

Tims Ford State Park Strategic Management Plan

2023 – 2033



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Park Purpose, History and Description

Tims Ford State Park was established September 1st, 1978. The original park was created from land that Tennessee Valley Authority had set aside for the creation of a state park along the banks of Tims Ford Lake. The original park was 478 acres containing a visitors' center, 50 campsites, 20 cabins, 6 miles of hiking trail and a marina. Today the park is 3,546 acres and has added an additional 118 campsites and over 16 additional miles of hiking trail. The Bear Trace at Tims Ford opened in 1999 as a 6,790-yard 18 golf course designed by Jack Nicklaus.

Tims Ford State Park has and will continue to provide residents and visitors to the area with a connection to the resource of Tims Ford Lake and the history and culture of the lands around it. Tims Ford State Park will forever protect and preserve the natural resources entrusted into our care and provide well planned educational opportunities about these resources. By providing professionally managed operations the park will continue to provide the local area with attractions that brings in people from across the Southeastern United States.

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:

Tims Ford State Park staff shall build partnership with local businesses. Tims Ford will make every effort to provide volunteer and donation opportunities for these businesses. Tims Ford staff shall provide monthly volunteer opportunities to park visitors. Park staff shall continue to work with the Friends of Tims Ford State Park, to create volunteer opportunities and the creation of the Tims Ford Trail Crew. Incentives shall be created to provide an incentive for volunteering such as after 100 documented hours of volunteer service it unlocks a 15% discount in the gift shop.

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

Action Plan:

1. Tims Ford State Park staff will create a comprehensive plan to reduce or eliminate invasive species from the park. This will include mechanical and chemical processes. Volunteer opportunities will be provided at strategic times of the year to help clear and eliminate invasive species. The field habitat of the park shall be maintained as prairie grounds and will be managed using mechanical, chemical and fire to maintain the grounds.
2. The historic building foundations of the park will be cleared of vegetation and educational panels will be installed to better interpret this history of Tims Ford State Park. The Cash Grocery foundation shall have the area surrounding cleared of woody vegetation and a new

interpretive replica erected as near to original as possible. This interpretive area can also be used as a storage area to store firewood for guests of the park.

3. Start a deer management hunt on Tims Ford during the slow season to help the park manage wildlife and preserve the biological integrity of the park.

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

Action Plan:

1. Tims Ford State Park will continue to work with TDEC Geography Information Systems team members to build tools and data for future management practices. This information can include information on the location of invasive species, location of controlled burns, and mapping endangered/at risk/sensitive species.
2. As many of the areas of Tims Ford State Park continue to move through succession returning from farmland to a more natural habitat, it is important for the park to document the occurrence of native and invasive species. It is imperative for Tims Ford Staff to work with local biologist, to help identify and document these species. The park will build species accounts for the park for all taxa and share geospatial data to help with future management planning.
3. The park shall also move away from paper handout materials and move toward QR codes so that guests can see information and save it directly to their mobile devices. The park will also be moving toward more kiosks with QR codes present to help with park navigation and information.

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 complete a motorized all-terrain wheelchair dirt trail that will expand our ADA accessibility.
2. Continue to lead a variety of educational outdoor recreational programs to help promote and foster personal exploration of the natural world.
3. The park has a need of ADA accessible boat ramps and a pontoon boat to meet the needs of mobility impaired guests.

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. Develop kiosk with maps, program schedules, and general information at strategic areas of the park to inform park guests about the opportunities around the park.
2. Create an adult boater education program to help promote safety and responsible boating at Tims Ford Lake.

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. Develop more introductory level adventure-based programs as primers to get more guest interested and experiencing the outdoors.
2. Develop an adventure race on park grounds that involves a bike, paddle/swim, and run.

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. Replace smaller tractors of Tims Ford with a larger 75hp tractor capable of operating a 99+ inch finishing mower. This addition will allow us to mow fast and have maintenance spend more time with area clean-up.
2. Replace all trash cans with bear proof trash cans to stop pests from getting into cans and saving maintenance time daily.
3. Continue to refine and improve preventative maintenance schedules to better assist the park with routine maintenance.
4. Continue to refine mowing schedule to meet customer needs and create an effective schedule for mowing for staff.

