

Long Hunter State Park Strategic Management Plan

2023 – 2033

Reviewed 2024



Table of Contents

Park Purpose, History and Description	3
Goals, Objectives and Action Plans	3
THE RESOURCES: Exemplary Natural and Cultural Stewardship	3
THE VISITOR: Welcoming and Inviting to All	4
THE AMENITIES: Well-Maintained Facilities and Amenities.....	5
THE OPERATIONS: Operational Excellence.....	6
Park Overview	7
Site Fact Sheet.....	7
Key Attractions	7
Site and Operations Assessment	8
Site and Facility Assessment.....	8
Operational Assessment.....	12
Summary of Key Recommendations	17
Resource Management Plan	19
Resource Management Objectives	19
Resource Inventory and Assessment	20
Management Strategies	22
Land Management Strategies	24
Supplemental Information	24
Interpretive Programming and Education Plan.....	25
Interpretation, Programming and Education Goals	25
Strategic Programs and Services	26
Financial Performance Goals.....	28

Park Purpose, History and Description

The area was acquired by the federal government in the early 1960's and construction began on Percy Priest Dam in 1963. The dam was completed, and the lake flooded in 1968. In 1972, 2400 acres would become core of the park which was leased from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by the state. The lease encompassed the land with two developed boat ramps and two public day use areas. Those areas are now known as Bryant Grove and the Couchville Recreation Area. The park was officially opened in 1978. In the decade of the 1980's a picnic area, pavilion and a large fishing pier was constructed by the state at Couchville Recreation Area and a beach was added to the Bryant Grove Recreation Area, several hiking trails were developed during this period as well.

The land area now occupied by Long Hunter State Park was originally a mosaic of cedar glades, barrens, and forest along the Stones River. Pre-historically the area served as a hunting ground for Native peoples. Then beginning in the late 1700's Long Hunters of European decent entered the area leading to eventual settlement and farming which remained the primary use of the land up until acquisition by the federal government for the impounding of the Lake and establishment of the park. The remains of that usage are still evident on the park in the old foundations of houses and fence rows still partially intact on the park. There are also remains of stone walls on the park.

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:

- Establish resource management units within the park grouping like resources.
- Establish management strategies for each unit.
- Identify a staff member to be the lead for each unit.
- Educate and engage the public in resource management through locally relevant interpretive programing.
- Involve all team member in the resource management process.
- Improve resource management staffing.

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

Action Plan:

- Provide access to relevant training in resource management for staff and volunteers.
- Engage staff, partners, and volunteers to collect data for each resource type and unit throughout the park.
- Establish a core group of partners to consult on best practices for each resource management unit and resource type.

- Engage staff, partners, and volunteers in resource stewardship to carry out resource restoration and maintenance work.
- Follow data recommendations to maintain sustainable use and management of all areas of the park.
- Integrate resource data with public use data to determine sustainable uses and occupancy of each park area.
- Prioritize allocation of funding and staff resources to resource stewardship.

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

Action Plan:

- Use available technologies including LIDAR, infrared imaging, and aerial photography to establish baselines of resources within the park.
- Use GIS systems to create a database and maps for each resource management unit and track results.
- Collaborate with other divisions including Archeology and Natural Areas to inventory and prioritize natural and cultural resources within the park.

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:

- Improve the arrival experience of the park by repairing infrastructure and making the Visitor Center more identifiable and accessible.
- Improve access to information for visitors with limited English proficiency with the use of multi-lingual publications, signage, and multi-Lingual digital information boards.
- Improve access to facilities including picnic areas, recreational amenities, and restrooms.
- Improve access to interpretive content using AR/VR technologies.
- Improve the condition of facilities and infrastructure through renovation and improved maintenance.
- Facilitate public understanding of diverse user cultural backgrounds.
- Expand program offerings to offer a consistent schedule of programs at all levels of engagement, age groups and backgrounds.

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

Action Plan:

- Engage with park visitors to identify roadblocks to participation and establish solutions.
- Develop interpretive programs that will engage diverse user groups both existing and new with the resources of the park.

