



Panther Creek 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 and present compelling interpretation of the park’s story and resources. To provide the highest quality service and hospitality while affording all visitors the opportunities for safe and enjoyable outdoor recreational experiences. To provide a safe and inspiring workplace for all park employees and volunteers while managing all park operations to be as efficient and cost effective as possible. To partner with local community leaders and businesses to bring a positive economic impact to the area surrounding the park.”

Goals, Objectives and Action Plans

Goal 1. Cost Management

See Financial Pro forma section for the Parks' cost objective.

Objective 1: Plans for controlling Personnel expenses:

- 1) Park management will control personnel expenses by managing seasonal hours.

Objective 2: Plans for controlling Other expenses, These action plans would include preventative maintenance, limited renovations, any savings from LEAN or energy audits;

- 1) Added insulation to park residences.
- 2) Maintain a water leak control plan that includes monitoring water usage daily, installing a smart meter, and fixing leaks in a timely manner.
- 3) Maintain motion sensors or timers in all public buildings and facilities.
- 4) Maintain efficient lights, electronic ballasts, and LED bulbs in all facilities.
- 5) Inventory cleaning supplies monthly. Develop and implement cleaning standards to ensure efficient use of available resources and time.
- 6) Perform quarterly preventive maintenance on HVAC units, facility fixtures, and other equipment.
- 7) As HVAC units expire, install high SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficient Ratio) units.
- 8) Adjust the thermostat upon exiting the building. Adjust it back to normal settings once the building is occupied again.

Goal 2: Revenue Growth

See Financial Pro forma Section for revenue objectives. .

Objective 1: Plans to increase campground revenue

- 1) Park manager will request a 25% price discount for camping on Monday through Thursday (historically our least used days) from May through September. A Special Arrangement Request form will be used to request the proposed discount.

Objective 2: Plans to increase swimming pool revenues:

- 1) Park staff will request a 50% discount for groups of 20 or more. A SAR form will be used to request the proposed discount. The target group will be daycares in Hamblen and Jefferson Counties.
- 2) Park staff will make a list of all daycares and key staff within the two counties.
- 3) Park staff will send a letter to each daycare explaining the discount opportunity at the park swimming pool.

- 4) Park staff will propose swim lessons or other programs for daycare staff and children in order to encourage increased swimming pool use.

Objective 3: Increase gift shop revenue;

Many park visitors are not aware of our park gift shop. Therefore, we will make a sign to place in the parking lot notifying visitors of our gift shop. Signs will also be placed in the campground.

Goal 3: Expand Special Events

See Interpretive Action Plan

Goal 4: Expand Recreational and Interpretive Programs

See Interpretive Action Plan

Goal 5: Improve the Effectiveness of Marketing and Sales

Signage will be placed in key locations throughout the park promoting the gift shop.

Goal 6: 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.

Goal 7: 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.

Park Overview

Park Fact Sheet

Park Name	Panther Creek State Park
Region Manager	Robin Peeler
Park Manager	Jason Chadwell
Park acreage	1,444
Total Number of Visitors (FY12-13)	603,111
Total Expenses before CO (FY12-13)	748,299
Total Revenues (FY 12-13)	135,405
Retail Self-sufficiency % ¹	205%
Park Self-sufficiency %	18%
Avg Expense per Visitor (FY12-13)	1.24
Avg Revenue per Visitor (FY12-13)	.22
Gross Profit or Loss (FY12-13)	-612,895
Total full-time available positions / filled	10 / 10
Total part-time available positions / filled	2 / 2
Primary feeder markets	Visitors and residents from The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Pigeon Forge, Gatlinburg, Knoxville, Jefferson City, and Morristown. <u>Groups include:</u> local citizens, park users, Friends of Panther Creek State Park, private businesses, Morristown City and County Government, Volunteer Fire Department, Rescue Service, Lakeway Riding Club, Five Rivers Cycling, and River Sports Outfitters just to name a few.
Primary reasons people come	Convenient location, variety of outdoor activities available to visitors, and the support the park receives from the community. The park offers a variety of outdoor activities: trails for biking, horseback riding, hiking; camping, fishing, swimming, picnicking, and boating.
Opportunities for improvement	Ongoing trail maintenance and improvements to trail signage will enhance safety/pleasurable experiences for all users.

