

Park Information Podcast Transcript

Hello and welcome back to the Prairie City podcast. I am Addison Fisher (A) and today I am joined by Jeanne Sisson (J).

(A) Jeanne, why don't you go ahead and tell us about yourself. What your position in State Parks is and overview of your duties.

(J) I am currently a Superintendent 2 at Prairie City and Clay Pit State Vehicle Recreation Area. That includes oversight of all the programs area, so interpretation, education, law enforcement and public safety, and maintenance.

(A) So let's dig into the park. What are the different areas of the park?

(J) The park is divided into zones, five different riding zones. But, basically what you have is riding areas. In this park, especially compared to some other state vehicular recreation area, has quite a few facilities. Facilities for motor sports, for practicing skills. Most of our parks do have practice tracks, which we have those. But we also have facilities such as, the cart track and other special, the MX track, 4X4 track. So, that is kind of how the park is made up.

(A) Okay. So, what type of riding is allowed in the park?

(J) You can ride motorcycles, side by sides, which are also known as ROB's, ATV's, and 4 wheel drive vehicles.

(A) Alright. So, I know as state parks you offer a lot of different programs in the different parks. But what programs are offered specifically here.

(J) We do have riding safety classes that we offer, motorcycle, ATV's, and ROB's. We also have educational programs that are given by our interpreters. Especially during the weekend outreach programs. Those are programs designed to increase rider awareness of environmental impacts and also help them to enjoy the outdoors when they are recreating.

(A) Okay. So, you mentioned there were different areas in the park. Like the go cart track and stuff. What other types of concessionaires are there in the park?

(J) We currently have three concession operations and are working on developing a fourth. One of them, I mentioned earlier, the go cart facility. Currently operating as All-Star Karting. They offer lessons and races. They have races for people who have their own karts, practice sessions and corporate events. We have PCMX, which is, that is on the Hangtown track facility. That is a concession that shares the facility with two or three special events a year. And that has professional level track racing. But, they also cater to people who are rising to the professional status. That is a track that is built up more than our practice track for expert riders. That is PCMX. Then we have Mud Mart, that is a concession that offers sales of parts that are commonly broken when you are out riding. The idea is, someone is out riding, they drop their bike, brake a lever. They can get back on the road or the trail, without having to leave the park. They also do some repairs and offer food, snacks, water, not full on meals, but snacks and such, for riders, for their convenience.

(A) So can you talk about the forth concessionaire?

(J) Yes I can. The forth is currently being operated as a flat track. The operation has its speedway events and other a variety of other events that are typically held on a flat track. We are currently awaiting a bid process in order to get a permanent concessionaire. Right now, we have Big Time Speedway operating there on a special event permit and doing well.

(A) You keep mentioning special events. What type of special events are held in the park?

(J) There are a wide variety of special events held here at prairie City. Mostly motor sports type of events. Ranging from, we even have mountain bike events that occur in the spring season. On Wednesdays, when the park is closed for maintenance operations. But we do open it up in the afternoon for mountain bike races. We have all kinds of motorcycle events, such as, air scrambles, motocross events, speedway. Of course, the concessionaires hold events at their facilities. So, we get kart track racing, quarter midget racing. And the big rising event, is the 4x4 events, in particular, rock racing. Similar to what we see cross-country in other parts of the world. Actually, such as King of the Hammer, is a very large rock racing event that occurs in southern California, in natural conditions. We have a one-mile track, a promoter comes in and adds obstacles and the race is on. That's been an event that is really getting popular. It is a great spectator sport. So, we have those 4x4 events as well.

(A) Alright, cool. So, what is the biggest special event that the park hosts currently.

(J) Currently is biggest is still our signature event and that is the Hangtown motocross event. It is one is the series of twelve, of the Lucas oil series motocross races that occur all over the nation. We kick it off in May. We kick off that series with, it is called, Hangtown event. And we have gotten as many as twenty thousand people at that event. The numbers vary depending on how things are economically and other events in the area. Things like that do effect the attendance at that event. But that is currently our largest event and we are very proud to hold that event here. It has been here since the state has owned the park.

(A) What is the parks busy season?

(J) The busy season is fall through spring. Our slow season is in the summer when the weather is hot. People with motorcycles that have red stickers, for registration, cannot ride during those months, summer months, due to air quality concerns. So, June, July, and August is kind of our slow season.

(A) What is your favorite thing to do in the park.

(J) I enjoy, when I have time, I enjoy getting out and practicing my riding skills. And I enjoy spectating some of the events we have out here. I enjoy coming out and watching the rock racing and motocross racing.

(A) Is there anything else you think we should know about Prairie City? Or any park within the Twin Cities District?

(J) Just that we are here for the riders and that our goal is, in all of our parks in the state park system off-highway vehicle parks, our goal is to help people ride and provide them opportunities to help them to do it safely. While balancing the impact on the environment. Which means sometimes we have to make decisions that are not appreciated by everyone, but in the end, our goal is to keep those opportunities available for everyone. For this generation, the next generation, and generations after that.

(A) One last question. Take your time. What does Prairie City mean to you?

(J) Slight pause...Prairie City to me is just a team of really dedicated, hard working, employees who are entirely, including myself, who are dedicated to that mission. That mission providing off-highway recreation and serving the people who ride.

(A) Thank you for joining us on Prairie City podcast. Once again, my name is Addison Fisher and I was joined today by Jeanne, who is Prairie City's Sector Superintendent 2.