

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
Draft: Centennial Horizon Vision Plan
Shaping the Future of Recreation, Conservation and Preservation

Working Document: Creating the Vision
March 2008

Principle 1: Save Oregon's Special Places

Oregon contains a rich mosaic of natural, historic, and scenic places that must be conserved and expanded for future generations.

Specific strategies:

- Revitalize Oregon's historic places and stimulate activities that will foster their continued use, care and conservation.
- Expand and reform protection of Oregon's ocean, beaches and rocky shore habitat.
- Strengthen all native habitats in response to a changing environment.
- Protect important vistas, viewpoints and scenic resources.
- Secure and promote key outstanding habitats, historic places and scenic settings.
- Acquire for OPRD, or cause to be in public ownership, key landscapes for protection, connection and restoration.
- Adopt and teach "best management" practices for Oregon's natural, cultural and scenic settings.
- Establish benchmarks for site revitalization.
- Integrate cultural, natural and scenic resource management plans to best protect and preserve the landscape.
- Manage State Park properties to ensure overall health, to protect the beauty and enhance the benefits of the ecosystem, and to protect/restore rare, sensitive, threatened and endangered species.
- Maintain and enhance watersheds and ecosystems through collaboration with other agencies, non-profit organizations and park neighbors.
- Acquire and restore marginal lands that have the potential to be first-class resource areas.
- Gather baseline data for natural, cultural and scenic resources in State Park properties.

Principle 2: Connect People to Meaningful Outdoor Experiences

Oregon statutes mandate that Oregonians and visitors be assured adequate outdoor recreation resources for the physical, spiritual, cultural and scientific benefits that outdoor recreation resources afford. OPRD does this in two ways: supplying outdoor recreation resources that are the responsibility of the state, and leading others to work cooperatively to meet total recreation needs in Oregon.

Specific strategies:

- Offer outdoor recreation experiences at OPRD properties that foster lifelong appreciation of Oregon's special and beautiful places.
- Make the needs of youth, an aging population, an increasingly diverse population and a population suffering from physical inactivity important park development, acquisition and recreation program priorities.
- Purchase and build, or support others in purchasing and building new types of parks that will meet future visitor needs.
- Increase the number of young visitors and visits by families by providing programs that offer first-hand experiences in nature.
- Base future planning, design and management decisions on the desired recreational/visitor experience for each specific OPRD property.
- Bring citizens into close contact with the parks through volunteer programs.
- Build closer connections to the public so they understand the direct connection between parks and personal health.
- Build closer connections with the public so they respect parks and commit to keeping the parks healthy.
- Enhance quality experiences for visitors, participants, partners and future sponsors.
- Increase visitation to lesser known, but inspiring places during the peak season and to popular summer parks in the quiet seasons through marketing and incentives.
- Support Oregon higher education research and education opportunities that relate to park properties or programs.

Principle 3: Take the Long View – Make Parks Last Forever

OPRD practices sustainable natural resource management that balances the needs of today's outdoor enthusiasts with the need to pass on a healthy resource system to future generations.

Specific Strategies:

- Showcase exemplary environmental practices for public education.
- Increase use of alternative energy and fuels in parks.
- Serve as a national model for energy efficiency.
- Reduce OPRD's environmental impacts at all operational levels.
- Meet or exceed national green standards for new facilities, all departments and resources.
- Systematically increase sustainable measures in all areas of OPRD to meet or exceed state standards.
- Periodically review sustainable practices to ensure successful implementation, continued use and consistent application throughout OPRD.
- Become self-sufficient by maximizing ability to reduce consumptive costs (energy, native plants, recycling, etc.).

Principle 4: Strengthen Oregonian’s Connection with their Land

OPRD is a platform for reaching out to Oregon’s citizens, recreation and resource providers and visitors to enhance everyone’s understanding and enjoyment of the outdoors. Interpretation is a primary avenue for this outreach as well as other programs that can inspire people to use and appreciate parks, heritage, trails and waterways.

Specific Strategies:

- Increase visitors’ familiarity and association with nature, Oregon’s history, and sustainable practices through targeted programs and partnerships.
- Inspire citizens to use park resources – provide comprehensive information about trails and paddling opportunities, expand and connect trails and water trails, and teach people outdoor skills.
- Create an interactive dialogue with Oregonians through web-based and other discussion forums.
- Use interpretation to bring parks alive.
- Design and deliver powerful interpretive experiences that create enduring memories, appreciation and learning about Oregon and its special places.
- Promote a regional approach to outreach and interpretation. Foster a sense of renewed ownership.
- Engage the education community to use parks as laboratories to advance education objectives.
- Increase interest through school involvement programs (K-12.)
- Create curriculum packets and offer them to school districts, youth organizations and service clubs, etc.
- Explore methods to increase school visitation and interaction at State Park properties.
- Foster enhanced internal and external communications that will eliminate barriers to an open dialogue.
- Connect people to Oregon’s landscape.
- Inspire people to make recreation choices that preserve and enhance resources.
- Create an experimental and immersive heritage experience.

