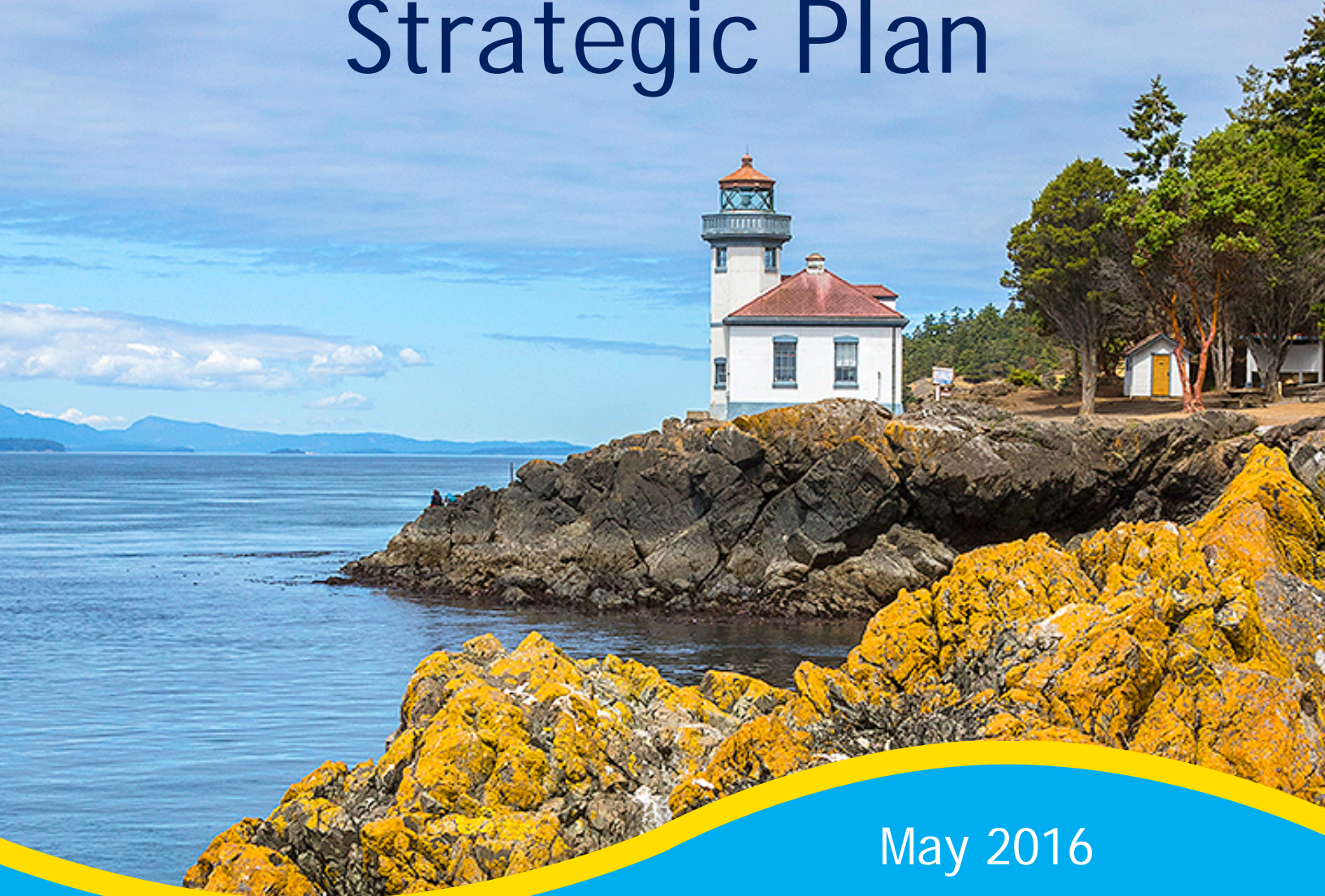




Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

EMBRACE YOUR
NATURE

2014-2019 State Parks Strategic Plan



May 2016

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2014-2019 State Parks Strategic Plan

May 19, 2016 Update

Moving toward a healthy and sustainable
Washington State Parks system

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Washington State Parks mission

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission cares for Washington's most treasured lands, waters and historic places. State parks connect all Washingtonians to their diverse natural and cultural heritage and provide memorable recreational and educational experiences that enhance their lives.

Washington State Parks vision

Washington's state parks will be cherished destinations with natural, cultural, recreational, artistic and interpretive experiences that all Washingtonians enjoy, appreciate and proudly support.

Culture and core values

The State Parks work environment

In interacting with one another, the Commission, staff, partners, supporters and volunteers foster a collaborative culture in which people:

- Maintain a working environment to **nurture innovation**
- **Encourage risk-taking** and accept responsibility for outcomes
- **Respectfully challenge** assumptions and work traditions
- **Respectfully honor their colleagues' diverse cultural heritage**
- **Give and accept** constructive criticism
- Adopt a '**yes, and**' approach in discussions
- **Accept that conflict** between ideas may be a necessary step toward finding solutions
- **Act with civic courage** and the highest ethical standards
- **Invest in training** and professional and personal development
- **Take pride** in the work, mission and resources they steward

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, its staff, partners, supporters and volunteers share core values that **demonstrate a commitment** to:

- **Stewardship** that preserves the state's natural and cultural heritage in perpetuity
- **Universal access** to recreational, educational, artistic and cultural opportunities in state parks
- **Meaningful public engagement** and participation in developing and operating the state park system
- **Supporting one another** by working together to achieve the Commission's mission
- **Quality and value** in all work accomplished

Director's statement

As our nation and state continue to recover from the losses of the Great Recession, the State Parks Commission, staff, dedicated friends groups and partners such as the Washington State Parks Foundation can take pride in the knowledge that they have helped the park system survive some of its toughest times.

Although we still face challenges, we have begun to rebuild. Our current (2015-17) budget represents a step in the right direction for the park system. A modest increase in public financing has helped us move toward health and stability, as we apply modern business practices, market the park system and work with partners.

Our *Transformation Strategy*, adopted in 2013 to drive operational change, resulted in many successes, new insights and a refined focus, as outlined in this Strategic Plan. We recap our history, including the perilous parts, and we share perspectives gained along the way. We also share our accomplishments and a growing awareness of conditions and concerns that must be addressed as we look to the future. A few of those conditions and concerns are highlighted below:

- Between 2009 and 2015, State Parks more than doubled its earned revenue, from less than \$20 million per year to over \$50 million.
- A 2015 study concludes that annual state park visits generate \$1.4 billion in total economic contribution, \$31 million in local tax revenue and \$64 million for the state General Fund.
- State Parks now derives about 80 percent of its budget from earned revenue (fees, donations, leases, etc.) and receives about 20 percent from tax sources. This is a complete reversal in financing structure in just a few years.
- Environmental and global conditions pose threats that State Parks must consider as it cares for its resources today and plans for the park system of the future.
- Washington's population continues to grow (growth is projected at 21 percent over the next 20 years), underscoring the importance of ensuring that State Parks has the capacity to meet future needs.
- State Parks' complex mission includes caring for a diverse array of natural and cultural resources that are iconic and essential to the heritage of our state, yet do not generate revenue.

In the past year, our hard work has begun to pay off. It is crucial that we maintain this momentum, since parks do much to improve people's lives. With continued support from the public, our partners, the Governor and the Legislature, we remain committed to creating and sustaining a healthy park system that current and future Washingtonians can enjoy and proudly support.

See you in the parks!



Don

Who we are and what we do

The Washington state park system is one of the largest, most diverse—and most beautiful—in the country. With more than 120,000 acres, the system includes 125 developed parks, including 19 marine parks, 11 historical parks, 35 heritage sites, 13 interpretive centers and approximately 500 miles of long-distance recreation trails. There are state parks in nearly every county in the state and within an hour's drive from home for almost all Washingtonians. Parks lie along rivers, freshwater lakes and Puget Sound shorelines. State Parks manages lands in mountains and along the Pacific Ocean seashore; Central Washington's desert shrub-steppes and river gorges; and Eastern Washington's channeled scablands and river corridors.

According to the most recent estimates, state parks receive more than 30 million visits a year. These visits generate an estimated \$1.4 billion in annual economic contribution to the state and \$64 million in state general fund tax receipts.

The state park system is managed by a seven-member commission of citizens from around the state, appointed by the Governor to serve staggered, six-year terms. The Commission sets policy for the system and hires an agency director, who in turn manages all aspects of agency operations.



Father and daughter enjoy a day fishing at Potholes State Park, near Moses Lake in eastern Washington.

Washington State Parks' expertise is in providing sites where people can enjoy a broad array of healthy outdoor recreation activities. Year-round activities include camping, hiking, boating, mountain and trail biking and horseback riding. Winter recreation activities include downhill and cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, skijoring, dog-sledding and snowmobiling. Over the years, Washington's state parks have become known as world-class locations for recreation enthusiasts pursuing such activities as long-distance kayaking, wind surfing and wind sailing, diving, paragliding and rock climbing. As new trends develop, State Parks strives to meet the needs of recreation enthusiasts, while ensuring protection of natural and cultural resources.

The agency also manages statewide recreation programs that are not limited to agency-managed lands. This responsibility includes management of the federally funded Boating Safety Program and the fee-supported Winter Recreation program. The agency also approves the design of ski lifts and carries out regular public safety inspections.

