JANUARY COMMISSION MEETING RECAP

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

The Commission wrapped up a productive meeting in Port Townsend that included presentations, work sessions, guest speakers and more. Here’s an overview of topics covered.

COMMISSION ACTION

Item E-1: Fort Worden PDA Lease Amendment
This item asked the Commission to make a final decision regarding obligations of the Fort Worden Public Development Authority (PDA) under their master lease that was temporarily waived due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff recommended that the Commission continue to provide relief from obligations until a new organization and business plan are in place. This item was unanimously approved.

View Presentation

Item E-2: Parkland Acquisition Account
The Commission voted on the proposal to delegate one-time authority to the Director to use Parkland Acquisition Account (PAA) funds for the acquisition of the Bear Creek Lodge at Mt. Spokane State Park. This item was unanimously approved.

View Presentation

Item E-3: 2022 Commission Priorities
Commissioners officially adopted the 2022 Commission priorities for the agency. This item was unanimously approved.

View Presentation
**Item E-4: Blue Mountain Area CAMP Project**
The Commission reviewed and voted on the long-term park boundaries and land classifications proposed for Palouse Falls, Lyons Ferry and Lewis and Clark Trail state parks. Laura Moxham and Melinda Posner, parks planners, presented the recommendations along with a summary of the public process conducted during the planning effort and an overview of comments received.

The Commission was asked to take 5 actions:
- Adopt the long-term boundary and land use classification recommendations for Palouse Falls State Park
- Adopt the proposed closure area for Palouse Falls State Park
- Approve the name change for Palouse Falls State Park
- Adopt the long-term boundary and land use classification recommendations for Lyons Ferry State Park
- Adopt the long-term boundary and land use classification recommendations for Lewis and Clark Trail State Park

This item was unanimously approved.

[View Presentation]

**Item E-5: 2023 - 2025 Grant Proposals**
The Commission was asked to approve a list of projects that staff will seek funding from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to complete.

Prospective projects that are appropriate for grant funding are identified by staff through a collaborative process that includes region and headquarters staff from the Operations and Parks Development divisions.

This item was unanimously approved.

[View Presentation]
**Item E-6: Financial Update**

Through September, State Parks has spent $45.8 million (21.6%) of its $212.3 million biennial operating budget. Parks continues to accrue savings from vacancies and has chosen to invest those savings in seeking a consultant contract partner for reviewing and improving capital program management functions and for recruitment strategies towards ensuring our parks are staffed for the busy season. Of the $104.1 million capital budget, Parks has spent $16.1 million (18.1%) through December. Parks' revenue continues to be strong, coming in at 14% higher than the same timeframe in 2019.

Parks funding requests up for consideration in the current legislative session were largely supported by the Governor’s Office. The House and Senate versions of the budget are expected in mid-February. With this legislative session underway, Parks is beginning to strategize budget development and budget requests for consideration in the 2023-25 biennium.

›› [View Presentation](#)

---

**Item E-7: Legislative Update**

The Commission heard an update about the 2022 Legislative Session. The 60-day regular session of the Washington State Legislature began on January 10, 2022. Owen Rowe, policy and governmental affairs director, provided a brief status update about the agency's legislative agenda and other legislative matters that could impact programs and policies. View the [Washington State Parks 2022 Legislative Priorities](#) document.

›› [View Presentation](#)

---

**Item E-8: Miller Peninsula Planning Update Report**

The Commission heard a report about the long-range planning effort at Miller Peninsula State Park Property. The planning process will result in a park Master Plan, Classification and Management Plan (CAMP), predesign, park name, environmental analysis and an Operating Plan. The alternatives phase of the project is complete, and staff is beginning work to develop a preliminary recommendation.

The public process so far has included two online public workshops and separate meetings with Tribes, neighbors and community members. Public input has been mixed with some expressing concerns about water availability, traffic, fire risk, tree removal, wildlife impacts and trespass. An additional public workshop will be scheduled when the preliminary recommendation is available for review.

›› [View Presentation](#)
**Boating Program Update**
This presentation by Rob Sendak, Boating Program manager, provided an overview of the Washington State Parks Boating Program. Consisting of the Recreational Boating Safety workgroup and the Clean Vessel Act Grant workgroup, the Boating Program is federally funded annually by the United States Coast Guard and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Topics of discussion included program funding levels, updated recreational boating accident data, life jacket loner stations, 2021 No Child Left Inside grant award, marine law enforcement, clean vessel pump-outs and 2022 life jacket legislation. The chair of the Boating Programs Advisory Council, Jim Virgin, provided brief remarks.

