

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (WSPRC)

2006 Sustainability Plan Update

An Amendment to the agency's 2003 Sustainability Plan

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Preface

In 2003 State Parks created a Sustainability Plan that outlined eight long-term goals the agency would seek to achieve in an effort to promote the sustainability of the resources in its charge. This plan amends the 2003 Plan, outlining actions and opportunities to measure the agency's success in advancing the intent of the 2003 document.

Plan Overview and Background

The WSPRC manages a diverse system of more than 120 parks and several recreation programs, including boating, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. The 93-year old park system, which receives nearly 40 million visits a year, nationally ranks 6th in day-use attendance, 10th in overnight attendance and 47th in state budget expenditure per visitor.

In 2003 a multi-disciplined Charter Team created the agency's original Sustainability Plan that extends to the year 2013. In 2004 a Sustainability Coordinator was appointed by the Deputy Director to serve as the agency's lead for sustainability, preparing annual reports and plan updates for the Governor's policy staff. Since 2004 the Sustainability Coordinator has guided a team created by the Deputy Director: a Sustainability Charter Team. The team has worked to interpret and implement the agency's Sustainability Plan, while creating an agency Sustainability Policy. Members of team provided leadership, research, input, and review for annual reports submitted in 2004, 2005, and 2006.

The agency's Sustainability Policy, signed by Director Rex Derr on September 1, 2006, establishes a permanent standing Sustainability Team. The policy charges each park, region, and service center to develop an Integrated Sustainability Plan (ISP) that integrates sustainability into its operations before July 1, 2009. The ISP's are expected to identify practices that will be undertaken to support the agency's Sustainability Policy and related sustainability efforts. The Sustainability Team will manage the development, training, and use of ISP's. This 2006 Plan Update reviews the agency's long range sustainability goals

and identifies actions and potential, measurable activities the agency will consider to advance sustainability during the coming two years.

State Parks Sustainability Policy and Current Practices

The WSPRC is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under Executive Orders 02-03, 04-01 and 05-01. The agency will strive to model the principles of sustainability in the stewardship of its natural, cultural, and recreational resources; in the construction and renovation of its new and existing facilities; in fleet management; and, in the day-to-day operations of carrying out its mission. Furthermore, the WSPRC is dedicated to providing recreation resources to Washington's citizens while preserving the resources of today for the generations of tomorrow.

While still in its infancy, sustainability efforts in State Parks have begun to infuse themselves into the fabric of the agency. Below is a brief listing of areas where sustainability is an integrated component of agency guidelines and practices:

- Established core value of commitment to stewardship that transmits high quality park assets to future generations;
- Adopted an agency's Centennial 2013 Vision, a component of the plan the Commission adopted to prepare for the Park system's 100th birthday in 2013, is linked to the agency's sustainability goals and timeline;
- Adopted an agency vision that focuses on coordinating the acquisition and/or management of lands supporting statewide and regionally significant natural resources with stake holders;
- Adopted a Strategic Plan to Conserve and Protect the Natural Resources of Washington State Parks;
- Adopted a 10-year Cultural Resources Action Plan;
- Made Resource Stewardship Certification training available to all park staff;
- Implemented Volunteer Resource Stewardship Program;
- Conducted energy audits with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) in over 30 parks, and recommended upgrades completed in 4 parks with rebate grants; pursuing upgrades in other parks PSE audited, as well as exploring energy audit rebate programs with other utilities statewide;
- Adopted agency new sustainability policy in September of 2006;
- Implemented litter reduction and recycling program active and pursuing grants to expand these efforts;
- Implemented illegal dump site clean-up program supported by Ecology Litter Program; and,
- Purchased alternative fuel vehicles and committed to expansion of this program.

Sustainability Goals

The long-range sustainability goals for State Parks, as outlined in the 2003 Sustainability Plan, are noted below and remain relevant today:

1. Institutionalize sustainability,
2. Raise employee awareness of sustainable practices in the work place,
3. Minimize energy and water use,
4. Shift to clean energy for both facilities and vehicles,
5. Shift to non-toxic recycled and remanufactured materials in purchasing, construction, renovation and regular maintenance procedures, where possible and available,
6. Expand markets for environmentally preferable products and services, through purchasing practices, recycling programs and other means,
7. Reduce or eliminate waste through recycling programs and other means,
8. Preservation and protection of natural, cultural and recreational resources.