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

Site Summary

Panther Creek State Park is located in Morristown Tennessee. Knoxville Tennessee is approximately 38 miles from Panther Creek State Park. The highest point in the park, Point Lookout, is 1,460 feet above sea level and 400 feet above the lake.

Key Attractions

Panther Creek State Park is located on the shores of Cherokee Lake and recreational opportunities that are offered to visitors including swimming, fishing, hiking, trail running, mountain biking, horseback riding, boating, camping, wildlife viewing, sports, interpretive programs and special events. The park operates a swimming pool open from Memorial Day through mid-August, a campground open year-round, and picnic shelters and tables available to visitors. Shelters are rented year-round. The park maintains approximately 30 miles of trails, several recreation fields, a playground, boat ramp, tennis courts, basketball court, sand volleyball courts, and horseshoe pits.

Facilities include 3 park residences, the visitor's center, maintenance building, swimming pool, 4 restrooms, 3 shelters, 1 playground, 1 campground with 2 bathhouses and 50 camping sites, 2 campground pavilions, a boat ramp, and an overlook deck.

Financial Targets

The following table details the total operating expenses and earned revenues for Panther Creek State Park over the last four years (FY 09-13).

Actual	FY09-10	FY10-11	FY11-12	FY12-13
Visitors	635,602	648,697	666,136	603,111
Total Revenues	116,824	123,617	137,290	135,405
Total Expenses	633,557	661,133	687,934	748,299
Revenue per Visitor	.18	.19	.21	.22
Expense per Visitor	1.00	1.02	1.03	1.24
Retail Self-sufficiency %	271%	214%	269%	205%
Gross Profit	-516,733	-537,516	-550,644	-612,895
Park Self-sufficiency %	18%	19%	20%	18%

Pro forma	Base Year		Year 1		Year 2
	FY12-13	%+	FY13-14	%+	FY14-15
Campground	82,860	2%	84,517	3%	87,053
Gift Shop	1,273	20%	1,528	10%	1,680
Programs	-	2%	-	4%	-
Other	51,271	3%	52,809	4%	54,921
Total Revenue	135,404	3.5%	138,854	3.9%	143,655
Total Expense	748,299	0%	748,299	0%	748,299
Gross Profit	(612,895)		(609,445)		(604,644)
Park Self-sufficiency	18%		19%		19%

Key Recommendations for use in Action Plans

Short Term Recommendations (Less than 1 year)

- Work with key stakeholders including current business partners, Friends Group, local community groups, and other park volunteers to promote park programs, volunteer opportunities, and recreation.
- Facilitate community meetings to determine local interest in a disc golf course.
- Write an LWCF grant to improve recreational facilities including the playground and sand volleyball court.

Long Term Recommendations

- Continue to develop partnerships with local community groups to help promote and protect park resources. Continue to search for appropriate grants for help with funding resource management and conservation projects.
- Work with users to educate and promote healthy outdoor activities. Continue to screen requests from visitors to ensure that activities are aligned with park values.
- Continue to improve productivity and customer service by holding regular staff meetings and training.
- Meeting facility addition.
- Purchase adjacent land to use as a buffer area and possible disc golf course site.

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.

Needed capital improvements - Assets & Amenities

PARK: Panther Creek		
PARK ASSET/AMENITY	QUANTITY	CONDITION
Basketball Courts	1	Good
Bathhouses	3	Excellent
Boat Ramp	1	Good
Bridge	2	Good
Bridges (small, foot bridge)	2	Good
Camper Check-in Stations	1	Good
Campsites	50	Good
Equipment Sheds	1	Good
Maintenance Building	1	Good
Park Pool	1	Fair
Picnic Shelters	5	Good
Playgrounds	1	Fair
Rangers Residences	2	Good
Restrooms	4	Good
Roads / Paving		Good
Tennis Courts	1	Fair
Trails	30+ miles	Good
Visitor Center / Park Office	1	Good
Volleyball Courts	1	Good
Sewage Treatment Plant	1	Good

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
Meeting/Conference Center	Currently there is no local conference center for businesses to use.

