



STATE OF WASHINGTON

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

March 2008

Item #19: State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning (SCORP)

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Presented By: Jim Eychaner, Senior Outdoor Resource Planner

Approved by the Director:

Proposed Action: Discussion and Direction

Summary

To be eligible to receive Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants, the state must submit a State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning (SCORP) document to the National Park Service every five years. The current SCORP expires in June 2008. Staff has developed a new draft SCORP document that requires public review and RCFB approval before it is submitted to the Governor and the National Park Service.

Staff Recommendation

Distribute the draft SCORP document for public review. We anticipate that public comment may result in changes to the draft. Staff will present a final version to the Board for consideration and action in June.

Background

At the January 2008 Board meeting, the staff presented a memo on the background of SCORP and several options for updating the document. This memo follows up on direction given by the Board at the January meeting.

Since 1964, the Recreation and Conservation Office has been responsible for developing a "state comprehensive outdoor recreation planning" document (SCORP). SCORP is a federal requirement for state participation in the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) federal pass-through grant program. The National Park



Service administers the LWCF, and provides limited funding and guidance for plan development. The state is able to write the document in a way that meets its needs.

Analysis

Staff has developed a draft SCORP document that emphasizes the roles and responsibilities of Washington State government in outdoor recreation. The document has three primary audiences: the Governor, the Office of Financial Management, and the National Park Service.

In particular, the draft SCORP document:

1. Identifies the four recreation estates by provider (state, local, federal, and private), identifying the primary role of each;
2. Explains the dual role of state government in outdoor recreation, first as a direct provider of resource recreation, and second as a supporter of local and federal agencies that help achieve recreation priorities;
3. Highlights recent trends in outdoor recreation, with a brief analysis of impacts to state and local government providers;
4. Analyzes elements currently measured for state government's Priorities of Government (POG) budgeting process and proposes modifications to the list of elements;
5. Proposes meaningful, measurable elements for the Governor's Government Management, Accountability and Performance (GMAP) system by working toward an acceptable level of service (LOS) model for state and local use;
6. Lists potential outputs and outcomes from the state's investment in outdoor recreation; and
7. Proposes to test the LOS model in the 2009- 2010 round of Land and Water Conservation Fund grants.

Next Steps

To meet the June 2008 deadline for filing SCORP with the National Park Service, the following actions, at minimum, are required:

1. Public review and comment during April and May, including a minimum of two public meetings to present the draft and invite comments.
2. Development of a proposed final SCORP document for Board action at its June 2008 meeting.
3. Transmittal of a recommended document to the Governor.
4. Submittal to the National Park Service.

Attachments

- A. Draft document: *The Role of State Government in Outdoor Recreation: Defining and Measuring Success*

The Role of State Government in Outdoor Recreation: Defining and Measuring Success

A State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning
(SCORP) Document

DRAFT

Executive Summary

This State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning document is developed to maintain Washington State's eligibility for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program dollars. Its audience is the National Park Service, the Governor, and the Office of Financial Management (OFM).

State government invests tens of millions of dollars each budget in recreation resources from the purchase of land for park use to the payroll of state agencies charged with managing these vital resources. In total dollars, the investment is impressive; in a percent of total state expenditures, the investment is quite modest.

However, there currently is no satisfactory way to measure the effectiveness of the state's investment in outdoor recreation. While anecdote abounds, the State has little data with which to explain "what's working and what's not." Measures used to estimate the impact of the investment are inadequate and inconsistent across state programs.

To help address this inadequacy, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) recommends consideration of a level of service (LOS) approach to measuring the state's investment in recreation. LOS is a well-understood concept in land use and urban planning.

RCO has developed two preliminary LOS tools, one addressing state agency sites and facilities, and one addressing local agency sites and facilities. By preliminary, we mean these are concepts that need additional discussion and field testing over time. In the LOS approach:

- State agencies are encouraged to emphasize sustainable access to state resources, measuring success by the degree to which resources are protected, with further emphasis on service area, facility condition, and public satisfaction.
- Local agencies are encouraged to emphasize individual active participation, balanced with facility capacity, service area, facility condition, and public satisfaction.

RCO recommends testing and refining the concept over time by adapting it to the management of LWCF grant program.

Introduction

People do not regard outdoor recreation and nature as frills: they are essential elements of social and personal identity, health, and economic well-being.

The State of Washington, consistent with this popular view, recognizes recreation as a priority of government.

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One: Roles and Responsibilities

State government's role in recreation is two-fold.

First, it is a direct manager of resource-based recreation. That is, recreation that depends on sustainable management of natural, cultural, historic, and other resources.

The particular emphasis of state agencies is in "resource recreation." Resource recreation focuses on use and enjoyment of natural, cultural, historic, and other resources. These resources include:

- Forests
- Ocean beaches
- Shorelines
- Fish and wildlife
- Historic sites and structures
- Cultural sites

For resource recreation to be sustained over time, resource protection must come first. Whether to prevent over-fishing or damage to the landscape caused by user-made trails, state agencies have a primary duty to preserve and protect resources, emphasizing sustainable recreation and access.

Other forms of recreation are supported by state agencies not typically considered to be in the "recreation business." State highways, for example, are important for popular forms of recreation such as motorized sightseeing and bicycling.

Second, the state has an interest in resource, service- and facility-based recreation provided by local, federal, and private providers.

Local agency recreation opportunities tend to be service- and facility-driven (recreation programming, ball fields, courts, pools, trails and paths). These activities represent active behaviors important to the priorities of state government:

Public health, supported by facilities that encourage physical activity, especially shared used trails, paths, or routes for walking and bicycling; and fields and courts for individual and team sports.¹

Personal mobility, supported by facilities such as shared used trails, paths, or routes for walking and bicycling.²

Local roads and streets are important for walking, jogging, and bicycling. Local schools are important providers of playground and ball field opportunities.

Federal government: resource recreation

The National Park Service and USDA Forest Service offer resource-oriented recreation opportunities similar to those offered by state agencies, but on a broader landscape. The large scale landscape offers the greatest contribution statewide to the open space backdrop of the state. This backdrop provides visual and aesthetic interest, watershed functions such as storm water retention and water filtration, and carbon sequestration, among other benefits.

Recreation opportunities on the federal landscape take many forms, from technical mountaineering to motorcycle riding, from camping to sight-seeing. Forest and park roads are important for sightseeing and other dispersed recreation.

In the past twenty years, State government has increasingly found itself paying for shortfalls in federal land management budgets. One informal estimate is that State grants pay for as much as half of the Forest Service trail maintenance budget in this state.

The private estate: individual to corporate

Whether a family gathering in the backyard, or a round at a members-only club golf course, recreation in all its forms is critical to the mental and physical health and well-being of the state's citizens.³

Commercial ventures offer recreation opportunities as a commodity in order to realize profit, whether in highly-developed water parks or convenient travel-oriented RV parking. Some private entities, especially large tract commercial forest land owners, often find they

¹ *Washington State Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan, Policy and Environmental Approaches*, Washington State Department of Health, June 2003

² Commuting use of the Burke-Gilman Trail in King County increased from 6% of all uses in 1985 to 32% of all uses in 2000, Puget Sound Regional Council November 2000 Puget Sound Trends Newsletter

³ See RCW 79A.25.005(1)

have a challenge to manage access, not provide recreation, in order to protect their lands, minimize costs, and maintain their ability to produce income.

Summary of the Recreation Estate⁴	
State-owned land	649,000 acres of land for outdoor recreation, habitat, or environmental protection. Another 3 million acres of land managed for resource production and extraction are often available for public use, subject to public use, intended or not, and access management.
Local government land	237,000 acres of land for outdoor recreation, habitat, or environmental protection.
Federal land	9,100,000 acres of land for outdoor recreation, habitat, or environmental protection.
Private land	Unknown number of acres, from private timberland to the backyard of a private home, supporting highly popular forms of recreation from hunting to picnicking.

