

Summary of 2024 Public Open House Meetings on the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Overview

In 2024, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) hosted virtual open house events on Feb. 15, 29 and March 2 to discuss the draft Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) for 2025-2029. Attendees were able to register for each event using the SCORP planning website (<https://outdooreconomy.oregonstate.edu/scorp2024>). The meetings gave an opportunity for interested and engaged citizens to learn about the plan and to ask questions that were relevant to their interests. The SCORP planning team used the events as a chance to ensure the report is clear and applicable to users across the state and to foster interest in the public review of the full plan. This public feedback can serve as a resource as OPRD considers outdoor recreation issues during the next SCORP planning effort as well.

Open House Format

Each of the three open house events began with a 30-minute presentation about the draft plan. The topics included the following:

- Requirements and functions of the SCORP
- Public involvement in the SCORP
- Summary of outdoor recreation participation data
- Summary of outdoor recreation needs
- Summary of statewide issues
- Final steps in the planning process

Attendees were provided with details on how to stay informed about the planning process at the end of the presentation as well.

After the presentation, there was an opportunity for attendees to offer comments or ask questions about the plan. These comments and questions are summarized in the next section and the full list of comments and questions are provided in the appendix of this report.

Summary of Open House Questions and Comments

Open house questions and comments covered several SCORP topics. First, attendees were curious about the survey data collected. Specifically, there were questions about how the data was used, which user groups were included in the survey, and what year the data was collected. Second, there were questions about how the SCORP data and analysis would be incorporated into planning efforts. There was a comment expressing concern about recreation providers potentially neglecting local community visitors in planning efforts and instead focusing on the needs of visitors who do not live near the parks. There was also a question about how the SCORP recommendations are used to address the issues identified in the plan. Third, attendees asked whether there was an element in the SCORP process that assesses progress over time and if there are measurable goals for outdoor recreation participation in Oregon.

Several questions related to the topic of engaging with underserved communities. Attendees expressed interest in reviewing detailed survey response data across various demographic groups. They also asked about how underserved communities were identified and if that process would be explained in the full SCORP report. In addition, there were questions about how the SCORP could be utilized by organizations seeking to serve these communities.

Lastly, attendees had a number of questions and comments regarding the SCORP report on balancing conservation and recreation. There was feedback focused on specific management actions (e.g., permitting, one-way trails) and how those actions have been implemented in Oregon. Additionally, attendees were interested in how the report recommendations were developed.

Appendix: Full List of Open House Questions and Comments

Each open house event was recorded to ensure that the SCORP planning team could review the comments and questions from attendees. Some questions and comments are edited for clarity in a manner that reflects the original intent of each speaker.

During the open house on February 15, 2024, attendees offered the following questions and comments:

- Question: Where did you obtain the data for the net economic value estimates?
- Question: Is there more specific information on how underserved communities were identified and to what extent are those communities underserved compared to statewide population?
- Question: Will all the data be made available?
- Question: Is there a review of recreation sites throughout the state? Is there a database of all recreation sites and the number of accessible recreation facilities?
- Comment: I live in a community where state parks are inside community parks, however, planning and development seems to focus on people using the parks as outside community parks.
- Question: What if the plan identified that participation was declining every 5 years? Is there an accountability element or would the state become ineligible for the Land and Water Conservation Fund program? Or is the purpose to measure and report?

During the open house on February 29, 2024, attendees offered the following questions and comments:

- Question: Can you cite examples of one-way trails inside a community? How does any provider or authority enforce a one-way trail?
- Question: What happens after you put the findings together? What is the process for addressing the issues identified if folks have ideas or solutions to address those issues?
- Question: I am interested in camping every 12-16 miles on backpacking trips and I have observed day use parks along the coast that might be able to accommodate primitive camping. Does the SCORP include input from long distance backpackers/paddlers/cyclists regarding camping needs along specific routes?
- Question: Are these grants available to outdoor companies that are providing programming for underserved communities?
- Question: Do you have constraint data broken out across many demographic groups?
- Question: Does the state of Oregon set goals on the amount of outdoor recreation participation?

During the open house on March 2, 2024, attendees offered the following questions and comments:

- Comment: I am concerned that parts of the Grande Ronde and Owyhee rivers are being loved to death and would benefit from a permit system. The permit system on the Rogue River is a good model. It should also provide preference to Oregonians.
- Question: On the topic of balancing recreation and conservation, what are limitations and challenges besides crowding? How can we move forward to make recreation accessible but also maintain our natural resources which are greatly affected by human activity? Does “Leave No Trace” really work?
- Question: Is there any part of the report that discusses Latina/o/x or BIPOC communities creating their own outdoor recreation spaces (e.g. camps)?
- Question: What years does this survey cover?