

Bledsoe Creek State Park Strategic Management Plan

2023 – 2033

Updated in 2025



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Park Purpose, History and Description

Bledsoe Creek State Park Mission Statement:

“To preserve and promote the natural, historical, and educational aspects of Bledsoe Creek State Park while offering enriching camping and day use experiences.”

Bledsoe Creek State Park is rich in history. It was once a prime hunting ground for the Cherokee, Creek, Shawnee, and Chickamauga Native American tribes. Once English settlers arrived to the area, the once-great herds of animals were dispersed, never to return. The area is home to a wealth of Native American history along with various historical sites nearby. The Bledsoe Creek territory became a Tennessee State Park in 1973.

Bledsoe Creek State Park is a 169-acre park located off State Hwy 25 approximately 6 miles outside of the city of Gallatin, the county seat. The park is perched on the Bledsoe Creek embayment of the U.S. Corps of Engineers Old Hickory Reserve near the 1780s settlement of Cairo in Sumner County. The park features 68 campsites with amenities, along with 3 hammock only primitive campsites. There are more than six miles of scenic hiking trails. The trails meander through the forest and along the lakeshore of the park. One mile of these trails is paved making it ADA accessible. The trails are open year-round, as is a portion of the campground. Old Hickory Lake provides good boating, skiing and fishing.

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:

- 1) A maintained effort to collaborate with local schools in Sumner County as well as the surrounding counties of Macon, and Trousdale for continuing educational programming support.
- 2) Continue to invite the current, and seek out additional, home school groups for park field trips and Ranger led programming.
- 3) Continue to partner with local community corporations and business such as the new Meta Data Facebook compound, Publix, and other such volunteer groups.

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

Action Plan:

- 1) Identify needs for nurturing and rebuilding lost or degraded natural areas and work those plans into employee IPPs for specific application to gain desired results.
- 2) Work to have employees seek out course work and/or training to build specific skill sets relevant to park cultural and natural resources to be improved or enhanced.
- 3) Implore employees to research adjacent properties and what natural features might impact the park property. Ask staff to know what properties would be of interest if/when those properties would be available for purchase.

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

Action Plan:

- 1) Utilize the GIS office to gain insight and build relevant mapping for natural resources, invasive species location, and other key factors that might impact the park. (i.e., the emerald ash borer beetle infestation of the ash tree population)
- 2) Work to update the current internet service from copper to fiber network. The current infrastructure (current provider AT&T) fails often and is constantly being repaired.
- 3) Work with sister agencies such as TWRA and Army CORPS for additional insight into wildlife behavior and disease trends such as CWD and Asian Carp invasive species.

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:

- 1) Work to enhance the most desirable and popular areas of the park so that these areas are ADA accessible for all to experience and enjoy.
- 2) Continue to seek out additional training from the office of IPE pertaining to bias training and “telling full stories” In order to provide programs to reach multiple audiences revolving around the history and people that used to thrive in the local area.
- 3) Continue to develop Essential Eligibility Criteria to enhance visitor experiences.

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

Action Plan:

- 1) Have staff develop quality programs with simple how to's, and materials needed, to be able to quickly and efficiently reproduce these programs in house for other staff members to have at their disposal.

- 2) Develop quality programs in various categories that are in line with the parks interpretive theme and mission statement. Work to enhance these categories as time goes on, examples of categories could include Ranger Lead Hikes with themes, water-based programs, and birding programs given our setting and popular program topics.
- 3) Plan for staff to be able to attend various critical training opportunities to enhance their programming skills and talents for the betterment of program curriculum presented on the park.

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

Action Plan:

- 1) Research the park’s history and typical programming that has been conducted in years prior. Work with veteran staff members to gain insight as to what programs are most popular and work to enhance those offerings.
- 2) In researching the park’s history and grounds, establish what natural, scenic, and cultural resources the park has within its boundaries and create high level programs to conduct with those findings.
- 3) Work with the office of IPE to create additional EEC (essential eligibility criteria) documents for the various types of programming that may be offered by park staff.

