



Natchez Trace State Park Management Plan

Table of Contents

Mission Statement.....	03
Park Overview.....	03
Goals, Objectives and Action Plans.....	04-08
Financial Targets.....	09
Key Recommendations.....	10
Park Operations Assessment	
Park Inventory and Facility Assessment.....	11-13
Operational Assessment.....	13-15
Financial Performance Assessment.....	16-17
Customer Service & Satisfaction Plan.....	21
Financial Pro Forma.....	22
Park Map.....	23
Google Map.....	24
Organization Chart.....	25-26

Park Mission

“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 a safe and inspiring workplace for all park employees and volunteers, manage all park and retail hospitality 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.”

Executive Summary

Park Fact Sheet

Park Name	Natchez Trace State Park
Region Manager	Ryan Forbess
Park Manager	Christopher Hill
Park acreage	10,154
Total Number of Visitors (FY11-12)	1,759,480
Total Expenses before CO (FY11-12)	2,233,652
Total Revenues (FY 11-12)	1,366,973
Self-sufficiency %	109%
Avg Expense per Visitor (FY11-12)	1.27
Avg Revenue per Visitor (FY11-12)	.78
Avg Self-sufficiency ¹ (FY10-12)	110%
Gross Profit or Loss	(866,679)
Total full-time employees ²	22
Total part-time employees ³	22.1
Primary feeder markets	Jackson, Nashville, Memphis, west TN
Primary reasons people come	Horseback riding, fishing, water sports, camping, cabins, hunting, hiking
Opportunities for improvement	Update facilities, reach out to new groups, update programming opportunities

¹This is the average of the last three years – FY09-10, FY10-11, and FY11-12.

²Current employees, not including vacancies.

³Current employees, not including vacancies.

Site Summary

Natchez Trace is a western spur off of the historic Natchez Trace Parkway. Its roots are based in the Roosevelt Administration's "New Deal" initiative. Creation of the park began in the late 1930's under programs such as the Works Progress Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps.

Key Attractions

- 47 room inn with restaurant and conference center
- 17 cabins
- 10 villas
- group camp
- 4 campgrounds
- equestrian center
- 40 mile backpacking trail.

Financial Targets

- Operate within a 2.1 million dollar budget and continue to surpass revenue goals of 1.3 million per year.

The following table details the total operating expenses and earned revenues for Natchez Trace State Park over the last three years (FY 09-12). Park management will need to decide the assumptions for visitation growth and Self-sufficiency percentage for FY13-15 (3 years out). Once those two numbers are decided upon, total expenses and revenues for FY 13-15 can be calculated.

List budgeting assumptions:

Park visitation growth:

% in FY12-13; 6%

% in FY13-14; 4%

% in FY14-15; 2%

Self-sufficiency %

% in FY12-13 63%

% in FY13-14 66%

% in FY14-15 67%

Inflation %

% in FY12-13 1.7%

% in FY13-14 1.5%

% in FY14-15 2.0%

Actual	FY09-10	FY10-11	FY11-12
Visitors	1,270,421	1,701,660	1,759,480
Total Revenues	1,332,030	1,343,401	1,366,973
Total Expenses	2,303,005	2,370,609	2,233,652
Revenue per Visitor	1.05	.79	.78
Expense per Visitor	1.81	1.39	1.27
Self-sufficiency %	58%	57%	61%
Gross Profit	-970,975	-1,027,208	-866,679

Estimated	FY12-13	FY13-14	FY14-15
Visitors	1,875,818	1,957,835	
Total Revenues	1,287,116	1,519,921	
Total Expenses	2,063,604	2,316,363	
Revenue per Visitor	.69	.78	
Expense per Visitor	1.10	1.19	
Self-sufficiency %	64%	67%	
Gross Profit	-776,488	-796,442	

Key Recommendations:

- Natchez Trace needs more “buy in” from its local communities.
- Developing a closer relationship with the surrounding chamber of commerce organizations will be paramount to its future growth.

Short Term Recommendations (Less than 1 year):

- Develop more lodging packages and programming events to enhance visitation.
- Work with the state marketing group to promote our facilities
- List all events and special programs on the park Facebook page along with the state’s Facebook page.

Long Term Recommendations:

- Recruit more commercial type groups for conferences and special events.
- Develop an action plan for reaching out to various businesses.
- Plan more “value added” programs to boost revenues.