Sustainability actions & potential measures of success for the 2007-2009 Biennium

Outlined below are a series of sustainability-related actions that mirror the 2003 goals, and associated potential measures of performance, to be examined during the 2007-2009 biennium. As with all planning efforts, outcomes are directly linked to the input of resources. Hence, **the following actions will be undertaken where opportunities exist, conditions permit, and funding / staff are available.** With this caveat in mind, to promote sustainability in the agency State Parks will seek to:

Action 1: Develop and test performance measures associated with the other actions noted below. Selected opportunities associated with each action may serve as a starting point to identify key measures reflecting sustainability accomplishments.

Action 2: Raise employee awareness of sustainability responsibilities, opportunities and practices. Opportunities to increase awareness and measure success include:

- Provide training and technical support to help staff comply with deadlines set in the Sustainability Plan, Sustainability Policy, and Integrated Sustainability Plan (ISP) template, developed in 2006 and distributed to all parks, regions, and service centers in September of 2006, and
- Incorporate sustainability components into agency's strategic destinations and balanced scorecards.

Action 3: Minimize energy and water use in park facilities. Opportunities to reduce the use of these resources include:

Energy - Establish an energy-use baseline for the parks, regions, and headquarters, and then advance measures towards reducing energy use by 15 percent by 2013 (as required by the Governor). The following are examples of activities that could advance this effort:

- Conduct Energy Audits of park facilities on a regular basis;
- Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs;
- Convert current park facility lighting to high efficiency lighting;
- Use electronic ballasts instead of magnetic ones in fluorescent lamp fixtures;
- Replace T12 fluorescent tubes with T8s;
- Install occupancy sensors so lights are only on when areas are occupied;

- Install photo-sensors so lights are off when there is sufficient daylight;
- Purchase and maintain high efficiency HVAC systems;
- Install timers on equipment that is only needed certain periods during the day, such as water heaters and circulating pumps;
- Seal and insulate ductwork and replace inefficient windows;
- Lower the thermostat temperature on the water heaters;
- Set hot water temperature controls at efficient level in all park facilities;
- Maximize the use of programmable controls for HVAC equipment;
- Perform diagnostics on existing controls and give them an “energy tune up” to optimize performance of components such as air flow, fans, and boilers;
- Replace aging equipment such as pumps and water heaters with efficient models;
- Reduce load on the A/C by using Energy Star office equipment and appliances;
- Use solar domestic water heaters where feasible;
- Install more efficient photocells, for turning off lamps in the morning;
- Replace less efficient street lights with the highest efficiency option possible;
- Explore renewable electricity generation via solar and wind energy technologies;
- Develop tracking database and/or other tools for use by parks, regions and headquarters to acquire and review overall reductions in energy use for agency;
- Work closely with utility companies to implement emerging technologies; and,
- Strive to meet LEED standards in new construction and renovation.

Water and Waste Water - Establish a water-use and waste water-creation baseline for the parks, regions, and headquarters, and then advance measures towards reducing water use and the generation of waste. The following are examples of activities that could advance this effort:

- Develop efficient and effective ways of measuring and recording water use and waste-water creation so that the agency can determine practices that promote sustainable use of these resources.
- Improve efficiency of pumping systems;
- Connect on-site sewage treatment to city and sanitary districts;
- Improved leak detection and repair through the instillation of pressure reduction valves in high pressure areas of the network;
- Use on-demand hot water heating systems;
- Promote incentives for water conservation practices: and,
- Use low flow shower heads, low flush toilets, waterless urinals, water efficient washing machines, and the like.

Storm Water – Reduce the volume and/or improve the quality of storm water runoff via activities like those outlined below (NOTE: a number of the activities outlined below are very difficult to directly quantify, however, they nonetheless are deemed to be of benefit to storm water conditions):

- Deter RV dumping with formaldehyde treatments and other hazardous chemicals;
- Consider Green Roofs and similar innovations for park buildings;
- Protect waterways, shorelines, and wetlands – maintain 100+ foot native plant buffers around wetlands and along riparian corridors;
- Landscape with native vegetation and reduce or eliminate lawns;
- Use WSU master gardener irrigation standards (or similar);

- Prevent erosion and sedimentation from storm water runoff; when possible avoid paving and use low-impact paving alternatives;
- Create bio-swales and vegetation strips in heavy traffic use and parking areas to catch and filter runoff;
- Allow browning of turf areas during dry season;
- Reuse storm and reclaimed water for irrigation, toilets and laundry wherever possible; and,
- Maintain trails to minimize erosion.

