

# Reelfoot Lake State Park Strategic Management Plan

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**2023 – 2033**



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## Park Purpose, History and Description

Reelfoot Lake State Park was originally designed as public gathering place providing physical and visual access to Reelfoot Lake and surrounding lands. This continues today as a primary use theme. Other uses include boating access, wildlife viewing, nature/environmental interpretive education, along with camping and cabin facilities.

The mission of Reelfoot Lake State Park is:

To protect and preserve, unique examples of natural, cultural, and scenic beauty, throughout the park.  
To provide a quality overnight and day-use recreation and interpretive experience.

In 1925 the state was authorized to purchase a wide but broken band around the lake for, game, and fish management. The actual beginning of what would become Reelfoot Lake State Park began in 1934. Some areas were created for picnic areas constructed with the assistance of the National Park Service and the WPA (CCC). In 1955 a special act was passed by the legislature that allowed the Game and Fish Commission to transfer some lands to the Department of Conservation for the development of the State Park. In 1956 Reelfoot Lake State Park was established on one of the present ten areas known locally as Bluebank.

## 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:

- Reelfoot Lake State Park will work with the Lake and Obion County citizens, government, Schools, and tourist to increase public awareness of the uniqueness and fragility of Reelfoot Lake by promoting educational opportunities.
- The State Park will provide opportunities to demonstrate the importance of the lake and its natural and cultural history through programming year around. Using pontoon boats, canoes, buses, vans, and leading hikes along with other on and off-site educational programming.
- Reelfoot Lake State Park employees will work with local Tourism on events, promotions, and meetings
- Reelfoot Lake State Park will engage in volunteer efforts, Friends Group and Local Schools/Communities

**Objective - *Better resource management practices:*** Identify, manage and restore natural and cultural resources.

Action Plan:

- Establish State Park Goals and Objectives
- Provide Administrative Oversight Responsibilities
- Address Maintenance and Operational Needs

- Provide and maintain reasonable, safe public access
- Facilitate public use.
- Prioritize development and maintenance
- Engage in education and research

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

Action Plan:

- Work with the GIS Team to continue documenting Eagle Nest around the Lake and surrounding lands
- Continue to document Eagle Nesting activities through GIS Data Base
- Work with team to maintain, create maps for Reelfoot Lake State Park
- Utilize Smart Parks Hub to document Interpretive Goals, Programming, Volunteer Efforts, Events, School Programs and Outreach
- Research, plan and try to implement a fee-based Park App for self-guided Eagle Tours, Exhibits, etc. Working with the GIS team

## 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: Work to tell story of a woman in history stand alone and of Keystone History; to add to the variety of existing exhibits.

As we have begun with hearing impaired through hearing devices and cell phone web site at the museum. Work to add technology to the exhibits in the form of telling the story through a app/cellphone and map with descriptions of the exhibits

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

Action Plan: Develop and maintain a portfolio of programs such as Eagle Tour documented, Pontoon Tour Interpretive examples recorded, Outdoor Classroom manual with examples of programs

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

Action Plan: Support the community and Guest with outdoor recreation such as Photo Tours, Deep Swamp Tours, Sunset Tours, Lily Pad Tours, Osprey Tours, Pelican Tours. Highlight Cultural History and Arts through tours of the museum, events, and programs such as Jr. Ranger Camp

## 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: Complete and Identify priority list such as aviaries, equipment for tours, etc ; for maintenance upkeep

Annual Assessments and preventative maintenance schedules for all facilities.

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

Action Plan: Provide welcoming information to include exhibits and the interpretation of those with an app to walk through time. To add Wi-Fi services at the south campground.

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

Action Plan: Work with West Tn Maintenance to modernize kiosk, exterior of the museum along with signage on the building. Update and modernize Ellington Hall Kitchen/doors/lighting/feature wall.

## 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: Work with TDEC to provide learning opportunities such as supervisory, leadership and self-development classes for supervisors/team members. Supervisors will share weekly reports with each other to be inclusive. Employees will complete weekly reports and share with others in the same work team. Work with IPE on creating a more diverse workplace and workforce with unbiased exhibits which tell the full story.

Develop optimal staffing plans as needed for the operations of the park, review each year, or as needed. Continue to develop SOPs for job duties so that employees can use those as a reference.

