

# Red Clay State Historic Park Strategic Management Plan

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**2023 – 2033**



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## Purpose, History and Description

Red Clay State Historic Park (RCSHP) was the last seat of the Cherokee national government before the 1838 enforcement of the Indian Removal Act of 1830 by the U.S. military. Eleven general councils were held between 1832 and 1837. Red Clay is where the Trail of Tears really began, for it was at the Red Clay Council Grounds that the Cherokee learned that they had lost their mountains, streams and valleys forever.

### Park Vision Statement:

Red Clay State Historic Park will forever be preserved as the last council ground of the Cherokee people prior to their removal. Through high quality exhibits and interpretation, visitors will have the opportunity to experience a deep sense of the Cherokee people and how they were forever changed by their removal and the Trail of Tears on the land where these events occurred.

### Park Mission Statement:

“The mission of Red Clay State Historic Park is to provide professional management and stewardship of the park and its resources, present consistently effective interpretation of the park’s compelling story, provide the highest quality hospitality experience possible, and foster and maintain relationships with community partners.”

### Interpretive Mission Statement:

RCSHP’s interpretive mission is to provide quality interpretive experiences that focus on 19<sup>th</sup> century daily life of the Cherokee people that will educate the park visitor on the historical, cultural, and natural resources found at this Nationally Registered historic site.

## 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: 1. Provide our visitors with quality interpretive programs. Interpretation cultivates future stewards.

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

Action Plan: Continue providing quality on and off-site programming to a wide variety of audiences and institute online programming opportunities to increase our reach.

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

Action Plan: We are currently utilizing an excel spreadsheet to inventory our artifact collection. We are also using the app iNaturalist to continually log flora and fauna within the park. iNaturalist allows everyone, including visitors, access to what we have at Red Clay and where they are

located. We are also taking inventory of medicinal plants used by the Cherokee as well as birds and animals within the park.

## 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: Host programs that are accessible to a wide variety of visitors and utilize Essential Eligibility Criteria to ensure that guests will be able to participate in programs.

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

Action Plan: Continue hosting programs that focus on environmental health, individual health, and the history of Red Clay.

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

Action Plan: Regularly scheduled hikes, creek crawls, and other nature-based programs at the park.

## 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: Replace old or broken picnic tables. Implement longer intervals of time between mowing the fields to provide opportunities for wildflowers to pollinate.

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

Action Plan: Repave the interpretive trail to ensure that visitors of all abilities can enjoy the park. Provide programming that caters to a wide range of visitors and utilize Essential Eligibility Criteria to lay out what programs will specifically involve.

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

Action Plan: Update the Visitor Center and Gift Shop to have more modern amenities while still maintaining a rustic, 19<sup>th</sup>-century feel.

## 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: Create more opportunities for team building and schedule and trainings for all staff.

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

Action Plan: Monitor spending and seek out alternative revenue sources, such as grants, donations, friends group, etc.

## Park Overview

### Site Fact Sheet

Park Name	Red Clay State Historic Park
Site Manager	Erin Medley
Area Manager	Jacob Young
Park acreage	263
Total number of visitors (FY 2022)	22, 232-doesn't include large park events because they don't come through the front gate.
Total expenses before CO (FY 2022)	\$381,981
Total revenues (FY 2022)	\$41,788
Retail cost recovery % <sup>1</sup>	6%
Park cost recovery %	11%
Average expense per visitor (FY 2022)	\$17.18
Average revenue per visitor (FY 2022)	\$1.88
Gross profit or loss	\$340,000
Total full-time available positions / filled	4/4
Total part-time available positions / filled	1 Seasonal Job Share with 5 in that position
Primary feeder markets	Chattanooga, N. Georgia, Dalton, Bradley, Hamilton, Polk, Athens
Primary reasons people visit	Cherokee history, hiking/recreation, picnicking
Opportunities for improvement	Update/renovate all facilities, replace fencing, paving for parking lots and trail, new front gate.

### Key Attractions

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

- Council Spring
- Eternal Flame Memorial
- Museum
- Hiking trails
- Cherokee Farmstead and replica buildings
- Picnic Pavilion

<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 Red Clay 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 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 Red Clay State Historic Park and provides the assessed condition of each as reviewed in April 2023.

Site Asset / Amenity	Quantity	Condition
Museum	1	Fair
Picnic Pavilion	1	Fair
Public Restrooms	2	Fair
Picnic Tables	15	Fair to Poor
Amphitheater	1	Good
Mini Amphitheater	1	Fair
Maintenance Building	1	Fair
Staff Housing	2	Good to Fair

## Trail Inventory and Assessment

Red Clay has 3 primary trails that span approximately 2.5 miles

Paved Trail - .5 miles-desperately needs repaving

Blue Hole Trail - .35 miles-Needs bank stabilization due to erosion

Council of Trees Trail – 1.7 miles-the re-route was completed within the past year and is in good shape.