Park and Operations Assessment

This section is an assessment in detail of facilities, operations, and financial forecasts. The findings are not intended to be exhaustive review of all issues but a basic overview of the predominant issues. The assessment includes the following:

- Park Facilities Assessment
- Operational Assessment
- Financial Assessment

Park Facilities Assessment

Facilities and park assets are rated using a nominal scale of excellent, good, fair or poor. Descriptions of those rankings are provided below.

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. 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. 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. Users 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

Park Inventory & Facility Assessment

The table below is an inventory of facilities and amenities. The assessed condition is for the group of assets under that label, i.e., inn rooms includes the overall condition for 47 inn rooms.

Needed capital improvements - Assets & Amenities

Natchez Trace State Park

Site Asset/Amenity	Quantity	Condition
Inn Rooms	47	Good/Fair
Rustic Cabins	17	Good
Villas	10	Good
Campsites	211	Excellent/Good
Inn common areas	1	Good
Restaurant	1	Good
Conference Rooms	3	Good
Picnic Shelters	4	Good
Group Lodge	1	Good
Trails	2	Good/Fair
Ranger Residence	4	Good/Fair
Visitor Center/Park Office	1	Good
Stables	1	Excellent
Gift Shop	1	Good
Other		

List new assets and amenities that would fall under capital expenditures that are needed to improve customer service and drive revenue. Examples would be new trails, ADA improvements, wifi accessibility, additional campsites, etc.

New Assets & Amenities	Description
ADA Hiking Trail	Develop an ADA accessible hiking trail for visitor use
WIFI	Add WIFI to our RV campground
*Pin Oak Lodge Renovations	Overall renovations and upgrades
*Campground Renovations	Upgrade Campground 1 and Wrangler Camp/decommission Campground 2
Mattresses and TV's	Purchase new mattresses and flat screen TV's for inn and cabin use
Furnishings/HVAC/Key cards	Update furnishings & HVAC system and purchase key card system for inn and cabins

Prioritized Facility Needs

Based on the inventory and assessment conducted above, these prioritized needs have been identified. Each need has been aligned with a priority category of high, moderate, or low to support future decision making regarding project sequencing, investment of public resources, and meeting community expectations. The priority assignment is not a measure of importance; rather, these recommended priorities reflect a phased implementation approach over the next several years.

Facility Need	Priority Assignment
ADA hiking trail/other trails - Lakeside	Low
Campground WIFI	Moderate
*Pin Oak Lodge Renovations	High
*Campground Renovations	High
Cabin and inn room mattresses	High
Cabin and inn room flat screen TV's	High
Cabin and inn room furnishing upgrades	High
Inn room HVAC system upgrade	Moderate
Cabin and inn room key card system	Moderate

Operational Assessment

The Operational Assessment includes:

1. An inventory and classification of programs and services provided at the park.
2. A review of staffing at the park
3. A review of concessionaires and partners operating at the park
4. Visitation and customer satisfaction

Inventory and Classification of Programs and Services

- 1) Programs and services are classified as Core or Essential Services
- 2) Important Services
- 3) Visitor Supported Services

Programs and services at the park are classified into these categories based in part on the mission and public mandates for both the site and the agency.

Category 1 – Core Services (largely supported by tax funds)

Core programs, services and facilities are those the agency must provide and/or 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 following programs and services at Natchez Trace State Park have been identified as **core services**:

- Support the mission of Tennessee State Parks which is “to preserve and protect, in perpetuity, unique examples of natural, cultural, and scenic areas and provide a variety of safe, quality, outdoor experiences through a well-planned and professionally managed system of state parks.
- Provide for public access to the park, the facilities and the grounds.
- Provide for public safety for visitors and protection of natural and cultural resources.
- Provide for maintenance of grounds, facilities and infrastructure.
- Maintain facilities developed through the LWCF program to required standards.
- Provide for basic, non-staff supported day-use activities (such as hiking and picnicking) with trails, informational signage, picnic tables, trash cans and restroom facilities.

- Maintain park drinking water and wastewater programs to state standards.

Category 2 – Important Services (supported by a balance of tax funds and earned revenues)

Important programs, services and facilities are those the agency should provide, and are important to governing and effectively serving residents, businesses, customers and partners. The following programs and services at Natchez Trace State Park have been identified as **important services**:

- Provide a full range of environmental, cultural and recreational programs.
- Offer park-specific information at the Visitor Center and Nature Center.
- Provide educational programs for schools and organized groups.

