



Deep dive: Camping

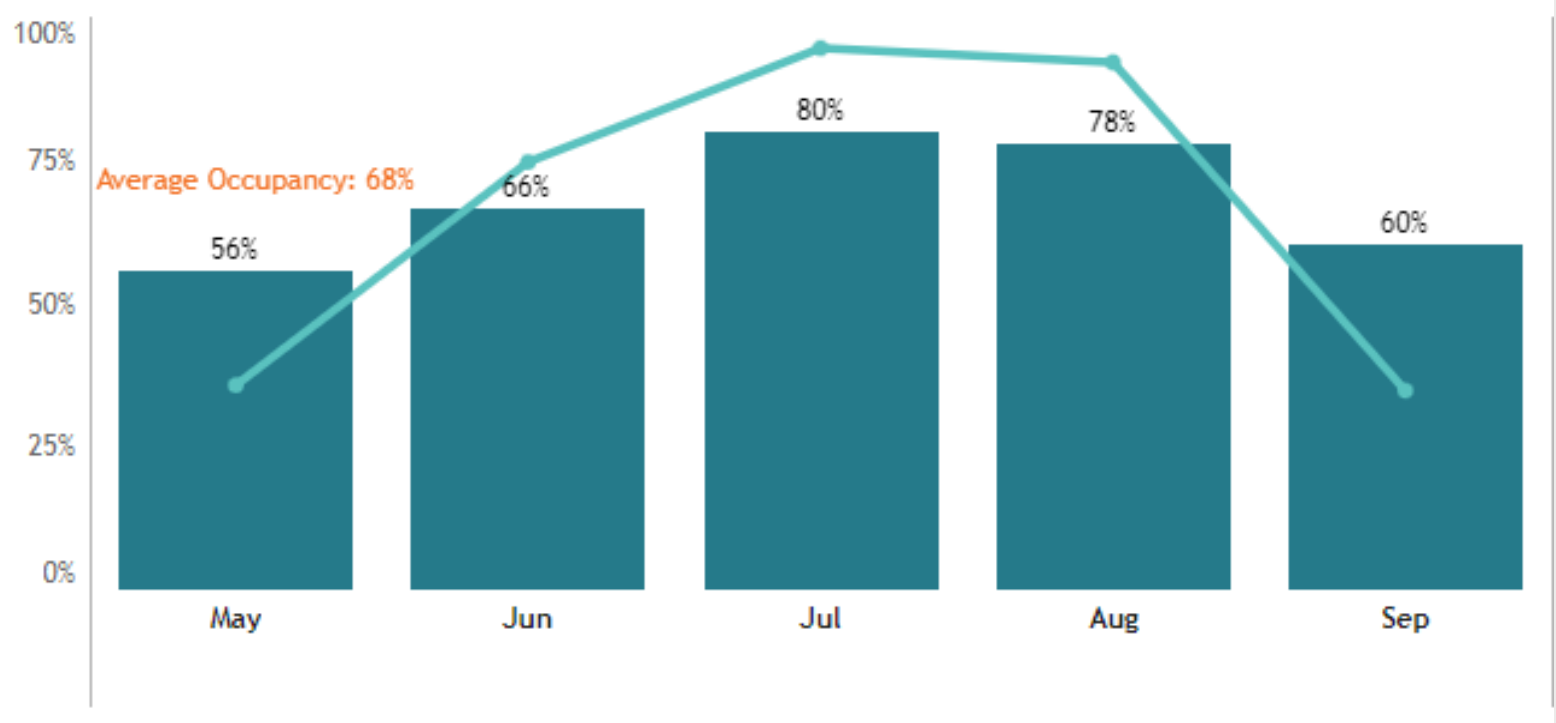




Today's Focus

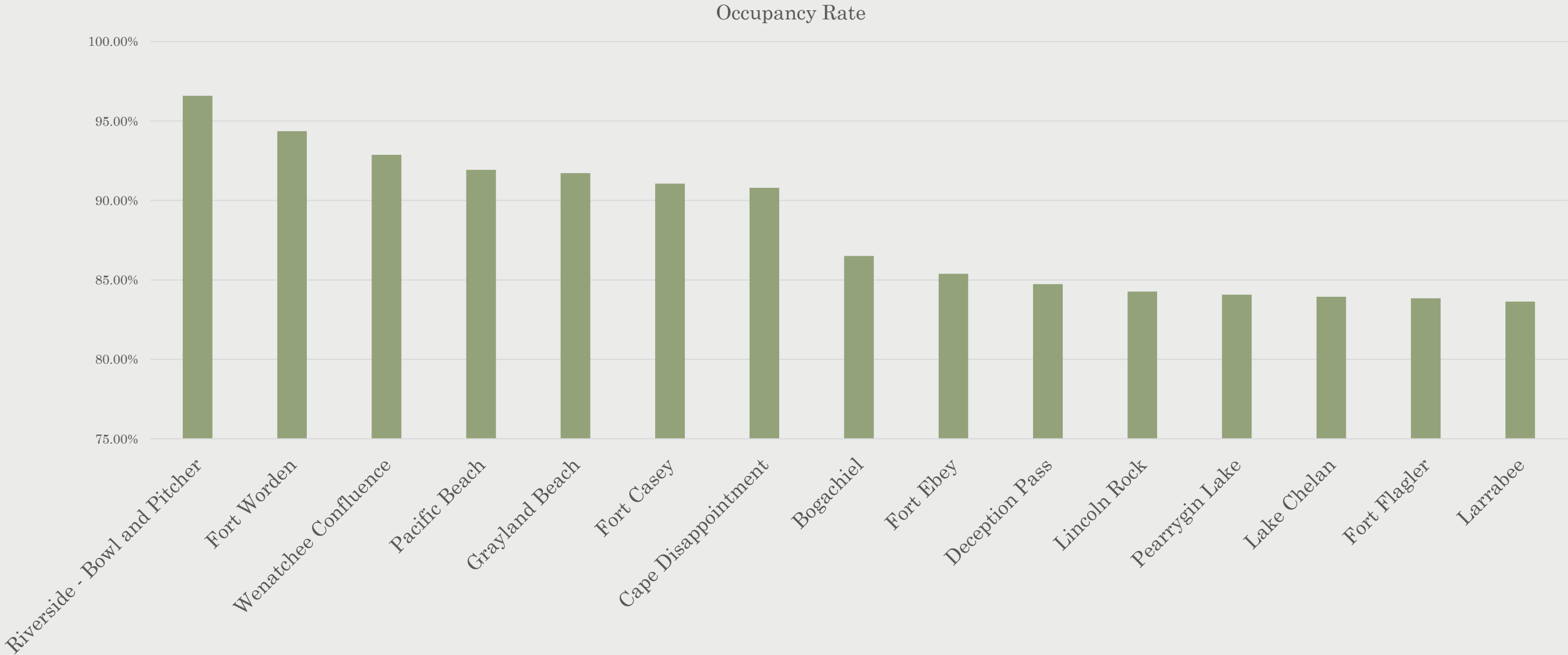
- **Occupancy data and trends**
- **Camper demographics**
- **The scoop: Vacant or not?**
- **How are we filling vacancies?**
- **What's next?**

