

**PARKS, RECREATION AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES INTERIM SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Annual Report to the Joint Committee on  
Government and Finance  
2007 - 2008**

**January 8, 2008**

In 2007 the Subcommittee continued its oversight role of the West Virginia state park system and was also actively involved in other wildlife resources and outdoor recreation issues of importance to the State.

### **Parks Related Issues**

Parks issues of interest in 2007 and speakers who appeared before the Subcommittee to address these issues included:

- *Lewis Ledford, Director of the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation*, who discussed North Carolina's implementation of a dedicated funding source for the North Carolina parks system and the positive impact it had on the parks system;

- *Don Striker, Superintendent of New River Gorge National River, Gauley River National Recreation Area and Bluestone National Scenic River*. Mr. Striker discussed a recent economic impact study which cited the tremendous economic impact of these national park sites on the economy of southern West Virginia, and discussed his ideas for better facilitating a tourism economy in West Virginia through increased cooperation with West Virginia state parks and other state government agencies;

- *Bob Beanblossom, West Virginia State Parks District Administrator*, who discussed the legacy of the depression era Civilian Conservation Corps in building the initial facilities that would lay the foundation for the beginnings of our state park system.

### **Wildlife Resources Related Issues**

In the 2007 interim year, the Subcommittee also continued its oversight role of outdoor recreation activities managed by the Wildlife Resources Section. Wildlife Resources issues of interest in 2007 and speakers who appeared before the Subcommittee to address these issues included:

- *Christopher W. Ryan, Black Bear Project Leader, Wildlife Resources*, who discussed his work on the West Virginia Bear Research and Monitoring Project;

- *Paul Johansen, Assistant Chief for Game Management, Wildlife Resources*, provided a preliminary review of the results of the Fall 2007 big game hunting season, and also discussed other issues such as Chronic Wasting Disease in the deer herd. A summary of the harvest figures from the 2007 big game hunting season is included in the appendix.

### **Law Enforcement Issues**

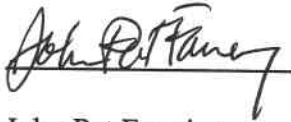
West Virginia DNR Law enforcement issues of interest in 2007 included:

*Lieutenant Tim Coleman, West Virginia DNR Law Enforcement*, discussed recreational boating issues and ways to better improve boater safety through increased boater education and broader enforcement powers for DNR law enforcement officers.

### **State Parks and other DNR sites visited by the Subcommittee in 2007**

In furtherance of its traditional oversight role, the Subcommittee has made a substantial commitment to visit state park sites, as well as other sites managed by the Division of Natural Resources. This year the Subcommittee conducted on-site visitations to Capcapon State Park, Hawks Nest State Park, Plum Orchard Wildlife Management Area, Prickett's Fort State Park, Tygart Lake State Park and Valley Falls State Park. Summaries of these visitation sites are located in the appendix of this report.

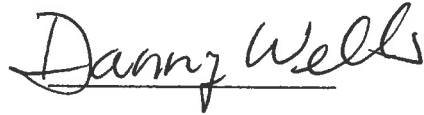
Respectfully submitted,



John Pat Fanning  
Chair  
State Senate



Jeff Eldridge  
Co-chair  
House of Delegates



Danny Wells  
Co-Chair  
House of Delegates

**APPENDIX**

# SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

## Tygart Lake State Park

### Background Information

The dam that created Tygart Lake was completed by the US Army Corps of Engineers in 1938. In 1945 the Federal government deeded 1,775 acres around the lake to the State of West Virginia, and 539 acres of this land were used to begin Tygart Lake State Park. An additional 715 acres were added in 1947, through a long-term license agreement. The 1947 license agreement was for 25 years and was renewed in 1972 and 1997. Initial development included boat docks and picnic areas and in the early 1950's a bathhouse, roads, water systems, residence and maintenance buildings were completed. One of the first campgrounds in the Parks system opened at Tygart Lake in 1953, and the rental cabins opened four years later. Construction of the lodge began in 1964 and it was opened for business in 1966.

### Current/Recent Projects and Improvements

- Four Executive Suites (deck, refrigerator, microwave, DVD/VCR, sofa, large TV)
- Computer Reservation System
- New parking area near park office
- Re-built fireplaces in ten cabins
- Accepting reservations in campground
- Wireless internet service at lodge
- New lighting in lobby, restaurant and conference rooms
- New freezer for restaurant kitchen
- New automatic fire retention system over cook's station (restaurant kitchen)
- Marina retaining wall
- Lodge retaining wall constructed by WVDOH
- Picnic shelter (financed by the Tygart Lake State Park Foundation)
- New sidewalks at lodge

## **Major Needs**

### **Capital Improvements**

- Build additional lodge rooms
- Build additional conference rooms
- Outdoor amphitheater
- Nature Center with displays
- Swimming pool
- ADA accessible multi-purpose trail
- Marina parking lot expansion and paving
- Picnic shelters
- Laundry building
- Relocate campground and increase size

### **Equipment**

- Tractor with long arm brush hog
- Lodge, restaurant and conference room furniture
- Conference room audio/visual equipment
- Conference room amplifier w/ speaker system
- Four wheel drive vehicle
- Riding mowers
- Weed eaters
- Wood splitter

### **Major Repairs and Alterations**

- Lodge roof replacement
- Pave cabin parking areas
- Pave campsites/walkways
- A/C units needed (conference rooms & restaurant kitchen)
- Replace problematic phone system
- Renovate additional rooms to Executive Suites

## **Personnel**

Tygart Lake operates with seven full-time personnel covering administrative and maintenance functions. The total of summer/seasonal workers is 27 for operation of the campground, cabin and lodge housekeeping, security, grounds maintenance, lodge front desk clerks, and nature/recreation programs. A total of 17 staffers are scheduled on an as needed basis for

restaurant operations in addition to the seasonal manager position. The park also utilizes court mandated community service workers and prisoners from the Pruntytown Correctional Facility.

