

JANUARY COMMISSION MEETING RECAP

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION



The Commission got 2024 off to a great start with two days of packed meeting agendas in Tumwater. Here's an overview of topics covered.

COMMISSION MEETING

Item E-1: 2024 Director's Performance Agreement and 2023 Performance Evaluation

Parks Director Diana Dupuis shared a detailed accounting of her performance agreement for this year and evaluation for 2023. The commission was asked to adopt this agreement, which includes the 2024 commission priorities. They also documented that Director Dupuis performed satisfactorily in 2023, and that a meaningful evaluation process was used to reach this conclusion. Fun fact: Director Dupuis actually added more stringent criteria for her own evaluation, something the commissioners noted went above and beyond in ensuring accountability.

>> [View presentation](#)

Item E-2: Financial update

Administrative Services Director Laura Holmes presented a detailed budget and financial update to the commission. Topics included 2023-25 biennium operating and capital budget expenditures, Parks Renewal and Stewardship Account (PRSA) revenue, 2024 Supplemental budget requests, the 2025-27 budget development process and more. Fun fact: Currently, 41% of our agency's earned revenue comes from camping, even though about 95% of our annual visitors are day-use.

>> [View presentation](#)



124
PARKS



120,000
ACRES



1,300 miles
OF TRAILS



45 million
ANNUAL VISITS



7
COMMISSIONERS



The Commissioners listen to a report.

Item E-3: Legislative update

Policy and Government Affairs Director Owen Rowe provided an overview and update of the 2024 legislative session. Despite being a short session, it is a busy one for Parks! We are tracking over 50 bills, and working with legislators on agency budget requests and policy legislation. We'll know more about what bills are moving forward in the coming weeks as legislative cutoff dates begin.

>> [View presentation](#)

Item E-4: Interagency Tribal Recreation Impacts Management

Did you know we have more than 1,200 known archaeology sites within our parks and properties?

Responsibly managing cultural and natural resources is important work being done by an interagency group in relationship with tribes. Andrea Thorpe, Natural Resources Program Manager, and Peter Herzog, Interagency Liaison, provided an overview of this interagency effort. Parks, the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Wildlife and Governor's Office of Indian Affairs engage with 31 tribes with territories in Washington on this work. The aim is to codevelop systems to improve management of recreation impacts on natural and cultural resources and protect tribal rights on state land.

>> [View presentation](#)

Item E-5: 2025-2027 Grant Requests

Michael Hankinson, Planning Program Manager for State Parks, shared about the important and exciting ways grants support agency work. Grants allow the agency to take on a variety of projects and provide services that augment the public's experience in parks and further our mission. Requested action in this presentation asked the commission to approve a list of grants administered through the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) as well as some other actions that make applying for and managing grants more efficient. The requested action was approved.

>> [View presentation](#)

Pre-arranged speaker: Mountains to Sound Greenway

Representatives from the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust shared an update about work happening in collaboration with their organization and Parks. This greenway encompasses 1.5 million acres (100 miles) along the I-90 corridor from Seattle to Ellensburg. The area includes some of the fastest growing metro areas in the nation, small towns, working farms and forests, wild rivers, and alpine wilderness.

>> [View presentation](#)

WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS

2024 Commission priorities

Director Diana Dupuis presented the work the agency is doing in support of the commission priorities. The priorities for 2024 remain the same as the priorities for 2023, with some aspects expanded upon - including coordination with tribes and DEI initiatives to increase access to the outdoors for all. Moving forward, it is the intention to develop commission priorities every two years, in alignment with biennial funding.

» [View presentation](#)

(Priorities can be found on pages 5-11 of the Director's Performance Agreement)

2025-2027 Commission priorities

This was a robust discussion between the commissioners and executive staff to determine priorities that will help define the 2025-27 biennial budget ask and division work plans. Director Diana Dupuis shared her priorities: A welcoming park system, commitment to resource and environmental stewardship, and confidence in agency business. The commission and staff then discussed the timeline and activities required to develop and finalize commission priorities and success measures for the 2025-27 biennium.

» [View presentation](#)

Fort Worden Public Development Authority update

Executive leaders from the Fort Worden Public Development Authority (PDA) presented to the commission on wins, challenges and work happening regarding their lease of the Fort Worden campus. Fort Warden is a sprawling and unique property that State Parks has owned for over 50 years. The PDA provides space for a variety of creative services and businesses important to the community of Port Townsend and beyond. New leadership in the PDA is working hard to address challenges in funding and historic building management.