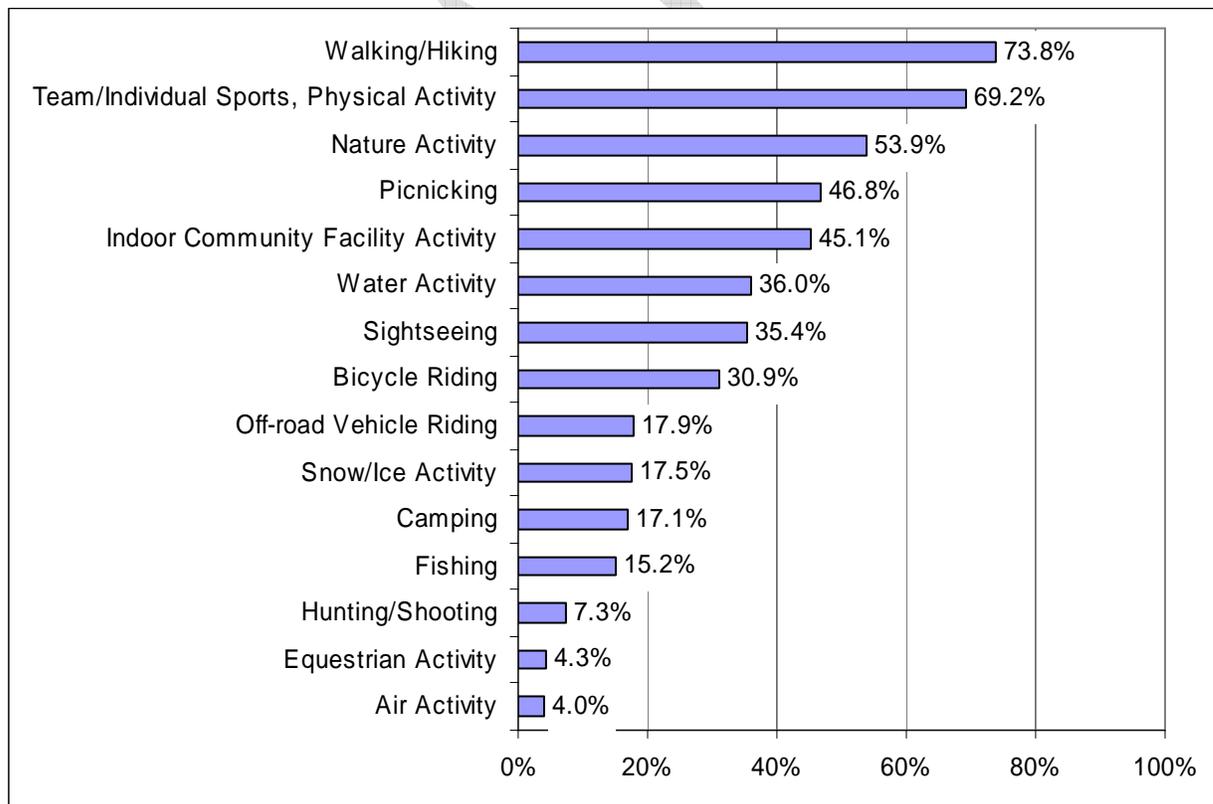
⁴ *The 1999 Public and Tribal Lands Inventory, Final Report*, December 2001, Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation

Two: A Summary of Recreation Trends and Implications for Managers

Current research has collected data on no less than 170 activities in 15 major categories, and new variations and specialization in many categories are appearing on a regular basis.⁵

Recreation reflects our changing population. A few decades ago, our residents expected to live in a rural state and enjoy the benefits of a resource-based economy. Today, the state's population lives "in town," participating in an economy that has become service and technology oriented. Recreation trends reflect these changes.

Ranking of Major Activity Areas by Average Month Participation, 2006-07



⁵ All data from 2006 *Outdoor Recreation Survey*, Clearwater Research, August 2007

Virtually all forms of outdoor recreation compete for land, facilities, and resources. Of the many activities measured, some have direct interest to state agency managers.

Camping

Camping is important to State Parks revenue. Current estimates indicate that tent camping is as popular as recreational vehicle (RV) camping. Up to 24% of the state's residents will tent camp in some form in the month of July. RV camping peaks in September: about 20% of residents report participation that month. Asked whether they would like to do more camping, children and young adults were most likely to say yes. RCO suggests that State Parks be cautious when considering development of park open spaces to provide an increased level of service for RV campers. More research is advised.

Fishing

This activity has direct fiscal impacts to Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Data estimates that 16% of the state's residents fish from a boat or at a bank. Fishing is done primarily by men. When asked about the desire to fish more, women were likely to say no. Related research done by the Oregon State Marine Board suggests that women are more likely to go boating if clean sanitary facilities are available. If WDFW wishes to increase fishing participation, the needs suggested by women should be investigated.

Hunting

Obviously important to WDFW income, hunting participation is 6% of state residents in peak season. Hunting is overwhelmingly practiced by men. License sales appear to be steady, but are shrinking as a percent of population. Consistent with national trends, increased participation is highly unlikely as the state's population continues a general rural-to-urban migration.

Observing/photographing nature

Nearly a third of the population (31%) reports participation, most prominent among adults 50-64. There is less participation among younger people. Women are more likely to participate than men. WDFW may wish to consider market research on how women might be willing to pay to support non-consumptive fish and wildlife activities.

Off-road vehicle use

13% of our residents report driving 4x4 vehicles for recreation, most of which takes place on roads. The data does not reveal whether the "4x4 vehicles" are SUVs or "street legal" off-road ready specialty vehicles. 7% of residents report using all terrain vehicles (ATVs), most use occurring on "rural trails," interpreted here as likely a combination of user-made and official trails, mostly on public lands. Off-road motorcycling has roughly 5-6% participation, predominantly male. There is a noticeable "spike" in the participation of teenage riders.

Signs of Stress on State Lands

Modest average participation numbers (in the teens and low twenties) mask the true impact of recreation on state lands, which usually happens “all at once,” especially on weekends. Some of the activities occurring on state lands are challenging to manage, while others are conflicting with each other or with the primary purpose of resource management.

- State Parks require reservations months ahead of peak season.
- The extent of user-made trails on DNR-managed land may be 250% or more than the official inventory. As DNR’s practice has been to adapt as many user-made trail miles into its official system as possible, the potential future budget impact is large.
- WDFW’s wildlife recreation lands often see unintended undesirable uses, from poaching to garbage dumping.

The on-the-ground stress has been summarized by the Office of Financial Management (*Priorities of Government*, November 2006): “A lack of resources devoted to an on-the-ground management presence at state-owned recreation sites has resulted in unquantified but potentially significant levels of inappropriate public use and impacts. Examples include informal trails and camp sites on trust and wildlife lands that degrade trust assets, create environmental damage, and, in extreme cases, result in deaths and injuries to the recreationists themselves.”

Other activities, many of which demand high-cost specialized facilities, are of interest to state priorities such as health and mobility, and are managed by local agencies.

Walking

Walking is hugely popular, with 67% resident participation, common to all ages, in all regions. Most walking happens on the “transportation” system: sidewalks, streets, roads. People prefer to walk unpaved paths and sidewalks. When planning trails or paths, it is of interest to know that research done for the Washington Department of Transportation found that the public will support new facilities when they offer a new safe place to walk.⁶ Most walks are short: averaging about 1.9 miles.⁷

Sports

Playground use was measured under the “sport” category, and turned out to be the number one “sport” statewide. Playgrounds host 34% of the population, with girls most likely to use them. Roughly the same numbers of people use playgrounds at parks as at schools. More typical “sports” participation include swimming at a pool (23% statewide participation), basketball (16%), soccer (13%), baseball (9%), football (7%), and softball 5%. Field sports tend to compete with one another for available facilities, with apparent demand especially high for practice. This explains why the appearance of a relatively “new” sport with low participation (for example, lacrosse, with roughly 2% statewide participation) will have a relatively high impact on local facilities and programs.

Cycling

About 1/3 of the state’s residents report that they bicycle at least once per year. Most riding is done by kids 10 and younger, and most riding takes place on roads and streets. Only about 4% ride on forest or mountain trails, and less than 1% tour. A “typical” bicycle ride is about 6-1/2 miles.⁸

Confirming the state’s interest in local recreation

Recreation offers more than play. Recreation as physical activity has a direct contribution public health. Walking and bicycling contributes to personal mobility.

