



Memorandum from the Office of the Inspector General

September 29, 2009

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FINAL REPORT – INSPECTION 2009-12695-06 – REVIEW OF BARTON SPRINGS CAMPGROUND

At the request of the Senior Vice President, Office of Environment and Research, we initiated reviews of the 11 Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) managed campgrounds to determine if (1) campgrounds are being operated in accordance with the program intent and (2) campgrounds' operating controls are functioning as intended. This report addresses our findings pertaining to the Barton Springs Campground.

We found that the campground was operating under the program intent, which is to provide public areas for recreation. During our walkdown, we noted that 39 of the 69 campsites were occupied. Additionally, we found the basic operating controls were the functions of the Resident Manager. In summary, we found the operating controls appear to be functioning as intended and campground guidelines were generally being complied with. However, we did note that (1) the Resident Manager contract has not been updated to reflect agreed-upon duty changes and (2) some minor campground program guideline and contract inconsistencies exist.

BACKGROUND

TVA operates some 100 public recreation areas throughout the Tennessee Valley, including campgrounds, day-use areas, and boat launching ramps. TVA manages 11 campgrounds throughout the Valley and has set out specific campground rules in various TVA documents to help guide the maintenance and operation of these campgrounds. These documents include:

- Stewardship Guideline 7.2.1 - TVA's Recreation Areas
- Stewardship Guideline 7.1.4 - Developed Recreation Area Rules and Regulations
- Stewardship Guideline 7.1.1 - Administration of Fee Campgrounds and Pavilion Reservations

- Campground Host Procedures and Campground Regulations Handbook (2008 Edition) (Host Handbook)
- Resident Manager Procedures and Campground Regulations Manual (2009 Edition) (Resident Manager Manual)
- Campground Fee Process provided by Facilities

According to Stewardship Guideline 7.2.1, the 11 TVA-managed campgrounds help provide opportunities for public access to and enjoyment of the river system.

Barton Springs Campground is located in Normandy, Tennessee. It contains 69 campsites, 40 with water and electrical hookups. Barton Springs Campground contains many amenities including (1) heated showers and flush toilets, (2) picnic tables, (3) a group pavilion which is available by reservation, (4) a swimming beach, (5) a boat ramp, (6) a fishing pier, (7) and a dump station.¹ The boat ramp and swimming beach are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1



¹ A dump station is a place where camper wastewater may be discharged into a sanitary sewer system in a safe and responsible way.

Figure 2



All of the 11 TVA-managed campgrounds are available on a first-come, first-serve basis; except for Barton Springs, Cherokee Dam, Loyston Point, Mallard Creek, and Melton Hill campgrounds that operate on a lottery system to initially allocate campsites on opening day at the start of camping season and then manage the remaining season on a first-come, first-serve basis. TVA campgrounds charge the same camping rates and fees. Specifically, during the time period we reviewed, TVA daily and monthly rates were:

- For a campsite without water and electric hookups, \$16 daily and \$240 monthly.
- For a campsite with water and/or electric hookups, \$20 daily and \$300 monthly.
- For a campsite with water, electric, and sewer hookups, \$24 daily and \$360 monthly.

America the Beautiful Pass and older Golden Age and Golden Access Passport programs² can be used at TVA campgrounds to obtain half-price rentals on daily campsites only.

Facilities management provided us certain revenue, expense, and occupancy information (i.e., the number of days the campsites were occupied) for fiscal years 2004 – 2008 for the TVA managed campgrounds, and that information is summarized in Table 1 for Barton Springs Campground.

Table 1

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Revenue	\$ 58,253	\$ 93,282	\$ 77,869	\$ 92,119	\$ 85,717
Expense	\$ 21,944	\$ 22,626	\$ 33,556	\$ 45,476	\$ 63,998
Occupancy	6448	7533	7508	7665	7707

² America the Beautiful Access Passes and older Golden Access Passes are for U.S. Citizens or permanent residents with permanent disabilities. America the Beautiful Senior Passes and older Golden Age Passes are for U.S. Citizens or permanent residents age 62 or over. These passes can be purchased through the National Park Service and are lifetime passes.

Four of the 11 TVA-managed campgrounds have a Resident Manager because the campground is not located on a dam reservation. The Resident Manager is to assist TVA in supplying a safe, hazard-free environment for persons using the campgrounds. The Resident Manager is responsible for registering campers, operating the gates, providing information to campers, picking up litter, and various other tasks. Barton Springs Campground has an on-site Resident Manager. TVA Facilities Management takes care of maintenance and upkeep, such as lawn care and bathhouse repairs, at Barton Springs Campground.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of our review of Barton Springs Campground were to determine if (1) the campground is being operated in accordance with TVA's program intent and (2) the campground's operating controls are functioning as intended.

To achieve our objectives, we:

- Interviewed key TVA personnel and reviewed related TVA policies, processes, procedures, guidelines, and contracts to identify program intent and operational controls.
- Reviewed TVA contracts with Resident Managers to identify additional operational controls.
- Reviewed TVA-managed campground assessments as prepared by Land and Water Stewardship and Facilities, including scorecards, assessment briefing papers, and electrical reports to identify potential areas of concern.
- Conducted a walkdown of Barton Springs Campground to determine whether guidelines are being followed and controls are functioning as intended. During the walkdown, we reviewed daily pay envelopes and receipts to verify payment by campers identified during the walkdown. We also spot checked some randomly selected pay envelopes to determine if campers paid appropriately.
- Compared a sample of remittance registers for June 2009 submitted to Facilities for deposit with records maintained at Barton Springs Campground to determine whether revenue was accurately reported or discrepancies exist.
- Reviewed historical occupancy reports and revenue information to identify any potential control weaknesses.