Peak Season 2024 Occupancy Overview

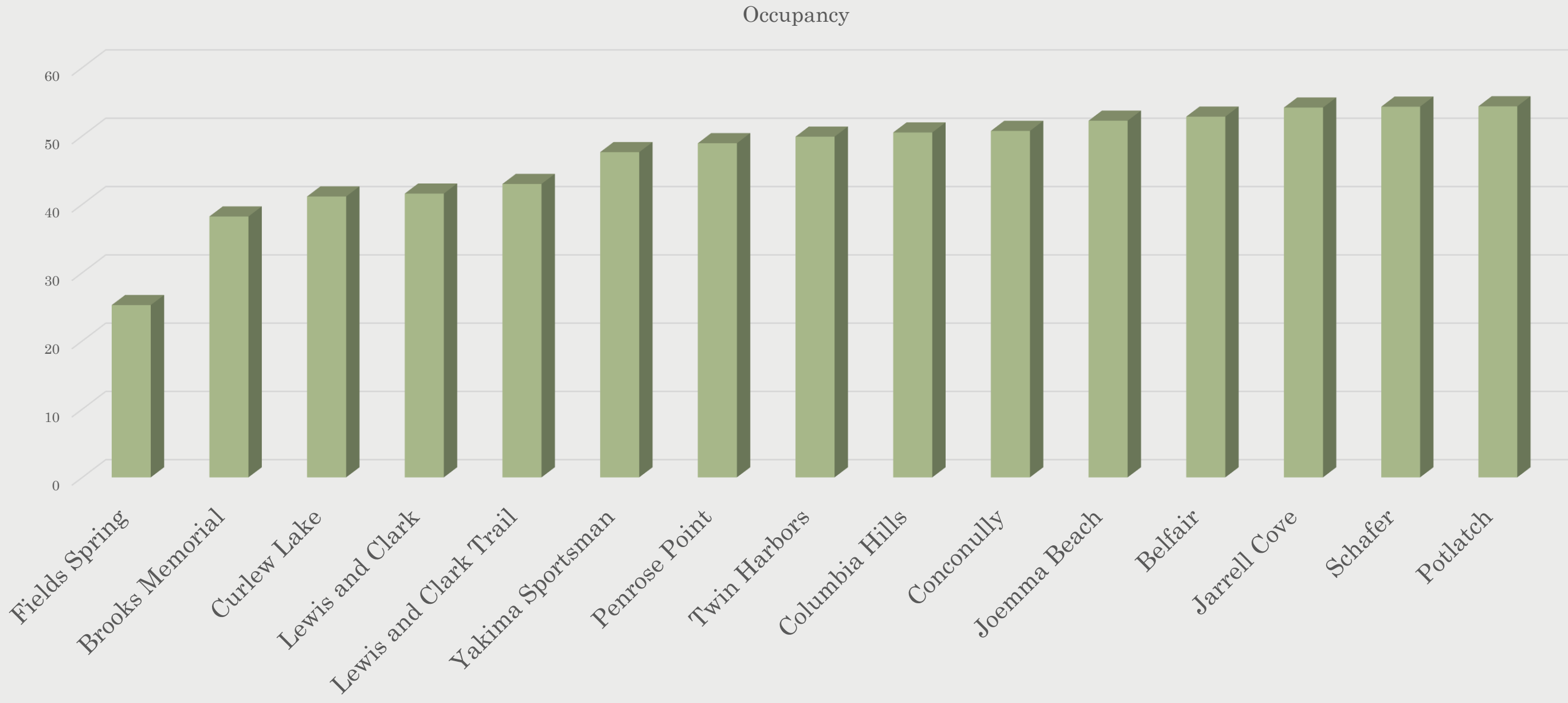


- Peak Season Occupancy
 - All sites: 70.41%
 - Utility Sites: 86.79%
- Weekend Occupancy
 - All Sites: 78.49%
 - Utility Sites: 90%
- Weekday Occupancy
 - All sites: 67.11%
 - Utility Sites: 85.47%

Highest occupancy – peak season 2024



Lowest occupancy – peak season 2024



Occupancy by rate type

- Full Rate: 61%
 - 414,000 nights
- Disabled Veteran: 5%
 - 34,245 nights
- Disability: 3%
 - 21,815 nights
- Senior Limited Income: 0.8%
 - 5,391 nights
- Foster Family: 0.25%
 - 1,531 nights





Camper Demographics

State demographics

Racial demographics

- American Indian and Alaska Native: 2.0%
- Asian: 10.8%
- Black or African American: 4.7%
- Hispanic or Latino: 14.6%
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 0.9%
- Two or more races: 5.4%
- White: 64.2%

Languages

- More than 1 in 5 households in WA speaks a language other than English at home.

Disability

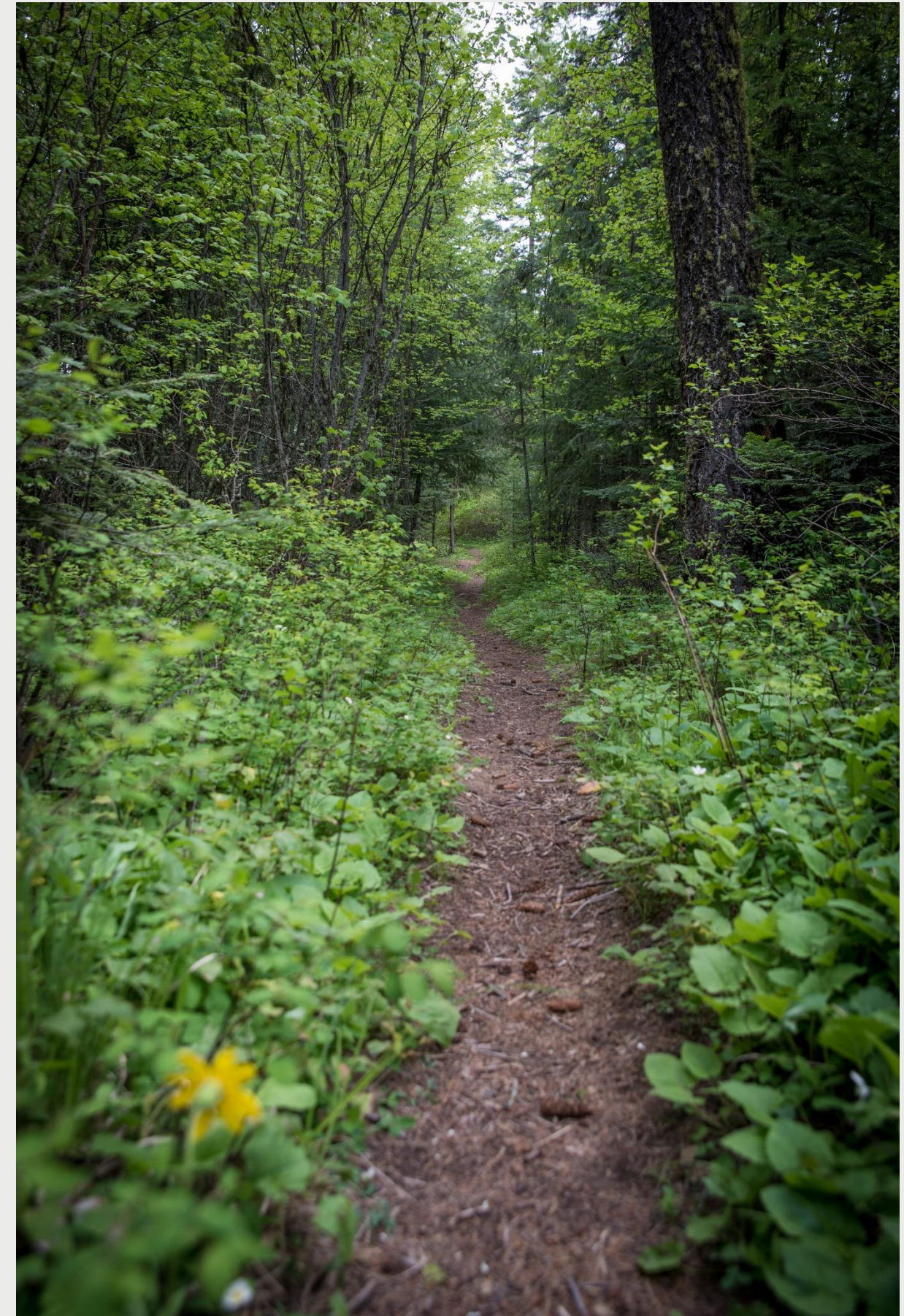
- 9.1% of the population under 65 has a disability.

