

Booker T. Washington State Park Strategic Management Plan

2023 – 2033

Updated in 2025



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Park Purpose, History and Description

Booker T. Washington State Park was one of the first Tennessee State Parks. The site on which the park was constructed and leased (by the state) from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) on September 28, 1938. The plot contained 350 acres, and is located north of Chattanooga, on Chickamauga Reservoir.

On June 22, 1939, the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) TVA-16, staffed by Company 3459, was hired to construct a recreational park along the lakefront of Chickamauga Lake. In the days of racial segregation, facilities were to be administered separately, so, Booker T. Washington State Park was set aside for the Negro citizens of Hamilton County. On July 5, 1954, the park was purchased from TVA for \$1 for the sole purpose of recreation.

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: To preserve, protect, and share Tennessee's natural and cultural resources while providing safe, quality outdoor experiences.

Use vehicles such as Tennessee Promise and Junior Ranger Program to introduce the park and environmental education to youth. Expose youth on the benefits of being a Park Ranger. Promote the outdoor and interpretive education by hosting events such as Earth Day, Outdoor Celebration, River Rescue, and National Public Lands Day.

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

Action Plan: Interpretation will encourage visitation throughout the year. Improve significant historic structures, landscapes and recreational opportunities that support key interpretive periods. Utilize Park assets and outreach programs to provide outdoor classrooms to attract unconventional visitors. Collaborate with organizations and communities to provide a diverse set of opportunities in conjunction with Tennessee State Parks mission.

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

Action Plan: Accept conflict between ideas as a necessary step toward finding solutions. Act with civic courage and the highest ethical standards. Invest in training and professional and personal development. Take pride in the work, mission, and resources they steward. Maintain a working environment to nurture innovation. Utilizing GIS resources within the Department, continue to inventory significant resources of the site.

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: Park visitors will leave knowing that Booker T. Washington didn't let his surroundings or circumstances predetermine his destiny and neither do they. The Park was designated for African Americans during segregation but now is a place of destination for many diverse cultures to experience the park and its many amenities. Park visitors will learn why it's important to preserve state parks while enjoying themselves and the outdoors. Park visitors will feel a sense of appreciation for the craftsmanship and impact that the Civilian Conservation Corp had on the development of Tennessee State Parks.

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

Action Plan: Visitors will incorporate some of the teachings of the interpretive programs in day-to-day life. Visitors and area residents will treat the park resources with a sense of respect and stewardship. Park visitors will support Booker T. Washington State Park by avid user and volunteer by Recycling, Reusing, Reducing, and promoting environmental awareness. After attending interpretive programs, park visitors will share their knowledge with others and consider making donations to support park interpretive efforts.

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

Action Plan: Stewardship that preserves the state's natural and cultural heritage in perpetuity. Universal access to recreational, educational, artistic, and cultural opportunities in state parks. Meaningful public engagement and participation in developing and operating the state park system. Supporting one another by working together to achieve the TDEC's mission. Quality and value in all work done.

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: The park is open and accessible and provide visitors a healthy and safe environment. All park facilities are well cared for and functioning for their intended purpose. Restrooms are clean and regularly maintained. Grounds are well-maintained. Boat launches, fishing piers, and overnight facilities meet industry standards for quality and effectiveness. Infrastructure services such as water, sewer and electrical systems are working and meet all health and safety standards and have been upgraded in the last 15

years. The natural and cultural heritage features in this park are protected from degradation and managed for long-term sustainability.

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

Action Plan: Booker T. Washington State Park offers a diverse array of active outdoor recreation choices for visitors, including but not limited to hiking, canoeing, mountain biking, fishing, boating, birdwatching, basketball, cookouts, and field games. Park provides beautiful natural settings for passive recreation such as sunset watching, flora and fauna identification, and personal learning through interpretive features and displays. The Park's facilities are easily accessible for day and limited overnight use for visitors of all ages and abilities. The Park provides opportunities, as appropriate to the site, for people to connect with and learn about the Park's significant natural and cultural heritage. The park will work with the TSP capital project team to ensure BTWSP is a model park for accessibility.

