Recreation and Conservation Funding Office

Briefing on Outdoor Recreation

Recreation and Conservation Office

- Who we are
- Our relationship to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
- What we fund
- Our role in identifying outdoor recreation and conservation trends
- Our role in using those trends to establish policy and fund projects

What is the Recreation and Conservation Office?

- Created in 1964 by citizen initiative
- Renamed in 2007 session to recognize its broader role in conservation efforts
- 55 employees
- 6 boards (5 legislatively created; 1 created by executive order)
  - Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
  - Salmon Recovery Funding Board
  - Washington Biodiversity Council
  - Washington Invasive Species Council
  - Washington Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health
  - Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group

Our role in Outdoor Recreation

- Recreation and Conservation Funding Board:
  - Funds outdoor recreation projects
  - Develops a State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
  - Sets policy and program direction for outdoor recreation and conservation
  - Funds studies on outdoor recreation and conservation trends and issues

Statewide Participation Survey

Recent Data on

Outdoor Recreation

Why Survey?

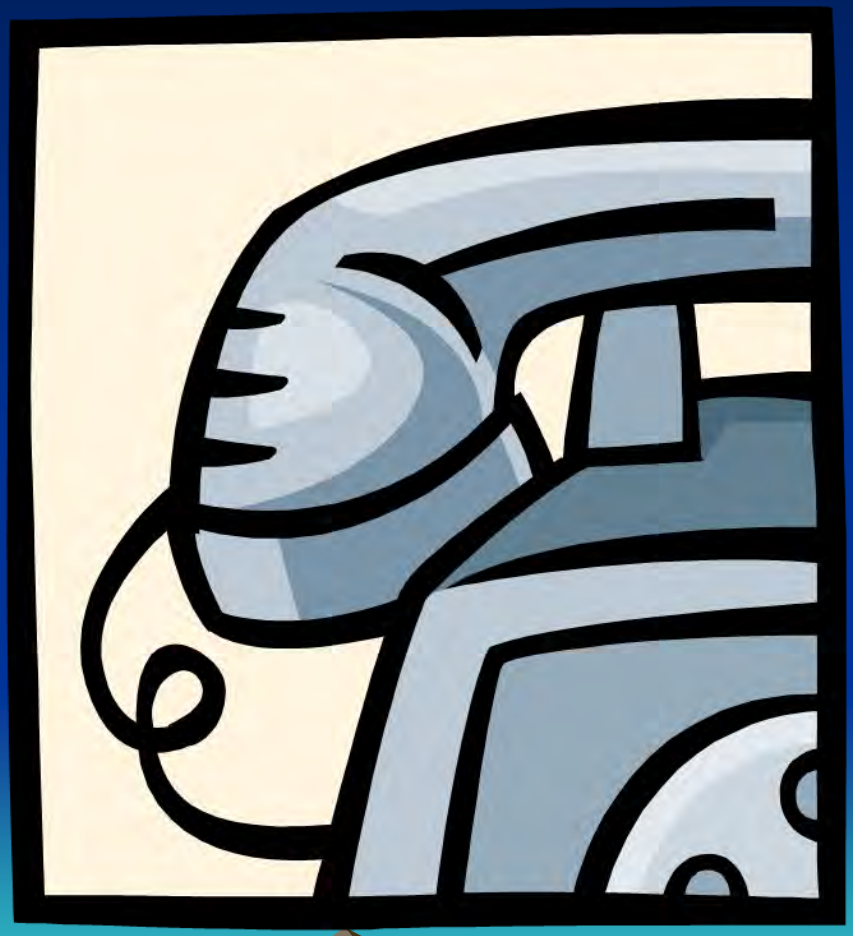
- To collect data as a foundation for policy and planning
  - **Priorities of Government (POG)**
  - **Statewide Assessment (SCORP)**
  - **Federal, state, and local agency planning**

Who Did the Survey?

