



WASHINGTON STATE
Recreation and
Conservation Office

2018-2022



Recreation and Conservation Plan for Washington State

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





Strategic Direction

WHY CREATE A RECREATION AND CONSERVATION PLAN?

The 2018-2022 Recreation and Conservation Plan for Washington State provides a strategic direction for how local, regional, state, and federal agencies, together with tribal governments, and private and non-profit partners, can assure the effective and adequate provision of outdoor recreation and conservation to meet the needs of Washington State residents.

It lays the foundation and context that will help guide decisions and determine how to invest limited funding on the most important recreation and conservation needs.

The governor-appointed Recreation and Conservation Funding Board developed a Unifying Strategy with goals to implement this plan.

ROLE IN AGENCY PLANNING

This plan is intended to meet requirements of the National Park Service to create a state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan to maintain eligibility for the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Federal Highways Administration also requires states to use a state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan or trails plan to guide funding in the Recreational Trails Program. The priorities in the plan also serve to guide other federal, state and local outdoor recreation and conservation throughout Washington State.





Washington State's excellent interconnected systems of parks, trails, waterways, and natural areas equitably provide for diverse recreation pursuits while conserving critical landscapes for the benefit of people, plants, and animals that live here.

This statewide system is supported by public and private partners and is a driving factor in Washington State's economic success, human and ecological health, and overall quality of life.

As the state's population grows by 2 million people (or 26 percent) by 2040 and lands develop to accommodate them, the space for recreation and conservation must also expand and diversify to meet the needs of the current and future populations. While more than 90 percent of Washingtonians recreate outside today, this plan lays the groundwork to ensure the next generation has the same opportunities.

Outdoor recreation contributes \$21.6 billion to the state economy each year. The natural beauty of Washington State is one of the key factors that attract businesses here. Investing in parks, trails, and conservation lands to keep pace with growth is essential to keeping our economic prospects high.





PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION AND CONSERVATION

The goal of this plan is to identify the near and long-term priorities to meet the needs of residents for outdoor recreation and conservation in Washington State. Priorities may be broad or narrow in scope. Priorities also may be general for the state or specifically focused on certain recreation and conservation needs. Specific actions are identified within each priority to set a course for achieving it. The plan includes five priority areas to meet these needs, including:

- 1. Sustain and Grow the Legacy of Parks, Trails, and Conservation Lands**
- 2. Improve Equity of Parks, Trails, and Conservation Lands**
- 3. Meet the Needs of Youth**
- 4. Plan for Culturally Relevant Parks and Trails to Meet Changing Demographics**
- 5. Assert Recreation and Conservation as a Vital Public Service**



Sustain Our Legacy



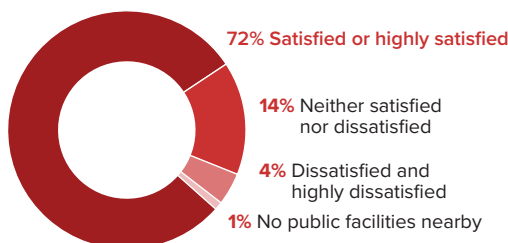
SUSTAIN AND GROW THE LEGACY OF PARKS, TRAILS, AND CONSERVATION LANDS

Washington has a wide range of parks, trails, and publicly accessible conservation areas that support the diverse recreation opportunities that residents seek. Whether it's walking at a favorite local park or camping at a state park, there is a wealth of recreation opportunities in Washington. This breadth and beauty of our recreation and conservation system did not happen overnight. Only through the foresight of yesterday's leaders, did Washingtonians gain their park and open space systems.

Leaders today face the hard challenge of keeping existing recreation and conservation areas and facilities open, safe and enjoyable for all. Some areas need modification to meet the interests of today's population. Park leaders cite the difficulty of sustaining existing areas while expanding and building new facilities to keep up with a growing population.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ➔ Renovate facilities to meet today's recreation needs
- ➔ Pursue regional solutions to recreation and conservation
- ➔ Build partnerships to leverage better results
- ➔ Include recreation needs when planning for growth
- ➔ Maintain residents' level of satisfaction in recreation opportunities



In the general population survey in 2017, people were asked to rate their satisfaction with the public facilities and opportunities in the last 12 months.

