

# Edgar Evins State Park Strategic Management Plan

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**2023 – 2033**



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## Park Purpose, History and Description

To provide professional, effective management and stewardship of the park and all its resources, to present compelling interpretation of the park's story and resources and provide opportunities for safe, enjoyable outdoor recreational experiences for all Park Visitors, to provide the highest quality hospitality and stay- use services in the form of Clean well maintained cabin units and Campsites. To provide a safe and inspiring workplace for all park employees and volunteers, managing all park operations to be as efficient and cost effective as possible, to partner with local community leaders to reinforce the idea that the park brings positive economic impact to the surrounding area.

Edgar Evins State Park is 6,338 acres along the shorelines of beautiful Center Hill Lake. Located in Northern DeKalb County on the shoreline of Center Hill Reservoir Edgar Evins State Park is a lease property of The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers established in 1975. Edgar Evins has the most unique campsites in the entire Tennessee State Park system. The park has 60 RV sites that suspend you over a hillside. The park also has 34 town house style cabins. The park offers an abundance of wildlife and with 12 miles of moderate hiking trails there is something to enjoy for the entire family. The Visitors Center/Park Office offers a 98-step observation tower to view Center Hill Dam and Reservoir and on a clear day you can for miles. The park offers an interpretive center that tells the story of the Caney Fork River and the formation of Center Hill Reservoir, panels line the walls telling about the land and families before impoundment. The park has 2 boat ramps inside the park and a third is across the lake on Indian Creek, if you want to bring your boat to enjoy the water while you rest in the cabins a slip at the courtesy dock is first come first serve for our cabin guest. If you enjoy watching the sunset the peninsula is the place to be.

## 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: Increase our volunteer program by 5% within the next 5 years. We are currently partnering with REI to help us build trails. Grow our friend's group to allow more volunteer workdays and provide lunch for our volunteer workers. If we can make our guest fall in love with the resource, they will want to help protect it. Advertise or workdays by providing a volunteer workday schedule and post on social media pages and the park website.

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

Action Plan: In the next 5 years identify a new resource management project every year. While maintaining our current resource projects that have been completed. Examples would be the pollinator corridor, Birds of prey signage, list of plants in the pollinator corridor. Examples of new cultural resource projects Dunham Cemetery signage and information, the Lon Christian

homeplace project, and the cleanup of the pre impoundment homestead located at the entrance of the park. These efforts could be done with volunteer work hours. As well partner with the Corps with the western wallflower restoration Project.

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

Action Plan: Develop a list and prioritize by cost and need. Complete a resource inventory on all park resources and rate them by cost and need. Provide a list of future resource projects and rate by cost and need. We want to tell the full story behind the resource and by partnering with the county archives we will be able to obtain much needed information. Share the information collected with the historical commission to see if the site holds historical relevance.

## 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: Telling full stories to give each visitor a feeling of ownership in our programs. By having a diverse program's so each visitor feels included and they can relate to the story. Provide a program inventory of programs from fee based like our interpretive pontoon boat rides to a free hike with a ranger. Every program holds value, time is the greatest gift you can give someone and a free hike from a ranger is a wonderful way to spend some time.

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

Action Plan: Come up with 3-5 new unique experiences for all audiences to enjoy. Train all staff in telling full stories so that they get buy in on what our goals are. Encourage staff attend park programs that gives them buy in and ownership of the park. Come up with 3 new programs each fiscal year.

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

Action Plan: Do an inventory of our programs and make sure they align with the department's goals. Identify an outside partner to help provide supplies. Example would be partner with the Caney fork outdoors to offer Kayak trips down the river as well rentals for park guest for the lake.

## 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: Keeping up top 15 projects and identifying new maintenance projects to enhance customer experiences. Utilizing H.I.P.P.O. and prioritizing maintenance needs. Creating a preventive maintenance plan. Having a plan for every facility that identifies daily, weekly monthly, yearly and 5 years maintenance needs.

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

Action Plan: Identify 2 trails on the park to make ADA assessable to allow the use of ADA equipment such a track chairs or off-road chairs made for hiking to enhance all visitor experiences on trails. Keep facilities up to date on all ADA codes to add to guest experiences by keeping our facilities to be assessable to all visitor's.

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

Action Plan: Customer service is top priority. Front desk staff will greet visitor's as they walk through the door and take care of customers' needs that are Infront of them. If a staff member is on the phone as soon as the customer is taken care of on the call, they are to help the person in front of them once off the phone call. All staff will be trained on park programs and amenities and attractions in the community around the park to better serve our guest.

## 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: Edgar Evins will strive to provide a diverse work force that encourages growth both personal and professional. We provide a mentoring atmosphere where the employees with more experience train with a new employee. This promotes learning and helps spread knowledge of certain skills, we will increase our net promoter scores by 5 points over the next 5 years.

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

Action Plan: Edgar Evins will increase revenue goals 3% each year over the next 5 years to provide a more fiscal sustainable service to our guest. Develop outside partnerships with community businesses to sponsor events at the park. Work with our public stakeholders to help promote events at the park.

## Park Overview

### Site Fact Sheet

Park Name	Edgar Evins
Site Manager	Brad Halfacre
Area Manager	Kenneth Gragg
Park acreage	6,338
Total number of visitors (FY 2022)	268,805
Total expenses before CO (FY 2022)	\$1,712,300
Total revenues (FY 2022)	\$794,200
Retail cost recovery % <sup>1</sup>	1.32%
Park cost recovery %	46%
Average expense per visitor (FY 2022)	\$6.37
Average revenue per visitor (FY 2022)	\$2.95
Gross profit or loss	(\$918,100)
Total full-time available positions / filled	16/16
Total part-time available positions / filled	4/4
Primary feeder markets	Baxter, Smithville, Cookeville, Gordonsville, Carthage, Murfreesboro, Lebanon, Nashville
Primary reasons people visit	Center Hill Lake/ Caney Fork River
Opportunities for improvement	Upgrade WIFI for campground and install WIFI in cabins

### Key Attractions

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

- Cabins
- Campground
- Boat Ramps
- Hiking Trails
- Camp Store
- Visitor Center
- Center Hill Lake
- Caney Fork River
- Interpretive Center
- Picnic Shelters

<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 Edgar Evins 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 Edgar Evins State Park, and provides the assessed condition of each as reviewed in December 2022.

Site Asset / Amenity	Quantity	Condition
Park Office/Visitor Center	1	Good
Residences/ Ranger office	1	Fair
Residences/Park Manager	1	Good
Shelters	3	Good
ADA Assessable Restroom	1	Good
Old Restroom and Pump house	1	Poor/ not in
Maintenance Shop	1	Good
Camp Store	1	Good
Campsites RV	60	Fair
Campsites Primitive	9	Good
Campground Bathhouses	3	Fair
Boat Ramp Restrooms	2	Good
Boat Ramps	3	Fair
Boat Ramp Courtesy Dock	2	Good
Cabin Courtesy Dock with Building	1	Poor
Cabins	34	Good
Interpretive Center/Housekeeping	1	Good
Swimming Pool	1	Good
Swimming Pool Pumphouse	1	Good
Waste Treatment Plant	1	Good

## Trail Inventory and Assessment

Trail Name	Mileage	Condition
Campground Trail	0.90	Good
Connector Trail	1.48	Good
Dunham Cemetery Trail	0.13	Good (needs interpretive)
Evins Ridge Trail	0.53	Good
Highland Rim Nature Trail	1.35	Good
Merritt Ridge Trail	2.34	Good
Millennium Trail	1.78	Good
Mountain Bike Trail	2.44	Poor (work in progress)
Storybook Trail	0.40	Good
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>11.34</b>	



Edgar Evins has 12 miles of Moderate Hiking trails with 7 trails to choose from.

Highland Rim Nature Loop- 2 Mile Loop it is located at the Visitor Center it is one of the best trails in the Upper Cumberland for spring wildflowers, it is also great for bird watching, you might even catch a glimpse of the Cerulean Warbler.

Millennium Trail Loop-2.5 Miles The beginning of this wooded trail follows an old roadbed that once led to the Wolf Creek Community. There are two remnant homesteads that can be found on this trail as well as old stone walls. (Needs for this trail would be bridge replacement in 2 locations.)

Merritt Ridge Trail Loop- 5.5-mile loop that branches off the Millennium Trail at a mile in. It climbs steeply on top of Merritt Ridge and offers spectacular views of the Lake and landscape in the winter and early spring months. Two acres of Wild Hyacinths can be found on this trail in the spring, as well as patches of Yucca and the rare Western Wallflower. Another interesting feature to be found is a mysterious wall of massive, stacked stones high up on a bluff along the trailside. (This is our hardest trail to keep clear of debris due to the length and location its better assessable by boat.)

Marina Trail- 1 mile out and back trail. This trail takes you to the marina or from the marina it can take you to the campground,

Dunham Cemetery Trail- This is a very Short Trail That winds up the ridge side, taking you to the historical Dunham Cemetery. (This Trail needs signage talking about The Dunham Family).

Evins Ridge –½ mile Loop, this trail can be accessed in the cabin area, across from the Interpretive center a small parking lot is provided. This rocky trail winds through a drier forested area, as evidenced by the prickly pear that grows here.

Hillside Storybook Trail-¼ mile Loop, this trail can be accessed to the right of the interpretive center. This trail has a small parking lot. This trail combines hiking and reading.

### 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
Conference facility	Large indoor meeting facility with view of lake and with full
Wi-Fi	Install Wi-Fi in the cabins and upgrade the system in the
Individual private cabins	Build 10 separate cabin units that are stand alone structures

## 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 Edgar Evins 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 (such as hiking and picnicking) with trails, informational signage, picnic tables, 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 Edgar Evins 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 Nature Center.
- Provide educational programs for schools and organized groups.

**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 Edgar Evins State Park have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- Operate and provide retail support services for the gift shop at the park office and campground store.
- Provide support services for 34 rental cabins, 60 tent/RV campsites and 9 primitive campsites.
- Provide support services for 3 picnic shelters, swimming pool and a meeting house.

**Personnel / Staffing Review**

Personnel and staffing at Edgar Evins State Park represent the largest area of budgetary expense at an average of 45.46% of the total operating budget each year for the last three complete years, which is less than the target of labor costs not exceeding 65% of total operating expenditures. The tables below and on the following page provide a basic review of the current staffing at the site.

**Full Time Equivalent Employees**

Position / Title	Quantity (FTE)	Compensation Total
Park Manager 2	1	*
Park Ranger 3	1	*
Park Ranger 2	2	*
Facilities Supervisor	1	\$60,300
Building Maintenance Worker 3	1	\$47,304
Building Maintenance Worker 2	1	\$38,184
Conservation worker 2	1	\$34,236
Conservation Worker 1	3	\$91,512
Custodial Worker Supervisor 1	1	\$34,236
Custodial Worker 1	2	\$55,386
Secretary	1	\$37,020
Secretary	1	\$34,236
Clerk 2	1	\$27,780
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>\$670,206</b>

*\*Law enforcement compensation confidential by TN law.*

**Part Time Employees**

Position / Title	Quantity	Compensation Total
Conservation Worker 1	1	\$30,205.50
Laborer	1	\$27,787.5
Custodial worker 1	2	\$50,251.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>\$108,244.5</b>

**Labor Support**

Labor Support	Annual Hours
Volunteers	1,500
Community Service Workers	150
Engineering and Construction Crews	
Resource Management Crews	
Other: _____	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,650</b>

### Total Labor Compensation Expense

Labor Type	Labor Expense
Full Time Equivalent Employees	\$670,206
Part Time Employees	\$108,244.5
<b>TOTAL Annual Labor Expense</b>	<b>\$778,450.5</b>

### Additional Future Positions Needed

Position / Title	Quantity	FTE or PT	Year Needed	Justification
Custodial Worker 1	1	FTE	2023	We are blocking off cabins just so staff can keep up with the turn around. Even with visitation decreasing the cabins have increased in occupancy and no one is applying for the part time positions.
TSP Maintenance Lead	1	FTE		This will provide the park with adequate maintenance staff to deliver the best possible customer service to overnight Facilities including the campground and cabins.
Ranger 1/2	1	FTE	2025	Job duties have grown to a point where patrol coverage is limited
Clerk	1	PT	2025	Job share split between the office and the camp store.
<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	Cabin Rev Per Unit	Camping Rev Per Unit	Day use Rev Per Unit
2019	24.51	7.54	1.38
2020	29.73	9.14	1.1
2021	41.4	12.08	1.59
2022	54.11	10.1	2.04

**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	Camping Rev Per Unit	Day use Rev Per Unit
2023	54.92	10.25.	2.07
2024	55.64	10.40	2.10
2025	56.47	10.55	2.13
2026	57.31	10.70	2.06

### Customer Service

Platform / Site	Year	Customer Satisfaction Level
Net Promoter	22/23	64
Google	2023	4.7 stars

### Professional Development and Training

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

- Routine management training
- Routine law enforcement training
- Safety training
- Maintenance 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. Provide Signage for our Birds of Prey Exhibit.
- b. Upgrade the wildlife room in the interpretive center.

#### 2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Camp store open longer hours to better serve our campers.
- b. Need 3 seasonals to utilize hours or find some volunteers to work in the store.

#### 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Expand Wi-Fi to the cabins area and throughout the campground.
- b. Campground fire pit area with seating where the old volleyball court is.

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

#### 1. Site and Facilities

- a. Marina Parking area reconfiguration and resurface.
- b. ADA fishing access at the shelters and on the peninsula.

#### 2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Add a full-time custodial worker for the cabins.
- b. Job share clerk position for the camp store/park office.

#### 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Add ADA restroom and changing room at the pool for cabin guest.
- b. More outdoor seating behind the cabins with fire pit.

### Long Term Recommendations (5+ years)

#### 1. Site and Facilities

- a. Large indoor venue site with full kitchen and restrooms to host meetings or receptions
- b. Tear down the old courtesy dock and building and replace with new Trex style dock with open air outdoor gazebo.

#### 2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Full time ranger position
- b. AmeriCorps seasonal position

#### 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. New information kiosk at the park office and trail heads.
- b. Clean up Indian Creek area and add some hiking trails.

## 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.

The general purpose of this Resource Management Plan is to provide a framework for implementing management recommendations that will result in favorable visitor experiences balanced with sound natural and cultural resource stewardship of Edgar Evins State Park.

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. Conduct routine hikes on the trails to check on conditions of the trail for any problems or maintenance. Inspections should be made at minimum of one trail per week or four trails per month.
- B. Conduct routine inspections of the native plantings within the park. Planted areas consist of a butterfly garden at the park entrance, the park office, interpretive center, and the cabin pool and Pollinator corridor.
- C. Edge habitat should be maintained for the betterment of the wildlife and provide an aesthetic and scenic quality.
- D. Current historic home sites on the park should be kept visible and accessible to the public.



## 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
Dunham Cemetery	1	Fair
Old Homesteads	4	Fair
Center Hill Lake	Approx. 60 miles shore line/	Excellent
Mixed Mesophytic Forest	Approx. 6,200 acres	Good

## 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
Dunham Cemetery	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Managed access with a trail head and steps with access limited to the trail.</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> The cemetery is managed for the upkeep of the marker stones and trail is cleared.</p>	High
Old Homesteads	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Managed Access with infrastructure and regulation- Access limited to trails and RCC access road.</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> some of the sites are only accessible when the lake is down. The sites we can get to we manage by clearing debris off standing structures and removal of invasive plant species that have grown around the structure.</p>	Medium
Center Hill Lake	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Managed Access with infrastructure regulation with 3 boat ramps and shore line management.</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> Shore line is managed by the park and regulated through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.</p>	Medium
Mixed Mesophytic Forest	<p><b>Public Use:</b> <i>Managed access with infrastructure and regulation – access limited to trails and Wildlife Management area with usage policies and regulations.</i></p> <p><b>General Management:</b> <i>The mixed Mesophytic forests are managed for improvement of overall forest health which include ongoing invasive species management, erosion mitigation in areas of steep topography, and understory management through prescribed burns. Pursue collaboration with TN Division of Forestry to assist with overall forest management and we must follow U.S. Army Corps Of Engineers regulations.</i></p>	Medium

## Land Management Strategies

In some cases, strategic land acquisitions or divestitures are necessary to meet the overall resource management goals and objectives of the park. This can include opportunities to address buffers, watersheds, viewsheds, inholdings, and adjacent properties. The table below details **general strategies** for land management. Timelines refer to Short Term (1-3 years), Mid Term (4-6 years), and Long Term (7-10 years).