It is the State’s interest to encourage local activity by supporting local facilities. Support of parks and sports facilities is obvious. Less obvious is that support for school facilities results in increased opportunities for physical activity. A state policy requiring publicly-funded school facilities to be made available for after school use is worth exploration. Likewise, encouraging walking and cycling *on and to* local facilities (e.g., a safe route to school that uses a grade-separated trail) addresses multiple priorities and public benefits.

⁶ *Public Attitude Survey of Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning*, Gilmore Research, May 2007

⁷ Same citation.

⁸ Same citation.

Three: State Government's Investment in Outdoor Recreation

State government invests hundreds of millions of dollars every budget in natural resources and recreation. In total dollars, the investment is impressive; in a percent of total state expenditures, the investment is quite modest and declining.

OPERATING AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURES BY FUNCTION ⁹									
GENERAL FUND									
\$ in Millions									
	Biennium								
	1987-89	1989-91	1991-93	1993-95	1995-97	1997-99	1999-01	2001-03	2003-05
Natural Resources and Recreation	\$300.7	433.6	389.8	400.1	389.0	412.0	479.7	562.6	575.1
Total General Fund Expenditures	\$13,060.6	16,399.1	20,206.5	22,516.4	24,302.5	26,488.5	29,867.0	32,762.2	35,063.6
Natural Resources and Recreation as a Percent of Total Expenditures	2.3%	2.6%	1.9%	1.77%	1.6%	1.55%	1.6%	1.7%	1.6%

The question raised is the return on the investment. To what extent are state priorities, goals, and objectives being met?

⁹ 2005 Data Book, Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2005

Making Investment Decisions: the Operating Budget

While recreation has changed significantly over the last few decades, most models used to measure, plan for, or invest in recreation sites and facilities have not changed.

State and federal programs continue to assume that models such as supply-demand have relevance, while in reality it is likely they have become obsolete.¹⁰

In recent biennia, the State's Office of Financial Management (OFM) has used a process called Priorities of Government (POG) to develop the State operating budget.¹¹ One of the priorities of government is "cultural and recreational opportunities." When considering operating budget proposals for recreation, OFM uses the following measures:

- Per capita participation in cultural and recreational activities.
- Equity of participation in cultural and recreational activities.
- Percentage of users satisfied with their experience of cultural and recreational opportunities.
- Dollar value of volunteers' time, and private dollars donated to culture/recreation.

OFM and other participants have acknowledged that the measures are inadequate to reflect the complexity of access and recreation issues.

A closer look may help to assess whether the measures are adequate or if additional or entirely different measures are needed.

¹⁰ "Replacing Conventional Park Level of Service (LOS) Analysis with the 'Composite Values' Approach," Teresa Penbrooke, *Practicing Planner*, American Institute of Certified Planners, Fall 2007

¹¹ Office of Financial Management Internet site <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/budget/pog/default.htm> August 2007

Per Capita Participation

As with data on any subject, there is more than one way to rank the activities in which Washington residents participate.

One way is to list the top 20 activities ranked by peak month prevalence. That is, in which month did most activity take place?

Top 20 Recreation Activities in 2006, Ranked by Peak Month Participation¹²

Activity	Population		Population	
	%*	±	N*	±
Picnic, BBQ, or cookout	78.4	7.0	4,927,720	1,071,600
Walking without a pet	67.2	9.8	4,224,902	1,083,286
Swimming or wading at a beach	58.4	9.1	3,675,934	973,508
Sightseeing	57.7	10.0	3,635,404	953,693
Flower or vegetable gardening	52.9	10.6	3,327,473	911,012
Swimming in a pool	52.0	10.1	3,277,856	947,997
Walking with a pet	47.4	10.4	2,980,256	954,741
Playground recreation	42.6	10.6	2,677,139	900,686
Bicycle riding	41.6	9.6	2,618,693	807,427
Social event (indoor, community center)	39.1	9.0	2,460,898	725,266
Observing or photographing wildlife or nature	39.0	8.9	2,453,243	714,497
Jogging or running	37.0	9.4	2,324,377	754,403
Aerobics or fitness activities at a facility (indoor)	34.8	13.0	2,183,204	1,085,696
Beachcombing	34.0	9.0	2,136,092	680,029
Sledding, inner tubing, other snow play	31.8	9.1	2,003,681	727,453
Hiking	30.9	9.1	1,942,715	693,370
Motor boating	26.7	9.1	1,676,747	686,082
Weight conditioning at a facility (indoor)	26.7	9.2	1,676,998	674,971
Camping with a car or motorcycle	24.6	9.3	1,548,265	700,654
Basketball	24.5	8.6	1,541,914	638,554

* Based on peak month data, therefore the lower bound estimate of participants in 2006.

¹² *Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office 2006 Outdoor Recreation Survey*, Clearwater Research, July 2007

Another way to rank activities is by average month participation. This measure evens out the variation of prevalence in the monthly samples and gives a sense of the relative level of the activity among Washington residents for the year as a whole.

Top 20 Recreation Activities in 2006, Ranked by Average Month Participation¹³

Activity	Population		Population	
	%*	±	N*	±
Walking without a pet	55.2	2.9	3,473,870	211,925
Picnic, BBQ, or cookout	48.5	2.9	3,050,969	219,437
Sightseeing	42.7	2.9	2,686,008	199,168
Walking with a pet	36.4	2.8	2,290,621	197,488
Playground recreation	34.3	2.9	2,157,113	207,155
Bicycle riding	32.6	2.9	2,049,743	203,620
Flower or vegetable gardening	32.1	2.7	2,020,627	175,769
Observing or photographing wildlife or nature	31.2	2.7	1,961,441	171,944
Social event	30.9	2.7	1,942,400	180,175
Jogging or running	29.7	2.7	1,869,554	186,576
Aerobics or fitness activities at a facility (indoor)	24.9	2.6	1,562,726	177,519
Swimming in a pool	23.1	2.6	1,452,095	172,217
Hiking	20.5	2.4	1,288,746	155,902
Beachcombing	19.9	2.4	1,250,857	154,484
Swimming or wading at a beach	18.6	2.3	1,169,260	152,685
Weight conditioning at a facility (indoor)	18.2	2.3	1,146,819	147,094
Basketball	16.8	2.2	1,058,079	147,109
Gathering or collecting things in nature setting	16.2	2.2	1,018,397	139,733
Class or instruction (indoor)	13.3	2.1	833,466	132,370
Soccer	13.2	2.1	826,925	138,917

* Monthly average in 2006.

¹³ Ibid

A third way to look at the activities that Washington residents participated in during 2006 is to count the number of times that an individual member of the population engaged in an activity.

Top 20 Recreation Activities in 2006, Ranked by Activity Frequency¹⁴

Activity	Activity	
	N	±
Walking without a pet	3,473,870	211,925
Observing or photographing wildlife or nature	3,050,969	219,437
Walking with a pet	2,686,008	199,168
Jogging or running	2,290,621	197,488
Playground recreation	2,157,113	207,155
Bicycle riding	2,049,743	203,620
Flower or vegetable gardening	2,020,627	175,769
Aerobics or other fitness activity at a facility (indoor)	1,961,441	171,944
Picnic, BBQ, or cookout	1,942,400	180,175
Sightseeing	1,869,554	186,576
Weight conditioning with equipment at a facility (indoor)	1,562,726	177,519
Hiking	1,452,095	172,217
Swimming	1,288,746	155,902
Gathering or collecting things in nature setting	1,250,857	154,484
Basketball	1,169,260	152,685
4-wheel drive vehicle	1,146,819	147,094
Activity center	1,058,079	147,109
Class or instruction (indoor)	1,018,397	139,733
Swimming or wading at a beach	833,466	132,370
Social event (indoor)	826,925	138,917

¹⁴ Ibid

Finally, it is possible to measure the desire of Washington residents to participate in activities in the future; that is, a measure of current preference for those activities.