Category 3 – Visitor Supported Services (almost exclusively supported by earned revenue)

Visitor supported programs, services and facilities are those discretionary services that the agency may provide when additional funding or revenue exists to offset the cost of providing those services. The following programs and services at Natchez Trace State Park have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- Operate a 47-room inn and conference center.
- Operate a limited-service, year-round restaurant.
- Operate banquet and conference facilities for business meetings, wedding, etc.
- Operate and provide retail support services for the gift shop in the inn.
- Provide support services for 27 rental cabins and 209 tent/RV/wrangler campsites.
- Provide support services for picnic shelters and group lodges.

Staffing Assessment

Full Time Equivalent employees

As of: 5/28/13

Position/Title	Quantity (FTE)	Vacancies	Annual Hours
Park Manager 3	1	0	1950
Ranger	2	0	5850
Conservation Worker 1	4	0	7800

Conservation Worker 2	2	0	5850
Conservation Worker 3	1	0	1950
Custodial Supervisor 1	1	0	1950
Account Clerk	2	0	3900
Room Clerk	1	0	1950
Hospitality Assistant	1	0	1950
Food Service Asst Mgr 2	0	0	1950
Hospitality Manager 2	1	0	1950
Custodial Worker 1	2	0	3900
Park Ranger/Lead Programmer	1	0	1950
Building Maint Worker 2	1	0	1950
Building Maint Worker 3	1	0	1950
Equipment Mechanic 1	1	0	1950
Total	22	0	48,750

Part Time Employees (No benefits)

Position/Title	Quantity (FTE)	Vacancies	Annual Hours
Room Clerk	8	0	15,990
Clerk 1	.8	0	1599
Cook 2	4.1	0	7995
Servitor	2.5	0	4797
Food Service Worker	0	0	1599
Custodial Worker 1	4.1	0	7995
Laborer	2.6	0	12,792
Total	22.1	0	52,767

Labor Support (Non-paid)

Labor Support	Annual Hours
Friends	40
Park Volunteers	500
Golf Course Volunteers	0
Court Mandated Community Service (probation/prisoner)	0
Campground Host	1,000
Total	1,540

Labor Budget Summary

Based on a three year average total personnel expenses averaged 54.2% of total expenses.

Expenditure Description	FY09-10	FY10-11	FY11-12	% Change from 2010
Personnel Services	940,744	969,786	866,399	-7.9%

Employee Benefits	462,832	488,614	432,675	-6.5%
Total Personnel Expenses	1,403,576	1,458,400	1,299,074	-7.0%

Visitation and Occupancy

Describe trends over last 3 years. Overall annual visitation to this park has increased from FY09-10 to FY11-12, by 38% or over 489,000 visitors.

Fiscal Year	Total Visitation
FY09-10	1,270,421
FY10-11	1,701,660
FY11-12	1,759,480

Occupancy for the overnight accommodations as well as restaurant for the last three years is detailed in the table below.

Fiscal Year	Inn Occupancy	Cabin Occupancy	Campsite Occupancy	Group Camps Occupancy	Restaurant Covers	Total Golfers
FY09-10	25%	34%	21%	5%	33,221	
FY10-11	24%	35%	16%	5%	34,503	
FY11-12	24%	33%	16%	5%	38,055	

Customer Service and Satisfaction:

Natchez Trace is typically described in a very positive light by most patrons. There are reviews on TripAdvisor, Facebook, and through in-house comment cards. The comments primarily give good reviews based on customer service and most of the amenities. The few negative comments are based on lack of upgraded facilities.

Financial Performance Assessment

Operational Expenses:

A summary of total operating expenses from FY09-10 through FY11-12 are provided below. Revenue increases are noticeable in the restaurant and gift shop while camping activity, as reported above, is declining.

