

OCTOBER COMMISSION MEETING RECAP

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION



The Commission was treated to a stunning fall day at Saltwater State Park on Oct. 14 where they walked to the water for views of Maury and Vashon islands across Puget Sound. They then headed back to State Parks HQ in Lacey for their regular meeting.

COMMISSION MEETING



123
PARKS



120,000
ACRES



1,300 miles
OF TRAILS



40+ million
ANNUAL VISITS



7
COMMISSIONERS

Item E-1: Fort Worden State Park – Centrum Lease

The Commission was asked to provide delegated authority to the State Parks Director to enter into a long-term lease agreement with Centrum for their use of several buildings at Fort Worden Historical State Park. The lease would be for a term of 35 years, with the option of amending for an additional 35 years. It would also allow for State Parks to apply a rent credit for building improvements, consistent with a Director-approved rent credit policy.

This item was approved unanimously.

[View the full presentation here.](#)

Item E-2: Financial update

Business Support Services Director Laura Holmes reported out on the agency's finances, noting Discover Pass sales remain steady and camping revenues are up. Overall, expenditures are on target for the operating budget. There is a strong start to capital budget work happening on reappropriated funding. Revenue is coming in slightly under projections, but it is early in the biennium. Visitation to the park system remains stable.

[View the full presentation here.](#)



This Grand Fir tree at Saltwater State Park was a highlight of the Commission tour. The towering giant is an example of the “awe” nature can inspire for visitors.

Legislative update

Legislative Relations and Public Affairs Director Brian Considine gave the Commission a quick update ahead of the short 2026 legislative session. As he said, the start of session is just 88 days away and the end only 148 days away. Everything is going to move quickly, so we're working hard to be ready, focused and primed to tell our story. Heading into this session, State Parks only has one agency request bill that covers ski lift equipment safety inspection language. The agency is also moving forward the Senate Bill from last session regarding snow mobile fees.

Revenue Update and Business Development Update

Communications Director Clare DeLong Tuminez brought a whole crew with her to discuss the tactics deployed over a busy summer for her team. She was joined by Marketing and Brand Manager Stephanie McDermott, Communications Manager Sarah Fronk, Visitor Services Manager Keri Murphy and Business Insights Analyst Darleen Simkins.

DeLong Tuminez and Simkins began the presentation with an overview of work they did during the summer to assess agency fees and work to standardize the fee review process and cadence. This work is ongoing and will require high levels of feedback and input from field staff, program managers and leadership. Only the Natural Investment Permit (NIP) fee was adjusted this summer through this work. Due to the legislatively mandated increase in the price of the annual Discover Pass and the tie between the Discover Pass and the NIP, this fee had to be adjusted. Simkins will be taking a look at other fees over the next year.

Next, McDermott, Fronk and Murphy discussed the multi-pronged effort they launched in May to help usher in the first-ever annual Discover Pass fee increase. While Murphy focused on interagency partnerships with the departments of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources, Veteran Affairs and Licensing, McDermott and Fronk extended their efforts into a robust marketing campaign across several channels:

- Google ads
- Earned media
- Email marketing
- Social media
- Podcast ads

Their goal was to help alleviate any pain points for customers while simultaneously supporting staff; answering questions; and maintaining or increasing revenue for the agencies amid a period of change.

[View the full presentation here.](#)

Camping Occupancy

Visitor Services Manager Keri Murphy, Communications Manager Sarah Fronk and Central Reservation System Manager Mark Baker presented the Commission with an update about current trends in occupancy at state parks, as well as updates and improvements they've made to help fill vacancies in campgrounds.

Two new and exciting developments for 2025 included the expansion of same-day reservations to the entire State Parks system and the ability to promote last-minute camping availability on social media. Baker has worked closely with Social Media Lead Emily Masseth from Fronk's team to share about parks with less than 80% occupancy and more than 10 available campsites on social media in an effort to promote lesser-visited parks and help fill empty sites. Both of these efforts have cumulatively brought in thousands of new reservations and earned revenue for the agency.

[View the full presentation here.](#)



The Marine View Drive Bridge bisects Saltwater State Park and McSorley Creek as it passes from north to south through the park. The bridge is a reminder of how the park provides a 137-acre forested oasis near the urban centers of Federal Way and SeaTac.

WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS

Operations: How we deliver the State Parks mission

Operations Director Jon Crimmins gave the Commission a sense of who the Operations Division is and how they serve visitors and the agency through their staff, services and the experience they provide.

Operations maintains a balance between visitor service, facilities safety and stewardship in all the work they do. The division is a mix of rangers (39%), maintenance staff (25%), park aides (15%), division/regional staff (10%), administrative staff (5%), interpretive staff (3%) and management (3%) — all of who support the complex functions of running more than 100 state parks, their facilities and the programs necessary to provide the quality of service our visitors expect from us.