### Superintendent's Comments

We must continue to provide clean, comfortable facilities for park patrons, maintain courteous, informative employees, and be revenue conscious while providing enjoyable and effective services to all park users. An aggressive sales / marketing and advertising program are two key factors that can enhance revenue growth in future years. The park restaurant has been under direct State management for the past several years and visitor satisfaction with the restaurant has been much improved as reflected on comment cards received.

In keeping with the ever changing recreational trends, such as the influx of Jet Ski users on the lake, sound judgment must be exercised to protect the quality of the park experience for all users as well as to protect the natural resources of the area.

With the spectacular natural beauty of Tygart Lake as a background, we have the potential to attract visitors from all walks of life. The Tygart Lake State Park Foundation has been instrumental in providing for our park by purchasing equipment, tools and playgrounds for improvements to the park. We are hopeful that the future will bring more giving by the private sectors with improvements from the state that will make our park the destination area of North Central W.V.



## Statistical Trends

<b>Tygart Lake State Park</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	193,899	233,979	143,644
<b>Lodge Occupancy</b>	53.17%	47.87%	46.00%
<b>Cabin Occupancy</b>	56.00%	55.35%	52.73%
<b>Campsite Occupancy</b>	21.22%	20.78%	20.38%
<b>Operating Revenue</b>	674,825	646,140	554,842
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>	900,423	907,633	846,642
<b>Surplus/(Subsidy)</b>	(225,598)	(261,492)	(291,800)
<b>Self-Sufficiency</b>	75%	71%	66%

## Three Year Revenue Comparison Tygart Lake State Park

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
Boat Dock Concession	15,903	26,445	24,161
Cabin Rentals	150,405	153,221	113,239
Campsite Rentals	29,998	27,395	27,175
Coin Machine Concession	-	-	375
Cot Rental	4,124	2,082	1,603
Facility Use Rental	331	300	275
Firewood Sales	4,711	4,480	3,882
Games	156	150	134
Gift Shop Sales	33,578	33,821	24,899
Lodge Rooms	178,547	154,022	134,656
Marina	-	14,682	-
Miscellaneous Collections	(4,922)	2,537	17,949
Miscellaneous Concessions	13,568	-	-
Picnic Shelter Fees	2,176	2,278	2,152
Pro Shop	-	(52)	-
Restaurant	238,897	219,912	198,348
Swimming Fees	4,609	4,054	4,672
Vending Machines	2,745	815	1,324
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>674,825</b>	<b>646,140</b>	<b>554,842</b>

## Three Year Expense Comparison Tygart Lake State Park

Expense	FY 2006	FY 2005	FY 2004
Total Personal Services	395,283	400,797	389,216
Total Employee Benefits	127,402	123,917	109,044
<b>CURRENT EXPENSE</b>			
Office/Postal/Freight	5,589	6,145	6,330
Printing/Binding	347	546	951
Rental Expense	-	17	-
Utilities	77,120	70,791	72,842
Telephone	16,144	12,108	6,873
Contract/Professional	21,502	16,574	8,611
Travel	1,248	3,283	1,009
IS&C/WV Net	306	-	-
Vehicle Rental	-	-	21
Machine Rental	3,217	2,008	753
Clothing/Household Supplies	39,162	57,411	48,174
Advertising	3,505	2,672	4,113
Vehicle Maintenance Expense	13,515	13,125	10,439
Research/Education/Medical	253	170	614
Maintenance Contracts	1,110	572	723
Merchandise for Resale	152,371	155,932	147,448
Hospitality	2	95	-
Recreation Supplies			
Miscellaneous	2,788	4,737	1,648
Credit Card Processing Fees	7,889	7,136	7,802
Training	535	1,645	372
Miscellaneous Equipment	6,724	995	-
<b>TOTAL CURRENT EXPENSE</b>	<b>353,328</b>	<b>355,962</b>	<b>318,720</b>

Expense	FY 2006	FY 2005	FY 2004
<b>REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS</b>			
Office Equipment	1,134	534	524
Building/House/Repairs	4,347	4,590	5,141
Building Repairs/Alterations	11,528	13,412	12,575
Vehicle Repairs	1,535	1,038	(620)
Ground Improvements	1,924	461	4,828
Farm/Construction Equipment	4,200	4,617	4,054
Other Repairs/Alterations	(260)	2,305	1,606
<b>TOTAL REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS</b>	<b>24,410</b>	<b>26,957</b>	<b>28,100</b>
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>			
Office/Communication	-	-	1,562
Household/Furnishings	-	-	-
Vehicle	-	-	-
Live/Farm/Const.	-	-	-
Other Equipment	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,562</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>900,423</b>	<b>907,633</b>	<b>846,642</b>

## SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

### Valley Falls State Park

#### Background Information

Located on the boundary between Marion and Taylor counties, Valley Falls State Park was once the location of a lumber and grist mill community along the banks of the Tygart River. The area was first settled in the late 1700's. The first lumber and grist mills were built in the mid 1800's and the railroad lines were laid around the same time. The town that grew up around the river was devastated by fire and floods during 1886 and 1888, and never fully recovered. The remains of the mill race from the grist mill are still visible in the park. In 1964 the state acquired approximately 750 acres of land around the falls, and Valley Falls State Park was created. With additional land purchases over the years, the park grew to the current size of 1,145 acres. In 1972 a picnic area, water and sewer system, road and parking improvements and landscaping were funded by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. Two years later the state provided funding for additional water and sewer improvements and rest room facilities. The picnic shelter and parking area were constructed by the West Virginia Army National Guard in 1989 and the next year a donated building was moved onto the park for use as an office. In 1994 electric service improvements were made. Current opportunities for recreation include game courts, picnicking, fishing and hiking.

