



INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT

2010-11-0278

September 30, 2010

INSPECTION OF FORT HARRISON STATE PARK

Inspector General David O. Thomas, after an inspection by Director of Administration Melissa Hauger, reports as follows:

On Thursday, September 30, 2010, an unannounced inspection by a member of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) was made of Fort Benjamin Harrison State Park, Marion County, Indiana. The property is managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This inspection was conducted to observe the effectiveness of the recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds that were used for various projects within Indiana State Parks. The inspection also observed the use of various state contracts/contractors in effect throughout various state properties.

The OIG is responsible for addressing fraud, waste, abuse, and wrongdoing in agencies. IC 4-2-7-2(b). The OIG is also charged to recommend policies and carry out other activities designed to deter, detect, and eradicate fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and misconduct in state government. IC 4-2-7-3(2).

Upon arrival at the entrance of the Park, the Gatehouse was found to be

staffed with one person, who was friendly. While driving through the park, the grounds appeared to be mowed and well maintained. Restroom areas were also clean.

The Visitors' Center appeared to be clean and staffed. An employee at the main desk offered a greeting, as did another employee in a side office area. The Center houses one small room of exhibits, but construction/renovations appeared to be under construction in a separate room at the time of inspection.

The Natural Resource Education Center building was open, however, the front desk was not staffed and the lobby area was empty. Since this is a training facility, it is possible there were no events occurring that day, and visitors were not expected. Circumstances being unclear, and with no staff present for questioning, this building was not further inspected.

The Museum of 20th Century Warfare opened in May 2010 and appears to be a valued addition to the Park based on the many visitors that were present during inspection. A volunteer, who was present at the front desk of the Museum, offered a kind greeting and briefly explained a little about the Park and Museum history. Exhibits were interesting and informative.

Upon arrival at the Saddle Barn, a large group of horses were outside within the holding area and appeared healthy, with ample food and water available. Several employees were observed tending to tasks within the barn area.

The exterior of the Fort Harrison State Park Inn was well maintained, however, at the time of arrival to the Park in the morning (approximately

8:30AM), no cars were present in the parking lot. Stopping by closer to noon, three cars were present, two being in the back lot behind the building. Questioning whether the Inn was open for business, a visit inside proved employees were present: one at the front desk, speaking on the phone, and another in a side room using a computer. No guests were seen.

Regarding the inspection of the use of ARRA funds within the Park, the state website www.invest.in.gov states that ARRA funds were used by the Young Hoosier Conservation Corps to repair muskrat and beaver damage to the Duck Pond Dam (other projects were listed, but information was too vague to find the various locations). The Camp Creek Trail was hiked to reach Duck Pond, however, it was unclear as to whether the area accessible from the trail contained the Dam area referenced in the ARRA report. Photos were taken of a possible area where dirt had been moved to clear an opening under a foot bridge (see Exhibit A), but the results of the use of ARRA funds within the Park will remain inconclusive at this time.

Finding nothing further, inspection was completed at Fort Harrison State Park.

Dated this 30th day of September, 2010.

APPROVED BY:



David O. Thomas, Inspector General

EXHIBIT A:
Possible evidence of repairs to muskrat and beaver damage:

