

Thank you all for interest, support and submitting your comments. Below is a full list of comments to date. When the commenter is stating an opinion, State Parks will consider it. When the commenter asks a question, you will see a *staff response in italics* after it. Where some questions are deemed rhetorical, State Parks will take it as an opinion and consider it, but not respond.

Email Comments – Beyond 2013 Strategic Planning

Updated 7/3/2012

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Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 9:51 AM

Subject: Re: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks - I for one can't believe you are actually interested.

Daniel,

I am shocked at your suggestion of Theme #2. Here in Port Townsend (Fort Worden) we work our fingers to the bone setting up a community non-profit and your employee's union head and one Parks Commissioner were able to undermine years of work and essentially said to us: "a community non-profit over my dead body"!

What gives?

You therefore can't be serious about Theme #2. The mere suggestion of it is.....well, it is hard for me to trust that you actually are interested in public feedback.

Regards, James

Staff response: The thematic alternatives in the "Beyond 2013" public outreach effort are designed to help us think about the park system from a statewide perspective as well as understand potential impacts for each park. The specific direction at Fort Worden, regarding a management approach between State Parks and the Fort Worden Lifelong Learning Center Public Development Authority (PDA) has not been decided. We are not sure what you believe has been undermined at this point, but we encourage you to stay involved as State Parks and the PDA continue to explore management choices in the coming months.

Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 11:31 AM

Subject: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks // Create Public Survey for those of us who cannot attend public meetings

Dear Daniel,

For those of us who will not be able to attend the public meetings, will there be a forum for us to respond to questions?

A public e-mail survey would capture this for myself and family members who rely and use our State Parks on a very regular basis.

Theme 1: Parks as an Enterprise

Theme 2: Parks as a Community Non-Profit

Theme 3: Parks as a Public Conservation Asset

I look forward to hearing from you about my proposal and concerns!

Sincerely, Renee

Staff Response: Our web site offers the opportunity to provide comments and ask questions if people cannot make it to the meetings.

Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 12:07 PM

Subject: RE: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

Daniel,

As a primary alpine skier state park user, it seems simple to me that as the federal and state governments continue to outspend their revenues, parks will be cut back. If Mt. Spokane, for example, must become self funded, it is apparent to me that user fees must make up the bulk of the funding presently provided by the state. I am a regular user of Mt. Spokane State Park and would gladly pay more for my lift tickets to support my portion of the use and maintenance of the park. If this reduces skier visits because of price competition with other ski resorts, my experience at Mt. Spokane will be enhanced with smaller crowds on weekends. If that causes my fee to increase additionally, I will be happy to pay that as well. If the concessionaire generates \$3M in revenues now and the cost to maintain the road alone is \$3M per winter, lift ticket prices would have to double or more. The snowmobile and XC trail system maintenance and patrolling costs would significantly have to be supported by user fees as well and their costs may increase by 10X since they pay so little now.

I think it is fantastic that you are asking for input on the use of the parks as self-supporting. I think you will hear that most users will quit using the parks because of the high fees they will have to pay relative to the fees they pay now. Surely you know this infinitely better than I do. Daniel, you are a bright guy and have done amazing things at State Parks. You will sort this out and we will all pay. The proximity and the features of our state parks will keep us loyal recreationists. At the end of the day, why should I benefit on the backs of state tax payers who don't use Mt. Spokane?

Also, use this note as my solid support for the environmental statement issued by Mt. Spokane 2000 toward the addition of Chair 6 in the PASEA. That group has done a far better job operating the ski area than we hoped for when we helped State Parks write the bid package document years ago.

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Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 1:25 PM
Subject: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

Hi Again. If I would have read your message more fully I would have found the list of scheduled meetings. I am happy to see that there will be one at Ft. Columbia. I'll watch for the date.

One thought on possible legislative changes necessary. Before I was appointed to the Parks Commission, I was the manager of a Washington Public Port. My first thought regarding Parks funding was that if a Port Manager had all the assets of Washington State Parks, he would be making all the money needed. It was pointed out to me that the restrictions placed on Parks budgeting and management makes it impossible. So, if you have not already done so, you might want to take a look at the Ports enabling legislation to see if something of that nature would work for Parks. As I recall, the only restrictions on a Port budget is that it must show an estimate of the beginning and ending cash and a statement as to how much of a levy they want to assess. Of course, standard accounting practices must be followed, but there is no legislative oversight as to where the money will come from and where it is spent. There is a list of activities that it is legal for Ports to engage in. I am not suggesting that Parks become strictly an anything for a Buck operation, but our success with vacation housing, etc. shows that we can provide services to the public that are appropriate and welcome.

Our Rangers are a really wonderful group of multi talented people, but most of them are not necessarily accountants or business managers. Maybe a crash course in business management would be necessary.

Anyway, a little food for thought for you: I am really looking forward to seeing you. I can't think of anyone else at Parks, or elsewhere, that would be a better person for the task you have undertaken. Good luck

Bob

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Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 2:22 PM
Subject: Re: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

Dear Daniel Farber,

Thank you very much for the email, and for the invitation to be part of the process.

Your email is quite sobering, and based on the recent actions (and non-actions) of State Parks relative to the bureaucratic "bump" in a key leadership position at Fort Worden State Park (see the front page article "[New Manager at Fort Worden](#)" in the January 6, 2012 *Port Townsend-Jefferson County Leader*) I find it a challenge to engage in the process you outline below.

Fort Worden was years into a thoughtful, politically collaborative, and daring process that was already doing what you propose: creating a model that would allow parks to be

a self-sustaining. To allow the "bump" of talented leadership that was largely responsible for the successes that were achieved seems to be the exact *opposite* of strategic, and part of no plan that makes any rational sense.

So I ask *you* the question: Why would a well intentioned and engaged citizen like myself trust any strategic planning process of a bureaucratic organization that would allow such bumps in key leadership positions to happen?

Sincerely,
Joseph

Response: State agencies are required to uphold personnel rules and collective bargaining agreements with unions. It is unfortunate the economy took a down-turn and left many government and private organizations no choice but to downsize its workforce. We lost many talented employees.

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Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 4:03 PM

Subject: Re: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

What 5 state parks have closed?

Response: A number of state parks have been transferred to other governments in the last decade or so. They include Fay Bainbridge, Fort Ward, Wenberg, Osoyoos Lake, Moses Lake, Crowe Butte, Lake Cushman, Mukilteo, Chief Timothy, Lyons Ferry and Central Ferry. The latter two are closed to use now, with the others operated by other public entities.

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Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 8:13 PM

Subject: Re: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN SAID THAT "THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE." THAT TO ME WOULD BE GOOD MUSIC, (NOT HIP HOP AND NOISE), MOUNTAINS, TREES WILDLIFE, SUNSETS, AND PEACEFUL SILENCE OF NATURE HIGT IN THE MOUNTAINS OR IN OUR MANY STATE PARKS. "GOD GIVEN,....NOT MAN MADE!"

FREE ADMISSION FOR THE ELDERLY IS STILL A "MUST!" ALL OUR ASSETS ARE TAXED AWAY FROM US AND WE ARE FORCED TO SELL OR TAKE ON REVERSE MORTGAGES TO KEEP GOING. REASONABLE FEES IS AN ABSOLUTE FOR OUR RANGERS AND PARK UPKEEPS. HOWEVER, IT HAS TO BE A "PAY AS YOU GO' TYPE OF PLAN, SO AS NOT TO LOOSE THEM ENTIRELY! TAX USE for parks was once a PRIORITY! THAT AND OUR PUBLIC HIGHWAYS AND ROADS! NOW, OUR Road and safety white and yellow stripes for night time driving safety have fallen by the wayside!

