

GRAND GULF MILITARY MONUMENT COMMISSION

AGENCY # 472

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**FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
2019-2023**

Board Members:

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Staff:

Thomas W. Ross, Director

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1. COMPREHENSIVE MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of Grand Gulf Military Monument Commission is to preserve, maintain, operate, share and improve this Civil War Historical Monument for the State of Mississippi including the museum full of priceless artifacts and the buildings and 400+ acres.

2. PHILOSOPHY

The Commissioners of Grand Gulf Military Monument Commission are committed to the continued preservation and responsible maintenance of the original earthworks of this Civil War battlefield, the buildings and valuable artifacts under their domain. The philosophy of the Commissioners and staff is to adhere to the highest professional standards representing the State of Mississippi in quality public service and the preservation and maintenance of our artifacts, buildings and grounds for visitors now and in future years.

3. RELEVANT STATEWIDE GOALS AND BENCHMARKS:

Statewide Goal #1.: To develop a robust state economy that provides the opportunity for productive employment for all Mississippians.

Relevant Benchmarks #1.:

1. To increase the number of day visitors and campers thereby increasing the amount of money that goes into our special funds.
2. Grand Gulf Park was given level funding for FY 2018 (\$276,767). This is not enough to re-fund Pin #5 which is a facility maintenance worker, and therefore we are still short on help. The goal in FY 2019 and future years is to increase visitors and campers so that the Legislature sees the need to fund Pin #5.

Statewide Goal #2.: To ensure that current and future generations have access to the state's abundant natural resources through protection, conservation, and wise development of those resources.

Relevant Benchmarks #2.:

1. Grand Gulf Military Park has 400+ acres which are a natural resource in addition to 10 or so buildings, two of which are from the pre-civil war period. Also included in our "resources" are artifacts dating back to the mastodon era through the Civil War and world wars; American Indian artifacts, hearses, buggies, jail house from the town of Grand Gulf, Catholic Church from Rodney, MS and much more. The Commissioners and staff take very seriously the preservation of ALL artifacts and grounds to have them present for future generations.

4. OVERVIEW OF THE AGENCY 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN:

The Commissioners of Grand Gulf Military Park and the supporting staff will provide quality, professional service to visitors and care to the 400 acres of land with associated monuments, cemetery, Catholic Church, buildings and camping pads. The park is funded with approximately one-third of its budget from raised revenue (admissions, camping and souvenirs) and two-thirds from state support. The commissioners and staff are good stewards of both the money and facilities they are in charge of. Agency goals are:

a. Cooperation with other agencies: In an effort to attract more tourists and campers, this Agency will cooperate and seek the help of the State Department of Tourism and area Chamber of Commerce and State visitor centers. In FY 2017, Grand Gulf Park became a member of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission and also the MS River Geotourism Program through National Geographic. The addition of these two groups has increased interest from people throughout the country. Networking with these and similar agencies offers a way to promote our Park within a well-established State supported operation. We speak to community groups whenever possible.

b. Increase in public awareness: The staff will maintain and upgrade, when necessary, the park website. Brochures will be printed when necessary and distributed through the state at Welcome Centers and to locations out of the state. A Facebook fan page has been established and features upcoming events, park projects and visiting groups. A recent picture on Facebook had 2,414 likes and 11 shares showing that this medium is getting our name out there.

c. Create educational opportunities for visitors: There is much to be learned about the history of the United States and Mississippi through the artifacts and earthworks the park has. School groups come regularly and are encouraged to spend time and ask questions. The park staff is well informed about the relics and grounds. In addition, there are several groups of soldiers who come each year from Camp Shelby, The Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, KS and the War College from Pennsylvania. These are our nation's finest leaders who are here to learn from the past to lead into the future.

d. Preserve and protect the grounds and artifacts: Grand Gulf Park is located on 400 acres of land with numerous earthworks from the Civil War, buildings which date back to the 1760s, a museum with thousands of artifacts both donated and loaned, and 42 full-service camping pads. It takes the staff of seven full time workers to maintain, groom, and preserve these artifacts and areas. Beginning in FY 2017 we are a staff of six. On Memorial Day of 2017 we had a tornado that hit the park causing severe tree damage throughout the park. Local news reporter, Walt Grayson, a huge fan of the park, reported

on the damage and the next week we had volunteers from the Vicksburg Coast Guard Station and AmeriCorp based in Vicksburg bring their equipment and do a lot of needed tree work. They are scheduled to come back in July.