» [View presentation](#)



Honoring outgoing Commission Chair Ken Bounds.

WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS

Human Resources update

Human Resources Director Amber Erdahl presented an in-depth profile of our workforce at Parks. Data included permanent and non-permanent position figures, diversity and demographics of our staff, comparisons with other agencies, trends in our workforce and more. The commissioners had lots of questions and engagement in the topic, providing the opportunity to share some of what we're doing to support our staff and attract and retain a diverse and talented team.

>> [View presentation](#)

Partnerships & Strategic Initiatives Program update

Partners & Strategic Initiatives Program Manager Licia Sahagun shared an overview and update on the program and key projects. Licia highlighted incredible work being done by our staff who help coordinate volunteers, the Parks Foundation, Friends groups and others. The agency currently has about 140 partnership agreements with many opportunities on the horizon. Fun fact: Last year we had over 5,500 volunteers for Parks, donating the equivalent of some \$3 million in their time!

>> [View presentation](#)

Toptana fiber optic cable discussion

Quinault Indian Nation Self-Governance Executive Director Tyson E. Johnston presented about a project that would require a fiber optic cable deep beneath the Seashore Conservation Area. Access to broadband is critical to students, businesses, remote workers and more. This area of Washington is severely underserved by broadband service. Toptana Technologies is a company owned entirely by the tribe and is requesting re-approval of a permit to bring broadband to the area.

>> [View presentation](#)

SERVICE PINS



Laura Shedd (center)
25 years of service



Jon Crimmins (left center)
25 years of service



Bryan Alexander (right center)
30 years of service

MEET OUR COMMISSIONERS & DIRECTOR



MIKE
LATIMER
COMMISSIONER



SCOTT
MERRIMAN
COMMISSIONER



LAURIE
CONNELLY
VICE CHAIR



KEN
BOUNDS,
COMMISSIONER



SOPHIA
DANENBERG
CHAIR



ALI
RAAD
COMMISSIONER



HOLLY
WILLIAMS
SECRETARY



DIANA
DUPUIS
DIRECTOR

SERVICE PINS

Lena Shedd: 25 Years

Lena has worked in many areas over her years in state government, including the Legislature and Parks. Her colleagues shared how much they admire Lena's positive attitude, hard work and expert problem-solving skills - never to shy away from a challenge.

Jon Crimmins: 25 years

Jon started with Parks in 1998. He has been a ranger, instructor and many other roles in the field. He became the Operations Director in 2022. His sense of humor, experience and care for parks staff are qualities his colleagues shared about him.

Bryan Alexander: 30 years

Bryan started at Parks as a park aide at Pearrygin Lake. He has since served in many parks around the state and currently works as an instructor in marine law enforcement. His colleagues highlighted his sense of pride, authenticity, customer service and all-around excellence as a teammate.

GOLD STAR AWARDS

Brinn Marri

Brinn was recognized for outstanding achievement in managing the first year of the State Parks Cultural Resources Protection Campaign!

Al Brummitt

Recognized for being a supportive and dedicated mentor in the trades. Al's ability to teach different learning styles has fostered a meaningful work experience for maintenance staff in the Kitsap Area. Al was recognized for his combination of guidance, advocating for the strengths of others, and allowing people to learn from mistakes.

Megan Morris

Visitor submitted recognition from Kitsap Memorial State Park. Megan was recognized for building relationships with the preschool students visiting the park. Her impact was demonstrated in how excited the kids were to see her. They have called the reestablished trail at the park "Megan's Trail."

Farewell to former Commissioner Mark O. Brown

Mark O. Brown has retired from service on the Parks Commission after serving for 12 years. He was a tireless advocate for State Parks and is known for his enthusiasm and dedication. He visited every state park in his time on the Commission - iPhone in hand - always ready to share his photos and experiences to further garner support for the agency and the lands we manage. Jon Snyder, from the governor's office, shared that Commissioner Brown truly believes in "public action for the public good."

Current and former commissioners and other colleagues and friends shared memories of time spent in the parks together, challenges faced over the years and joy at having the opportunity to serve Parks and the state in this way. His boundless energy, genuine curiosity, desire to continuously learn and an abiding dedication to service were noted. There was also universal appreciation for his wife, Julie, who was a constant supporter of the parks and the work of the Commission.

Thank you, Commissioner Brown, for your years of service!