I CAN'T MAKE ANY OF YOUR MEETINGS AS WE WILL BE GONE ON THOSE DAYS CLOSEST TO OUR AREA WE LIVE IN. "big government" NEEDS TO STAY OUT OF OUR "BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE" AREAS! MAYBE ITS TIME TO

PUT MORE REPUBLICANS INTO OUR WASHINGTON GOVERNMENT IF CHANGES ARE TO BE ON THE POSITIVE SIDE FOR THE PEOPLE.

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Sent: Wednesday, May 09, 2012 6:19 AM
Subject: RE: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

As president of our home owners association, located adjacent to the Lake Chelan State Park at First Creek, I will try to help our good neighbor in any way we can. Education of the public with this change in funding to more of a user fee (opposed to tax based funding) is certainly necessary. Once people realize this change, they will realize the need to pay for their service direct. Running the Park as more of a nonprofit organization will inspire more volunteer support, both financial and labor. Please keep me informed of meetings in this area and policies you adopt. I will steer our members in your direction.

Ed
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Sent: Wednesday, May 09, 2012 12:09 PM
Subject: RE: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

Dear Daniel,

Thank you for your email and interest in the Washington Native Plant Society's participation in upcoming meetings. Before I work with the membership to get involved it would be helpful if I had a better understanding of your three themes. Will these be on the listed website soon?

I have been thoroughly disheartened by the legislature's approach to funding Washington State Parks. I believe I and our membership are in the Parks as a Public Conservation Asset category, but I don't know what State Parks means by this and how it is distinguished from your other themes. I'm also unclear what role we can play in affecting change to the financial path State Parks now must travel.

I look forward to hearing more from you, so that I might better work with our membership.

Sincerely,

Catherine
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Sent: Wednesday, May 09, 2012 4:02 PM
Subject: RE: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

Dear Mr. Farber,

Thank you very much for sending us this email. My husband and I stand by willing to do what we can to assist Washington State Parks in the challenging years ahead. We will attend the upcoming meeting at Fort Worden next month. In the meantime, we don't

specifically belong to any group (we did sign the on line petition re not turning over Fort Worden to the PDA).

We did go to your web site, and will continue to monitor it for more information re your 3 "visions" for the Park's future. We know we would not support #1, and certainly need education about #2 and #3.

Thank you for all your work on this. If you hear of a group that you think we might want to connect with, please let us know.

Penelope and Lee

Sent: Wednesday, May 09, 2012 6:59 PM

Subject: Re: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

One way the parks can save money is to allow more volunteers to help at local parks instead of worrying about whether or not they are insured or if there will be lawsuits. If someone wants to help mowing a lawn or picking up trash or whatever, then let them do it. Don't hinder their efforts with a lack of vision.

Sent: Thursday, May 10, 2012 7:23 PM

Subject: Re: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

Daniel -- One thing that would help me is to know how many other state park systems have been directed to become self-sustaining, *without any General Fund support*. It would seem this should be readily available data through whatever national state parks information exchange exists. The other systems must profile their funding sources in some accessible format. That would be useful information, and Washingtonians should have it.

Frankly, I am amazed that no one came to the effective defense of State Parks in the State Legislature. Where were the Good Sam Clubs, the mountain bike enthusiasts, the downhill skiers, the various "Friends of...(your park here)", the local Chambers of Commerce, and all the other recreationists whose interests are served by State Parks?

State Parks cannot be a self-sustaining operation. It may come closest at Ft. Worden, but, without Disneyfying every other state park in WA, there is little likelihood you will ever operate in the black.

I return to my initial question: how many other state park systems have no General Fund monies? If there are any, what are they doing to keep their heads above water? If we knew this it could help inform a dialogue. If we are unique in having no General Fund dollars the public should know that.

Thanks for any information you can provide.

Staff response: New Hampshire State Parks system supposedly operates from user funds, though they are mostly ski resorts. All of the park systems are unique and it is difficult to compare apples and oranges. Other parks systems operate and maintain their systems with mixtures of general funds support and user fees. No state parks system

operates independent from tax funding for both operations and capital. The Washington State Legislature has not talked about eliminating capital improvement funds from state parks.

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Sent: Tue 05/08/2012 10:01 PM

Daniel,

Glad to do anything to help. After talking to a lot of people while doing the pilot program with Brian on the Discover Pass, I'm convinced we need to pull out all stops to tell the park story to the public. If we need 17% of the people to buy passes, we have an uphill battle. If there is any hope of success, then time is really of the essence.....we need everyone working this over the next two months. Although we need public input for the long term, for the short term (and that is what will kill us) we need to lay out the facts and enlist support. I'm afraid if we take a measured step by step process as we are accustomed to doing with the CAMP or other planning, we'll run out of time.

Again, will be glad to do anything to help.

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Sent: Tue 05/08/2012 11:38 AM

It is pathetic that the state government chooses to underfund what should be a top priority. The state should focus on eliminating waste, inefficiency, and bureaucratic incompetency. Our road system is grossly inadequate, education is underfunded, and our natural resources which preserve our state parks for tax-paying citizens is in a sad state.

Suggestions:

Increase the fee for the yearly Discover Pass. Day passes should be \$5.00 or \$10 at all parks. **THIS SHOULD BE STRICTLY ENFORCED WHICH IS NOT THE CASE CURRENTLY.**

Run ads to solicit contributions from the general public.

Solicit gifts from the area's many millionaires. Solicit contributions from the area's corporations and businesses. (Costco, Microsoft, Boeing---)

Solicit individuals who are interested or required to perform community service.

Hire part-time workers to perform routine maintenance and cleaning of buildings.

Solicit college students who are studying field biology, ecology, environmental studies to create interpretative trails and education information. (Perhaps college credit could be given.)

Hire part-time retired workers at minimum wage to aid in keeping the parks looking their best.

Ask the Governor and the legislature to set an example by donating 1% of their inflated salaries. Ask state workers to help support state parks. (For example, a dollar or two deducted from paychecks.)

Ask local TV stations to have popular area newscasters report the funding problem and ask for contributions in any amount.

Instead of paying welfare, put able-bodied individuals to work in the parks.

Preserving natural beauty for the enjoyment of all is not an option. It is a necessity which contributes to our physical and mental well-being. We should be adding parks and natural areas in an increasing high density urban like environment. It is short-

sighted and ignorant to ignore the protection and expansion of the relatively small part of the landscape remaining as part of a natural ecosystem.

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Sent: Tue 05/08/2012 11:45 AM

Hi Daniel,

I see you need to come up with some revenue ideas by August 1st.

I'm now 70 years old and have way too much stuff on my plate to take on trying to help State Parks....but I'll give you my 2 cents very quickly and in no way volunteer to get involved in a bigger 'process'....

1. Discover Pass probably isn't working as well as you'd like....just my guess.... My personal observation is that you don't have local support (merchants etc) for how the Pass is structured. You need to have the Indians on your side...figure out a way to get local support....I've got a couple ideas on how to do that.... Your goals (Success at the Park) needs to be synergistic with the Locals goals.... For that matter, I don't think you have the public at large' support for the Pass.....at least not enough.

2. Parks likely has some assets that could be sold, or otherwise generate some income. Not too different than in a capitalistic setting...a company gets too big or unprofitable...it needs to look for selling off stuff....a division...acreage...etc. Sometimes ya gotta sell stuff and do things that may have been unthinkable previously.... What does Parks own that it could turn into cash? I've got ideas here too....

3. Why in the heck did Parks buy the Christenson property, the Smith property, the Jones property?.....sell it.... Maybe not specifically...but sell stuff that will raise cash..... I'll bet that you're saying to yourself "we can't do that"... Well bull, yes you can.....

