

# Warriors' Path State Park Strategic Management Plan

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**2023 – 2033**



## Table of Contents

<b>Park Purpose, History and Description .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Goals, Objectives and Action Plans .....</b>	<b>3</b>
THE RESOURCES: Exemplary Natural and Cultural Stewardship .....	3
THE VISITOR: Welcoming and Inviting to All .....	4
THE AMENITIES: Well-Maintained Facilities and Amenities.....	5
THE OPERATIONS: Operational Excellence.....	6
<b>Park Overview .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Site Fact Sheets .....	7
Key Attractions .....	7
<b>Site and Operations Assessment .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Site and Facility Assessment.....	8
Operational Assessment.....	11
Summary of Key Recommendations .....	15
<b>Resource Management Plan .....</b>	<b>17</b>
Resource Management Objectives .....	17
Resource Inventory and Assessment .....	19
Management Strategies .....	20
Land Management Strategies .....	21
<b>Interpretive Programming and Education Plan.....</b>	<b>22</b>
Interpretation, Programming and Education Goals .....	22
Strategic Programs and Services .....	23
<b>Financial Performance Goals.....</b>	<b>25</b>

## Park Purpose, History and Description

Warriors' Path State Park was named for the Great Native American War and Trading Path. Native peoples including the Cherokee, Seneca, and Shawnee followed trails from the early Woodland Indians, who followed wildlife trails across the ridges and valleys of Tennessee. European pioneers followed this network of trails as they explored, traded, settled, and pushed westward expansion. Today's travelers can still find evidence of Cherokee and earlier travelers along the Warriors' Path. The Holston River valley that was once a pathway for wildlife, Native Americans, and early settlers, has become a pathway for modern-day outdoor enthusiasts. Many come to camp, hike, fish, golf, and play in the Tennessee outdoors. It's a great place to reflect on those who came before us and to remember how we affect those who will follow us.

Warriors' Path State Park is a general recreation style park, serving over a dozen activities and sports, including camping, hiking, boating, kayaking, running, mountain biking, golf, disc golf, horseback riding and soccer. At now approximately 1,030 acres, it offers a beautiful setting of bluffs, woodland, and open space along the shores of Fort Patrick Henry Reservoir.

The mission statement is as follows: "To provide professional, effective management and stewardship of the park and all its resources, present compelling interpretation of the park's story and resources, provide opportunities for safe enjoyable outdoor and recreational experiences to all park visitors, provide the highest quality hospitality and stay-use services and facilities, provide a safe and inspiring workplace for all park employees and volunteers, manage all park operations to be as efficient and cost effective as possible and to partner with local community leaders to bring a positive economic impact to the area surrounding the park."

## 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:

- Create dedicated interpretive space within the park to encourage field trips and create a sense of community within the park visitors by providing a welcoming destination and more organized gatherings for programs, meetings, or volunteer activities.
- Engage local leaders by presenting at applicable business or commission meetings to communicate the park's role in their constituencies and economy.

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

Action Plan:

- Identify and inventory unique biologic, geologic, and cultural features.
- Manage and monitor progress of management of these features.

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

Action Plan:

- Utilize SmartPark or current iteration of GIS group's software to inventory off trail or backcountry cultural, geological, and biological features, and collaborate with Division of Natural Areas and TN Historic Commission to identify sensitive sites.
- Create a physical inspection plan to monitor identified sites.
- Use the above process to identify natural resource management needs (invasive exotic plant populations, boundary intrusions). Update with management activities and follow up annually to see efficacy of activities.
- Combine data sets from various software suites (AVENZA, SmartPark, Hippo, Origami) to one platform.
- Utilize GIS software in wildland fire tracking and reporting, SAR activities, incident report heat maps.

## 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:

- Interpretive signage at points of interest, wayfinding, rules, and introductory signage should be compatible with translation apps (or QR codes to translations) for limited English proficiency and impaired vision populations.
- Signage should be created with pictographs instead of text.
- Efforts should be made to work with local zoning authorities to see if the approach corridors to the park entrance can be regulated for aesthetics.
- Continual evaluation of ADA and additional accessibility opportunities as aligned with the goals and objectives of the Access 2030 initiative.

