Natural Falls State Park
Resource Management Plan
Delaware County, Oklahoma

7/31/2019
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Dr. Alyson Greiner served in a lead role as the head of the Department of Geography at Oklahoma State University. The field crew of Amanda Thomas, Nicole Pauley, and Christina Woehrle gathered GPS data and served important functions in processing GIS data, reviewing documents, and providing insight into the RMP process.

At the time of preparation of the Resource Management Plan, Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park had been recently acquired by the State of Oklahoma. This important property was included in the protocol for the Resource Management Plan. However, numerous details related to Fox Meadow were undetermined during this process.

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.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADAAG ........................................... Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines
CDC .......................................................... Centers for Disease Control
CFR .......................................................... Code of Federal Regulations
CLEET ........................................... Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training
CPSC .......................................................... Consumer Product Safety Commission
EPA .......................................................... Environmental Protection Agency
ESA .......................................................... Endangered Species Act
GIS .......................................................... geographic information systems
gPS .......................................................... global positioning system
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
RMP .......................................................... Resource Management Plan
RMP/EA ................................................... Resource Management Plan/Environmental Assessment
ROS .......................................................... Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
SCORP .................................................... Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
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
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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, Natural Falls 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 Natural Falls State Park and its incorporated resources, summarize the plan’s components, and provide descriptive and historical information related to the project. An initial resource management plan for Natural Falls State Park had been completed in 2008 and served as a foundation for this second cycle in the legislatively authorized resource management planning process.

That 2008 RMP for the Natural Falls State Park focused entirely on the properties south of U.S. Highway 412. In the interim since that time, the State of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State Parks have made significant capital investment in the property and acquired additional property, Fox Meadow, to the north of U.S. Highway 412. This 2019 Resource Management Plan addresses improvements and developments presently on the property, achievements in management recommended in 2008, and concepts that may be incorporated into the newly acquired Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park.

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 Natural Falls State Park. With regard to Natural Falls State Park and its incorporated properties, the RMP is to:

- Provide managers and decision-makers with long-term direction and guidance for the successful management of the resources at Natural Falls State Park and its incorporated properties;
- 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 Natural Falls 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 Natural Falls 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 Natural Falls State Park during 2018 – 2019, and the intent of the agreement is to continue the RMP process across all state parks in Oklahoma, now into its second round.
The RMP agreement became effective July 1, 2018 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 Natural Falls State Park in June 2019.

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.

Effective January 14, 2019 as authorized in Enrolled House Bill 3603, “all duties and powers of the Commission shall be transferred to the Executive Director. Any provision in statute that provides to the Commission authority that is not advisory in nature shall be deemed to grant the duty or power to the Executive Director.”

**Figure 1.1 – Iconic entry arch at Natural Falls State Park**
Figure 1.2 shows the boundaries of Natural Falls State Park and its location south of U.S. Highway 412 in Delaware County, Oklahoma. Located in Delaware County in northeastern Oklahoma, Natural Falls State Park is at the southern edge of the Ozark Plateau. Six miles west of West Siloam Springs and the Arkansas border, visitors access Natural Falls State Park one-quarter mile south of U.S. Highway 412 (see Figure 1.2). Prior to designation as a state park, this property was owned and operated as a private tourist resort. Now, as Natural Falls State Park, the property offers an environment unique in Oklahoma located in a well-traveled corridor.

Figure 1.3 below shows the boundaries and location of the newly acquired Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park. This property is northeast of the property shown in Figure 1.2 and situated north of U.S. Highway 412. County Road N1700 extends north from U.S. Highway 412, marked primarily by signs for New Life Ranch. N1700 crosses the southwest corner of Fox Meadow, loops to the northwest, then crosses the Fox Meadow property as E0550 Road. New Life Ranch, a non-profit camp, borders the property on the southwest.
Chapter 2 – Project Description

About Natural Falls 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,
cabin, 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.

Purpose and Significance of Natural Falls 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.

Prior to the 2008 planning process, a purpose statement for Natural Falls State Park did not exist.
As a result, it was necessary that one be developed. Research staff from OSU worked with
OTRD staff, and personnel from Natural Falls State Park, to develop a draft purpose statement.
During that process staff created the following statement. During the 2018 – 2019 planning
process, this statement was reviewed and confirmed.

Natural Falls State Park serves the state of Oklahoma in providing a quality
outdoor recreational opportunity in the Oklahoma Ozarks; and by providing
long-term conservation of our natural, cultural, scenic, and recreational
resources. Key in these resources is the 77-foot high waterfall in the park, trail
system to provide appropriate access, RV camping area, and gardens. Park staff
will strive to provide quality facilities, family-oriented programs and opportunities, consistent with our mission, for both overnight camping and day use experiences.

Similarly, during the 2018 planning process, the personnel from Natural Falls State Park, OTRD personnel, in cooperation with the research staff, developed a statement of significance for Natural Falls State Park. That statement follows:

**Natural Falls State Park is a significant component of the Oklahoma State Park System as a distinctive landscape, uncommon in Oklahoma, situated along a major traffic corridor with easy access. The history and culture linked to the property and environment adds to the significance of Natural Falls State Park. The park offers a quiet, tranquil environment featuring a creek and forest ecology in the Illinois River watershed, a crucial, protected, scenic resource with statewide significance. The karst topography provides dramatic landscape variation with historic and cultural significance.**

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.

![Figure 2.1](image_url)  
*Figure 2.1 – Utilization of purpose and significance statements*  
Source: National Park Service
Geographic Location of Natural Falls State Park

The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department acquired Natural Falls State Park in 1990. The property consists of 120 acres of oak-hickory-pine forest, open meadows, and pristine Ozark streams. Unique features of this park are the 77-foot high waterfall and multiple “dripping springs” adjacent to the enhanced waterfall. The name Dripping Springs is still evident in signs and literature. To ensure that all visitors experience the water flowing over the falls, in the 1920s, the owners installed a pump to recycle the water to the top; this practice continues today.

Above the falls, on the dry, rocky ridge top portion of the park are post oak, blackjack oak, and grasses, which struggle to survive on the thin soil. An entirely different plant community exists in the canyon at the base of the waterfall. A dense forest of maples, chinquapin, white oak, flowering dogwood, redbud, sassafras, coral berry, spicebush, and pawpaw blanket the cool forest floor while the springs and waterfall create a moist environment where ferns, mosses, and liverworts thrive.

Moving water forms caves and sinkholes in the limestone rock providing shelter for many species of wildlife, and special protection for many species of bats and salamanders. An observation platform overlooks (Figure 2.2) the falls, and a boardwalk with viewing deck is located at the base of the falls in the grotto area.

Natural Falls State Park is a mix of natural features and recreational development. The park provides a campground that accommodates RV and tent camping; it also offers hiking trails and a formal gardens area. Other recreational facilities include a multi-purpose center, group picnic shelter, open playing field, and various play structures.

The map shows Natural Falls State Park south of U.S. Highway 412 and west of the City of West Siloam Springs, Oklahoma. Public access to Natural Falls State Park is limited to the routes east and west along U.S. Highway 412, a four-lane federal highway. Direct access into the park is one block south of U.S. Highway 412. Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park is approximately two miles east and two miles north of the original state park property.
Natural Falls State Park History

The area in which Natural Falls State Park is situated was originally known as Dripping Springs, in Indian Territory. According to the Delaware County Historical Society (1974), the first known formal designation of the property was in 1888 when Jefferson and Caleba Carnes moved to the 170-acre site. Jefferson Carnes was a citizen by blood of the Cherokee Nation and was allotted the property by the Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory. In 1907, a homestead deed was given to Carnes, and in 1908 Secretary of State, James R. Garfield, approved it. The Carnes family built a house on the property and constructed a ‘windlass’ to collect water for daily use. A trough was constructed below the main spring and water ran from the trough into pails that were then drawn to the top by way of cables. In addition, the family excavated an entrance into another spring and built a cistern where water was collected. Milk, butter, and other items needing refrigeration were stored in this structure.

People visited the Carnes for their company, and to experience the springs and relax. Visitors to the springs would take a train from various locations to Siloam Springs (approximately 14 miles east), and complete the journey to Dripping Springs by horse and buggy. Records exist reporting that students from nearby eighth grade graduating classes visited the springs for picnics and class trips.

In 1918 Richard and Sabra Rankin purchased the Dripping Springs property, and one year later P.G. and Ervilla Airy purchased a one-half interest. Together, the Rankins and the Airys developed the property for visitors. They built the original swinging bridge, which at 152 feet long and 75 feet high spanned the canyon and waterfall.

In addition to the bridge, the Rankin-Airy families constructed a small store (named the Confectionary, and seen in Figure 2.4) and a stone wall at the entrance to the walkway to the falls. The stone wall stands in the same location today. To accommodate the many visitors who were arriving at the Springs, the families erected ten ‘modern’ cottages on the hill.

![Figure 2.4 - 1920s entry arch to Dripping Springs](Source: Oklahoma Historical Society)

![Figure 2.5 - Pedestrian bridge at Dripping Springs - 1920s](Source: Oklahoma Historical Society)
across from the swinging bridge and added a large, lighted entrance sign, which led to the falls: ‘Dripping Springs.’

During this time, the owners had two small dams built – one at the base of the main springs so people could walk across and view the springs, and the other downstream from the falls. The dam at the main springs is below and southeast of the falls; it can be viewed from the current-day steel span bridge. The downstream dam, to the southwest of the falls, created a small pond called the swimming pool, where visitors could relax in the cool spring water.

Amenities included a nearby bathhouse and diving board on the downstream dam. To help defray costs, admission to the springs and access to the bathhouse and swimming pool was ten cents. Also during this period, the main house was converted into a six-bedroom hotel and named ‘The Wayside Inn.’ At the front of the inn, a water garden with two fountains made out of native stone was constructed. While the exact date is unknown, it was during this time that a Ram Pump (see Figure 2.5) was installed below the falls to pump the water back to the top, thereby providing a continuous flow of water over the falls.

After ten years of Rankin-Airy ownership, in 1927 Henry and Louella Echols purchased Dripping Springs. They enlarged the store and operated it as a filling station and grocery store. At this time many visitors traveled to the vacation spot in their Model-A Ford cars. Three years later the State of Oklahoma purchased a small parcel of land (fifty-five hundredths of an acre) to augment the right-of-way for Highway 11. Six months afterward, Texaco leased the filling station and grocery store. And, in 1937 the State purchased another small parcel of land (forty-eight hundredths of an acre) for construction of Highway 33.

Louella Echols was known as ‘the heart of the operation at Dripping Springs’ and after she died in 1942, Dripping Springs went into estate. During this time the hotel was torn down and highway construction was completed. Two years later, in 1944, Clint and Kathleen Smith purchased 120 acres of the property for private use. The Smiths leased the store to the Davidson family, built a barn, and raised cattle and hogs. The Smiths moved six of the cottages from the hill behind the swinging bridge to behind the store, and sold four of them.

In 1950 the Southwestern Gas and Electric Company purchased an easement and perpetual right to erect, operate, and maintain a line of poles, wires, and fixtures on the property across from the swinging bridge. Later the same year, Richard and Ruth Wilkerson purchased Dripping Springs. They remodeled the store, sold gas and tires, and rented the remaining cabins. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the Wilkersons allowed the Life Science and Botany classes from the University of Tulsa to visit Dripping Springs to study plant morphology. Students examined mosses, liverworts, and hunted for fossils.

Changing hands once again, in 1964 Guy and Helen Osburn purchased Dripping Springs to operate as a private resort. They opened and operated a café and curio shop; sold gas, oil, and fishing gear; and put in a new well. The Osburns raised Rainbow Trout in the pool by the main
springs and charged a one-dollar admission to view the springs and engage in other recreational activities.

After camping at Dripping Springs while on vacation, in 1972 David and Charlene Gadient purchased the property. They remodeled and enlarged the store, and moved the cabins to be among the trees. The Gadients also restored the swinging bridge, which had fallen into disrepair. One year later, a Safari franchise campground opened at Dripping Springs; it provided ‘deluxe accommodations’ for overnight guests. The campground included 98 camper sites with full hook-ups, wilderness sites, swimming pool, showers, restroom, a common dining room with fireplace, recreation center, playground, picnic tables and grills, laundromat, and sanitary disposal station. Other Dripping Springs facilities included a gas station, grocery store, gift shop, and restaurant. In the early 1970s a lighted cement walkway was added, allowing visitors easy access to an observation deck to view the falls day or night. And, in 1973 several scenes for the movie, “Where the Red Fern Grows,” were filmed near the springs and waterfall.

Little information was found regarding the ownership and use of Dripping Springs between 1974 and 1985. It is evident, however, that the various owners had difficulty in maintaining the many facilities and structures on the property. In 1985, the owners claimed bankruptcy and sold the 120-acre land parcel to the State of Oklahoma to establish a state park (Klein, 1990). In 1997, in anticipation of the park opening the Oklahoma Legislature approved a $3.00 per vehicle entrance fee pilot program for Natural Falls State Park. The law states,

> The Division of Parks may establish until July 1, 1999, a pilot entrance fee program and rates for entry in Natural Falls State Park in Delaware County. All monies collected shall be deposited to the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department Revolving Fund; provided 100% on such monies collected shall be spent on repairs, upkeep or improvement of park areas in Natural Falls State Park in Delaware County. Within sixty (60) days of the end of the pilot program, the Division shall prepare an evaluation of the program and recommendations for continuation, termination, or expansion of the program. The evaluation shall be submitted to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Ch. 157 § Section 1811, p. 931

Then, in 1997, after demolishing, refurbishing, or replacing the damaged areas and facilities, Dripping Springs State Park opened to the public. In 1998, due to liability concerns, the swinging bridge was replaced with a 150-foot long steel span bridge 120 feet above the falls. In addition, an 80-foot long and a 49-foot long bridge were constructed across the creek, downstream of the falls (Stahl, 1999). In the same year, to minimize confusion with an existing state park named Dripping Springs in Okmulgee, the Oklahoma Legislature changed the name of the park to Natural Falls State Park (1811.5A of Title 74).

Several of the historic names such as Carnes, Airy, and Rankin are now memorialized in designated areas within Natural Falls State Park.
Community and Regional Context

Brief History of Delaware County

The following history of Delaware County was written by Rose Stauber for the Oklahoma Historical Society and retrieved from the website for the Oklahoma Historical Society (http://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=DE010).

“Located in northeastern Oklahoma, Delaware County is bordered on the east by McDonald County, Missouri, and Benton County, Arkansas, on the south by Adair and Cherokee counties, on the west by Mayes and Craig counties, and on the north by Ottawa County. U.S. Highway 59 crosses the region north and south. The Cherokee Turnpike, also U.S. Highway 412, crosses the southern end of Delaware County. Other important routes include State Highways 10, 20, 28, 85, 116, 125, and 127.

The county lies on the western slopes of the Ozark Plateau, an area of forests, prairies, and farmland. The Grand River and Elk River are the major watercourses in the county’s northern portion, and Flint Creek and the Illinois River drain in the southern part. The Ozark limestone holds no oil or minerals but provides an abundant supply of water. The county’s total land and water area is 792.33 square miles.

At least three different periods of prehistoric peoples have been documented in Delaware County. By 2004 twenty-three Archaic, seventeen Woodland, and sixty-three Eastern Villager archaeological sites had been tested. In 1939, before Grand Lake filled, University of Oklahoma archaeologists excavated along Grand River and Honey Creek, uncovering many artifacts. The sites, similar to the Hopewell Culture that resided in the Kansas City, Missouri area 2,000 to 1,400 years ago, are now under the lake. In more modern times, few American Indians lived in the present county until the federal government began relocating tribes.

Beginning in 1828 the Western Cherokee were relocated from Arkansas, settling mainly outside future Delaware County, in the southern part of the region that later became the Cherokee Nation. One of the chiefs, Thomas Chisholm (grandfather of Sen. Robert L. Owen), settled just west of Maysville, Arkansas. He was buried there in 1834 in the oldest-known marked grave in the county. In 1832 the Seneca from Ohio were removed to Indian Territory into lands that extended into present northeastern Delaware County. Some of the Eastern Cherokee arrived in 1836 and 1837, but the main body came late 1838 into 1839. About 1820 a group of Delaware who had befriended the Cherokee against the Osage settled Delaware Town, located approximately two miles south of present Eucha on Spavinaw Creek; that site now lies under Lake Eucha. The Cherokee named the surrounding area Delaware District.

