
- 6 Churches
- 2 Schools
- 20 Wells/Spring Houses
- 8 Cribs
- 14 Smoke Houses
- 1 Dairy
- 2 Stores

- 7 Garages
- 3 Store Houses
- 24 Cemeteries

The present trail system is as follows:

- **Chestnut Ridge Trail**
From the cabin area to the road near the park's back entrance, this trail offers a variety of sites to see including sinkholes, Lyon's Spring Branch and remains of American Chestnut trees. These trees once dominated the ridge before they were decimated by blight. One of the most notable sites is the land itself where signs of erosion, farming uses, and forest succession can be seen.
- **Old Mill Trail**
From the lakeside cabins to Norton Gristmill, the trail meanders along Big Ridge Lake and over to Lyon's Spring Branch which once supplied the water to make the mill wheel turn. The mill was originally built in 1825 and was privately operated until 1930. Be sure to look for signs of beaver along the way.

Fisherman's Trail

Beginning near the back entrance of the park, the trail takes you to an area of Norris Lake known as Poor Land Valley. Some say that this area got its name many years ago because of the poor quality of the soil for farming. Follow this trail to find a quiet spot suitable for fishing or swimming.

- **Loyston Overlook Trail**
This trail to Loyston Overlook takes hikers to an area where they can see the widest portion of Norris Lake. Norris Lake was formed in the 1930's with the completion of TVA's first project, Norris Dam. The area of the lake now known as Loyston Sea was once a bustling town called Loyston. Founded in the early 1800's by John Loy, Loyston once included a grocery store, gas station, school, churches, and a post office, all of which are now covered by the waters of Norris Lake.
- **Meditation Point Trail**
This trail climbs to a covered bench for an excellent spot to relax or to get in touch with the natural world.
- **Lake Trail**
This trail meanders around 45-acre Big Ridge Lake. It crosses Big Ridge Dam which was constructed in the 1930's by the Civilian Conservation Corp. The men of the CCC are responsible for building the dam and many of the other structures in the park. This trail is excellent for viewing wildlife such as deer, frogs, heron, wood ducks and more. If you like, you can also make a stop at the Snodderly Cemetery where many of the area's earlier inhabitants are buried.
- **"Ghost House" Trail**
This loop begins near the group camp and takes you deep into history of the area's pre-1930's inhabitants. According to locals and some park visitors, eerie and unexplainable events occur along this trail. Make a stop at the Norton Cemetery and visit the sunken grave of Maston Hutchison, who some think is responsible for these strange occurrences. NO HOUSE REMAINS but the infamous "Ghost House", the Hutchison family home, was believed to be haunted.
- **Big Valley Trail**
This trail travels a road used by many of this area's early settlers as they hauled corn down to the Norton Gristmill. It traverses Pinnacle Ridge, descends into Dark Hollow, then climbs to the top of Big Ridge where it meets Indian Rock Loop. Several species of ferns and spring wildflowers can be seen. The trail passes Langley Cemetery, where the most modern gravestones are dated 1932.
- **Dark Hollow Trail**

This trail has an eastern and western portion. The western portion leads from Big Ridge Dam to Big Valley Trail, while the eastern portion starts at Big Valley and dead ends at Norris Lake. This trail was once a county road and there are still many noticeable areas where some Big Ridge settlers made their homes. The ridge north of the Hollow is Big Ridge, the namesake of the park, while the ridge south of the Hollow is Pinnacle Ridge, known locally as Pine Ridge.

- **Indian Rock Trail**
Recommended for the experienced hiker only, the trail begins just past Langley Cemetery via the Big Valley Trail. Indian Rock Trail leads to a rocky area where a plaque commemorates where Peter Graves, a settler of Sharp's Station was killed and scalped by Indians. Graves was turkey hunting when he thought he heard a turkey gobble behind some boulders. To his surprise, it was not a turkey, but a group of Indian braves.
- **Sharp's Station Trail**
Branching off from Indian Rock Loop, this trail travels along the shores of Norris Lake to the site of Sharp's Station Fort. Sharp's Station founded in the late 1780's was one of the first two settlements west of the Appalachians. The other was James White Fort in Knoxville. A stone wall is all that remains of Sharp's Station Fort, but a plaque commemorates the area.

