

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION RULES OF PROCEDURE

Adopted January 29, 2026

1. APPOINTMENTS, TERMS, AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission provides policy direction to the Director and all Parks staff for one of the largest, most diverse and beautiful state parks systems in the country. The state park system is comprised of state parks and properties covering over 124,000 acres throughout the state. The park system includes marine parks, heritage sites, historic parks, interpretive centers, retreat centers, ocean beaches and hundreds of miles of trails. The agency is also responsible for the state's winter recreation program, boating safety and vessel pump out program and numerous contracted concession operations. The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission cares for Washington's most treasured lands, waters, and historic places. State parks connect all Washingtonians to their diverse natural and cultural heritage and provide memorable recreational and educational experiences that enhance their lives.

The commission is made up of seven citizen members appointed by the governor. Commissioners also go through the Senate Confirmation process. Commissioners must understand parks and recreation needs and interests; and may not hold any elective or full-time appointive state, county, or municipal office. **RCW [79A.05.015](#)**

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

At the October meeting each year, the Commission shall elect one of its members as chair and another member as vice chair, each of whom shall serve for a term of one year effective in January or until a successor is elected and qualified. In the case of a vacancy, the commission shall hold a special election for that vacant position to fulfill the one-year term. See Parliamentary Procedure below for election process.

3. QUORUM

Four members constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and to adopt permanent rules and amendments to or repeals of existing rules.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Commission Chair roles

- Serve as official spokesperson for the Commission.
- Conduct official meetings of the Commission, unless delegated to the Vice Chair or another Commissioner.
- In agreement with the Director and Executive Committee determine the placement of items on agendas and approve final agendas.

- Direct the Commission staff in regard to decisions of the Commission.
- Have approval authority for out-of-state travel of the Director.
- Be responsible for the general conduct of Commission meetings.
- Ensure that the Executive Assistant provides advance public notice of Commission meetings, including distribution of agendas and meeting materials.

B. Commission Vice Chair roles

- Carry out the responsibilities of the Commission Chair in their absence.
- Function as resident expert in implementing procedures adopted by the Commission (commonly referred to as parliamentarian).

C. Commission Member roles

- Attend and participate in Commission meetings.
 - If a member is unable to attend, the member will inform the Executive Assistant as far in advance as possible, who will in turn inform the Chair.
- Keep up to date on issues, legislative activities, and statutes affecting the Commission.
- Be familiar with and operate within governing statutes and state and federal laws.
 - Comply with the requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act, Open Public Meetings Act and Public Records Act.
- Comply with state ethics laws and complete ethics training.
- Select an Acting Commission Chair if Commission Chair and Vice Chair are not available.
- Inform the Executive Assistant of any relevant Commissioner activities.
- Provide Commission members with a summary of any meetings attended as a representative of the Commission.
- Access their e-mail system regularly and respond to messages expediently. With emails:
 - Send to the Executive Assistant for distribution of messages to the agency or to other Commissioners (always avoiding a quorum).
 - Forward copies of Commission business-related e-mail messages to the Executive Assistant for recordkeeping purposes.
- Do not send business communications (e.g. emails/texts) to more than two other Commissioners (in keeping with the Open Public Meetings Act).

- Submit time and expense reimbursement information to the Executive Assistant in a timely manner as required by current administrative protocols.

5. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

A. Commission members shall

- Be clear when speaking for the Commission versus as an individual; present only the results of formal decisions (e.g., where four or more Commissioners have agreed) as official Commission positions.
- Work collaboratively with other Commission members and agency staff on decision-making.
- Be respectful of other Commission members and agency staff.
- Establish sound working relationships with other Commission members.
- Commission members are encouraged to visit and familiarize themselves with parks across the state.
- Be responsible for where work is best done, i.e., issues pertaining to a specific committee shall be given to the commission chair to assign.
- Maintain confidentiality of sensitive or privileged Commission business. During participation in remote meetings, ensure that there are no other individuals able to hear confidential briefings or conversations.
- Keep focused on big decisions and issues (big picture) high level policy matters as opposed to minor implementation matters.
- Represent all residents of the state (who own the resource), not constituents from a particular area or special interest.
- Serve actively on Commission committees after accepting an appointment.
- Keep other Commission members informed on individual activities of Commission business.
- Not engage in any activity which gives rise to a conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest as a Commission member. Should a conflict of interest arise, any member should recuse themselves.
- Expeditiously respond to requests and messages from Commission members and the Executive Assistant regarding Commission business.
- Provide the Executive Assistant with comments and suggestions on results of agency presentations, meetings, etc., in a timely manner.