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

Action Plan:

1. ADA sites in Main Campgrounds need to be converted to full-hookup and with larger paved areas to better accommodate ADA needs.
2. Lakeview Marina needs ADA access to the boat area of the marina.
3. Work with others to create ADA boat ramps at Tims Ford State Park boat ramps.

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

Action Plan:

1. Update the park office space to allow guests more room to do business and to decorate the area with photographs of the lake and park areas. This will also move the gift shop into the former conference room.
2. Add kitchen to Spencer Hall to add more value and useability for park guests.
3. Continue erosion work in the Main Campground to address the area and allow more parking within the campground.
4. Install a new camper check-in station at the Fairview Campground that will allow the station to be closer to the campground, and large enough to have a true gift shop.

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. Hold monthly meetings to ensure that all park staff are aware of efforts and projects that are taking place.
2. Hold department meetings monthly so that staff can feel safe discussing ideas and concerns. Ensure that all staff feel connected to the mission of the park.
3. Ensure that staff get training and are taking advantage of professional development opportunities.
4. Create fair, reliable schedules that offer opportunities for staff to enjoy time with their families. Schedules shall be posted at least two weeks in advance of the coming month.

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

Action Plan:

1. During monthly meetings ensure that purchasing policies are being met.
2. During the monthly staff meeting create plans of spending and forecast future needs to ensure that stocks on hand can meet needs of the park.
3. Ensure that major maintenance and capital projects are in HIPPO so future needs of the park are communicated to leadership.

Park Overview

Site Fact Sheet

Park Name	Tims Ford
Site Manager	Shawn Settle
Area Manager	Jacob Young
Park acreage	3,546
Total number of visitors (FY 2022)	1,385,611
Total expenses before CO (FY 2022)	\$2,791,572
Total revenues (FY 2022)	\$3,001,200
Retail cost recovery % ¹	150%
Park cost recovery %	107%
Average expense per visitor (FY 2022)	\$2.01
Average revenue per visitor (FY 2022)	\$2.17
Gross profit or loss	\$209,628
Total full-time available positions / filled	22
Total part-time available positions / filled	3
Primary feeder markets	Chattanooga, Nashville, Middle TN, Huntsville AL, Northern AL.
Primary reasons people visit	Water sports, hiking, camping, golf.
Opportunities for improvement	Internet, Boat Parking, Parking lots, Day Use Area.

Key Attractions

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

- 134 RV Campsites
- 20 Rustic Cabins
- 23 Miles of Hiking Trail with 5 Miles of Paved Multiuse Trail
- The 6,790 Yard 18 Hole Bear Trace Tims Ford Golf Course.
- 20 Tent Campsites
- 4 Hike in Backcountry Campsites
- 10 Paddle in Backcountry Campsites.

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 Tims Ford 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 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 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 Tims Ford State Park and provides the assessed condition of each as reviewed in May 2023.

Site Asset / Amenity	Quantity	Condition
Park Office	1	Good
Maintenance Shop	1	Fair
Nature Center	1	Fair
CXT Bathhouses	3	Good
Spencer Hall	1	Fair
Cabins	20	Fair
Main Campground Site	52	Fair
Turkey Creek Campground Sites	20	Good
Fairview Campground Sites	82	Good
Lakeview Marina	1	Fair
Boat Ramps	9	Fair
Shelters	3	Fair
Day Use Bathhouses	7	Fair/Poor
Playgrounds	2	Fair
Pool	1	Poor
Camper Check-in Stations	2	Fair
Ranger Residences	4	Fair

Trail Inventory and Assessment

Trail Name	Mileage	Condition
Bike Trail	3.05	Fair
Campground Bike Spur	0.40	Fair
Visitor Center Bike Spur	0.70	Fair
Overlook Trail	1.10	Fair
Clifton Doyle Trail	0.55	Good
Highland Rim Wildflower Trail	0.25	Poor/Trail extension and restoration underway
Lost Creek Overlook Trail	1.35	Good
Spann House Trail	3.80	Good
Evans Loop Trail	2.35	Good
Marble Plains Loop	1.05	Good