Top 20 Recreation Activities in 2006, Ranked by Preference¹⁵

Activity	Population		Population	
	%*	±	N*	±
Sightseeing – in general	47.7	2.9	2,996,377	215,786
Picnicking – in general	39.4	2.9	2,478,575	200,292
Hiking	34.2	2.8	2,153,345	189,614
Tent camping with a car or motorcycle	33.4	2.9	2,097,926	205,270
Swimming or wading at beach	28.4	2.6	1,788,283	176,045
Sightseeing – specific type	27.3	2.6	1,715,422	170,698
Bicycle riding – in general	27.2	2.7	1,707,780	186,155
Observing or photographing wildlife or nature	25.8	2.5	1,623,609	162,870
Picnic, BBQ, or cookout – location not specifically designated	25.7	2.6	1,619,010	173,482
Walking and hiking – in general	25.7	2.6	1,618,522	173,875
Picnic, BBQ, or cookout – site specifically designated	25.6	2.7	1,608,425	182,823
Flower or vegetable gardening	25.3	2.6	1,591,943	171,205
Bicycle riding	24.8	2.6	1,561,060	175,593
Walking without a pet	24.8	2.4	1,558,496	155,704
Social event (indoor)	24.5	2.5	1,541,056	161,304
Skiing	24.0	2.6	1,511,369	169,348
Equestrian activities – in general	23.8	2.6	1,494,916	172,043
Motor boating	23.6	2.5	1,483,166	162,572
Camping – in general	21.9	2.5	1,378,868	164,859
Beachcombing	21.7	2.4	1,366,781	159,511

* Monthly average in 2006.

¹⁵ Ibid

Discussion

Participation alone is an inadequate indicator for making investment decisions. Not all recreation behavior is in the best interests of the State. If the Department of Health's goals for physical activity are considered, for example, there is probably no compelling State interest in encouraging people to picnic. On the other hand, Health's physical activity goals suggest there is a compelling interest in encouraging people to walk, ride bicycles, use play grounds, and participate in sports.

Therefore, the "per capita participation" measure should be refined. The measure should be better focused to consider recreation's contribution to multiple State priorities. From the OFM report *Priorities of Government*, at least two state goals are relevant and measurable:

1. From Improve the Health of Washingtonians: "Invest in expanding community and business based pilot projects to improve *wellness activities* and expand our basic understanding of best practices [emphasis added]."
2. From Improve Statewide Mobility of People, Goods, and Services: "Increase share of ridership of transit and other alternative travel mode. Increase non-motorized trips in urban areas."

The measure of per capita participation should focus on activities contributing to these goals. "Wellness activities" include recreational opportunities such as walking, hiking, bicycling, play ground activities, and field and court sports.¹⁶ Non-motorized trips include walking and bicycling.

¹⁶ *Washington State Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan*, Department of Health, 2003

Equity of Participation (Geographic, Demographic, Socioeconomic)

Access sites and facilities are distributed statewide. Boating facilities, for example, appear to be adequately distributed on a geographic basis.¹⁷ Free and low cost facilities from school play grounds to sidewalks are found in virtually every community.

The Office of Financial Management (OFM) has evidence that recreation participation is directly related to income and level of education: both higher income and higher levels of education appear to mean result in higher levels of recreational participation.

Participation in Recreational Activities by Income¹⁸	
Income	Recreational Participation
\$0-\$4,999	27%
\$5,000-\$14,999	21%
\$15,000-\$24,999	27%
\$25,000-\$34,999	38%
\$35,000-\$49,999	47%
\$50,000-\$74,999	55%
\$75,000-\$99,999	64%
\$100,000-\$149,000	75%
\$150,000 and over	78%

Similarly, there appears to be a direct relationship between education and recreation participation. Presumably, a higher level of education tends to result in a higher income.

Participation in Recreational Activities by Education¹⁹	
Education	Recreational Participation
< High School	16%
High School Graduate	34%
Some College	46%
Bachelor's Degree	61%
Graduate or Professional Degree	64%

¹⁷ *Washington Boater Needs Assessment*, Responsive Management, 2007

¹⁸ *Washington State Population Survey*, Office of Financial Management, 2006

¹⁹ Ibid

The same relationship among income, education, and participation has been noted in other states.²⁰

Participation by race/ethnicity is somewhat uncertain. While OFM data indicates lower “recreational” participation among Black/African Americans and Hispanics generally, the 2006 statewide survey by Clearwater Research found few specific activities with significant racial/ethnic differences (skiing, RV camping, ATV riding).²¹ The differences may be in the methods used by the two surveys.

Discussion

Most public agencies address the question of income: access to public recreation sites and facilities is predominantly free or at low cost. Local recreation programs offer discounted rates or other means to encourage people of all incomes and backgrounds to participate.

Research into barriers to recreation participation often identifies work schedules and family obligations, as well as lack of facilities close to home.²² It is known that that an urban park’s proximity to residential areas has a direct impact on actual use,²³ and that a key barrier to participation for low income people in our state is lack of transportation to parks and recreation sites.²⁴ Therefore, site and facility location becomes a critical issue, one that needs to be measured as a partial surrogate for “equity.” Ideally, sites and facilities would be close to where people live, and would be accessible via public transportation, foot, or bicycle.

Service area analysis with GIS is an obvious approach to this issue.

²⁰ *Research/Findings*, Issue 54, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, October 2005

²¹ *Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office 2006 Outdoor Recreation Survey*, Clearwater Research, July 2007

²² *A Look at Leisure*, “Desired Activities and Barriers to Participation,” Alberta Recreation and Parks, March 1990

²³ *Park Use and Physical Activity in a Sample of Public Parks in the City of Los Angeles*, Rand Corporation, 2006

²⁴ *Voices of Washington: Public Opinion on Outdoor Recreation and Habitat Issues*, State of Washington Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, November 1995

Users Satisfied With Their Experiences

A survey of Washington residents concerning attitudes about State Parks found:

Washington residents are, for the most part, satisfied with Washington State Parks: about half are *very* satisfied, and another third are *somewhat* satisfied. Results are similar regarding satisfaction with State Park employees and State Park facilities.²⁵

In a similar result, a report of a survey of residents of counties bordering Puget Sound found

A majority of Puget Sound area residents are satisfied with current public access points to Puget Sound, with 57% saying they are satisfied with the number of parks and public access points to Puget Sound, and 39% saying they would prefer more parks and other public access points. There is consensus agreement among majorities of all subgroups that there are a satisfactory number of parks and access points for the public to Puget Sound.²⁶

Local area surveys find similar levels of satisfaction. A recreation study done for Chelan County Public Utility District asked about satisfaction with existing developed sites and concluded:

Visitors are generally very satisfied with the recreation sites in the Project area (DES and Howe Consulting, Inc., 2001d). During on-site interviews, visitors were asked to rate the site they were visiting on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most satisfied (Appendix D)... All seven of the recreation sites were given very high ratings, with five of the parks given average ratings of 9 or above. Orondo River Park and Entiat Park were just below 9, with ratings of 8.7 and 8.5, respectively.²⁷

Discussion

Of note is that each survey focused on designated parks and sites. However, many popular forms of recreation do not for the most part take place in a park. The participation data presented above demonstrates that fact without question. There is some data associated about satisfaction recreation outside of designated parks and sites for a few activities such as walking, cycling, sightseeing, and nature recreation.

In 2003, the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC)²⁸ contracted with the Department of Health to have walking-specific questions added to its Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS²⁹).