State Parks strives to enrich the visitor experience through educational and interpretive events and activities designed to connect them with the natural and cultural heritage of our state. Washington State Parks interprets the Ice Age floods that carved Washington's landscapes; collaborates with tribes to tell the stories of the people who are native to this land; provides

multi-media history exhibits to educate visitors about early explorers such as Lewis and Clark; offers a glimpse of 19th- and early 20th-Century life on military forts constructed during the administrations of Presidents Pierce, Lincoln, McKinley and two Roosevelts; and preserves the stories and park structures built during the Great Depression by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA).



A kayaker paddles along the northern side of Kukutali Preserve in northern Puget Sound.

Washington State Parks strives to balance services geared to the health, education and enjoyment of people, with the stewardship and care of natural and cultural resources. The lands managed by the Commission are precious and varied. Acre for acre, these Commission-managed lands represent the greatest concentration of species of conservation concern (endangered, threatened, sensitive, imperiled or vulnerable species) held by any public or private entity in Washington. More than 10 percent of park lands contain rare plant and/or animal species, and more than 40 percent of park landscapes have plant associations classified as moderate risk or higher, within our state or globally.

Water is essential to all types of habitat. More than half the uplands in state parks lie within 600 feet of a surface water source. State Parks manages 19,800 acres of wetlands, 2.1 million lineal feet of riparian habitat and 15,800 acres of significant habitat supporting rare plants, animals or both. The agency manages 4,799 acres of Natural Area Preserves and 13,173 acres of Natural Forest Areas.

State Parks owns more than 2,800 buildings—more than one-quarter of all state-owned buildings. Most of these buildings are small but isolated and expensive to maintain. State Parks cares for more than 770 identified historic structures. These include Victorian-era officers' residences at former military forts, an historic homestead and ranch buildings, a comprehensive set of lighthouses and an historic seminary building and grounds. State Parks also manages an array of cultural landscapes and sites listed on the Washington Heritage Register and National Register of Historic Places.

State parks are like small cities, with law enforcement, public works and facility management responsibilities. The agency also manages and maintains 300 miles of roads, 140 watercraft launches, more than 100 wells and water systems and hundreds of sewer and septic systems.

Core public services

As numerous studies have confirmed, parks benefit all people. They contribute in immeasurable ways to personal well-being by enhancing physical and mental health. They strengthen the fabric of society by enhancing community, family and spiritual bonds. Through environmental education and interpretation, visitors of all ages can learn about our environment and be inspired to care for the health of our planet. In addition, visits to state parks provide a financial benefit to all, contributing more than \$1.4 billion a year in economic value to the state. Visits to parks boost local and statewide economies and support delivery of government services.

Outdoor recreation

State Parks provides beautiful and inspiring venues that connect Washingtonians and visitors with the great outdoors. State Parks focuses on creating opportunities for natural heritage-based outdoor recreation, with interpretive facilities, wildlife-viewing areas and informal picnic and gathering spots for families, friends and community groups. State Parks also provides active recreation opportunities through trails and trail systems for walkers, bicyclists and equestrians. Wheelchair-accessible trails and sites encourage people of all abilities to use park trails. An abundance of water adds a “water-



Camping at Daroga State Park near Wenatchee.

trail” dimension to many parks, attracting boaters, windsurfers, kayakers and swimmers. And an array of winter recreation sites support such activities as skiing, snowshoeing, skijoring and even dog-sledding. State Parks also offers camping and overnight stays, providing a more immersive experience. Parks has an outdoor recreation option for every taste and every visitor.

Statewide recreation programs

State Parks partners with other agencies to serve the recreating population. The cross-state trails program coordinates opportunities for hikers, bicyclists and equestrians on trails that spread over hundreds of miles and that will eventually make up a cross-state, east-west traverse. Its Winter Recreation program administers the state’s system of Sno-Parks and trails for non-motorized and motorized winter recreationists. State Parks oversees the state’s federally funded Boating Programs, which include boating safety and education, in coordination with stakeholder groups and law enforcement agencies around the state.

Natural heritage protection

State Parks preserves Washington’s diverse natural resources for the benefit of all Washingtonians, visitors and future generations. This effort involves conserving rare plant and animal species and preserving unique habitats and landscapes. State Parks uses its expertise in

science, along with stewardship staff and arbor crews, to manage forest health activities, fire fuel reduction and weed-control efforts in parks across the state.

Cultural heritage preservation

State Parks honors the past by providing public access to sites and programs that connect people with their cultural heritage. State Parks preserves the state's most iconic and representative historic structures, sites, districts and intact cultural landscapes. Examples include historic military forts from the 19th and early 20th centuries; historic markers; heritage agricultural sites such as Olmstead Homestead and Dalles Mountain Ranch; the Jackson House territorial courthouse; Cama Beach State Park, a historic fishing resort; and Civilian Conservation Corps-era parks and park features.



The historic Jackson House near Lewis and Clark State Park, in Lewis County.

Natural and cultural heritage-based education/interpretation

State Parks offers educational and interpretive programming at the state's most important natural and cultural heritage sites and provides one-of-a-kind opportunities for scientific research, field work and education.

For example, the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center at Cape Disappointment State Park provides interactive displays that tell the story of the Lewis and Clark expedition. The interpretive centers at Sun Lakes/Dry Falls and Ginkgo/Wanapum State Parks offer intimate perspectives on the iconic Ice Age floods that carved much of Washington's landscape. Sacajawea State Park Interpretive Center brings focus to the confluence of the Snake and Columbia rivers, where people of many tribes gathered for centuries. Goldendale Observatory provides astronomy education and interpretation. Sites such as Olmstead Homestead State Park are living classrooms for students of early homestead and farming history.

Arts and cultural events

State Parks develops, protects and enhances special venues of unsurpassed beauty and cultural significance where people come together for cultural celebrations, commemorations and other forms of artistic expression. State Parks works with a variety of organizations to present Folk and Traditional Arts in the Parks programming, which promotes understanding of and connection with the state's rich cultural heritage.

Environmental conditions and trends

Washington State Parks is not alone in striving to understand the changing environment in which it operates. Other federal and state agencies that provide outdoor recreation and natural resource stewardship face the same challenges of changing demographics, social shifts, political dynamics and climate-related concerns, as well as competing interests for financial support.

State Parks has considered the larger factors and forces at work in creating this Strategic Plan. Here are some of the notable factors:

Physical environmental considerations

Outside forces affect Parks:

Parks provide public access to the beauty of nature and exposure to the state's cultural heritage. Yet that beauty and heritage are constantly threatened. Noxious exotic plants invade park vegetation communities, urbanization spreads to park boundaries and global-scale climate alteration stresses habitats and threatens sea-based infrastructure.



In 2015, state parks staff found diseased trees in the campground at South Whidbey State Park. The agency determined the trees to be a public safety risk and closed the area to overnight camping.

Cultural and natural heritage preservation efforts must be active and ongoing. The role of parks as learning laboratories for natural and cultural heritage is likely to take on greater importance in the coming years.

Natural processes cause dynamic change: Tree diseases such as laminated root-rot and occurrences of wildfires have already led to temporary or permanent closures of several state park campgrounds. These and other natural processes create pressures on agency operations and policies. Considerations may include moving recreational facilities out of high-risk areas, modifying the environment to maintain facilities or otherwise reducing public exposure to risks.

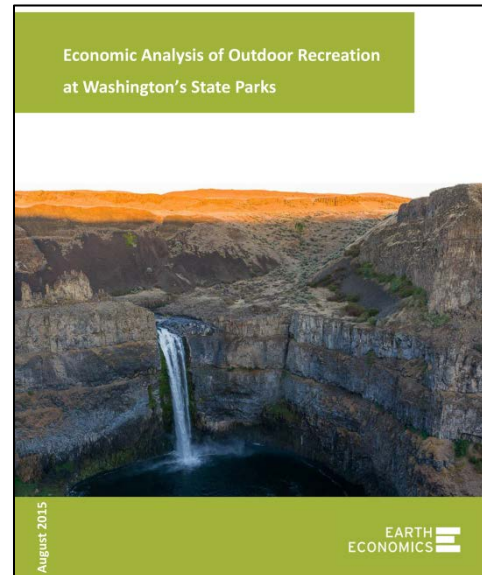
Protection priorities: A central challenge for parks is to set preservation and restoration priorities. Since financial resources are finite, it is important to preserve the most significant cultural sites first. Likewise, Parks must protect those natural habitat areas that show the greatest promise for resilience. Park facility design should maximize the impact of parks on people; at the same time, facility design should minimize the impact of people on parks and resources.

Government policy and fiscal considerations

State parks benefit the economy: Visits to Washington state parks generate jobs, tourism, business income and tax revenues for the state. In 2013, the Outdoor Industry Association reported that two-thirds of Washingtonians participate in outdoor recreation each year and that \$22.5 billion is spent annually on outdoor recreation in our state.

A follow-up study commissioned by State Parks in 2015 showed that half of Washingtonians visited a state park in the previous two years. State park visits generate more than \$64 million to the State General Fund each year and contribute more than \$1.4 billion to the state’s economy. What’s more, the data clearly demonstrate that this economic contribution transfers economic activity from urban portions of the state to rural areas.

Public funding shifts between 2009 and 2013 put the parks system at risk: Legislative policy changes in State Parks’ financing base happened quickly between 2009 and 2013. Those changes were dramatic. Prior to 2009, the agency received 70 percent of its operating revenue from taxes, and by 2013, the operation was 80 percent reliant on revenue from use fees and donations. The State General Fund share for State Parks declined from \$94.5 million in 2007-09 to \$8.7 million in 2013-15.



A 2015 study shows state parks are a significant economic driver.