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

Action Plan: The park office is open and welcoming during operation hours. Visitors will have access to park staff during their visit. High-quality customer service is provided by staff from management to maintenance of the park who are pleasant, knowledgeable and efficient. This includes customer reservations, access to information and assistance with park maps and State Parks Passports, whether online, over the telephone or in person. Administrative and support services are adequately resourced to enable staff to carry out the park's mission and vision efficiently and effectively, operate with the highest ethical standards, and minimize public liabilities and risks.

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: Cross train all park employees to tell the park story or primary interpretive theme of Booker T. Washington. Park employees will provide input in planning special event days. Park employees will be encouraged to give comments on programs and activities they would like to see at Booker T. Washington State Park. Employees are encouraged to continue to sharpen their skillset and management works with their schedule to pursue further education and cultivate family life.

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

Action Plan: Maintain a sustainable park system through diversified financial support from visitors, enterprises, partners, friends' groups, volunteers, and the broader community. Operate with fiscal accountability and creativity while ensuring that business-minded practices never supersede the park's mission to preserve, protect, and share Tennessee's natural and cultural resources. Pursue operational efficiencies that reduce costs without diminishing safety, service quality, or interpretive impact. Continue providing well-maintained facilities, essential infrastructure, and programs that strengthen visitor connections, foster stewardship, and reflect the educational and conservation legacy of Booker T. Washington State Park.

Park Overview

Site Fact Sheet

Park Name	Booker T. Washington State Park
Site Manager	Levan Gardner
Area Manager	Jacob Young
Park acreage	400
Total number of visitors (FY 2025)	164,126
Total expenses before CO (FY 2022)	\$864,703
Total revenues (FY 2022)	\$75,274
Retail cost recovery % ¹	26%
Park cost recovery %	9%
Average expense per visitor (FY 2022)	\$2.88
Average revenue per visitor (FY 2022)	.25
Gross profit or loss	(\$789,429)
Total full-time available positions / filled	11/11
Total part-time available positions / filled	3/3
Primary feeder markets	Chattanooga, TN, Southcentral TN, Northern Alabama, Northern Georgia
Primary reasons people visit	Outdoor experiences including fishing, biking, hiking, bird watching, canoe/kayaking, boating and water experiences. Overnight Group Facilities/Team building activities.
Opportunities for improvement	Visitor Center, Recreation Lodge, RV Park, Glamping Treehouses, Land acquisition, Interpretive Center

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

Key Attractions

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

- Group Camp and Group Lodge overnight facilities
- Fishing Pier and Boat Ramp
- Mountain Bike / Hiking Trail
- Pavilions
- Interpretive Programs
- Bird Watching
- Bird Aviary
- Local users are generally Youth Groups, Churches, Families, Civic and Social Groups, Schools, Home Schools, Seniors, Bikers, Hikers, Fishermen, and Bird Watchers. Groups that use the Group Camp and Group Lodge are businesses, churches, families, and special interest groups in the southeast United States.

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 Booker T. Washington 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 Booker T. Washington State Park and provides the assessed condition of each as reviewed in September 2025.

Site Asset / Amenity	Quantity	Condition
Oaks Group Camp	1	Good
Tuskegee Airmen Group Lodge	1	Good
Pavilions	3	Fair
Fishing Pier	1	Good
Boat Ramp	1	Good
Boat Dock	2	Good
Bird Aviary	2	Excellent
ADA Kayak Launch	1	Excellent
Mountain Bike/Hiking Trail	1	Fair
Walking Trail	2	Fair
Park Office	1	Excellent
Maintenance Areas	2	Fair
Ranger Residences	3	Good
Outdoor Classroom	1	Good
Electric Car Charge Pumps	2	Excellent
Playgrounds	4	Poor

Trail Inventory and Assessment

Trail Name	Mileage	Condition
Inner Loop 1 Trail	2.25	Fair
Inner Loop 2 Trail	1.20	Fair

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Nature Trail	1.10	Good
Outer Loop Trail	3.90	Good
ADA Scenic Trail	0.25	Good
Grand Total	8.45	

After reviewing the trail system here at Booker T Washington State Park, it has been determined that the Outer Loop of the trail (3.90 miles) overall is in good shape for a trail built in the 1980s. Some things need to be kept in mind about this loop. Some parts of the trail have more than the average amount of poison ivy in that section. There is another portion of this trail called the “Jeep Road” that could use dirt to smooth out that section to make it more passable for the mountain bikers to navigate. The trail also has a few bridges that may need some of the wooden planks replaced; they have some soft spots. There is a water drain that comes under Champion Road, and it is partially blocked. Keeping the Privet Wire briars cut back and off the trail takes a lot of work.

Interloop # 1 (1.20 miles). This part of the trail system is full of the invasive species of plant called privet, and it takes a lot of work to keep it pushed back off the trail along with any tree that falls onto the trail.

Interloop # 2 (2.25 miles). Same as loop one, keeping the privet cut back and trees off the trail.

Nature Trail (1.10 miles). Like the rest of the trails, the privet is the problem on this trail.

The last trail is a quarter of a mile of new ADA foot trail.

1. Guard railing on the lake side of the trail to keep the all-terrain wheelchair on the trail.
2. We will construct a “Story Book Trail” on the track of the trail.

Equipment and things needed to fix the wrong parts of the trail:

1. A trail builder will bring in dirt and spread it over the areas needing it.
2. Remove poison Ivy from the trail in the highly concentrated areas.
3. We need to look at some parts of the track to combat the erosion of the bank of the lake.
4. Wood to fix the planks on the bridges on the trail or change trail bridges to aluminum.

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
Visitors Center	Additional office space, gift shop, and BTW interpretive center.
RV Park	50 Site full service with electrical and water and dump station
Glamping Tree Houses	6 glamping tree houses with full amenities overlooking the water
Recreation Lodge	200 people capacity facility with amenities for one day events
Playgrounds	Replace previously removed playgrounds at Oaks Group Camp and Tuskegee Airmen Group Lodge as requested by visitors. This would bring total park playground count back to 6 (currently 4).

Prioritized Facility Needs

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

Facility Need	Priority Assignment
Recreation Lodge	High
Visitor Center / Office	High
Land Acquisition	High
Glamping Tree Houses (6-10)	Moderate
RV Park (50 site)	Moderate
Interpretive Center	Moderate
ADA Accessibility Throughout	High
Improve floating dock at boat ramp	High
Improve fishing pier	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 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 Booker T. Washington State Park have been identified as **core services**:

- Protecting and improving the quality of Tennessee’s air, land, and water through a responsible regulatory system.
- Protecting and promoting human health and safety.
- Conserving and promoting natural, cultural and historic resources.
- Site and facility maintenance

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 Booker T. Washington State Park have been identified as **important services**:

- Providing a variety of quality outdoor recreational experiences.
- Overnight Facilities for team building and conference retreats and family bonding
- Interpretive Programs with aid of bird aviary and outdoor classroom
- ADA compliant for accessibility to park amenities

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 Booker T. Washington State Park have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- Offsite interpretive programs
- Park special hikes
- Park service days
- Environmental holidays
- Group camp
- Group lodge

Personnel / Staffing Review

Personnel and staffing at Booker T. Washington State Park represent the largest area of budgetary expense. 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 Manager 1	1	*
Park Ranger 3	1	*
Park Ranger 2	2	*
Admin Assistant 1	1	\$52,968
Clerk 3	1	\$36,036
Maintenance Supervisor	1	\$47,940
Maintenance Lead	2	\$76,728
Maintenance Technician	1	\$34,404
Custodial Lead	1	\$30,660
TOTAL	11	\$554,412

**Law enforcement compensation confidential by TN law.*

Part Time Employees

Position / Title	Quantity	Compensation Total
Maintenance Worker	3	\$83,732
TOTAL	3	\$83,732

Labor Support

Labor Support	Annual Hours
Volunteers	110
Community Service Workers	300
Engineering and Construction Crews	0
Resource Management Crews	0
Other: _____	
TOTAL	400

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Total Labor Compensation Expense

