



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

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June 13, 2008

Victor Moore, Director
Office of Financial Management
Post Office Box 43113
Olympia, Washington 98504-3113

Dear Mr. Moore:

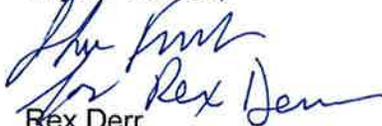
The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission herein submits its 2008 Strategic Plan for implementing the State Parks Centennial 2013 Vision and Plan. The Commission commits to working with the Governor, Legislature and the public to "Move Washington Forward" by improving and sustaining Washington's parks and recreation programs.

The 2008 Strategic Plan describes how the Commission wants to proceed with those improvement and sustaining efforts. It aligns our work on Centennial 2013 with the Priorities of Government, our Governor's priorities and it provides a framework for our participation in the Governor's accountability and performance efforts. It is intended to focus agency staff, state policymakers and the public's efforts on appropriate care of Washington's treasures.

The Centennial 2013 vision is that state parks be "of premier and uncommon quality, for the enjoyment of all." The Centennial 2013 Plan, which provides additional details, has been endorsed by two governors and the legislature which appointed a committee to advise the Commission on the plan's implementation. The Centennial 2013 Plan has three clear priorities and eleven measurable goals.

Our policy and budget requests through 2013 will be guided by the Strategic Plan for the State Parks Centennial. The Commission is committed to the strategy for ensuring a second century of excellent Washington state parks for all to enjoy.

In your service,


Rex Derr
Director

Washington State Parks And Recreation Commission

Strategic Plan

2009-2015



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Strategic Plan

Washington State Parks And Recreation Commission

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission Mission

“The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission acquires, operates, enhances and protects a diverse system of recreational, cultural, historical and natural sites. The Commission fosters outdoor recreation and education statewide to provide enjoyment and enrichment for all, and a valued legacy to future generations.”

“Moving Washington Forward

The State of Washington



Proclamation

WHEREAS, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission's mission is to acquire, operate, enhance and protect a diverse system of recreational, cultural, historical and natural sites; to foster outdoor recreation and education for the enjoyment and enrichment of citizens; and to leave a valued legacy to future generations; and

WHEREAS, state parks receive an estimated 48 million visits a year, and the state's population is expected to grow by 1.7 million in the next 20 years, while delivering public benefits that include education, health, and environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS, Washington State Parks will celebrate its 100th birthday in 2013, and it is time to begin planning a Centennial celebration; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission's Centennial 2013 vision calls for Washington state parks in 2013 to be premier destinations of uncommon quality, including state and regionally significant natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources; and

WHEREAS, The Centennial 2013 Plan matches private and public contributions to build a new legacy, by renewing favorite parks, extending land and water trails, creating new park destinations, enhancing boating opportunities, improving stewardship, giving new life to historic buildings, and inviting citizens to create 100 improvements in parks they know and love; and

WHEREAS, the Washington state park system has great value to the citizens of Washington state and needs to be protected for future generations;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Christine O. Gregoire, Governor of the state of Washington, do hereby endorse the Washington State Parks Centennial 2013 Plan and urge all citizens to build an enduring legacy in our parks for future generations by participating in Centennial 2013 activities.

Signed this 4th day of March, 2005

Governor Christine O. Gregoire



Agency Statutory Authority

Statutes relating to the general charge of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission may be found at chapter 79A.05RCW. RCW 79A.05.030 (1) states that the Commission shall:

“ . . . have the care, charge, control, and supervision of all parks and parkways acquired or set aside by the state for park or parkway purposes.”

Other statutes relating to the Commission’s responsibilities:

- Conserving Washington’s Seashore, RCW 79A.05.600 (Seashore Conservation Area – declaration of principles)
- Preserving the state’s history, RCW 79A.05.030 (Powers and duties, Mandatory); 79A.05.195 (Identification of historic and archaeological resources); 79A.05.335 (Environmental interpretation, authority of Commission)
- Preserving the state’s Natural Wonders, RCW 79A.05.020 (Duties of commission, integrated pest management); 79A.05.025 (Powers and duties, mandatory); 79A.05.355 (Underwater Parks)
- Imbedding a work and conservation ethic in youth, RCW 79A.05.500 (Youth development and Conservation Corps); 79A.05.545 (Conservation Corps)
- Providing recreation areas, RCW 70A.15.355 (Acquisition of habitat conservation and outdoor recreation lands); 79A.05.355 (Underwater parks).
- Recreational Boating Safety, RCW 79A.05.310 (Boating Safety Education Program); 88.02.040 (Distribution of state funds for boating safety); 70A.60 (regulation of recreational vessels)
- Winter recreation, RCW 79A.05.225 to 255 (Winter recreational facilities); 79A.45 (skiing and commercial ski activity).
- Land and water trails, RCW 79A.05.380 (Water trail recreation program); 79A.05.115 to 130 (Cross-State Trail); 79A.05.315 to 330 (Milwaukee Road corridor)
- Scenic Rivers, RCW 79A.55 (Scenic River Systems)
- Environmental interpretation, RCW 79A.05.335 (Environmental interpretation - Authority of Commission); 79A.05.340 (Scope of Activities)
- State Parks Centennial RCW 79A.75.005
- Issuing park passes to the especially needy and deserving (low-income senior citizens passes (to camp), service related veterans’ disability passes, foster children and families passes); RCW 79A.05.065 - *Eligibility*
- Serving as a member of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board – RCW 79A.25.110 – *Created – Membership – Terms – Compensation and Travel Expenses*
- Working with partners, donors, and the Washington State Parks Foundation – RCW 79A.70.010 - *Purpose*

Washington State Parks

Washington has one of the most beautiful state park systems in the country. With 120 developed parks, a variety of recreation areas and park properties totaling more than 250,000 acres, it is also one of the largest state park systems in terms of land base. The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission has the broad responsibility to manage these park lands, along with 4,000 miles of winter and summer recreation trails, 60 miles of ocean beach, 21 marine parks, 140 watercraft launches and 730 historic buildings in 17 historic areas. The Commission also offers a variety of public programs, including winter recreation and recreational boating.

The state park system is ecologically diverse. It includes expansive Pacific Ocean beaches, Puget Sound tidelands and old-growth forests of Western Washington and shrub-steppe, channeled scablands and desert landscapes of Eastern Washington.

Washingtonians have always valued their state parks. The best evidence of this is the early establishment of the state park system here in 1913, three years prior to creation of the national park system. In Washington, the first park lands were donated by citizens who wished to leave a legacy of public parks in their state, a tradition that continues in modern times.

A robust state park system offers benefits in two categories – the measurable and quantifiable and the major mental and physical health benefits that many would argue are just as important. These less measurable and perhaps more ethereal benefits continue to be discussed and argued, while our population continues to grow and while studies try to gauge the effects natural places have on people in a high-tech world.

Among the measurable are the obvious economic benefits of state parks. Research in recent years makes it clear that parks in communities around the state create healthy local economies. Dean Runyan Associates of Portland, Ore., last analyzed financial data in 2002 and learned that visits to Washington state parks resulted in a total annual direct contribution of \$1.1 billion to the state's economy, generating \$34 million in state tax receipts from travel-related spending such as food, lodging, transportation, tours, entertainment and recreation. We can only speculate how these financial benefits have grown from the time of the last analysis.

Though a single, clear metric may not yet be in existence for showing the public health benefits of parks, agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention say that parks and other natural places provide the perfect antidote to some of our most pressing health problems, such as obesity and related diseases. The CDC can cite studies showing that when people have access to parks, they exercise more and enjoy better health.

Educational benefits and knowledge of our natural and cultural resources seem clear. Those who visit Washington's state parks can see remnants of our past around them. Interpretive and educational programs help connect people with real places and real people from the past.

The story of Native people is everywhere, but especially visible in places like Columbia Hills State Park along the Columbia River, where petroglyphs and pictographs are testament to ancient times. The story of homesteaders is tangible in the original buildings at Olmstead State Park near Cle Elum.

You can explore 100-year-old gun emplacements sitting atop bluffs at Fort Columbia, Fort Casey, Fort Ebey, Fort Flagler and Fort Worden – and take in the grand scale of the latter’s Victorian-era officer’s row to get a feel of turn-of-the-century military life. Lighthouses at Cape Disappointment prompt dramatic true stories of multiple shipwrecks where the Pacific Ocean and Columbia River meet. The fruits of labor from the Civilian Conservation Corps appear in classic park buildings and roads from the 1930s. The dramatic stories of our state’s geology can be much better understood at Gingko Petrified Forest State Park and along the Ice Age flood-carved Columbia Gorge than in a classroom in Centralia or Pomeroy.

Many periodicals have published stories citing Washington’s quality of life as one of the reasons people are drawn to live and work in our state. Parks contribute to that quality of life. The National Association of State Parks Directors’ social values report from 2006 said that, for those struggling to fit into society, outdoor recreation in parks can provide increased knowledge, self-awareness and a sense of belonging.

These are qualities apparently not lost on most Washingtonians. In a 2008 scientifically administered citizen survey by Responsive Management of Harrison, VA, citizens gave their state park system a rating of “B” or better. Slightly more than half of respondents had visited a state park in the previous two years, and nearly half had camped overnight in a state park during the same time frame.

Park visitors tell staff on a regular basis how important parks are to their family life. A favorite line shared by staff is that people take parks home with them when they go; state parks are represented in family photo albums. Kristina Croonquist of Seattle says parks provide an affordable, dependable, convenient, relaxing and welcoming place for her family.

Croonquist puts it this way: “We love our state parks – it’s that simple. Being able to get away and enjoy healthy, simple fun outdoors together is really important to our family. It’s our special time. It’s one of the things that keep us close.”

Author Richard Louv seconds the notion that nature bonds family and community and goes further to make a compelling case that, in fact, nature is nothing less than essential to human beings. In his 2006 bestseller, “Last Child in the Woods,” Louv invented the term, “nature-deficit disorder” to describe the results of a high-tech world where kids are more connected to screens than to trees and the local fishing hole.

The result, Louv says, is that children are missing out on some essential benefits the natural world provides, to the detriment of their very well-being. “Nature offers healing for a child living in a destructive family or neighborhood. It serves as a blank slate upon which a child draws and reinterprets the culture’s fantasies. Nature inspires creativity in a child by demanding visualization and the full use of the senses.”

“Given a chance, a child will bring the confusion of the world to the woods, wash it in a creek, and turn it over to see what lives on the unseen side of that confusion. . . . In nature, a child finds freedom, fantasy and privacy: a place distant from the adult world, a separate peace.”

Washington’s 120 state parks offer an antidote – Louv’s “separate peace” in a confusing world – a safe and affordable place for parents to venture out with their children and give them an experience of nature that can be profoundly meaningful in their lives and for schools to use as a classroom.

The Commission’s mission to protect our precious natural and cultural resources and to provide rich outdoor recreation experiences is a commitment to core values of quality, preservation and health. The Commission’s work is based on a belief that well-managed parks are essential to our well-being.

It is in this spirit that the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission has created its Centennial 2013 Plan and this agency strategic plan to move the park system forward and ensure a viable park system and move it forward.

The story of the Centennial 2013 Plan

In 2002, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission recognized the importance of its 100th anniversary in 2013 and saw it as an opportunity to chart a course for improving the park system that had suffered in previous decades from restricted budgets and intermittent funding cuts.

The Commission recognized that funding challenges had resulted in some unfortunate consequences for visitors – things like seasonal park closures, loss of interpretive programs, lifeguards at beaches and loss of a youth conservation corps. In addition, stretching dollars to cover basic operations had resulted in deferred maintenance and equipment replacement statewide.

In 2003, the Commission took a bold step to create a vision for the future and began the arduous work of identifying park system needs. That year, they adopted the Centennial 2013 Plan, (See Appendix A) realizing that the impending 100th anniversary could provide a focal point for making needed improvements to turn the park system around and ensure a legacy of state parks in Washington.

The plan focuses the Commission, policy-makers and the public on the common goal of getting the park system to where it could be. The strategic process used to help the Commission identify the plan’s specifics included public outreach communications with the governor, legislature, local governments, tribes, user groups and statewide park staff.

In the past two biennia, The Governor and Legislature have supported the plan and have provided increased funding to begin the work outlined in the Centennial 2013 Plan, to catch up on maintenance, update facilities and expand and improve core services. In the next biennia and beyond the park system's 100th birthday into a second century of service, the Centennial 2013 Plan serves as the cornerstone that anchors State Parks' strategic plan.

Centennial 2013 Vision

“In 2013, Washington’s state parks will be premier destinations of uncommon quality, including state and regionally significant natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources that are outstanding for the experience, health, enjoyment and learning of all people.”

The timeline of the plan calls for renovations, upgrading and construction in the early years – in other words, preparing the park system. As this “improvement “phase continues, the agency continues a variety of public outreach activities to call attention to the plan and build public support. By early 2008, more than 1,300 citizens and groups had formally endorsed the plan through letters, forms and e-mails to the agency, lending support and agreement to the approach identified by the Commission. During the final two to three years of the plan, the public also will be engaged to help with planning celebration activities.

A mid-course assessment

In August, 2007, the Commission held a two-day workshop to discuss core values and alignment with the Centennial 2013 Plan. This session resulted in a re-confirmation of the basic focus and direction of the plan, as well as resulting in some refinements of language in the plan and goals. The mid-course analysis also centered on the financial reality that the original \$250 million price tag the Commission had earlier identified would no longer buy the same level of projects and improvements because of recent worldwide events resulting in higher fuel and materials costs and general inflation. As 2008 continues, new project lists are being created to rectify this difference and to align the goals of the plan with the reality of current costs.

The priorities of Centennial 2013

Partly as the result of advice from the Governor and Legislature, the Commission has simplified the Centennial 2013 Plan and pitched its focus primarily on improving the parks enjoyed by the public today. However, the Commission also recognizes the importance of preserving parks, and facilities and upgrading and adding capacity to ensure a legacy of parks for the future, in a state that's been growing by approximately a million people a decade. The plan's message is centered on three simple priorities and a call to action to the public and communities to help with parks that are their particular favorites.

- Priority No. 1 – Improve what we have.
- Priority No. 2 – Upgrade existing parks, trails and services.
- Priority No. 3 – Work toward adding new parks, trails and services for the future.
- 100 Connections – A call to action for citizens to provide additional help by donating their time, labor and funds to make 100 citizen gift improvements in parks all over the state.

Centennial 2013 Plan Supplements:

When the Commission's adopted the *Centennial 2013* Vision, it acknowledged that work outside of the 2013 plan's core may be proposed by citizens, partners, governments, and other organizations. Proposals that helped to transform the park system into an improved public service would be considered significant supplements to the core of the plan. The Commission has expressed its appreciation of additional proposals that serve to support and enhance the intentions of Centennial 2013 Plan. The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission has gratefully acknowledged these proposals and has celebrated its role in helping to create these improvements for the state.

- **Puget Sound and Hood Canal Clean-up:**

Wastewater and storm water systems are old and have not been given high priority for the repairs and maintenance of our parks. The agency will focus on improving all waste water systems and adding or improving storm water systems in those parks that are adjacent to any lakes, streams, rivers or salt water. State Parks will request capital and maintenance funding each biennium until this objective is met. Additionally, sustainable water projects are extremely important to meeting our goals to lessen impacts to the waters of the state. State Parks will propose projects and request capital funding to continue to be a model neighbor to the waters of the state. To this end, near-shore developments will be carried out using Low Impact Development techniques where practical. Agency personnel will remove creosote piling, bulkheads, and random logs from Parks property and replace them with more sustainable materials where necessary. Near-shore habitat and access to upland spawning habitat will be considered as stand alone projects as well as parts of major capital development and maintenance.

