Rock Island State Park
Business and Management Plan Public Meeting

September 10, 2020
6:00 pm CDT
How to Join Hearing

• **Join via Computer**
  – Complete Sign-in Survey
  – Connect with WebEx web link

• **Join via the Cisco WebEx Meetings App**
  – Available on iPhone and Android

• **Join via Phone (Not Recommended)**
  – +1-415-655-0003 US TOLL
  – Access code:161 952 6154
  – If you have trouble connecting to the hearing, please call me:
    • 931-287-7995
WebEx Options

• Below are options available to use during the WebEx.
  – Note: Some options may be disabled by the host.

• You can control what you see during the meeting. Don’t be afraid to tailor this experience to your liking.
Etiquette

• At designated times during the tonight’s meeting we will stop to read and respond to participants’ questions.
• **Please type all questions into the Chat Box.**
• Please stay on Mute during the meeting and turn off your video.
  – If participants are disruptive, they may be re-muted by the host, or removed from the WebEx.

Red microphone button means you are muted.

Black microphone button means everyone can hear you.
Meeting Purpose & Agenda

Christina Treglia, Brand Promise Director
Meeting Purpose

- To comply with state law – *TCA 11-3-120* – each park conducts period reviews of its plans which include the following components:
  
  - Facilities preservation, maintenance, and utilization
  - Management and personnel staffing, training, compensation, and professional development
  - Preservation, development, and expansion of existing and new park resources and facilities
  - Educational programming
  - Land acquisition
Meeting Goals

• Inform stakeholders of some recent successes, struggles, & future park business planning goals

• Inform stakeholders about the TVA easement renewal process & provide a current status update

• Inform stakeholders about the TDOT SR287 bypass process & provide a current status update

• Receive input/feedback on these updates and address comments within 30 days.
Welcome & Webex Overview
   Tara Wohlgemuth, External Affairs Regional Director (Moderator)
Meeting Purpose & Agenda
   Christina Treglia, Brand Promise Director (Presenter)
Park Overview & Updates
   Damon Graham, Park Manager
TVA Lease Renewal
   Daniel Chuquin, State Parks Land Acquisition Manager
Mill Feasibility Study
   Don Alexander, Warren County Industrial Development Board
Historic Preservation of the Old Mill
   Hobart Akin, Cultural Resources & Exhibits Specialist
Roadway Changes and Impact
   TDOT & Kenneth Gragg, Parks Area 4 Manager
Written Question & Answer Session
   Christina & Tara
Park Overview & Update
Damon Graham, Park Manager
GENERAL PARK UPDATES

- Background & Appreciation
- (New Normal)
- Visitation
- Incidents, Medicals/SARs, Law Enforcement
- Visitor/customer services, programs/events
- Staffing
- Park Business Operations:
  - Camping, Cabins, Shelters, etc.
GENERAL PARK UPDATES

2019-20 Highlights:

• Place of **safe** refuge in stressful times

• Safety Improvements
  • fencing

• Sustainability Gold Award--
  • (LED conversion, tankless water heaters, court lighting, etc.)

• Cabin Upgrades
GENERAL PARK UPDATES

2019-20 Highlights:

• Challenges

• Renovation/Repair Projects:
  • Flooding
  • Roofs, painting, Sandbar, erosion work, etc.

• Center Hill Lake returns to normal pool cycle

• Hazard Tree Removal Program, storm damage

• Major Blue Hole Trail Renovation project
2019-20 Highlights:

- Historic Spring Castle
- Historic Minnow Box Spring
- Collins River Prairie Pollinator Site

*Photos courtesy of Bryant family collection. In memoriam: Joyce Bain Bryant along with her husband Robert Bryant were often found at this site enjoying a roadside lunch break from farm work.

Circa 1950: L-R (Lee Bain with grandson Dan Bryant, Aubrey Jones, & Fish and Game Officer)

Circa 1961: Postcard featuring Great Falls Dam promoting the great fishing the region has to offer.

This peaceful site has an array of ferns and wildflowers making it a picturesque roadside rest stop frequented by many generations of local residents, visitors, & fishermen.

Many claim that the water is the "best tasting for miles around"; however, the park does not recommend drinking any untreated water.

Natural springs like these were also commonly used for refrigeration. Spring houses were designed to hold the cool spring water year around. Crocks of milk, butter, & other perishables would have remained fresh for quite a while even in the warmer months. Walk up to the viewing window to see how the interior might have looked in decades long past.