The scope of this inspection included activities and operating controls as related to Barton Springs Campground. This Inspection was conducted in accordance with the "Quality Standards for Inspections."³

³ The Quality Standards for Inspections issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, Executive Council on Integrity and Efficiency, provide standards for conducting inspections in the Inspector General community.

FINDINGS

Our review found that Barton Springs Campground was operating in accordance with the program intent, which is to provide recreation for the public. Additionally, we found the basic operating controls were the functions of the Resident Manager. The operating controls appear to be functioning as intended. Furthermore, the campground guidelines were being complied with. However, we did note that the Resident Manager contract does not contain agreed upon duty changes. We also noted some other minor inconsistencies when we (1) reviewed applicable TVA guidelines and (2) compared the resident managers' contracts for four campgrounds with the Resident Manager Manual.

PROGRAM INTENT

We observed campers in 39 of the 69 campsites during our visit to Barton Springs Campground. We viewed campers enjoying their campsites and public use areas, including the boat ramp. We found the campground to be well maintained. A section of the Barton Springs Campground waterfront and the pavilion are shown in Figures 3 and 4.

Figure 3



Figure 4



OPERATING CONTROLS

Oversight at Barton Springs Campground is provided by a Resident Manager. The duties of the Resident Manager are laid out in the Resident Manager's contract with TVA and Resident Manager Manual. In 2006, Barton Springs was made self-service in regards to the collection of campground fees. The Resident Manager did not want to be on the premises full-time, and in order to accommodate him, TVA offered to put in a payment vault so the Resident Manager could come and go during the day for personal errands. TVA no longer required the Resident Manager at Barton Springs to be on-site for 24 hours a day, as long as he/she spent the night on-site. We determined the Resident Manager still tracks who pays and collects unpaid fees from renters. However, we found that TVA has not yet updated the Resident Manager's contract for Barton Springs Campground to reflect the responsibility changes.

As part of our review, we (1) reviewed camper payments, (2) performed a walkdown of the campground to assess compliance with campground guidelines, (3) compared all indentified manuals and guidelines for consistency, and (4) compared the Resident Manager Manual to the Resident Manager contracts. We found the operating controls were functioning as intended, but some control improvement opportunities may exist pertaining to overall program guideline and contract inconsistencies.

Camper Payments

During our walkdown, we noted that 39 of the 69 campsites were occupied. The Resident Manager opened the vault and showed us the envelopes that had been submitted. Of the 39 occupied campsites, we were able to verify that 26 had been paid for through the review of payment envelopes maintained by the Resident Manager. We spot checked three envelopes and all contained the correct payment amount. The remaining 13 campsites were monthly rentals and had not yet been paid for at the time of our walkdown. The Resident Manager told us the monthly rental payments have not been a problem.

No discrepancies were identified when we compared our judgmentally selected sample of remittance registers from June 2009, provided by Facilities, to the documentation maintained with the campground attendant. Additionally, our review of documentation and discussion with the Resident Manager found that length of stay guidelines are being monitored and enforced.

These observations indicate that the operating controls tested are meeting their intended function.

Campground Guideline Compliance

We performed a walkdown of Barton Springs Campground, and we found it to be operating in accordance with the guidelines. We created a checklist based upon (1) Stewardship Guideline 7.1.4 - Developed Recreation Area Rules and Regulations, (2) Host Handbook, and (3) Resident Manager Manual. We used the checklist during our walkdown to identify whether the campground was in compliance with the guidelines. We

found the campground to be clean, well-maintained, and based on our walkdown, operated effectively. Based on the specific criteria in the guidelines, we identified one noncompliance. It is provided for informational purposes only and does not require a response or action from management. The only noncompliance we noted was one instance of a nail in a tree, hanging the sign shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5



Guideline Alignment and Clarity

During our reviews of the 11 TVA-managed campgrounds, we noted some inconsistencies among the various TVA guidelines utilized for the campgrounds. The detailed findings, recommendations, and management's planned actions were addressed in Inspection 2009-12695-02 – Review of Douglas Dam Headwater Campground.

Contract/Manual Alignment

During our reviews of the four TVA-managed campgrounds that have oversight provided by a Resident Manger, we found the Resident Manager Manual contains three specific deliverables which are not specifically addressed in the Resident Manager contracts. The detailed findings, recommendations, and management's planned actions were addressed in Inspection Report 2009-12695-04 – Review of Foster Falls Campground.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend the Senior Vice President, River Operations, update Barton Springs Campground's Resident Manager's contract to incorporate the Resident Manager's current responsibilities.

TVA management reviewed a draft of this report and plans to take corrective action. Specifically, they will update the four Resident Manager contracts to promote consistency with the Resident Manager Manual and to reflect process accuracy, alignment, and clarity.

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This final report is for your review and final action. Please advise us of your planned actions (i.e., management decision) in response to our findings within 60 days of the date of this report.

Information contained in this report may be subject to public disclosure. Please advise us of any sensitive information in this report that you recommend be withheld.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss our observations, please contact Gregory C. Jaynes, Deputy Assistant Inspector General, Inspections, at (423) 785-4810. We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation received from your staff during the inspection.



(For) Robert E. Martin
Assistant Inspector General
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