Age

- As of 2023, 17% of our state's population was 65+ with 20.1% under 18.

Income

- 10% of Washingtonians are considered living in poverty.



Census and OFM data

Camper demographics – 2024 peak

Race/ethnicity

American Indian or Alaskan Native	2.43%
Asian	7.31%
Black/African American	1.77%
Hispanic/Latino	4.23%
Middle Eastern or North African	0.47%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1.35%
Some Other Race, Ethnicity or Origin	3.19%
White	90.40%
Total	100.00%

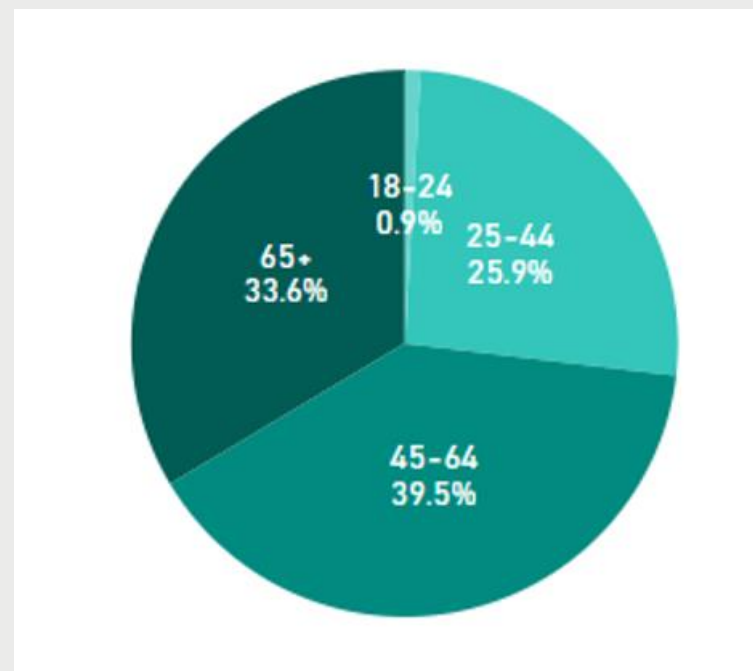
Visiting with Children?

No children:	61.10%
Age 5-9:	20.20%
Age 10-14:	18.30%
Age 0-4:	12.40%
Age 15-17:	8.70%

Household Income

\$200k	16.9%
\$150-\$199k	15.1%
\$100-\$149K	26.4%
\$75-\$99k	16.9%
\$50-\$74k	13.7%
\$25-\$49k	8.2%
Less than \$25k	2.8%

Age



Age by race/ethnicity

Age Group	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic /Latino	Middle Eastern or North African	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race, Ethnicity or Origin	White	Total
18-24	3.7%	6.0%	3.7%	9.3%	0.0%	0.9%	2.8%	73.5%	100%
25-44	2.6%	11.5%	1.7%	6.2%	0.7%	1.7%	3.0%	72.5%	100%
45-64	2.3%	6.5%	1.9%	3.7%	0.4%	1.4%	3.2%	80.7%	100%
65+	1.6%	2.2%	1.0%	1.6%	0.2%	0.6%	2.2%	90.3%	100%

Where are our campers from?

Top 5 countries

- United States: 206,169
- Canada: 11,557
- Germany: 556
- Switzerland: 196
- Netherlands: 194

Top 5 states

- Washington: 171,923
- Oregon: 9,727
- California: 3,891
- Idaho: 1,464
- Colorado: 1,181



What's the scoop: Vacant or not?