Ray Branch Shoreline Trail	3.30	Good
Storybook Trail	0.40	Fair
Boiling Fork Trail	2.30	Good
Tims Ford Lake Blueway	36.0	Good
Grand Total	56.6	

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
Mansford Day Use Area	500 Vehicle parking lot with boat ramp, shelters, and picnic area
Class A Campground	Large Full-Hookup Campground Built in Day Use Area (Main Park)
Lakeview Parking Lot Expansion	Expand Parking Lot at Lakeview Marina
Check-in Station Fairview	Larger Check-in Station at Fairview Closer to Campsites
Install fiber optic internet	Park wide
Additional Parking	Park wide

Prioritized Facility Needs

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

Facility Need	Priority Assignment
Cabin 1-20 Renovation (re-sided/renovated)	High
Lakeview Marina (re-sided/renovated)	High
Interpretive Center (re-sided/renovated)	High
Resurface of paved bike trail	Medium/High
New Campground to accommodate larger RV's (Main side of Park)	High
Fiber Internet available for business and guest use on park	High
New day use area at Manfords Bridge area with boat ramp	Medium
Boat parking area with 20 slips and Lakeview Marina	Medium
Primitive Campground on Main Body of Park	Medium
ADA access to Lakeview Marina	High
Renovation of Main Campground with 50-amp service and sewer	High

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 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 Tims Ford have been identified as **core services**:

- Provide public access to the park, facilities, and grounds to include access to Tims Ford Lake.
- Provide public safety for visitors and protection of the natural and cultural resources.
- Provide maintenance of park grounds, facilities, and infrastructure.
- Maintain clean and accessible boat ramps for visitors of Tims Ford Lake.

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 how 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 Tims Ford have been identified as **important services**:

- Provide a full range of environmental, cultural, and recreational programs.
- Mark available park specific information through on site public contact and informational kiosks.
- Provide on and off-site educational programs for school and organized groups.
- Assist local community with revenue growth by providing overnight accommodation and recreational opportunities.
- Promote the Bill Dance Signature Lake program and work with local non-profits to ensure program success.
- Provide access to Tims Ford Lake with best-in-class service and accommodations.

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 their cost and/or provide 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 Tims Ford have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- Provide volunteer opportunities allowing the community to have a personal stake in the park.
- Host a variety of special events to include: Veterans Day 5K, Fall Festival, Fairview Truck-or-Treat, and Haunted Island.
- Provide opportunities for local business to partner with the park to include the Jack Daniels Volunteer Day, and Nissan Intern Community Service.
- Partner with other local non-profit organizations to enhance public experience within the local area to include Tims Ford Council working to build access to lake, and Bass Nation working to improve wildlife habitat.
- Partner with local bass fishing tournament clubs to assist with recreation of Tims Ford Lake.
- Work with local food trucks to provide services to guests of the park to meet needs of guest.
- Camping
- Working with local school groups to provide educational services to the local youth.
- Fee based programming to include pontoon boat tours, nature center activities, survival school and large events.

Personnel / Staffing Review

Personnel and staffing at Tims Ford represent the largest area of budgetary expense at an average of 60.7% of the total operating budget each year for the last three complete years, which is 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 (Park Operations)

Position / Title	Quantity (FTE)	Compensation Total
Park Manager	1	*
Park Ranger 2	3	*
Park Ranger 3	1	*
Administrative Assistant 1	1	\$51,096
Administrative Secretary	1	\$38,184
Clerk 3	1	\$30,204
Clerk 2	1	\$27,780
Facilities Supervisor	1	\$60,300
Conservation Worker 3	1	\$38,184
Conservation Worker 2	2	\$68,472
Conservation Worker 1	4	\$122,016
Custodial Supervisor	1	\$33,900
Custodial Worker 2	1	\$28,776
Custodial Worker 1	3	\$71,292
TOTAL	22	\$865,044

*Law enforcement compensation confidential by TN law.