4. Are you as an agency too green? Probably....there is likely a need to change stripes and become more capitalistic....sell some timber maybe...but the point is cultural...what culturally does Parks need to do to create revenue. This isn't a personal attack...it's just that Parks isn't a revenue oriented organization...so some cultural change is going to be needed....

There you have my 2 cents...

All the best,

Staff Response: Regarding selling assets, that is indeed an option. State Parks has a basic policy that it uses the proceeds of any property sale to purchase other property that is more crucial to meet our mission. Regarding, whether state parks is "too green," that is a judgment each person can make for themselves.

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Sent: Wed 05/09/2012 8:23 AM

I am sorry that Washington State Parks are in such dire financial straits. Here's an idea to generate a lot of revenue.

In each park, pick the most picturesque areas and lease lots. I believe you could generate enough revenue from renting 1% of the land to pay for upkeep on the other 99%. You could create a long term lease with a contract that protects the park.

If you decide to go this way, let me know so I can get on the top of the list for a lot.

Best Regards,

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Sent: Tue 05/08/2012 2:45 PM

Mr. Farber,

Thank you for the note on the future of the parks. I am co-chair of a hydroplane festival called Tustin N Racin at Lake Sammamish State Park. We are celebrating our 16th year this June. Our group also served as the Park's concessionaire in the 1990s. In 1998, our group submitted a proposal to put a state of the art golf driving range at Lake Sammamish State Park. We had created a joint venture with Scott O's group for the design, construction and operation of the range. At the Park's regional manager's request, we presented the proposal to a group of Park personnel, complete with an architect's rendition and revenue stream of approximately \$800,000 per year. The proposal was rejected by the group at that time. Based on the current state of the Parks Department's finances, perhaps floating this idea again deserves some merit. (I guess you can tell my vote would be for "Parks as an Enterprise".

Sincerely,

Staff Response: Regarding your proposal, we encourage you to contact Peter Herzog, our manager of Planning and Partnerships at 360-902-8652 or by email at peter.herzog@parks.wa.gov.

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Sent: Tue 05/08/2012 11:40 AM

Mr. Farber, Like most people I love camping, the problem is lack of stuff to fill my time.

Examples: Seniors giving trail guide tours (nature walks), sing a longs, tell stories, demonstrate how pioneers lived. Have Arts and craft shows, wild life shows, nature exhibits, nature hunts, dances, areas for games. Volunteers will be more than happy to help, especially if they can stay for free while there. Exhibitors could come in on weekends and be charge a percentage of their sales or a one-time fee.

Most places I go, I end up either spending my time walking (beach, trails or around the park) or setting by the camp fire. Last year booked a reservation at a park for three days, because there was absolutely nothing to do, left that first day and went to another

one, costing me double. I want more things to do in the park. Like any visitor/ camper, I would like adult and kids entertainment to fill and occupy my time making my camping experience MORE enjoyable.

This would add very little cost to the park system and with added reservations and campers staying longer, be a lot more economical and profitable.

Thanks,

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Sent: Tue 05/08/2012 10:54 AM

Daniel,

Thank you for the information about state parks planning. I am a volunteer with Washington Trails Association and I have worked with them to maintain trails in many state parks in the Seattle Area. I also volunteer every spring at Ft. Flagler state park for the annual Spring Mysteries Festival. In addition I hike many state parks in the winter when snow keeps me out of the high country.

However while I have a stake in some state parks, I confess I do not have any grasp of the whole scene. Also it is confusing what is state parks, what is DNR, and what is federal. The Parks website doesn't tell me either. So I have some suggestions, which you maybe already thought of:

1. Compile a list of stakeholders for each state park. If you have a history of reservations, that should do it.
2. Group state parks by region - ie - smaller regions than the website shows.
3. Break down costs and personnel assignments per region. You have cut staff but how many staff hours are devoted to each region?
4. Create a presentation of those parks in each region. Invite input from stakeholders and neighbors.

At very least this will help educate the public. At best this will energize the public to get behind better funding and best of all maybe get the stakeholders and neighbors to establish "Friends of so-in-so park" to volunteer for maintenance. In these times of uncertainty, lack of funds, distrust of government, and dire big pictures, everything becomes local. People can understand and take action on a local level. If you bring it down from "the state parks department" to "this is my park and I am responsible for it", a lot of local energy can be created.

Thank you,

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Sent: Wed 05/09/2012 9:14 AM

Hi Daniel,

I'm contacting you to make arrangements for the public meeting on Orcas Island. With ferry schedules and separate islands it's difficult to have one meeting in Friday Harbor and expect residents from Orcas to attend.

I would like to persuade you to hold two meetings one on Orcas and another on San Juan. Moran state park is a vital component to the economy on Orcas, not to mention how many locals visit the park year round.

Our Friends of Moran group has been in existence since 1995; operating successfully and supported wholeheartedly by our community. We hope that you'll consider coming to Orcas at the interest of the park and our community.

Thanks in advance for your time and consideration.

Staff response: State Parks accepted the invitation to conduct a public meeting on San Juan and Orcas Island. Park staff met with the residents on Orcas Island on June 9th at the Eastsound Fire Hall. Approximately 120 people attended this meeting.

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Sent: Tue 05/08/2012 11:39 AM

Dear Mr. Farber:

I am very interested in seeing how you resolve your problem. However, I will be out of the state on the date of your Fort Worden meeting.

In an effort to be better informed, can you please supply me with a listing of the states in which their state parks are totally self supporting. If there are any, I assume that you will have evaluated there approach to funding.

I think that you will find that a large percent of the state taxpayers believe that they are already paying for the upkeep of their State Parks and should find their taxes lowered when parks no longer receive state funding. As you can see from the ongoing Fort Worden project local ownership is not viable. Just yesterday the PDA was informed that Fort Worden was to remain first and foremost a State Park.

It is time the governor and legislature stepped up to their responsibility and raise taxes sufficient to maintain a high quality park system. Having said that, they should hold the head of WSP responsible and provide him with the authority to optimize operational costs.

You have a tough assignment. Good luck.

Staff response: New Hampshire State Parks system supposedly operates from user fees, though they are mostly ski resorts. All of the park systems are unique and it is difficult to compare apples and oranges. Other parks systems operate and maintain their systems with both general funds support and user fees. No systems are tax free when it comes to capital improvements.

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Sent: Mon 5/21/2012 9:34 AM

To: Evans, Valeria (PARKS)

Subject: Re: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

Good morning, Daniel!

I am the program coordinator for the Nisqually River Council. We would love if you or someone from your organization could come and present at an upcoming Council meeting. I know some of your information is time sensitive, and I was wondering if you would be available in June or July. Meetings are held the third Friday of each month from 9am to noon. The June meeting falls on the 15th and is to be held at the Braget Farm near the Nisqually delta and our July meeting is the 20th and will be at the Ashford Fire Hall. Please let me know if any of these dates work for you.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Thanks! Ashley

Staff response: Staff met with the Nisqually River Council on June 15th.

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Sent: Sat 5/19/2012 8:20 PM

Subject: Tax study

At the May 19 meeting in Spokane, a study of tax revenues generated by state parks was mentioned. Please send me a copy of that study.

Staff response: Staff provided revenue/tax study to inquirer.

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Sent: Wednesday, May 09, 2012 8:57 PM

Subject: RE: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

Dear Mr. Farber,

I would like to know when and where the meetings will be. State Parks are very important assets and worth fighting for. I live next to St. Edward State Park in Kenmore and want to help support this effort. It pains me that we, the people, cannot/will not pay taxes to support the legacy we were given by those who came before us.

Sincerely,

Staff response: Public meeting schedule provided.