²⁵ *Washington State Parks Centennial 2013 Survey*, Responsive Management, under contract to Washington State Parks, 2006

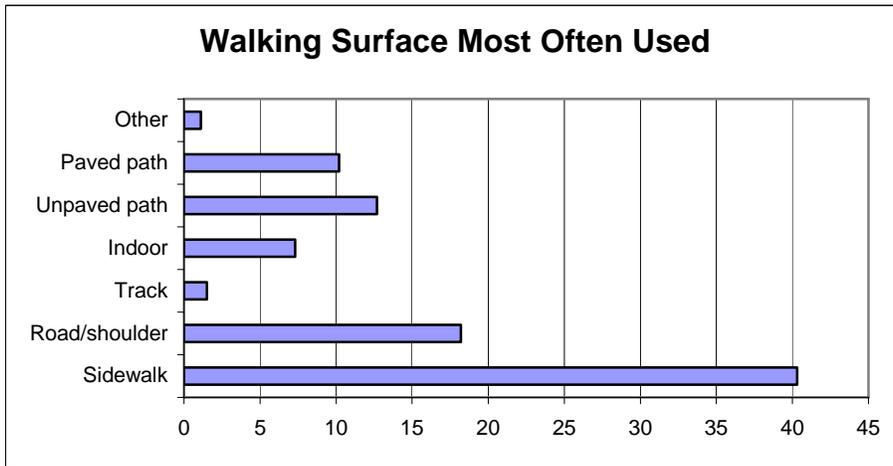
²⁶ Puget Sound Residents Survey, Moore Information, May 2006, conducted for the Puget Sound Partnership

²⁷ Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment (Final) for Hydropower License Rocky Reach Hydroelectric Project FERC Project No. 2145, Chelan County PUD, June 2004

²⁸ Renamed the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) in July 2007

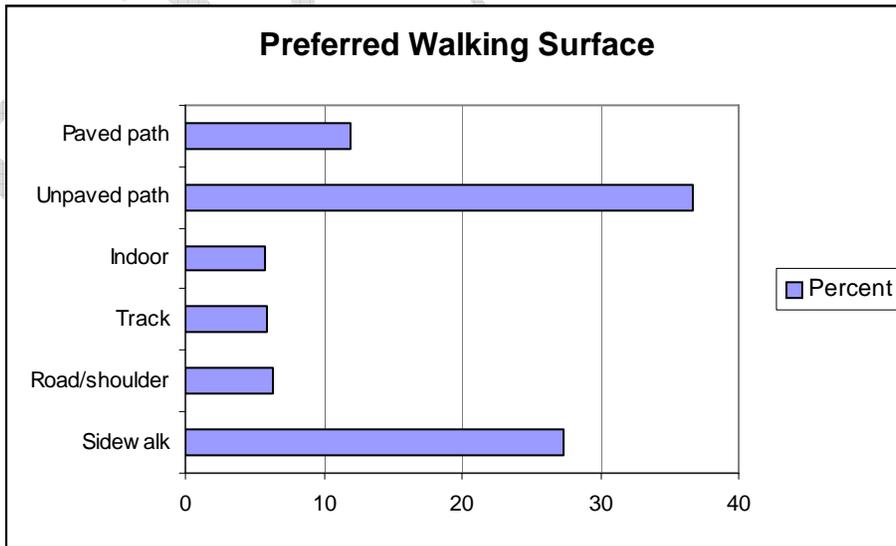
BRFSS participants were asked about physical activity, both work and recreation related. Those respondents who reported walking as a recreational activity were asked further questions: surface walked on most often, and the surface preferred for walking.

The BRFSS data on the walking surface most often used confirms the widespread use of transportation facilities for recreation purposes.



From BRFSS data provided to IAC by DOH, August 2004

An additional BRFSS question was the surface *preferred* for walking. The results are shown in the following graph.



From BRFSS data provided to IAC by DOH, August 2004

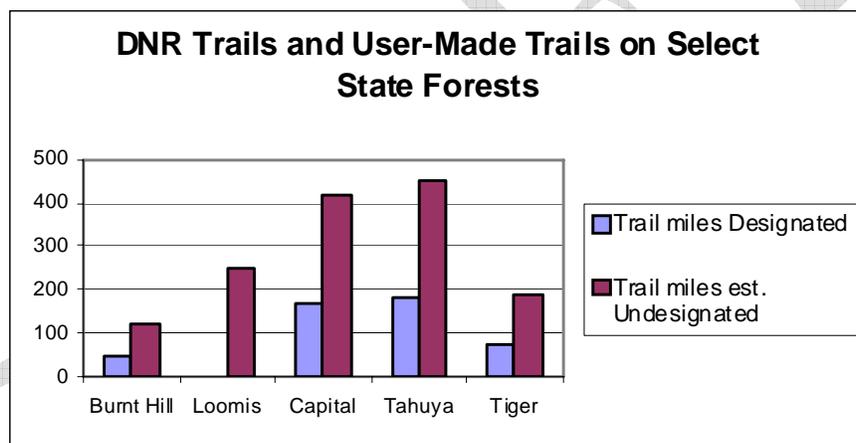
²⁹ The BRFSS collects information from adults on health behaviors and preventive practices related to several leading causes of death. The BRFSS is used by all states, the District of Columbia, and three territories, through funds disbursed by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and supplemented by state program funds.

The high level of preference for the unpaved path may not be an indicator of either satisfaction or dissatisfaction with walking on sidewalks and road shoulders, but it may be reasonably interpreted as an indicator of unmet demand.

Satisfaction with available opportunity can be inferred from public behavior. Finding little or no acceptable inventory, the public will sometimes create its own.

State forests managed by the Department of Natural Resources are popular destinations for trail uses of all kinds. Statewide, Mountain bike riders, equestrians, and ORV users have become adept at finding and adapting to undeveloped areas, both public and private. The phenomenon of the “user-made” trail is the most visible evidence of this adaptation.

One estimate is that the ratio of designated trail miles to undesignated trails miles on DNR property at about 1 to 2-1/2.³⁰ This ratio is probably conservative. If accurate, the estimate means that DNR has at minimum 3,000 miles of user-made trail on its property statewide.



The user-made inventory represents the potential for significant impact on DNR land management. When in the context of the agency’s past practice to incorporate user-made trails into its official system, the user-made inventory could represent an unmet agency need for a “trail budget” 250% higher than actual.

Discussion

The relationship between satisfaction and actual participation cannot be adequately explained with the data available.

- Hundreds of thousands of people are walking on less than desirable facilities, but they continue to walk.

³⁰ RCO estimate provided to DNR, September 2006

- The extent of user-made trails on DNR property likely indicates dissatisfaction with the official trail inventory. The dissatisfaction could be with the proximity of trails, the physical characteristics of the trail system (poor location, poor tread), the number of miles (too few), the trail experience (too challenging, not challenging enough), or a combination of these factors. We simply do not know.

In both examples, however, the measure of user satisfaction does not consider the institutional capacity of facility providers, and it does not take resource protection needs into account.

In any event, user satisfaction is an important measure, but it must be balanced with other measures including the needs of land and facility managers.

DRAFT

Dollar value of volunteers' time, and private dollars donated to culture/recreation

According to State Parks:

Volunteers play a vital role in sustaining the treasure that is Washington state parks, providing more than 275,000 hours of service each year (the equivalent of 145 full-time employees). Helping hands are needed everywhere for a wide variety of short- and long-term projects, providing interesting and rewarding volunteer opportunities for individuals, couples, schools, families, corporations, citizen groups and service organizations.³¹

Data is not available from other state agencies, but it may be reasonable to estimate that DNR and WDFW both enjoy a similar level of support.

Discussion

To estimate the value of the value of volunteer time in grant applications, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) use the hourly rates determined by the Employment Security Department. Rates for King County range from \$8.60 per hour for dishwashing to \$90.55 per hour for the services of a chief executive.³² At these rates, 275,000 hours represents a dollar value of between a low of \$2,365,000 and a high of \$24,901,250. The unskilled labor rate of \$13 an hour may be a suitable average, resulting in a volunteer value of \$3,575,000. This compares to Parks' estimated capital improvement backlog of about \$292,000,000.³³

While volunteerism is to be valued and encouraged, it appears not to be an adequate measure for recreation. For every volunteer able to contribute a day's worth of labor, no doubt there are countless others who do not have the time, who believe they have "contributed" through taxes and fees, or who simply have no interest.

³¹ <http://www.parks.wa.gov/volunteer.asp> August 2007

³² Workforce Explorer, Washington State Employment Security Office, August 2007

³³ State Parks 2010: A Capital Facilities Condition Report, December 2001

Recommendation

- Per capita participation in cultural and recreational activities.
Keep this measure, but focus by measuring those activities that support additional priorities of government: specifically, those that contribute to physical activity and to personal mobility.
- Equity of participation in cultural and recreational activities.
Keep this measure, but use GIS analysis to determine service area (proximity and access) as a key indicator representing “equity.”
- Percentage of users satisfied with their experience of cultural and recreational opportunities.
Keep this measure, and combine with other elements.
- Dollar value of volunteers’ time, and private dollars donated to culture/recreation.
Eliminate this measure. Replace it with a measure of sustainability: that is, how well state agencies are achieving resource protection goals while managing recreation access.

