

## **State Parks Commission Considers State of State Parks Report**

### **Local News**

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Olympia, WA - The Washington State Parks and Recreation will approve a comprehensive "State of State Parks" report on the status of the park system and the Commission's view of the best funding mix to make it financially stable, at its regular meeting next week in Wenatchee.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 9, at the Washington State Parks Eastern Region Headquarters Office, 270 Ninth St. N.E., Suite 200, East Wenatchee, WA. A full Commission meeting agenda is available online at [www.parks.wa.gov/agency/commissionmeetings/](http://www.parks.wa.gov/agency/commissionmeetings/). Time for public comment is provided at all regular meetings, which are scheduled six times a year at pre-determined locations around the state.

The report to be considered by the Commission is required as part of the 2012 Legislative Proviso and will be submitted to the state Office of Financial Management by Aug. 15. The Proviso directs the Commission to provide a status report on the Discover Pass, a new fee program instituted in 2011, in part, to move the state park system to a more self-supporting funding model.

The Discover Pass is a \$30 annual (\$10 daily) vehicle access pass now required of most daytime visitors and recreation users on lands managed by Washington State Parks, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The Discover Pass is intended to generate revenues no longer available to cover the costs of operating state-managed recreation lands. State Parks receives 84 percent of revenues, and WDFW and DNR each receive 8 percent. For more information about the pass, how to purchase and exemptions from the pass requirement, visit [www.DiscoverPass.wa.gov](http://www.DiscoverPass.wa.gov).

The "State of State Parks" report outlines progress the agency has made toward greater financial stability on its own and includes some details about an agency Transformation Strategy currently being created to keep the agency working proactively on operations funding solutions. Efforts in the report include explorations of new revenue sources, greater leveraging of partners, expansion of technology and market considerations, as well as the Commission's rationale to pursue some level of general fund in its 2013-15 budget request. The Commission also proposes getting support to gather the data needed to determine financial need for 2015-17 and beyond.

The agency recently conducted a statewide outreach effort to get public input to guide the agency on its planning efforts. The draft reported is available online at [www.parks.wa.gov/Beyond2013/](http://www.parks.wa.gov/Beyond2013/). The public is encouraged to provide comment.

The Commission also will consider policy decisions related to the development of the agency's 2013-15 operating and capital budget requests and will consider agency request legislation for the 2013 legislative session, also outlined in the above-referenced report.

In other business, the Commission will consider:

- A ranked list of grant proposals for State Parks, through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, administered by the Recreation Conservation Office.
- Revisions to Commission policies related to real estate transactions related to non-recreational uses of parklands and delegations of authority for real estate transactions.
- A long-term boundary revision for the Green River Gorge Conservation Area and to declare a portion of Nolte State Park no longer advantageous for park purposes. Any proceeds from the 28-acre parcel could be used to fill in the boundary in other portions of the conservation area.
- A final 2013 Commission meeting schedule.

The Commission also will hear several reports, including a capital construction program update; a status report on Fort Worden State Park's business and management plan; marketing update; friends development initiative; 2012 annual Washington Administrative Code review; and a report on the public outreach for the agency Transformation Strategy.

Commission work session: A Commission work session is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 8, at Washington State Parks Eastern Region Headquarters Office, 270 Ninth Ave. N.E., Suite 200, East Wenatchee. Work sessions are open to the public, however, no public testimony and no formal Commission action are taken at work sessions. Work session topics include a budget update; the agency legislative agenda and outreach; operations update; background on the August report to OFM; discussion with Chelan County Public Utility District Commissioners; forest health; historic preservation; agency Transformation Strategy; Commission's travel, tours and meeting policy.

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Support state parks by purchasing your annual 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](http://www.discoverpass.wa.gov).