Delaware County was created at statehood in November 1907. Cherokee John H. Gibson, mayor of Grove, swore in the first county judge and clerk. As the only incorporated town in the county at statehood, Grove was designated the seat of government. However, a movement soon emerged to relocate it. Those who wanted it in the county’s center banded together, found a place on Jay Washbourne’s allotment, platted a town, won a vote to make Jay the county seat, and built a wooden courthouse. Meanwhile, an entrepreneur built a concrete courthouse just outside of the Jay plat. The wooden courthouse mysteriously burned, tempers flared, guns appeared, and the governor called out the military. A judge ruled in favor of the Jay plat, and in
1912 the records went into the Jay courthouse. Nevertheless, Grove citizens complained that poor roads and insufficient accommodations made it difficult to hold court at Jay.

At the turn of the twentieth century subsistence farming served as the principal occupation. Much changed in the century’s first two decades. Better transportation, refrigerated railroad cars, new farm equipment, and agricultural education brought improvements. The value of dairy products rose from $127,389 in 1919 to $186,499 ten years later. Egg production increased from 390,006 dozen in 1919 to 636,835 in 1929. Over time, labor-intensive row crops and grains gave way to cattle. In 1920 the county had 2,176 farms with 257,671 acres. This held steady until the 1960s when the number began decreasing. In the 1970s poultry, mainly broilers, became a key product. In 1997 there were 1,303 farms covering 364,620 acres. The value of agricultural products sold that year was $94 million, approximately two-thirds of which were poultry products.

Three lakes changed the face and the economy of Delaware County. In 1924 the city of Tulsa, completed a water-supply dam at Spavinaw on Spavinaw Creek in Mayes County. Lake Spavinaw impounds water into Delaware County. Although small, the lake began to attract weekenders and day-trippers. In 1940 a dam on Grand River was completed, and Grand Lake O’ the Cherokees was filled. Grand Lake sprawls north across Delaware County into Ottawa County. Creation of the lake also displaced hundreds of people, covered roads, and necessitated relocation of a number of cemeteries. Sailboat Bridge on Grand Lake is the second-longest bridge over water in Oklahoma.

Tulsa’s growing need for water caused it to revisit Spavinaw Creek, and in 1952 an upstream dam was completed, creating Lake Eucha. It became a popular fishing and recreation area. The lake inundated the Cherokee town of Eucha, the home of Cherokee Chief Charles Thompson, or Oochalata, who was buried there. The town and the cemetery were relocated. The chief is buried just inside the gate of the new cemetery, the grave marked by a military stone for his Civil War service to the Union.

After World War II a boom began. Tourism and retirement became big business. In 1965 Green Country, Incorporated, formed to coordinate promotion and development of sixteen northeast Oklahoma counties. In 2000 the three largest occupation groups, each at 23.4 percent of the labor force, were management, professional, and related occupations; production, transportation and material moving occupations; and sales and office jobs. Service occupations involved 15.9 percent, and farming and related jobs involved only 1.8 percent.

Rail access assisted in community growth over the years. In 1896 Congress authorized the Arkansas Northwestern Railway to build a line from Southwest City, Missouri, northwest to the Kansas line between Baxter Springs and Chetopa. Under the name of the Arkansas and Oklahoma Railroad, a line was built from Rogers, Arkansas, to Grove, reaching there in 1900. The next year the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway bought the line, which never extended beyond Grove and was abandoned in 1940. In 1912–13 the Kansas, Oklahoma, and Gulf Railroad built tracks through the region to connect Kansas and Texas. Upon entering Delaware County, the line looped west and then southwest, following the west bank of Grand River and exiting into Craig County. In 1912 the town of Bernice was platted on both sides of the railroad near the crossing of Horse Creek. Many businesses in Needmore, two miles east, moved to Bernice. Further east, Rabbit, a small community north of Grove later renamed Copeland Switch, developed. When Grand Lake was built, Bernice relocated to higher ground on the west
side of Horse Creek, and some of the railway grade was moved. The line was abandoned in 1966, and the railway grade, including the Horse Creek Bridge, became State Highway 85A.

In 1910 Delaware County had a population of 11,469; only five counties had fewer people. This did not change appreciably until 1970 when the population surged from 13,198 in 1960 to 17,767 in 1970, 23,946 in 1980, and 28,070 in 1990. The 2000 census recorded 37,077, more than fifty-nine other counties. In 2004 the census revealed that while rural counties were losing population, Delaware County was the fifth-fastest-growing in the state. In addition to tourism, a tight labor market, aggressive action to attract employers, and a growing economy in adjacent northwest Arkansas contributed to these changes.

Since the surge of whites into Indian Territory in the nineteenth century’s last decades, they have outnumbered other groups. In 1900 the census of Indian Territory recorded whites at 77.2 percent and American Indians at 13.4. The 2010 census tallied whites at 67.0 percent, American Indians at 22.4 percent, Asians at 1.3 percent, and African Americans at 0.2 percent. Hispanic ethnicity was identified as 3.0 percent. The incorporated towns are Bernice, Colcord, Grove, Jay, Kansas, Oaks, and West Siloam.

The county offers several recreation areas and historic sites. Just south of Lake Eucha is the 14,316-acre Spavinaw Wildlife Management Area. State parks include Honey Creek at Grove and Bernice at Bernice, Lake Eucha south of Jay, and Natural Falls near West Siloam Springs. Har-Ber Village, a large museum, is west of Grove. Near present Oaks is Moravian Springplace Mission. Southwest of Maysville, Arkansas, is the site of Fort Wayne. Six properties have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Polson Cemetery (NR 77001092), west of Southwest City, Missouri, is the burial place of Major Ridge, John Ridge, and Stand Watie. Northwest of Grove in the Seneca-Cayuga area is the still-active Splitlog (Cayuga Mission) Church (NR 72001061) built by Mathias Splitlog. The Hildebrand-Beck Mill (NR 72001062) stands on Flint Creek just north of U.S. Highway 412 east of Kansas, Oklahoma. The Talbot Library and Museum in Colcord displays artifacts and provides genealogy resources.

Notable natives of Delaware County include Lee B. Smith (1844–1917), an adopted Cherokee who served on the Cherokee Nation Council and was the county’s first state legislator. John H. Gibson (1861–1940) owned the Grove Sun and served in local and state offices.”

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**Demographic and Socioeconomic Conditions and Impact**

The U.S. Bureau of Census provides summary data related to the demographic profile of the residents of Delaware County. The 2010 Census provided the statistical basis for the detail related to the population of Delaware County. In addition, the Bureau of Census provides population estimates based upon the 2010 Census. These estimates are projected in several tables into 2015.

The following tables provide this summary based upon data retrieved during November 2018 from [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/cf/1.0/en/county/Delaware County, Oklahoma/POPULATION/DECENNIAL_CNT](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/cf/1.0/en/county/Delaware County, Oklahoma/POPULATION/DECENNIAL_CNT).
Table 2.1 – Population of Delaware County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2017 estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delaware County</td>
<td>41,484</td>
<td>41,632</td>
<td>42,602</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 – Demographic Characteristics of the Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Detail on factor</th>
<th>Delaware County Number (Percent)</th>
<th>Oklahoma Number (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex and Age</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20,470 (49.3%)</td>
<td>1,816,749 (49.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21,017 (50.7%)</td>
<td>1,858,590 (50.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age (years)</td>
<td></td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 years of age</td>
<td></td>
<td>9,307 (22.4%)</td>
<td>911,484 (24.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 years of age and over</td>
<td></td>
<td>32,180 (77.6%)</td>
<td>2,762,318 (75.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years of age and over</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,536 (20.6%)</td>
<td>491,422 (13.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>27,811 (67.0%)</td>
<td>2,720,135 (72.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>92 (0.2%)</td>
<td>267,179 (7.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>9,277 (22.4%)</td>
<td>259,809 (8.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>519 (1.3%)</td>
<td>61,581 (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>30 (0.1%)</td>
<td>3,967 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>3,308 (8.0%)</td>
<td>263,896 (7.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>Of any race</td>
<td>1,248 (3.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The population of Delaware County increased at a rate of 2.7% over the years between 2010 and 2017. Since 2000, Delaware County has been increasing in population, contrasting with numerous other rural counties in Oklahoma. However, it is growing at a slower rate than is true in several other northeastern Oklahoma counties and most of northwestern Arkansas.

Interestingly, Delaware County reports a population in which the median age of male residents is 1.5 years lower than the median age for resident females. In addition, Delaware County shows a
population with less diversity than that present within the population for the state of Oklahoma with the notable exception of American Indian. Delaware County reports a population in which 8.0% of the residents represent two or more races. This composition of the population represents part of the history of the county in that 7.1% of the population reported their race to be “White & American Indian.” In addition, Delaware County presents a population with a much smaller percentage of Hispanic residents than is true across Oklahoma.

Table 2.3 provides detail on the household characteristics of the population of Delaware County. Of particular note is the much higher percentage of households in Delaware County with one or more members over the age of 65 than is true in the state of Oklahoma. On most measures related to household characteristics, Delaware County is dissimilar from the household characteristics represented across Oklahoma. This is particularly evident in number of households with persons 65 years of age and above, lower percentage of occupied housing units, higher percentage of vacant housing units, higher percentage of owner occupied housing units and related lower percentage of renter occupied housing.

### Table 2.3 – Household Characteristics in Delaware County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Related Factor</th>
<th>Delaware County Number (Percent)</th>
<th>Oklahoma Number (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of households</td>
<td>17,093 (100.0%)</td>
<td>1,421,705 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population in households</td>
<td>41,131 (99.1%)</td>
<td>3,563,497 (96.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with a child or children under 18</td>
<td>4,857 (28.4%)</td>
<td>425,149 (29.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with person 65 years and over</td>
<td>6,026 (35.3%)</td>
<td>140,851 (9.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied housing units</td>
<td>17,093 (68.9%)</td>
<td>1,421,705 (86.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant housing units</td>
<td>7,725 (31.1%)</td>
<td>222,523 (13.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupied housing units</td>
<td>13,295 (77.8%)</td>
<td>969,959 (68.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter occupied housing units</td>
<td>3,798 (22.2%)</td>
<td>451,746 (31.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One characteristic on which the population of Delaware County differs from that across Oklahoma is household income. The median household income in Delaware County is $4,000 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 Delaware County, the mean household income is $38,438 indicating that a small number of residents are in the upper levels of income while a larger number are in the lower income categories. About 2.6% of households in Delaware County report incomes of over $200,000, with an additional 13.3% above $100,000.

It is equally important to recognize that 14.6% of the population of Delaware 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 Delaware County are financially limited as compared to the general population of Oklahoma.

**Table 2.4 – Financial Characteristics in Delaware County**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic or Factor</th>
<th>Delaware County</th>
<th>Oklahoma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median household income</td>
<td>$38,438</td>
<td>$42,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households below poverty level</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals below poverty level</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**Table 2.5 – Education Characteristics in Delaware County**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Delaware County (Percent)</th>
<th>Oklahoma Number (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25,549 persons 25 years of age and above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 9th grade</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>115,248 (4.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th to 12th grade, no diploma</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>232,987 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma or equivalency</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
<td>775,478 (32.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>559,367 (23.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>159,557 (6.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>362,043 (15.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or professional degree</td>
<td>5.1%</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 Delaware County are reported in Table 2.6. As of 2010, Delaware County reported unemployment to be approximately 8.2% as compared with a statewide 7.7%. While those percentages have changed since 2010 as...
economic conditions have improved, Delaware County continues to show slightly lower employment than is true statewide.

Table 2.6 – Employment Characteristics in Delaware County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic or Factor</th>
<th>Delaware 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>33,712 (72.3%)</td>
<td>1,806,858 (63.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>15,968 (91.8%)</td>
<td>1,674,765 (92.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private wage and salary workers</td>
<td>11,596 (72.6%)</td>
<td>1,260,965 (75.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government workers</td>
<td>3,056 (19.1%)</td>
<td>285,562 (17.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed (non-incorporated business)</td>
<td>1,291 (8.1%)</td>
<td>124,013 (7.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid family workers</td>
<td>25 (0.2%)</td>
<td>4,225 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, Delaware County comprises a rural area with approximately 53.8 persons per square mile as compared to an average of 50.3 for Oklahoma. The county population shows an average household income below the statewide average; additionally, a higher percentage of Delaware 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

Northeastern Oklahoma (Green Country) offers a great variety and number of recreation resources and opportunities, attracting visitors from throughout the region. One-quarter mile east of Natural Falls State Park on the north side of U.S. Highway 412, is the West Siloam Speedway shown in Figure 2.7. It has been open since 1987 and was refurbished in 2005. The track is a one-quarter mile red clay oval track and the owners operate a variety of dirt-car races: pure stock, mini-stock, factory stock, super-stock, 360 modified, limited late model and modified cars; they also offer bike racing for youth. Racing is scheduled from March to October each Saturday afternoon and into the night hours. The facility opens at 3:00 pm, practice begins at

Figure 2.7 – Regional recreation facilities
5:00 pm, and the races start at 7:00 pm. The noise from the Speedway is clearly heard at Natural Falls State Park and can continue until midnight or later. However, frequency of events at the Speedway has decreased in recent years.

Also to the east of Natural Falls State Park and shown in Figure 2.7, a Cherokee Casino and Hotel is located north of U.S. Highway 412 in West Siloam Springs. It is located approximately six miles from the park at the junction of U.S. Highways 412 and 59. Cherokee Casino and Hotel includes the café, a buffet, a dance bar, and the casino open and available to visitors 24 hours each day. In its current configuration, the 50,000 square foot casino and hotel cost $83 million. The hotel is an 8-story, 140 room lodging facility adjacent to the casino.

To the south along U.S. Highway 59 and at the outflow of the former Lake Frances, the Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA) is planning construction of a whitewater park. This park is proposed as including an enhanced, constructed flowage for kayaking, floating, and other whitewater activity in the waters of the Illinois River as they enter Oklahoma.

The Illinois River also draws numerous visitors to northeastern Oklahoma offering float trips along the designated scenic river. Near Kansas, Oklahoma, Flint Creek, a tributary to the Illinois River, offers similar floating opportunities in a designated scenic waterway.

Lake Eucha, a property owned by the City of Tulsa and once managed as a state park, offers camping and swimming opportunities north of Natural Falls State Park. Grand Lake State Park is further north and distributed throughout the Grand Lake o’ the Cherokees area. Most of the units within Grand Lake State Park offer a lake experience that contrasts with the other properties in the area.

Numerous private resorts and campgrounds have been developed throughout the region, but none of these offer the unique topography and features in Natural Falls State Park. Northwest Arkansas does include several state parks and private developments that supplement those available within Oklahoma.

**Natural Resources in the Park**

**Climate and Air Quality**

The following information related to climate in Delaware County is provided by the Oklahoma Climatological Survey and retrieved November 1, 2018 ([http://climate.ok.gov/county_climate/Products/County_Climatologies/county_climate_delaware.pdf](http://climate.ok.gov/county_climate/Products/County_Climatologies/county_climate_delaware.pdf)).

Delaware County is part of the heavily forested Ozark Highlands. Extreme northwestern Delaware County is part of the Caves and Prairies region. Average annual precipitation ranges from about 42 inches in northern Delaware County to 48 inches in the south. March and June are the wettest months, on average, but much of the spring through fall receives sufficient rainfall. Nearly every winter has at least one inch of snow, with one year in two having ten or more inches.

Temperatures average near 59 degrees, with a slight increase from north to south. Temperatures range from an average daytime high of 91 degrees in July and August to an average low of 26 degrees in January. Delaware County averages a growing season of 207 days, but plants that can withstand short periods of colder temperatures may have an additional three to five weeks.
Winds from the south to southeast are quite dominant, averaging just over six miles-per-hour. Relative humidity, on average, ranges from 42% to 95% during the day. During the year, humidity is highest in May through July and lowest in April. Winter months tend to be cloudier than summer months. The percentage of possible sunshine ranges from an average of about 50% in winter to nearly 75% in summer.

Thunderstorms occur on about 53 days each year, predominantly in the spring and summer. During the period 1950 – 2003, Delaware County recorded 30 tornadoes. The most recent significant tornado (F2 intensity or greater) occurred on May 8, 1989, passing near the town of Moseley. Typically, there are about 3 events each year of hail exceeding one inch in diameter.

Geology of Natural Falls State Park

The Oklahoma Archeological Survey provided a focus on Natural Falls State Park in The Oklahoma Geology Notes, volume 77, number 3, for July – September 2018. This timely research and publication by Julie Chang, Stacey Evans, and Russell Standridge provided an up-to-date assessment of the geology of Natural Falls State Park. The following elements are quoted from this publication.

