



## **Tennessee State Parks**

### **Park Strategic Management Planning Public Meeting**

#### **Response To Comments**

#### **Roan Mountain State Park**

The 10-year individual Park Strategic Management Plans for Tennessee State Parks are part of the overall planning processes within the department and are developed to guide the management and direction of each park. These plans steer continued success of each park and influence long term innovation by the park staff. Building on Tennessee State Parks' strong foundation they seek to address the various challenges anticipated for each park. The Strategic Management Plans present a strategic and actionable strategy for the next 10 years.

This response to comments document is shared publicly as a record of comments that were made at a public information meeting as well as online.

Location: Roan Mountain Conference Center

Date: 01/28/2025 at 5:30pm

#### **Public Comments:**

Improve cell coverage and WiFi connections.
It is disappointing to see the pool close. It provided park users with much enjoyment, especially the kids who were camping.....
Cannot find plan for Roan Mountain on the website. However, I have a suggestion for the park. It is my favorite of all the TN State Parks, well maintained, clean and supervised. We camp there every year. But it is not "Welcoming and Inviting to All" as stated in your Cornerstones. Last year, while camping there, I went about my passion of photographing fireflies at night (of course) as I have done for the past several years at Roan Mtn SP. I was threatened with a ticket for being in a day-use area (50 feet from the state highway with only me, my camera and the fireflies). My vehicle was outside any gated areas, parked in a paved area with a note in the window to let the rangers know I was photographing fireflies, not lost on a trail. The very courteous ranger told me there was "new management" that wanted no photographers in the park at night shooting fireflies. What? A photographer with a tripod is going to do no damage to the park. However, the very next day the Roan Mtn Festival was to begin - which takes a heavy toll on the park. I



<p>love the festival. It should be part of the park's activities and service to the community. However, my love for Roan Mtn SP has gone down several notches after being threatened for using the park at night for photography of fireflies and the night sky. I would like to see this policy changed ASAP. Thank you - Jerry Whaley, President - SANP (Southern Appalachian Nature Photographers) 865-453-1518</p>
<p>We love Roan Mountain State Park. Unfortunately, like other State Parks, it is not very handicapped friendly. We love to camp, but sites without solid camper pads and sewer connections make it increasingly difficult. The bath houses are sufficient. The number of handicapped sites at all parks are not sufficient. Better wifi in areas that don't have cell service would make us more secure. Thanks.</p>
<p>We tent camped in RMSP in June and it was fabulous. We drove an EV from central Missouri to the park. We were unaware that there were two level 2 EV chargers at park headquarters until late in our stay. Those chargers are an incredible resource so why didn't we know about them immediately upon arrival? You know there will more EV campers going forward so you should make a big deal out of your EV infrastructure. SP's are very good at providing power, albeit mostly to run RVs; its one of your superpowers (pun intended). My recommendation is that all SPs should have chargers because parks are usually in remote areas away from cities which generally have some DC fast chargers. We were able to charge our car in Johnson City and enjoyed our time there. Hope this helps!! Keep up the great work.</p>
<p>I would love for the TN parks to make more of an effort to utilize native plantings and grassland ecosystems where there are vast (I mean, huge!!) mowed grass areas at the entrance to the park. The beauty is in the grasslands, not short turf that's an ecological dead zone. Please consider the nature in your parks, that's why we come! Most of us don't care about tennis courts (there wasn't a single player the weekend we were there that I ever saw), field of mowed turf, or holiday decor. We want to be in nature 🍀</p>
<p>"1. Expand the mews to incorporate more birds of prey. Get a saw whet owl since they are unique and special to the area. Owl mews need a functional working area with electricity and water so volunteers and staff can provide care for the owls in a safe environment. A heater for winter temperatures for the owls would be helpful. The aviary for the healthy and safety of the birds needs to be pushed further up the priority list. 5+ years is a very long time to wait. 2. The visitor center needs a face lift. More interactive exhibits. 3. The waste water treatment plant does not need to plow through the entire park. New infrastructure needs to be integrated in such a way that it minimized cutting down trees. Keep the natural beauty of the park. 4. New disc golf course would be fun. 5. Please give this park enough money in their budget to actually address deferred maintenance and cover expenses that come up through out the year. 6. Managing the new river flow in Hampton Creek site will be critical especially preventing cow poop from going in the river."</p>

**Response from Tennessee State Parks:**



Thank you for your interest and participation in the Roan Mountain State Park Strategic Plan review process. Your comments and concerns were reviewed and considered by the Tennessee State Parks management and leadership team. We appreciate your support of the park and hear your feedback on WiFi access, accessibility, Visitor Center, general maintenance, and customer service.

Attached is a copy of the final plan. Your input is instrumental, and we appreciate your commitment to making the park even better. Thank you for being a vital part of this collaborative effort to enhance Roan Mountain State Park.