Principle 5: Build the State Park System with Purpose and Vision

Oregon's system of parks is emblematic of Oregonian's outdoor heritage. OPRD properties can serve as gateways to a destination or can be destinations within themselves. Linking OPRD properties to those of others will offer seamless and borderless outdoor opportunities on a regional and local level.

Specific Strategies:

- Provide first-class park facilities, including trails, camping, day-use, boating and interpretive media and programs.
- Continue to maintain and improve first-class OPRD facilities including campgrounds, trails, roads, buildings and the unseen infrastructure that visitors count on for an enjoyable experience.
- Create a series of legacy projects that will mark this time period in OPRD's history.
- Promote the ethic that parks are vital to every community and Oregon's way of life.
- Promote the ethic that parks are for all people (physical, cultural, income level) and that we all have a civic responsibility to provide and protect our outdoor resources.
- Provide support for parks, trails and water trails on a regional basis and with regional partners.
- Bridge the boundaries of parks into surrounding communities, other park providers and public lands through links with trails, bike and paddling routes.
- Preserve Oregon's heritage through cultural and historic sites, events, interpretation and experience.
- Connect Oregonians and visitors with the "best of Oregon" at events at state and county fairgrounds.
- Improve the State Fair highlighting the "best Oregon has to offer." Make the State Fair the premiere event for celebrating the best of Oregon products, industries and our way of life.

Principle 6: Attract and Inspire Partners

OPRD will work with other recreation/heritage providers, land managers, educators, health providers, communities, advocates, philanthropists, volunteers, and others to offer the best recreational, environmental and cultural experiences possible in Oregon.

Specific Strategies:

- Provide leadership through professional excellence
- Implement “best practices” partnerships.
- Nurture active, vibrant “friends” groups.
- Increase awareness of partnership opportunities throughout OPRD.
- Be proactive in targeting partnerships.
- Actively promote the creation of new parks and trails by other providers.
- Develop recreation options that meet the needs of communities through well-managed grant programs to local governments, education (K-12), and other park providers.
- Work to improve economic growth in local communities.
- Overhaul partnerships program to better improve relationships with other agencies, local communities and local government.
- Develop education partnerships with stronger connection to k-12 and universities.
- Blur lines between Oregon land managers and stewards.

Principle 7: Prioritize Based on the Vision

Focus time, energy, talent and funding on those activities that will take OPRD forward in an effective, efficient, and deliberate way. Be creative, collaborative and flexible in finding solutions for how we do business.

Specific Strategies

- New initiatives and projects should be relevant to the mandates, goals and strategies.
- Allocate adequate resources (manpower, funding, time) to successfully implement programs, operations, and initiatives.
- Provide clear direction to staff
- Streamline and focus programs.
- Cluster staff around projects for coordination and to share knowledge, skills and abilities.
- Create an organization that is able to adapt, respond and is ready for change.
- Define, in policy, how decisions are made and implemented.
- Seek innovative mechanisms to fund activities.
- Fully integrate the resources of agency into for efficiency and effectiveness.
- Develop, diversify, and stabilize long-term funding sources.
- Communicate early and frequently to ensure timeliness, accuracy and integrity of target programs and projects.

Principle 8: Oregon's Parks will be Tended by People who Love Their Work

An excellent state park system is operated by staff and volunteers who are trained, motivated, challenged and satisfied in all they do. They are committed to professional excellence and to providing memorable experiences for their visitors.

Specific strategies:

- Be an employer of choice.
- Recruit and cultivate a highly-skilled workforce of staff and volunteers that reflects the diversity of Oregon's population, dedicated to outstanding customer service and quality visitor experiences.
- Staff will be active with and supported in parks networking and professional organizations (for example, the Oregon Recreation and Parks Association.)
- Staff and volunteers will enjoy long and satisfying affiliation with OPRD.
- Agency-wide training programs will meet all employee needs.
- OPRD staff/volunteers will reduce inefficiency and waste across the organization.
- Adopt fiscal guidelines to guide budget development, funding strategies, and accountability.
- Encourage innovation by creating and sharing new approaches to customer service across the state parks system and beyond.
- Recognize and reward excellent work of staff and volunteers.
- Commit to the development of skills and professional knowledge of all staff through meaningful training and development opportunities.