

Response from Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation (AFORR) Aug 25, 2014

My first visit to Oak Ridge was picnicking, swimming, and canoeing at Clark Center Park. And that visit is a key reason why, when I moved to East Tennessee, I decided to reside in Oak Ridge.

Clark Center Park is the prime recreational area of Three Bends Scenic and Wildlife Management Refuge Area on the ORR. In 1999 former Energy Secretary Bill Richardson dedicated the Three Bends for the next generation "forever." In fact he held up my 10-year-old son and proclaimed "this is for you kid."

Now as president of the Advocates for the Oak Ridge Reservation (AFORR), we endorse preserving the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR) for its diverse values including recreation, science and technology, conservation, economy and jobs, public health and safety, education, and historical significance. Clark Center Park is the prime recreational area of the ORR. AFORR favors maintaining the fishing and swimming areas, playground, two picnic areas, restrooms, boat ramp, and two ball fields. Access to the Gallaher Bend Greenway should be continued.

In May 2006 AFORR convened a meeting of various groups with conservation-related interests in the area to share information and perspectives on the ORR's values and its future, and the Three Bends area, which contains Clark Center Park, was recognized as the "crown jewel of the Oak Ridge Reservation."

AFORR's position is that the Park must remain public in perpetuity. It's already highly used and is greatly appreciated by those who go there. We favor maintaining existing amenities and not making the Park into a highly developed marina (there are already plenty of those in the region). Many of us appreciate that Clark Center Park provides wonderful (and little known) access to water, greenways and recreational amenities.

DOE should be asked to sustain a large portion of the \$300,000 per year that currently supports the Park. While a limited amount of funding could be provided by users' fees (especially from those coming from outside the city), the true value of Park is its ability to draw people to live in or visit Oak Ridge.

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