During this time, one-third of State Parks’ permanent, full-time staff was laid off throughout the system. Parks made tough decisions and acted quickly to keep parks open by moving to a more seasonal structure and spreading staff more thinly. The legislature repeatedly asked Parks—through budget proviso-mandated reports—whether a budgetary policy goal of moving the system toward 100 percent self-sufficiency was possible. The Commission asserted that this goal was neither sustainable nor feasible and that stable public funding was necessary to achieve the type of a parks system the public expects and demands. During that time, public service, attendance and economic stimuli were at risk, while facilities continued to degrade due to lack of resources for maintenance.

Boosting earned revenue: State Parks and the public responded powerfully and effectively to legislated mandates to earn revenue through fees and donations. As the Commission continued to make the case that a balance of public funding would be needed for a healthy park system, State Parks continued to do what it could to meet its own fiscal needs. Between 2007 and 2016, earned revenue more than doubled, from \$20 million to more than \$50 million annually. Overnight accommodation revenue increased by 24 percent between 2011 and 2015, as the agency moved to a more demand-responsive pricing system. Discover Pass revenue increased by more than 30 percent during that same period. The Discover Pass now generates the fourth-highest revenue of any state park day-use fee in the country and is second-highest per-capita in the country (National Association of State Parks Directors, 2014-15).

While earned revenue has risen significantly, the increase has not completely offset the loss in tax support that started in 2007-09. As the Discover Pass matures into an accepted part of the financing for State Parks and other state recreation lands, pass revenues are near capacity. Budget writers can expect future fee revenue to fluctuate with annual weather patterns—but not to increase significantly beyond current levels. Today, the nationwide trend among state park systems is to be financed by a mix of stable public funding and use fees. No other state park system of comparable size and mission relies solely on use fees.

Not everything makes money, but everything should produce value: While State Parks may charge recreation access and service fees, a meaningful and significant part of its mission—natural and cultural heritage protection—does not generate direct revenue. These core activities result in benefits to all and are essential for sustaining the state’s environmental health, vibrant economy, quality of life and legacy for future generations. Parks provides these public benefits to all citizens. For this reason, the Commission has said that broad public financing is an appropriate funding mechanism.

Unforeseen events, legislative mandates and business costs: The park system can be dramatically affected by such events as storms, fires and natural disasters. For example, storms in 2007 destroyed bridges across the Chehalis River and Willapa Hills Trail State Park, and in 2015, wildfire closed Alta Lake and several other state parks. Wildfires threaten lands and park visits every summer. Forest diseases can cause unplanned recreation closures, associated downturns in revenue, additional expenses and staffing challenges. Legislative budget provisos, biennial mandates and other unexpected obligations may limit Parks’ authority and also may necessitate the re-direction of resources. Cost increases for things such as salary and health care, regulatory requirements and prices for utility services and equipment must be factored in when assessing the capacity for service fees to meet or cover program costs.



In 2014, a major wildfire burned through part of Alta Lake State Park in eastern Washington.

Capital needs: In addition to sufficient operating funds, State Parks needs a strong capital budget to protect the state’s investment. For the first time in 2013, State Parks developed a comprehensive digital inventory of facility condition, called the Facility Condition Index (FCI). The FCI is a percentage measure of a fully healthy physical plant for all structures, roads and utilities in the park system. From 2013 to 2015, with support from the Legislature and Governor, the agency increased its FCI from 60.5 percent to 61.4 percent. About half the maintenance backlog involves historic properties. Sustained and adequate capital funding will be necessary to catch up and restore the condition of the park system to a healthier level. State Parks must

maintain quality facilities to accommodate and encourage visits, retain revenue from service and access fees and achieve operational efficiencies.

Knowing our customers

A changing Washington: While population growth is static or declining in some states, Washington continues to experience population growth and significant pressures from development and urbanization. The State Office of Financial Management (OFM) reports that the state's population will increase 21 percent over the next 20 years. During that period, Washingtonians are expected to be more ethnically diverse, about 90 percent urban, and older, as increasing lifespans and generational changes lead to the doubling of the 65-plus population. Currently, participation rates in outdoor recreation are lower among the elderly and some ethnic and racial minorities.



Parks are important gathering places for families and communities from diverse backgrounds.

If State Parks is to meet its mission to connect all Washingtonians with their state's heritage, the agency will need to respond in ways that are welcoming and relevant to citizens. The agency is committed to creating an equitable, hospitable, appreciative, safe and inclusive park environment—one that embraces the full spectrum of community members' contributions. The Commission makes this commitment because:

- Celebrating diversity is a way to appreciate and value individual differences
- A diverse workforce will more effectively serve an increasingly heterogeneous society
- Diversity in our staffing and programs helps ensure the relevance of a state park system, its mission, properties, and programs.

The Commission encourages and supports staff efforts to reach out to people of all races, national origins, abilities, religions, sexual orientations, veteran status, ages and genders who use the parks and who live in communities near parks. The Commission is dedicated to offering quality experiences to all visitors through a workforce and volunteer corps that reflects the diversity of Washington.

People do not want parks commercialized: When conducting public outreach to develop the agency's Transformation Strategy and its subsequent Strategic Plan, State Parks received a clear and consistent message from people around the state: They love their state parks, and they do not want them commercialized or changed substantially. As a result, the Commission created advertising policies that distinguish between in-park advertising and advertising on web sites and in written materials. The policy for in-park advertising places strict limits on commercialism to

ensure the protection of the visitor experience in parks. In-park advertising is intended only to generate support for and information about park concessions and local services available to visitors.

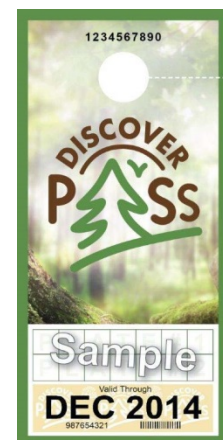
What people do want—rest, renewal and connection: Surveys show that basic recreation pursuits remain important in Washington State. People want places to walk, bike and ride horses. They want trails, and they like to be near, in and on the water. Passive recreation—just being out in nature—is far more popular than active or organized recreation. More than 40 percent of Washingtonians go camping. Arts and cultural celebrations remain vital draws, along with experiences that connect people with history and culture or provide learning experiences. Many survey respondents affirmed the personal and social benefits of access to quiet, beautiful natural places.

Visitor feedback: Through its reservation camping system, State Parks can easily garner feedback from campers, which can inform future improvements. For example, visitors have responded positively to increased numbers of cabins, yurts and vacation house rentals. State Parks considers these accommodations to be solid capital investments that upgrade services and increase revenue. The agency is currently surveying day users, who comprise the majority of park visitors.

People expect the benefits of technology: For many years, the trend was for parks to be “technology-free zones,” where the concerns of daily life could be set aside. This attitude has shifted nationwide, and park systems around the country are embracing technologies that enhance services, expand communications and advance core missions. State Parks is making greater use of technologies that provide customer information and services through web sites, apps and new platforms. Apps and web-based information can replace the need for costly, on-site interpretive displays that degrade in weather and quickly become out of date. Parks must compete for people’s leisure time. This requires a balance—using technologies to entice visitors seeking a real experience and enhance the on-site experience, versus technologies that replace a site visit with a “virtual” trip. Meanwhile, greater investment in advanced technologies will help agency efforts to meet customer needs.

Creative and effective partnerships

Working with sister agencies: The Commission recognizes that State Parks cannot finance the park system all by itself. To meet the demands of a large and diverse park system, State Parks must work with partners. Engaged partnerships allow State Parks to deliver the highest levels of public service with efficiency. For instance, the Discover Pass program is managed collaboratively with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). In another example, State Parks collaborates with Departments of Health and WDFW to provide recreational shellfish harvesting communication and access. State Parks works closely with other state agencies, counties, cities and public utility districts on various projects.



Collaborating with tribes: State Parks has a history of collaborating with native tribes on cultural and natural resource protection and cultural events. New efforts include

collaboration on basic park management. A unique co-ownership and co-management arrangement has been forged with the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community at Kukutali Preserve, where joint development and preservation efforts are proving successful. Parks also has engaged with the Nisqually Tribe to provide trail access at Nisqually State Park. This partnership also creates a venue in which the tribe can tell its story to a wider audience. The annual intertribal canoe journey frequently stops at state parks, where the agency is a proud host.

Linking State Parks to broader recreation, education and conservation purposes: The lands and waters of state parks meet multiple public interest objectives. State Parks campgrounds, trails and picnic areas serve as way stations for anglers, hunters, bird watchers and climbers. Its wetlands, escarpments, prairies and old-growth forests serve as habitat for wildlife conservation. Its amphitheaters and historic structures are sites for field research, formal and informal education and lifelong learning. The State Parks’ “No Child Left Inside” grant program, administered in coordination with the Recreation and Conservation Office, fosters connection between our state’s youth and the great outdoors.

Volunteers: Washington State Parks has a long tradition of engaging volunteers to help leverage resources and create a welcoming atmosphere. In 2015, volunteers more than 210,000 hours of service as campground hosts and trail maintenance hands. Clearly, the park system cannot run solely on volunteer efforts, but these dedicated park users make significant contributions to the quality and breadth of system services.



Volunteers and members of the Friends of Lake Sammamish State Park help assemble a new ADA-accessible playground.

Parks Foundation and friends groups are essential: The Washington State Parks Foundation raises public awareness and financial support for park projects and programs. Contributions include development of Cama Beach State Park, opened in 2008; construction projects along the Willapa Hills Trail in 2016; and funding for special events and financial support for the Folk and Traditional Arts in the Parks Program. In close coordination with Parks leadership and field staff, the Foundation supports a Parks Improvements Grant program that helps fund small park improvements throughout the system.

Meanwhile, 19 incorporated friends groups associated with specific parks work closely with staff to improve the parks they support. The Foundation is available to help new friends groups form. The Foundation can act as a fiscal agent, helping friends groups implement programs and projects or to foster partnerships.

Business relationships and partnerships: State Parks has dozens of concession and lease agreements with commercial businesses. These provide equipment and services supporting the agency mission (boat rentals, firewood, etc.). Recently, State Parks signed a lease agreement to co-manage Fort Worden State Park. A non-profit, quasi-governmental entity, the Fort Worden Public Development Authority (PDA) is managing the “campus” portion of the park, which

encompasses lodging and rental buildings, while State Parks continues to manage the park's natural areas and campground. The arrangement encourages fundraising by the PDA to improve the large collection of historic buildings onsite. This arrangement is unique. Partnership arrangements must fit the special circumstances of each park.

The agency is cautiously and systematically exploring partnership options where mission-aligned investment and development may more feasibly be accomplished by other public or private entities. To that end, the Parks Commission is ready to initiate pilot projects for designated recreation concession areas and enterprise lands. These efforts are directed at mission-aligned recreational facilities and/or programs developed and managed by the private sector within state parks. Enterprise lands are State Parks properties that have been determined inappropriate for park purposes but which have potential to generate income for park operations if developed by outside parties. In exploring these creative real estate agreements, State Parks will keep the focus on providing facilities and services that meet immediate needs for public recreational access, while maintaining the long-term public interest of land stewardship and fiscal health.



Agreements with concessionaires provide glamping opportunities at two state parks - Millersylvania, south of Olympia, and Moran State Park on Orcas Island (pictured).

Workforce issues

Reorganizing to make things work: Due to shifts in funding between 2009 and 2012, State Parks made a series of deep, system-wide staffing and program reductions. The agency went into survival mode. Some public funding has been restored and earned revenue has increased through agency, partner and public efforts. This has allowed State Parks to make investments in facility maintenance and improved customer service. During the crisis years of the Recession, workload and retention issues arose from a staffing structure reliant on seasonality, with losses in operation capacity and stability. But between 2013 and 2016, the agency was able to move back toward a year-round workforce structure. Parks is currently making a shift toward a geographically based area management structure that will allow more resource sharing among groups of parks. The new structure also allows for greater staff specialization and increased vital relationship building opportunities between park managers and local communities.

Law enforcement: Park rangers are fully commissioned law enforcement officers who provide public safety services. Investment in training and equipment is essential to provide this service. The new operating structure focuses on training and assignment of law enforcement staff where they are most needed.

Streamlining and LEAN: State Parks continues to actively engage in LEAN management efforts, investing staff time and resources to streamline processes, save time and increase efficiency. The agency has embraced the philosophy of continuous improvement in agency business processes. LEAN offers an opportunity to cut out unnecessary steps and free staff time for essential, mission-related work.

Labor relations: Most of the workforce is covered by a labor contract, and State Parks values collaboration with the unions to find solutions when challenges arise. It is important to note that reductions and downsizing during the 2009 to 2012 period put a strain on this valuable relationship and created new challenges. Even as the agency has begun to reinvest during the 2013 to 2016 period, some employees who had been through years of layoffs remain anxious. In this climate, policies that call for new businesslike approaches and greater use of appropriate partnerships can be sources of stress for employees concerned about job security. Agency leadership is sensitive to these concerns and is working to bring about workforce health and stability by improving park quality, increasing attendance and defining clear and vital roles for park staff. It is essential that the agency stay committed to open communications and creative, active and ongoing partnerships with its employees.

Diversity: State Parks is committed to recruiting, developing and retaining a diverse, high-performing workforce and maintaining a work environment that is inclusive and respectful. Diversity is multi-dimensional and covers a broad spectrum, from race and ethnicity, to gender and sexual orientation and from socio-economic status to physical abilities, age and religious beliefs. By eliminating barriers to growth and opportunity, each employee can contribute his or her full measure of talent. By building capacity to deliver innovative and effective services to all Washingtonians, State Parks will be more successful. The overall goal is to have a workforce and a visitor base that reflect the diversity of Washington's residents.

Training: State Parks believes it is essential to invest in its employees, to help them grow through training and professional development. Required training is provided in such areas as law enforcement, ethics and information technology. Parks is once again advancing position-appropriate professional development training. The agency is restoring the Stewardship Certification Program and an important statewide maintenance conference, as well as empowering managers to provide needed and effective training for their employees. Access to training and skill enhancement increases employee and departmental productivity and boosts morale across the agency.

Staff longevity and experience: State Parks has a large percentage of core staff that have been with the agency for years. This longevity and depth of experience has served the agency well, but it has a downside; many agency employees will be eligible for retirement in the next five years. Concerns include dramatic loss of institutional knowledge and costs of impending sick-leave and vacation leave cash-outs. Resources and succession planning are needed to address these concerns.

Strategic response

The August 2012 *State of State Parks* report and the March 2013 *Transformation Strategy* provide context and background for the agency’s strategic direction over the subsequent six years. Those documents and other support materials, including public involvement efforts, can be found on the agency website at: <http://parks.state.wa.us/152/Strategic-Planning> Clear descriptions of the agency’s Mission, Vision, Culture and Core Values and a comprehensive set of strategies and initiatives have emerged from those documents. Strategies are geared toward rapid and meaningful changes, and the creation of a successful, sustainable foundation. Additionally, the mission, vision and core values will ensure that quality, public trust and confidence are maintained.

This section of the *Strategic Plan* adds to the previous documents. Descriptions of and rationales for specific strategic goals, along with a list of near-term actions, will help advance State Parks’ goals. The response is structured as follows:

- **Defining a healthy and sustainable state park system**—Putting a finer level of detail on the agency mission and vision, this description of a healthy, sustainable park system forms the basis for agency aspirations. Moving toward such a healthy system is the fundamental and overarching goal expressed in this strategic plan.
- **Measuring health**—Converting definitions of “park health” into measurable indicators that can inform budgeting is an administrative challenge that will take time to complete. Progress on that effort has begun.
- **Strategic commitments**—Stating basic assumptions about the size and scope of the park system and the financing of that system. Without these assumptions, we would fail to grasp the fiscal and programmatic costs of moving toward a healthy and sustainable future parks system.
- **Strategic priorities**—Broad direction is expressed through a set of strategies. Biennial priorities are expressed here.
 - **2015-17 prioritized initiatives and performance measures:** For the 2015-17 Biennium, priority initiatives and performance measures for seven strategies are presented. These are a subset and update of the initiatives listed in the Transformation Strategy that formed the basis for the Strategic Plan.
 - **2017-19 Strategic priorities:** For the 2017-19 Biennium, the agency expresses a set of investment priorities that shore up its core services, while adding to future capabilities.
 - **Organizing for strategic mobilization:** The agency has reorganized its staff structure to act with strategic intention. That structure, in the form of an organizational chart, is presented as Appendix A.

Defining a healthy and sustainable state park system

Years of restricted budgets have left the system in need. The Commission is committed to advocating for needed resources; the agency will do everything in its power to establish and sustain a healthy park system for current users and future generations. Some attributes of a healthy park system are described below.

Parks are in good physical condition

- All state parks are open and accessible, meeting established and publicly acceptable service levels and providing visitors a safe, healthy environment.
- All park facilities are well cared for and functioning for their intended purpose. Restrooms are clean. Grounds are well-maintained. Boat launches, utility campsites and other overnight facilities meet industry standards for quality and effectiveness. Recreation trails, picnic sites and other day-use areas are well-maintained. Infrastructure services such as water, sewer and electrical systems are working and meet all health and safety standards.
- The natural and cultural heritage features of each park are protected from degradation and managed for long-term sustainability.

Parks provide opportunities for recreation, enjoyment, health and learning

- The state park system offers a diverse array of active outdoor recreation choices for visitors, including but not limited to hiking, camping, bicycling, picnicking, boating, horseback riding, rock climbing and winter recreation activities—cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, skijoring, dog sledding and snowmobiling.
- Parks provide beautiful natural settings for passive recreation such as picnicking, wildlife viewing and personal learning through interpretive features and displays.
- State Parks facilities and programs promote individual and community health and wellness.
- State parks and facilities are accessible to visitors of all ages and abilities for day and overnight use.
- State Parks provide opportunities, as appropriate to the site, for all people—but particularly our youth—to connect with, learn about and experience the state’s significant natural and cultural heritage.

State Parks’ resource care and protection mission is fulfilled

- Biological communities, including forests, wetlands, plant communities, habitats, seashore conservation and natural areas are healthy and well cared for.
- Historic properties contributing to the state’s cultural heritage are appropriately preserved, treated and interpreted for the public.
- Architectural and cultural resources are protected and conserved in perpetuity as part of the state’s cultural legacy and are managed appropriately for scientific and interpretive use.

Staffing and customer service meet public expectations

- State park offices, interpretive and visitor centers are open and welcoming during reasonable hours. At full-service parks, visitors have access to park staff during their visit.
- Staff or agency representatives offer customer service in a pleasant, efficient manner, using their knowledge to meet established and publicly acceptable service levels. This includes customer reservations, access to information and purchase of use permits such as the Discover Pass, whether online, by phone or in person.

- Administrative and support services are adequately resourced, enabling staff to efficiently and effectively fulfill the agency mission, meet legal requirements, operate with the highest ethics and minimize public liabilities and risks.