“At Natural Falls, the waterfall occurs where Dripping Springs Branch falls over a cliff into a deep v-shaped ravine (Figure 2.8). Here, more resistant rocks cap weaker rocks, and the weaker underlying rocks were more easily eroded by the flowing stream. As the weak strata were eroded and that portion of the stream became topographically lower and lower, the overlying more resistant rocks remained nearly unchanged, resulting in the sharp drop in elevation that is characteristic of waterfalls. This type of waterfall tends to retreat upstream as erosion of the weak strata leads to undercutting of the more resistant strata. Eventually the resistant cap rock will lose support, break off, and the crest of the waterfall will move further upstream.

The rocks exposed at Natural Falls are primarily Mississippian chert-bearing limestones of the Boone Formation. According to Bingham, springs below the waterfall flow from openings in the Reeds Spring Member of the Boone Formation. Historically, most studies of Mississippian stratigraphy in northeastern Oklahoma were focused on the Tri-State Zinc-Lead Mining District because of its economic importance. Over time, changes to the stratigraphic interpretation have been made as more geologic data are acquired in an area. Even today, revisions to Mississippian stratigraphy in northeastern Oklahoma continues. Much of the most recent stratigraphic work has been based on studies of conodont fossils.

Most of the fossils found in the rocks are marine invertebrates such as crinoids, brachiopods, and bryozoans. Chert is thought to have formed both penecontemporaneously with carbonate deposition and as a diagenetic replacement of carbonate. Due to the abundance of carbonate rocks (limestone, dolostone) in the Ozark Uplift, karst features are common. Karst forms when
acidic groundwater dissolves carbonate rocks, creating features such as caves, sinkholes, disappearing streams, and springs. Caves and caverns are natural openings in the ground that lack light and are large enough for humans to enter. Sinkholes are depressions or holes in the ground that form from dissolution of rock or by cave collapse. Disappearing streams occur where streams disappear underground due to the flowing or seeping of water into the ground, commonly at sinkholes. Springs form where groundwater emerges at the Earth’s surface."

Topography
Using the Fenneman Physiography Classification (National Geographic Society), Delaware County is entirely within the Ozark Uplift. As a result, Natural Falls State Park and Fox Meadow are also within the Ozark Uplift. As shown in Figure 2.9, the uplift encompasses all or portions of nine counties in northeastern Oklahoma and extends into Missouri and Arkansas.

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 Natural Falls State Park and the associated property at Fox Meadow is provided in Figure 2.10a on the following page.
Figure 2.10a – Soil map of Natural Falls State Park and Fox Meadow

Source: Natural Resource Conservation Service
Soil Suitability for Recreational Development

Various soils have characteristics that may limit development for recreational purposes without additional investment for remediation or engineering. The ratings are based on the soil properties that affect the ease of developing camp areas and the performance of the areas after development. Slope, stoniness, and depth to bedrock or a cemented pan are the main concerns affecting the development of camp areas. The soil properties that affect the performance of the areas after development are those that influence trafficability and promote the growth of vegetation, especially in heavily used areas. For good trafficability, the surface of camp areas...
should absorb rainfall readily, remain firm under heavy foot traffic, and not be dusty when dry. The soil properties that influence trafficability are texture of the surface layer, depth to a water table, ponding, flooding, saturated hydraulic conductivity (Ksat), and large stones. The soil properties that affect the growth of plants are depth to bedrock or a cemented pan, saturated hydraulic conductivity (Ksat), and toxic substances in the soil.

Each of these properties has its unique soil features (Figure 2.10b). At Natural Falls State Park, the creek channel leading to the falls is Doniphan-Tonti complex with 3 to 5% slopes. Nearing the falls and continuing along the southern edge of the campground, the soils are Clarksville silt loam. These areas have slopes ranging from 5-20% and 20-50% and are gravelly. In Figure 2.10b, the red shaded areas are limited for trail development and for installation of sanitation facilities (septic systems and lagoon systems).

The northern portion of Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park is predominantly Clarksville silt loam with similar 5-20% or 20-50% slopes. The flatter areas near the creek are Britwater silt loam showing lesser slopes.

As stated, the red shaded areas in Figure 2.10b indicated soils that are limited to severely limited for installation of sanitation facilities or trail development. Additional limitations are shown in these same areas for development of campgrounds or picnic areas. However, with appropriate engineering and modification, some of these areas have been successfully developed for these uses at Natural Falls State Park.
Hydrology

While Delaware County includes multiple watersheds, the important watershed for Natural Falls State Park is a small portion of the larger Illinois River flowage (Figure 2.11b on the following page). The Dripping Springs Branch drains an area west and south of West Siloam Springs, Oklahoma, and flows westerly remaining primarily south of Highway 412 as shown in Figure 2.11a. The Illinois River watershed spans the Oklahoma-Arkansas border in the northeastern part of the state and is located in Benton, Washington, and Crawford Counties in Arkansas and Delaware, Adair, Cherokee, and Sequoyah Counties in Oklahoma. The watershed encompasses 1,069,530 total acres (approximately 1,600 square miles), with 54% located in Oklahoma. The Illinois River is designated as a State Scenic River, and, as such, is recognized as one of Oklahoma’s most valuable water resources for beneficial uses ranging from aesthetic and recreational value to high water quality as a drinking water source.

Control of water quality and quantity along this portion of the Dripping Springs Branch is important for the distinguishing feature of Natural Falls State Park. At present, most of this watershed is light agricultural or residential in nature. Sager Creek, just east of Fox Meadow, is limited in water quality due to agricultural byproducts entering the stream.

Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park is located downstream and west of the confluence of Sager Creek and the main branch of Flint Creek as shown on Figure 2.11b. Flint Creek flows west before turning southwestward to join the Illinois River. Flint Creek is also protected as a “scenic waterway” in Oklahoma.
Figure 2.11b – Illinois River Watershed
Vegetative Cover

Natural Falls State Park is in the Ozark Highlands as an ecoregion, shown in Figure 2.12. This ecoregion is Oak-Hickory forest using the Kuchler Vegetation Classification. The area is in the “humid temperate” domain, the “hot continental” division and the eastern broadleaf province. The Lenihan Vegetation Classification identifies these areas with slightly different descriptors, classifying Delaware County as “eastern hardwood forest.”

Common species within an oak-hickory forest include the following groups:

- Principal oak species: blackjack, post oak, black oak, southern red oak, Shumard oak, pin oak, bur oak, and white oak;
- Principal hickory species: black hickory, shagbark hickory, and mockernut hickory;
- Typical understory vegetation: flowering dogwood, eastern redbud, green brier, poison ivy, May apple, white sassafras, and coralberry; and
- Moist valley vegetation: silver maple, river birch, American elm, eastern cottonwood, American sycamore, and American linden.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintains a list of plants and animals native to the United States that may warrant future listing as species vulnerable to extinction. Species considered sensitive are candidates for listing as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act [16 USC 1531-1544]. Despite their rarity, however, insufficient information exists regarding population stability of and threat(s) to these species.

Two rare plants are found in Delaware County: the Ozark Spiderwort (Tradescantia ozarkana) and Ozark Chinquapin (Castanea ozarkensis). The Ozark spiderwort population estimates vary from 200 to 1,000 individual plants. Ozark spiderwort grows in deciduous forests on steep, rocky, hillsides and mesic ravines composed of limestone and sandstone. This species is endemic (i.e., found in a very limited geographic range) to the Ozark Mountains of Missouri, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, and to the Ouachita Mountains of western Arkansas and southeastern Oklahoma. Residential development,
conversion of natural areas to cropland, logging, and impounding of rivers have contributed to the decline of the Ozark spiderwort. In areas where the Ozark spiderwort occurs, forested areas should be maintained and herbicide use discouraged (Oklahoma Biological Survey, 2005).

The Ozark Chinquapin tree has been negatively impacted by the chestnut blight, which kills the trees before they mature. It is a tree that, when healthy, can grow to 3 feet in diameter and 65 feet tall. It has 5-inch long, serrated leaves and flowers in May. The nut (seed) of this tree is edible. Ozark Chinquapin trees grow on uplands and cliff margins and ridges, and at the base of talus slopes on limestone, sandstone, and chert. It occurs in oak-hickory or oak-pine forests and is found at elevations of 500-2800 feet above sea level. The population size is unknown (Center for Plant Conservation, 2006).

Fish and Wildlife

Delaware County has a wildlife complement typical of Midwestern deciduous forests (USFWS, 2002). Thus, we find a diverse assortment of vertebrate and invertebrate species common to the Ozark Plateau and more broadly across Oklahoma, northwest Arkansas, and southwest Missouri. Among the more common mammals around and in Natural Falls State Park are whitetail deer, grey squirrel, raccoon, opossum, skunk, beaver, fox, bobcat, coyote, and a number of hawk and owl species; bald eagles are also found in the region. The caves of this region are extremely important for the survival species of bats and salamanders.

An interesting feature of the Ozark Plateau is the development of populations unique to individual caves or small areas. As a result, some cave ecosystems develop their own endemic species. As an example, in 2002 the USFWS reported finding three species of insects unique to a single cave in the Ozark Plateau (USFWS, 2002).

Mammals of specific concern around Natural Falls State Park include a number of species of bats. Maternity caves and hibernating caves (hibernacula) are commonly associated with caves, cliffs, and rock ledges in oak-hickory forests on the Ozark Plateau. Among the bats that have been identified in the ecosystem around Natural Falls State Park are the following species: Townsends Big-eared bat; eastern red bat; big brown bat; silver haired bat; hoary bat; evening bat; gray myotis; little brown myotis; northern myotis (edge of range); Indian myotis; and eastern pipistrolle. The Ozark big-eared bat (Corynorhinus townsendii ingens) is on the federal list of endangered species. Additional federally endangered gray bats (Myotis grisescens) and federally endangered Indiana bats (Myotis sodalis) are found in the area of Natural Falls State Park.

Other protected species that have been identified in areas near Natural Falls State Park include the cave crayfish (Cambarus tartarus), the Ozark cavefish (Amblyopsis rosae), and the Neosho mucket (Lampsilis rafinesqueana). The longnose darter (Percina nasuta) has been identified in Lee Creek south of Delaware County. Bowman’s cave amphipod (Stygobromus bowman) and the Ozark cave amphipod (Stygobromus ozarkensis) have also been identified as species of concern in the area. Three amphibians are on the Oklahoma listing for Delaware County, including the cave salamander (Eurycea lucifuga), grotto salamander (Typhlotriton speleaeus),
and Oklahoma Salamander (Eurycea tynerenesis). The State also lists the prairie mole cricket (Gryllotalpa major) as protected.

The Oklahoma Ornithological Society reported 108 species of birds from the records of an 1849 expedition into Indian Territory near present-day Delaware County (Turner, 1997). On a second expedition in 1850 Woodhouse added another 47 species to his list. Stevens identified a high of 221 identified bird species in Delaware County in 1912. Most of these species remain in the area, although four have now been declared to be extinct and eight have been marked as being questionable. In any case, there is a rich avian population of possibly 150 species or more in the Natural Falls State Park area.

Two bird species are worthy of specific mention: the bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus) and Bachman’s sparrow (Aimophila aestivalis). The bald eagle is on the protected list of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and a winter resident of Delaware County. Bachman’s sparrow is on the list of threatened species for the State of Oklahoma, but is not considered on the federal list. Reptiles often attract the attention of people, especially in recreation settings. A number of species of lizards, skinks, and salamanders are common to northeastern Oklahoma and are likely found within the park. In addition, several species of snakes – both venomous and nonvenomous – are common to Delaware County. Most of the reptiles that inhabit this ecosystem are quite compatible with human use.

Twenty-eight species of fish may be found in Delaware County (Gelwick & Gore, 1990). This is considered to be relatively high in diversity for Oklahoma and likely reflects the high diversity of habitat conditions, which mimic those of larger streams. In addition, there are permanently flowing water sources of apparently good quality and a lack of obvious habitat destruction by cultural activities (e.g., channelization and clearing of riparian timber) that have harmed fish faunas in other systems. In Natural Falls State Park, visitors catch (and release) perch, bluegill, and catfish from the small lake downstream of the falls.

**Nuisance Species**

Feral hogs are present in Delaware County and have been observed throughout the county with populations dating back prior to 1970. The estimated feral hog density for southern Delaware County was less than 13 hogs per square mile.

Additionally, eastern red cedar is invasive in this environment. Eastern red cedar presents additional concern for management due to its potential fuel load for wildfire.

**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. 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 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. However, 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. In recent years, it has been the practice of OTRD to apply available standards once they are established, even if they are not yet in force for state parks. These rules and their associated interpretations have direct bearing on the consideration of access in Natural Falls 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

Most of the trails within Natural Falls State Park are natural surfaces, although hard surface sidewalks have been installed in the developed areas leading to various buildings. 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 2.15. As of 2018, 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 Natural Falls State Park simultaneously with the passage of the ADA; thus, most of the established structures meet the requirements of the law as of the date of the construction of the individual feature. In several locations, Oklahoma State Parks has added accessible restrooms, developed hard surface campsites, installed walkways, and made other efforts to improve accessibility and remain current with legal requirements. The existing trails in these properties are not currently accessible trails, and such modification may not be desirable. 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 Natural Falls 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.
Recreational Development

Natural Falls is located in northeastern Oklahoma, six miles west of West Siloam Springs, one block south of Scenic U.S. Highway 412.

Once privately owned and operated as a tourist attraction, this park was used in the production of the 1970s film, “Where The Red Fern Grows.” During the 1980s the private park was closed and many of the buildings and recreational facilities fell into disrepair.

In 1990, the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department purchased the 120-acre park with the hope of one day restoring it for public benefit. With assistance from area legislators, appropriation of state funding, donations from local citizens, and the hard work of park employees, Natural Falls has once again become a recreational destination. Although actually opened for public use in September 1997, the grand opening for this new park was held December 12, 1997.

The identifying and namesake feature of this state park is the presence of a 77-foot high waterfall. The park affords an opportunity to observe a variety of plant and animal life. Natural Falls State Park is located within the Ozark Highlands region of Oklahoma. Post oak, blackjack oak, and stunted grasses struggle to survive on the thin soil along the dry, rocky ridgetop portion of the park. However, as one travels down the trail that ends at the bottom of the waterfall, a totally different plant community is encountered. A dense forest of maples, chinquapin and white oaks supplemented with flowering dogwood, sassafras, coral berry, spicebush, redbud and pawpaw blanket the cool forest floor. The springs and waterfall create a moist environment where ferns, mosses and liverworts thrive.

Natural Falls is typical of the geology of the Ozark Highlands. Moving water creates caves and sinkholes in the limestone rock that is found here. Such wildlife as whitetail deer, grey squirrel, raccoon, opossum, skunk, beaver, fox bobcat, coyote, and a number of hawk and owl species find plenty of food and shelter here. The caves of this region are extremely important for the survival species of bats and salamanders.

Entry Drive and Environs

The environs surrounding Natural Falls State Park are quite rural with pastures and tilled croplands adjoining the highway access into the park. Highway access is available from U.S. Highway 412, one block south to E578 Road. Most visitors enter along N4680 Road at the west boundary as shown in Figure 3.1.
Figure 3.2 – Map of Natural Falls State Park

KEY TO SYMBOLS

VISITOR'S CENTER  TENT AREA  PLAYGROUND  SCENIC AREA  DAM
COMMUNITY CENTER  YURT AREA  DISC GOLF  PICNIC PAVILION
PARKING  RV CAMPING  VOLLEY BALL  HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE
COMFORT STATION  RV DUMP STATION  HIKING TRAIL  PARK MAINT.
Figure 3.3 depicts the blue signage provided by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation leading from U.S. Highway 412 to the park entrance. The sign shown in Figure 3.3 is located at the intersection of N4680 Road and E578 Road. Similar blue signage is situated east and west of N4680 Road along U.S. Highway 412. For travelers from the west, the first sign is two miles west of N4680. For travelers from the east, the first sign is near the Choctaw Casino in West Siloam with a second sign about two miles east of N4680 Road.

Once a visitor turns south onto N4680 Road, the drive is a two-lane hardtop road, quite narrow and in poorer condition than is true along E578 Road which is also a two-lane hardtop surface. The surrounding development is rural, residential in nature. Several of these properties are in need of repair and maintenance. At present, the visual impact of the private property contrasts with the well-maintained appearance of Natural Falls State Park.

As of 2018, Natural Falls State Park is the only state park in Oklahoma with a mandatory entry fee for all vehicles entering the park. Immediately upon entry to the property, a visitor is informed (Figure 3.4) of this mandatory fee.

