

# APRIL COMMISSION MEETING RECAP

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION



The Commission met in Olympia this month to hold its regular meeting at The Evergreen State College. On April 15, Commissioners also spent a day exploring Paradise Point State Park and the Mount St. Helens Interpretive Center.

## COMMISSION MEETING



**124**  
PARKS



**120,000**  
ACRES



**1,300 miles**  
OF TRAILS



**41+ million**  
ANNUAL VISITS



**7**  
COMMISSIONERS

### Item E-1: Headquarters lease

State Parks is preparing to move its headquarters to co-locate with the Department of Ecology at 300 Desmond Drive SE in Lacey. This move into this state-owned building will reduce the agency's footprint by 30 percent and provide a cost savings of \$1 million per year. The Commission was asked to authorize the Director or designee to enter into a lease agreement with the Department of Ecology. This request was unanimously approved.

[View the presentation here](#)

### Item E-2: Financial update

We are 83 percent of the way through the 2023-25 biennial cycle. At this time, the agency's spending is on track, with increased spending on projects with reappropriated funds. The agency's operating budget reflects spending freeze savings, making the total spending for operating funds 77 percent. In revenue collected, the agency is experiencing a slight downward trend, particularly in camping, while Discover Pass sales continue to hold strong.

[View the presentation here](#)



Leaders from the Cowlitz Indian Tribe met with the Commission at Paradise Point State Park where they talked about the history of the area and shared its significance to their Tribe. Speaking in this photo is Cowlitz Tribal Chairman Bill Iyall.

### Item E-3: Legislative update

We are still in the heart of Legislative Session, and Legislative Relations and Public Affairs Division Director Brian Considine has been hard at work. Considine talked openly with the Commission about some of the conversations, struggles and politics he has been working through as legislators discuss various bills and request legislation impacting State Parks. Considine also advised that the bill to raise the cost of the annual Discover Pass from \$30 to \$45 is anticipated to continue moving forward.

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### Current budget outlook

Though there is still uncertainty about what a final budget will look like, Director Diana Dupuis led a high-level discussion about the current outlook and budget considerations. She said agency leadership is continuing to monitor what's happening during session, so they are prepared to jump into action when budgets are signed.

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### Westport Golf update

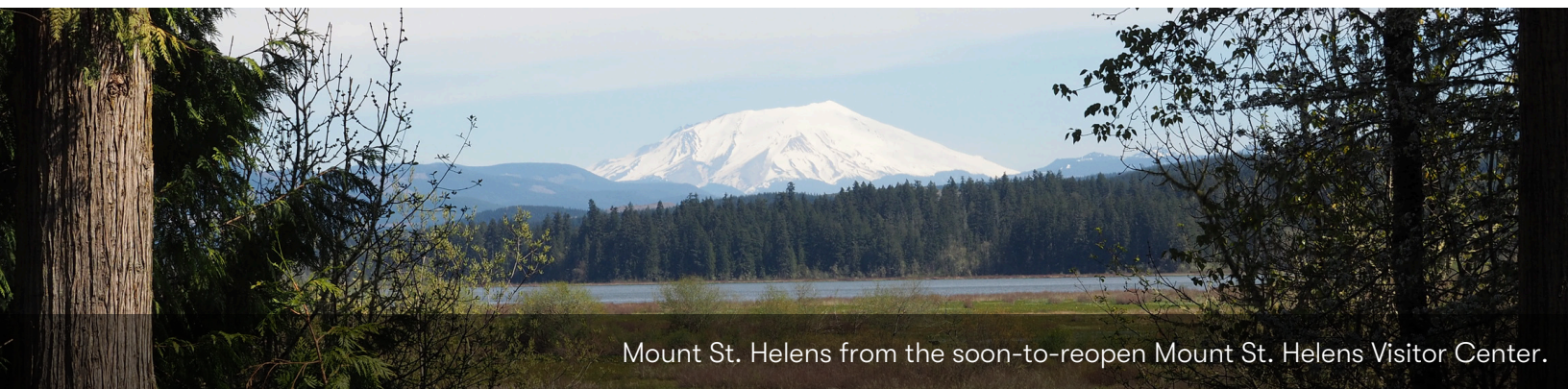
On April 7, 2025, the City of Westport released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Scottish links-style golf course and a 30-to-40-room inn at Westport Light State Park near Westport. State Parks Stewardship Director Lisa Lantz presented to the Commission a brief history of the park and then described the purpose of a DEIS and what people can expect to read about within it. The City of Westport is the nominal lead agency, and all public comments regarding the DEIS should be directed to them. We encourage you to visit the City's website to review the DEIS and submit your comments.

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### Guest speaker: Jim van Löben Sels, general manager, MS2000

This winter, approximately 116,500 people – including 6,290 season pass holders – visited the Mount Spokane Ski and Snowboard Park. It was a record snowfall year, and the mountain saw an approximate total of \$7.3 million in earned revenue, the highest on record. Check out the presentation to learn more about wins of the season and identified needs to keep the mountain a competitive locale for snow sports.