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:

- 1) Ensure all deferred maintenance projects and TOP 5 projects are routinely updated in HIPPO and get the prioritized attention and focus needed for desired results.
- 2) Have established preventative maintenance plans, mow plans, etc. in place and ensure they are being implemented by staff.
- 3) Park signage, playground equipment, kiosks, picnic tables and grills in day use, as well as the campground, should be routinely inspected for functionality and aesthetics to ensure a positive visitor experience.

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

Action Plan:

- 1) Work towards making as many popular visitor areas/points of interest as accessible as possible to include ADA access.
- 2) Ensure the park office is open and accessible as much as staffing allows for, and that proper relative information is placed in easy to view and access areas within/at the park office.

- 3) Identify key cultural, natural, scenic points of interest on the park for visitors and work to enhance those areas as time and funds allow.

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

Action Plan:

- 1) Ensure the main office and bath house structures maintain a clean and aesthetically pleasing appearance.
- 2) Ensure that ADA access is possible at all relative points routinely, including the upkeep and repainting of ADA parking spot indicators located at various points throughout the park.
- 3) Identify needs for upgrades and/or additional structures that will enhance visitor experience and visitor draw.

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:

- 1) Ensure employees are placed in the best possible position to succeed. Pair with strong peers and/or supervisors to enhance productivity.
- 2) Work to make hires to create a diverse employee workplace.
- 3) Ensure the proper training to enhance productivity is suggested and made available to attend by supervisory personnel.

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

Action Plan:

- 1) Engage the community to vet their needs and wants for their park vision so that park staff might work to make those a reality if possible. The resulting items of interest must be relevant to the mission of both TN State Parks and that of Bledsoe Creek State Park to be considered.
- 2) Review the various monetary reports such as Monthly Budget Report, VAM report, Energy Cap, etc. to ensure the most cost-effective way to operate and save money.
- 3) Work to complete as many in-house repairs as possible and effective preventative maintenance applications to reduce expenditures.

Park Overview

Site Fact Sheet

Park Name	Bledsoe Creek State Park
Site Manager	Chris Thurman
Area Manager	Kenneth Gragg
Park acreage	169.47 ac
Total number of visitors (FY 2025)	84,898
Total expenses before CO (FY 2025)	\$ 711,069
Total revenues (FY 2025)	\$ 516,027
Retail cost recovery % ¹	278 %
Park cost recovery %	73 %
Average expense per visitor (FY 2025)	\$ 8.38
Average revenue per visitor (FY 2025)	\$ 6.08
Gross profit or loss	(\$195,042)
Total full-time available positions / filled	6/6
Total part-time available positions / filled	2/2
Primary feeder markets	Nashville, Gallatin, Hendersonville, Lebanon, Mt. Juliet, Hermitage
Primary reasons people visit	Camping, Water Recreation, Hiking
Opportunities for improvement	Additional parking, Sidewalk adjacent to main park road for enhanced safety, repaving of ADA trails for safety, extension of the observation deck to reach Birdsong Trail, mulch for playgrounds located on Raccoon Creek Road and Rabbit Jump Road.

Key Attractions

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

- Approximately Six miles of hiking trails, with some being ADA accessible
- Two boat launching ramps with docks, in addition to a stand-alone courtesy dock
- 68 RV campsites with power and water hookups
- 3 hammock only primitive campsites
- Picnic tables, grills & restrooms in our day use area

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

- Two Children’s playgrounds
- Offers year-round educational and interpretive programs
- Open area with Stage for events, weddings, and educational outings with power
- Observation platform in a protected wildlife cove of Old Hickory Lake

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 Bledsoe Creek 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.
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Facility Inventory and Assessment

The table below is an inventory of facilities and amenities at Bledsoe Creek State Park and provides the assessed condition of each as reviewed in September 2025.