e. Operate with financial responsibility: The Park Commissioners and staff strive to operate within the budget given to us by the Legislature each year. The operating budget for FY 2018 is currently \$276,276 funded with \$170,731 in general fund and \$106,036 in revenue. State budget cuts in FY 2017 amounted to \$9,643. We will run the park in a conservative manner while doing what is necessary in maintenance and repairs to preserve and protect what is here. The Commissioners have raised both the visitor and camping rates effective July 1, 2017 in an effort to increase special fund revenues. Monthly tallies are kept of visitors and campers and this will continue.

5A. AGENCY'S SIGNIFICANT EXTERNAL FACTORS ASSESSMENT:

a. The current economy will always affect the Park's business. The cost of gasoline, vehicles and motor homes directly impact traffic through the park. Current economic trends have prevented some people from retiring and if they can, their expendable retirement money may not be available for travel.

b. Grand Gulf Park is an outside facility except for the museum. Periods of bad weather have a negative effect on day visitors and campers alike.

c. Grand Gulf Park is situated on the Mississippi River. There is the occasion, as in the summer of 2011 and January of 2016 when the river flooded and the park was forced to be closed.

d. Grand Gulf Park benefits by the close vicinity of Grand Gulf Nuclear Power Station in that we usually have at least a few employees that are long-term campers and their families come to visit. However, there are still some people leery of nuclear power and what they perceive as negative effects, and they won't come to visit or stay.

5B. AGENCY'S SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL FACTORS ASSESSMENT:

Grand Gulf Military Park operates with a Commission of five local residents, appointed by the Governor, interested in the welfare and continuation of this historical park. They hold six regular meetings a year with the Director and Administrative Assistant. At these meetings the current budget is discussed, including expenditures and revenue, along with the number of visitors and campers. They also discuss any major problems or projects that need to be dealt with any budget cuts. At these meetings the pay vouchers are approved and signed. The Commissioners use revenue, expenditures and numbers of paying customers as a guide to the success of their stated goals.

6. AGENCY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND MEASURES BY PROGRAM FOR FY 2019 THROUGH FY 2023:

PROGRAM I: HISTORICAL PRESERVATION

GOAL: To provide quality, professional service to visitors and care to the 400 acres of Civil War battlefield land associated with the artifacts, site monuments, cemetery, Catholic Church, building and camping pads.

Objective 1.: Work in cooperation with the State and other agencies to attract more visitors for educational, recreational and camping possibilities. Increased tourism will increase the special funds deposited.

Outcome 1: Increase in #s of people

Output 1: Increase in total revenue

Efficiency: Decrease in cost per visitor

Explanation: Admission costs were raised on July 1, 2016 in hopes to increase revenue per person.

Objective 2: Financial Responsibility

Outcome: Increase revenue for the benefit of the Park's special funds

Output: Prices for camping and visitors increased effective FY 2017 in an effort to increase revenue.

Efficiency: With an increased number of visitors, reduction of day to day costs, and increase in prices, it is anticipated that the cost/person will decrease.

Explanation: The amounts of money budgeted for supplies and maintenance were reduced drastically. Park staff decreased the amount of electricity and gasoline used. Monthly tallies are kept of visitors and campers and strict controls of money earned and spent are kept as well.

Objective 3: Increase in public awareness and educational opportunities: The Commissioners and staff will use every possibility to increase the public visibility of Grand Gulf Military Monument Park.

Outcome 1: Distribute informative pamphlets throughout the state to welcome Centers and tourist stops. Continually update the web site and Facebook page.

Output: Increased numbers of tourists, student groups and visitors. In FY 2017 we became associated with the Mississippi River Parkway Commission and the MS River Geotourism Program.

Explanation: Visitors come to know Grand Gulf Park through word of mouth and public information which includes the website, Facebook, visitor centers, Trip Advisor and other online travel sites.