- Expand interpretive offerings and diversity to tell the full story of the park from multiple perspectives.
- Promote programs to the public to increase participation.

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

Action Plan:

- Mange recreational vs. resource stewardship needs.
- Improve trails to sustain volume of use.
- Improve lake access for fishing and paddle sports at designated locations to protect other locations from un-authorized access.

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:

- Expand the maintenance department including staff positions and equipment necessary to maintain the park.
- Complete existing deferred maintenance backlog.
- Prioritize preventative maintenance of facilities and infrastructure.
- Establish preventative maintenance schedules for both long term and short term needs and factor this cycle into staffing and the budgetary process.
- Include visitor load, site conditions, sustainability, and maintenance in the design of facilities and infrastructure.
- Provide adequate training, staffing, funding, and equipment to ensure repairs are made correctly and efficiently.

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

Action Plan:

- Prioritize projects that will improve appropriate access to park resources, facilities, and infrastructure.
- Provide clear accessible information relating to park offerings and accessibility considerations to each.
- Implement a comprehensive trail plan to include varying degrees of challenge and accessibility.
- Improve signage throughout the park.

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

Action Plan:

- Consistent and adequate welcoming, wayfinding, informational and regulatory signage with clear messaging.
- Bring facilities throughout the park up to department standards with consistent designs.
- Replace the visitor center to meet the needs of park operations, visitors, and mission.
- Renovate picnic areas.
- Renovate trails.
- Renovate boat ramps.
- Replace restrooms.
- Procure and install adequate broadband internet service.

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:

- Provide training and professional development opportunities for all staff.
- Ensure adequate resources for staff to fulfill their duties.
- Review and implement optimal staffing plan.
- Ensure adequate levels of staffing to allow staff to fulfill their duties.

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

Action Plan:

- Develop operational budgets with revenue goals for individual operations.
- Review current and potential operations for suitability factoring resource impact, public access, public demand, financial viability, and support of mission.
- Add, remove, or alter operational offerings based on findings of review.
- Review operational suitability for park operation vs. third party operation.

Park Overview

Site Fact Sheet

Park Name	Long Hunter State Park
Site Manager	Vacant
Area Manager	Kenneth Gragg
Park acreage	2,923
Total number of visitors (FY 2024)	537,798
Total expenses before CO (FY 2024)	\$990,484
Total revenues (FY 2024)	\$86,618
Retail cost recovery % ¹	115%
Park cost recovery %	8.7%
Average expense per visitor (FY 2024)	\$1.01
Average revenue per visitor (FY 2024)	\$0.08
Gross profit or loss	(\$903,866)
Total full-time available positions / filled	8/7
Total part-time available positions / filled	2/2
Primary feeder markets	Davidson and Wilson Counties
Primary reasons people visit	Hiking, Picnicking, Boating, Fishing
Opportunities for improvement	Provision of overnight camping to expand user base and improve trails and operational amenities.

Key Attractions

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

- Hiking Trails
- Picnic areas
- Boating
- Boat Rentals
- Swimming
- Mountain Biking
- Back Country Camping

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

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 Long Hunter 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 Long Hunter State Park and provides the assessed condition of each as reviewed in April 2023.

Site Asset / Amenity	Quantity	Condition
Visitor Center	1	Poor
Group Campsites	3	Fair
Back Country Camp Sites	2	Fair
Alpine Tower	1	Good
Residences	2	Fair
Picnic Areas	4	Poor
Picnic Shelters	2	Fair
Playgrounds	2	Good
Natural surface Trails (Miles)	25	Fair
Paved Trails (Miles)	2	Fair
Maintenance facilities	2	Poor
Maintenance Shed	1	Good
Old Water plant (storage)	1	Fair
Roadways		Poor
Parking Lots	10	Fair
Boat Ramps	2	Fair
Courtesy Docks	3	Poor
Fishing Pier (Large)	1	Poor
Fishing Pier (Small)	8	Fair
Boat Rental	1	Poor
Swim Beach	1	Fair
Trail bridges (wood)	9	Poor
Trail bridges (Aluminum)	3	Good
Water Lines	3 miles	Poor
Data Lines	1	Poor
Septic systems	4	Fair

