Raymond Gary State Park
Resource Management Plan
Choctaw County, Oklahoma

6/30/2015

Lowell Caneday, Ph.D.
Hung Ling (Stella) Liu, Ph.D.
I-Chun (Nicky) Wu, Ph.D.
Updated: Nov. 2018
This page intentionally left blank.
Figure 0.1 – View across Lake Raymond Gary
Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the assistance of numerous individuals in the preparation of this Resource Management Plan. On behalf of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department’s Division of State Parks, staff members were extremely helpful in providing access to information and in sharing of their time. The essential staff providing assistance for the development of the RMP included John Parnell, manager of Raymond Gary State Park, and Johnny Moffitt, Associate Director of Little Dixie Action Agency, Inc. In addition, Gary Daniel, manager of Clayton Lake State Park, and Ron Reese, manager of Hugo Lake State Park, attended the initial meetings for Raymond Gary State Park and provided insight into management issues.

Assistance was also provided by Kris Marek, Doug Hawthorne, Don Shafer and Ron McWhirter – all from the Oklahoma City office of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department. Merle Cox, Regional Manager of the Southeastern Region of Oklahoma State Parks also attended these meetings and assisted throughout the project.

It is the purpose of the Resource Management Plan to be a living document to assist with decisions related to the resources within the park and the management of those resources. The authors’ desire is to assist decision-makers in providing high quality outdoor recreation experiences and resources for current visitors, while protecting the experiences and the resources for future generations.

Lowell Caneday, Ph.D., Regents Professor Emeritus
Department of Geography
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078
Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADAAG............................................................... Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines
CCC............................................................... Civilian Conservation Corps
CDC................................................................. Centers for Disease Control
CFR................................................................. Code of Federal Regulations
CLEET............................................................. Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training
CPSC............................................................... Consumer Product Safety Commission
DOI................................................................. Department of Interior
ESA............................................................... Endangered Species Act
GIS................................................................. geographic information systems
GPS................................................................. global positioning system
NAAQS............................................................ National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAWQA............................................................ National Water Quality Assessment Program
NEPA............................................................. National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA............................................................. National Historic Preservation Act
NPRM............................................................. Notice of Proposed Rule Making
OSU.............................................................. Oklahoma State University – Stillwater
OTRD.............................................................. Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department
OWRB............................................................ Oklahoma Water Resources Board
PBCR............................................................... Primary body contact recreation
pH................................................................. potential for hydrogen ions
ppm............................................................. parts per million
RMP............................................................... Resource Management Plan
ROS............................................................ Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
SHPO.......................................................... State Historic Preservation Officer
USFWS........................................................ United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS........................................................... United States Geological Survey
WBDO........................................................ Waterborne Disease Outbreak
WROS........................................................ Water Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................................................ iii
Abbreviations and Acronyms ......................................................................................................................... iv
Table of Contents ........................................................................................................................................ v
List of Tables ................................................................................................................................................. viii
List of Figures ................................................................................................................................................. ix
Mission Statement of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department .............................................. xi
Vision Statement ........................................................................................................................................... xi
OTRD Values ................................................................................................................................................ xi
Chapter 1 – Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 1
  Resource Management Plan: Purpose and Process ................................................................................ 1
    Planning Process ..................................................................................................................................... 1
    Authorization and Agencies Involved .................................................................................................... 2
Chapter 2 – Project Description ................................................................................................................... 4
  About Raymond Gary State Park ............................................................................................................. 4
    Purpose and Significance of Raymond Gary State Park ..................................................................... 4
    Geographic Location of Raymond Gary State Park ........................................................................... 7
Community and Regional Context .............................................................................................................. 8
  Brief History of Choctaw County ........................................................................................................... 8
  Demographic and Socioeconomic Conditions and Impact .................................................................. 10
  Competing and Complementary Recreational Opportunities ................................................................ 14
  Regional and Park History ..................................................................................................................... 15
Natural Resources in the Park ..................................................................................................................... 17
  Climate and Air Quality ......................................................................................................................... 17
  Archeology of Raymond Gary State Park ............................................................................................. 18
  Topography ........................................................................................................................................... 18
  Geology ................................................................................................................................................ 19
  Soil ......................................................................................................................................................... 19
  Hydrology ............................................................................................................................................. 22
  Vegetative Cover ................................................................................................................................... 27
  Wildlife .................................................................................................................................................. 27
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3 – Current Status of the Resource</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Development</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry Drive and Environs</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area A – Lakefront</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area below the Dam</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area B</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Residence/Office</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance Area</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking/Walking/Riding Trails</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Summary at Raymond Gary State Park</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Access and Entry Aesthetics</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Visitation</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Use of Park Facilities</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Perception of Raymond Gary State Park</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Evaluations of Raymond Gary State Park</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Management</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue and Expenses</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazards Analysis – Natural and Operational</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Hazards</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Hazards</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy-Related Exposures</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste Management</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4 – Alternatives and Preferred Plans</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview and Summary</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues and Alternatives</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Statement 1: Qualification and branding as a state park</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Statement 2: Maintenance of Lake Raymond Gary impoundment</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Statement 3: Maintaining Water Quality</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Statement 4: Branding, Marketing and Reservation System</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Statement 5: Safety and Playgroups</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 2.1 – Population of Choctaw County ..................................................................................... 10
Table 2.2 – Demographic Characteristics of the Population .......................................................... 11
Table 2.3 – Household Characteristics in Choctaw County ............................................................ 12
Table 2.4 – Financial Characteristics in Choctaw County ................................................................ 12
Table 2.5 – Education Characteristics in Choctaw County ............................................................. 13
Table 2.6 – Employment Characteristics in Choctaw County ....................................................... 13
Table 3.1 – Campground Detail for Area A Campground ............................................................. 36
Table 3.2 – Campground Detail for Campground below the Dam .................................................. 40
Table 3.3 – Campground Detail for Area B RV Campground ....................................................... 41
Table 3.4 – Campground Detail for Area B Tent Campground ...................................................... 42
Table 3.5 – Cabin rentals at Raymond Gary State Park ................................................................. 47
Table 3.6 – Staffing at Raymond Gary State Park ......................................................................... 50
Table 3.7 – Expense and Revenue at Raymond Gary State Park .................................................. 51
Table 3.8 – Ranger Staff at Raymond Gary State Park ................................................................. 54
List of Figures

Figure 0.1 – View across Lake Raymond Gary ................................................................. ii
Figure 1.1 – Entry sign for Raymond Gary State Park ..................................................... 3
Figure 2.1 – Utilization of purpose and significance statements .................................... 6
Figure 2.2 – Geographic location of Raymond Gary State Park ..................................... 7
Figure 2.3 – ODOT signs on Highway 70 ................................................................. 8
Figure 2.4 – View from Raymond Gary State Park .................................................. 14
Figure 2.5 – ODWC sign in Raymond Gary State Park ........................................... 17
Figure 2.6 – Doaksville interpretive signs and markers .......................................... 18
Figure 2.7 – Geological regions in Oklahoma .................................................. 19
Figure 2.8 – Soil map of Raymond Gary State Park ................................................. 21
Figure 2.9 – Legend for soil map on previous page ............................................... 22
Figure 2.10 – Watersheds of Choctaw County ................................................ 22
Figure 2.11 – Angler at Raymond Gary State Park ............................................... 23
Figure 2.12 – Lake Raymond Gary ............................................................... 24
Figure 2.13 – Lake Raymond Gary Public Fishing Areas ....................................... 25
Figure 2.14 – Lake Raymond Gary ............................................................... 26
Figure 2.15 – American Burying Beetle ............................................................. 27
Figure 2.16 – Interior Least Tern .............................................................................. 28
Figure 2.17 – Scaleshell .......................................................................................... 28
Figure 2.18 – Piping plover .................................................................................... 28
Figure 2.19 – Accessible Trail Signage ................................................................. 30
Figure 3.1 – Boundaries of Raymond Gary State Park ......................................... 32
Figure 3.2 – Map of Raymond Gary State Park .................................................. 33
Figure 3.3 – Entry drive into Raymond Gary State Park ......................................... 34
Figure 3.4 – Entry signs for Area A ........................................................................ 34
Figure 3.5 – Comfort station and campground host in Area A ................................ 35
Figure 3.6 – Campsites in Area A ........................................................................ 35
Figure 3.7 – Cabins in Area A .............................................................................. 36
Figure 3.8 – Playgroup in Area A ........................................................................ 37
Figure 3.9 – Comfort station and pavilion in Area A ............................................. 37
Figure 3.10 – Amenities for anglers at Raymond Gary State Park ......................... 38
Figure 3.11 – Beach at Lake Raymond Gary ........................................................ 38
Figure 3.12 – Raymond Gary Lake Association .................................................... 39
Figure 3.13 – Dam and road into campground ....................................................... 39
Figure 3.14 – Campground below the dam .............................................................. 39
Figure 3.15 – Road to west side of the dam .............................................................. 40
Figure 3.16 – Closed restroom .............................................................................. 40
Figure 3.17 – Entry to Area B RV Campground .................................................... 40
Figure 3.18 – Amenities in Area B RV Campground ............................................. 41
Figure 3.19 – Area B tent sites ............................................................................. 41
Figure 3.20 – Signs leading to Area B ................................................................. 42
Mission Statement of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department

The mission of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department is to advance Oklahoma’s exceptional quality of life by preserving, managing, and promoting our natural assets and cultural amenities.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department is to promote and enhance tourism throughout the state; protect and preserve the environment and natural resources; educate the public about Oklahoma’s people and places; provide exceptional customer service to all citizens and visitors; create a team environment in which all employees are successful, productive, and valued; embrace and seek diversity in our workforce and those we serve.

OTRD Values

- Responsibility and leadership
- Respect
- Quality
- Exemplary customer service
- Balance and self-fulfillment
- Teamwork and communication
- Flexibility
- Creativity and innovation
- Coordination
- Commitment
- Integrity
Chapter 1 – Introduction

Resource Management Plan: Purpose and Process

The Resource Management Plan (RMP) program and policy is to document management responsibilities to balance the use of water and land resources as they relate to recreation; in this instance, Raymond Gary State Park. As a guiding plan, the RMP seeks to propose long-term policies that limit adverse impacts to critical resources while providing protection and management of fish, wildlife, and other natural and cultural resources. In addition, the RMP will provide guidelines for public health and safety, public access, and a wide variety of outdoor recreational opportunities.

Within the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, the purpose and scope of the RMP is to provide background information, identify the policies and goals governing the management of Raymond Gary State Park and its incorporated resources, summarize the plan’s components, and provide descriptive and historical information related to the project. Raymond Gary State Park is on property owned by the State of Oklahoma and leased to Little Dixie Community Action Agency (http://www.littledixie.org/) for management of the property. Little Dixie Community Action Agency has contracted management of Hugo Lake State Park, Clayton Lake State Park, and the group camps at Beavers Bend State Park, in addition to Raymond Gary State Park. These properties are managed as part of the tourism and economic development focus for Little Dixie, “creating jobs in southeast Oklahoma.”

The ultimate purpose of the RMP is to establish a management framework for the conservation, protection, enhancement, development, and use of the physical and biological resources at Raymond Gary State Park. With regard to Raymond Gary State Park, the RMP is to:

- Provide managers and decision-makers with long-term direction and guidance for the successful management of the resources at Raymond Gary State Park;
- Ensure that management of the resources is compatible with authorized purposes;
- Ensure that recreation experiences and facilities are compatible with other environmental resources;
- Ensure that planned developments are based on public need and the ability of the environmental resources to accommodate such facilities and use; and
- Resolve issues and concerns related to management of the environmental resources.

Planning Process

The planning process for preparation of this Resource Management Plan included discussion between research staff at Oklahoma State University (OSU) and management personnel from Oklahoma State Parks. In addition, the process incorporated (1) the acquisition of archival information from libraries, state parks, books, research reports, and other sources; (2) interviews of state park personnel; (3) records provided by state park management; (4) input from members of the public through surveys, comments cards, and focus groups; and (5) searches of the Internet for information that expanded on other archives.
The purposes of public involvement are to inform the public and solicit public response regarding their needs, values, and evaluations of proposed solutions. Public involvement programs are designed not only to meet state and federal regulations, but also to include interested individuals, organizations, agencies, and governmental entities in the decision-making process. Techniques used for public involvement include interviews, workshops, advisory committees, informational brochures, surveys, and public hearings. The process of public involvement is important to help strengthen the relationship between public and government agencies involved in the proposed plan. The relative success of public involvement techniques and the participation of supporting government agencies regarding the program as a whole is indicated by how well informed the public is and by how much the public has contributed to making environmentally sound, feasible decisions that are supported by a significant segment of the public. The public involvement process for the Raymond Gary State Park RMP is incorporated into the text of this document.

The original concept in preparation of an RMP is a federal action that requires compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); therefore, the public involvement process must fulfill the RMP and NEPA requirements as well as those of other entities. Oklahoma State Parks has committed the agency to follow a similar model at the state level for all state parks.

Using several public involvement methods to gain insight into the concerns of the public and governmental agencies potentially affected by provisions of the Raymond Gary State Park RMP, representatives from OSU compiled and analyzed the data. The public involvement process offered citizens and various interest groups information about the project and its potential impacts. This course of action was used to gather information, ideas, and concerns regarding the different issues to be compiled and addressed to determine issues of public concern. The issues were then evaluated resulting in alternative solutions and recommendations for the park.

Finally, the RMP process included integration of global positional system (GPS) technology into geographic information system (GIS) software to document features and attributes within the park. This component of the process permits an on-going record of facilities with their respective attributes, locations, and conditions. As a result, the GPS and GIS components of the RMP process are integral to on-going implementation and application of the planning effort.

Authorization and Agencies Involved

In 2006, Oklahoma State Parks, through the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD), contracted with Oklahoma State University to prepare Resource Management Plans for each park. This agreement has been renewed annually since 2006. The current agreement specified Raymond Gary State Park during 2014 – 2015, and the intent of the agreement is to continue the RMP process across all state parks in Oklahoma.

The RMP agreement became effective July 1, 2014 between Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and Oklahoma State University. Following a meeting between OTRD and OSU staff, information, reports, and comment cards were provided to OSU for review. In accordance with the RMP contract, OSU performed research services and delivered reports to OTRD concluding with a written plan for Raymond Gary State Park in June 2015.

The authority for the agreement between OTRD and OSU is based upon Title 74 § 2213 as authorized by Engrossed Senate Bill 823 of the 2005 session: “The Commission may contract for the study, analysis, and planning as reasonably necessary to aid in determining the feasibility of
leasing, selling or privately managing or developing the property or facilities under the control of the Commission. The Commission shall be exempt from the competitive bidding requirements of the Competitive Bidding Act for the purpose of soliciting, negotiating, and effectuating such a contract or contracts.”

Further, this authority is specified in Title 74 § 2215 which states: the Division of State Parks, subject to the policies and rules of the Commission shall formulate, establish, maintain, and periodically review, with public participation, a resource management plan for each state park. The resource management plan, upon approval by the Commission, shall be considered a guide for the development, utilization, protection, and management of the state park and its natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources.

