



Tennessee State Parks

Park Strategic Management Planning Response to Comments

Bledsoe Creek 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 an online survey. The public information meeting was held at Highpoint Health on December 8th, 2025, at 5:30pm.

Summary of Public Comments

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation received **4 public comments** specific to the draft Strategic Management Plan for Bledsoe Creek State Park. Feedback reflected strong appreciation for the park's natural beauty and staff, with respondents highlighting the park's heavy local use and importance to the community.

Key themes included:

- **Storm Damage & Trail Safety** – Respondents requested removal of downed and leaning trees along trails following recent straight-line wind and tornado events. Safety concerns were raised regarding the High Ridge Trail staircase, which needs repair, railings, and general stabilization.
- **Bridge Replacement & Aesthetic Concerns** – While supportive of replacing flood-damaged wooden bridges, one respondent expressed concern that metal replacement bridges detract from the park's natural appearance.



- **Playground Improvements** – Requests were made for updated playground equipment and improved landscaping. Both playgrounds were described as muddy with insufficient mulch, resulting in unsafe drop-offs at slide exits.
- **Equestrian Access** – One respondent requested that horses be allowed on certain trails or that new horse-friendly trails be developed, noting limited riding opportunities in the region and a willingness among riders to pay a small usage fee.
- **General Support & Park Engagement** – A long-time visitor who has visited all 62 Tennessee State Parks expressed deep appreciation for the system and interest in future conversations about park management.

Department Response

The Department appreciates the public's thoughtful input and the strong community connection to Bledsoe Creek State Park. All comments were reviewed and considered by Tennessee State Parks' leadership in relation to the park's mission, existing site conditions, operational needs, and the goals and management strategies outlined in the draft Strategic Management Plan.

Concerns regarding storm debris, tree hazards, and trail safety features such as the High Ridge Trail staircase will be evaluated as part of ongoing maintenance planning and hazard mitigation assessments. Input regarding bridge materials and aesthetic compatibility will be incorporated into future facility design considerations, balancing durability, safety, and environmental integration.

Feedback on playground conditions and mulch depth will help inform prioritization of recreation-area improvements, particularly where safety concerns exist. The request for equestrian access will be reviewed as part of broader recreational use evaluations, with attention to trail sustainability, potential user conflicts, environmental protection, and feasibility.

The Department values the strong support expressed for Bledsoe Creek State Park and will continue to consider public input as plans are refined and implemented over the next decade.