Lanes are marked on the asphalt pavement directing drivers into one of two entry lanes. The signage shown in Figure 3.4 is to the right side of the entry drive. A service window allows park personnel to communicate with drivers upon entry.
Visitor Center

The entry area at Natural Falls State Park permits a visitor to park a vehicle outside the entry gate or to actually enter the park area. Two options are available for those who choose to park outside the entry gate. Option one would be a turn to the west rather than passing the entry gate. A parking lot shown in Figure 3.5 permits a park visitor to park a vehicle and walk to areas within Natural Falls State Park. Option two permits a visitor to utilize available temporary parking spots to the north of the park office, visible in Figure 3.6. Parking spots are available adjacent to the office and further north adjacent to the northern boundary of the park. Several of these spots have been identified and marked as accessible parking spots.

The office/visitor center serves several purposes. As currently utilized, the western entrance into the building leads to a public service area that includes displays of park and visitor information, a registration desk served by park personnel, displays of natural artifacts and area photographs, a small retail sales area, and access to public restrooms. Park personnel can serve the registration desk while also remaining in easy contact with the window providing connection with entering visitors in their vehicles. Park management also maintains offices in this portion of the building, permitting the building to be a primary point of park business.

Figure 3.5 – Free parking area west of park office

Figure 3.6 – Visitor Center north elevation
The eastern entrance into the building provides direct access to the Red Fern Reunion Center (Figure 3.7), an open meeting space with basic kitchen facilities. The public restrooms also serve the reunion center since they are located in the middle of the building. The Red Fern Reunion Center can be reserved. A doorway from the center leads directly to a patio on the eastern side of the Visitor Center as shown in Figure 3.7. In addition, ice and firewood are available for sale through the park office.

Traffic entering Natural Falls State Park typically passes to the west side of the Visitor Center to enter the main body of the park. Exiting traffic passes along the east side of the Visitor Center to then pass the north side of the building before exiting the park. For ease of presentation, the RMP follows this traffic pattern in the ensuing discussion.

**Airy Campground**

P.G. and Ervilla Airy, property owners during much of the 20th century, are memorialized in the naming of a campground located in the northwest portion of Natural Falls State Park. Airy Campground, identified on maps as a tent area, is the first right turn after a visitor enters the park. Pine Ridge Trail and three holes on the disc golf course are situated in this northwestern portion of the park between the parking area outside the entry gate and Airy Campground. Another feature in this location is a sand volleyball court (Figure 3.8).
The entry drive leading to Airy Campground passes between the sand volleyball court and a comfort station. Located between Airy Campground and Rankin Campground to the south, the accessible comfort station can serve both areas. The central location and proximity to both campgrounds for several amenities (playgroup, horseshoe pitch, volleyball court) is shown in Figure 3.10 below.
Airy Campground is designed as a loop with one-way traffic. While individual campsites are not defined, they are associated with numbered picnic tables. Fire rings and grills are distributed throughout the campground as shown in Figure 3.11. Potable water is also available at standpipes as depicted in Figure 3.11. Pine Ridge Trail, a hard-surfaced trail, connects to Airy Campground at the north side of the loop, between sites #3 and #4, while Fox Den Trail, a natural surface trail, extends southward from a trailhead between sites #8 and #9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campground amenity</th>
<th>Airy Campground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-modern campsite (Water, electricity)</td>
<td>0 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unimproved (no utilities)</td>
<td>17 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseshoe pitch</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand volleyball court</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playgroup</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort station</td>
<td>1, including showers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail</td>
<td>Pine Ridge Trail Fox Den Trail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rankin Campground

Returning to the entry drive and turning south, a visitor can enter Rankin Campground immediately south of Airy Campground. An entry sign and well-established camp host (Figure 3.12) mark the entrance into Rankin Campground with its 45 campsites, although #1 and #2 may be occupied by the camp hosts.

Rankin Campground, named for another family associated with the property in the mid-20th century, is designed with four primary north-south, one-way traffic routes. Ten sites are designed as pull-through campsites, whereas the remaining sites are back-in. Site #3 is designed as an accessible site, while sites #23, #45, and #4 are priced as premium sites.

Fox Den Trail extends along the western side of Rankin Campground, while Bear Trail parallels the bluff along the eastern side of the campground. As mentioned in the discussion of Airy Campground, numerous amenities are located on the north side of Rankin Campground.
Table 3.2 – Campground Detail for Rankin Campground

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campground amenity</th>
<th>Rankin Campground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campground hosts (Water, 50-amp, electricity, sewer)</td>
<td>2 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull-thru sites (Water, 50/30-amp electricity)</td>
<td>12 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern campsite (Water, 30-amp electricity, sewer)</td>
<td>8 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-modern campsite (Water, 30-amp electricity)</td>
<td>24 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unimproved (no utilities)</td>
<td>0 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail</td>
<td>Fox Den Trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bear Trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort station</td>
<td>1, including showers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playgroup, horseshoe pitch, comfort station</td>
<td>Shared with Airy Campground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary dump station</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While Figure 3.14 on the preceding page documents scenes within Rankin Campground, additional amenities are available along the exit route. In particular, the sanitary dump station is located along the east side of the exit drive. In this location, the sanitary dump station can serve units exiting from either Airy Campground or Rankin Campground, although the majority of likely use would come from visitors to Rankin Campground. There are two lanes for the dump station as shown in Figure 3.15 with available dumpsters for additional trash disposal.
Day Use Area

East of the campgrounds and south of the Visitor Center, the topography of Natural Falls State Park is a swale between knolls to the east and west. As a result, there is a gentle slope downward toward the south. The roadway passes south of the Visitor Center leading eastward across the grassy, well-maintained slopes.

Figure 3.16 reveals a portion of the gentle slope in this area and a lift station that serves as part of the waste management system for the park. Waste from the campgrounds and Visitor Center is moved to the lagoons (discussed later) in the southeast quadrant of Natural Falls State Park. Pine Ridge Trail passes through this area as visible in front of the tree line in Figure 3.16.

Moving eastward a visitor will approach a parking lot and pathway leading to Carnes Shelter House, a playgroup and several picnic tables. The pathway serves as a single-lane vehicle access leading to a small parking lot as shown in Figure 3.17. The parking lot also serves as an outdoor basketball court. Hole #5 from the disc golf course and a horseshoe pitch augment the recreational opportunities in this area. Figure 3.17 also shows the relative positioning of the various facilities in this area.

Figure 3.16 – Lift station in Natural Falls State Park

Figure 3.17 – Carnes Shelter House and supporting amenities
Pine Ridge Trail continues along the tree line and passes through the developed recreation area. As a result, it is easy to access the area from the trail or to utilize Pine Ridge Trail to reach the playgroup, Carnes Shelter House, and the supporting recreational facilities. Slightly southeast of Carnes Shelter House and adjacent to Pine Ridge Trail, there is a comfort station that serves the day visitors in Natural Falls State Park. A hard-surface trail connects the Comfort Station to Pine Ridge Trail as shown in Figure 3.18. As a result of its location along Pine Ridge Trail, the comfort station is easily accessible from the gardens and from the small parking lot leading to Dripping Springs Trail to the east.

**Gardens Area**

Continuing to the east along the main road, a visitor will come to the largest parking lot within the body of Natural Falls State Park. This parking lot is adjacent to the former maintenance area (discussed later) and serves as the primary parking area for visitors to the gardens or to the Dripping Springs Area. The Gardens Area and the Carnes Shelter House are accessed along the entry drive shown in Figure 3.19. This entry drive is gated permitting closure when necessary. The entry drive leads directly to the larger parking lot, although the roadway does continue south, along the east side of the gardens, permitting access to a few accessible parking spots that serve clientele at the entrance to Dripping Springs Trail (Figure 3.20).

A maintenance building and fuel tanks dominate the view on the east end of the parking lot as shown in Figure 3.21 on the following page. This maintenance area was developed when the park was first opened, but has been supplemented with a new area further east. This facility was originally a concession building and shelter associated with the garden area. The north edge of the parking lot is fenced, serving also as the northern boundary for Natural Falls State Park. The gardens extend southward from the central portion of the parking lot.
As shown in Figure 3.22, the gardens are arrayed in a stair-step pattern with planting areas distributed along each level. A gazebo is located in the center elevation with additional feature attractions and plantings in a side plot. Picnic areas with tables supplement the public space, encouraging visitors to relax and enjoy the environment.
Dripping Springs Area

The roadway, footpaths, and trails lead to the entrance to Dripping Springs, the namesake feature for Natural Falls State Park. The rock pillars and fence with the wooden arch shown in Figure 3.23 hearken back to the iconic entry of the early 20th century. Several accessible parking spots outside the entry permit persons with disabilities to get closer to the walkway. The upper portion of the walkway to the springs is also accessible and enhanced with a seating area shown in Figure 3.23.

Interpretive signs and walkways continue downward into the grotto formed by Natural Falls (Dripping Springs). Several viewpoints and rest areas allow visitors to enjoy the walk. As shown in Figure 3.24, the interpretive signage varies in appearance, providing information, directions, and interpreting the surrounding environment. The walkway gives way to steep steps that restrict access for persons with physical limitations. As a result of the natural terrain, the lower portion of the walkway is not accessible. Additional side trails such as Bear Trail and Ghost Coon Trail radiate from the main Dripping Springs Trail.
At the end of the walkway, the dominant feature is the waterfalls with the pool at its base. The plant community and the ecology in the grotto differs significantly from that at the top of the falls.

The stream has been impounded at multiple locations below the falls to form small pools. As shown in Figure 3.25, these pools are stagnant and overgrown with algae.

At one time the pools below the falls were utilized for children’s fishing; however, the fishery no longer supports an adequate population and the aquatic environment is not attractive for fishing. Trails do lead into the wooded environment and a foot bridge spans the pool identified as “Fishing Pond” on some maps.

Additional views of the falls, the stream above the falls, and the gorge are possible along walkways that lead to the Yurt Area.

**Yurt Area**

Several foot trails and a service road lead to the east side of the chasm formed by Dripping Springs. Five yurts have been constructed on the hill overlooking this chasm. The yurts provide a lodging alternative for visitors to Natural Falls State Park.

*Figure 3.25 – Falls, pool and lower stream*
The walkways leading across the gorge (Figure 3.26) offer a different perspective from above the falls and the chasm below. For most visitors, the walk along these upper walkways would require doubling back. However, for visitors staying in the yurts, the walk offers a truly unique experience in Oklahoma.

Five yurts – designated as Cedar, Red Oak, Elm, Redbud, and Dogwood – are arrayed through the wooded area on the east side of Natural Falls State Park (Figure 3.27). These yurts are distinctive features in a few Oklahoma State Parks and may be rented throughout the year. Information provided by Oklahoma State Parks suggests that yurt means “year-round universal recreational-tent” although yurts are traditional housing from the Asian steppes.
Natural Falls State Park Yurt Rentals

918/422-5802 OFFICE

Yurt (Year-round Universal Recreational Tent)

Rental Fees:

- $100.00 per night, tax included (utility cart and park pass also included)
- $25.00 optional linens, pillows, and spreads (you may bring your own)
- $15.00 pet fee (per pet/per night)

Inside Amenities:

- One room yurt
- Sleeps 4 to 6 people
  - Yurts that Sleep 4—come with 1 futon and 1 queen bed
  - Yurts that Sleep 6—come with 2 sets of bunk beds, each having a queen and twin mattress
  - All mattresses are vinyl covered
- Microwave
- Dorm size refrigerator
- AC/heat
- Utility cart: only for use on designated roads, special conditions apply (see use permit)
- Ceiling fan/light
- Electrical outlet
- Kitchen cart
- Dining table/4 chairs
- K-cup coffee maker
- Coffee cups
- Broom/Dustpan

Outside Amenities:

- Picnic Table
- Charcoal BBQ Grill
- Fire Ring (with attachments for cooking)
- Deck
- Lantern Hanger
- Restrooms, showers, and playground are located near the RV campground while portable lavatories are located adjacent to the yurts for convenience.

***PLEASE READ***

Yurts can only be accessed by utility carts (provided) or hike in only. Vehicles must be parked in the designated parking area.

Water MUST be packed in! Yurt camping area DOES NOT have water.

---

Figure 3.28a – Yurt rentals and rules
Yurt Rules

- Reservations are accepted by phone up to 11 months out.
- Reservations for weekends will require 2 nights minimum and 3 nights for holiday weekends.
- Check in time is 5pm. You are welcome to check in the park earlier, but the keys will not be available until check in time.
- Check out is 12pm. You are welcome to stay and enjoy the park on your departure day but the keys must be returned to the gate staff prior to check out time.
- Tent camping is allowed at the rate of $14.00 per tent/per night.
- No late check out available.
- All yurts and decks are non-smoking.
- All trash must be placed in dumpsters by office.
As indicated in the rental information shown in Figure 3.28a, the Yurt Village does not include water or plumbing for sewers and restrooms. As a result, porta-potties shown in Figure 3.29 are provided for use by visitors. The closest comfort station is in the gardens area, although the comfort station with showers is near Airy and Rankin campgrounds.

Chairs, grills and fire rings are additional amenities provided in the area to enhance a visitor’s experience (Figure 3.30). Interestingly, a “smoker’s pole” is also provided, contrasting with the state policy of no tobacco use in state parks.

Dripping Springs Interpretive Trail is accessible from the Yurt Village and winds through the wooded area to the west. Ghost Coon Trail encircles Yurt Village and follows a short stretch of the Dripping Springs Interpretive Trail. Both of these trails have natural surfaces. In addition, the “back nine” baskets of the disc golf course are distributed throughout the area extending south from Yurt Village.

---

**Figure 3.29 – Porta-potties**

**Figure 3.30 – Amenities in Yurt Village**

Top: Picnic table, chairs, fire ring and grill with “smoker’s pole”

Right: Disc golf basket

Bottom: trail access from Yurt Village
Maintenance Area

A portion of the maintenance facilities for Natural Falls State Park were shown in the discussion of the Gardens Area (Figure 3.21 on Page 43). This included a garage and storage facility with associated fuel tanks. A second, newer maintenance area is located in the northeast portion of the park as shown in Figure 3.31. This area is accessible directly from E578 Road or by way of a service road within Natural Falls State Park. The service road within the park boundaries links the garden area to the maintenance garages and circles around the lagoons and back to the west to the Yurt Area.

The lagoon serves the entire park and is a significant improvement added since the 2009 Resource Management Plan.

The northern and eastern boundary of Natural Falls State Park is fenced in this location. In addition, the entry to the maintenance area is gated (Figure 3.32). One metal building and a second open shed provide sheltered storage and work space. Figure 3.32 also shows the service road that extends westward to the main body of the park.

Figure 3.31 – Maintenance area
Credit: Google Earth

Figure 3.32 – Maintenance area
**Hiking/Walking Trails**

As indicated in the discussion of the various areas within Natural Falls State Park, there are a number of trails that provide access throughout the property. These trails are mapped and shown in Figure 3.33. Additional information available at the Visitor Center and online describes each of these trails. The following information summarizes each of the trails and the experience provided.

1. **Dripping Springs Trail:** One-half mile in length, Dripping Springs Trail is accessible for a portion of its length leading from the entry arch south of the gardens and terminating the accessible portion at an overlook above the 77’ waterfall. Beyond the accessible portion, 47 steps lead downhill to the base of the falls, rated “moderate” to “difficult.” Branches from Dripping Springs Trail lead to the fishing lake below the falls and continue uphill to link with Ghost Coon Trail. Portions of Dripping Springs Trail are paved; others are wood; others are natural materials.

2. **Bear Trail:** Rated “difficult,” Bear Trail is about one-tenth of a mile in length leading from Rankin Campground steeply downhill to connect with Dripping Springs Trail. A feature along Bear Trail is a hidden Ozark spring. Bear Trail is a natural surface.

3. **Ghost Coon Trail:** The longest trail in the park at 1.8 miles, Ghost Coon Trail meanders from the forest edge to the stream bank to wind-swept prairie. The trail offers several views of the falls, prairie, and bluffs.
4. Fox Den Trail: This loop trail of 1.5 miles can be accessed in either Airy or Rankin campground and leads southward to a rock overhang and cavern area, then on down to the stream below a low-water dam. The natural-surfaced trail is challenging with significant elevation change.

5. Pine Ridge Trail: This three-quarter mile multi-use trail connects all areas of the park together. Since the trail crosses roadways at several intersections, caution is needed. Segments of Pine Ridge Trail are A.D.A. accessible while other segments exceed slope guidelines for accessibility. Multi-use is encouraged for bicycles, skateboards, and foot traffic with a rating of “easy.” Motorized use is not permitted.

Photographs of several of the trails in Natural Falls State Park are shown in Figure 3.34 and in other portions of this Resource Management Plan as associated with other portions of the property. The trails offer diversity in surfaces, variety in experience, and change in topography, plant life, and temperature.