### **Current/Recent Projects and Improvements**

- Road paving
- Trail widening and drainage improvements
- Storage building

## **Major Needs**

### **Capital Improvements**

- Maintenance building
- Parking lot expansion

### **Equipment**

- Grounds maintenance equipment
- Playground equipment
- Picnic tables
- Grills

### **Major Repairs and Alterations**

- ADA fountain
- Parking lot paving

## **Personnel**

Valley Falls operates with one full-time Superintendent and two seasonal employees who split a total of 1730 hours during the summer.

## **Superintendent's Comments**

The natural beauty of Valley Falls has led to the area being in great demand as a site for weddings, with an average of more than one per week. The waterfalls serve as a scenic backdrop for school class photos, draw many kayakers and others for recreation and also provide a location for various volunteer fire departments and other rescue personnel to do fast water rescue training. The number of waterfalls and the 100' elevation drop in a short distance provides a significant challenge for both recreation and training. Local schools use the park for day trips as do several area rest homes.

Hikers and mountain bikers enjoy the 18 miles of trails, the picnic shelters are in demand for weddings and family reunions as well as school outings. Art classes from Fairmont State University take advantage of the scenery to hold classes in the park.

## Statistical Trends

<b>Valley Falls State Park</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	66,007	60,252	68,510
<b>Operating Revenue</b>	7,601	6,652	6,803
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>	82,659	74,039	71,545
<b>Surplus/(Subsidy)</b>	(75,057)	(67,387)	(64,742)
<b>Self-Sufficiency</b>	9%	9%	10%

## Three Year Expense Comparison Valley Falls State Park

<b>Expense</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
Total Personal Services	38,188	36,662	36,937
Total Employee Benefits	16,982	16,615	16,771
<b>CURRENT EXPENSE</b>			
Office/Postal/Freight	228	489	204
Printing/Binding	-	38	-
Utilities	8,625	7,591	6,831
Telephone	1,214	260	698
Contract/Professional	910	20	20
Travel	193	202	-
IS&C/WV Net	63	-	-
Machine Rentals	175	20	-
Clothing/Household	377	355	1,181
Advertising	-	74	93
Vehicle Maintenance Expense	4,356	2,783	3,904
Research/Education/Medical			
Maintenance Contracts	307	632	196
Merchandise for Resale	1,041	733	1,882
Recreational Supplies			
Miscellaneous	210	623	133
Training	438	1,099	-
Miscellaneous Equipment	99	48	-
<b>TOTAL CURRENT EXPENSE</b>	<b>18,237</b>	<b>14,967</b>	<b>15,142</b>
<b>REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS</b>			
Office Equipment	-	-	-
	213	764	131



<b>Expense</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
Building/House/Comm Repairs			
Building Repairs/Alterations	1,823	92	346
Vehicle Repairs	476	1,425	-
Ground Improvements	3,437	669	892
Farm/Const Equipment	2,929	2,589	1,111
Other Repairs/Alterations	373	258	215
<b>TOTAL REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS</b>	<b>9,252</b>	<b>5,796</b>	<b>2,695</b>
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>			
Office/Comm Equip	-	-	-
Livestock/Farm/Construction	-	-	-
Other Equipment	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>82,659</b>	<b>74,039</b>	<b>71,545</b>

## SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

### Prickett's Fort State Park

## **Background Information**

The original Prickett's Fort was built on this site in 1774 by the people of Prickett's Settlement, to protect themselves from Indian attacks. A few years later, the fort was used as a military post during the Revolutionary War. The fort was no longer needed by the turn of the century and was dismantled. As early as 1927, efforts were made to preserve the site and funds were allocated to purchase the land from the Prickett family, who had owned the land for more than 150 years. However, the Great Depression prevented the acquisition at that time and it was not until 1966 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers purchased the land and surrounding acreage to build a boat ramp that the idea of a state park was reborn.

The Marion County Historical Society persuaded the Corps to relocate the boat ramp and preserve the fort site. In 1970 the Prickett's Fort Memorial Foundation was formed and research commenced, leading to a detailed plan for rebuilding the fort. Money, labor and materials were donated, but it was not enough to complete the fort. So in 1974 the foundation approached the state for assistance. The legislature appropriated funding to finish the project and the fort was completed and turned over to the Foundation on July 3, 1976. The fort is still operated by the Foundation, a private, non-profit organization which provides authentically costumed interpreters who give demonstrations and answer visitors' questions on pioneer life in the late 18th century. Also part of the park, just outside the fort, is the Job Prickett House, a red brick structure built around 1859. The house is on the National Register of Historic Places and has been restored and furnished with original antiques belonging to the Prickett Family.

## **Resource Management Issues**

Prickett's Bay has filled in due to silt buildup to the point where it is of little or no use to most boaters. The boat launch area has been moved once due to the original site becoming unusable. The current launch area will soon meet the same fate if the area is not dredged.

