

Land Between the Lakes Advisory Board
PUBLIC MEETING
February 11, 2026 | 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM (CST)
MEETING MINUTES

The Charter for the Land Between the Lakes (LBL) Advisory Board (Board) is hereby established pursuant to Section 460 of the Land Between the Lakes Protection Act of 1998 (LBLP Act) (16 U.S.C. 460 iii et. Seq.) and managed in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) as amended, (5 U.S.C.10) excepting section 14(a)(2) as outlined in the Act in Section 522(h).

The LBLP Act transferred responsibility for Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area from the Tennessee Valley Authority to the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretary), managed as a unit of the National Forest System.

In December 2022, Congress changed the Board composition in accordance with Section 460 of the Land Between the Lakes Protection Act 1998 (Act) (U.S.C. 460iii-22 et. Seq). This update repealed Public Law 117-328, Div. DD, Title II, § 201(c)(1)(B), Dec. 29, 2022, 136 Stat. 5582 and redesignated four Board members. The Board shall now be composed of 13 members.

In accordance with the established provisions, the Land Between the Lakes Advisory Board convened for this public meeting February 11, 2026, 9:00 AM. The meeting was held at 100 Van Morgan Drive, Golden Pond, Kentucky and was open to the public/to join virtually via Microsoft Teams/Meeting ID: 227 737 970 506 35, Passcode: Fb9KH2AR or Dial in by phone +1 (202) 650-0123, Passcode 245548548# United States, Washington. Phone conference ID: 245 548 548#

A [Federal Register notice](#) was published January 12 2026, providing general information and public participation details for the meeting. Meeting details were posted on the committee website: [Land Between the Lakes Advisory Board Web Page](#) January 13, 2026, per the FRN.

Committee website: [Land Between the Lakes Advisory Board Web Page](#)

General inquiries: [Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area Website](#)

Meeting Agenda

Item #	Topic
1.	Safety Message – Chip Littell, Safety Officer
2.	Call to Order – Jim McCoy, Designated Federal Officer
3.	Welcome/Opening Statement – Mary Moore, Chairperson

4.	Introductions – Chris Thornock & Jordan Crain, Facilitators
5.	Old Business/Updates – Line & Staff Officers
6.	Nature Station Presentation – Coyle & Caron
7.	Recreation Fee Schedule – Jared Baker & Jamey Thweatt
8.	Natural Resource Management – Yvonne Antes, Russell Harris & Jamey Thweatt
9.	Address Public Comments – None Received
10.	Closing Remarks – Mary Moore, Chairperson
11.	Schedule Next Meeting/Adjourn – Jim McCoy, Designated Federal Officer

Meeting Attendance

The quorum requirement was met per the Charter.

Committee Members			
Name	Category/Represented Industry	Attendance	Attendance Type
Derek Beard	Kentucky Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Present	Virtual
John Zimmer	Kentucky Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Present	In-person
David Nickell	Lyon County, Kentucky	Present	In-person
Todd Pinnegar	Lyon County, Kentucky	Present	In-person
Melissa Parker	Stewart County, Tennessee	Present	In-person
Ski Witzofsky	Stewart County, Tennessee	Present	In-person
Patrick Lemons	Tennessee Wildlife Resources	Present	In-person
Lori Anne Oakley	Trigg County; Kentucky	Present	In-person
Mark Turner	Trigg County, Kentucky	Present	In-person
Nancy Dawson	USDA Kentucky	Present	In-person
Abigale Smith	USDA Kentucky	Present	In-person
Walter Battle	USDA Tennessee	Present	In-person
De'Etra Young	USDA Tennessee	Present	Virtual
USDA Forest Service Staff			
Name	Position/Title	Attendance	Attendance Type
Jim McCoy	Designated Federal Officer	Present	In-person
Mary Moore	Chairperson	Present	In-person
Christine Bombard	FACA Coordinator	Present	In-person
Emily Cleaver	Public Affairs Specialist	Present	In-person
Scott Raymond	Public Affairs Officer	Present	In-person
Chris Thornock	Facilitator	Present	In-person
Jordan Crain	Facilitator	Present	In-person
Andy Mowrey	Area Planner	Present	In-person
John Westbrook	Special Projects	Present	In-person

Jared Baker	Strategic Admin. Svcs. Staff Officer	Present	In-person
Jamey Thweatt	Recreation & Eng. Staff Officer	Present	In-person
Yvonne Antes	Silviculturist	Present	In-person
Russell Harris	Fire Management Officer	Present	In-person

General Audience	
Name	
Mike Wilson	Austin Peay State University
Elaine Jackson	Land Between the Lakes Association
John Pollpeter	Land Between the Lakes Association
Laura Caudill	Land Between the Lakes Association
Steven Nolen	Land Between the Lakes Association
Randal Kot	
James Oakley	
Douglas Catellier	Austin Peay State University
Bharat Pokharel	Tennessee State University
Xiaoyu Xu	Tennessee State University
Anish KC	Tennessee State University
Andrew Clifton	Tipton, FSI
Edward Marlowe	WKDZ/WHVO

Meeting Recording

[Land Between the Lakes Advisory Board Web Page](#)

Call to Order

Jim McCoy, Designated Federal Officer called the meeting to order.

Opening Remarks

Mary Moore, Chairperson expressed appreciation for everyone’s willingness to be here to help guide and advise Jim and the team on how to best shepherd Land Between the Lakes. She shared that currently the federal government is going through transformational change. We’ve been asked to figure out how to do business cheaper and quicker. Our chief wants us to look for opportunities to deregulate, innovate and partner.

Introduction

The board members, chairperson and designated federal officer took a moment to introduce themselves.

Old Business/Updates

- The April meeting minutes were approved.

- Golden Pond Overlook: Currently, it's accessible only via the quarter mile hike up a steep hill. As a result of our partnership with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) we have secured a draft design for a road to the overlook. Funds for the project are on contract. We're in the process of completing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis. We expect the road to be completed by the end of July. Thank you to Stan Humphries, Trigg County Judge Executive for his advocacy of the project and to KYTC for providing the design to us at no charge.
- Feral Hogs: The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has been able to dispatch 1,195 hogs using aerial gunnery. They are currently off site with plans to return in a few weeks for another round of aerial operations. Trapping efforts are ongoing. As far as the remaining number of hogs here we just don't know. In response to a question Jim stated there are no discussions about bringing in dog hunters.
- Special Projects: Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR): We are in the process of finalizing agreements with the first five early adopters (Austin Peay State University, Kentucky State University, Murray Independent School District, Tennessee University and University of Tennessee at Martin). The agreements formalize collaborative partnerships with them, so we are able to supply advanced ecological and environmental data including LiDAR to facilitate natural resource research. Private industries are now expressing interest in this tool as well.
- Restoration: There are lots of issues here with non-native invasive plants partly due to a lack of certain management activities on the unit. Now that the non-native invasive plant environmental analysis (EA) is complete we're moving ahead with a forest wide comprehensive multiyear effort. Loblolly pine is a big one and we're going to start with that. We'll be using prescribed fire, mowing/mastication and applying some herbicides as well as designating new burn blocks. Some of the work will be done through partnerships (i.e., National Deer Association). We will generate funds by leveraging the loblolly. This is a cost-effective way to carry out the mission.
- Chestnuts: In 2024, 64 American chestnuts were planted. As of October, there were 27 remaining. That is above expectation. We're hopeful for a viable crop of seeds in approximately 5 years.
- Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO): We can apply for these funds when we have a disaster. We submitted 5 roads due to the May flooding. We were approved for \$1 million. The roads will be repaired and not replaced. We are in the process of completing the NEPA. We submitted 23 additional roads due to another storm event. We were approved for \$5.9 million. It will likely be spring/summer next year before we receive those funds.
- Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA): We were approved for two projects. One project is to improve a facility, and the other is to improve infrastructure. The Brandon Spring project involves replacing the current intern housing trailer that is uninhabitable and

improving the water system. March 2028 is the goal for completion. We have the money; we need the design to start construction. The other project is the Jenny Ridge wastewater lagoon replacement.

- Construction Management Funds: We were awarded funds to replace the Jones Creek Bridge. Currently, it is closed due to poor conditions. The design was done by the regional bridge team, and construction should be completed by this October.

Jim's response to a question about the status of Rushing Creek is that we have no firm plans yet. It is still being conceptualized. Large RVs can't negotiate the roads, so it be more for teardrop campers, vans, etc. Yurts are becoming very popular so we may consider them as well. It will roughly cost \$30 million to get it reopened.

- Website Demonstration: Recommendations were made to add information such as, core areas, emergency information (i.e. medical facilities), birding checklist, tick information, historical data and a community page to promote the surrounding areas (i.e. Cherokee Park).
- Archaeology/Heritage: We are partnering with the Trigg County Historical Society to standardize former resident homeplace signs. Former residents can contact the historical society for a sign. Hopefully, in the future, signs will have a QR code that will give information on the family. We're also preparing for the annual geocache. The theme for this year is Native American heritage.

Nature Station Presentation

Project Goals:

- Create a memorable destination experience
- Transform Woodlands Nature Station
- Meet or exceed Association of Zoos & Aquarium (AZA) standards
- Preserve, interpret, and share the site's cultural and historical significance
- Create a resilient, safe and accessible destination

Organizational Framework:

- The Riverlands: Pre-60's-confluence of nature and humans from the Hillmans to Native Americans
- The Refuge: 60s to 80s-the beginnings of rewilding and environmental stewardship
- The Backyard: Today-nature in our own backyard

Interpretive Narratives:

- Living with the Land: Native American Habitation & Use
- Company Town: Boom & Bust at Center Furnace
- Songs through the Smoke: Black People & Landscapes at Center Furnace
- Up from Ashes: Environmental Rehabilitation, Conservation & Controversies

Funding is in place for phase 1 of the project. Concern regarding accessibility was raised. The pathways will be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible. There will be various types of interpretation to include sound and touch. The design allows for inclusivity.