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

Action Plan:

- Create and maintain dedicated interpretive spaces within the park to highlight the features of the park and create the connection between the visitor and the place.
- Thoughtfully design interpretive spaces for people of varying abilities.
- Communicate with incoming groups prior to their arrival to plan our program according to their needs.
- Tell the full story: Peel back the layers of history in place – give attention to Native American and African American populations.

- Create virtual hikes or alternative sensory experiences.

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

Action Plan:

- Consult with an advocacy group to assess accessibility needs and suggest solutions.
- Install an adaptive kayak launch at the smaller of our two boat ramps so people can have the independence to launch themselves without assistance.
- Inventory trails for All-Terrain Wheelchair use and get in the pilot program.
- Build an accessible fishing access point and refurbish the existing fishing pier.
- Rebuild and/or create new parking lot access at the Sinking Waters, Fall Creek Loop, and Mountain Bike trailheads.

## 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:

- Review Hippo projects quarterly with key staff to improve accuracy of reporting, especially completion of a work order.
- Prioritize work plans based on traffic and visitor density.
- Identify potentially hazardous conditions and prioritize resources to resolve the conditions.
- Utilize automated reminders for routine and preventative maintenance.

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

Action Plan:

- Consult with an advocacy group to assess accessibility needs and suggest solutions.
- Create a visitor center to give the visitor a place to learn about the park and plan their visit according to their interests.
- Continual evaluation of ADA and additional accessibility opportunities as aligned with the goals and objectives of the Access 2030 initiative.

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

Action Plan:

- Install accessible restrooms in the primary day use areas of the park.
- Install on-course restrooms on the golf course.

## 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:

- Annual staffing assessment with operation supervisors to determine optimal staffing solutions.
- Provide professional training and create career pathways to encourage employee retention.
- Provide a safe and inclusive work environment where ideas are heard and employees are empowered to make decisions in the best interest for the park and visitor.

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

Action Plan:

- Monthly and quarterly budget reviews
- Review spending patterns to predict future spending
- Encourage employees to engage in competitive shopping for supplies and retail items.

## Park Overview

### Site Fact Sheets

Park Name	Warriors' Path State Park
Site Manager	Sarah Leedy
Area Manager	Veronica Greear
Park acreage	1030
Total number of visitors (FY 2022)	1,382,933
Total expenses before CO (FY 2022)	\$2,291,474
Total revenues (FY 2022)	\$1,187,971
Retail cost recovery % <sup>1</sup>	156.77%
Park cost recovery %	51.84%
Average expense per visitor (FY 2022)	\$1.66
Average revenue per visitor (FY 2022)	\$0.86
Gross profit or loss	(\$1,103,503)
Total full-time available positions / filled	14 / 14 Golf 8 / 8
Total part-time available positions / filled	8 / 8 Golf 5 / 5
Primary feeder markets	Knoxville, Tri-Cities, east TN, southwest VA, southeast KY, northwest NC
Primary reasons people visit	Camping, golf, watersports, Boundless Playground, disc golf, hiking, walking/running
Opportunities for improvement	Visitor center for easier orientation to the park and all it offers. Accessibility for water sports and fishing.

### Key Attractions

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

- Campground
- Marina (specifically kayak rentals)
- Golf Course
- Boundless Playground

<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 Warriors' Path 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 Warriors' Path State Park and provides the assessed condition of each as reviewed in May 2023.

Site Asset / Amenity	Quantity	Condition
Campsites	138	Fair
Campground bath houses	6	Good
Conference Rooms	2	Fair
Picnic Shelters	5	Fair
Trails	10	Fair
Ranger Residence	5	Good
Visitor Center/Park Office	1	Poor
Golf Course	1	Good
Marina	1	Excellent
Stables (leased)	1	Poor
Swimming Pool	1	Poor
Maintenance Shops	2	Fair
Boat ramps	3	Poor