## **Current/Recent Projects and Improvements**

-  
Visitors Center with ticket office, gift shop, banquet room, research library, museum and offices  
Old Visitors Center converted to Educational Annex with classroom facilities  
Blacksmith shop under construction

## **Major Needs**

### **Capital Improvements**

Maintenance building  
Parking lot expansion

**Equipment**

- Grounds maintenance equipment
- Playground equipment
- Picnic tables

**Major Repairs and Alterations**

- Shoreline rip rap
- ADA fountain
- Parking lot paving
- Stone for road
- Residence repairs

**Personnel**

Prickett's Fort State Park operates with two full time personnel covering administrative and maintenance functions. One seasonal employee is utilized during the summer to assist with grounds maintenance. The Prickett's Fort Memorial Foundation handles all staffing functions for the operation of the Visitor's Center and historical interpretation. The Foundation receives a state appropriation of \$92,874 annually to help fund operations. This will go to \$120,000 in FY 08.

**Superintendent's Comments**

The area provides a pleasant break for many travelers on I-79 as well as hikers and cyclists using the MCPARC and Mon River trails. Community concerts and Fairmont State University groups bring visitors to the amphitheater throughout the summer. The boat launch area is heavily used from the spring thaw through the first winter freeze. In addition to individuals trying their luck, over 20 scheduled fishing tournaments use the area for launching and weigh-in.

The historical nature of Prickett's Fort draws countless school groups and others interested in the primitive and harsh way of life at the time of the birth of our nation. As we journey into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the fort provides a glimpse into the past that would otherwise be lost.

# Statistical Trends

<b>Prickett's Fort State Park</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	83,814	79,106	73,578
<b>Operating Revenue</b>	-	-	25
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>	115,757	111,377	118,782
<b>Surplus/(Subsidy)</b>	(115,757)	(111,377)	(118,757)
<b>Self-Sufficiency</b>	-	-	-

## Three Year Revenue Comparison

# Prickett's Fort State Park

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
Miscellaneous Concession	-	-	25
<b>TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE</b>	-	-	25

## Three Year Expense Comparison Prickett's Fort State Park

<b>Expense</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
Total Personal Services	51,513	53,089	56,224
Total Employee Benefits	28,476	27,613	28,491
<b>CURRENT EXPENSE</b>			
Office/Postal/Freight	232	260	181
Utilities	20,158	13,144	14,536
Telephone	647	446	443
Contract/Professional	912	394	210
Travel	1,400	2,049	456
IS&C/WV Net	63	-	-
Machine Rentals			
Clothing/Household	1,427	2,859	3,181
Advertising			
Vehicle Maintenance Expense	3,359	2,464	1,853
Research/Education/Medical			
Maintenance Contracts	-	-	146
Merchandise for Resale	104	120	34
Miscellaneous	547	216	138
<b>TOTAL CURRENT EXPENSE</b>	<b>31,372</b>	<b>22,172</b>	<b>21,670</b>
<b>REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS</b>			
Building/House/Comm	90	466	144
Building Repairs/Alterations	579	2,107	7,939
Vehicle Repairs	-	-	1,167
Ground Improvements	2,992	470	499
Farm/Const Equip	641	5,414	2,647

<b>Expense</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
Other Repairs/Alterations	93	46	-
<b>TOTAL REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS</b>	<b>4,395</b>	<b>8,503</b>	<b>12,396</b>
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>			
Household Equip/Furniture	-	-	-
Livestock/Farm/Const	-	-	-
Other Equipment	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>115,757</b>	<b>11,377</b>	<b>118,782</b>

# SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

## Audra State Park

### Background Information

In 1948 the state purchased 355 acres of land on the Middle Fork River from the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad company to develop as a state park. The park was named after the town of Audra which existed on the site at the turn of the century. The first construction by the state centered development of a swimming area with bathhouse, snack bar, basket room and restrooms on the Middle Fork River. Additional land was purchased in the late 1950's and construction began in 1960 on a campground and bathhouse with laundry facilities. Other improvements included a playground and country store. Demand at the campground led to an expansion in the early 1970's consisting of 25 additional sites and a new bathhouse.

### Resource Management Issues

The forest and river are the main attractions at Audra State Park. With the cooperation of the Division of Forestry, the area is monitored for Gypsy Moth infestation. The area has been treated in the past and is not currently threatened with defoliation.

The river has received much attention from the Division of Natural Resources and other state and federal agencies. Since 1996, the river has been suitable for trout stocking and continues to attract fishermen from near and far. Further more, early spring run-off brings many kayakers to the park to test their skills on the river.

### Financial Trends

The campground is, of course, the largest revenue producer of the park. During the summer months, the campground operates at around a 40% occupancy rate which rises to 90% on weekends. The swimming area and snack bar also help contribute to the park's general revenue. We are hoping in the near future to have a campground check-in station and store to help increase general revenue and provide better service to the patrons of the campground.

### Current/Recent Projects and Improvements

New picnic shelter  
Repairs to concession stand floor and building  
Renovations and painting to large campground bath house



Re-shingling of picnic area bath house, woodshed, residence and concession stand

## **Major Needs**

### **Capital Improvements**

Check-in station/camp store for campground.  
Electric to the picnic shelter

### **Equipment**

Playground equipment  
Grills  
Riding lawn mower

### **Major repairs and Alterations**

New office building roof  
Rewiring of office and residence  
Repaving of shelter parking lot  
Electric service to campsites

## **Personnel**

Audra currently operates with three full-time staff members for administrative functions and building/grounds maintenance. During the summer months there are ten summer/seasonal employees who provide service at the swimming, picnic, concession, and camping areas.