Trail Inventory and Assessment

Trail Name	Total
Bryant Grove Trail	3.99
Cedar Glade Trail	0.81
Couchville Lake Trail	2.12
Day Loop Trail	3.40
Deer Trail	0.86

Inland Trail	0.70
Jones Mill Mountain Bike Trail	8.70
Reading Ranger Story Trail	0.33
Volunteer Trail	5.55
Bryant Grove Fisherman's Trail	.17
Shoreline Trail	.32
Grand Total	26.95

Walking and hiking are the most frequent activities engaged in by park guests, with mountain biking being popular as well. Long Hunter has over 25 miles of trail, most of which are in fair condition with the primary issues being erosion and heavy use. Recommendations include widening trail treads to accommodate heavy traffic and rerouting sections that do not meet drainage slope requirements. Recommended trail additions include the Bryant Grove peninsula area to include fishing access, and a loop back on Bryant Grove trail to pass through Cedar Glade area for interpretation. All remaining wood bridges need to be replaced as well.



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
Full-Service Campground	RV type campground with water electric and bath houses is needed for the park to serve visitors outside of the local area.
High Speed Internet	Fiber internet service to all park operational areas.
Additional Parking	Additional parking is needed throughout the park.
Interpretive Space	Interpretive space is needed. The park has vast interpretive potential in Long Hunter cultural history, Cedar Glade Ecology, Reservoir lakes, and Karst Geology.
Picnic Shelters	Picnic Shelters are needed outside of the primary recreation areas with dedicated parking. This is a high demand amenity we do not currently offer.
Kayak/ paddle sport Launch	Dedicated launch area for Paddle craft outside the boat ramp areas to reduce congestion and user conflict.
Restrooms are needed throughout the park	Restrooms are needed to serve Upper Bluff-Shoreline picnic area, Bakers Grove, and Jones mill.
Bakers Grove	A new entry point is needed to access the very popular trail system, current parking is inadequate and requires traveling through a residential neighborhood causing traffic, parking issues and user
Docks (2)	Covered/secure on water storage for park boats and a courtesy dock at Bryant Grove picnic area.

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 Long Hunter have been identified as **core services**:

- Resource preservation and protection.
- Access to resource-based recreation.
- Resource Based interpretation of natural and cultural features within the park.
- Public Safety.
- Maintenance of facilities, infrastructure and resources within the park.

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 Long Hunter State Park have been identified as **important services**:

- Boat Ramps
- Fishing Piers
- Swim Beach
- Picnic areas
- Trails
- Playgrounds
- Visitor Center
- Restrooms
- Picnic Shelters

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 Long Hunter State Park have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- Camping
- Kayak/ Canoe rentals
- Gift Shops
- Alpine Tower

Personnel / Staffing Review

Personnel and staffing at Long Hunter State Park represent the largest area of budgetary expense at an average of 70% of the total operating budget each year for the last three complete years, which is higher 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 Ranger	4	*
Interpretive Specialist	1	\$63,684
Administrative Assistant	1	\$44,628
Park Manager	1	*
TOTAL		\$420,96

**Law enforcement compensation confidential by TN law.*

Part Time Employees

Position / Title	Quantity	Compensation Total
Operations Worker JS	2	\$60,372
TOTAL		\$60,372

Labor Support

Labor Support	Annual Hours
Volunteers	1,784
Community Service Workers	28
Engineering and Construction Crews	
Resource Management Crews	120
Other: Janitorial Contract	2,190
TOTAL	3,797

Total Labor Compensation Expense

Labor Type	Labor Expense
Full Time Equivalent Employees	\$394,368
Part Time Employees	\$60,996
TOTAL Annual Labor Expense	\$455,365