This quaint site centers around a natural, free-flowing underground spring. The small stone enclosure, a spring house, was likely built in the early 1900s when the Tennessee Electric Power Company (TEPCo) operated the dam nearby. This spring house along with the adjacent "spring castle", likely served as water supplies for the Fall City community that developed around the Fall City Cotton Mill, in operation from 1892-1902. These watering sites would have been popular throughout the early-mid 1900s to residents and visitors of the community.
FUTURE PARK PLANNING

- Staffing Support
- **Connectivity:** increased foot/bike opportunities for visitors
  - Complete connectivity by foot/bike 2030
- TVA Great Falls Dam pedestrian walkway
  - Connect White & Warren County sides of the park
- Lower Caney Fork River Gorge cable suspension bridge
  - Connect White & Warren County sides of the park
- Historic Collins River Bridge pedestrian walkway
- Interpretive historic walking trail of Collins Peninsula/Fall City Village
- Acquisition of surrounding lands for resource, aesthetic, and buffer value
- Expansion of the Bluff Trail routes. Continued improvement of trail systems
- Stabilization/Protection of the historic Mill site
HISTORIC MILL SITE

- 1892- completion by local entrepreneur Asa Faulkner, his son, Clay, & Jesse & H.L. Walling

- 1902- Good Friday flood ceased operations

- One of the very few remaining textile mills from that era of post civil-war industrialization boom

- 1982- Added to National Register of Historic Places

- 3 stories, 21,000 sq. ft.
HISTORIC—CULTURAL—COMMUNITY VALUE

Mill girls  Georgia, 1902

Falls City Workers
HOBART AKIN
CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGER
TENNESSEE STATE PARKS
MILL DETERIORATION

- 120+ years old
- Sits on rough terrain/bluff
- Moisture
- Vandalism/security
- Structural Instability/danger for repairs
- Lack of resources; staff; funding; time
MILL DETERIORATION

- Brick failure; structural instability; termites; water intrusion; etc.
NEW ROOF—MILL STRUCTURE 2013

--With support of Tennessee Historical Commission Grant
PRESERVING THE MILL SITE

• Park Mission: **preserve and protect natural & historical resources, interpret for future generations**

• Long Term Mill Site Goals:
  1. Stabilize/preserve the historic structure
  2. Consider avenues for a park museum & possibly a reservable meeting space for park/community/private events

• Concerns for stabilization:
  - Accelerated deterioration now
  - Funding $
    - Continual maintenance
    - Return on investment
  - Proximity to SR287 Roadway
  - Parking plans
  - Maintaining integrity- NPS standards
  - Mechanical: sewer; hvac; electrical service; etc.
GREAT FALLS MILL HISTORIC SITE

Mill will fail without efforts for preservation soon.

West wall has severe failure now.

Funding is not allocated for any development or preservation effort of the Mill site at this time.

Dedicated group of front-line staff & park supporters
TVA Lease Renewal
Daniel Chuquin,
Land Acquisition Manager
(BACKGROUND INFO)

TVA SECTIONS OF THE PARK

- Excess of 367 acres which includes
  - Historic mill site
  - Collins peninsula/Collins loop trail
  - Twin Falls/powerhouse areas/Great Falls dam

- Has been managed through a long-term public recreation lease agreement starting in 1971 during early park development
TVA SECTIONS OF THE PARK

- Temporarily managed by short term recreation license agreements
- TVA and TDEC are currently finalizing a new long-term agreement on similar terms- 40 years
- Public recreation easement agreement
- New agreement will include one major addition/change:
  - Allows the designation of a 5-acre Commercial Parcel surrounding the historic mill site. This provides TDEC an opportunity to evaluate the option for commercial use of the mill site to offset repair, restoration and management costs.
Mill Feasibility Study
Don Alexander,
Warren County IDB Director
Roadway Impact
Kenneth Gragg,
Parks Area 5 Manager
SR287 AT MILL SITE
SAFETY, CONGESTION & PARKING
SR287 BYPASS
SR 287 BYPASS

- Approx 0.40 Miles (centerline staked in blue ribbon now)
- Safety
- Congestion
- “park traffic” outlet flow
- Part of the Park Master Plan original design
- Road safety/congestion is a separate but related issue to preserving the Mill historic site.
- Mill building and surrounding 5-acre site
SR 287 BYPASS

- Disturbance estimated at +/-12 acres
- Required archeological impact & environmental impact reviews nearing completion
  - Phase I & Phase II is complete; Phase III is nearing completion
  - Environmental reviews
  - Mitigation plans for disturbances
- Long term planning for connectivity of the park
  - Historical walking/biking route
  - Safety
  - Traffic Flow
- Tradeoffs
HIKING TRAILS
PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

- Estimated to have little or no net loss of trail distance
- Reroute likely to have one crossing point of the SR287 bypass
  - Interior loop to access mill, castle, etc.
  - Outer loops remain intact for Collins trail, & Cunningham connector trail via Collins trailhead parking area
MISSION

• To preserve and protect, in perpetuity, unique examples of natural, cultural, and scenic areas and provide a variety of safe, quality, outdoor experiences through a well-planned and professionally managed system of state parks.
How to Provide Input
Christina Treglia,
Brand Promise Director
How to Provide Input

Any comments you would like to include in the record should be submitted by **4:30 pm CST, October 10, 2020**, via our online comment card or via mail:

- **COMMENT CARD:**
  - Link in Chat Box and on Public Participation tab at tn.gov/environment

- **MAIL:**
  Tennessee State Parks Attn: Public Participation
  312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue
  2nd Floor WRS Tennessee Tower
  Nashville, TN 37243
Questions?

Open Question and Answer Period until 7:30pm

CHAT BOX:

– Type your question in the chat box and we will read it out loud
– We will attempt to answer your questions with those assembled, and we commit to responding to all questions in writing.