Site Asset / Amenity	Quantity	Condition
Visitor Center	1	Fair
Maintenance Building	1	Good
Residence	1	Good
Bath House	2	Good
Shelter	2	Good
Campsites (with power and water)	68	Good
Campsites (primitive/hammock only)	3	Good
Dump Station	1	Good
Laundry facility	1	Good
Wastewater Treatment Plant	1	Fair
Wooden Bridge	8	Fair to Poor
Boat Ramps	2	Good
Boat Docks	3	Good to Fair
Playground	2	Poor (due to lack of mulch)

Trail Inventory and Assessment

Trail Name	Total	Condition
Birdsong Interpretive Nature Trail	0.29	Fair (would be “good” if not for pavement that needs resurfacing)
High Ridge Trail	1.38	Fair (some erosion issues)
Mayo Wix Trail	0.55	Fair (would be “good” if not for pavement that needs resurfacing)
Owl Ridge Trail	0.27	Poor (extensive erosion issues)

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Shoreline Trail	1.65	Good
Woodchuck Hollow Trail	0.21	Good
TN History Trail	0.35	Good
Grand Total	4.7	Good

The trail system at Bledsoe Creek State Park is often complimented on and gives access to everyone from needing ADA accessibility to a trail with a series of strenuous steps. The Mayo Wix and Birdsong Trails are paved and allow ADA accessibility. These two trails are in fair condition but tend to flood in some areas with heavy rain from time to time. The main concern with these two trails, aside from monitoring for flooding, are downed trees and the condition of the asphalt.

The rest of the trail system: Shoreline, High Ridge, Owl Ridge, and TN History Trail are all comprised of natural terrain and have differing topography. The Shoreline also tends to flood along with the paved trails. The main issue with the natural tread trails is erosion, it is the number one maintenance issue that is constantly being addressed, with the owl ridge trail being the most compromised followed by the High Ridge Trail. There have been meetings with the scenic trails and vista administrator and there have been a couple of new sections of trails cut to help curtail the erosion issue.

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
Additional Parking	Park Wide
Install Fiber Optics	Wi-Fi for campground, update copper network to fiber for office.
Restroom	Restroom behind campsite #13 on Deer Run (prior torn down)
Sewer on all campsites	Install sewer on 68 campsites throughout the park

Prioritized Facility Needs

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

Facility Need	Priority Assignment
Visitor Center	There has been a structural integrity evaluation by a structural engineering group. There was no conclusive report, and we are now moving towards a portion of the second level of the VC being finished out for additional office space and conference room availability.

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 Bledsoe Creek 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 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 Park drinking water and wastewater programs to state standards.

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.
- The 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 Bledsoe Creek State Park have been identified as **important services**:

- Access to the lake via 2 boat ramps and 3 docks, supervision of day-use activities
- 2 Picnic shelters (open and family group shelters)
- Provide educational programs for schools and organized groups.

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 Bledsoe Creek State Park have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- Provide RV camping opportunities.
- Gift shop operation
- Picnic Shelter/Outdoor Classroom rental
- Fee-based programming
- Public Transit via Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency
- Water Recreation Concession on site (Get Up and GO kayaking tours)

Personnel / Staffing Review

Personnel and staffing at Bledsoe Creek State Park represent the largest area of budgetary expense at an average of 62% of the total operating budget each year for the last three complete years, which is 3% 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	1	*
Park Ranger	2	*
Administrative Assistant 1	1	\$54,876
Clerk 3	1	\$37,332
Maintenance Lead	1	\$41,136
TOTAL	6	\$322,488

**Law enforcement compensation confidential by TN law.*

Part Time Employees

Position / Title	Quantity	Compensation Total
TSP Operations Worker	2	\$29,047
TOTAL	2	\$29,047

Labor Support

Labor Support	Annual Hours
Volunteers	2861.87
Community Service Workers	150
Engineering and Construction Crews	
Resource Management Crews	30
Other: _____	
TOTAL	2891.87

Total Labor Compensation Expense

Labor Type	Labor Expense
Full Time Equivalent Employees	\$322,488
Part Time Employees	\$29,047
TOTAL Annual Labor Expense	\$351,535

Additional Future Positions Needed

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Position / Title	Quantity	FTE or PT	Year Needed	Justification
Maintenance Tech	1	FTE	2026	Additional Maintenance support
Maintenance Supervisor	1	FTE	2026	Upgrade Maintenance Lead
Interpretive Park Ranger/ Clerk 2	1	FTE	2028	Additional operational support
	1	FTE	2027	Additional office support
TOTAL	4			

