

LAKE FANNIN HISTORIC LEASE ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN 2023 - 2024

(1938 view, courtesy of Fannin County Museum of History)



Lake Fannin Historic Lease Annual Operating Plan 2023-2024

Table of Contents

I. Authority & Introduction 3

II. Historical Background 3

III. Mission & Vision..... 4

IV. Goals & Objectives 4

V. Responsibilities of the Operators 5

VI. Description of Lake Fannin Physical Amenities 6

VII. Terms & Conditions..... 7

VIII. Key Personnel & Contact Information 7

IX. Facility Rentals 7

X. Operating Year 2023 – 2024 Priorities 9

XI. Attachment A: Lake Fannin Repair, Restore and Renovate Work and Maintenance Plan.....16

XII. Attachment B – Calendar of Special Events Programming.....17

I. Authority and Introduction

Authority:

- Section 111 of the National Historical Preservation Act of 1966, 54 U.S.C. 30612
- USFS Historical Property Lease issued December 4, 2018

Introduction:

Lake Fannin, located in Fannin County, Texas, is currently under the control of the United States Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service and is leased to Fannin County, Texas on a 30-year lease. This Operating Plan is in accordance with said lease dated October 1, 2018.

The historic Lake Fannin Volunteers are a 501(c)(3) organization for charitable, tax-significant donations. The Lake Fannin Volunteers are now proposing to be responsible for the Fannin County elected officials to continue the future operations of the historic site (on 197 acres) under a thirty-year lease agreement between the U.S. Forest Service and Fannin County.

II. Historical Background

The Lake Fannin Organization Camp was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

The Lake Fannin Organization Camp, built between 1936 and 1938, was the first Resettlement Administration (RA) project of its size in the United States and the only one of its kind in Texas attributed to the RA. Planning began in 1933 or 1934, under the direction of Fannin County RA director Malcom Campbell. At the time, soil depletion and erosion had rendered much of the agricultural land in north Texas useless. In an attempt to halt the erosion of soils, an existing lake on the property was drained and a new, larger lake was built. Construction of the dam began in early 1936, and by the fall of that year, ten of the sixteen overnight cabins had been completed. The entire complex was completed by January of 1938. The over 400 workers employed in the construction of the site, planting and furniture making, were hired from the Fannin county relief rolls.

The camp is significant in the area of Politics and Government in that it is representative of the New Deal era public works projects. The June 23, 1936 issue of the *Bonham Daily Favorite* attributes the authorization of this project, along with several others in Fannin County, to the efforts of Congressman Sam Rayburn further enhancing its significance in this area.

The camp layout, architectural and design elements and building materials are all distinctive to planned landscapes created by federal public works projects during the 1930s, thus the camp is significant in the area of Landscape Architecture. The camp possesses significance in the area of Conservation as an example of the successful effort in the reclamation and conservation of badly eroded, unproductive sub-marginal agricultural lands. The selection of this particular site for this camp was predicated on the desire to stem the ravaging effects of soil erosion, caused by many years of agricultural overuse and compounded by dramatic shifts in weather patterns resulting in what is termed the "Dust Bowl era."

The camp is also significant in the area of Entertainment/Recreation as it provided the residents of Fannin County an important recreational resource that was not available prior to its construction.

The land for the Lake Fannin Organizational Camp was originally purchased by the city of Bonham in 1900 for the purpose of constructing a country club. By 1930, a small lake had been constructed, but

further development was delayed when the local economy worsened; the small dam eventually burst and the lake dried up, becoming a catch basin for soils being eroded from the adjacent hillsides. The main goal of the RA Land Utilization Project at this location was to halt the erosion, restore productivity for lands that were sub-marginal for agricultural production, and, in the process, provide an opportunity for meaningful employment and enjoyable recreation experiences for the citizens of Fannin County. The newly constructed 75-acre lake, with its lodge, overnight cabins and other amenities, quickly became the focal point of the area, but it was the terracing and revegetation of the surrounding hillsides that eventually halted the erosion and restored the land. Lake Fannin became a popular leisure spot even before the construction of all facilities was completed. By the summer of 1940, the complex would receive hundreds of visitors per weekend.

