

Blue Ribbon Parks and Outdoor Recreation Task Force
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July 8, 2014 Wenatchee Task Force Meeting Summary

The fourth of six task force meetings was held Tuesday, July 8 on the Wenatchee Valley College campus in Wenatchee. The objectives were to discuss priority recommendations emerging from the four subcommittees, gather public comment, and review task force report process and timeline.

Task force members Shiloh Schauer and Senator Linda Parlette along with Wenatchee Valley College administrators and City of Wenatchee Mayor Frank Kuntz welcomed participants. The meeting was well attended: 14 of the 17 voting members participated (Dale Denney, Ben Klasky, and Spencer Olson were unable to attend), along with 8 of 12 non-voting members and at least 35 members of the public.

From the 27 public comments at the task force meeting, the following key themes emerged: (1) importance of fostering public-private partnerships; (2) improving access to outdoor recreation; and (3) increasing youth involvement in outdoor recreation. Visit the [task force Web page](#) for meeting materials and upcoming meeting dates.

On Monday evening, July 7 task force members hosted a public listening session. The purpose was to accommodate Wenatchee area stakeholders who were unable to attend the daytime task force meeting the following day. The gathering is summarized below on Page 5.

Key Outcomes

- **Task force subcommittees continue to develop recommendations.** Draft submittals due to the Recreation and Conservation Office by July 15, and final recommendations due by July 31.
- **35 public comments received:** Eight people shared comments and personal stories at the July 7 listening session. Twenty-seven shared comments at the July 8 task force meeting.

Guest Speaker: Healthiest Next Generation

Lisa Rakoz, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's Healthiest Next Generation Program supervisor, began with a startling statistic: One in five children are overweight by age 6, and obese children are more likely to be obese as adults. A 2012 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey uncovered the percentage of students in our state that did not meet the recommendations for 60 minutes of physical activity daily: 44 percent of 8th graders, 49 percent of 10th graders, and 53 percent of 12th graders.

Lisa summarized key state fitness education gaps:

- Consistency across the state: Meeting requirements (minutes, waivers, certified) and funding
- Elementary physical education specialists
- Access to information (What is really happening in physical education?): Certified physical education teachers, class size, number of classes in the gym, professional development

She then highlighted key state fitness education opportunities:

- Partnerships
- Health and fitness cadre
- Let's move, active schools

- Comprehensive school physical activity programs
- Safe routes to school
- Higher education and pre-service teachers
- Grants and other funding sources
- Health and fitness connections to the common core state standards

Subcommittee Presentations

Before the presentations, co-chairs set the tone by reminding members to focus on transformative recommendations that go beyond just a report. Doug Walker mentioned the Mountains to Sound Greenway and Barb Chamberlain mentioned the Olmsted Brothers' plans (influential landscape design firm in the U.S., founded in 1898 by brothers John Charles and Frederick Law Olmsted), as examples of this kind of innovative, creative thinking. As Barb said, "don't color in the lines!"

Economic Development (Marc Berejka, subcommittee lead): Primary lesson is that outdoor recreation and parks generate an array of economic benefits across the state. With more concerted effort and better intra-governmental coordination, we can unlock even more potential. To bring the Governor's Executive Order to life, we need to: (1) reduce barriers to outdoor access through targeted regulatory reform and investments, (2) increase and better coordinate promotion of Washington's many, diverse recreation opportunities; (3) continue to educate public officials that recreation can be a key contributor to the economic well-being of Washington; and (4) create an office of the outdoor recreation tsar that can work cross-agency to maximize the many indirect economic benefits of recreation.

Get More People Outdoors (Ben Klasky, subcommittee lead): Dan Nordstrom presented preliminary recommendations: (1) access and awareness: People need up to three parking passes to recreate outdoors; it's confusing knowing which one to use. Need to streamline the Discover Pass process; (2) liability reform: Increasingly difficult to access private lands because of liability issues. Colorado instituted recreational use act to limit liability. It was truly transformative and a good precedent; opened up opportunities not available 30 years ago; (3) access to quality outdoor resources: Lack of maintenance decreases interest in getting outdoors. Public-private partnerships could be one solution; and (4) most outdoor recreation land in Washington is federal, so this task force's influence is limited. State should have voice in management of federal lands. State of Utah "Fabulous 5" marketing is great example. Expand Recreation and Conservation Office's role engaging with federal agencies managing federal outdoor resources. State tourism office closed a few years ago. Washington Tourism Alliance is taking on that role with only \$1 million budget (for comparison, Montana has a \$20 million budget).