Labor Type	Labor Expense
Full Time Equivalent Employees	\$383,136.00
Part Time Employees	\$64,243.00
TOTAL Annual Labor Expense	\$447,379.00

Additional Future Positions Needed

Position / Title	Quantity	FTE or PT	Year Needed	Justification
Clerk 2	2	FTE	2026-27	Visitors Center coverage with new facility
TOTAL	2			

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	Group Camp / Lodge Rev Per Unit	Day Use Rev Per Unit
2022	\$70.96	\$7.80
2023	\$87.54	\$7.92
2024	\$108.18	\$6.38
2025	\$59.56	\$5.51

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	Group Camp / Lodge Rev Per Unit	Day Use Rev Per Unit
2026	\$90	\$5.75
2027	\$105	\$6
2028	\$110	\$6.25
2029	\$115	\$6.50

Group Camp / Lodge: From FY22–FY24, the Group Camp/Lodge showed consistent year-over-year growth averaging roughly +23%, followed by a sharp decline in FY25 (–45%), this decrease coincides with the implementation of an increased cost of stay, which temporarily affected occupancy rates and short-term averages. Projections for FY26 assume a recovery to 80–90% of FY24 levels, with subsequent years reflecting modest annual increases of 3–5% to account for inflation, improved programming, and the anticipated stabilization of operations after renovations or maintenance.

Day Use: Day Use RevPAR held steady through FY23, followed by declines in FY24–FY25. FY26 projections assume a partial rebound as park improvements and visitor engagement initiatives (interpretive programming, facility upgrades, etc.) continue to strengthen attendance. Modest yearly growth of approximately 4–5% was applied through FY29 to reflect gradual recovery and steady participation.

*While these projections provide a reasonable baseline model, the construction and eventual opening of the new event center introduce several unknown variables that could meaningfully influence both revenue and utilization rates. Once operational data are available, these RevPAR projections should be reassessed and adjusted to reflect the actual performance range.

Customer Service

Platform / Site	Year	Customer Satisfaction Level
Google	2025	4.6 / 5.0
Facebook	2025	92% recommend (64 reviews)
TripAdvisor	2025	4.3/5.0
AllTrails	2025	4.4/5.0

Professional Development and Training

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

- Office Systems Specialist Certification – Office Staff
- Criminal Justice -master’s degree – Park Ranger
- Routine management training
- Routine law enforcement training.
- Maintenance training when available

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. Land acquisition needs
- b. Start Recreation Lodge development
- c. Widen roadway for Recreation Area #1 or develop a separate exit. Road was not design for heavy two-way traffic.
- d. Pave road leading to New Service Area
- e. Pave Boat Ramp parking lot
- f. Acquire new Park Office and Visitor Center
- g. Place Hardie board siding on all buildings and new roofs.
- h. Bank stabilization
- i. The playground at the old swimming pool/new event center location was removed but plans are in place to replace it.
- j. Replace playgrounds at Recreation Areas #1 and #2.

- k. Replace playground at Lake Front that was removed and not yet replaced—highly requested by visitors.
 - l. Previously there were 2 additional playgrounds at the Oaks Group Camp and Tuskegee Airmen Group Lodge that were removed. Visitors have requested to replace them.
- 2. Operations and Staffing**
 - a. Upgrade staff positions and use equity to hire additional employees
 - 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience**
 - a. Developing links and QR codes for park guests, especially those out-of-town patrons that need to view facilities and amenities. Also enhance website and social media platforms.

Mid Term Recommendations (2-5 years)

- 1. Site and Facilities**
 - a. Recreation Lodge constructed and operational, including restrooms and pavilions
 - b. Playground upgrades
 - c. Shelter upgrades
 - d. Accessibility capital project throughout park
 - e. Improve fishing piers
- 2. Operations and Staffing**
 - a. Trained staffing to turn buildings for groups and upkeep of facilities
 - b. New staff hires to support operations of new facilities
- 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience**
 - a. Introduce and promote to general public the new facility and how to reserve it and its amenities.