**Disc Golf Course**

Another feature at Natural Falls State Park is the disc golf course. Various holes were identified as they appear in the sectors scattered throughout the park. The most visible element are the baskets (Figure 3.35) laid out across the landscape. The course is designed with hole #1 near the parking lot outside the entry gate, nine holes laid out along the north portion of the property, and nine holes laid out southeast of the Garden Area interspersed in Yurt Village and beyond. Information related to disc golf is provided in Figure 3.36a and 3.36b on the following pages.
Figure 3.36a – Disc Golf Course at Natural Falls State Park
DISC GOLF

Natural Falls State Park

**Front Nine:** Enjoy 9 holes of disc golf along the Pine Ridge Trail and in the improved/mowed portion of the Park. Please watch for other users and make sure your path is clear before throwing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hole#</th>
<th>Par</th>
<th>Hazards</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 1</td>
<td>Par 4</td>
<td>Trail Crossing(X)</td>
<td>445'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2</td>
<td>Par 3</td>
<td>Trail X</td>
<td>315'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 3</td>
<td>Par 3</td>
<td>Trail X</td>
<td>269'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 4</td>
<td>Par 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>405'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 5</td>
<td>Par 3</td>
<td>Picnic Tables</td>
<td>242'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 6</td>
<td>Par 3</td>
<td>Rock Wall/Parking</td>
<td>211'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 7</td>
<td>Par 3</td>
<td>Parking / Rock Wall O.B.</td>
<td>282'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 8</td>
<td>Par 3</td>
<td>Creek on Right</td>
<td>280'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 9</td>
<td>Par 4</td>
<td>Through Trees/ Trail X</td>
<td>502'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Front Nine Par: 29**  
**Score: ________**

**Back Nine:** Explore your adventurous side on this challenging course. Roughly following parts of the Ghost Coon Trail, these nine holes are through timber, prairie and hazards alike.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hole#</th>
<th>Par</th>
<th>Hazards</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 10</td>
<td>Par 3</td>
<td>Trees on both sides/Narrow</td>
<td>277'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 11</td>
<td>Par 4</td>
<td>Dogleg Right</td>
<td>252'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 12</td>
<td>Par 4</td>
<td>Through the Timber</td>
<td>151'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 13</td>
<td>Par 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>272'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 14</td>
<td>Par 4</td>
<td>Through Trees Dogleg right</td>
<td>407'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 15</td>
<td>Par 4</td>
<td>Long Shot</td>
<td>501'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 16</td>
<td>Par 4</td>
<td>Grass in Fairway is O.B.</td>
<td>339'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 17</td>
<td>Par 4</td>
<td>Stay Left of Tree, Fence is O.B.</td>
<td>407'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 18</td>
<td>Par 3</td>
<td>Launch off Hill, Hanging Basket</td>
<td>196'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Back Nine Par: 33**  
**Score: ________**

O.B. – Out of Bounds, add a stroke to your score, throw from where you went out.

X – Crossing (Such as a trail)

*Figure 3.36a – Disc Golf Course at Natural Falls State Park*
**Fishing Lake**

Downstream and southwest of the falls is a low-water dam that results in a 3.5-acre impoundment, referred to as a lake or pond. The lake provides park visitors with opportunities to engage in catch and release shoreline fishing. However, the lake has not been stocked during the period 2015 – 2019. As a result, fishing success has declined significantly.

While the water is typically clear and visibility is good, during late summer, the surface of the water is often covered with duckweed. To access the lake, visitors must walk down one of the trails, thus, this area is not accessible to visitors with disabilities.

There are actually multiple low-water dams that impound and slow the flow of the stream below the waterfalls. Fishing Lake is formed by one of the larger of these impoundments.

As shown in the lower photograph in Figure 3.37, there is a foot bridge that crosses the pool permitting trail access from the east or from the west. Bear Trail and Fox Den Trail provide the easiest access routes to Fishing Lake.
Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park

Just prior to the initiation of the 2018 RMP process, the State of Oklahoma acquired approximately 142 acres north of U.S. Highway 412. This area is shown in Figure 3.38. The property had been utilized as a horse ranch with numerous trails winding through the wooded hillsides. The property is located along N700 Road about two miles north of U.S. Highway 412. A sign indicating New Life Ranch directs traffic north on an otherwise inconspicuous rural road. New Life Ranch adjoins the southwest boundary of Fox Meadow. N700 Road divides into 558 heading westward and E0550 Road which crosses the Fox Meadow property east and west. D1703 Road parallels the property boundary along its northeastern side.

Flint Creek, designated as a “scenic waterway” and protected by Oklahoma legislation, crosses the southern portion of the property in a west-northwesterly channel. Figure 3.39 shows Flint Creek east and west of the bridge on N700 Road, with the eastern view (right photo in Figure 3.39) on the Fox Meadow property.
Vehicular access to Fox Meadow occurs at three routes, each entry controlled by locked gates (Figure 3.40). The property is fenced and signed, clearly identifying the property as state park. The yellow boundary signs have been posted at intervals along the fences surrounding the property.

For ease of arrangement, Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park is presented in three nodes as each is encountered as a visitor travels northward and eastward across the property.

**West Entrance with House and Barns**

The first roadway leading into the property leads north from E0550 Road just east of the sharp turn after a visitor crosses Flint Creek. This gated entrance is shown in Figure 3.40 and the drive leads to a cluster of buildings including a house, a barn, and multiple small sheds. The house was the primary residence (Figure 3.41), built in 2013. The house includes a two-car garage, two-stories, with solar panels as shown. Energy efficiency and “off-grid” lifestyles are evident in the design and structure of the house and may offer potential education opportunities.
Construction of this house and other building on the property deviate from common building codes and standards. Doorways vary in width; ceiling heights vary from room to room; restroom location and design reveals individual preferences of the former owner. Although the house has electrical service, primary heating was provided through a wood-burning stove.

A barn and shed (Figure 3.43) complement this house. Both are situated to the north of the house and are nestled into trees. Various farm implements, tools, and other equipment remain in the barn, while the shed shelters several cords of firewood.
East Entrance with House and Barns

Returning to E0550 Road and turning to the east, a visitor arrives at the second entrance along the north side of the road. This entrance leads to a second homestead built in 2003, barns, and various outbuildings. This entrance is well-marked with the distinctive Fox Meadow sign shown in Figure 3.40.

This home incorporates many of the features further developed in the later homestead to the west. While the exterior of the house (Figure 3.44) shows contemporary styling, the garage on the west side of the house is inaccessible by vehicle due to several trees. The fenced entry includes ground-cover leading to steps to the entry porch. Once inside, there are many similarities shown between the two houses. The fireplace serves as the primary means for heating the house. Narrow walkways and low ceilings define the upstairs, which also shows a design and layout that reveals personal taste of the former owners. The same deviation from building standards and codes shown in this older homestead are repeated in the newer house.

Figure 3.44 – Interior views
Top: east house (2003) exterior
Middle left: downstairs kitchen
Middle right: stairway
Left: main hallway upstairs
The east side of this house includes a wooden deck shown in Figure 3.45. This deck is directly accessed from the kitchen area via a doorway to the left of the stairway leading to the second floor (shown in the middle right photo in Figure 3.44 on the preceding page). This deck has potential value as an educational space or meeting location.

To the east of the house is a large horse barn shown in Figure 3.46. This two-level barn includes a loft accessible by an interior ladder or various other points of entry. Approximately fourteen stalls provide room for horses, tack, and other equipment. Several unique features within the barn enhance its appearance and functional value.
Other prominent features at this location are a storage shed and corral shown in Figure 3.47. The storage shed is metal on a wood frame and in need of repairs or demolition. The corral is small for most equestrian activity and has been overgrown with various weeds and plants. In addition, the fence requires repair.

**The Grounds at Fox Meadow**

The southern portion of the approximate 142-acre property is wooded around Flint Creek. The former owner developed and maintained numerous trails throughout this portion of the property. The middle portion of the property is open grassland, utilized for hay crops. The east-west route of E0550 Road crosses this open grassland and serves as the primary vehicular route through the property. A third vehicle entry at the eastern edge of the property allows for access to the open fields as shown in Figure 3.48. Fences separate these fields for utilitarian purposes. The northern portion of the property is quite hilly with multiple ridges and ravines, all of which are heavily forested. Additional trails have been developed and maintained through this portion of the property.

**Figure 3.47 – Corral and storage shed**

**Figure 3.48 – North entry gate**
Figure 3.49 shows some of the variation in topography from the sedimentary geology along Flint Creek to the open grasslands and further to the wooded hillsides in the north. Eastern red cedar, an invasive species, is very common in the northern portion of the property.

**Property Summary at Natural Falls State Park**

Natural Falls State Park is essentially a 120-acre rectangle owned by the state of Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department acquired Natural Falls State Park in 1990, making, at that time, it the newest park in the Oklahoma State Park system. It consists of 120 acres of oak-hickory-pine forest, open meadows, and pristine Ozark streams. The most unique features of this park are the 77-foot high waterfall and dripping springs, which gave the park its original name, Drippings Springs State Park. To ensure that all visitors experience the water flowing over the falls, in the 1920s the owners installed a pump to recycle the water to the top; this practice continues today.

Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park is 142 acres of mixed hardwood forest adjoining a creek. Several portions of the property have been cleared of timber when the property was utilized as a horse ranch.

**Public Access and Entry Aesthetics**

As stated earlier, Natural Falls State Park is easily accessible about one-quarter mile south of U.S. Highway 412. Fox Meadow is also easily accessible via hard-surfaced road north of U.S. Highway 412. For both properties, the surrounding area between Kansas, Oklahoma, and West Siloam Springs is primarily rural with multiple farms dotting the wooded landscape.
**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 Natural Falls State Park, a certain percentage of the visitors recorded in the park would include park staff, vendors, and others entering the park for other than recreational purposes. The fact that Natural Falls State Park has a controlled entry with an authorized entrance fee permits more accurate counting of visitors than may be true in other parks.

Other aspects of park visitation can also be calculated 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 Natural Falls State Park and specific usage of particular areas within the park.

For clarity in understanding of visitation patterns, total park visitation is presented in the following discussion. This would include campers and day visitors, as well as guests in the yurts.

**Recreational Use of Park Facilities**

Visitation for Natural Falls State Park has varied considerably during the past five years based on comment from management and in reported numbers. This variability is linked to development of facilities within the park, economic factors related to travel expenses, and possible change in accuracy of reporting following change in management personnel. Park visitors include sightseers, hikers, disc-golf participants, picnickers, and many other recreational visitors. Park management specifically identified day visitors who use the reunion center or enter the park to utilize the dump station or the showers. Overnight visitors include campers who spend one or more nights within Natural Falls State Park.

**Table 3.3 – Camping and Total Visitation – Natural Falls State Park**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal year</th>
<th>Day visitors</th>
<th>Campsites rented – improved</th>
<th>Campsites rented – unimproved</th>
<th>Total Visitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>36,668</td>
<td>4,176</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>57,912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>56,285</td>
<td>5,197</td>
<td>1,335</td>
<td>79,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>65,787</td>
<td>7,204</td>
<td>1,599</td>
<td>100,792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>60,299</td>
<td>6,883</td>
<td>1,531</td>
<td>93,327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>51,531</td>
<td>6,269</td>
<td>1,251</td>
<td>84,432</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under traditional management practices, determining the number of campsite rentals 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. At Natural Falls State Park, the number of day visitors is based upon vehicle occupancy and entry fees paid. As a result, the total visitation annually is an estimate based on an algorithm from that count, whereas number of yurt rentals and campsite rentals is much more accurate.

Table 3.4 – Yurt Rentals at Natural Falls State Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal year</th>
<th>Total Yurt rentals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>237 nights/$23,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5 – Entry Permits at Natural Falls State Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal year</th>
<th>Revenue from Permits Sold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$42,230.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$82,438.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$104,005.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$95,659.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$79,520.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public Perception of Natural Falls State Park

At the time of preparation of this resource management plan, the authors reviewed numerous websites and marketing sources related to Natural Falls State Park, which were provided by private sources. Further, private citizens and visitors to Natural Falls 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 hiking the various trails, camping, or family gatherings, but addressed Natural Falls State Park in some manner. In addition, the Visitor Center maintains a visitor sign-in sheet which offers the opportunity for public comment. All of these sources provided some insight into the public perception of Natural Falls State Park.
The following comments are examples of these public comments and the perception of Natural Falls State Park. These comments are taken directly from online sites and include verbatim comments which may also include errors.

- We camped here for a long weekend. Several family members met us. The campground is very clean and well maintained. They were very strict on parking vehicles but that is what keeps the atmosphere family friendly. Hiking trails are gorgeous and the falls is like something out of a fantasy story. My 3 yr old granddaughters enjoyed the playgrounds and the restrooms were great.

- We hiked the Dripping Springs Falls Trail, which was a short and pretty easy hike as long as some stairs don’t bother you. Our three and five year old completed the hike with no problems. I did hold my 3 year olds hand near the steep drop offs though. Our 1 year old rode in his hiking backpack carrier. We continued on a connecting trail to make a loop and we stumbled upon a small yurt village.

- My daughter and I took off on a girls trip with her 10 week old baby. This place was on my bucket list for a long time so here we came. We arrived late afternoon on a weekday and had the place to ourselves. We took our time wandering around to the base of the falls. It was peaceful and nice to breathe the fresh air. We are already making plans to bring the rest of the family soon. There are camping spots, a shelter that can be reserved and a gift shop. What a hidden gem.

- Lived in NE Ok for 35+ years and never knew about this little hot spot. Beautiful area and great hiking trails. Pack a lunch or there are lots of great restaraunts within 15 minutes. You can’t get in the water, but the scenes will be worth the stop. Trails for all different levels of hikers.

- This was our second trip to this park. On this one, we took our grandsons who loved the waterfall and hiking the trails. It was a little warm and humid, but a light breeze and lots of shade helped. We walked two of the trails before the kids tired, but intend to return to walk the remaining three trails. Wonderful trip our young grandsons enjoyed very much.

- We walked to the falls, it’s a short walk in the shade. Loved it, then we went down to the bottom of the falls, a steep track but not too far. It is so worth it.

- Love this place! Beautiful scenery, Held our family reunion here. It’s a great place to enjoy the outdoors. The waterfall is lovely, access to camping and hiking trails, Pavilion, and indoor space to rent. Clean place to go!

- Cannot swim in any water. Hikes are short and unfriendly staff. Waterfall is only for looking, no swimming or touching the water is allowed. If you are looking for a place to walk a half mile, great! If not pass this place up.

- On a hot day a visit to the small Oklahoma State Park known as Natural Falls is a nice relatively peaceful for a day trip to casually take walks, picnic and view the unexpected waterfall in Eastern Oklahoma just East of Kansas, Oklahoma. This beautiful spot was featured in the movie, “Where The Red Fern Grows”. Hike down to the pool of water below the Falls and enjoy a temperature drop. Excellent day trip for those in Eastern Oklahoma and Western Arkansas.
• So glad I finally did! Beautiful falls with upper and lower views. Per car fee of $10 for park fee. This state park has many activities if you’d like to camp etc., but the falls is worth a trip.

• My parents and I stopped here at the Natural Falls State park on our way back to Arkansas after spending all day in Oklahoma. The park sits on the west side of West Siloam Springs, which is just over the border of Arkansas into Oklahoma. It is just a couple tweets off the highway and easy to find with signs posted in both directions. It costs $5 per car to enter the park (might be free for senior we later found out). We really just wanted to see the falls and the lady at the check-in booth gave us great directions. We parked in the general lot down from the visitor center, walked through the garden to the entrance area. We followed the path to the overlook and then took the steep trail down to the falls. They were spectacular plus it was about 10 degrees cooler down at the base of the falls. There were lots of people there to see the falls like us, but everyone was courteous and did not get in the way of people taking pictures. If it had not been so hot, we might have tried one of the trails, but I think the falls were more than enough.

• Very nice camp ground. Not too crowded even tho it was full. Easy to Difficult hiking trails. The Falls were really nice and cool.

• We drove out to this state park after church during a visit to Siloam Springs for JBU Family Weekend. There are numerous hiking trails that take you over and around the creek and springs. The hikes have differing levels of difficulty so check that out before you start down a trail and good shoes are a must. Even though it was winter, this was a beautiful place to get out and get some fresh air and exercise. A picnic would be perfect for a pretty day.

