

United States Forest Service
Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area (LBL)
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
July 22, 2015

The Land Between The Lakes NRA Advisory Board convened at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, July 22, at the Forest Service Administration Building, 100 Van Morgan Drive, Golden Pond, Kentucky 42211. The meeting was open to the public. Nine Board members, one alternate, a facilitator, nine members of the public and twelve Forest Service (FS) employees were in attendance.

Advisory Board members present:

Tony Black (P)	Della Oliver (P)	Dwight Van de Vate (P)
Michael Lyons (P)	Steve Elkins (P)	Michelle Rodgers (P)
Bill Purkes (P)	Donnie Holland (P)	Ben Stone (A)
Terry Mott (P)		

Advisory Board staff present:

Dr. Jerome Thomas, Advisory Board Chairperson
Tina Tilley, Designated Federal Official (DFO)
Rosemary Bray, Acting Advisory Board Administrative Liaison
Nancy Walters, Facilitator

Forest Service (FS) Staff in attendance:

Dennis Wilson, Acting Environmental Stewardship (ES) Manager
Steve Bloemer, Wildlife Biologist
Elizabeth Raikes, Wildlife Biologist
Yvonne Helton, Silviculturist
Jeff Laird, Customer Service Manager
Duane Cameron, LEO Supervisor
Jan Bush, Communications Department Manager
Barbara Wysock, Area Planner (NEPA)
Amanda Kunzmann, Deputy District Ranger on the Shawnee

Ten members of the public were: John Rufli, Lisa Taylor, Bobbie Faust, Ginny Gaulke, Keith Dreyer, Knox Goostree, Luke Hoehn, Andy Van der Yacht, and Dr. Patrick Keyser

Dr. Thomas opened the meeting and thanked the Board for their attendance. He mentioned the public meetings that have been held in the last few months on land management that many here participated in. He stated that we all have our own views and perspectives, and that the dialogue is an important part of the process. His key desire is to move forward in a collaborative style. Dr. Thomas requested the Board to review the LBL *Land and Resource Management Plan* by the next meeting to gain a better understanding of what is in the plan. He stated that Board consideration of what needs to change is important.

Tina thanked the Board members and the public for taking the time to attend today's meeting and discussed logistics for the day. She hoped the Board members would find the day beneficial as it is about continuing to develop a relationship of trust and how we can move forward.

Facilitator Nancy Walters reviewed the goals, roles, and agenda for the day.

Field Trip

Dr. Keyser, Associate Professor and Coordinator for the Center for Native Grasslands, University of Tennessee, and his graduate student, Andy Van Der Yacht, led a field trip to the South Oak Grasslands Area. They showed results of research studies being conducted as part of the Cooperative Oak Ecosystem Restoration Project. This project demonstrates the response of vegetation, birds, and bats to forest disturbance, including prescribed fire and tree cutting.

LBL is interested in learning how it might use disturbance to create more oak woodlands and savannas—an ecosystem that was once much more prevalent than it is now. Evidence of elk, bison, and insects in certain areas of LBL support the presence of an oak belt that ran from East Oklahoma to Virginia. The animals would not have been here had there not been sufficient habitat to support them. Fire events would have had to happen every two to seven years to maintain this habitat.

The vegetative responses to prescribed fire and thinning in the study sites included increased varieties and amount of grasses and wildflowers and a lower density of oaks that shut out the light to the ground. Some of the benefits of disturbance mentioned by Dr. Kaiser include increased soil nutrients from fire, increased light to the ground that allows for different herbaceous plant species to grow, and a greater diversity of bird species and presence of bats.

The field trip provided a good back-drop for interesting conversation about the science and the management questions it is addressing. Some of the topics discussed were:

- What is the goal of restoration? What are we restoring the land to?
- Should fire be a part of the landscape?
- What about the impact of smoke on people from prescribed fires?
- Why is biodiversity important?
- What effect does prescribed fire and tree removal through thinning have on the storage of carbon, an issue of importance when we talk about climate change?
- How do non-native invasive plant species respond to forest disturbance?

The meeting reconvened at the Administration building after lunch at Brandon Springs, with discussion of the questions submitted by Board members before the meeting.

What will be the Advisory Boards role be moving forward? Dr. Thomas shared that the Board can provide advice to Tina about their concerns and concerns of the publics they represent. The desire is to work together in a collaborative way and we will use future meetings to do that.

Why is there such an effort to create oak savannah grassland at LBL? The Forest Service believes oak woodlands and savannas were an important part of the history of LBL and that if something is not done to prevent it this ecosystem may be lost forever from the landscapes of the Mid-South. They are among the rarest plant communities in the country and provide critically needed habitat for many different plants and animals.