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

Action Plan: Professionally managed budget and operations of the park by reviewing reports, sharing with the team to encourage team work on goals. Work with Friends Group on donations, projects and goals that is in line with the parks mission statement.

## Park Overview

### Site Fact Sheet

Park Name	Reelfoot Lake State Park
Site Manager	Alisha ODell
Area Manager	Zach Tinkle
Park acreage	280 acres
Total number of visitors (FY 2022)	532,927
Total expenses before CO (FY 2022)	\$1,701,696
Total revenues (FY 2022)	\$917,618
Retail cost recovery % <sup>1</sup>	171%
Park cost recovery %	54%
Average expense per visitor (FY 2022)	\$3.19
Average revenue per visitor (FY 2022)	\$1.72
Gross profit or loss	(\$784,078)
Total full-time available positions / filled	16/16
Total part-time available positions / filled	8/8
Primary feeder markets	Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, West TN
Primary reasons people visit	Fishing, Birding, Waterfowl, Photography
Opportunities for improvement	Camping Cabins at Air Park, Restaurant, Inn Cypress Point

### Key Attractions

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

1. Access to fishing, waterfowl, and boating opportunities
2. Overnight accommodations in the form of cabins and campsites
3. Picnic opportunities
4. Recreational and interpretational programming and environmental educational opportunities
5. Meeting facilities

Visitation for 2022 is down by 36 percent compared to last 3 years. Factors include storm damage, extreme heat/drought/low lake, high gas prices, inflation.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 Reelfoot Lake 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 Reelfoot Lake State Park , and provides the assessed condition of each as reviewed in April, 2023.

Site Asset / Amenity	Quantity	Condition
Park Office	1	Good
Park Shop	1	Good
Museum	1	Good
Nature Center	1	Excellent
Square Shelter/ Restroom Bluebank	1	Being Rebuilt (2024)
Round House	1	Good
Eagle Basin Restroom	1	Being Rebuilt (2024)
Eagle Basin Shelter	1	Being Rebuilt (2024)
Eagle Basin Pier	1	Poor
Bluebank Pier	1	Good
Boardwalk VC	1	Fair
Campground South	1	Poor/Fair
Campground Main Bath House	1	Good
Campground A street Bath House	1	Poor
Campground C Street Bath House	1	Poor
Campground Office	1	Good
Kirby Restroom	1	Excellent
Air Park Bath House	1	Poor/TDOT partnership
Campground Residence	1	Excellent
Cabin Residence	1	Good
Airpark Resident	1	Good
Keystone Shelter restroom	1	Excellent
Playground Campground South	1	Excellent
Playground Bluebank	1	Excellent
Playground Eagle Basin	1	Excellent



## Trail Inventory and Assessment

Trail Name	Mileage
Airpark Trail	1.23
Black Bayou Trail	0.71
Brough Slough Nature Trail	0.27
Deep Swamp Canoe Trail	2.58
Keystone Trail	0.63
Walking Loop Trail	0.41
Grand Total	5.83

Keystone – Good 1.5 miles moderate upkeep

Cabin – Good ¾ mile moderate upkeep

Airpark – 3 miles good moderate upkeep, wetland area issues

Eagle Basin – Good/paved/3/4 mile and Challenge Course destroyed in tornado needs replacing

Kirby – Plan, develop and implement an accessible trail at Kirby Pocket

## 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
Airpark Bath House	CXT building new

**Prioritized Facility Needs**

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

Priority Projects	Category (Sub-Category)	Maintenance/Renovations	Proposed Capital Improvements	Quantity	Priority (L/M/H)	Funding	Additional Staff Needed	Systemwide Goal	Systemwide Objective
		Quantity	Priority (L/M/H)						
<b>Public Structures</b>									
Park Office Renovation needed expected 2024	Other	1	High		N/A	Funded	No	Operations	Efficient & effective operations
Exterior of Donaldson Museum	Museum	1	Medium		Low	Non-Funded	No	Visitor	Accessible, welcoming & inviting to all
Ellington Kitchen Update	Meeting Facilities	1	High		Low	Funded	No	Visitor	Accessible, welcoming & inviting to all
<b>Recreation Facilities</b>									