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
Meeting and conference center	1

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 Panther Creek 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 day-use activities (such as hiking and picnicking) with trails, informational signage, picnic tables, 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 Panther Creek 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 Ranger Station.
- 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 Panther Creek State Park have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- Operate and provide retail support services for the gift shop in the visitor center.
- Provide support services for 50 tent/RV campsites and bath house.
- Provide support services for a swimming pool and picnic shelters.

Staffing Assessment

Total Full-Time Available Positions / Filled

10 / 10

Total Part-Time Available Positions / Filled

2 / 2

Labor Support (Non-paid)

Labor Support	Annual Hours
Friends	120
Park Volunteers	384
Court Mandated Community Service (probation/prisoner)	96
Campground Host	0
Total	600

Labor Budget Summary

Based on a 4 year average, total personal expense is 52.2% of total expense.

Expenditure Description	FY09-10	FY10-11	FY11-12	FY12-13	% Change from 2010
Personnel Services	273,595	262,619	297,005	315,941	15.5%
Employee Benefits	123,632	11,200	129,068	13,700	-89%
Total Personnel Expenses	397,227	273,819	426,073	329,641	-17%

Visitation and Occupancy Describe trends over last four years.

Fiscal Year	Total Visitation
FY09-10	635,602
FY10-11	648,697
FY11-12	666,136
FY12-13	603,111

Occupancy for the overnight accommodations for the last four years is detailed in the table below.

Fiscal Year	Campsite Occupancy
FY09-10	18%
FY10-11	24%
FY11-12	24%
FY12-13	17%

Financial Performance Assessment

Operational Expenses

A summary of total operating expenses from FY09-10 through FY12-13 are provided below.

Part 1 – Profit center Self-sufficiency

	FY09-10	FY10-11	FY11-12	FY12-13
Profit Center Revenue				
Restaurant				
Inn				
Cabins				
Golf				
Marina				
Gift shop			366	1,273
Camping	68,268	65,014	72,147	82,860
Sub-total Revenue	68,268	65,014	72,513	84,133
Costs & Expenses				
COGS				549
Personnel				
Total Other Expenses	25,179	30,344	26,917	40,571
Sub-total Cost & Expense	25,179	30,344	26,917	41,120
Retail Self-sufficiency %	271%	214%	269%	205%

Part 2 – Other profit center revenues and expenses

	FY09-10	FY10-11	FY11-12	FY12-13
Vending	5,215	1,578	34	876
Group Lodge/Camp				
Picnic Shelters	8,664	10,228	9,653	8,678
Boat Rental				
Fishing				
Grocery Store				
Swimming	30,298	40,895	43,704	34,485
Gen Rec Other	459	494	513	276
Leased - Equestrian				
Leased - Gift Shop				
Leased - Other				
Misc	3,919	5,409	10,873	6,956

Other Profit Center Revenue	48,555	58,604	64,777	51,271
Cost & Expenses from Other Profit Centers				
COGS			132	
Personnel Expenses	397,227	273,819	426,073	329,641
Total Other Expenses	211,151	356,970	234,812	377,538

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

	FY09-10	FY10-11	FY11-12	FY12-13
Total Revenue	116,824	123,617	137,290	135,405
-Total COGS			132	549
-Total Personnel Expense	397,227	273,819	426,073	329,641
-Total Other Expense	236,330	387,314	261,729	418,109
Gross Profit	-516,733	-537,516	-550,644	-612,895
Parks Self-sufficiency	18%	19%	20%	18%

Review of Pricing

(Take from Rate Schedule)

CAMPING: Rates Effective January 1, 2013

Camping rates are listed below and State and local sales taxes will be added to the listed rates where applicable. The following camp rates will apply at all parks.

