

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

PARKS DIVISION

DIVISION ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Montana State Parks is responsible for conserving the scenic, historic, archaeological, scientific, and recreational resources at 54 state parks and providing for their use and enjoyment thereby contributing to the cultural, recreational, and economic well being of the people and their health. The Division manages the Recreation Grants Program which administers recreational trails, off-highway vehicle, snowmobile, and Land and Water Conservation Fund grants to trail users and for local government recreation projects.

DIVISION PRIORITIES

SERVICE – provide high quality services to State Park visitors and user groups, provide the strong and efficient program leadership to local Montana communities via grant programs, and enhance sites throughout Montana for recreational opportunities.

SAFETY – provide for immediate improvements in safety and reduced exposure to liability by improving management practices, safety training, incident responses and hazard reductions while also working to reduce workers comp claims.

STEWARDSHIP – promote maintenance, use and stewardship of natural, cultural and recreational resources for current and future generations.

SUSTAINABILITY – provide and enhance resources within State Parks in a fiscally conscious manner.

STATE PARKS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Provided safe and enjoyable recreation opportunities at 54 parks statewide while contributing to the local economy through tourism related services. (\$289 Million spent and 1,600 jobs supported in 2010)
- Use of state parks reached record highs in the last 4 years (2009 and 2012).
- Rolled out aggressive marketing campaign to build awareness, increase use and revenues throughout the park system.
- Established an AmeriCorps program to increase education, volunteerism and community outreach.
- Increased use of volunteers by 14% in 2012 and logged almost 42,000 hours in parks.
- Successfully implemented a campsite reservation system in 2011.
- Increased revenues by 22% in FY'12 through increased use and improved service.

CHALLENGES

- Deep backlog of infrastructure needs and improvements to sustain the park system and serve tourism economy.
- Limited ability to raise additional revenues but working on various solutions (Report on Concessions).
- Staffing for state parks is limited in comparison to other states and programs (HJR 32).

RECREATION PROGRAM

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Granted \$387,183 in winter grooming grants to 27 snowmobile clubs statewide.
- Issued \$196,000 in grants for OHV projects to 12 groups statewide.
- Approved Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants totaling ~\$1.4 million to 53 sponsors.
- Issued six Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants totaling \$249,318 to local communities.
- In partnership with other agencies, implemented an on-line grant application process in 2012.
- Hired a full-time OHV Program Manager position to better address safety, education, and constituent issues.
- Simplified the OHV, Snowmobile, and Recreational Trails Program application processes for all applicants.
- Reinforced positive working relationships with the Montana Snowmobile Association (MSA) and Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association (MTVRA) leadership.
- Attended various RV and sport shows statewide to raise awareness of OHV safety.

CHALLENGES

- Funding revenues via fuel tax proceeds which support the OHV and Snowmobile Programs have declined in recent years. A conservative approach to maintain the stable year-to-year grants is in-place.
- The RTP and LWCF are federally funded programs. In recent years the funding amounts have been unpredictable for both the amounts and timing of funding availability.
- The funding available for replacement and repairs of the snowmobile groomer fleet are a concern. Funding levels are stable, but costs increase annually and the fleet grows older.
- Support and enhance recreation on federal lands in a sustainable manner.

DECISION PACKAGES

- **DP #602 Restore Parks O&M Staff-** **\$271,339**
Restores 2.53 FTE in base for managers and maintenance staff. A .50 FTE for NW Montana, 1.0 FTE for manager at Pictograph Cave, and .25 manager for Travelers' Rest. Maintenance FTE are: Kalispell .20, Missoula .25, Bozeman .25, and Great Falls .08.
- **DP #603 Restore LWCF Program Staff-** **\$170,286**
The request restores authority to re-establish a modified 1.0 FTE for a snowmobile program manager and administrative support for Land & Water Conservation Fund community grants.
- **DP #604 Restore Base Operations-** **\$230,126**
This request does two things: Restores base operations to historical levels that were left unspent due to conservative budget management for maintenance, safety, and other operational needs. Restores base operational funding for the Recreational Trails, Snowmobile, and Off Highway Vehicle programs that were OTO in the 2011 legislative session and are used to support clubs, safety and education to the public, grant management, and field support statewide.
- **DP #605 Restore Snowmobile Biennial-** **(\$410,000)**
Restores the biennial appropriation to purchase snowmobile trail groomers for local clubs such as West Yellowstone and Seeley Lake.
- **DP #606 Parks Boat Safety-** **\$63,304**
This request for Budget Amendment federal authority spent in FY2012 for .50 FTE and operations. This funding is combined with state park wardens at Flathead Lake & Cooney State Parks to promote boating safety, education, assistance, and maintenance in the Division.
- **DP #607 Parks Reservation System RST/OTO-** **\$150,000**
Requested funds are for operations authority to support the campsite reservation system. The current MOU will expire on Dec. 31, 2013 and funding is needed to pay for operations costs associated with a service provider's fees, transaction fees, and other reservation system costs.
- **DP #608 Parks Equipment OTO-** **\$400,000**
Request for one-time-only authority to purchase critical heavy equipment used to maintain and repair infrastructure at parks statewide.
- **DP #609 Parks O&M** **\$164,000**
A request to increase operations funding to address steadily increasing utility and operating costs such as latrine pumping, electrical, and garbage disposal.
- **DP #6101 Professional Development Center Fee Allocation-** **(\$934)**
The executive requests an increase for training services purchased from the Professional Development Center (PDC) of the Department of Administration. This request reflects the difference between the amount paid in the base for PDC services and a fixed cost allocation based on agency FTE counts. Starting in the 2015 biennium and beyond, the executive recommends funding the PDC as a fixed cost item.