Nowhere do the priorities of government relate access and recreation directly to natural resource protection. This connection needs to be made. The state is an important provider of resource recreation. Sustainable access, in which resource needs are addressed first, must be measured.

In addition, measures should be considered for

- An assessment of facility conditions based on design standards and safety conditions.
- Agency operation/maintenance goals.
- Access by public transportation, foot, and bicycle.

Finally, it is important to treat state lands and facilities differently from local lands and facilities. Though there is occasional “overlap” between state and local sites (for example, a very small number of State Parks offer sports fields), core missions are different.

Criteria for the Capital Budget

Most capital funding for additional State recreation land comes from the sale of state bonds. Bond funds are distributed through two primary methods: competitive grant processes managed by the Recreation and Conservation Office, and the trust land transfer program managed by the Department of Natural Resources.

Distribution of Bond Revenue for Acquisition of Recreation and Habitat Lands by Method 1990-2005 ³⁴			
	Trust Land Transfer	WWRP*	Other
DNR	79%	18%	3%
State Parks	59%	28%	13%
WDFW	0%	77%	23%
<small>“Other” includes federal funds, direct budget appropriations, and other sources *Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, managed by RCO under RCW 79A.15</small>			

Trust Land Transfer (TLT)

Criteria for identifying property for transfer include “...low potential for income production due to factors such as steep, unstable slopes, critical fish and wildlife habitat, public use demands, environmental and social concerns, and other issues that complicate income production from certain trust lands. The DNR identifies a list of such properties each biennium for consideration by the Board of Natural Resources and the Legislature as candidates for the TLT program. One key criterion is that candidate properties, in aggregate, have a high timber to land value to ensure the greater part of the appropriation is deposited directly to fund school construction in the current biennium.”³⁵

³⁴ *Toward a Coordination Strategy for Habitat and Land Acquisitions in Washington State*, RCO, 2005

³⁵ *Trust Land Transfer Program 2007-2009*, Department of Natural Resources

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

The criteria for distributing WWRP funds will vary by program sub-category. Some criteria are prescribed by statute. A cursory review of a few WWRP sub-categories selection of shows the following.

WWRP Sub-category	Criteria	Statute
Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community support - Immediacy of threat to the site - Linkage between communities - Linkage between trails - Existing or potential usage - Consistency with an existing local land use plan or a regional or statewide recreational or resource plan - Availability of water access or views - Enhancement of wildlife habitat - Scenic values of the site 	RCW 79A.15.070
Water Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community support - Distance from similar water access opportunities - Immediacy of threat to the site - Diversity of possible recreational uses - Public demand in the area 	RCW 79A.15.070
Local Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need - Scope - Project design - Immediacy of threat - Site Suitability - Expansion/renovation - Project support - Cost efficiencies - GMA preference - Proximity to human populations 	Not in statute

A comparison can be made to the Youth Recreational Facilities (YRF) program managed by Community, Trade, and Economic Development (CTED). YRF pays for youth recreational facilities, both indoor and outdoor. Its project selection criteria include:

- Percent of project funds raised.
- Design work started.
- Professionally prepared fundraising feasibility plan completed.
- Professionally prepared project feasibility study completed.
- Project readiness.
- Organizational capacity.
- Project results.
- Community need.
- Stakeholder participation.
- “High-performance” building (bonus points)

Other state grant programs distribute state capital funds for recreation facilities. Among them are the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA), Boating Facilities Program (BFP), and the Non-Highway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program. Each of course has its own set of criteria for evaluating project selection. There are commonalities among the criteria, including:

- Need
- Site suitability
- Design
- Community or public support
- Growth Management Preference
- Proximity to people

Of the criteria, “proximity to people” most closely reflects criteria used for operating budget guidance.

Discussion

Criteria for state operating and capital budgets for the most part do not use the same measures. The relationship between the two is indirect at best. As one example, “equity of participation” is not directly measured when considering capital investment whether through grants or general fund budgeting.

If the state’s interest is to fund the best projects that help meet priorities of government, grant criteria should address measures used for priorities of government.

Recommendation

Criteria for the capital budget should at minimum reflect the criteria for the operating budget.

Four: Better Investments through Improved Criteria and Indicators

The State has an interest in accurate measures of its investment in access and recreation sites and facilities in terms of both outputs and outcomes. Put simply, the state needs to be able to answer the question of how many parks and trails are enough. The state also needs to better understand the outcomes that result from providing parks and trails.

Currently, there is no satisfactory way to measure the effectiveness of the state's investment in local parks and recreation sites and facilities. While anecdote abounds, the State has little data with which to explain "what's working and what's not." Traditional recreation planning models from "supply-demand" to "facilities per thousand" have been tested and found, at least individually, to be inadequate.³⁶

A concept well understood in land use planning is "level of service." Level of service measures a can be adapted to a variety of public services and infrastructure types. Recreation facilities and access sites are no exception.

RCO recommends consideration of a level of service (LOS) approach to measuring the state's investment in recreation. The measure is based on a grading system, similar to those used for transportation LOS and school achievement: A being the best, and E being the worst. Presumably, a lower score argues for the need for more investment resources in order to achieve a target level of service. State agencies or individual communities are free to determine their target.

RCO has developed two preliminary LOS tools, one addressing state agency sites and facilities, and one addressing local agency sites and facilities. By preliminary, we mean these are concepts that need additional discussion and field testing over time.

The current initial approach to a statewide LOS is comprised of three sets of guidelines. This multiple guideline approach reflects public input that just one indicator of need is not enough to adequately capture the complex nature of determining and providing access and recreation opportunities. As a result, the three sets of LOS guidelines help address the complexity of properly identifying and quantifying access and recreation site and facility needs. It also acknowledges the needs of agencies with differing planning capabilities and resources, as well as the need for a "sliding scale" methodology.

1. The "baseline" is intended as a minimum required measure. For state agencies, the baseline is resource protection. For local agencies, the baseline is per capita participation in activities that support priorities of government.
2. The "enhanced" criteria are meant to be added to the baseline if GIS resources are available.

³⁶ See "Methods Used," below.

- The “in depth” criteria are also to be added if the agency in question has the resources available.

An agency using the LOS tool could use an average of all items or simply score individual items to assess current level.

Proposed for State Agencies

The proposed LOS for state agency sites and facilities begins with the assumption that the state’s primary role is in resource recreation. Resource recreation demands sufficient stewardship of resources to allow sustainable access and recreation.

BASELINE CRITERIA: Resource Protection

Indicators	LOS Ratings				
	A	B	C	D	E
Resource Protection	The agency meets over 70% of its resource protection goals while allowing access	The agency meets up to 70% of its resource protection goals while allowing access	The agency meets up to 60% of its resource protection goals while allowing access	The agency meets over 50% of its resource protection goals while allowing access	The agency meets less than 50% of its resource protection goals while allowing access

RCO recommends that state agencies use existing processes and available data to self-assess this indicator. We further recommend that “resource protection” must quantify the potentially significant levels of inappropriate public use and impacts. Examples of items that are appropriate to measure include miles of informal (user-made) trails, and the number and extent of user-made (dispersed) camp sites. Additional measurable impacts include introduction of invasive species, incidents and amounts of vandalism, theft, illegal drug sites, poaching, and garbage dumping. These impacts have been identified by Office of Financial Management (OFM) as those that “...degrade trust assets, create environmental damage, and, in extreme cases, result in deaths and injuries to the recreationists themselves.”

ENHANCED CRITERIA: Service Area/Population-Based (Equity)

	A	B	C	D	E
Distance to parks, trails, access sites	66-100% of population within 1 hour of a state site	51-65% of population within 1 hour of a state site	36-50% of population within 1 hour of a state site	21-35% of population within 1 hour of a state site	≤ 20% of population within 1 hour of a state site

The service area distance assumes access via private motor vehicle. Access via other modes of transportation is addressed below (Access).