Part 1 – Profit center Self-sufficiency

	FY09-10	FY10-11	FY11-12
Profit Center Revenue			
Restaurant	281,563	281,358	325,609
Inn	445,141	316,315	304,616
Cabins	275,951	409,177	410,937
Gift shop	32,613	38,631	38,400
Camping	238,676	221,031	214,457
Sub-total Revenue	1,273,944	1,266,512	1,294,019
Profit Center Costs & Expenses			
COGS	123,377	142,797	211,515
Personnel	564,868	620,322	588,205
Travel (03)			
Utilities & Fuel (05)			
Maintenance & Repair (07)			
Supplies & Materials (09)			
Motor Vehicle Operation (11)			
Buildings (18)			
Total Other Expenses	439,350	419,647	384,999
Sub-total Cost & Expense	1,127,595	1,182,766	1,184,719
Self-sufficiency %	113%	107%	109%

Part 2 – Other profit center revenues and expenses

	FY09-10	FY10-11	FY11-12

Vending	2718	2305	1,173
Group Lodge/Camp	14,552	12,695	1,355
Picnic Shelters	80		
Boat Rental	6460	5616	5,701
Fishing	66	153	434
Grocery Store			
Swimming			
General Recreation-Other	4091	3916	8,897
Leased - Equestrian	1989	1996	1,125
Leased - Gift Shop			
Leased - Other	2454	2048	1,860
Misc	25,676	48,160	52,408
Other Profit Center Revenue	58,086	76,889	72,953
Cost & Expenses from Other Profit Centers			
COGS	920	111	816
Personnel Expenses	840,411	838,078	710,869
Travel (03)	902	471	492
Utilities & Fuel (05)	58,430	54,862	45,738
Maintenance & Repair (07)	3,479	9,844	1,451
Supplies & Materials (09)	2,505	982	2,985
Motor Vehicle Operation (11)			
Buildings (18)			
Total Other Expenses	334,079	349,876	337,2490

Part 3 – All sections combined to yield the Parks gross profit or loss

	FY09-10	FY10-11	FY11-12
Total Revenue	1,332,030	1,343,401	1,366,972
-Total COGS	124,297	142,686	212,331
-Total Personnel Expense	1,405,279	1,458,400	1,299,074
-Total Other Expense	773,429	769,523	722,248
=Gross Profit	-970,975	-1,027,208	-866,679

Review of Pricing

There has been no significant growth in rates since 2009. Current rates as taken from the TSP Webpage are below.

As of 8/25/14:	In Season		Off Season	
	April 1 to	October-31	November 1 to	March-31
	Sunday - Thursday	Friday - Saturday	Sunday - Thursday	Friday - Saturday
Inn room	72	76	70	70
1 Bed Suite	115	115	115	115
2 Bed Suite	173	173	173	173
3 Bed Suite	231	231	231	231
Villa*	150	150	150	150
Rustic Cabin*	85	95	85	95
Group Lodge (64 people)*	532	532	532	532

* = 2 night minimum

Camping	
Base rate campsite inland/lakefront	25.00
Camper Cabin	34.00

Conference and Meeting facilities	Sq. Ft.	Dim.	Rate
Recreation Lodge	2400	30' x 80'	200
Pin Oak A or B	1014	39' x 26'	100
Natchez Room	1080	30' x 36'	75

	Qty	Rate
Picnic shelters	4	2@40

Competitors

- Beech Lake Campground/Lexington, TN.
- KOA Campground/Wildersville TN.
- Econo Lodge/Lexington, TN.
- Knights Inn/Wildersville, TN.
- Lexington Inn/Lexington, TN.

All these business would be considered as comparable in price and moderately comparable in quality.

Business and Management Plan

Business Goals

Improve Self-sufficiency: Cut expenditures in areas of control, i.e. utilities, travel, overtime, supplies, etc. Generate more revenue through creative marketing and other means.

Enhance Revenue Generation: Market packages to groups that have never been done before, i.e. hunting packages, overnight hiking packages, boating/fishing packages. Continue to operate the park store which previously was a leased operation.

Expand Special Events: Develop more annual special events. Provide at least one “major” program per quarter to attract visitors. These programs could include but not be limited to: Heritage Day, Halloween Spookout, Astronomy Night, Christmas in the Park, Jr. Ranger Camp, etc.

Improve the Diversity and Innovation of Recreational and Interpretive Programs: Continue to offer our most popular and well attended programs while developing new ones that create interest from untapped sources. Incorporate technological advances into programs such as the use of a GPS to locate a Geocache.

Improve the Effectiveness of Marketing and Sales: Begin to use marketing in a much more “proactive” manner. Traditionally Natchez Trace marketing has consisted primarily of newspaper ads along with specials advertised on the state parks website. Emphasis for the future will be based more on our individual park website, park Facebook site,

local industry cold calls, and working more closely with surrounding Chambers of Commerce.

