

# South Cumberland Park Manager's Report

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covering October, November, and December 2024

**3 Search & Rescue lost group, 3 Search & Rescue medical injuries. 1 Response and Suicide Prevention. 6 Arrest. 25 LE Confrontation/Encounter. Hazardous Trees Cut during this period - 58.**

## **Fiery Gizzard North (Grundy Forest)**

*Good News:* 1) 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Hikes Conducted/Completed 2) Staff leafblow entire FG Trail System 3) Firerings replaced at Grundy Forest Campground

*Bad News:* 1) N/A

## **Fiery Gizzard South (Foster Falls)**

*Good News:* 1) Access Fund and Southeastern Climbers Coalition acquired \$200K RTP Grant to improve the climbing areas of Foster Falls and trails to begin Summer 2025 2) Ranger Sheley conducted interview with Marion County reporter highlighting Foster Falls and park happenings

*Bad News:* 1) 5 deer stands, 4 gam cams, and 2 feeders found within state property 2) Gam cams revealed confirmation wild boar within Fiery Gizzard since last spring 3) Campground Hosts removed December 1 and replacements not found yet 4) Bathhouse septic issues from overuse in October required much work 5) New CXT Bathhouse project to be completed March 2 has new date of May 4, closing Foster Falls vehicle campground this winter and spring

## **Denny Cove**

*Good News:* 1) Tourism writer from Germany conducted interview Ranger Jason and supported by Southeast Climber Coalition

*Bad News:* 1) No meetings concerning road repair or prospective date of completion

## **Grundy Lakes**

*Good News:* 1) TWRA delivered trout to try and introduce in December with another delivery in January 2) TWRA delivered excess bluegill and other small fish from fishery due to our proximity and ease to distribute in November 3) State Archeologist Phil Hodge and his team reviewed coke oven restoration and will assist park personnel to create strategic plan

*Bad News:* 1) One way loop road is failing and road is sloughed to center line on back side of lakes, TDOT and TSP Operations ELT advised monthly with documentation over the last 8 years of the concern with no response. Eventual total road closure will be the only solution for public safety 2) Park lost the \$250 Grant application to the Historical Commission, we applied for Heritage Fund for half the funding and was not awarded. Historical Commission advised for us to reapply next fall as the project was good

## **Information & Welcome Center**

*Good News:* 1) Lone Rock Stockade installation completed, and big reveal scheduled for February 8 with the Deputy Commissioner and IPE Director to speak 2) Received \$200 IPE Grant for interpretive program resources 3) Staff removed unused baseball backstop and fencing, plans to plant American Chestnut trees within the field in scientific study and educational purposes locally with Hannah Leeper, Southern Regional Outreach Coordinator for the American Chestnut Foundation, having graduate students at UTC who can plant and monitor the trees.

*Bad News:* 1) Barred Owl Friar Tuck passed away due to old age in October 2) Artemis the Hawk passed away from Bird Flu (TWRA investigating to determine) late December 3) Vehicle wreck park entrance sign

## **Park, Overall**

### **Park Staff**

*Good News:* 1) Ranger Jessie purchased a home in Decherd and is moving off-site, allowing Ranger Hannah to move closer soon into the Grundy Forest residence 2) Manager Bill and Ranger Jessie completed AEMT Re-Certification 3) Ranger Jessie was chosen and attended State Parks Leadership in Wheeling, WV 4) Ranger Josh attended Coalmont High-Angle Rescue Training 5) Ranger Hannah attended IPE Fall Workshop 6) Ranger Hannah also is in TN Naturalist Program this year 7) Maintenance Supervisors Chris and Tommy attended TSP Maintenance Conference 8) Admin Carla attended TSP Admin Conference

*Bad News:* 1) Ranger Jason transferring to Head of the Crow, start date February 2) SCSP management will have to rehire and train another new ranger, with Ranger Josh going to Ranger Pre-Academy in mid-March, then TN Law Enforcement Academy and will graduate June 20. Leaving 2 managers and 2 rangers to work our park this upcoming busy spring and start of summer

### **Park Strategic Initiatives**

*Good News, Park-wide:* 1) Ranger Hannah and Josh have been conducting every month a program for Grundy High Schoolers 2) Manager George attended TDTD Workshop 3) Manager George and Friends Bruce showcased Denny Cove to OSI Director Houser and CEO President Erik Kulleseid, along with a couple of their fundraising/marketing team to gain interest and attention from OSI in our region 4) MGTA have gravel bed access spur trail to Grundy Forest and Visitor Center, with porous recycled tire trail to be installed this spring 5) Fiery Gizzard Marathon had 200 runners!

*Bad News, Park-wide:* 1) \$1M ADA Project will disrupt many areas of the park this year as they make improvements

*Park Visitation:* **October = 71,168** visitors, **November = 51,543** visitors, and **December = 40,677** visitors for a **grand total of 163,388** park customers/visitors this last quarter!

Everything this park staff accomplishes is truly a miracle. This is due in large part to the support and encouragement of our Friends group. It IS appreciated.