In Season Rates and Discounts

Site Category	Rate Ranges	Senior	Disabled	TN State Employee*	TN Veterans*
Type AAA	\$25.00-\$27.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Type AA	\$25.00-\$27.50	25%	25%	25%	N/A
Type A	\$20.00-\$22.50	25%	25%	25%	N/A
Type B	\$16.00-\$18.50	25%	25%	25%	N/A
Type C	\$11.00-\$13.50	25%	25%	25%	N/A
Primitive	\$ 8.00-\$10.50	25%	25%	25%	N/A

Off Season Rates and Discounts

Site Category	Rate Ranges	Senior	Disabled	TN State Employee*	TN Veterans*
Type AAA	\$25.00-\$27.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Type AA	\$25.00-\$27.50	50%	50%	50%	50%
Type A	\$20.00-\$22.50	50%	50%	50%	50%
Type B	\$16.00-\$18.50	50%	50%	50%	50%
Type C	\$11.00-\$13.50	50%	50%	50%	50%
Primitive	\$ 8.00-\$10.50	50%	50%	50%	50%

Occupancy limits for campsites are determined by the Park. Exceptions to limits can be approved by Park Manager at the additional rate of \$1.00 per person. No Charge for children 7 years of age and under.

Site Category General Descriptions:

Site designations at each park to be determined by Park Manager & Regional Manager

Type AAA: Premium sites with water & electric that has features that put them in high demand. Examples of premium features would be individual sewer hook-up, waterfront location, scenic vista location, etc.

Type AA: Standard improved sites with water, electric, may have sewer or 50 amp service but do not have the features of a premium site.

Type A: Standard improved sites with water and electric and usual campsite amenities.

Type B: Improved sites with water & electric that may be in less demand due to location or with older features and limited facilities, or, improved sites without water & electric that may be in high demand due to desirable features and location.

Type C: Improved sites without water and electric. This can also be used for unimproved low demand, overflow sites with water & electric.

Primitive: Unimproved sites without water & electric to be used by tent campers only. Sites minimally developed, may have table & fire ring but little else.

Group camping sites: Those sites designed to accommodate larger groups of campers within a specific single location.

SWIMMING: (All rates include tax)

Pools are generally open from Memorial Day to Mid-August (Subject to availability of Lifeguard staff)

Note: Most public pools are closed on Mondays and Tuesdays except for holidays. Check with individual parks for specific dates and days of availability.

Pool	\$4.00
Campers	\$2.00

PICNIC SHELTER RESERVATION/RENTALS:

Name of Park	Shelter(s)	Per Day	Half-Day
Panther Creek	2@	\$75.00	NA
	1@	\$25.00	

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.

Cherokee Park campground.

Shelters located at Frank Lorino park.