• Just off the highway you can get to this state park very easily and should stop through. It’s $5 to enter the park to see the falls and hike. There are several rv spots in a wooded area, lots of open grass areas, frisbee golf, playgrounds, 5 hiking trails, and some glamping tents. The park store has a few treats and information inside. We went in late March and the falls were flowing nicely. The falls itself has several paths to get good vantage points of the falls. The lower path where the falls terminate requires several steep steps but the upper path had wheelchair accessible ramps. The pathways around the falls have seen better days but the views are great. The upper path leads to a trail that follows the upper path of the stream with lots of waterfall views as well as crags with lookouts. The lower path had a trail that led to another bridge further away from the waterfall but a good stream blocked the path the day we came. Another note is to bring extra socks and shoes as water naturally flows all over the trails and paths here, especially in March. We took young Kids and the main and bear trails were perfectly suited with supervision.

• An hour and 10 minutes away and we had barely heard of it much less seen it. But it’s a great place for a day trip. Nice hiking trails, beautiful Oklahoma scenery and the falls. Small admission fee but nice gift shop. Lots of RV parking for the longer term visitors.

• Just a lovely site. Walkways are very well maintained to overlook. Lots of steps down to base of waterfall, but definitely worth the steps. Boardwalk is very well maintained at the base.
• My husband has lived in the area his whole life and had never been the Natural Falls. I still call it Dripping Springs since that is the name it had when I started going as a young girl. “Where the Red Fern Grows” was filmed here. The walk to the waterfall is easy, but the walk down and back up to the bottom is steep. There were families out enjoying the day either camping, hiking, playing and picnic. The flowers in the garden were all bloomed and beautiful and the leaves are all changing colors. There is a $5 fee per car for daytime stay. You can camp for a fee as well.

• My husband and I planned 2 nights at Natural Falls and what a treat! We went on what had to be the most humid week EVER. After we got our tent set up and realized we weren’t going to die, we settled in and enjoyed the natural beauty and sounds of the park. The campsites were very clean and manicured. Park hosts were friendly. The hike down to the falls is pretty easy. I have knee problems and I made it fine. Park was quiet (not many people. I’m guessing because of the heat!). My only complaint is that the bath/shower were HOT. Not only was there no AC in the showers, but it seemed like they had the heat running. The showers could be cleaned better but they really need extra hooks or even a shelf of some kind to hold your clothes while you shower. No big deal, though. We plan to go back in late fall so we can enjoy even more of the park. I would recommend Natural Falls State Park.

• Lush and multi-shades of green welcome you in to the falls. The paths are easy to maneuver but can be a little slick in spots from the moisture. We had a great time exploring, camped at the campgrounds for 3 nights, and had a family event at their lodge recreation hall. The park itself is very clean and well maintained (small caveat to this was the grass was overgrown around our campsite). The main drawback is there is no access to water for swimming or recreation purposes within the park. However, there is a covered pavilion and play area for children. I would visit again and recommend!

• Very nice state park, one of our top 3 favorites in Oklahoma! Very peaceful campground with pads mostly separated so not right on top of our neighbors. The trails are challenging, but the scenery is well worth it! Had a most wonderful weekend!

• This place is so beautiful. I did not expect what I saw when I arrived. It is so pretty. I would never guess a place like this is so close to my home. You can’t swim or touch the water but that’s what keeps it beautiful. To get to the bottom of the falls you do have a small hike so I recommend tennis shoes.

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**Park Management**

Over the years of operation, the management structure for Natural Falls State Park has changed at the direction of leadership within OTRD from Oklahoma City. However, in recent years, Natural Falls State Park has been quite stable in organization and operation.

Natural Falls State Park is included in the Northeast Region of Oklahoma State Parks. This intermediate management structure allows park management to work with regional oversight as an intermediary or in direct contact with the Oklahoma City office.
**Staffing**

Staffing for Natural Falls State Park has been stable over the past five years, with minor adjustments in the full-time-equivalent seasonal staff appointment during that time. Table 3.6 documents the staffing pattern for Natural Falls 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>2014</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most state parks in Oklahoma experienced similar staffing adjustments in response to budgetary appropriations. Natural Falls State Park has sustained a dedicated, loyal staff over the years.

**Revenue and Expenses**

Data related to revenue and expense at Natural Falls State Park was provided by the park manager. Table 3.7 reports this revenue and expense data for the past five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal year</th>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Revenue on-site</th>
<th>Net gain (loss)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014 Total</td>
<td>$215,319.95</td>
<td>$181,274.34</td>
<td>($137,987.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Expense</td>
<td>$215,319.95</td>
<td>$102,942.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Expense</td>
<td>$102,942.25</td>
<td>$88,332.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 Total</td>
<td>$239,498.89</td>
<td>$266,782.69</td>
<td>($316,068.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Expense</td>
<td>$239,498.89</td>
<td>$103,242.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Expense</td>
<td>$103,242.74</td>
<td>$163,539.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Total</td>
<td>$242,748.24</td>
<td>$326,459.65</td>
<td>($11,657.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Expense</td>
<td>$242,748.24</td>
<td>$95,368.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Expense</td>
<td>$95,368.53</td>
<td>$231,091.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Total</td>
<td>$249,578.30</td>
<td>$334,335.84</td>
<td>($5,429.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Expense</td>
<td>$249,578.30</td>
<td>$90,186.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Expense</td>
<td>$90,186.97</td>
<td>$244,148.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 Total</td>
<td>$248,492.39</td>
<td>$322,694.47</td>
<td>($49,360.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Expense</td>
<td>$248,492.39</td>
<td>$123,562.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Expense</td>
<td>$123,562.49</td>
<td>$209,131.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.6 – Staffing at Natural Falls State Park

Table 3.7 – Expense and Revenue at McGee Creek State Park
The principal revenue sources for Natural Falls State Park are entry fees, yurt and campsite rentals. These revenues earned on-site are detailed in Table 3.7. As a result, the difference between revenue earned on-site combined with expense for operation of Natural Falls State Park has been reduced over the past five years. For fiscal 2017, Natural Falls State Park showed a net loss of $5,430 – a remarkable achievement in park management essentially recouping 98.4% of operating costs.

**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, Natural Falls 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 Natural Falls State Park include the steep and rocky terrain, steep trails and stairs, 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 Natural Falls State Park, it is possible for an individual to become “lost” on property, but that is an unlikely occurrence.

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, tornados, 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 Natural Falls State Park. The park environment encompasses habitat suitable for venomous snakes including the copperhead and rattlesnake. 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, armadillos, opossums, skunks, badgers, and bats.
The wooded and grassland environment in and around Natural Falls 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 Delaware County. Both spiders have produced adverse effects for humans in recreational settings (and other environments). Both types of spiders likely 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 Natural Falls 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.
Natural Falls State Park receives its potable water from approved public water supplies through the local rural water district. 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 Natural Falls, 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 several local volunteer fire departments. The Oklahoma Department of Forestry provides secondary support in a fire emergency, especially in those cases of wildfire. Emergency response time is estimated to be about 15 minutes. Emergency medical service is available in West Siloam Springs including ambulance service.

As part of the data collection for the development of this RMP, the researchers conducted several on-site visits to Natural Falls State Park. Common issues that could be dangerous for visitors include play structures which utilize a variety of surfacing materials. The play structures are currently in compliance with Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines or accessibility guidelines.

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, Natural Falls 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 at Natural Falls 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 Natural Falls State Park relies on the support and cooperation of law enforcement personnel from West Siloam Springs and the Delaware County sheriff in the appropriate jurisdiction.
Table 3.8 – Ranger Staff at Natural Falls 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>2014</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Manager retired LE commission 01 May 2018

Law enforcement within Natural Falls State Park does result in encounters between park management and visitors. The actual record of citations and incidents reported by state park law enforcement at Natural Falls State Park is shown in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9 – Citation and Incident Reports at Natural Falls State Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar year</th>
<th>Incident Reports</th>
<th>Citations Issued</th>
<th>Arrests</th>
<th>Combined Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 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.

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 Natural Falls State Park, but service was highly dependent upon specific carriers. Thus, in case of injury, illness, fire, or other emergency, park visitors with personal cell phones may 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 relatively concentrated area of development at Natural Falls State Park requires multiple programs in 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 for disposal. 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 sanitary lagoon system, a major improvement in recent years. While septic systems tend to be concentrated on a single structure, the lagoon systems serve multiple buildings and campgrounds. The lagoon system requires lift stations to transport liquid wastes from the respective development to the lagoons.

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.

Waste management for the property at Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park was designed and developed by the original owners. The two houses are serviced by septic systems. Additional solid and liquid waste management will need to be developed as activity increases on the property.
Chapter 4 – Alternatives and Preferred Plans

Overview and Summary

In this Resource Management Plan, background is provided related to Natural Falls State Park and the newly acquired Fox Meadow. 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.

The initial Resource Management Plan for Natural Falls State Park was prepared in 2008. Several recommendations from that RMP have been implemented, as well as, multiple improvements for the property. The following discussion briefly summarizes those recommendations and improvements.

Recommendation 1: Maintain the current blend of human-made and natural resources for recreational use. This will, at the least, require a strategic plan to refurbish and preserve the historical and natural features in the park.


Recommendation 2: Erect a fence at the northern park border and a control gate at the park and campground entrances; modify campground hours to have specified ‘open and closed’ hours; redesign the park entrance and exit.

- Action taken: Northern boundary is fenced; control gate and entry fee have been established with redesign of the park entrance and exit.

Recommendation 3: Review, develop, implement, and evaluate a reservation and rental plan for all available opportunities at Natural Falls State Park; this would require the establishment of appropriate policies and procedures, as well as a complementary marketing plan.

- Action taken: Policies have been developed and implemented; yurts have been constructed; marketing efforts can be improved.

Recommendation 4: Construct selected recreation facilities that are suitable for the environment, and which enhance appropriate interaction between visitors and the natural environment. These might include a gazebo in the formal gardens area, additional hiking/walking trails, an information kiosk at the head of the Dripping Springs trail, and an interpretive center in the day use area.

- Action taken: Several trails have been developed and improved; the yurts are a significant enhancement for overnight lodging; interpretive materials have been installed at appropriate locations; an interpretive center remains a possible addition.

Recommendation 5: Develop, implement, and evaluate a trail maintenance plan, with an aim to stabilize trail surfaces and encourage visitors to stay on designated trails. This could include additional interpretive and safety signage along the trails.
• Action taken: Additional and updated interpretive and safety signage has been installed; trails are maintained.

Recommendation 6: Develop a comprehensive education and interpretive curriculum and program, and construct an interpretive center; replace all worn interpretive signs, relocate them as necessary, and add new signs where appropriate.

• Action taken: Interpretive and directional signs have been updated and located as necessary; interpretive materials are provided in the Visitor Center; a comprehensive education and interpretive curriculum has not been developed specifically for Natural Falls State Park, although such items have been developed for the Oklahoma State Park system; an interpretive center has not been constructed.

Recommendation 7: Negotiate a conservation easement or contract with the USFWS to include Natural Falls State Park in an expanded Ozark Plateau National Wildlife Refuge.

• Action taken: None – and no additional action is needed at this time.

Recommendation 8: Review adjacent properties for possible acquisition to augment the state park as well as to serve as unimproved buffer areas to the state park.

• Action taken: The acquisition of Fox Meadow is an important augmentation for the Oklahoma State Park system; immediately surrounding properties should be reviewed as they become available.

Additional recommendations: Several addition and time-sensitive recommendations were included in the 2008 RMP. These included removal of several plywood figures, improvement of campgrounds, updating of playgrounds and playgroups, clean-up and relocation of the maintenance facilities, and other day-to-day operational practices. All of these recommendations have been addressed with evidence provided in this current RMP.

**2019 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 Natural Falls 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
jealousy 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 Natural Falls State Park, it could be concluded that:

1. Natural Falls State Park offers historical, cultural, geological and environmental resources of statewide significance with the additional benefit of regionally important recreation significance. As indicated in the statement of significance of Natural Falls State Park, this property is significant because it has “a distinctive landscape, uncommon in Oklahoma, situated along a major traffic corridor with easy access. The history and culture linked to the property and environment adds to the significance of Natural Falls State Park. The park offers a quiet, tranquil environment featuring a creek and forest ecology in the Illinois River watershed, a crucial, protected, scenic resource with statewide significance. The karst topography provides dramatic landscape variation with historic and cultural significance.”

2. Natural Falls State Park is feasible to manage within the agency and fits within the mission of Oklahoma State Parks. Natural Falls State Park supplements several surrounding important resources including the Illinois River. The park offers a quiet, nature-based recreation experience similar to those experiences available in other state
parks, augmented by the unique environment of the one of the two highest natural waterfalls in Oklahoma.

3. Natural Falls State Park property fits within the mission of OTRD. Oklahoma State Parks will conserve the natural, cultural, scenic, historic and environmentally-based recreational resources within the park, and make them forever available for the education and enjoyment of all people.

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

Alternatives

A. Remove Natural Falls State Park from the assets managed by Oklahoma State Parks;
B. No change (maintain the current blend of human-made and natural resources for recreational use).

Preferred alternative:

Alternative B: No change (maintain the current blend of human-made and natural resources for recreational use).

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**Issue Statement 2: Future of Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park**

Fox Meadow is a significant acquisition for Oklahoma State Parks featuring forests and grasslands adjacent to a tributary of Flint Creek and the Illinois River, each designated as a “scenic waterway” and protected by Oklahoma legislation. The assets associated with Fox Meadow include houses, barns, out-buildings, a walking track for horses, and other structures as remnants from prior private use and development. These structures vary in quality and potential, with limitations evident in the two houses due to design and construction. When the property was deeded to the state, the donors placed restrictions on future development: “no improvements shall be placed upon said lands other than fencing and such minor improvements as shall be deemed necessary for the proper management of the lands as a state park.” However, the property presents great opportunities! Among these opportunities are the following:

1. An environmental education park: The heritage of Fox Meadow and the wishes of the prior owners emphasize environmental awareness, energy efficiency, and compatibility with the natural environment. In many ways, Fox Meadow offers an Oklahoma context similar to The Leopold Center (https://www.aldoleopold.org/visit/), the farm chronicled by Aldo Leopold in A Sand County Almanac. The Leopold Center invites visitors to “explore the center’s ‘green building’ features, and exhibits on Leopold’s life and legacy. Or head outside to hike or snowshoe through lovely prairies and woods. Just down the road is the Leopold Shack, a National Historic Landmark. Our lands are also part of the Leopold-Pine Island Important Bird Area, a preserve for rare grassland birds.” In the same manner, Fox Meadow could be developed to invite visitors to explore the energy efficient features in the housing; to hike trails through the grasslands, woods, hills, and creek-side; to explore a remnant of Oklahoma’s natural heritage.

2. A living history farm: As the population of Oklahoma changes, particularly toward greater urbanization, the role of state parks in proximity to the urbanized population must be adjusted. Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park is a property at the geographic interface between an increasingly urbanized population and the traditional rural landscape.
of Oklahoma. Historically, equestrian activity was common at Fox Meadow. Other traditional agricultural practices and symbols are possible in an expanded role for Fox Meadow. Fox Meadow could be developed as a “living history farm” at an Oklahoma state park. Living history farms have been developed in other settings with multiple purposes: preservation of a by-gone lifestyle; education for urbanized populations; interpretation of cultural traditions; and more. Probably the premier living history farm in the United States is located in Urbandale, Iowa, just west of Des Moines, although this property is not in a state park. Several other state parks that include living history farms are present at (1) Barrington Living History Farm at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site in Texas, (2) Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm at Lyndon B. Johnson State Park in Texas, (3) the living history farm at Kings Mountain State Park in South Carolina, and (4) Dudley Farm Historic State Park in Florida.

3. A nature preserve: Situated along scenic Flint Creek, Fox Meadow offers potential as a nature preserve, permitting interaction between humans and native species in the natural environment. Just as Black Mesa Preserve and the McGee Creek Natural Scenic Recreation Area serve as true preserves while permitting limited recreational visitation, Fox Meadow could be managed as a nature preserve. Such management may permit limited agricultural activity (i.e. hay production), limited human visitation (i.e. overnight rental of lodging), or even continuation of prior human use (i.e. equine trail rides).

4. A traditional state park: Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park could be developed as a stream-side state park. The creek-side areas would be very limited for structures, but offer excellent settings for trails and interpretive displays. The existing houses are extremely limited for public purposes, whereas the large barn offers potential for unique lodging or programming.

5. A meeting venue or specialized state park: To protect the natural environment and to provide a unique experience in a park setting, Fox Meadow could be developed as a meeting venue or specialized state park. This concept would emphasize weddings, family reunions, or similar gatherings at a venue with limited improvements. There is a market for such facilities, but that market is drawn from some higher economic strata than is presently common for most state parks. This concept could be combined with features from other suggestions to expand the available experience for visitors while protecting the vision of the donors.