Additional Future Positions Needed

Position / Title	Quantity	FTE or PT	Year Needed	Justification
Maintenance Technician	2	FTE	2025	Position is necessary to maintain the park including grounds, facilities, custodial assistance and trails. Current staffing is not adequate to maintain base
Custodial Technician	1	FTE	2025	To clean facilities in place of contract service.
Clerk 3	1	FTE	2025	Needed to operate, Visitor center, reservations, and Gift Shop operations.
Conservation Worker JS	1	PT	2025	Needed to maintain and preserve park resources including 1000+ acres of Cedar Glades and nearly 30 miles of trail.
Operations Lead	1	FTE	2025	Needed to operate and lead, Boat rental, Alpine Tower, Camping and Gift Shop operations.
Maintenance Worker JS	1	PT	2028	Will be needed to maintain and clean expected amenity additions
Maintenance Technician	1	FTE	2028	Will be needed to maintain expected amenity additions
Clerk 2	1	FTE	2028	Will be needed to operate expected amenity additions
Park Ranger 2	1	FTE	2028	Will be needed for public safety with additional amenities and visitation
Operations worker JS	1	PT	2028	Will be needed to operate expected amenity additions
TOTAL	11	8 FTE/3 PT		

Financial Performance

Revenue per available unit (**Rev Per Unit**) for the last four years in park facilities is detailed in the table below.

Current Rev Per Unit

Fiscal Year	Camping Rev Per Unit	Day Use Rev Per Unit
2021	\$3.54	\$3.47
2022	\$5.52	\$5.70
2023	\$4.95	\$6.38
2024	\$4.49	\$2.85

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	Camping Rev Per Unit	Day Use Rev Per Unit
2025	\$4.75	\$4.00
2026	\$5.00	\$4.25
2027	\$5.25	\$4.50
2028	\$5.50	\$4.75

Customer Service

Platform / Site	Year	Customer Satisfaction Level
General Survey	24	4.6/5
Campsite	23	4.0/5

Professional Development and Training

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

- EMT
- Chain Saw
- Field Training Officer
- Search and Rescue
- Routine law enforcement training
- Trail development and maintenance
- Routine management 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. Boat rental facility needs stabilization.
- b. Trails need repair.
- c. Couchville Lake Bridge needs stabilization.
- d. Parking areas need repairs.
- e. Picnic areas need repairs.
- f. Swim Beach needs repairs.
- g. Plumbing systems need repairs
- h. Restrooms need repairs.
- i. Visitor Center needs repairs.
- j. Fishing piers need stabilization until they can be replaced.
- k. Improve signage.
- l. Initiation of USACE review of future needs and projects.
- m. Secure right of way off Granny wright to back country sites.
- n. Acquire land on Bakers Grove Rd. to provide direct access to Volunteer trail and onsite security.
- o. Transfer Sellars Farm to Cedars of Lebanon State Park.

2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Additional full-time Maintenance staff is needed to maintain park facilities. Improved maintenance will make the park more attractive, safer, and able to accommodate greater visitation.
- b. High speed internet is needed for base operations.
- c. Cancellation of custodial contract and replacement with park staff.
- d. An operations Lead or concessioner lease is needed for the Boat Rental and Alpine Tower Operations. Without additional staffing we are only able to operate the boat rental 3 days per week 3 months out of the year and the alpine tower by appointment only.

3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Improve Visitor Center access.
- b. Addition of pontoon boat for interpretive programming
- c. Improve Multi-lingual resources.
- d. Expand Interpretive programming.
- e. Improve access to fishing.
- f. Improve access to the Alpine Tower.

Mid Term Recommendations (2-5 years)

1. Site and Facilities

- a. Renovation of Couchville recreation area, all facilities and infrastructure.
- b. Replacement of Maintenance Facility.
- c. Expansion and improvement of traffic flow of Parking Lots.
- d. Addition of Full-service Campground.

- e. New Visitor Center in location and of design to accommodate park needs and visitor services.
 - f. Addition of Picnic shelters at locations where adequate parking and access can be provided.
 - g. Conduct sustainable capacity studies on all use areas.
 - h. Acquisition of inholdings, buffer, and resource protection tracts adjacent to the Park.
 - i. Full trail system renovation.
 - j. Improve paddle sport access.
- 2. Operations and Staffing**
- a. Addition of a Ranger to provide public safety of all areas of the park with the expected addition of new facilities.
 - b. Addition of maintenance, custodial and administrative positions to operate existing operations as well as proposed operational additions.
- 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience**
- a. Replacement of Ranger Boat to provide safe patrol and rescue response along 35 miles of shoreline.
 - b. Creation of Long Hunter encampment interpretive area.

