



**Ocoee River Recreation and Economic Development Fund Board  
Marking RFP Sub-Committee  
July 31, 2023, Meeting Minutes  
10:00 am Eastern Time  
Hiwassee/Ocoee Rivers State Park Office  
404 Spring Creek Rd  
Delano, TN 37325**

**Voting Committee Members Present:** Angelo Giansante, Ryan Cooke, Keith Jenkins, Angie Arp, Melissa Woody

**Voting Board Members not present: None**

**Guests Present:** Julie Thorner, Taylor Barnard, Sara Page, Carlo Smith, Lynne McClary

**Review of Vendor Proposal:** Committee and Guests

Julie Thorner presented a brief overview of the marking initiatives that have been completed to date. A strategic marketing plan has been developed, updated branding was developed and launched, new website was designed and developed, video/phot shoot locations have been identified and permit application submitted, content has been gathered for website and social media, collected on the ground content at TVA Media Day, collected user generated content from Ocoee River social media content, launched social media with new branding, website, and story telling about America's Favorite Whitewater, launched first social media ads from new organic reels, added comprehensive tracking to new website content, including rafting outfitters links, buttons, phone #'s and locations, collected TN Tourism Coop opportunities for 2023-2024 FY, and developed to billboard location preferences. Marketing initiative that are in progress are: website expanded non-outfitter listings, video/photo shoot: model, outfitter logistics, dates, peak and fall season ads for area markets, monthly digital marketing performance reporting from all channels, launched new YouTube & TikTok channels, Blue Ridge Outdoors ad for Ocoee River scheduled, responded to two public relation opportunities: NBC Today Show Last Minute Summer Getaways & Labor Day Weekend. The priorities for the rest of the season are complete the video and photo shoot, pitching public relations and digital ad placements for last minute end of summer and fall adventures, continue social media story telling of the Ocoee, and track and report website activities and marketing initiatives for visibility to outfitters.

Julie reported that phase 1 of the website has launched. The website is <https://theoccoeriver.com>. The user guides what they see when they visit the site. The committee decided to not list the lodging and food & drink businesses on the site. Those lists will be updated by the tourism partners listed at the

bottom of the page. The page offers sample itineraries for guest to help plan out their visit to the area with 1, 2, 3 and 4 day itineraries. There is also a page that shows a timeline of the history of the Ocoee River and the history of the Ocoee 1996 Olympics.

The committee agreed to not have a Contact Page at the bottom of the new site. The guests can use the links to the tourism partners that are provided. In addition, questions that arise from the website would go directly to a tourism partner to address.

@theocoeeriver on Instagram is taken. LiquidSpark would like to get this handle from who owns it to flow with the branding.

The committee agreed that TN State Parks would handle responding to negative comments on social media and future tragic events on the river by using the state POI to respond.

Sara Page asked that the website state that it is part of TDEC since the contract is between LiquidSpark and TDEC. She also commented that TDEC has a policy on how to handle negative comments and she will share that with Julie and Taylor.

Taylor reminded the outfitters to continue to add content to their media folders for them to use on social media when they make posts.

Angelo is still waiting to hear if the permit was approved by the USFS for video footage. He stated the big hold up will be getting a permit for the drones. Taylor asked about getting a permit from State Parks for filming and Sara replied that LiquidSpark is State Parks for all intent purposes by contract. Taylor asked for help with the logistics of the video shoot. The plan is to have 2 model rafts for the shoot that will be in unmarked rafts.

Taylor asked who manages the Ocoee River Recreation Area on the TN Vacation website. No one was sure so she will research more. The print ad for the TN Vacation Guide will be due on September 29<sup>th</sup>. Sara will route the contract to who it needs to go to for approval. Angelo stated that it will be brought up to the board on September 22<sup>nd</sup> to approve the payment for the expense of the TN Vacation Guide and the design expense. Angelo instructed Taylor to send over the contract for the TN Vacation Guide and he will handle it.

Taylor stated that they are constantly monitoring the free PR opportunities in Tennessee and are taking advantage of those available. Julie reminded the committee that they are pitching the area in the opportunities, not specific outfitters.

Carlo asked about the board applying for grants. It was discussed that the ORRED board can designate a committee to complete these.

**Adjournment:**