Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission

February 23, 2023

Agenda Item: 3a **Information**

Public Comment Allowed: No

Topic: Office of Outdoor Recreation Update (Information)

Presented by: Cailin O'Brien-Feeney, Director – Office of Outdoor Recreation

Background: The purpose of this brief is to provide an update on implementation of the recommendations in the Governor's Task Force on the Outdoors: 2020 Framework for Action report. The overall purpose of that group was to "recommend policies, legislation and initiatives to support economic development in both rural and urban areas, balance improved outdoor recreation access with resource protection, and increase outdoor recreation participation especially among youth and traditionally underserved communities". In short, the report was and remains a sort of roadmap for statewide outdoor recreation priorities – it also serves to inform the Office of Outdoor Recreation annual workplan.

The following section is organized around the original five strategies developed by the Task Force and approved by this Commission. Only the recommendations where action has been taken or anticipated for 2023 are included. Importantly, each of the top recommendations across the five categories has been completed or is in progress. Additional work or resources may be needed to advance the other recommendations, including an assessment of their relative priority which will be guided by the Outdoor Recreation Advisory Council. Status updates include work both by the Office of Outdoor Recreation as well as partner agencies, the Oregon State Legislature and other stakeholders. Further detail on the actions and outputs of the work summarized here is available.

- Center efforts on diversity, equity and inclusion
 - o Advance accessibility and universal design principles
 - This OPRD led effort (with a project advisory group) is anticipated to deliver a final report before the end of the biennium.
 - o Build capacity to increase engagement in recreation planning
 - HB 2992 (2021) aimed to reduce systemic barriers to participation by increasing the per diem compensation for members of state boards and commissions, as well as required compensation for volunteer members subject to an income threshold. OPRD has since also made per diem compensation for volunteers in other planning efforts such as revision of our Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.
 - Set targets for inclusion of people of diverse backgrounds and abilities on agency committees

- Oregon State Parks and Recreation Commission adopted rule 736-002-0170 on November 17, 2021 establishing diversity targets for membership of the Outdoor Recreation Advisory Council
- o Evaluate and propose improvements to current EDI efforts in state agencies
 - The establishment of a Racial Justice Council, and specifically its Environmental Equity committee, has informed how agency budgets and programs are developed and evaluated. The creation and funding of dedicated Diversity, Equity and Inclusion positions in several agencies (including OPRD) will also serve to advance this work.
- Strengthen collaboration and organizational effectiveness
 - o Appoint a stakeholder group to advise the Office of Outdoor Recreation
 - Appointments have been made and the council has begun meeting, with an initial focus on shaping a 2023 workplan for the Office.
 - o Create and outdoor recreation sub-cabinet to lead policy and strategy
 - This concept has been combined with the above, in that the council includes seats for agency representatives as well.
 - o Support community outdoor recreation development with technical assistance
 - Assistance has been focused on six communities impacted by the 2020 Oregon wildfire season. This work has been funded through an agreement between the Federal Emergency Management Agency and National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program at the request of the state. Pending legislation (HB 2910, 2023) would provide further investment in outdoor recreation technical assistance efforts.
- Accelerate investments in the outdoor recreation sector
 - o Address county search and rescue needs
 - HB 2593 (2021) established a framework for a search and rescue card donation program with an aim of reimbursing operating costs as well as funding training and equipment.
 - o Fund outdoor recreation industry incubator and accelerator programs
 - HB 2910 (2023) referenced above also includes a provision for a grant program that would meet this objective.
 - o Rally community and industry support for the Oregon Conservation Strategy
 - The initial pilot phase of the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF) was successful in generating private investment. The Legislature has since provided additional funding and removed the program's sunset – the Office of Outdoor Recreation holds an ex-officio seat on the grant committee, specifically to advise on outdoor equity and recreation as copriorities for the OCRF.
- Catalyze innovative policies and legislation
 - o Reassess recreational immunity and liability provisions
 - In the current legislative session SB 754 (2023) is a bill that "Provides that operator may require person who engages in sport, fitness or recreational activity in various ways to release operator from claims for ordinary negligence."
 - o Offer a single storefront for recreation passes and permits
 - Updating the Office of Outdoor Recreation section of the OPRD has been identified as a 2023 task by the Outdoor Recreation Advisory Council,

which will include the cost and feasibility of including this functionality as well.

- o Expand Youth Corps vocational and career training
 - SB 762 (2021) included \$10 million investment in an Oregon Wildfire Workforce Corps Program. The core purpose of the program is wildfire risk reduction as well as to engage young adults in workforce training. While not specifically focused on parks, there may be crossover benefit in terms of supporting fire-adapted communities and protecting infrastructure.
- o Advance 'Equal pay for Equal Play' legislation for recreation events
 - Developing a legislative concept is on the 2023 Office of Outdoor Recreation workplan, and will necessitate convening race promoters, athletes, and relevant permitting agencies among others.
- Empower local and statewide action
 - o Conduct a statewide outdoor recreation inventory and gap analysis
 - This work is ongoing, both through our SCORP revision and as part of a grant from the Geospatial Enterprise Office to OPRD.
 - o Publish a partnership guide for recreation groups and agencies
 - Ready, Set, Plan!? Introductory Guide to Trails Planning and Development – Oregon Trails Coalition, 2021.
 - o Develop and promote outreach materials targeting the outdoor industry
 - Business Oregon continues to include outdoor gear and apparel as a target industry
 - o Affirm the connection between health, wellness and the outdoors
 - We plan to update the Health Benefits of Outdoor Recreation in Oregon study as part of our SCORP in partnership with Oregon State University researchers.
 - o Promote a culture of responsible recreation
 - "Take Care Out There" communications toolkit, developed by Travel Oregon and partners. Initially focused on promoting a culture of responsible recreation statewide, we also tailored messages to the COVID-19 pandemic and wildfires.
 - o Align outdoor recreation university and career programs
 - Oregon State University's Center for the Outdoor Recreation Economy is leading the way through research, technical skills training and leadership development programs.

Prior Action by Commission: Adoption of Governor's Task Force on the Outdoors final report and recommendations – Agenda item 1d, April 15, 2020.

Action Requested: N/A

Attachments: N/A

Prepared by: Cailin O'Brien-Feeney