

# STATE PARKS' 2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND  
RECREATION COMMISSION



**+ 41 million**

\*Annual Visitors



**+ 15,000**

Full-time & seasonal  
jobs supported



**+ \$1.6 billion**

Economic contributions to  
the state



**+ \$116 million**

State & local tax revenue

\*Represents 2024 data.

Other figures represent 2019 data.



**Funded by  
earned revenue**  
(operating budget)

## Overview

State Parks has fewer acres but more visitors than any other state-managed lands agency in Washington. In 2024, we hosted over 41 million visits. We've been around longer than the National Parks Service and have provided outdoor refuge for Washingtonians since 1913. However, our aging infrastructure is in need of significant investment to meet visitor expectations of access and recreational opportunity. We're committed to providing an accessible and welcoming environment for all to explore the wonders of Washington's natural and cultural heritage, but we need your support to deliver on that promise.

## OPERATING BUDGET REQUESTS

### Fund shift to maintain services (\$10 million GF-S)

Our earned revenue is not keeping up with compensation increases and inflation. To maintain service levels, State Parks is requesting additional support from the state general fund to address inflationary impacts on the Parks Renewal and Stewardship Account. Without this funding adjustment, we anticipate impacts to future revenue and visitor satisfaction due to disruption of service expectations.

### ADA compliance (3.4 FTE, \$943,000)

State Parks entered into a settlement agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice after an injury complaint at an ADA campsite. The agreement requires the agency to update ADA policies and procedures and to compile a remediation plan for all non-compliant facilities throughout the parks system.

### Fort Worden campus operations (16.7 FTE, \$5.6 million GF-S)

The Fort Worden Public Development Authority, which has operated the 90-acre upper campus under a 50-year lease since 2013, is unable to continue operating. To minimize disruption to the public and avoid loss of services, State Parks is requesting funding and FTEs to reestablish the agency's operation and maintenance of the historic campus.

### Address visitor expectations (16.8 FTE, \$2.8 million GF-S)

State Parks' Park Aide positions are critical to our customer service. They provide visitor support at welcome centers and information booths, complete guest check ins and fee collection, support basic park maintenance and upkeep and promote outdoor education and safety. Some state parks are not adequately staffed to support the increasing demand for yurts, cabins and vacation homes.

### **Resource adaptation and management (3.4 FTE, \$1.6 million GF-S)**

Stewardship of State Parks' diverse natural resources, including some of the state's rarest species and ecosystems, is increasingly impacted by invasive weeds and insects, climate change and increased recreation impacts. These staff positions would provide technical expertise to control noxious weeds and other invasive species, implement management and restoration plans and monitor the status of endangered, threatened and sensitive plants and animal species to protect park resources.

### **Responding to climate change (2.2 FTE, \$2.8 million Climate Commitment Act Accounts)**

State parks are experiencing increases in the damaging effects of climate change through sea-level rise, increased winter flooding, summer heat waves and declining snowpack and in-stream flows. Funding will allow the agency to address state-mandated greenhouse gas emission reductions by implementing the agency's Climate Adaptation Plan and establishing park-level plans to build climate resiliency and support the protection of plant and animal species.

### **Tribal state lands stewardship (1.8 FTE, \$818,000 GF-S)**

Supporting State Parks' participation in the co-development of an adaptive management framework with Tribal governments and state land management agencies will help us address Tribal concerns about recreation management on rights reserved by Tribes. Funding will support strengthened partnerships with Tribal governments, improve decision making and increase the effectiveness of recreation management.

## **CAPITAL BUDGET SUMMARY**

The Washington State Parks system is facing an over \$400 million maintenance backlog. Our \$128 million capital budget request is designed to address this by:

- Funding the maintenance care of our existing facilities (80%)
- Investing in new recreational opportunities to meet growing demand (20%) and lessen the impact on existing parks and facilities

Highlights of the request include developing camping loops and trails at Nisqually State Park and increased funding for ADA access and other improvements throughout the park system.



### **Contact Information**

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