Public and community engagement in all meaningful decisions

- Parks and program staff throughout the agency have the skills, time and resources to engage with the public and stakeholders. Park and regional staff have the tools to build effective relationships in their local communities.
- State Parks engages with the tourism industry, local governments, other parks departments and partners to promote parks and tourism offerings, recognizing that visits to state parks generate business for their neighboring communities and add significantly to the economic health of the state.

Measuring a healthy and sustainable state park system

State Parks faces a unique and extraordinary challenge to establish consistent, measurable standards for public parks. Each park is distinctive, with highly varied uses, public expectations, cost-drivers and revenue potential. Nevertheless, when competing for public funds, the Legislature, the Governor and the public want to know what services will be provided at different levels of tax support. If more money is provided, what services will be available that wouldn't be available with less money?

State Parks is committed to continuously improving its quantitative indicators of service level. For some parameters, progress over the past few years has been substantial and important. The Facility Condition Index (FCI) system created in 2014 allowed Parks for the first time to provide quantitative, system-wide and up-to-date analysis of its infrastructure's condition, including the estimated costs of facility deficiencies. The Index can be applied to a number of the goal statements that define a healthy and sustainable system.

One agency goal is the establishment of measurable indicators that describe its services to the public. As those quantitative measures are developed, they will be incorporated into future strategic plans and reporting materials to the Governor, the legislature and the public.

Strategic commitments

The Commission strives to create and maintain a state park system that the public enjoys and proudly supports, now and in the future. The Commission has identified the following commitments that will drive agency decision-making for the duration of this Strategic Plan:

Commitment 1: Size and scope of the state parks system

Public expectations and sentiments about the size of the state park system have been clear; any significant reduction in the size of the system is not acceptable. Population growth will continue to increase demand for additional parks and recreational opportunities. As State Parks strives to keep up with demand, the agency works to offer new recreation modes and to be relevant to the ever more diverse population. The agency will continue reviewing its land base to identify sites that may not be suitable for park purposes. Meanwhile, the Commission will aim to provide a system of parks that is large and diverse enough to connect all Washingtonians to their state's natural and cultural heritage.

The Commission strategy for land acquisition and development is focused at the local level and statewide:

- Park-level long-term boundaries
- System-level inventory and gap analysis

At the park level, the Commission continues to use an extensive public participation process to develop long-range plans for each of its parks and properties. These plans include Commission-approved long-term park boundaries—identifying properties around existing state parks that should be managed consistent with park purposes. Long-term park boundaries are defined by:

- In-holdings or adjacent properties that contribute to the park’s mission, which the Commission seeks to manage in the future
- Adjacent or nearby properties the Commission would like to manage cooperatively with others
- Existing agency-owned properties that do not contribute to the park’s mission and may be suitable for surplus through transfer, sale or lease

At the system level, the Commission will meet its responsibilities and fulfill its statutory mandate to acquire lands and develop new parks in an intentional and comprehensive manner. It also will involve communities and local partners in achieving its mission. The Commission envisions a system of parks that are unique and distinctively Washingtonian. The Commission intends to target acquisitions and developments in places that meet one or more of five goals:

- **Places to be**—Connecting people with Washington’s iconic landscapes
State parks will be the places we all think of when we think of Washington:

- Salish Sea shorelines
- Rain forests
- The Palouse
- Ocean beaches
- The Columbia River Gorge
- Puget Trough lowland forests
- Dry forests
- Shrub steppes
- Columbia basin reservoirs and coulees
- Glacial lakes and snow-capped mountains
- Channeled scablands
- Wild rivers

- **Stories to know**—Engaging people with authentic Washington stories

State parks will tell the stories of this state’s people and places:

- Ice Age floods
- Native American history and culture
- Lewis and Clark Exploration
- Pioneer settlement, history and culture
- Ethnic immigration, history and culture

- Natural resource-based industries, such as logging, mining, fishing and shellfish harvesting
 - Coastal defense
 - Depression-era park design and development
 - Hydroelectric power
 - Agriculture
 - Railroads
 - Navigation
 - Aerospace
- **Things to do**—Providing Washington’s recreation mainstays

State parks will provide places to participate in the state’s most popular outdoor activities:

- Walking and hiking
 - Cycling
 - Horseback riding
 - Picnicking
 - Fishing
 - Camping
 - Geocaching
 - Beach exploring
 - Boating
 - Skiing
 - Climbing
- **Ways to grow**—Inviting people who are new to outdoor recreation to experience Washington’s outdoors

State parks will serve as gateways for people new to outdoor recreation. State Parks can introduce people to new and different recreation modes and provide inspiration and information about other park destinations as their comfort and skills increase. Variety in exposure to new types of recreation can be found in:

- Urban gateway parks
 - Marine parks
 - Water trails
 - Cross-state trails
 - Winter recreation areas
 - Cabins and vacation rentals
- **Something for everyone**—Improving the quality of life for all Washingtonians

State parks will provide benefits to all Washingtonians, not just those who visit parks. These benefits include:

- Personal health
- Conservation
- Economic development
- Transportation

- Environmental and heritage education
- Community identity
- Intergenerational continuity

The Commission will inventory its current land holdings for each of these goals to determine:

- What do we already have?
- Do we have enough of it?
- What do we not have?
- Does someone else have it, or would it be better for someone else to provide it?

Answers to these questions will allow the Commission to target its future acquisitions and developments in places that best connect the people of Washington to their natural and cultural heritage.

Commitment 2: Financing a healthy, sustainable state park system

A healthy, sustainable park system that satisfies public expectations will require broad-based financial support from park visitors, enterprises, partners, friends groups, volunteers and all Washingtonians. To operate as a public enterprise, State Parks must seek creative ways to engage users and supporters, and it must deliver services people are willing to pay for. While there are potential fiscal benefits in “acting like a business,” State Parks also must keep true to its stated public mission and vision.

The 2013 Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) document echoes other state parks’ plans and recently-adopted federal direction on outdoor recreation. All these strategic plans discuss citizens’ concerns about the proper balance between the realities of public finance and the essential demands of public purpose.

The 2014 Governor’s Blue Ribbon Parks and Outdoor Recreation Task Force report recommended the Legislature provide stable funding for Washington’s state parks and other state recreation lands, facilities and programs. This recommendation was made in recognition of the essential public service provided by parks and other outdoor recreation resources. Furthermore, the recommendation was made that these resources be supported primarily by General Fund revenues, with user fees supporting services that mainly benefit the user. In the short term, the task force recommended additional revenue sources to meet the needs of State Parks, DNR and WDFW and to support the actions recommended in the Task Force report. Funding options included in the discussion were an annual motor home and travel trailer excise tax; a sales tax on bottled water; and the watercraft excise tax. If enacted, these sources were projected to raise an additional \$100 million in revenues for the 2015-17 biennium. However, none of the new revenue sources were approved by the 2015 Legislature.

When asked through survey and outreach activities (See 2013 SCORP and related citations at <http://www.rco.wa.gov/recreation/scorp.shtml>), Washingtonians have said repeatedly that they do not wish state parks to become overly commercialized or feel like private amusement parks. Most people see parks as oases from the bombardment of commercialism and the stresses of modern life. However, many are reluctant to pay taxes to support the facilities and services they want and expect to find, while others believe their taxes are already paying for these things.

In response to conflicting desires and shifting dynamics, State Parks must remain focused on its mission. A mission-centered approach will instruct the agency in making sound decisions and implementing actions. The following principles will guide actions involving the services and funding of State Parks:

- Take no action that is inconsistent with the mission and vision of the agency.
- Constantly pursue efficiencies in operation—actions that save money while providing the same or a higher level of service long-term.
- Provide high-value services that enhance the visitor’s park experience, create connections and inspire memories. These services include basic health and safety infrastructure; recreational and interpretive facilities and programs; care and preservation of natural, cultural and historic resources; food and beverage services; overnight accommodations and recreational supplies.
- Set fees for services to balance an acceptable level of user-financing with the desire for broad public access. In cases where those public services are the responsibility of all Washingtonians and provide broad benefits, financial support should come from public sources, and fees should be close to zero. In cases where services provide special or private benefit to consumers, fees should be set at market rate.
- Actively support and promote the annual Discover Pass, camping and other activities as great values for park visitors. At the same time, work with the Legislature, Governor and stakeholders to look comprehensively at outdoor recreation fee and fee-exemption systems and public finance mechanisms. The goals of this review should be to ensure state law and budgeting: 1) Support and expand use and enjoyment of public recreation lands by all citizens; 2) Develop consistent, equitable and effective exemption and pass programs that meet clear social policy objectives; and 3) Maintain and establish long-term adequate and sustainable public funding mechanisms.

Strategic priorities

The agency's Transformation Strategy, written in 2013, led to a rapid change in agency culture and priorities in a time of severe public funding reductions and transition to a user fee financial model. Transformation included seven overarching strategies:

1. Demonstrate that all Washingtonians benefit from their state parks
2. Adopt a business approach to park system administration
3. Provide recreation, cultural and interpretive opportunities people will want
4. Promote meaningful opportunities for volunteers, friends and donors
5. Form strategic partnerships with other agencies, tribes and non-profits
6. Expand use of land holdings for compatible revenue generating purposes
7. Develop amenities and acquire lands that advance transformation

Each strategy was advanced through implementation of a series of initiatives. This *Strategic Plan* represents the next stage in the agency's transformation, in that it incorporates the fundamental goals of the *Transformation Strategy* while focusing on, refining and prioritizing strategic initiatives and investments. It provides a description for each initiative, related performance measures, accomplishments from the 2013-15 biennium and new performance measures for the 2015-17 biennium. It also provides a set of prioritized strategic investments for 2017-19 that shore up its core services while adding to future capabilities. It is State Parks' intention to update the initiatives and performance metrics every two years.