![Figure 1.1 – Entry sign for Raymond Gary State Park](image)
Chapter 2 – Project Description

About Raymond Gary State Park

The Division of State Parks, a part of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, is governed by the laws of the state of Oklahoma. These laws define the authority for the Division and the context in which individual state parks are managed. Title 74 § 2214 of the Oklahoma Statutes states that the Division of State Parks shall, subject to the policies and rules of the Commission:

1. Conserve, preserve, plan, supervise, construct, enlarge, reduce, improve, maintain, equip and operate parkland, public recreation facilities, lodges, cabins, camping sites, scenic trails, picnic sites, golf courses, boating, and swimming facilities, and other similar facilities in state parks reasonably necessary and useful in promoting the public use of state parks under the jurisdiction and control of the Commission;

2. Supervise the management and use of state properties and facilities under the jurisdiction of the Commission. The Commission may adopt rules to lease concessions in any state-owned facility if the Commission deems it feasible;

3. Authorize those employees in the Park Manager job family classification series, as established by the Oklahoma Office of Personnel Management, to maintain administrative control over all facilities, programs, operations, services, and employees in the park to which they are assigned; and

4. Enforce the rules and policies governing the use of and conduct of patrons in all recreational facilities and properties of the Commission.

Operation of Raymond Gary State Park has been contracted to Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc., although the property belongs to the State of Oklahoma. This places Raymond Gary State Park into a contractual management agreement with Clayton Lake State Park, Hugo Lake State Park, and the group camps at Beavers Bend State Park.

Purpose and Significance of Raymond Gary State Park

An initial requirement of the RMP process is the development of a purpose statement for the property under consideration. The process selected for the development of resource management plans for state parks requires purpose statements and statements of significance for each park. These statements drive the decisions as to planning for the respective parks, since individual parks in the state park system do not have identical purposes or intents.

As previously indicated, Raymond Gary State Park is managed under contract by Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc. The purpose of Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc. is “To assist in developing, executing, and coordinating plans and the programs authorized under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and subsequent amendments which may be made to that act, and other Federal, State, and local laws and programs which will tend to alleviate and
eradicate poverty within the area of operation of this agency, exclusively for charitable purposes.”

The mission of Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc. is “Community Action changes people’s lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.”

At the initiation of this project, a purpose statement for Raymond Gary State Park did not exist. As a result, it was necessary that one be developed. Research staff from OSU worked with OTRD staff, personnel from Little Dixie Community Action Agency representing Raymond Gary State Park and the broader agency, to develop a draft purpose statement. During that process staff created the following statement.

The purpose of Raymond Gary State Park is to provide for the protection, conservation, and public enjoyment of the scenic, historic, and ecological values that exist within the park property. As an Oklahoma State Park on a lake developed by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Raymond Gary encompasses a forest, stream, and lake ecosystem. Raymond Gary provides visitor amenities compatible with that environment permitting visitors to enjoy the lake, fishery and wildlife. Raymond Gary State Park serves as a tourist destination, stimulates the local economy, and provides an outdoor recreation setting in an under-served region of Oklahoma.

Similarly, in response to requests from the research staff, OTRD personnel and Little Dixie representatives, in cooperation with the research staff, developed a statement of significance for Raymond Gary State Park. That statement follows:

Raymond Gary State Park is significant because it encompasses a historic and culturally important setting. Raymond Gary State Park provides and protects the natural, cultural, and historic resources present in that ecosystem for a population in an under-served portion of Oklahoma and attracts tourists which benefit the local economy. These developments and the surrounding environment form valuable memories for visitors and influence the lives of generations of guests.
Figure 2.1 demonstrates the inter-relationship of purpose and significance statements with the mission of the management agency in decisions related to a given park or property. This model has been developed by the National Park Service to assure consistency between the mission of the National Park Service and the operation of their respective properties. In a similar manner, park purpose statements and park significance must be consistent with the mission of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department.
Geographic Location of Raymond Gary State Park

Raymond Gary State Park is located in extreme southeastern Oklahoma in Choctaw County. The park is situated along the eastern edge of Lake Raymond Gary, about 5 miles north of the Red River.

Raymond Gary State Park is located southeast of Fort Towson, approximately 12 miles east of Hugo, Oklahoma, and five miles west of the Choctaw County/McCurtain County line. A map with various insets (Figure 2.2) of Raymond Gary State Park shows its location in the rural, wooded environment of Choctaw County along the shores of Lake Raymond Gary.

Hugo is the county seat of Choctaw County, with a population of 5,310. There are numerous other small communities distributed throughout Choctaw County and the adjoining Highway 70 corridor into McCurtain County. The largest population base in the region is in Hugo, although other cities in the area include Paris, Texas, as well as Broken Bow and Idabel, Oklahoma. The Broken Bow area has become a popular recreation area increasing traffic along Highway 70.

Travel to and from Raymond Gary State Park requires access along federal Highway 70 extending east and west across the county. Highway 70 intersects with Highway 271 and the Indian Nation Turnpike in Hugo and with Highway 259 in Idabel. For immediate access to Raymond Gary State Park, state Highway 209 intersects with Highway 70 just east of Fort
Towson. Highway 209 extends about 1.5 miles south from that intersection and terminates in Raymond Gary State Park. Highway 70 is four-lane through Fort Towson, but changes to a two-lane highway just east of the intersection with state Highway 209 (Figure 2.3).

Historic Fort Towson and Doaksville is located to the north of Highway 70. The entry corridor along Highway 209 passes through a residential area before entering Raymond Gary State Park.

---

**Community and Regional Context**

**Brief History of Choctaw County**

The following history of Choctaw County was written by James Milligan for the Oklahoma Historical Society and retrieved from the website for the Oklahoma Historical Society [here](http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/C/CH051.html).

“Choctaw County derives its name from “Chahta,” the mythical founder of the Choctaw tribe. Containing a total land and water area of 800.68 square miles, the county is bordered by McCurtain County on the east, Bryan County on the west, Pushmataha and Atoka counties on the north, and the Red River and Texas on the south. The major water feature in Choctaw County is the Kiamichi River, which drains northwest to southeast into the Red River. The Muddy Boggy and Clear Boggy rivers (creeks) also drain into the Red. The county lies in the Coastal Plains physiographic region. U.S. Highway 70 passes east-west through the incorporated towns of Swink, Fort Towson, Sawyer, Hugo, Soper, and Boswell, and U.S. Highway 271 traverses north-south from west of Grant to Hugo (county seat) and north to Antlers in Pushmataha County.

Centuries before Europeans arrived early Native peoples used the region. Archaeologists have studied only five Paleo-Indian (prior to 6000 B.C.) sites. A number of later period groups have resided or camped in the present county. At the beginning of the twenty-first century fifty-one Archaic (6000 B.C. to A.D. 1), forty-five Woodland (A.D. 1 to 1000), and fifty-four Plains Village (A.D. 1000 to 1500) sites were listed by the Oklahoma Archaeological Survey. Several historic sites were also present.

Prior to statehood Choctaw County existed as a part of Jackson, Kiamichi, Cedar, and Towson counties, Choctaw Nation. In 1824 the U.S. Army established Fort Towson, the second oldest fort in Indian Territory, in present Choctaw County. The Choctaw people began settling in the area in 1831-32 after their removal from the American South. Signing of the 1837 treaty for the
final removal of the Chickasaws into the Choctaw Nation occurred at the town of Doaksville, located adjacent to the fort. Doaksville was the Chickasaw Nation’s largest town and emerged as Indian Territory’s most important regional agricultural and trading center. Both Towson and Doaksville served as capital of the Choctaw Nation at various times. Six miles east of present Hugo, Robert M. Jones, a wealthy Choctaw planter, built an elegant southern mansion that he named Rose Hill (burned in 1912). Jones owned more than two hundred slaves on his cotton plantations along the Red River. Tracing its roots to an 1848 Presbyterian mission among the Choctaw, the Goodland Presbyterian Children’s Home, four miles south of Hugo, is one of Oklahoma’s oldest such agencies still in existence. County Judge Thomas W. Hunter, called “the Godfather of the Choctaw,” hailed from Boswell. In 1832 his father, Bina Ahanta, a mixed-blood, made the removal from Mississippi; his mother, Tennessee Hunter, was a white woman. Judge Hunter began his career as a teacher at Jones Academy, in 1902 unsuccessfully challenged Green McCurtain for the post of Choctaw chief, after statehood became the first mayor of Boswell, and later served eight terms in the Oklahoma House of Representatives. Another important Choctaw County figure was Joel Spring, titled ‘the Father of Hugo.’ When the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway built a line through the Choctaw Nation in 1902, this Goodland merchandise-store operator moved to Hugo.

As the railroad became more important, Hugo developed into a commercial center. The Webb Hotel was one of the most important stops on the line. Reportedly in the 1920s, sixteen passenger trains per day stopped at the town, enabling travelers to take advantage of the Webb’s facilities. Rail service remained a transportation factor, with the Kiamichi Railroad Company (KRR) providing east-west and north-south lines.

Agriculture, ranching, and the lumber industry have supported the county’s economy. In 1910, when cotton reigned as the chief crop, the census counted 2,040 farms. Prior to World War II tenant farmers worked the majority of the farms, 73 percent in 1930. By the 1930s corn, oats, prairie hay, and peanuts diversified the county’s agricultural activities. By the end of the twentieth century, when farms numbered 991 and involved 337,961 acres, soybeans, vegetables, and corn were the main crops. A vegetable-processing industry thrived, and petroleum and crushed stone were also economic assets. The Kiamichi Area Vocational School and the Western Farmers Electric Cooperative were located in Hugo. Retail businesses and health care were the largest employers.

At 1907 statehood Choctaw County was created with Hugo as its seat. In 1910 the population stood at 21,862. A decline of more than 8,000 between 1920 and 1930 brought the total to 24,142. By 1960 there were 15,633 residents. In 2000 the county had a population of 15,342, of whom 68.6 percent were white, 10.9 percent were African American, 15 percent American Indian, and 1.6 percent Hispanic.

Choctaw County residents have included a variety of personalities. Hugo was also the home of Oklahoma Gov. William Judson Holloway, who in 1929 succeeded Henry S. Johnston after his impeachment. The town is also the winter headquarters for Carson & Barnes Circus and the Kelly-Miller Brothers Circus. Called “Circus City,” the town has reserved part of Mt. Olivet cemetery for performers. Among those interred there are circus founder D. R. Miller and rodeo champion bull-riders Freckles Brown, Lane Frost, and Todd Whatley. Another recreational amenity attraction has been the annual Bill Grant Bluegrass Festival, attracting musicians and large audiences each summer. Hugo has also garnered recognition for its restoration of the Frisco Depot and the Harvey House Restaurant. The Hugo Dam on the Kiamichi River has added
fishing and boating at Lake Hugo, attracting tourist dollars. Lake Raymond Gary, east of Fort Towson, also appeals to outdoors enthusiasts.

Historic properties of Choctaw County that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places include the Doaksville Town Site (NR 75001561), Spencer Academy (NR 75001562), Choctaw Chief’s House (NR 71000660), and Fort Towson Cantonment (70000531).”

**Demographic and Socioeconomic Conditions and Impact**

The U.S. Bureau of Census provides summary data related to the demographic profile of the residents of Choctaw County. The 2010 Census provided the statistical basis for the detail related to the population of Choctaw County in 2013.

The following tables provide this summary based upon data retrieved during October 2014 from [http://factfinder2.census.gov](http://factfinder2.census.gov).

**Table 2.1 – Population of Choctaw County**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013 estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choctaw County</td>
<td>15,342</td>
<td>15,205</td>
<td>15,045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The population of Choctaw County has decreased at a rate of 2.5% over the first decade of the 21st century. That population decline appears to be continuing based on the 2013 census estimate as shown in Table 2.1. This pattern of decreasing population is opposite that for the population of Oklahoma which has increased during that same period. However, it is similar to the decrease of population in several western Oklahoma counties. By contrast, most of the counties in northeast Texas grew significantly in population during this same period.

Interestingly, Choctaw County reports a population in which the median age of male residents is two years higher than the median age for resident females. This may be a reflection of economic conditions in the county in which younger males have moved out of Choctaw County in search of employment. In addition, Choctaw County shows a population with greater diversity than that present within the population for the state of Oklahoma. Choctaw County reports a population in which 6.6% of the residents represent two or more races. However, the percentage of African American residents in Choctaw County exceeds that across the state of Oklahoma, while the percentage of American Indian residents is almost double that of the statewide average. In addition, Choctaw County presents a population with a much smaller percentage of Hispanic residents than is true across Oklahoma.
Table 2.2 – Demographic Characteristics of the Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Detail on factor</th>
<th>Choctaw County Number (Percent)</th>
<th>Oklahoma Number (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex and Age</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7,332 (48.2%)</td>
<td>1,816,749 (49.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7,873 (51.8%)</td>
<td>1,858,590 (50.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Median age (years)</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under 18 years of age</td>
<td>3,679 (24.2%)</td>
<td>911,484 (24.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 years of age and over</td>
<td>11,526 (75.8%)</td>
<td>2,762,318 (75.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65 years of age and over</td>
<td>2,759 (18.1%)</td>
<td>491,422 (13.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>9,866 (64.9%)</td>
<td>2,720,135 (72.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>1,658 (10.9%)</td>
<td>267,179 (7.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>2,504 (16.5%)</td>
<td>259,809 (8.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>41 (0.3%)</td>
<td>61,581 (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>3,967 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>1,010 (6.6%)</td>
<td>263,896 (7.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino Of any race</td>
<td>427 (2.8%)</td>
<td>302,167 (8.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3 provides detail on the household characteristics of the population of Choctaw County. Of particular note is the much higher percentage of households in Choctaw County with one or more members over the age of 65 than is true in the state of Oklahoma. This is a reflection of aging of the population in the county and likely departure of many of the younger adult members of the population. On most measures related to household characteristics, Choctaw County is similar to the household characteristics represented across Oklahoma.

An interesting comparison can be made between housing in Choctaw County and housing in McCurtain County, just to the east. According to the 2013 Census estimate, Choctaw County had 246 “seasonal, recreational, or occasional use” housing units (3.3% of the available housing). McCurtain County reported almost double that percentage of recreational real estate, largely due to developments near Broken Bow Lake.
Table 2.3 – Household Characteristics in Choctaw County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Related Factor</th>
<th>Choctaw County Number (Percent)</th>
<th>Oklahoma Number (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of households</td>
<td>6,270</td>
<td>1,421,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population in households</td>
<td>15,033 (98.9%)</td>
<td>3,563,497 (96.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with a child or children under 18</td>
<td>1,967 (31.4%)</td>
<td>425,149 (29.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with person 65 years and over</td>
<td>2,055 (32.8%)</td>
<td>140,851 (9.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied housing units</td>
<td>6,270 (83.4%)</td>
<td>1,421,705 (86.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant housing units</td>
<td>1,251 (16.6%)</td>
<td>222,523 (13.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupied housing units</td>
<td>4,436 (70.7%)</td>
<td>969,959 (68.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter occupied housing units</td>
<td>1,834 (29.3%)</td>
<td>451,746 (31.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One characteristic on which the population of Choctaw County differs from that across Oklahoma is household income. The median household income in Choctaw County is $13,000 below the statewide average. Median household income as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Census may be somewhat misleading: by definition 50% of the population in the county is above the median income level and 50% is below that number. In Choctaw County, the mean household income is $42,711 indicating that a small number of residents are in the upper levels of income while a larger number are in the lower income categories.

It is equally important to recognize that 24.5% of the population of Choctaw County is identified as being below federal poverty guidelines. The percentage of households below poverty levels and the percentage of individuals in those households are above the comparable statistics for the state of Oklahoma. It can be concluded that the residents of Choctaw County are financially limited as compared to the general population of Oklahoma.

Table 2.4 – Financial Characteristics in Choctaw County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic or Factor</th>
<th>Choctaw County</th>
<th>Oklahoma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median household income</td>
<td>$29,015</td>
<td>$42,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households below poverty level</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals below poverty level</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Residents of Choctaw County also present education characteristics that are associated with the financial status of the county. In Choctaw County, the greatest variation from the statewide
educational pattern is in the percentage of individuals with high school diplomas or equivalent educational achievement, but Choctaw County lags behind state statistics for education beyond the high school diploma. County residents have achieved a higher percentage at this level, but then at higher levels of education, Choctaw County lags behind the statewide average. Education levels have been shown to be highly correlated with other economic measures.

