

Port Royal State Historic Park Strategic Management Plan

2023 – 2033



Table of Contents

Park Purpose, History and Description	3
Goals, Objectives and Action Plans	4
THE RESOURCES: Exemplary Natural and Cultural Stewardship	4
THE VISITOR: Welcoming and Inviting to All	5
THE AMENITIES: Well-Maintained Facilities and Amenities.....	6
THE OPERATIONS: Operational Excellence.....	7
Park Overview	8
Site Fact Sheet.....	8
Key Attractions	8
Site and Operations Assessment	9
Site and Facility Assessment.....	9
Operational Assessment.....	10
Summary of Key Recommendations	13
Resource Management Plan	15
Resource Management Objectives	15
Resource Inventory and Assessment	15
Management Strategies	17
Land Management Strategies	18
Supplemental Information	18
Interpretive Programming and Education Plan.....	19
Interpretation, Programming and Education Goals	19
Strategic Programs and Services	19
Financial Performance Goals.....	22

Park Purpose, History and Description

Port Royal’s Mission Statement: Port Royal State Historic Park will preserve and interpret the early town of Port Royal and its role as a flatboat port and Cherokee Indian Removal site, but more broadly the landscape, culture, folklore, and events of the Red River Valley and the ways in which they helped shape the State of Tennessee. PRSHP will provide modes of interpretation to connect the public with complex, and sometimes difficult, stories and themes in meaningful ways that foster empathy and better citizenry.

History: The idea for Port Royal Historic Area was born sometime prior to August of 1969, when a professionally prepared Project Plan was submitted to the Department of Conservation. The original plan called for a 135-acre park facility to serve the north-central Tennessee area. The Park would provide facilities for camping, picnicking, and hiking, traditional park activities for an area with such few facilities. House Joint Resolution 153 (1971) echoes the content of the original plan. This original park was to be centered on the 1904 Covered Bridge. By August of 1976, plans radically shifted. The intent of the division became the re-creation of the village of Port Royal. The plan still hinged on the covered bridge (now to be a re-creation, as the original fell in 1972), but all other planning efforts and funding was shifted toward the preservation and interpretation of the town of Port Royal in the form of a State Historic Area. Sadly, lack of long-term funding and proper staffing resulted in a more ambiguous and general recreation role for Port Royal over the first three decades of its existence. In 1998 this was made more difficult when the recreated covered bridge fell into the river. Tennessee State Parks decided to not rebuild the bride due to the considerable financial outlay and the lack of a guarantee the river wouldn’t claim the bridge in the future. This decision was galvanized by recent interpretive planning and research which has recognized that the bridge’s significance was nostalgic one – not historical significance. The site’s story site can be better interpreted without the distraction of an unauthentic, and costly bridge.

Beginning in 2017, efforts in planning, preservation, and interpretation were made to course-correct with the intended result of managing Port Royal in accordance with professional standards for high-quality historic sites across the country. Ultimately, the Park’s purpose needs to be re-legislated to codify its role in the lives of Tennesseans.

Today, Port Royal is a 30-acre historic site that preserves the site of one of Tennessee’s earliest communities. The site tells the story of commerce and tobacco culture and the relationship to the Red River Valley. Port Royal tells the stories of all people, including the enslaved African Americans that built the town and worked in its tobacco fields, and the over 10,000 Cherokee American Indians that stayed at Port Royal during the Trail of Tears in 1838. The purpose of Port Royal State Historic Park is to protect, preserve, and interpret the historical, archaeological, and natural resources of the former town of Port Royal and show the visitor how they can connect in meaningful ways to the stories of Tennessee in potentially life changing ways.

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 Plans:

- **Establish a Friends Group.** Port Royal has had Friends Groups in the past. We have deferred the effort to create a current group until site redevelopment and planning is complete.
- **Develop internship program to meet the internship needs of graduate History and Public History students at Middle Tennessee State University and Austin Peay State University.** This should be a three-month program and utilize existing part-time interpreter positions. Guidelines/ parameters should be developed to ensure the students accomplish their goals, as well as to ensure the sites needs are met.
- **Develop interpretive opportunities that require volunteers for success** (i.e., historical gardens, living history, docent program, etc.). A mission for guidelines should be developed to ensure success and alignment with the site's mission.

