

Oklahoma House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations

2014 Performance Report

OKLAHOMA SCENIC RIVERS COMMISSION

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

To Protect, Preserve and Enhance Oklahoma's Designated "Scenic Rivers Areas."

It was a policy decision of the Oklahoma Legislature in 1977, to establish the Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission to ensure for the protection and development of the state's scenic river areas and adjacent and contiguous lands and quality of outstanding resource waters.

The Commission is responsible for ensuring the preservation of the state's scenic rivers through implementation of properly planned and executed rules promulgated respecting public services, land use, occupancy, structures, lot and plot sizes, density of population and other activities for the protection of the aesthetic, scenic, historic, archeological and scientific features or deemed necessary for the protection of their ecosystems and environment from pollution, despoliation and destruction or waste of these outstanding natural resources.

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

Ed Fite

Agency Administrator

P.O. Box 292, Tahlequah, OK 74465-0292

Phone: Office (918) 456-3251 or Cell (918) 207-8180 Email: ed.fite@osrc.ok.gov

GOVERNANCE:

Here a brief description of the agency's governance structure should be provided. Is the agency headed by a Governor appointee? An appointee of an independent board? Who selects the board, and who are the current members of the board.

The agency head is not appointed by the Governor. Mr. Fite was appointed in 1983 and serves at the pleasure of the OSRC Board of Commissioners.

The Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission is composed of 12 members. The Governor appoints three members, at least one of whom shall be a representative of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission or the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Commission. The President Pro Tempore of the Senate appoints two members, one of whom shall be a member of a statewide citizens' conservation or environmental group. The Speaker of the House of Representatives appoints two members, both of whom shall be residents of one of the counties containing the scenic river area and one of whom shall be a representative of the agriculture industry. Five additional members of the Commission are elected in a nonpartisan election to represent the OSRC operating jurisdiction for the Illinois River, Barren Fork Creek and/or Flint Creek designated scenic rivers areas.

The five additional members of the Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission are elected as follows:

- a. Registered voters, who reside, own real property or have a permanent residential structure within six hundred and sixty (660) feet of the Illinois River or Flint Creek within Delaware County, Oklahoma, elect one member to represent them.
- b. Registered voters who reside, own property or have a permanent residential structure within six hundred sixty (660) feet of the Illinois River in Adair County, Oklahoma, elect one member to represent them.
- c. Registered voters who reside, own property or have a permanent residential structure within six hundred sixty (660) feet of the Illinois River above its confluence with the Barren Fork Creek or those portions of the Barren Fork Creek in Cherokee County, Oklahoma, elect one member to represent them.
- d. Registered voters who reside, own real property or have a permanent residential structure within six hundred and sixty (660) feet of: (1) the Illinois River above its confluence with the Barren Fork Creek located in Adair, Cherokee and Delaware Counties, or (2) Flint Creek located within Delaware County, or (3) Barren Fork Creek within Cherokee County, elect two at-large members to represent them.

All appointed and elected Commissioners each serve a four (4) year term of office.

OSRC Board Members

Dr. Riley Needham, Chairman – Bartlesville, OK (Appointed by Senate and represents environment)

Gerald Hilsher, Vice Chairman – Tulsa, OK (Appointed by Governor)

John Larson, Secretary/Treasurer – Tahlequah, OK (Elected – Cherokee County Representative)

Jeff Bashaw – Jay, OK (Appointed by Speaker)

Monte Bradford – Westville, OK (Appointed by Speaker and represents agriculture)

Randy Corp – Edmond, OK (Appointed by Governor)

Michael Fuhr – Tulsa, OK (Appointed by Governor and represents Conservation)

Archie “Trey” Peyton, III – Tahlequah, OK (Elected – At-Large)

David Pickle – Watts, OK (Elected – At-Large)

Steve Randall – Kansas, OK (Elected – Delaware County Representative)

David Spears – Tahlequah, OK (Appointed by Senate)

George R. Stubblefield - Proctor, OK (Elected Adair County Representative)

There are no committees or subgroups of the board.

GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

Please provide copies of the minutes for any Commission/Board meetings the agency has had in the last twelve months in electronic format (Only in PDF format) Is there an attendance policy for board members/commissioners? If so, is it being followed?

All OSRC meeting minutes for the last twelve months are attached. There is an attendance policy for OSRC members. The policy is adhered to by OSRC members.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

Please provide a list of all government modernization efforts undertaken by the agency in the last twelve months. Additionally, please provide any authorizing statutory changes that prompted the modernization efforts and whether those efforts have led to cost savings or additional cost burden.

- Effective February 1, 2014, the agency will complete transition of all share administrative services provided by the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department since late 1970s to Oklahoma Management and Enterprise Services
- Conversion to PeopleSoft Time and Labor w/OMES
- Information Technology Consolidation w/OMES
- Online Licensing –continuing (estimated completion by fall 2014)

What steps has the agency taken to cut costs and/or eliminate waste? Are there efforts that have been successful which you believe could serve as a model for other state agencies seeking to keep costs minimal?