The contents of this resource management plan are as follows:

1. Resource Management Objectives
2. Resource Inventory and Assessment
3. Management Strategies
4. Priority Actions
5. Supplemental Information

Resource Management Objectives

Goal: Tennessee State Parks will be nationally recognized for exemplary stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

Objective - *More and better stewards:* Increase internal and external stewards who share Tennessee State Parks core values and can contribute to the State Parks mission to steward Tennessee's natural and cultural resources.

Objective - *Better resource management practices:* Identify, manage, and restore unique natural and cultural resources for generations to come.

Objective: *Better data and technology:* Leverage data and technology to help inform and guide decisions on natural and cultural resources stewardship.

Aligned with these objectives are specific strategies to achieve the desired outcomes for the natural, cultural, and historic resources of this park.

Strategies

- A. Acquire property to have access to land located on the SW portion of the park.
- B. Strategize with Facilities Management and park staff to slow the rate of deterioration and begin to restore the CCC era-built structures.
- C. Strategize with park staff and Division of Natural Areas to slow and reverse the impact of invasive species in pertinent areas of the park such as buffer zones and to monitor and manage rare species.

- D. Through better trail management, minimize the impact of soil erosion on existing trails and on newly constructed trails through using best management practices.
- E. Fully Implement Hazardous Tree Management Plan.
- F. Improve system for identifying, prioritizing, conducting and documenting resource management activities.
- G. Continue to compile inventories of plants, animals, and ecological communities to improve management of natural areas and ecological resources.

Resource Inventory and Assessment

The significant natural, cultural and historic resources of the park requiring management are detailed below including a condition assessment rating for each. Condition assessments are selected from the following options based on what most describes the current condition of the resource:

1. **Excellent** – resource is in excellent condition; all potential threats to the integrity of the resource are currently managed and effectively mitigated.
2. **Good** – resource is generally in good condition and stable; threats to the integrity of the resource require regular management in order to mitigate.
3. **Fair** – resource is in stable condition but difficult to mitigate ongoing threats; additional management support is required.
4. **Poor** – resource is generally in poor condition with management support required to both improve existing conditions and address threats.
5. **Critical** – resource is highly threatened or deteriorated and requires immediate management prioritization.

| Significant Park Resources | Quantity | Current Conditions | Notes |
|----------------------------|----------|--------------------|--|
| Norton Mill | 1 | Poor | Structure is in deteriorating quickly. |
| Sharp's Station | 1 | Fair | Area is in good condition but need a good deal of invasive species removal. |
| Indian Rock | 1 | Good | Area is in good condition but need some invasive species removal. |
| Big Ridge Lake | 45 acres | Good | Lake is in good condition. |
| Norris Lake Border | 35 miles | Fair - Critical | In several areas, major erosion is occurring due to boat traffic. |
| Cemeteries | 5 | Fair | Each cemetery needs grounds work, headstone stabilization and cleaning, and various other maintenance. |
| Trails | 13 miles | Fair - Poor | Continuous work to create sustainable trail system, many areas need serious |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----|-------------|---|
| | | | improvements and bridges are needing replacing. |
| CCC Built Structures – Below List | | | |
| Stone Office / Information Booth | 1 | Poor | Wood components are deteriorating quickly. |
| Rec Hall and Amphitheater | 1 | Fair | Understructure has some rot, causing settling. Added structure has serious deterioration issues. Amphitheater concrete is eroding severely. |
| Swim Beach House | 1 | Critical | Critical state of being beyond saving. |
| Picnic Shelters | 2 | Fair | Structures need heavy maintenance. |
| Cabins | 19 | Poor | Capital project has just started on these to restore these. |
| Superintendent's dwelling | 1 | Good | Overall, building is in tolerable shape. |
| Linen House | 1 | Poor | Building is suffering from deterioration. |
| Group Camp | 22 | Poor | All buildings are in dire need of stabilization and repair. |
| Waterplant retaining wall | 1 | Fair | Wall is in fair condition, but could use some point patching. |
| Numerous drainage head and tail walls | 10 | Fair / Poor | These are scattered about the property and are mostly in fair condition, but a few are poor. |
| Swimming area wall | 1 | Poor | This is reaching critical status. Walls are leaning and falling into the lake. |
| Walking bridge | 1 | Good | This was restored a couple of years ago. |
| Various retaining walls | 5 | Fair / Poor | Some of these are in really poor condition, nearing collapse and failure. |
| Big Ridge Dam | 1 | Poor | Wing walls are deteriorating and the walkway and spillway screens are in extremely poor condition. |