Long Term Recommendations (5+ years)

- 1. Site and Facilities**
- a. Acquisition of inholdings, buffer, and resource protection tracts adjacent to Park.
 - b. Update USACE review of future needs and projects.
 - c. Review and evaluate facilities and resource impact based on visitation and operational use.
- 2. Operations and Staffing**
- a. Re-evaluate staffing levels vs. visitation and operational needs.
 - b. Re-open Jones Mill Boat Ramp with automated launch fee collection
 - c. Addition of climb/repel and low rope course to the Alpine tower operation.
- 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience**
- a. Review and update interpretive panels and interpretive offerings.

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.

Long Hunter

Karst topography is a defining characteristic of Long Hunter State Park along the shores of Percy Priest Lake the reservoir created by the damming of the Stones River. The area was frequented by Long Hunters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries leading to the eventual settlement of the middle Tennessee area. Limestone rock outcrops, crevices, caves, and the unique hydrology they create give rise to the area's signature mosaic of biological communities – second growth hardwood forests, woodlands, barrens, vernal Streams, ponds, and glades -- supporting a diverse mix of associated rare plant and animal species. The rare cedar glades found in the park are home to many endemics, threatened or endangered botanical communities found nowhere else in the United States other than Middle Tennessee. The land still bares the remains of several home places from the years before park influence when the land served to support rural agriculture.

The impounding of the Percy Priest reservoir and subsequent creation of Couchville Lake through the flooding of connected caves resulted in a combined loss of 1000's of acres of cedar glade and barrens ecosystems as well as entire communities both modern and ancient. This and the rapid development of Davidson, Wilson and Rutherford Counties has put significant pressure on the delicate cedar glades and left a lasting cultural story both of which need preservation and protection.

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

- Collaborate with other divisions and organizations to expand knowledge and resource base.
- Engage public through quality interpretation to support and aid in resource management.
- Dedicate necessary resources including human resources to resource management.
- Conduct survey of resources within the park with assistance of other divisions and institutions.
- Obtain copies of pre-impoundment records from the USACE.
- Compile data into GIS database to aid in decision making and prioritization.
- Identify management units within the park based on the resources within a specific area requiring uniform management practices.

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
Cedar Glades and Barrens	1000 Acres	Fair	Most of the Cedar Glades in the park are overgrown from lack of naturally occurring fire and large Herbivores. Trash dumps are common as are invasive plants. Significant progress has been made on the 400 acre Dairy Farm tract.
Harwood Forests	1000 Acres	Good	The hard wood forests in the park are in generally good condition but we have lost about 15 years of regeneration due to overgrazing of deer. Areas within the flood plane are littered with driftwood and trash that are choking out regeneration.
Riparian Corridors	Approx. 4 Miles	Good	Minor erosion, localized damming and overgrowth of vegetation need management. Stream Side Salamanders are known to inhabit at least four small vernal streams. Remnant Darter populations are also found in some branches

			originating from the now impounded Stones River.
Percy Priest Lake and flood plain	35 miles of shoreline	Fair	The lake is maintained by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Along the parks shoreline there are areas of erosion and large debris fields of driftwood and trash from flooding amounting to several hundred acres in area.
Couchville Lake and ponds	110 acres	Fair	Couchville Lake is in Fair condition with the primary concerns being habitat management for improved fish health and vegetative diversity. Over population of crappie and insufficient over winter food supplies are a concern. Couchville, Percy priest and the ponds are all permanently connected by a network of caves and during seasonal flooding all water bodies merge into one. There are some areas of erosion.
Oak Hickory Savannah and Grasslands.	200 acres	Good	Overgrowth of vegetation including invasives due to lack of large grazing herbivores and fire suppression.
Historic rock works	Approx. 1 mile combined	Fair	Many rocks wall segments and foundations throughout park are in various states of collapse and upheaval from root action.
Historic cultural sites including home sites and cemeteries.		Poor	The Historic cultural sites within the park represent a broad history including natives, early Long Hunters and settlement to communities relocated and flooded by the impounding of the lake.
Wildlife		Fair	There is an overpopulation of deer causing damage to vegetation and forest regeneration. Fish populations in Couchville lake are out of balance. Over population of Crappie and cold shallow waters at winter pool limiting food stock have stunted fish growth in the lake causing less desirable fishing.