<p>Airpark Updated Campsites, water lines, septic, etc CXT Bathhouse needed as the current bathhouse is in fair to poor condition and not owned by TSP but by TDOT. Camping Cabin Request Demo of remaining pier for the INN Demo of Swimming Pool Demo or reconstruction of Shelter</p>	<p>Camping (RV)</p>		<p>Low</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Funded</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Visitor</p>	<p>Accessible, welcoming &amp; inviting to all</p>
<p>South Campground South Campground renovation expected 2024. Replacement of one bathhouse, replacement of utility lines, full hookup, renovation of main Bathhouse, demo of one bathhouse</p>	<p>Camping (RV)</p>		<p>Low</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Funded</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Visitor</p>	<p>Accessible, welcoming &amp; inviting to all</p>
<p>Tornado Damage Bluebank Picnic Shelter and Restroom Eagle Basin Shelters and Restroom Eagle Basin Pier and Challenge Course Visitor Center Boardwalk 3rd and 4th sections need updating to accessibility</p>	<p>Picnic</p>		<p>Low</p>	<p>2 areas</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Funded</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Visitor</p>	<p>Accessible, welcoming &amp; inviting to all</p>

which includes the loading dock								
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**Airpark**

Updated Campsites, water lines, septic, etc

CXT Bathhouse needed as the current bathhouse is in fair to poor condition and not owned by TSP but by TDOT.

Camping Cabin Request

Demo of remaining pier for the INN

Demo of Swimming Pool

Demo or reconstruction of Shelter

**South Campground**

South Campground renovation expected 2024

**Park Office**

Renovation needed due to Fair Condition expected 2024

**Tornado Damage**

Bluebank Picnic Shelter and Restroom

Eagle Basin Shelters and Restroom

Eagle Basin Pier and Challenge Course

Boardwalk

3rd and 4th sections need updating which includes the loading dock

**Exterior of Donaldson Museum**

**Ellington Kitchen Update**

## 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 Reelfoot Lake State Park have been identified as **core services**:

- Support the mission of Tennessee State Parks which is "To preserve, protect, and share Tennessee's natural and cultural resources while providing safe, quality outdoor experiences."
- Provide for public access to the park, the facilities, and the grounds.
- Provide for public safety for visitors and protection of natural and cultural resources.
- Provide for maintenance of grounds, facilities, and infrastructure.
- Maintain facilities developed through the LWCF program to required standards.
- Provide for basic, non-staff supported day-use activities informational signage, trash cans and restroom facilities.
- Maintain Park drinking water and wastewater programs to state standards.

### **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 Reelfoot Lake State Park have been identified as **important services**:

- Provide a full range of environmental, cultural, and recreational programs.
- Offer park-specific information at the Visitor Center and Museum.
- Provide educational programs for schools and organized groups.
- Provide for non-staff supported day-use activities (such as hiking and picnicking) with trails and picnic tables

### **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 Reelfoot Lake State Park have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- Interpretive Tours such as Eagle, Pontoon, Kayak, Canoe, Etc
- Events such as Pelican Fest, Eagle Fest, Arts and Crafts etc
- Museum and Nature Center Operation
- Birds of Prey rehab and Display for Environmental Education Outreach
- Camping Cabins and Over Night Accommodations
- Operate a Meeting Rooms with a capacity of 150 people.
- Operate and provide retail support services for the gift shop.

- Provide support services for rental cabins.
- Provide support services for tent/RV campsites.

## Personnel / Staffing Review

Personnel and staffing at Reelfoot Lake 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 2	1	*
Ranger 2	2	*
Ranger 3	1	*
Administrative Assistant 1	1	42,924
Clerk 3	2	66,744
Facilities Supervisor	1	60,300
Conservation Worker 1	4	120,000
Conservation Worker 2	1	53,400
Custodial Worker Supervisor	1	34,235
Cust. Worker/Housekeeper	2	61,008
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>\$726,335</b>

\*Law enforcement compensation confidential by TN law.