Financial Performance

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

Current Rev Per Unit

Fiscal Year	Campsite Rev Per Unit
2022	16.91
2023	17.39
2024	18.98
2025	18.25

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

Fiscal Year	Campsite Rev Per Unit
2026	18.75
2027	19.00
2028	19.25
2029	19.50

Customer Service

Net Promoter Score/BCSP	Year	Customer Satisfaction Level
Google	2025	4.7
Facebook	2025	4.9
Trip Advisor	2025	4.5

Professional Development and Training

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

- CPR training for all staff, along with AED training.
- CIH and/or CIG training for visitor center staff.
- Continue to keep up Basic Level Chainsaw Certifications for relevant staff.
- Allow for any interested Rangers to attend trainings to join any of the TSP specialized teams.
- Routine management training.
- Routine law enforcement 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. Bledsoe Creek State Park-Visitor Center

- a. The Visitor Center is of a log cabin structure design, and as such, has all the maintenance downfalls of a log cabin. This structure has been evaluated by Major Maintenance and Facilities for structural integrity of the roof and wall structures and has been deemed in good standing. Now that the review of the structure is complete, the Visitor Center is set to begin construction in the coming days for additional office and meeting space on the second level of the building.
- b. Re-staining/resealing of the exterior of the VC. This structure was erected in the fall of 2015 and to my knowledge has never been resealed. As with any log cabin structure, this maintenance needs to be completed every so many years depending on wood type, climate, etc. This structure is due to be sealed in my opinion.

2. Watercraft rental- Leased Concession

- a. The CUA agreement with R Adventures to provide guided kayak tours continues to go well, and it has been evaluated to be moved to the next level in which a 3-year term has been agreed upon in the form of a leased concession. If this operation continues to track well, this concession should be kept online.

Mid Term Recommendations (2-5 years)

1. Bledsoe Creek State Park- Additional Parking

- a. The park is set up to have events or parking, however, it is difficult to successfully have both at the same time. Due to this reoccurring issue, it would be highly recommended to create additional parking somewhere on the park.

2. New positions added

- a. The current TSP Operations Worker is a part time position, and the current employee in that position is a flight risk as he has recently obtained a degree for a different occupation. A full time Maintenance Tech would be a good addition to the lone Maintenance Lead currently in the staffing pattern, who is also approaching retirement age within in the next 5 years.

- b. Park Ranger / Interpretive Ranger addition- one of these additions to staff could help to allow more flexibility in scheduling as well as offer more programming opportunities, community engagement, training opportunities, and response to calls for help from sister parks in need.
- c. Clerk 2 addition- similar to the addition of an LE Ranger or an Interpretive Ranger the addition of another full-time clerk would allow the office to be open later than our current 4:30 PM closing time. We have been able to experiment with keeping the office open later on weekends in recent summer months, but that was only due to a job share position being available to accommodate the test run.

3. Playground Mulch

- a. The two playgrounds located on the park are in desperate need of mulch. Both playgrounds needed mulch in 2018, and the park procured mulch from Barky Beaver for approximately \$6,000. In assessing the need for mulch again, we have investigated synthetic options, poured foam type options and natural mulch again. The last quote from Barky Beaver, which was a couple of years ago, was approximately \$10,000. We have sought out some grant opportunities and have the Friends Group game planning for funding as well.

Long Term Recommendations (5+ years)

1. ADA Trails- resurfaced

- a. The Birdsong and Mayo Wix trails are currently paved and allow for ADA accessibility. Over the years the adjacent trees and associated root systems have caused cracks and uplift of the asphalt and thus safety concerns due to trip hazards. These hazards have currently been painted in high vis paint to help identify them for now.

2. Watercraft rental- Leased Concession

- a. Evaluation of the concession, assuming the concession is granted from previous years, should continue to take place or possibly host that operation in house if the staffing and revenue stream seems sustainable.