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Sent: Thursday, May 10, 2012 5:45 PM

Subject: RE: Announcement

Good Day Daniel:

With your permission, I would like to share this e-mail with the members of the Washington State Chapter--Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation.

Sadly, with all the recent budget cuts, the Governor disbanded the Governor's [Washington State] Lewis and Clark Trail Committee, a committee I believe, would be of the utmost importance to you during this planning period. The Washington Chapter has taken over many of the Committee's responsibilities, and I believe the members would be interested in this information.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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Sent: Tue 05/15/2012 7:52 AM

My first thought is the disabled veterans getting free camping even with a very small % of disability. My understanding is that we, Washington, are the only state that does this. What about basing their camping rate on the % of their disability? Or, offering any disabled veteran a 50% discount just like the normal disabled people. I have seen, too many times, prime campsites empty on weekends because the disabled veteran makes a reservation, gets it for free and doesn't feel the need to cancel their reservation. Or, maybe if the person doesn't cancel their reservation there could be some kind of penalty.

Another idea.....why do I have to pay \$10 for an extra vehicle when I stay in a small camper and the 40 foot motor homes tow in a vehicle so it's free? The huge motor home uses a lot more power and water than my little camper. I can't tow my extra vehicle in because my truck tows a boat. I expect to pay for my extra vehicle but have a really hard time understanding why the big motor homes don't have to pay. An extra vehicle is an extra vehicle.....no matter how it gets there.

I also think that the rangers need to be more visible. They need to make more rounds and enforce the rules. One rule that is NEVER enforced is people riding in boats and on jet skis as they are being towed. The rule is in place for a reason and the rule needs to be followed before someone gets killed and sues the parks system for not enforcing the rules. The rules, all of them, will not be adhered to if someone doesn't enforce them.

I have been at parks and seen "new hires" that were too young to be around chemicals, cleaning solvents and paint. Too young to run the lawn mowers or any equipment. Perhaps we need to look at who's hired and make sure that the person hired is not some ones friends kid and is someone who can really do the work.

I think that you need to look into using more volunteers that need community service hours to qualify for certain programs. Tie in with local community colleges and even universities to try to obtain volunteers to clean, paint and pick up litter. Maybe even work in the check in booths.

As a frequent camper, I know that I would volunteer to help with certain things in the parks. I may be disabled but for a longer stay in the park I could do paper work, drive around in the golf cart and check on the status of campsites. But, as I'm still working, I can't commit to an entire month of volunteering. I think that the people who utilize and love the parks would be willing to help with whatever they can. The parks are very important to me and my family. I will help with what I can.

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Sent: Saturday, May 12, 2012 11:57 AM
Subject: Re: FW: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

To: Daniel Farber

My name is Mike, my wife and I manage Wenatchee River County Park. We are only 3 miles from Confluence State Park. Both parks are almost exactly the same size in terms of spaces available to the camper. We though at W.R.C.P. do have one large difference and that is we are in the "BLACK" at the end of every year. I have seen the figures for some of the parks and have seen that Confluence State park loses over \$100,000 per year. There is a a lot of difference in the management of our park and the state park. If you would like any help regarding the problems at this park or others both my wife and I would be happy to help as we love camping and traveling ourselves.

Staff Response: Staff met with letter writer and had good discussion about the differences in operation between the two agencies.

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Sent: Monday, May 14, 2012 4:16 PM
Subject: Mountain biking in state parks

Good afternoon,

I understand you will be holding meetings across the state regarding the future of Washington state parks. I won't be able to attend a meeting, so I wanted to send a quick note to tell you how much I appreciate being able to mountain bike on public lands. I hope you will be able to expand mountain biking options in your future vision for the state parks.

Sincerely,

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Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 11:05 AM
Subject: WASHINGTON STATE PARKS MEMO -5/15 kept on mailing list

Thank you for the update regarding State Parks and your fight for survival. I am interested in taking part in some way as a result of my activity relating to the new proposed Nisqually/Mashel Park, being considered for future development. Obviously,

with the financial situation being in its current state of affairs, there will be no new money for park development for quite some time.

If you are scheduling one of these "citizens group" meetings in the Eatonville area, please keep me posted. If I am able, I would like to attend such a meeting.

Thank you and best regards,

Sent: Tuesday, May 15, 2012 5:53 PM
Subject: RE: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

I might like to add that you can finish the ranger station at Pacific Beach State Park and we can buy tee shirts and stuff again. I think there is a loss of service and items to buy making the small little booth not very profitable. Please finish the job the building is almost finished.

Thanks

Sent: Friday, May 25, 2012 6:10 PM
Subject: Strategic Plan

Dear Daniel:

This seems to be a good time to add ideas to the mix. Please consider the ideas below during the strategic plan process.

1. Please consider changes to the operation system for parks with campsites below 100 (or some number below 100) where a park is less self-supporting. (Yes, I know that no state parks are completely self-supporting, but some are far closer than others.) My premise is that the agency primarily staffs for camping and that campgrounds where there are few campsites a continual drag on the system. I also think that the agency will have a very difficult time closing camping in those parks, as it will be a politically charged issue. I suggest that the agency instead consider a different model for the state parks in question. Develop strong standards as in the British Columbia system and find private vendors to operate camping. There would be supervision to ensure that standards are met. There will be union pushback, but these kinds of efficiency changes could stabilize the agency and preserve a stronger state parks system (and eventually more jobs and better service).

Sources: A. I did a little comparison related to Cama Beach when they were talking about staffing it with state employees. The comparison showed that within three parks where the natural, recreational (non-camping) and cultural resources were similar; that the camping parks had many more staff. If there is more proof needed beyond the obvious fact, a more comprehensive look could be done.

B. My RV study and the agenda item by Paul M. about Oregon's state park system.

2. A more open Commission process is needed. Agency stakeholders need to have legitimate input to the Commission. The connection between the people of the state and the Commissioners was mentioned several times during the discussions about legislation that would have eliminated the Commission. In addition, the new direction seems to be more inclined towards partnership. As it is now, there is not that close connection and it is difficult for people outside the agency to follow what is happening inside, unless you have inside information or go to the meetings. Some simple steps would help:

A. Make sure that all agenda items and attachments are on the website at least two weeks prior to the meeting. I don't want to pick on anyone, but take a look at the posting for the May meeting, which is not unusual. The budget item, which is important to stakeholders, was not available. This item and several other important agenda items during past meetings are delivered at the meeting and never put up on the website. I suppose that people could ask for the item, but probably not before the meeting when input would be possible. In many of the other items the main information was in the attachments, which were not available either. This is also not unusual.

B. It may be difficult, but the meetings themselves should be more available. It has been a long time since the actual transcription of discussion about an agenda item has occurred, but in these days of the Internet, why is there not at least the recordings available? There must be some way to make this information available, such as a podcast broken down by agenda items.

C. A goal towards a more open Commission would be to move towards a meeting where the Commission was online and could take testimony (written or verbal) from people on the Internet. I don't know of any similar operations in this state, but it is a worthy goal.

If I think of additional input, I hope I can add to it as we go along. I also look forward to seeing you at the Tumwater High School.

Staff Response: There are a number of important process improvements questions and suggestions included in the above letter. We'll work on that.

.....
Sent: Sat 05/26/2012 5:38 PM

My husband and I manage a resort on Orcas island and are almost daily users of Moran State Park. Over the years we have worked with park rangers to advocate for more trail access or year round access for mountain bikers. Recently the park has become more aware of how much revenue this user group provides and they have seen us as more important than in the past. Mountain biking is a growing sport and if the State embraces it I think it could benefit everyone. We also hike and swim and enjoy the other features of many parks, but feel like mountain biking has been pushed aside for too long. More and more vehicles loaded with bikes arrive to Moran State Park. It is a growing industry.
Sincerely,

.....
Sent: Sat 05/26/2012 8:52 AM

Hello,

I am not able to attend one of the upcoming meetings so I would like to give my public comment via email.