As State Parks makes needed investments and builds capacity, agency leadership knows there are significant uncertainties, risks and challenges that lie ahead. These include:

- The anticipated loss of \$10 million in Litter Tax revenue in 2017-19 that State Parks has received during the last two biennia, with no scheduled replacement
- One-time use of cash reserves in 2015-17 that will not be available in future biennia
- A \$463 million deferred maintenance backlog that needs to be addressed
- A lack of agreement between legislators, the Governor and park stakeholders on how to best finance the state parks system moving forward, including questions about the level of public funding; the flexibility, purpose and fiscal goals of agency fees; and the creation of one or more dedicated public fund sources

Despite the financial challenges, State Parks will continue to pursue the strategic direction outlined in this plan by:

- Focusing on customer service
- Improving the condition and function of existing facilities
- Embracing opportunities to improve the system through thoughtful acquisition and development, using public funding or the assistance of partners
- Earning revenue from park users, lessees and partners to meet service needs
- Seeking broad public financial and material support for the agency to meet its stewardship mission and resource protection obligations

State Parks will take advantage of new opportunities that advance the mission and vision of the state park system and advance the goal of a healthy and sustainable park system. The following are State Parks' 2015-17 Strategic Initiatives and 2017-19 Strategic Priorities.

Table 1. 2015-2017 Strategic Initiatives

Active Initiatives (Existing/adapted or new)

	Included in 2013-15 strategic initiatives list
<i>Italics</i>	New initiative

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
1*	Natural Heritage	Assemble field data and develop a systematic stewardship plan for protecting and restoring natural plant and animal communities in state parks, conveying their significance to the public and enlisting public participation and support in conserving them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop materials and methods to convey the significance of the resources and threats they face, by December 2014, and begin outreach to stakeholder groups to enlist support for stewardship efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generated GIS model to assess condition of the agency’s natural plant communities and determine treatment priorities. Developed protocol for monitoring resource condition in significant habitats using GIS/GPS technologies. Added class to Stewardship Training that provides introduction to this technology and recruits citizen scientists to assist with effort. Held first training May 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use GIS model to develop restoration cost estimates to inform 2017-19 natural resource budget request. Enlist 10 volunteers to collect monitoring data by June 2016. Meet with five conservation organizations to discuss implications of GIS modeling for statewide conservation efforts.

* Descriptions of the seven different strategies are on the previous page.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
1	Cultural Heritage	Develop a systematic plan for treatment and preservation of cultural historic properties in state parks, conveying their significance and value to the public, and enlisting public participation and support in preserving them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop materials and methods to convey the significance of the cultural and historic resources and their value to the public by December 2014, and begin outreach to stakeholder groups to enlist support for stewardship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compiled National Register of Historic Places properties, including level of significance and date of designation. Compiled properties eligible for National Register. Developed criteria for prioritizing historic properties and engaged key stakeholders (DAHP, Washington Trust for Historic Preservation) in review. In March 2015, Commission adopted prioritization criteria; staff is currently using these criteria to rank individual historic properties and incorporate priorities into a statewide historic property treatment plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Commission-approved criteria to score all historic properties by April 2016. Meet with two historic preservation organizations to discuss the implications of the scoring. Incorporate scoring results into 2017-19 capital budget request.
1	No Child Left Inside	Re-establish the No Child Left Inside grant program that funds efforts to get children outside to enjoy nature and outdoor experiences. The 2015 Legislature provided \$1 million for 15-17 biennium.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-establish the No Child Left Inside grant program through legislative funding by July 2015. Propose program modifications that integrate the program into broader agency interpretive program objectives and align with activities associated with the recently passed State Parks partnership bill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Legislature appropriated \$1 million for the 15-17 biennium. Selection criteria providing emphasis to veterans were added. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with RCO to award grants by April/May 2016. Monitor Grant projects process. Ensure grant funds are expended by June 30, 2017. Provide an end of biennium progress report to the Commission.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
1	Fish Passage	Identify, evaluate and correct barriers to anadromous fish passage through an extensive inventory and evaluation of barriers; design and construct capital projects that correct problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct six (6) fish barrier correction projections by June 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since July 2014, State Parks has corrected nine culverts Four remaining culverts must be corrected by the October 31, 2016 deadline imposed by federal court injunction. These culverts are currently in design/permit, with the construction planned for the 2016 work window. 	Measure no longer needed
1	Tourism and Economic Development	Develop working relationships with local governments, local tourism groups, Chambers of Commerce and economic development entities to help market and support state parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop presentation materials that explain the positive economic impacts of park visitation to state and local tourism, by March 2015. Meet with local governments, chambers of commerce and local tourism groups in at least 10 areas of the state to present information and explore new partnership opportunities, by June 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The agency's new economic study "Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation at Washington State Parks" was completed by Earth Economics in August 2015. Attended Washington State Association of Counties Leadership Conference and shared state park economic data with county officials. Attended 6 meetings with King County Parks Directors, sharing state park information with 35 regional county and city parks. 	Converted from biennial project to ongoing program

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
1	<i>Communications</i>	Communicate our accomplishments to the public in key areas, including revenue earnings, facilities improvements, capital project completion, customer service improvements and progress in stewardship efforts.	None in 2013/15	N/A	By December 2016: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating success: Complete a recognition plan that defines options and methods for thanking contributors and partners and celebrating accomplishments with the public. • Touting our accomplishments: Report accomplishments to stakeholders twice a year, using communication and marketing outreach tools that include the agency website, online marketing newsletter and social media. • Benefits access: enhance customer service to qualifying veterans by reviewing and improving customer information for three agency discount pass programs.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
2	Discover Pass	The Discover Pass Business Plan initiative has been updated to reflect the progress made in the program and the upcoming efforts to continue to develop the program and increase revenues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase visitation to state parks; this will be measured by a 1 percent per fiscal year increase of Discover Pass and daily permit sales and by meeting the Results Washington goal of 760,000 permits and passes sold in 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This measure has been exceeded. In fact, in FY2014 the agency sold more than 780,000 passes. Refined Law Enforcement training and approach to enforcement of Discover Pass to improve overall customer service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Discover Pass program revenues by 3% annually

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
2	Data Management	Assess current agency data collected through surveying data collectors and users and identify ways to streamline reporting from parks. Improve the accuracy of park attendance data collected for tracking visitation. Develop low cost but effective system for collecting customer feedback from park users. Provide access to data in central location accessible to staff and the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a report by January 2015 that includes an inventory of data collection systems to be used for agency business decisions; analyzing the value, security, efficiency, mechanisms for collection and storage and accessibility of each data area, including specific recommendations to improve the data management system. • Deploy new technology solutions to more accurately report day use attendance in parks by July 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 completed: The Data Management Report was shared with executive leadership and the final report submitted in August to the executive sponsor. Recommendations included investing in IT FTE to build a modern data warehouse and intranet reporting system that would staff data management requests. Phase 2, enhancing State Parks “forms inventory” survey is on schedule for distribution the end of February 2016. • Attendance Improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conducted analysis ○ Acquired and deployed 36 TrafX counters at 16 parks ○ Pilot concluded ○ Continuing to purchase and install additional counters ○ Visitation workgroup to meet in January 2016 to assess further needs • Customer Satisfaction Survey: (future details moved to <i>Customer Service</i> initiative) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spring 2014, camping survey redesigned to include demographic data and more targeted information. • Continued analysis of data to gauge visitor satisfaction with state parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and streamline five data collection forms by fall of 2017. • Continue to improve the process for collecting vehicle/day use attendance by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Installing 50 TrafX counters by July 2017, so they are established and operable. ○ Facilitating a visitation workgroup training to further assess needs regarding vehicle visitation data collection.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
2	LEAN Management	Evaluate administrative and operational processes within the agency and apply LEAN solutions to remove non-value added efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete three LEAN processes that create efficiencies, by July 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value Stream Mapping projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CRT Process, March 2013 ○ Hiring of Seasonal Employees, September 2013 ○ Time, Leave, and Attendance, February 2014 ○ Retreat center reservations, October 2014 ○ Bathroom Cleaning Process, April 23, 2015 ○ Policy and Procedure Process, June 30, 2015 ○ Time, Leave, and Attendance Data Base, November 2015 • LEAN principles have been used to make numerous less comprehensive changes to agency processes. 	Converted from biennial project to ongoing program

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
2	Sustainability	Expand effort to analyze agency energy and resource usage (electricity, fuel, water, etc.) and develop a statewide plan that directs specific sustainability measures in parks so that the agency achieves efficiencies and reduces costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete five or more park energy audits and identify and implement resource use efficiency improvements that reduce electrical load and provide energy use efficiencies by 10% in at least five parks, by June 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed state-wide water meter survey, water usage and water rights data summary and encouraged parks to conserve limited water resources during the 2015 statewide drought. Energy audits were completed at 19 parks during the 2013-15 biennium, resulting in up to 75% reduction in lighting loads for those parks that installed energy efficient lighting upgrades. Completed installation of new thermal windows for four parks buildings and installed LED lights at Lake Wenatchee State Park, utilizing the remainder of capital energy conservation funds. Secured over \$80,000 in energy rebate funds to be applied to future park energy conservation efforts. State Parks has reduced GHG emissions primarily through building energy use reduction by 2,585 MTCO₂e, a reduction of approximately 20% over six years. 	Converted from biennial project to ongoing program