3. Main Park Road sidewalk installation

- a. Our most attended event of the year is our Trunk or Treat event put on by the Friends Group. This event is held in our Day Use area. Given the layout of the park, and its limited parking issues, participants are directed to park at the back boat ramp and walk to our Day Use area. This causes a safety concern as there is no shoulder to the roadway and you have pedestrian traffic walking along with vehicular traffic in what is a hectic 3 hour window of event coming and going.

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.

We are partially governed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers through a 30-year lease agreement, Lease Number W912PS-1-04-0225, and The Tennessee Valley Authority through a Grant of Transmission Line Easement (in perpetuity), as well as Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA) and Tennessee State Parks Rules and Regulations.

Currently Japanese Stilt grass (*Microstegium Vimineum*) is seen in much of the park. We are attempting to control it through use of herbicides, mowing and pulling the grass up, all of which has had little impact. There is also a small area that has been taken over by Ivy that originated in a family cemetery located across the park boundary to the North, near gate access #2. A major concern is that if we clear a large area, that erosion will take place and cause another significant impact to the park.

There are some erosion issues along the Eastern side of the park at the point where the High Ridge Trail meets the Shoreline Trail. This is an area where the shoreline is receding and periodically, the side of the hill must be cut back to maintain a safe width of the trail. There is periodically an issue with the heavy rains washing away some of the base of the trail tread in areas of the High Ridge trail, to include a bridge near gate access #3 that is inspected often after weather events for structural integrity.

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

- 1) Conduct regular patrols throughout the park observing how the visitor is utilizing the space provided watching for possible damage to trees, movement off trail and generation of “social trails”, and other park policy infractions that may cause damage to the area. Educating visitors is the key to success in helping to foster good stewards of the park.
- 2) Ensure the park and trail system are clean and presentable for the next guest to visit. Work to advertise and host volunteer outings in which these volunteers can work to provide care and/or restoration of the parks natural and scenic areas.
- 3) There is a nearby installation of an \$800M Facebook data center on Highway 25. It is surmised that this facility will impact the park from a visitor volume and traffic pattern outlook.
- 4) Utilize visitation information to determine sheer volume of use by park patrons. Try to utilize that information to direct visitation away from erosion ridden and overused areas.
- 5) Because there are no sites of historic significance here at the park, we will advise and direct visitors to visit historic sites such as Wynnewood, Cragfont, Hawthorne Hill, Castalian Springs Mounds, Bledsoe Lick, and Bledsoe Fort all of which are approximately 5.5 miles or 8 minutes from Bledsoe Creek State Park. These places are part of Middle Tennessee’s history. In addition, we will regularly conduct interpretive historic programming that is of significance to the Middle Tennessee area.

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
Old Hickory Lake	22,500 ac	Poor	This fishing lake leans towards not being too clean. It is renowned for an abundance of debris, mainly logs and household trash. The water level itself is constantly fluctuating which has an often and direct impact on trail closures, boat dock usage, etc.
Hard wood and cedar mix forest	149 ac (approx.)	Fair	Most of the forest is generally in good condition. However, regular wind gusts and regular rainfall encourage routine uprooting of cedar trees, along with a continuous battle of erosion due to the annual rainfalls and various areas of extreme slope. We have an abundance of Ash trees that are dead and/or dying. Due to the Emerald Ash Borer insect this is a battle we cannot win. The trees are identified and felled due to priority of safety concerns and proximity to visitation/ structures.
Fur trading cabin and Long Hunter Lean To structure	1 each	Good	These structures have been built by a previous volunteer group who have disbanded. They get used very little since this group being defunct. Park staff evaluates the structures routinely during trail inspections and does what is necessary to keep them in good standing.