I live on Bainbridge Island where we've been the "recipient" so to speak of two state parks. I'm well aware of the financial implications of running a state park. Prior to the transfer of Ft Ward to our local park district I was involved in building a significant connecting trail into the park from local Blakely Harbor Park. Work with the state to coordinate this effort was done by the park district and I believe it went well. As a volunteer I worked with park staff and a visiting park official from Olympia to ensure that the proposed route was located outside of sensitive areas. Over the course of the next 2 months I organized work parties with volunteers and we cleared about 1300 feet of trail to a 6 foot width. Overall there is now a 1.2 mile trail connecting Ft. Ward park to Blakely Harbor Park and we're working on securing two more easements to connect even further by trail to Pritchard Park on Eagle Harbor.

Where I'm going with all of this is that to me and my family our favorite activity is trail walking and trail riding on our bikes. We have traveled to Ft Ebey State Park to use the trails there with our bikes. Our kids are still pretty young but they really love riding, it's a great family sport. We camp often at Ft Flagler S.P. and enjoy the trails there. It has struck me that the topography at Ft Flagler S.P. would lend itself to further trail creation. Volunteers can be the leading work force and can raise funds to pay for machine time as needed. More trails at Flagler would draw my family to visit beyond the traditional camping season. I'm sure the same is true for other state parks.

We actually base our travel on where we can go to ride our bikes. We visit Bend and Sisters, OR for their trails. We plan to visit Coeur D'Alene, ID for their extensive trail systems.

Trails are inexpensive to build, and if built properly they are socially sustainable (avoiding user conflicts) as well as physically sustainable. Trail building volunteers are fairly easy to recruit, self recruiting. Trail maintenance can be done by users.

Even bike parks with pump tracks are relatively simple elements that may draw more users.

Please consider as you move forward, and thanks for all your work!

.....
Sent: Thursday, May 17, 2012 6:25 AM

Privatization? Self-supporting non-profit? Nonsense. These parks are public treasures, not amusements. The public needs to support access to them through the tax system. The solution is to un-elect the anti-government, anti-regulation Republicans

and the road kill Democrats who let the discussion lead to this rotten piece of legislation. We need to raise taxes, pay park rangers the professional salaries they deserve and hire enough of them to do the job.

All this other stuff is just deflection from the real issue. When are we going to ask the wealthiest Washingtonians to pay their fair share to maintain the public assets we all enjoy.

.....
Sent: Thu 05/17/2012 9:47 AM

I am out of town on May 19, so I will not be able to attend the public meeting in Spokane.

I am 58 years old and have been riding at Riverside State Park since 1987. I do a lot of mountain biking at Riverside, probably over 100 times per year. I have some recommendations.

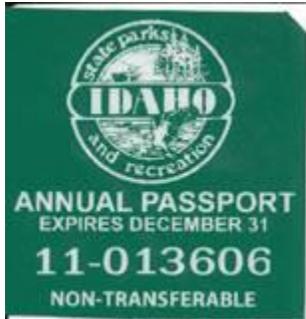
1. Raise the price of the Discover pass. It's a bargain. Or have persons like myself, who use the park frequently, pay more.
2. Make the Discover Pass something that we can be proud of, like the Idaho Passport, or perhaps offer a premium pass for more money. That huge ugly pass that you make us display is embarrassing, and because it is required to be displayed on our mirror, it is very difficult to attach and remove (over 100 times in a year). It's a punishment to drive around with it, but it will only survive a few removals, so I have to keep it attached to my mirror. I would much rather have a small sticker at the bottom of my windshield, like the Idaho Passport.
3. Make the Discover Pass impossible to forge. I have overheard several persons bragging that they photocopy the pass before adding the license plate number and hand them out free to their friends. You cannot do that with the Idaho Passport. They are numbered and very difficult to remove. If you remove it you destroy it.
4. Make more people pay. There is a free parking lot at 7-Mile Road & Wilber that we call "Republican-Only Parking". It does not seem fair that they are allowed to park there without contributing their fair share to the Park, even though they use the Park regularly. They face their windshields toward the street, proudly displaying that they do not contribute to the Park.
5. Offer a day pass. Idaho does that for \$5. Dozens of persons have approached me at the Wilber trailhead and asked if there was a way to pay. People want to pay but they don't want to drive for 30 to 45 minutes and pay \$35+ for an hour or two.
6. Offer a way to pay at the trailhead. A day pass only would be OK. Farragut State Park (Idaho) gives you four options to pay in the first mile after the park entrance, and two of them are available 24/7. They also allow you to trade in your day pass and apply it to your Passport (one time).

7. Offer a discount on the second pass. I only needed one Idaho Passport, but I ordered a second passport and gave it to my wife, just because the price was only \$15 for the second passport.
8. Add more trails. Riverside does not have a Mount Rainier or an Old Faithful. There is no real destination at the Park. The trails themselves are the attraction. Riverside has the potential to be a world-class mountain bike destination, but when we are forced to ride on rutted-out and muddy roads that we actually have to share with motor vehicles – it is unpleasant and dangerous. There is plenty of room for new trails, and Riverside could be a mountain bike destination that brings revenue to the State and to local businesses.
9. Stop closing trails. I attended a meeting at Riverside in April 2011, then met Chris (Park Manager) and Dave (Ranger) at the Park. They claimed that their mandate was to close every trail that was not on some ancient map from the 1930's. They said that every current trail they documented, that could not be found on the ancient map, would have to be proposed to the Park, then go through an environmental review for consideration. It was unclear if there were resources to accomplish that. So not only did I lose hope of having any new trails, but now I ride in fear that the trail I'm on will be closed in a year, just as they have recently closed several other long-standing trails (and personal favorites). Chris and Dave did not understand the difference in riding pleasure between riding a rutted-out 2-lane dirt road with standing water most of the year compared to a winding technical single-track through a wooded section of the Park. "There are hundreds of miles of trails in the Park" ranger King said, making the point that any trail will get you from here to there. Ranger King closed a 100-Yard section of trail installed by a race coordinator 14 years ago, with Park permission, and now forces us to ride on 3 separate car roads and the two busiest intersections inside the Park just to connect to another section of single-track. The area by Wilber trailhead is used for military training and other groups that bring cars inside the Park regularly. Chris and Dave said that the Park included ancient Indian artifacts, and that they had to plan around those artifacts and the deer – and other wildlife in the Park, and so many more trail closures were likely.
10. Maintain the trails. When trees blow over, sometimes they are never removed, so we have to ride around them or carry our bikes over them for years – or forever. It seems silly that Riverside doesn't have the resources to remove trees in the trails, but they have the resources to cut several live trees to block access to each trail that was closed in 2011.
11. Allow mountain biking at night. Light technology has advanced so much, that a bike can easily have as much headlight power as a car. I love mountain biking at night, but I have to drive to Idaho now.

Riverside has so much mountain biking potential. The trails drain well, and mud disappears shortly after a rain storm. However, some of the car roads we are forced to ride on, after the recent trail closures, have standing water, very large ruts, and/or mud most of the year. Park management wants to repair the car roads and have us continue

to ride on those terrible roads, thinking that they will be much better after they add gravel, which is terrible for biking. The recent trail closures have changed the personality of the Park, and the potential to make Riverside a destination mountain bike resort seems to have vanished for now. If we have to compete with deer and Indian artifacts for new and even existing trails, there does not seem to be much hope for the future of mountain biking.

Best regards,



Staff Response: Thank you for all of your suggestions. We will forward this on to Riverside State Park for their particular review.