Management Strategies

The management strategies outlined below are directly correlated to the resources identified previously in the *Resource Inventory and Assessment* section immediately above. These are general and overall management recommendations for each resource from which priority actions will be determined. Each resource has both a “Public Use” management strategy (which could include limited or no public access, or managed access with infrastructure and regulation) and a “General Management” strategy.

The priority assignments reflect the highest resource management priorities of the park over the next 1-5 years (High Priority) and 6-10 years (Moderate Priority)

| Resource | Management Recommendations | Priority |
|----------------------|---|----------|
| Norton Mill | <p>Public Use: Manage access with infrastructure and regulation – access open during park hours.</p> <p>General Management: Facility is managed through the park operations and regional facilities maintenance and is subject to limited funding and limited staffing to maintain as possible.</p> | High |
| Sharp’s Station | <p>Public Use: Manage access with infrastructure and regulation – access limited via trails with usage policies and regulations.</p> <p>General Management: Area is managed by Ranger staff and volunteers to maintain trail access and control invasive species.</p> | Moderate |
| Indian Rock | <p>Public Use: Manage access with infrastructure and regulation – access limited via trails with usage policies and regulations.</p> <p>General Management: Area is managed by Ranger staff and volunteers to maintain trail access and control invasive species.</p> | Moderate |
| Big Ridge Lake | <p>Public Use: Manage access with infrastructure and regulation – access open during park hours.</p> <p>General Management: Lake is managed through the park operations and is subject to limited funding and limited staffing to maintain as possible.</p> | Moderate |
| Cemeteries | <p>Public Use: Manage access with infrastructure and regulation – access open during park hours.</p> <p>General Management: Facility is managed through the park operations and regional facilities maintenance and is subject to limited funding and limited staffing to maintain as possible.</p> | High |
| CCC Built Structures | <p>Public Use: Manage access with infrastructure and regulation – most of the structures are available through the rental / reservation process</p> | High |

| | | |
|--------------------|---|----------|
| | General Management: Facilities are managed through the park operations and regional facilities maintenance and are subject to limited funding and limited staffing to maintain as possible. | |
| Norris Lake Border | Public Use: Manage access with infrastructure and regulation – access via Norris Lake General Management: Shoreline management is done by park staff through under the approval and advice of TVA. | Moderate |

Land Management Strategies

In some cases, strategic land acquisitions or divestitures are necessary to meet the overall resource management goals and objectives of the park. This can include opportunities to address buffers, watersheds, viewsheds, inholdings, and adjacent properties. The table below details **general strategies** for land management. Timelines refer to Short Term (1-3 years), Mid Term (4-6 years), and Long Term (7-10 years).

| Land Management Strategy | Timeline |
|---|------------|
| Acquire property to allow access to park property on the SW border of the park. | Short Term |

Supplemental Information

Vehicular and Foot Traffic – In the heavy use areas such as the campground, picnic areas, Group Camp and on some trails, soil impaction is evident from heavy use. This impaction translates into having an effect on the plant communities and soil erosion in those areas.

