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State Parks Futures Committee II

FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

December 3, 2002

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INTRODUCTION

During 2001, the Legislative Audit Division conducted a performance audit of the programs within the Parks Division of Montana of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP). The audit recognized the "world class" recreational opportunities and significant contributions to quality of life provided by the parks system. But auditors also noted that the number of people recreating in Montana state parks is on the rise, and that many changes had occurred in the 12 years since the previous review of parks programs by the first State Parks Futures Committee in 1989.

That first Futures effort led to a host of recommendations and subsequent improvements in the field and in parks program administration. FWP agreed with the Legislative Auditors that the time was ripe for another Parks Futures review, and they jointly recommended that Governor Judy Martz create a State Parks Futures Committee II.

FUTURES COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Futures Committee II was appointed under Executive Order 27-01, signed October 3rd, 2001, by Governor Martz (see Appendix A). The nine members represent a variety of interests and communities across the state. They include:

John Brueggeman (Rep., Polson)
Jim Elliott (Senator, Trout Creek)
Ed Henrich (Fairmont Hot Springs Resort, Fairmont)
Dave Kasten (Rep., Brockway)
Christine Kaufmann (Rep., Helena)
Bob Keenan (Senator, Bigfork)
Margaret Moddison (chair, Great Falls)
Mike Penfold (Our Montana, Inc., Billings)
Michele Reese (The Big Mountain, Whitefish)

PURPOSE

As outlined in the Executive Order, the purpose of the Futures Committee is to make recommendations to the Governor, the 2003 Legislature, and FWP regarding changes that have occurred in the parks system and new challenges and trends that have arisen since the original state parks futures committee met in 1989. In that time, the number of parks in the system shrank from 60 to 42, largely through the transfer of sites (including Canyon Ferry, Nelson Reservoir, East Gallatin, and Bears Paw Battlefield) to other public agencies. The total number of visitors to state parks is now lower, given that there are fewer parks, but actual visitation has remained steady. Montana residents are a larger portion of visitor use (72 percent in 2000) than in past years. Many parks anticipate increased visitation during the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

The work of the first Futures Committee led to a number of improvements across the parks system. Parks fees were raised to help defray rising costs. Parks Division established a new paid intern program with the Montana University system, providing one intern per year for each region. Six new "friends of the park" groups were formed. Overall, the division standardized planning, policies, publications, and signage, and added over $30 million in improvements, including new visitor centers at three parks.

The park system's legal landscape also changed during the 1990s. Passage of the Primitive Parks Act (23-1-115 through 23-1-118, MCA) eliminated entrance fees and curtailed further development at 15 designated parks. Also, to prevent impacts to landowners adjoining state parks, the legislature established the Good Neighbor Policy (23-1-126, MCA), which requires FWP to place maintenance as a higher priority over additional development at all state parks and fishing access sites.

While responding to these and other changes and trends, parks management must also confront challenges related to funding. Costs continue to rise, but revenues—particularly from existing fees and taxes—remain flat. On the current course, FWP projects that expenditures will eclipse revenues by 2006.

In light of these and other trends, the Executive Order directed the Futures Committee to consider:

- Park fee revenues and funding sources
- Park resources
- Statutory park designations
- Park designations
- Potential long-term policy changes
- Distribution of state parks across the state
- Other policy considerations

These items are covered in this report under the broader headings of Statutory Framework, Planning and Management, and Funding.

The Executive Order also stated that the Futures Committee's recommendations must:

- Consider the original futures committee report, the *2020 Vision for Montana State Parks System Plan*, and the 2001 performance audit conducted by the Legislative Audit Division.
- Consider the social and economic effects, both positive and negative, of state changes.
- Consider the values and needs of all recreational users.
- Consider the financial and staffing needs of the state parks system.
- Be technically, legally, socially, and economically feasible to implement.

A Deliberative Process

The Futures Committee met eight times in nine months in communities across the state to gather information, discuss the issues, and develop its recommendations. Meetings were facilitated by the Montana Consensus Council and staffed by the council and Parks Division personnel.

Futures Committee members also toured ten state parks, met with all seven regional parks managers, and held public meetings in Helena, Billings, Three Forks, Missoula, Dillon, Glasgow, Glendive, and Bigfork. Representatives of a number of interest groups, notably the Montana State Parks Foundation and several local "friends of the park" associations, attended meetings and provided information, insights, and a broad range of perspectives on the park system. The Committee received written comments and provided an opportunity for public comment through the FWP web site.

The State Parks Futures Committee II *Draft Report and Recommendations* was released at the end of July 2002, and public comments were accepted through the end of September 2002. Parks Division also held a statewide public meeting on September 11, 2002, through MetNet, the interactive video conferencing network. About 30 people participated via links in Billings, Bozeman, Dillon, Glasgow, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell, Miles City, and Missoula. Written and email comments were received from a total of 19 individuals and organizations. Some comments praised the work of the committee, while others were critical of specific recommendations. The main themes regarding the committee's

recommendations that emerged from all of the public comment included:

- Concern over and opposition to the recommendation to repeal the Primitive Parks Act.
- Opposition to proposed fee increases.
- Support for some fee increases.
- Concern and questions about Parks Division budget allocations.
- Support for the budget priorities listed in Recommendation 15 (and specifically support for giving priority to maintenance of existing park resources and facilities).
- Support for increasing and improving law enforcement in the parks system.
- Support for enhancing the tourist and economic development potential of state parks.
- Support for developing thematic links among parks.
- Support for developing policy on the commercial use of parks.
- Opposition to allowing tourism and commercial use to drive parks management.
- Support for improving relations with tribal governments.

The committee reconvened in Helena on November 14, 2002, to revise the report based on public comment and the committee's own further deliberations. Significant changes were made to several recommendations and are incorporated in this final report. Most notably, the recommendation to replace the Primitive Parks Act was dropped in favor of asking Parks Division to develop, under administrative rule, a systematic management and planning framework, after which the act would be revisited to determine whether it would be appropriate to amend or repeal it at that time (see Recommendation 3).

The committee also clarified that actions to enhance the parks' economic development potential and visitor experiences should be consistent with the park system mission and vision and with the budget priorities listed in Recommendation 15. These budget priorities were revised to more clearly emphasize maintenance of existing park resources and facilities (with the exception of Region 6, where acquisition is the first priority).

HISTORY AND STATUS OF THE STATE PARK SYSTEM

Montana's state park system began in 1939 with the acquisition of Lewis and Clark Caverns from the federal government. Since then, the system has grown—largely through the initiative of local citizens and communities—to include 42 state parks (see Appendix B for a map of state parks across the state). The system features natural areas, cultural and historical sites, and recreational areas, all providing a broad range of recreational and educational opportunities, from the historical and cultural resources at Pictograph Cave and Bannack, to the water-based fun of the Smith River and Flathead Lake, from the fossils and nature trails of Makoshika, to the near-urban developed swimming holes of Whitefish and Spring Meadow lakes.

Nearly 1.4 million people visit Montana state parks each year. In 2000, 72 percent were Montana residents. According to FWP, the most popular park activities are learning about Montana history, fishing, boating, picnicking, camping, hiking, and wildlife viewing.

In Fiscal Year 2002, the Parks Division had an operations budget of about $12 million, including 110.66 full-time equivalents (FTEs). This budget and staff are responsible for the state parks system as well as more than 320 fishing access sites (which are managed by the Parks Division but are not part of the parks system), a community grants program, and a trails program, with a total land base of more than 60,000 acres (33,532 of which are in parks). The primary focus of the Futures Committee II was the State Park program.

During the 2000 recreation season, more than 1,300 volunteers logged over 36,000 hours as campground hosts and visitor center attendants, and doing maintenance and interpretive work. In exchange for $8 an hour and college credit, 24 student interns from the Montana University system also worked in the parks system in 2000.

For more information on the Montana state parks system, see the publications listed in Appendix I.