Lake Fannin faded in the 1940s with the creation of huge Lake Texoma in adjacent Grayson County. It was closed to the public in 1954 through the 1970s. In 1989, only an onsite caretaker was on hand to keep vandals at bay and in the early 1990s, the caretaker vacated.

III. Mission & Vision

- **Mission**

To provide a safe and gratifying experience for the families of Fannin County through the historic nature of Lake Fannin Historic Lease area.

- **Vision**

To obtain the funds necessary to restore and maintain the Lake Fannin Historical Area; this would allow for the residents and visitors of Fannin County and North East Texas to have a usable recreational venue which includes camping, fishing, hiking and other outdoor sports.

Lake Fannin is a center for family-friendly outdoor activity, whose amenities allow patrons to function safely and enjoyably and whose reputation retains not only families' recreational desires, but also the historical significance of the historic leased area, parallel with the National Register of Historic Places.

IV. Goals & Objectives

- To protect, stabilize, preserve, restore and reconstruct the structures and surrounding park grounds of the Lake Fannin Historical Site.
- The Operational Plan for immediate and longer range implementation recognizes three distinct "on the ground" zones. The Lodge will be the main priority. On the western bluff, the Lodge and nearby structures (including the Caretaker's Residence, Rustic Cabins, bathhouse and latrine) will have adjacent areas to permit parking for indoor public gatherings and outdoor activities such as picnics, hiking, and historical interpretations of the site. The emphasis here will be on low-impact, daytime visits and limited overnight primitive camping, with the area appearing much as it did in the 1940's and 1950's. Other locations include the bike trail and the lake. The goal for these locations is to maintain and make available to the public on a limited basis. At this time, it is anticipated that the historic area will be open on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays and camping will be limited to primitive tent camping.

V. Responsibilities of the Operators

To fulfill goals and responsibilities of Lake Fannin Historic Lease area, there are 4 critical partners: United States Forest Service (USFS), Texas Historical Commission, Fannin County Government and Lake Fannin Volunteers (LFV) and 3 supporting partners: Fannin County Board of Directors, Fannin County Historical Commission and Secretary of the Interior Professional Standards.

- United States Forest Service
 - The US Forest Service's responsibilities include approving all activities of the operations of the lease.

- State Historical Preservation Office
 - A Programmatic Agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office will be developed for direction on future consultation. Additionally, any ground disturbing operations will be coordinated under the forthcoming Programmatic Agreement and is subject to the Section 106 federal regulatory review process.
 - An operating plan will be submitted by October 1 annually. Fannin County will officially submit the Operating Plan annually for their review and approval. Additionally, any renovations required for structures, and or the property, will be presented to the Texas Historical Commission for their review and approval.

- Fannin County Government
 - The Fannin County Government will be the prime lease holder of the property and will be responsible for the volunteers and the use of the Lease by the public. A Business Plan will be developed within the first year on the lease.

- Fannin County Board of Directors
 - County created body that serves as a liaison between the U.S. Forest Service and Fannin County.

- Lake Fannin Volunteers.
 - The Lake Fannin Volunteers will be a subcontractor to Fannin County Government and will be responsible for operations, management and income for restoration of the leased area.

- Fannin County Historical Commission
 - Because of Lake Fannin's designation on the National Register of Historic Places, the support and responsibility of county and state agencies will be defined by mutual consent and cultivated.

- Secretary of the Interior Professional Standards
 - Under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Secretary of the Interior is responsible for establishing professional standards and for providing guidance on the preservation of the Nation's historic properties.

 - *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* applies to all grant-in-aid projects assisted through their Historic Preservation Fund (authorized by

the NHPA) and are intended to be applied to a wide variety of resource types, including buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts.

The Standards address four treatments: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. The treatment Standards developed in 1992, were codified as 36 CFR Part 68 in the July 12, 1995 Federal Register (Vol. 60, No. 133). They replaced the 1978 and 1983 versions of 36 CFR Part 68, entitled *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects*. The revised Guidelines herein replace the Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings, published in 1995 to accompany the treatment Standards.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties are regulatory only for projects receiving Historic Preservation Fund grant assistance and other federally-assisted projects. Otherwise, these Guidelines are intended to provide general guidance for work on any historic building.