- **Spokane River Water:**

As a part of the Priorities of Government (POG) process, State Parks is working with a small group of state agencies to develop a pilot program in the Spokane River area. The effort, led by the Department of Ecology, will include water quality, dam re-licensing, toxic site clean-up, and technical assistance.

- **Washington Historical Society:**

Together with the Washington State Historical Society, the Commission will add new partnerships to assess historic resources, curate historic artifacts, and do a more satisfactory job of historic preservation and education. This is a specific interest within work expected by the Governor's Office of Financial Management as a result of the Priorities of Government. (POG).

- **Mountains-to- Sound Greenway:**

The Mountains-to-Sound Greenway project also integrates directly into State Parks *Centennial 2013 Plan*. By leveraging Mountains-to-Sound Greenway's ability to generate funds with State Parks, the agency can coordinate completing the *Centennial 2013 Plan* within current funding, as part of the trail component identified in the Plan.

- **Enterprise Risk Management:**

In 2007 the State Parks and Recreation Commission adopted a Centennial Risk Strategic Plan consistent with both the Governor's enterprise risk management initiative and with the State Parks mission, vision and goals. The ability of all employees to identify, prioritize and minimize risks and then adopt sustainable best practices is the best way to keep both people and property safe and productive.

- **Winter Recreation Strategic Plan:**

In 2008 the State Parks and Recreation Commission will adopt a Winter Recreation Strategic Plan for both motorized and non-motorized activities. The Plans were written with the assistance and cooperation of two Advisory groups.

- **Southwest Washington Trail Connection to Clark County:**

In 2007 the State Parks and Recreation Commission adopted a major southwest Washington trail connection between the Connection's cross state trail and Clark County as a formal supplement to the Centennial Plan. This connection will be financed by trail partners.

PART I: STRATEGIC PLAN

Centennial 2013 - 11 goals

The Centennial 2013 effort has been streamlined to 11 measurable goals and objectives, which align with the Priorities of Government, the Governor's Priorities as outlined in Government, Management, Accountability, and Performance (GMAP), the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission's Mission and the Commission's Centennial 2013 Vision and Plan.

The 11 goals of the strategic plan are an essential focus of the agency's GMAP process, with work groups reporting their strategies, progress, and challenges around these goals. The goals are intended to be completed by 2013.

Goal No. 1

Stewardship – All 120 parks will have land-use plans supported by the public and Commission . . . (The plans categorize park land use into historic venues, cultural sites and natural resource areas) citizens understand that parks are places to enjoy healthy recreation and learn about Washington's history and cultural heritage.

Strategy to achieve this goal:

One of the most fundamental management tools for State Parks and its park managers is the Classification and Management Plan (CAMP). The CAMP document defines the long-term boundary of the park, inventories species, identifies natural areas and key management issues. It provides a mechanism to balance the preservation of natural, historic and cultural resources with the provision of appropriate recreation activities for the public.

The CAMP process is a highly participatory process and is done through intensive outreach to citizens, governments and other stakeholders, including neighbors, local governments, visitors from afar, business and a diverse array of recreational users. A very transparent online system has been developed on the agency's Web site to ensure that the public has the benefit of seeing all the ideas, up to date, as the plan is being developed. CAMP is one of the agency's most dynamic and successful means of public engagement, ensuring the Commission knows what the public wants and needs from its park system.

A goal of CAMP is public ownership, continued public engagement and a continuing and growing public role in understanding the complex business of caring for resources while offering recreational opportunities for the public. Many active friends groups, park volunteers and other helpers come to State Parks through this process.

The land-use plan portion of the CAMP document defines the long-term park boundary, identifies lands that may be acquired in the future through willing sellers or donations and provides a land classification designation (natural, cultural, historical, and recreational) for all properties and facilities within the long-term boundary. The plans are designed to identify issues affecting a park's natural, cultural, and recreational resources, as well as to identify future options and opportunities to enhance the resources and the experiences of visitors

interacting with those resources. The plans also assess and minimize risk to our resources whenever possible.

Areas of Special Focus:

Better care for historical resources through a new partnership:

Washington State Parks is working to initiate new partnerships with the Washington State Historical Society to assess historic resources, curate historic artifacts, and do a more satisfactory job of historic preservation and education. This is a specific interest within work expected by the Governor's Office of Financial Management as a result of the Priorities of Government (POG).

Institutionalize sustainability:

State Parks is working throughout the agency to ensure compliance with Executive Orders 04-01 and 05-01. This effort will lead to policies and actions that: a) reduce carbon emissions, b) improve energy conservation, c) conserve water, d) reduce toxics in the environment, and e) reduce waste while increase recycling. In addition, our leadership in sustainability will serve to educate the public to both our sustainability efforts, and opportunities for them to apply similar technologies / approaches in their communities.

Create healthy forest conditions:

Forests dominate the State Park landscape; the public identifies trees with parks. They are an icon of our agency and our largest and most valuable non-human resource. With few exceptions (remnant pockets of old growth), the park system's forestlands are in moderate to poor condition owing to historic timber cutting, wildfire suppression, competition from exotics, insect and disease infestations, and fragmentation. Climate change will likely exacerbate these conditions. Healthy forests are essential to the advancement of the agency's mission to provide high quality, functioning habitat; safe and inviting recreational experiences; and exemplary stewardship of the resources in our charge.

Related to concerns about healthy forest conditions, but in the system's more developed landscapes, is the abatement of risk associated with tree failure, and the protection of the agency's shade tree assets. Recent inventories have identified an immediate need for enhanced tree care, with 80% of existing stems in campgrounds and day-use areas requiring treatment to mitigate tree-related risk to staff and the public and to ensure the health and longevity of the agency's shade tree resources.

Control invasive and noxious weeds, and restore native habitat:

Exotics are the second leading cause of reductions in biological diversity (the first being habitat conversion). Through an integrated pest management approach and active participation in other statewide initiatives like the Invasive Species Council, the agency will reverse habitat degradation; reduce the risk of fire to the public and structures; and bring State Parks into compliance with the law (RCW 17.15; RCW 17.10 – noxious weeds – control board).

Other stewardship activities and focuses:

In an effort to move toward a sustainable park system that guarantees resource protection, access and a multitude of opportunities to learn about resources, the Washington State Parks Commission has committed to a sustainability program. The commission identified five model stewardship parks to demonstrate the state's ability to use sustainable technologies, preserve cultural assets, maintain healthy plant and wildlife communities, and offer interpretive opportunities. Model stewardship park activities include controlling all

noxious weeds identified by local county weed boards, reducing fire fuels to prevent catastrophic wildfires, providing learning opportunities about state cultural and natural resources, and preserving plants important to Native American people. The model stewardship parks are Flaming Geyser, Fort Casey, Lake Wenatchee, Leadbetter Point, and Rothschild House. The lessons learned at parks translate directly to the improved sensitivity and care of the environment when visitors return home.

Other Stewardship activities:

- Support the Governor’s commitment to restoration of the Puget Sound by renovating park infrastructure and utilities at Puget Sound Parks.
- Support the governor’s commitment to sustainability by implementing an agency-wide sustainability policy and plan.
- Participate in the Healthy Forests Initiative to reduce the risk of wildfire and hazardous trees throughout the system, and promote the restoration of degraded habitats and the recreational experiences they support.
- Promote the conservation and interpretation of Washington’s biodiversity (Washington’s Biodiversity Council), with an emphasis on protecting sensitive species and their habitats (e.g., salmon recovery).
- Control invasive species including inventories, development of integrated approaches, and monitoring for success and or treatment.
- Conduct a 10 year survey of the Seashore Conservation Line and Line of Vegetation for the Seashore Conservation Area in 2010.
- Undertake inventory, assessment, and monitoring of natural resources to assist planning decisions and actions.
- Initiate collection management of agency historical and cultural resources.
- Develop interpretation opportunities to help the public understand and appreciate the resources associated with current and emerging topics (e.g., Ice Age Flood, Coastal Defense Fortifications, South Cle Elum Depot, David Thompson Bicentennial, and Women’s History). Give new life to historic buildings to conserve them for the future.
- Provide stewardship training for natural, cultural and historic resources, and interpretation. Giving knowledge and skills to agency and state staff to conserve the public’s resources extends and institutionalizes agency stewardship efforts and enables the agency to provide meaningful interpretation. Provide tools for compliance with Executive Order 05-05 for Archaeological and Cultural Resources to agency and state staff.
- Assess and act upon climate change impacts, issues, and needed adaptations.

Goal performance assessments and measures:

In the Commission’s previous strategic plan, dated 2006, this goal was stated incorrectly – that is, the number of land-use plans was cited to be the measure, instead of the number of parks with land-use plans, as was intended by the Commission. This is an important distinction, since some plans cover an entire management area and more than one park. Original targets were drawn as a “straight line of progress” from 2003 through 2013.

Because many of the plans for the largest, most complex parks were completed first, and the plans covering smaller parks are less time-consuming and controversial, it is reasonable to assume that the agency will handily complete land-use plans for all 120 state parks by 2013.

Goal performance assessments and measures:

Land use plans:

To date; Washington State Parks has completed land-use plans for 48 of the 120 parks.

2005-07 goals: 48 cumulative total land-use plans completed.

2007-09 goals: 70 land-use plans completed.

2009-11 goals: 85 land-use plans completed.

2011-13 goals: 120 land-use plans completed

The agency is on target to complete the 2007-09 goals.

Goal No. 2

Enjoyment, Health and Learning – All 120 parks have community events and interpretive programs . . . so that citizens understand that parks are places to enjoy healthy recreation and learn about Washington’s history and cultural heritage.

Strategy to achieve this goal:

Washington’s state parks traditionally have offered interpretive programs to visitors, but budget cuts in the 1980s and 1990s resulted in cuts to interpretive staff. Subsequent restricted budgets further hampered the agency’s ability to offer programs. The Commission has, in more recent years, provided training and encouragement to staff all over the state to find new ways to create educational opportunities for the public. The Centennial 2013 Plan provides further support and emphasis in this area.

In many locations, programs are being created by rangers and other staff who have received special stewardship and interpretive training. In some locations, grants, volunteers and external interest groups are helping to provide programming. A partnership between Washington State Parks and the Washington State Arts Commission has resulted in a very successful program called “Folk and Traditional Arts in the Parks. This program has brought in many people who otherwise might not have visited a park, with interesting cultural programs such as Hispanic music and dance, Native American craft demonstrations and performances, cowboy poetry performance a popular “hip-nik” and a host of other programs. In addition, the Commission has encouraged park managers to find new ways to make connections with their communities and invite organizations to host their seasonal events in parks so that people all over Washington think of their state parks as important community gathering places. The events will encourage local communities to view their park as an integral part of the community and a gathering place for a variety of community events where all people are welcome, regardless of race, color, or creed.

By focusing on interpretive programs and community events, State Parks also works collaboratively with the travel and tourism industries. Travel trend watchers say that visitors are looking for a park experience that goes beyond beautiful places; they want an experience that offers them a sense of adventure and discovery.

Goal performance assessments and measures:

The goal is that all 120 parks would host at least one community event and a schedule of interpretive programs by 2013. By the end of calendar year 2007, 66 parks had achieved this goal. Region managers and park staff report that most will have completed the goal by 2013, though it is likely that hosting interpretive programs in some remote satellite parks will not prove practical.

Measures for this goal will include examples of specific regions and programs added for the public. In 2007, for example, staff in Southwest Region parks alone presented more than 8,000 interpretive programs to 85,745 people. In Eastern Region, park staff presented 4,440 interpretive programs with 49,400 people in attendance.

State Parks also provides federally funded statewide programs to support the healthful and responsible enjoyment of outdoor recreational resources. These include the Recreational Boating and Winter Recreation Programs.

Recreational Boating:

- **Pump Outs:**

Agency staff created a statewide program that is the model for the federal program, to support clean water through grants for pump-outs at public and private marinas. The program provides environmental information to boaters about sewage, aquatic nuisance species, oil and fuel spills and other environmental issues that lead to improved care of the environment by boaters.

The program funds 100 boat sewage disposal facilities across the state. The current facilities may represent the easy locations not hindered by costs. The program has a long range plan for additional facilities in underserved locations.

- **Mandatory Boater Education:**

In 2006, the new requirement to offer courses, testing and a card for successful completion of the test did not carry state funding, and was expected to be self supporting, resulting in the expenditure of federal funds to satisfy this unfunded mandate. Through December 2007, costs of the new program exceeded \$200K. The schedule set by law for recreational boaters to get the card means that more than 80,000 boat operators will need classes, cards and brochures in the next three years. Funding for these services cannot continue to be covered by reduction in law enforcement and boating safety.

- **Safety:**

The program through grants to local jurisdictions funds law enforcement on the waterways.

Winter Recreation:

The Winter Recreation Program is made up of two grant programs, for snowmobilers and for non-motorized winter recreationists. The program is funded by fees to the user groups. The funds are distributed to state parks and other public and private agencies and organizations to support construction and maintenance of facilities such as parking lot snow removal, sanitary facilities, trail grooming, trail signing and mapping. The program also provides information to winter recreationists about effects of cold weather, lack of

food, and humans on winter wildlife so that citizens understand and support the care of their parks and environment.

In the next five years, the program should increase revenue from user fees to support increased demand for snow play areas, more Sno-Parks, expanded trail systems, adequate plowed access to off-trail recreational activities such as snowshoeing, climbing, back country camping, and overnight lodging (cabins and yurts). As the State's winter recreation agency, State Parks will seek state funding to assist the winter recreation program in satisfying the demands of a growing winter recreation population in its State Parks. The State Parks and Recreation Commission adopted a higher Recreation Strategic Plan on June 12, 2008. This plan will map a course of action for the next 10 years.

Other agency “Enjoyment, Health and Learning” activities:

- Develop model stewardship parks that add quality to the visitor experience, educate visitors and demonstrate sustainability.
- Upgrade and repair of facilities to support enjoyment of the parks system.
- Ensure health and safety of visitors by mitigating risk and accidents through prevention.
- Conduct winter recreation activities.
- Continue providing boating and boating safety education and activities.

Goal No. 3

Public service – The public will rate agency public service B+ or better on surveys so that the Commission can hear public opinion and pursue continued improvement of services provided by the park system.

Strategies for this goal:

Investment in employees: The Commission recognizes that a trained workforce is the key to enhancing service to the public. The Commission also believes that one critical path to providing excellent public service and high-quality visitor experiences is through wise investment in its employees. This investment may be made by providing adequate compensation and benefits for all levels of staff, including law enforcement rangers, maintenance, support, and other technical and preferred classifications.

This means offering training and career development opportunities for all agency personnel, so staff feels valued and is sufficiently skilled to do a quality job. These efforts will allow the agency to retain valuable staff.

Management tools available under the new Civil Service system help to inspire and ensure ingenuity and productivity from staff. Employee recognition programs and Commission recognition of staff work are integral. Two annual employee surveys, gather staff feedback on agency operations in an effort to improve workplace quality for State Park employees, its organizational integrity, and its public service ethic.

Surveying Citizens:

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission is committed to a professional and scientifically administered citizen survey to obtain feedback on citizens' confidence in their

parks and services. In addition, a parks Visitor Comment Card program provides specific feedback about the visitor experience. An executive summary of the results from the 2008 citizen survey is attached as Appendix B.

