



Big Cypress Tree State Park Business & Management Plan

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Mission Statement:

To provide professional, effective management and stewardship of the park and all its resources, to present compelling interpretation of the park's story and its resources, to provide opportunities for safe enjoyable outdoor passive recreational experiences to all park visitors, to provide a safe and inspiring workplace for park employees and volunteers, to 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.

MDS, December 2012

Goals, Objectives and Action Plans

Definitions:

COGS – Cost of Goods Sold

SEER – Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating

LEAN – Process Improvement Method

Goal 1. Cost Management

See Financial Pro forma section for the Parks' cost objective. This percentage can be reduced by increasing revenues (see Goal 2); by controlling COGS; by controlling Personnel costs and Other expenses.

Objective 1: Plans for controlling Personnel expenses; list \$ or % of revenue; unless noted otherwise, all objectives are for completion by end of FY14-15.

Action plans: What is to be done; frequency; by whom. **The park has no revenue. Only one employee at Big Cypress Tree (the park manager) so he can't charge for anything or accept money.**

Objective 2: Plans for controlling Other expenses, These action plans would include preventative maintenance, limited renovations, any savings from LEAN or energy audits; list \$ or % of revenue; unless noted otherwise, all objectives are for completion by end of FY14-15.

Action plans: What is to be done; frequency; by whom. **Use energy saving light bulbs and Energy Star rated appliances. Semi-annual preventive maintenance on heating and cooling unit done by West TN Facilities Management. EXAMPLES:**

- 1) Reduce utility operational costs by using grant funding to purchase and install high efficiency lighting, using Energy Star rated appliances when replaced old refrigerators, ranges and other electrical appliances in all buildings where this would apply.

- 2) Install high efficiency, High SEER rated HVAC units for all buildings.
- 3) Perform semi-annually preventive maintenance for HVAC units to insure peak performance and to extend the life span of the units.
- 4) Perform quarterly cleaning of lighting and electrical fixtures to obtain peak performance and reduce heat loads.
- 5) Install motion sensor light switches in living room spaces to insure lights will not be left on when people are not in the room thus reducing cost of electricity.

Goal 2: Expand Special Events

Special events can include revenue generating concerts, golf tournaments, seasonal hikes, and incorporation of holidays and special days of the year to increase overnight occupancy and to show off culinary delights in the restaurant.

Objective 1: Inventory all Special Events locations currently being held at the Park.

Action plans: What is to be done; frequency; by whom. **At least four annual hikes and the annual Big Cypress Tree Fall Festival. Park Manager plans and conducts these events with help from Friends of Big Cypress Tree and UT Martin. No overnight stays are possible due to lack of overnight facilities. All events are free.**

Objective 2: Prepare a list of new events that can be added to the list of current events. Consider events linked to the park's history, ecology, wildlife, and area patrons. List details:

Action plans: What is to be done; frequency; by whom. **Possible new events: "Owl Prowl" on the new boardwalk led by park manager and UT Martin staff. "Park Plant Life" will identify different flora growing along the new boardwalk led by park manager, UT Martin staff, and natural areas ecologists. "Park Animal Life" will identify fauna living in the park.**

Goal 3: Expand Recreational and Interpretive Programs

While BCTSP already offers a wide variety of interpretive programs and recreational activities, the park staff should consider broadening the horizons with more group team building opportunities. With this in mind, the inclusion of a canopy tour operation should open up more opportunities to host groups with more and different interpretive programs. This should enhance people to visit the park more frequently and stay longer partaking of park facilities.

Another program should be considered where people can pay to work on park projects in the forest. Many people want to make a difference with nature; to build trails or to assist with ecology minded projects. *Example is Volunteer Vacations (building trails) offered by the American Hiking Society.*

Objective 1: Evaluate and prepare programs that can be offered to in-house groups.

Action plans: What is to be done; frequency; by whom. **Big Cypress Tree is a small park (day use only) with no accommodations for overnight stays. Only a building contractor is allowed to**

build the boardwalk because of liability issues so volunteer boardwalk trail building will probably never happen.

Objective 2: Evaluate and prepare 3-day and 7-day “vacation” packages to offer to paying guests.