Table 2.5 – Education Characteristics in Choctaw County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Choctaw County Number (Percent)</th>
<th>Oklahoma Number (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10,207 persons 25 years of age and above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 9th grade</td>
<td>328 (7.8%)</td>
<td>115,248 (4.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th to 12th grade, no diploma</td>
<td>1,245 (12.2%)</td>
<td>232,987 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma or equivalency</td>
<td>4,185 (41.0%)</td>
<td>775,478 (32.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
<td>2,205 (21.6%)</td>
<td>559,367 (23.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
<td>551 (5.4%)</td>
<td>159,557 (6.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>888 (8.7%)</td>
<td>362,043 (15.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or professional degree</td>
<td>347 (3.4%)</td>
<td>176,139 (7.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another demographic factor that is highly correlated with financial characteristics and educational characteristics is employment. The employment figures for Choctaw County are reported in Table 2.6. In 2010, Choctaw County reported unemployment to be approximately 10% as compared with a statewide 7.7%.

Table 2.6 – Employment Characteristics in Choctaw County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic or Factor</th>
<th>Choctaw County Number (Percent)</th>
<th>Oklahoma Number (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population in the labor force (16 years and over)</td>
<td>6,127 (52.3%)</td>
<td>1,806,858 (63.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>5,504 (89.8%)</td>
<td>1,674,765 (92.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private wage and salary workers</td>
<td>3,775 (68.6%)</td>
<td>1,260,965 (75.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government workers</td>
<td>1,212 (22.0%)</td>
<td>285,562 (17.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed (non-incorporated business)</td>
<td>513 (9.3%)</td>
<td>124,013 (7.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid family workers</td>
<td>4 (0.1%)</td>
<td>4,225 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In summary, Choctaw County comprises a rural area with approximately 18.8 persons per square mile as compared to an average of 50.3 for Oklahoma. Over 35% of the population of Choctaw County resides in Hugo, the county seat. The county population shows an average household income below the statewide average; additionally, a higher percentage of Choctaw County residents are below the poverty level than is true statewide. A higher percentage of residents of the county have achieved their high school diplomas, but the county is below statewide educational statistics at higher levels of education.

**Competing and Complementary Recreational Opportunities**

In recent past, southeastern Oklahoma has been marketed as “Kiamichi Country: Where Oklahoma’s Day Begins.” However, as of December 2014, Kiamichi Country has been rebranded as Choctaw Country and will continue to serve as a tourism outlet promoting eastern Oklahoma. Ten counties, including Choctaw County, comprise the former Kiamichi Country and continue under the umbrella of Choctaw Country.

Southeastern Oklahoma is recognized for its rivers, lakes, and pine forested hills. Between Hugo at the Indian Nation Turnpike and the Arkansas state line along Federal Highway 70, there are three state parks with distinct personalities. Hugo State Park is managed under contract by Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc. and features recreation development on Hugo Lake, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers property. Hugo Lake is much larger than the lake at Raymond Gary State Park, allowing for much greater boating and fishing activity. Hugo Lake State Park includes camping and cabins, but also includes a substantial marina. There may be some local visitors who utilize both Hugo Lake and Lake Raymond Gary.

Beavers Bend State Park is located north of Broken Bow to the east of Raymond Gary State Park. Beavers Bend is a highly developed Oklahoma State Park on Broken Bow Lake, another U.S. Army Corps of Engineers impoundment. Beavers Bend State Park includes a golf course, lodge, cabins, multiple campgrounds, group camps, and marina. It is highly unlikely that Beavers Bend State Park competes for the same market as that at Raymond Gary State Park.

Similarly, McGee Creek State Park is located about 40 miles northwest of Raymond Gary State Park. It offers a larger lake with camping and complements the experiences possible at Hugo Lake and Raymond Gary State Parks.

Clayton Lake State Park is slightly more than 50 miles north of Raymond Gary State Park and is also managed by Little Dixie. The experience at Clayton Lake and the facilities available at that location may directly compete with that offered at Raymond Gary State Park. Both parks have relatively small lakes offering camping, fishing, and a few cabins.

*Figure 2.4 – View from Raymond Gary State Park*
South of the Red River, Pat Mayse State Park, a Texas State Park, located on Pat Mayse Lake, another U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reservoir may compete more directly with Hugo Lake State Park. Pat Mayse State Park offers camping and fishing, but on a larger lake than Lake Raymond Gary. Pat Mayse State Park draws primarily from Paris, Texas, but may draw visitors from Hugo as well.

**Regional and Park History**

The history of Raymond Gary State Park is directly associated with the impounding of Gates Creek in 1956. The Gates Creek Dam Association was formed and sold about four hundred memberships to support the effort. With later legislation, Lake Raymond Gary was placed under management of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Gates Creek was impounded to establish a wildlife management area, resulting in Lake Raymond Gary with primary purposes for recreation and fishing. This impoundment created a lake with 9.9 miles of shoreline and a surface area of 267.5 acres. The lake level is relatively stable, maintaining an average depth of 6.4 feet and a maximum depth of 22 feet. The earthen dam is 900 feet long and 30 feet high. The watershed above Lake Raymond Gary is about 65 square miles (http://www.wildlifedepartment.com/fishing/raymond.htm).

Species of interest for anglers in Lake Raymond Gary include bluegill sunfish, redear sunfish, and channel catfish. Stocking has occurred regularly over the years. For example, channel catfish are stocked at a rate of 40 per acre. In 2011, 23,733 Florida largemouth bass were added to the fishery.

The lake and the park were named for Raymond Dancel Gary, governor of Oklahoma from 1955 to 1959. Having a state park named in honor of Governor Raymond Gary is very appropriate. In addition to his campaign promise to develop the lake and a state park, the governor “secured legislation creating the Department of Commerce and Industry. Directed by the governor and a citizen advisory council, the new agency’s role was to inform the nation about the state’s natural resources and its agricultural and commercial opportunities. Using an official state magazine, Oklahoma Today, and other promotions, the department effectively began to publicize Oklahoma’s economic and environmental virtues to encourage businesses from around the country and the world to relocate in the Sooner state” (Norris, 2007).

In 1979, the community of Fort Towson expanded its boundaries to incorporate the residential areas at Lake Raymond Gary. Location of Raymond Gary State Park near the town of Fort Towson and the historic Fort Towson enhance its attraction for visitors. The history of Fort Towson is provided by Keith Tolman for the Oklahoma Historical Society.

“In May 1824 a company of the U.S. Army Seventh Infantry established a camp on Gates Greek near the confluence of the Kiamichi and Red rivers in present Choctaw County, Oklahoma. The outpost, called “Cantonment Towson,” was named for Gen. Nathan Towson, a hero of the War of 1812 and then army paymaster general. The post was established as a fortification on the international boundary with Mexico (Texas),
and as a curb to lawlessness in the region. It was also intended to serve as a buffer between Plains Indians to the west and the Choctaw, who were slated for removal to the area from Mississippi.

Operating from a temporary camp of tents and log structures, the troops at the garrison were charged with enforcing the federal law of 1802 that prohibited hunting and unlicensed trading on Indian lands. They were also detailed to the unpopular duty of removing Anglo settlers who believed the area to be a part of Miller County, Arkansas. Other important tasks included the construction of roads connecting the post with Fort Smith, Arkansas, and Fort Jesup, Louisiana.

The post was abandoned in 1829 but was reestablished in 1830 as “Camp Phoenix,” when the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek was concluded with the Choctaw and the facility was soon renamed “Fort Towson.” Substantial barracks, officers’ quarters, and other buildings were constructed. For the next several years the post served as a terminal on the Choctaw Trail of Tears. During the Mexican War (1846–48) Fort Towson served as a staging area for troops headed for Mexico. By the mid-1850s, however, it was left in the backwaters of a westward advancing frontier. The post was abandoned in 1854 and the remaining troops marched out to forts farther west. Fort Towson witnessed a brief resurgence of importance during the Civil War when Gen. Samuel Bell Maxey chose it as headquarters for Confederate forces in Indian Territory. At the close of the conflict Cherokee Brig. Gen. Stand Watie surrendered at Doaksville, near the fort, becoming the last Confederate general officer to lay down arms.

Many historical figures have been associated with Fort Towson. Jefferson Davis, later president of the Confederacy, was stationed there as a young lieutenant, and Sam Houston was known to have visited there and in nearby Doaksville. Others who may have visited Fort Towson include Davy Crockett, Benjamin Bonneville, and Ben Milam, a hero of the Texas Revolution. The Oklahoma Historical Society acquired the Fort Towson property in 1967. Since then numerous archaeological investigations have been conducted. A Visitor Center and period sutler’s store are open to the public (Tolman, 2007).

The State of Oklahoma originally acquired approximately 60 acres for development of a state park in multiple transactions. Raymond Gary State Park was opened in 1957. As a result of private ownership and development along its shores, the majority of public access to Lake Raymond Gary is provided through Raymond Gary State Park. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation continues a significant presence at Lake Raymond Gary as shown in Figure 2.5 on the following page. While fishing is encouraged in Raymond Gary State Park, hunting is not allowed in the park or on Lake Raymond Gary.
Natural Resources in the Park

Climate and Air Quality

Choctaw County is part of the Cypress Swamps and Forest. This region is characterized by irregular plains and short leaf pine forests. Average annual precipitation ranges from about 45 inches in western Choctaw County to 51 inches in the east. May and October are the wettest months, on average, but much of the spring through fall receives sufficient rainfall. One in two winters have at least one inch of snow, with one year in thirteen having ten or more inches.

Temperatures average near 63 degrees, with a slight increase from north to south. Temperatures range from an average daytime high of 94 degrees in July and August to an average low of 32 degrees in January. Choctaw County averages a growing season of 226 days, but plants that can withstand short periods of colder temperatures may have an additional four to eight weeks.

Winds from the south to southeast are quite dominant, averaging seven miles-per-hour. Relative humidity, on average, ranges from 43% to 96% during the day. During the year, humidity is highest in June and lowest in February. Winter months tend to be cloudier than summer months. The percentage of possible sunshine ranges from an average of about 55% in winter to nearly 75% in summer.

Thunderstorms occur on about 50 days each year, predominantly in the spring and summer. During the period 1950 – 2003, Choctaw County recorded 18 tornadoes. The most recent significant tornado (F2 intensity or greater) occurred on November 22, 1983. A more destructive F4 tornado passed through Choctaw County on April 2, 1982. Messer and Lake Hugo were affected and 29 people were injured. Typically, there are about two events each year of hail exceeding one inch in diameter. As information collection improves, both the number of reported tornadoes and the number of severe hail events have increased (Oklahoma Climatological Survey).
**Archeology of Raymond Gary State Park**

Choctaw County has a rich history as discussed in the context of the history of the county and the history of Fort Towson. The community of Doaksville was once one of the largest towns in the Choctaw Nation, flourishing as the Choctaw National Capital from 1850 to 1863. A series of several major excavations have been conducted in 1995, 1996, and 1997 by the Oklahoma Historical Society under the direction of William Lees (Oklahoma Archeological Society). These research efforts have concentrated on the Doaksville area.

The Doaksville archeological site provides an opportunity for visitors to the area to gain an understanding of the diverse historic and cultural past in southeast Oklahoma. A walking trail constructed in 2001 loops through the historic ruins and interprets this record.

Since Doaksville is located north of Raymond Gary State Park along Gates Creek, there is a possibility of archeological materials of value in the lake or on the property. Choctaw County includes five known Paleo sites (? to 8,000 BP), 51 Archaic sites (8,000 to 2,000 BP), 45 Woodland sites (2,000 to 1,000 BP), and 54 Village sites (1,000 – 500 BP) [BP = before present].

**Topography**

Raymond Gary State Park and all of Choctaw County are situated in the Atlantic Plains division using the Fenneman Physiography Classification (National Geographic Society). This area is further defined as a coastal plain province and a section of the west gulf coastal plains.

Surface rocks are primarily of the quaternary and cretaceous periods. The county slopes from north to south, with rivers and streams flowing from north to south and west to east.
Geology

Choctaw County and Raymond Gary State Park are situated in the Gulf Coastal Plain south of the Ouachita Uplift (Figure 2.7). The Ouachita Uplift or orogeny is one of three such mountain belts in Oklahoma where a series of folding, faulting, and uplifting occurred during the Pennsylvanian Period. The east-to-west formations of the Ouachita Mountains are mostly cherty marine limestone, 200 – 3,000 feet thick in the north. Rocks are mostly marine shale and sandstone.

A portion of the Edwards-Trinity aquifer system extends east and west across the northern extent of Choctaw County. The Edwards-Trinity system is a sandstone and carbonate-rock aquifer.

Soil

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) gathers data and prepares custom soil resource reports for specific areas. In each report they define various terms related to soils and the related capacities. Soils that have profiles that are almost alike make up a soil series. Except for differences in texture of the surface layer, all the soils of a series have major horizons that are similar in composition, thickness, and arrangement.

Soils of one series can differ in texture of the surface layer, slope, stoniness, salinity, degree of erosion, and other characteristics that affect their use. On the basis of such differences, a soil series is divided into soil phases. Most of the areas shown on the detailed soil maps are phases of soil series. The name of a soil phase commonly indicates a feature that affects use or management. For example, Alpha silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, is a phase of the Alpha series.
Some map units are made up of two or more major soils or miscellaneous areas. These map units are complexes, associations, or undifferentiated groups.

A complex consists of two or more soils or miscellaneous areas in such an intricate pattern or in such small areas that they cannot be shown separately on the maps. The pattern and proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas are somewhat similar in all areas. Alpha-Beta complex, 0 to 6 percent slopes, is an example.

An association is made up of two or more geographically associated soils or miscellaneous areas that are shown as one unit on the maps. Because of present or anticipated uses of the map units in the survey area, it was not considered practical or necessary to map the soils or miscellaneous areas separately. The pattern and relative proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas are somewhat similar. Alpha-Beta association, 0 to 2 percent slopes, is an example.

An undifferentiated group is made up of two or more soils or miscellaneous areas that could be mapped individually but are mapped as one unit because similar interpretations can be made for use and management. The pattern and proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas in a mapped area are not uniform. An area can be made up of only one of the major soils or miscellaneous areas, or it can be made up of all of them. Alpha and Beta soils, 0 to 2 percent slopes, are an example.

Some surveys include miscellaneous areas. Such areas have little or no soil material and support little or no vegetation. Rock outcrop is an example of a miscellaneous area (NRCS, 2010).

Material about soils in the study area provides background information about suitability for recreational development. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) provides information related to soils. The detail of the soil report for Raymond Gary State Park is provided in Figure 2.8 on the following page.

Almost 98% of Raymond Gary State Park is classified as Swink-Hollywood complex (coded ‘50’ in Figure 2.8) with 5 to 20% slopes. The parent material for these soils is clayey residuum weathered from limestone. Just to the east of the park, the Swink-Hollywood complex continues but with lesser slopes. The developed portions of Raymond Gary State Park are entirely on Swink-Hollywood complex with 5% to 20% slopes.

**Soil Suitability for Recreational Development**

Various soils have characteristics that may limit development for recreational purposes without additional investment for remediation or engineering. This is true within Raymond Gary State Park. For development of campgrounds, areas with Swink-Hollywood soils (50) are very limited due to depth to bedrock and slow water movement. The same limitations are true for these soils for use with paths and trails, with the added concern that the soils are too clayey. In the same manner, these soils are very limited for picnic areas and installation of playgrounds. Septic systems and lagoon systems also present problems due to slow water movement and depth to bedrock.