Part Time Employees (Park Operations)

Position/Title	Quantity (FTE)	Compensation
Conservation Worker 1	2	\$60,996
Laborer	1	\$27,495
Lifeguard	3	\$41,242
TOTAL	6	\$129,733

Full Time Equivalent Employees (Hospitality)

Position / Title	Quantity (FTE)	Compensation Total
Golf Course Manager	1	64,008
Hospitality Assistant	1	34,236
Greens Superintendent	1	64,044
Greenskeeper	1	40,932
Food Service Worker	1	22,704
Clerk 2	1	29,700
Grounds Worker 2	2	63,360
Grounds Worker 3	1	34,356
Laborer	1	27,780
TOTAL	10	\$381,120

Part Time Employees (Hospitality)

Position / Title	Quantity	Compensation Total
Food Service Worker	1	23,393
Grounds Worker 1	1	25,253
Laborer	3	83,070
TOTAL	5	\$131,716

Labor Support

Labor Support	Annual Hours
Volunteers	3234
Community Service Workers	120
Engineering and Construction Crews	
Resource Management Crews	20
Other: Garden Club and Duck River Beekeepers	200
TOTAL	3574

Total Labor Compensation Expense

Labor Type	Labor Expense
Full Time Equivalent Employees	\$1,244,904
Part Time Employees	\$261,449
TOTAL Annual Labor Expense	\$1,506,353

Additional Future Positions Needed

Position / Title	Quantity	FTE or PT	Year Needed	Justification
Park Ranger 2	2	FTE	2026	With addition of day use areas
Clerk 1	1	FTE	2024	To only work front desk
Clerk 1	2	FTE	2025	To work Fairview Check-in
Custodial Worker 1	1	PT	2024	Helping clean restrooms and Day Use
Interpretive Specialist	2	FTE	2024	Staff Nature Center
TOTAL	8			

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	Cabin Rev Per Unit	Campground Rev Per Unit	Day Use Facilities Rev Per Unit	Golf Revenue per Round
2019	57.66	9.97	5.49	26.80
2020	50.6	10.34	3.99	17.40
2021	92.23	13.39	3.83	29.95
2022	88.9	13.28	5.45	32.64

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	Cabin Rev Per Unit	Campground Rev Per Unit	Day Use Rev Per Unit	Golf Revenue per Round
2023	74.52	12.1	5.6	51.63
2024	76.76	12.5	5.8	52.14
2025	79.1	12.8	6.0	52.65
2026	81.5	13.2	6.2	53.17

Customer Service

Platform / Site	Year	Customer Satisfaction Level
Tripadvisor	2023	4.5/5
Facebook	2023	4.5/5
Yelp	2023	4.5/5
Net Promoter Score	2023	70
Staff Service	2023	3.44/5

Professional Development and Training

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

- Boater Safety Training
- To ensure compliance with TSP policy, a chainsaw training opportunity severely needs to be identified and implemented. Trainings offered by TSP are sporadic and difficult to get employees into. Something available online would be ideal so new employees can get proper training to use saws.
- Horse Mounted Instructor Course
- TWRA BLUE Class (Boater Safety and BUI)
- Human Resource training is needed. Our HR contacts need to embody professionalism in every way and training will help achieve this.
- Routine state law enforcement training
- Routine management and administrative 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. Complete the new all-terrain wheelchair trail (Formerly the Wildflower Trail).
- b. Expand the Park Office Gift Shop.
- c. Installation of single rail fencing around the park area to improve traffic patterns and area beautification.
- d. Replace and update park signage.
- e. Upgrade internet to main body of the park both office campground, and cabins.

2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Establish staff to ensure that Nature Center is open daily 8-4:30.
- b. Improve gift shop hours in the Fairview Campground.

3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Repaint all boat ramp bathhouses.
- b. Remodel existing day use bathhouses.
- c. Increase the number of recreation-based activities on the park.
- d. Work with Itinio to update customers facing side with backcountry sites.

Mid Term Recommendations (2-5 years)

1. Site and Facilities

- a. Install Kiosk at all boat ramps and trailheads.
- b. Install donation tubes at boat ramps.
- c. Cabin renovations to include new siding, kitchen remodel, bathroom remodel, new roofs and upgraded furnishings.
- d. Replace unused facility with open grass area.
- e. Additional paved parking lot expansions at Lake View Marina, Fairview Campground, Park Office/Nature Center, and Spencer Hall.