Action 4: Replace older-technology, low-efficiency vehicles and motorized equipment with newer, more fuel efficient energy products. Opportunities to reduce carbon emissions, improve fuel efficiencies, and educate the public to our efforts include:

- Demonstrate quantifiable progress towards converting WSPRC fleet and equipment to the desired goal of 35 percent alternative fuels and 100 percent of the fleet sedans at headquarters and regions will be hybrids and other alternative fuel vehicles by 2013;
- As new vehicles are purchased alternative fuel decals will be placed on vehicles to increase public awareness;
- Develop sustainable purchasing standards for vehicles, boats, snowmobiles, mowers, and other motorized equipment;
- Develop sustainable fleet management procedures where all vehicles are EPA certified low emission, and companies servicing State Parks vehicles recycle oil, tires, oil filters, batteries, steel parts, and solvents used for cleaning; and,
- Promote commute trip reduction and increase in videoconferencing.

Action 5: Maximize the use of non-toxic, recycled and remanufactured materials in purchasing, construction, renovation, and regular maintenance activities. Opportunities to promote these products include:

- Assess the environmental impact associated with commonly selected products, services, and activities and distribute this information so that staff can incorporate appropriate controls and changes;
- Identify environmentally appropriate products and techniques to reduce and/or eliminate persistent, bioaccumulative toxins in parks and facilities;
- Purchase paper-stock, paper towels, and toilet paper that contain at least 30% post consumer content recycled paper:
- Purchase paper products that are processed chlorine free (PCF) ;
- Reduce mercury and other toxic substances through refurbishing and recycling of old computers and other such equipment or send to hazardous materials disposal;
- Dispose safely of all lighting equipment, including florescent lamps which contain mercury, following all requirements of Executive Orders 04-01;
- Install low-mercury fluorescent lighting; and,
- Apply green building standards following components of State's LEED program.

Action 6: Expand markets for environmentally preferable products and services. Opportunities to expand these products include:

- Buy in bulk, in collaboration with other state agencies;

- Buy non-toxic/low toxic cleaners, pool supplies, and lawn care chemicals; and,
- Purchase energy efficient appliances.

Action 7: Reduce or eliminate waste through recycling programs and related means. Opportunities to expand recycling practices in State Parks include:

- Establish in each park and facility a recycling program that addresses one or more of the following items depending on local recycling opportunities: newspaper, cardboard, office paper, aluminum cans, glass, and plastic;
- Establish in each park and facility a program to compost food waste, grass clippings, and other organic debris for use as a substitute to chemical applications to maintain turf and planted areas;
- Explore options for agency to lease select materials and services in lieu of purchasing to reduce packaging waste;
- Pilot on-site reuse and donation programs;
- Train and equipment staff to undertake recycling activities noted above; and,
- On or before 2013 establish organic materials management plans in model stewardship parks.

Action 8: Protect and sustain natural, cultural and recreational resources, with an emphasis on those of regional and statewide significance. Opportunities to ensure the long-term integrity of these resources include:

- Add a sustainability component to every Land Classification and Management Plan;
- Integrate sustainability principles into interpretive programs;
- Develop integrated pest management (IPM) plans for all parks;
- Develop and implement Integrated Sustainability Plans (ISP) in all parks and facilities by 2009 as noted in agency's new Sustainability Policy, and
- Make knowledge of sustainable practices an element of Park Ranger qualifications.

Action 9: Communicate sustainability information and messages to employees, park visitors and stakeholders. Opportunities to ensure the dissemination of this information include:

- Electronic distribute the Sustainability Plan to agency staff;
- Post key Sustainability Program informational materials in all parks;
- Develop and distribute fact sheets on sustainable practices;
- Provide timely and interesting articles to the agency newsletters related to sustainable practices and emerging technologies;
- Provide sustainability information to the public via interpretive programs presented by park rangers;
- Integrate sustainability values into the employee performance evaluation and park points processes; and,
- Institute an employee incentives program for innovative sustainability ideas and accomplishments.

Long-term Goals and Future Plans

Above, the agency has sought to identify avenues for improving sustainability practices across all segments of the State Park system. Clear performance measures need to be established by which the WSPRC can track its sustainability progress. Those measures will be established and data collected to track performance during the next year. This document is the first step in that direction. With leadership and resources significant headway can be expected on meeting the goals and actions of this plan by the agency's 2013 Centennial.

Acknowledgements

Members of the Sustainability Team along with other key stakeholders in the agency provided valuable input and review during the development of the Sustainability Policy, the agency's annual 2006 Progress Report and this Updated Sustainability Plan.

Attached Appendix Documents Include:

- Agency's new Sustainability Policy
- Integrated Sustainability Plan (ISP)
- CD with ISP and supporting documents