Boat traffic at Blue Mud Launch – With the heavy motorized boat usage utilizing Blue Mud boat launch or just enjoying the cove, the wakes have an impact on the shorelines, causing an increased rate of erosion to occur.

Structures – Many of the structures need to be updated to meet the needs and desires of the public. The public has requested many times over for the structures to take on some more modern amenities, but still keep the splendor and feel of the past history. In addition, address many of the deferred maintenance on these structures.

Nuisance Animals – Especially in the cabin area, there is a huge problem with nuisance animals such as raccoons. In some area of the park, there are excessive amounts of beavers and Canadian geese. Since there are not good predation going on other animals to control these populations, park staff must provide some assistance in population control.

Interpretive Programming and Education Plan

The Interpretation, Programming, and Education planning is currently going through a planning process to further build out the process. This section only represents the very basic framework. As TSP moves forward with the future of Interpretive programming and education this section will likely be changed to accommodate those modifications.

Attached to this plan are the Interpretive Program Templates in fillable PDF forms.

Big Ridge State Park will provide quality interpretive programs that give an understanding of Tennessee Valley Authority's and the Civilian Conservation Corps' role in creating the park, the forces that propelled the parks movement and provide a sense of connectedness to the park's Appalachian frontier history and culture. We will educate and entertain the public about natural, cultural, and historical life by offering visitors a place of comfort, serenity, and safety for rest and recreation.

Big Ridge State Park will provide information and knowledge of the rich cultural and natural resources history of the property and the surrounding area. As part of this, we will interpret the wide recreational possibilities provided through the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Civilian Conservation Corps efforts when the lakes and park were formed. Moreover, we will interpret the construction of Norris Lake by TVA as it was intended for flood control and to bring electrical power to the region and greatly influenced Appalachian culture. TVA's intentions for the park were to demonstrate the recreational opportunities along the newly formed lake's shore.

Interpretation, Programming and Education Goals

Goal: Tennessee State Parks will be the most accessible, welcoming, and inviting system of parks that enriches Tennesseans and visitors through excellent interpretation, education, and resource-based recreation.

Objective: *accessible, welcoming, and inviting to all:* create quality and varied programs of interpretation, recreation, and outreach so that all audiences feel welcome and invited.

Objective: *high quality programming:* develop and support mission-based and resource-relevant programs to engage visitors, empower staff, and develop community wellbeing.

Objective: *resource-based outdoor recreation:* provide resource-based outdoor recreation opportunities that ensure representation of Tennessee's natural, scenic, and cultural resources.

Within these objectives are the following desired outcomes:

- Building stewards
- Ensuring Equity
- Provide the Highest Value
- Develop Resource Based Programming
- Support Staff

Strategic Programs and Services

The strategies detailed below with corresponding action plans are aligned with the Comprehensive Strategic Plan of Tennessee State Parks.

Strategy – Telling Full Stories: to identify and replicate best practices while establishing new methods for representing diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just dialogues.

Action Plan:

- When providing Personal Interpretation, presenter will address full stories in non-biased methods to provide complete representation of history.
- Interpretive staff will actively search for and include multiple historical viewpoints, as relevant within interpretive materials, displays, and programs.
- Feel respect for and recognize the local sacrifice of land to make way for the construction of the park and the implementation of TVA’s regional plan.
- Inspire an appreciation for the natural resources and aesthetic value the park has to offer.

Strategy – Interpretative Media: Connecting people to the resources of Tennessee State Parks with technology in ways that compliment and expand interpretation within and beyond the park, giving everyone access to becoming a park steward.

Action Plan:

- Provide Interpretive Programs to represent the park them through activities, presentations, publications, audio-visual media, signs, and exhibits that convey key resource messages to audiences.
- Utilize first-person perspective of life in the CCC, of displaced family member regarding the relocation efforts, and of bringing rural electrification to the TN Valley.
- Create a series of video programs for audiences to view on YouTube, Facebook, or the park’s webpage to reach a broader segment of the public and those with limited or no access to the park.