B. Meeting schedule, tours and agendas

The Commission and its staff follow the rules in the adopted Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission Travel Manual, which is based on and consistent with state law and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) travel regulations. The Commission is responsible for the operation of developed state parks, additional undeveloped properties located throughout the state, several statewide recreation programs and Washington's coastal seashore conservation area.

It is the Commission's goal to hold Commission meetings in various locations around the State in order to better understand local needs and ongoing or emerging issues, to facilitate stakeholder interactions and to enable outreach with local officials and community leaders, and to provide opportunities for Commission members to tour parks and other properties and to meet with parks staff. The criteria used to select meeting venues and to plan tour itineraries shall accomplish the Commission objective of maximizing efficiency and cost effectiveness in working towards its goals. The Commission's intent is to be visible and responsive to issues in different areas motivated by weather, population, location and types of recreational, historical, cultural and natural source issues.

The Commission must publish its annual meeting schedule for regular meetings with the Washington State Register. (RCW 42.30.075). Changes to the regular meeting schedule must be published in the Register twenty days in advance of the date. The Executive Assistant shall keep a running draft agenda for each of the regularly scheduled meetings ("Master" calendar). The Executive Assistant shall endeavor to keep the Commission apprised of changes to an agenda prior to the agenda being published.

Definitions

- 1. Official Commission business** means business related to the statutory functions of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission including, but not limited to, meetings on policy issues, conferences and association meetings, luncheons or dinners related to park commission business, park visits/tours, ribbon cuttings and dedications, tours of potential park sites or disposals of park lands, required attendance at work sessions and Commission meetings and travel to and from any official business.
- 2. Commission tour(s)** are scheduled in advance and are conducted with a State Parks staff member for the purpose of conducting official Commission business.
- 3. Commissioner Park Visit** means visiting park land or potential park land and does not include a majority of Commissioners for the purpose of conducting official Commission business.
- 4. Reimbursable Expenses for Commission business** means official Commission business in excess of three hours.

Criteria for Selection of Commission Meeting Locations and Tours:

- The area must have sufficient lodging available at state per diem rates. The meeting site must have sufficient wi-fi to enable virtual attendance.
- In order to minimize the use of public resources the Commission will seek to hold meetings at times and locations where lower off-season or reduced rates may be available. Work Sessions and Commission Meetings should be available for the public to watch virtually
- It is important to give the public access to the commission, so meeting around the state is desirable. But, it also is necessary to reduce costs, reduce travel times, and ensure good availability of meeting space.
- Commission tours will be planned in conjunction with Commission meetings. The Commission Executive Committee will work with the Director and the Executive Assistant to the Director to plan and approve Commission tours. It may be necessary to schedule tours at times other than a Commission meeting at various locations, but scheduling will be done to maximize attendance and minimize cost.
- Commission tours are open public meetings. Tour itineraries with approximate times will be made available to the public and the public may be provided transportation during the tour if state vehicles are used and there is available space in the scheduled vehicle (seat belts must be worn by each individual), on a first come first serve basis. No additional vehicles will be added to accommodate the public.
- Commissioners who are touring or visiting parks on their own, outside of the tour planned by the Executive Assistant, must get approval from the Commission Chair if asking for lodging or travel reimbursement. Commissioners requesting to meet with staff will coordinate with the Executive Assistant.

C. Staff Attendance at Commission Meetings

- The Commission wants to make informed decisions in the best interest of the State, and it desires that appropriate staff be available for discussions and presentations at Commission meetings.
- Staff attendance is at the discretion of the Director.

D. During Commission meetings, Commission members agree to:

- Work from existing policy to make decisions and provide direction, until such time that the Commission adopts policy revisions.
- Discuss at each commission meeting any requests for a future Commission action, agenda item or work session discussion topic.
- Utilize breaks for conducting other business.

- Keep business and conversation to the agenda item at hand, including intervening if process gets off track.
- Speak in turn when acknowledged by the Chair.
- Refrain from directing questions to individual staff members unless directed by lead staff person.
- Keep dialog with agency staff cooperative rather than adversarial.