PARKS MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

The Futures Committee agreed to adopt the mission and vision statements from *2020 Vision for Montana State Parks*, with several modifications.

The mission statement is framed to capture why the state park system exists, what it is intended to accomplish, and who it serves. The statement draws heavily on the language in the 1939 state park enabling legislation, as well as the statement included in the 1990 State Park Futures Committee report. The vision statement seeks to broadly describe what sort of park system should be in place by the year 2020.

MISSION

The mission of the Montana State Park system is to preserve, enhance, and interpret a diverse representation of Montana's most outstanding natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources, for the personal, social, and economic benefit of present and future generations.

VISION

In the year 2020, the Montana State Park system will more accurately reflect the natural, cultural, historic, and recreational diversity of Montana, with a broader geographic and cultural representation than at present. The future system will provide a greater diversity of park types, such as recreational waterways, railtrails, and historical routes. The system will also offer a broad range of facilities, experiences, and programs which meet an assortment of changing visitor needs and interests, including more educational and interpretive opportunities. Staff will continue to improve resource protection, maintenance, programs, planning, monitoring, site design, visitor information, and overall professionalism, with enhanced connections and communication with other programs both inside and outside FWP. The quality of the system will be more consistent and recognizable between units, and staff and financial resources will be sufficient to meet visitor needs. From one end of the state to the other, visitor expectations will be routinely exceeded by the high quality of the experiences provided. Overall, the state park system will be a more integral part of everyday existence in Montana; state parks will be affordable places where Montanans and their visitors from all walks of life feel comfortable and welcome.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Montana's state parks system is enabled and governed by the provisions of Title 23, Chapters 1 and 2 of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA). In its deliberations on the park system's statutory framework, the Committee focused primarily on the effects of the Primitive Parks Act (23-1-115 through 23-1-118, MCA).

THE PRIMITIVE PARKS ACT

Passage of the Montana Primitive Parks Act in 1993 designated 15 sites as "primitive" to prevent their further development and to eliminate entrance fees at those parks.

The Futures Committee recognized that the Primitive Parks Act provides the following benefits and disadvantages.

Benefits:

- Stopped incremental development.
- Saved capital costs and prevented rising long-term O&M costs.
- Provides no-fee parks for visitors.
- Preserves 15 sites as they were in 1993.
- Recognizes the needs of one segment of the population who prefer these sites remain as they are, protected from further development.

Disadvantages:

- Limits management flexibility to deal with unforeseen problems, changing conditions, and changing visitor needs.
- Restricts options for maintaining existing development.
- "Primitive" is not an appropriate description for some of the sites designated under the act.
- Does not acknowledge the potential benefits of developed or semi-developed zones within larger primitive landscapes.
- Some provisions of the Primitive Parks Act may conflict with provisions in the Good Neighbor Policy (23-1-126, MCA).

To remedy these problems, the committee considered amending the Primitive Parks Act or replacing it with new legislation. They eventually agreed to recommend creation of a new management framework aimed at preventing incremental development (see Recommendation 2 below), and repealing the act for several reasons. First, they agreed that the day-to-day planning and management of the state parks should be the responsibility of professional park and recreation managers. Second, they agreed that management could be more effective if various zones of development were recognized within each park, rather than designating a single development standard for an entire park. Third, the committee wanted to separate the issue of providing no-fee parks from the issue of preventing incremental development.

Recommendation 1: Recognizing that the management planning process has been set to meet statutory intent at Chief Plenty Coups and Pictograph Cave state parks, after Parks Division consults with the Crow Tribe and the Friends of Chief Plenty Coups State Park, the Legislature should repeal 23-1-130, MCA.

Recommendation 2: To increase the visibility of state parks and improve the ability of the Parks Division to solve problems, the Legislature should amend the statute creating the FWP Commission to require at least one representative on the Commission with a demonstrated interest in parks and recreation.

PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The Futures Committee agreed on the following broad, over-arching principles to guide the planning of each park unit.

Planning for each park must be based on a thorough identification, assessment, and analysis of its resources. Potential planning decisions must be measured against (a) the enabling legislation and mission statements, (b) short- and long-term public need and demand for these resources, (c) capital available or projected to be available, (d) projected maintenance requirements of the parks, and (e) appropriate and sustainable use considerations.

Planning should also recognize that a wide spectrum of outdoor recreation opportunities is available in Montana, from undeveloped federal wilderness areas to highly urbanized municipal and private parks. Within this spectrum, the state parks system fills a narrower niche—most if not all state parks have significantly more facility development

than wilderness areas but less development than is common in city and county parks or private recreation facilities.

Planning should never lose sight of the fact that parks are for people, for their use and enjoyment. Planning for park units must protect the high quality of Montana's natural and historic resources and the sustainability of public use.

Professional multi-disciplinary planning that reflects sound principles and community values should be the foundation of park development and protection. Communities and interested publics should be involved early on and throughout the planning processes, with the goal that plans will reflect community values and facilitate the development of working partnerships. Planning must also recognize that parks are owned by all Montanans, and are funded in part with federal dollars, and so seek a balance among local, statewide, and national interests.

Parks planning should be guided by state-of-the-art concepts and strategies, such as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, Limits of Acceptable Change, and sustainability, which have been used by state and federal agencies. The concepts and strategies should be appropriately adapted to state parks in Montana.

Planners should seek a balance within the state parks system among types of parks (i.e., historical/cultural, natural, and recreational) and classifications of parks (based of the level of development). They should also consider the activities of other recreation and interpretive providers such as private campgrounds, the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Bureau of Land Management to ensure that future direction is compatible with and complements other park resources in the state.

Planners should consider the potential for public-private partnerships, and for the involvement of private corporations, concessionaires, foundations, volunteers, historical organizations, community organizations, environmental organizations, and other interested groups in planning for implementation of park plans.

Recommendation 3: To prevent unwarranted incremental development at state parks, the Parks Division should (1) create, through administrative rule, a classification system for designating and managing state parks based on sound management and planning principles, levels of development (see Appendix C for a sample framework), public use and desires, and park settings; (2) develop management plans for each state park based on the classification system; (3) provide meaningful opportunities for public participation in the development of management plans, consistent with MCA 23-1-110; (4) include a system for monitoring and evaluating the status of development at state parks in each management plan; (5) develop and implement management plans consistent with the Good Neighbor Policy; (6) seek a balance within the parks system among types of parks (i.e., historical/cultural, natural, and recreational) and classifications of parks (based on the criteria in (1) above); (7) weigh and balance local and statewide input to individual parks and the overall park system; and (8) continue to manage parks currently designated under the Primitive Parks Act (23-1-115 through 23-1-118, MCA) consistent with the intent of the act until the management planning process has been completed for each park and the classification system is in place under administrative rule. At that time, the legislature should revisit the Primitive Parks Act.

PARK RESOURCES

With the exception of Region 6, each region hosts a variety of parks. For the most part, the

landscapes and habitats in parks are still intact. Parks protect and present the unique character of western life.

Some of our parks promote awareness and understanding of Native American cultures, the Lewis and Clark expedition, and early mining history. Parks also protect and provide fishing, hiking, boating, and other recreational opportunities. Due to public demand and the availability of federal funding, water-oriented parks have more development than the historic and cultural parks.

Most parks were started through community support, which continues today. Local communities often see parks as economic anchors, and as their backyard community center—"their" park—which may be used for weddings and family/community gatherings. Parks enhance local communities' quality of life. The parks are also recognized as economic assets to local communities and educational assets statewide. Parks provide outdoor classrooms.

Partnerships with other agencies add value to the system—we share and exchange information, expertise, and marketing. The park system includes experienced and dedicated staff, including seasonals and volunteers.