Meet Future Recreation Needs (Jim Cahill, subcommittee lead): Summarized gaps in the operating and capital budgets supporting our state recreation resources for the three main agencies (Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and State Parks). Preliminary recommendations to bridge the gap in the operating budget include: (1) increase earned revenues; (2) increase broad-based taxes or fees, for example a mandatory \$5 or \$10 fee; (3) increase recreation-related taxes; (4) increase use of local park districts, for example, metropolitan park districts; (5) prevent sunset of current law allowing real estate excise tax to be used for park maintenance; and (6) enhance partnerships.

State Role (Doug Levy, subcommittee lead): State's role in legislation to help foster outdoor recreation. Preliminary recommendations include: (1) access, which could mean statutory or administrative changes; trail maintenance, especially trash pick-up and avoiding dumping on public recreation lands; local partnerships to increase all-weather recreation opportunities; (2) increase number of outdoor recreation events, giving small investments to support small events and increasing participation by youth; (3)

connecting outdoor education to STEM—ensure that environmental education qualifies as part of STEM; (4) allow for increased marketing of outdoor resources; and (5) formal analysis of user fees.

Public Comment

Comments are summarized and listed in the order presented at the meeting.

1. **John Gifford, Pacific Northwest Ski Areas Association:** Get school kids involved in outdoor recreation. How do we get businesses involved? Need improved access to outdoor recreation, including permits and transportation. Recreation and tourism should be linked; work together to promote the state's outdoor resources.
2. **Mike Kaputa, Chelan County Natural Resources Department:** The County just acquired a large area in the Stemilt Basin, as a result of a years-long partnership building effort. But now our challenge is providing access and planning for future uses on the 4,000 acres of the Stemilt Basin property. Increase public-private partnerships.
3. **Priyanka Bandyopadhyay, Washington State Parks Foundation:** Need sustainable funding for state parks. Current overall funding is down by 20 percent, and 30 percent less than we need to maintain our park resources. Need committed roadmap to increase and secure funding. Fees and other revenue sources alone won't provide required stability.
4. **Josh Jorgensen, Mission Ridge Ski & Snowboard Resort:** Important community outdoor recreation resource. Providing free ski days for kids. Need cooperation and unifying values among state agencies regarding land use, demonstrating value of outdoor recreation in Washington. Opportunity for state to harness and use private groups and volunteers to increase and foster outdoor recreation.
5. **Kirsten Hewitt, Professional Snowsports:** Opportunity to partner with schools, get kids off campus and outdoors.
6. **Allison Williams, City of Wenatchee:** Important that state and local agencies work across jurisdictions. Encourage cooperation among entities. Encourage economic development clusters that increase outdoor recreation opportunities. Need regional funding sources.
7. **Bob Gillespie, Wenatchee Valley Outdoor Alliance:** Young students can't get outside efficiently. School liability, funding, budgets, and "teaching to test" are key barriers. Link outdoor recreation and education, encouraging lifelong outdoor recreation.
8. **Sally Brawley, Eastmont Metropolitan Park District:** Lacking Americans with Disabilities Act access in parks and playgrounds for kids and parents.
9. **Dwight Keegan, park ranger, Lake Chelan State Park:** Discover Pass is a barrier for some, especially teachers and educators working to bring more kids outside.
10. **Sharon Soelster, park ranger, Alta Lake State Park:** Need to improve quality of park facilities through increased funding for maintenance.
11. **Nancy Warner, resident:** Loop Trail in Wenatchee is example of one transformative idea leading to others. Creating that trail led to better water and land management, community health, and much more. Leadership is key element in improving outdoor recreation in Washington.
12. **Elliott Scull, former state parks commissioner:** Emphasize importance of state parks in communities and the role they play in improving the environment in our state.