E. When working with staff, Commission members shall:

- Respect the Director's authority in matters of authority and matters delegated by the Commission.
- Make requests for individual staff to attend meetings through the Director and Chair.
- Respect workloads of agency staff when making requests for support or assistance for information.
- Refrain from intervening in the operations of the agency, administrative issues, or internal agency matters except through official Commission action.
- Encourage staff members to use existing internal channels for decision-making, not individual Commission members.
- Commission requests for information from agency staff, other than requests to the Director or Executive Leadership member:
 - Simple questions: easy questions (requiring 15 minutes or less of staff time) can be asked and answered by staff.
 - Complex questions that require more than 15 minutes of staff time should be requested through the Director or Executive Leadership member.
 - Any request requiring substantial reallocation of staff time and resources or that entails program changes and project directions should be submitted to the Chair and Director. Consider vetting any such requests through the relevant committee and relevant staff.

F. When working with constituents and the public, Commission members shall:

- Promote relationships with all individuals interested in the agency.
- Be mindful of the signal sent by your presence at an event.
- Stay connected to community leaders and decision makers.
- Remain responsive to the public, direct citizens to the right contacts within the agency.

G. Written correspondence to the Commission

The Commission's goal is to acknowledge written correspondence received by the Commission. Given the volume of correspondence received, a substantive response to every such contact is rare.

- Correspondence received by individual Commissioners.
 - If a Commissioner chooses to respond directly, copy the Executive Assistant and Chair.
 - If a Commissioner believes an individual response from other agency staff is warranted, forward to the Executive Assistant and Chair with instructions.
- Correspondence sent to the Commission.
 - The Executive Assistant manages correspondence sent to the Commission Inbox, If other agency staff receive correspondence addressed to the full Commission, staff shall forward to the Executive Assistant.
 - The Executive Assistant will forward all appropriate correspondence addressed to the Commission to each of the Commissioners. If the Executive Assistant already responded with a template response, include the response.
 - The Executive Assistant shall use discretion in working with agency staff for an individualized response or refer to the Commission Chair for a full commission response. Individualized responses will be copied to the full Commission.
- A Commissioner who believes a formal Commission response to correspondence is warranted should discuss with the Commission Chair. All formal Commission correspondence will be reviewed by the executive committee.

H. Media Protocols

- Media requests received by the Commission are typically routed to the Communications Division to address. The Communications Division will interact with the media and/or coordinate with an agency subject matter expert to provide a timely response.
- The Chair is the primary spokesperson with the media on behalf of the Commission.
 - The Chair may:
 - Convey to the media the policy positions approved by the Commission.
 - Explain the process and procedures used by the Commission that led to a decision.

- The Communications Division is available to assist in developing talking points and preparing the Chair for the media interview.
- Editorials or other position statements for use in the media and on agency social media and website are drafted for the Chair and/or co-authored with the Director.
- Commissioners are encouraged to engage with the Communications Division prior to communication with the media on parks issues in their official capacity.
 - Commissioners should convey policy positions adopted by the Commission.
 - Commissioners should engage on topics only after Commission decisions to reduce political or legal risk and ensure that public comments are reviewed and synthesized prior to decision.
 - Commissioners should practice discretion in providing quotes to the media as it is difficult for the public to see a Commissioner quoted in the media as being separate from their position as a commissioner or speaking on behalf of the Commission.
- Commissioners writing letters to the editor or other editorials on Parks and Recreation Commission related issues should coordinate the text with the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Director for awareness.

6. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

These procedures apply whenever the Commission, as a body, takes formal action. Where these parliamentary procedures are silent, Robert's Rules of Order Revised shall be used as an additional guide. The Vice Chair is the Commission's parliamentarian.

- The purpose of parliamentary procedures:
 - To enable the Commission to conduct business in an organized, efficient, and timely manner.
 - To protect the rights of each Commissioner.
 - To preserve a spirit of harmony within the Commission when engaged in the decision-making process.
- All Commissioners are voting members
- Ethics in voting. Each Commissioner shall abstain from any vote or attempt to influence any vote taken by the Commission that would put that Commissioner in violation of the State Ethics Law. The Commissioner shall announce for the record his or her reason for his or her abstention.
- Electing Chair and Vice Chair

- The new Chair shall be elected first.
- The current Chair will open the floor. Every candidate who desires to run for Chair may announce their interest. Commissioners can nominate another Commissioner and that person may accept or decline. Ask for nominations three times, then close the floor.
- Upon conclusion of nominations, the Chair will ask each Commissioner to write on a piece of paper their name, and the name of their preferred candidate. Each Commissioner shall provide their vote to the Executive Assistant for a tally. If more than two people are running for Chair and no candidate obtains four votes, then the candidate with the fewest votes is removed and a new vote occurs among the remaining candidates. Candidates can vote for themselves.
- This process will be repeated to elect the Vice Chair.