Almost all recreational development in these soils requires some remediation. Usually that remediation leads to additional engineering and expense.
Figure 2.8 – Soil map of Raymond Gary State Park
Source: Natural Resource Conservation Service
Choctaw County straddles portions of six watersheds, only two of which are entirely within Oklahoma. The others cross state lines with Texas and Arkansas. These watersheds are:

- Bois D’arc-Island (OK and TX) – 11140101
- Muddy Boggy (OK and TX) – 11140103
- Clear Boggy (OK) – 11140104
- Kiamichi (OK and TX) – 11140105
- Pecan-Waterhole (AR, OK, and TX) – 11140106
- Upper Little (OK) – 11140107

The watershed that includes Lake Raymond Gary and Raymond Gary State Park is the Kiamichi (11140105) which originates in the Ouachita Mountains near the Oklahoma/Arkansas border and arcs southwest then south before emptying into the Red River. Waters in the Kiamichi watershed are tested at various locations along the Kiamichi River. Current impairment of these waters as tested at the Highway 271 bridge in Antlers include copper, lead, and enterococcus bacteria.
The maps and figures on the following pages provide detail related to Lake Raymond Gary. This detail is provided by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. As indicated, the normal elevation for Lake Raymond Gary is 401 feet above sea level.

Water quality in Lake Raymond Gary is rated as “eutrophic.” While the waters are of average clarity, the level of dissolved oxygen is inadequate to support the fishery during at least part of the year. By contrast, turbidity levels and pH ratings support fish and wildlife propagation.

Some concern is noted related to primary body contact recreation. Testing has been inadequate related to E. coli and enterococcus bacteria. However, enterococcus bacteria have been found in other portions of the watershed.
Figure 2.12 – Lake Raymond Gary
Source: Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
Figure 2.13 – Lake Raymond Gary Public Fishing Areas
Source: Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
## Figure 2.14 – Lake Raymond Gary

Source: Oklahoma Water Resources Board
Vegetative Cover

Raymond Gary State Park is in the Southern Floodplains Forest using the Kuchler Vegetation Classification, with a small portion of Choctaw County in the Bluestem Prairie. The area is in the Humid Tropical prairie division and the subtropical prairie parkland province. Within the prairie division, Choctaw County is the only Oklahoma County in the Oak Woods and Prairies section. The Lenihan Vegetation Classification identifies these areas with slightly different descriptors. Most of Choctaw County is in the Eastern Hardwood Forest, although a portion as above is in the tallgrass prairie. The vegetation associated with the area around Raymond Gary State Park is identified as post oak-blackjack oak forest. There are patches of tallgrass prairie distributed throughout the central portion of Choctaw County. This vegetation provides habitat for a variety of wildlife, with the addition of the forest associated with the park property. Eastern Red Cedar is invasive in this environment.

Wildlife

As is true with all Oklahoma state parks, Raymond Gary State Park is a wildlife sanctuary. Due to its relatively small size and location, Raymond Gary State Park serves a variety of roles for many forms of wildlife. For some, Raymond Gary State Park and Lake Raymond Gary are a temporary or seasonal habitat as part of the migratory movement of birds and animals through the area. For others, Lake Raymond Gary may be the permanent habitat, providing an appropriate setting for the entire lifecycle. As indicated earlier, fishing is permitted and encouraged in Lake Raymond Gary, but hunting is not permitted at the Lake or in the park.

Nuisance Species

Feral hogs are present in Choctaw County and have been observed in the area surrounding Raymond Gary State Park. The estimated feral hog density for Choctaw County was abundant at 64 or more hogs per square mile. These densities were reported for six counties in southeastern Oklahoma (Stevens, 2007).

Endangered or Threatened Species

At present there are no state-listed threatened or endangered species listed for Choctaw County. However, federally listed endangered and threatened species that may be present in Choctaw County include: American Burying Beetle (*nicrophorus americanus*), Interior Least Tern (*Sternantillarum*), Scaleshell (*leptodea leptodon*), Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*), and leopard darter (*pericina pantherina*). The American burying beetle, interior least tern, and scaleshell are listed as endangered, whereas the Piping Plover is listed as threatened.

The American Burying Beetle is believed to be present in southeastern Oklahoma. In its remaining territory, the beetle is listed as endangered regardless of where they are found. This is a large beetle, approximately one to one-and-a-half inches long, predominantly black with red or orange markings (Figure 2.15). According to ODWC, a pair of beetles will find a carcass “the size of a rat, bury it a few inches below the surface of the ground and lay a small clutch of 10 to 25 eggs on it.” Loss of habitat and reduction in
available and suitable carcasses are believed to be primary causes in the reduction of the population.

As is true across much of Oklahoma, the Interior Least Tern (Figure 2.16) is a migratory bird that nests along isolated areas of several rivers. As a result, the Interior Least Tern is possible along stretches of the Kiamichi River or the Red River, but unlikely in Raymond Gary State Park. The Interior Least Tern is migratory and may be present during spring and summer.

The scaleshell is a rare mussel that remains only in the Kiamichi and Little rivers and would not be found in Raymond Gary State Park. Reservoir construction, reducing stream flow, may be a factor in the decline of the population.

Piping plovers are migratory shorebirds that prefer sandy beaches and mud flats. It is much more likely to find piping plovers in western Oklahoma, although it is possible they may be found in the upper reaches of Lake Raymond Gary.

Fishery

The status of the fishery was presented in earlier detail. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation manages the fishery. Species of interest for anglers in Lake Raymond Gary include bluegill sunfish, redear sunfish, and channel catfish. Stocking has occurred regularly over the years. For example, channel catfish are stocked at a rate of 40 per acre. In 2011, ODWC reported that 23,733 Florida largemouth bass were added to the fishery.
**Accessibility**

The Oklahoma State Parks Division strives for accessibility for those with disabilities in all its park locations and facilities and has an access plan for the Division. Many parks and facilities were designed and constructed before the passage of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and well before the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) were developed. Further, by its very nature, the natural environment may not lend itself to easy access for those with mobility impairments.

The technical provisions of the ADA permit deviation from the stated guidelines. These provisions allow deviation from full compliance if accessibility cannot be provided because (1) compliance would cause substantial harm to cultural, historic, religious or significant natural features or characteristics; (2) substantially alter the nature of the setting or purpose of the facility; (3) require construction methods or materials that are prohibited by federal, state or local regulations or statutes; or (4) would not be feasible due to terrain or the prevailing construction practices.

In 2007, the United States Access Board issued a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) for outdoor developed areas. These rules and their associated interpretations have direct bearing on the consideration of access in Raymond Gary State Park. The minimum requirements found in the NPRM for outdoor developed areas are based on several principles developed through the regulatory negotiating process. They include (U.S. Access Board, 2009):

1. Protect the resource and environment
2. Preserve the experience
3. Provide for equality of opportunity
4. Maximize accessibility
5. Be reasonable
6. Address safety
7. Be clear, simple, and understandable
8. Provide guidance
9. Be enforceable and measurable
10. Be consistent with Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (as much as possible)
11. Be based on independent use by persons with disabilities

The United States Access Board has since issued requirements that are now part of the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Accessibility Standards and apply to national parks and other outdoor areas developed by the federal government. The final rule became effective on November 25, 2013. This does not apply to outdoor areas developed with federal grants or loans or to other entities. The Board has indicated it intends to develop guidelines for non-federal outdoor sites covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and areas developed with federal grants and loans covered by the ABA in subsequent rulemaking. However, it has been the practice of OTRD to apply available standards once they are established, even if they are not yet in force for our entity.

Most of the trails within Raymond Gary State Park are natural surfaces, although hard surface sidewalks and a bridge have been installed in the developed areas. Any one designated trail may make use of all or several surface types. If major trail redesign or construction were to occur, it
would be important to ensure compliance with the ADA standards where appropriate. The NPRM addresses ten provisions that must be considered related to trail accessibility. These provisions are:

1. Surface – must be firm and stable
2. Clear tread width – minimum of 36 inches
3. Openings in surface – may not permit passage of sphere one-half inch in diameter
4. Protruding object – minimum of 80” of clear headroom above the trail
5. Tread obstacles – cannot exceed a maximum of two inches
6. Passing space – minimum of 60” by 60” at intervals of 1000’ or less
7. Slope – addresses cross slope and running slope
8. Resting intervals – at least 60” in width
9. Edge protection – not necessarily required, but may be provided
10. Signage – information on distance and departure from technical provisions

An example of possible signage for trails as suggested by the National Center on Accessibility is shown in Figure 2.19. As of 2010, no specific signs have been designated for universal communication related to accessible trails. However, these signs communicate the concept of accessibility in outdoor developed recreation spaces that include trails.

Other considerations related to access for persons with disabilities include “Braille trail” concepts that allow persons with visual limitations to enjoy the features of a trail. This is particularly true if the trail is interpretive in nature, with signs communicating information related to natural, cultural, historic, or other significant topics related to the park environment.

In an effort to fully disclose the extent of accessibility within state parks, the Oklahoma State Park Division developed terms to describe two levels of access; these terms are used in State Parks publications: accessible and usable.

Accessible indicates that the park “substantially complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). The facility is connected with a barrier-free-route-of-travel from an accessible parking area.”

Usable indicates that the “facility allows significant access. Some individuals with disabilities may have difficulty and need assistance. Due to topography and the primitive nature of some sites, parking and connecting routes may not be accessible to all with disabilities” (OTRD, 2007).
OTRD began development of the properties at Raymond Gary State Park before the passage of the ADA; thus, many of the established structures do not meet the explicit requirements of the law. In several locations, Little Dixie Community Action Agency has developed hard surface campsites, installed walkways, and made other efforts to improve accessibility. However, the number of designated accessible campsites and parking spaces in several locations are inadequate. OTRD has developed two accessible comfort stations within the park and closed a third which was not accessible. The playgroups within Raymond Gary State Park tend to be of earlier installation dates and are not presently in compliance with accessibility standards or Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines. There are no existing trails in this property, but if trails are developed, accessibility must be a consideration. The natural terrain varies considerably and is quite rocky; in addition, the environment includes vulnerable species. Thus, ADAAG-defined accessibility to every area of the park is not practical, nor necessarily desirable.

Throughout Raymond Gary State Park, it will be necessary to complete a thorough review of accessibility. In addition and in light of continuous updating, new rule-making, and interpretation of rules on-going vigilance related to accessibility is required.

An example of this rule-making and interpretation took effect March 15, 2011 under the Department of Justice ruling that specified “other power-driven mobility devices” (OPDMD) that could be used on trails by individuals with mobility limitations. At present, the expectation is that the operating entity (OTRD) shall “make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of other power-driven mobility devices by individuals with mobility disabilities, unless the public entity can demonstrate that the class of OPDMD cannot be operated in accordance with legitimate safety requirements that the public entity has adopted based on actual risks” (American Trails, 2011).

Another example of interpretation of rules took place in mid-2014 with publication of 7 Things Every Playground Owner Should Know about the Accessibility of their Playground Surfaces by the U.S. Access Board and the National Center on Accessibility.
Chapter 3 – Current Status of the Resource

Recreational Development

As one of three Oklahoma State Parks in the southeastern quadrant of the state managed by Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Raymond Gary State Park encompasses 40 acres state-owned, purchased from Bill and Pauline Bailey in 1956, supplemented with 23 acres in Government Lot 1. These 63 acres are located along the eastern shore of Lake Raymond Gary which is under the jurisdiction of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

The map on the following page, Figure 3.2, provides an overview of the features of Raymond Gary State Park. The map is provided by OTRD on the TravelOK.com website. During the preparation of the Resource Management Plan, this map was updated and is now accurate in portrayal of features within the park. As the RMP was being finalized, there was an unanswered question regarding the deed for a portion of the property near the dam. The following discussion provides details on each feature presently within Raymond Gary State Park.

For all visitors entering Raymond Gary State Park by automobile, the only highway access route is along Oklahoma Highway 209 south from U.S. Highway 70 at an intersection just east of Fort Towson. Highway 209 loops through Raymond Gary State Park, but terminates at the southern end of the park. Interior park roads provide access along the lakeshore and into the campgrounds and day use areas.

Figure 3.1 shows the boundaries of Raymond Gary State Park overlaid on aerial photography from Google Earth. This figure shows the outline of the property, owned by the State of Oklahoma.

By contrast Figure 3.2 on the following page shows the developed portions of this property. The inner portion of the loop is at a higher elevation than the western side of the park. As a result, vehicular access from Area B to Area A is by Highway 209 only. Within Area A, there is some elevation change, but visitors routinely drive into most areas of this portion of the park resulting in reduced vegetation and numerous social roadways.

Figure 3.1 – Boundaries of Raymond Gary State Park

Background from Google Earth
Figure 3.2 – Map of Raymond Gary State Park
**Entry Drive and Environs**

The entry drive into Raymond Gary State Park south from Highway 70 to the main body of the park is approximately three-quarter mile distance on Highway 209. This entry drive passes through a sparsely developed residential area with some agricultural presence.

The drive is shaded and quiet with occasional views toward the northern portion of Lake Raymond Gary. During preparation of the RMP, a private property north of the park was under construction including excavation along the lake. It appeared that this property included recreational access to Lake Raymond Gary.

There is limited signage related to Raymond Gary State Park except for the ODOT sign on Highway 70 (Figure 2.3 on page 8) and a small, green, wooden sign identifying entry into the park (Figure 1.1 on page 3). Once within the park, a visitor can turn left and uphill into Area B or continue southwest into Area A. For ease in presentation the RMP is developed based on the counter-clockwise travel through Area A into Area B, with a return to this entry point.

**Area A – Lakefront**

Area A, identified on Figure 3.2, offers the lakefront camping and lodging facilities while also serving as a day use area. Highway 209 serves as a main route into the developed portion of the park, while a turn to the right and downhill takes a visitor into the campground and along the lake frontage. Little recreational development is directly accessible from Highway 209, but it serves as the major route through the park.

On the right (northwest) side of Highway 209, the first building that is apparent to a visitor is a restroom or comfort station (Figure 3.5 on the following page). Paved parking for five or six vehicles is provided in front of the restroom, while the drive leading into Area A also extends toward Lake Raymond Gary from this location.
The comfort station shown in Figure 3.5 predates passage of the ADA. The facility is usable by persons with disabilities, but is not in full compliance with current requirements. The comfort station, with showers, is identical in construction to many found within other Oklahoma State Parks.

As shown in Figure 3.5, a campground host was present throughout the preparation of the RMP in the first campsite adjacent to the entry into Area A. This site includes water, electricity, and sewer connections for the campground host. In this location, all traffic entering Raymond Gary State Park must pass the campground host.

The road along the lake front is at a lower elevation than is Highway 209. Campsites and other recreational development are located on the hillside between these two drives. Boat ramps and waterfront services are located on the west side of the lake front drive.

The design of the campsites in Area A includes some pull-through sites and some back-in sites as shown in Figure 3.6. Nine sites include water and electricity. A few sites have a hard surface defining the campsite, but with little additional landscaping.
Table 3.1 – Campground Detail for Area A Campground

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campground amenity</th>
<th>Area A Campground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modern campsite (Water, sewer, electricity)</td>
<td>1 for campground host</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-modern campsite (Water, electricity)</td>
<td>9 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unimproved (no utilities)</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavilion (capacity of 25)</td>
<td>2, electricity, water and grill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat Ramp</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary dump station</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playgroup</td>
<td>1 (adjoining beach area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrooms</td>
<td>2, including showers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Area A includes six cabins, developed in two groups of three structures. As with the campsites, these cabins are located along the hillside between the lake front drive and Highway 209. Each of the cabins is placed on what once was a campsite. This is somewhat evident in Figure 3.7. In addition, each cabin includes electricity and a wood-burning stove. Some of the cabins have been constructed with ramps to permit use by persons with mobility limitations. As shown in the photograph in Figure 3.7, three cabins have a screened porch providing additional “outdoor” space overlooking Lake Raymond Gary.