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

Action Plans:

- **Record on-site cultural resource data.** Adhere to professional best practices for doing so. Work with the Division of Archaeology to accomplish this.
- **Archaeological research.** There is a significant potential for archaeology in the old townsite. At a minimum, a university field school should be sought to conduct the work under the guidance of the Division of Archaeology.
- **Implement recurring historic preservation plans to maintain historic structures and archaeological ruins in accordance with Secretary of the Interior Preservation standards.** This should be a simple checklist that requires periodic recording of condition, plans for specific resources preservation needs, and metrics for how and when to include Division of Archaeology and/or the State Historic Preservation office.
- **Continue partnership with the National Park Service,** Trail of Tears National Historic Trail to identify preservation needs in relation to the Trail of Tears.
- **Identify historical resources outside the boundaries of the site that are integral for contextualizing the stories at Port Royal and in the Red River valley.** These should be identified by parcel, and explanation provided. This plan should be integrated into the site land acquisition planning.
- **Develop plan to reconstruct the historic Port Royal Inn & Tavern.** This should include a feasibility study first. A plan of process based in best practices should include a step-by-step plan for archaeology, historic architecture review, State Building Commission Approval, as well as interpretive plans.

- **Become members of professional organizations**, such as Tennessee Association of Museums (TAM), American Association of State and Local History (AASLH), and Association of Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums (AHLFAM). Utilize the training and certifications provided by all.

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

Action Plan:

- **Identify tools and software needed to manage cultural resource data.** Acquire and train.
- **Identify software required for collections management.** Acquire and train. AASLH “STEPS” training should be investigated.
- **Leverage Augmented Reality experiences** to help the visitor better envision a vanished town.

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 Plans:

- **We will provide truthful interpretation and history because visitors more readily find themselves in truthful interpretation and history.** This requires well designed interpretation based robust and current historical research. Of particular relevance at Port Royal are these stories of enslaved African American and chattel slavery, but also of emancipated community making in Port Royal. This also includes the story of the Trail of Tears and the US and State government’s role in forced removal of indigenous people, as well as Port Royal’s role in labor reform movements in early 20th century.
- **Work with Parks facilities to ensure an ADA compliant experience is available.**

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

Action Plans:

- **Continued development of recurring townsite tours** available during operating hours. These tours should be the primary experience for visitors for proper site contextualization. These should be available at set times every day.
- **Develop a series of partnership-based programs** that occur off-site but take visitors to related and companion sites that help reinforce and contextualize stories and resources found at Port Royal. This should include a well-designed roadside wayside program that creates an overarching sense of connection between sites.
- **Continued development of the recreated 1859 General Store.** This should be a paramount experience for all visitors to the site.

- **Install an exhibit based on the book “Pioneer Colored Christians”.** This book is a collection of interviews with formerly enslaved African American Port Royal residents.
- **Develop plan for marking the spatial organization and layout of the town of Port Royal.** If visitors can more easily visualize the former town, it may facilitate better connections.
- **Become organizational members of professional organizations** such as Tennessee Association of Museums (TAM), American Association of State and Local History (AASLH), and Association of Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums (AHLFAM). Utilize the training and certifications provided by all.
- **Redevelop the Trail of Tears interpretive experience via the NPS Connect Parks to Trails program.** Planning phase is funded for FY 24 through this program.

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

Action Plans:

- **Outdoor museums, like Port Royal, have a potential to introduce museum-experience oriented visitors to the outdoors through a curated, and safe experience**
 - By its very nature, the hallmark tour program recommended in the programming section of this plan is an outdoor experience.
- **Implement certified arboretum program and develop plan for long term management**
- **Implement interpretive experiences that by necessity takes place outside.** For example: a recreated historical garden, or tobacco agriculture.
- **Develop long-term plan for sustainable paddling access on Red River.** This must be thoughtful and with an eye to the future. It should consider land acquisition needs and should not impact the operation of the historic site.