## Trail Inventory and Assessment

Trail Name	Mileage	Condition
Boneyard Mountainbike Trail	2.20	Good
Connector Trail	0.29	Fair
Darwin's Revenge Mountainbike Trail	2.05	Good
Devil's Backbone Trail	1.14	Fair
Fall Creek Loop Trail	0.96	Fair
Fawn Loop Mountainbike Trail	0.53	Fair
Holston Bluff Trail Loop	0.36	Good
Lake Hollow Trail	0.59	Fair
Lake Road Mountainbike Trail	0.79	Fair
Lakeshore Trail	0.33	Fair
Magic Carpet Mountainbike Trail	0.25	Good
Narnia Lions Braille Trail	0.26	Excellent
Overlook Trail	0.50	Poor
Paw Paw Breek Mountainbike Trail	0.51	Good
Ridgetop Mountainbike Trail	0.43	Good
Riverbank Trail	0.26	Fair

Rock City Mountainbike Trail	0.55	Good
Sinking Waters Field Loop	0.62	Fair
Sinking Waters Forest Loop	0.72	Fair
Sinking Waters Marsh Loop	0.31	Fair
Wahoo Mountainbike Trail	1.65	Good
Whitetail Mountainbike Trail	2.15	Good
Woodland Ridge Trail Loop	1.45	Poor
Zipline Mountain Bike Trail	0.31	Good
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>19.18</b>	

We have 11 miles of trails that are dedicated to foot traffic only, 2 miles of trails that are used by the horse rental stables and foot traffic, and just over 10 miles of trails for mountain biking and foot traffic. The hiking trails are quite segmented and do not interconnect much. The horse and mountain bike trail systems by design are separate from the foot traffic only trails, although there is a very close run of the Fall Creek loop to the mountain bike system that needs continued barrier and sign placement to discourage cross connecting. The biggest problems that the park resources face on the trail system are ongoing wear and tear from ever increasing usage, and pressure from the user groups to increase mileage.

There is an important need to create a trail connecting the newly renovated Moody Bluff Campground to the main part of the park. This will give bicycles and pedestrians a safer route than the road side/shoulder.

### 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
Visitor Center	Development of a combination headquarters and visitor center with meeting space.
Kayak launch	An adaptive kayak launch that is separate from the main boat launch, which serves motorboats. This would be a renovation of an existing dilapidated paved ramp to accommodate shallow wet launching of kayaks as well as ADA compliance in the form of specified parking, approach ramp, courtesy dock, and adaptive loading apparatus.
Golf course restrooms	Build on-course restrooms on the golf course.
Duck Island Restrooms	Accessible restrooms at Shelter #5 on the Duck Island Walkway
Holston Rowing Club crew dock	Gift in place in progress – A low freeboard dock on the back of Duck Island for safe launching of rowing shells belonging to the Holston Rowing Club. Plans include a youth program for rowing.

## 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 Warriors’ Path 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 natural and cultural features and to lake-based recreation.
- Provide for public safety in the enjoyment of the park
- Provide for sanitation and utilities necessary to allow for sustainable visitation
- Site and facility maintenance

### **CATEGORY 2 – IMPORTANT SERVICES** *[Supported by a balance of revenues and public subsidy]*

Important programs, services and facilities are those the agency should provide, and are important to governing and effectively serving residents, businesses, customers and partners. Providing Category 2 services expands or enhances the agency's ability to provide and sustain its core services. The criteria for programs or services to be classified as important are:

- The services expand, enhance or support identified core services.
- The services are broadly supported and utilized by the community, and are considered an appropriate, important, and valuable public good. Public support may be conditional upon how the services are paid for or funded.
- The services generate income or revenue that offsets some or all the operating cost and/or are deemed to provide economic, social or environmental outcomes or results.

The following programs and services offered at Warriors' Path State Park have been identified as **important services**:

- Lake Access
- Wayfinding / trail map access
- Park office for administrative support of the operations and public information.
- Environmental education to instill a stewardship ethic in visitors and future generations

### **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 Warriors' Path State Park have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- Darrell's Dream Boundless Playground
- Riding Stables
- Disc Golf Courses
- Golf Course
- Mountain Bike Trail system
- Rowing club access
- Soccer fields
- Certified 5K course