<u>Recommendation 4</u>: Consistent with the budget priorities in Recommendation 15, provide the following resources to enhance the experience of visitors and to sustain park resources:

- Improve the information available on the values and services provided at individual parks through brochures, web sites, and other means.
- Do more to add value to visitors' experiences and enhance revenues and word-of-mouth business through books, videos, souvenirs, and services provided primarily by the private sector.
- Improve interpretive presentations to create a value-added benefit to visitors.
- Increase and/or create opportunities for schools to visit the parks. Environmental education is a potential growth area (for example, the Mikal Kellner Wildlife Center at Spring Meadow; programs for teaching kids to fish).
- Recognize that marketing is key. We need to convey the value of each park, as well as marketing the "package" of the overall system and other public and private attractions in Montana. The specific content and resources of each park are what draws people to the parks and makes visitors advocates for these resources.
- Although the 1989 Futures Committee I determined that using the single "parks" designation provided a more consistent image for the parks system, Parks Division should better communicate whether individual parks are predominantly cultural/ historical, natural, or recreational parks.
- Use highway maps, web sites, brochures, and other means to inform the public about the values and services available at individual parks, and whether the park is a cultural/ historic, natural, or recreational park.
- Foster local and statewide public input and even let the public play a leading role in articulating the vision of each park's future. (Many individual park management plans already have this input in their goals.)
- Programs to enrich visitors' experiences are limited. We need more volunteers and resources to expand existing programs.
- FWP should work to enable people to donate land and other resources through charitable trusts and conservation easements.
- The complementary relationship between FAS and Park programs should be further developed. For example, the Parks Divisions could develop linear parks connecting FASs and linking non-river

state parks—rails to trails type of recreation corridor. FASs are potential keys to linking bigger systems, including bridges. Bring the Montana Department of Transportation into that discussion.

DISTRIBUTION AND ACQUISITION OF STATE PARKS

Region 6 (the northeast corner of Montana) is the only FWP region without a state park. Because most of the area was heavily homesteaded, public land is scarce. There are few developed recreational opportunities and designated cultural sites.

Many residents of Region 6 want a parks program in northeast Montana, with one or more sites developed as state parks. They want equity with other regions, and they want to spur their local economies by attracting tourism. Residents also see parks as a way to enhance their quality of life, and to give people a reason to stay in the region.

Under its 2001 six-year plan, FWP intends to establish at least one state park in Region 6. A regional parks manager position was created and filled, and a 12-member Region 6 Parks Search Committee was formed to inventory potential sites and nominate a short list of the best prospects. The Search Committee identified a number of potential sites and selected four for recommendation (see Appendix D).

Recommendation 5: The Futures Committee applauds the efforts of the Region 6 Search Committee and agrees that a state park and parks program should be established in Region 6 consistent with the policy framework outlined in Recommendation 6.

Recommendation 6: The Parks Division should use the following set of criteria as a policy framework for the distribution and acquisition of state parks in Montana.

When acquiring parks lands and resources, Parks Division should ensure that every acquisition:

- Is consistent with the mission of state parks;
- Adds value to the overall parks system;
- Is consistent with the intent to seek a balance of park types (natural, cultural, historic, and recreational) and levels of development (based on the proposed classification system); and
- Is consistent with the budget priorities outlined in Recommendation 15 (with the exception of Region 6, where acquiring one or more parks should take first priority).

FWP should weigh the following factors and give priority to sites that present a prudent balance among:

- Acquisition costs.
- Development costs.
- Operation and maintenance costs.
- The ability of a site to generate revenue.
- Public demand and support.
- Public welfare and safety.
- Resource protection and preservation.
- Enhancement of the equitable distribution of parks across the state.

OTHER PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 7: FWP should develop pilot projects to develop thematic links among parks that draw a common interest, such as the Lewis and Clark Trail, river corridors, etc., including between neighboring states as appropriate.

Recommendation 8: Parks Division should acknowledge and foster the existing and potential economic development values of state parks and the

value-added opportunities for enriching visitor experiences, while preserving existing park values.

Recommendation 9: FWP should draft a memorandum of understanding with the Montana Heritage Commission to share information and technical expertise.

Recommendation 10: Working with the Montana Promotional Division, and tailored to the mission and vision statements on page 4, Parks Division should develop a consistent, long-term marketing plan for the state park system. Marketing may increase use of the parks, but can also help to redistribute use away from overcrowded parks.

Recommendation 11: Parks are understaffed, and the system is unable to maximize the quality of visitors' experiences, resource and visitor protection, benefits to local communities, and collection of fees. To reduce these problems, Parks Division should:

(a) Seek volunteers and financial sponsors from "friends of the park" associations, civic groups, businesses, and local communities.
(b) Encourage commercial and entrepreneurial opportunities to provide some visitor services in appropriate parks.
(c) Seek resources for paid seasonal staff to supervise volunteers based on demonstrated need to conduct interpretive and educational programs, site maintenance, fee collection, site control, and visitor protection.
(d) Continue to develop partnerships with other agencies and organizations to share information, expertise, and staff, as appropriate.

Recommendation 12: FWP and volunteers should create a network to link all of the "friends of the parks" associations and foster best practices in their work.

Recommendation 13: FWP should review the adequacy of its tribal involvement efforts and explore strategies and seek opportunities for sharing decision-making authority and responsibilities through government-to-government relationships.

FUNDING

RATIONALE FOR FUNDING INCREASE

The Futures Committee recognizes that revenues into the Parks Division have been flat for a number of years, while expenses have been flat-to-slightly increasing. The division is currently spending some of its cash reserves. The Committee further recognizes that, if revenues do not increase in the next three years, and there are no new capital improvements expenses, the Parks Division will be operating with a minimal cash reserve in 2005 and a deficit in 2006. The longer we wait to address the problems described in this report, including the projected parks budget deficit, the more it will cost.

The Futures Committee has included in this report a statement by the Parks Division on its funding needs (see Appendices G and H). The Committee realizes that finding additional funding will be difficult during the current budget cycle, but also recognizes that Parks Division needs more funding to meet immediate needs and to achieve the mission and vision of the parks system. The committee also urges Parks Division to review its internal allocation of funding to ensure compliance with the budget priorities given in Recommendation 15.

Parks Division has an annual budget of about $12 million, including operational and capital costs, as well as parks, fishing access sites,

grants, and the trails program. Of this total, 2.2% comes from the state general fund, 26% comes from various programs administered by the federal government, and the remainder comes from a mix of fees and state tax sources (see Appendix E).

The financial resources of the Parks Division are allocated according to the categories shown in the pie chart in Appendix E.

Recommendation 14: Principles to Guide Funding

The following principles should guide the funding of Montana State Parks:

1. Montana state parks are a valuable resource to the state of Montana, with a great yet unfulfilled potential to provide opportunities for recreation, education, conservation, interpretation, and economic development.

2. Without proper stewardship, the quality of state park resources and visitor experiences will decline.

3. It is important to optimize the effectiveness of park management, particularly when funding is scarce. This may include the reallocation of resources, programs, staffing, and funding. For this purpose, and consistent with all relevant laws and regulations, *reallocation* may include mothballing, trading, or disposing of park lands and resources, and reprioritizing programs and services. These actions should be taken only as a last resort, and, as far as possible, only when public access to the lands and resources can be preserved, preferably through administration by another public agency. Parks that would more appropriately be managed as FASs (such as Ackley Lake) should be transferred to the FAS program. FWP should develop a policy and criteria to determine when and how to reallocate parks system lands and resources.

4. State parks cannot be self-sufficient and should be supported in part by public funds.

5. State parks should be managed to enhance their capacity to be more self-sufficient, consistent with the mission and vision statements presented earlier in this report. Park users should be expected to support the parks and programs they use, yet parks should not be inaccessible to people on low incomes.

6. When economic conditions allow, funding should be responsibly increased to sustain and improve the park system.

Recommendation 15: Budget Priorities

The Parks Division should use the following priorities to allocate its financial and human resources:

First: Maintain existing park resources and facilities.