### Part Time Employees

Position / Title	Quantity	Compensation Total
SIR	3	\$57,523
Laborer	4	\$55,575
Custodial Worker 1	1	\$25,252
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>\$138,350</b>

### Labor Support

Labor Support	Annual Hours
Volunteers	472
Community Service Workers	
Engineering and Construction Crews	
Resource Management Crews	
Other: _____	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>472</b>

### Total Labor Compensation Expense

Labor Type	Labor Expense
Full Time Equivalent Employees	\$726,335
Part Time Employees	\$138,350
<b>TOTAL Annual Labor Expense</b>	<b>\$864,685</b>





### Additional Future Positions Needed

Position / Title	Quantity	FTE or PT	Year Needed	Justification
Conservation Worker 1	2	FTE	2024	Renovation Campgrounds, Airpark
Ranger	1	FTE	2024	Number of tours will pay salary
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>			

### 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	Cabins Rev Per Unit	Campgrounds Rev Per Unit	Shelters Rev Per Unit
2019	94.6	4.19	3.94
2020	99.22	6.13	2.87
2021	160.76	9.16	3.79
2022	165.54	8.8	4.46

**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	Cabins Rev Per Unit	Campgrounds Rev Per Unit	Shelters Rev Per Unit
2023	166	6	2.0
2024	168	6.5	2.0
2025	170	9	2.0
2026	172	10	3.0

### Customer Service

Platform / Site	Year	Customer Satisfaction Level
Facebook	2023	4.9/5
Net Promoter Score	2023	75
Google	2023	4.7/5

## Professional Development and Training

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

- Understanding Bias Workshop
- Interpretive Guide
- Resource Management Training
- Program and Interpretation Training
- Management Training
- Safety Training
- Medical Training
- Routine management training.
- Routine law enforcement 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. Campground Renovation South
- b. Meet with Local Gov and Community on Airpark. Work with Project Team to compile ideas to improve area
- c. Tornado Damage Capitol Project move forward with Design Team and Planning
- d. Kirby Pocket and Bill Dance Trail Improvements. Complete improvements planned for this area

#### 2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Request Full Time CW1 positions
- b. Work with planning team on salary adjustments and compression needs to be addressed

#### 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Continue to improve on our BOP Program and Conditioning Birds to Glove
- b. Work on ideas for telling full stories
- c. Purchase the 2nd Van for tours which has been set aside for budget

### Mid Term Recommendations (2-5 years)

#### 1. Site and Facilities

- a. Airpark Capitol Project move forward from planning phase
- b. Construction of tornado damage completed
- c. New Campground Ribbon Cutting
- d. Property Acquisitions

#### 2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Request full time Ranger Position for Interpretation and Law Enforcement needs

- b. Salary adjustments made through HR department
- c. Add needed and justified positions such as Ranger, CW1
- 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience**
  - a. Acquire or maintain the 2<sup>nd</sup> Van for tours which has been set aside for budget
  - b. Work with community on leases for armory area, sidewalk to museum from town

## Long Term Recommendations (5+ years)

### 1. Site and Facilities

- a. Accessibility in all park areas complete working with West TN Maintenance and Capitol Teams
- b. Land Acquisitions
- c. Ribbon Cutting of the Airpark Improvements
- d. Improved pedestrian and bicycle access to all areas of the park

### 2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Add needed and justified positions such as Ranger, CW1

### 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Replace boats as needed for pontoon tours, canoes, and kayaks
- b. Acquire or maintain the 2<sup>nd</sup> Van for tours which has been set aside for budget
- c. Work with community on leases for armory area, sidewalk to museum from town

## Resource Management Plan

Reelfoot Lake State Park is in Lake and Obion counties, state of Tennessee. Reelfoot Lake State Park consists of approximately 280 acres in ten non continuous areas located along the shores of Reelfoot Lake. Approximately 22 miles separate the most distant of the ten areas. The majority of the ten areas comprising Reelfoot Lake State Park is located along state highway 22. One area containing the Airpark Inn Complex and other amenities is located off state highway 78 on state route 213. The nearest town to Reelfoot Lake State Park is Tiptonville (population 2,439) which is approximately 3 miles from portions of the park. Both Dyersburg (population 17,452) and Union City (population 10,876) are approximately 25 miles from Reelfoot Lake State Park.

The area is basically open (private property is predominately agricultural) and the topography is flat. Approximately 80 acres of the park could be classified as forested and about 50 acres of these would be classified as cypress swamp.