## 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
Install Fiber Optics	Park Wide-Visitor’s Center, two residences, maintenance, picnic
New camp host site	Full hook up RV site for volunteer that will help offset park labor.
Visitor’s Center/Cherokee Nature Center	Create two separate buildings for the VC and Museum. This building will be a typical VC, but with an additional nature portion that will focus on the Cherokee’s uses for the different plants and animals found at Red Clay.
Museum	This will be an interpretive center to learn about the history of Red Clay and the Cherokee People during the time before and after the Removal.



## Prioritized Facility Needs

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

Facility Need	Priority Assignment
The exterior of the VC needs to be renovated. The paint is peeling off, the lattice is missing and falling off, boards are rotting, paint is faded and different colors in places, the gutters need to be replaced, the roof needs to be cleaned due to weathering, the stone facade around the building is falling off and needs to be re-cemented.	1
The interior of the VC needs to be renovated to create more space for the gift shop. This area could be more efficient if it were renovated properly. Over the past several years gift shop revenue continues to grow, therefore we need a facility that can accommodate that.	6
The Picnic Pavilion has lattice and paint issues like the VC. The 10 picnic tables need to be replaced because the tables and seats sag in places. The restrooms in this facility need completely gutted and replace with new floors, sinks stalls and toilets. Most importantly the ventilation and/or humidity needs to be addressed because mold and mildew constantly grow on the walls. Also, it's hard to clean the facility because the floors take so long to dry after being mopped and there is a constant unpleasant odor due to the dampness.	4
The maintenance building has an extreme mold and mildew problem. The bathroom facility is old and all of the fixtures need to be replaced. All of the lighting fixtures need to be updated and replaced. Some of them have been updated/replaced but we don't have the equipment to reach the rest of the lights. Gutters need to be replaced. This could	2
Paved Walking Path- currently the path is not ADA compliant, and wheelchairs and walkers have difficulty using it	3
Picnic Pavilion- this facility needs a complete upgrade	5
Visitor Center	7

## 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 Red Clay State Historic Park have been identified as **core services**:

- Provide public access to the park, facilities, and grounds.
- Provide public safety for visitors and protection of the natural and cultural resources.
- Provide maintenance of park grounds, facilities, and infrastructure.

**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 Red Clay State Historic Park have been identified as **important services**:

- Offer a full range of historical and cultural programs
- Make available park-specific information through on site public contact and interpretive signage.
- Provide on and off-site interpretive programs for schools and organized groups.
- Interpret the compelling story of the Cherokee people, the councils at Red Clay and the subsequent removal on the Trail of Tears.

**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 Red Clay State Historic Park have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- Provide volunteer opportunities allowing the community to have a personal stake in the park.
- Host events where Cherokee citizens and cultural ambassadors can take park in the interpretation of their Tribe’s history and culture.

**Personnel / Staffing Review**

Personnel and staffing at Red Clay State Historic Park represent the largest area of budgetary expense at an average of 66.8% of the total operating budget each year for the last three complete years, which is 1.8% higher 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 1	1	*
Park Ranger 2	1	*
Administrative Assistant	1	\$34,236
Museum Curatorial Assistant	1	\$38,184
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$195,012</b>

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

**Part Time Employees**

Position / Title	Quantity	Compensation Total
Seasonal Laborer Job Share	1950 x 14.25	27,787.50
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$27,787.50</b>

**Labor Support**

Labor Support	Annual Hours
Volunteers	50
Community Service Workers	0
Engineering and Construction Crews	0
Resource Management Crews	0
<b>Other: Friends of Red Clay</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>

**Total Labor Compensation Expense**

Labor Type	Labor Expense
Full Time Equivalent Employees	\$16,251 x 12=\$195,012
Part Time Employees	\$14.25 x
<b>TOTAL Annual Labor Expense</b>	<b>\$222,799.50</b>

**Additional Future Positions Needed**

Position / Title	Quantity	FTE or PT	Year Needed	Justification
Building Maintenance Worker	1	FTE	2024	We need someone who can service vehicles/equipment, facilities, clean facilities, and supervise seasonal laborers. Currently, my Ranger, is in charge of all of this in addition to safety/security, SIR, Interpretation, volunteer groups, department initiatives, etc
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</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	Pavilion Rev Per Unit
2019	5.97
2020	3.46
2021	6.89
2022	6.42

**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	Pavilion Rev Per Unit
2023	6.45
2024	6.55
2025	6.65
2026	6.75

### Customer Service

Our NPS for our picnic pavilion is a 100 with a 4.63 out of 5 through Itinio.