2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Convert the last seasonal full-time custodial position into a job that better meets the needs of the park.
- b. Have full-time interpretive staff that work in the Nature Center.

3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Create an outdoor classroom using the old aviary.
- b. Remedy erosion issues within the Main Campground.

Long Term Recommendations (5+ years)

1. Site and Facilities

- a. New day use area at Mansford Rd property. The area will include at least 500 parking spaces with shelters, picnic tables and a multi-boat launching area with boat parking.
- b. Build a new RV campground within the day use area of Tims Ford.

2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Add Park Rangers to assist with additional day use traffic in the new area and new campground.
- b. Increase number of people working in the office to ensure that a person is working for the customer facing side of the office at all times the office is open to the public.

3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Repave the paved bike trails at Tims Ford.
- b. Additional 20 site primitive lakeside campground on main side of park.
- c. ADA access to Lakeview Marina and ADA boat ramps.

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 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.

Tims Ford State Park was established to provide access to the wildlands surrounding Tims Ford Lake. Much of the land that is now Tims Ford State Park is successional forest as much of the land was farm ground prior to the creation of Tims Ford Lake. Tims Ford State Park has a mixture of traditional protected park lands and public hunting grounds. The park is proud to offer visitors with a variety of recreational opportunities from sportsman activities and outdoor recreation. Tims Ford is a sportsman's paradise offering a variety of opportunities of experience southern middle Tennessee. Game species are abundant for viewing pleasure on the original park.

The park also offers guest with small glimpses of the past as they travel the trails and roadways of the park. Many foundations, wells, and fences are left of the old ways of the park grounds. The park will forever offer these reminders of what the grounds once were as a reminder of our heritage and the culture of the region.

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

- A. Use prescribed fire to manage invasive species on the park.
- B. Use prescribed fire as a method to preserve grassland of Tims Ford State Park

- C. Highlight areas of the park such as the Spann House foundation and Cash Grocery as cultural landmarks of the park.
- D. Ensure that the many cemeteries of the park are cared for and protected.
- E. Preserve riparian integrity of the lakeshore of park grounds as to preserve the area of public recreation.
- F. Use mechanical and chemical methods to remove invasive species from park grounds to preserve native biodiversity.

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
Cash Grocery Foundation	1	Poor	Overgrown and in need of tree removal and storefront renovation.
Spann House Foundation	1	Fair	Old foundation could use some grounds clearing and more information about the history of cabins in southern middle Tennessee.
Upland Successional Forest	3000 acres	Good/Excellent	Some invasive removal is needed but overall healthy.
Riparian corridors.	Approx 2 miles of unprotected Shoreline	Fair/Poor	Some unforested high traffic areas are in need of bank stabilization.
Native Grasslands	200 Acres	Good/Excellent	Mostly native but always encroachment of woody and invasive species.
Devils Den Cave	1 acre	Excellent	Near Ray Branch Trail with need of official public access.

Pennington Cave	1	Excellent	Boat Access to area along shoreline.
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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
Cash Grocery Foundation	<p>Public Use: <i>General Management along tail side open to the public.</i></p> <p>General Management: <i>The upland hardwood forests are managed for improvement of overall forest health which include ongoing invasive species management, erosion mitigation in areas of steep topography, and understory management through prescribed burns. Pursue collaboration with TN Division of Forestry to assist with overall forest management.</i></p>	Medium
Spann House Foundation	<p>Public Use: <i>General Management along tail side open to the public.</i></p> <p>General Management: <i>The upland hardwood forests are managed for improvement of overall forest health which include ongoing invasive species management, erosion mitigation in areas of steep topography, and understory management through prescribed burns. Pursue collaboration with TN Division of Forestry to assist with overall forest management.</i></p>	Medium
Upland Successional Forest	<p>Public Use: <i>Managed access with infrastructure and regulation access limited to hiking trail or public hunting ground.</i></p> <p>General Management: <i>The upland hardwood forests are managed for improvement of overall forest health which include ongoing invasive species management, erosion mitigation in areas of steep topography, and understory management through prescribed burns. Pursue collaboration with TN Division of Forestry to assist with overall forest management.</i></p>	Medium