Sent: Sun 05/20/2012 7:23 PM

None of the options is credible. Who came up with these? Where is the NO ACTION Alternative?

Parks are a public asset and should be available as they have been. I don't mind paying for a Discover Pass. I bought two this year, and don't mind paying camp fees or more taxes but I don't want parks go commercial and the non-profit model is not realistic. The Public Asset model is way too severe.

Versions or combination of these Alternative might work on a park-by-park analysis: some parks in some seasons could operated more profitably but what about winter? Many parks get little use but they should remain open.

Staff Response: The "no action" alternative is not really feasible, from State Parks' perspective. The existing approach is not sustainable, and we are failing. If your intention is to go back to the way it used to be, with the majority of funds coming from the General Fund, then that too is considered unrealistic.

Sent: Thursday, May 24, 2012 10:18 AM

To: Washington State Parks Planning

Subject: Riverside Park plan

I do, however, want to make some comments:

In order to preserve the vital corridor around the bowl and pitcher area, which appears to be the largest area for human use, you need to put more emphasis

on the park land surrounding the road leading to that area. The Devils Toenail rapids area is worth protecting including the land around it. I would hope you

are not going to sell any of the park land close to Aubrey White parkway because as your plan pointed out; park land is hard to purchase and even harder with state budgets being what they are.

Sadly, I see no recognition of the importance of both the Spokane and Little Spokane rivers play in the ecosystem of the park except for scenery. Why can't Washington parks sign an interagency agreement with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to enhance the fisheries and the habitat of both rivers within the boundaries of Riverside State Park. Riverside is appropriately named because it is adjacent to two rivers which is unique within the Washington Parks statewide. Please make some accommodation for enhancing and improving river habitat within the park besides just scenery.

Staff Response: State Parks and Fish and Wildlife do coordinate river management, and a critical part of the natural area state parks classification of the Little Spokane River area is for habitat protection. If there are specific suggestions for improving habitat, we hope you work with our park manager and WDFW staff.

.....

Sent: Wed 06/06/2012 11:06 AM

Sir: I attended the meetings in Spokane concerning Riverside and Mount Spokane State Parks.

As an Enterprise:

Every person entering a State Park should have the Discover Pass or be part of an issued Special Permit.

No Discover Pass is required for people who purchase the Snowpark, Snowmobile and / or a Groomed Trail Permit. I believe these fees were originally intended to pay for costs of plowing the parking areas during the winter.

They are paying to park - but do not have to pay to use the lands - like every other person entering the park. There are costs associated with maintaining snowshoe and Nordic trails as well as the snowmobile areas - that is not just plowing.

Mount Spokane has a ski area where these patrons do not pay for a Discover Pass - yet the State Park maintains the roads to these areas. There should be an added cost to

every lift ticket sold to compensate the Park for this service. Annual passes could be prorated to accommodate a fair share.

Thank You

Staff Response: State Parks responded and his comments/suggestions were also shared with Mt. Spokane State Park staff.

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Sent: Wed 06/06/2012 2:52 PM

Good Afternoon-

In regards to the Strategic planning reports, Beyond 2013 Transformation, I am very interested and pleased with the details! I am an individual citizen, approved Washington State Park Volunteer, but professionally involved with all sorts of contacts. Please if you have a moment, please call, I would like to see what I may be able to offer as a volunteer! I would also like to give some input, but honestly... would like to be accurate in how to get involved without stepping on toes.

Staff Response: State Parks responded and also provided our volunteer coordinator writer's offer to help support state parks.

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Sent: Fri 06/08/2012 5:21 PM

Dear Pacific News Readers, (75 bcc)

The WA Legislature has directed the State Parks system to become "self-supporting".

If you care about the future of your WA State Parks, please read the following 2 emails, please go to the Parks website <http://www.parks.wa.gov/Beyond2013> for more information, and PLEASE consider attending a public meeting near you (listed at end for your convenience) or contacting Mr. Farber.

I think it is very short-sighted for the Legislature to insist state parks have NO state funding.

What do you think?

Best regards,

.....
Sent:

Dear Committee,

I am deeply concerned about how our State Parks Dept. is trying to change the running of our parks. They keep decreasing the amount of Park Rangers in the parks, making them seasonal or eliminating them all together. With the ever rising crime in our local parks and campgrounds THIS IS NOT THE WAY TO GO. WE NEED MORE WORKING RANGERS, not top heavy management!

Now you are looking to change how parks are operated by the three options in the "Transformation Strategy for 2013".

I don't see how you feel our parks will be safer with LESS presence of authority via the Park Rangers. If the parks can't get volunteer support now to help with camp hosting and other services how will they rely on them to run more portions of the parks?

You are proposing to try and receive more dollars through the Discover Pass in the next few years and haven't even met the goals in this past year. What is the big change now? How do you expect the parks to be self-sufficient when we are not even collecting enough now? The state parks are allowing so many exemptions for free camping and the Discover Pass. Many times the majority of campers and visitors are there for free and stay for extended periods of time taking up space for paying campers.

What ever happened to trying to get the parks supported through the general fund??? The current method is obviously not working and needs to be changed. Another concern is the millions of dollars that has been invested in the parks infrastructure and that it will start to decline with the proposed decrease in patrolling.

We go camping a lot and I am sure other campers are NOT going to want to go to State Campgrounds when they are not safe. Anybody with common sense can see if there are no rangers present in the parks, problems will arise. The Park Rangers prevent so much violence, incidents from escalating due to their presence and keep our parks safe. All you have to do is look at the amount of incidents that occurred in each park to realize how much "policing" they have to do. These rangers need to be armed for their safety and ours. With proposing to not have rangers even present thinking more people-volunteers will deter the violence doesn't even make sense. That is an invitation for the gangs to return to the parks, more crime, break-ins and theft.

People may complain they never see Park Rangers anymore and the overall appearance of our parks are in decline; this is not from them trying. I know some Park Rangers and they routinely having to cover TWO LARGE STATE PARKS by themselves. How do they do the garbage, clean bathrooms, patrol two campgrounds, parks and keep everyone safe? The state obviously needs to get MORE WORKING RANGERS than they have now and work on the safety of our parks. They also need year round park aides to do the park maintenance to leave the rangers patrolling for our safety.

Many of the Park Rangers who were full time and were made seasonal have since left the agency due to not being able to support their families on a salary of 5-8 months a year.

ANY of your proposals should be to increase the number of working Rangers in our parks, not to decrease. That is basic common sense and our "Executive Leadership Team" with the parks department that is working on this, needs to take their head out of the sand and wake up and smell the coffee.

The outreach meetings you held weren't advertised properly. The people in our state don't even realize what is going to happen to their parks.

Sincerely,
VERY CONCERNED CAMPER

Staff Response: While a number of the questions above were rhetorical in nature, a few need specific response. The writer asked what has changed to have state parks believe that additional funds will come in the future from the Discover Pass. The response is that there was a major change allowing 2 vehicle licenses per pass, and the data indicated that that would increase participation rates significantly. Initial results in that regard are promising, but more data is necessary to reach a full conclusion. In addition, it is common that any time a new fee is imposed, there is "price avoidance" that occurs initially, but that changes over time.

The critique that the outreach meetings weren't advertised well is understandable. Please spread the word as best as you can about access online, and do look for additional materials and opportunities to interact in the near future.

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Sent: Fri 06/08/2012 5:54 PM

The Director, his Commissioners and the ELT need to admit that this course of action is a failure and get to work lobbying the State legislature for General funds money. The current model is unsustainable as proven by the massive layoff only six months into the two-year budget. Resulting in the loss of a dedicated and skilled staff as well as taking the parks away from the residents of Washington State and making them available to only those whom can afford to "Pay to Play".