Land Management Strategy	Timeline
Acquire Edgar Evins home site	Long Term

## 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.

Edgar Evins will be forever preserved as an outstanding example of Eastern Highland Rim geography, cultural heritage and natural scenic beauty on the shores of Center Hill Reservoir, where visitors may experience numerous outdoor activities on both land and water while surrounded by diverse flora and fauna.

**Interpretive Mission Statement:** To provide quality interpretive programming of the park's natural resources, the park's history, as well as the culture and history of the Caney Fork River and Center Hill Lake.

**Primary Interpretive Theme:** Edgar Evins State Park is on the eastern most edge of the Central Basin and the western most edge of the Eastern Highland Rim, creating a steep and rugged terrain where many diverse species of flora and fauna thrive.

### Secondary Interpretive Themes:

The rugged terrain of Edgar Evins State Park was carved by the Caney Fork River, and has influenced how the land has historically been used by both Native Americans who hunted this land and settlers that once lived in this area.

The Caney Fork River has eroded the landscape creating steep ridges and sheer bluffs, cutting through the limestone to reveal fossils left over from the Ordovician era.

Edgar Evins State Park is leased from the Corps of Engineers, whose Center Hill Dam has had a major impact on the Caney Fork River, the aquatic species that used to live there and changed the surrounding environment.

Center Hill Dam and Center Hill Lake have had a major impact on the people who used to live in the river valley, their way of life, and the economy of Dekalb County.

Center Hill Lake provides a recreational resource for many visitors, from camping, nature/bird watching, and stargazing, to hunting, boating and fishing.

James Edgar Evins was mayor of Dekalb County, entrepreneur, teacher, businessman, and State Senator who was instrumental in getting the Corps of Engineers to place Center Hill Dam and reservoir in Dekalb County. His son Joe L. Evins was instrumental in getting Edgar Evins State Park created near the dam to provide recreation resources for the area.

## Interpretation, Programming and Education Goals

**Goal:** Tennessee State Parks will be the most accessible, welcoming, and inviting system of parks that enriches Tennesseans and visitors through excellent interpretation, education, and resource-based recreation.

**Objective:** *accessible, welcoming, and inviting to all:* create quality and varied programs of interpretation, recreation, and outreach so that all audiences feel welcome and invited.

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

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

Within these objectives are the following desired outcomes:

- Building stewards
- Ensuring Equity
- Provide the Highest Value
- Develop Resource Based Programming
- Support Staff

## Strategic Programs and Services

The strategies detailed below with corresponding action plans are aligned with the Comprehensive Strategic Plan of Tennessee State Parks.

**Strategy – Telling Full Stories:** to identify and replicate best practices while establishing new methods for representing diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just dialogues.

Action Plan: Make a connection to all guest that our park is for them. Research the Lon Christian home place that is located on the park and bring his story to life by talking about the life of an African American share cropper from the great depression era. Go to the archives in the County Library and check census records and locate family to get an interview to get a real-life account about Lon.

**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: Develop a steward ship program where the park recognizes stewards on all levels. Expand on all media sites Facebook and Instagram share our resources on all social media platforms where an individual can see it and then they will want to come and take part in it.

**Strategy – Develop and maintain a portfolio of programs across multiple types of experiences:**

- A. Interpretation of natural, historic, and cultural resources
- B. 3-5 unique experiences for all audiences
- C. Varying intensity from self-guided to immersive experiences
- D. Partnership opportunities for program delivery
- E. Varying costs to the user from “free to fee” based on value of the benefit to the participant.

Action Plan: Keeping a diverse program schedule that doesn’t have the same programs from week to week excluding the pontoon rides. Share what their money goes for all programs have value and when the guest sees that value they want to help with the experience.

**Strategy – Develop and maintain diverse and varied resourced-based outdoor recreation opportunities across multiple types of experiences:**

- A.** Managing recreational use with the stewardship needs of the resource
- B.** Varying intensity from self-guided to guided experiences
- C.** Partnership opportunities for program delivery
- D.** Varying costs to the user from “free to fee” based on value of the benefit to the participant and impact to the resource.

Action Plan: Develop a partnership with area business to get a core of volunteers to come and help do projects and events and work with friends' group.

### 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	58.44%	46.89%	58.33%	53.33%	52.74%	57.74%