## **Superintendent Comments**

Many of Audra State Park's guests are second and third generation visitors who return to the park bringing their children and grandchildren. The two nearby colleges also provide many visitors. Graduates are always stopping to say how they visited the park during their time in college and are now camping with their families.

Enough cannot be said for the improved water quality of the Middle Fork River. This improvement has allowed for spring trout stocking and now small mouth bass are becoming quite prevalent in the river. Given the amount of swimming done in the river outside the developed swimming area, which takes in very little revenue, consideration could be given to its closure.

With the increase cost of traveling, Audra will continue to see increases in attendance and occupancy. It is important for Audra to be able to grow as a park so that it may continue to attract new visitors and remain the place that will draw them back year after year.

## Statistical Trends

<b>Audra State Park</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	91,116*	65,777	62,721
<b>Campsite Occupancy</b>	32.01%	33.20%	33.02%
<b>Operating Revenues</b>	71,205	63,235	60,746
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>	176,144	157,634	149,992
<b>Surplus/(Subsidy)</b>	(104,939)	(94,399)	(89,247)
<b>Self-Sufficiency</b>	40%	40%	40%

\*Significant jump likely due to improved methods of surveying/traffic counts.

## Audra State Park Three Year Revenue Comparison

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
Campsite Rental	59,031	52,104	50,884
Coin Laundry	482	592	576
Firewood Sales	9,118	9,190	6,499
Gift Shop Sales	-	136	-
Miscellaneous Collections	(33)	(231)	(9)
Picnic Shelter Fees	195	-	-
Snack Comm./Souv.	1,035	743	513
Swimming Fees	1,377	703	942
Vending Machines	-	-	1,341
<b>TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE</b>	<b>71,205</b>	<b>63,235</b>	<b>60,746</b>

## Audra State Park Three Year Expense Comparison

<b>Expense</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
Total Personal Services	88,770	86,343	79,911
Total Employee Benefits	36,355	33,269	30,964
<b>CURRENT EXPENSE</b>			
Office/Postal/Freight	316	329	245
Utilities	19,347	14,177	14,894
Telephone	1,115	1,159	1,308
Contract/Professional	983	613	88
Travel	225	193	167
Machine Rental	120	1,390	510
Clothing/Household	4,069	1,668	2,818
Vehicle Maintenance	4,589	4,829	2,904
Research/Edu./Med.	209	-	-
Maintenance Contracts	373	312	269
Merchandise for Resale	2,421	2,010	2,329
Miscellaneous	185	466	831
Training	-	100	-
Miscellaneous Equipment	2,486	253	4,864
<b>TOTAL CURRENT EXPENSES</b>	<b>36,438</b>	<b>27,499</b>	<b>31,228</b>
<b>REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS</b>			
Building/Household/Comm	46	80	-

<b>Expense</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>
Building Repairs/Alterations	5,029	4,619	2,359
Vehicle Repairs	486	3,697	3,367
Ground Improvements	1,521	362	1,112
Farm/Const. Equipment	571	134	480
Other Repairs and Alterations	6,928	1,630	572
<b>TOTAL REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS</b>	<b>14,581</b>	<b>10,523</b>	<b>7,889</b>
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>			
Office/Comm. Equipment	-	-	-
Household Equip/Furn	-	-	-
Vehicles	-	-	-
Livestock/Farm/Const.	-	-	-
Other Equipment	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>176,144</b>	<b>157,634</b>	<b>149,992</b>

# SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

## Hawks Nest State Park

### Background Information

Originally known as Marshall's Pillar, for United States Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall, the main overlook of Hawks Nest State Park is just off what was once the famed James River and Kanawha Turnpike, a major east-west land route in the 1800's, now known as the Midland Trail. The current name of Hawks Nest comes from the osprey, a raptor that once nested in the face of the cliffs overlooking the New River. A C&O Railroad depot, post office and store once stood where Mill Creek flows into the New River. The latter building was remodeled into a hotel in 1870 and operated until destroyed by fire in 1902. In 1875, the Hawks Nest Coal Company, based in London, England, built a coal tipple and coke ovens where the lower tram building now stands.

In 1934 the Hawks Nest Dam was completed to provide water to a hydroelectric power plant downstream. The river is channeled into a 40 foot high tunnel that cuts through the mountain and was the site of the nation's worst industrial tragedy when as many as 1,500 workers died from silicosis, a disease of the lungs brought on by the silica dust from blasting the tunnel. In 1935 the state purchased the land around the overlook and the CCC camp based at Babcock State Park began construction of many of the present facilities including the picnic shelter, snack bar and souvenir shop, restrooms, museum and many stone walls. In 1963 the parks system purchased additional land and constructed the lodge and conference complex, which opened in 1967. The aerial tram was installed in 1970 to transport visitors to the river complex, which now includes gift shop, nature center, and restrooms, and is home to the New River Jet Boat concession.

A lease agreement was signed in 1999 transferring to state operation a 9-hole golf course, which was originally the private country club belonging to Union Carbide and later sold to Elkem Metals, near Gauley Bridge, WV. The course property includes a clubhouse, conference room, and a small maintenance shed for equipment.

In the summer of 2002 the New River National Park announced an extension of its boundary to include the New River Gorge property from the New River Bridge to Hawks Nest State Park. In doing so, this boundary extension will protect the viewshed of Hawks Nest State Park from development. However, the encroachment of gated communities and upscale housing developments in the area may affect the Hawks Nest historical view.