Recreation Fee Schedule (Fees vs. Inflation)

Over the years, appropriated funds have been on the decline. We're looking to save money as well as increase revenue. Sometimes decreasing fees increases visitation which increases revenue.

How do we increase overall revenue?

- Without significantly increasing prices
- While maintaining intent of public lands
- With limited capital improvement funding
- While satisfying a wide variety of partners and interest groups
- Without breaking laws and policies while navigating bureaucracy
- While promoting the regional economy
- While maintaining current infrastructure with limited funds and personnel

The following suggestions were made: increase partnerships to include corporate partners, implement fees at the rifle range and for hunters. Increase fees at Turkey Bay OHV.

Current Tactics:

- Revenue Strike Team (what is the return on investment of that decision-it isn't always monetary)
- Made up of a variety of team members
- Meet weekly with a retreat every other month
- Any and all ideas are thoroughly examined
- Currently over 105 ideas are on the list and growing
- Leveraging partners such as, Land Between the Lakes Association, The National Forest Foundation, National Deer Association and others.
- Establishing more partners and increasing public interest
- Market research before recommended fee increases
- Engaging the Advisory Board
- We plan to present fees to the Board at the Fall meeting.

Natural Resource Management:

LiDAR Demonstration

Forest Planning Examples

Historical & Archaeological Data:

- Identifying Past Land Use
- Ascertain New Survey Areas
- Topographic Reconstruction

Engineering Data:

- Road Planning & Management
- Floodplain Mapping & Erosion Control
- 3D Modeling of Infrastructure

Wildlife Habitat Data:

- Canopy Cover & Height
- Vegetation Density & Structure
- Aspect, Slope and Elevation

Loblolly Conversion

- Loblolly is a coastal pine species. It was planted here to stop erosion. We're returning hardwood forests back to the unit.
- Proposed Timber Sales: Smith Bay and Tharpe to start as early as April
- We're removing mainly loblolly along with a few others needed to gain access
- Roads will be brought to standard
- We will be following the Forest Plan and best management practices
- Currently, we have one employee that works in forest management. We're working with the National Deer Association. They will take over the management. We come up with the price for the timber, and they find a purchaser for the material.
- Proceeds from the sales will be invested back into where the stands were harvested. Funds can be used for food plots, roads, etc.
- Will schedule a field trip for the Board

Fuels/Fire

Our future fire management plan is to increase the amount of fire treatments to 20,000 plus acres annually in line with the Area Plan.

How?

- Maintain workforce to meet LBL land management objectives using fire applications
- Work directly with partner agencies
- Identify new management areas for fire use
- Utilize existing boundaries for Rx units where possible

Beneficial Use of Fire for Resource Management:

- Reducing invasion of trees and shrubs including invasive species
- Managing grassland communities
- Removing excess leaf litter that inhibits vegetative growth and wildlife
- Releasing seeds for germination
- Increasing species diversity
- Reducing hazardous fuels
- Controlling disease

Monitoring Prescribed Fire Smoke:

- We use two primary tools “Blue Sky” and “PB Piedmont” which generate downwind receptor models showing location of smoke field and the timing of where it will be and the width of impacted areas/areas it may impact.
- Provides outputs based upon time and location of ignition, amount of acreage to be burned, and fuel type.

LBL Fire Staff Support Other Units by Providing Expertise in Needed Areas:

- Wildland and prescribed fire management in leadership roles
- Aviation operations including drone ignition operations in the future
- Prevention support services
- Fuels management training
- Wildfire training courses at various levels
- Specialized staff qualified in all-hazard response
- Last fiscal year we sent out 24 responders totaling 61 assignments

In fiscal year 2025, 7 units were completed for a total of 1,952 acres burned. We burn to meet desired conditions not just for the sake of burning.

Openlands

The Forest Service took over management of LBL in 2000. Since then, we have not made good choices regarding management of openlands. We have some challenges (i.e., access, feral hogs, pesticide restrictions, etc.), but we have some good tools we will utilize moving forward.

- Openlands Environmental Analysis (EA)
- Agreement with the National Deer Association (NDA)
- Tipton, FSI
- Burning, mastication, herbicide use, strip discing
- Timber receipts will help pay for this

We’re taking an adaptive stance to tackle some areas that need improvement.

Addressing Public Comments

We received no written request for public comment.

Closing Statement

Mary thanked everyone for the day and for the sharing of lots of great information from the update on feral hogs, restoration, chestnuts, EFRO and GAOA funding. The innovation around the Nature Station, LiDAR and the new website are exciting. It’s good to hear that existing relationships are being fostered/new partnerships are expanding and that we’re tackling openlands and burning. Also, it would be good to plan a timber sale field trip.

Schedule Next Meeting/Adjourn

A field trip is scheduled for September 15, 2026, with a meeting to follow on September 16, 2026. The DFO adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:00 P.M (CST).

Certification

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

James R. McCoy, Designated Federal Officer

Mary Moore, Chairperson