Action plans: What is to be done; frequency; by whom. **Does not apply to Big Cypress Tree.**

Goal 4: Improve the Effectiveness of Marketing and Sales

This goal refers to marketing activities taken by the all Park staff in their local area. These activities will be assisted where possible by the Central Office marketing staff. Activities would include local area sales calls, phone calls to clients, email blasts, Facebook postings, attendance at local civic organizations, networking, Website postings and direct mail. In-house efforts would include lobby posters, in-room collateral, on-table offerings and front-desk signs, camp store signs, elevator signs, and park-wide video announcements. Typical **examples** might include:

Objective 1: Acquire video capability (to place videos on you-tube).

Action plans: What is to be done; frequency; by whom. **This doesn't apply to Big Cypress Tree.**

Objective 2: Obtain 1,000 Facebook friends. Assign maintenance and updates.

Action plans: What is to be done; frequency; by whom. **The Friends of Big Cypress puts events on Facebook for the park.**

Objective 3: Assign responsibility to attend local Chamber meetings.

Action plans: What is to be done; frequency; by whom. **The Friends of Big Cypress Tree are members of the Weakley County Chamber of Commerce.**

Objective 4: Develop passive surveys and intrusive surveys.

Finding out the demographics will help point the marketing effort in the right direction. It will also help in the decision to develop park services and activities.

Action plans: What is to be done; frequency; by whom. **A log in book could be put in the kiosk in the picnic area so visitors can sign in with the date, their names, and where they are from.**

Goal 5: Monitor and Manage Customer Service and Satisfaction

Monitoring customer service and satisfaction will entails some means to measure how visitors feel about the Park and how they perceive the services and the conditions of the facilities. Ways to measure customer service are the number of complaint letters, comment cards, ratings on *TripAdvisor* or other social media platforms. In some cases, the park may have to go out and survey visitors several times a year.

Managing customer service and satisfaction deals with developing and incentivizing good products and services and getting rid of bad products and services. If you know what the visitor thinks is good, then it makes sense to make the product or service easier to use. Resource allocation would normally promote the good products over the bad or mundane products.

Objective 1: Develop a way to monitor activities and services throughout the park on a regular basis.

Action plans: What is to be done; frequency; by whom. **This does not apply to Big Cypress Tree. The Park Manager strives to help each visitor have a good safe visit to Big Cypress Tree.**

Objective 2: Set a numerical goal that all park personnel will strive for by which customer service and activities offered are evaluated as good.

Action plans: What is to be done; frequency; by whom. **The Park Manager strives for 100% visitor satisfaction.**

Goal 6: Expand Partnership Opportunities

All park locations have multiple types of partnership opportunities. The most obvious is the Friend's Group who raises money for Park projects and provides personnel to work on Park projects and events. Other types of partnerships include Campground Hosts, golf course volunteers, local companies that provide free services and institutional organizations that lend trustee prisoners for day-use work.

By expanding partnerships, the Park can reduce the costs of materials and supplies and related services needed by the Park, and offset event and program costs.

Objective 1: Find ways to measure the contribution by partnership and report this outcome annually, both in monetary contributions and volunteers hours worked. (Types of Partnerships would be Friends, Park Volunteers, Court Mandated Community Service, local businesses and other groups.)

Action plans: What is to be done; frequency; by whom. **The Friends of Big Cypress Tree contribute significant amounts of money to match park grants. They also help plan and support the park's events during the year. UT Martin staff and students help with the annual Fall Festival by setting up ecology and paleontology booths as well as doing programs for the festival.**

Objective 2: Find ways to expand partnerships such as more participation in events, festivals or other park projects; or new types of volunteers or docents.

Action plans: What is to be done; frequency; by whom. **The Park Manager works with boy scout and girl scout troops, UT Martin park and rec. students, and other groups to help them identify and carry out projects beneficial to the park. These groups also have helped with the fall festival.**

Park Overview

Park Fact Sheet

Park Name	Big Cypress Tree State Park
Area Manager	Ryan Forbess
Park Manager	Bill McCall
Park acreage	329.52
Total Number of Visitors (FY13-14)	15,758
Total Expenses before CO (FY13-14)	116,321
Total Revenues (FY 13-14)	0
Retail Self-sufficiency % ¹	0
Park Self-sufficiency %	0
Avg Expense per Visitor (FY13-14)	7.38
Avg Revenue per Visitor (FY13-14)	0
Gross Profit or Loss (FY13-14)	(116,321)
Total full-time available positions / filled	1 / 1
Total part-time available positions / filled	0 / 0
Primary feeder markets	This is primarily a local community park that provides recreational space for area groups such as scouts and civic groups.
Primary reasons people come	Local residents come for exercise and to bring children to enjoy open spaces. Some groups come for festivals, family reunions and scout camping.
Opportunities for improvement	

¹Based on **T.C.A. 11-3-305, Self-sufficiency of revenue-generating facilities**

Site Summary

The park is located just 6 miles northwest of Greenfield and 50 miles north of Jackson. While named for a large bald cypress tree that is no longer there, the park features a variety of plant life ranging from native wildflowers to native trees. Part of the park is a wet bottomland hardwood forest.