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:

- **Implement a recurring maintenance program.** Identify the daily, weekly, and monthly needs and build them into employee performance plans.
- **Establish a site maintenance position.** Port Royal currently has none, and all maintenance needs are handled by other employees or contracted out. This would likely present a significant budget savings, while also improving overall maintenance and upkeep of the site.

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

Action Plan:

- **Work with Parks facilities to ensure ADA compliant experiences are available.**

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

Action Plans:

- **Ensure new site additions are in keeping with the interpretive intent and mission of the site.**
- **Ensure the 1859 general store has adequate staffing for guest welcoming.**

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 Plans:

- **Ensure performance plans meet the strengths of employees,** while meeting the operational needs of the site.
- **Identify and provide accredited training for employees** according to employee responsibilities.

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

Action Plan:

- **Develop staffing plans to reflect the growing needs of the park.** We should be forward thinking with this and less reactionary.
- **Develop long-term plan for sustainable paddling access on Red River.** This must be thoughtful and with an eye to the future. It should consider land acquisition needs and should not impact the operation of the historic site.

Park Overview

Site Fact Sheet

Park Name	Port Royal State Historic Park
Site Manager	David Britton
Area Manager	Ryan Forbess
Park acreage	30
Total number of visitors (FY 2022)	75,476
Total expenses before CO (FY 2022)	\$47,600
Total revenues (FY 2022)	\$1,576
Retail cost recovery % ¹	N/A
Park cost recovery %	3.3%
Average expense per visitor (FY 2022)	\$0.63
Average revenue per visitor (FY 2022)	\$0.02
Gross profit or loss	-\$45,924
Total full-time available positions / filled	0
Total part-time available positions / filled	0
Primary feeder markets	Interstate 24, Fort Campbell, Austin Peay State University, history tourism
Primary reasons people visit	History tourism, quiet space
Opportunities for improvement	Standalone operations. Increase interpretive offerings, address river access issue.

Key Attractions

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

- The recreated 1859 General store
- The remains of the town of Port Royal
- Interpretive programs
- Paddling Access
- Fishing
- Passive outdoor recreation

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

Site and Operations Assessment

This site and operations assessment is a culmination of analyses and findings from a review of the condition of facilities, infrastructure, and operations at Port Royal State Historic Park. The findings and observations are not intended to be an exhaustive review of all issues present but provide a basic understanding of the predominant issues that contribute to the site’s current operating conditions. The assessment includes the following:

1. Site and Facilities Assessment
2. Operational Assessment
3. Financial Assessment

Site and Facility Assessment

Methodology

Facility and asset conditions are rated using a differential scale of excellent, good, fair, or poor. Descriptions of conditions that are attributed to each of these findings are also provided.

Scale of Conditions	
Rating	General Description
Excellent	Facilities/amenities are in ‘excellent’ condition when they show little or no maintenance or repair problems. Facilities do not feature any major design or operational issues or flaws that contribute to diminished use or increased maintenance or upkeep. Facilities are easy to clean and maintain to place them back into public use and the users perceive them to be in excellent shape.
Good	Facilities/amenities are in ‘good’ condition when they show only minor maintenance or repair problems. Most maintenance issues with these facilities typically appear to be the result of age and/or heavy use. Facilities may only feature minor design or operational issues that contribute to diminished use or increased maintenance or upkeep. Facilities are moderately easy to clean and maintain to place them back into service and the users perceive them to be adequate for their use, but probably not in excellent shape.
Fair	Facilities/amenities are in ‘fair’ condition when they show significant maintenance or repair problems. Facilities generally exhibit ongoing maintenance issues that appear to be the result of age, heavy use, or design or operational flaws. Some maintenance and repair needs may compound their fair condition by being deferred because of budget and/or resource limitations. Facilities require more effort to clean and maintain before placing them back into service and the users may perceive them as being less than adequate for their use and in a state of deterioration. The facility or structure may need of major repair or replacement.
Poor	Facilities/amenities are in ‘poor’ condition when they show significant, on-going maintenance or repair problems that ultimately may result in suspended use for repair/replacement. Maintenance and repair issues are possibly the result of poor maintenance and clearly the result of age, heavy use, or design or operational flaws. Problems with the facilities are often compounded over time due to consistently deferred maintenance and repair because of budget and/or resource limitations. Facilities may feature major design or operational issues that contribute to diminished use or increased maintenance or upkeep. Facilities require excessive effort to clean and maintain before placing them back into service and the users often perceive them as being inadequate for their use and in a state of serious deterioration. The facility or structure may need of major repair or replacement.