- Terminated postage meter and increased electronic mailings saving over \$1K annually
- Provided public use facilities and services to ~500,000 individuals visiting the Barren Fork Creek, Flint Creek and the Illinois River scenic river areas located within Adair, Cherokee and Delaware Counties to float, swim, sunbathe, camp, fish, hunt, hike, equestrian trail rides, mountain bike riding, fall/spring foliage tours, to observe Bald Eagles and Elk and host of other out-of-doors activities that scenic rivers provide to our citizens and visitors of Oklahoma;
- Approximately 200,000 individuals floated the Illinois River utilizing those services offered by commercial flotation device operations, providing a direct economic impact to Cherokee County alone of \$15,000,000;
- Daily maintained and managed 18 public use/access areas to scenic rivers located in Adair, Cherokee and Delaware Counties;
- From May 15th thru September 15th, operated the OSRC Visitor Center daily, weekends and holidays for the public to make inquiries for information, conditions and contact river rangers;
- Recruited a retired Captain from Oklahoma Highway Patrolman w/32 years of service to manage and operate OSRC River Ranger Division;
- Published quarterly **“River Currents”** newsletters and maintained a website to keep the public informed of scenic river issues;

- OSRC team members collectively presented to more 3,000 individuals at public speaking engagements related to scenic rivers issues;
- Hosted the annual Illinois River Festival in October, with 500 school children (2nd – 5th grades) participating;
- Hosted the annual Illinois River Clean-Up Event, with 125 individuals participating and ~2,000 pounds of trash removed from the river and gravel bars;
- Distributed 65,000 trash bags “free-of-charge” to river floaters and visitors. It is estimated that 3 pounds of trash was disposed per trash bag (195,000 total pounds);
- Removed 33,780 pounds of trash from public access and other areas immediately adjacent to the Barren Fork Creek, Flint Creek and the Illinois River;
- Removed ~100 waste tires from scenic rivers areas;
- 12,000 gallons of wastewater was collected and properly disposed from 12 permanent pit toilets along w/contracting 11 portable/seasonal toilet facilities located in public access areas and along gravel bars to scenic rivers (each toilet was cleaned and pumped twice weekly basis);
- OSRC team members recycled aluminum, iron and other materials from trash/waste collections that resulted in \$469 revenue being generated back to the agency budget;
- Provided assistance to the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation to co-manage 556 acre Sparrow Hawk Primitive Area to reduce that agency’s costs of personnel, transportation and equipment being dispatched from their properties located considerable distance outside the scenic river area;
- Contracted with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to manage and clean up public use areas that that federal agency had abandoned management for located immediately adjacent to the Illinois River and Barren Fork Creek;
- Conducted 204 environmental reviews for Arkansas and Oklahoma Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits, Section 404 Dredge and Fill Permits, Hazard Mitigation, Community Development Block Grant and other projects throughout Oklahoma;
- OSRC partnered with Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, Oklahoma Conservation Commission and Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation to leverage \$79,500 in state funds with \$118,900 federal cost-share match provided by U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to fund \$198,400 Cooperative Illinois River Basin Water Quality Monitoring and Stream Gaging Network that the public, government and non-governmental organizations rely upon for water quality, water quantity, flood elevations/high water events and recreation forecasting;
- Communicated and cooperated with Illinois River Association, Illinois River Watershed Partnership, Poultry Community Council, Poultry Partners, Save The Illinois River, Inc (STIR), Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, Northwest Arkansas City Officials/Boards/Public Works Authorities, and other environmental and conservation organizations;
- Partnership with sister local, regional, state, federal and tribal agencies on many projects, including the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation to provide public access to scenic rivers, the state’s new Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program administered by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission and education outreach program with Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality;

- When funds would become available, OSRC maintains a list of applications from twenty riparian landowners wishing to enroll 550.2 riparian buffer acres into 30-year term conservation easements;
- OSRC team members continued “*Frogology*” education outreach program for the Illinois River Basin;
- OSRC river rangers made 230 Arrests and issued 235 Citations along 703 Written Warnings, totaling 1,168 contacts with individuals who violated agency regulations and state law related to scenic rivers (Summary of arrests, citations and written warnings attached); and,
- There were drowning.

Important Note:

On November 1, 2012, the OSRC was transferred from the Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Commerce to become the newest member agency reporting to the Cabinet Secretary of the Environment. Yet, in August 2013, that transfer was reversed with OSRC placed under the new Cabinet Secretary of Tourism and Recreation.

In October 2013, the Deputy Director of Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department without consultation of OSRC made a decision to transfer OTRD-OSRC administrative shared services to Oklahoma Management and Enterprise Services. Prior to that decision, the OSRC had partnered with OTRD at no-cost for administrative shared services support dating back to late 1970s. Completion of transfer to OMES administrative shared services support will be complete by February 1, 2014. The new shared services partnership with OMES will cost OSRC ~\$14,000 for the new administrative services along with an additional ~\$4,000 for IT services (annual basis).

CORE MISSION:

What services are you required to provide which are outside of your core mission? Are any services you provide duplicated or replicated by another agency? Are there any services which are core to your mission which you are unable to perform because of requirements to perform non-core services elsewhere?

No

PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES:

Are any of the services which are performed by the agency also performed in the private sector in Oklahoma? In other states? Has the agency been approached by any foundation, for-profit or not-for-profit corporation with efforts to privatize some of the functions of the agency?

No