

STATE PARKS' 2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission



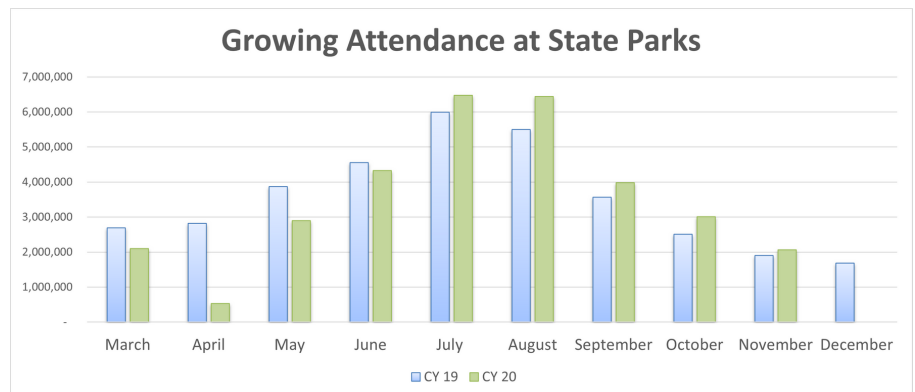
Large crowd at Lake Chelan State Park, summer 2020

We learned this past year how fundamentally important our state parks are to the public's health and wellbeing. During the COVID pandemic, the people of Washington sought and found refuge in our state's public lands. As a result, we saw record attendance in many parks across our state.

Keeping parks open and safe

With more and more people visiting parks, our system has experienced increased wear and tear on our facilities and natural resources. We anticipate increased attendance will continue in the coming years. In fact, we expect more than 43 million visitors in FY 23, more than any other state or federal recreational land agency.

In order to keep our public lands open, safe and well cared for, we need more investment of tax support in the park system. This includes funding to support **additional staffing** at the parks to support ongoing **maintenance** and **services** to visitors.



Economic contributions

State Parks is an economic driver for the state and a major contributor to tourism. The spending associated with recreational experiences and activities at state parks has contributed to the state's economy since the park system's founding in 1913.

In a 2015 the Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation study found visits to state parks generated:

- \$1.5 billion in annual spending related to state park visits
- \$64 million in state tax revenue directly to the State General Fund
- 14,000 jobs

Governor and legislative support

We ask the Legislature to support Gov. Insee's budget proposals for State Parks. It's not only a smart investment in our economy, but important to the lives of the people of Washington.

Essential components of the Commission's operating budget request:

- Preventive maintenance request for 22 FTE and \$6.9 million
- Visitor services request for 61 FTEs and \$10.5 million
- Provide \$4 million in one-time General Fund support to rebuild the fund balance of the parks Renewal and Stewardship Account after COVID related park closures
- Increase the No Child Left Inside grant program from \$1.5 million to \$2 million



Operating budget request also includes funding for:

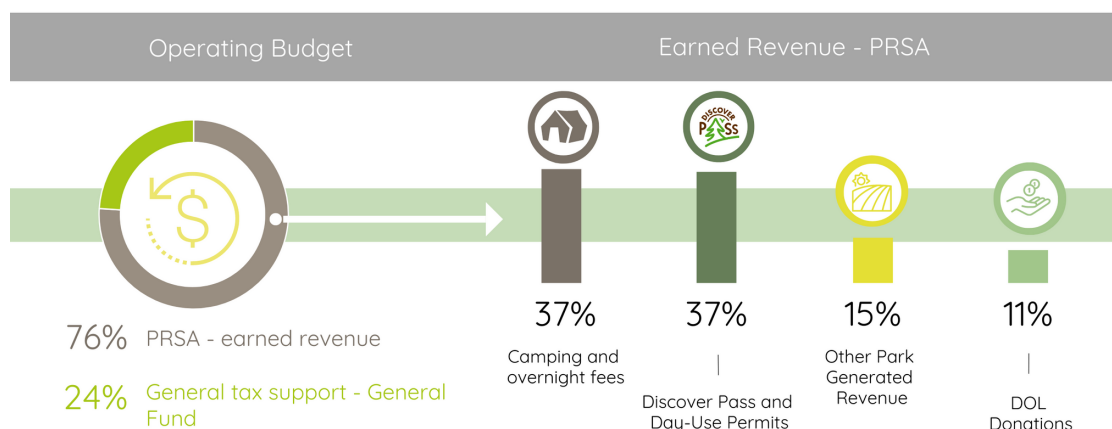
- An agency Diversity, Equity and Inclusion coordinator
- Work to update our Seashore Conservation area survey and related plans
- Safety protocols for ongoing cleaning and sanitation measures

Governor's 21-23 Capital budget

- Provides \$104 million in new capital project funding which will improve the facility condition index and provide necessary capacity for park visitors
- Funding includes \$12 million in "shovel ready" paving and comfort station projects to improve park properties and stimulate local economies across the state
- The budget accelerates funding for the first new full-service park in over 2 decades. The Nisqually State Park is being designed and constructed in cooperation with the Nisqually Indian Tribe.

Park's Funding Model

State Parks relies heavily on earned revenue from overnight accommodations and day-use permits like the Discover Pass. Less than a quarter of Parks' operating budget comes from the state General Fund.



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