Reelfoot Lake State Park provides:

1. Access to fishing and boating opportunities
2. Overnight accommodations in the form of motels and campsites
3. Picnic opportunities
4. Recreational and interpretational programming and environmental educational opportunities
5. Meeting facilities

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. Eagle Nest monitoring with GIS Team, Nest Count, Activity, Successful Breeding and Fledging to include areas around, adjacent to Reelfoot Lake and on the Lake
- B. Cypress Tree Inventory/Preservation – Protection of these trees and monitoring throughout projects, day to day. Inventory of the largest trees with GIS Team
- C. Boundaries Inspections
- D. Leased Property and Usage
- E. Seawall Project Capitol
- F. Protection and Preservation of important watersheds to prevent major fill in of Reelfoot Lake. Kirby Pocket watershed is most important
- G. Migratory Bird List Digitized with GIS Team
- H. Original Spillway Interpretive Panel to tell the full story
- I. Bluebank Day Use Area/Round House Preservation of the CCC story

## 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 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
Sea Wall	4,020 linear feet	Poor	Capitol Project in the works currently  The proposed impacts include shoreline stabilization along six sections of actively eroding reservoir bank using 360 feet riprap above the high water mark, 300 feet of vegetated riprap, 2,070 feet of native vegetation and 800 feet of sheet pile wall in areas of failed existing seawall.

## Reelfoot Lake Strategic Management Plan

Cypress Trees	230 acres land 15,000 acres water	Excellent	Continued protection and planning Inventory GIS Largest Trees
Reelfoot Lake	15,000 acres	Good	Good condition continues working with multiple agencies on management of fill in, erosion impact
Water Sheds/Boundaries	230 acres	Good	Continue with the use and preservation of these important systems to prevent major fill in of the lake especially around Kirby Pocket #2 Watershed area. Water basin and dam maintenance.  Land set aside around other water sheds to secure the flood zone, but TSP does not manage the water itself on these or maintenance of the dams  Boundary Preservation and Protection of around the lake and state owned ditches
Migratory Birds / Turtles / Reptiles and Amphibians Inventory		Good	Update migratory Bird list to digital with GIS team efforts
Bluebank Dayuse and Round House	1	Good	Historical Register efforts, Upkeep preserve
Original Spillway	1	Good	Create Interp Panel on Historical Significance

## 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
Seawalls	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Manage infrastructure of Seawalls</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> Replacement of existing Seawalls, Riprap and Vegetation to reduce erosion and loss of land, along with preventing fill in of the lake</p>	High
Cypress	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Manage Viewing and Regulation – no cutting, or damaging of trees</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> Require marking, roping off, protection of trees during construction projects. Inventory largest trees on lake, surrounding areas with GIS Team.</p>	High
Reelfoot Lake	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Manage access to lake with infrastructure and regulations. Protection of ditches, boundaries / usage of the ditches.</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> Manage Lake access for public use, gravel, pave as needs arise, increase parking where it is an option. Work with sister agencies on protection of boundaries, ditches from fill in and encroachment of boundaries. Ditches that are parked owned should be managed so that only state revenue is generated on state property.</p>	High

<p>Watersheds/Boundaries</p>	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Manage infrastructure and regulations of watersheds. Watershed #2 near Kirby Pocket is major protector of the lake from fill in.</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> Watershed number #2 at Kirby’s has been cleaned out as of 2018 with team efforts of West TN River Basin and RLSP. This should continue to be HIGH Priority in the future as protection of Kirby Pocket lands, Reelfoot Lake and the Highway Safety impacts of HWY 22.</p> <p>Erosion historically in the 80’s and early 90’s had impacts as much as covering picnic tables with sediment at Kirby. This was a major project then to prevent what they expected to be the complete fill in of Reelfoot Lake if these watersheds were not created.</p> <p>Land set aside around other water sheds to secure the flood zone, but TSP does not manage the water itself on these or maintenance of the dams</p> <p>Boundary Issues at the ditches of Campground, Bluebank Day Use Area, Keystone Area.</p>	<p>Med</p>
<p>Migratory Birds/ Turtles/ Reptiles and Amphibians</p>	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Protection and Preservation of migratory birds, Inventory of Species</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> Work with GIS Team to inventory, digitize Migratory Birds, Turtles, Reptiles and Amphibians</p>	<p>Med</p>
<p>Bluebank / Round House</p>	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Historical Preservation and Telling Full Story</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> Historical Registry, Interpretive Panels Created</p>	<p>Med</p>
<p>Original Spillway</p>	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Historical Preservation and telling Full Story</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> Historical Registry, Interpretive Panels Created</p>	<p>Med</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
Inholding owned by the Whites between Bluebank and Eagle Basin (presentation given 2022)	Short to Long Term
Armory Property and Leases (this is State Owned Land)	Short

## 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.

Attached to this plan are the Interpretive Program Templates in fillable PDF forms.

