

**GRAND GULF MILITARY MONUMENT  
COMMISSION**

**AGENCY # 472**

**FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2024 - 2028**

## **1. Comprehensive Mission Statement**

The mission of Grand Gulf Military Monument Commission is to preserve, maintain, operate, share and improve this Historical Monument for the State of Mississippi including the museum, full of priceless artifacts, 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 town, battlefield, the buildings and valuable artifacts under their domain. The philosophy of the Commissioners and staff is to adhere to the highest professional standards possible representing the State of Mississippi. We are committed to provide quality public service and to preserve and maintain our artifacts, buildings and grounds for visitors now and in future years.

## **3. Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks**

Statewide Goal #1.: To increase marketing for and improve the State of Mississippi's most unique State Park, which is listed on the National Historic Register.

Relevant Benchmarks #1.:

To increase the number of day visitors, campers and groups, thereby increasing the amount of money that goes into our special funds.

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.:

Grand Gulf Military Park has 400+ acres which are a natural resource in addition to 10 or so buildings, three of which are from the pre-civil war period. Included in our resources are priceless artifacts dating back to the mastodon era through the World Wars. American Indian artifacts, hearses, carriages, the jail from the town of Grand Gulf, the town of Grand Gulf Cemetery, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, and much more are contained within the Park grounds. The Commissioners and staff strive for 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 that they are charged with maintaining. Agency goals are:

- A. Cooperation and interaction with other agencies: In an effort to attract more tourists and campers, this Agency will continue to cooperate and seek the help of the State Department of Tourism and area Chambers of Commerce and State visitor centers. In FY 2017, Grand Gulf Park became a member of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission and the Mississippi 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.
- 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 Grand Gulf Military Park page has been established and features upcoming events, park projects and visiting groups. In the past month we have reached 16,913 people through posts on this page.
- 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, tour and special interest 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 US Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and the US Army 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 is a challenge for the staff of five full time workers to maintain, groom, and preserve these artifacts and areas. Beginning in FY 2023 we are a staff of five employees: four full time and one part time.
- E. Operate with financial responsibility: The Park Commissioners and staff strive to operate within the budget given to us by the Legislature each year. We will operate the park in a conservative manner while doing necessary maintenance and repairs to preserve and protect our many components. Monthly tallies are kept of visitors and campers. The rates were raised in 2022 to be competitive with other parks and museums.

## **5. External/Internal Assessment**

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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.
- 3) Grand Gulf Park is situated on the Mississippi River. There is the occasion, as in the summer of 2011, January of 2016, March of 2018, and March, May and June of 2019 when the river flooded the main road and sections of the Park, forcing us to close. In 2020, the road and sections of the Park were flooded for a few weeks. However, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically affected the entire operations of the Park. Since January of 2022 we have seen substantial increases of campers, groups and day visitors.
- 4) Grand Gulf Park benefits by the close vicinity of Grand Gulf Nuclear Power Station in that we usually have at least a few of their employees that are long-term campers and their families and friends come to visit the Park. Routine and special outages usually fill our campgrounds to capacity.
- 5) Grand Gulf Military Park operates with a Commission of five area residents, appointed by the Governor, interested in the welfare and continuation of this historical park. They hold at least quarterly meetings a year with the Director. At these meetings, the current budget is discussed, including expenditures and revenue, along with the number of visitors and campers. They discuss any major problems or upcoming projects in addition to the normal daily operations and routine maintenance. 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**

**GOAL: To maintain and preserve the 400+ acres of the historic former town of Grand Gulf, Civil War battlefield land, cemetery, and all artifacts, site monuments, cemetery, Catholic Church, and buildings and increase Park revenue**

**OBJECTIVE A.1. Effectively maintain the historical integrity of all components and update the existing facilities.**

*Output:* Buildings, grounds and park facilities updated and maintained at optimum standards

*Efficiency:* Less future extensive repairs and facilities that meet industry standards

*Explanatory:* Due to previous years' budget cuts the buildings have not been maintained in satisfactory conditions and facilities are antiquated. For the last couple of years, our budget has been increased and we have been

able to address critical issues and move forward with our schedule of updates and repairs. We continue to improve the Park as budget allows

**OBJECTIVE A.2 Work in cooperation with the State and other agencies to attract more visitors for educational and recreational purposes and increase public awareness of our Park**

*Output:* Increased number of visitors, tour groups and campers

*Efficiency:* Increased revenue

*Explanatory:* Networking with other agencies and special interest groups will increase visitors and minimize advertising fees to increase revenue.