Area of Special Focus:

Diversity efforts that continue to build a strong, diverse work force that reflects the cultural makeup of Washington State is core value of the State Parks Commission. The agency continues its aggressive diversity recruitment effort designed to enlist people of color into its workforce. The agency will explore various avenues to increase the diversity applicant pool. Ideas such as staggered requirements for the various levels of Park Rangers. There is a pilot program to offer diversity camping, targeting African-American families, the most under-represented group to visit state parks. The pilot's ultimate goal is to build interest in eventual careers in state parks. Many of our Park Rangers began their careers with us as Park Aids. The diversity camp over will introduce youth to a career at State Parks. The goal of all these activities is to provide a welcoming environment in state parks for all people, for both play and work.

Information Management:

The information technology is key to improving productivity in the agency. It is the foundation that connects the parks to the public via the web, GIS for maps and reservation systems. It allows all park staff to have tools to do their jobs. It must have adequate funding. Resources need to be dedicated to provide for services beyond the minimum. The agency will submit a number of decision packages in the information management arena aimed at reducing risk, improving efficiencies and allowing staff to access data to make better management decisions.

- Better interface for Human Resource Management System (HRMS) that would allow managers and employees real time access to their timesheets and produce summary information that could be electronically submitted to Department of Personnel.
- Asset maintenance management system.
- 3-year leasing cycle for computers. This program began this biennium and will be institutionalized in the agency.
- Park connectivity to improve electronic connections and internet access at 120 Parks.
- 3-year server, switch and infrastructure replacement. Additionally the agency servers located at headquarters location in Olympia will be consolidated into Department of Information Services consistent with the Governor's direction and sufficient money to pay. DIS fees will need to be included in the agency's budget.
- New network at Cama Beach including a reservation system.
- GIS / mapping project.
- In recognition of changing demographics and increased numbers of citizens for whom English is a second language, the agency to address resources to make all communications available in a variety of languages through the website, through downloadable publications starting with the following languages - Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Russian.

Other agency public service activities:

- **Safe environment for employees – new headquarters:** With funding and building approval, the agency is moving forward with a new headquarters building in FY 2008. State Parks' Headquarters is currently in substandard office space spread out over four buildings. State Parks will move into a new headquarters facility by late 2008. The facility will also recognize the importance of sustainability and employee health. To these ends the following general requirements were to be considered in the procurement of this facility.
 1. The facility will be a single building or tight campus design.
 2. The appearance of the facility and grounds will reflect the nature and mission of the agency.
 3. The facility will meet or exceed state sustainability standards
 4. The facility will allow for agency growth, to meet the needs of agency management and staff for 15+ years.
 5. The facility will be leased outright or with a lease-to-own agreement.
 6. Easy access for staff, the public and RV's will be a consideration.
 7. The site will provide adequate free parking for visiting public.
 8. The buildings will be constructed as a certified LEED gold project.

- **New Eastern Region Headquarters:**

The agency also has relocated its Eastern Regional Headquarters to a more workable and safer environment for both its employees and the public. (Wenatchee)

- **Three other regional offices are at or exceed capacity:**

The agency's 6 year space estimates that were submitted to OFM on April 18, 2008 highlight the need for additional space at the regional level. All three office buildings are currently owned by the agency. The Southwest regional office is located at Millersylvania State Park in a historic building and renovations to that building may be financially challenging. The other two regional offices are owned by the agency and may have sufficient land available to expand existing buildings.

- **Assessing staffing levels:**

The agency operates its parks 365 days a year, often it requires staff present well beyond a normal work day. In order to better serve the public, the agency is looking at its staffing levels at the region and park level to determine where overtime is appropriate for ensuring the public is served at a quality level, or whether additional permanent staff is needed.

- **Centennial 2013 operation needs:**

The agency is assessing what operational dollars will be necessary to fully implement the *Centennial Plan* by 2013 and will be seeking additional operational dollars over the next three biennia; to increase staff where necessary to operate Capitol Projects funded through the Centennial Plan, planned maintenance and provide adequate utility costs and equipment, and to implement the Agency's Strategic Plan, Winter Recreation Strategic Plan, and action plans from the Berk study and Performance Audit.

- **Computer equipment and network connections:**

Agency staff is working to improve its computer equipment and network connections at its headquarters and 120 park sites. The agency must also upgrade old and inadequate equipment and wiring. The agency has a 23 year old legacy computer systems as well as aged equipment with no replacement plan. The agency is now on a 3 year computer replacement cycle; however newer equipment does not assist the park ranger in the field if new technology and connectivity issues are not addressed. The agency will be requesting funds to improve internet and develop an intranet as well enhancing data base management, GIS services and software and programming capabilities as well as addressing security issues.

- **Expanding visitation, welcoming everyone:**

The Commission is committed to making state parks feel like home to everyone. Therefore, it supports programs that provide support to families who have little history with this Park system or who may want to develop a family history of outdoor activity. To further Parks' mission to support inclusiveness, one grant-funded program (Inside Out) will evolve but currently introduces families and youth to parks in every season. A second program, which commenced in 2007, provides grants to support youth programs with an emphasis on outdoor learning ("No Child Left Inside"). These are only the beginning of meeting the mission to provide for education and recreation in parks.

Goal performance assessments and measures:

In a 2006 scientific survey of 1,200 citizens by independent surveyor Responsive Management, Washington State Parks received an overall rating of "B" or better on questions relating to satisfaction and quality of services and facilities in their state parks. A 2008 survey is being prepared. The Commission is committed to surveying the public every two years, using consistent survey questions in order to compare performance by citizen standards year to year.

Goal No. 4

Facilities – Improve the old, well-loved state park system . . . so that citizens have safe and modern parks.

Strategy for this goal:

A capital facilities report published in 2001, "State Parks 2010. A Capital Facilities Condition Report," identified \$300 million worth of major facility renovation needs for the existing state park system. Work by the Commission in subsequent years has refined the renovations needs list and recognized the need for a few high-priority new additions to the state park system in order to take it into the future. The *Centennial 2013 Plan* identifies funding needs over the next seven years to complete half of the major renovations identified in 2001. With inflation, this is an estimated cost of \$160 million.

These major, bondable projects would address public health and safety-related park needs, by providing renovations to outdated (and in some cases, failing) infrastructure, facilities and buildings. The agency has established a schedule for the next two biennia that lays out the projects, their costs, and the year it will begin construction. The schedule is attached in Appendix C. Not only does this demonstrate that the agency has a clear plan for the accomplishment of the *Centennial 2013 Plan* but it allows for greater planning with regional staff that must operate the facility when the project is completed. It is now easier to develop

operating impacts and predict the fiscal year in which the project will be completed and when the operating costs will begin. The schedule also allows for better communication and planning of development of projects that will minimize future operational impacts.

The plan also includes \$40 million for projects and equipment replacement needs under \$25,000 in cost. These projects, part of routine operational maintenance, have been deferred from one biennium to the next and sometimes beyond that, because basic operations needs and their associated rising costs had to be covered first.

State Parks has shown it knows how to manage appropriations to improve parks. In 2001-03, Legislators, concerned about the condition of State Parks, allocated \$3.5 million to help address the backlog of deferred maintenance. As a result, 450 projects were selected for immediate attention. By leveraging tax dollars, closely managing costs, and using park staff instead of contract workers, State Parks finished the 450 select projects along with an additional 250 projects – things like road improvements, restrooms, electrical upgrades, and more.

Improvements were made in all 38 of the 39 Washington counties with a state park.

In 2003, the agency began using parking fee revenues to help with deferred maintenance. To date, the agency has completed 2,012 of the 2,782 projects on the original 1999 minor deferred maintenance list. That discrete list has been kept so the agency can measure progress; however, because no improvement has been made to the planned maintenance funding of parks for over 20 years, a new list of deferred maintenance needs has begun to grow. Deferred maintenance in State Parks is not unlike home maintenance for homeowners; the longer maintenance is put off, the higher the price when the job is finally tackled. In recognition of the problem, the Legislature provided \$2 million in the FY 2006 Supplemental Budget, and 3.2 million in 2007- 2009.

This is an important goal for the agency because the lack of repairs can cause risk to the park visitor and to the park infrastructure. It is important that, as park staff addresses the backlog issue, that it stays current with its planned maintenance. Planned maintenance will continue to be a focus in the agency's FY 2009-2011 budget requests. Staff is currently completing an inventory of all parks infrastructure and equipment and determining what is necessary to be completed on annual basis to protect state assets and minimize risk to the public. Current staff capacity is also being examined. The FY 2009-2011 budget request will address deficiencies in this area. Funds were received in the 2008 supplemental to conduct a facility assessment of Southwest Region to be used as a pilot for the rest of the Regions.

Goal performance assessments and measures:

Major renovations: By the end of 2007, State Parks had completed a cumulative total of \$32.1 million of the \$87 million in major renovations projects identified in the Centennial 2013 Plan under the “Facilities fix-up” goal.

Performance assessments and measures:

Major renovations

To date: the agency has completed 0 of 220 major renovations projects (cost of \$128 million)

2005-07 goals: Complete 48 cumulative total projects

2007-09 goals: Complete 108 projects

2009-11 goals: Complete 158 projects

2011-13 goals: Complete 220 projects (\$128 million total cost)

The number of completed projects is based on projects funded from 2005-07 appropriations and since it is early in the biennium there are no projects completed at this time

Goal performance assessments and measures:

Deferred maintenance: By the end of 2008, a cumulative total of 2,012 of the 2,987 (\$23.1 million of the \$40 million total) deferred maintenance and equipment replacement backlog items were eliminated from State Parks’ original 2001 “deferred maintenance” backlog list included as part of this goal.

Performance assessments and measures:

(Minor) deferred maintenance

To date: the agency has eliminated 2,012 maintenance projects and equipment replacement items out of 2,782 items on the original list (\$23 million eliminated of \$40 million).

2005-07 goals: Complete 1,490 cumulative total projects

2007-09 goals: Complete 1,750 projects

2009-11 goals: Complete 2,250 projects

2011-13 goals: Complete 2,782 projects (\$40 million total cost)

To complete the major facility projects and eliminate the remainder of the original \$40 million backlog of deferred minor maintenance projects; the agency requested approximately \$75 million in Fiscal Years 2007-09; and will request \$75 million in 2009-11 and \$75 million in 2011-13. A complete list of the capital projects and the dollars by biennium is attached as Appendix C.

Parks staff will also be tracking data on the number of road projects completed the number of capital projects completed on time and within budget, and the percent of capital project staffing costs of the total project costs. Parks will be reviewing the best way to fund its planning staff. The Office of Financial Management received funds in the FY 2006 Supplemental Budget to hire a consultant to review the capital projects process at State Parks so that the opportunity exists for the process to become a model for the rest of the state. That study was conducted by Berk and Associates and a detailed report was provided. The agency developed an action plan and has been reporting to OFM and the Legislature on progress. The agency received funding to acquire project management and facilities management software. Additionally, the agency is tracking its performance on the \$17.3 million it received in FY 2006 Supplemental Budget for Puget Sound and Hood Canal Water Quality Initiatives. Monthly progress reports are issued. Several projects have been completed and the rest are underway. To continue its part in the Governor’s Initiative, parks will request an additional \$7 million to plan, design, and implement projects.

Goal No. 5

Partnerships – Double participation to 500,000 annual volunteer hours and 500 partners . . . so that citizens are actively recruited, welcomed and engaged in improving their parks and recreation opportunities.

Strategy for this goal:

Volunteers are central to State Parks operations. Since the early 1970s, volunteers have been indispensable for providing everything from trail maintenance and interpretation to campground hosting, office assistance, events and more. Volunteers of all ages and walks of life are recruited and placed, trained and supervised by State Parks staff. Volunteers come from within the state as

well as from outside. They are a committed part of the State Parks family, providing services to the public and often sharing their professional experience and expertise to improve the visitor experience in parks.

Engaging and utilizing volunteers is the responsibility of staff all over the agency. Although the largest recruitment and coordination effort is handled centrally through the agency's Volunteer Program, staff throughout the agency record and report volunteer hours. The agency realizes the inherent risk cost in utilizing volunteers. Adoption of legislation to require background checks will help reduce potential risks to visitors as the number of volunteers increase. Because the legislation that requires background checks did not have an appropriation, the costs for this and covering Labor and Industries' is an unfunded increased requirement in the budget. The agency continues to refine procedures to implement legislation, working to minimize the risk at the lowest cost possible.

Partnerships also are essential to State Parks and staff throughout the agency engage and work with partners for a variety of activities. Recreational organizations, community groups, schools, local governments, and corporate groups have formed partnerships for the care of particular parks and facilities. Partnerships often provide the impetus for new developments and programs. Partners enter into agreement contracts to help organize support for parks, often contributing money, time, and labor for the benefit of all.

Goal performance assessments and measures:

In 2007, State Parks logged 291,000 volunteers hours statewide. This is down slightly from the 293,000 reported at year's end in 2006, with speculation that high fuel prices are affecting volunteers statewide. It is anticipated that the new law requiring background checks may cause a down turn in hours volunteered in the future.

By year's end in 2007, agency staff had reported a total of 436 partnerships, ranging from friends groups, recreation organizations and school, business and scouting groups, to state, local and federal agencies. An assessment in June 2007 found that 185 of these partnerships were based on formal, written agreements.

Performance assessments and measures:

Volunteers:

2005 Actuals: State Parks recorded 1,176 volunteers who performed 271,000 volunteer hours of service

2005-07 goals: 1,382 volunteers, 328,000 cumulative volunteer hours annually (\$3,608,000.00)

2007-09 goals: 1,588 volunteers, 385,000 cumulative volunteer hours annually (\$4,235,000.00)

2009-11 goals: 1,794 volunteers, 442,000 cumulative volunteer hours annually (\$4,862,000.00)

2011-13 goals: 2,000 volunteers, 500,000 cumulative volunteer hours annually (\$5,500,000.00)

Partnerships:

In 2005, State Parks had 283 partnerships.

2005-07 goals: 325 cumulative total partnerships

2007-09 goals: 390 partnerships

2009-11 goals: 450 partnerships

2011-13 goals: 500 partnerships.

Other volunteer/partnership activities:

The agency has several different types of partnerships that have aided Parks in achieving its goals. The agency has partnered with other governmental agencies, not-for-profit groups, Native American and the private sector. The agency will pursue all types of partnerships to leverage both

money and non-financial support to implement programs in its parks and complement programs in our partners' mission. Parks will look to strengthen its partnerships in helping to market, the park system regionally and globally.

Goal No. 6

Financial strategy – All 120 state parks have business plans that include cost-saving strategies and four revenue sources (facility fees, product and service revenues, taxes and donations) . . . so that parks are managed with a focus on financial sustainability, efficiency and innovation.

Strategy:

In order to move toward the goal of having more financially sustainable parks, the Commission has committed to leveraging increased general tax support with earned revenue and donations for better park operations. Park rangers are taking an active role in managing the financial health of parks, a shift that starts with managers becoming educated about the funding of the park system and how park operations receive funding. Park Managers have been working from a template to create business plans that use four revenue sources outlined in the Centennial goal, to move toward a more financially stable and sustainable park system.

Park managers also now have the ability to use their creativity in choosing sustainable, revenue-producing activities for the parks they manage. For larger plans, private business consultants are providing expertise to train staff and help the agency achieve the goal.

