

News Release

Office of the Mayor | G.T. Bynum



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City and River Parks Take Steps to Protect Turkey Mountain and River Parks System

Mayor G.T. Bynum, River Parks Authority Chair Robin Ballenger, and Executive Director of River Parks Matt Meyer announced today that the City will present a master lease agreement for consideration by the River Parks Authority that could consolidate property leases and strengthen and protect the long-term preservation of more than 900 acres of River Parks land for the public's use.

"This could be one of the most important preservation initiatives in our city's history," Mayor G.T. Bynum said. "With a master lease agreement, we can preserve Turkey Mountain and the River Parks for future generations, give private donors assurance their philanthropic investments at those locations will be secure, and provide our development community with a crystal clear understanding of the options available to them in the river corridor."

Currently, the City has the option to cancel River Parks leases with only 30 days' notice. The new approach of a master lease agreement could end the cancellation option and further protect park lands. The master lease would also allow River Parks Authority the ability to keep a consistent management process across all properties to foster continued investment and improvements to Turkey Mountain and trail systems.

The master lease agreement is still under review by the River Parks Authority Board of Trustees, but both parties are excited about the potential a new master lease agreement could bring.

"The City of Tulsa and River Parks are taking a powerful step today to safeguard our iconic riverfront," Robin Ballenger said. "Pending review by the River Parks Authority, the proposed lease agreement could enable Tulsans to engage in a master plan for Turkey Mountain, and give all of us the security of knowing that this magnificent park will be an ongoing gift for generations to come. River Parks is so grateful to Mayor Bynum and his team for their wisdom and cooperative spirit."

Pending approval from the River Parks Authority, the City of Tulsa and River Parks Authority could enter into a 10-year lease agreement with the option to renew four times every 10 years, in effect making the agreement a 50-year lease. The master lease agreement with the River Parks Authority would encompass City owned land along the Arkansas River Corridor, which is comprised of three "classes". (Please see the attached map).

Under the proposed agreement, class one lands would be comprised of the Turkey Mountain Wilderness area, which is highly protected in the new agreement and marked for preservation. Class two lands would encompass land on the east side of the river, which is primarily trails and

park land, and gives River Parks the full authority to maintain and improve the trails system and park area. Class three lands are on the west side of the river and have been identified as strategic economic development opportunities in the river design overlay.

About River Parks

Spread along miles of the Arkansas River, as it flows through Tulsa, River Parks provides some of the metropolitan area's finest outdoor recreation. More than 26 miles of asphalt-surfaced recreation trails weave past picnic areas, playgrounds, fountains and sculptures. The park's landscape ranges from manicured lawns to the rugged terrain of the Turkey Mountain Urban Wilderness Area. Recreation in River Parks includes fishing, rowing, rollerblading, kayaking, disc golf, hiking, cycling and horseback riding.

About River Parks Authority

The River Parks Authority is a public trust authority that is funded by the City of Tulsa, Tulsa County, and substantial private contributions that are administered by the River Parks Foundation, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

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