

Land Between the Lakes Advisory Board
PUBLIC MEETING
September 16, 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 This update repealed Public Law 117-328, Div.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 September 16, 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: 251 781 168 745 87, Passcode: R3Y5BL65 or Dial in by phone +1 (202) 650-0123, Passcode 797120726# United States, Washington. Phone conference ID: 797 120 726#

A [Federal Register Notice](#) (FRN) was published July 23, 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](#) 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 – Board Members
5.	Old Business/Updates – Line & Staff
6.	State of the Unit Presentation – Jared Baker
7.	Recreation Fee Structure – Jared Baker and Jamey Thweatt
8.	Resource Management – Andy Mowrey and National Deer Association Rep.
9.	Special Purpose Vehicle Program – Jamey Thweatt
10.	Public Forum – Comments Received (3) – Designated Federal Officer
11.	Closing Statement – Mary Moore, Chairperson
12.	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	Virtual
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	Unable to Attend	N/A
De'Etra Young	USDA Tennessee	Unable to Attend	N/A

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	Acting Natural Resources Staff Officer	Present	In-person
John Westbrook	Special Projects	Present	In-person
Jared Baker	Strategic Administrative Services Staff Officer	Present	In-person
Jamey Thweatt	Recreation & Eng. Staff Officer	Present	In-person
Christopher Littrell	Safety Officer	Present	In-person
Garrison Lupton	Fire Management Officer	Present	In-person
Josh Prather	Acting Partnership Coordinator	Present	In-person
Steve Buckman	Patrol Captain	Present	In-person
Wanda Crump	Administrative Support Assistant	Present	Virtual
Andy Chappell	Recreation Program Manager	Present	Virtual
Yvonne Antes	Silviculturist	Present	Virtual
General Audience			
Name			
Elaine Jackson	Land Between the Lakes Association		
Steve Nolen	Land Between the Lakes Association		
Laura Phelps	Land Between the Lakes Association		
Mason Pyburn	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service		
Austin Carroll	National Deer Association		
Mechelle Morgan	Murray Independent School District		
Randy Kot			
Sherry Lynn			
Andrew Clifton	Tipton, FSI		

Meeting Recording

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

Safety Message

Chip Littrell, Safety Officer reviewed safety procedures, evacuation routes, and shelter-in-place locations should an emergency arise.

Call to Order

Jim McCoy, Designated Federal Officer, called the meeting to order and reviewed rules of engagement.

Opening Remarks

Mary Moore, Chairperson, expressed gratitude for spending the day with us to help provide counsel, wisdom and guidance to Jim and the team as they manage the land on your behalf and that of the public. Mary shared Ken Arney, Regional Forester is retiring on October 30, 2026.

Introduction

The board members took a moment to introduce themselves.

Old Business/Updates

- The February Meeting Minutes were approved.
- Personnel Updates: multiple temporary details and backfills across natural resources, partnerships and contracting:
 - Acting Natural Resources Staff Officer Andy Mowrey
 - Acting Partnership Coordinator Josh Prather
 - Acting Contract Specialist Kathy Coursey
 - New Fire Management Officer Garrison Lupton
- Golden Pond Overlook
 - Board received a sample road design prepared by Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.
 - Road access project is nearing start; waiting to get funding on the contract. Funding is secure.
- Feral Hog Eradication (Guest: Mason Pyburn, Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service)
 - 1,883 hogs removed from LBL (1,802 via aerial gunning; 81 via trapping). Estimated 90% population reduction. Additional aerial resources are allocated for next season.
- Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO) Road & Storm Damage Repair Projects:
 - Multiple roads repaired or near completion (174, 134, 321, 302). Most culvert and grading work are complete; some paving/guardrail work pending.

- Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) Projects:
 - Brandon Spring Intern Housing – In design stage; \$5.9M awarded.
 - Jenny Ridge Wastewater Lagoon Replacement – Contract award expected within weeks.
 - Hillman Ferry Wastewater Plant – Funding gap due to increased bid cost; exploring additional funding sources.
- Jones Creek Bridge:
 - New bridge design complete. Planned partnership with National Guard for construction (target start FY 2027). Funding is secure.
- Historic Homeplace Sign Program:
 - 57 former resident homeplace signs have been installed across LBL.
- NAGPRA (Native American Graves Repatriation):
 - Major repatriation with Chickasaw Nation: 939 individuals & 42,000+ funerary objects reburied at LBL. Secure cemetery established; not publicly disclosed.
- Fire Management Overview:
 - 18 prescribed burn units completed (14,152 acres).
 - Goal: treat 20,000 acres annually.
 - Eight wildfires this year: 591 acres burned (largest: 464 acres).
 - Significant national response contributions: 42 LBL responders deployed since May.
- Children’s Forest, Nature Station & Heritage Hub:
 - Children’s Forest: Conceptual plan complete; board received a copy.
 - Nature Station Master Plan: Final booklet delivered; major upgrades proposed (ADA-compliant canopy walk, updated exhibits, new classroom). Board received a copy.
 - Heritage Hub: In development—future homeplace, bison range, and historic landscape interpretation.
- Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) Project (Guest: Mechelle Morgan, Murray Independent School District)
 - Multi-year effort using high-resolution aerial laser scanning to support science, heritage protection, land management, and education.
 - “The First Five” initiative launches the first wave of university and K-12 partnerships to bring LBL’s new LiDAR dataset into real world learning environments. Including classroom projects, research partnerships, technical skill development, internships, and industry collaboration.
 - Murray Independent School District was the first to complete their agreement. Preparing for implementation in January.

State of the Unit Presentation

- Financial Structure
 - LBL retains 100% of its revenues due to special legislation. Revenues fund construction, improvement, and maintenance - not staff salaries.