13. **Spencer King, North Central ATV Club:** We have over 200 family memberships and offer high school scholarships. We're partnering with search and rescue efforts and helping with trail maintenance. Be aware that some small towns rely on motorized recreation for economic sustenance. Pro recreation for all.
14. **Matt Kearny, Wenatchee Valley Sports:** Need county-level economic data related to outdoor recreation. Numbers talk.
15. **Gus Bekker, El Sendero:** Continue generating winter outdoor recreation opportunities.
16. **Jim Harris, Grant County Public Utilities District:** Need more public-private partnerships. Continue to sell our quality of life to corporations seeking to headquarter in Washington.
17. **Larry Tobiska, Wenatchee Row & Paddle Club:** Create more opportunities to get kids outside.
18. **Penelope Tobiska, North Central Washington Audubon Society:** We're reaching out to the public with our programs. Cooperating with many other state and local groups to provide birding opportunities. Need to improve and enhance natural areas. Birding is accessible to all ages, and provides a great way to get outdoors.
19. **Carin Smith, veterinarian:** Increase no-fee, designated off-leash dogs parks. For some, walking their dog is the only outdoor activity they get.
20. **Deb Miller, Pybus Kids Century:** Kids not meeting minimum outdoor activity requirement. Build a culture of active living. Fund neighborhood level to promote and support active living.
21. **Nancy Smith, Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce:** Understand the valuable economic development opportunities generated when outdoor recreation is fostered and supported.
22. **Mary Bean, Okanagan Wenatchee National Forest:** As a federal agency, we are stewards of the land. Some of our key funding comes from state grants. Recreation and Conservation Office is a great supporter of our recreation program.
23. **Craig Larsen, Port of Chelan County:** Helping create the conditions for economic development and outdoor recreation through private investment and job creation in the county.
24. **Hana Butler, Washington State University Chelan County Extension Office:** I believe in getting our high school students outside. Building health, skills, and confidence. Community collaboration is key.
25. **Andy Dappen, Wenatchee Valley Outdoor Alliance:** Partnerships are key. How do we develop more programming, for example, leadership and mentoring that help get more kids outside?
26. **Hanne Beener, Chelan-Douglas Land Trust:** Diverse state and local partnerships are key. Make sure trails are maintained.
27. **Brad McQuarrie, Mt. Spokane Ski Area:** Need funding for more park rangers. Managing and enforcing Discover Pass takes up too much time, not best use of rangers' time. They could be interpreting and educating.

RCO Staff Updates

- **Outreach Update** (Meg O'Leary): With only two months left to develop the final report to the Governor, we're shifting gears from gathering information and comments to developing the recommendations. To date we've received thousands of public comments via e-mail and www.engageoutdoorwashington.com. We've posted 17 questions—including four from each

subcommittee—online. As of July 7, the Web site is closed to new questions and comments. RCO will distribute the final Web site comment summary to task force members by July 10. Interested parties are welcome to e-mail general comments to meg.oleary@rco.wa.gov until August 19. The draft report will be available for a 10-day public comment period in late August.

- **Task Force Final Report Process and Timeline** (Jim Fox): Subcommittee draft recommendations are due to RCO by July 15. Staff will have report ready for task force member approval at the August 19 meeting in Sequim. Members will receive the draft for review before the meeting. Meantime, subcommittees will continue to meet and refine their recommendations.

Next Steps and Action

Task Force Co-Chairs and Subcommittee Leads

- Tues, July 15: Submit draft recommendations to RCO (5 preferred; 10 maximum)
- Tues, August 19, 4-8 p.m.: Task Force meeting, Dungeness Suite of the Sequim Holiday Inn Express, 1441 E. Washington St., Sequim

RCO and Consultant Partners

- Wed, July 9: Post meeting summary
- Thurs, July 10: Distribute final summary of Web site public comment
- August: Prepare draft report
- August through September: Ongoing subcommittee support

July 7, 2014 Public Listening Session Summary

On July 7, task force members hosted an evening public listening session. The purpose was to accommodate Wenatchee area stakeholders who were unable to attend a daytime task force meeting the following day. Both 15 task force members attended, along with 5 staff and at least 40 citizens.

