

# OCTOBER COMMISSION MEETING RECAP

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION



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

## COMMISSION MEETING

### Item E-1: Scooteney Park Management Agreement

Planning and Real Estate Program Manager Nikki Fields presented the Commission with a request to delegate authority to the Parks Director to enter into a partnership agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation to manage Scooteney Park. The 925-acre park, located in Southeast Washington, includes 90 developed acres with existing tent camping sites and opportunity for development of more camping, roofed accommodations and infrastructure in the future.

This item was approved unanimously.

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### Item E-2: Pearrygin Lake Long-Term Park Boundary Update

Planning and Real Estate Program Manager Nikki Fields asked the Commission to adopt a revised land classification and long-term park boundary for Pearrygin Lake State Park. This expansion would allow Parks to eventually extend the park around the entirety of the lake, create more recreation opportunities and provide more opportunity for partnership with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and its neighboring properties. It would additionally open up the opportunity to purchase two properties on the north side of the lake.

This item was approved unanimously.

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124  
PARKS



120,000  
ACRES



1,300 miles  
OF TRAILS



45 million  
ANNUAL VISITS



7  
COMMISSIONERS



View of the Methow Valley

### **Item E-3: Development of Recreation and Conservation Office Grants for the 2025-27 Biennium**

Planning Program Manager Michael Hankinson delivered an overview of the grant process as Parks prepares to submit its requests for the 2025-27 biennium. His report included a breakdown of how the grant process works from initial development to final submission. Hankinson also discussed goals for the grant writing process, including increased collaboration across agency divisions that will provide a more robust list of potential projects and provide grant writers with a better idea of agency needs.

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### **Item E-4: Financial Update**

Administrative Services Director Laura Holmes provided an overview of agency finances. This included a presentation of the final budget report for the 2021-23 biennium, the status of the 2023-25 biennium operating and capital budget expenditures, updates on Parks Renewal and Stewardship Account (PRSA) revenue and development of the 2025-27 biennium budget. Holmes also provided revenue and occupancy information from the past year.

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### **Operations Update**

Director of Operations Jon Crimmins introduced the new region superintendents: Scott Griffith, Anna Gill and Jessica Logan. Griffith presented an outline of the history of leadership in the field, including struggles and areas requiring more support. Gill and Logan talked about some of the goals of these new positions and expressed the groups commitment to expediting decision making, empowering staff at all levels and improving communication and collaboration between divisions.

### **December Planning Meeting**

The Commission discussed goals for the upcoming December meeting. These include an evaluation of the Commission and its procedures, how commissions should work together and communication procedures between commissioners and Parks leadership.

### **Pre-Arranged Speaker: Jim van Loben Sels, General Manager, Mt. Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park**

Jim van Loben Sels presented an outlook for the 2023-24 winter season and advised that Outdoor recreation remains in high demand due to population growth and improving mountain operations, efficiencies and programs. Mt. Spokane's 2023-2024 season pass sales are up by 20 percent and pre-season booking is up 40 percent. van Loben Sels also discussed opportunities for betterment, noting that youth programs present the greatest opportunity for growth.

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# WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS

## Administrative Services Team Update

Administrative Services Director Laura Holmes provided an overview of her division and its subteams, including staff members, roles, responsibilities and major projects. The teams housed within Administrative Services include: Budget, Risk & Records, IT Services and Financial Services — which includes the subteams of Payables, Revenue, Payroll, a General Accounting Manager, and Contracts, Grants and Procurement (CGP).

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## Seashore Conservation Area Update

In addition to outlining the significance of Washington's seashore, Seashore Conservation Area Manager Matt Niles provided a brief overview of the findings in a recent report that reviewed expert interviews, journal articles and available research about threats to these areas. These threats include fireworks, driving on beaches, events and data gaps about other potential impacts. Niles said his program will continue to work with partners to discuss potential management responses to the report.

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## Westport Golf LLC Update

Representatives from the Westport Golf Links, Inc. team provided an update on the status of a proposed project to build a Scottish-style links golf course at Westport Lighthouse State Park. They included descriptions of potential ecological benefits of the project, including invasive species management, establishment of more open sand interdunal wetlands, expanded habitat for snowy plover and erosion mitigation.

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Commissioners and staff meet with local officials about tourism and outdoor recreation in Mazama



# WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS

## Capital Program Update

A recent hire to Parks, Deputy Director of Parks Development Andrew Rose took a few minutes to introduce himself and his background to the Commission. Rose previously worked for the Washington Department of Health. Since joining Parks, Rose has been working on adjusting the structure of his division by working toward full staffing in the regions and moving project-based staff to permanent status. Additionally, Rose has been improving the team's processes to improve efficiency and develop stronger cross-agency relationships.

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## Clean Energy Transformation Update

Climate and Sustainability Coordinator Ryan Karlson discussed current progress in the agency's greenhouse gas emissions reduction approach. He was joined by Capital Program Manager Kyle Murphy who discussed ongoing efforts to install EV chargers for public use within select parks and challenges faced by this effort. Contracts, Grants and Procurement Manager Dylan Davis-Bloom concluded the presentation with an overview of parks' efforts to follow Governor's Executive Order 21-04 to electrify state-owned vehicles.

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## Youth Engagement Update

Policy and Governmental Affairs Director Owen Rowe presented an overview of Parks' efforts to provide more opportunities for engagement with young people at state parks. These efforts include catering more programs to school groups and offering Junior Ranger activities. Rowe also discussed Parks' commitment to empower youth by connecting with more diverse community groups and recruiting students to participate in a Youth Leadership Program so their voices can contribute to future developments within the agency.

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Policy and Governmental Affairs Director Owen Rowe receives his five-year Parks pin from Director Diana Dupuis



# 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

### **Amy Brotherton - Eastern Region Headquarters**

We're celebrating Amy for her leadership and outstanding effort promoting state parks at the 2023 Wenatchee Apple Blossom Festival. At the Youth Day and Grand Parade, she stepped up and played the role of Bagley Beaver. She also was there as Bagley during the Daroga State Park playground ribbon cutting. Thank you for all you do!

### **Isabel Rifenberg - Larabee State Park**

Thank you to Isabel for going the extra mile and creating Junior Ranger programming for Larabee State Park. Isabel took the lead in this endeavor, and it is appreciated. Thank you for your work and dedication!

### **Shellie Johnson - Fort Casey Historical State Park**

Thank for your attention to the cleanliness of the park and maintaining the integrity of the discount pass program. You are a fantastic representative of our parks and we're lucky to have you!



View of beautiful Winthrop