Customer Service and Satisfaction

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

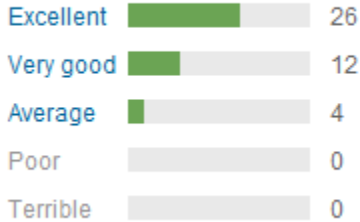
Tripadvisor as of 7/16/14

Ranked #2 of 6 attractions in Morristown

 42 Reviews

 Certificate of Excellence 2014

Visitor rating



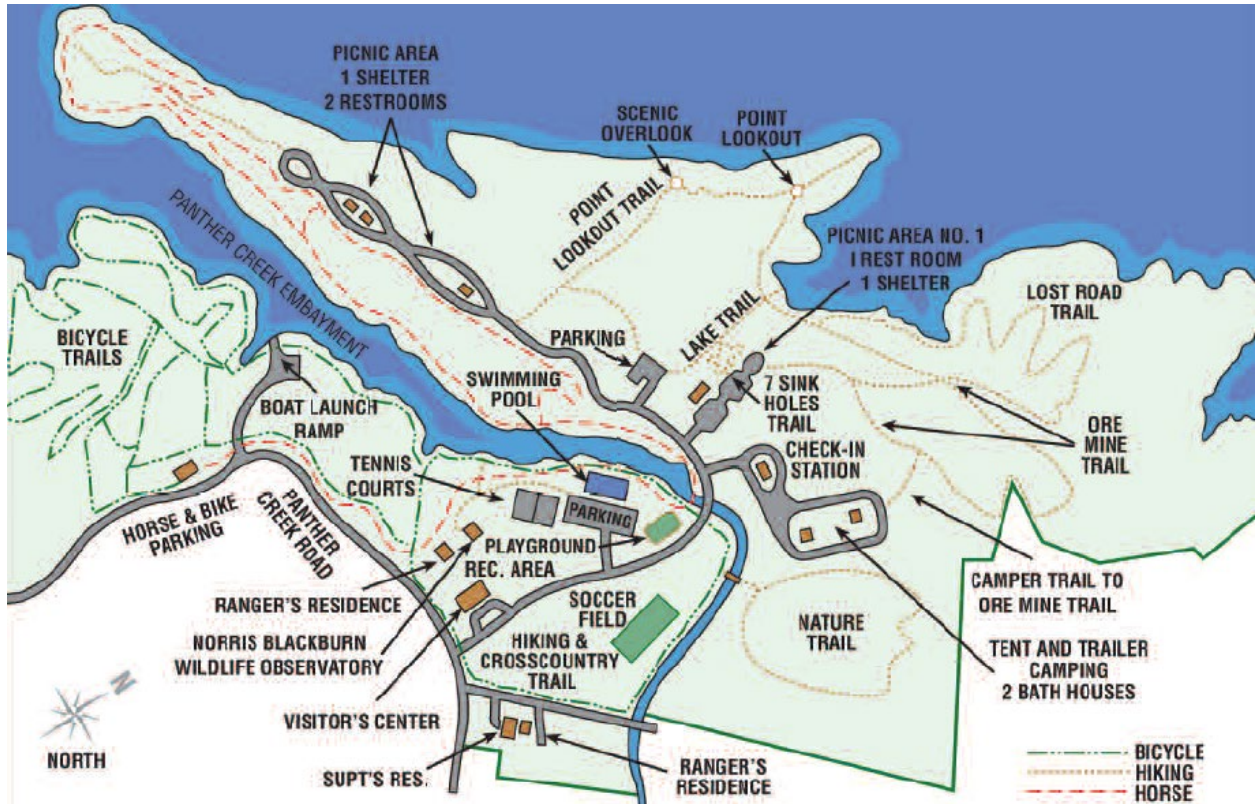
Financial Pro Forma

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

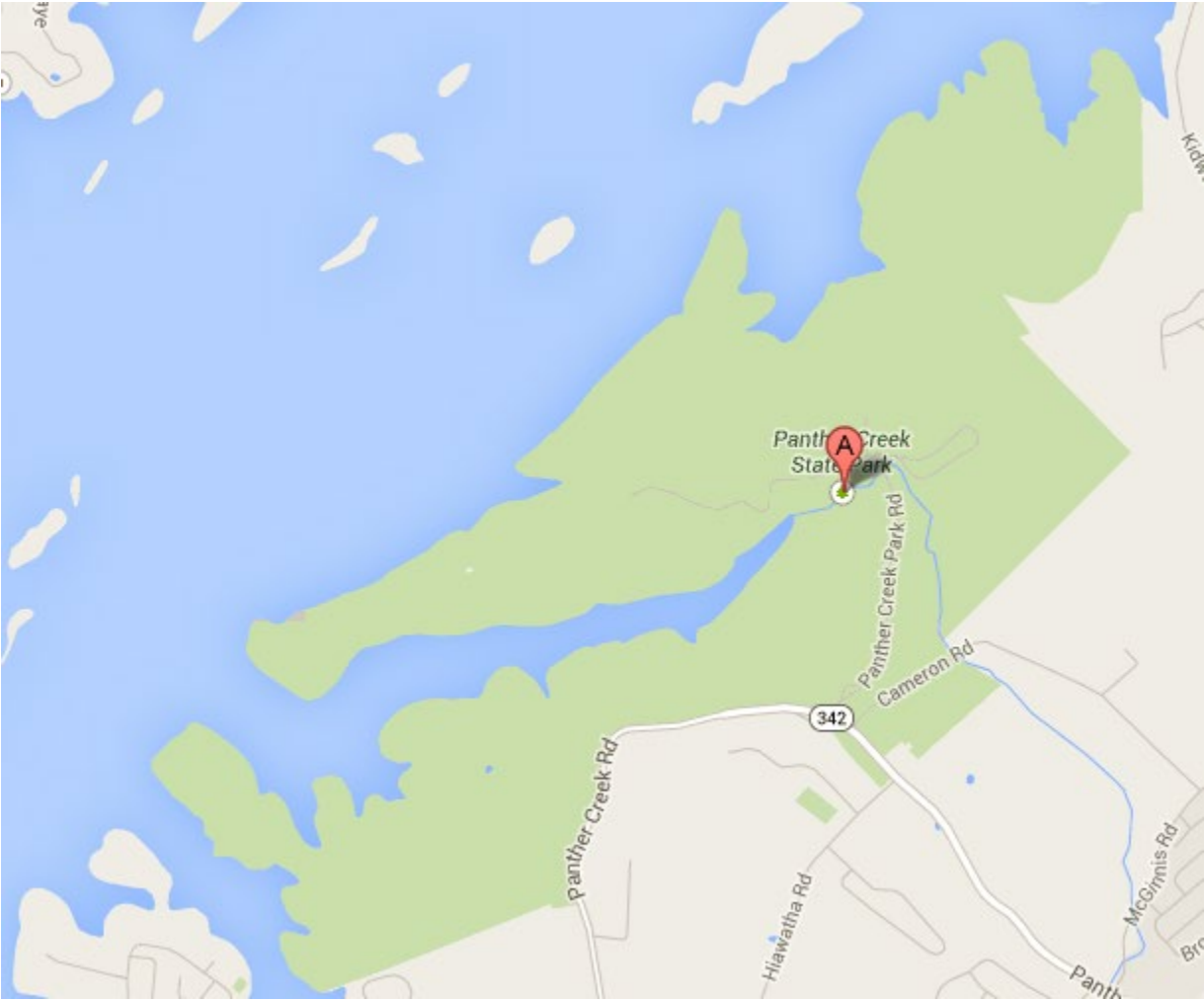
Pro forma	Base Year		Year 1		Year 2
	FY12-13	%+	FY13-14	%+	FY14-15
Campground	82,860	2%	84,517	3%	87,053
Gift Shop	1,273	20%	1,528	10%	1,680
Programs	-	2%	-	4%	-
Other	51,271	3%	52,809	4%	54,921
Total Revenue	135,404	3.5%	138,854	3.9%	143,655
Total Expense	748,299	0%	748,299	0%	748,299
Gross Profit	(612,895)		(609,445)		(604,644)
Park Self-sufficiency	18%		19%		19%

	%+	Year 3		Year 4		Year 5
		FY15-16	%+	FY16-17	%+	FY17-18
Campground	4%	90,535	5%	95,062	5%	99,815
Gift Shop	10%	1,848	5%	1,941	5%	2,038
Programs	4%	-	5%	-	5%	-
Other	4%	57,118	5%	59,974	5%	62,973
Total Revenue	4.5%	149,502	5.0%	156,977	5.0%	164,825
Total Expense	0%	748,299	0%	748,299	0%	748,299
Gross Profit		(598,797)		(591,322)		(583,474)
Park Self-sufficiency		20%		21%		22%