Second: Protect public health and safety, which may include enforcement.

Third: Enhance the experience of visitors.

Fourth: Acquire land and resources (with the acquisition of in-holdings taking priority over purchase of completely new properties). In Region 6, the acquisition of one or more new parks is the top priority.

Fifth: Support new construction.

FUNDING STRATEGIES

Given the demonstrable need to increase funding for the state parks system, the Futures Committee offers the following strategies. Rather than seek unanimous

agreement on every strategy, the Committee agreed to present all of the strategies it considered followed by the percent of support among committee members for each strategy.

Strategy 1 (see Table 1 for level of committee support): **The Legislature and/or the Parks Division and FWP should increase selected existing fees and taxes according to Table 1.** Of the 42 parks in the system, 20 are fee sites. Most fee parks charge an entrance fee of $4 per car. An annual park pass is also available, and in the fall of 2001 FWP raised the fee for the pass from $20 to $24; the fee is now the same for residents and non-residents alike. An early-bird discount of $4 is still available until early February of each year.

Strategy 2 (100 % support): **Parks Divisions, specifically, regional park managers, should work with local citizens and communities to foster public-private partnerships and "friends of" the local state park. This expectation should be included in the performance appraisals for regional park managers.**

The friends groups should be encouraged to help the parks division articulate a vision and management plan for the local park, and to set-up "trusts" or other appropriate vehicles to raise private funds to support their local state park.

Realizing that no single model will work for all state parks, the Futures Committee recognizes a number of existing arrangements that seem to be working, including but not limited to Friends of Makoshika, Traveler's Rest, Friends of Bannack, and the Heritage Park Commission.

Strategy 3 (89 % support): **The FWP Commission should raise the fee for candlelight tours at Lewis & Clark Caverns from $8/$5 to $15/$8.** This strategy was proposed because demand far outstrips the available slots for candlelight tours. But at least one Committee member felt that these fees should stay at their current levels. It seemed inappropriate, they said, to raise fees on local people bringing families and friends to the caverns during the winter holidays. The additional revenue would be minimal, and it would be more in the holiday spirit to simply ask visitors to make donations in support of parks if they felt so inclined.

Strategy 4 (78 % support): **The FWP Commission should raise the fees for annual park passports to $30/$18 ($24/$15 for early bird purchases).** Most Committee members felt that the existing $24/$15 fee for an annual park passport was a real bargain. They agreed that park users should bear a significant share of the costs for providing parks, and most felt that park users would understand the need for a fee increase and accept it. But several Committee members said that the park system provides a widespread public benefit and so should be supported by all Montanans. They worried that increasing entrance and annual passport fees would inhibit some Montanans from using the parks.

Strategy 5 (67 % support): **The Legislature should pass a referendum to either (a) create a one-mill levy dedicated to state parks (which would result in about $2.2 million annually); or (b) create a license plate fee** – that is, adding a $4 or $5 fee to the purchase of license plates for all vehicles "one-ton" and under. Given that there are about 900,000 vehicles that would be subject to the license plate fee, this strategy would generate a total of $3.6 to $4.5 million, or a net gain of about $3.1 to $3.9 million each year. People would still be required to pay for camping, showers, and other amenities at state parks, in addition to fees at special parks such as Lewis and Clark Caverns.

Either strategy would allow FWP to eliminate entrance fees to state parks for Montana residents. The Futures Committee prefers a mill levy over the license plate fee because the license plate fee would be difficult to administer, many people have more than one vehicle, and it would be less progressive, with a greater financial impact on low-income citizens.

The Futures Committee recognizes that implementing either one of these strategies and allowing free admission to Montana residents may not only increase the number of people visiting state parks, but also the potential for vandalism and the need for enforcement.

Strategy 6 (67 % support): **The Legislature should levy a tax on rental cars, 90 percent of which are rented by non-residents, and allocate all of the proceeds to the state parks.** A 4% tax would raise about $1.3 million annually.

Strategy 7 (56 % support): **Parks Division should create a pilot project at two state parks – one urban and one rural – to maximize the collection of fees (see Appendix H). This will require additional resources from the Legislature.**

Regional park managers say that controlled, staffed entrance points are needed across the park system. Having a person at the entrance ends up being efficient and cost effective because it heads off many problems before they occur. Charging a fee and staffing an entrance station increases visitor respect for the park and dramatically reduces vandalism and other problems. Managers can focus the use of entrance staff during high-use times—certain seasons, weekends, and holidays. During low-use periods, the staff can work in other areas, such as weed control, maintenance and repair, etc.

Staffing entrance stations adds a cost (paying the person to be there to collect fees), but creates revenues and savings by (1) enhancing revenues (fees collected); (2) reducing vandalism; (3) reducing costs of after-the-fact enforcement; and (4) potentially increasing visitation (because people enjoy a better experience). To cover the cost of staffing park entrances, two visitors an hour (at $4 each) equals the hourly wage of a staff person ($8 an hour).

Strategy 8 (56 % support): **The Legislature should raise the fee for a motorboat decal from $2.50 ($0.50 of which goes to Parks) to $10 ($6 of which would go to Parks).** Some Committee members felt this increase was reasonable because $10 would be a small fee relative to the cost of most motorboats. Other Committee members said that motorboat owners already pay a number of fees or taxes that contribute revenue to state parks and other programs, and such an increase was unwarranted.

Strategy 9 (56 % support): **The Parks Division should impose a fee on launching motorboats.** The Futures Committee agreed that this would not be necessary given their recommendation to raise the fee for motorboat decals.

Strategy 10 (44 % support): **The Legislature should institute a fee decal ($5 to $10) for non-motorized boats.** Some Committee members said that non-motorized boaters who use public boat access points and other facilities should share in the costs of providing those facilities. Others argued that basic public access to a public resource should remain free. Also, boaters using private access would resist paying for a decal, enforcement would be difficult and costly, and the issue might be better addressed in a river recreation planning process.

Strategy 11 (56 % support): **The Parks Division should create a "park trust" at one or more state parks.** A trust is a legal assignment of certain powers to one or more persons, called trustees, who manage assets for the benefit of another. In the context of state parks, the idea would be to require the trust to cover all costs either from revenues generated from park assets or from private contributions of funds, property, or services by individuals, corporations, or charitable foundations.

Strategy 12 (44 % support): **The Legislature should levy a land conversion tax—a tax collected when undeveloped land is developed for any non-agricultural purpose.** Some Committee members saw this as a way to raise revenues to support parks while providing an incentive for Montana landowners to leave rural lands undeveloped. Other Committee members were opposed on principle to creating new taxes.

Strategy 13 (33 % support): **The Legislature should increase the amount of the severance tax on natural gas production, specifically coal bed methane, from 15% to 30% and dedicate some or all of the proceeds to the state parks.**

Strategy 14 (33 % support): **The Legislature should increase the accommodations (or bed) tax by 4% and maintain the existing allocation of the revenue by this tax.** This strategy would raise about $728,000 per year for the state parks system.

OTHER POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Recommendation 16: **The Legislative and Executive branches should recognize the economic value of Montana's environmental assets, including state parks. Strategies for economic development should build on these environmental assets while sustaining the resources.**

Montana's public lands, scenic open space, cultural and historic sites, rivers, and wildlife provide a quality of life uncommon outside our borders. Our relatively unspoiled environment—including the state parks system—is also a major economic asset, attracting tourism and small business to the state and offering a promising foundation for economic development. State government, and the parks system in particular, should play an important role in supporting such economic development and enhancing residents' quality of life.

Tourism is a major economic driver in Montana with tremendous growth potential. In communities across the state, private sector services (hotels, campgrounds, restaurants, retail stores, guides, etc.) are expanding to capture tourism dollars, significantly diversifying and rejuvenating local economies.