Individual Business Plans for merchandise at the park level will not reduce the need for state general funding. Parks use merchandising as a means by which to fund ancillary services such as campground talks, movies in the park and even on occasion to purchase fundamentals such as stamps and signs. Future analyses must occur in which services and fees are analyzed in terms of which are a public good to be subsidized and which are more a private good that should be self-supporting.

Research must occur to determine the expectation of each fee charged; the expectation of revenue generation of each venue; the determination of private vendors' use of parks for profit. Research and policy decisions must occur on whether and how the system sustains its current level/number of discounts and fee waivers. The research must include methods by which low income citizens are not priced out of parks.

Washington State Parks will work with the Division of Tourism to develop a marketing strategy for the state that highlights the recognition that Washington State is about clean, beautiful and accessible venues where people can enjoy their recreation of choice. The Commission will continue to stress that it has an important role to play in the tourism of the state, and most importantly how to expand the system without exceeding the ability of all citizens to pay to participate in outdoor activities.

The park system is in competition for the citizen's recreational dollar. The state's most iconic natural features are often located in parks, and many rural communities have grown because of proximity to a state park. In the next 10 years, a significant budget must be developed to market and inform citizens about their natural treasures, how they can access these treasures and how to bring visitors from out of state to these treasures.

Revenue-building activities include provision of additional cabins, yurts, and other lodging facilities in parks; innovative public and private partnerships; marketing; and merchandising activities in park stores

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission is committed to working with the Governor's Office and the State Legislature to finding a stable permanent funding source for parks operations. The revenue model jointly developed with the Office of Financial Management is complete and will assist with projecting and monitoring state parks revenue. The agency works very closely with OFM and accuracy of projections are on target. State Parks and OFM will include the Winter Recreation Program in its forecast for the 2009 – 2014 budget.

The next five years the agency must continue to generate revenue. The Commission has asked staff to develop an Agency-Wide Business Plan that addresses policies in the agency that hamper its ability to generate revenue balanced with the need to provide services to all income and ethnic groups. The revenue generated must be from activities that fit the mission and vision of the Commission.

Concessions

Park visitors enjoy an enhanced visitor experience through the goods and services provided or managed by private concessionaires in state parks. The system has approximately 40 service providers under contract. Contracts range from one-year pilots for simple amenities or firewood, to long-term agreements for multi-million dollar activities like foodservice, lodging, and alpine skiing. Contract length is determined in part by the amount of private investment operators propose to invest in capital improvements, which become state property upon completion. One vendor under contract is required to make improvements worth \$4 million in today's dollars.

Depending on the availability of capital and operating funds, concessions and other commercial service providers may play an increasing role in the delivery of amenity services to park visitors. The agency will require sufficient staff to manage and audit contracts to ensure quality, the performance of terms and conditions, and that a fair market value is received for the privilege of conducting business on public lands.

Marketing

Marketing is a results-oriented "call to action" campaign directed toward potential fee-paying visitors for the purpose of increasing the frequency and duration of park visitation. A 2006 survey revealed that many more state residents would visit State Parks if they had information about park locations and features.

For example, the Marketing Program develops statewide and park-specific efforts to:

- Boost overnight stays (year-round) in campsites, yurts, cabins, and vacation houses
- Increase year-round day-use facility rentals such as conference centers and picnic shelters
- Stimulate use of new capacity from capital improvement projects (campgrounds, marinas)

- Motivate visits to special interpretive, cultural, and recreational events and festivals
- Attract users to special facilities for concerts, weddings, underwater parks, etc.
- Sell park-specific merchandise
- Position parks as the overnight component of trips to local community events
- Partner with the local Chambers of Commerce and Visitor and Convention Bureaus (VCBs) to increase tourism

State Parks' marketing has enormous collateral benefit to local and regional economies. Studies show that personal travel to state parks generates millions of dollars of commerce and tax revenue, promotes the amenities of distressed rural communities, and stimulates direct and indirect (multiplier) spending in small towns.

Central Reservation System

The agency has three central reservation systems. Fort Worden and Cama Beach state parks share an agency-operated system that uses purchased hardware and software designed for hotels. This system gives some priority to prior visitors. The second reservation system, for vacation houses, retreat centers and other facilities, is also operated by the agency and gives priority based on seniority for prior and continued rental.

The third system books campsite, shelter, and cabin reservations without priority. It is operated by a private contractor and is by far the busiest of the three systems, logging more than 100,000 reservations per year. All three systems are labor-intensive, and require constant updating on availability and system changes. They must continue to be understandable, easy to use, responsive, accurate and cost-effective.

The agency's contracted system charges users directly for reservations, with the exception of Disabled Veterans (who are exempt by law). The system books reservations for 85% of the agency's campsites, overnight roofed accommodations and day use facilities at approximately 57 of the 120 state parks. Reservations may be made as far as eight months in advance of the arrival date. A newly re-bid contract will commence in November 2008. Citizens report they are very satisfied with the reservation system and with transaction fees held stable for six years.

The reservation website provides an ADA-site listing, assistance for colorblind customers, campsite- and park-availability tools, site data and campsite photos. Use of the reservation website continues to increase, with customers now booking 65 percent of reservations online. The following goals for the system were achieved in the first six-year contract: 24-hour accessibility through a user friendly website, longer operator hours, drastic reduction of cash handling (and associated costs and risks) in the parks, reduction in false reservations that cause excessive cancellations, elimination of payment by check and lower volumes of self registration.

Future and current issues --Reservation systems

Central Reservation Services will continue as in the last contract. A call center, online reservation site, in-park reservation/registration system, software, hardware, customization of software, installation, monitoring, support, training, yearly maintenance and yearly training of staff will all be covered by the reservation transaction fees, but this cannot occur without increases in transaction fees.

However, the agency must determine the elasticity of demand for these services. In other states, these transaction fees to citizens are as high as \$10 per transaction as compared to Washington's current charge of \$7.00. In the next five years, the agency must recognize market place resistance and devise a plan for dealing with citizen complaints. The agency will be reviewing its reservation system policies in order to facilitate greater use of the system by the public and ensure that all parks are included in the reservation system where practicable.

Goal performance assessments and measures:

By the end of 2007, 60 parks had completed business plans that included the four revenue sources and cost-saving strategies. With more plans in draft now, all indications are that the goal of having a business plan for each of the 120 parks is reasonable and will be completed.

Performance assessments and measurements:

Business plans:

To date: State Parks has completed a business plan format and template to be used by all parks. Parks throughout the system are developing their individual business plans.

2005-07 goals: 30 parks of 120 have working business plans in place

2007-09 goals: 60 cumulative total parks have working business plans in place.

2011-13 goals: 120 parks have working business plans in place.

State Parks staff is working with the Attorney Generals office for clarification on the implications of the citizen initiative I-960. A strategy for fee increases and revenue must be reviewed and developed for which fees need legislative approval.

Other agency "Financial Strategy" activities:

- **Park icons for merchandising:** The agency has established a park icon program, producing artwork that reflects the unique identity of each park. Icons provide business opportunities for the agency. Icons are sold for framing and also appear on t-shirts, mugs and a variety of other items for sale.
- **Optimizing efficiencies:** Parks, as a financial strategy, is developing "vulnerability assessments" for each park and all its other operations, to avoid costs, minimize risk and optimize efficiencies.
- **Internet access:** The agency is reviewing its technology operations, and, as a sound business practice is finding that it must improve its connectivity at park sites, in particular those used as conference centers and rental vacation homes. State Parks, must also improve its technology infrastructure so that reservation and web site access speed and ease are improved. In order for some parks to function as a conference center, internet access must be provided for its customers.
- **Concessions:** Review and expand the number of concessions and leases managed by the agency.

- **Revenue projection:** The development of a revenue projection model with a policy component that will help the agency assess which new revenue ideas will be the most profitable and which fee increases will generate the most new revenue.
- **Increasing Occupancy in parks:** Currently, the occupancy rate for overnight camping is approximately 32% system-wide. In several major parks occupancy rate is near or at 100% on summer weekends. Parks will focus on ways to increase occupancy during the week and other off peak times to increase the overall occupancy rate. This will become more important as gasoline prices rise and citizens may make trips closer to home.
- **Donation programs:** The agency is working the State Parks Foundation to encourage targeted donations to State Parks. Additionally, the agency will actively market the new donation program connected to the renewal of vehicle registration.

Goal No. 7

Trails – Improve facilities and add trail miles on winter recreation, land and water trails . . . so that recreational trail opportunities are expanded and improved for citizens.

Strategy for this goal:

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission committed to providing recreation for multiple uses on trails, which many see as the “recreation of the future” Currently, the Commission offers recreational opportunities on a number of long-distance recreational land trails. The Commission also has responsibility for administration of the water trails program in Washington. State Parks works with dozens of agency and private, non-profit partners to obtain, develop, and manage these trails. Grants from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, (WWRP) along with state capital funds, pass-through moneys from federal agencies and donations have made many trails, trestles and bridge connections possible.

As part of its *Centennial 2013 Plan*, the Commission has made a commitment to recreational trails leadership in Washington. To that end, the agency has created a statewide trails coordinator position. This coordinator works with parks, regions and programs, as well as private and public partners to connect the agency’s statewide trails to city, county, state and federal trail systems and to create a inter jurisdictional state network of trails.

While long-distance trail progress is a major focus of the Centennial 2013 Plan, park staff around the state also has worked with partner groups to expand in-park trails, recognizing that visitors are seeking more hiking opportunities when they visit or camp in parks. Park staff and partners are working to add trailheads, restroom facilities, interpretation and updated bridge and trestle passages on trails around the state. State Park staff has increased their reporting of all these types of trail facilities, which, have been added to the agency performance measures in order to communicate progress in a meaningful way with the trail-using public.

State Parks already has several trails in its inventory. Long-distance land trails are enjoyed year round by hikers, bikers and equestrians and in winter, by cross-country skiers, snowshoers, dog-sledders and snowmobilers. Water trails offer long-distance recreation for non-motorized boats, with primitive camping provided along the way. State Parks manages the following trails:

- Spokane Centennial Trail, 37 miles, Idaho to Nine Mile Falls near Spokane
- Columbia Plateau Trail State Park, 130 miles, Pasco to Cheney (23 miles currently developed and open)
- Iron Horse State Park, John Wayne Pioneer Trail, 113 miles, North Bend to Vantage
- Willapa Hills Trail, 56 miles, Chehalis to Raymond, most to be developed
- Klickitat Trail, 31 miles, Lyle to Warwick, public/private partnerships to develop
- Cascadia Marine Trail, 200-plus miles, Hope Island near Olympia, to Canada, with 56 primitive campsites on islands and shorelines.
- Columbia and Snake River trails, 513-mile regional water trail with 474 water trail miles in Washington, in cooperation with 30 partners

In November 2005, the Commission set the following trail project priorities in alignment with the Your Legacy portion of the plan (now part of Priorities 2 – upgrade and expand existing parks, trails and services) and identified associated project costs:

- Expand John Wayne Pioneer Trail West – Improve trail surface, tunnels and trestles to allow for multi-use. Cost \$5 million.
- Open new segments of Columbia Plateau Trail and John Wayne Pioneer Trail East, Cost \$5 million.

Goal performance assessments and measures:

Measures will be expressed in terms of a variety of visible improvements and added trail miles for visitors to enjoy.

In 2007, the following accomplishments were noted:

- Completed 7 miles of winter trails at Nason Ridge connecting Lake Wenatchee State Park trails to U.S. Forest Service trails.
- Completed 3.2-mile Greg Ball Trail at Wallace Falls State park
- Completed and opened a new water trail campsite at Kinney Point
- Added 1,000 feet of trail at South Cle Elum Rail Yard
- Added 700 feet of trail connecting Lake Sammamish to East Lake Sammamish Trail
- Added 1,580 feet of trail from Fort Ward State Park to Bainbridge Island Metro Park Recreation District.

Trail progress reported since the Centennial 2013 Plan began in 2003:

- Completed agreement and accepted 103 miles of John Wayne Pioneer Trail East from state Department of Natural Resources, 2006
- Opened 57.5 new miles of winter recreation trail, 2005
- Worked with more than two dozen other agencies to jointly establish 3670-mile Northwest Discovery Water Trail in 2005 and to establish 146-mile Lower Columbia Water Trail in 2004
- Opened 31 miles of Klickitat Trail in 2003.

Performance assessments and measures:

To date: 544 new miles of land trail and water trails have been added.

2005-07 goals: 658 cumulative total new trail miles added.

2007-09 goals: 772 new trail miles added.

2009-11 goals: 886 new trail miles added.

2011-13 goals: 1,000 total new trail miles added.

The expansion of trails and trail maintenance will require operating impact funds as new trails are added. The agency will request funds over the next three biennia.

Goal No. 8

Updated and new parks – Update existing parks and work toward opening new parks . . . so that parks and recreation opportunities are available to meet future needs in a growing state.

Expand nine parks:

In November 2005, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission adopted the priorities of the *Centennial 2013 Plan* and selected nine of the most popular and most visited state parks to focus on for expansion in alignment with the plan, for a total estimated cost of \$57 million. The projects are intended to have a significant positive impact on each park, providing new recreation experiences or improving park conditions:

- Beacon Rock: Camping, day use, roadway, and trail improvements; \$5 million.
- Cape Disappointment: Complete Commission-approved master plan; \$9 million.
- Deception Pass: Redevelop Sunrise area, master plan improvements; \$7 million.
- Lake Sammamish: Implement Commission-approved master plan, encourage private investment; \$5 million.
- Millersylvania: Renovate Civilian Conservation Corps-era buildings, new retreat center, campground upgrades; \$5 million.
- Pearrygin Lake: Park redevelopment, expansion, new trails, cabins; \$5 million.
- Fort Worden: Convert barracks to motel-style accommodations, historic structure renovations; \$10 million.
- Belfair: Park-wide renovation in cooperation with Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group; \$3 million.
- Riverside: New campground, convert existing old campground to day use; \$3 million.
- John Wayne Trail West: Improve trail surface, tunnels, and trestles to allow for multi-use; \$5 million.

New parks:

Also in November 2005, the Commission selected three properties as potential new parks in the plan. Funding amounts listed will not allow completion of any one of the recommended projects; however they will allow parks to open for day use and can set a course for completion as funds, including public funds, grants, donations, and private investment, become available:

- Miller Peninsula: Infrastructure, day use, and overnight facilities; \$12 million.
 - Nisqually Maschel Infrastructure and day use development; \$6 million.
 - Snake River/Southeast Washington: Initial park development; \$2 million.
- Cross-State Trail Projects; \$ 5 million.

The Commission is pleased to announce the opening of Cama Beach State Park on June 21, 2008 and the planned opening of Bottle Beach State Park for day use and bird watching in 2009. With the Commission's mid-course assessment came the understanding that the \$250 million price tag of the Centennial 2013 Plan will not cover full attainment, because of increased fuel and material costs and general inflation. A streamlined list of projects is being

developed in 2008 in order to more realistically carve out a goal for updating existing parks to build capacity and ensure a viable future. The Commission recognizes that its first priority is fix what you have, and is proceeding slower with the development of additional new parks.

Goal No. 9

Historic sites – Improve four major historic sites . . . so that the state’s heritage is available to citizens now and into the future.