Strategy – Develop and maintain a portfolio of programs across multiple types of experiences:

- A. Interpretation of natural, historic, and cultural resources
- B. 3-5 unique experiences for all audiences
- C. Varying intensity from self-guided to immersive experiences
- D. Partnership opportunities for program delivery
- E. Varying costs to the user from “free to fee” based on value of the benefit to the participant.

Action Plan:

- Develop a variety of “stock” programs that staff can utilize in whole or in part to cater to guests’ specific needs.
- Program outlines and transcripts will be developed and formatted as specified by IPE, stored digitally, and organized in the categories of natural, cultural, or historical programs. Seasonal Interpretive Staff will provide programs during summer season in addition to F/T Interpretive staff.

- All fee-based programs will be subject to the manager’s approval in terms of quality and costs.
- Interpretive staff will utilize the PVA to determine appropriate costs.
- Interpretive staff will differentiate between audiences consisting of children and those consisting of adults and develop programs tailored to the unique needs, characteristics, and interests of those audiences.

Strategy – Develop and maintain diverse and varied resourced-based outdoor recreation opportunities across multiple types of experiences:

- A. Managing recreational use with the stewardship needs of the resource
- B. Varying intensity from self-guided to guided experiences
- C. Partnership opportunities for program delivery
- D. Varying costs to the user from “free to fee” based on value of the benefit to the participant and impact to the resource.

Action Plan:

- Develop a variety of “stock” programs that staff can utilize in whole or in part to cater to guests’ specific needs.
- Offer varying intensity opportunities from self-guided to guided experiences
- Continue to offer sustainable trail system that is professionally managed, blazed according to TSP trail standards with appropriate signage.
- Continue to offer high quality interpretive programs that offer recreational elements including but limited to ranger led hikes, canoe/kayak programs, and backcountry experiences.
- Continue to offer non-motorized boat rental operations at the park.
- Continue to conduct Junior Ranger and Spirit of America Youth Boating Education camps at the park each summer.

HELPFUL DEFINITIONS:

- Nonpersonal Interpretation: Interpretive media that do not require a person to deliver a message (i.e. exhibits, waysides, brochures, signs, magazines, books, etc.).
- Personal Interpretation: One person or persons providing interpretation to another person or persons.
- Interpretive Program: Activities, presentations, publications, audio-visual media, signs, and exhibits that convey key heritage resource messages to audiences. (Adapted from US Fish & Wildlife Service)
- Interpretation: a purposeful approach to communication that facilitates meaningful, relevant, and inclusive experiences that deepen understanding, broaden perspectives, and inspire engagement with the world around us.

Financial Performance Goals

Financial performance goals are a critical performance management tool of the Tennessee State Park System. While the financial performance of parks are managed more intently at the system level, individual parks are expected to recover a portion of their operating costs through the generation of earned revenues where appropriate and to contribute to the system goals. The majority of earned revenues at state parks are generated through facility usage (campsites, cabins, lodge rooms, rentable pavilions, etc.), the delivery of fee-based programs and services, equipment rental and usage, and retail sales. Other forms of revenue generation come from golf courses and restaurants where those amenities are present. That said, not all parks have the same ability to generate earned revenues because the availability of facilities or programs vary widely from one park to the next. The “recovery” of operational costs by earned revenues is referred to as “cost recovery”. Operating costs beyond those supported by earned revenues represents the extent to which state funding support operations at each park.

The table below represents the overall park cost recovery for this specific park for the most recent fiscal year and forecast estimates for the upcoming five years. These estimates are based on projection estimates for known and foreseeable costs and recovery figures.

| FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE GOALS | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Current Cost Recovery (2022) | Target Cost Recovery: FY 2023 | Target Cost Recovery: FY 2024 | Target Cost Recovery: FY: 2025 | Target Cost Recovery: FY 2026 | Target Cost Recovery: FY 2027 |
| Park Overall | 45% | 35% | 36.24% | 37% | 37.75% | 38.5% |

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