



Memorandum from the Office of the Inspector General

September 29, 2009

Janet C. Herrin, WT 10D-K
Jeffrey T. Parsley, EB 3G-C

**FINAL REPORT – INSPECTION 2009-12695-08 – REVIEW OF PICKWICK DAM
TAILWATER CAMPGROUND**

At the request of the Senior Vice President, Office of Environment and Research, we initiated reviews of the 11 Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) managed campgrounds to determine if (1) campgrounds are being operated in accordance with the program intent and (2) campgrounds' operating controls are functioning as intended. This report addresses our finding pertaining to the Pickwick Dam Tailwater Campground.

We found that the campground was operating under the program intent, which is to provide public areas for recreation. During our walkdown, we noted seven out of 95 campsites were occupied. We found the basic operating controls were the functions provided by the TVA Police. In summary, we found the operating controls appear to be functioning as intended and campground guidelines were generally being complied with. However, we did note some minor overall program guideline inconsistencies.

BACKGROUND

TVA operates some 100 public recreation areas throughout the Tennessee Valley, including campgrounds, day-use areas, and boat launching ramps. TVA manages 11 campgrounds throughout the Valley and has set out specific campground rules in various TVA documents to help guide the maintenance and operation of these campgrounds. These documents include:

- Stewardship Guideline 7.2.1 - TVA's Recreation Areas
- Stewardship Guideline 7.1.4 - Developed Recreation Area Rules and Regulations
- Stewardship Guideline 7.1.1 - Administration of Fee Campgrounds and Pavilion Reservations
- Campground Host Procedures and Campground Regulations Handbook (2008 Edition) (Host Handbook)

- Resident Manager Procedures and Campground Regulations Manual (2009 Edition) (Resident Manager Manual)
- Campground Fee Process provided by Facilities

According to Stewardship Guideline 7.2.1, the 11 TVA-managed campgrounds help provide opportunities for public access to and enjoyment of the river system.

Pickwick Dam Tailwater Campground is a self-service campsite.¹ The campground contains 95 campsites, 66 with water and electric hookups. One of the 95 campsites was constructed to meet former accessibility guidelines.² The campground contains many amenities including (1) restrooms with heated showers and flush toilets, (2) a dump station,³ (3) picnic tables and grills, (4) a boat ramp located below the Pickwick Dam, (5) tailwater bank fishing, and (6) bird watching.

All of the 11 TVA-managed campgrounds are available on a first-come, first-serve basis; except for Barton Springs, Cherokee Dam, Mallard Creek, Loyston Point, and Melton Hill campgrounds that operate on a lottery system to initially allocate campsites on opening day at the start of camping season and then manage the remaining season on a first-come, first-serve basis. TVA campgrounds charge the same camping rates and fees. Specifically, during the time period we reviewed, TVA daily and monthly rates were:

- For a campsite without water and electric hookups, \$16 daily and \$240 monthly.
- For a campsite with water and/or electric hookups, \$20 daily and \$300 monthly.
- For a campsite with water, electric, and sewer hookups, \$24 daily and \$360 monthly.

America the Beautiful Pass and older Golden Age and Golden Access Passport programs⁴ can be used at TVA campgrounds to obtain half-price rentals on daily campsites only.

¹ These are campgrounds without a Resident Manager which operate on the honor system. Fees are placed in a lockbox and collected by the designated campground attendant and forwarded to TVA. The designated campground attendant for Pickwick Dam Tailwater Campground is TVA Police.

² We were told by Land and Water Stewardship personnel that campground assessments have been completed and plans are being developed pertaining to the update of campgrounds to current Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines.

³ A dump station is a place where camper wastewater may be discharged into a sanitary sewer system in a safe and responsible way.

⁴ America the Beautiful Access Passes and older Golden Access Passes are for U.S. Citizens or permanent residents with permanent disabilities. America the Beautiful Senior Passes and older Golden Age Passes are for U.S. Citizens or permanent residents age 62 or over. These passes can be purchased through the National Park Service and are lifetime passes.

Facilities Management provided us certain revenue, expense, and occupancy information (i.e., the number of days the campsites were occupied) for fiscal years 2004 – 2008 for the TVA-managed campgrounds, and that information is summarized in Table 1 for Pickwick Dam Tailwater Campground.

Table 1

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Revenue	\$ 82,931	\$ 77,344	\$ 78,920	\$ 84,959	\$ 79,600
Expense	\$ 58,141	\$ 58,997	\$ 75,538	\$ 80,611	\$ 97,878
Occupancy	6008	5390	6184	6241	5488

Four of the 11 TVA-managed campgrounds have a Resident Manager because the campground is not located on a dam reservation. The Resident Manager is to assist TVA in supplying a safe, hazard-free environment for persons using the campgrounds. The Resident Manager is responsible for registering campers, operating the gates, providing information to campers, picking up litter, and various other tasks. Pickwick Dam Tailwater Campground is a self-service campground and does not have a Resident Manager, but utilizes TVA Police to collect money and provide oversight. TVA Facilities Management takes care of maintenance and upkeep, such as lawn care and bathhouse repairs, at Pickwick Dam Tailwater Campground.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of our review of Pickwick Dam Tailwater Campground were to determine if (1) the campground is being operated in accordance with TVA's program intent and (2) the campground's operating controls are functioning as intended.