Key Attractions

The main facilities include one picnic shelter with five tables and restrooms and a boardwalk. Activities include primitive group camps for scouting groups, short hiking trails, a short handicapped accessible boardwalk and picnic tables near a children's playground. There is also softball field.

Financial Targets

The following table details the total operating expenses and earned revenues for Big Cypress Tree State Park over the last four years (FY 10-14).

Actual	FY10-11	FY11-12	FY12-13	FY13-14
Visitors	25,567	15,957	18,702	15,758
Total Revenues	0	0	0	0
Total Expenses	114,075	120,757	130,114	116,321
Revenue per Visitor	0	0	0	0
Expense per Visitor	4.46	7.57	6.96	7.38
Retail Self-sufficiency %	0	0	0	0
Gross Profit	(114,075)	(120,757)	(130,114)	(116,321)
Park Self-sufficiency %	0	0	0	0

Key Recommendations for use in Action Plans

Short Term Recommendations (Less than 1 year)

The park needs to be able to close its gate after dark to keep people from driving into the park during the night to prevent vandalism. Because hunting is allowed in the park and the hunter's parking area is close to the park office, the gate near the entrance cannot be locked at sunset. **The park was closed in 2002 and TWRA took possession of it for 2 years. During that time, TWRA started to allow hunting on the park. A few years later, Tennessee State Parks got the park back. Presently, Tennessee State Parks owns and manages all 330 acres of Big Cypress Tree again. The hunting should be stopped in the park because we have a new boardwalk trail in the same woods where hunting occurs with firearms. This is a potentially dangerous situation. Park visitors on the boardwalk should feel safe and have a chance to see wildlife when walking on the boardwalk. They should not have to be worried about a stray bullet from a hunter. Prime time for seeing wildlife and walking the boardwalk is the fall and winter months when the weather is cooler and insects are not present. During the day after Thanksgiving hike at Big Cypress Tree, a group of visitors led by the Park Manager was approaching the boardwalk and met 2 hunters leaving the woods on the very same concrete walk. The hunters had a dead deer in a wheel barrel. Park visitors coming to hike and enjoy the boardwalk hope to see a live deer (and other wildlife) so this situation was unpleasant for the park visitors. Hunting should be banned on the park. There are other public hunting lands in this area of West Tennessee for hunters to use. The park should go back to being a sanctuary for wildlife like it was before TWRA got possession of it.**

LWCF money was used to establish this park as a public area where passive recreational activities are enjoyed. Many people do not consider hunting to be passive recreation which could mean hunting on the park violates the LWCF guidelines. A park funded by LWCF must stay the same as it was originally intended forever. Its original purpose cannot be drastically changed. Big Cypress Tree’s original purpose was to be a protective sanctuary for flora and fauna.

Long Term Recommendations

Need a Visitors’ Center/Administrative facility for programming, offices, storage, office equipment, meetings, etc. **The Friends of Big Cypress Tree own 2 acres next to the highway which would be a great location for a new visitor’s center and office. The Friends would probably donate this land to the state for a visitor’s center. Park visitors would stop there for information before going deeper into the park.**

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

Park Asset/Amenity	Quantity	Condition
ball field	1	Good
Office	1	Good
play structure	1	Good
pump house	1	Good
Restroom	1	Good
septic tank systems	2	functioning
Shed	1	Good
Shelters	1	Good
storage/shed combination	1	Good
walking trail	1	good/poor

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
Addition to existing boardwalk	Big Cypress Tree has a 1,142 foot long boardwalk. We need to extend that another 1,700 feet which will take it to the middle fork of the Obion River. This would complete the boardwalk.
Fence in the current residence/office and the maintenance building	The boardwalk's handicapped parking area is in front of the park's maintenance building. Handicapped parking access must be allowed but the 2 buildings need to be protected, too. Fencing in these 2 buildings will protect these buildings while allowing the handicapped to access boardwalk parking.