Measure and Manage Customer Service and Satisfaction: Begin to compile and respond to comments from customers through various web sites and comment cards in an organized, timely fashion.

Expand Partnership Opportunities: Seek out patrons of the park to organize for the purpose of stewardship projects. Explore new avenues of partnering with groups to expand revenue possibilities.

Partnership Development Plan

Operational Partners: Presently there is only one operation that is leased out at Natchez Trace. The park equestrian facility is operated by a concessionaire when a lease agreement has been established. This facility has had no interest in being leased since 2011 and is currently used by the park for overnight horse boarding.

Vendor Partners:

- Pepsi Inc.

Service Partners:

- Natchez Trace Outdoor Classroom
- West TN. Astronomy Club
- Friends of Natchez Trace
- Tennessee Trails Association
- Various scout troops
- UTM Parks and Recreation Dept.

Funding Resource Partners:

- Natchez Trace campground hosts
- Friends of Natchez Trace.

Marketing and Sales Plan

Marketing and sales goals for Natchez Trace State Park are based on the following desired outcomes:

Promotional Plans:

- Work with the local country club to develop a golfing package to offer.
- Deer hunter packages will be available on every opening weekend of archery, muzzleloader, and rifle season.
- Free Tuesday package. Stay any 3 consecutive nights, with a Tuesday being one of them, and get the Tuesday night free.
- Continue putting restaurant pamphlets in Inn rooms that advertise hours and buffets available.
- Co-brand with other vendors to become the “official” overnight accommodations for them and offer deals to their customer base.
- Offer more programming during fall and winter months to increase visitation.
- Send out day meeting packages to local industries. Partner that with a special rate for any out of town employees they bring in.

Interpretive Plans:

- Continue to offer annual special event programs such as Heritage Day, Halloween Spookout, Astronomy Night, Christmas in the Park, Junior Ranger Camp.
- Develop more special events throughout other slow times of the year.
- Advertise and do more programming during serving time at the restaurant.
- Publicize all programs and events through local media outlets and through any social website available.

Sales Call Goals:

- Sales calls will be made twice per week.

- Sales calls will be made by the Park Manager, Inn Manager, Assistant Inn Manager, or lead programmer.
- Sales calls will target groups such as local businesses, youth organizations, leadership retreats, church groups, etc.

Social Media Plans:

- Use email blasts to offer last minute deals.
- Use social media outlets to promote special events for the park and lodge.
- Lead programmer will ensure the content of the park's Facebook account to be accurate and up to date.
- Park Manager and Inn Manager will monitor other sites such as TripAdvisor to gauge the feedback provided and take any necessary corrective action.

Customer Service Satisfaction Plan

Conduct “on site” surveys to assess how well customer satisfaction is being met. Read all comment cards and take corrective action when necessary. Monitor social media and travel websites to gather information on what our customers like and don’t like.

Revenue Generation Plan

1. Most price adjustments are set by Nashville. Inn room prices just increased \$5-\$6 per night in 2013/2014. It is feasible the rates on facilities could increase by 10% over the next 5 years.
2. We are constantly searching for new ideas for our gift shop to increase revenue. We do this primarily through trial and error methods. Also, we will be doing the same in regards to packages we offer.
3. New groups we will strive to target can and will include: Teacher retreats, women's getaways, leadership retreats, and corporate team building.

Cost and Expense Control

1. Over the course of the past few years we have targeted reducing expenses through a number of ways. We have predominately eliminated any overtime costs. We have cut back on supplies that could be done without. We manage our seasonal hours always to stay “under” budget. One of the largest areas we have saved in is utilities. We will be continuing to explore new avenues to save in this regard. Future plans include: Winterizing public lodge area, recreation lodge, and equestrian center. Some cabins will also be looked at to do the same.
2. LEAN initiative has helped tremendously with the ordering process. We are now able to determine what our inventory is at a glance and the supplies we need.
3. Through participation in the “green” initiative, we have reduced utility costs. This has been accomplished by measures such as: Using more energy efficient appliances and light bulbs, installing programmable thermostats in certain facilities, and using motion sensor lighting. We will continue to look for other