- Retail Gift Shop
- Marina, Equipment and Boat Slip Rentals
- Camping

## Personnel / Staffing Review

Personnel and staffing at Warriors' Path State Park represent the largest area of budgetary expense at an average of 60.9% of the total operating budget each year for the last three complete years, which is 4.1% 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	3	*
Conservation Worker 3	1	\$38,184
Conservation Worker 2	1	\$34,236
Conservation Worker 1	3	\$91,512
Account Clerk	1	\$41,568
Secretary	1	\$34,236
Clerk 2	2	\$55,008
Food Service Supervisor 1	1	\$34,236
Food Service Worker	1	\$28,116
Golf Course Manager	1	\$59,124
Hospitality Assistant	1	\$34,236
Greenskeeper	1	\$50,700
Grounds Worker 3	1	\$41,964
Grounds Worker 1	1	\$27,960
Equipment Mechanic 1	1	\$47,976
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>\$961,212</b>

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

### Part Time Employees

Position / Title	Quantity	Compensation Total
Food Service Worker	2	\$47,385
Lifeguard 1	5	\$63,131
Conservation Worker 1	2	\$60,996
Laborer	5	\$137,475
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>\$308,987</b>

**Labor Support**

Labor Support	Annual Hours
Volunteers	13,650
Community Service Workers	400
Engineering and Construction Crews	
Resource Management Crews	
<b>Other: Golf Volunteers</b>	<b>4,968</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,018</b>

**Total Labor Compensation Expense**

Labor Type	Labor Expense
Full Time Equivalent Employees	\$961,212
Part Time Employees	\$308,987
<b>TOTAL Annual Labor Expense</b>	<b>\$1,270,199</b>

**Additional Future Positions Needed**

Position / Title	Quantity	FTE or PT	Year Needed	Justification
Park Interpretive Specialist	1	FTE	FY2024	Focus on quality programming
Park Ranger 1 (6 month)	1	PT	FY2025	Public safety in peak season
Conservation Worker 1	1	FTE	FY2025	Visitor experience, grounds
Administrative Assistant (Golf)	1	FTE	FY2024	To carry out administrative duties
Clerk	1	PT	TBD	To support a future visitor center
Park Interpreter	1	FTE	TBD	To support programming a future environmental education center
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</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	Campground Rev Per Unit	Day Use Rev Per Unit	Golf Revenue per Round
2019	11.36	6.47	26.80
2020	12.33	5.5	17.40
2021	15.34	7.89	29.95
2022	17.42	7.71	32.64

**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	Camping Rev Per Unit	Day Use Rev Per Unit	Golf Revenue per Round
2023	19.33	8.01	36.26
2024	21.46	8.34	36.62
2025	23.82	8.67	36.97
2026	26.44	9.02	37.34

### Customer Service

2023 FYTD Net Promoter Score 64 for campsites. Staff service 4.54 out of 5.

2022 FY Net Promoter Score of 64 for campsites. Staff service 4.68 out of 5.

2021 FY Net Promoter Score of 58 for campsites. Staff service 4.55 out of 5.

2023 FYTD Net Promoter Score of 79 for Golf Course. Staff service 4.59 out of 5.

Platform / Site	Year	Customer Satisfaction Level
Google	2023	4.70
Google	2022	4.70
Google	2021	4.7

### Professional Development and Training

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

- Itinio workspace processes
- HVAC technician
- Chainsaw certification
- GREAT customer service
- 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. Stables – slope stabilization
- b. Recoat floors in campground bathhouses
- c. Replace door hardware on all restroom doors
- d. Rowing dock (gift in place in process)

**2. Operations and Staffing**

- a. 6-month LE Park Ranger
- b. Park Interpretive Specialist
- c. Convert Conservation Worker 3 to Facilities Supervisor

**3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience**

- a. New telecom system with afterhours recording to help with visitor information
- b. Access trail between Moody Bluff Campground and the park entrance
- c. New maps to reflect recent capital improvements with new place labels

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

**1. Site and Facilities**

- a. Marina – add alternate 20 covered boat slips
- b. Pedestrian connectivity to unify park operations / features
- c. Environmental Education Center to replace unused facility
- d. Sinking Waters Boardwalk rebuild
- e. Redesign spatial use of the Duck Island area to remove obsolete manmade features and to make the area more inviting and useable for picnicking and other activities.
- f. On Course restrooms at Golf Course
- g. Integrate trail system on Maloy Tract with existing trail system
- h. Playground in Moody Bluff campground

**2. Operations and Staffing**

- a. Park Interpreter
- b. Golf Course Administrative assistant
- c. Conservation Worker 1
- d. Job shares for future visitor center
- e. Additional personnel to support camp store and marina to operate seven days per week from March through October.