According to a 2002 study done by the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, the most important activities for visitors to our state are watching wildlife (50%), day hiking (46%), picnicking (36%), history (35%), and visiting museums (25%). These activities are dependent on the natural, cultural, and historic landscapes and resources held in the stewardship of local, state, and federal government. Without public stewardship of these public resources, Montana's tourism potential would be severely diminished.
Currently, a number of state agencies administer tourism-related programs and manage tourism-related resources. The Montana Department of Transportation manages rest stops. The Montana Heritage Commission acquires and develops historic sites such as Virginia and Nevada cities. The Montana Historical Society manages historic

properties and serves as curator for an extensive artifacts collection. The Lewis and Clark Commission focuses on the bicentennial of the Corps of Discovery expedition. Within FWP, Parks Division manages 42 state parks and 320 FASs. Among state agencies, only Travel Montana has the primary focus of promoting tourism.

Montana can strengthen its economy by thoughtfully planning for and investing in tourism and environmental quality. This will require a concerted, coordinated, more efficient effort on the part of state government. To do so, the Futures Committee recommends that, over the long term:

- The state consolidate the planning and administration of outdoor, culture, and history-related recreation and tourism in one agency to save money, avoid duplication of efforts, and increase effectiveness. This arrangement would not remove authority for tourism promotion from Travel Montana or curator services from the Historical Society.
- This recreation and tourism agency serve as a recreation extension service to help the private sector develop outdoor, cultural, and historic heritage tourism businesses.
- This agency serve as the coordinator of statewide efforts to develop and update a State Outdoor Recreation Plan and as the state's representative with groups such as the Interagency Travel Tourism Initiative.
- State parks be managed to enhance economic diversification and to supply a variety of outdoor, cultural, and historic experiences, including the creation of linear parks along historic pioneer trails and rivers.

<u>Recommendation 17</u>: The Parks Division and FWP Commission should develop a uniform policy on the commercial use of state parks. The policy should provide sufficient flexibility to meet local needs and interests and balance local and statewide interests.

<u>Recommendation 18</u>: The Legislature, FWP Commission, and Parks Division should provide sufficient resources for enforcement to protect public health and safety, as well as park resources.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The recommendations in this report are intended to maintain and improve Montana's state parks system as we move into the 21st century. Many challenges and opportunities will arise as these recommendations are implemented. To help ensure that the recommendations have the desired effects and are tailored to best serve the parks and their visitors, we urge Montana's citizens and public officials to constructively monitor and evaluate implementation. We encourage the Governor's Office; FWP Commission; and FWP Director to work with Parks Division throughout this process and to hold one another accountable to the mission and vision of the parks system.

The committee also recommends that Parks Division periodically report to the public on progress through articles in its newsletter and on the department web site. Further, we encourage the Legislative Audit Division to review Parks Division progress at appropriate intervals.

Table 1. Suggestions to Increase for Existing Fees/Taxes

	Item	Current Price	Proposed Price	Estimated New Revenue
Require FWP Commission Action	Park Passport (78% support)	$24/15	$30/20	$30,000 (20% resistance)[1]
	Early Bird passport (56% support)	$20/12	$24/15	Included in the above
	Eliminate Early Bird (89% support)			
	Caverns Tour (89% support)	$8/5	$10/5 w/ local disc.	$35,000[2]
	Prime Camping (78% support) Big Arm, Finley, Wayfarers, Placid, Salmon, Cooney, Tongue	$12/8	$15/11	$20,000
	Smith River (100 % support)	$15 (refundable)	$30 drawing fee, refundable ($70 n/r), $30 float fee (res.) with a $15 low income float fee available, $70 n/r, no n/r low income; $200 nonresident guided fee, $30 guide.	$35,170[3]
	Miscellaneous: (67 % support) Bannack gold panning Cave candle tours	 $0 $8/5	 $1/person $10/5	 $500 $540[4]
Require Legislative Action	Eliminate Senior discount (89 % support)	½ price camping	Full price camping	$15,000[5]
	Charge at Primitive (44 % support)	$0	Regular fees	Not accepted by committee
	Motorboat decal (56 % support)	$2.50 ($.50 to parks, $2.00 to law enforcement)	$10 ($5.50 new to parks, $2.00 new to enforcement).	$231,000(to parks) ($84,000 to Enforcement)
	RV license fee (67 % support)	$3.50	$5	$90,961
	Boat In Lieu (67 % support)	20% of fees	25% of fees	$68,750

[1] Figured on a percentage basis of existing sales less 20% buyer resistance.

[2] Assumes implementation of a locals discount for multi-visits, $10 first visit-$5 each additional visit; 34,420 adults, 9,262 child, 3,901 adult group, 2,727 child group. Child is 6th grade and under.

[3] Using 2001 stats, 1,678 private floaters X $15 new = $25,170; 250 guided clients X $25 new = $6,250; 250 guides X $15 new = $3,750.

[4] 360 candlelight tours annually, assume 75% adults=270 X 2 (the new $ addition) + 90 X $ 0 (new child fee).

[5] Assumes 10-15% senior camping discounts are used today.

TABLE 2. SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW FUNDING SOURCES

Item	Current	Proposed	Est. New Revenue
Non-motorized boat fee (44 % support)	$0	$5-$10	$354,000-$700,000[1]
Vehicle license plate (56 % support)	$0	$4/vehicle	$2,900,000[2]
Statewide Mill Levy (44 % support)			

[1] Assumes 3:1 motorboats to non-motorboats, 42,000 X 3=126,000 X $5=$630,000 X 75% licensed each year X 75% of the funds to State Parks (25% to FAS program)=$354,000 ($118,000 to FAS).
[2] Assumes 900,000 vehicles under one ton, less existing entrance fees ($584,000), less $100,000 assumed to Dept. of Justice for collections.

Appendix A
Executive Order

State of Montana
Office of the Governor

Executive Order No. 27-01

EXECUTIVE ORDER ESTABLISHING THE
STATE PARK FUTURES COMMITTEE II

WHEREAS, Montana's State Parks were created with the purpose of conserving the scenic, historic, archaeologic, scientific, and recreational resources of the state and providing for their use and enjoyment thereby contributing to the cultural, recreational and economic life of the people and their health; and

WHEREAS, Montana's State Parks provide world class recreational opportunities for Montanans and their guests; and

WHEREAS, recreation on Montana's State Parks contributes significantly to the quality of life and economy of the people of the state; and

WHEREAS, the number of people recreating in Montana's State Parks is growing; and

WHEREAS, there was a review of the state parks program done in 1989 by the State Park Futures Committee that lead to improvements within the state parks system: and

WHEREAS, the Legislative Audit Division reviewed the programs within the Parks Division of Fish Wildlife and Parks and with the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks recommended to me the creation of the State Park Futures Committee II.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JUDY MARTZ, Governor of the State of Montana, by virtue of the authority vested in me under the laws and Constitution of the State of Montana, do hereby create the State Park Futures Committee II.

PURPOSE

The State Park Futures Committee II shall:

A. Make recommendations to the Governor, the 2003 Legislature and Fish, Wildlife & Parks regarding changes that have occurred in the parks system since the original state park futures committee met in 1989 including

1. Park fee revenues and funding source
2. Park resources
3. Statutory park designation
4. Park designations
5. Potential long term policy changes
6. Distribution of state parks across the state
7. Other policy considerations

B. Recommendations from the State Park Futures Committee II shall:

1. Consider the 1990 Futures Committee report; the 2020 Vision for Montana State Parks System Plan and the 2001 performance audit conducted by the Legislative Audit Division.
2. Consider the social and, economic effects, both positive and negative, of state changes.
3. Consider the values and needs of all recreational users.
4. Consider the financial and staffing state parks system.
5. Be technically, legally, socially and economically feasible to implement.

C. In its deliberations the State Park Futures Committee II shall seek and consider input from citizens of the state and other interested parties.