How does the Federal Budget work, does Dr. Thomas or Tina have any say in how the money is allocated and spent? Congress establishes the budget for programs such as recreation, vegetation and timber management. The Forest Service does not receive any funding for Environmental Education and money allocated for some programs like roads are decreasing. The agency as a whole is reducing roads and decommissioning roads. This budget reduction at National level is requiring individual forest to take a hard look at what size programs are sustainable. LBL does not have any roads to be decommissioned at this time. On a National level highway funding is changing. Federal money that had been set aside for highway maintenance for states is now no longer available.

Where did the \$550,000 that was given to the Wild Turkey Federation come from and what was it used for? Funding came from congressionally-allocated Wildlife dollars. They were used to support the establishment and maintenance of wildlife habitat.

What logging is being done outside the core area (not within the 8,600) and why is it taking place? The Old Ferry Road Sale and Paradise are areas where the timber is already sold, and are part of the Demumbers decision. This work is being driven by damage from the 2009 ice storm and addresses forest health. The plan is to remove the loblolly pine and replant with short leaf pine. Loblolly pine is an invasive species and does not hold up well under our severe weather conditions.

Question was asked about The Land and Resource Management Plan, referring to a standard of limiting logging to 40 acres unless the area has damage from storms. That statement refers to clearcutting: the plan allows for clearcuts of up to 40 acres. Though LBL has this flexibility, it is not clearcutting at this time. Concerns were shared on how clearcutting scares people and the land needs to be managed like it was our own. The group discussed an area where loblolly is being removed to favor shortleaf pine. Shortleaf pine is resistant to fire where loblolly is not. Thirty thousand shortleaf seedlings were planted in a 42- acre section to enhance native wildlife diversity where loblolly was removed.

A Board member reported that the Tennessee Wildlife Federation and the National Wild Turkey Federation had contacted him to voice their frustration over the cancelation of the Pisgah Bay Project.

Tilley is committed to reengaging the public before moving forward on projects in a collaborative way. LBL does not have any plans to offer a timber sale at this time. However, there are sales leftover in Demumbers. Devils Backbone is an area where the decision has already been made; there is 500 commercial acres in that area to be thinned. Moving forward the public will be involved in developing a range of alternatives on projects. This will be a change from just commenting on proposals that the Forest Service develops.

Where does the income from timber sales go? Some Board members feel that the FS should not be making money off of timber sales. Some Board members feel like the FS is running a tree farm. They feel better communication is needed from the FS to understand what it is doing and why.

The Forest Service keeps 100% of the receipts generated off of timber sales. It is reinvested into other programs such as heritage, roads and the timber program; the numbers are posted on the website. The Forest Service does not conduct a timber sale in the same manner private individuals would on their own land. Where private landowners often want to harvest their most valuable trees, the FS wants to leave the best, healthiest trees to reseed the forest. The Forest Service also has stringent requirements for road maintenance and slash disposal, and for adherence to best management practices. All these factors affect the receipts from timber sales. LBL has averaged in sales \$90,000 to \$140,000 annually. The Forest Service goal of all sales is to maintain a healthy forest.

After all the questions were answered, Tina agreed to follow-up with written responses to all the questions, send them to the Board for review, and then disseminate them widely.

The Board decided to add a meeting in September and then identified items to include on the agenda. Items suggested were as follows:

- Discuss any responses to the published questions and answers
- Focus on collaboration process. What would it look like?
- Clarify role of Advisory Board – look into forwarding out a Power Point presentation that has been used in the past to members
- Discuss how the heritage of LBL can it be used to attract visitors
- Provide an overview of the LBL area plan

Tina will work with the board on the agenda for September.

Tina thanked the Board for their time and flexibility, she felt that good, rich conversation had taken place and she was excited for the opportunities ahead. She appreciated the candor on the morning field trip from the Board.


Dr. Thomas thanked the Board for their support of Tina and the FS Staff. He understands that we all care about LBL and its resources and recognizes that LBL is special. Dr. Thomas thanked Michael Lyons for his support and contribution to the Board, as this is his last meeting, and thanked everyone for coming.

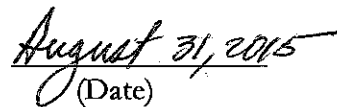
Dr. Jerome Thomas adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

Action Items

- Send notes from this meeting to the Board.
- Complete thorough answers to the questions presented to and discussed by the Board and send out to all Board members for review.
- Send Board members information on timber sale receipts and how they are spent.
- Work with the Board on identifying a date and developing an agenda for September's meeting.

Certified by:


JEROME THOMAS
LBL Advisory Board Chairperson


(Date)