- Trust Fund
 - Now over \$7M with high interest earnings due to improved investment strategy. Interest is used for education, conservation, and regional promotion.
- Cost Recovery
 - Campgrounds and the Elk & Bison Prairie are performing extremely well
 - Nature Station numbers are improving – under where we’d like them to be.
 - Backcountry/hunt area is financially healthy.
- Visitation Trends
 - LBL hosts one of the highest visitor densities in the U.S. Forest Service. Post-2021 visitation remains strong but slightly declining—an operational concern.
- Operational Tools
 - Smartsheet dashboards, Point of Sale analytics, zip code mapping, inventory tracking, and internal business processes used to guide decisions.
 - Fee alignment with inflation to maintain financial sustainability.
 - Viper Strike Team exploring new revenue, visitor experience, and efficiency improvements.
 - Consulted with concessionaire to assess feasibility of revitalizing operations at Brandon Spring.

Recreation Fee Structure

- Fee Alignment & Market Research
 - LBL reviews market pricing every 3–5 years; latest analyses were in 2023 and 2026.
 - LBL must balance fee increases with regional economic sensitivity—avoiding undercutting local businesses or overpricing visitors.
 - LBL’s pricing heavily influences nearby private campgrounds and state parks.
- Current Fee Analysis
 - A spreadsheet was presented showing baseline fees, inflation-adjusted equivalents, current fees and proposed new fees (with gradual two-year phase-in)
 - Most LBL fees remain below regional averages, even after proposed increases.
- Other Fee Categories
 - Adjustments proposed for: horse stalls, visitor vehicles, extra vehicles, showers (decrease proposed), kayak/canoe rentals, horse day use permits, golf cart passes, Turkey Bay permits, Elk & Bison Prairie fees, dorm rates at Brandon Spring, Target Range (proposal to begin charging for use due to high operating costs and misuses. Potential inclusion of a future “range master.”
- Revenue Implications
 - Projected increases (based on fiscal year 2025 actual sales):
 - Camping fee increases: +\$389,000
 - Lakefront upcharges: substantial additional revenue
 - Recreation fee adjustments: +\$51,000

- Golf cart increases: +\$50,000
- Turkey Bay adjustments: +\$232,000
- Elk & Bison Prairie: +\$230,000
- Total potential added cost recovery: over \$1 million

Resource Management Update (Guest Austin Carroll, National Deer Association)

The board received a chart highlighting openlands work.

- Partnerships Now Active: National Deer Association (NDA), Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves, Tipton FSI, Murray State University, Mingo Job Corps and Riverlands Alliance.
- Accomplishments
 - 3,500 acres treated this year through burning, mowing, mastication, herbicide, and co-op farming.
 - NDA began work early and aggressively (e.g., early kudzu treatment).
 - Increased coordination between partners improving openlands, wildlife habitat, and access.
- Future Work
 - Continued openlands restoration, invasive control, and quail habitat development.
 - NDA assisting with access improvements and upcoming timber projects.
- Timber Program
 - NDA explained shared stewardship model.
 - Targeting off-site loblolly pine for removal to restore native forest ecology and enhance wildlife habitat.
 - Timber market challenges acknowledged; work underway to evaluate sale options.

Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) Pilot Program Discussion

Purpose: To authorize street-legal “side-by-side” vehicles on LBL federal roads via a permitted, controlled access program.

- Key Features
 - SPVs must meet state licensing requirements (rollover protection, lights, signals, plates, insurance).
 - Three permit types:
 - Recreation Access Permit – seasonal, fee-based
 - Heritage/Cultural Access Permit – free, year-round, for former residents/descendants (via Heritage Board recommendation)
 - Vendor Permit – for businesses offering tours or rentals
 - Approximately 450 miles of roads shown on draft map as eligible.
 - Turkey Bay is excluded—still separate OHV system.
- Rules & Management
 - Speed limits: 35 mph generally; 10 mph in campgrounds.
 - No trail or off-road usage (except limited deer retrieval allowances).

- Stickers required (future possibility of RFID for monitoring).
- Violations may result in permit revocation.
- Seasonal implementation: March–November for general use.
- Monitoring & Enforcement
 - Proposed “SPV monitors” modeled after campground hosts:
 - Volunteers receiving a campsite and fuel
 - Provide visitor contact, education, documentation
 - Serve as eyes/ears for resource protection
- Concerns & Board Discussion
 - Safety issues (wildlife interactions, road conditions, alcohol use).
 - Road degradation and increased maintenance needs.
 - Equity for communities without direct SPV road access.
 - Need to build adaptive management, possible quotas, and two-year evaluation period.
 - Jim agreed to formalize a mandatory two-year reassessment checkpoint in the program’s design.

Public Comments

Written comments were received from Jeff Laird, John Mack, and Whitney Raque. The DFO read the comments, and the board was provided with copies of the comments.

Meeting Closing & Next Steps

Mary expressed her gratitude for everyone’s time and encouraged the following:

- Take time to reflect on the recreation fee proposal; with board members invited to share additional thoughts within 2 - 4 weeks.
- Continued thoughtful, careful deliberation on the SPV program.

Schedule Next Meeting/Adjourn

The DFO adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:00 P.M (CST). The next meeting is scheduled for March 9 -10, 2027, including a field visit.

Certification

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

JAMES MCCOY Digitally signed by JAMES MCCOY
Date: 2026.09.22 10:17:48 -05'00'

James R. McCoy, Designated Federal Officer

MARY MOORE Digitally signed by MARY MOORE
Date: 2026.09.22 13:42:12 -04'00'

Mary Moore, Chairperson