Research

- In-park audit of three parks, summer 2024
- Staff survey
- Feedback from other park systems
 - Alaska
 - Colorado
 - Delaware
 - Idaho
 - Iowa
 - Maryland
 - Massachusetts
 - Michigan
 - Missouri
 - New York
 - South Carolina
 - Wisconsin
 - Parks Canada
- Feedback from the PEAR team



In-park audits: Summer 2024

In-park audit of three parks, summer 2024

- **Millersylvania**
 - Reserved but unoccupied*: 2.5%
 - No-show Arrivals**: 4%

- **Lake Chelan**
 - Reserved but unoccupied: 14.4%
 - No-shows: 15.5%

- **Cape Disappointment**
 - Reserved but unoccupied: 5.2%
 - No-shows: 5.5%

Unoccupied campsite fee types, all parks

Full pay	29
Disabled Vet	1
Disabled	1
Limited income Sr.	1

*Reserved but unoccupied data includes all empty sites that were booked.

**No Show arrivals is based on arrivals scheduled for the date of the audit.

Key takeaways from research

Why a site looks empty but isn't:

- Sprinter vans – often arrive late and leave early.
- Late check-ins.
- Unoccupied one night but they come for subsequent reserved nights.
- Many campers visit other parks during the day and so their site looks unoccupied.

Common reasons for cancellations, skipped days and no-shows:

- Uncontrollable circumstances (Ferries, weather events, etc.)
- Cancellation policy – not enough refund.
 - Reservation window is so far in advance people forget.

Other observations:

- Other parks systems struggle with this issue too.
- Auto-check-in has mixed benefits.
- Lack of staffing to vacate sites.
- We need additional data to fully assess which rate types have highest no-shows (discount vs. full-rate).



Filling vacancies

Same- and next-day reservations

- Sept 2023: Pilot expansion launched
- Spring 2024: Additional expansion to total 27 parks statewide
- January 2024: Adjusted reservation cut off time for all parks
- Over **6,521** same-day
- **1,916** next-day reservations made after 8:00 p.m. (at parks not on same-day pilot).



Flexible Booking Dates

- Launched in May
- Over 2,639 reservations
- Average of 2.3 nights
- Many booked for weekday stays – great news for booking sites during times they are most likely to be vacant.

The screenshot displays a booking interface for Washington State Parks. At the top, there are two tabs: "Select dates" and "Flexible dates". Below this, a question asks "How many nights would you stay?" with a numeric input field set to "1" and minus/plus buttons. The next section asks "When do you want to go?" and features four buttons for the months: "May 2024", "Jun 2024", "Jul 2024", and "Aug 2024". Below the month selection, there is a "Looking for a weekend?" section with "No" and "Yes" buttons. The "Choose a park" section has a dropdown menu currently showing "Cape Disappointment". On the right side of the interface, there are tabs for "Group" and "Day". At the bottom right, there is a "Party Size" section with a numeric input field set to "1" and minus/plus buttons, and an "Equipment" section with a "1 Tent" button.

Strategic Communications

- Targeted media

- Marketing Flexible Booking Dates, Same-Day Reservations

- Pitches picked up by:

- Wall Street Journal, The Chronicle (Lewis, Thurston, Cowlitz), Seattle's Child (Seattle area parenting magazine), KXRO (radio)
 - 527 press release views week of publication

- Leveraging relationships

- KOMO 4 News evening show appearances, RV Out West (podcast), TVW (The Impact)

- Social media

- Promoting flexible booking, same-day reservations, availability notifications



Strategic Communications

- Blogs
 - Trip itineraries
 - Where to go/How to avoid the crowds
 - Top performer 2024: Where to see wildflowers and avoid the crowds (~7,600 reads)
 - Nine parks that bring Middle Earth to Washington (~4,800 reads)
- Social media
 - "Stock" images and video highlight lesser-visited parks
 - Weaving messaging into viral trends/sounds
- Share with partners
 - Provided State Parks Foundation with a lesser-known parks list for their promotion and outreach
 - Connecting parks with organizations that promote a location as an attractive travel destination (DMOs)
 - Connecting with other state recreation groups
 - DNR, WDFW, Recreate Responsibly Coalition



goodbye brat summer

HELLO GILMORE GIRLS FALL

wastatepks • Brat summer is officially over! Say hello to...

wastatepks • Photo 1: Scenic Beach State Park in Seabeck, WA (a.k.a. Mount Doom)
 Photo 2: Bogachiel State Park in Forks, WA (where Twilight is based, duh!)
 Photo 3: Yakima Sportsman State Park in Yakima, WA (a really pretty place to visit in the fall)
 Photo 4: Lake Easton State Park in Easton, WA (it gives Harry Potter cozy vibes)
 Photo 5: Fort Ebey State Park in Coupeville, WA (where Practical Magic was filmed)

6w 13 likes Reply

wastatepks • #wastateparks #washingtonstateparks #stateparks #washington #explorewa #pnw #pacificnorthwest #pnwonderland #cascadiaexplored #washingtonhikes #scenicbeachstatepark #bogachielstatepark #forkswa #yakimasportsmanstatepark #lakeeastonstatepark #fortebeystatepark #bratsummer

6w Reply

wantiparkfund Impossible to choose one, great

6w 7 likes Reply

pgk_photography Gilmore Girls and Practical Magic The others I usually associate them with winter

6w 1 like Reply

View insights

Liked by emilymasseth and 1,399 others

September 25

Add a comment...