Strategy: The Commission began this portion of the plan by identifying four historic sites to develop, with citizen participation to help direct the planning. The four sites identified are:

- South Cle Elum Depot: A historic Milwaukee Road train depot refurbishment projects in cooperation with a number of friends groups and foundations.
- Olmstead Place State Park: A working pioneer farm with original buildings, equipment and tools, near Vantage.
- Fort Simcoe: A Civil-War era fort near White Swan on the Yakama Indian Reservation. The fort, built during the Civil-War era to keep peace between the settlers and Native Americans, has original officer’s buildings. It was the earlier meeting place for many tribes.
- Saint Edward State Park Seminary: A Romanesque revival - style historic building on the site of a 300-plus acre day-use park in Kenmore.

Goal performance assessments and measures:

Progress on the historic sites is as follows:

- South Cle Elum Depot at Iron Horse State Park – Depot project completed and opened 2006.
- Olmstead Place State Park – Planning, 2012.
- Fort Simcoe – Planning, 2011.
- Saint Edward State Park Seminary – Completed structural assessment, 2007, with elimination of water intrusion to be accomplished in 2009.

Goal No. 10

Interpretation – Tell the Ice Age floods story . . . so that our state’s dramatic geologic history is available to citizens.

Strategy:

In 2003, the Commission began discussions with other agencies and organizations interested in working together to tell the story of the Ice Age Floods; cataclysmic floods that carved the landscape of Eastern Washington and created the Columbia River Gorge, and channeled Eastern Washington scablands landscape. The effort is of interest to tourism-oriented communities and educational groups. Because many of the most dramatic examples of the great floods are evidenced on State Parks lands, the agency has an opportunity to use its expertise in educating the public and sharing this important and unique story with citizens and out-of-state visitors.

Goal performance assessments and measures:

Much progress has been made to develop the sites where the Ice Age floods story can be told and the programs that will entice and educate visitors.

- Ice Age Floods Interpretive Plan developed, 2005
- Ice Age Floods Interpretive Plan completed and adopted by the Commission, 2006
- Phase 1 development under way on interpretive exhibit displays for visitors at several parks, 2007. Parks include Dry Falls, Palouse Falls, Ginkgo Petrified Forest, Beacon Rock, Steamboat Rock, and Wenatchee Confluence. Several sites are expected to be ready for visitors in 2008.

Goal No. 11

100 Connections – 100 citizen gift improvements enhance state parks all over Washington . . . so that citizens contribute to the parks they visit and enjoy.

Strategy to achieve this goal:

Park managers all over the state have ideas and visions for their parks. Often these ideas come from visitors, who comment regularly about what they would like to see in their parks. The 100 Connections portion of the Centennial 2013 Plan was envisioned as a way for park managers to reach out to local communities, user groups, volunteers and partners and invite donations of time, labor and money to help make visible improvements in parks.

This “call to action” part of the plan invites citizens to “adopt” a park near where they live or a far-away park they love to visit and donate toward that park’s improvement. Originally, the 100 Connections goal was to have the improvements completely funded by private donation, but park staff, have found this not to be practical. In many cases, some State Parks funds have been used to finish projects, and in others donations and work parties have sufficed. In all cases, friends groups and recreationists have participated, gaining a sense of ownership and leaving something for all to enjoy.

Goal performance assessments and measures: By the end of 2007, 48 of the 100 citizen gift improvement projects around the state had been completed. Projects range from new playground structures to trail improvements, kitchen shelters, commemorative fixtures, projects to remove invasive species and many more successful projects. All indications are that the 100 projects will be completed by 2013.

PART II: PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT & APPRAISAL OF EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Performance Analysis

- **GMAP Process**

The agency used the GMAP process to look at its Centennial 2013 goals but did not use it to look at on going agency operations to make budgetary decisions. During the last two years, leadership has learned that it must use GMAP to do both things and has committed to altering its GMAP process to do so. The agency has used its Government Measures and Performance (GMAP) process primarily to track progress on the Centennial 2013 goals and objectives throughout the agency. During this process, agency Executive Leadership Team has learned several important things. The team realized that the same criteria were not used by each region to report similar measurement goals were not consistent. This lead to the team redefining several elements and communicating those changes so that consistent criteria was used and past data was adjusted to so the information could be aggregated. The team will begin to GMAP specific issues and program areas as well as tracking the Centennial Goals. The agency has not yet moved from the measurement of outcomes to outputs in all cases. The Centennial 2013 goals and performance measurement in the OFM Activity Inventory System are still mostly output oriented. Newer measures written for specific decision packages tend to be more outcomes driven and better address the question of what benefits the public is receiving as a result of investment in each particular activity. The agency also has learned in this process that it does not have adequate database systems or the resources for those systems to communicate across the system and aggregate the data. The Performance Audit of the agency highlighted that the agency has a number of old legacy systems that lack security and connectivity. Additionally the agency lacks the programming staff to design meaningful management reports from the existing systems. It is clear that additional information technology resources for staff and systems are necessary.

- **Performance Gaps**

The Executive Leadership Team of the agency has not looked at each performance measure to closely assess whether the goals are realistic with existing resources. Nor has it assessed the total agency's performance as a group in the past. However the Executive Leadership Team which is comprised of the all direct reports to the agency director and deputy director now meets monthly and these issues are beginning to be discussed. The agency has strengthened its GMAP process to include this assessment element. Performance gaps are discussed when budgetary priorities are discussed with executive staff and the Commission. It is those discussions that have lead to a systematic review of the agency's maintenance practices and funding at the parks. The 07-09 agency budget as submitted and enacted, included funds for increased maintenance in the parks, over the next three biennium in order to get all parks facilities routinely maintained so that deferred maintenance would not continue to grow.

As pointed out in the OFM Performance Measure Assessment the majority of measures are simple counts of outputs, and executive staff agrees. Agency leadership agrees that the next step for State Parks is to shift the measurement focus to outcomes; for example, rather than counting completed business plans it would count revenue generated by business plans. The assessment also noted that the recent Berk study of State Parks' capital program made several recommendations about the performance measurement. The agency has incorporated those into its action plan and will work with OFM to incorporate the new measures into the OFM system.

Management reviewed and discussed OFM's Activity Assessment and agreed on revising performance measures that are doable within existing resources. Performance measures that have been defined as outputs have been changed. The agency worked with the OFM Budget Analyst assigned to State Parks to reduce and combine the number of activity descriptions and to improve activity titles. The agency is still working with OFM staff to change some performance measures that align its reporting more closely with the Governor's GMAP sessions.

Washington State Quality Award

The agency has been working through this process and will submit its application by the fall of 2008. The agency has used an interdisciplinary team of senior management to write sections of the application. The effort is being headed by agency's performance measurement manager and two senior staff.

Assessment of Internal Capacity, External Challenges, and Opportunities and Financial Health

Challenges: Work Force Issues

1. Changes in Service Delivery Methods/Organizational Change.

State Parks has gone through a number of internal assessment processes in the past two years, leading the agency to evaluate itself and lay out a phased reorganization that is more efficient and will better serve the citizens of the state while streamlining activities for employees.

- Study of Washington State Parks and Recreation's Capital Budget Development, Execution, and Monitoring Process (Berk Report) - The report was sponsored by the Governor's Office of Financial Management. This resulted in the development of an agency improvement plan.
- Performance Audit by the Office of State Auditor (I-900).
- Parks Executive Leadership review of agency organization.
- Blue Ribbon review by Union Leadership

Influences in this area include recent cutting of agency management WMS positions, necessitating reassignment of work.

There were several consistent themes throughout the above mentioned reviews.

- Communication between various programs and levels in the agency needs to be enhanced.
- Operating and capital staff in the regions and field need better coordination and consistency.
- Need for a stronger centralized budget, finance and contract function.
- Field staff needs a voice in headquarters.
- Technology and systems issues are affecting the agency's ability to carry out its mission and make the best management decisions.
- State Parks and Recreation Commission also has workforce issues relating to the longevity of many of its long-time employees and the potential loss of much of the agency's institutional memory during the next two years. During this biennium two Regional Managers, one Assistant Director, managers of major programs and large parks and other key staff will retire.

Given this challenge, it appeared to be a logical time to consider reorganization. The main phases of the reorganization are accomplished with existing agency positions and resources.

Highlights of the reorganization are listed below:

- Eliminate the position of Assistant Deputy Director and establish the position of Assistant Director for Operations. This position will also be responsible for centralized policy for cross-state programs. This will allow for greater consistency and give the field a clearer voice in management decisions.
- Move from having Operations Regional Managers to casting the positions as Regional Directors who have responsibility for both operations and capital implementation. This is to provide enhanced communication and coordination at the service delivery level.
- Both the Assistant Director for Operations and the Assistant Director for Capital Development will be responsible for policy and statewide program development, while Regional Directors will be responsible for implementation of agency policy and budget in their region.
- Strengthen Information Management in the agency by changing it to report to the Budget Director who reports to the Agency Director. This allows for a greater utilization of agency resources in providing policy direction on funding IT Services central to operation of the park system.
- Future Changes:
 1. Reclassification of an existing position to Internal Auditor, to report to the agency Director.
 2. Consolidate all agency financial, revenue, technology, risk management and budgetary functions under the current Budget Director (with a new name to be developed) to maximize agency resources, ensure internal controls and enhance agency effectiveness.
- Additional analysis is currently being done to determine where other functions may belong.

- At the same time long term functions are being reviewed for economy and efficiencies to help assess where operations can be enhanced. The motor pool and parks shops are two areas that may be reviewed.

2. Aging Workforce and Impending Retirements.

Parks' low turnover rate (4.3 percent for FY 07) creates two very different challenges for the agency. Historically, it has not been uncommon for employees who start in the field to stay employed with parks for 20, 25, 30 or more years. Field positions (rangers and maintenance workers) are physically demanding. Employees hired after PERS 1 eligibility closed are likely to work into their 60's to achieve a greater retirement benefit. This, in turn has created issues about age-related physical restrictions, ability to perform the job, etc. The agency has worked on developing a better career track for interpretive positions in the field, with one goal being to allow Rangers to have an alternative to the physical demands of their positions. The agency will continue its efforts in this area.

The other challenge is created by large numbers of long term employees who will become eligible to retire in the near future. Approximately 132 (of those, 60 would incur penalties) employees are eligible to retire by December 31, 2011. Efforts need to be made to preserve and transfer the significant institutional memory of these long-term employees. Additionally, more resources and creativity will need to be channeled toward recruitment activities as retirements will result in higher overall turnover and more vacancies.

3. Leadership and Management Development.

In 2005, in pursuit of greater organizational effectiveness, Parks began a focused effort to enhance agency leadership and management skills. A Park Manager Forum was implemented to introduce field staff to the broader world of professional park system management in the ever changing public service world. Better management of employees increases our ability to achieve agency goals, and has positive impacts on employee morale, both of which translate to a public better served. Consultant-led training and teambuilding sessions were first held with all members of the Executive Leadership team. All agency middle managers also participated in an intensive workshop. Executive Leadership and Mid Managers now meet quarterly. This training will be provided to the next management and supervisory levels beginning in 2008. Work will continue into the 2009-2011 biennium to ensure agency managers at all levels utilize the learning, and to develop related policies, programs and tools to support a strong leadership culture. We recently sent two staff members to the Allenbaugh "Train the Trainer" workshop to determine how and when to deliver the training to the remainder of staff.

4. Succession Planning.

State Parks need to ensure effective continuity in leadership, field and program positions. Now, more than ever, with the anticipated increase in agency turnover as a result of retirements, it is vital that Parks has an effective approach (es) to succession planning. To do so, the agency must clearly identify the critical competencies for key positions (including all manager positions), provide opportunities for employees to gain those competencies, and develop mechanisms to support career paths and promotions. The Executive Leadership Team will begin discussions in mid-2008, and a comprehensive plan will be developed for implementation by no later than July 1, 2009. The Northwest Region office implemented a mentoring program to address succession planning in their region. We had current as well as retired Park Managers to mentor other rangers to develop their skills and abilities for promotional opportunities within State Parks. We have seen the results of the Park Rangers promoting into Park Manager positions from that group. In addition we have practiced succession planning in our Region offices by allowing an Assistant Region Manager to backfill a Region Manager position which in turn allows Rangers to move into Region to backfill the Assistant Region Managers position. In Headquarters when we know of a retirement on the horizon we fill the position while the incumbent is still working so that valuable skills and information can be passed on.

5. Turnover of Newly Trained Rangers.

The agency sends new rangers who are hired without a law enforcement commission through the Parks Law Enforcement Academy at Skagit Valley College. Most new rangers do not have commissions when they begin employment, and thus are sent through the academy. The cost to the agency is significant – twelve weeks of salary, twelve weeks of lost work time at their assigned park, and approximately \$12,000 per ranger for tuition, travel, per diem and overtime. Since 2002, nine new rangers have left the agency less than two years after being hired and sent through the academy; they have moved on either to other law enforcement agencies or to pursue other careers. The agency would like to reduce this loss rate. Revisions to the Ranger hiring process are under way, with one goal being a better fit of candidates to the ranger position. Additionally, the agency will begin a structured exit interview process by the end of 2008, to assess the reasons employees are leaving Parks.

6. Employee Satisfaction and Engagement.

Eighty percent of Parks' 596 permanent employees participated in the state's employee survey process in the fall of 2007. The agency's overall score on this twelve question survey was lower than the score for the survey conducted in the spring of 2006. The lowest scoring areas included:

1. I know how my agency measures its success.
2. My performance evaluation provides me with meaningful information about my performance.
3. I receive recognition for a job well done.

Employee satisfaction and engagement is critical to organizational effectiveness and achievement of agency goals, so agency management is concerned about these scores. An action plan to address the issues brought forth in the survey has been developed and included with the agency's April 2008 Human Resource Management Report to the Department of Personnel.

7. Different or New Skills Set Needs.

The Centennial 2013 Plan includes goals in the areas of stewardship, interpretation, partnerships, and revenue generation. All have a direct impact on the knowledge and skills needed in the agency – particularly in the parks and regions. The agency needs to ensure there are adequate and effective learning opportunities in these areas available to all field staff. Goal No. 2 of the Centennial Plan is "Enjoyment, health and learning: All 120 state parks have community events and interpretive programs". In addition to enhancing training opportunities for field staff in the area of interpretation, Parks has also advanced a classification and compensation package for the Interpretive Specialists series through the Department of Personnel. State Parks Stewardship Program developed a two year certification program that is a career development opportunity and is now available to all agency staff. This package will increase the compensation for interpretive staff, and allow higher positions in the series to be used in the field.

8. Sufficient Regional Staffing.

Currently there are four Regional Directors that oversee park operations in their region and report to the Deputy Director. However, Capital Regional Managers report to a State Parks Assistant Deputy Director. Parks has recently decided to reorganize the Capital functions of the agency and put responsibility for implementation of most capital projects under the Regional Director positions – which currently have responsibility for operations only. This will place increased demands on regional staff that is already overtaxed due to decentralization of programs over the last several years. The agency will evaluate and consider various regional staffing models to determine if efficiencies can be gained by using different job classifications, consolidating duties, or other means. Increased effectiveness at the region office level will help ensure strong management of both the capital and operations programs.

9. Ensuring Employees Understand Their Part.

Employee survey results tell us that many employees are not clear about how we measure success as an agency. Additionally, recent performance audit feedback suggested that we need to make the link between individual contributions and agency performance more clear. Studies show that employees are more engaged and perform at higher levels when they can see the connection between their job and the agency goals. Efforts need to be made to clarify agency success measures for all staff, and to train employees and supervisors to simply and effectively link employees' work to the agency mission and goals.

