

APRIL COMMISSION MEETING RECAP

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION



The Commission wrapped up a productive meeting in Spokane that included presentations, work sessions and some time outdoors. Here's what we covered.

COMMISSION MEETING



124
PARKS



120,000
ACRES



1,300 miles
OF TRAILS



45 million
ANNUAL VISITS



7
COMMISSIONERS

Item E-1: Financial update

Director of Administrative services, Laura Holmes, provided an update about the Parks finances and budget (spoiler alert: overall it is looking good). We collected \$10.4 million more than was projected this biennium. The Discover Pass is the largest source of earned revenue, followed by camping.

>> [View presentation](#)

Item E-2: Legislative update

Government Relations Director, Owen Rowe, shared an update about the 2023 legislative session. He and his team reviewed over 3,000 bills! Overall, things are looking good for our agency this year. We will know the final budget at the end of the week when session ends on April 23.

>> [View presentation](#)



Spokane Tribal Council Member Monica Tonasket welcomed our WSPR commissioners and staff to the traditional lands of the Spokane People.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Update

DEI Manager, Melinda Posner, shared progress being made in our agency's DEI efforts. The Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) team has officially formed and is set to meet for the first time soon. We will also be rolling out a new DEI training later this year, along with all other state agencies. In partnership with the Washington Trails Association, we wrapped up another successful round of the Emerging Leaders Program.

>> [View presentation](#)

No Child Left Inside (NCLI) grant evaluation update

We heard a second great presentation from Melinda Posner about the NCLI program. We're close to selecting another batch of grant recipients from a fantastic pool of diverse groups around the state. Since its inception, this program has served around 135,000 kids and youth in WA and provided them more than 4.6 million hours in the great outdoors!

>> [View presentation](#)

Tribal Relations update

Our agency Director for Tribal Relations, Jenna Bowman, gave a powerful presentation about her work so far. Jenna started with a message about how stories have the ability to connect to each other. She also shared an update on a survey she conducted with agency staff and discussed the difference between Big “C” Consultation and little “c” communication with tribes. She also highlighted the importance of both Tribal and Indigenous Sovereignty.

>> [View presentation](#)



David Schaub, of the Inland Northwest Land Conservancy, gives a presentation on the ongoing Glen Tana Project. This project is a collaboration between the Spokane Tribe of Indians, INLC and State Parks to reintroduce salmon to the Little Spokane River.

WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS

Restoration project update

Natural Resources Program Manager, Dr. Andrea Thorpe, presented an overview of major restoration projects currently underway. These include projects at Ragged Ridge Natural Area Preserve, Jones Island in the San Juans and habitat restoration for the Western Snowy Plover out on the coast. Did you know deer are good swimmers? That's why you find large populations on islands like Jones.

>> [View presentation](#)

Planning Program update

The Planning Program team provided a great introduction to new and long-time staff. There is a lot of heart, passion and expertise in this group. They shared details of their prioritization process as well as updates on the Commission priority projects: Lake Sammamish, Blake Island, Miller Peninsula, Westport Light and Nisqually State Park.

>> [View presentation](#)

Capital projects update

Capital Program Manager, Kyle Murphy, provided a detailed update on Capital projects. There is a lot of work happening in this team! There was a high level of interest among the Commissioners and productive conversation about how collaboration with tribes and local governments is crucial to this work. Also discussed were ways to capture greater efficiency and how each project has its own complexities and challenges.

>> [View presentation](#)



Our seven Parks commissioners, dressed for the weather at Spokane House Interpretive Center. It was a beautiful but cold day.

WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS

Human Resources update

The Director for Human Resources, Amber Erdahl, shared the highlights of the 2022 Employee Engagement Survey results. This presentation set up a great discussion about what is going well for staff and areas where we can improve. Amber also highlighted steps we are taking to address the lowest scoring areas. Thank you to everyone who took the survey last fall!

>> [View presentation](#)

Spokane River Centennial State Park Trail coordinating council overview

Have you been looking for a 40-mile paved trail along a beautiful river, with 20 trailheads along the way for easy access? Then you're probably looking for the Spokane River Centennial State Park Trail. Members of the trail's coordinating council shared information about the trail, the 5-way partnership that manages it and details about improvement projects happening.

Did you know that the Spokane River Centennial State Park Trail is the fourth busiest state park in WA? About 2 million people visit each year.

>> [View presentation](#)

MEET OUR COMMISSIONERS & DIRECTOR



MIKE
LATIMER
COMMISSIONER



MARK O.
BROWN
COMMISSIONER



LAURIE
CONNELLY
SECRETARY



KEN
BOUNDS,
CHAIR



SOPHIA
DANENBERG
VICE CHAIR



ALI
RAAD
COMMISSIONER



HOLLY
WILLIAMS
COMMISSIONER



DIANA
DUPUIS
DIRECTOR

GOLD STAR AWARDS

The Commission recognized the Combined Fund Drive team for their hard work to create fun and impactful events that raise funds for good causes.

Congratulations

- Kerri Dennis
- Cassandra Alarcon

The Commission also recognized the incredible IT Customer Support team for always going above and beyond to help.

Congratulations

- Anthony Walker and team!

Thank you for all you do for the agency and our community!