State Parks Asks "Would You Like Flies With That?"

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - Should the State Parks system operate more like an enterprise-based hospitality industry, a public conservation asset based mostly on grant and tax funding – or perhaps a system of parks freely standing as community non-profit entities? What do people love about their park system, and what improvements need to be made?

These and other questions will be considered and discussed as part of a broad public outreach effort by Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission staff. Ideas are being sought through e-mail and in meetings with legislators, stakeholders and in public meetings scheduled around the state in May and June.

Information gathered will be used to create a transformation strategy that will guide the park system through the next five years and beyond. The strategic transformation plan is to be used as a successor plan to the State Parks Centennial 2013 Plan, which provided guidance for parks improvements during the past 10 years.

At the public meetings, parks staff will present the "state of state parks" and ask for ideas and comments about three “thematic alternative” visions for the future. Each of the “themes" will be explored by using a local park as an example. Participants at each meeting will have an opportunity to discuss the themes and share their ideas. Attendance is free, and a Discover Pass is not required to attend meetings held at a state park.

As the process moves forward, public comments, questions and suggestions received about the future of Washington State Parks will be made available online at www.parks.wa.gov/Beyond2013/.

Public meeting locations, dates and times are as follows:

• Tri Cities: 7 to 8:30 p.m. May 17
Columbia Basin College
2600 N. 20th Ave.
Building A, room A126
Pasco, WA 99301

• Spokane: 3:30 to 5 p.m. May 19 (focus on Riverside State Park) and 6 – 7:30 p.m. May 21 (focus on Mount Spokane State Park)
Spokane Public Library Shadle Branch
W. 2111 Wellesley Ave.
Spokane, WA 99205

• Central and East Wenatchee: 7 to 8:30 p.m. May 22

Washington State Parks Eastern Region Headquarters
270 Ninth Street N.E.
Ice Age Conference Room
East Wenatchee, WA 98802

• Friday Harbor: 2:15 to 4 p.m. June 2
Whidbey Island Bank - Community Room
535 Market Street
Friday Harbor, WA 98250

• Olympia: 7 to 8:30 p.m. June 5
Tumwater High School
700 Israel Road S.W.
Olympia, WA 98501

• Seattle area: 7 to 8:30 p.m. June 6
King County Department of Development and Environmental Services
900 Oakdale Ave. S.W.
Renton, WA 98057

• Fort Worden State Park: 6:30 to 9 p.m. June 11
200 Battery Way
Company A
Port Townsend, WA 98368

• Burlington: 6:30 to 9 p.m. June 12
Burlington Library
Burlington Rotary Community Meeting Room
820 E. Washington Ave.
Burlington, WA 98233

• Chinook: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. June 14
Fort Columbia State Park Theater
475 Highway 101
Chinook, WA 98638
Individuals, groups and organizations wishing to join an e-mail list for updates on the planning process are invited to use the following contact information:

• E-mail: Strategic.Planning@parks.wa.gov
• Phone: (360) 902-8504 and ask for Strategic Planning
• Mail: Washington State Parks, Strategic Planning, P.O. Box 42650, Olympia, WA 98504-2650

Stay connected to your state parks by following Washington State Parks at www.facebook.com/WashingtonStateParks, www.twitter.com/WaStatePks_NEWS and www.youtube.com/WashingtonStateParks.

The Commission manages a diverse system of more than 100 state parks and recreation programs, including long-distance trails, boating safety and winter recreation. The 99-year-old park system will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2013. For more information on Centennial 2013, visit

www.parks.wa.gov/Centennial2013.

Support state parks by purchasing your Discover Pass today, and enjoy a whole year of outdoor fun on Washington’s beautiful state-managed recreation lands. For more information, visit www.discoverpass.wa.gov.