

JANUARY COMMISSION MEETING RECAP

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION



The Commission wrapped up a productive meeting in Lacey that included presentations, work sessions and more. Here's an overview of topics covered.

COMMISSION MEETING



124
PARKS



120,000
ACRES



1,300 miles
OF TRAILS



45 million
ANNUAL VISITS



7
COMMISSIONERS

Item E-1: Financial update

Administrative Services Director Laura Holmes delivered [a report](#) on the status of:

- State Parks' 2021-23 biennium operating and capital budget expenditures,
- Parks Renewal and Stewardship Account (PRSA) revenue, and
- Agency comparison to the Governor's Budget for Fiscal Year 2023 Supplemental and the 2023-25 biennial budget.

>> [View presentation](#)

Item E-2: 2023 Director's Performance Agreement and 2022 Performance Evaluation- Requested Action

The Commission was asked to adopt the 2023 Director's Performance Agreement, which includes the 2023 Commission Priorities.

It was also asked to document their conclusion that the Director performed satisfactorily in 2022, and that a meaningful evaluation process was used to reach this conclusion.

This item was unanimously approved.

>> [View the performance agreement and Commission priorities](#)

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Update

DEI Director Janette Chien presented an overview of the Parks DEI plan, to include an update, program goals and next steps.

>> [View presentation](#)

Item E-3: Legislative update

Policy and Governmental Affairs Director Owen Rowe provided the Commission with an overview and update of the 2023 Legislative Session.

» [View presentation](#)

Scenic Bikeways Update

Trails Program Manager Lisa Anderson introduced new Scenic Bikeways Coordinator Bryn Osmonson to the Commission and presented on program staff's progress in creating a Scenic Bikeways program.

» [View presentation](#)

Life Saving Award

Thanks to the calm and quick action of Ranger Ben Martin, a woman who fell 12 feet from a cliff in Ike Kinswa State Park is alive and recovering from her injuries. Ranger Martin was first on the scene and was able to carefully pull the woman to safety from the rocks and water where she was unable to move on her own.

In another incident, Ranger Martin discovered the husband of a Senior Park Aide unconscious in his truck. He immediately recognized the signs of a diabetic episode. Ranger Martin was able to wake the man enough to ensure he was still breathing. Then he quickly called for someone to bring sugary liquids and snacks to get his blood sugar back up while an ambulance was called. The man was stabilized and transported to the hospital for treatment.



Ranger Ben Martin is presented with the Life Saving Award. From the left: Operations Director Jon Crimmins, Commissioner Mark O. Brown, Ranger Ben Martin, Director Diana Dupuis

WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS

Boating Program Update

Rob Sendak, Boating and Winter Recreation Program Manager, presented the Commission with an overview of the Parks Boating Program, including its mission, how it is organized, priority projects and upcoming programming.

>> [View presentation](#)

Winter Recreation Program Update

Winter Recreation Program Manager Corey Tolar presented the Commission with an overview of the Winter Recreation Program. His presentation included program updates, forecasted challenges and opportunities for improvement.

>> [View presentation](#)

Website Redesign Update

Parks Brand and Marketing Manager Stephanie McDermott shared an update on the agency's website redesign project. She spoke about the importance of human-centered design and how it's being used to put the user at the heart of all decision-making throughout the project. Content revisions start this month and it will take teamwork to ensure the website is completed on track this fall.

>> [View presentation](#)



Commissioner Mike Latimer (left) presents former Commission Chair Mark O. Brown with a thank you gift for his service.

WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS

Operations Leadership Update

Operations Director Jon Crimmins presented the Commission with a brief set of highlights for each Parks region as well as an opportunity to meet and interact with several new Operations Leadership staff who are new to the Agency and/or their positions.

>> [View presentation](#)

Welcome, Commissioner Ali Raad!

Parks is thrilled to [welcome Ali Raad to the Commission](#). Raad is a first-generation immigrant from Lebanon and has lived in Thurston County since 1982. He is a civil engineer and began his career with the Washington State Military Department. He went on to work for the Washington Department of Transportation and the Washington Department of Ecology. Raad retired from state work in 2002 and now serves as the owner and president of Raad Properties.

Raad and his wife Sandra are parents to three children who graduated from the Olympia School District. They are the proud grandparents of five grandchildren. In his spare time, Raad enjoys taking nature walks and traveling with his wife.

Raad's term runs through Dec. 31, 2028. He takes the seat vacated by former Commissioner Steve Milner, whose term ended in Dec. 31, 2022.

New Commission Officers

The Commission elected new officers to serve for 2023 during its January meeting. The new chair of the commission is Ken Bounds, who replaces former chair Mark O. Brown. Commissioner Bounds previously served as vice chair of the commission. Commissioner Sophia Danenberg, former secretary, was elected into the vice chair position. Commissioner Laurie Connelly was elected to fill the vacated secretary seat.

Thank you to our former officers for their service to the Commission and to our new officers for their leadership as they take on these new positions.

WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS

Governor Jay Inslee visits the Commission

The seven-member State Parks and Recreation Commission is appointed by the Governor, and the Commission usually schedules in-person meetings with the Governor during their January meetings in the Olympia area. For the last couple of years, these in-person meetings were not possible because of the pandemic. At the Commission's Work Session on Wednesday, these annual in-person meetings resumed and Governor Inslee attended as a special guest to discuss successes and challenges over the last couple of years at the park system.

Governor Inslee has been a strong advocate for the importance of public lands and outdoor recreation and has sought increased budget support of State Parks over his tenure. The Governor began the conversation with a discussion of his plan to increase housing for people experiencing homelessness and that he is not supportive of people using public parks for housing. Additionally, the Governor and Commission celebrated some of the recent capital budget successes with the completion of the Renslow Trestle, the Beverly Bridge, and the Tekoa trestle on the Palouse to Cascades Trail. The Governor also reflected on his visit to the grand reopening of the Goldendale Observatory in April and the ongoing development of the Nisqually State Park with the Nisqually Indian Tribe.



Governor Jay Inslee visited the Commission. From the left: Commissioner Mark O. Brown, Chair Ken Bounds, Commissioner Ali Raad, Gov. Jay Inslee, Vice Chair Sophia Danenberg, Commissioner Mike Latimer, Parks Director Diana Dupuis, Commissioner Holly Williams and Secretary Laurie Connelly.

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 Arbor Crew Natural Resource Specialist Matt Kilgore Brown, Customer Service Specialist Vicente Lopez and Park Ranger Bob Chalfant for the excellence in service to Parks.

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

SERVICE RECOGNITION

The Commission and Parks leadership celebrated the substantial service of several Parks team members:



40 years
Joel Pillers
Park Ranger



35 years
Martin Baxter
IT Specialist



30 years
Paul Ruppert
Volunteer Program
Specialist



25 years
Elnora Martin
Engineering Aide



25 years
Jason Goldstein
Winter Recreation
Program Specialist