Each cabin includes a spur for parking of a vehicle. Most of the cabins also have access to a picnic table outside the structure.

Figure 3.7 – Cabins in Area A
Note ramp, distance between cabins, and screened porch.
Area A also includes an older playgroup arrayed in separate pieces (Figure 3.8). The playgroup includes three sets of swings. One swing set includes four swings in two bays, while the other two swing sets include three bays each. In addition, a see-saw, two slides, climbing apparatus, and a merry-go-round complete the playgroup. All elements in these various playgroups are out of compliance with current standards for accessibility or safety guidelines from the Consumer Products Safety Commission. Fall zones and surfaces beneath the play areas are inadequate. Trip hazards and surfaces are problems for compliance with ADA.

A comfort station with showers and picnic pavilion provide additional support for recreational visitors to Raymond Gary State Park. This comfort station is inaccessible for persons with mobility limitations due to the terrain around the building and the design of the structure.
The lakefront at Lake Raymond Gary shows the emphasis upon the attraction of this park for anglers. Three boat ramps are located along the frontage road although these ramps are designed for small watercraft. Two fishing piers have been developed, one at the north end of the campground and the other at the south end. In addition, ODWC has installed a fishing pier shown in Figure 3.10. The waterfront also includes a designated beach area.

Figure 3.10 – Amenities for anglers at Raymond Gary State Park

Figure 3.11 – Beach at Lake Raymond Gary
One other organization that is present along the waterfront is the Raymond Gary Lake Association (Figure 3.12). The Raymond Gary Lake Association is a membership organization largely representing the various communities around the lake and other interested parties. As stated by a local realtor, “the Raymond Gary Lake Association is a very moderately priced voluntary lake association. They are involved in decorating the State Park at Christmas time, hosting the annual Christmas Boat Parade and also hosting a fireworks display on the Fourth of July every year” (Barrett, 2014).

**Area below the Dam**

At the south end of Area A, Highway 209 turns sharply to the left (east). However, there is a side road leading downhill below the dam impounding Gates Creek and forming Lake Raymond Gary (Figure 3.13). The impoundment is properly maintained through mowing and removal of woody plants.

The outflow from Lake Raymond Gary is on the west end of the impoundment. As a result, the area immediately below the impoundment and east of Gates Creek is wooded lowland. This area has been developed as a minimally improved campground for tenting (Figure 3.14); however, this is the area that needs resolution regarding deed and ownership.
A road (Figure 3.15) continues through this campground and extends to the west side of the property. This road is gated with a locked gate. Discussions with park management indicated that a water valve for the park and gates to control lake level are located on the west side of the lake, making this road an important route of access.

Table 3.2 – Campground Detail for Campground below the Dam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campground amenity</th>
<th>Campground below the Dam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unimproved (no utilities)</td>
<td>6 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrooms</td>
<td>1 closed, 1 in Area A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the intersection of the road leading to the campground below the dam and Highway 209, there is an older restroom (Figure 3.16). This restroom was closed throughout the preparation of the RMP due to instability of the foundation. The building was utilized for park storage. The restroom is similar to many found within Oklahoma State Parks and predates ADA. As a result of its design and the terrain near the entry to the structure, this restroom is inaccessible for persons with mobility limitations.

Area B

As indicated, Highway 209 turns sharply uphill and to the east as it loops back through Raymond Gary State Park. Just past the restroom shown in Figure 3.16, Highway 209 again turns sharply left (north) and continues uphill. On the west side of Highway 209 and within the loop formed by the highway, there is a campground designated as Area B. For most persons actually utilizing this portion of Area B, the easiest route of access is by direct entry along Highway 209 from the north.

Area B includes two campground loops. The loop at the southern end of Area B is developed for recreational vehicles (Figure 3.17) and includes 10 sites with water, electricity, and sewer.
Figure 3.18 shows the amenities present in Area B RV Campground. Six of the electrical pedestals in this campground have been modified to include 50-amp service. A sanitary dump station is situated at the north end of the campground, while an old pump station, now used for storage, is located at the south end of the campground. The roadway through the campground is a loop drive, although there is an exit at the south end of the loop permitting direct egress to Highway 209.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campground amenity</th>
<th>Area B RV Campground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modern campsite (Water, sewer, electricity)</td>
<td>10 sites (6 with 50 amp)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary dump station</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort Station</td>
<td>In Area A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second loop in Area B is north of the RV Campground on an elevation overlooking most of Area A. This second loop is a somewhat improved camping area with five sites, three of which include shelters as shown in Figure 3.19. The tent area is heavily wooded and overlooks Area A.
Table 3.4 – Campground Detail for Area B Tent Campground

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campground amenity</th>
<th>Area B Tent Campground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unimproved campsites</td>
<td>5 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered sites</td>
<td>3 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort Station</td>
<td>In Area A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a visitor who entered Raymond Gary State Park along Highway 209 and chose to turn left into Area B, road signs direct the visitor to the Park Office and to Area B. After a left turn near the park entry, the road rises over a crest with the tent campground on the right, the RV campground directly ahead, the park office, park residence, and management area on the left.

Near the intersection of Highway 209 and the road leading toward the park office and park residence, there are a few features that would attract attention of park visitors. A telephone and interpretive sign shown in Figure 3.21 were placed along the east side of this intersection. The telephone was removed in 2017. The box was intended to store interpretive materials associated with destinations identified on the sign. Such brochures were rarely available.

Figure 3.20 – Signs leading to Area B

Figure 3.21 – Phone and signage
**Park Residence/Office**

The east side of the roadway in Area B is developed with structures necessary for park management. This area includes the park residence (Figure 3.22), a portion of which serves as the park office. The residence is situated on a slightly elevated area above the campgrounds on the west side of the roadway. The drive into the park residence is a loop permitting access and egress if visitors enter this location.

**Maintenance Area**

Essential management and maintenance facilities are arrayed from northeast of the park residence to the area east of the house and continuing to the southeast. An access road has been developed from Highway 209 entering the northern portion of this property and additional roads enter the area from the loop leading to the park residence.

A water tower and two structures shown in Figure 3.23 were components of the former Water Treatment Plant. The metal building next to the water storage tank housed the package plant installed in the 1980s, and the partially in-ground structure was the original slow sand filter water plant. To the far eastern portion of the property, there is an area utilized for disposal of brush and wood.

The sewage treatment facility, an in-ground “pod” system, (Figure 3.24 on the following page) is fenced, signed, and gated. This facility is southeast of the maintenance area.
Figure 3.24 – Sewage treatment area

Figure 3.25 – Water lines and service

Water meter off property

Water valve off property

Dam overflow valve

Park side shutoff
Other important aspects of utility service and maintenance at Raymond Gary State Park are shown in Figure 3.25 on the preceding page. A water meter and shut-off valve are located on the west side of Lake Raymond Gary where the city water meter is located. Water is provided to the park by a waterline from that location on the west side of the lake to the east side of the lake. On the east side of the lake there is a shut-off valve on that water line. The park water line extends from that meter and along the lake bottom and emerges from the lake where the “park side shutoff” is shown. This shutoff includes another meter installed by the park so that water meter readings can be compared to determine if there is a leak in the line on the lake bottom.

In addition, the park manager is responsible for managing water levels in Lake Raymond Gary. A manually operated overflow valve is located near the spillway and is utilized to regulate water levels.

**Hiking/Walking/Riding Trails**

There are no developed trails of a traditional nature in Raymond Gary State Park. The only footpaths that exist are those that link campsites and parking lots to restrooms or shelters. One short walkway links Area B tent sites to Area A permitting foot traffic from the higher elevation of Area B to the lake frontage. This walkway includes a foot bridge perpendicular to Highway 209. As shown in Figure 3.26, the presence of grass at the upper end of this bridge indicates that there is limited foot traffic along this route.

There is limited potential for trail development within Raymond Gary State Park. Two locations have some potential for trails. The wooded area north of Area B within the highway loop offers possibility for an interpretive trail, while the area south of the current developed portion of the park could be used for a longer nature trail.

*Figure 3.26 – Foot bridge linking Area A and Area B*
Property Summary at Raymond Gary State Park

Raymond Gary State Park is composed of approximately 70 acres of land, owned by the state of Oklahoma, adjoining a 263-acre impounded lake. Within the park, there are 10 modern campsites, nine semi-modern campsites, and an estimated 100 unimproved campsites. In addition, there are six one-bedroom cabins for overnight lodging.

The largest portion of the property for Raymond Gary State Park was acquired in June 1956 from Bill and Pauline Bailey by the State of Oklahoma for the Oklahoma Planning and Resources Board. Two tracts of property are described in the warranty deed, the first of which contains approximately 40 acres and the second (a portion of Government Lot 1) contains 23 acres, although the deed says “approximately 20 acres.” The deed also makes reference to a road easement, to be executed later, extending east from the property to provide access. In 1958, the Oklahoma Planning and Resources Board dedicated 6.05 acres of the property for a public highway, leaving approximately 57 acres. Documentation for the acquisition of the southwest quadrant of the park (a portion of Government Lot 2), has not been identified, but may be held jointly with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. There is a dedication of 2.45 acres of that property, by the former private land owner, for a public highway. Based on the boundary currently shown on OTRD maps, about 8 acres of park land is included in that area, but the property may extend further west. There is an unimproved campground operated by the park which is outside what is currently shown as the boundary. In October 1976, a 3.5-acre tract at the north end of the park was purchased from B.H. and Alphada J. Ingram. This would bring the total acreage with the boundary shown to 68.5 acres. If the boundary actually encompasses the campground at the southwest corner, the park acreage may exceed 70 acres.

Public Access and Entry Aesthetics

Public access to Raymond Gary State Park was discussed earlier. All vehicular access is from federal Highway 70 to the north of the park. Highway 70 is four-lane from Hugo to Fort Towson, but is two-lane east of Fort Towson. For most of this distance, Highway 70 is designated as a 65-mph speed. Highway 209 links Raymond Gary State Park to Highway 70 and is a two-lane road with 45-mph speed limit.

The area near the entrance to Raymond Gary State Park is rural and residential, fitting for the wooded environment. Mixed hardwood and conifer stands border Highway 70 for most of the distance between Hugo and Idabel, with interspersed agricultural properties. Small communities such as Sawyer, Fort Towson, Valliant, and Garvin are adjacent to Highway 70 and offer basic commercial services.

Park Visitation

Attendance records have been kept since the opening days of the park. It should be noted that counting park visitors is an inaccurate process. Technically, every person entering the park is a park visitor – but not all of those visitors are recreational visitors. At Raymond Gary State Park a certain percentage of the visitors recorded in the park would include park staff, vendors, and members of the general public entering the park to utilize the restroom or for other purposes. The physical location of Raymond Gary State Park along State Highway 209 requires that persons driving on the roadway pass through the park. These motorists would be park visitors. Based on
observation and reports from management personnel, visitors quite frequently enter the park on Highway 209 and “cruise” through the property while sight-seeing.

Other aspects of park visitation can be calculated more accurately. This would include those situations in which there is an exchange of a fee for a specific service. As a result, the following discussion reports total visitation to Raymond Gary State Park and specific usage of particular areas within the park.

Recreational Use of Park Facilities

Visitation for Raymond Gary State Park has remained relatively stable during the past five years based on comment from management. Accurate numbers for visitors are not available, but observation and generated revenue indicate a stable to increasing visitation. Park visitors include pass-through sightseers, anglers, boaters, picnickers, and many other recreational visitors. Every vehicle driving the highway 209 loop includes park visitors. Overnight visitors include campers who spend one or more nights within Raymond Gary State Park.

Under traditional management practices, determining the number of campsites rented is more accurate than is the calculation of total visitors to the park. Total number of visitors should not be interpreted as “individuals” in that numerous individuals are repeat visitors to the park on a daily, weekly, monthly, or annual basis. In addition, guests may enter the park, leave the park, and return to the park multiple times on a single visit. In such cases, traffic counters would record each entry. At Raymond Gary State Park, the number of day visitors has not been calculated using the traffic counter in recent years. As a result, the total visitation of 57,500 visitors annually is an estimate.

Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc. did not provide data related to campsite rentals at Raymond Gary State Park. However, campsites were occupied and visitation was observed throughout the preparation of the resource management plan. The occupancy rate on unimproved campsites is hindered by extremes of weather since these sites do not have electricity. The heat of the summers in 2011 and 2012 certainly had an adverse impact on occupancy in unimproved sites as shown in several other parks.

More accurate records were available for rental of cabins at Raymond Gary State Park. As shown in Table 3.5, the demand for cabins at Raymond Gary State Park is increasing each year. During this four-year period, occupancy rate for the six cabins at Raymond Gary State Park steadily increased from 29.8% to 41.9%.

Table 3.5 – Cabin rentals at Raymond Gary State Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal year</th>
<th>Total cabin rentals</th>
<th>Occupancy rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public Perception of Raymond Gary State Park

At the time of preparation of this resource management plan, the authors reviewed numerous websites and marketing sources related to Raymond Gary State Park, which were provided by private sources. In addition, Little Dixie Economic Development Agency maintains a website that includes information regarding Raymond Gary State Park. Further, private citizens, realtors, and visitors to Raymond Gary State Park maintain personal “blogs” and social networking sites that address their experiences and visits to the park. These blogs often were associated with activities such as walking, camping, fishing or boating, or attending the Christmas festival, but addressed Raymond Gary State Park in some manner.

The following comments are examples of public perception of Raymond Gary State Park. These comments are taken directly from online sites and include verbatim comments which may also include errors.

- Stayed at the park in October. This is a super little place to visit. We stayed in cabin #3 and it was great. They put new asphalt on all the roads while we were there, beautiful. John & Larry are super hosts. Go visit, you will be impressed.
- My friends and I have made this our Labor Day tradition for several years now. The cabins are well kept, and have just the right amenities. It’s a small, quiet, peaceful spot with no loud boats, only a few cabins. Just lovely. We used to be big tent campers, but with age comes compromise, and these cabins are the perfect mixture of camping and comfort. John, the park ranger, is as sweet and accommodating as he can be, while also maintaining the peaceful, clean atmosphere that makes the place so awesome. Highly recommend.
- Raymond Gary State Park is a wonderful getaway. If you are wanting some peace and quiet and a great little lake to fish, this is the place. The park hosts were some of the most helpful and kind we have experienced. The primitive cabin was very clean and comfy. There are just enough items for your use to make it a wonderful escape from the hectic world of work.
- we stayed in cabin no. 5 the weekend of july 12 and 13 this is a great place the host of the sites were very nice and good job the cabins were so nice and clean and so was the park the host were some of the best I have seen we will be back nice place to take your family thanks to the park host that made our trip nice.
- Raymond Gary State park is our favorite place to go camping. We live less than five miles from Lake Texoma but would rather go eighty miles to enjoy RGSP, Johnny, Larry, and the peaceful, quiet, clean, and enjoyable park.
- Love this site and absolutely can't resist the peaceful fun that Raymond Gary has to offer!! i love all of southeast Oklahoma, hope to travel further soon. Great job keeping up your site. Love, a Texan admiring the mountains and views Oklahoma can offer.
- We recently stayed in a cabin in this park. It is a very quiet, secluded park with excellent fishing. The cabin was clean and well maintained. The most surprising thing was the size of the bathroom. It was HUGE! I was so please with my stay here, that now when I am on business, I will stay there as well. Sure does beat any hotel room I have ever stayed in.
- We stayed here over Thanksgiving Weekend and it is a very beautiful and quiet place. The park manager is super nice and helpful and we will definitely return. The bathrooms are some of the cleanest bathrooms we’ve ever seen in an Oklahoma State Park. Trash cans at every site. We stayed in Tents at a water/electric site. Very beautiful place.
User Evaluations of Raymond Gary State Park

The most formal and scientific evaluations for Raymond Gary State Park were generated during the 2003 park visitor survey (Caneday & Jordan, 2003). These evaluations were the result of on-site interviews with park visitors contacted at various locations throughout the park. The analysis of the data from these interviews was reported by category of type of visitor: day visitor or camper. Although dated, this visitor survey is the most recent thorough analysis of attitudes and opinions represented by visitors to Oklahoma state parks. Since contacts were made at public locations throughout the park, the determining factor for classification of the visitors was their respective place of lodging during the visit on which they were contacted.