[View the presentation here](#)



Mount St. Helens from the soon-to-reopen Mount St. Helens Visitor Center.



# WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS

## State lands usage

The impact of a state park isn't limited to its park boundaries. Thanks to new information, Communications Director Clare DeLong Tuminez and Business Insights Analyst Darleen Simkins presented the Commission with a data-informed look at the far-reaching economic impact of state parks in their communities. They also discussed how the agency can work across divisions to use customer data in strategic planning, project and work prioritization, revenue generation and to support field staff.

[View the presentation here](#)

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## PEAR team updates

With guidance from the Pro Equity, Anti Racism (PEAR) team, State Parks is working toward building equity into its processes, building diversity in its workforce, embedding inclusion in its culture and reimagining a welcoming park system. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director Janette Chien was joined by DEI Consultant Yelley Taylor and members of the PEAR team to provide the Commission with an overview and update on its progress toward these goals.

[View the presentation here](#)

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## Free Days and Free Ways presentation

Which state parks are reachable by public transit? Clair Werch, intern at Washington State Parks and Masters of Public Health student at the University of Washington-Seattle, completed an audit of all state park locations in relation to bus stops. During the work session, Clair presented on her findings, which included challenges and opportunities, and she developed a series of recommendations for the Commission to consider.

[View the presentation here](#)

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From the left: Parks Development Director Heather Saunders, Chair Holly Williams, Stewardship Director Lisa Lantz, Vice Chair Laurie Connelly, Secretary Ali Raad and Director Diana Dupuis outside the Mount St. Helens Visitor Center.



# GOLD STARS

## MEET OUR COMMISSIONERS & DIRECTOR



LAURIE  
CONNELLY  
CHAIR



HOLLY  
WILLIAMS  
VICE CHAIR



ALI  
RAAD  
SECRETARY



ALFIE  
ALVARADO-RAMOS  
COMMISSIONER



SOPHIA  
DANENBERG  
COMMISSIONER



MIKE  
LATIMER  
COMMISSIONER



SCOTT  
MERRIMAN  
COMMISSIONER



DIANA  
DUPUIS  
DIRECTOR

### Madison Loughheed

Thank you to Madison for the incredible work scanning and uploading every single one of State Parks' medical files. Madison volunteered for this project and completed it in addition to her regular work. Thank you for all you do!

### Gary Vierra

Thank you for your noble work in extracting a deer that had died in the park. The job isn't always pretty, but we appreciate you putting in the work to save our visitors from the gruesome sight!

### Bob Toretta

Bob was recognized for all of the tireless work he put into trimming at Fort Worden. His dedication has made a tremendous visual impact to the park and has increased safety for its visitors.

## SERVICE PIN

### Park Ranger Mark Harris, 30 years

Eastern Region Superintendent Scott Griffith says there's one word that comes to mind when he thinks of Mark Harris' 30 years: Respect. Harris' tenure is defined by the respect he shows to everyone he works with, to the way we do business, to the park ranger uniform, to the history of the area he works in and to all those who visit his parks.



State Parks Director Diana Dupuis (left) and Park Ranger Mark Harris (right). Mark Harris received his 30-year Service Pin during the Commission meeting on April 17, 2025.



# MARCH VIRTUAL WORK SESSION

On March 19, the Commission met virtually for its work session.

## WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS

### Climate update

Climate and Sustainability Program Manager Ryan Karlson spoke to the Commission about the agency's progress toward one of its priorities for 2025: Implement greenhouse gas reduction strategies/projects and make substantive progress implementing the agency's climate change adaptation plan. Karlson provided an overview of greenhouse gas emission reduction metrics and a summary of clean energy transition investment efforts.

[View the presentation here](#)

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### State-Tribal Recreation Impacts update

More and more people are recreating on their public lands, which means lands are at greater risk of impact. The State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative seeks to bring together the perspectives of the 31 federally-recognized Tribes with protected rights in Washington, Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, State Parks and Recreation Commission and the Recreation and Conservation Office to improve the condition of our public lands, support the ongoing conservation of natural and cultural resources and improve the cooperation and working relationship among independent state agencies and Tribes.

[View the presentation here](#)

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### Legislative update

Legislative Relations and Public Affairs Division Director Brian Considine gave an overview of what's happening in the 2025 Legislative Session as it relates to State Parks. Of particular note, he is keeping a close eye on a bill that would raise the price of the annual Discover Pass from \$30 to \$45. The price of the Discover Pass has not changed since it was implemented in 2011, though inflation has dramatically raised maintenance and operations costs for the agency.

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### Financial update

Business Support Services Division Director Laura Holmes provided the Commission with an overview of the agency's current operating and capital project budgets. She advised the combined budget from the House and the Senate is expected in late April and we can expect the Governor to enact budget bills in May.

[View the presentation here](#)