Another regulation, 326 CFR Part 67, focuses on "certified historic structures" as defined by the Internal Revenue Service Code of 1986. The Standards for Rehabilitation cited in 36 CFR Part 67 should always be used when property owners are seeking certification for federal tax benefits.

VI. Description of Lake Fannin Physical Amenities

The historic Lake Fannin, located 17 miles north of Bonham, Texas, is part of a 2,025-acre property and has six main structures throughout the property that are established to encourage recreational activities/events.

- The Lodge
This building is the signature structure of the complex, functioning as the hub for all social activities within the complex during the early years of its existence. This 53' x 86' stone structure is located on the high ridge overlooking the Red River valley to its west. The original floor plan included a dining hall, foyer, kitchen with walk-in pantry and two large fireplaces (located on the north wall of the foyer and on the east wall of the dining hall) that dominate the interior furnishings. The lodge retains its architectural and historical integrity through its pine paneling, a flagstone terrace (in its original configuration) and French doors that separate the dining hall and foyer.
- The Bathhouse
This structure was used as a changing location for swimmers. It consists of two large rooms connected in the middle to a snack station. The building has restroom facilities and was restored during the prior lease.
- Caretaker's Residence
The Caretaker's Residence includes two bedrooms, one bathroom, a living room and a kitchen. At the last inspection, the structure requires repairs to the roof and within the house as well. This structure is not currently suitable for habitation, and stabilization of the structure, including roof repair will need to be conducted as soon as possible.
- Water Tower & 5,000-gallon Cypress Water Tank
Currently, the historic lease area draws water from a co-op water system and not from the water tower. The water tower needs structural upgrades to assure that it remains upright. It is one of

Lake Fannin Historic Lease Annual Operating Plan 2023-2024

- During this operating plan, the campsite area will be inventoried and planned for future restoration and use.
-
- In 2023-2024 continue a formal planning process for Fannin County future work will have started to function. Those functions include the following:
 - Restoration:
 - Reclaim campgrounds
 - Clear camp sites (brush and debris), restore fire pits and make available approximately 2/3 of the main camp area.
 - Clear cabin 1, 2 and 3 sites. Remove small trees and brush to permit tent camping. This area provides the best access to lake view
 - Continue working on latrine to bring into compliance.
 - Improve area around latrine to allow guests to use the facility. This includes structure restoration and area cleanup improvement.
 - Develop funding source
 - Develop plan to deal with water tower/other structures
 - Best potential for restoration
 - Develop funding source
 - Develop plan for restoration of caretaker's residence
 - Clear area of debris to enable the workers to safely assess repairs needed and to execute those repairs
 - Develop structure restoration plan to bring building into approvable code for living standards
 - Develop funding through fundraising events and donations within but not limited to Fannin County
 - Boy Scout or similar organizations work projects
 - "Camp for work" agreement
 - Hold at least one multi-group event
 - Trail and Bridge Maintenance
 - Improve trail and bridge areas to allow guests to use the trails in a safe manner.
 - Hold open house
 - Maintenance/Repairs:
 - As per guidelines with applicable federal and state statute, the State Historical Preservation Office, currently the Texas Historical Commission, will be consulted for their approval annually for proper upkeep of historical areas and the necessary process to ensure historical preservation and accuracy of the Lake Fannin Historical Area.

Lake Fannin Historic Lease Annual Operating Plan 2023-2024

- A calendar maintenance plan will be developed by Fannin County for grounds and structures before October 1 each year. The plan will include the following points:
 - Review of the existing structures' stability and necessary improvements to meet code and safety guidelines.
 - Review and development of plans to maintain non-structures such as the dam, lake fronts, bike trail, & camp sites.
 - A plan to address encroachment of trees and shrubs, specifically poison ivy, poison sumac, poison oak and other harmful plants.
 - A plan for scheduled work days by the workers to remove dead trees and shrubs and restore areas which are subject to erosion.
 - As a part of monthly meetings of the Lake Fannin Board, progress will be reviewed and documented for these areas.