## **Business Management Issues and Trends**

### **Restaurant Operations**

In 2004 the state operated restaurant was converted to a concessionaire operation with the Twin Falls restaurant operator taking over. The concession showed positive improvement in service and customer comments. However, the concessionaire just served notice that she will be leaving on November 1 due to staffing difficulties. The lease opportunity is to be advertised ASAP. We are not interested in returning to self operation unless absolutely necessary.

### **Linen Operations**

In the winter of 2006, an in-house commercial laundry was constructed for hotel linen service, due poor vendor service and product quality. In 2007, the laundry took responsibility for providing linen service to Babcock State Park. The service has provided much improved quality of linen as well as reduced costs as compared to rental service.

## **Golf Course Management Issues**

The golf course has been managed by the DNR/State of West Virginia since April 1999. In the past the course had been run for the use of Elkem employees. By the mid 1990's, it became quite clear that the membership could not maintain the course, and the infrastructure was in need of attention. The course was offered for sale to private operators, but no interest was generated. The State of West Virginia, DNR, was offered the property for a permanent lease of \$1.00, with the understanding that the property would be maintained as a golf course, with no major construction that might affect the tunnel which feeds the hydro station at Gauley Bridge. The lease arrangement received legislative endorsement and encouragement through a Budget Digest line item.

The course has been plagued by numerous floods since the state took control including one event that disrupted the golf course water supply for an extended period resulting in extensive die-off of turf. The watering system was replaced in 2002 but a great deal more remains to be done to offset years of neglect prior to the state lease. Projects should include replacement of pro shop, improved public restrooms, compliance chemical storage, maintenance facility, fairway drainage, cart paths completion, and greens repair.

Since 2004, efforts have been concentrated on improved turf management to greens and tees condition. Three greens had to be totally rebuilt with new sod at a cost of over \$60,000, with aggressive soil amendment and new turf seeding projects.

Play in 2007 finally is showing improvement through incentive discount packages for lodge guests and on weekday evenings. Attraction of a 9-hole course continues to draw less than the area 18-hole course. So we have had to promote course with incentive packages and promos.

## **Golf Repair and Improvement Projects**

In-house projects since April 1999

- Constructed replacement reservoir, 66,000-gallon
- Constructed replacement irrigation system
- Constructed new sand bunkers
- Constructed one new green to PGA standards
- Built two new cart pathway bridges
- Constructed concrete cart pathway
- Removed deteriorated tennis courts
- Re-roofed club house flat roof
- Filled swimming pool and retrofitted into reception area
- Rewired club house from 25 cycle to 60 cycle.
- Installed new main service
- Rebuilt most tee boxes
- Rewired the maintenance building
- Began annual aerification and turf schedule for greens
- Repaired and installed new storm drain culverts
- Renovated dining area for small conference and reception areas

## **Current/Recent Projects and Improvements**

- Upgrade guest rooms HVAC and air handlers on 4<sup>th</sup> floor
- Replacement of dining room windows to Low E glass
- Replacement of guest room balcony sliding doors
- Renovate all rooms on 4<sup>th</sup> floor
- Offer complementary wireless internet to guests and meetings
- Upgraded suites to king beds
- Upgraded ADA rooms to queen beds with refrigerator
- Installed complete commercial laundry for lodge and Babcock cabins
- Replaced jetboat dock boardwalk
- Installed ADA courtesy dock at public slip
- Moved-loaned Hawks Nest museum to Town of Ansted – for improved guest access

### **In progress**

- Upgrade televisions in suites to flat screens
- Upgrade suites bathrooms
- Install microwaves, mini refrigerators & coffee pots in suites
- Offer complementary wireless internet to guests and meetings
- Guest room upgrade of paint and plaster



Upgrade guest room fixtures and wall decorations

### **Tram**

Replace bull wheel bearings and bearings  
Install new maintenance arms for workers safety  
Repair all towers pins, sheeves, and bearings  
Hire certified electrical contractor to repair electrical service failures  
Replaced cliff tower main walking arm beam and assembly  
Replaced over speed safety timers  
Rewired complete communication cable from bottom to top stations  
Replaced defective relays in operators panel

## **Major Needs**

### **Capital Improvements**

#### **Lodge expansion**

A 30 room lodge is not a particularly efficient size. The lodge would probably benefit from an expansion.

#### **Tram**

The aerial tram is probably approaching the end of its useful life and may need to be replaced within five to ten years, unless the decision would be made to eliminate the service entirely. An A/E study is ongoing to identify major needs.

#### **Golf maintenance building**

A new golf maintenance building is needed for storing and servicing grounds maintenance equipment and materials.

### **Equipment**

Small backhoe with front end loader  
Small cart for linen service – electric  
Telephone system replacement  
Two way radio base system – and mobiles – 911 service  
Greens walker mower

### **Major Repairs and Alterations**

Lodge boiler upgrade for heating system  
Chiller unit replacement  
Lodge plumbing replacement  
Lodge HVAC air handler replacements  
Lodge electrical and lighting improvements  
Lodge thermo-pane window/door replacement  
Paving golf course parking, service roads

Continue cart paths  
Golf course drainage  
Continue reconstruction of greens  
Replace golf maintenance building facility

### **Personnel**

The park operates with 19 full-time employees.