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
Old Hickory Lake	<p>Public Use: Continued use of two boat ramp access points. Individual boat owners run the risk of damage if lake levels are too low or if significant debris is encountered on the lake.</p> <p>General Management: Staff can monitor lake levels via computer/phone and observe real time levels to determine when/if section of trails need to be closed temporarily.</p>	Moderate
Hard wood and cedar mix forest	<p>Public Use: Ongoing use of the trail system, day use facilities, campground, and other areas that are intermixed with the park forest structure. Closures shall be identified and communicated via signacades placed in the appropriate areas.</p> <p>General Management: Staff will evaluate the trail system and the adjacent forest to the trail. If areas of concern present themselves corrective action should be taken. (i.e. Trail closure, trail re-route, etc.) Examples of items to be evaluation include: erosion, invasive species, hazardous trees, etc.</p>	Moderate
Fur trading cabin and Long hunter Lean To structure	<p>Public Use: These structures are utilized when staff is available to open them and use them for historical programming.</p> <p>General Management: Continued evaluation by staff regarding degree of rot, foundation failure, roof failure, etc. will determine temporary stoppage of use and/or repair until further notice by evaluating staff member.</p>	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 adjoining property to expand event offerings for the park	Long Term
Acquire property to increase land buffer for the park	Long Term

Interpretive Programming and Education Five-Year Action Plan

Tennessee State Parks' Interpretation, Programming, and Education team is helping park staff set and achieve programming goals by developing Interpretive Action Plans. This process begins with conversations with Area Interpretive Rangers that prepare field staff for the Scoping Meeting. This meeting brings park staff and stakeholders together to identify audience(s), themes, resources, and set goals and objectives. This information then turns into the five-year Interpretive Action Plan.

Park Primary Interpretive Theme

Converging pathways at Bledsoe Creek State Park connect common natural resources with regional communities throughout time.

Park Secondary Interpretive Themes

- S.1. Bledsoe's Lick provided local wildlife with unique essential nutrients, creating popular hunting grounds for indigenous peoples and settlers.
- S.2. Bledsoe Creek State Park's ecosystem components show the historic land use of the area.
- S.3. Bledsoe Creek State Park uses personal connections to its natural resources to encourage stewardship.
- S.4. Biodiversity in our freshwater systems impact the health of the surrounding community.
- S.5. Bledsoe Creek State Park's hardwood and cedar forest demonstrate historical human impact on the landscape.

Existing Audience

- Local families with parent's ages averaging in the 30s and 40s who are interested in educational and interpretive programs.
- Recreators using the park for hiking, walking, running, or exercising their pets.
- Out-of-state visitors staying at the campground. Retirees in this group often stay on their campsite throughout their stay, while younger groups utilize the trails, fields, and playgrounds.
- Off-park school groups requesting educational and interpretive programs.

Emerging Audience

Hobbyists:

- This group consists of citizen scientists who are interested in collecting data for their personal use.
- This audience is generally retirees as well as adults without children.
- The adults from these groups are typically in their 30s or 40s. Grandparents are typically in their 50s or higher.
- This audience comes to the park from the local area.

- They are interested in naturalist programs.

Casual Park Visitors:

- Adults in their 20s-40s
- This group may have children with them.
- This group is driven by curiosity and wants to know more about the park and what it has to offer. To get them interested in the park.
- Interested in short introductory experiences like short hikes or a picnic.

Park Programming Inventory Data

Number of Programs	Number of Attendees	Number of Programmers	Total Cost Offset	
118	1,156	6	\$3,794	
Scheduled Programs	Scheduled Program Attendees	Supporting Programmers	Programs with a Fee	Fees Collected
113	1,071	5	37	\$3,587
Roving Programs	Roving Program Attendees		Programs with Donations	Donations Collected
5	85		18	\$207
Offsite Programs	Offsite Attendees		Programs with Grants	Grant Funds
2	128		0	\$0

Key Park Natural, Cultural, and Recreational Resources

Resource	Resource Type
Old Hickory Lake and Shoreline bluffs	Natural
Hardwood climax community	Natural
Wildlife (white-tailed deer, barred owl, eastern box turtles, skunks, raccoons, tree frogs, salamanders, waterfowl)	Natural
Creeks and vernal ponds	Natural
Evidence of change over time (TN history trail, fossils, rock formations)	Cultural