IN-DEPTH CRITERIA: Function-Based Guidelines

	A	B	C	D	E
Agency-based assessment	81-100% of facilities are fully functional per their specific design and safety guidelines	61-80% of facilities are fully functional per their specific design and safety guidelines	41-60% of facilities are fully functional per their specific design and safety guidelines	21-40% of facilities are fully functional per their specific design and safety guidelines	20% of facilities are fully functional per their specific design and safety guidelines
Public satisfaction	66-100% of users satisfied with the condition (including facility condition, cleanliness, etc.) of existing outdoor access and recreation facilities	51-65% of users satisfied with the condition of existing outdoor access and recreation facilities	36-50% of users satisfied with the condition of existing outdoor access and recreation facilities	35-49% of users satisfied with the condition of existing outdoor access and recreation facilities	Less than 35% of users satisfied with the condition of existing outdoor access and recreation facilities
Operations and Maintenance	On average, routine operations and maintenance funded at 81-100% of annual need	On average, routine operations and maintenance funded at 61-80% of annual need	On average, routine operations and maintenance funded at 41-60% of annual need	On average, routine operations and maintenance funded at 21-40% of annual need	On average, routine operations and maintenance funded 0-20% of annual need
Access	66-100% of facilities may be accessed safely via foot, bicycle, or public transportation	Up to 51-65% of facilities may be accessed safely via foot, bicycle, or public transportation	Up to 36-50% of facilities may be accessed safely via foot, bicycle, or public transportation	Up to 21-35% of facilities may be accessed safely via foot, bicycle, or public transportation	0-20% of facilities may be reached via foot, bicycle, or public transportation

State natural resource agencies currently use distinct facility condition measures. Agreement among the agencies, perhaps including the Department of General Administration (GA) and OFM, on access and recreation facility condition measures is needed.

Proposed for Local Agencies

Participation, or demand for specific types of park and recreation facilities, forms the first set of statewide LOS guidelines. Participation was chosen because it can be measured quantitatively, is a good indicator of actual demand for recreation facilities, and can be used to estimate future needs.

BASELINE criteria: Per Capita Participation

Indicators	LOS Ratings				
	A	B	C	D	E
Individual Active Participation	66-100% of population participates in one or more active outdoor activities	51-65% of population participates in one or more active outdoor activities	41-50% of population participates in one or more active outdoor activities	31-40% of population routinely participates in one or more active outdoor activities	≤ 30% of population routinely participates in one or more active outdoor activities
Facility Capacity: Activity-Specific Participation	Existing facilities meet 76-100% of activity-specific demand	Existing facilities meet 61-75% of activity-specific demand	Existing facilities meet 46-60% of activity-specific demand	Existing facilities meet 31-45% of activity-specific demand	Existing facilities meet ≤ 30% of activity-specific demand

Even the smallest community with the fewest resources could use the “individual active participation” criterion, simply by using statewide participation data available from RCO. RCO’s participation data is both standardized and statistically defensible by regions enabling more accurate comparisons across statewide communities.

ENHANCED CRITERIA: Service Area/Population-Based (Equity)

	A	B	C	D	E
Urban Park/Trail	76-100% of population within ½ mile of a neighborhood park/trail	61-75% of population within ½ mile of a neighborhood park/trail	46-60% of population within ½ mile of a neighborhood park/trail	31-45% of population within ½ mile of a neighborhood park/trail	≤ 30% of population within ½ mile of a neighborhood park/trail
County Park/Trail	76-100% of population within 1-1/2 miles of a county park/trail	61-75% of population within 1-1/2 miles of a county park/trail	46-60% of population within 1-1/2 miles of a county park/trail	31-45% of population within 1-1/2 miles of a county park/trail	≤ 30% of population within 1-1/2 miles of a county park/trail
Regional Park/Trail	76-100% of population within 25 miles of a regional park/trail	61-75% of population within 25 miles of a regional park/trail	46-60% of population within 25 miles of a regional park/trail	31-45% of population within 25 miles of a regional park/trail	≤ 30% of population within 25 miles of a regional park/trail

The enhanced criteria would use the power of GIS technology to graphically analyze and display service areas (which approximate travel distances) and the population served within the established service areas. There is compelling evidence that a person’s proximity to a park or recreation facility greatly determines their potential use of the park/recreation facility. As such, service areas are an effective means of encouraging equitable distribution (or the provision of links/paths to) parks and recreation facilities.

Public school playgrounds and ball fields should be considered for inclusion in service area inventories. For communities planning under the Growth Management Act, we recommend comparing inventory in existing city limits to inventory in urban growth boundaries to help estimate future needs.

IN-DEPTH ENHANCEMENT: Function-Based Guidelines

	A	B	C	D	E
Agency-based Assessment	81-100% of facilities are fully functional per their specific design and safety guidelines (based on manager assessment)	61-80% of facilities are fully functional per their specific design and safety guidelines	41-60% of facilities are fully functional per their specific design and safety guidelines	21-40% of facilities are fully functional per their specific design and safety guidelines	≤ 20% of facilities are fully functional per their specific design and safety guidelines
Public satisfaction	66-100% of population satisfied with the condition (including facility condition, cleanliness, etc.) of existing outdoor park and recreation facilities	51-65% of population satisfied with the condition of existing outdoor park and recreation facilities	36-50% of population satisfied with the condition of existing outdoor park and recreation facilities	26-35% of population satisfied with the condition of existing outdoor park and recreation facilities	≤ 25% of population satisfied with the condition of existing outdoor park and recreation facilities
Amount of open space meets community expectations	66-100% of the community satisfied with amount of open space	51-65% of the community satisfied with amount of open space	36-50% of the community satisfied with amount of open space	26-35% of the community satisfied with amount of open space	≤ 25% of the community satisfied with amount of open space
Operations and Maintenance	On average, routine operations and maintenance funded at 80-100% of annual need (does not include major capital development)	On average, routine operations and maintenance funded at 61-80% of annual need	On average, routine operations and maintenance funded at 41-60% of annual need	On average, routine operations and maintenance funded at 21-40% of annual need	On average, routine operations and maintenance funded at ≤ 20% of annual need
Access	80-100% of facilities may be accessed safely via foot, bicycle, or public transportation	Up to 61-80% of facilities may be accessed safely via foot, bicycle, or public transportation	Up to 41-60% of facilities may be accessed safely via foot, bicycle, or public transportation	Up to 21-40% of facilities may be accessed safely via foot, bicycle, or public transportation	Up to ≤ 20% of facilities may be reached via foot, bicycle, or public transportation

Function-based guidelines focus on the function, as opposed to the provision, of specific types of park and recreation facilities. These guidelines are intended to provide direction regarding the ongoing operation of park and recreation facilities, the adequate funding of operations and maintenance activities, and the provision of safe, convenient access to park and recreation facilities.

Use of the Criteria

Access and recreation providers have historically found it difficult to “tell their story” when competing for money, whether in grant competition or at budget time.

The recreation level of service is intended as a tool for better communication of access and recreation needs. RCO’s recommendation is to test the LOS at the local and state level. Tests could include:

- State funding for local communities willing to use its guidance in developing access and recreation plans.
- Use LOS as an optional way to answer “Need” questions posed in grant evaluation instruments.
- Use as a discussion tool in the state’s operating budget process.

Outputs from the Criteria

If adopted and implemented, the level of service tool can not only help the state and communities to objectively assess how well their trails and parks are functioning, but it can also help in determining with more precision what additional investments are necessary to improve service, with obvious implications for budgets and funding decisions.

At some point, full use of the criteria could help guide state funding decisions. It could be decided that communities with lower LOS scores would be given priority in state grant processes.

Use of uniform criteria would help to explain and clarify “need” statewide. Acceptance of uniform criteria would advance public understanding of the obstacles and opportunities faced by access and recreation providers.

As the in-depth criteria emphasize the partnership between providers and the public, we should hear better communication and see better results “on the ground.”