- 1 Superintendent
- 1 Assistant Superintendent
- 1 Lodge Manager / group services coordinator
- 1 Maintenance Coordinator
- 3 Maintenance workers, including mechanic, carpenter and laborer.
- 1 Activities Coordinator /Naturalist
- 2 Clerical: Audit clerk and Office assistant
- 2 Retail clerk/buyer
- 2 Housekeepers (including one Lead Housekeeper)
- 4 Desk clerks (including supervisor)
- 1 Golf Facility Manager

Summer and seasonal staff includes cashiers, laborers, food and beverage service workers, grounds keepers, housekeepers and night security.

### **Superintendent's Comments**

Hawks Nest continues to be a quiet getaway close enough to Charleston and Beckley as well as attracting regional meetings and reunions from Virginia and North Carolina. This facility is showing a plateau in growth with regional competition providing improved amenities and conference space. We have made small steps toward maintaining our active presence for group services such as wireless internet and golf packaging. Special dinner theater events continue to attract sell-out crowds to see local artist performances; the murder mystery theaters are always a favorite. Motor coach planners continue to use our facility as base camp for the New River region opportunities. However, a 31 room lodge is not sufficient for motor coach travel agents, and has resulted in turned away revenue both in room sales as well as conference space.

The Town of Ansted- Hawks Nest Rail Trail has been an exceptional attraction to the river and lodge guests. This bike trail runs from just south of Route 60 and follows Mill Creek to the Hawks Nest tramway and provides guests a looped bike trail with the tramway tying in the loop via an aerial shuttle. The bike trail also offers excellent nature interpretation resources for our Jetboat and tramway program for school groups each spring and fall. We are currently working with National Park Service and Town of Ansted for a cooperative trail project tie in the trail to New River Visitor Center at the Bridge.

The New River Jetboat, operated by Cindy Dragan, continues to be a positive link for revenue generation from guests looking for a tour of the New River that is less strenuous than rafting. The 14-passenger Jetboat provides an exhilarating ride up the New River and offers a special view of New River Bridge and the thrill of a few smaller rapids.

This facility continues to be the host for the Country Roads Festival, which is held each year in September by the Ansted Lions Club. The festival features a weekend of crafts demonstration, quilting classes, craft and food sales, live blue grass, country and gospel music. The park also is the host for the Hawks Nest Foundation "Lights along the Midland Trail." The Christmas ornament display features hundreds of lighted ornaments located on the park and throughout the Ansted community. The development of partnerships with local whitewater rafting companies also has helped developed lodge room night referrals and customer recreational opportunities, both of which enhance revenue growth.

This year we worked with Ansted community in an effort to provide improved access to the Hawks Nest – Calhoun Museum Collection. The museum, situated on the knoll above the historic overlook, was very difficult to access and required negotiating a steep incline of over 100 steps to the CCC facility; consequently, the facility was not ADA accessible nor was restroom service available. The new location, in the Town of Ansted, now provides for improved access for all guests, and as well, it is in an environmentally controlled room to insure protection of artifacts and historical items. The new museum location has been excellent stop over link with motor coaches and school groups that avoided the facility due to location barriers.

The computerized reservation system has provided improved guest service particularly with accounting tracking as well as guest tracking and internet reservations. We are also able to use this software for facility management, optimizing room availability, customer service, and improved group service and facility maintenance planning. However, the amenities we provide are once again approaching a major refurbishing/redecoration cycle.

Because Hawks Nest State Park is strategically located along the New River Gorge, in coming years, we can position our property to grow along with the area with attention to these details and expansion of existing facilities.

## Statistical Trends

<b>Hawks Nest State Park</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	245,848	352,784	411,477
<b>Lodge Occupancy</b>	57.54%	57.80%	56.34%
<b>Operating Revenue</b>	698,743	721,291	895,027
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>	1,130,340	1,211,875	1,349,287
<b>Surplus/(Subsidy)</b>	(431,597)	(490,583)	(454,260)
<b>Self Sufficiency</b>	62%	60%	66%

## Three Year Revenue Comparison Hawks Nest State Park

Revenue	FY 2007	FY 2006	FY 2005
Coin Machine Concession	2,120	959	1,534
Facility Use Rental	-	-	195
Gift Shop Sales	195,652	197,804	190,181
Greens Fees	-	(548)	-
Lodge Rooms	451,999	473,791	434,183
Miscellaneous Collections	(90)	(8,808)	2,923
Miscellaneous Concessions	2,119	1,992	(1,836)
Picnic Shelter Fees	2,535	3,639	664
Restaurant Concession	5,883	1,645	2,449
Restaurants	319	13,508	229,242
Tram	38,196	37,309	35,491
Vending Machines	10	-	-
<b>TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE</b>	<b>698,743</b>	<b>721,291</b>	<b>895,027</b>

## Three Year Expense Comparison Hawks Nest State Park

<b>Expense</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>
Total Personal Services	548,002	567,392	646,064
Total Employee Benefits	227,977	244,157	237,664
<b>CURRENT EXPENSE</b>			
Office/Postal/Freight	5,429	5,778	4,893
Printing/Binding	298	1,593	-
Utilities	100,711	100,638	93,276
Telephone	21,423	24,250	25,385
Contract/Professional	7,976	20,096	36,762
Travel	1,129	2,180	1,736
IS&C/WV Net	331	247	-
Vehicle Rental	135	4,996	150
Machine Rentals	4,504	4,640	6,891
Association Dues	250	50	250
Clothing/Household	32,182	43,243	32,535
Advertising	3,847	4,151	10,963
Vehicle Maintenance Expense	4,885	5,821	4,134
Research/Education/Medical	-	108	217
Maintenance Contracts	5,565	5,075	5,795
Merchandise for Resale	82,563	108,562	187,312
Miscellaneous	916	1,287	878
Credit Card Processing Fees	10,610	9,325	9,927
Training	700	253	100
Attorney Fees	-	-	63
Miscellaneous Equipment	16,947	10,852	1,872
<b>TOTAL CURRENT EXPENSE</b>	<b>300,400</b>	<b>353,144</b>	<b>423,139</b>
<b>REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS</b>			
Office Equipment	3,507	496	1,074

# **SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS**

## **Plum Orchard**

### **Wildlife Management Area**

#### **Background Information**

Located in Fayette County, Plum Orchard Lake is four miles from the Mossy interchange of the West Virginia Turnpike. The lake was constructed by the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources. Groundbreaking for the project took place on November 14, 1960 with the dam completed on May 15, 1962.