Day visitors to Raymond Gary State Park were familiar with the park, averaging 21 visits per year with a mode of three visits annually. Over 90% of all day visitors interviewed were repeat visitors to the park. The most frequent recreational activities reported by these day visitors were picnicking, relaxing or sunbathing, and sightseeing. Day visitors tended to be satisfied with their experiences at the park, showing the least satisfaction with the public restrooms in the park. The park was the primary destination for all of the day visitors, who were motivated to visit the park to be with friends or family and because Raymond Gary State Park was close to their respective homes and provided an inexpensive recreation experience.

Day visitors tended to be in groups, ranging up to fourteen individuals, but the most common grouping of day visitors was two members. The day visitors contacted during the survey tended to be white, non-Hispanic, although 16% of respondents were African American. These visitors reported having a high school education or above. They ranged in age from 23 to 67 years of age, with a median of 52 years of age; they included similar numbers of males and females. Since these individuals were day visitors, they had traveled a limited distance to get to Raymond Gary State Park, reporting a median of 14 miles in travel. It is likely that a substantial number of these day visitors were from the surrounding communities including Hugo, Valliant, Fort Towson, and other locales along Highway 70.

Campers at Raymond Gary State Park were also quite familiar with the park in that they were repeat visitors, although at a much lower percentage than shown among day visitors. Approximately 50% of responding campers were repeat visitors; they had visited the park an average of eighteen times in a year, although that mean was skewed by several campers who stayed at the park more than 50 nights in the year. The most frequently reported number of visits for repeat campers was five times per year. These campers participated in a wide range of recreation activities, but most frequently they walked or hiked, drove for pleasure (sightseeing), fished, observed wildlife, or just relaxed in the park. Campers expressed great satisfaction with the facilities provided in the park.

Raymond Gary State Park was the primary destination for 75% of the campers contacted in the survey. They chose to visit the park to relax or rest and to be with friends or family at a location close to home, with the single highest factor in motivation being “rest and relaxation.” The vast majority of the campers were white and non-Hispanic. In addition, the campers were well educated in that they presented a high school education or above as the highest level achieved by 90% of campers.

Campers reported having traveled an average of 98 miles on their visit to Raymond Gary State Park, although the mode for distance traveled was 10 miles. This would indicate that the presence of two distinct segments of the camping community at Raymond Gary State Park. One
segment is quite local, traveling 10 miles to the park. The other segment is more distant, traveling 95 miles to the park – trips that would take a couple of hours travel time.

**Park Management**

Over the years of operation, the management structure for Raymond Gary State Park has changed at the direction of leadership within OTRD from Oklahoma City. However, in recent years, Raymond Gary State Park has been quite stable in organization and operation under the management contract with Little Dixie Community Action Agency.

Raymond Gary State Park is included in the Southeast Region of Oklahoma State Parks and under contract to Little Dixie. This intermediate management structure allows park management to work with regional oversight as an intermediary or in direct contact with the Oklahoma City office. Under the management contract, Oklahoma state statutes, policies, and procedures govern various aspects of park management, while Little Dixie’s policies and procedures are in place for day-to-day operations. These day-to-day operations include essential maintenance, purchasing, employment, and other details.

**Staffing**

Staffing for Raymond Gary State Park has been stable over the past five years under the management contract through Little Dixie Community Action Agency. Table 3.6 documents the staffing pattern for Raymond Gary State Park in recent years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal year</th>
<th>Permanent salaried staff</th>
<th>Seasonal staff Park</th>
<th>Total park staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most state parks in Oklahoma experienced similar staffing adjustments in response to budgetary appropriations. Raymond Gary State Park has sustained a dedicated, loyal staff over the years. As indicated in comments from visitors, the personnel at Raymond Gary State Park are known by name and reputation for high quality, personalized service.

**Revenue and Expenses**

Data related to revenue and expense at Raymond Gary State Park was provided by the Associate Director of Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc. Table 3.7 on the following page reports this revenue and expense data for the past four years. Under the management contract between
Oklahoma State Parks and Little Dixie, Oklahoma State Parks pays a management fee as shown in Table 3.7.

The principal revenue sources for Raymond Gary State Park are cabin and campsite rentals. However, park management also rents ‘Jon’ boats, paddle boats, and canoes to park visitors. These revenues earned on-site are detailed in Table 3.7. As a result, the difference between revenue earned on-site combined with the state management fee and expense for operation of Raymond Gary State Park has varied from a loss of $36,597 in fiscal 2012 to a positive balance of $9,871 in fiscal 2014.

There are various perspectives on revenue and expenses associated with state park operations. For Raymond Gary State Park, the annual investment by Oklahoma State Parks through the management fee has varied from 37% of operational cost in fiscal 2012 to almost 48% of operational cost in fiscal 2014. Little Dixie has generated revenues from operation of Raymond Gary State Park to cover from 36.5% of operation in fiscal 2011 to slightly more than 50% of operation in fiscal 2014. In addition, Little Dixie has shown a net loss in operating Raymond Gary State Park in three of the past four years.

Table 3.7 – Expense and Revenue at Raymond Gary State Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal year</th>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Revenue on-site</th>
<th>State contract</th>
<th>Net gain (loss)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011 Total Personnel Expense</td>
<td>$143,308</td>
<td>$52,369</td>
<td>$66,949</td>
<td>($23,990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 Operating Expense</td>
<td>$92,889</td>
<td>$50,419</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 Total Personnel Expense</td>
<td>$175,996</td>
<td>$73,887</td>
<td>$65,512</td>
<td>($36,597)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 Operating Expense</td>
<td>$102,041</td>
<td>$73,955</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Total Personnel Expense</td>
<td>$149,293</td>
<td>$74,642</td>
<td>$67,523</td>
<td>($7,128)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Operating Expense</td>
<td>$108,148</td>
<td>$41,145</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 Total Personnel Expense</td>
<td>$144,145</td>
<td>$85,056</td>
<td>$68,960</td>
<td>$9,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 Operating Expense</td>
<td>$107,175</td>
<td>$36,970</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hazards Analysis – Natural and Operational

Any recreational activity includes the exposure to hazards, and the probability of specific risks may increase in many outdoor settings. In most current discussions related to hazard and risk, hazards are defined as conditions or events. Risk is the likelihood of injury resulting from a given hazard and is typically defined as a probability of adverse effects from those conditions or
events. Everything people do exposes them to hazards. It is how people conduct themselves that determines the risk. An agency or site risk management plan addresses potential loss from anticipated hazards.

**Natural Hazards**

As with all natural areas, Raymond Gary State Park includes a number of hazards. Some of those hazards are natural and related to such things as topography, flora, and fauna. Some of the hazards are structural or related to design; other hazards are operational in nature.

Natural hazards in Raymond Gary State Park include the rocky terrain, flora and fauna, as well as a number of other natural conditions or events. In addition, the development of facilities encourages visitors to interact with the natural environment, encouraging people to participate in recreation in an outdoor setting. For example, trails invite visitors to engage the varied terrain and, while signage exists, distressed and lost hikers are not uncommon. Quite commonly, the visitor is not informed of the various hazards and is not prepared for the risks involved in their interactions. Due to the topography of Raymond Gary State Park, it is possible for an individual to become “lost” on property, but that is an unlikely occurrence. Boating, swimming, and other aquatic activity present greater risks for most visitors.

Among the natural hazards present in the park are those associated with weather events. The National Climatic Data Center reports a variety of such hazards by county over several years. These hazards include hail, floods, thunderstorms with accompanying wind and lightning, tornadoes, snow, ice, excessive heat, and drought. Staff members are prepared to notify park visitors in the event of severe weather, but appropriate shelter is limited. At the present time, neither signage nor printed visitor materials provide severe weather information to park visitors.

Other natural hazards are related to life forms in the natural environment. Any time people are hiking and recreating in an outdoor environment, a chance exists that they will inadvertently encounter such wildlife; this is the case in Raymond Gary State Park. The park environment encompasses habitat suitable for venomous snakes including the copperhead, rattlesnake, and water moccasin. There are no recent records of any adverse encounters between people and snakes within the park.

A number of mammals common to the park are subject to rabies. They include raccoons, opossums, skunks, armadillos, and bats.

The wooded, grassland, and marshy environment in and around Raymond Gary State Park is home to mosquitoes, ticks, and spiders—all of which may be hazards or present hazards to recreational visitors. The Brown Recluse spider and the Black Widow are native to Choctaw County. Both spiders have produced adverse effects for humans in recreational settings (and other environments). Both species of spiders are possible within the park making it likely that these spiders may occur in structures throughout the park. In addition, ticks are known carriers of a number of serious diseases in humans.

The 2002 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (Caneday, 2002) stated:

An “environmental problem” of increasing occurrence in Oklahoma in recent years is related to ticks and tick-transmitted diseases. Although there are a number of tick-transmitted diseases, the most frequent occurrence is shown by Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Lyme disease, and Tularemia. A number of factors are
related to this increased occurrence of disease including demographics, living preferences, and recreational behavior. Oklahoma has experienced significant increases in tick-transmitted diseases over the past decade. While most of these diseases can be treated, the diseases can also be life threatening. Participants in outdoor recreation are among those who encounter the ticks and who contract the tick-transmitted diseases. A concerted, unified effort is necessary to educate the recreational visitor regarding the results of recreational behaviors.

At the time of the writing of the 2002 SCORP, the author contacted the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta regarding rumors (at that time) of a mosquito borne virus – West Nile virus. The CDC assured Caneday that Oklahoma would not experience West Nile virus within the five-year period covered by the 2002 SCORP (2002-2007). However, by summer 2003, Oklahoma was experiencing cases of West Nile virus among horses and humans. Often these resulted from outdoor recreation activity, and that pattern is continuing.

Some plants are also hazardous to some individuals and the risk varies by degree of exposure and response to that exposure. Poison ivy is among those potentially hazardous plants at Raymond Gary State Park.

Another potential natural hazard in a recreation environment is waterborne disease. As stated in the 2002 Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) for Oklahoma (Caneday, 2002):

> Since 1971, Federal agencies (CDC and EPA) have maintained a collaborative surveillance system for collecting and reporting data related to occurrences and causes of waterborne-disease outbreaks (WBDOs). As an environmental hazard, waterborne diseases have always been present in the United States; however, outbreaks linked to drinking water have steadily declined since 1989. By contrast, the number of outbreaks linked to recreation activity has increased (Center for Disease Control). It is not clear whether this is due to increased outdoor recreation activity, larger numbers of people involved in outdoor recreation, or greater hazard present in the water environment. CDC reports for 1995 – 1996 have shown that the exposure to the disease occurred in lakes in 59% of waterborne-disease outbreaks of gastroenteritis associated with recreational water. Equal percentages (27%) of Cryptosporidium parvum and Escherichia coli as the etiologic agent were reported during that period.

Raymond Gary State Park receives its potable water from approved public water supplies through Fort Towson. Water service to the park relies on a 2” line from the west side of the lake to the east side of the lake. A leak in that line during 2014 caused an inflated water bill before the leak was identified and corrected. A 6” line along Highway 209 may be an option for future water service, reducing the likelihood of leakage or contamination. As with all water supplies, there is the potential to be a host for waterborne disease through the drinking water provided on-site. Such a risk is no greater for a park visitor than would be true in a private residence. By contrast, surface waters in Lake Raymond Gary, in streams, and in ponds have a greater chance of being a source of a waterborne-disease.

**Operational Hazards**

Operational hazards include those vulnerabilities to park staff, the park system, or the state of Oklahoma that exist as a result of management or operation of the resource and application of
policy. Management and operational decisions are made on a daily basis and are affected by budgets, prioritization within the state park system, staffing patterns, local and state politics, and other external influences.

At present, emergency fire service and other emergency services are provided by the Fort Towson volunteer fire department. Emergency response time is estimated to be twenty minutes. Emergency medical service is available in Hugo including ambulance service.

As part of the data collection for the development of this RMP, the researchers conducted several on-site visits to Raymond Gary State Park. Common issues that could be dangerous for visitors include play structures which utilize a variety of surfacing materials. A thorough examination of the play structures and the applicable surface materials for compliance with Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines for public playgrounds is warranted at this time. The play structures predate current Consumer Product Safety Commission safety standards and ADA requirements.

Further, weather-related events (e.g., ice storms, strong winds) in Oklahoma often result in tree and limb damage throughout the park. The locations in which downed trees and limbs have immediate impact on visitors include the camping areas, trails, and day use areas. Currently, Raymond Gary State Park does not have a formal limb management or tree replacement program; this is common throughout the state park system. Park staff members attend to downed trees and limbs as they discover them and/or are notified of the hazard.

**Law Enforcement**

In most state parks in Oklahoma, the CLEET certified rangers and reserve-CLEET certified rangers are responsible for primary activity related to law enforcement within the boundaries of the park. At present under the management contract provided at Raymond Gary State Park, there are no CLEET certified rangers as shown in Table 3.8. It is common for law enforcement units to have mutual aid agreements with other law enforcement agencies, but no memorandum of agreement has been established with any local law enforcement agency. As a result, enforcement of applicable laws at Raymond Gary State Park relies on the support and cooperation of the Choctaw County sheriff in the appropriate jurisdiction. In addition, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol makes regular routes through the park.

**Table 3.8 – Ranger Staff at Raymond Gary State Park**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal year</th>
<th>CLEET Certified</th>
<th>Reserve CLEET</th>
<th>Total ranger staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since there is not an on-site law enforcement presence, citations and incident reports that are available in most Oklahoma State Parks were not applicable to Raymond Gary State Park. In conversation with park management personnel, there have been no serious incidents in recent years requiring arrest or citation.

**Policy-Related Exposures**

Some aspects of management of hazard risk are incorporated into law enforcement. Park rangers are the law enforcement personnel for the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, although they frequently have cooperative (mutual aid) agreements with county sheriffs and the Oklahoma Highway Patrol. Law enforcement authority for Oklahoma State Park Rangers is authorized by state statute as follows (Title 74 § 2216, 2005):

> Park rangers, when commissioned, shall have all the powers of peace officers except the serving or execution of civil process, and shall have in all parts of the state the same powers with respect to criminal matters and enforcement of the laws relating thereto as sheriffs, highway patrolmen [sic] and police officers in their respective jurisdictions and shall possess all immunities and matters of defense now available or hereafter made available to sheriffs, highway patrolmen, and police officers in any suit brought against them in consequence of acts done in the course of their employment, provided, however, they shall comply with the provisions of Section 3311 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

In parks with CLEET certified or reserve certified personnel, written logs are maintained by park staff to document incidents. In addition to the regular log, staff members complete incident reports when notified of property damage or personal injury to visitors or staff. While the incident reporting form requires information regarding personal injury or property damage, the process does not appear to require follow-up with the reporting party.