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
Cedar Glades and Barrens	<p>Public Use: Managed access is limited to trails and guided interpretive programs.</p> <p>General Management: The Cedar Glades are managed to reestablish and maintain a transitional mosaic of Glade zones consistent with the underlying geology. Emphasis is placed on protection and promotion of rare and or endangered endemics. Methods include mechanical removal of overgrowth with forestry mulchers, chainsaws and bush hogs, targeted removal of invasives, and prescribed fire. GIS resources are used to collect more data including displaced and remnant populations for aid in management decisions. Continue with the Division of Natural areas to expand active management throughout the park.</p>	High
Hardwood Forests	<p>Public Use: Access is limited to trails and back country campsites.</p> <p>General Management: The Hardwood forests of the park are managed for overall health and sustainable succession. This includes management of invasive species, damage from overgrazing of wildlife and human impacts from off trail use. Methods include prescribed fire, wildlife population management, and restricting public access.</p>	High
Riparian Corridors	<p>Public Use: Access is limited to trail bridge crossings</p> <p>General Management: Riparian corridors are maintained for water and wildlife health. Methods include erosion control, vegetation management, watershed protection, water testing and surveys of aquatic wildlife.</p>	High
Percy Priest Lake and flood plain	<p>Public Use: Access to the lake is provided through boat ramps, picnic areas, swim beach and trails. Off trail access is prohibited.</p> <p>General Management: Percy Priest Lake is primarily managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers and TN wildlife Resources. The park manages 35 miles of Shoreline in which debris management, erosion</p>	Moderate

	and vegetation management including invasive species control are conducted to protect the Lake and Flood plain ecosystem. Further collaboration with the USACE could improve park efforts. Damage from off trail use and littering by the public are the primary concerns.	
Couchville Lake and ponds	<p>Public Use: Access is provided by 7 fishing piers, kayak launch area and boat rentals.</p> <p>General Management: Couchville Lake and the connected ponds are managed for Lake and Fishery health. Collaboration with TWRA has provided baseline data on fish populations and health indicating further management of Crappie population and improved food stock are needed. This is complicated by the fact they are connected with Percy Priest and therefore drained to winter pool annually greatly reducing water temperature, and the ability to manage for feed stock and vegetation.</p>	High
Oak Hickory Savannah and grasslands	<p>Public Use: Access is provided by trails.</p> <p>General Management: Prescribed fire is needed to maintain the savannah areas often found within the transitional zone between the Cedar Glade/ barrens and hardwood forests throughout the park. The grassland areas need prescribed fire and targeted invasive species control.</p>	High
Historic rock works	<p>Public Use: Access is provided to some locations by trails.</p> <p>General Management: The rockworks are managed for limiting potential for root upheaval, tree fall damage and vandalism.</p>	Moderate
Historic cultural sites including home sites and cemeteries.	<p>Public Use: Some remnants are visible from trail and other public use areas of the park. Others are part of the interpretive story of the park and shared through programs and interpretive panels.</p> <p>General Management: The historic cultural sites of the park are managed through protection of physical remnants and interpretation of the cultural significance of the sites.</p>	Moderate
Wildlife	<p>Public Use: Access is provided through wildlife watching, as well as regulated hunting and fishing.</p> <p>General Management: The wildlife of the park is managed for overall health and balance. Populations are monitored with the collaboration of TWRA, the state zoologist and university partners and creel limits and permits are based on the data collected. Habitat improvement is needed.</p>	High

