

*Outdoor Recreation in Oregon:
The Changing Face of the Future*

January 2008

Chapter One Introduction



Prepared by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

Plan Introduction

The purpose of this planning effort was to provide guidance for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program and information and recommendations to guide federal, state, and local units of government, as well as the private sector, in making policy and planning decisions. It also provides guidance for other Oregon Parks and Recreation (OPRD)-administered grant programs including the Local Grant, County Opportunity Grant, Recreational Trails and All-Terrain Vehicle Programs. In addition, it provides recommendations to the Oregon State Park System operations, administration, planning, development, and recreation programs.

This document constitutes Oregon's basic five-year policy plan for outdoor recreation. It establishes the framework for statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation planning and the implementation process. In conjunction with that purpose, it is intended to be consistent with the objectives of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, which, as its title implies, is to conserve and make available for public enjoyment as much of the nation's high-quality land and water resources as may be available and necessary to meeting the nation's outdoor recreation needs.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was established by Congress in 1964 to create parks and open spaces, protect wilderness, wetlands, and refuges, preserve wildlife habitat and enhance recreational opportunities. The LWCF has two components:

- A **federal program** that funds the purchase of land and water areas for conservation and recreation purposes within the four federal land management agencies; and
- A **stateside matching grants program** that provides funds to states for planning, developing and acquiring land and water areas for state and local parks and recreation areas.

The Federal LWCF Program

Funds appropriated for the federal program are available to federal agencies including the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management for the purchase of land and water areas for conservation and recreation purposes. These funds are used for public acquisition of special lands and places for conservation and recreation purposes; public acquisition of private holdings within National Parks, National Forests, National Fish and Wildlife Refuges, public lands managed by the Bureau of Land management, and wilderness areas; public acquisition areas key to fish and wildlife protection; and public acquisition as authorized by law.

Federal LWCF program funds are distributed following an annual process of prioritizing regional land acquisition needs for each eligible agency. After taking into account a variety of factors such as cost, probability of development, and local support, they develop prioritized "wish lists" that are forwarded to their Washington, D.C. land acquisition headquarters. The headquarters staff identifies its priorities and sends them to the Land Acquisition Working Group, comprised of the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks; and the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land Management; and the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Nature, Resources, and the Environment. The working group sends the prioritized agency lists to the

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) at the completion of the congressional session. OMB critiques and returns the list and, following a final appeal process by the agencies, the fiscal year's land acquisition funding amount is presented as part of the President's budget.

The Stateside LWCF Grant Program

Those funds appropriated for the stateside matching grants program can be used to acquire land for parks and recreation purposes; build or redevelop recreation and park facilities; provide riding and hiking trails; enhance recreation access; and conserve open space, forests, estuaries, wildlife, and natural resource areas through recreation projects. In most years, all states receive individual allocations of stateside LWCF grant funds based on a national formula, with state population being the most influential factor.

Qualifying For LWCF Funding

To qualify for stateside LWCF funding, each state must prepare a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) every five years. In Oregon, the plan functions not only to guide the LWCF program, but also provides guidance for other OPRD administered grant programs including the Local Grant, County Opportunity Grant, Recreational Trails, and All-Terrain Vehicle Programs. Finally, the plan provides guidance to federal, state, and local units of government, as well as the private sector, in delivering quality outdoor recreational opportunities to Oregonians and out-of-state visitors.

Legal Authority

To be eligible for assistance under the Federal Land and Conservation Fund Act of 1964

(P.L. 88-578; 78 Statute 897), the Governor of the state of Oregon has designated the Director of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department as the official who has authority to represent and act for the State as the State Liaison Officer (SLO) in dealing with the Director of the National Park Service for purposes of the LWCF program. The SLO has authority and responsibility to accept and to administer funds paid for approved projects.

Authority to conduct the SCORP process is granted to the Director of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department under Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 390.180. This document and related appendices were prepared to be in compliance with Chapter 630 of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants Manual. Federal acceptance of the States comprehensive outdoor recreation planning process is a prerequisite for Oregon's establishing and maintaining eligibility to participate in the Land and Water Conservation Fund program.

The Oregon Administrative Rules, Chapter 736, Division 8, Distribution of LWCF Funding Assistance to Units of Local Government for Public Outdoor Recreation establishes the State Liaison Office, when distributing federal Land and Water Conservation Fund monies to the state agencies and eligible local governments, and the process for establishing the priority order in which projects shall be funded. See Appendix D for the Oregon Administrative Rules used by OPRD when distributing stateside LWCF grant monies. The rules are also available online at: http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS_700/OAR_736/736_008.html.