In terms of wildlife, while a formal management plan does not exist, staff operates under an agreed-upon plan approved by the Oklahoma Division of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC). As an important natural resource in the park, the vulnerable and endangered species in the area lack a management plan other than classification by ODWC. In contrast, the fishery in Lake Raymond Gary is carefully managed.

Perhaps one of the most essential operational hazards related to the public is the concern that cell phones and radios have limited to sporadic service in rural areas, and possibly within the park. During the preparation of the RMP, research staff members were able to acquire and maintain cell phone signals throughout Raymond Gary State Park. Thus, in case of injury, illness, fire, or other emergency, park visitors with personal cell phones should be able to contact necessary emergency services. Those without personal cell phones or with inadequate signals must use a landline based telephone to call emergency personnel.

**Waste Management**

The area of development at Raymond Gary State Park permits an efficient design for handling of waste management. There are two primary concerns related to waste management within the park: solid waste and liquid waste.
Solid waste is transported off-site under a contract with the city of Fort Towson. Dumpsters have been located at strategic points within the park. Visitors are expected to dispose of waste properly in these dumpsters.

Liquid waste is managed on-site through a modern system using filter pods containing engineered textile media (Figure 3.24 on page 44). Effluent from the two filter pods flows into a dose tank and is then pumped into a subsurface drip line field.

As with any area that is utilized by the public, some trash and litter is present within the park. This solid waste presents a visual detraction, but presents limited problems other than clean-up of the area.
Chapter 4 – Alternatives and Preferred Plans

Overview and Summary

In this Resource Management Plan, background is provided related to Raymond Gary State Park. This background information was gained through review of literature, interviews and meetings with park management personnel, input from the public, multiple on-site visits, and through other sources. When analyzed, this information raises several issues for consideration with alternatives for possible management action. These issues are presented in the following discussion with alternatives for management to consider. In each case, based on the available information a preferred alternative is identified.

Issues and Alternatives

Issue Statement 1: Qualification and branding as a state park

One of the central issues for consideration related to each of the properties being reviewed during the Resource Management Plan project is qualification and branding as a state park. That question is applicable for Raymond Gary State Park as for other properties.

What is a state park? Jordan and Caneday addressed this question in an earlier report for OTRD as a part of the state park visitor study in 2003 (Caneday and Jordan). As stated in that report –

The research team believes that the term “state park” should mean something specific. The term, “state park,” should identify a property distinctively through management practices, quality of experience and appearance to the public. The research team believes that visitors to Oklahoma “state parks” should know immediately that they are in a State Park because of the distinctive “branding” apparent to the visitor and deliberately intended by management. The research team believes that the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department must jealously guard the use of the term “state park” in much the same manner as companies protect symbols of intellectual property.

An example of resource qualifications for specific classifications can best be demonstrated through the National Park Service. For a property to be classified as a National Park there must be (1) evidence of national significance for a natural, cultural, or recreational resource, (2) management of the property must be feasible, and (3) the property must be suitable within the mission, purpose, and system of the National Park Service.

By contrast, other classifications of National Park Service properties include National Monuments, National Recreation Areas, and National Preserves. National monuments must be significant natural, cultural, or recreational resources, but may be managed by entities other than the National Park Service. National preserves are limited to significant environmental resources and may vary in ownership and management of the resource. National recreation areas, including Chickasaw National Recreation Area in south-central Oklahoma, are managed for more intensive recreation in outdoor settings.
OTRD policy related to acquisition of property uses some of this language, thereby establishing a general pattern of resource qualification. These criteria include (1) state-wide significance for natural beauty, uniqueness, or other recreational and resource preservation purposes, and (2) sites which will improve the overall availability of public recreation facilities to the recreating public while possessing resource significance (Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission, 1988).

In addition, branding and classification of properties within the Department has varied over the years. Minutes of the Oklahoma Planning and Resource Board (a precursor to the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission) from September 18, 1953 record the passing of a motion defining state parks, state recreation areas, state memorials, and state monuments. That variation in descriptive classification was changed by legislation during the 1980s.

Applying the national concepts to state parks in Oklahoma and utilizing the earlier definitions in Oklahoma, it could be concluded that a state park must (1) have a significant statewide natural, cultural, or recreation resource, (2) be feasible to manage by the agency, and (3) be suitable within the mission, purpose, and statewide system of state parks. If this set of qualifications is applied to Raymond Gary State Park, it could be concluded that:

1. Raymond Gary State Park offers historical, cultural, and environmental resources of statewide significance with the additional benefit of regionally important recreation significance. As indicated in the statement of significance of Raymond Gary State Park, this property is significant because it offers public access to the lake (public waters), to natural and recreational resources adjacent to a prime public fishing lake while protecting the natural environment and providing education and recreation appropriate to that environment.

2. Raymond Gary State Park is feasible to manage within the agency and fits within the mission of Oklahoma State Parks. However, at present, Raymond Gary State Park is managed under contract by Little Dixie Community Action Agency, and that management contract is also a feasible action. Raymond Gary State Park is located in an under-served region of Oklahoma from the perspective of public recreation resources. It is a relatively small park offering a quiet recreation experience in a rural lake environment.

3. Raymond Gary State Park property fits within the mission of OTRD and the park’s stated purpose to conserve the natural, cultural, historic, scenic, and environmentally-based recreational resources within the park, and make them forever available for the education and enjoyment of all people. Oklahoma State Parks will protect, manage, restore and conserve these resources and associated values of Raymond Gary State Park and provide appropriate programs, facilities, and opportunities for public use consistent with the conservation of these resources and values.

As a result, the research team recognizes the value of Raymond Gary State Park as a state park.

Alternatives

A. Terminate the management contract for the property at Raymond Gary State Park;
B. Seek to transfer Raymond Gary State Park to some other management agency;
C. No change – Retain Raymond Gary State Park as an integral property in the Oklahoma State Park system.
Preferred alternative:

Alternative C: No change – continue management as it is. Retain Raymond Gary State Park as an integral property in the Oklahoma State Park system.

**Issue Statement 2: Maintenance of Lake Raymond Gary impoundment**

Lake Raymond Gary is a 263-acre reservoir impounded by an earthen dam with a concrete spillway. At present that impoundment is well maintained by park management. The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA, 2005) asserts “trees and woody vegetation growth have no place on the embankment of an earthen dam.”

The risk associated with plants on the embankment varies by zones. FEMA identifies five zones for inspection and evaluation on earthen dams. FEMA also addresses proper procedures for management of those situations in which woody plants are present and should be removed. At present, the earthen dam is well maintained by park management.

Failure of the Lake Raymond Gary impoundment is unacceptable, but must be recognized as a possibility. Therefore, appropriate inspection and remedial measures are essential. At present, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board classifies this impoundment (OK01510) as “low” for hazard potential, meaning there is “no probable loss of human life and low economic loss” in the event of failure. The dam should be inspected every five years.

*Figure 4.1 – Mid-life crisis of a dam*

Source: FEMA, 2005.
The park manager at Raymond Gary State Park works in conjunction with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation to regulate the lake levels. Lake level is managed by two gates at the spillway (Figure 3.25). The park manager reported that the “screw” on the upper gate had been recently replaced, but that little maintenance or inspection had been conducted on the lower gate. Lake levels are managed for fish and wildlife habitat.

Since management of lake levels is part of the duty for the park manager, it is important that the park management be knowledgeable and properly trained to operate these gates.

Alternatives

A. Employ qualified inspectors to evaluate the condition of the impoundment and make recommendations regarding existing woody plants;
B. No change – continue management as it is, which includes a five-year inspection cycle, management of the lake levels, and education for the park manager.

Preferred alternative:

Alternative B: No change – continue management as it is, which includes a five-year inspection cycle, management of the lake levels, and education for the park manager.

**Issue Statement 3: Maintaining Water Quality**

Lake Raymond Gary and the quality of that fishery are crucial to the existence and value of Raymond Gary State Park. The park exists because of lake; significant recreational value is provided by the presence and quality of the lake; and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation relies upon appropriate water quality to sustain the fishery.

Water levels rely upon precipitation and in-stream flow. There is little that park management can do to affect water levels in Lake Raymond Gary, although the park manager does lower the lake level to permit habitat enhancement. As stated earlier, water quality in Lake Raymond Gary is rated as “eutrophic.” The waters in Lake Raymond Gary are rated as supporting fish and wildlife propagation (although dissolved oxygen levels are occasionally “not supporting” for the fishery), aesthetics, and agriculture. In addition, there was “not enough information” related to the waters in Lake Raymond Gary as supporting full body contact recreation.

ODWC and OTRD must work with ODEQ and the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to maintain the water quality in Lake Raymond Gary at levels that support the purposes for all agencies involved. Most of the issues associated with water quality are beyond the immediate responsibility of Oklahoma State Parks. However, Oklahoma State Parks can be an advocate for best management practices upstream to encourage improvement of water quality. In addition, Oklahoma State Parks provides the primary recreational access to Lake Raymond Gary for sightseers, anglers, and boaters. Appropriate educational information regarding invasive nuisance species, algae, and potentially dangerous boating conditions are the duty of park management.

Alternatives

A. Ignore the issues of water level and water quality as being outside the domain of state park operations;
B. No change – continue management as it is. Continue as an advocate for best management practices related to water conservation and water quality. Employ appropriate signage
and management interventions as needed to permit safe access for boaters and anglers and to educate boaters and anglers regarding aquatic nuisance species.

Preferred alternative:

Alternative B: No change – continue management as it is. Continue as an advocate for best management practices related to water conservation and water quality. Employ appropriate signage and management interventions as needed to permit safe access for boaters and anglers and to educate boaters and anglers regarding aquatic nuisance species.

---

**Issue Statement 4: Branding, Marketing and Reservation System**

OTRD and Little Dixie maintain webpages related to Raymond Gary State Park, but very little additional marketing related to the park is presently in place. The OTRD webpage provides a basic description of the property, with directions and photographs. The Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc. webpage provides a listing of features within the park and encourages viewers to visit the OTRD website. No printed literature was available. The directional signage along major highway routes is minimal. There is no entry sign for Raymond Gary State Park. Raymond Gary State Park is worthy of a stronger marketing presence.

Park visitors have commented on the difficulty of making reservations or finding out whether cabins or campsites are available. Visitors expect – and deserve – a higher level of service prior to their arrival onsite. Once onsite at Raymond Gary State Park, visitors are impressed with the property, the management, and the experience available.

For experienced visitors to other Oklahoma State Parks, older signage and buildings are representative of the appearance of Oklahoma State Parks from the 1970s and 1980s. However, most Oklahoma State Parks have seen investment in new signage, new branding through colors and designs, and a general updating in appearance. Raymond Gary State Park needs to have the same branding in appearance, signage, and design to distinguish the property as being a state park.

Alternatives

A. Improve the marketing materials related to Raymond Gary State Park and brand it as a property in the Oklahoma State Park system;
B. Consider implementing an up-to-date reservation system for visitors to Raymond Gary State Park;
C. No change – continue management as it is.

Preferred alternative:

Alternatives A and B: Improve the marketing materials related to Raymond Gary State Park and brand it as a property in the Oklahoma State Park system; Consider implementing an up-to-date reservation system for visitors to Raymond Gary State Park.
**Issue Statement 5: Safety and Playgroups**

As indicated in the RMP, the playgroups that are on property at Raymond Gary State Park were installed in the mid-1960s (OTRD inventory identifies 1966 as the year of installation). Since that time, laws related to accessibility for persons with disabilities have established new requirements. Safety guidelines related to public play apparatus have changed the legal expectations for provision of playgroups.

Technically, it is not necessary to remove the existing playgroups, but reasonable accommodation is required. This generally requires accessibility to playgroups for persons with disabilities. In addition, reasonable remediation for safety is expected. This generally requires an inspection and installation of a safe surface beneath and surrounding the playgroup. It also requires an inspection of the apparatus to eliminate catch points and protrusions.

**Alternatives**

A. Replace playgroups within Raymond Gary State Park with apparatus that complies with current laws and safety requirements for persons with disabilities and appropriate ages;
B. If replacement of playgroups cannot be accomplished, conduct a thorough inspection of the existing apparatus, and provide remediation of the play surface;
C. No change – continue management as it is.

Preferred alternative:

Alternatives A and B: Replace playgroups within Raymond Gary State Park with apparatus that complies with current laws and safety requirements for persons with disabilities and appropriate ages; If replacement of playgroups cannot be accomplished, conduct a thorough inspection of the existing apparatus, and provide remediation of the play surface.

---

**Issue Statement 6: Interpretive Services at Raymond Gary State Park**

Raymond Gary State Park has a story to tell in many locations. The story of Raymond Gary State Park includes the history of the area linked to Doaksville, the history of Raymond Gary as governor, and the natural history of the environment. The interpretive message of Raymond Gary State Park should be told on property and off, to any interested audience, and to audiences yet uninformed.

Interpretive services are variously defined depending upon the source or the agency involved. The classic definition of interpretation was given by Freeman Tilden (1977) as “An educational activity that attempts to reveal meaning and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than to simply communicate factual information.”

William E. Brown (1971), in *Islands of Hope*, presented the role of parks in the interpretive process. His definition of interpretation encompassed technology as well as process, as he stated that interpretation is “That body of communications, devices and facilities that conveys environmental knowledge, stimulates discourse on environmental problems and results in environmental reform.” Brown also indicated that interpretation has a distinct purpose, especially in a sensitive natural environment. Brown argued that “Environmental interpretation not only
informs, it motivates to action – sometimes it is action. Even at the informing level, it ceases to be innocent nature study or whitewashed history. It questions value systems, folk heroes, and conventional wisdom.”

The National Association for Interpretation (2008) has developed a professional, contemporary definition of interpretation that incorporates the theory from Tilden, the purpose from Brown, and the mission of the agency delivering the service. “Interpretation is a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource.”

Raymond Gary State Park offers multiple resources with inherent meaning and interest for the audience, allowing for forging of emotional and intellectual connections. The story includes the people, the place, the organizations, the events, the habitat, the wildlife, and much more. Properly developed and delivered programming could be presented on a fee-for-service basis. These programs could and should be delivered on-site and off-site. These programs become the educational foundation and outreach for Raymond Gary State Park and the state park system more broadly. This would require staff at a time when finances are limited for employing personnel.

Raymond Gary State Park and Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc. could host one or two collegiate interns continually to create and deliver interpretive messages. Such interns could easily be shared between the three state parks presently managed by Little Dixie as well as the group camps at Beavers Bend State Park. This would accomplish several goals for Raymond Gary State Park and for Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc.: (1) it would bring creative and energetic personnel into the park system; (2) it would achieve an educational goal for the park and the park system; (3) it would provide a link between the park system and the formal college and university education system; and (4) it would provide a message that Oklahoma’s state parks serve an educational role as well as a recreational role.

Alternatives

A. When finances permit, expand the interpretive programming within and beyond the park;
B. Encourage the development of internship agreements focused on interpretive services and other aspects of park management;
C. No change – continue management as it is.

Preferred alternatives:

Alternative A and B: When finances permit, expand the interpretive programming within and beyond the park; encourage the development of internship agreements focused on interpretive services and other aspects of park management.

Issue Statement 7: Green practices related to energy and conservation

Within the past few years Americans have begun to take conservation practices seriously. On behalf of citizens and as a representative of the park and recreation profession – a field with a strong connection to the environment – Oklahoma State Parks has initiated several practices that are intended to conserve energy and other resources. This has been initiated with energy efficient
lighting in the lodge and office structures, and needs to be expanded to other management practices.

Among the many possible areas that would benefit from conservation practices are: (1) park policies related to mowing, maintenance, debris removal, and waste disposal; and (2) recycling opportunities for the entire operation and its guests.