10. Difficult to Fill Positions.

A number of key job classifications are becoming increasingly more difficult for the agency to fill timely and with qualified candidates. We are finding that it is taking multiple recruitments and sometimes increased salaries to recruit qualified Budget and higher level Human Resources candidates. We are having similar difficulties with engineering positions at our Puget Sound Region. Many of our parks are reporting challenges finding qualified and interested candidates for our seasonal Park Aide positions. Increasing gas prices make our remote parks less desirable as potential summer jobs for young people who often live 30 plus miles away from a park. We are gathering data to consider advancing a compensation change request through the Department of Personnel for Park Aides, and will need to work in partnership with that agency to evaluate strategies for our other recruiting difficulties.

11. Facility Needs for Office Space.

The agency has recently completed a review of all of its office space. In January of 2009 State Parks will move into a Headquarters building and locate its entire Olympia staff in one location for the first time in 10 years. Given staff growth in the year since we committed to the lease and projected growth in the next budget it is not unreasonable to assume that the remaining 6,000 sq ft not leased by the agency in the building will be necessary.

Additionally we now have 3 regional offices at capacity. We own the three buildings. Southwest region is currently well beyond their capacity and in need for a larger facility. Since their building and land are owned by State Parks and situated at a State Park it is expected that the only viable option is to expand the existing building on its existing site and will seek capital funds to do so.

The Puget Sound and Northwest regional office buildings are beyond or at capacity. Although both buildings are owned an analysis is necessary to review determine whether it is in the best interest of the agency and the State to sell trade or lease that land and lease office space elsewhere. The agency will be contacting OFM and GA to help with analysis.

Challenges/Opportunities: Financial Stability

1. Stable Permanent Funding Source

The Agency's current internal capacity is stretched to its limit. Current-level only budgets over the last decade have taken a toll on the agency's flexibility. Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission has concluded that the only viable solution to address State Parks continued health and quality operations is to find a stable, dedicated funding source for operating State Parks. Nationwide it has become difficult for parks to compete for general fund tax dollars. While abundant and safe parks are considered a quality of life issue, in competing for funds, health, education and public safety generally receive money first. The Parks and Recreation Commission is all too aware that in times of financial hardship Park funding is a target for general fund cuts and long range planning is compromised.

In 2006, when the legislature and governor repealed the parking fee – a source the Commission had come to view as its last frontier for generating revenue – Legislators and the Governor promised to revisit the issue of state parks funding in the 2007 session and find a stable, dedicated improved funding source for State Parks.

The agency appreciates the legislature's voluntary license tab donation program, whose results are still too preliminary to use as the basis for funding models. Additionally the Commission appreciates the invitation from the chairperson of the House, Parks and Ecology Committee to explore policy and funding issues with the Committee.

It is important to note that the donation program is not viewed as a permanent stable funding source and is dependent on the citizens that make the donation and the economy as a whole.

Funding is out of line with citizen's appreciation of their parks. State Parks still receives less than one-quarter of one percent of the state's budget. According to the National Association of State Park Director's 2005 Annual Information Exchange, Washington spends only \$1.13 cents per visitor (44th in the nation) compared with an average of \$4.94 in per-visitor spending among state parks systems nationwide.

While the State Parks budget has increased markedly over the last few biennia, the agency's purchasing power has not. Much of the increase in the budget has gone to dedicated recreation programs, new responsibilities and staff cost-of-living increases. With those increases set aside, State Parks' budget growth supported by the State General Fund is modest. At the same time state park visitation remains about 40 million visits a year and inflation has raised more than 27 percent.

2. Use of Citizen Donations from Vehicle Registration Priority Use of Registration Renewal Donations and Vanity License Plates

The ability to make a donation to State Parks at time of vehicle registration and renewal became effective January 1, 2008. Based on the amount of donations in the first four months and the number of vehicles to be renewed it is projected in conjunction with the Office of Financial Management Forecasting Unit that it is probable that the agency can receive approximately \$1 million in the 07-09 biennium. Additionally, State Parks has its own State License Plate and proceeds are deposited into a special account. Those funds are generated by the public support of State Parks and the funds should be used in a manner similar to the donation program. To date there have been 1,705 Washington State Parks license plate issued since August of 2006. State Parks has not had sufficient funds to provide services in the parks that are not revenue generating activities such as camping. It is also important these donations are not used to supplant existing funds for park operations and maintenance and the park user is rewarded with enhanced services for their donation. The items chosen will enhance the park visitor experience and visitor safety.

The following items are priority uses of the donated money

- Picnic shelters, tables, benches, barbeques, playgrounds and sand at swim beaches that can be used by all park visitors
- Folk Art programming in the park
- Maps of parks and trails
- Educational materials aimed at children
- Interpretative programming and sustainability
- Matching grants to leverage other funds

Existing agency dollars should be used for park improvements and maintenance and for activities that generate their own revenue. The donation program is new and on-going expenditures may not be the most prudent use of these funds since there is no guarantee of the same volume of donation from year to year. One time expenditures are that enhance the park experience is clearly an advantageous use of the donated funds. Particularly with the first item on the list the emphasis is has been for replacement when possible of those amenities however, those funds have been limited and there has been no funds to add those items to existing parks.

Once the agency has collected 6 months of the donation, the Budget Director will request proposals from senior management that fall within the categories and guiding principals established above. The Budget Director working the executive team will propose an allocation of the funds and bring a priority order proposal for specific projects to the Commission for action.

3. Continual Pressure to Generate Revenue

State Parks not only needs a permanent funding source, the system also needs continual revenue streams to respond to the world's changing demands and future recreational tastes. To finance these changes – many of them outside the scope and scale of current services—there is a continual pressure on State Parks “to act more like a business” or to aggressively seek philanthropic partnerships which can leverage the agency's capacity to develop and deliver future services.

While the need to share in the cost of operation is made obvious by each biennial budget, the nature of revenue-generating activities that are considered appropriate to provide in parks varies wildly between policy makers and across biennia. A prominent example of this is the recent parking fee, considered essential in 2003 and then rescinded in 2006. Other activities with less prominence and less revenue potential are nonetheless also subject to the vicissitudes of public opinion. Greater clarity and consensus by policy makers of appropriate activities would improve the agency's ability to develop and maintain programs that accomplish the legislature's goal for the operating budget.

The state's changing demographics – especially among people of color and the aging “Baby Boomers” will alter the current park user profile. In 2000 there were more people over 50 years of age than under. A recent study showed “Retirees will demand much richer range of social activities and learning opportunities than previous senior citizens have (Garnter, W.C. & Lime, D.W. *“Trends in Outdoor Recreation, Leisure and Tourism: (2000).* Using new revenues, State Parks will continue to re-engineer campgrounds and day-use facilities to respond to demographic changes.

4. Parks Foundation

State Parks has developed a stronger relationship with the State Parks Foundation and is working with the Foundation to leverage donations that will be used to construct projects that generate future revenue such as cabins and yurts. The Foundation is planning to start a campaign to raise funds for the construction of the cabin or yurt for State Parks. State Parks would then pay for the operating impacts such as utilities furnishings and cleaning costs out of the revenue earned and deposit the rest into PRSA to pay for general park maintenance.

5. Federal Government

The US Forest Service, Coast Guard and other government agencies have continued to close visitor centers or discontinue use of iconic lighthouses and have offered them to the State to own or operate. While these potential additions to the state on surface appear to be what the public wants they generally come in state of disrepair and without operating funds. The first

priority of the Centennial Plan is fix what you have. There are not enough funds to take care of the existing park system, yet there is pressure to acquire because the opportunity may not exist again.

The agency has been careful to ensure that revenue derived is sufficient for operations or that appropriations are sought out first. The Commission will be faced with a decision shortly on Point Wilson Light House, as the Coast Guard is asking the agency to take possession. The agency has tried to assess its fiscal obligations before it agrees.

The agency has assumed the ownership of the visitor center at Mt. St. Helens. If we did not it would have shut down.

6. The economy and gasoline prices

State Parks continues to be concerned about the impact of a possible recession in Washington and other surrounding states. As gasoline prices rise to over \$4 a gallon during the summer months, the busiest camping season, State Parks and OFM forecasting is trying to project the impact it may have on the agencies revenue. The citizens survey (Appendix B) conducted every two years, indicates that 81% of those surveyed, say gasoline prices may influence their camping decisions. Since almost 30 percent of the agency's budget is funded from its own revenue generation there is a concern that we react quickly to changes in the economy that impact our ability to generate revenue. State Parks will closely monitor its camping reservations and actual attendance in all State Parks monthly. Additionally, the passage of Initiative 960 may impact the agency's ability to raise user fee without legislative action.

7. Winter Recreation Program

The Legislature intended for this program to be self-sufficient however the administrative cost of the program has increased in the past twenty years and the agency can no longer provide the level of service required without using agency funds. Administrative costs erode program costs to program users. The agency should either seek additional funding from the general fund to support this program or help seek fee increases in legislative changes to provide additional outside funds for this program to survive.

8. Fort Worden State Park

This State Park continues to struggle with less than adequate operational funding and capital investment. In this way, the park is emblematic of the entire state park system. Exceptionally committed staff, partners, and volunteers continue a valiant effort to keep this national historic landmark held together, doing ever more with less. Without a dramatic infusion of capital and operating resources, the condition of facilities and level of visitor service will continue to deteriorate.

For the past three years, agency staff, the park's advisory committee, non-profit partners, a specially appointed task force, and the public have worked together to develop a bold new vision for the park, transforming it into a world-class destination learning center. The park will host a collection of non-profit and business partners providing learning-oriented programs and services over a wide range of environmental, cultural, artistic, and recreational disciplines. Visitors of all ages and abilities will participate in an evolving selection of programs as partners grow and adapt and new partners join.

Long-range planning has critically assessed facilities, operations and management, business practices, and governance of the fort and its many partner organizations. This process has produced a facility use and development plan, design guidelines, business and operations plan, and governance structure that together create a path towards achieving the Commission's vision for Fort Worden.

Achieving this vision will require not only continued capital and operating program investment by State Parks, but also tapping outside investment by the philanthropic and business community. Marrying state and private resources will also require new management arrangements and financial practices that allow cooperating organizations to effectively and efficiently work together.

9. Storms, Fires, other Natural Disasters and Park Closures

State Parks are challenged by wind and rain storms, fires and other natural disasters that cause damage to our natural environment, risk to visitors and staff and result in park closures that reduce services and revenues. Even when a Disaster is declared and FEMA funds are available due to insurance requirements in most cases the agency can not accept the funds.

Since FEMA requirements include insurance and the only deductible available is \$250,000 often it is not cost effective to get insurance. The cost of the insurance far exceeds the value of the building and the funding available. The difficulty is that the agency is not budgeted for the insurance or funds to repair the facilities and it is unable to take FEMA dollars because of the insurance requirements. The agency is exploring legislation on Capital budget supplemental requests. During this past year, State Parks had nearly \$6 millions in storm damage, 28 park closures and \$151,000 loss in revenue. OFM revenue forecast estimates the economic impact on the area due to closed parks is anywhere between \$3.5million to \$7.75million dollars.

• Demographics and Demand for Park Services

State Parks is monitoring certain population trends that will affect our ability to satisfy customers. The *Centennial 2013 Plan* is based on the premise that in the next 20 years the State will have approximately 2 million additional residents and that will be a major eco-tourism destination for retiring "Baby-Boomers". Completion of the Centennial 2013 Plan will allow us to prepare for those new residents. Based on data from the State Office of Financial Management, "Forecast of the State Population by Age and Sex: 1990-2030," Elderly population (ages 65 and over) has been rapidly rising group since

2005. About the time of Centennial 2013, the 75-and –older segment of the age group will expand as the “Baby Boom Generation” ages. By 2027, this group will comprise 18.8 percent of the State’s population. This is an age group that may have more time for leisure pursuits but also may have additional special needs that should be addressed. The workforce will be growing much more slowly than in the past two decades. If the cost of living remains high, the numbers of “Baby Boomers” leaving the work force may be slowed because some retirees will need to work at least part-time.

We can anticipate a diverse and aging population. That presents a challenge, because participation in outdoor recreation generally decreases for adults older than 75 years of age. As millions of “Baby-Boomers” retire in the next 20 years, they will seek a higher quality of camping and outdoor recreation and the park system must be ready to accommodate them. Also, our understanding of participation in outdoor recreation by people of color is not as complete as for other groups.

- **Needs of a Diverse Population**

Diversity efforts continue to build a strong diverse work force that reflects the cultural makeup of Washington State, is a core value of the State Parks Commission. An agency-wide diversity effort is ongoing. With The Folk & Traditional Arts in the Parks Program which organizes and promotes a variety of cultural events across the state. Also a Diversity Camping Program, “now called inside out” to acquaint underserved youth with park facilities & programs. As well as a Human Resources Diversity Program to increase diversity of parks employees and visitors through recruitment and by collaborating with all parks diversity programs thereby making a more well rounded diversity effort. The goal of all these objectives is to provide a welcoming environment in state parks for all people, for both play and work. The Commission also believes that its’ workforce should mirror the diverse population of this State and is focusing on recruitment efforts designed to diversify its workforce

- **Inside Out**

What started out as pilot diversity camping program targeting African American families, the most under-represented group to visit state parks, has the additional objective of building interest in state parks. Inside out has now become one of our staple programs that have brought about much interest in our parks system. State parks need to continue to fund and enrich this program as our states demographics change.

- **Folk & Traditional Arts**

The Folk & Traditional Arts in the Parks Program brings a variety of arts programs to Washington State Parks to showcase the state’s diverse cultures and to provide enjoyment and entertainment for all park visitors. By presenting events that represent diverse cultures, Folk & Traditional Art Park Program events expose people of those communities to parks and their facilities. “Folk and traditional arts programs provide culturally robust and meaningful opportunities to expand visitor programs while building new patrons and partnerships for the park system.”

Folk & Traditional Arts goals:

1. Increase the use of state parks by people from new cultures & communities.
2. Re-attract & reconnect with people who’ve quit coming to parks.
3. Show park visitors and people in surrounding communities, state parks as venues for cultural events.

4. Increase staff & visitors' awareness of the arts & traditions of the people of Washington.

- **Diversity Program**

The agency's diversity specialist will continue to focus on keeping communication between all the various diversity programs to ensure a team effort. Organize the diversity task force to ensure all levels of the agency get an opportunity to assist in our diversity efforts. As well as organizing the diversity team to make diversity more of a priority from the top down. Continue to network with all types of organizations across the state to increase awareness of what Washington State Parks has to offer our state. Facilitate and organize a systemic training process that will help overcome many of the barriers we currently face to enhance our work force.

The diversity team has become an important part of Washington State Parks because the Commission has directed the Director and Executive Leadership team to make diversity a high priority and integrate it into everything the agency does. The culture of Washington State Parks must change to remain successful in serving our public. In addition to that the agency has reorganized its diversity program staff to be more centralized in the agency to create a more cohesive working environment for the program's success.

April 2008 members of the diversity team along with other parks employees attended a workshop on how to overcome organizational racism. They learned and evaluated what the training has to offer to pursue the possibility of having the entire agency trained. In addition to that we are discussing the possibilities of training our own staff to take over our agency's diversity training to ensure proper development of the various diversity programs and barriers. As our state demographics change the work force should follow suit to ensure that Washington State Parks continues to be a place that everyone feels welcome.