Long Term Recommendations (5+ years)

- 1. Site and Facilities**
 - a. Glamping Tree Houses
 - b. RV Park
 - c. Visitor Center
- 2. Operations and Staffing**
 - a. Provide trained staff to clean and maintain facilities
 - b. New staff hires to support operations of new facilities
- 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience**
 - a. Provide amenities that community has been requesting
 - b. Provide a WOW moment to ensure repeat visitors

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.

Park Vision and Mission Statements

Park Vision

The vision of Booker T Washington State Park is to provide a sense of retreat and relaxation from the urban environment. The park will continue to provide quality outdoor experiences while striving to “touch the future” by encouraging park visitors young and old through quality nature education, and by nurturing their desire to care for what they enjoy.

Park Mission

The mission of Booker T Washington State Park is to provide quality recreational opportunities and environmental education through both day use and overnight facilities while continuing to protect the parks resources

Purchase outdoor fitness equipment and habitat playground for Recreation Area #2 by 2024. Promote the self-guided tour of the park with information kiosk about Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver and Tuskegee Institute/University. Develop much needed indoor Recreation Lodge for day use events to relieve pressure off the Group Camp Assembly Hall and Group Lodge General Chappie James Jr. Mess Hall. Develop additional overnight facilities to include cabins and tree houses. Acquire additional maintenance and patrol vehicles to better accommodate staff needs. Address needs for heavy duty maintenance equipment and attachments.

- 1) Reduce utility operational costs by using grant funding to purchase and install high efficiency lighting, using Energy Star rated appliances when replaced old refrigerators, ranges and other electrical appliances in all buildings where this would apply.
- 2) Install high efficiency, high seer rated HVAC units for all buildings.
- 3) Perform semi-annually preventive maintenance for HVAC units to ensure peak performance and to extend the life span of the units.
- 4) Perform quarterly cleaning of lighting and electrical fixtures to obtain peak performance and reduce heat loads.
- 5) Install motion sensor light switches in living room spaces to ensure lights will not be left on when people are not in the room thus reducing cost of electricity.

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. An experiment to help determine the best way for the park to curb the invasive spread in and around the park will take place over the years.
- B. Invasive species will be removed in a targeted format to allow areas to recover instead of overwhelming staff and volunteers
- C. Pesticide, mowing and weed eating will be limited, especially near the shoreline, to maintain water quality for aquatic life.
- D. Limiting damage to trail systems by not allowing biking while the trail is wet.
- E. Outdoor lighting will be limited and strive for night sky settings to limit the park contribution to light pollution.
- F. Utilize partnerships to enhance resource management

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
Booker T Washington Monument	1	Good	Monument is educational and great place for photo opportunities
CCC Civilian Conservation Corps Monument	1	Good	Monument has been moved to a more popular area in the park and draws plenty of attention to visitors.
Chickamauga Lake	57 sq miles surface area	Good	Affords us boating and watersport activities and one of the premiere fishing areas in the south.
Outdoor Classroom	1	Good	Retaining wall is a CCC-era facility; Converted from old, outdated kiddie pool to an alternative education area for interpretation.
Hardwood Forest	250 acres	Fair	The forest is in fair condition as the lower canopy is being overtaken with invasive exotics. This will lead to a decline in native hardwoods as windblow and other damage takes out canopy trees.
Informational Kiosks	6	Good	Interpret park history, Booker T., and Tuskegee University

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
<i>Example: Upland hardwood forest</i>	<p>Public Use: <i>Managed access with infrastructure and regulation – access limited to trails and back country campsites with usage policies and regulations.</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</i></p>	High