Reelfoot Lake State Park will forever be preserved for present and future generations of park users as a public gathering place providing physical and visual access to Reelfoot lake and to educate the public about the natural and cultural history of the area and the importance of Reelfoot Lake and its natural ecosystems to the environment.

Reelfoot Lake State Park will protect and preserve unique examples of natural, cultural, and scenic areas on Reelfoot Lake and provide a variety of safe, educational, quality interpretive programs and recreational activities utilizing a well-planned and well managed system of park areas and facilities.

Reelfoot Lake State Park will provide educational opportunities to the visiting public about the natural, cultural, historical, and geological features of Reelfoot Lake and the surrounding area and their influences on the past, present, and future of the area through well planned interpretive and recreational programs.

The primary interpretive theme of the park is the formation and history of Reelfoot Lake and the unique diversity that is found within Reelfoot Lake ecosystems.

Secondary interpretive themes for Reelfoot Lake State Park include lake formation, Mississippi River influence, earthquakes, ecosystems (unique to Reelfoot), animals, flora and fauna (unique to Reelfoot), early life and settlement (hunting, fishing, lumbering, guiding, folklore), lake and area changes (siltation, levee construction, spillway construction), park development, pre-lake formation history (American Indians, early explorers), night riders, agricultural practices, civil war, and state acquisition and management.

### 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.

Park Interpretation and Programs should be developed with the following desired outcomes:

- Building stewards
- Ensuring Equity
- Providing the Highest Value
- Developing Resource Based Programming
- Supporting 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:

Keystone History Diversity and Woman’s History standalone story

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

Action Plan:

Park Interpretive App to generate revenue for birding, plants etc

Museum App walk through time guided exhibit

**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 the benefit to the participant, value to the park, and impact to the resource.

Action Plan:

1. Develop an in-depth reference library of Reelfoot Information
2. Expand and develop an in-depth informational park web site
3. Expand non-traditional program efforts such as Outdoor Classroom, Astronomy, Night Programs on lake, Campground Programs
4. Expand photography tours for individuals and clubs.
5. Organize Volunteer Program for both Students and Adults
6. Create Wildlife Viewing Areas with Native Plants for photography and environmental education outreach
7. Create new programs and special events such as a Night in the Nature Center, Harvest Fest, Nighttime Program, Campground Programming
8. Cultural History DVD for Visitor Center to be updated

**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 the benefit to the participant, value to the park, and impact to the resource.

Action Plan:

Interpretive Plan Actions (requires outside funding)

1. Work to increase staffing so that the park can respond effectively to the many interpretive and programming opportunities and requests. (Ranger Position funded by the Fee Based Programs it would add)
2. Visitor/Interpretive Center Paving and Kitchen Update
3. Expand Interpretive Signage and Informational Kiosks
4. Expand Trail System with sidewalk to Tiptonville to Whites Landing to the Museum
5. Expand and Replace Interpretive Equipment as needed
6. Create a Boundless Playtrail for walking and active play with interpretive signage on native wildlife and plants at Kirby Pocket
7. Replace pontoon boats/motors as needed as program revenues support them
8. Offer a Fishing and Boating program at Kirby Pocket
9. Develop and App for purchase with proceeds going to the park for self-guided Eagle Tours etc
10. Joint Program efforts increased with other agencies such as TWRA/USFW
11. Acquire a lap top computer and power point projector for interpretation as needed
12. Update entrance to Visitor Center with wording on building and new exterior
13. Purchase and replace canoes/Kayaks/gear as needed

### 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.

FINANICAL 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	54%	52.55%	45.3%	46%	54.5%	55%

