



Observation Knob Park
&
—campground—



February 22, 2023

[Recipient Name]

[Recipient Street Address]

[City, State, Zip]

Dear Recipient,

I am writing you to provide an update on Observation Knob Park. As you know, the Park is operated by Sullivan County Tennessee. As mayor of the county, it is my responsibility to ensure that Observation Knob Park is being operated in an efficient manner and in a way that makes the park accessible and enjoyable for all in the community who wish to use it.

In December, the Observation Knob Park Committee submitted a recommendation to my office that we adopt the 2012 Length of Stay Guidelines, established by the owner of the land, Tennessee Valley Authority. We have made the decision it is in the best interest of the park to adopt those policies, effective immediately. They are available for your review on the park's website.

As a first step in implementation of these guidelines, all who are currently occupying a seasonal site at the park must clear their belongings from the park, including campers, decks, and personal property on or before March 15, 2023. This is necessary to provide time for completion of some necessary repairs and allow TVA to inspect the property. We look forward to the continued patronage from those of you who successfully secure one of the approximately 88 seasonal sites the park will offer for the 2023 season. Those sites will be awarded through a lottery held according to TVA guidelines on or about April 1. The new process for accepting seasonal applications (for the approximately 88 seasonal campsites available this camping season) will begin March 20. The only way to secure a site for the 2023 season is to take part in this process and the subsequent lottery. The public will be notified of how to participate in this process and lottery. Also please note that our seasonal rental rate will change to \$300 monthly, water and electric included, in the season and \$90 monthly in the winter months, for storage only. Further details concerning the new process can be obtained from the park director.

These changes will allow us to provide more daily camping for the families in our community as well as provide additional revenue to the park to offset costs for much needed repairs and future upgrades to the facility. During the past year Observation Park Committee Chair Commissioner Darlene Calton and I have reviewed many complaints from park users. Most were contained in an ethics complaint filed with Sullivan County Ethics Committee. These, along with others were reviewed in numerous meetings with the Park Director Chris Ihrke, Mrs. Calton, and me. We are satisfied with the explanations we received and the corrective actions the director has taken. The only remaining issue is the Comptroller's investigation of the illegal raffle held last year. Corrective action has already been taken to prevent any further occurrences. The Park committee chair and I have emphasized to the director and staff that we and they are public servants and that all who use the park will be treated with the upmost respect. We'll continue to work on improving that aspect of providing a public facility for the use of our citizens and taxpayers.

We greatly appreciate your support for our park and thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Thank you.



Richard Venable