

[State Parks to Consider Fee Changes at Ocean Shores Meeting](#)

Local News

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OCEAN SHORES, Wash. - At its regular meeting next week in Ocean Shores, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission will consider changes to agency fee policies, including establishment of new fee programs and changes in policies around rate adjustments, so they may be based more on market conditions and cost of service.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 24, at the Ocean Shores Conference Center, 120 West Chance A La Mer Ave., Ocean Shores. A full Commission meeting agenda is available online at 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.

National and state economic downturns have led the state Legislature and governor to make the policy choice of converting the State Parks Operating Budget from primarily general fund tax support, to being funded primarily by "fee for service." This shift requires a thorough review of agency policy regarding fees and rates for all programs and services.

The Commission has directed staff to consider best practices from the public and private sector with regard to pricing, while respecting the agency's stewardship obligations and signature service and recreation opportunities that will continue drawing the public to choose Washington state parks for recreation, travel and enjoyment.

The new fee policy under Commission consideration would have the Commission setting base rates for primitive, standard, partial-utility and full-utility campsites — with variable pricing options typical in the private sector. While State Parks staff believe the new fee structure will result in a lower **average** price for campsites over the course of a year, additional revenue will be generated due to increased earnings from premier sites for weekends, holidays and prime seasons. A goal from these price changes is to increase overall occupancy throughout the year.

Proposed 2014 base rates:

- Primitive campsite: \$12 (same as 2013)
- Standard (tent) site: \$25 (8 percent increase)
- Partial-utility site: \$30 (same as 2013)
- Full-utility site: \$35 (8 percent increase)

In addition, the policy would allow the agency to charge up to an additional \$15 for designated premier sites and up to \$8 on standard or \$15 for RV campsites for weekends and holidays. The policy also would enable the agency to discount up to \$10 for designated economy sites year round and even greater discounts during the winter season.

The policy also would allow the agency flexibility in “bundling fees” that provide package incentives to visitors and to provide discounts to encourage use during lower visitation times. The policy under consideration also encourages responsible use of the reservation system so State Parks can maximize greater accessibility of campsites to everyone and limit loss of revenue because of customers who reserve campsites but do not cancel or show up, thus tying up campsites others could be using.

The Commission will hear several reports: Future governance at Fort Worden State Park; the Recreational Boating Safety Program; 2012 Clean Vessel Act Program; Employee Satisfaction Survey Recommendations and Agency Direction; and personal use of powered mobility devices by persons with disabilities.

Commission work session: A Commission work session is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 23, also at the Ocean Shores Convention Center. Work sessions are open to the public; however, no public testimony and no formal Commission action are taken. Work session topics include: Remarks by outgoing Commissioner Joe Taller; current status of the agency Operating and Capital budgets; park housing; Winter Recreation implementation plan at Crystal Springs Sno-Park; Update on Avista/The Cove; personal use of mobility devices by persons with disabilities; the director’s 2012 and 2013 performance contracts; agency Transformation Strategy; the union contract/volunteering and contracting; working endowment lands; rental accommodations; Centennial 2013 celebration events and marketing.

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The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission manages a diverse system of more than 100 state parks and recreation programs, including long-distance trails, boating safety and winter recreation. Washington State Parks will turn 100 years old on March 19, 2013, and will celebrate with events in parks all over the state, all year long. For more information, visit www.parks.wa.gov/events/.

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.