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
Any adjoining land with a residence that could be used for staff housing.	Short
Bakers Grove Mid trail access point and boundary buffer.	Short
Back Country access Right of way.	Short
Cedar Glade Habitat- acquire any available cedar glade adjoining or inholding to the park.	ALL
Acquire inholdings as able to protect boundary integrity.	ALL

Supplemental Information

Long Hunter

Public ownership by itself does not adequately preserve living ecological systems. Active management is required to mimic natural processes that have been suppressed or disrupted. Deprived of natural disturbance processes such as fire, biological communities that would otherwise retain a more open appearance develop into thickets, shading out species adapted to higher light conditions. Lack of active management for decades has reduced community and species diversity. Introduction of prescribed fire, selective thinning, or use of a Forestry Mulching is needed to open glade margins, restore barrens systems, deter invasive species, rejuvenate forests, and improve wildlife habitat. The two largest ecosystems within the park are glades and barrens of the Nashville Basin and Dry-Mesic Oak (Hardwood) Forest. Both systems have areas needing active management. It is a priority to identify potential transitional areas between open glades and cedar forests for selective management (burning, thinning, mulching) to improve ecological health, increase habitat diversity within the glade/barren/forest mosaic and encourage species currently shaded out by dense growth at glade margins.

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.

Long Hunter

Long Hunter State Park's Interpretive purpose is to connect visitors through a sense of place, understanding, and appreciation for the unique Natural and Cultural Resources of the Park and of Middle Tennessee.

The parks' primary interpretive theme is the Long Hunter culture that existed throughout middle Tennessee including the Stones River area that includes what is now Long Hunter State Park and Percy Priest Lake.

The parks' secondary theme is Cedar Glades and the unique ecology that they represent stemming from karst geology and thin soils to host some of the highest concentrations of rare and endemic species in North America.

1. Several long hunters explored the fields and streams of Middle TN during their hunting expeditions of the mid 1700s and today many features still bear their names.
2. Cedar Glade ecosystems occur primarily in Middle Tennessee where Davidson, Wilson and Rutherford counties meet and the plants, much like desert flora, must be adapted to the extreme conditions where they grow.
3. Central Basin geology around Long Hunter State Park features karst topography as evidenced by sinkholes and other fissures in the underlying Ridley and Lebanon Limestone bedrock.
4. J. Percy Priest Lake and other water features in the park provide ample opportunity to encounter the ecology of these aquatic areas and discover the organisms that inhabit them.

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:

Identify diverse perspectives to interpret both the primary and secondary interpretive themes of the park.

- Interpret native and female perspectives of Long Hunter activities within the Stones River area and how those individuals helped shape the settlement of the area.
- Interpret how the same geology that led to Cedar Glades impacted settlement, life, and economics of those who lived in the area up to impoundment of Percy Priest Lake flooding entire communities both cultural and environmental.
- Interpret the perspectives of Sherrod Bryant, his family and slaves as early settlers to the area following the Long Hunter Era.
- Interpret the culture of the Mississippians, and how past perspectives shaped the condition and reverence of the site.

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:

- Develop interpretive panels incorporating digital data through QR. codes for expanded information and access to those with limited English proficiency, auditory or visual limitations.
- Use social media to share the parks interpretive story and attract the public to further engage in onsite interpretation.
- Use Augmented/virtual reality technology to interpret the history of Long Hunter pre-impoundment.

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 program overview for each interpretive topic at each site including both free and fee options.
- Develop outlines for each program offered and compile into interpretive library in SharePoint for the park.
- Develop self-guided programs with the use of wayside panels and digital media.

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 resource based recreational programs that will provide context, appreciation, and lead participants to resource stewardship.
- Monitor recreational use for resource impact.
- Offer self-guided programs in a variety of areas that may include hiking, paddling, or boating.
- Offer high quality fee-based opportunities that will attract further engagement and stewardship.

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.

FINANICAL PERFORMANCE GOALS						
	Current Cost Recovery (2024)	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2025	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2026	Target Cost Recovery: FY: 2027	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2028	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2029
Park Overall	8%	10%	10%	11%	12%	13%