**3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience**

- a. Reorganized signage for easier wayfinding

**Long Term Recommendations (5+ years)**

**1. Site and Facilities**

- a. Visitor Center and Park Office
- b. Campground – Main campground renovation to larger sites, 50-amp service, one way loop, and sewer where possible

**2. Operations and Staffing**

- a. Clerk to support new Visitor Center

**3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience**

- a. To be determined



## 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.

Warriors' Path State Park is comprised of approximately 1052 acres, although there is no record that an actual boundary survey has been completed. It is in the geographic area designated as the Ridge and Valley area of Tennessee. The park is divided by the main channel of TVA's Fort Patrick Henry Reservoir. This small reservoir is a "run of the river" reservoir that is quite small and retains many of the river's natural features, most notably the sheer Ordovician limestone bluffs overlooking the water and gooseneck bends with sandy deposits. The park's elevation ranges from the reservoir elevation of 1,258 feet to approximately 1,450 feet above sea level. The soils on the park are generally either sandy deposits between rocky outcrops or dense clay.

The forested areas of the park are characterized by communities of oak/ hickory and maple/beech. There is a large creek, Fall Creek, cascading along rocky layers in a valley behind the golf course and emptying into the reservoir. The overall topography of the park is characterized by rolling hills on the higher elevations bisected by crevices in the underlying limestone strata. The park holds many unique and fragile habitats which are worthy of extra protection, including wetlands, old growth forest, dripping cliffs, and butterfly meadows.

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

## Natural Resource Management Goals and Objectives

1. **Protect and monitor**
  - a. Wetlands at Sinking Waters and Fall Creek
  - b. Old growth Beech/Maple forests and Oak/Hickory forests at the mountain bike trails
  - c. Dripping cliffs at Fall Creek – an especially rich area for spring ephemerals
  - d. Overlooks on Devils Backbone, Overlook, Boneyard and Rock City trails
  - e. Butterfly/Milkweed meadows at Fall Creek and at Mountain Bike parking area (latter needs more protection from mowing)
  - f. Water quality assessments in the bays around Duck Island
2. **Educate and manage**
  - a. Create comprehensive invasive control plan
  - b. Strengthen the on-site education opportunities (higher education/science clubs)
  - c. Use volunteer programs (TN Promise, corporate or youth project programs) to do invasive exotic control while educating
3. **Retain Audubon Certification**
  - a. October 2022 – renewal awarded, and the next cycle of the process begins
  - b. Introduce prescribed burning of the “wild” areas of the golf course

## Cultural Resource Management Goals and Objectives

1. **Identify**
  - a. Research previous landowners
  - b. GPS marking of known sites
  - c. Location of cemeteries, if any, other than Shipley cemetery
  - d. Continued research and document the Triple C (Charleston, Cincinnati, and Chicago) Railroad grades, cuts, and culverts that exist on the park. This railroad was created in or about 1888 and went bankrupt in or about 1893. Clinchfield (later and presently CSX) Railroad acquired the Triple C but did not use that grade for their line. The Triple C grades run alongside the present-day line in the park.
2. **Protect**
  - a. Determine if standing ruins are viable for reinforcement
  - b. Evaluate traffic to sites
3. **Educate**
  - a. Develop more cultural/humanities-based programming on site
  - b. Develop interpretive kiosk, possibly tying in with TVA visitor center one mile away downstream, to tell the story of the park area, name, settlers, etc.
  - c. Interpretive signage along existing trail system