Platform / Site	Year	Customer Satisfaction Level
Yelp	2023	5/5
TripAdvisor	2023	4.5/5
Google	2023	4.5/5
Facebook	2023	4.5/5

### Professional Development and Training

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

- All staff who have direct contact with visitors, are required to visit the Cherokee historic sites in our area, to include those in GA (New Echota and Chief Vann House). Each site tells a different part of the Trail of Tears tragedy, which is important to learn for a greater understanding of the entire story.
- Interpretive staff will take the Implicit Bias courses as well as the Telling Full Stories classes. Working at a culturally sensitive park, this training is extremely important, so that our staff will a better understanding of their own biases.
- Interpreters need to take specialized classes that focus on a particular skill the Cherokee would have been using during the 1830's. Blacksmithing, spinning and weaving, and woodworking are some examples of the types of classes they could take.
- All staff members running the gift shop/museum need to attend the Certified Interpretive Host Training, so they can learn how to better interpret our park's story.
- 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. Renovate gift shop area with a grant from marketing

#### 2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Ranger to continue the same work which includes maintenance for the entire park. He also supervises seasonal laborers in addition to all of his other duties.

#### 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Utilize Seasonal Laborer position to help supplement our small staff. They will help run the gift shop, stock inventory,
- b. Provide a living history experience with SIR and Ranger

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

#### 1. Site and Facilities

- a. Renovate entire office space to include gift shop, office area, break room and back offices (to include, flooring, more efficient use of space, wall repair/painting)

#### 2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Create a camp host for Red Clay to help with maintenance needs year-round.

#### 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Continue using the seasonal laborer position to fill the need.
- b. Hire a Cherokee Citizen to provide seasonal interpretation through our SIR position

### Long Term Recommendations (5+ years)

#### 1. Site and Facilities

- a. Build two separate facilities for the Visitor's Center and Museum/Interpretive Center so one can be closed while the other remains open.

#### 2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Add a Full Time Maintenance position

#### 3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Create a position specifically for gift shop and museum separate from the Secretary position,
- b. Create a full-time interpretive specialist position and hire a Cherokee citizen to provide interpretive/living history programs to our community.

## 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.

Our primary role is to preserve and protect the natural, cultural, and historic features of the park. Management goals encompass administrative oversight, maintenance, provide opportunities for education about the history of the park, manage the ecological and natural resources in order restore, maintain, or improve these resources.

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.

- **Administrative Oversight**
  - Develop a plan yearly to manage each of the Target Elements
  - Meet with staff about the conditions and priorities of each of these elements.
  - Update management plan as needed
- **Maintenance**
  - Inspect borders and boundary markers at least once a year
  - Conduct regular inspections of these areas to assess the condition.
  - Continue to develop and repair trail system.
- **Manage ecological and natural resources in order to restore, maintain, or improve these resources.**
  - Monitor the population of the Conasauga Blue Burrower
  - Do not mow in that area until the end of May in order to protect their habitat.
  - Work with the researchers to ensure we are doing everything we can to protect this species.
  - Stay informed of research and keep history of all research conducted.
  - Continue to improve and implement management strategies to manage or eradicate invasive exotic species
  - Work with the appropriate experts to identify threats to plant communities (especially those deemed rare) and to develop and conduct the appropriate management needed to restore, maintain, or improve these communities.
  - Identify all other ecological and biological resource management issues within the natural area (these could include erosion, toxic substances, and others). Work with the

appropriate experts when necessary to eradicate or lessen these threats if eradication is not possible.

- **Manage Cultural Resources**

- **Maintain Replica Structures**

Conduct routine maintenance inspections of each structure to assess their condition  
Continue to replace and repair areas as needed.

Keep a timeline of when such repairs are conducted, for example, roof replacement, drainage, etc.

- **Council Spring**

Continue to remove algae every year. In the past decade and a half, the algae growth has increased significantly. Now the staff must clean it out every year. The Seasonal Interpretive Ranger/Seasonal Laborer took several samples of the water over several months and there was a high number of phosphates (4.0 ppm) in the water which could be one of the contributing factors. It was also higher in the summer months and lower in the later months. This data needs to be continually collected throughout the year.

- **Eternal Flame**

Continually clean out the inside of the memorial due to debris being thrown in by people and/or weather events.

Clean the exterior stonework due to soot build up.

Eradicate all weeds and grass in and around the structure.