Facility Inventory and Assessment

The table below is an inventory of facilities and amenities at Port Royal State Historic Park and provides the assessed condition of each as reviewed in May 2023.

Site Asset / Amenity	Quantity	Condition
1859 General Store	1	Good
Maintenance shop	1	Fair
Restrooms	1	Good

Trail Inventory and Assessment

- **River Bottom trail, 0.5 miles long.** This trail connects with the preserved section of the Trail of Tears. This trail presents confusion to visitors as to the correct identification of the Trail of Tears. The trail is in a river bottom and presents significant recurring maintenance to maintain, due to recurring flooding. **Accordingly, this trail should be removed.**
- **Hopson’s Spring Branch walking path, 0.18 miles (1000 feet).** This is a walking trail that leads visitors from the historic town site to Hopson’s Spring Branch. It is in good condition.

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
Interpretive Space	Space for classroom, lecture, and workshops.
Parking Lot	Parking is at capacity (contingent on land acquisition)

Prioritized Facility Needs

Based on the facility inventory and assessment, these prioritized needs have been identified. It is essential that additional land be acquired to accommodate these facility needs. *The current landscape poses difficulties for locating new assets due to the needs of cultural resource protection. These needs are contingent on land acquisition.*

1. Interpretive Space.
2. Parking Lot.

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 Port Royal State Historic Park have been identified as **core services**:

- Staffing necessary to keep the gates open, provide interpretation, and to provide a reasonably safe experience
- Natural and cultural resource management
- 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 Port Royal State Historic Park have been identified as **important services**:

- Interpretation, education, and programming.

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 provide a meaningful return on investment.
- The Services can possibly be provided through outsourcing or use of concessionaires, providing opportunities for community enterprise or services that may not otherwise be provided by the agency.

The following programs and services offered at Port Royal State Historic Park have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- Gift Shop (To be opened in Summer 2023)

Personnel / Staffing Review

***Note: Port Royal State Historic Park is managed by the Park Manager at Dunbar Cave State Park. The site also utilizes portions of job-shared positions located at Dunbar to augment operations.**

Full Time Equivalent Employees

Position / Title	Quantity (FTE)	Compensation Total
Park Interpretive Specialist	1	\$48,000
Park Ranger 2	1	*
TOTAL	1	\$101,940

**Law enforcement compensation confidential by TN law.*

Labor Support

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

Total Labor Compensation Expense

Labor Type	Labor Expense
Full Time Equivalent Employees	\$101,940
Part Time Employees	
TOTAL Annual Labor Expense	\$101,940

Additional Future Positions Needed

Position / Title	Quantity	FTE or PT	Year Needed	Justification
Park Manager	1	FTE	2025	Park currently has no positions
Park Ranger 2	1	FTE	2025	Park currently has no positions
Building Maintenance Worker 3	1	FTE	2025	Park currently has no positions
SIR (job-shared)	1	FTE	2025	Park currently has no positions
TOTAL	5			

Customer Service

Net Promoter score and Staff Service: **100**

Platform / Site	Year	Customer Satisfaction Level
Google	2023	4.3
Facebook	2023	4.5
Trip Advisor	2023	3.5

Professional Development and Training

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

- Historic Preservation training. Various subjects
- Giftshop management
- Oral History collection
- Docent training for volunteers
- Routine law enforcement training
- Routine management 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. None at this time
2. **Operations and Staffing**
 - a. Open the recreated 1859 General Store
 - b. Open Gift Shop
3. **Customer Service / Visitor Experience**
 - a. Increase quantity and cost of townsite tours

Mid Term Recommendations (2-5 years)

1. **Site and Facilities**
 - a. Land Acquisition
 - b. Additional Parking
 - c. Interpretive/ Educational space
2. **Operations and Staffing**
 - a. Establish Port Royal as a standalone operation
 - b. Park Manager and other support staffing
 - c. Create a long-term solution to river access issues
3. **Customer Service / Visitor Experience**
 - a. Address branding/ marketing to accurately reflect the purpose of the site to the public