Booker T. Washington State Park Strategic Management Plan

	<p><i>with TN Division of Forestry to assist with overall forest management.</i></p>	
Booker T Washington Monument	<p>Public Use: <i>Centralized and very visited section of the park – limits vandalism chances. A mowed area around allows close inspection of the inscriptions</i></p> <p>General Management: <i>Maintaining current landscaping with possibility of adding a native flower garden and tree plantings</i></p>	Moderate
CCC Civilian Conservation Corps Monument	<p>Public Use: <i>Centralized and very visited section of the park – limits vandalism chances. A mowed area around allows close inspection of the inscriptions</i></p> <p>General Management: <i>Maintaining current landscaping with possibility of adding a native flower garden and tree plantings</i></p>	Moderate
Chickamauga Lake	<p>Public Use: <i>Lake access via the boat ramp, ADA launch or shoreline launch of small watercrafts. Fishing from docks and shoreline.</i></p> <p>General Management: <i>Lake itself is managed by TVA. A buffering of untrimmed grass should be encouraged around the park shoreline to help mitigate runoff from vehicles and other chemicals that may be present in the park. Boat launching should be maintained at the two established sites and a possible smaller launch sites near the trailhead or a small launch near the large boat ramp.</i></p>	Moderate
Outdoor Classroom	<p>Public Use: <i>Benches circling the perimeter of the old kiddie pool allow presentations by groups when not in use by park staff. A connector trail constructed in 2022 allows quick access from the area to the park trail system</i></p> <p>General Management: <i>Leveling of the area to compliment the French drain is needed to continue to improve on drainage through the area. Invasives removal from the area should be a focus to try and keep the area in a more natural state. The adjacent native grass field should be maintained to help in this regard. A shelter near the current shed will allow further chances for use, even in rainy weather.</i></p>	High

<p>Hardwood Forest</p>	<p>Public Use: <i>Trails snaking through the forest limit the damage to the forest. Some access points unmanaged, especially on park boundaries allowing illegal access. Champion road allows easy littering into the trail by passing cars.</i></p> <p>General Management: <i>Further development of the park in forested areas should be limited, with construction only taking place in already cleared areas. Unregulated access points should be closed/blocked to limit illegal access to the park. A concerted effort should be taken to open up the understory of the forest from invasive exotics, to allow the establishment of native saplings.</i></p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Informational Kiosks</p>	<p>Public Use: <i>Interpret park history, Booker T., and Tuskegee University</i></p> <p>General Management: <i>Review interpretive content for accuracy and refresh as needed. Maintain kiosks in good condition and replace as needed.</i></p>	<p>Low</p>

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
Land acquisition for park buffering (e.g. TVA tract, etc.)	Short – Mid Term

Interpretive Programming and Education Five-Year Action Plan

Tennessee State Parks' Interpretation, Programming, and Education team is helping park staff set and achieve programming goals by developing Interpretive Action Plans. This process begins with conversations with Area Interpretive Rangers that prepare field staff for the Scoping Meeting. This meeting brings park staff and stakeholders together to identify audience(s), themes, resources, and set goals and objectives. This information then turns into the five-year Interpretive Action Plan.

Park Primary Interpretive Theme

Booker T. Washington State Park nurtures the whole person – the head, the heart, and the hands honoring the legacy of Booker T. Washington, the educator.

Park Secondary Interpretive Themes

S.1. Great place to consider the legacy and service of the work done by the Civilian Conservation Corps at the park and surrounding areas.

S.2. A great place to consider and reflect on the history of segregation in Tennessee's public lands.

S.3. Restoration of natural and scenic resources at the park with an emphasis on removal of non-native invasives.

S.4 Excellent place to discover the legacy of skills and trades education emphasized at the Tuskegee Institute.

S.5. Water and trails are an outstanding place to develop resource- based recreation skills.

Existing Audience

- Organized School Groups
- Churches and Organized Group Camps
- Special Use Groups
- Youth Attending Related Events

Emerging Audience

Individual Families not in an extended group setting, Casual day use visitors in the 20-40's age range and Adults living in nearby assisted facilities.

Park Programming Inventory Data

Number of Programs	Number of Attendees	Number of Programmers	Total Cost Offset	
591	21,083	13	\$1,883	
Scheduled Programs	Scheduled Program Attendees	Supporting Programmers	Programs with a Fee	Fees Collected
486	18,574	15	55	\$1,860
Roving Programs	Roving Program Attendees		Programs with Donations	Donations Collected
7	2,509		0	\$23
Offsite Programs	Offsite Attendees		Programs with Grants	Grant Funds
79	12,007		0	\$0

Key Park Natural, Cultural, and Recreational Resources

Resource	Resource Type
Kiosks and monuments	Cultural
Trail system	Recreational
Lake Chickamauga	Natural
ADA Launch	Recreational
Butterfly garden	Natural