At present, state laws do not encourage a state agency to recycle waste or trash products, especially when private citizens generate (and thereby ‘own’) those materials. Inventory management and accounting procedures prevent the sale of, or revenue production from, recycled materials. However, volunteer groups such as a possible “Friends of Raymond Gary State Park” are permitted to serve as an agent for the collection and sale of recyclable materials. Certainly Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc. can serve as an agent for the collection and sale of recyclable materials. Another challenge to the establishment of a recycling program is the difficulty in finding a consistent market for the various products that might easily be recycled: glass, aluminum, and paper. These challenges do not lessen the desirability of establishing a recycling program in the state park system.

Raymond Gary State Park can have a significant role in modeling and educating other managers and guests regarding best management practices. One state park in Oklahoma – Keystone State Park – has been eco-certified. Raymond Gary State Park should be a leader in this effort as well.

Alternatives

A. Seek to change state accounting regulations to permit operation of the recycling program by park staff;
B. Encourage the development of a “Friends of Raymond Gary State Park” or work through Little Dixie Community Action Agency to create, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive recycling program throughout the park;
C. No change – continue management as it is.

Preferred alternative:

Alternative B: Encourage the development of a “Friends of Raymond Gary State Park” or work through Little Dixie Community Action Agency to create, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive recycling program throughout the park.

Issue Statement 8: Erosion control and landscaping

As addressed in Issue Statement 3, water quality in Lake Raymond Gary is dependent upon activities that occur on land. Within Raymond Gary State Park, several campsites, picnic areas, and play areas reveal considerable erosion from loss of ground cover, soil compaction, and normal human activity. Some remediation of erosion and run-off is accomplished through the grassy median maintained along the shoreline.

Beyond the concern for water quality, erosion leads to uneven surfaces for campsites, play areas, and walking. As a result, landscaping of campsites, cabin areas, and play areas should be considered as a means to reduce the adverse effects of erosion.
Alternatives

A. Landscape campsites, cabin areas and play areas to reduce erosion potential and provide safe footing for guests, while complying with accessibility guidelines;
B. No change – continue management as it is.

Preferred alternatives:

Alternative A: Landscape campsites, cabin areas and play areas to reduce erosion potential and provide safe footing for guests, while complying with accessibility guidelines.

Recommendations beyond the Issues

Recommendation 1: New entry sign and standardized signs

As mentioned in Issue Statement 4, Raymond Gary State Park needs and deserves branding as a property in the Oklahoma State Park system. Within the past several years, Oklahoma State Parks has initiated an effort to standardize signs within the parks and to brand each property as being part of the system. The signs within Raymond Gary State Park and at its entrance must be updated. As of 2018, Little Dixie Community Action and OTRD are working to construct one of the new Primary Entrance Signs at the intersection of US70 and SH209 to replace the original sign that deteriorated and was removed.

Recommendation 2: Playgroups and safety

As mentioned throughout the RMP, the playgroups at all locations in Raymond Gary State Park are of the older design typical of the 1970s. These playgroups do not comply with current safety and accessibility standards. All the playgroups throughout Raymond Gary State Park need to be reviewed for basic safety, particularly related to fall zones and surfaces. However, a review of these playgroups should also include examination of protrusions and potential for other injuries. A Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) could review the existing playgroups and make recommendations. However, a better alternative is to plan for replacement of these older playgroups and replace them with accessible, safe, and modern playgroups.

Recommendation 3: Social media presence for Raymond Gary State Park

Raymond Gary State Park is one of the few Oklahoma State Parks without a presence on social media. The park would benefit greatly from having a presence on social media, particularly in expanding its market to the younger generation. While it would take some time for an employee, there may be creative solutions to developing and maintaining that presence. For example, an intern could benefit the park manager in many aspects of operation and could take on the project of developing and sustaining a social media presence. If an intern cannot be arranged, it is possible that an Eagle Scout from the area may be interested in developing a social media presence for Raymond Gary State Park.

Recommendation 4: Water service for Raymond Gary State Park

As indicated in the RMP, water service to Raymond Gary State Park is provided via a 2” line extending from the west side of the lake to the developed areas on the east side of Lake
Raymond Gary (Figure 3.25 and Figure 4.3). The line is “sunk” under surface water and water flow is controlled by a valve on the west side of the lake. As discussed, a leak in that water line produced an inflated water bill until the leak was identified and corrected.

A 6” water line has been extended along Highway 209 north of the park. This water line would provide a more secure, safer, and adequate flow of water to the park. Consideration should be given to extension of this line and linkage to the line as a replacement water service.
References

Access Board and the National Center on Accessibility. (2014) 7 things Every Playground Owner Should Know About the Accessibility of Their Playground Surfaces. The Access Board, Washington, D.C. and National Center on Accessibility, Bloomington, IN.


Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture. (2010). Custom Soil Resource Report for Osage County, Oklahoma.. A product of the National Cooperative Soil Survey, a joint effort of the United States Department of Agriculture
and other Federal agencies, State agencies including the Agricultural Experiment Stations, and local participants. November 30, 2010.

http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/G/GA018.html


Appendix A – Documents related to Property

1. 1956 Bailey warranty deed
2. 1958 highway dedication deed and right-of-way
3. 1976 Ingram warranty deed
WARRANTY DEED

Know All Men by These Presents:

That Pauline Bailey and Bill Bailey, wife and husband, a corporation duly organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Oklahoma, whose principal place of business is in the City of Oklahoma City, parties of the first part, in consideration of the sum of Three Thousand and No/100 DOLLARS ($3,000.00), in hand paid, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, do hereby grant, Bargain, Sell and Convey unto the State of Oklahoma, for the use and benefit of Oklahoma's Planning and Resources Board of Oklahoma County, State of Oklahoma, parties of the second part, the following described real property and premises situate in Oklahoma County, State of Oklahoma, to-wit:

the W1/2 of the E1/2 of the NW1/4 of Sec. 31-6S-20E and all that part of Lot 1 of Sec. 31 lying above water line on elevation 400 U.S.L.; the first described tract containing approximately 40 acres and the last described tract containing approximately 20 acres, "said grantors for the same consideration of $3,000.00 do hereby covenant and agree that they will execute and deliver unto the grantees herein a permanent Easement for road purposes covering a strip of land lying immediately east and adjacent to the W1/2 of the E1/2 of the NW1/4 of Sec. 31-6S-20E, said strip of land to commence at a point on the North section line of Sec. 31-6S-20E and extending along said north section line and beginning at the intersection of said line with the W1/2 of the E1/2 of the NW1/4 in an easterly direction for a distance of 100 feet thence extending along a line in a southeasterly direction and across the E1/2 of the W1/2 of the NW1/4 of Sec. 31-6S-20E to a point which intersects with the half section line of said Section 31 and at a point approximately 500 feet directly west of said half section line of said Sec. 31-6S-20E. Said Easement when executed shall be conveyed by a metes and bounds description so as to afford a practical and useable roadway for public use from the north line of said Section 31. One half of the mineral rights in and under said tract being expressly reserved by the grantors herein, and all mineral rights reserved to grantors covering said Easement, as described, together with all the improvements thereon and the appurtenances thereunto belonging and warrant the title to the same.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD said described premises unto the said parties of the second part, forever free, clear and discharged of and from all former grants, charges, taxes, judgments, mortgages and other liens and encumbrances of whatsoever nature.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned have hereunto set their hands this 30th day of June, 1956.

[Signature]
[Signature]
STATE OF OKLAHOMA, County of Choctaw, ss:

Before me, a Notary Public in and for said County and State, on the 30th day of June, 1956, personally appeared Pauline Bailey and Bill Bailey, wife and husband, to me known to be the identical persons who executed the within and foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that they executed the same as their free and voluntary act and deed for the uses and purposes therein set forth.

Witness my hand and official seal the day and year above set forth.

Shelma Million  
Notary Public
DEDICATION DEED
PUBLIC HIGHWAY

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That

Oklahoma Planning and Resources Board
Division of State Parks — Raymond Gary Recreation Area

in the County, State of Oklahoma, hereinafter called the Grantors (whether one or more), for and in consideration of the sum of

and other good, valuable and sufficient considerations, do hereby grant, bargain, sell, convey and dedicate unto the State of Oklahoma the following described lots or parcels of land for the purpose of establishing thereon a public highway or facilities necessary and incidental thereto:

A strip of land lying in part of Lot 1 (NW\(^2\) NE\(^2\)) and in the NE\(^2\) SE\(^2\) of Section 31, T 6 S, R 20 E in Choctaw County, Oklahoma. Said parcel of land being described by metes and bounds as follows:

Beginning at a point on the West line of said NE\(^2\) NE\(^2\), 1775.9 feet South of the NE corner of said SE\(^2\) SE\(^2\), thence S 12°50' E to a point 9.6 feet East of the West line and 226.6 feet North of the South line of said NE\(^2\) NE\(^2\), thence N 83°55' W a distance of 100.7 feet, thence N 12°50' W a distance of 238.7 feet, thence Northwesterly on a curve to the right having a radius of 765.2 feet a distance of 134.3 feet to point of beginning.

Also: Beginning at a point on the South line of said Lot 1 a distance of 51.5 feet West of the SE corner of said Lot 1, thence West along said South line a distance of 372.5 feet, thence Northwesterly on a curve to the right having a radius of 288.7 feet a distance of 320 feet, thence N 30°26' W a distance of 2.3 feet, thence Northwesterly on a curve to the right having a radius of 108.1 feet a distance of 266.6 feet, thence N 67°50' W a distance of 3.3 feet, thence Northwesterly on a curve to the right having a radius of 142.4 feet a distance of 323 feet, thence N 80°18' W a distance of 6.9 feet, thence Northwesterly on a curve to the left having a radius of 188.7 feet a distance of 226.4 feet, thence N 10°48' W a distance of 13.1 feet, thence Northwesterly on a curve to the right having a radius of 132.8 feet a distance of 221.8 feet, thence N 64°12' W a distance of 26 feet, thence Southeasterly on a curve to the right having a radius of 231.8 feet a distance of 282.7 feet, thence S 57°07' E a distance of 65.9 feet, thence Northwesterly on a curve to the left having a radius of 221.4 feet a distance of 270.5 feet, thence 84°12' W a distance of 26 feet, thence Northwesterly and Southeasterly on a curve to the left having a radius of 221.8 feet a distance of 310 feet, thence S 61°18' W a distance of 6.6 feet, thence Southeasterly on a curve to the left having a radius of 332 feet a distance of 295.5 feet, thence S 10°48' W a distance of 13.1 feet, thence Southeasterly on a curve to the right having a radius of 288.7 feet a distance of 319.8 feet, thence S 80°18' W a distance of 6.9 feet, thence Southeasterly on a curve to the left having a radius of 1382.1 feet a distance of 301.2 feet, thence S 57°50' W a distance of 3.3 feet, thence Southeasterly on a curve to the left having a radius of 308.1 feet a distance of 201.1 feet, thence S 30°26' W a distance of 2.3 feet, thence Northwesterly and Southeasterly on a curve to the left having a radius of 188.7 feet a distance of 209.2 feet, thence S 33°50' W a distance of 0.1 feet, thence Southwesterly on a curve to the left having a radius of 188.7 feet a distance of 158.4 feet, thence S 80°34' W a distance of 113.8 feet, thence Southeasterly on a curve to the right having a radius of 683 feet a distance of 93.8 feet to point of beginning.

Containing in both parcels 6.05 acres, more or less.

In witness whereof the Grantors herein named have hereunto set their hands and seals this... 1956

Day of February 1956

Chairman

______________________________

[Signature]

______________________________

[Signature]

OKLAHOMA PLANNING AND RESOURCES BOARD

______________________________

[Signature]
State of Oklahoma,  
County of OKLAHOMA  

Before me, a Notary Public in and for said county and state, on this 19th day of February 1958, personally appeared Dr. W. K. Haynie,  

Chairman of the Oklahoma Planning and Resources Board,  

who executed the within and foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that they executed the same as their free and voluntary act and deed for the uses and purposes therein set forth.

Witness my hand and seal the day and year last above written.  

My commission expires June 12, 1961  

Notary Public  

State of Oklahoma,  
County of  

Before me, a Notary Public in and for said county and state, on this 19th day of  

and to me known to be the identical person who subscribed the name of the maker thereof to the foregoing instrument as the  

and acknowledged to me that he executed the same as his free and voluntary act and deed, and as the free and voluntary act and deed of such corporation, for the uses and purposes therein set forth.

My commission expires  

Notary Public  

State of Oklahoma,  
County of  

Before me, a Notary Public in and for said county and state, on this 19th day of  

and to me known to be the identical person who executed the within and foregoing instrument by mark, in my presence and in the presence of  

as Witnesses, and acknowledged to me that executed the same as free and voluntary act and deed for the uses and purposes therein set forth.

My commission expires  

Notary Public  

DEDICATION DEED FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY  

STATE OF OKLAHOMA  
This instrument was filed for record on this 19

Day of

Book

Page  

County Clerk

Depository

Official Record of Oklahoma Official Record of Oklahoma
WARRANTY DEED
(Statutory Form—Individual)

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

THAT B. H. Ingram and Alphada J. Ingram, husband and wife,

parties of the first part, in consideration of the

sum of TEN AND NO/100--------------------------------------------- dollars,

and other valuable considerations, in hand paid, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, do

hereby grant, bargain, sell and convey unto Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department,

State of Oklahoma

party of the second part, the following described real property and premises situate in Choctaw

County, State of Oklahoma, to-wit:

A strip, piece or parcel of land lying in the SE ¼ of the SW ¼ of Section 30, Township 6 South, Range 20 East, of the Indian Base and Meridian, more particularly described by metes and bounds as follows, to-wit: Beginning at the Southwest corner of said SE ¼ of the SW ¼ of said Section 30; thence running East along the section line a distance of 357 feet; thence running North a distance of 428.1 feet; thence running West a distance of 357 feet to a point on the West boundary line of the SE ¼ of the SW ¼ of said Section 30; thence running South a distance of 428.1 feet to the place of beginning.

together with all the improvements thereon and the appurtenances thereunto belonging, and warrant the title to the same.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD said described premises unto the said part ------------ of the second part, heres and assigns forever, free, clear and discharged of and from all former grants, charges, taxes, judgments, mortgages and other liens and incumbrances of whatsoever nature, except mineral reservations and conveyances of record, if any.

Signed and delivered this 30th day of July, 1976

B. H. Ingram
Alphada J. Ingram

INDIVIDUAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

STATE OF OKLAHOMA
County of CHOCTAW

Before me, a Notary Public in and for said County and State, on this 30th day of July, 1976

personally appeared

B. H. Ingram and Alphada J. Ingram, husband and wife,

to me known to be the identical person who executed the within and foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that they executed the same as their last will and voluntary act and deed for the uses and purposes therein set forth.

Given under my hand and official seal this 3rd day of March, 1979.

My commission expires March 2, 1983.

Notary Public

NOTE—This form supplied by TITLE GUARANTY DEPARTMENT of AMERICAN-FIRST TITLE & TRUST CO., Oklahoma City, for the convenience of ATTORNEYS. No legal instrument or form should ever be prepared by anyone other than an Attorney.
INDIVIDUAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

STATE OF ______________________________________________ County of ______________________________________________ SS.

Before me, a Notary Public in and for said County and State on this __________________________ day of __________________________, 19 ______ personally appeared ________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

to me known to be the identical person who executed the within and foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that ________________________________________________________________ executed the same as __________________________ free and voluntary act and deed for the uses and purposes therein set forth.

Given under my hand and seal the day and year last above written.

My commission expires ____________________________________________ Notary Public