Long Term Recommendations (5+ years)

1. **Site and Facilities**
 - a. Land Acquisition (if not previously addressed)
 - b. Additional Parking (if not previously addressed)
 - c. Interpretive/ Educational space (if not previously addressed)
2. **Operations and Staffing**
 - a. Establish Port Royal as a standalone operation (if not previously addressed)
 - b. Park Manager and other support staffing (if not previously addressed)
 - c. Create a long-term solution to river access issues (if not previously addressed)
3. **Customer Service / Visitor Experience**
 - a. Diverse interpretive offerings that depend upon having space to do it.

Resource Management Plan

A resource management plan is a specific statement of the objectives you have for your land and natural resources, as well as any significant cultural and historic resources stewarded by the state park. This includes a defined series of priorities and activities that will take place to meet those objectives. This can include future potential land acquisitions or divestitures that are necessary to meet the park's resource management goals and objectives.

Resource Protection is inextricably connected to the process of interpretation; thus, resource management always has interpretive value. Port Royal (PRSHP) preserves the site of one of Tennessee's earliest communities and tells the story of commerce and tobacco culture in the Red River Valley. The purpose PRSHP is to protect, preserve, and interpret the historical, archaeological, and natural resources of the former town of Port Royal and show the visitor how they can meaningfully connect to the stories of Tennessee. PRSHP will protect and professionally manage the resources of the former town of Port Royal and its environs to include archaeological remnants, oral histories, records, physical settings, and sense of place. By preserving our resources in such a manner, we are ensuring their continued longevity and impact on people's lives for years to come.

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

- **Nurture and manage a robust and professional research program.** This is essential for all resource management. "We don't know what we don't know". We must always pursue greater depth in understanding of the resources we are charged with managing.
- **Entrench and formalize partnerships with outside preservation agencies**
- **Seek continuous historic preservation and interpretation training for staff**

- Ensure programming is often centered on the resource management experience.

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
1859 General Store & Masonic Lodge	1	Good	<i>This structure is in good condition. SOI standards for preservation are crucial for longevity.</i>
Townsite (archaeological)	~5 acres	Good	<i>This is managed for minimal disturbance to the resource. Features of this site are varied in preservation and extent.</i>
1890 Iron truss bridge	1	Good	<i>Recently included on the National Register of Historic Places. Needs engineering evaluation, pier repointing, and structure repainting.</i>
Red River riparian corridors	~2,500'	Poor	<i>Most riparian corridors have severe erosion and significant invasive plant species.</i>
Trail of Tears	275 yds	Good	<i>Managed in partnership with the NPS, National Trails office. Funded planning for redevelopment of access and interpretation in FY24 via 'Connect Trails to Parks' program in NPS. Working with TNDOA and SHPO for Section 106 review.</i>
Brick Phone building ca. 1930	1	Poor	<i>The parks preservation efforts will focus on this structure in 2024.</i>
Prehistoric archaeological site TDOA #	2	Good	<i>Archaic prehistoric sites recorded in TDOA site files</i>

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>1859 General Store & Masonic Lodge</i>	Public Use: Interpretive and Park office General Management: This is a historic structure and is physically managed according to SOI standards for historic Preservation. The lower floor is used for recreating the 1859 general store and other historical interpretation/ exhibits. The upper floor is the Park’s office.	<i>High</i>
<i>Townsite (archaeological)</i>	Public Use: Confined to general exploration and regulated by park hours. No non-interpretive use permitted. General Management: Management is consistent with an archaeological site. TNDOA is consulted with any management strategies.	<i>High</i>
<i>1890 Iron truss bridge</i>	Public Use: Pedestrian access only, within confines of park hours. No rentals permitted. General Management: Periodic visual evaluation and consultation with engineering via Facilities.	<i>High</i>
<i>Red River riparian corridors</i>	Public Use: Fishing from bank. Access for Kayaking. General Management: Fishing is permitted along the gravel bar. Kayak access is closely monitored and managed to prevent incursion upon primary mission objectives. Kayak access must be reevaluated for appropriateness for the site.	<i>High</i>
<i>Trail of Tears</i>	Public Use: Pedestrian access, interpretive. General Management: Closely managed in partnership with the NPS, National Trails office. Primary objectives are access for all capabilities, Interpretation, and preservation of sense of place and sacred aspects of site.	<i>High</i>
Brick Phone building ca. 1930	Public Use: None General Management: Preservation efforts upcoming. However, no public access will be permitted.	<i>Moderate</i>