Financial Pro Forma

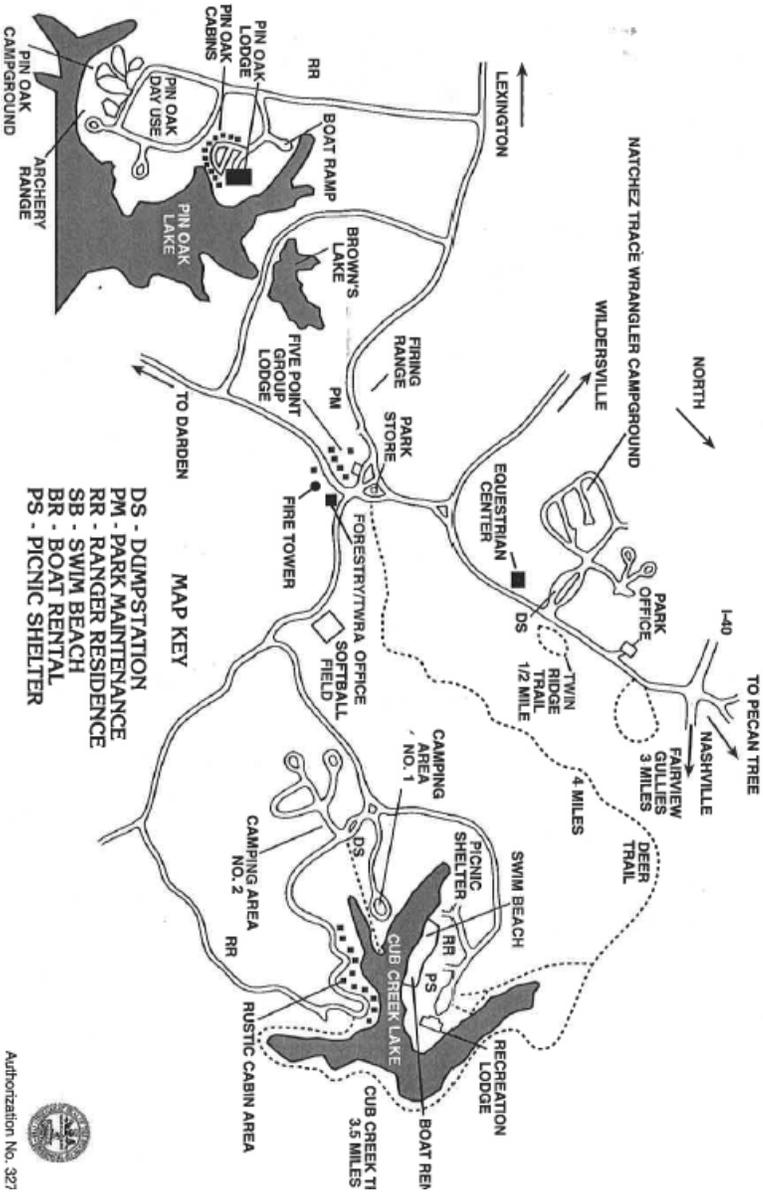
The following three-year pro forma projects the financial outcomes based on the strategies and desired outcomes identified in this business plan.

State assumptions on park visitation growth, inflation, revenue growth:

Part 1 – Profit center Self-sufficiency

	FY12-13	FY13-14	FY14-15
Profit Center Revenue			
Restaurant	315,433	321,742	331,394
+Inn	282,071	287,712	296,344
+Cabins	408,936	429,383	450,852
+Golf			
+Other	67,567	69,594	72,378
+Gift shop	43,068	51,682	56,850
+Camping	198,984	208,933	219,380
=Sub-total Revenue	1,316,059	1,369,046	1,427,197
Profit Center Costs & Expenses			
COGS			
+Personnel			
+Other Expenses			
=Sub-total Cost & Expense	2,054,380	2,054,380	2,054,380
Profit	(738,321)	(685,334)	(627,183)
Self-sufficiency %	64%	67%	69%

Natchez Trace State Resort Park



Authorization No. 327



*Updated June 24, 2018; Pages 8, 9; Public Hearing held April 19, 2018 at Natchez Trace State Park as per Tenn.Code Ann. 11-3-120

Business & Management Plan

Natchez Trace State Park

Updated June, 2018

Approved by:



Chris Hill, Park Manager
Tennessee State Parks

Date: 6/19/2018



Ryan Forbess, Area Manager
Tennessee State Parks

Date: 7/11/2018



Mike Robertson, Director of State Park Operations
Tennessee State Parks

Date: 30 July 2018



Brock Hill
Deputy Commissioner
Parks & Conservation

Date: 8-30-2018