View Presentation

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Update**
Dr. John Scott, DEI director for Parks, presented an overview of the 2022 DEI work plan. The presentation included details about ongoing and upcoming internal and external DEI work with an emphasis on building and utilizing a DEI lens.

Plans for the year include engagement with Business Resource Groups (BRGs), hosting roundtable discussions with the executive leadership team, providing consultation and collaboration to all divisions, developing and hosting trainings for staff, working with the Commission to expand their DEI practice and more.

View Presentation

**Recreation Experience Study**
Todd Tatum, parks development division manager and John Floberg and Allison Lu with the Washington State Parks Foundation presented findings from a recreational experience study that was conducted between the Foundation and WSPRC. The study worked with communities of color to assess the user experience at several parks.

Themes of the study included:
- Signage presented a problem for users and the study highlighted several areas of potential improvement
- Users noted that they were interested in hiking but often found our trail system confusing
- People are looking for additional engagement at parks
- Project leadership will discuss the findings of the study and determine improvements based on the findings.

View Presentation
**Blue Mountain CAMP Update**

Parks planners Laura Moxham and Melinda Posner presented information about the final recommendations for the Blue Mountain CAMP process. The presentation occurred on January 26 and the Commission voted on the recommendations the following day on January 27.

[View Presentation](#)

**Westport Light Planning Update**

Michael Hankinson, Laura Moxham and the Westport Golf Links, LLC Team presented the research conducted around a potential golf course at Westport Light State Park. The team presented the opportunities and constraints analysis conducted about the feasibility of building a links course at the site. The team also shared some renderings and anecdotes about community feedback.

[View Presentation](#)

**2023 - 2025 Grant Proposal Report**

Staff provided the Commission an overview of projects for which they anticipate seeking grant funding from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) for funding in the 2023-25 biennium. The presentation occurred on January 26 and the Commission voted on the recommendations the following day on January 27.

[View Presentation](#)
SERVICE PINS

Todd Jensen - 40 Year Service Pin
Thank you, Todd, for 40 years of dedicated service! Todd is currently a park ranger at Spencer Spit State Park.

GOLD STAR AWARDS

Ken Pike - Birch Bay
Thank you, Ken, for volunteering to be the respirator trainer for our area. We appreciate you taking the lead in this. Working with Health and Safety is an important ingredient to being safe and efficient for our area and agency. We really appreciate you!

Alex Smith - Birch Bay
Thank you, Alex, for your effort and volunteering at the Shop with a Cop 2021 event! Your service and engagement were excellent during this event. It illuminates our profession in a positive light. Well done!

Gregory Stephenson - Moran
Greg went above and beyond during the recent flood incident at Moran State Park. Both sprang into action to clear culverts, divert water to prevent erosion, monitored sewer and drainage systems following the loss of power at the park. Your can-do attitude was present even when challenged!

Happy early birthday, Owen Rowe!

Thank you, Commissioner Latimer, for serving as chair this past year!
2022 COMMISSION OFFICERS

Chair
- Mark O. Brown

Vice Chair
- Ken Bounds

Secretary
- Sophia Danenberg

2022 COMMISSION COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Budget Committee
- Sophia Danenberg
- Ken Bounds
- Mark O. Brown

Real Estate
Michael Latimer
Steve Milner
Laurie Connelly

Legislation
- Steve Milner
- Laurie Connelly
- New commissioner

Other Assignments

Liaison to the Washington Parks Foundation
- Laurie Connelly

Liaison Fort Worden Public Development Authority
- Ken Bounds
2022 COMMISSION PRIORITIES

- Recruit and hire a new Director from a diverse pool of leaders.
- Expand the system of usable cross-state and in-park trails.
- Make significant progress on major planning activities including Miller Peninsula, Westport Light, Nisqually, Lake Sammamish, and Blake Island State Parks.
- Continue efforts, actions, and commitments that integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in all aspects of our agency.
- Plan for the agency to achieve mandated greenhouse gas reduction targets and make progress implementing the agency’s climate change plan.
- Advocate for consistent funding and support for interpretation, including the development and delivery of interpretive experiences that are relevant to more diverse audiences and inspire memorable connections.
- Effectively manage risks and implement improvements to capital project delivery systems that reduce project completion times and enhance internal agency collaboration.
- Support efforts to create accessible and welcoming experiences for State Parks visitors during all phases of their visit.
- Improve outreach, collaboration, and partnerships with Native American tribal governments.
- Enhance coordination and partnerships among public lands managers including developing leadership relationships and sharing new concepts, latest research/best management practices, policies, trail campaigns, recruitment, pandemic responses, and exchange programs.
- Strengthen strategic partnerships to improve natural resource stewardship in state parks.

Please note, the priorities above have been edited to fit in this document. To view the unedited list of priorities, please view this document.