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
2	Fees	<p>This initiative transitions all agency fee-setting into a market-based system of competitive rates for facilities and services. All elements of this initiative support the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting service fees and rates based on demand and fair market value. • Creating new market opportunities • Harmonizing new fee policies with the Discover Pass. • Pricing for exclusivity of services being offered • Pricing services at or above the cost of service, except as discounted by Commission policy or state law. • Delegating most fee and rate setting to staff to maximize entrepreneurial approaches in the marketplace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate 2014 camping fee system changes and revise as appropriate for the 2015 season. • Set marine-related service fees and rates based on complete cost of service and fair market value for the 2015 season. • Re-design the Discover Pass product to increase sturdiness and clarity and distinguish it from the WDFW Visitor Access pass, with an eye toward a product more easily sold at retail outlets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation complete and prices were revised to simplify the tiers and increase revenues for 2015. • Marine-related service fees were revised and adopted by the Director effective January 2015. • The annual Discover Pass was redesigned and a contract was signed with a new print and fulfillment vendor in 2015. • Operations implemented fee modifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure YOY camping fees revenue tracked against YOY bookings • Measure customer satisfaction trends using survey data to ensure satisfaction ratings do not decrease • Develop variable pricing structure for roofed accommodations, shelters, and ELC's. • Measure fees YOY for roofed accommodations, shelters, and ELC's to ensure at least a 3% increase.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
2	Law Enforcement Analysis	The purpose of this project is to evaluate Washington State Park's use of and reliance on, fully commissioned law enforcement personnel as the primary staffing classification in parks.	Provide an objective analysis of the costs and benefits of WSPRC's current law enforcement program and evaluate potential opportunities for improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report proved to Commission, May 2014. • Work continuing with WFSE in negotiating impacts and implication of strategically focusing ranger enforcement duties at each classification. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administrative Commission ○ Focused training efforts for Admin/limited commission ○ Defensive tactics review • Targeting Law Enforcement training to reinforce Area staffing roles. 	Measure no longer needed
2	Marketing	Build and sustain a comprehensive strategic marketing program that can adapt to support agency financial needs and promote the value of the state park system to the public. Stimulate sales of the Discover Pass and other fee-based services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By June 15, execute five projects defined in the strategic marketing plan, including testing and measuring new media vehicles (e.g., television, cinemas, etc.), and provide quantitative analysis of effectiveness to inform future marketing efforts. 	All projects were executed in a timely manner, including tests with television and cinema. All campaigns were set up to enable effective tracking to measure success.	Converted from biennial project to ongoing program

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
2	<i>Central Reservation System</i>	Produce a Request for Proposal and navigate the agency through the procurement process to secure a vendor to provide a central reservation system to manage reservations and provide a point of sale system at the park.	None in 2013/15	N/A	Manage multiple stakeholder groups to produce a complete RFP to secure a new vendor that will offer a cloud-based system with new functionality including offers management and a point of sale system.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
2	<i>Employee Development</i>	Efforts to optimize organizational structure within Operations have led to a more specialized focus of most classifications on the ground. In 2016, the agency will place a focus on improvement to employee development to further define roles and expectations; develop staff to be successful within their role; and focus on encouraging opportunities for growth for staff to promote into critical management roles as we face significant turnover in the current biennium. Additional emphasis will continue to be placed on development for staff in supervisory and leadership roles.	None in 2013/15	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% completion of PDPs for all permanent employees. • All permanent employees to receive a minimum of 1 training opportunity other than required/mandatory training and in alignment with their PDP.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
2	<i>Customer Service</i>	The current biennium budget has allowed for a modest increase in front line employees at the park. In 2016 the agency will concentrate on improvements to basic customer service in order to provide an improved experience for the park visitor. Specific focus will be on restroom and campsite cleanliness and repair; staff availability to visitors; and visible improvements to entrances and administrative areas used by the public. An effort will be made to bring these intended changes to the attention of visitor and encourage customer feedback to evaluate the impact of this emphasis.	None in 2013/15	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase customer survey participation by 50%. • Each seasonal employee engages in Customer Service Training. • Each park area has a written 2016 customer service plan that ensures intentional customer service efforts.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
2	Maintenance	<p>This initiative will focus on assessing the routine maintenance needs in the parks, prioritizing efforts, and deploying resources to optimize impacts to needed maintenance.</p> <p>Assessment of the data gathered will be used to more deliberately focus staffing resource into priority areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a definition for custodial/routine maintenance, preventative maintenance, and deferred maintenance. • Develop a comprehensive inventory of park level maintenance activities. • Assess current time utilized for maintenance related activities. • Determine resources currently expended on maintenance. • Determine proper classifications for achieving maintenance activities. • Use as a budgeting tool for 15-17 operational budget. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed process in 2014 and used data collected to inform 15/17 budget request. • In 2015, further refined system to improve accuracy. Updated standards and frequencies set for each activity. • Accomplished a system-wide audit, which updated the data for November 2015. • Currently assessing system for use in 17/19 budget request. • Assessment underway for refining agency wide staffing needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEP complete with a budget implication assessment • Maintenance pilot implemented and evaluated for further implementation by end of biennium. • Develop and implement written fire plan for the prevention and management of fires. • Continue into a second phase MMP to refine and comprehensively capture maintenance activities at the park level.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
2	<i>Sponsorships and Advertising</i>	Develop a strategic plan to coalesce and manage opportunities for sponsorship and advertising with the agency	None in 2013/15	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare policy guiding advertising within state parks for Commission consideration by May 2016. • Develop procedures and rate cards to manage sponsorship opportunities and communicate to necessary stakeholders. • Create baseline for revenues generated from advertising online and in parks. Then, look to optimize existing efforts to increase net revenues by 3% in 2017.
2	<i>Customer Data</i>	Visitor preferences and behaviors inform us as to the best products and services to offer. Evaluating these data also leads to better business decisions that will, in turn, increase revenues. This initiative seeks to centrally manage the data that are currently gathered at a variety of touchpoints to ensure a complete picture on which educated decisions can be based.	None in 2013/15	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish baselines for customer acquisition costs and retention rates on which to assess performance and guide improvements during the 2017-19 biennium. • Hire a new IT employee to assist with data management.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
2	Park Enterprise	This initiative enhances retail sales of agency branded items in park gift shops, stores, interpretive centers, and online as part of the agency's digital media strategy. Contract to sell on-demand printed products such as calendars, mugs, books, posters etc. that incorporate both agency and visitor-produced images and content.	None in 2013/15	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish inventory and manage inventory turns per year. • Launch program and increase PIA account revenues by 5% annually • Launch online merchandising program and increase revenues by 3% annually.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
3	Interpretation	Restore and enhance interpretation into a fundamental park experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be on track to expand the number of active interpretive interactions in state parks by 10 percent a year, increasing direct interpretive contacts from 114,000 annual visitors in 2012 to the Results Washington goal of 160,000 annual visitors by July 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Fiscal Year 2015, the number of reported interpretive contacts increased from 171,092 to 221,922, an increase of 29.7 % from the previous fiscal year. Used match from federal partnership grants to establish two new interpretive programs (staffed by 6-month Interpretive Specialists). One is supported by the USFWS-Urban Partnership and focused on urban youth outreach at Lake Sammamish; the other is supported by USFS and focused on old-growth forest experiences at Rockport. Established an Interpretive Leadership Team to guide the development of a long-range, interpretive program strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand number of active interpretive interactions in state parks by 10 percent a year, increasing direct interpretive contacts from 221,000 visitors in fiscal year 2015 to the (proposed) Results Washington goal of 267,000 visitors in fiscal year 2017. Complete exhibit renovation of one of thirteen agency-operated interpretive centers; specifically, Phase One of the Catherine Montgomery Interpretive Center exhibit renovation in Federation Forest State Park. Replace at least 30 outdoor exhibits, 15 per fiscal year, that are no longer relevant or have outlived their designed lifespan. Work with the State Parks Foundation to initiate a distance learning pilot program in 2016 to provide interpretive programs for underserved schoolchildren.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
3	Park Events	Work with State Parks Foundation, friends groups and other community groups to host events, arts performances, and festivals in state parks (e.g., fun runs, races, concerts, and ethnic festivals) to enhance public service, encourage new and repeat visitation and encourage Discover Pass sales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsor ten arts and performance events at five parks by December 2014. Inventory event facility capital needs and identify key areas of investment by June 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided 20 Arts in Parks events to an audience of 11,600 visitors, including an average of 583 visitors per event. Identified the location of at least 38 outdoor amphitheaters in the system, 8 of these having a seating capacity of 100 or more and suitable utilities and access. Many of the remaining 30 amphitheaters are in need of accessibility and utility improvements. A minor works-scale 2015-17 Capital Budget request for event infrastructure was developed and supported by the agency; however, it did not receive legislative funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate at least 12 Folk and Traditional Arts in the Parks events and/or festivals in at least six state parks by December of 2016. Implement the New Old Time Chautauqua in State Parks Partnership Program, including statewide community outreach events in at least six state parks. Establish Headwaters Project outreach event in at least one state park located along the Columbia River.
3	Park Trails	Develop accurate trail maps for use online and in mobile applications. Work with trail user groups to identify improvements that meet trail user needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete mapping of 100 state park trails and make available on State Park web site. Promote on State Park apps and social media by June 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress has been made with over 900 miles of park trail GIS data collected. Trail mapping is projected to be available on the agency website in early 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete planning process currently underway for eastern portion of Iron Horse State Park. Provide trail-related 2017-19 operating budget, capital budget, and grant requests. Install at least 3 attendance counters capable of discerning between user types on linear trails in 2016.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
3	Cabins and Yurts	Manage \$3 million capital investment in statewide cabin and yurt development, and generate associated revenue to help offset agency operating expenses.	Complete the installation of 25 cabins or yurts at five (5) parks by June, 2015.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the contractor defaulting, only 21 cabins were installed, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 at Ike Kinswa ○ 4 at Millersylvania ○ 5 at Dosewallips ○ 5 at Dash Point ○ 5 at Twin Harbors • Local park staff completed set up and opened facilities to the public. 	Measure no longer needed
3	<i>Cross-State Trails</i>	This initiative seeks to advance the system of cross state trails by working with key agencies and user groups to identify needed improvements and build “grass-roots” support for linear trails.	None in 2013/15	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete planning process currently underway for eastern portion of Iron Horse State Park. • Provide trail-related 2015-17 operating budget, capital budget, and grant requests. • Install at least 3 attendance counters capable of discerning between user types on linear trails in 2016
3	Park Level Transformation	Pursue implementation of transformation principles at Lake Sammamish to test their viability at the park level.	None in 2013/15	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign initial partnership agreement with REI. • Cooperate with USFWS to hire an urban wildlife refuge partnership coordinator.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
4	Sponsorships	Develop sponsors and sponsorship opportunities in state parks through mutually beneficial agreements, consistent with agency policies and legislative statutes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the State Parks Foundation to develop a Sponsorship Policy and procedural guideline by June 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific policy has been developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Sponsorships and Advertising • Initiative development of a philanthropic sponsorships policy with the Foundation by October 2016.
4	Friends Development (includes Community-Based Partnerships)	Recruit active volunteers and interested community members to establish park friends groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain 18 active park friends groups per year. • Hold an annual support conference to provide training for friends groups and park hosts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 active Friends Groups with formal agreements were in place June 30, 2015. • Conferences are held each year. In 2015 the conferences were split into two more focused conferences with one for Friends Group representatives and one for hosts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewrite the Community Based Project process (R139) by December 2016 • Seek to connect the Foundation to the Community based improvement process • Partner with the Foundation to produce the Friends Conference each Fall • Increase to 24 the number of Formal Friends Groups in 2016 • Work with the Washington State Park Foundation's Executive Director to develop a Memorandum of Understanding in 2016.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
5	Interagency, Tribal, and Non-Profit Partnerships	Identify and develop agreements to manage park resources or programs with other government agencies, Native American tribes, and non-profit organizations. Use partner expertise to manage resources or programs to secure financial investments and result in cost savings or revenue earnings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate new management partnerships with two agencies, tribes, or non-profit partners by June 2015. Develop system to evaluate revenue and cost savings achieved through partnerships by June 2015. Initiate two park planning projects to communities and encourage public involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The phase one MOU with the Nisqually Tribe was signed in April of 2014 MOU with the City of Issaquah signed in August 2013 Planning projects include the Lake Sammamish Development Plan and the Larrabee CAMP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request Commission approval of a long-term agreement with the Nisqually Tribe for cooperative development of Nisqually State Park. Initiate preparation and environmental review of a development agreement with the City of Issaquah for Lake Sammamish State Park. Complete South Whidbey CAMP; Beacon Rock Climbing Plan; Lake Spokane CAMP
6	Property Interest (including Surplus Lands, Revenue Lands, and Endowment initiatives)	This initiative seeks to designate certain lands to be managed for the primary purpose of revenue generation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Commission real property management policies, setting direction by December 2014. Complete analysis and identify lands potentially appropriate for revenue generating purposes by June 2015.* <p>*From Property Interest Initiative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real Estate Policy adopted by the Commission in 2015. Staff submitted PAA budget proviso report to the legislature as required by sect. 3107 of 2015-17 Capital Budget to identify “poorly used” lands. Analysis for over 300 properties as needed to nominate Recreation Business Activity sites, Enterprise Lands, and Land Transfer candidates completed by June 1, 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post Round 1 Recreation Business Activity site candidates on agency website by January 2016. Request that Commission designate first round of authorized sites as Recreation Business Activity sites by July 2016.