Potential Outcomes

A fully functioning system of public lands and facilities would provide more than just an opportunity to recreate in a quality setting. Other outcomes, all measurable, may be reasonably anticipated.

Of a system of lands, parks, access sites, and trails

- Increased tourism
- Attracting businesses
- Attracting retirees
- Enhancing real estate values of adjacent properties
- Increased retail sales
- Decrease in rates of obesity, cost savings for preventing obesity-related conditions (heart disease, diabetes)

In addition to the above, the State Park System can enjoy

- Better informed citizens: state natural heritage, geography, history
- Better preservation of historic and cultural sites.

DNR could realize

- Lower cost of managing trust lands due to less vandalism to harvest sites, less garbage dumping, fewer drug labs
- Less exposure to liability-related law suits

WDFW sites and facilities

- Increased sale of licenses
- Less illegal behavior
- Less exposure to liability-related law suits

Five: An Additional Strategic Option

It is in the best interests of the state to maximize or leverage the use of non-state funds and resources. A long-standing program with a rich history is the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program.

LWCF should be considered as the program used for testing the LOS concept. For example, the LWCF evaluation criteria could be modified to use LOS in place of the “need” question.

Whether LOS is tested in LWCF, we recommend the following priorities for the LWCF program in the next five years:

1. Individual active participation. “Active” means those forms of recreation that rely predominantly on human muscles and includes walking, sports of all kinds, cycling, and other activities that help people achieve currently accepted recommendations for physical activity levels. *Reason:* walking, sports, and cycling are among the most popular activities statewide. It is in the state’s best interests to leverage the public’s willingness to be active in order to meet physical activity (and potentially health) goals.
2. Stewardship of existing sites and facilities, especially renovation to protect previous LWCF investment. *Reason:* to respond to focus group participants and others concerned about the condition of recreation sites and facilities including but not limited to State Parks. Demand for renovation dollars is increasing, especially for sites developed in the early years of LWCF. LWCF is an important tool to address more general stewardship needs, especially for local and State parks.
3. The integration of low-impact non-consumptive human activities with natural settings. *Reasons:* high participation in “nature activities,” and to respond to focus group participants who suggested that human activities can be compatible with wildlife. Some state programs address the integration of habitat and compatible recreation, and LWCF is an important supplement to these state programs.

The open project selection process is in place and is easily adaptable to these priorities.³⁷

³⁷ RCO manual 15 would be modified.

Technical note: Federal rules for the development of state comprehensive outdoor recreation plans require the inclusion of a wetlands priority component.³⁸ Washington State law assigns primary responsibility for wetland issues to the Washington State Department of Ecology.³⁹ Ecology is guided by the “antidegradation policy” found in Chapter 173-201A-070 WAC.⁴⁰ Ecology works closely with the Pacific Coast Joint Venture⁴¹ to identify wetlands acquisition projects as well as funding sources such as WWRP grants.

DRAFT

³⁸ Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants Manual (C630.1)

³⁹ Ecology derives its authority from federal and state laws, including the Clean Water Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the State Water Pollution Control Act (90.48 RCW) and the Shoreline Management Act (90.58 RCW).

⁴⁰ See Ecology publication 97-112 How Ecology Regulates *Wetlands* 1999

⁴¹ The Joint Venture is a non-government organization working to help implement the North American Wetlands Conservation Act in cooperation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Appendix: Methods Used

Level of Service Development

In its 2005-06 session, the Legislature passed ESSB6384. This bill directed the Recreation and Conservation Office to develop “recommendations for a statewide approach to a recreation level of service for active local and regional active recreation facilities, including indicators with which to measure progress in achieving level of service objectives.”

RCO understood “level of service” requires consideration of a number of factors including but not limited to service area, accessibility, level and quality of development, regional context or connectivity, and response to public demand.

We assembled an advisory team to help us clarify terms, identify issues, and recommend approaches. The team members were

Larry Otos, Washington Parks and Recreation Association,
Speed Fitzhugh, recreation specialist, Avista Utilities
Nancy Craig, land use and recreation manager, Grant County PUD
Grant Griffin, recreation planner, Pierce County
Greg Jones, citizen volunteer, Wenatchee
Linda Steinman, Washington State Office of Financial Management

In addition, we had outreach assistance from Leonard Bauer, Managing Director of Growth Management Services, Washington Community, Trade and Economic Development; and Brit Kramer, Executive Director of the Washington Recreation and Parks Association

RCO retained the services of EDAW, an international consulting firm. EDAW tested a number of LOS options using public information available from six local communities in Washington. The test communities were Spokane County, Winthrop, Wenatchee, Snohomish County, Tacoma, and Aberdeen. The options tested were:

1. Population ratio (“facilities per thousand,” as originally published by the National Recreation and Park Association)
2. Service area (GIS-based)
3. Community-driven, based on typical public meetings (“those who speak up”)
4. Demand-based, relying on participation data (“actual play”)
5. Service area/population ratio, using GIS technology
6. Community-Driven/demand based, combined
7. Preferred service area, attempting to recognize the relationship between distance and use

For example, data from the Town of Winthrop was compared to the NRPA “facilities per thousand” guidelines. It was found that NRPA guidelines suggested exactly zero facilities for that community. In reality, Winthrop enjoys parks, trails, and ball fields in addition to nearby state and federal sites and facilities.

In December 2006, RCO held a series of workshops to explain the options, to present test results, and to get public comment on a possible preferred option. Eight workshops were held, two each in Spokane, Wenatchee, Everett, Tacoma, and Aberdeen.

Additional presentations and workshops were held with the Washington Recreation and Park Association in April 2007, November 2007, and February 2008.

Participation Data Collection

In 2005, the RCO contracted with Clearwater to conduct the 2006 ORS. The survey would gather original, objective, statistically defensible data regarding participation in outdoor recreational activities in Washington.

The RCO had established several criteria for the ORS results. The collection method had to be based on a statistically valid sample that would support defensible conclusions for the state as a whole and for each of ten regions. The statewide survey results had to have a precision of plus or minus 5% at the 95% confidence level. Finally, the method had to minimize bias in the survey results.

To meet those criteria, Clearwater used a telephone survey method based on a stratified random-digit-dialing (RDD) sample design. The design would yield a minimum of 3,000 interviews with randomly selected residents of Washington. Compared with other sample frames, the RDD approach has the benefit of high coverage of the target population. Compared with other data collection modes, computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) has the benefits of relatively quick sample processing, repeated and timely contacts to complete an interview, and a high degree of accuracy and completeness in recording respondents' answers. Finally, stratification of the sample would, while minimizing cost, achieve equitable precision in the survey estimates for each tourism region.

Clearwater used a repeated cross-sectional design for sampling. The sample was stratified proportionately by month and disproportionately by tourism region. That approach collected the same number of interviews in each of the ten Washington tourism regions each month over a 12-month field period. The design provided comparable precision (confidence intervals) for the survey results in each tourism region and for each season.

Clearwater designed a CATI questionnaire that collected data comparable to the data reported in 2002, which permitted analysis of changes in outdoor recreation participation. This included statistically defensible results for activities in the 14 major categories. The instrumentation permitted analysis of current participation by season of the year; frequency or activity occasion; setting or facility type used; and demographic characteristics, including age, gender, ethnicity, and income. Finally, the design measured recreation preferences, as distinct from actual participation.

A complete report is available from RCO.

Public Input on Criteria for Priorities of Government

Governor Gregoire met with Washington residents during a series of town halls in 2006.⁴² The town halls were held in Spokane, Vancouver, Pasco, Puyallup and Everett. Residents were invited to “share their thoughts on the issues most important to them.” Structured around the issue list of Priorities of Government, the town halls gave people the chance to describe top issues and to suggest ways to measure progress on the issues. In each of the town hall meetings, recreation and cultural opportunities were the public’s lowest priority. When asked about ways to measure success, the replies were:

- Percentage of residents by regional and demographics, who feel they have good access to desirable recreational activities
- Percentage of state managed cultural and recreational assets judged to be in good or excellent condition
- Percentage of user fees actually used for those activities
- Per capita participation in cultural and recreational activities

⁴² News release, Office of the Governor, June 26, 2006