II. COMPOSITION

The Committee shall consist of not more than 10 members appointed by the Governor. Members will represent a variety of interests including, but not limited to private citizens; legislators; the tourism community and business interests. The names and addresses of members, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor, are submitted by separate letter to the Secretary of State and the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND COMPENSATION

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks will provide administrative support to the Committee. Committee members shall serve without compensation, but shall be 'reimbursed by Fish, Wildlife & Parks for reasonable travel expenses pursuant to sections 2-15-122(5) and 2-18-501 through 2-15503, MCA.

IV. DURATION

The Committee shall exist for a period of 18 months from the effective date of this Order unless extended by subsequent Executive Order. This order shall be effective immediately.

GIVEN under my hand and the
GREAT SEAL of the State of
Montana, this 3rd day
of October 2001.

JUDY MARTZ, Governor

ATTEST

BOB BROWN, Secretary of State

Appendix B
Map of Montana State Parks

Appendix C
Proposed Statutory Framework and Administrative Rule

1. Clarify in statute the role of Montana State Parks.

In Montana, a range of federal, state, and local governments and private organizations and business provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and the enjoyment and preservation of natural, cultural, and historical resources. Within this range, the role of the Montana State Parks system is to:

- Protect, maintain, and interpret natural, cultural, historical resources of statewide significance, and recreational resources of at least regional significance.
- Provide recreational opportunities in primarily rural, rustic, minimally developed settings, including campsites without utility hook-ups.

Most if not all state parks, therefore, will have significantly more facility development than federally designated wilderness and recreation areas but less development than is common in city and county parks or private recreation facilities.

2. Clarify in statute legislative intent for the management of the State Parks system.

FWP and the Parks Division shall manage the state park system to preserve, enhance, and interpret a diverse representation of Montana's most outstanding natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources, for the spiritual, social, and economic benefit of present and future generations, and to ensure that:

- Natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources are protected and maintained to prevent their degradation over time;
- Long-range stewardship is achieved through management policies and plans developed with professional and public input;
- Public use facilities are appropriate, safe, clean, and, as far as possible, accessible;
- The parks remain affordable to Montanans; and
- Development is not increased incrementally without public input and legislative approval after review of:
    (a) the desires of the public as expressed to the department;
    (b) the stated need for the improvements, based on:
        i. the need to meet minimum public health standards regarding sanitation, which may include necessary access to outhouses, vaults, and water;
        ii. the need to ensure the safe public use of existing facilities;
        iii. the need to ensure safe public access through the addition of gravel to existing unpaved roads and the resurfacing of paved roads;
        iv. the need to establish new hiking trails or improve existing hiking trails; and
        v. the need for directional, regulatory, and interpretive signage to preserve the park's resources and enhance visitor experience;
    (c) the capacity of the park for development;
    (d) environmental impacts associated with the improvement or development;
    (e) the capital costs of the improvements;
    (f) the long-term maintenance and operation costs of the improvements;
    (g) the protection of natural, cultural, and historical park features;
    (h) potential impacts on tourism; and
    (i) site-specific modifications as they relate to the park system as a whole.

3. By administrative rule, develop a classification system for State Park management zones.

The Legislature directs FWP to develop by administrative rule a classification system for management zones within state parks (see sample below). Each park or zone within a park as delineated in a management plan shall be classified under the administrative rule. To move a park or zone from one class to another shall require:

- A management plan completed within the last five years;
- Opportunities, both statewide and locally, for meaningful public involvement; and
- Legislative approval of funding for the development that would require the reclassification, upon review of (a) through (i) above.

Sample State Parks Classification System

	Park Management Zones			
	Undeveloped Or Minimally Developed	**Semi-Developed**		**Highly Developed**
		Day Use	**Camping**	
Mngmt. Priorities	Mostly natural or undisturbed historical or natural environment managed with minimum, subtle controls and facilities for visitor use.	Substantially modified natural or historical environment with numerous facilities designed to accommodate a variety of visitor uses. Managed to provide interpretive and recreational experiences for higher numbers of visitors.		Urbanized environment with a high density of facilities and management controls to accommodate varied and intense visitor use.
Allowable Facilities Once classified, a park area cannot be reclassified under another zone without a compelling human health or resource protection reason, a management plan, public involvement, and legislative review and approval for funding of the development that would require the reclassification.	Not to exceed: • Unpaved trails. • Perimeter fencing. • Location or directional signs. • Iron ranger and unstaffed information kiosk. • Gravel entrance road. • Parking area.	All of the facilities to the left, and not to exceed: • Paved entrance road. • Gravel interior roads. • Staffed entrance station. • Equipment shed and maintenance shop. • Interpretive signs. • Potable water. • Vault toilets. Garbage collection. • Picnic tables. • Boat ramp. • Dock.	All of the facilities to the left, and not to exceed: • Campsites. • Fire pits. • Host site utilities (water, electricity, phone). • RV dump station.	All of the facilities to the left, and: • Paved interior roads. • Paved trails. • Visitor center. • Concession buildings and facilities. • Flush toilets. • Showers. • Picnic shelters. • Amphitheater or activity pavilions. • Playground equipment and sports facilities. • Rental cabins. • Staff housing.

Appendix D
Potential Sites for State Parks in Region 6

Region 6 Search Committee's Top Four Recommendations:

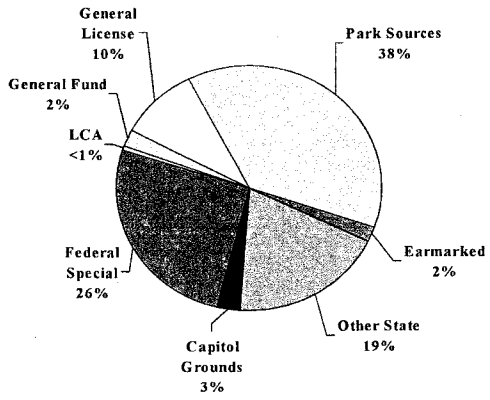
Fort Assinniboine (4 miles south of Havre)
Brush Lake (31 miles south east of Plentywood)
Azure Cave (50 miles south of Malta)
IMAX Dome Theater (Fort Peck)

Other Locations the Search Committee Considered:

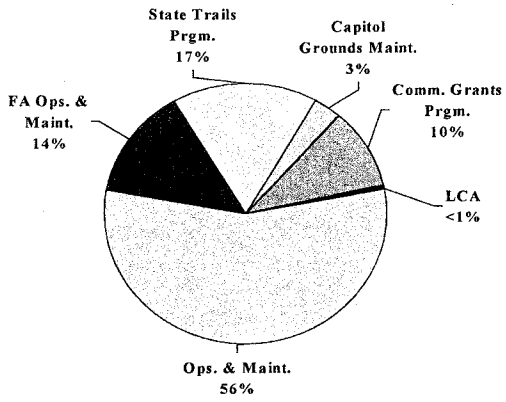
Pioneer Village, Scobey
Blaine County Wildlife Museum, Chinook
Old Fort Belknap, Chinook
Joe Hartman Ranch, south of Malta
Rock Creek and Lewis & Clark Fishing Access Sites
Brockton Town Park, Brockton
Rock Creek, north of Hinsdale
Threshing Bee, Culbertson
Iron Stake Ridge, south of Malta

Appendix E

Sources of Revenue
FY02 - $11,906,820



Expenditures



Appendix F
Funding Needs as Presented by the Parks Division

Present Budget: As presented and discussed at the State Park Futures II Committee, state parks are currently spending into cash reserves to operate and maintain the parks system in the condition that it is in today with the services that are provided today. In other words, state parks are spending more than they are taking in and cash reserves are being depleted. If this trend continues without either a reduction in expenditures or an increase in revenues in the main four park financial accounts, the parks system will have cash balances below those required by state law during FY 2006. To keep the cash balances positive, it will take either a budget reduction or a funding increase of $200,000 per year assuming there is no program growth, no major maintenance, capital construction, program enhancements or land acquisition expenditures.
Funding Need: $200,000 per year