- Hold monthly work days

- Continue maintenance of dam and **hiking/bike** trail

- Utilize prison community work crews for building and grounds maintenance

- Maintain/pump septic tanks

- Provide general maintenance via work when necessary

- Operations:
 - Fee structure:
 - Lodge: Rental for the lodge will be based on weekend use primarily for weddings, family reunions, private parties and fundraising events. Because this is the area where most of the rental fees are generated, it is important that the fees cover the utilities and maintenance.
 - Camping: Camping will be permitted between Fridays' sunrise and the following Sundays' sunset.

 - Develop access schedule and communicate via website
 - Fannin County will maintain website.
 - Monthly meetings will occur with Fannin County officials and other interested parties to communicate and report issues and future activities.

- Administration:
 - Seek grants and sponsor funding
 - Develop and publish calendar
 - Continue website development
 - Hold at least 2 public events such as Chamber mixer to get local support

Lake Fannin Historic Lease Annual Operating Plan 2023-2024

- Partner with community groups to develop fund raisers for the historic lease area
- Continue to be a part of Chamber of Commerce

Additional detail includes the following:

Category 1: Buildings and Structures

U. S. Forest Services shall approve all improvements and repairs to infrastructure or land prior to start up, and projects shall be in accordance with U.S.F.S. guidelines. Project planning approval will evaluate materials, time periods and methods & equipment to be used. Consultation and project approval with the State Historic Preservation Office/Texas Historical Commission (SHPO) is required prior to work.

- Lodge
- Caretaker's Cabin
- Latrines
- Bath House
- Storage and Equipment Sheds
- Water Tower
- Bridges on Foot and Bicycle Path
- Reconstruction of Pier on Lake
- Cabins

Category 2: Dam, Shoreline and Upland Areas

Vegetation and overgrowth will be removed through chemical and mechanical means. All chemical control will follow Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension guidelines.

- Clearing of vegetation around Lodge Area
- Reclaim Camp Grounds
- Clear Cabin Sites of vegetation and debris
- Clear Hiking/Bicycle Path of vegetation
- Clear road and Southwest entrance for emergency evacuations and traffic flow
- Improve Gates and Fencing for both entrances
- Control brush and regrowth on Dam
- Fish restocking for lake
- Removal of vegetation in the lake
- Clearing of vegetation from Shoreline
- Install and maintain a security camera system

Operating Season/Schedule

The initial signing of the lease agreement with Fannin County from the present to September 30, 2024 defines the scope of work of Fannin County. Currently, the Historical Area is closed to the general public, except during the rental of the Lodge. The intent is to open all facilities to the public when the buildings and grounds are ready for safe public usage. The projected hours of operation will be Friday-Sunday, from 8AM to dusk.

Facility Use and Services

- **Lodge**

The Lodge in the Historical Area can be rented for special events. All rentals require a member of the Lake Fannin Volunteers to be on site to supervise during the course of the event. This includes preparation, event and clean up. If alcohol is served, a Deputy of the Fannin County Sheriff's Department or other approved officer must be on site for an additional fee paid by the renter. If an officer other than from the Sheriff's office is used, that officer must be approved by the Fannin County Judge or County Auditor.

- **Camping**

The camp sites are currently closed until clearing of the camp sites and renovations to the latrine facilities are completed. When the structures and camp areas are restored, they will be used for camping, hiking, biking and other outdoor sports.

- **Utilities**

- Water: White Shed Co-Op (903-583-4928, Ivanhoe, TX)
- Electricity: Reliant Electric Company (713-207-7777 or 1-866-222-7100)
- Trash Pick-up: County Trash Company (903-583-3610, Bonham, TX)
- Sewer: On grounds septic system which is pumped and removed by a certified disposal company (local septic company)
- Removal of dead and hazardous trees will be done by a qualified sawyer or an insured professional tree removal firm.

- **Fundraising & Reinvestment**

- Occasional events to be held on site for fundraising purposes with the revenue generated being reinvested back into the Lake Fannin Historical Lease Area for restoration/maintenance.