Key Park Interpretive Infrastructure

- Shelter 1 (approx. 30 persons)
- Shelter 2 (approx. 100 persons)
- Open fields in various locations
- Outdoor classroom
- Observation deck
- Animal ambassador: eastern box turtle
- Visitor center
- Equine barn
- TN history trail fire ring w/ benches
- Mayo Wix fire ring w/ benches
- Storybook trail

Park Personnel Primarily Dedicated to Interpretation

Position Titles	Percentage of Time Dedicated to Interpretation
Park Manager	10%
Park Ranger	10%
Park Ranger (interp. lead)	30%
SIR	65%

Volunteer Hours and Numbers for Most Recent Fiscal Year

- Volunteer Hours: 3,851.77
- Volunteer Opportunities: 11
- Number of Volunteers: 57

Park Interpretive Goals

Goal 1 – Natural Resource Interpretation: Visitors will have an increased awareness of water quality factors and their effects on the local fauna.

Theme(s) Supported: S.2. and S.3. The promotion of biodiversity and its importance in our ecosystem. Promoting the preservation of species like our animal ambassadors additionally educates the public on the importance of a clean waterway.

2-Year Objective: Expand captive animal program by obtaining 1 additional herptile, increase water quality awareness programs by 50%, and add 3 interpretive panels

5-Year Objective: Increase captive animal programs by 15% and develop 3 new animal programs, and apply for 3 external funding opportunities

Resources Assigned to Goal: Rangers, SIRs, potential grant funding

Strategy for Implementation: Rangers and SIRs will develop new programs and informative signage to educate the public on the importance of clean water ways.

Goal 2 – Cultural Resource Interpretation: Increase the usage of the TN History Trail by visitors, volunteers, and staff.

Theme(s) Supported: S.1. Bledsoe’s Lick provided local wildlife with unique essential nutrients, creating popular hunting grounds for indigenous peoples and settlers.

2-Year Objective: Increase historical/cultural programing by 15%, require SIR to do at least 2 historical/cultural programs a month, identify 2 external partners, add 1 historical program geared toward retirees.

5-Year Objective: Develop TN History Trail by adding 6 new panels and hosting a living history event.

Resources Assigned to Goal: Rangers, SIRs, Maintenance staff, volunteers

Strategy for Implementation: Develop and promote programs for groups listed above by utilizing the TN History Trail.

Goal 3 – Natural Resource Interpretation: Visitors will become stewards of the park’s resources, as well as the resources and history in their communities

Theme(s) Supported: S.2. and S.3.

2-Year Objective: The park will establish a baseline for participation in programs with a take-home component and increase participation by 5

5-Year Objective: The park will experience a 10 % increase in participation with programs featuring a take-home component.

Resources Assigned to Goal: Rangers, SIR, Office Staff.

Strategy for Implementation: Increase the number of programs offering take-home components and/or concluding action statements.

Goal 4 – Education Goal: Educators will seek new experiences for students at Bledsoe Creek State Park.

Theme(s) Supported: S.3. and S.4.

2-Year Objective: The park will experience an increase in education programs by 5%.

5-Year Objective: The park will experience an increase in education programs by 10%.

Resources Assigned to Goal: Rangers, SIR, office staff

Strategy for Implementation: Promote education programs via social media and create professional relationships with surrounding schools and home school groups.

Goal 5 – Volunteer Goal: Volunteers will increase the park’s workforce capacity to care for the park and its resources.

Theme(s) Supported: S.4. and S.5.

2-Year Objective: The park staff will establish a baseline of current volunteer hours by tracking volunteer hours in Galaxy Digital.

5-Year Objective: The park will experience a 25 % increase in reported volunteer hours.

Resources Assigned to Goal: Rangers, SIR, Office Staff, Maintenance Staff

Strategy for Implementation: Promote a variety of volunteer opportunities for our audiences.

Financial Performance Goals

Financial performance goals are a critical performance management tool of the Tennessee State Park System. While the financial performance of parks is 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.

FINANICAL PERFORMANCE GOALS						
	Current Cost Recovery (2025)	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2026	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2027	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2028	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2029	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2030
Park Overall	73%	78%	80%	82%	84%	85%