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
6	Environmental Mitigation Initiative	Allow restoration of natural systems as compensatory mitigation for public and private development projects by creating a mitigation bank that would allow for large-scale restoration of degraded natural features and systems, while generating revenue for agency purposes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit an application to the Washington Department of Ecology to become a certified, statewide natural resource mitigation banking entity by June 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application not submitted to Ecology due to lack of interest from private sector consultant contracted to submit the application. Additional mitigation banking program work on hold pending private sector interest as needed to initiate/continue the program 	Measure no longer needed
7	Facility Management and Capital Planning (Previously 10-Year Capital Development Plan)	Develop a comprehensive ranked and prioritized 10-year capital program funding plan based on operational needs, opportunities, and facilities condition, maximizing funds and leveraging private and public fund sources. Develop and maintain an inventory of all physical improvements within the State Park system including their current condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the Facility Condition Index from 61% to 62% by October 2015, with a goal of 80% FCI attained in the next 20–25 years. Provide initial access to two (2) parks held for future development, by October 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further refinement of the data showed that the October 2014 FCI was 60.43. Based on these refined data, the FCI for October 2015 was 61.43 or slightly below the goal of a 1% increase. The shortfall was due to funding. Initial Park Access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miller Peninsula Initial Park Access was completed 9/3/2015. Nisqually Initial Park Access is substantially complete. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the Facility Condition Index (FCI) a minimum of 2% per biennium with a goal of 80%. While maintaining current data, add a minimum of one infrastructure type per biennium (e.g., Roads, Sewer, Power, Water, Trails).

Strategy	Initiative	Description	Performance Measure 2013-15	Accomplishments 2013-15	Performance Measure 2015-17
7	Grants Coordination	Develop grant requests that support agency transformation through expanded grant opportunities and improved grant applications.	By 2015, increase by 10 percent the number of state grant funds received compared to 2013.	Grant coordination was improved through the designation of a specific grant program coordinator; the number of grants received remained about the same.	Converted from biennial project to ongoing program
7	<i>Statewide Park Acquisition and Development Strategy</i>	Develop statewide strategy to guide prioritization and development of properties held for future park development and acquisition of lands for new, stand-alone parks.	None in 2013/15	N/A	Develop strategy for Commission approval by July 2016.

2017-2019 priorities

To build on recent progress toward achieving the strategic goal of a healthy and sustainable park system, the Commission plans to focus on the following areas in the 2017-19 biennium:

Customer focus: “Clean, green and be seen”

More than 70 percent of the current State Parks budget is devoted to direct, on-the-ground service to park visitors. Park staff respond to visitors to answer questions and address concerns and provide programming in parks. Meanwhile, they also work to keep public facilities such as restrooms, campgrounds and picnic shelters safe, clean and welcoming. Since the State Parks operating model relies on a majority of funding to come from user fees, satisfying customer expectations in the parks is critical to the financial stability of the park system.



Improving customer relations is a key priority for State Parks.

State Parks will continue to focus efforts on basic custodial care as a core element of customer service and will continue striving to standardize service efforts throughout the state. The agency also will continue its outreach to understand visitors as well as those who are not currently going out to parks. This knowledge will help the agency be responsive and provide parks and services that are relevant to the public.

Improving facility condition

The condition of facilities in state parks varies. Some parks have been recently refurbished and have buildings, roads, trails and utilities that are in good condition. Other parks have serious deficiencies in facility condition and have buildings and infrastructure in need of renovation or replacement. During the past few years, the agency has made some progress on improving the condition of its facilities, because of support from the Legislature, the Governor and partners. State Parks is making strategic decisions in determining priorities for facility repair, replacement or elimination. With a maintenance backlog currently pegged at \$473 million statewide, State Parks will use capital and operating funds to continue its focus on facility condition.

Making smarter decisions with better data

State Parks will continuously invest in efforts that yield the following results:

- Administrative efficiencies
- Expansion of internal and external communications
- Streamlined decision-making
- Improved connection with current and potential customers

The agency will apply continuous improvements in its performance measurement systems. This will provide better data for agency internal decisions, as well as clearer and more meaningful information

for legislative and gubernatorial decision makers. Customer service and customer expectations data will drive program and facility investments.

Understanding resources in our care

To prioritize and protect the most important natural and cultural resources, State Parks must continue improving its knowledge of resources in its care. Staff will improve assessments and inventories and will work with volunteers, non-profit conservation organizations and other agencies to deepen its understanding of stewardship needs around such activities as noxious weed and forest health management and shellfish protection. This will lead to better restoration, protection and preservation of natural resource assets for future generations.

Engaging youth and diverse communities

Demographic changes continuously alter State Parks’ potential customer base and the service preferences of those prospective customers. The same changes affect the probable work force. The agency is working to better understand these changes and meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population. In particular, State Parks will make concerted efforts to reach out to youth and ethnic minorities to help increase engagement and participation. The agency is focused on recruiting and developing a high-performing, diverse workforce. The agency also seeks to better understand the recreation needs of various ethnic communities and provide services and facilities in response to their preferences. Parks intends to enhance its commitment to the No Child Left Inside grant program and expand other efforts to engage youth in outdoor education and resource stewardship.

Developing trail access and improving trail management

Surveys show that, by a wide margin, the most popular outdoor recreational activities are walking, biking and horseback riding in summer and skiing and snowshoeing in the winter. These are the activities that take place on State Parks trails. The agency intends to increase its outreach to trail users, improve trail conditions, build relationships with trail neighbors and draw in partners to help develop programs and facilities.



Bridge replacement: Willapa Hills Trail State Park.

Appendix A: Organizational Chart



Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
Updated September 2016