Alternatives

A. Initiate appropriate market assessment, property assessment, archaeological assessment, and discussions to develop a preferred plan for Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park;

B. No change – continue management as it is, a component of Natural Falls State Park.

Preferred alternative:

Alternative A: Initiate appropriate market assessment, property assessment, archaeological assessment, and discussions to develop a preferred plan for Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park.
**Issue Statement 3: Invasive species and prescribed burn plan**

During discussions in preparation of the Resource Management Plan and in observation of the environment, it is evident that specific invasive species, notably eastern red cedar and honey locust, are changing the composition of plant life within the park. These invasive species, combined with natural limb loss and understory growth in the wooded areas, has created a fuel load and combustion opportunity that would be devastating to the park. Natural Falls State Park needs to have a prescribed burn plan – developed and implemented – to sustain a desired park environment.

Alternatives

A. Develop and implement a prescribed burn plan;
B. No change – continue management as it is.

Preferred alternative:

Alternative A: Develop and implement a prescribed burn plan.

**Issue Statement 4: Redesign of exit routes**

The entry and exit routing of traffic at Natural Falls State Park presents some difficulty, especially at high traffic periods. Evidence of the routing is provided on page 35, Figure 3.4. Since Natural Falls State Park is an “entry-fee” park, all visitors in vehicles entering the property must pay the required entry fee or have the required permit. As a result, during high visitation periods, there may be congestion for those visitors entering the park. However, exiting vehicles must come uphill to the east of the Visitor Center and exit through the parking area immediately north of the Visitor Center. This area becomes the focus of congestion during high traffic periods or with large recreational vehicles.

Alternatives

A. Redesign the routes for exiting traffic;
B. No change – continue with current design and operation.

Preferred alternative:

Alternatives A: Redesign the routes for exiting traffic.

**Issue Statement 5: Water quality and quantity in Dripping Springs Branch**

Natural Falls, with its normal and enhanced water flow, is the namesake resource for Natural Falls State Park. As such, the falls are a critical factor to consider in a resource management plan. The watershed for the Dripping Springs Branch producing the flow for Natural Falls is relatively small as shown in Figure 2.11a on page 25, parallel to the south side of U.S. Highway 412. While being outside the boundaries of Natural Falls State Park, this watershed is crucial to this principal resource within the park.

OTRD and Oklahoma State Parks should seek protection of the water quality, quantity, and flow of water in the Dripping Springs Branch. This may require acquisition and protection of surface
water rights to the northeast of the property at Natural Falls State Park. Personnel from Natural Falls State Park suggested that expansion of the impoundment of the Dripping Springs Branch above the falls would offer additional recreational and aesthetic value for the park. Such impoundment would require geological and hydrological review, as well as possible permits. The geology of this area is extremely porous – but crucial to the falls.

As discussed in the RMP, ODWC is no longer stocking the pond (Fishing Lake) below the falls. While there are multiple factors leading to that decision, reduced water quality has an adverse effect upon the appearance of the water and its ability to sustain aquatic life.

Alternatives

A. Consider expansion of impoundment above the falls; seek protection of water quality, quantity, and flow onto park property; obtain upstream surface water rights to the water flowing onto the Natural Falls State Park property;
B. No change – continue management as it is.

Preferred alternative:

Alternatives A: Consider expansion of impoundment above the falls; seek protection of water quality, quantity, and flow onto park property; obtain upstream surface water rights to the water flowing onto the Natural Falls State Park property.

**Issue Statement 6: Archeological and geological assessments needed**

Both Natural Falls State Park and Fox Meadow need to have an archeological assessment conducted by qualified scientists. Such assessments may be restricted to specific portions of each property, but each property is worthy of such assessment. Word-of-mouth and traditional lore abounds related to history within the boundaries of Natural Falls State Park. Given the importance of the Illinois River and Flint Creek in the history of northeastern Oklahoma, the property at Fox Meadow is equally worthy of a thorough archeological assessment before further development.

Similarly, during preparation of the RMP, park personnel reported a geological fissure that has been located on the property at Natural Falls State Park. This fissure appears to be extremely deep and vents evaporated moisture. A geological assessment would aid in defining this feature, identifying its actual structure, and may lead to better decisions related to management of the resource.

Alternatives

A. Conduct an archeological assessment of Natural Falls State Park and Fox Meadow;
B. Conduct a geological assessment of Natural Falls State Park;
C. No change – continue management as it is.

Preferred alternative:

Alternatives A and B: Conduct an archeological assessment of Natural Falls State Park and Fox Meadow; and conduct a geological assessment of Natural Falls State Park.
Issue Statement 7: Educational commitment and professional development

Efficiencies in operation are necessitated by budgetary conditions and demanded by good management practices. Natural Falls State Park has operated over the past several years with a minimal number of staff members – and now must expand oversight to Fox Meadow. With the limitation in staff, there has been a limitation in service and capacity to handle additional workload. This situation is not unique to Natural Falls State Park since similar patterns are present at all of the parks. However, Natural Falls State Park is a premier park, highly visible to the visiting public.

Increasing staff numbers is unlikely given the present economic and political environment. As a result, creative strategies will be necessary to attract and prepare the next generation of state park professionals. Properly qualified staff members could be achieved through utilization of collegiate interns. Properly qualified interns could be employed for relatively low wage levels in roles such as: (1) basic and essential park maintenance, (2) natural, cultural, and historic interpretation, (3) office management, (4) out-reach and development of park-specific marketing materials, and (5) other necessary duties. Interns would require supervision and oversight – to be provided by an appropriate staff member. Interns would require housing – that could be available on property at Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park. In addition, Natural Falls State Park is in a location, close to Siloam Springs and easily accessible to Tulsa, that would be attractive to intern candidates.

Cooperative education agreements and internships could be arranged for persons in a variety of disciplines, including (1) recreation, park, and leisure studies, (2) forestry, (3) botany, zoology, geology or other natural and physical sciences, (4) environmental science or environmental education, and (5) other disciplines as appropriate. OTRD and Oklahoma State Parks would benefit greatly from such agreements, as would participants in the internship experience. Such an educational role is essential and appropriate for OTRD.

Alternatives

A. Develop and sustain agreements for qualified internships;
B. No change – continue management as at present.

Preferred alternative:

Alternative A: Develop and sustain agreements for qualified internships.

Issue Statement 8: Visitor safety and property protection

The western and northern boundaries of Natural Falls State Park are quite well defined by fences and roads. However, activities and developments on adjacent property to the north and west of the park has direct impact on the visitor’s experience in the park and potentially on the environment within Natural Falls State Park. Property to the north between Highway 412 and E578 road is desirable as a buffer for sights and sounds, as well as for protection of water quality and quantity in Dripping Springs Branch (Issue Statement 5). In addition, property west of Natural Falls State Park to S678 road is desirable as a buffer for sights and sounds on the western edge of the park, in close proximity to the major campgrounds. Acquisition of these properties, or acquisition of protective easements on these properties, should be considered.
While the north and west side of Natural Falls State Park are fairly well-defined and clear to visitors, that is not true on the eastern and southern sides of the park. Trails in the southern half of the park encourage visitors to explore the diverse terrain. It is likely that some visitors stray from state park property onto adjacent private property; it is equally likely that there is some encroachment from adjacent properties onto state park land. This would be particularly undesirable during hunting seasons or with all-terrain vehicles. Ideally, the entire property for Natural Falls State Park should be fenced and properly signed as is common at many other Oklahoma State Parks.

Alternatives

A. As property and funding is available, seek to acquire ownership or easement to sensitive, adjacent properties west and north of Natural Falls State Park;
B. As funding is available, uniformly fence and sign the entire boundary of Natural Falls State Park;
C. No change – continue management as at present.

Preferred alternative:

Alternatives A and B: As property and funding is available, seek to acquire ownership or easement to sensitive, adjacent properties west and north of Natural Falls State Park; and as funding is available, uniformly fence and sign the entire boundary of Natural Falls State Park.
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.


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Appendix A – Documents related to Property

Documents related to Natural Falls State Park
Documents related to Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park
Documents related to Natural Falls State Park
APPRaisal REPORT ON REAL ESTATE PROPERTY

PROPERTY LOCATED AT:

Near Highway 412, West of Siloam Springs, Arkansas .. in Delaware County, Oklahoma.

PURPOSE OF APPRAISAL:

Planning

LEGALLY DESCRIBED AS:

N/2 of NW/4 and the N/2 of S/2 of NW/4, Section 32, T-20-N, R-25-E, Delaware County, Oklahoma.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

Scenic 120 acre tract, mostly wooded, rocky soils. Tract contains a deep canyon area with spring water dripping out of porous limestone walls. Has long history as tourist attraction. Also on site, restaurant, motel, pool R.V. campsites and related facilities.

The property was appraised as a whole, owned in fee simple, unencumbered and subject to the contingent and limiting conditions outlined herein. I assume no responsibility for matters legal in nature, nor has any opinion on title been rendered. Appraisal assumes marketable title. The sketch in this report is included to help the reader visualize the property only. A land survey was not made but dimensions and quantities of land and all improvements are felt to be substantially correct. I assume there are no hidden or any unapparent conditions of the property, subsoil or structures which would render it more or less valuable. I assume no responsibility for such conditions or for engineering or other professional investigative services which might be needed to discover such factors.

After giving full consideration to the location, the improvements, overall appeal and condition of the property and the prevailing real estate market, it is my opinion that the MARKET VALUE (Defined as the consummation of a sale and the passing of full title the seller to buyer by deed under conditions whereby (1) Buyer and seller are free of undue stimulus and are motivated by no more than the reactions of typical owners (2) both of the parties are well informed or well advised and act prudently, each for what he considers his own best interest (3) a reasonable time is allowed to test the market and (4) payment is made in cash or in accordance with financing terms available in the community for this type property at its locale was as of:______

July 11, 1939

$150,000.00 (One hundred fifty thousand dollars)
Incorporated herein is a report containing the basic data and computations upon which my opinion of MARKET VALUE was based. "The National Association of Independent Fee Appraisers has a mandatory program of continuing education for designated members. Those who meet the minimum standards of the program are considered to have recertified. I am certified under the program through December 31, 1989."

Charles R. Powell, IPA
Appraiser

William C. White, Appraiser

CRP/WCW:jp
SUMMARY OF SALIENT FACTS

ADDRESS:
N/A

SITE:
120 acres of scenic wood lands

IMPROVEMENTS:
Campground, restaurant, pool and related facilities.

ZONING:
Rural Delaware County - zoning does not apply.

ESTIMATED MARKET VALUE BY THE THREE APPROACHES:

COST: $150,000.00
INCOME: Omitted
MARKET: Omitted

FINAL CORRELATED ESTIMATE OF VALUE:

$150,000.00 (One hundred fifty thousand dollars)

EFFECTIVE DATE OF APPRAISAL: July 11, 1989

HISTORY OF SUBJECT PROPERTY:

Dripping Springs has been an attraction since before Oklahoma Statehood. Being operated as a private enterprise, the project had evolved to its highest state of development by the early 1930's. At that time, part of Highway 33 (Now 412) was relocated about 1/4 mile away from the site. Afterward, the project declined and has been closed for the last few years.
PROPERTY RIGHTS APPRAISED

Property rights appraised are the "fee simple" interests, less minerals as shown of record.

FUNCTION OF THE APPRAISAL

The function of this appraisal is: PLANNING
SCOPE OF APPRAISAL

The presence of the spring located on the Subject Property is a phenomon of nature which happened to occur at this particular spot.

The spring and the immediately surrounding terrain is one of nature's rare and beautiful creations. We do not presume to place a commercial value on that beauty.

Rather, we have confined our activities to a basic land value, with allowances for the more scenic setting, which is measureable from the market place. Beyond that, we estimate the value of the buildings and other physical improvements which might have commercial value to a person or entity wishing to operate a scenic or tourist-oriented facility at this location.
ZONING:
Zoning does not apply.

REAL ESTATE TAXES FOR 1988:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sound Value</th>
<th>Assessed Value</th>
<th>Taxes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>$ 60,000.00</td>
<td>$ 6,900.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements</td>
<td>$ 48,835.00</td>
<td>$ 5,616.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$108,835.00</td>
<td>$12,516.00</td>
<td>$ 891.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Treasurer's Office reports taxes are paid current.
"That reasonable and probable use that will support the highest value as defined, as of the effective date of the appraisal."

Alternatively, that use, from among reasonably probable and legal alternative uses, found to be physically possible, appropriately supported, financially feasible, and which results in the highest land value, as defined by the Real Estate Appraisal Terminology book.

Based on present zoning, surrounding improvements and existing Subject improvements, it is the appraiser's opinion that the Subject Property's highest and best use is:

In view of the long history of this site, the natural beauty of the site, the location, and the developments in place on the site, we feel the HIGHEST AND BEST USE OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY is:

Recreational Facility
SITE DATA

CORNER: No

DIMENSIONS: 1/2 Mile by 3/3 Mile

SHAPE: Rectangle

ACRES: 120

TOPOGRAPHY: Timbered with hills and gullies

UTILITIES: Public electric and telephone

ENCROACHMENTS: None noted, recommend a survey to determine.

EASEMENTS: None noted, recommend a survey to determine.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 11, 1939

ACCESS: Former Highway 33

EXPOSURE TO EXPRESSWAY:
None at this time. Construction expected soon on Turnpike from Tulsa area to a point West of the Subject and 4 lane from end of Turnpike on to Arkansas State Line. Current routing of Highway passes slightly (1/4 mile) North of Subject.
ZONING MAP

Rural property in Delaware County not affected by zoning.
State of Oklahoma  
County of Delaware

I, DELMAR HARMON, the undersigned, hereby solemnly(swears and affirms) as follows:

1. That I am Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners in and for Delaware County, Oklahoma.

2. That I have examined the acts and resolutions of the Board of County Commissioners and have determined that said Board has not enacted any zoning code, fire code, safety codes or health codes.

3. The applicant is in compliance with all codes and laws that are applicable.

Further affiant sayeth not.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 19 day of __________, 1989.

__________________________

Delmar Harmon
Chairman - Board of Commissioners  
Delaware County, Oklahoma
FRONT VIEW OF MAIN BUILDING
ADDITIONAL VIEWS OF MAIN BUILDING
CLUBHOUSE & OLD STONE GATEWAY TO SPRING
RV AREA & AMPITHEATRE
TWO VIEWS OF THE SPRING
ONE OF THE SUSPENSION BRIDGES & SMALL LAKE DOWNSTREAM FROM SPRING
POOL & STREET SCENE
ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITING CONDITIONS

1. This property has been appraised as though free of liens and encumbrances, in responsible ownership and under competent management.

2. No responsibility is assumed for matters legal in nature, nor is any opinion of title rendered herewith. Good title is assumed.

3. Both legal descriptions and dimensions are taken from sources thought to be authoritative; however, no responsibility is assumed for either unless a survey, by a competent engineer, is furnished.

4. The physical condition of the improvements described herein was based on visual inspection. No liability is assumed for the soundness of the structural members since no engineering tests were made of same.

5. The appraiser, by reason of this report, is not required to give testimony or attendance in court or any governmental hearing unless arrangements have been previously made.

6. Distribution of the total valuation in this report between land and improvements applies only under the existing program of utilization. The separate valuations for land and improvements must not be used in conjunction with any other appraisal.

7. Possession of any copy of this report does not carry with it the right of publication, nor may it be used for any purpose by any but the applicant without the previous written consent of the appraiser or the applicant and; in any event, only in its entirety. Neither all nor any part of the contents of this report shall be conveyed to the public through advertising, public relations, news, sales or other media, without the written consent and approval of the author, particularly as to valuation conclusions, the identity of the appraiser or firm with which he is connected.
CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that I have made a personal inspection and appraisal, subject to the assumptions and limiting conditions set forth, of the enclosed property. Ownership interest appraised is "Fee Simple", as though it were free and clear of any liens or encumbrances. The legal description furnished is assumed correct and no liability is assumed for legal or title deficiencies.

I also certify that I have no present or proposed future interest in the property appraised... that my fee is in no way contingent upon the value estimated... that data and analysis contained are to the best of my knowledge correct as reported. No pertinent information affecting the value of the property has been withheld.

This report was made in conformity with the standards and rules of the professional ethics of the National Association of Independent Fee Appraisers.