Introductions

- Shiloh Schauer, task force member, and Steve Robinson, executive director of the Pybus Public Market welcomed participants.
- Co-chair Doug Walker reiterated the task force purpose and the following members introduced themselves: Marc Berejka, Jim Cahill, Russ Cahill, Barb Chamberlain, Kaleen Cottingham, Patty Graf-Hoke, John Keates, Brock Milliern, Senator Linda Parlette, Tom Reeve, Shiloh Schauer, Rodger Schmitt, Louise Stanton-Maston, Joe Stohr, and Representative Tharinger.
- A short video, [We are Wenatchee](#), was shown.

Public comment

1. **Elliott Scull, Chelan-Douglas Land Trust:** Preserving the Wenatchee foothills. Convened a community strategy to preserve foothills from residential construction and maintain easily accessible recreation close to town. Maintain adequate trailheads with minimum impact on neighbors. Saddlerock is now a city park and we're developing a trailhead.
2. **Marlen Mendez, Columbia Valley Community Health:** Serving Chelan and Douglas past 40 years. Increasing access to healthcare. Getting people outside on the trails. For many Latinos, barriers exist around perception, lack of experience outdoors, and lack of information about what to wear. Organized series of hikes for our patients in partnership with the land trust (who provided a bilingual guide). Now we're seeing more young families outside.

3. **Norma Gellegos, Team Naturaleza:** Worked for Head Start for many years. Now teaching citizenship classes. Encouraging Latinos to get outdoors. Data shows that Latino kids are not exposed to, or interested much, in natural sciences because of various socio-economic barriers such as transportation, comfort level outside, and knowledge about appropriate clothing. We're organizing fishing and snowshoe trips for all ages and creek clean up projects.
4. **Deb Miller, Community Choice Century Link:** Encouraging healthy activities and promoting active living. Looked at population and health data for Wenatchee Valley and found that one in four adults are obese. Kids are inside too much, with no outdoor activity. Created Pybus Kids Century, incentivizing kids to ride the loop as much as possible during 2 months. Program runs May through October with more than 120 kids participating. Goes beyond getting kids active, want access to parents to encourage their outdoor activity. Transportation barriers exist, for example, driving kids to safe biking area. Recreation can seem like a luxury because of lack of time. Pybus Kids Century is an example of leveraging existing local resources and opportunities.
5. **Marylou Guerrero, Chelan County resident:** Recovering from Nature Deficit Disorder. Limited experience with outdoor world (shared story of challenge of walking 10-mile river loop). At the time, I was overweight and out of shape. Started running 1 minute longer each day. After 10 months of training, I finished my first marathon.
6. **Joel Rhyner, Run Wenatchee:** We started a local running club 18 months ago. We were seeking community and had these goals for the club: It needs to be free, open to everyone, and consistent (we'll be there every week). First run was in January, and despite the cold and snow, we had 50 people. Word spread through social media. We now average 200 runners per run. Partnering with local businesses. Host runs right downtown. Family friendly—dogs, strollers, scooters, and wheelchairs. Seeing increase in Latino involvement. In addition to weekly runs, we host events and races throughout the year benefiting local organizations such as food banks.
7. **Matt Kearny, Wenatchee Valley Sports, division of Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce:** Formed in 1999. Providing funding to help kids play organized sports. \$7.4 million generated through local sports tourism spending—money coming into community from outside (races, tournaments, etc.)—significant in the valley. The current Recreation and Conservation Office economic study is drilling down to county level and we're looking forward to the results. Lack of soccer fields in Wenatchee. Not fulfilling the need and demand. Confluence State Park is a good example of an underused state park; great opportunity for a soccer complex, revenue generator, and strong community builder.
8. **Andy Dappen, Wenatchee Valley Outdoor Alliance:** Web site covering outdoor activities within 1 hour of Wenatchee. Asked ourselves how we could better coordinate and communicate outdoor recreation opportunities locally, and how we could partner more effectively. Hosted a summit 6 months ago, invited leaders of outdoor agencies, groups, non-profits, and businesses—asked how we could be more strategic in getting people outdoors and connecting them with the land for health and conservation. Partnerships are key. Through this alliance, we've identified outdoor recreation areas to focus on and leverage. Need better economic data to approach elected leaders—if they see numbers, it's easier to gain advocates. How do we create programs that address barriers to outdoor recreation? Programs are more important than more infrastructure.

Ice Cream Social

Local ice cream was served following the presentations, giving people a chance to mingle with task force members and RCO staff.