STATE PARKS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ARE PERFECT PHOTO OPS

wastatepks • All our parks are picture perfect all-year-round, but here are a few you may not know about:

- Fields Spring is a must-visit location during the springtime (even if it's in the name), with the mesmerizing fields of purple/blue lupine and the blue mountains as a backdrop. Remember to stay on the trail to help protect the wildflowers, due to the low snow this year.
- Palouse Falls is a stunning place to visit any time of year, but the summertime is particularly special. Try visiting during the week or getting there early to beat the heat and the crowd.
- Yakima Sportsman & Fort Columbia are breathtaking in the fall. The colors and the giant maple leaves will leave you in awe (pun intended).
- Alta Lake is gorgeous in the winter! Catch spectacular views of the frozen lake from the Alta Lake Trail.

wastatepks • #wastateparks #washingtonstateparks #washington #stateparks #fieldspring #palousefalls #photoops #photopportunity #explorewa #pnw #pacificnorthwest #pnwonderland #optoutside #washington #washingtonstate #wastate #wacampers #washingtoncampers

15w Reply

hykakang Palouse is my favorite and can't wait to visit other

15w 1 like Reply

frideoutdoors The fur



Where to see wildflowers — and avoid the crowds

Classic wildflower destinations like Dog Mountain in June or Mount Rainier in July get all the spring/summer love (and overcrowding). But a few WA state parks have lesser-known wildflower explosions every spring.

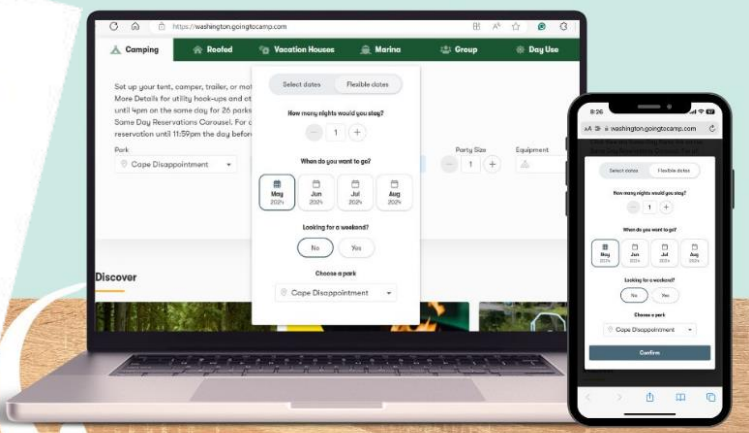
So, if you want to sin... hordes of people in... wastate #pnw #pnwonderland #pacificnorthwest #cascadiaexplored #optoutside #memorialday #memorialdayweekend #stateparks



Other than the fact it's not inhabited by humans, **Columbia Hills State Park** comes pretty close to what we imagine the view of The Shire to be. With beautiful rolling hills, wildflowers and farms nearby, the park offers a peaceful escape to the most beautiful place in Middle Earth.

Visit this wonderful park in the next few weeks when the wildflowers are in full bloom.

NOW OFFERING FLEXIBLE BOOKING DATES



www.washington.goingtocamp.com

STATE PARKS TO VISIT THIS MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

wastatepks • With Memorial Day for the season, we know many of 124 parks across the state, many of which are busy, doesn't mean they're not as special as you think. If you're thinking of getting outside, consider going to one of these parks. The others I usually associate them with winter

6w 1 like Reply

wastatepks • #wastateparks #washingtonstateparks #stateparks #washington #explorewa #pnw #pacificnorthwest #pnwonderland #cascadiaexplored #washingtonhikes #optoutside #memorialday #memorialdayweekend #stateparks

6w Reply

yumiph Oooooo

5w 1 like Reply

skynomad1010 72° and sunny at Bridgeport this weekend

6w 1 like Reply

eeffreer I camped at Maryhill last spring - it was a great location for exploring both sides of the Gorge!