SUCCESS STORY



Lake Sammamish State Park Renovation

As one of the few urban State Parks, Lake Sammamish provides day-use recreation opportunities for a wide-range of activities including, swimming, fishing, boating, paddling, hiking, biking, and others. With a dense population surrounding the park and critical habitat for an endangered species within the park boundary, renovation of the park needed to balance multiple benefits for people and fish. First opened in 1952, Lake Sammamish State Park is being renovated to accommodate more people, provide new amenities, and improve salmon habitat.

Improve Equity



IMPROVE EQUITY OF PARKS, TRAILS, AND CONSERVATION LANDS

Recreation and conservation areas are a community's assets. In this regard, parks, trails, and conservation lands should be available to the community equitably and benefit all. The National Recreation and Park Association's position on social equity states:

"Our nation's public parks and recreation services should be equally accessible and available to all people regardless of income level, ethnicity, gender, ability, or age. Public parks, recreation services and recreation programs including the maintenance, safety, and accessibility of parks and facilities, should be provided on an equitable basis to all citizens of communities served by public agencies."

Improving equity is also a strategy to improve health. A recent study found that easy access to parks, adequate park distribution, activities that increase physical activities, and well-maintained

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ➔ Locate and build recreation facilities for underserved populations
- ➔ Connect more people to popular activities
- ➔ Provide experiences where people go most
- ➔ Enhance community health and safety

parks all contribute to a community's health. The lack of one or more of these parameters can be an indicator of an underserved community from a health perspective.

PARTICIPATION RATES FOR TOP 12 CATEGORIES

94% Walking	48% Outdoor sports
89% Nature activities	46% Water-based activities (freshwater)
82% Leisure activities at parks	45% Camping
68% Swimming	33% Trending activities
67% Sightseeing activities	30% Snow and ice activities
61% Hiking	28% Bicycling

SUCCESS STORY



Meadow Crest

The Meadow Crest Accessible Playground is located in one of the most diverse and disadvantaged areas of Renton. In addition to hundreds of hours of volunteer labor, nearly \$600,000 in donations, and two grants, the balance was funded jointly by the City of Renton and Renton School District. The nature-themed playground is accessible for children and people of all ages and abilities to encourage imagination and interaction, and provides the opportunity to improve cognitive and motor play skills.

Get Youth Outside



MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUTH

Youth (people under 18) are getting outside contrary to popular belief and Washington youth are no exception. Most youth are walking, playing at a park, trying new or trending activities, fishing in freshwater, exploring nature, and riding bikes. Other activities of interest to youth are activities in freshwater such as boating and paddling, fishing in saltwater, and target shooting, hiking, outdoor sports, and riding off-road vehicles.

The rates of participation in Washington are markedly different from those found nationally. Findings by The Outdoor Foundation show much lower participation rates for the ages 6-18. The participation results for youth fishing and hunting are significantly lower in national studies than in Washington State. A study by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in 2011 found 24 percent of youth ages 5 to 16 went fishing and 4 percent went

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ➔ Provide a variety of activities for youth
- ➔ Build and renovate athletic facilities for youth
- ➔ Support programs for youth

hunting compared to 77 and 44 percent, respectively, in Washington State. More analysis is needed to understand why youth in Washington State are participating in outdoor recreation at higher rates than nationally.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION RATES FOR TOP 12 CATEGORIES

88% Walking	66% Freshwater-based activities (not swimming)
78% Leisure in parks	62% Target shooting
77% Trending activities	57% Hiking
77% Fishing in freshwater	57% Outdoor sports
75% Nature-based activities	57% Off-road vehicle riding
74% Bicycling	53% Fishing in saltwater

SUCCESS STORY



Senator Henry M. Jackson Park Renovation

Senator Henry M. Jackson Park is located in an area of Everett, WA, with one of the lowest median incomes in the area. The City's renovation project transformed an underutilized and dated park to meet the needs of a diverse neighborhood. The renovated park increased access for families to gather, build relationships, and create a neighborhood support network. It includes a large, child-inspired playground, community gardens, walking paths, and basketball courts.

Address Changing Demographics



PLAN FOR CULTURALLY RELEVANT PARKS AND TRAILS TO MEET CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

Washington's population is expected to grow by 2 million people by 2040 leading to more congestion and competition for recreation resources. The increase in population is expected to be mostly from people moving into the state.