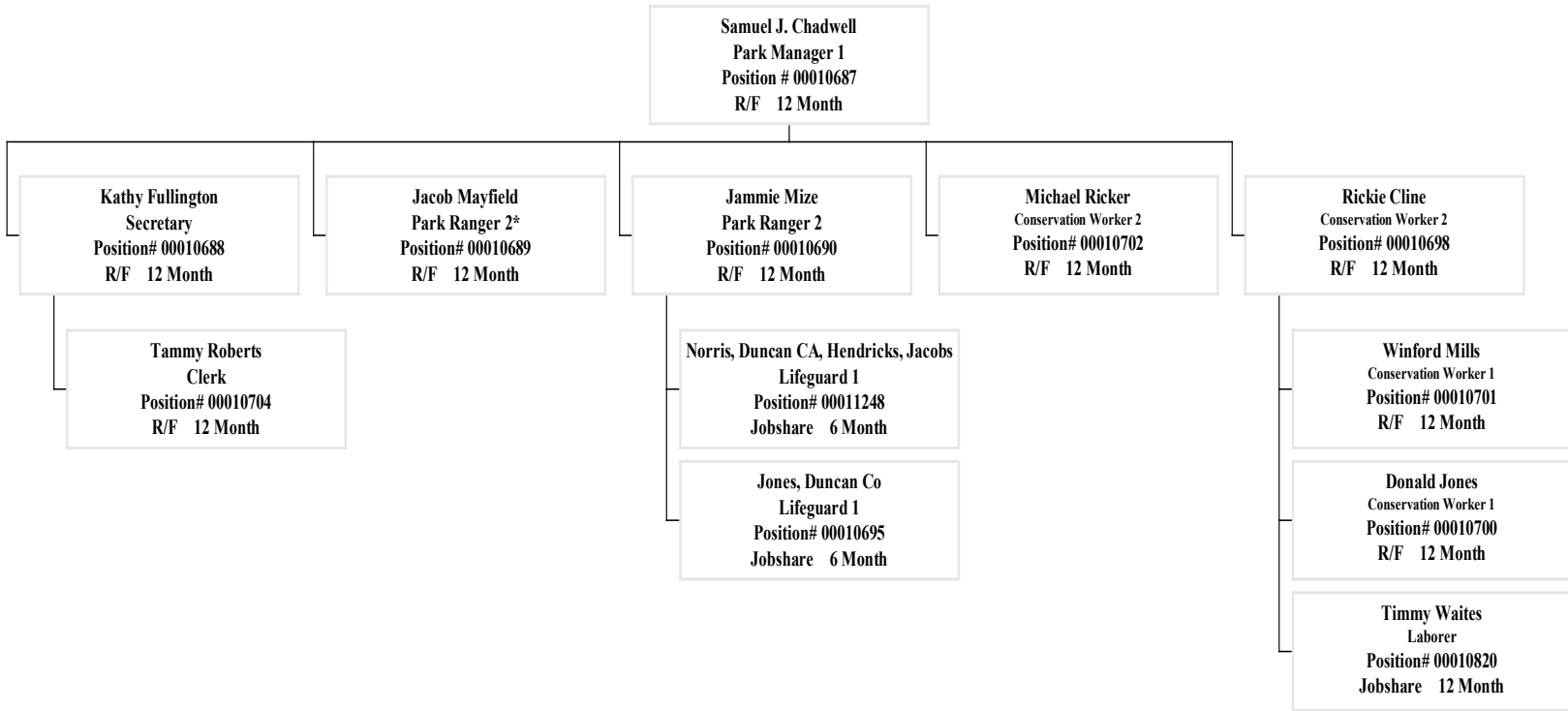
Park Map



Google Map



Organizational Chart



***Updated 01-02-2019; Pages 5, 9, 10, 21; Public Hearing held October 23, 2018 at Panther Creek State Park as per Tenn.Code Ann. 11-3-120**

Page # 5

- Updated park acreage from 1,435 to the correct acreage which is 1,444 acres
- Removed “Panther Creek Cycles” from Primary Feeder Markets section – business no longer in existence.
- Removed “Repaving the campground roadway and campsites would significantly improve the condition of the campground and result in greater satisfaction among overnight park guests.” The campground was repaved in 2015 so the sentence was no longer valid.

Page # 9

- Removed “Repave Campground” and “The campground should be repaved to improve camping experience” from the New Assets & Amenities table because this improvement has since been completed.

Page # 10

- Removed “Repave Campground” from the Facility Need table because this improvement has since been completed.

Page # 21

- Replaced old organizational chart with current, up-to-date organizational chart.

Business & Management Plan

Panther Creek State Park

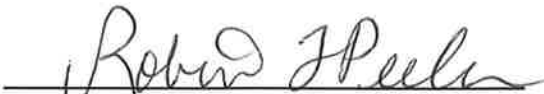
Updated January, 2019

Approved by:



Samuel Chadwell, Park Manager
Tennessee State Parks

Date: 1/17/19



Robin Peeler, Area Manager
Tennessee State Parks

Date: 1/18/19



Mike Robertson, Director of State Park Operations
Tennessee State Parks

Date: 1/18/19



Brock Hill
Deputy Commissioner
Parks & Conservation

Date: 1/18/19