[View the full presentation here.](#)

Forest health annual update

Agency Forester David Cass returned to the Commission with his annual update on the state of State Parks' forests and our progress in managing forest health. In state parks, forest health encompasses recreation, natural and cultural preservation considerations. Our forests face several risks including wildfire, insects and disease, drought, climate change, noxious weeds and degraded habitat. However, our arbor crews help mitigate these risks with tactics like tree density management, fuels management, insect or disease management, thinning, shaded fuel breaks and prescribed burning. In the 2023-25 biennium, State Parks treated 803 acres. In total, this covered five state parks:

- Riverside State Park
- Fisk State Park Property
- Moran State Park
- Mount Spokane State Park
- Nisqually State Park

[View the full presentation here.](#)

Historic preservation update

While most people focus on the recreation part of State Parks' mission, the agency is also charged with caring for "Washington's most treasured lands, waters, and historic places." Parks Planner Alex McMurry provided the Commission with an overview of the agency's historic properties, our Cultural Resources Management Policy and how a place becomes "historic."

[View the full presentation here.](#)

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

Dylan Harvey

We're recognizing you for responding to a natural disaster/wildfire at Clayton Beach within Larrabee State Park. Dylan was an initial responder and helped locate the fire, operate the side-by-side in a safe manner and helped to extinguish a wildland fire. Nice job!

Stephen Wood

The eruption of fun you shared with headquarters staff at the Mount St. Helens Visitor Center. Thank you for taking time to tell us about the new remodel. 5 stars.

Terry Leber

Thank you for your extraordinary teamwork while installing park Wi-Fi, as well as converting the booth to implement the new same-day check-in process. You have made a lasting impact, thank you!



Picnic table near the water at Saltwater State Park.

AUGUST VIRTUAL WORK SESSION

On Aug. 27, the Commission met virtually for its work session.

WORK SESSION PRESENTATIONS

Agency Request Legislation for the 2026 Legislative Session

The Commission approved the agency's request legislation and gave them the go ahead to submit the proposals to the Governor's Office in September. State Parks' requests this short session are minimal.

Commission Priorities 2025-27

The Commission officially approved its priorities for 2025-27. In summary, they are:

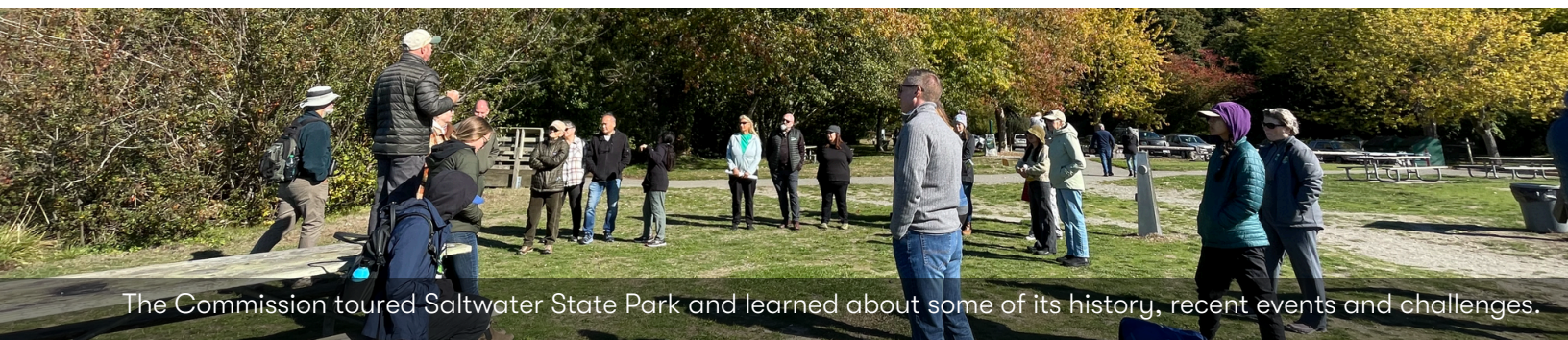
1. Develop a structured, transparent and value-based process to support Commission decision making.
2. Strengthen existing revenue streams and explore new funding opportunities that support financial sustainability without compromising access or service quality.
3. Strengthen equity in the workplace and advance an equitable and welcoming park system.
4. Reduce the maintenance backlog through strategic investments and asset management.
5. Strengthen strategic relationships to advance the agency's mission and secure ongoing support.

[Read more details about the tactics and desired outcomes here.](#)

Proposed 2026 Regular Meeting Schedule for the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

The Commission approved its 2026 meeting dates and locations. The schedule will be:

- January 28, 29 – Olympia
- March 4 – Virtual
- April 16 – Spokane (work session/Commission meeting same day)
- May 20 – Virtual
- July 8, 9 – Olympia
- August 26 – Virtual
- October 14, 15 – Olympia
- November 18 – Virtual
- December 9, 10 – Planning meeting – Olympia



The Commission toured Saltwater State Park and learned about some of its history, recent events and challenges.

AUGUST VIRTUAL WORK SESSION

Scenic Bikeways Route Nomination launch

Scenic Bikeways Trails Program Manager Bryanna Osmonson and Trails Program Manager Paul Knowles were excited to announce the official launch of the Scenic Bikeways Program and the opening of the pilot nomination round for the state's first-ever scenic bikeways.

[View the full presentation here.](#)

Financial update

Business Support Services Director Laura Holmes reported out on the biennial budget transition and budget outlook for the agency. This included the final information for the agency's PRSA ending fund balance and reappropriations for capital projects.

[View the full presentation here.](#)



Tahoma Gateway Area Manager Jeff Vassallo walks the Commission and other State Parks staff around Saltwater State Park. Saltwater is only two miles from I-5 and offers visitors access to saltwater shoreline and an artificial reef for diving.