Riparian corridors.	<p>Public Use: <i>General Management open to the public for access to Tims Ford Lake as fishing and recreation areas.</i></p> <p>General Management: <i>Areas are managed to ensure bank stability and safe recreation of park visitors. When natural vegetation is not suitable to ensure banks are stable natural substrates are used to gain bank stability.</i></p>	High
Native Grasslands	<p>Public Use: <i>Managed access with infrastructure and regulation – access limited to trails with usage policies and regulations.</i></p> <p>General Management: <i>Areas are managed by fire and chemical application for woody species. Some dispersal of native grasslands seeds is performed to out compete non-native species in these areas.</i></p>	Medium
Devils Den Cave	<p>Public Use: <i>Managed access with infrastructure and regulation – access limited to trails with usage policies and regulations.</i></p> <p>General Management: <i>Areas is manged naturally with little outside input. Barries are needed to protect the resource from the public before opening.</i></p>	Medium
Pennington Cave	<p>Public Use: <i>General Management, area is accessible by boat by public.</i></p> <p>General Management: <i>Area is safe and manageable as is. Area is patrolled by park rangers to ensure proper use.</i></p>	Medium

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
Access to park boundaries and park land that is only accessible by boat	5-10
Assess ownership of multiple lake access points	5-10

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.

To forever represent the landscape and history lost in the formation of the Tims Ford Reservoir and the development of lakeshore while providing unique opportunities for interpretive and recreational outdoor activities in the protected remnant landscape. While many visitors will come for active recreation out park will strive to engage them in the story of the Elk River Valley, the development of the lake and the park, and the uniqueness of our park environment.

To share the story of the land prior to the impoundment of the Elk River Valley and the creation of Tims Ford State Park, while also revealing the history of the Elk River Valley and its use across the ages. Interpret the stories of the people and the impacts on the communities, land, and people by the Eld River Impoundment. To interpret the flora, fauna, and wildlife through recreational and educational programs while maintaining the conservation and protection of the natural cultural and historic resources.

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:

1. Park will continue to collect and share the stories of the residents of the Elk River Valley up to the creation of the Tims Ford Reservoir.

Strategy – Interpretative Media: Connecting people to the resources of Tennessee State Parks with technology in ways that complement and expand interpretation within and beyond the park, giving everyone access to becoming a park steward.

Action Plan:

1. The park shall add a kiosk to all satellite properties with additional State Park signage. Kiosk will include information about the park and spread public awareness about usage of the land.
2. The park will move to a digital version of park handouts. QR codes will be developed to assist guests with information while reducing paper use on the park.

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:

1. Ensure that the Nature Center is always free to enter and explore, while asking for and celebrating that the Nature Center was made possible through donation to the park.
2. The park shall participate in all signature hikes as well as providing additional free opportunities for staff lead hikes.
3. Fees for education programs shall be held at a level that covers the cost and time to perform the program.
4. The park will offer regular boating programs to include paddling and lake tours to promote the park and use of Tims Ford Lake.
5. Instructional events such as the survival school, introductions to backpacking and the paddle/camp programs shall be regularly available to the public.
6. Create digital media-based programs to help promote safety and responsible park use.
7. A minimum of two Junior Ranger Camps will be provided yearly.
8. The Spirit of America, youth boating program will be provided a minimum of once per year.
9. The park shall continue to develop and expand our curriculum-based education programs to better serve the local schools and home school programs of the local area.

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:

1. Continue the “adventure based” programming theme of being the gateway to the Cumberland Plateau by providing a variety of introduction level outdoor recreation activities to include: rappelling, kayak/canoe floats, backpacking, ranger led overnight trip and more.
2. Continue the Forged at the Ford survival school and create an advanced school for prior graduates.
3. Expand the rappelling wall at the nature center to include a rock-climbing area and under the back porch of the Nature Center to a cave wall climbing area to enhance our available programs.

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.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE GOALS						
	Current Cost Recovery (2022)	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2023	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2024	Target Cost Recovery: FY: 2025	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2026	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2027
Park Overall	106%	95%	90%	95%	95%	95%

