



Land Between the Lakes: Forward to the Future

DRAFT OBJECTIVES

Comments Due: October 11, 2019

Introduction

Forward to the Future is an ongoing strategic planning initiative which focuses on the future of recreation and environmental education at Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area. The purpose of this effort is to develop the organization’s first *Strategic Sustainability Plan for the Future of Recreation and Environmental Education at Land Between the Lakes*. The Plan will identify:

1. Key strategic plan components (vision, priority areas of focus, and set of goals and objectives) that will guide management of recreation and environmental education programs for the next 10-15 years;
2. Strategies which will help Land Between the Lakes, as an organization, to be more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable; and
3. Ways in which Land Between the Lakes can help to cultivate regional sustainability through collaboration and partnership.

Public Engagement

Public engagement is an essential piece to the development of the **Strategic Sustainability Plan for the Future of Recreation and Environmental Education at Land Between the Lakes**. As part of this process there have been and continue to be several opportunities for public input, comment and dialogue. These opportunities correspond to the three phases of the strategic planning process: Assessment, Visioning, and Strategic Development.



To date, public input has been collected from approximately 1200 participants as part of the Assessment and Visioning phases via one of the following methods: through an online engagement platform (landbetweenthelakes.mindmixer.com), two open house sessions, facility open houses, a community visioning session, and three outdoor community forums. The Vision and Goals have been finalized and now additional input is being gathered for the Draft Objectives that the public helped develop during three outdoor community forums held in June 2019. The following is a brief summary of what we heard from the public. If you would like to know more about the methods and results of these public engagement opportunities, which serve as the foundation for the draft vision and goals, please visit landbetweenthelakes.mindmixer.com/about-this-site or visit <https://www.landbetweenthelakes.us/> and scroll to the Sustainable Recreation Planning section near the bottom of the webpage.

Final Vision and Goals

| VISION | | |
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| Working together with visitors and local communities to bring positive, sustainable change through exceptional nature-based experiences that reach all generations. | | |
| STRATEGIC GOALS - AREAS OF FOCUS | | |
| Be Responsive to Change | Sustain Thriving Habitats | Inspire Youth |
| GOAL 1 | GOAL 2 | GOAL 3 |
| Anticipate changing recreation needs, demonstrate innovative management practices, and sustainably transform to meet 21 st century expectations. | Restore and sustain healthy habitats to be a destination for hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing of abundant and diverse species. | Inspire youth in neighboring counties and states to connect with their natural lands and cultural heritage. |

Draft Objectives

STRATEGIC GOAL #1 - Anticipate changing recreation needs, demonstrate innovative management practices, and sustainably transform to meet 21st century expectations

Draft Objectives:

1. Upgrade 25% of the existing 30 amp campsites to 50 amp each year for 100% upgrade over 4 years.
2. Modernize website, implement OnCell app and use social media to increase online engagement by 10% within 2 years.
3. Cell connectivity is available within 15 years at Piney Campground, Hillman Campground, Wranglers Campground, Energy Lake Campground, Woodlands Nature Station and the Homeplace 1850s Farm.
4. Provide public wifi within 5 years inside Piney Campground, Hillman Campground, Wranglers Campground, Energy Lake Campground, Woodlands Nature Station, Brandon Spring Group Camp and the Homeplace 1850s Farm.
5. Implement a Recreation/Environmental Education program budget, on an annual basis, no greater than the 3 year average of past Fiscal Years, focusing on:
 - a) reducing costs,
 - b) identifying new revenue sources and new partnerships,
 - c) reducing deferred maintenance,
 - d) creating efficiencies, and
 - e) planning for long term maintenance and infrastructure needs.

6. Complete visitor services facility review (Golden Pond Visitor Center, South Welcome Station, and North Welcome Station) within 2 years. Review will include:
 - a) tracking existing uses,
 - b) tracking how many people services are provided to,
 - c) analyzing the needed workforce to complete the work at these facilities,
 - d) determining how these facilities should promote recreation/environmental education opportunities,
 - e) determining if there is a better way to provide services or if service is needed, and
 - f) determining how any proposed changes might impact other facilities,

7. Increase visitation by 10% in 3 years at Turkey Bay, Woodlands Nature Station, Homeplace 1850s Farm, and basic camping areas.

8. Increase occupancy by 10% in 3 years at Piney Campground, Hillman Campground, Wranglers Campground, and Energy Lake Campground.

STRATEGIC GOAL #2 – Restore and sustain healthy habitats to be a destination for hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing of abundant and diverse species

Draft Objectives:

1. Increase presence on traditional (includes outreach) and social media beyond a 40 mile radius (geo-extended population) and increase postings on social media by 20% to educate and inform the public and stakeholders on the why, what, when, and where of habitat management, within 5 years.

2. Use active habitat management, with collaboration, to create and maintain:
 - a) 550 acres of Shortleaf pine forest,
 - b) 3000 acres of mature open oak forest, and
 - c) 3500 acres of woodland structure,
 within 10 years, to increase opportunities for hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing.

3. Use active habitat management, with collaboration, to regenerate 1500 acres of forest habitat within 10 years.

STRATEGIC GOAL #3 – Inspire youth in neighboring counties and states to connect with their natural lands and cultural heritage.

Draft Objectives:

1. Increase presence on traditional (includes outreach) and social media beyond a 40 mile radius (geo-extended population) and increase postings on social media by 20% to educate and inform the public and stakeholders on the why, what, when, and where of environmental education opportunities, within 5 years.

2. Promote a community approach to environmental education by establishing a regional partnership with the 6 surrounding county school systems to identify practical ways to incorporate environmental education in the school curriculum, within 3 years.

3. Increase participation in environmental education facilities/programs/events by 5% per year for the next 5 years.
4. Provide Forest Service outreach presence, with an environmental education focus, at 75% of community fairs/festivals/parades within the 6 surrounding counties within 3 years.
5. Collaborate with partners so they can establish 2 sponsorships per year to support, promote, and accomplish Land Between the Lakes' environmental education mission.
6. Establish environmental education partnerships with 10 additional schools (public or private) in a 200 mile radius within 5 years and with an additional 20 schools (public or private) within 10 years.

Your Comments

Land Between the Lakes seeks your input on the draft Objectives **by October 11, 2019**. Comments can be submitted through the MindMixer website: landbetweenthe lakes.mindmixer.com, or by sending them directly to Jeff Laird, Customer Service Manager at jeffrey.laird@usda.gov. If you have any questions they can also be addressed to Jeff Laird at jeffrey.laird@usda.gov.

Next Steps

Your input will help determine how the draft objectives will help us to accomplish the goals and meet the vision. The next step will be to review all public comments and refine these draft objectives based upon what we have heard. Our goal is to identify and move towards a desired future that represents both the priorities of Land Between the Lakes and its surrounding communities. Once these objectives have been finalized, Land Between the Lakes will seek to work with stakeholders and user groups to define specific strategies and tactics to fulfill the objectives.