6w Reply

zachziska Make sure to cleanup after yourselves and pick trash!!! Leave no trace

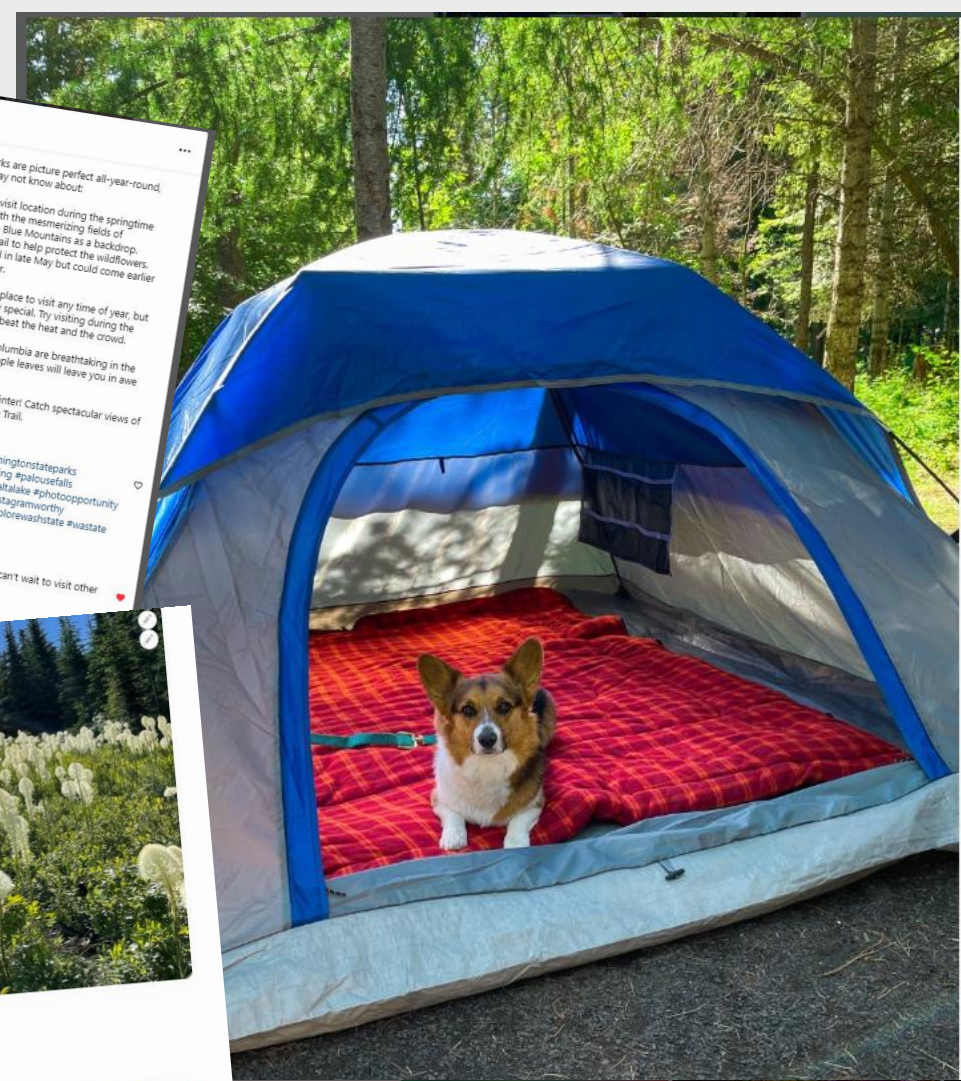
6w 3 likes Reply

View insights

Liked by emilymasseth and 235 others

May 23

Add a comment...



wastatepks • Fields Spring State Park

wastatepks • Camping reservations>>>> Dinner reservations

Who else can agree? 🐾 If you're looking to camp at our parks this summer, there's still many open sites available. Pick a spot using our new flexible dates option. This new feature makes it easier to pick a spot without having to search through a bunch of dates that may or may not work.

Visit our reservations website (link in bio) and choose "flexible dates." Once the flexible dates button is selected, choose up to four months in advance, the park, and add the group size and equipment. Hit search and check out the dates and sites available at your park of choice. You can also add filters to accommodate your specific needs.

Also, Happy #internationalCorgiDay to all you Corgi owners and lovers 🐾

4w

wastatepks • #wastateparks #washingtonstateparks #washingtoncamping #wacamping #wacabins #campingreservations #camping #summercamping #explorewa #pnw #pacificnorthwest #pnwonderland #optoutside #washington #washingtonstate #wastate #wacampers #washingtoncampers

4w Reply

pdx_bishop Cooking great meals while camping

4w 1 like Reply

waterfrontmarkettrust Camping in wa is the best!!

4w 1 like Reply

wander.free.and.queer Agree!

View insights

Boost post

Liked by emilymasseth and 310 others

wastatepks • Starting today, you can choose flexible booking dates for campsites! 🐾 This is a great new feature for campers looking for an adventure, especially during our peak season, at our busier parks.

Visit our reservations website (link in bio), and choose "flexible dates." Once the flexible dates button is selected, you can choose the month and the park you would like to visit. Then, set the filters for your specific needs. Hit search and check out the dates and sites available at your park of choice — making it easier for you to pick your spot without having to search a bunch of dates that may or may not work.

9w

sailwithrachelandbrian Great new feature!!