Equipment: The parks program has a fleet of over 400 pieces of specialized equipment ranging from small tools, computers, lawn mowers, dump trucks and backhoes. The division only keeps equipment for tasks that cannot be easily, practically and cost effectively contracted to the private sector. Historically, the parks division has spent approximately $37,500 per year replacing worn out equipment. This replacement amount has not been adequate to replace the $1.5 million equipment inventory. The replacement schedule for equipment varies with the type of equipment being discussed. The numerous small items, like computers and small lawn mowers, generally have a 4-5 year useful life. Generally, the larger and more expensive the piece of equipment, the longer the life, such as large mowers and utility tractors may last 12 years and backhoes have a life of 20-25 years. Because of the large range of equipment and their useful lives, we estimate needing to replace the entire fleet of equipment every 10 years.
Funding Need: $112,500 per year

Operating Budgets: The 1991 State Park Futures Committee Report identified and recommended an increase of over 30 FTEs over a 5-year time frame to allow the parks program to operate effectively and to meet the needs of the public and of the park resources. Since that time there have been less than 10 FTEs added to the parks program with most of those used for maintenance. Currently, the parks program, including state parks, fishing access sites and trails, has 110 FTEs. Regional park managers and maintenance supervisors were polled during the Futures Committee II process to assess current budget conditions and needs. A total of 38.40 FTE are needed by the parks system to operate a fully functioning state parks program. The positions needed range from state pay grade 7 caretakers and laborers, to grade 9 tour guides, grade 11 fee collectors, entry level park managers, volunteer and supervisors. Using a midlevel grade range these 38.4 FTE would cost $1,275,000 per year. Historically, personal services budgets make up about 70% of the operating costs of the parks program. An equivalent amount of operations support for these FTEs would be $550,000 for travel, uniforms, supplies and materials and contracted services.
Funding Need: 38.40 FTE @ $1,275,000 + $550,000 operations = $1,825,000 per year, or $48,000 per FTE

Land Inholdings Acquisitions: The Futures II Committee was presented an inventory of all of the park inholdings, private lands within or adjoining parks, which are vital to the operation of the park or to protect the resources within a park. This inventory did not have land values on all of the listed parcels because some of the values are unknown and others are not conceivable to acquire. Of the listed parcels with prices, the value is estimated to be $2.5 million. Assuming a 50% match on one half of the parcels using LWCF and a ten-year acquisition schedule, the parks program needs $187,500 per year to acquire inholdings, plus authority to spend the associated federal LWCF. This figure does not include acquisition of new parks.
Funding Need: $187,500 per year

Major Maintenance, Deferred Maintenance and Capital Construction: The Futures Committee was provided with several pieces of information about capital construction. In the last ten years state parks have done $30.5 million in capital repairs, rehabilitations and improvements to state parks, and the parks system today reflects these improvements. Nominally this has left $36 million in needed maintenance, repairs and enhancements. It is safe to assume the useful life of capital construction projects to be 20 years. It is also fair to assume that the existing needed capital projects cannot be accomplished in less than a 10-year period. As the final project is complete in 10 years, then the first project done 11 years ago will be ready of major renovation. Therefore, assuming a 20-year useful life and $36 million in current needs and $30 million in current assets also with a 20-year life, it will require $3.3 million per year to maintain current level asset conditions within the capital construction program. It fair to assume that 25 percent of this capital construction cost will be covered by federal funding each year.
Funding Need: $2.5 million per year

State Park Funding Needs	
	PER YEAR
Present Budget	$200,000
Equipment	$112,500
Operating Budgets (38.40 FTE @ $1,275,000 + $550,000 operations)	$1,825,000
Land Inholdings Acquisitions	$187,500
Major Maintenance, Deferred Maintenance, and Capital Construction	$2,500,000
Total Funding Need Per Year	**$4,825,000**

Appendix G
Maintenance Categories at Montana State Parks

Park Site		Major Main.	Defer. Main.	Cap. Rehab.	Cap. Enhance
Region 1					
Logan	flush latrines in day use area			$100,000	
	latrine replacement, fee booth replacement, upgrade host pad, utility upgrade,	$33,000			
	storage building, picnic shelter, roofing		$175,000		
Lone Pine	renovate existing building			$600,000	$400,000
	upgrade interp, repair roof, disabled accessibility, trail improvements		$250,000		
West Shore	comfort station			$250,000	
	tree removal, chlorination system	$14,000			
	repave roads, storage building, rehab boat ramp and parking, relocate camp areas		$250,000	$900,000	
Big Arm	tree removal	$5,000			
	road repair, storage building, relocate host pads, latrine replacements, entrance station, boat slips		$300,000		
Whitefish Lake	tree removal, chlorination system	$10,000			
	level camp pads, boat slips, beach repair, trail		$250,000		
Wayfarers	provide additional camping opportunities				$500,000
	storage, road repairs, level camp pads, boat docks		$100,000		
Lake Mary Ronan	chlorination system	$5,000			
Finley Point	modify campsites, provide additional camping		$100,000		$200,000
Wildhorse Island	latrine, interpretation, trails		$100,000		
Somers	additional parking, boat trailer parking		$200,000		
Lions Camp	restore historic lodge		$200,000		
Yellow Bay	provide parking, replace toilets, r&r storage shed, interp, boat docking		$400,000		
Region 2					
Frenchtown Pond	Phase II construction, comfort station, landscaping, beach improvements			$350,000	
Beavertail	comfort station, showers			$200,000	$150,000

Hill	camp loop repairs, group use shelter, road repairs		$200,000		
Placid Lake	road repair, internal and county connecting		$375,000		
	toilet replacement		$15,000		
Salmon Lake	road repair- internal, replace water systems, boat slips		$275,000		
Council Grove	interpretive display rehab, road repairs, group use shelter, fencing, trails		$100,000		
Painted Rocks	water well reconstruction, distribution system, picnic tables, docks		$200,000		
	fire rings	$2,500			
Lost Creek	latrine replacement, interior road work, connecting roads, fire rings, table replacement,	$20,000	$250,000		
	host pad, parking lot construction, campsite realignments			$250,000	
Ft. Owen	building stabilization		$100,000		
	water system, parking areas, roads, lighting, interpretation		$100,000		
	latrine replacement, rechink cabin, repoint wall	$20,000			
Anaconda Stack	repair top of stack, light stack, add lightning rods, interpretation		$200,000		
Granite	roads, parking, signing, fencing, stabilization, adaptive use modifications		$300,000		
	latrine	$8,000			
Blackfoot Corridor	latrine replacement	$8,000	$40,000		
Region 3					
Lewis and Clark Caverns	entrance station			$800,000	
	maintenance building rehab/recon			$250,000	
	cave wiring		$1,000,000		
	trails, campground water rehab, interp		$500,000		
	group use shelter				$50,000
	water system updates, tables, fire rings	$15,000			
Bannack	building stabilization			$1,500,000	
	visitor center				$2,500,000
	interpretive displays	$50,000			
	host pads, entrance contact station	$50,000			
	Employee housing				$250,000
	latrine replacement	$15,000			

	flume repairs	$6,000			
Spring Meadow	fencing, signing, trail work,	$12,000			
	roads, landscaping, toilets, amphitheater, added trails		$100,000		$300,000
	Kellner remodel				$3,500,000
Black Sandy	Roads, entrance station		$75,000		
	Disabled fishing pier repairs	$2,500			
White Sandy	Initial development				$1,500,000
Clarks Lookout	Initial development			$75,000	
Madison Buffalo Jump	Interpretive displays, roof repair, latrines				$80,000
Missouri Headwaters	Group use shelter, interpretation, camping mosquito shelters, equipment storage, staff office, visitor contact area				$250,000
Elkhorn	Building stabilization		$75,000		
Beaverhead Rock	Parking, access road, interp, trails				$400,000
Region 4					
Giant Springs	Roads repair and reroute, irrigation repairs, landscaping, trails		$200,000	$300,000	
	North Shore initial development				$1,000,000
	Bridge repair, signing, ADA access, toilets,		$40,000		
Ulm Pishkun	Outside electrical, sidewalk extension, gravel parking area	$4,000			
	Fencing, outside interpretation, trail extension		$50,000		
	Buffalo pasture				$100,000
Sluice Boxes	trails, parking lot, latrines, fencing		$75,000		
Smith River	Parking, fencing, signs	$1,500			
	Conservation easements				$500,000
Region 5					
Lake Elmo	trail improvements, vegetation rehab.		$100,000		
	paint concession/restroom areas	$15,000			
Plenty Coups	new wing on visitor center				$1,500,000
	property acquisition				$350,000
	staff housing				$250,000
	tree removal and pruning	$8,500			
	sprinkler system	$4,500			
Pictograph Cave	rehab interp., trails, water supply		$100,000		$100,000