To achieve our objectives, we:

- Interviewed key TVA personnel and reviewed related TVA policies, processes, procedures, and guidelines to identify program intent and operational controls.
- Reviewed TVA-managed campground assessments as prepared by Land and Water Stewardship and Facilities, including scorecards, assessment briefing papers, and electrical reports to identify potential areas of concern.
- Conducted a walkdown of Pickwick Dam Tailwater Campground to determine whether guidelines are being followed and controls are functioning as intended.
- Compared a sample of remittance registers for June 2009 submitted to Facilities for deposit with records maintained by TVA Police at Pickwick Dam Tailwater Campground to determine whether revenue was accurately reported or discrepancies exist.
- Reviewed historical occupancy reports and revenue information to identify any potential control weaknesses.

The scope of this inspection included activities and operating controls related to Pickwick Dam Tailwater Campground. This inspection was conducted in accordance with the "Quality Standards for Inspection."⁵

FINDINGS

Our review found that Pickwick Dam Tailwater Campground was operating in accordance with the program intent, which is to provide recreation for the public. Additionally, we found the basic operating controls were functions provided by TVA Police. The operating controls appear to be functioning as intended. Furthermore, the campground guidelines were generally being complied with. However, we did note some inconsistencies among applicable TVA guidelines.

PROGRAM INTENT

We observed campers in seven of the 95 campsites during our visit to Pickwick Dam Tailwater Campground. We viewed campers enjoying their campsites and public use areas including the boat ramp. The campground appeared to be well maintained and in good condition. Figures 1 and 2 show people making use of the boat ramp and a campsite.

Figure 1



⁵ The Quality Standards for Inspections issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, Executive Council on Integrity and Efficiency, provide standards for conducting inspections in the Inspector General community.

Figure 2



OPERATING CONTROLS

Pickwick Dam Tailwater Campground utilizes TVA Police to collect money and provide oversight. The functions of TVA Police act as the operating controls for the campground. There are no guidelines documenting the duties and responsibilities of TVA Police; however, from discussions with TVA Police, the following processes are to be completed:

- Unlocks vault and collect payment envelopes multiple times weekly.
- Reviews amount of money submitted for accuracy.
- Verifies occupied campsites have been paid for.
- Approaches campers that have not paid and collects money owed.
- Tracks and fills out occupancy reports.
- Tracks the campers' length of stay and will ask they move if approaching the short term 21 day period.
- Converts all cash collected to money orders and forwards all payments to TVA with a remittance report detailing weekly total.

As part of our review, we (1) assessed the camper payment process, (2) performed a walkdown of the campground to assess compliance with campground guidelines, and (3) compared all existing manuals and guidelines for consistency. While we found the operating controls were generally functioning as intended, some control improvement opportunities may exist pertaining to overall program guideline inconsistencies.

Camper Payments

During our walkdown, we noted seven of the 95 campsites were occupied. TVA Police opened the two campground vaults and showed us that no payments had been submitted in either vault. According to TVA Police, payment envelopes are picked up during the night shift. We compared the seven occupied campsites we identified to the TVA Police Campsite Occupant Report. Five of the seven occupied campsites could be tracked to the TVA Police Campsite Occupant Report. However, the Campsite Occupant Report showed 11 campsites paid through the date of our visit. When asked, TVA Police stated the other two could not be verified to the TVA Police Campsite Occupant Report due to campers moving campsites or checking in after the occupant report was completed for the day of our visit.

No discrepancies were identified when we compared our judgmentally selected sample of remittance registers from June 2009, provided by Facilities, to the documentation maintained by TVA Police.

Campground Guidelines Compliance

We performed a walkdown of Pickwick Dam Tailwater Campground, and we found it to be generally operating in accordance with the guidelines. We created a checklist based upon (1) Stewardship Guideline 7.1.4 - Developed Recreation Area Rules and Regulations, (2) Host Handbook, and (3) Resident Manager Manual. We used the checklist during our walkdown to identify whether the campground was in compliance with the guidelines. We found the campground to be clean, well-maintained, and, based on our walkdown, operated effectively. Based on the specific criteria in the guidelines, we identified one noncompliance. It is provided for informational purposes only and does not require a response or actions from management. The only noncompliance we noted was one minor instance where trash was outside of designated disposal areas, as shown below in Figure 3.

Figure 3



Guideline Alignment and Clarity

During our reviews of the 11 TVA-managed campgrounds, we noted some inconsistencies among the various TVA guidelines utilized for the campgrounds. The detailed findings, recommendations, and management's planned actions were addressed in Inspection 2009-12695-02 – Review of Douglas Dam Headwater Campground.

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Based on the results of this review and since the findings and recommendations regarding overall program guideline inconsistencies were addressed in a separate report, this report does not include any recommendations and is to be used for informational purposes only. Accordingly, no response is necessary.

Information contained in this report may be subject to public disclosure. Please advise us of any sensitive information in this report which you recommend be withheld.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss our observations, please contact Gregory C. Jaynes, Deputy Assistant Inspector General, Inspections, at (423) 785-4810. We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation received from your staff during the inspection.



(For) Robert E. Martin
Assistant Inspector General
(Audits and Inspections)
ET 3C-K

KSL:SDB

Attachment

cc (Attachment):

Peyton T. Hairston, Jr., WT 7B-K
Tom D. Kilgore, WT 7B-K
John E. Long, Jr., WT 7B-K
Richard W. Moore, ET 4C-K
Anda A. Ray, WT 11A-K
Emily J. Reynolds, OCP 1L-NST
Ronald J. Williams, CTR 2C-M
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