Prehistoric archaeological site TDOA #	Public Use: None General Management: These are in areas of the park not accessible to the public. Management is conducted with guidance from TNDOA.	<i>Moderate</i>
---	--	-----------------

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
Develop a plan that identifies resources in the Red River Valley deemed as significant to a contextual understanding of Port Royal.	Short term
Establish an MOU with the TN Historical Commission for management of the Red River Blockhouse site	Short term
Develop a land acquisition plan to enable sustainable river access for paddling activities. This must be thoughtful and with an eye to the future. It should consider land acquisition needs and should not impact the operation of the historic site.	Short term/ mid term

Supplemental Information

Specific acquisition objectives include:

- The 1867 Mt Zion Baptist church site
- The “Run-a-Muck” kayak outfitter property across the Red River from the site
- The enslaved cemetery site on Port Royal Rd.
- The remaining 1797 townsite, west of the parking lot
- The 1885 Giddings House. This is an integral part of the Black Patch Tobacco Wars story.
- The Sulphur Fork Bottom and Port Royal Mills site.

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.

Port Royal is a 30-acre historic site that preserves the site of one of Tennessee's earliest communities. The site tells the story of commerce and tobacco culture and the relationship to the Red River Valley. Port Royal tells the stories of all people, including the enslaved African Americans that built the town and worked in its tobacco fields, and the over 10,000 Cherokee American Indians that stayed at Port Royal during the Trail of Tears in 1838. The purpose of Port Royal State Historic Park is to protect, preserve, and interpret the historical, archaeological, and natural resources of the former town of Port Royal and show the visitor how they can connect in meaningful ways to the stories of Tennessee in potentially life changing ways.

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 Plans:

- **Formalize relationships with descendant Indigenous and African American communities.** They must be involved in the molding of interpretive efforts focused on their stories. These relationships already exist in an organic fashion but formalizing and entrenching that expectation should be a next step. This should be conducted via Division of Archaeology and IPE.
- **Develop an exhibit about the book “Pioneer Colored Christians”**, which is a 1910 collection of interviews with formerly enslaved African Americans.
- **Ensure that the standard narrative of Port Royal is inclusive** of stories about enslaved and emancipated African Americans, Cherokees during the era of Indian Removal, women’s history (intersectional), and labor reform history during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- **Ensure that marketing and media about the park bring the stories into the center.**

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

- **Develop a short series of videos for in-classroom use that connect viewers to the site’s story via primary documents.** Should partner with MTSU’s “Teaching with Primary Sources”.

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

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

Action Plans:

- **Develop a docent program** through which future Friends Group members can become certified by Park staff to present basic programs.
- **Diverse programs exist – they should be compiled into a portfolio.**
- **Task programming staff to create a variety of free subject-specific walking programs.**
- **Create a series of free rotating exhibits** in the General store.
- The townsite tour is the hallmark experience at Port Royal. **Additional subject specific programs should be created** and offered free of charge to offset the fee required for the Townsite program.
- **Install a series of small, unobtrusive panels to communicate the layout of the town to visitors.**

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

- Managing recreational use with the stewardship needs of the resource
- Varying intensity from self-guided to guided experiences
- Partnership opportunities for program delivery

- Varying costs to the user from “free to fee” based on value of the benefit to the participant and impact to the resource.

Action Plans:

- By its very nature, Port Royal presents a largely passive outdoor experience. **The hallmark townsite tour requires visitors to be outdoors for most of the program.**
- **Passive recreation should be promoted as a secondary feature.**
- **Active recreation should NOT be pursued nor promoted as it interferes with mission specific directives.**

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	3.3%	2.2%	2%	2.1%	2.2%	2.3%