The total surface area of the lake is 202 acres with a six and one half mile shoreline. The maximum depth of the lake is 40 feet. Over 2,600 acres of watershed drain into the lake. There are 43 rustic campsites, each with tent pad, grill and picnic table. The lake is open for fishing with three boat launch ramps. A rifle range and picnic tables are also on the area.

#### **Current/Recent Projects and Improvements**

- ADA rest room and campsite improvements
- Campground bathhouses
- Storage building
- Footbridges in camping areas
- Trail from campground to boat launch area
- Two fishing piers constructed
- Two boat docks at launch areas constructed
- Campsite renovations

## **Major Needs**

### **Capital Improvements**

- Bathhouse
- Picnic shelter
- Vault toilet in picnic area

### **Equipment**

- Grader blade for tractor
- Playground equipment
- Weedeater

### **Major Repairs and Alterations**

- Roofing storage building
- Lily pad control

## **Personnel**

Plum Orchard operates with one full time superintendent and one seasonal employee. During the summer a seasonal office clerk and campground attendant are on staff.

## **Superintendent's Comments**

Major repairs were made to the dam in 1992 after the water level was dropped. The spillway riser was repaired and the dam itself was raised in height an additional 15 feet. During this time a handicapped accessible boat dock was built at the main boat launch ramp.



# Summary of the 2007 Big Game Harvest Figures

Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Subcommittee Meeting

January 7, 2008

## 2007 Bucks-only Firearm Season

The 2-week, bucks-only firearm season traditionally opens on the Monday of Thanksgiving week. Hunters harvested 67,505 bucks during the 2007 season, which is up 2% from the 65,923 bucks taken in 2006. The increase in this year's buck harvest is primarily related to the carryover of deer from the harvest that took place in 2006 and an overall increase in deer populations within those counties targeted for herd expansion as identified in the DNR's *White-tailed Deer Operational Plan*.

This is the 10<sup>th</sup> year in a row that concurrent antlerless deer hunting has been permitted during portions of the buck season in selected counties. For the 6<sup>th</sup> year in a row, concurrent antlerless deer hunting took place during the entire 2-week buck season. Where adequate harvests of antlerless deer are occurring, Wildlife Biologists continue to report significant positive benefits associated with this regulation strategy, including a reduction in buck hunting pressure and an increase in antlerless deer hunting pressure.

While we have made significant progress in balancing the state's deer population with available habitat, a number of counties still support deer populations that are well above management objectives and beyond the capacity of the habitat to support in a sustainable fashion. Where this is the case, liberal antlerless deer harvest regulations will continue to be used in selected counties to reduce overall deer populations to desired levels. Where deer populations are below or approaching management objectives, we are recommending more conservative antlerless deer harvest regulation for the 2008 season.

## 2007 Antlerless Deer Season

Antlerless deer hunting opportunities were provided in a total of 41 counties, or portions thereof, during the 2007 season. These counties had a 21-day split antlerless deer season with a bag limit that ranged from 4 to 1, depending upon management objectives. The season included 2-weeks of concurrent antlerless deer hunting during the buck season on private land only, 6 days during the traditional antlerless deer season on public and private land, and 4 days in late December for antlerless deer hunting on private land only.

A total of 43,684 antlerless deer were harvested during the 2007 season. This figure is 11% above the 2006 harvest which was somewhat expected, as we had a more liberal antlerless season in place this past fall. Harvesting female deer during the antlerless deer season is the most important and effective tool used by wildlife managers, landowners and hunters to control deer numbers and bring deer populations in line with their carrying capacity. As this management strategy is accomplished, antler size, body weight and overall physical condition of the deer herd will improve. We will continue to recommend appropriate antlerless deer harvest regulations for the 2008 season. Where deer populations exceed management objectives, liberal

antlerless harvest regulations will be implemented to achieve management objectives. Where these populations are below management objectives, more conservative seasons will be put in place.

### **2007 Muzzleloader Deer Season**

The 2007 muzzleloader deer harvest of 7,423 was 8% higher than the 2006 harvest. This increase in the muzzleloader harvest was somewhat expected, as more counties were open to antlerless deer season and either-sex muzzleloader hunting.

### **2007 Archery Deer Season**

The 2007 archery deer harvest of 26,965 was 7% above the 2006 harvest.

### **2007 Bear Seasons**

We are still process bear tags and harvest information is not yet available for the 2007 seasons.

### **2007 Wild Turkey Seasons**

Spring turkey hunters harvested a total of 9,976 birds during the 2007 spring gobbler season. These numbers are 15% lower than the 2006 harvest of 11,735.

Preliminary figures show that fall turkey hunters harvested 1,491 birds during the fall 2007 season. This number should exceed 1,500 birds when the official count of game checking tags is complete. The harvest is currently 26% higher than the 1,186 recorded in 2006 and the highest in the past four years.