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
Extend boardwalk 1,700 feet to Obion River	1
Fence in the residence/office and maintenance building,	2
New visitor's center and office	3

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 Big Cypress Tree 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.
- 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.
- Picnic tables and picnic pavilions.

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 Big Cypress Tree State Park have been identified as **important services**:

- none

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 Big Cypress Tree State Park have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- none

Staffing Assessment

Total Full-Time Available Positions / Filled

1 / 1

Total Part-Time Available Positions / Filled

0 / 0

Labor Support (Non-paid)

Labor Support	Annual Hours
Friends	130 hours
Park Volunteers	80 hours
Local Businesses	
Court Mandated Community Service (probation/prisoner)	
Total	210 hours

Labor Budget Summary

Based on a 4 year average, total personnel expense is 66.6% of total expense.

Expenditure Description	FY10-11	FY11-12	FY12-13	FY13-14	% Change from 2010
Personnel Services	51,288	51,948	52,992	54,414	6%
Employee Benefits	26,075	27,195	27,900	28,809	10%
Total Personnel Expenses	77,363	79,143	80,892	83,223	8%

Visitation and Occupancy

Describe trends over last four years.

Fiscal Year	Total Visitation
FY10-11	25,567
FY11-12	15,957
FY12-13	18,702
FY13-14	15,758

Financial Performance Assessment

Operational Expenses

A summary of total operating expenses from FY10-11 through FY13-14 are provided below.

Part 1 – Profit center Self-sufficiency

	FY10-11	FY11-12	FY12-13	FY13-14
Profit Center Revenue				
Restaurant				
Inn				
Cabins				
Golf				
Marina				
Gift shop				
Camping				
Sub-total Revenue				
Costs & Expenses				
COGS				
Personnel				
Total Other Expenses				
Sub-total Cost & Expense				
Retail Self-sufficiency %				

Part 2 – Other profit center revenues and expenses

	FY10-11	FY11-12	FY12-13	FY13-14
Vending				
Group Lodge/Camp				
Picnic Shelters				
Boat Rental				
Fishing				
Grocery Store				
Swimming				
Gen Rec Other				
Leased - Equestrian				
Leased - Gift Shop				
Leased - Other				
Misc				
Other Profit Center Revenue				
Cost & Expenses from Other Profit Centers				

COGS				
Personnel Expenses	77,363	79,143	80,892	83,223
Total Other Expenses	36,713	41,615	49,223	33,098

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

	FY10-11	FY11-12	FY12-13	FY13-14
Total Revenue	0	0	0	0
-Total COGS				
-Total Personnel Expense	77,363	79,143	80,892	83,223
-Total Other Expense	36,713	41,615	49,223	33,098
Gross Profit	(114,075)	(120,757)	(130,114)	(116,321)
Parks Self-sufficiency	0	0	0	0

Competitors

List any competitors for the above listed facilities. Include their approximate proximity to the park, any competitive features, their quality level and their prices. List any key accounts they are getting.

Customer Service and Satisfaction

Describe any customer service rankings and/or surveys ranging from comment cards to TripAdvisor, Yelp or any other sources.