Cooney	water system, contact station, roads, signing, maintenance facility		$1,200,000		
	Comfort station				$300,000
	repair sidewalks	$3,000			
Greycliff Prairie Dogtown	rehabilitate interpretation		$40,000		
Region 6					
New Park	initial development				$1,500,000
Region 7					
Hell Creek	upgrade water system, group use building, roads,		$800,000		
	comfort station				$250,000
	Latrine replacement, irrigation system, tree planting	$31,000			
Makoshika	road repairs		$1,000,000		
	water line extension, trails, relocate rifle range, fencing, latrine replacements, update day use area		$500,000		
	secondary day use and camping areas				$250,000
	trail developments				$50,000
	latrine replacements	$16,000			
Medicine Rocks	road repairs, latrine replacements, trails, interp.		$250,000		
Rosebud Battlefield	visitor center				$2,500,000
	Internal road system, trails, interp		$100,000		
	Kobold house stabilization		$100,000		
	fence riparian area to keep cattle out		$10,000		
Tongue Reservoir	group use area, river camp improv.		$125,000		
	latrine replacements	$8,000	$335,000		
	road barriers	$8,000	$8,000		
Pirogue Island	foot bridge, interpretation		$25,000		$75,000
TOTAL		$375,500	$11,288,000	$5,575,000	$18,805,000
Total of all maintenance categories: $36,043,500					

Appendix H
Potential Pilot Project on Entrance Staffing to improve revenue collection and overall park operations.

PARK ENTRANCE FTE					
Region/Park	**FTE need, grade & cost**	**Operation budget**	**Current schedule**	**How FTE would be used**	**Est. Potential Revenue**
7 – Tongue River Reservoir	0.55 FTE at Grade 9 for a FY'04 cost of $13,541.	$7,000 to create entrance station on road.	Limited summer hours over many entrances	New staff would work entrance to administer fees and provide info to users on boating safety site occupancy and park rules.	$20,000
3 – Spring Meadow	0.25 FTE at Grade 11 for a FY'04 cost of $5,870	$300 in fixed cost items	10 hours per day 7 days per week from Mem. Day to Labor day. When entrance not staffed compliance = 40%	Shoulder seasons and winter in association with other duties such as maint. Fee compliance when entrance staffed is 90%.	$12,500
1 – Flathead Lake and Whitefish Lake	1.64 FTE at Grade 8 for a cost in FY'04 of $38,518 each park=0.41 FTE and $9,629	$1,000 in fixed cost items such as mileage, uniforms, etc.	5 days per week at 8 hours per day from Memorial day to Labor day.	Extend season by 5 weeks and staff to 7 days/week, 10 hrs/day. With additional benefit to other staff.	$25,000
5 - Cooney Reservoir	0.50 FTE at Grade 8 for a cost in FY'04 of $11,743.	$7,000 to create entrance station on road.	Summer hours with roving staff across 5 entrances.	New staff would work entrance to administer fees and provide info to users on boating safety site occupancy and park rules.	$30,000
2 – Salmon Lake, Placid Lake State Parks Each park = 0.25 FTE and $5,735	0.50 FTE at Grade 8 for a cost in FY'04 of $11,743	$500 in fixed cost items	20 hours/wk. on Fri./Sat./Sun. 50% compliance w/o staffing present.	Extend weekly staff hours every day all summer – esp. evenings and day use at Salmon.	$12,000
3 - Bannack	0.15 FTE at Grade 8 for shoulder season staff = $2,950. 0.50 FTE at Grade 8 for summer staff = $ 9,786.	$4,000 for entrance station on road.	Mem day to Labor day 10-6.	0.15 would provide staff for May and after Labor Day. 0.50 would staff entrance during summer season.	$10,000

Region/Park	FTE need, grade & cost	Operation budget	Current schedule	How FTE would be used	Est. Potential Revenue
4 – Giant Springs	0.25 FTE at grade 7 = $4,461 for shoulder seasons and summer.		Mid May-Labor Day 10 hours per day, 4 days per week.	FTE would open program earlier in the year and keep fee program in place later while extending hours during summer. High local resident fee resistance.	$4,500
TOTAL	4.09 FTE $94,151	$21,800			$114,000

It is worth noting that each manager felt that when park entrances are not staffed, fee compliance ranges from 40-50% for day use fee compliance. When entrances are staffed the compliance goes up to 90-95%. This does not include passport holders. Passport sales go up noticeably when parks are staffed and those parks that are staffed earlier in the season see earlier and increased passport sales.

Each manager also noted that the benefits of entrance staffing go beyond day use fee sales and may be observed in camping fee compliance. Finally, each manager felt that the benefit to: 1) existing staff through reduced burnout, 2) visitors through better service and, 3) citizens through lower vandalism and visitor behavior were justification that is not easily measured but clearly worthwhile.

Appendix I
Information Resources on Montana State Parks

The following publications are available by request from the Parks Division at Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1420 East 6th Avenue, Helena, MT 59620; phone 406-444-3750.

2020 Vision for Montana State Parks System Plan, December 1998. 196 pp. Plan sets the broad, long-range direction for Montana State Parks system through the first two decades of the 21st century. Includes mission and history of the park system; Parks division organization, programs, and activities; park classifications and inventories; national and statewide trends affecting Montana state parks; visitation and visitor satisfaction; alternative futures for the park system; and envisioned outcomes, issues, goals, and strategies for Montana state parks through 2020.

Accomplishments and Needs of the State Park System, Parks Division, September 1992. 14 pp. Report to the State Parks Futures Committee I on the division's accomplishments, benefits realized, barriers, and remaining funding needs.

Montana State Parks: System Plan, Recreation Management Opportunities and Inside Outside, February 10, 1989. 53 pp. Plan defines the major goal for the parks system, establishes standards of acceptability, and describes management and maintenance systems for each park.

Montana State Park System: A Financial Review, Recreation Management Opportunities, no date. 49 pp. Report identifies financial issues facing Parks Division, proposes solutions, and offers recommendations.

State Park Fee, Service, and Facility Survey: Results Report, Dana E. Dolsen and Zoe King, Responsive Management Unit, FWP, January 5, 1999. 100 pp. Summarizes results of park visitor survey on park fee structure, facilities, services, and programs.

State Parks Program, Report to the Legislature: Performance Audit, Legislative Audit Division, February 2001. 35 pp. Report provides background information on the parks system and operations, and policy considerations (including overall parks program direction).

The State Park System: Montana's Legacy – A New Growth Industry, A Report to Governor Stan Stephens and the 52nd Legislature, State Parks Futures Committee, November 1990. 51 pp. provides background on park system, mission, vision, barriers, and committee recommendations.

Welcome Home to Montana State Parks, park system pamphlet, 2001. 14 pp. State map, parks facilities chart, and directions, brief descriptions, and phone numbers for each park.