Coupled with the increase in population is an increase in diversity. Between 2010-2040, the percent of people of color are expected to increase from 27 percent to 44 percent. With the cultural change in the population, preferred recreational activities also will change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ➔ Create new and diverse opportunities
- ➔ Accommodate the active senior population

In addition, the population is aging. By 2030, more than one of every five Washingtonians will be 65 years old or older. By 2040, there will be more seniors than youth. This age group is becoming increasingly fit and they will seek different recreational experiences.

TOP ACTIVITIES BY RACE

African-Americans

- 84%** Walking park/trail
- 61%** Relaxing/reading
- 57%** Outdoor concert/event

Asian

- 87%** Walking park/trail
- 58%** Outdoor concert/event
- 57%** Visit beach/tide pool

Hispanics

- 91%** Walking park/trail
- 65%** Playing
- 62%** Outdoor concert/event

White

- 84%** Walking park/trail
- 68%** Visiting rivers/streams
- 61%** Visit beach/tide pool

SUCCESS STORY



Kiwanis Methow Park

The South Wenatchee neighborhood of Wenatchee, WA, has historically been an underserved community, but is currently experiencing a revival and civic engagement. Kiwanis Methow Park's current recreation amenities do not serve the South Wenatchee neighborhood's needs. Through grant funding, the City and the Trust for Public Land are partnering with the community to transform the park into a center for health, recreation, arts, and culture that reflects the community's Latino roots and agricultural heritage.

Assert as a Vital Public Service



ASSERT RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AS A VITAL PUBLIC SERVICE

Outdoor recreation contributes to a strong economy and is a public investment like other public services such as transportation, utilities, and emergency services. Some communities have realized the multiple benefits that recreation and conservation lands provide and have dedicated



RECOMMENDATIONS

- ➔ Promote the outdoor recreation economy
- ➔ Promote the benefits of outdoor recreation and conservation
- ➔ Improve communication tools
- ➔ Maintain mapped inventory
- ➔ Maintain funding and identify funding gaps

funds to support them. For example, the City of Spokane dedicates 8 percent of general fund revenue to parks and recreation. During challenging funding times, it is important for the recreation and conservation community to articulate clearly the importance of park and recreation services locally, regionally, and statewide.

SUCCESS STORY



Ferry County Rail Trail

Ferry County and the Ferry County Rail Trail Partnership are working together to develop a 25+ mile recreational corridor between the towns of Republic and Danville, WA. The trail route, which runs adjacent to the Kettle River, Curlew Lake and agricultural areas, boasts some of the most scenic beauty in Washington. The trail is expected to function as an economic stimulus to Ferry County as it draws tourists to the area to ride or hike the trail. Through significant private donations, thousands of hours of volunteer donations, and broad community support, 15+ miles of trail have already been constructed.



Unifying Strategy

PHOTO BY RUSS CARMACK

This Unifying Strategy is the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's goals for addressing priorities and recommendations in the 2018-2022 plan during the next 5 years. The unifying strategy is one of the ways the board works to meet its statutory mission and its strategic plan (see the Recreation and Conservation Office's website for more information on the board).

PERCENT OF FUNDING FROM THE RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE BY ORGANIZATION

ORGANIZATION	PERCENT OF FUNDING
Other state agencies	20%
Tribes	18%
Land trusts	11%
Federal agencies	7%
Other nonprofits	6%
Local government	4%

PHOTO BY RUSS CARMACK



The Unifying Strategy implements the priorities and recommendations from the 2018-2022 Recreation and Conservation Plan. Eight goals implement different priorities in the plan.

Use the chart below to identify which goals in the strategy link to priorities in the plan.



UNIFYING STRATEGY GOALS



Build, renovate and maintain parks and trails



Distribute funds equitably across the state



Conserve habitat



Improve program outreach



Support state plans, strategies, and initiatives



Changes to the grant programs



Maintain and improve mapped inventory



Implement actions from: State Trails Plan, NOVA Program Plan, State Athletic Facilities Plan, & Boating Programs Plan



Learn More!

Please visit <http://www.rco.wa.gov/StateRecPlans/> to see a special message from Governor Jay Inslee about outdoor recreation in Washington, as well as a full list of agencies, organizations, and individuals who contributed and made the 2018-2022 plan possible.

The 2018-2022 plan also includes these specific recreation plans:

- **State Athletic Facilities Plan**
A plan for athletic facilities for adults and youth
- **State Trails Plan**
A plan for walking, hiking, biking, and riding trails
- **Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Plan**
A plan for the Nonhighway and Off-road Activities grants
- **Recreational Boating Plan**
A plan for recreational boating grants

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