Tripadvisor as of 10/31/14

Ranked #1 of 1 Attractions in Greenfield

 6 Reviews

Visitor rating



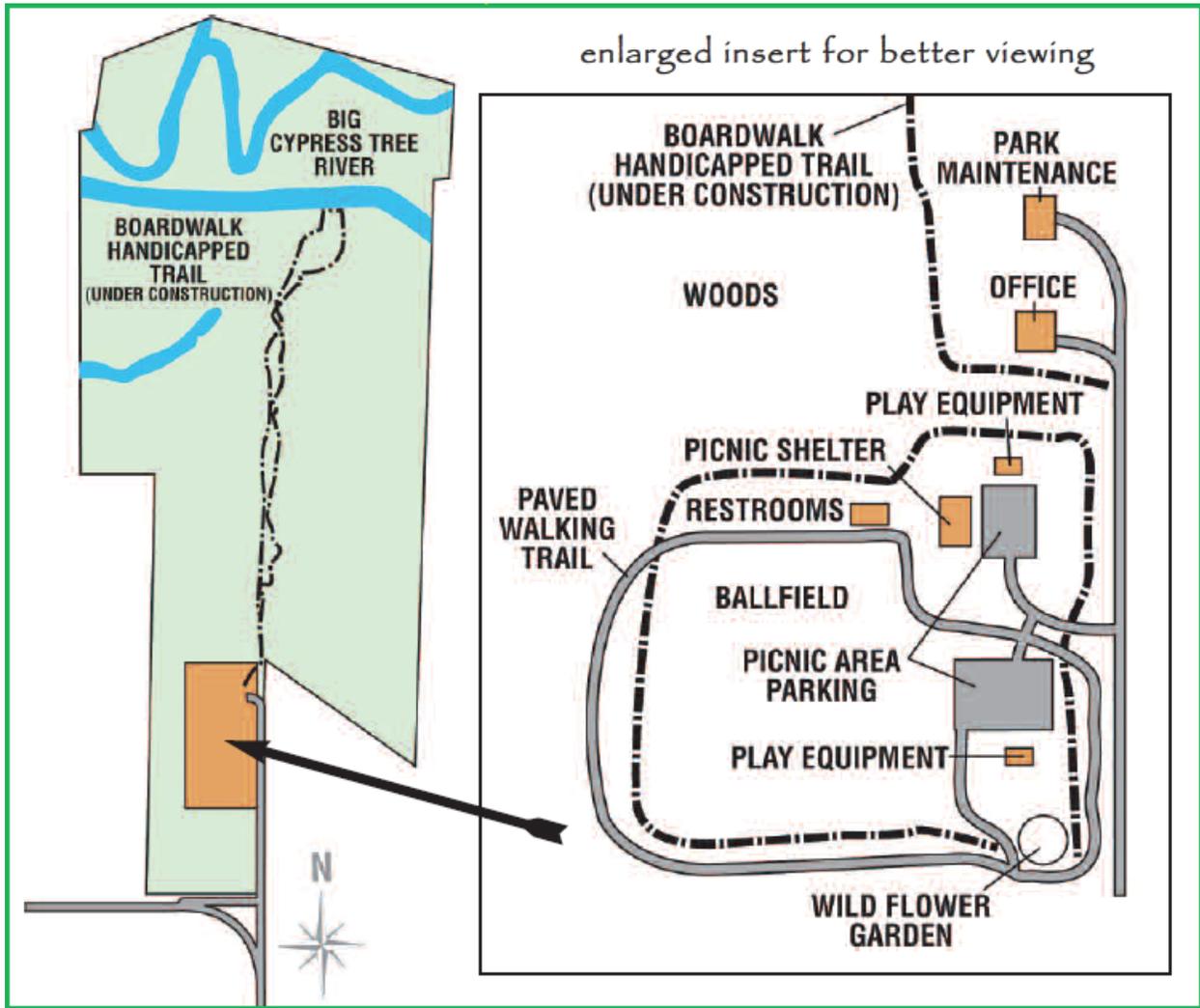
Financial Pro Forma

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

Use Year 2 for Objectives	Base Year		Year 1		Year 2	
	FY12-13	%+	FY13-14	%+	FY14-15	
Programs	-	2%	-	4%	-	
Other	-	3%	-	4%	-	
Total Revenue	-	3.5%	-	3.9%	-	
Total Expense	130,114	0%	130,114	0%	130,114	
Gross Profit	(130,114)		(130,114)		(130,114)	
Park Self-sufficiency	0%		0%		0%	

	Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
	%+	FY15-16	%+	FY16-17	%+	FY17-18
Programs	4%	-	5%	-	5%	-
Other	4%	-	5%	-	5%	-
Total Revenue	4.5%	-	5.0%	-	5.0%	-
Total Expense	0%	130,114	0%	130,114	0%	130,114
Gross Profit		(130,114)		(130,114)		(130,114)
Park Self-sufficiency		0%		0%		0%

Park Map



National Geographic Map



Organizational Chart

Big Cypress Tree State Natural Area
Organizational Chart – January 2014

Bill McCall

Park Manager 1

Position # 00067386

R/F – 12 months

Business & Management Plan

Big Cypress Tree State Park

Updated January, 2019

Approved by:

Bill McCall

Bill McCall, Park Manager
Tennessee State Parks

Date: 1-18-19

Ryan Forbess

Ryan Forbess, Area Manager
Tennessee State Parks

Date: 1/16/19

Mike Robertson

Mike Robertson, Director of State Park Operations
Tennessee State Parks

Date: 1/19/19

Brock Hill

Brock Hill
Deputy Commissioner
Parks & Conservation

Date: 1-19-2019