Key Park Interpretive Infrastructure

- Outdoor classroom/amphitheater
- Bird of prey enclosure
- Team building course

Park Personnel Primarily Dedicated to Interpretation

Position Titles	Percentage of Time Dedicated to Interpretation
Park Manager	10
Park Ranger 3	15
Park Ranger 2	30
Park Ranger 2	30
Clerk 3	5
Admin 1	5
Maintenance Lead	5
Maintenance Lead	5
Maintenance Tech	5
Maintenance Supervisor	5

Volunteer Hours and Numbers for Most Recent Fiscal Year

- Volunteer Hours: 20
- Volunteer Opportunities: 2
- Number of Volunteers: 6

Park Interpretive Goals

Goal 1 – Cultural Resource Interpretation: Visitors will be curious about BTWSP’s resources and stories

Theme(s) Supported: *S.3. and S.5.*

2-Year Objective: Establish a baseline and track engagement with additional materials and experiences related to the park's resources and stories, resulting in a 5% increase in engagement.

5-Year Objective: Engagement with additional materials and experiences about the park resources and stories will increase by 10%.

Resources Assigned to Goal: Park Ranger and Seasonal Interpretive Ranger will implement the goals

Strategy for Implementation: Park Rangers and staff will ask visitors about their attendance at park interpretive opportunities and continuously adjust the park’s program offerings based on data received from PPI.

Goal 2 – Cultural Resource Interpretation: Visitors will become stewards of the parks, resources, and the stories in their communities

Theme(s) Supported: *S.3. and S.5.*

2-Year Objective: The park will establish a baseline for participation in programs with a take home component and increase participation by 5%.

5-Year Objective: *The park will experience a 10 % increase in participation with programs featuring a take-home component.*

Resources Assigned to Goal: Park Ranger and Seasonal Interpretive Ranger will implement the goals

Strategy for Implementation: Park Staff will develop programs with a conservation message that the visitor can take home. Examples include an interpretive experience creating Bird Houses, native pollinator gardens, or other gardening opportunities with native plants.

Goal 3 – Recreation Skills Development: Visitors will become advocates for self-education and seek repeat visitation to learn about the park continually.

Theme(s) Supported: ALL

2-Year Objective: Develop a method for collecting repeat visitation information to establish a baseline and increase by 5%.

5-Year Objective: See an increase in repeat visitation of 10% by program participants.

Resources Assigned to Goal: Park Ranger and Seasonal Interpretive Ranger will implement the goals.

Strategy for Implementation: At every park program, the Ranger will ask how many visitors have done the Kiosk self-guided hike and encourage program participants who have not used the trail to explore the signs and resources around the park to learn about Booker T. Washington, the Tuskegee Institute, and the importance of education.

Goal 4 – Education Goal: Educators will seek new experiences for students at Booker T. Washington State Park

Theme(s) Supported: ALL

2-Year Objective: The park will experience an increase in education programs by 5%.

5-Year Objective: The park will experience an increase in education programs by 10%.

Resources Assigned to Goal: Park Ranger and Seasonal Interpretive Ranger will implement the goals.

Strategy for Implementation: The park Ranger and staff will attend more local conferences with outdoor educators to improve skills in the field of environmental education and Interpretation.

Goal 5 – Volunteer Goal: Volunteers will increase the park's workforce capacity to care for the park and its resources.

Theme(s) Supported: S.3. and S.5.

2-Year Objective: The park staff will establish a baseline of current volunteer hours and see a 5% increase in reported volunteer hours.

5-Year Objective: The park will experience a 10 % increase in reported volunteer hours

Resources Assigned to Goal: Park Ranger, Seasonal Interpretive Ranger, and the Friends group will implement the goals.

Strategy for Implementation: Park staff will work with Volunteers to track their hours in a log, provide new opportunities for existing volunteers, and encourage regular volunteerism at the park.

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 (2025)	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2026	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2027	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2028	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2029	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2030
Park Overall	8.69%	7.73%	7.73%	8.05%	7.83%	7.87%