## 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
Wetlands at Sinking Waters and Fall Creek	2	Good	Second growth successional, but accessed by trails and contain interpretive signage.
Boardwalk at Sinking Water	2	Poor	RTP funded boardwalk (circ 1990s) is showing significant damage from wildlife
Overlooks on Devils Backbone, Overlook, Boneyard and Rock City trails	4	Poor	Hiking trails have many social paths up and around cliff edges. MTB overlooks are in much better shape, most likely due to relative inaccessibility.
Creeks	3	Good	Fall Creek is a large creek that enters the park from far outside the park boundary. We see evidence of nutrient runoff from agricultural practices upstream. The creek at the playground is an emergent spring that surfaces at the park boundary, as is the Red Cedar Branch that drains into the “sink” on the Sinking Waters trail.
Hardwood Forest	750 acres	Good/Fair	This is all second growth forest. There is approximately 40-60 acres of old field succession growth. There is a strong presence of invasive species that need to be managed.

Riparian / River Frontage	50 acres/8.14 miles	Good	Approximately 50 acres of wetland and approximately 8.14 miles of riverbank frontage. Some invasive species and erosion problems to be addressed in cooperation with TVA.
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## 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
Old growth Beech/Maple forests and Oak/Hickory forests	<b>Public Use:</b> Access limited to trails <b>General Management:</b> Invasive species management, trail maintenance in order to help manage visitor over-use	High
Wetlands	<b>Public Use:</b> Access limited to trails <b>General Management:</b> Annual weed clearing to support Rare Odonata habitat	High
Dripping cliffs	<b>Public Use:</b> Access regulated as off trail <b>General Management:</b> Visual surveys	High
Old home sites	<b>Public Use:</b> Some on trail, some off trail <b>General Management:</b> Stable ruins are left as is. One house ruin has collapsed due to persistent off trail (not permitted) camping by local party groups.	Low
Old railroad beds	<b>Public Use:</b> At various points around the park, use could be hiking trail, amphitheater, or disc golf placement <b>General Management:</b> We maintain the trails that are on / in this network. There is great potential to create a scenic and interpretive trail system utilizing this remnant network.	Moderate
Open areas under power line ROWs	<b>Public Use:</b> Golf Course, MTB trails <b>General Management:</b> These offer a unique opportunity to engage in grassland restoration and management. There are large hurdles to this idea – mainly cooperation by the utility to not spray herbicide on managed areas.	Moderate

Pollinator meadows	<p><b>Public Use:</b> Adjacent to parking area and managed with signage to avoid disturbance</p> <p><b>General Management:</b> Yearly mowing and/or prescribed burning. These support the park’s beehives.</p>	High
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## 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
Re-acquire 88 acres divested to the Tennessee Valley Authority after the construction of Interstate 81. This would remove citizen requests to park at the MTB trailhead to access that parcel for hunting. There is already an approved MTB trail there that connects to the park property.	Short 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.

Because it is a natural pathway through the Northeast Tennessee mountains, this land we now call Warriors' Path State Park has known a long history of travelers. Many generations of changing human cultures and wildlife populations have left signs on the landscape – signs that can be guideposts for we modern-day travelers. As we experience how earlier peoples (and wildlife) shaped our land, we can better appreciate how our actions and land-use choices shape the future of the park, and of all our earth.

Reading the landscape to learn the past is key to planning for the future. Warriors' Path is an island of green in a region of rapid urbanization.

### 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:

- Clarify all media/brochure/website mentions of the “Cherokee” War and Trading Path to “Native American” to include all populations that traveled in this area.
- Find the minority stories – while it is widely accepted that slavery wasn’t as significant in the mountains as in the more agricultural parts of the state, it was still here, and its very presence is significant.

**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:

- Social media presence – expand from one platform to several
- Host bioblitz events for identification app users
- Virtual hike or mountain bike experience
- Digital map layering experience to show all phases of transportation in the region – perhaps tie in to where the audience is from and how this path may have influenced that place
- Interpretive displays in proposed visitor center.

**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 Plan:

- Winter Garden Seminar (addresses environmental ethic in the dormant landscape)

**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 Plan:

- Spring Nature Festival (Seminar/Field program format)
- Kayak 101 classes (promotes safe paddle sports)
- Rowing club classes

### 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.

FINANCIAL 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	51.84%	37.38%	38.13%	38.88%	39.63%	40.38%

