



# CENTENNIAL 2013 NEWS

**Commissioners:** Eliot Scull • Joe Taller • Fred Olson • Rodger Schmitt • Joan Thomas • Cecilia Vogt • Lucinda S. Whaley • Director Rex Derr

A newsletter for supporters of the Centennial 2013 Plan

Summer 2009

## Welcome, and enjoy: Thank you for helping keep parks open

When you head to your state parks later this summer, you'll notice big "Thank You" signs posted prominently in the parks. The thank you is to you, citizens who stepped up to let the Commission, Legislators and Governor know that parks are important and need to stay open.

As you plan your trip, remember that Washington State Parks is one of only 10 state park systems in the country that does not charge for day visits – and the Legislature, Governor, Commission and citizens worked hard this session to keep it that way and to keep parks open.

During state budget deliberations this past spring, it was looking likely that up to 40 parks would need to be mothballed to meet required state budget reductions in response to the economic recession. As news spread, thousands of Washingtonians responded, writing e-mails and letters to get a message to policymakers: "We love our parks, and we want them open."

The result: The Legislature and Governor passed House Bill 2339, establishing a new state parks donation program tied to vehicle license tab renewals. Donations are intended to supplant part of the \$52 million (out of \$100 million) in General Fund taxes cut from State Parks' two-year operating budget in the final 2009-11 budget.

The agency still is required to make substantial reductions in staff and programs, particularly at region and headquarters offices. But the Legislature and Governor directed in the final budget that all parks will remain open in 2009-11, provided adequate donation funds are collected.

Starting with September renewals, when you receive your license tab renewal from the Department of Licensing, you'll see an automatic \$5 donation added to your bill. You have the choice not to participate, but we're hoping you will. The donations come directly to State Parks to keep more than 100 beautiful state parks open for you all over Washington. For online information, visit [www.parks.wa.gov/current/](http://www.parks.wa.gov/current/).

Thank you again – and enjoy your Washington state parks.

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## Centennial 2013: The dream's still alive

Even though times are tough, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission is holding tight to its dream. The Centennial 2013 Plan was adopted in 2003 to improve the park system and prepare for its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and the next century.

In the face of a challenging economy, the Commission recently re-confirmed its commitment to the plan but acknowledged that some goals will be reduced and timelines revised in line with available resources. The Commission also emphasized the first priority of the plan, “Fix what we have.”

“We know we won’t be able to make as much progress as fast as we had hoped in the original plan, but that doesn’t mean we abandon our dreams and goals,” said Eliot Scull, Commission chair. “We’ll be focusing on basics, and we’ll still be working with our many partners and volunteers to continue improvements – but we also have to keep our thoughts on the future and make sure we provide good parks and recreation for future generations.”

The Commission continues to welcome endorsements for the plan. Currently, more than 2,500 people and organizations have endorsed Centennial 2013. To add your endorsement, view the Centennial goals and a progress report for 2008, visit [www.parks.wa.gov/Centennial2013/](http://www.parks.wa.gov/Centennial2013/).

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## **Washington State Parks Foundation honors major donors**

The Washington State Parks Foundation honored The Boeing Company and the Tagney-Jones Family Trust during an April reception at the Governor’s Mansion.

Boeing received the Corporate Partner award for its \$100,000 grant to the Foundation for environmental restoration on the Willapa Bay Trail in Lewis County. The trail lies along the Chehalis River and salmon spawning grounds damaged in 2007 floods.

The Tagney-Jones Family Trust received the Foundation Partner Award for its \$15,000 matching grant to the Foundation to develop a marked trail and interpretive signage to protect tidepools at Rosario Beach in Deception Pass State Park. The tide pools had received extensive damage from overuse.

The reception drew a crowd of 200 and helped the Foundation launch its new membership program that invites people to join as annual members for a \$25 donation. The Foundation was authorized by the Legislature in 2000 and has raised and committed more than \$2.5 million to State Parks for trails, environmental restoration and new facilities.

For information about the foundation, visit [www.washingtonstateparksfoundation.org](http://www.washingtonstateparksfoundation.org)

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## **Organizations unite to clean up ocean beaches**

Volunteers are invited to join coastal beach cleanups scheduled for July 5 on the Long Beach Peninsula, (organized by the Grass Roots Garbage Gang), and for July 11, at Twin Harbors State Park (organized by the Washington Chapter of Surfriders). Refuse from Fourth of July fireworks can kill seabirds and mammals and pollute marine waters, getting into the food chain.

The Washington Clean Coast Alliance was recently formed to enhance the ongoing efforts of state parks staff, volunteer groups, nonprofit organizations and government agencies, who were already working to promote clean and safe beaches along the entire Washington coast. Cleanups at State Parks beaches began as early as 1971 by the Washington Four-Wheel Drive Association. North Beach area State Parks rangers began conducting April community cleanups early this decade. The Grass Roots Garbage Gang volunteers at Long

Beach began organizing cleanup events around the same time and currently hold three beach cleanups each year. Surfrider Foundation volunteers have been coordinating beach cleanups at Westhaven since 2005.

The Alliance is composed of a variety of organizations: Grass Roots Garbage Gang, Discover Your Northwest, Lions Club International, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, Olympic National Park, Pacific Northwest Four-Wheel Drive Association, Surfrider Foundation and the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

At the April 2009 cleanup, about 1,200 volunteers collected more than 30 tons of debris – everything from Styrofoam chunks, plastic and bottles, to shotgun shells, toys, glass, caps, cigarette filters, derelict fishing gear and shoes and clothing.

After the July cleanup, watch for the following events: September 's Operation Shore Patrol; January's cleanup on Long Beach; and the Alliance's signature event in April: Washington Coast Cleanup at beaches statewide. For complete information and to sign up for an event, visit [www.coastsavers.org](http://www.coastsavers.org).

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## News and notes from your Washington state parks:

- **New Web site** -- A brand new State Parks Web site was launched in March, featuring more photos, color and other features than before. Find park maps that you can download and print, check out the agency's Events Page and more, at [www.parks.wa.gov](http://www.parks.wa.gov).
  - **Youth volunteer 500 hours at Belfair and Twanoh state parks** – Rangers at the two Hood Canal parks this past spring worked with three youth platoons from the Washington Youth Academy in Bremerton, a training program for at-risk youth. The cadets did extensive cleanup in storm-battered day-use and campground areas of the park, and rangers were impressed with the hard work, which resulted in a record-time cleanup at the parks.
  - **Earth Day at Saltwater State Park** – An excited crowd of more than 500 young people spent earth day on the beach and in the forest at the park, learning about nature and the environment. Organizations such as AmeriCorps, Seattle Tilth, Cascade Orienteering Club, 4-H Watershed Education, U.S. Coast Guard and the Rainier Audubon provided activities and tours. The Surprise Elementary Steel Drum Band from Kent kept things hopping all day long.
  - **State Parks Stewardship certification** – State Parks takes pride in a rigorous stewardship certification program that so far has trained 450 and certified 47 employees. The program is a series of training opportunities designed to increase awareness about interpretation of natural, cultural and historic resources. Trainings include Westside Ecosystems, Eastside Ecosystems, Principles of Historic Preservation, Cultural Resources, Interpretive Methods/Environmental Education and Resource Recreation. To become certified, staff develop a stewardship project.
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