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Sent: Wed 06/13/2012 11:22 AM

Subject: Follow-up from Burlington meeting

Hi Valeria,

We want to thank you and Daniel for all the hard work you have put into the "Beyond 2013" meetings and planning. It was a very informative presentation and discussion last night.

Jim had spoken to Daniel about his additional questions, and I will send them in a separate e-mail to strategic.planning@parks.wa.gov.

On the way home, I thought of another way to get the public involved with the state parks using free media coverage. Perhaps this has already been done, but if not, I suggest the person responsible for media coverage and public relations work with King 5 TV and Evening Magazine to put together a tour of many of our state parks to raise awareness of the financial situation, need for volunteers, and to hit a younger target market. The show could feature youth programs, groups camping, special events venues, as well as the typical campsites, trails, waterways, historical and archeological sites. They could talk to campers, rangers, interpreters, and volunteer hosts.

The State Parks' Centennial is a perfect opportunity to create this on-going "tour" with perhaps a visit a week to a different state park beginning later this year or into next year. Evening Magazine could partner with an RV advertiser such as Poulsbo RV to

use a recreational vehicle for the visits. Maybe Cabela's could provide a tent and camping equipment. The show could even take a family, bikers, hikers, skiers, fishermen...whatever demographic target that is best for that particular location to that week's featured park and show them using the facility. I used to work in Creative Services for Disney, and we could often find employees within the company to be our "models" at photo shoots; King 5 could probably do the same.

Some parks fill up for prime months nine months in advance, but one of the "hold-out" sites used for emergency relocations within a park could be used if another space was not available at the time the show wanted to be there. It is also a perfect time to show "off-season" uses of parks that remain open year-round.

A tie-in contest during the series could have the RV company giving away a trailer or RV and the State Parks giving a free week's stay for viewers that watch and collect park trivia to enter the drawing. Second place could be a free stay in a yurt or cabin. This will help build and maintain interest in watching the series.

There may also be a station in Eastern Washington that could do a similar program.

It looks like Washington State Parks need to take advantage of free publicity to raise awareness and fill up campsites, group sites, etc. in lesser used areas to earn more money. If WA State Parks are a non-profit organization (?), you could perhaps also get free air time to run public service announcements and by showing what is available in photo montages.

I am just brainstorming here, but it may at least rev up someone else's imagination to get positive publicity for the parks. I will be happy to brainstorm some more with anyone if they want to give me a call.

Best regards,

Staff response: The writer's suggestions were shared with State Parks marketing coordinator for consideration.

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Sent: Sun 06/17/2012 8:22 AM

Unable to attend public meetings, but my comment is that public accessibility to parks should be your priority. It makes no sense to continue spending millions buying conservation easements when you cannot keep parks open or charge too much for the public to use them. Thank you for your time and attention.

.....
Sent: Fri 06/15/2012 1:07 PM

I applaud your efforts to maintain our state parks.

I am outraged that you have been put in this position by a legislature that can spend \$50 billion on necessary as well as silly projects but decide to take away (steal) all the

tax money traditionally spent on the parks. No one voted for that to happen. In fact, I'm hoping that there's an initiative to return full funding to the parks system.

We paid for parks for 99 years out of our taxes. There is simply no reason to change that. User fees will decrease use, not increase revenues materially. They will prevent folks from enjoying the parks.

While I support getting a better grip on internal costs through an information system, and expect that the parks will begin to charge at fair market rates for certain special activities and services, like camping, I cannot abide the thought of anything but free day use of our state parks. That was what people who donated land intended; that is what we all expected. This sudden shift is a ruse to try to raise taxes by putting a sacred cow (the parks) on the chopping block. We should stop rewarding this kind of behavior from our feckless politicians.

Please fight to get back all of the parks' regular funding. Parks are one of the few things that most people believe the State does right. I, for one, will not be blackmailed into paying higher taxes for parks when I already pay high taxes.

Get rid of the discover pass—a dumb idea—and GET RID of those ORANGE FLAGS hanging next to the Discover Pass warning signs!

Give us our parks back!

P.S. Your presentation on Orcas was excellent. Your time would be better spent working on making the parks better, not begging for funding. I'm surprised the politicians don't want you to sit outside park entrances holding donation cups. Yet another \$50 billion is being spent – incredible!

.....
Sent: Mon 06/18/2012 9:48 PM

Parks are a public asset and deserve to be supported by the general fund. My family seldom visits a park, yet we enjoy our view of the 400 acre DNR reserve on Henderson Inlet with no user fee. My brother and his wife enjoy their view of Hope Island State Park with no user fee. How many people drive down Tilley Road and enjoy the massive trees of Millersylvania and never pay a user fee?

Knowing that Deception Pass is there for me anytime I want to go there and that it will be there for my children's children is an asset that I enjoy and I don't pay a user fee.

Having a park for my neighbors to visit and leave me in pieces and quiet is a benefit for me without a user fee.

Parks are an asset to our society by which we all benefit, some more directly than others. User fees can be part of the funding, but support from the general fund is a way that we can all pay for the unrecognized benefits mentioned above. All of us sharing

the expenses of our society's assets and responsibilities lightens the load and creates involved citizens.

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Sent: Wed 06/20/2012 6:14 PM

Is there someone at this email address who can tell me what people do not pay full price for the Discover Pass? Are there discount prices for some? Half prices? Total exceptions? Or what? Just wondering about this as a source of revenue. Thanks!

Staff response: State Parks Discover Pass web site identifies the groups exempt from needing to purchase a Discover Pass: <http://www.discoverpass.wa.gov/exemptions/>. There are no discount Discover Pass fees. There are exemptions or full cost. That said, special event organizers may be able to negotiate an event charge that differs from every individual vehicle being charged the Discover Pass. You will need to consult with the park manager about special event activities.

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Sent: Friday, June 22, 2012 1:18 PM

To: Washington State Parks Planning

Subject: RE: Visions for the future of Washington State Parks

Dear Mr. Farmer, I was wondering if you had a program like Tacoma school district has (or had in the past, may still have). Disabled students which are capable enough, come to the park supervised by a school district employee (Para-Professional). They clean pots, transplant flowers into bigger pots, water, etc., for the greenhouse. This gives the students life skills, and, may help to take some of the burden off the cost of gardeners. The students get graded on daily performance, for attitude, and, appearance. I don't know if this could be anything you might consider, but, the students also, could work at a hotdog stand possibly, or, a store even, not for a paycheck, but, for school credit. Maybe a community garden, etc., just wondering. It may be a good community project. But, may not be something workable for you. But, I thought I'd ask. I was also wondering about an organic garden, for use to local health food stores at a profit to the park, or, to provide help to food banks in your area. I'm not sure if there are grants provided for programs like this, but, I would think it would be a community asset. The students don't do an eight hour day, more like a half a day. Or there can be two, three or four hour shifts. The students must be able to ride the bus there. If you already have a program like this, please disregard.

Thanks,

Pat 

Staff response: State Parks do not have this program, but it will be worth considering and possibly exploring for specific state parks. I suggest you contact our partnership and planning manager by calling the main State Parks telephone number at 360-902-8500.

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Sent: Fri 06/22/2012 5:08 PM

I believe that our state parks should remain under control of the state and funded by a designated tax for their maintenance. If the legislature fails to pass that, then a \$50 fee per car should be levied and \$40 for second car.

Privatization of our parks will lead to their diminishment and degradation as profit is advanced at the cost of preservation and stewardship. I want future generations to enjoy the recreation we have. This will be especially so if the population in the state increases as projected and density increases. People will need green places and space. Sincerely,

Gena

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Sent: Mon 06/25/2012 3:55 PM

A note for Daniel Farber:

We read the article in the Chinook Observer that carried remarks by Daniel Farber, spokesperson for the parks system. It was very informative and we were glad it included details about revenue.