7w Reply

seasocial.allison LOVE! This will make booking way easier and quicker

5w 1 like Reply

wastatepks • #wastateparks #washingtonstateparks #stateparks #washington #wacamping #washingtoncamping #washingtonhikes #pnw #pnwonderland #pacificnorthwest #cascadiaexplored #explorewa #wastate #washingtonstate #optoutside

9w Reply

View insights

Boost post

Liked by emilymasseth and 93 others

May 1

Add a comment...

NOW OFFERING FLEXIBLE BOOKING DATES



Got wiggle room in your schedule? Check out the flexible dates feature on our reservations system!

Last month we brought you good news of our same-day reservation program, which expanded from three to 26 parks.

Now we're introducing another nifty addition, the flexible dates feature!

If your schedules have some give, the flexible dates feature makes it easier to pick a campsite without having to search through a bunch of dates. Visitors can also add filters to accommodate specific needs.

How it works: Visit our reservations [website](#) and choose "flexible dates." Then pick a time period up to four months in advance. Select your park, add group size and equipment, hit "search" and, *voila!*, see all the dates and sites available at your park of choice. Finally, you can snag a spot on the day that works best for you.

For more information, please reach out to the Parks Information Center by calling (360) 902-8844 or emailing Information.Center@parks.wa.gov.



Same-day reservation service expands

Last-minute planners, this one's for you: Hopeful campers can now make same-day reservations at 23 state parks!

How it works: Making a same-day reservation is just like making a reservation in advance. Head to our [reservation site](#) and book your stay at any of the below parks for a by 4 p.m. for same-day arrival:

- Cape Disappointment
- Deception Pass
- Millersylvania
- Birch Bay
- Fort Casey
- Moran
- Ocean City
- Schafer
- Pacific Beach
- Lake Sylvia
- Lake Chelan
- Alta Lake
- Bridgeport
- 25 Mile Creek
- Curlew
- Pearygin
- Conconully
- Wenatchee Confluence
- Lincoln Rock
- Lake Easton
- Fort Worden
- Twanoh
- Belfair
- Sequim Bay
- Lewis and Clark Trail
- Riverside (Bowl and Pitcher)

Know before you go!



Several state parks will be closed or partially closed this summer due to major construction. Make sure you check [alerts](#) and restrictions before you head out.

[Kopachuck](#) will be closed from June 3, 2024 through mid-summer, 2025 for construction. We recommend checking out [Manchester, Illa-hee](#) or [Dash Point](#) – all under 45 minutes away.

[Lake Sylvia](#) (pictured above) will be closed from June 10 through September for construction on the entrance road. Nearby [Schafer](#) is open, with a brand-new campground for you to enjoy.

[Deception Pass](#) has reduced parking capacity in its West Beach parking lot due to storm damage. Visitors may experience increased traffic and delays. Day visitors should plan ahead, arrive early and anticipate limited parking availability. Parking along SR 20 is prohibited and extremely dangerous. This is a great time to check out [Fort Casey](#) or [Bay View](#) instead – both are under 30 minutes away.

The 14 easternmost miles of the [Spokane River Centennial Trail](#) will be closed for a summer repaving project. Reopening is anticipated in September. The western section of the Centennial Trail remains open.

WSDOT road projects will impact traffic at [Steamboat Rock](#) and [Sun Lakes – Dry Falls](#) state parks through October.

[Get more details at our Projects page](#)

Monthly e-newsletter (~853,000)

Fridie Outdoors

Leveraged partnership with the Washington State Parks Foundation to address gaps in camping populations, reach new audiences

Upcoming videos

- Checking in
- Camping etiquette
- Bringing a dog to a park



Strategic Communications: Outcomes

- Roughly one million direct touch points with the public.
- We can help move the needle through communications.
- In 2023, we applied significant comms efforts to these two campaigns - with notable results.

Beach cleanups:

- 2022: 1,754 volunteers, 59,477 lbs.
- 2023: 1,923 volunteers, 133,247 lbs.
- 2024: 2,339 volunteers, 159,431 lbs.

First Day Hikes:

- 2022: 25 hikes, 300 participants
- 2023: 45 hikes, 1,555 participants
- 2024: 50 hikes, 1,733 participants



Next steps and recommendations

Visitor Services:

- Plan for statewide expansion of Same Day reservations.
- Develop proposal for staggered reservation windows.
- Consider sending additional reminder emails ahead of reservations.
- Consider ways to create consistency around vacating sites at 1 p.m. the next day.
- Research incentives for communicating about early departures.
- Audit additional parks in 2025 to better understand trends in vacant but reserved sites.

Communications:

- Social media opportunities
 - Profile parks with 70% or lower occupancy rate last peak season:
 - What parks are appropriate to promote/ can handle increase?
- Identify additional campaigns for next year based on commission/agency priorities.
- Build data baseline for understanding impact of communications/social campaigns, in partnership with marketing.
- Launch videos in partnership with Fridie and the Foundation – evaluate metrics.



Questions?