- **Technology Investments and Changes**

One of the agency's greatest challenges is connecting headquarters and 120 parks in order to be able to effectively communicate electronically. Additionally, the technological infrastructure at headquarters must be able to accommodate technology innovations that are necessary at many of the State Parks. For example, parks that function as conference centers must be able to allow internet access without infringing on the State's network and making its computer systems vulnerable. Currently, the agency has aging equipment without funds for a regular replacement cycle, insufficient staff to serve the technology needs of 120 parks without supplementing with consultant contracts, hardware failures due to poor office conditions and one GIS staff person supporting normal park needs as well as the Centennial Plan. The Performance Audit of the Agency has pointed out that the agency lack systems to collect data and program management reports in order for managers to make effective and efficient decisions on program operations and budgetary needs. The system that do exist lack security and connectivity to other systems that then require duplicate entry nor the agency have sufficient staff for data base management and programming special reports. The agency technology plan that will be submitted to DIS will further elaborate on these issues and the 09-11 budget submission will reflect additional dollars and staff needed in this area.

- **Minimize Risk and Enhance Safety for all Park Visitors and Employees**

Customers have reasonable expectations that facilities in state parks will be safe and function well. The reality is that major infrastructure problems are present and will continue to grow. These infrastructure problems result in a major risk and the system will continue to be vulnerable until the deferred maintenance backlog is eliminated and planned maintenance is adequate on an annual basis so that a new backlog is not created. Risk prevention is a key. The agency is working toward a culture where every park employee views him or herself as a risk manager. This requires that all park staff, especially the park ranger, park aide and construction and maintenance worker at 120 parks participate in identifying and prioritizing risks and deciding on sustainable and uniform best practices to reduce risks. To instill this culture into the entire agency, risk prevention training is critical. Trained staff is essential to the State Park system and intrinsic to providing an excellent experience to the public. The ranger must be well rounded and provide education, protection and service to the park visitor. Reaching out to, and coordinating with, staff in all the parks is challenging. Parks has determined that one of its greatest training needs and highest priorities is in the Risk Management area. Parks will embark on an aggressive risk and vulnerability assessment, mitigation and reduction program over the next seven years.

The goal of this initiative is to capture and document best practices for risk reduction that become universally accepted standards across all state parks. The challenge is to ensure that the millions of visitors that enter your state parks and agency staff are safe and injury free whenever possible and practicable.

One third of all roads in the state parks are now in substandard condition. More than 25 percent of all the state park buildings are due for major upgrade in the next 7 years and half of all state parks water, sewer, and outdoor electrical distributions systems will need major upgrades or replacements by the end of the decade. Each camping season brings several full or partial state park closures because of infrastructure failures.

The agency has a schedule to repair and replace the infrastructure that is the highest risk for health and safety occurrences. Additionally, our natural resources such as our trees must be maintained. Similar to our infrastructure issues trees must be maintained, dangerous trees removed and controlled burns when necessary planned.

The challenge is to secure an additional \$190 million over the next three biennia to replace and rebuild parks and \$30 million in additional operating funds to effectively operate the agency for the Centennial in 2013.

The agency is vulnerable because it does not have an adequate security plan for its computer systems and network at its' 120 parks; it does not have off-site storage for its back-up tapes in many parks. Additionally, customer credit card information is stored in agency computers and the data is vulnerable. The State Auditor's Office has informed the agency of issues with its security plan. The challenge is to provide a secure system, proper back-up and off site storage at all its locations across the State.

- **Reduce Energy Consumption while increasing visitor days in Washington State Parks**

State Parks has been striving to comply with the Governor's Executive Order 05-01 Establishing Sustainability and Efficiency Goals for State Operations. However, use of our resources is dictated by the number of park visitors. As park attendance increases, due to population and capacity increases and the elimination of the day parking fee,

energy usage in the Parks will increase. Efficiency measures will help mitigate and avoid some increases but it will be difficult to reduce energy purchases and fuel consumption as the demand for the park services increases. The challenge is for State Parks to be a model for state and private facilities.

- **Sustainability**

Throughout the nation the sweeping trend towards sustainable practices and “being green” is causing people to rethink the way they do business and the way government does business on their behalf. This trend places pressure on government and agencies to meet the new expectations. This is an opportunity for State Parks to take a leadership role in implementing new policies and technologies in order to meet the public expectation.

A potential economic down-turn could challenge State Parks in achieving targets because of the historic pattern of funding prioritization that occurs in lean times. Within the agency this same type of prioritization challenges our stewardship efforts during times of restrained budgets.

- **Climate change**

This represents a very large and looming unknown. Estimates of ice-cap melting that were made 10 years ago are now being proven to be far too conservative. These climate change issues will permeate stewardship activities from Forest Health planning to Salmon Recovery. Targets developed for a 5 year strategic plan may one day be found to be meaningless due to the effects of changes in our climate.

- **Comprehensive Resource Stewardship**

The State Parks Commission takes its obligation to preserve and protect the state’s natural, cultural, and historical resources seriously. The threats to this role are numerous and growing. In one area like forest health, global warming, antiquated forest-fire practices, non-preemptive disease and weed control, and the budget cuts to partnering federal natural resource agencies are factors contributing to the decline in health of state park-managed forest lands. Future stewardship needs a *comprehensive* approach to forest fire strategies, disease, and back-filling the loss of federal dollars. Having the resources to execute exemplary stewardship practices, such as developing and implementing a comprehensive forest health strategy, will continue to be a future challenge for State Parks.

- **Waste Water/Storm Water Program**

State Parks waste water and storm water systems are old and have not been given high priority in the repair and maintenance of our parks. A focus will be placed on improving all waste water systems and adding or improving storm water systems in those parks which are adjacent to any lakes, streams, rivers or salt water. Capital and maintenance funding will be requested each biennium until this objective is met. The challenge is to achieve sustainability and environmental protection while being cost effective and efficient.

- **Carbon-Footprint Reduction**

The agency is beginning to monitor and plan for reduction of the climate impact from operations. This includes everything to the amount of supervisory travel to parks, use of bio-diesel fuels in vehicles and renewable energy in buildings, and the climate impact of park visitation. Some private outfitters (such as REI) already embed the cost of carbon-

footprint reduction into the cost of their trips. (The surcharge is used to fund activities around the world that sequester or otherwise offset carbon production.) Depending on visitor interest, Parks could include carbon-offset as an optional or mandatory charge for camping and other overnight reservations.

- **Northwest Weather and Avalanche Center**

The federal sponsor of the Northwest Weather and Avalanche Center has decided to close the center, absent immediate additional external financial support. The 2007 legislature (in SSB 5219) directed State Parks to study the situation and report back on funding options for continuance of the Center. The future of this service will be determined by the legislature. An interim staff report recommends amalgamation of the center costs through long term contracts with "cooperators" including State Parks, WSDOT, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Pacific Northwest Ski Areas Association, the Friends of the NWAC, and the National Weather Service.

- **Economy**

State Parks has the opportunity to be an economic engine in remote areas of the State. There are 120 State Parks throughout the State. The attendance at State Parks for either day visits or overnight camping brings dollars into the local economy that might not be available otherwise. Visitors purchase gas, food and other commodities. Additionally, construction and other activities at State Parks bring dollars into the local economy. State Parks also pays local sales tax on its camp sites and boat launches and hotel/motel tax on its cabins, campsites and vacation homes. Past economic studies have indicated that the multiplier is 10 fold bring in multi millions into the local communities across the state.

Opportunities – Moving Washington forward

The *Centennial 2013 Plan* is a reality-based plan. It deals with the real maintenance, operations and restoration needs of keeping an aging park system viable for a new century of service, and it reaches toward a modern, real-world standard expected by citizens and national and international visitors. With support from the Governor and Legislature, the Washington state parks system has before it an opportunity – to become a viable competitor in the world eco-tourism market, bringing economic and social benefits to the state. Washington is one of the most beautiful states in the nation; the *Centennial 2013 Plan* presents an opportunity for Washington to show its best face to citizens and to the world, through parks that offer well-cared-for facilities and optimum services.

If we meet the challenges listed above – if we find a stable operational funding source, if we meeting the needs of our changing demographics, if we provide appropriate technology and keep a high level of organizational capacity, and if we ensuring safety and sound environmental practices, we ensure a strong, sustainable park system for the future. By meeting these challenges, we welcome all our citizens and enable Washington to graciously welcome its national and international guests.

Specifically, with the funding level outlined in *Centennial 2013*, at least one-half of the park system will be rebuilt, the backlog of minor maintenance projects will have been eliminated, every park will have a business plan that will include its technology needs, and every park will have a land-use plan. There will be new camping, recreational, historical and cultural activities for the public. Increased partnership activities and

volunteer work will help to sustain the park system, and marketing activities and revenue-generating ventures will help keep the park system vital and healthy into the future. New programs and services in the State Parks will help the agency retain existing customers and recruit new ones. Park managers are finding ways to connect with local communities and are providing additional cultural and educational opportunities for communities.

A focus on customer expectations is an important element of high-performing organizations. State Parks uses many methods of listening to customers, including scientific surveys, public meetings and direct contact with rangers. Early in 2004, the agency added another customer feedback tool in the form of a comment card and is receiving comments from park visitors from throughout the system. The program is used to help park staff identify opportunities for park improvement and to help agency staff improve and track progress over time. Staff is striving to continue to maintain the “B+ or higher” rating the public has given State Parks.

State Parks has the opportunity to serve all ages, cultures, working classes and types of families, as well as retired citizens. Parks fill a universal need by providing access to nature and healthy recreation. The service provided by State Parks needs to be considered as essential as other state services, because parks add dramatically to the quality of life that is identified with Washington State.

An investment in state parks is an investment in quality of life, in a growing state, in increasingly more complex times. An investment in parks is a tangible, visible way to move Washington forward.

Strategy for the Future –Next Steps

The table is set. Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission will embrace strategies that:

- **Secure Governor and Legislative support for capital and operating costs** - Support for the plan must include investment in the state park system with improved state financing, management flexibility and public encouragement to participate in Centennial 2013 preparations and celebrations.
- **Develop Plan for Beyond 2013 as a blueprint for the future of the Washington State Park System.** Planning efforts will begin in 2008 and will involve internal and external stakeholders and will work in lock step with the Agency’s Strategic Plan. This plan will focus on population growth and increased capacity in the Park system as well as continuing to ensure that we “Fix What We Have”.
- **Continue to implement reorganization**-Implement Reorganization efforts to streamline the agency, allow for greater accountability and communication and facilitate efficiencies.
- **Continue to implement Berk Study Action Plan and Implement Performance Audit Action Plan.**
- **Place an increasing focus on new revenue generation** - Aggressively “help ourselves” by pursuing opportunities to increase revenue. This can be done by maintaining existing and attracting new customers.

- **Show progress in improving the parks** - Communicate with the public about the value of new developments and new programs and their effects on the visitor experience.
- **Partnerships** - Seek increased community, private and partner support to make park improvements and to deliver valuable programs and services for visitors.
- **Reward our professionals** - Invest in our greatest resource, our employees, so that they can provide the highest-quality, best-value experience for our customers.
- **Make Washington more attractive and competitive** - Invest in it becoming an eco-tourism leader and world class destination on the Pacific Rim.
- **Continual Improvement** - The agency will establish an Internal Audit Program that will strive to ensure that the agency takes the right steps aimed at economy and efficiencies without sacrificing program effectiveness and excellent customer service. The agency will fully establish its Risk Management Program throughout the agency with the continual aim at reducing and mitigating risk to the park user and agency staff. The agency desires to look to itself to be part of the solution in finding sufficient monetary resources with the Governor and Legislature to operate effectively.

Appendix A

Centennial 2013 Plan (2008)

Priority No. 1: Improve what we have.

With help from the Governor and Legislature, your State Parks Commission commits to caring for and improving these high-quality state parks and recreation services you enjoy today:

- **Stewardship** – Safeguard Washington’s natural, cultural and historical treasures. Remove invasive plant species and noxious weeds and reduce tree risk and fire danger through healthy forest management.
- **Enjoyment, health and learning** – Provide environmental and cultural education, events and health opportunities for all citizens.
- **Public Service** – Strengthen public service with valued, skilled and versatile employees, volunteers and partners.
- **Facilities** – Eliminate backlog of parks maintenance and equipment replacement and improve our well-loved park system with critical renovations, including Puget Sound water quality improvements.
- **Partnerships**—engage the public by increasing volunteer and partnership opportunities.
- **Financial strategy** – Leverage increased general tax support with earned revenue, donations and cost efficiencies for sustaining park operations.

Priority No. 2: Upgrade existing parks, trails and services.

With a blend of public and private dollars, the Commission aims to build capacity and upgrade existing parks, trails and services to meet increased demand in a fast-growing state.

- Improve Deception Pass State Park, greater Spokane and coastal and marine areas.
- Improve facilities and add trail miles for multiple uses along Mountains-to-Sound Greenway and long-distance trails.
- Provide more access to water and services for boaters.
- Improve winter recreation trails and services.
- Add and improve in-park trails for visitors.
- Develop trail connections between state parks, long-distance trails and county and city trail systems.

Priority No. 3: Add new trails and services and work towards opening new parks.

With a blend of public and private dollars, the Commission works toward adding trails and opening three new parks while ensuring a legacy of outdoor resources is available to future generations.

Add to cross-state trails:

- Trails connecting Seattle to Spokane and Tri-cities and Chehalis to South Bend.)
- Water trails (Willapa Bay Trail and Columbia and Snake River water trails)

Work toward opening new parks:

- Nisqually-Mashel
- Lake Spokane
- Miller Peninsula
- Cama Beach
- Bottle Beach

Preserve history for future generations – improve four major historic sites:

- Iron Horse/South Cle Elum Depot
- Saint Edward Seminary
- Fort Simcoe
- Olmstead Place

Tell the story of the Ice Age floods

- Plan and develop interpretive sites and programs

“100 Connections”: Citizen Gifts enhance parks all over Washington

- Park managers invite groups and communities to help
- Contributions of funding and labor
- Project examples: Playground equipment, interpretive and wildlife viewing features, trails, landscaping and planting, picnic shelters and other buildings.