Charles H. Powell, IFPA
Appraiser

William C. White
Appraiser
No. 9819

Abstract of Title

PREPARED BY THE

JAY ABSTRACT COMPANY

JAY, OKLAHOMA

To the Following Described Real Estate, Situated in

Delaware County, State of Oklahoma

The NE4 of the SW4 of the NW4 of Section 32 Township 20 North and Range 23 East of the Indian Base and Meridian, containing 10 acres, more or less, according to survey thereof.
The NE\textsuperscript{4} of the SW\textsuperscript{1} of the NW\textsuperscript{4} of Section 32, Township 20 North and Range 25 East of the Indian Base and Meridian, containing 10 acres, more or less, according to survey thereof.
GROVE, OKLAHOMA

CAPTION
TO
Abstract No. 2038

ABSTRACT OF TITLE
TO THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED REAL ESTATE SITUATED IN
THE COUNTY OF DELAWARE AND STATE OF OKLAHOMA

THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF THE SOUTHEAST
QUARTER AND THE SOUTH HALF OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER
OF SECTION TWENTY NINE (29) AND THE NORTH
HALF OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER, AND THE NORTH
HALF OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF THE
NORTHWEST QUARTER AND THE NORTHWEST
QUARTER OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF THE
NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION THIRTY-TWO
(32) ALL IN TOWNSHIP TWENTY (20) NORTH
AND RANGE TWENTY FIVE (25) EAST OF THE
INDIAN BASE AND MERIDIAN, CONTAINING
170 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, AS THE CASE MAY
BE, ACCORDING TO THE UNITED STATES SURVEY
THEREOF ........................................

MADE FOR,
JEFF. D. CARNES,
OF
SILOAM SPRINGS, ARK.
Township 30 North and Range 25 East.

PLAT OF THE

South-west quarter of the South-east quarter, and
The South-half of the South-east quarter of the
South-west quarter of Section 30, and
The North-half of the North-west quarter, and
The North-half of the South-east quarter of the
North-west quarter, and
The North-west quarter of the South-west quarter of the North-west quarter, of Section 32, in Township 30 North and Range 25 East...
...170 acres...
CERTIFICATE AS TO AGE AND DEGREE OF BLOOD
OF

JEFF D. CARNES, A CHEROKEE CITIZEN,

ROLL NO. 1189.

STATE OF OKLAHOMA, )
) SS.
COUNTY OF DELAWARE, )

The undersigned bonded abstracters within and for said County and State, HEREBY CERTIFY: That after a careful examination of the Final Rolls of the Citizens and Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes in Indian Territory, prepared by the Commission and Commissioners to the Five Civilized Tribes, and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on or prior to March 4, 1907, we find as follows:

That Jeff D. Carnes, appears thereon as a citizen by blood of the Cherokee Nation; Roll No. 1189—was—41—years of age as of September 1, 1902; a—male—of 1/16—degree of Indian Blood and Census Card No. 386—.

In Witness Whereof, said Abstract Company has caused this certificate to be signed, at Grove, Oklahoma, this 23th day of February, A.D. 1918.

DELaware COUNTY ABSTRACT & LOAN COMPANY,

By

A member of the firm.
INSTRUMENT: Warranty Deed.
GRANTORS: Jeff D. Carnes and C.D. Carnes, (husband and wife)
GRANTEE: Richard A. Rankin and Sabra A. Rankin.
DATE: March 11, 1918.
FILED: March 16, 1918 at 2 o'clock P.M.
RECORDED IN: Book 55 at Page 599.
CONSIDERATION: $5,500.00
GRANTING CLAUSE: Grant, bargain, sell and convey.
COVENANTS: To have and to hold, warrant the title.
EXCEPTIONS: None.

DESCRIPTION.
The SW\(\frac{1}{2}\) of the SE\(\frac{1}{4}\) and S\(\frac{1}{4}\) of the SE\(\frac{1}{4}\) of Sec. 29, Also the NW\(\frac{1}{4}\) of the NW\(\frac{1}{4}\) and the N\(\frac{1}{4}\) of the SE\(\frac{1}{4}\) of the NW\(\frac{1}{4}\) of Sec. 32, Twp. 20 N., Rge. 25 E., Containing 170 acres, more or less.

$5.50 Revenue.
Witnesses.
Jeff D. Carnes
W.E. Short
Emeline Short.
STATE OF OKLAHOMA, }..SS.
Delaware County.

Before me, T.M. Garrett, a Notary Public in and for said County and State, on the Eleventh day of March 1918, personally appeared Jeff D. Carnes and C.D. Carnes 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 date above written.

T.M. Garrett
Notary Public.

My Commission expires
Dec. 11, 1918. (SEAL)
INSTRUMENT: General Warranty Deed.
GRANTORS: R.A. Rankin and Sabra A. Rankin, husband and wife.
GRANTEE: P.C. Airy & Ervilla Airy, husband and wife.
DATE: March 13th, 1919.
FILED: February 20, 1920 at 3 o'clock P.M.
RECORDED IN: Book 24 at Page 449.
CONSIDERATION: $5,400.00
GRANTING CLAUSE: Grant, bargain, sell and convey.
COVENANTS: To have and to hold, warrant the title.
EXCEPTIONS: None.

DESCRIPTION:

One Half undivided interest of the following described real estate.
The SW ¼ of the SE ¼ and the SE ¼ of the SE ¼ of the SW ¼ of Sec. 29, Also the NE ¼ of the NW ¼ and the NW ¼ of the SE ¼ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 30, Twp. 20 North Range 25 East, Containing 170 acres, more or less and 45 acres squarely off the East side of the following 60 acre tract to-wit. The NE ¼ of the NE ¼ and the NE ¼ of the SE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 31, Twp. 20 North, Range 26 East and Containing 45 acres.

$2.50 Revenue.

STATE OF OKLAHOMA,

County of Tulsa...)

Before me, A.C. Wise, a Notary Public in and for said County and State, on this 13th day of March 1919, personally appeared R.A. Rankin and Sabra A. Rankin 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 a free and voluntary act and deed for the uses and purposes therein set forth.
Witness my hand and official seal the day and year last above written.

A.C. Wise
Notary Public.

My Commission expires July 10, 1926. (SEAL)
INSTRUMENT: Mortgage.

GRANTORS: R.A. Rankin, Mrs. Sabra A. Rankin, F.G. Airy & Ervilla Airy.

GRANTEE: Claude Sample.

DATE: Jan. 27, 1923.

FILED: January 30, 1923 at 3 o'clock P.M.

RECORDED IN: Book 85 at Page 68.

CONSIDERATION: $4000.00

GRANTING CLAUSE: Have mortgaged and hereby mortgage.

NOTES: One note due Jan. 27, 1928, with 8½ interest from date.

DESCRIPTION:

SW¼ of SE½ & SE½ of SE½ of the SW¼ of Sec. 29, NE½ of the NW¼ and the NE½ of the SE¼ of the NW¼ & NW¼ of the SW¼ of the NW¼ of Sec. 32, all in Twp. 20 N., Rge. 25 E., Containing 170 A.

R.A. Rankin
Sabra A. Rankin
F.G. Airy
Ervilla Airy.

STATE OF OKLAHOMA,

County of Tulsa.

Before me a Notary public in and for said County and State on this 27 day of January 1923, personally appeared R.A. Rankin, Sabra A. Rankin, his wife and F.G. Airy & Ervilla Airy, his wife 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 true and voluntary act and deed for the uses and purposes therein set forth.

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

J.A. Lowman
Notary Public.

My Commission expires Nov. 22, 1924. (SEAL)
Supplemental Abstract of Title

Prepared by the

Jay Abstract Company

Jay, Oklahoma

To the Following Described Real Estate, Situated in

Delaware County, State of Oklahoma

The N\(^{\frac{3}{4}}\) of the NW\(^{\frac{1}{4}}\) and the N\(^{\frac{1}{2}}\) of the
S\(^{\frac{1}{2}}\) of the NW\(^{\frac{3}{4}}\) of Section 32, Township
20 North and Range 25 East of the
Indian Base and Meridian, containing
120 acres, more or less, according to
survey thereof.

This is a Supplemental Abstract and is
intended to cover that period of time
only from April 6, 1927 at 7 o'clock A.M.
to date of Certificate hereof.
An instrument of conveyance, dated the 26th day of September, 1990, and delivered in the County of Tulsa, State of Oklahoma.

This Warranty Deed is executed pursuant to the provisions of the Real Property Transfer Act of Oklahoma, Tit. 62, Sec. 35, and is subject to the provisions of the Uniform Deed Law of Oklahoma, Tit. 62, Sec. 35.

The undersigned acknowledges the receipt of the purchase price and hereby conveys to the purchaser and assigns all of his right, title, and interest in the property described below.

The property is described as follows:

1. A tract of land lying in the City of Tulsa, County of Tulsa, State of Oklahoma, more particularly described as follows:

   The Northwest Quarter (NW/4) of the Northwest Quarter (NW/4) of Section Thirty-two (32), Township Two (2), North of the Indian Meridian, containing eighty acres more or less, being the same tract of land shown on the plat of the City of Tulsa, Okla., filed in the office of the Register of Deeds of Tulsa County, Oklahoma.

2. The above described property is subject to all encumbrances shown on the plat referred to above.

3. The undersigned warrants that the title to the property is clear and free from all encumbrances.

4. The undersigned agrees to indemnify and save harmless the grantee from and against any and all claims, demands, or causes of action which may arise out of any violation of the terms of this instrument.

5. The undersigned agrees to pay all taxes, assessments, and charges levied against the property.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned has hereunto set his hand and seal this 26th day of September, 1990.

[Signature]

This instrument is acknowledged by the undersigned in the County of Tulsa, State of Oklahoma.

[Signature]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned has hereunto set his hand and seal this 26th day of September, 1990.

[Signature]
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hand and seal this 26th day of September 1990.

IN THE CUSTODY OF OKLAHOMA CITY, WITH THE PRINCIPAL OFFICE IN OKLAHOMA CITY, 1990.

(Seal)

STATE OF OKLAHOMA
COUNTY OF OKLAHOMA

Know all men by these presents:

THIS BILL OF SALE, made and executed into this 26th day of September, 1990, by and between, Market, C. Malaza, and Marqet, Pecodag, single person

Bill of Sale
BIL OF SALE

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

COUNTY OF OKLAHOMA

This instrument was filed for record on the 19th day of December, 1998, and duly recorded in book No. 19, page 680 of the records of this office.

By

[Signature]

County Clerk

[Signature]

Notary Public

[Signature]

Notary Public

The undersigned, a duly commissioned a County of Oklahoma

Notary Public, and in accordance with the laws of this state, and in accordance with the laws of this state,

on this 19th day of December, 1998, in the 69th year of the independence of the United States of America, and in the 19th year of the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, do hereby declare and affirm that the said instrument was duly recorded as required by law.

[Signature of Notary Public]

Notary Public

[Signature of Notary Public]
Documents related to Fox Meadow at Natural Falls State Park
Kris Marek

From: Irish Hill
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2016 4:10 PM
To: Kris Marek
Subject: Phone Message

Kris,

A very nice lady called with an interest in donating some property to Parks. Ms. Terry Pruitt, 918-422-5624. The property has the following possibilities:

- A 13 yr old house that could be a nature Center
- Trails
- Fishing
- Wading
- Big Trees
- Wildlife
- Etc.  Conservation

It is about 6 miles from Natural Falls, near Flint Creek, NE corner of Oklahoma

Irish Hill
Executive Assistant to CFO
Oklahoma Tourism & Recreation
900 N. Stiles Avenue, 2nd Floor
Oklahoma City, OK 73104
405.230.8312
www.travelok.com

- Not Tuesday
- on Flint Creek across from New Life Ranch. Creek with field & gate.
- Nice house -> Red Barn
- Fishing or creek access.
- 140 acres
- W to Sloan Springs
- N to 5700 road
- Christian youth camp
- E to New Life Ranch: 7.5 miles
- 1st curve in road 1st drive to N.
DEED OF DEDICATION

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, that TERRY L. PRUITT, in her capacity as TRUSTEE OF THE M. D. PRUITT TRUST DATED NOVEMBER 14, 1974, party of the first part, hereinafter called "Grantor" the owner of the legal and equitable title to the following described real estate situate in the County of Delaware, State of Oklahoma, for and in consideration of the sum of One Dollar, cash in hand, paid by THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA FOR THE USE AND BENEFIT OF OKLAHOMA STATE PARKS, party of the second part, hereinafter called "Grantee", and other good and valuable consideration, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, does hereby dedicate to the Grantee for the benefit of the public, forever, the following described lands, to-wit:

SEE EXHIBIT “A”

Grantor hereby expressly reserves to herself and her assigns, the full benefit and use of the above-described premises, and all rents, issues, and profits thereof, for and during the natural life of Terry Pruitt.

Grantor hereby expressly reserves to herself and her assigns, all of the oil, gas, and minerals and oil, gas, and mineral rights in, to and under the above-described lands, together with the right of ingress and egress thereto and the right to use an occupy such portion or portions of said lands as may be necessary for the purpose of this reservation.

The conveyance of all the property herein described is made upon the following express conditions: the Grantee shall preserve the above-described property in its current condition and proceed to develop and use the property as a state park for public recreational and educational purposes; no commercial logging, mining, hunting, or farming or animal operations shall occur on the above-described lands; no commercial fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides shall be used thereon; and no improvements shall be placed upon said lands other than fencing and such minor improvements as shall be deemed necessary for the proper management of the lands as a state park.

Should the above stated conditions, or any of them, be broken, or if the property dedicated, or any part thereof, shall cease to be used for the primary purposes set forth above, or shall be used for any other purpose,, all right, title, and interest in said lands shall revert to the Grantor, her successors and assigns, which reverter shall continue for the duration of the life of Terry L. Pruitt, the current trustee of the M. D. Pruitt Trust dated November 14, 1974, her descendants now living, or any of them, 21 years thereafter, to have and to hold said described dedicated lands unto the Grantee forever, free, clear and discharged of and from all claims of the Grantor, her successors and assigns, except pursuant to the reverter hereinabove set forth.
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the said Grantor, has hereunto set his hand the day and year above written.

TERRY L. PRUITT, TRUSTEE OF
THE M. D. PRUITT TRUST DATED
NOVEMBER 14, 1974

STATE OF ARKANSAS  )
COUNTY OF BENTON  )

BEFORE ME, the undersigned, a Notary Public, in and for said County and State, on this 6th day of March, 2017, personally appeared Terry L. Pruitt, trustee of the M. D. Pruitt Trust dated November 14, 1974, to me known to be the identical person who executed the within and foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that she executed the same as her free and voluntary act and deed for the uses and purposes therein set forth.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto set my official signature and affixed my notarial seal the day and year last above written.

[SEAL]
EXHIBIT "A"
LEGAL DESCRIPTION

All of the NW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 and part of the SW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 and also all that part of the East 1/2 of the SW 1/4 lying west of the centerline of the county road all in Section 10, T-20-N, R-25-E, Delaware County, Oklahoma, more particularly described as follows:
Beginning at a point 302.49' N 87°44'33" E of the SW Corner of said Section 10; point being in the county road; thence leaving said county road N 07°46'36" W 664.14'; thence S 87°31'40" W 235.26'; thence N 01°57'59" W 1980.57 thence N 87°50'47" E 1427.95' to a point in the centerline of the county road; thence along said centerline S 33°21'42" E 40.25'; thence S 05°42'39" E 52.66'; thence S 09°41'33" W 42.89'; thence S 17°54'55" W 59.44'; thence S 24°09'54" W 135.14'; thence S 07°47'28" W 87.49'; thence S 17°59'36" E 83.10'; thence S 31°33'55" E 51.57'; thence S 34°08'47" E 139.25'; thence S 28°03'27" E 65.82'; thence S 16°32'11" E 221.43; thence S 14°18'32" E 354.41; thence S 04°02'07" E 71.79'; thence S 08°12'42" W 67.05'; thence S 21°23'52" W 56.12'; thence S 31°47'59" W 50.19'; thence S 38°45'26" W 170.08'; thence S 36°44'43" W 92.64'; thence S 29°44'14" W 60.91; thence S 20°48'54" W 66.06'; thence S 12°20'37" W 57.23'; thence S 05°42'32" W 39.39'; thence leaving said centerline S 02°07'31" E 738.07'; thence S 87°44'33" W 1021.96'; to the point of beginning, having an area of 3622687.60 Square Feet, 83.17 Acres. Properly is subject to the right of way of the county road on the east and south sides.

AND

All of the SE 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of Section 9, and also part of the SW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of Section 10, all in T-20-N, R-25-E, Delaware County, Oklahoma, more particularly described as follows:
Beginning at the SW Corner of said Section 10; thence S 87°32'45" W 659.06'; thence N 01°58'07" W 659.98'; thence N 87°31'40" E 894.35'; thence S 07°46'36" E 664.14'; thence S 87°44'33" W 302.49'; to the point of beginning, having an area of 612665.16 Square Feet, 14.06 Acres. Property is subject to the right of way of the county road on the south side.

AND

The NW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 15, T-20-N, R-25-E, Delaware County, Oklahoma, containing 40.13 acres, Property is subject to the right of way of the county road on the north side and in the SW corner.