- **Staff & Procedures**

- During public use of Lake Fannin Historic Lease Area, the staffing will be handled by Fannin County, who may choose to delegate proper authority to members of the Lake Fannin Volunteers. While no hiring of employees is expected at this time, should the occasion arise during the 2023-2024 season, hiring procedures will follow policies mandated by Fannin County.

- **Accessibility & Discrimination**

- Fannin County will comply with all USFS policies and procedures with Fannin County in regard to providing ramping and access.
- Fannin County will regularly work with Volunteers to make sure they are properly educated on the law, and are ready to assist elderly and disabled persons during their visits to the historic leased area.

Health and Safety Information

- **Health**

Fannin County takes health and safety issues very seriously and will comply with regular county standards and inspections upon signing the lease agreement.

- **Safety**

- Fire and safety orientation will be held annually along with emergency evacuation procedures.
- Volunteers will be taught emergency evaluation procedures, and emergency evacuation maps will be posted.
- No outside camp fires are allowed anywhere on the Lodge grounds. Fires are only allowed in designated campfire areas.
- Volunteers will be trained in the use of fire extinguishers and fire suppression equipment.
- Upon implementation of the lease, and in on-going safety measures, volunteers will remove flammable debris off roofs and from around structures. Smoke detectors will be installed, and batteries replaced annually in proper locations. The county fire Marshal will perform yearly on-site inspections.
- Volunteers will be made especially aware of the dangers of wildfires.
- Volunteers will be urged to report and douse any campfire they see smoldering while on their walks and hikes on and outside Lake Fannin Historic leased property.
- Emergency Fire Plan: For the safety of the public the following will be implemented:
 - An exit strategy posted in the Lodge, at the latrine and the bike trail-head.
 - County will submit a safety contact list with contact information (names, phone numbers, emails, etc.) to U.S. Forest Service. List will be updated and posted in an appropriate location at the lodge.
- Water and waste water inspections to be done annually.
- Fence inspection to be completed on west side of lodge facing Red River.

- **Emergency Fire Plan**

For the safety of the public, the following Emergency Fire Plan is implemented:

- An exit strategy posted in the Lodge, at the latrine and the bicycle train-head
- Telephone Fire Department: 911
- Fannin County Sheriff's Department: 903-583-2143
- Posted signs when the fire ban is in effect
- Campfire regulations posted

Security

Lake Fannin maintains a close working relationship with the Fannin County Sheriff's Department. The main gate is closed and locked from late evening to early morning and remains locked unless special events are scheduled. A security camera system has been installed and will be monitored by the Fannin County Sheriff's Department and County Auditor. Fannin County also requests the approval of a temporary travel camper to be placed in the lease area for use by a caretaker.

Wildlife

Harassment of the wildlife will not be tolerated. This includes approaching, handling, feeding or contact of any kind. The wild hogs are dangerous and can be unpredictable, but by far the most dangerous hog

in the woods is a sow with young pigs. This situation is best handled by leaving the area in the direction opposite of the grown hogs. **DO NOT TRY AND CATCH ONE OF THE PIGLETS!**

Pets

Pets will be allowed on a 6-foot (or shorter) leash and must be controlled by an adult at all times. At no time will pets be allowed to be tied up. Pets are not allowed in the lodge or cabins. Pet waste (feces) must be picked up immediately and disposed of in the proper containers using a pet waste bag.

Special Events/Programming

A calendar of Special Events and Programs will be supplied to the U.S. Forest Service when determined, see Attachment B for further information.

Accessibility and Discrimination

Lake Fannin, Fannin County, Texas complies with applicable federal, state, and local civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, religion, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity, spousal affiliation or sex.

It is our understanding that all information included in the Annual Fannin Lake Operating Plan is subject to change, and should be documented by both USFS and Fannin County representatives.