100 Connections projects - 2008

Central Puget Sound

Belfair – Electrified amphitheater with seating for 75

Belfair – Estuary restoration

Blake Island – Flagpole and Centennial garden

Bridle Trails – Grandstand, judges’ tower for equestrian area – **COMPLETED**

Bridle Trails – Wheelchair-accessible paths

Federation Forest – Expand and renovate 1960s-era interpretive center

Green River Gorge area – New playground equipment at Flaming Geyser – **COMPLETED**

Jarrell Cove – Amphitheater to interpret history and culture of Squaxin Island Tribe

Kitsap Memorial – Rental cabins – **COMPLETED**

Lake Easton – Renovate, relocate trail to improve lake access

Lake Easton – New exhibits, buildings and rail pieces at South Cle Elum Rail Yard, interpret Chicago-Milwaukee-St. Paul-Pacific Railroad – **COMPLETED**

Lake Sammamish – New public recreation facilities

Saint Edward – Wheelchair-accessible trail to playground – **COMPLETED**

Squak Mountain – Equestrian warm-up arena near trailhead

Northeast

Bridgeport – Park trail extension to Chief Joseph Dam – **COMPLETED**
Conconully – Electrified kitchen shelter – **COMPLETED**
Daroga – Amphitheater for evening programs, eight to 12 rental cabins
Lake Chelan – Playground equipment – **COMPLETED**
Lake Chelan – Interpretive trails
Lake Wenatchee – Three rental cabins
Lake Wenatchee – Hiking trail improvements – **COMPLETED**
Lake Wenatchee – Natural and cultural history interpretive structure – **COMPLETED**
Lake Wenatchee – Reduction of fire danger – **COMPLETED**
Mount Spokane – Convert old forest fire lookout into rental cabin – **COMPLETED**
Pearrygin Lake – Playground equipment
Pearrygin Lake – Amphitheater and interpretive trails for wildlife viewing – **COMPLETED**
Ragged Ridge – Natural area vegetation restoration
Riverside – Update Spokane House interpretive displays – **COMPLETED**
Riverside – Reduction of fire danger – **COMPLETED**
Twenty-five Mile Creek – Trail links to Forest Service trails, new kiosk, and interpretation

Northwest

Bay View – Environmental, cultural interpretation of Padilla Bay
Birch Bay – Reservable picnic shelter, environmental learning “heron center”
Cama Beach – Continue park development with new buildings, water, and historic structure rehabilitation, new and restored trails
Camano Island – Enclose and upgrade kitchen shelter at Point Lowell day-use area – **COMPLETED**
Deception Pass – Develop Pass Lake Trail and new trailhead – **COMPLETED**
Deception Pass – Install Civilian Conservation Corps statue – **COMPLETED**
Fort Casey – Install historic ammunition lift in battery
Fort Flagler – Rehabilitate first floor of historic hospital for rent
Fort Worden – New interpretive panels – **COMPLETED**
Fort Worden – Rehabilitate 1930s-era Wheeler Theater
Hoko River – Restore vegetation along Little Hoko River
Joseph Whidbey – Construct 1.2 miles of new trail – **COMPLETED**
Larrabee – Day-use area expansion, playground equipment, kitchen shelter – **COMPLETED**
Lime Kiln Point – Interpretive center for sea life, geology and cultural history – **COMPLETED**
Moran – Fish ladders, spawning area – **COMPLETED**
Moran – Boathouse, park boat storage – **COMPLETED**
Old Fort Townsend – New kayak, canoe launch area, wheelchair-accessible fishing pier
Peace Arch – Upgrade orientation display, fountain – **COMPLETED**
Peace Arch – Gazebo rental for weddings, gatherings – **COMPLETED**
Rockport – Construction of 1.3 miles of ADA trail – **COMPLETED**
Sequim Bay – Playground structure for day-use area – **COMPLETE**
Sequim Bay – Boardwalk, fence leading to the bay – **COMPLETED**

Spencer Spit – Reconstruct cabin on the spit
Sucia Island – Construct picnic shelter at Fossil Bay – **COMPLETED**
Wallace Falls – Construct 3.5 miles of new trail – **COMPLETED**

Southeast

Camp Wooten – Interpretive trail, group barbecue area – **COMPLETED**
Columbia Hills – Improve boat ramp access for fishers at Horsethief Lake
Columbia Hills – Interpretive display for petroglyphs– **COMPLETED**
Columbia Hills – Interpretive center, trails at Dalles Mountain Ranch
Fields Spring – Warm-up shelter with woodstove for cross-country skiers at Puffer Butte – **COMPLETED**
Fields Spring – Amphitheater with fire circle – **COMPLETED**
Ginkgo Petrified Forest – Railroad trestle decking for smooth walking and biking surface on John Wayne Pioneer Trail, new trailhead and parking
Ginkgo Petrified Forest – Ice Age floods interpretive displays
Goldendale Observatory – Daytime amphitheater – **COMPLETED**
Klickitat Trail – Trailheads, visitor information, public restrooms
Lewis and Clark Trail – Lewis and Clark bicentennial interpretive structure – **COMPLETED**
Lincoln Rock – Four rental cabins – **COMPLETED**
Olmstead Place – New storage sheds to preserve antique farm equipment
Potholes – Two small day-use kitchen shelters – **COMPLETED**
Sacagawea – Improve entrance, landscaping and irrigation
Steamboat Rock – Picnic shelter and wheelchair-accessible fishing pier
Sun Lakes/Dry Falls – Amphitheater for cultural and educational events
Sun Lakes/Dry Falls – Renovate scenic Dry Falls vista interpretive center displays
Sun Lakes/Dry Falls – Play center at campground – **COMPLETED**
Wenatchee Confluence – Picnic shelter and group camp for 50 to 80 people
Wanapum – Campground and day parking expansion
Yakima Sportsman – Kiosk for wetlands interpretation – **COMPLETED**

Southwest

Battle Ground Lake – Acquire water-powered gristmill for historic preservation, interpretation
Battle Ground Lake – Fishing pier with wheelchair access
Beacon Rock – Expand kitchen, restroom facilities in group camp area
Beacon Rock – Improve access by connecting moorage area, trail
Dosewallips – Estuary interpretative displays – **COMPLETED**
Cape Disappointment – New day-use group shelter at Lake O-Neill
Cape Disappointment -- Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center display renovation – **COMPLETED**
Fort Columbia – Open, restore mine casement for public viewing
Ike Kinswa – Group camp, new restroom, kitchen shelter overlooking Cowlitz River
Lake Sylvia – New playground equipment
Leadbetter Point – New wildlife trail with waterfowl viewing blinds
Long Beach – Memorial and displays at beach where explorer Capt. William Clark camped – **COMPLETED**
Long Beach – Loomis Lake boat ramp acquisition, management
Long Beach – Install 30-foot yurt at Pacific Pines for use as environmental education

facility.

Millersylvania – Replace environmental learning center cabins

North Beach – Moclips history museum, reconstructed train station, day-use park

Potlatch area – Lilliwaup tidelands stair and trail access to tidelands – **COMPLETED**

Rainbow Falls – Open 12 miles of Willapa Hills Trail – **COMPLETED**

Schafer – Group camp kitchen shelter, picnic tables

Seaquest – Build five rental yurts – **COMPLETED**

South Beach – Concrete shoreline trail, picnic pads and shelter at Westhaven

South Beach – Bird watching trail, viewing blinds at Bottle Beach

Spring Creek Hatchery – Improve picnic, windsurfing and parking areas and restrooms
– **COMPLETED**

Responsive Management

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS CENTENNIAL 2013 SURVEY

**Conducted for the
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
by Responsive Management
2008 DRAFT REPORT**

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS CENTENNIAL 2013 SURVEY

2008

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2008 Washington State Parks Survey

The Commission hired an independent polling firm to conduct a scientific telephone survey of 1,200 Washington residents. This continues a biennial effort to determine satisfaction with State Parks and its facilities and personnel.

This year, new questions were added on Ranger responsibilities, on the new voluntary programs offering a specialized (affinity) license plate and the opportunity to make a donation while registering vehicles, and on outreach to nontraditional park visitors.

Some significant environmental conditions that have changed since the last survey was administered (in January 2006) include the rescission of the \$5 daytime parking fee (in April 2006) and the average price of fuel (from \$3.13 /gallon to \$4.14/gallon). Additional results will be available in July, after further analysis has been performed.

EIGHT-YEAR TRENDS

We have consistently asked seven questions since 2000. The results of those questions are tabulated to show trends in responses.

| | Affirmative replies (% yes, % agree, % support, % important) | 2000 | 2003 | 2006 | 2008 |
|---|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Have you visited a Washington State Park within the past 2 years? | 74 | 66 | 54 | 71 |
| 2 | The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission does a good job managing the park system. | 93 | 81 | 72 | 77 |
| 3 | The Washington State Park system is adequately funded. | 49 | 19 | 16 | 20 |
| 4 | The Washington State Park system spends taxpayer money wisely. | 79 | 50 | 50 | 51 |
| 5 | Do you agree or disagree that having a well-funded state park system is important to the quality of life in Washington State? | n/a | 92 | 94 | 95 |
| 6 | Would you support or oppose a state park system funding plan that includes private or corporate financial support? | 66 | 70 | 70 | 75 |
| 7 | In your opinion, how important is it that the state legislature set aside funds for buying new land for parks when it becomes available? | 85 | n/a | 78 | 83 |

VISITATION

In the 2008 survey, 71% of residents visited a Washington State Park within the past 2 years. In 2006, 54% of residents visited a Washington State Park within the previous 2 years.

FUEL PRICES

Among those who visited a park in the past 2 years, 59% agree that gas prices influenced the number of trips they took or the distance they were willing to travel to visit Washington state parks in the past 2 years. This compares to 53% in 2006.

Among those who visited a park in the past 2 years, 61% say it is *very* likely that gas prices will influence the number of trips or the distance they are willing to travel to visit Washington state parks this summer, and another 20% say *somewhat* likely, for a total of 81% saying it is likely.

SATISFACTION

More than three-fourths of residents (78%) rate overall satisfaction with Washington state parks as an “A” or “B” (38% give an “A” and 40% give a “B”). In 2006, 67% gave an “A” or “B”.

A majority of residents (57%) rate their overall satisfaction with the quality of service provided by Washington state park employees as an “A” or “B” (35% give an “A” and 22% give a “B”). In 2006, 52% gave an “A” or “B”.

Nearly three-fourths of residents (71%) rate overall satisfaction with the quality of the facilities of Washington state parks as an “A” or “B” (34% give an “A” and 37% give a “B”). In 2006, 65% gave an “A” or “B”.

RANGER RESPONSIBILITIES

Among those who visited a park in the past 2 years, 69% rate their overall satisfaction with the quality of service provided by Washington state park rangers as an “A” or “B” (42% give an “A” and 28% give a “B”).

Among those who visited a park in the past 2 years, 50% had personal contact with a park ranger while visiting a state park.

The tabulation below shows the results of questions about contacts with rangers, among those who had contact.

| Question | Strongly Agree | Moderately Agree | Total Agree |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Would you agree or disagree that the park rangers you came in contact with in state parks were courteous? | 89 | 8 | 97 |
| Would you agree or disagree that the park rangers you came in contact with in state parks were friendly? | 85 | 11 | 96 |
| Would you agree or disagree that the park rangers you came in contact with in state parks were knowledgeable? | 78 | 18 | 96 |
| Would you agree or disagree that the park rangers you came in contact with in state parks were professional? | 85 | 11 | 96 |
| Would you agree or disagree that the park rangers you came in contact with in state parks were helpful? | 83 | 11 | 94 |

Among those who visited a park in the past 2 years, the large majority (97%) are comfortable approaching a park ranger for assistance in a state park (92% are *very* comfortable).

Among those who visited a park in the past 2 years, nearly all (99%) indicated that they felt safe during their last visit to a Washington state park (89% felt *very* safe). In 2006, 97% felt safe (87% felt *very* safe).

The tabulation below shows residents' ratings of importance of various activities and efforts of Washington state park rangers.

| Question: How important do you think the following efforts are? | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Total Important |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Interpretation | 58 | 35 | 93 |
| Law enforcement | 83 | 16 | 99 |
| Maintenance | 89 | 9 | 98 |
| Resource protection | 87 | 11 | 98 |
| Park management | 73 | 24 | 97 |

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Among those who visited a park in the past 2 years, 65% agree that during their visits to state parks they learn ways to take better care of the environment where they live.

Nearly all residents (99%) had heard about global warming or climate change prior to the survey.

Among those who had heard about global warming or climate change prior to the survey, 47% frequently discuss environmental, global warming, or climate change issues with their family, and 33% sometimes discuss environmental, global warming, or climate change issues with their family (a total of 80% who discuss it frequently or sometimes).

Also among those who had heard about global warming or climate change prior to the survey, 77% said they or household members have changed their daily routines or household management in an effort to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions they produce.

OUTREACH

Regarding the Introductory Camping Program to help introduce families to camping, about a quarter of residents (24%) expressed interest in the program (8% *very* interested and 16% *somewhat* interested).

Regarding the Centennial 2013 Plan, only 6% of residents indicated being aware of the Plan (but only 2% were *very* aware). This is the same awareness as in 2006 (6%). Among those aware of it, support (64%) far exceeds opposition (3%), with the rest answering, “Don’t know.” In 2006, 76% supported, and 6% opposed (among those who were aware of the Plan).

Regarding license plates, residents were first informed about special design license plates that feature colorful scenes from state parks (which cost \$40 plus standard licensing fees for new plates and \$30 plus standard licensing fees for renewals, of which \$28 per year per vehicle goes directly to the State Parks and Recreation Commission to fund park improvements that might not otherwise receive funding). Just more than a quarter of residents (27%) were aware of these plates prior to the survey (11% *very* aware). Of those who were aware, 4% indicated that they or household members own plates of this type, although 67% of those who were aware have seen one of the plates on another vehicle.

Among those who do not have a state park special design license plate (nor have household members with one), about a third (32%) expressed interest in a state park special design license plate the next time they renew their plates, although only 4% indicated being *very* interested.

In another question about license plates, 10% of residents indicate that they or household members have another special design license plate.

Regarding license plate renewals, the Washington state legislature is allowing motorists to make a donation to state parks when they renew their annual license plate tabs. Awareness of this is fairly low: only 12% of residents are aware that they can make a donation to state parks when they renew their annual license plate tabs. Among those who are aware, 19% made a donation to state parks when they renewed their license plate tabs. Among those who are aware and did not make a donation or those who were not aware, the survey asked about interest in making a donation: among this group, 18% indicated being *very* interested, and another 47% indicated being *somewhat* interested (for a total of 65% expressing interest).

DEMOGRAPHICS

The large majority of residents (81%) describe the overall level of physical activity of people living in their household as *very* or *somewhat* physically active (35% said *very*, and 46% said *somewhat*). In 2006, 78% described the overall level of physical activity of people living in their household as *very* or *somewhat* physically active (28% said *very*, and 50% said *somewhat*).

An overwhelming majority of residents (91%) indicated that they were *very* or *somewhat* active in outdoor activities when they were children (76% saying *very* active).

Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission
Centennial Plan

Recommended 2008 Distribution of Centennial 2013 Funds

To accomplish the three recommended priorities of the Plan the Commission approved the following distribution of funds within the target level of \$250 million:

| | | |
|-----------|--|--------------------------|
| 1. | Preservation of Existing Facilities..... | \$140.8 M (56.3%) |
| | (Individual facilities preservation projects) | |
| | • Deferred Maintenance | \$ 40.0 M |
| | • Facilities Preservation | \$100.8 M |
| 2. | Renovations in Existing Parks | \$ 83.1 M (33.3%) |
| | (Park-wide renovation projects) | |
| 3. | Build New Parks & Trails..... | \$ 26.1 M (10.4%) |
| | (Added facilities or capacity to the current system) | |
| | • Trails | \$ 13.8 M |
| | • New Parks | \$ 12.3 M |
| | Total | \$250 M (100%) |

Capital Budget Request Levels: Recommended/Actual capital budget request levels for the length of the Centennial 2013 Plan:

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 2005-2007..... | \$ 33.0M (actual) |
| 2007-2009..... | \$ 41.1M (actual) |
| 2009-2011..... | \$ 76.5M |
| 2011-2013..... | \$ 59.4M |
| Deferred Maintenance | \$ 40.0M |
| Plan Total..... | \$ 250 M |

Agency Activity Crosswalk

| Elements of the Centennial 2013 Plan | Agency Activity |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Our Commitment | |
| Stewardship | A001, A002, A004, A011 |
| Enjoyment and Learning | A002, A004, A009, A016 |
| Service | A002, A004, A007, A016 |
| Facilities | A002, A004, A011, |
| Partnerships | A002, A004, A007 |
| Financial Strategy | A002, A004, A009, |
| Your Legacy | A002, A004, A011, A0018 |
| 100 Connections | A002, A004, A007 |