OPRD Planning Role

For this planning effort, the OPRD provided the necessary project management, staffing and resources necessary to complete the plan in a

high-quality manner. To maintain objectivity, the department incorporated rigorous research methods and established four separate Advisory Committees (aging, diversity, youth, and physical inactivity) to assist with addressing these key statewide demographic and social changes in the planning process. As a result, key planning recommendations represent the consensus of members representing a wide variety of agencies and organizations from across the state. The OPRD will support the implementation of key statewide and local planning recommendations through internal and external partnerships and through OPRD-administered grant programs.

The Planning Process

Background

The last SCORP for Oregon was completed by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and accepted by the National Park Service in January 2003. A primary focus of the planning effort was to develop an up-to-date, state-of-the-art SCORP plan providing guidance to federal, state, and local units of government, and the private sector in providing outdoor recreation resource opportunities in the state of Oregon. With the completion of this plan, the state maintains eligibility to participate in the Land and Water Conservation Fund up to December 31, 2007.

In addition to the current SCORP, the state has also completed a statewide trails plan entitled, "Oregon Trails 2005-2014: A Statewide Action Plan." The plan includes separate motorized, non-motorized and water trail components. It is the state's official plan for recreational trail management for a 10-year period, serving as a statewide and regional information and planning tool to assist Oregon recreation providers (local, state, federal, and private) in providing trail

opportunities and promoting access to Oregon's trails and waterways. It also identifies how the state's limited resources will be allocated for motorized, non-motorized and water trail projects throughout Oregon. A copy of this plan is available online at: <http://egov.oregon.gov/OPRD/PLANS/trailsplanning.shtml>.

OPRD began this SCORP planning process in September 2005. The plan focuses on the concept of repositioning⁴ in an effort to develop and nurture a broader constituency and wider community support for park and recreation providers in Oregon. The initial planning task was to identify the most important issues in Oregon related to outdoor recreation. Critical repositioning issues identified and addressed in this plan include a rapidly aging Oregon population, fewer Oregon youth learning outdoor skills, an increasingly diverse Oregon population, and the Oregon physical activity crisis. As a result, the plan has been titled, *Outdoor Recreation in Oregon: The Changing Face of the Future*.

Tomorrow's outdoor recreation users will come from a population dramatically different from that seen by recreation providers in the past. Therefore, a critical objective of the 2008-2012 Oregon SCORP planning effort was to provide outdoor recreation managers with usable information to proactively address the changing face of outdoor recreation in Oregon. The plan will also assist providers in Oregon to better describe the benefits resulting from recreation projects and programs addressing these issues and, as stated by Crompton and Witt, "reposition the place that parks and recreation occupies in the minds of elected officials and the general public."

⁴ Crompton, JL and PA Witt. 1997. Repositioning: The key to building support. *Parks and Recreation*, 32(10):80-90.

Components of the Planning Effort

The following section includes a brief description of the major components of the planning effort.

SCORP Advisory Committees

Early in the planning effort, OPRD established four separate Advisory Committees (aging, youth, diversity, and physical activity) to assist the department with addressing these key statewide demographic and social changes in the planning process. During the planning effort, committee members were asked to assist OPRD with the following SCORP related tasks:

- reviewing the basic planning framework;
- determining the basic plan outline;
- recommending actions that enhance outdoor recreation opportunities in the state;
- reviewing research findings and reports; and
- reviewing final planning documents.

Two rounds of Advisory Committee meetings (a total of eight meetings) were held over the course of the planning process. The first round of meetings was held between May and June of 2006. First round meeting objectives included:

- identifying key research analysis recommendations;
- identifying the basic planning outline; and
- identifying major topic areas addressed in the planning chapter.

A second round of meetings was held between March and August of 2007. Second round meeting objectives included:

- reviewing and providing feedback on research findings;
- identifying primary outdoor recreation needs; and

- developing key planning recommendations.

Committee member planning recommendations were based on a thorough review of existing literature related to the issue, SCORP research findings, and members' practical experience and knowledge of the issue.

SCORP Research Projects

The planning effort included a series of research projects designed to provide outdoor recreation managers and planners across Oregon with usable knowledge to proactively address the four key statewide demographic and social changes effecting recreation provision in the state. The research projects and methodologies are highlighted below.

1. An Aging Population and Outdoor Recreation in Oregon.

With the Baby Boomer generation fast approaching an age where leisure activities will increase and retirement relocation will peak, the implications of increasing recreational participation on park and recreation and for future non-metropolitan relocation and population growth are substantial. This research component assessed the effects on outdoor recreation of two related trends—Boomers moving into retirement and relocation to and within Oregon.