XI. Attachment A – Lake Fannin Repair, Restore, and Renovate Work and Maintenance Plan

Category 1: Buildings and Structures

- **Lodge:** Repairs necessary to make the building water and weather tight. This includes, but is not limited to, roof repair and/or replacement, building dry rot and termite damage, paint as necessary and other items necessary to improve or maintain the structure.
- **Caretaker’s Cabin:** Repairs necessary to make the building water and weather tight. This includes, but is not limited to, roof repair and/or replacement, building dry rot and termite damage, paint as necessary and other items necessary to improve or maintain the structure. Repair water damage inside of cabin and necessary repairs to improve the livability of the structure.
- **Latrines:** Work necessary to bring the latrines up to health standards. Improve area surrounding latrines to allow guests to utilize the facility. This includes, but is not limited to, restoration, rebuild and other items deemed necessary for utilization.
- **Bath House:** Repairs necessary to make the building water and weather tight. This includes, but is not limited to, roof repair and/or replacement, building dry rot and termite damage, paint as necessary and other items necessary to improve or maintain the structure. Bring structure up to usable standards and improve area surrounding the bath house to allow guests to utilize the facility. This includes, but is not limited to, restoration, rebuild and other items deemed necessary for utilization.
- **Storage and Equipment Shed:** Repairs necessary to make the building water and weather tight. This includes, but is not limited to, roof repair and/or replacement, building dry rot and termite damage, paint as necessary and other items necessary to improve or maintain the structure. Improve area around the structure.

Lake Fannin Historic Lease Annual Operating Plan 2023-2024

- Water Tower: Repairs and renovation necessary to extend the life of the structure. Improve area around the structure.
- Bridges on Hiking/Bicycle Path: Inspect bridges and make necessary repairs for the safe passage of the public. Clear surrounding areas of debris and vegetation.
- Lake Pier: Reconstruct the Lake Pier to the original size and location.
- Cabins: Repairs necessary to make the building water and weather tight. This includes, but is not limited to, roof repair and/or replacement, building dry rot and termite damage, paint as necessary and other items necessary to improve or maintain the structure. Improve area around the structures.

Category 2: Dam, Shoreline and Upland Areas

- Lodge Area: Clearing of vegetation by mechanical and chemical means.
- Camp Grounds: Clearing of camp sites of vegetation by mechanical and chemical means. Restore fire pits and make available for use and rental.
- Road: Clear road and Southwest entrance for emergency evacuations and traffic flow. Remove vegetation by mechanical and chemical means. Improve road for safe passage.
- Gates and Fencing: Improve gates and fencing for both entrances. This includes, but is not limited to, painting fences and gates, remove old fencing and replace with new. Remove or improve old gate and replace.
- Dam: Control brush, vegetation and regrowth on dam by mechanical and chemical means.
- Lake: Survey of Lake for fish population by Texas Parks and Wildlife. Restock fish. Remove vegetation in the lake.
- Shoreline: Remove vegetation from the Lake shoreline by chemical and mechanical means.
- Security Camera: Install and maintain a security camera system at the gates and lodge. Monitoring will be conducted by the Fannin County Sheriff's Department.

XII. Attachment B, Calendar of Special Events/Programming (Dates to be published)

Special Events/Programming


- Open House, emphasizing hiking and bicycle trail opening to the public.
- Open House/Fund Raiser Event.
- Lake Fannin Volunteer scheduled workdays.
- Training and Informational workshops for current and potential volunteers.


Lake Fannin Historic Lease Annual Operating Plan 2023-2024

- Hold at minimum 2 public events, such as Chamber of Commerce mixer to secure local support.
- Other events and programs, such as events about county history.

2023-2024 Project Priority List for Lake Fannin

- 1) Complete Programmatic Agreement (PA) with SHPO.
- 2) Will submit a proposal of a prescribed burn of the vegetation on the dam between the USFS and TPWD.
- 3) Will work to clear and open the southwest entrance for emergency evacuations.
- 4) Clear hiking trails of overgrown vegetation.
- 5) Control brush and vegetation around historical structures.

 H. N. Cunningham | 10/10/23
Fannin County Judge (Signature) | Printed Name | Date

 Jeffrey Stoney | October 12, 2023
U.S Forest Service (Signature) | Printed Name | Date