## 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
Council Spring	1	Good	There has been a significant increase in algae growth in the bottom of the spring in the 16 years of me being here. I have spoken with several experts but haven't found a plan that would eliminate this problem. My staff will continue to remove it by hand every year.
Replica Structures	8	Good	The cedar shake roofs have been replaced within the past 10 years. There are some erosion issues in and around the sleeping huts and barn.
Blue Hole Hiking Trail	.35 miles	Fair	There are some erosion issues where the trail begins at the Council Spring. We have added rocks for stabilization, but more is needed.
Council of Trees Trail	1.7 miles	Good	We have completed the re-routes of this trail with the help of volunteers. The benches along the trail need to be replaced. They are rotting and falling apart.
Overlook (COT)	1	Fair	This is the halfway point on the COT trail. It is a stone structure with a picnic table. This area needs some general maintenance.
Eternal Flame	1	Good	This is a memorial to those who died on the Trail of Tears. The flame was lit from the original fire that left here almost 200 years ago.
Paved Trail	.5 miles	Poor	This is a trail that takes visitors to our interpretive structures. This trail has ADA issues mostly arising from roots that have buckled the surface of the pavement.

## 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
Council Spring	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Managed Access-Cherokee People are the only ones with access to this area.</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> The Council Spring was the water source for the Cherokee People while they were here. This water is still very sacred, and they use it today for ceremonial purposes. They are the only ones allowed to enter this area. Park staff will keep other visitors back from this area during ceremony, so that they can have privacy.</p>	High
Replica Structures	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Limited Access</p> <p><b>General Management:</b></p> <p>These replica structures are an extension of our museum. It is a way for our visitors to see the types of buildings that would have been here during the 1830's. The Council House, Sleeping Huts, and Corn Crib are open and available for visitors to explore. The Farmhouse and the Blacksmith Shop are locked and only opened for demonstration/programming purposes.</p>	Moderate
Blue Hole Hiking Trail	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Managed access/ accessible to the public.</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> This hiking trail directly connects to the Council Spring and meanders along side the creek, which the Spring creates. It flows into the tributaries of the Conasauga and Coosa Rivers. Erosion and exotic invasives are the biggest management issues. We will work with an Eagle Scout for a potential future project.</p>	High
Council of Trees Trail	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Managed access/ accessible to the public.</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> This trail will have future erosion needs. Currently all issues are contained and re-routes have been made. Future Eagle Scout project for bench replacement.</p>	Moderate
Overlook	<p><b>Public Use:</b> A stopping point on the Council of Trees Trail</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> This stone structure is the halfway point on the COT trail. It needs some graffiti removal, weed-eating, and picnic table replacement. We could possibly be getting new picnic tables for the picnic area, therefore, we could salvage one of those tables to take up there.</p>	High

Eternal Flame	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Limited Access-there is a fence around the structure to prevent anyone from climbing and/or disturbing the fire.</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> In 2020, the entire gas system was replaced due to the flame continually going out. Inside the structure, in and around the flame, need to be cleaned out almost monthly due to storms or people throwing debris into it. The flame occasionally does go out, but we have a back up flame at maintenance that we use to relight it. This pilot light “The Phoenix” at maintenance was also lit with the original fire, so that we will always the original fire.</p>	Moderate
Paved Interpretive Trail	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Managed access/ accessible to the public.</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> This trail sees the most use of all of our trails. It is in poor shape, with many roots having caused it to buckle in some areas. We have been working with Trails for many years to try and get this trail resurfaced.</p>	High
Pier	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Managed access/ accessible to the public.</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> This structure will need to be rebuilt within the next five years. This was originally done by an Eagle scout, so it may be possible to get another Eagle scout to repair it.</p>	Moderate

## 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
If any of the surrounding properties become available, we would like to purchase them to maintain boundary integrity and protect the cultural resources in the surrounding area. Currently, we only have a quarter of what was the original council grounds. We don't have any plans to purchase the land surrounding the park but would like to if an opportunity arises.	7-10 years

## Supplemental Information

We have been monitoring a stand of river cane and have transplanted some. We hope to have a substantial population in the coming years.

## 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.

RCSHP's interpretive mission is to provide quality interpretive experiences that focus on 19<sup>th</sup> century daily life of the Cherokee people that will educate the park visitor on the historical, cultural, and natural resources found at this Nationally Registered historic site.

The primary interpretive theme of RCSHP is to interpret the compelling story of the Cherokee people, the councils at Red Clay and the subsequent removal on the Trail of Tears. The secondary interpretive themes of Red Clay are the Cherokee people's daily life prior to Removal, history of the railroad, the Civil War, and agricultural history.

## 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:** Red Clay will provide programming on Cherokee women, gender roles, and the enslaved peoples the Cherokees had and why.

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

Action Plan: Red Clay will create videos, social media posts, and online-accessible resources pertaining to the park’s flora & fauna.

**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: Create a digital and hard copy of all the items above as a quick reference guide for future and current employees. Work with the Park Ranger and other interpretive staff to create this resource.

**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: Same as above

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	11%	9.82%	10.25%	10.5%	10.75%	11%