The project included a statewide mail survey of “Boomers” and “Pre-Boomers”⁵ and a separate analysis of factors affecting relocation to and within Oregon associated with the Boomer and Pre-Boomer populations.

⁵ In this study, Baby Boomers, or simply Boomers, are Oregon residents born between 1946 through 1964, while Pre-Boomers are Oregon residents born between 1926 and 1945.

2. Encouraging Youth Outdoor Recreation Participation in Oregon.
Analysis of previous SCORP survey results indicates that participation in traditional outdoor recreation activities is decreasing, and this may be due to decreasing youth participation. Anecdotal information and recent analysis indicate that youth participation in outdoor activities is decreasing because of several factors including increased urbanization, loss of free time, increase in single-parent family households, and greater youth focus on electronic activities (TV, video games, internet). Research has shown that people who do not participate in outdoor recreation as youth are less likely to participate in those activities as adults (with implications also for the next generation). An investment in catalyzing youth participation now may be critical for achieving positive conservation attitudes in the future, and ultimately for maintaining support for the agencies that manage natural areas. This project is designed to identify factors that limit youth participation and opportunities for overcoming them.

The project included a statewide survey of Oregon youth and their parents and a series of youth focus group interviews designed to explore the opinions and thoughts directly from youth.

3. A Growing Minority Population and Outdoor Recreation in Oregon.
People of color are transforming Oregon much faster than expected, arriving in larger numbers and settling in areas throughout the state. In general, minorities are less likely than whites to participate in outdoor recreation in the U.S. Minorities forego the health, social, and other benefits of outdoor recreation, while natural areas, and the agencies that

manage them, lose a potentially important group of supporters. Lower participation rates amongst minorities will become even more important in the future with the growth of the minority population. This project identified the factors limiting minority participation in Oregon and opportunities to increase this participation.

The project included a statewide mail survey of Oregon's Hispanic and Asian populations and a series of focus group interviews designed to explore the opinions and thoughts of Oregon's Hispanic, Asian and African-American populations.

4. Health and Recreation Linkages in Oregon.
According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) rates of physical inactivity and obesity in the U.S. have reached epidemic proportions. Overweight and obesity are associated with increases in several chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, type-2 diabetes, and various cancers.

This project included a statewide study testing the hypothesis that local populations in Oregon with ready access to locally-provided outdoor recreation opportunities are healthier than areas without access to such resources. This information about the health-related benefits of outdoor recreation is useful to managers and policymakers who are increasingly challenged to both describe the benefits resulting from recreation projects and to allocate their scarce resources to providing high-quality recreation opportunities in addition to other public services.

SCORP Demographic and Social Trend Analysis

To better understand how these important demographic and social changes will affect

outdoor recreation providers in their local service areas in the coming years, OPRD requested the Population Research Center at Portland State University to prepare population estimates and projections for planning and grant program administrative purposes. The estimates were developed for the year 2005, and the projections, for 2010, 2015, and 2020. Estimates and projections include population sub-groups, as well as the total population, with specific demographic characteristics, such as age, race/ethnicity, and health status. The project also identified high-priority counties and cities for the following indicators: increase in aging population 60 years and older; increase in population diversity for Black, Asian/Pacific Islander races, and Hispanic ethnicity; increase in youth population between the ages of 6-17; and increase in the adult population not meeting minimum CDC physical activity recommendations.

Key Planning Recommendations

Following completion of the research studies, each of the four Advisory Committees met to develop a final set of planning recommendations for assisting recreation providers across the state to address the four planning issues. Key recommendations are divided into two categories; statewide recommendations and local recommendations. Statewide recommendations are relevant for all recreation providers across the state of Oregon. Because individual issues might be of greater relevance in certain areas of the state, local recommendations apply to those high-priorities counties and/or cities identified in SCORP research projects.

Oregon Wetlands Priority Plan

The Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 (P.L. 99-645) requires each state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan to include a component that identifies wetlands as a priority concern within the state. An appendix to the plan describes a brief history of wetland protecting in Oregon, current wetland protection strategies, and a priority listing of regions/watersheds for wetland restoration/acquisition.

SCORP Planning Web site

Early in the planning process, OPRD staff developed a SCORP planning web site for people across the state to access current information about the 2008-2012 SCORP planning process. One of the primary objectives of the web site was to build interest in SCORP through the course of the two-year planning effort. The web site was also useful in disseminating research results and the review of preliminary draft materials. The web site address is:

<http://egov.oregon.gov/OPRD/PLANS/SCORP.shtml>.