Before offering our comments, I'd like to review some of what we didn't know:

The Steptoe Butte "unsightly" cell phone tower brings in \$173K per year and is the most profitable revenue generator in the system.

Exempt vehicles create a six million dollar loss each year to the revenue stream.

Seven percent of campground & parks revenues come from overnighters.

Ninety-three percent of those revenues come from day-use patrons.

Over the past seven years hundreds of millions of dollars in general fund support has gone away due to budget constraints at the state level.

We'd like to make these comments:

Mind set: no cell phone tower is "unsightly." We need park managers who see revenue generators the way farmers see their products--if it sells it is "beautiful." Ask any pig farmer. :-)

Would it be difficult to get two or more strategic cell phone towers set up on state land?

I am acquainted with Bill Garoutte of Naches, WA, who does that on a national scale.

Parks needs to talk to him (NW Utility Services, LLC, www.nwutility.com). He and wife Mary also run the Bumping Lake Marina, where we met him (509) 240-0003. Email: bumpinglakemarina@wildblue.net. We were renting one of their travel trailers there.

He might be able to suggest some ideas.

Also, why not set up demonstration solar cell arrays and wind turbines on state land, with the cooperation of local P.U.D. power suppliers. It would not cut into the private sector business since it is a new enterprise. The farmer west of Walla Walla has famously stated that when he and his father decided to split the father's huge farm, the son chose the hills and dad took the bottom land. Once the towers were in place and

operating, the son made more money than the father--one farming crops, the other farming wind.

Are loans and grants available for this type of endeavor? We have been watching SRP in Arizona slowly getting into the solar power production, and it is very satisfying to see the power company moving ahead with acquiring desert land for that purpose.

Ten years ago I was told by the ranger at Black Butte Park, owned by BLM, run by WA state, that 38% of his total budget was for power. That spot along the Columbia River would generate great solar power and wind power. But I think the state is out of there now, though.

Fear: Many people I have spoken with are afraid to stop on state lands. This includes in state forests such as Capitol State Forest and little places like the overlook at Nahcotta Basin Boat Launch. The little sign at Nahcotta says it is state land and requires a Discover Pass. People move on because they have not purchased the pass and would not want to pay a \$90 fine, which is what they think it is for trespassing (I am thankful I was able to buy the year pass for \$30 when I renewed my car license plate by mail-- people may not associate that service with the Discover pass). Some people are now afraid to go to the Long Beach peninsula beach because the old highway that ran stagecoaches along the beach was a state highway. Sitting in the sand off the main drivable beach sand might be a location that is good for a fine.

People who used to go to state land now avoid it and find federal land to visit. The state trust lands that are here and there, and are logged, have to be avoided now if someone had forgotten to bring or buy a pass. The lack of knowledge about where state lands are located reminds me of newcomers to fishing in WA state. The fishing rules list the places and times in such a complicated way that some folks who would fish just throw their gear away. We think the people who make the rules, be they legislators or managers, have not actually gone through the licensing process for fishing or for the Discover pass.

The 2-part pass itself is physically a joke. The hanger that goes on the rearview mirror is okay, but the slip of paper and those four little flanges are of the "you gotta be kidding" configuration. I suppose a person could order a pass that was laminated for an extra fee....? Who designed that thing? Card stock would be somewhat more expensive, I know, but it would be much more durable.

We suggest that small signs be placed in many more state lands that require the pass. We also suggest that every brochure lists all of the local state lands of any kind that need a pass.

But we are naive about all of this. The loss of hundreds of millions of dollars cannot be made up by putting up a few more cell phone towers. We don't know how such a loss of revenue would ever be regained. It would be a shame to close parks and state lands because no one was on duty to take care of the place. And if the legislature is the only body that can tweak the pass rules, then nothing can be done for the 2013 centennial. I still smile at the ten-cent-a-child donation drive that captured the hearts of grade school

kids back in the 1980s when the Oregon capitol statue needed a new coating of gold leaf. Those dimes mounted up enough to accomplish the job.

Toll roads in and out of places may be part of the answer. The Megler-Astoria bridge was paid for with something like 50 cent tolls over the years. The bridge in Spokane--what was it called--cost a dime for years, and was paid for. The Bridge of the Gods is a dollar. We use it a lot just so we can drive the WA side of the Gorge. The problem is the person collecting the tolls has to be paid, or a volunteer has to be bonded and protected. Nothing is easy.

And when recycling drivers need something above \$98K salary per year, nothing is cheap. What are parks people paid?

Thanks for reading this. We wish you the best in this difficult task.

Respectfully,

AI

Staff response: I would like to clarify what was shared at the public meetings about Steptoe Butte State Parks cell phone generated revenue and a few of your other comments. Steptoe Butte is not exactly the most profitable revenue generator. The park generates a higher ratio of revenues to operating expenditures of any park in the system.

The exempt vehicles: Commissioner Mark Brown sort of said to exempt vehicles create a six million dollar loss each year, but he referenced that not to exempt vehicles but to certain camping and Discover Pass exemptions. Those exemptions did not include exempt vehicles. We are looking again at the figures which we had thought were closer to \$9 million and trying to get a stronger, more defensible number.

In regards to the seven percent of State Parks revenue coming from overnight campgrounds was misunderstood. Seven percent of the visits are from overnight visitors, and around 20-25% of the revenues come from overnight visitors, while 93% of the visits were from the day use patrons.

As we all have witness through the news media or personal affects, the state's general fund has decreased in this economy. The effect State Parks has experienced, at most, was slightly less than \$100 million in a biennium. It is now down to \$17 million and slated for zero next biennium.

State Parks is also engaged in pursuing solar and wind generation on our properties. Thanks for the names and contact information.

Your other ideas have merit and will be looked into.

.....
Sent: Thu 06/28/2012 2:18 PM

I wanted to add a comment that seems to have percolated from a variety of discussions around the Discover Pass and the related fee-for-service theme.

Unlike many private recreation businesses with more than one outlet (e.g. KOA), not all state parks provide similar levels of service. In fact, the range is quite significant (basic trailhead access to full service facilities). Yet, the daily parking fee (note I am not commenting on the annual pass) does not account for these variations in service.

Applying a flat rate for access with no correlation to level of service is not a sustainable business practice.

In a hybrid version of this theme, I would suggest thought be given to the feasibility of implementing a graded or tiered daily entry fee system (\$3, \$5 and \$10) based on level of service. I recognize this becomes a very complex issue with multiple agencies; however one could argue most, non-state park, state recreation lands actually provide a similar level of service (basic levels of vehicular access and sewage treatment). Something to consider in 2014 as the agencies prepare for the discussion around the scheduled 2015 legislative review of this policy and its effectiveness.

Therefore, a secondary comment is how well does the agency understand its current levels of service? We have a good example in our fee schedule for campsites. There are objective criteria and thresholds that can be developed if this data does not exist.

This concept also applies to fee-based interpretive services. We do have statewide survey and assessment data to support at least a three-tiered interpretive level of service framework.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment,
Ryan

Staff response: You present a professional and sophisticated way of looking at market pricing. The current Discover Pass program has fee rates set by the legislature. Agencies do not have flexibility to modify fees based on service levels at different sites. Nor have agencies traditionally needed to understand park service levels to set fees, or course, since no day use fees were in place. But your ideas are worth exploring for the future as we work to both understand and measure service levels and set prices that reflect them. As of now, we are working to develop the data systems and analytical methods needed to set those objective criteria you reference above. And that is true for camping, day use access, interpretive and other services.