7. PUBLIC INPUT AT COMMISSION MEETINGS

The Commission is the primary link between the residents of Washington and the Agency. The Commission places great value on information received from the public and, therefore, encourages citizens to provide public input. This procedure outlines the process the Commission shall follow in taking public input.

General public input

The Commission shall choose to allow open public input at the beginning of each day for full Commission meetings. The open public input agenda item is designed for matters not on the established agenda with specific public comment periods. Those testifying on other agenda items during the open public input agenda item will be requested to hold their testimony until the particular agenda item. Elected public officials will be allowed to speak first, regardless of presence in person. In-person public input will be prioritized.

Public input for specific decisions

Prior to a Commission decision, public input may be taken and limited to only the proposed action being considered. In some cases, the Commission may take a final vote in a subsequent meeting without allowing additional public input.

Testimony for rulemaking hearings under the Administrative Procedure Act

When the Commission adopts rules under the Administrative Procedure Act, public testimony and written comments are accepted during the periods specified in the rulemaking notices. Communications submitted to the Commission after the close of such deadlines will not be considered.

Registering to speak

- For in-person participation at meetings: Only those people who have completed a Public Testimony Form and turned it in at the registration table prior to the start of discussion of that agenda item will be allowed to testify.
- For remote participation: Only those people who pre-register are able to testify, and their testimony may be limited to audio only and not video.

Time limits

To maintain the agenda schedule, the Chair will impose limits on the length of time allotted to public speakers. Time limits will be announced at the beginning of the agenda item scheduled for public input. The Chair may also encourage public speakers to not repeat items that were raised by prior speakers. The Chair may end public comment to meet agenda demands and request that commenters provide written comments via the public web portal.

8. COMMISSION COMMITTEES

Purpose

Within the scope of its subject area, the purpose of a Commission Committee is to:

- Identify issues and discuss ideas that may lead to future Commission action
- Serve as a sounding board for staff in the development of policy recommendations or other requested actions
- Facilitate communication among commissioners regarding pending Commission actions
- Clarify and help convey committee-related information during work sessions and regular business meetings
- Review progress of activities delegated to staff as part of Commission actions
- Advise staff on time sensitive issues when formal action by the Commission is not possible

A Commission Committee does not:

- Take public testimony
- Formally deliberate on Commission action items
- Make any final decisions or take any final action

Roles of committee members and staff

The Director will appoint a staff lead for all committees who will be responsible for coordinating and leading committee meetings. Staff leads will be members of the executive team.

Commissioners

- Review materials and actively participate in committee meetings and discussions
- Initiate informal communication with other commissioners to provide information (taking care to avoid any communication, whether by email or phone, involving a quorum of the Commission)
- On an informal basis, receive input from the public and other institutional stakeholders on pending Commission actions (any public testimony must take place at full Commission meetings)
- Clarify and help convey information about committee-related issues during Commission work sessions and regular meetings
- Suggest topics for future committee and/or commission consideration

Staff

- Develop agendas, provide necessary background information and lead committee meetings
- Identify issues and opportunities likely leading toward future Commission decisions and bring them forward to the committee for discussion
- Consider and incorporate committee discussions and insight into preparation of Commission agenda items
- Document and distribute notes about committee discussions when appropriate.

Committee authorization and appointment of Commissioners

The Commission may authorize standing or ad hoc committees as necessary to achieve the goals of the agency work plan or otherwise advance goals of the Commission.

Standing Committees

- Standing committees will be authorized annually by the Commission.
- Standing committees will be oriented and directed toward achieving goals in the agency's annual work plan
- The Commission Chair will appoint amenable Commission members, typically during the Commission's November meeting, to serve on standing committees for a one-year period effective January.

Ad Hoc Committees

- Ad hoc committees may be authorized by the Commission at any time to complete a project or address a specific policy issue

- The Commission Chair will appoint amenable Commissioners to serve on ad hoc committees for the period necessary to achieve the purpose of the committee

Meetings

Committee members and lead staff will determine the frequency of meetings. A phone-in option will be provided whenever possible to limit travel. Staff will secure meeting locations and coordinate travel for committee members as necessary.

Committees

The following committees have been authorized by the Commission:

- Executive Committee
 - Comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair, and Immediate Past Chair or most senior Commission member
- Legislative Committee
- Budget Committee
- Real Estate Committee

9. AGENCY DIRECTOR REVIEW

- The Commission will conduct a formal performance evaluation of the Director annually.

APPENDICIES:

- Compensation and Reimbursement Procedures –[Payables - Documents - Travel - All Documents](#)