- Clearwater Research of Boise Idaho
- “Winner” in competitive process
- Selected by a review team of professionals and citizens

The Survey

- Random-dial telephone
- Statewide
- 12 full months
  - **January 2006 through January 2007**



Defensible Data

- Statewide by activity
- All seasons (12 months)
- Regional with the same activity list
- Gender, Age, Income, Ethnicity

But First

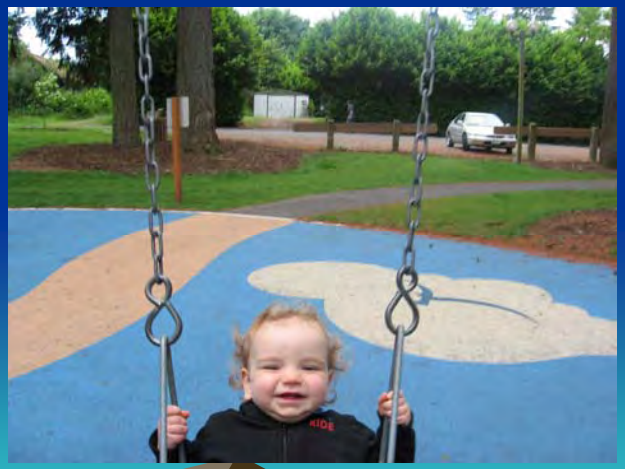
Some Context

Recreation “Estates”

- Private: backyards (lifestyle), businesses (commodity)
- Local: facility recreation
- Federal: large-scale landscape resource recreation – further out
- State: modest-scale landscape resource recreation – closer in

Private Estate

Local Estate: Facility Recreation



Federal and State: Resource Recreation

Examining the past…

- Late 1940s re-socializing: demand for the community center was #1
- 1950-60s: discovering the woods, urban parks renewal
- 1970-80s: addressing recreation diversity (ORV use)
- 1990s: specialization (girls sports)
- 2000s: the lure of the great indoors

A Bit of Detail

- 3 decades ago we…
- Seemed to get out on the road
- And did “traditional” stuff outdoors

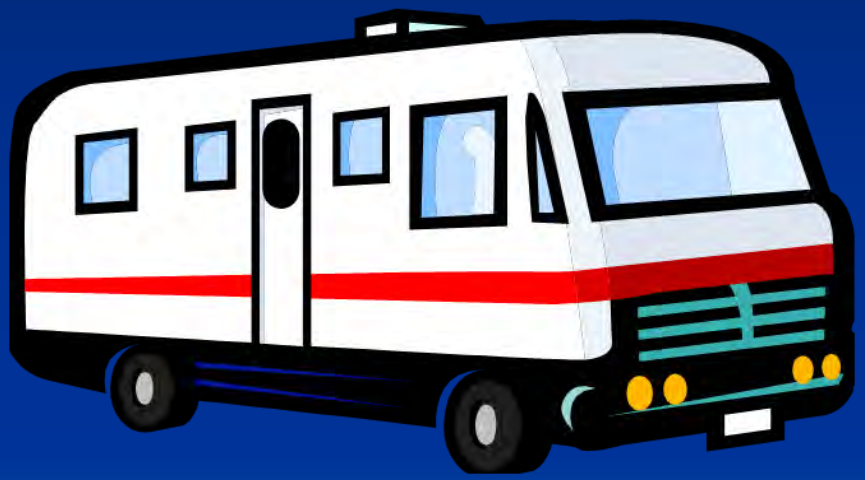
According to 1979 SCORP data

The Major Activities in 1979 Were:

1. Driving for pleasure
2. Camping
3. Gardening
4. Fishing
5. “Other”
6. Picnicking

Things Changed 10 Years Later

- We started using big rigs to sightsee
- … and stayed home more often to go for a walk



1989-90 SCORP data

Major Activities in the Late 1980s

1. Sightseeing, picnicking
2. Walking (hiking)
3. Sports, games
4. Water activities
5. Fishing
6. Camping

And Changed More in 10 More Years

- Close to home: walking, gardening, bike riding
- Sports of all kinds
- … while the “traditional” started to fade away

Data published in 2002 SCORP

By 2002 It Was:

1. Walking (in town, sidewalks, streets, roads)
2. Sports (in town, *local* ball fields)
3. Nature (in backyards)
4. Sightseeing (all over)
5. Bicycling (in town, streets and roads)
6. Indoor stuff (*local* centers)

2002 Overall Data

1. Walking, hiking
2. Team/individual sports
3. Nature (photography, gardening)
4. Sightseeing
5. Bicycle riding
6. Indoor
7. Picnicking
8. Water activities
9. Snow/ice
10. Fishing
11. Camping
12. ORV use
13. Hunting/shooting
14. Equestrian
15. Air activities

Keep in Mind

- Data may reflect survey methods, assumptions, and questions as much as actual recreation behavior

Is This Commuting or Recreating?

Now, Back to the Survey

And What’s Happening Today?

2006 Statewide Survey

- Telephone survey
- One year long
- Over 3,000 “completes”
- 10 regions
- A ton of questions
  - *Clearwater Research under contract to RCO 2006-2007*

Remember 2002?

1. Walking, hiking
2. Team/individual sports
3. Nature (photography, gardening)
4. Sightseeing
5. Bicycle riding
6. Indoor
7. Picnicking
8. Water activities
9. Snow/ice
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2006 Changes

1. Walking, hiking
2. Team/individual sports
3. Nature (photography, gardening)
4. Picnicking
5. Indoor activities
6. Water activities
7. Sightseeing
8. Bicycle riding
9. ORV use
10. Snow-ice
11. Camping
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Big Question: Is Declining Participation for Real?

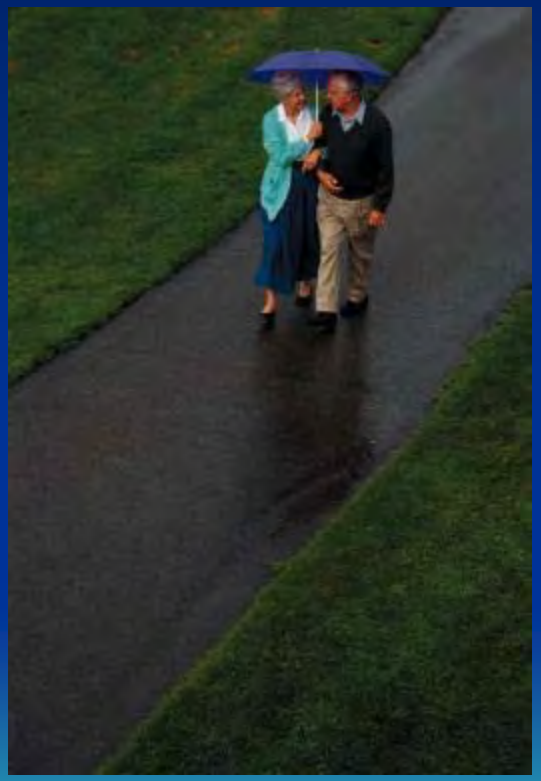
- YES for some “traditional” out-of-town stuff: hunting
- NO for ORV use
- NO for walking, sports
- OBSERVATION: “Demand” does not grow with population growth, it changes with social changes including population

Local Estate: Key Activities

- Walking
- Team/individual Sports
- Cycling

Walking

- Hugely popular, 67% participation all ages, all regions
- Most happens on the “transportation” system: sidewalks, streets, roads
- People prefer unpaved paths and sidewalks
- Public will support new <u>safe</u> places to walk



Team/Individual Sports, etc.

- Playground use #1 in "sport" category
- Playgrounds host 34% of the population (especially girls)
  - About the same numbers at parks as at schools

“Classic” Sports

- Swimming 23%**
- Basketball 16%
- Soccer 13%**
- Baseball 9%
- Football 7%
- Softball 5%
  - **Higher participation by teenagers from higher income households

Cycling

- About 1/3 of us ride at least once per year
  - Most riding is done by kids
  - Most riding is on roads and streets
    - Only about 4% ride on forest or mountain trails
    - Less than 1% tour

Possible Policy Implications for State Government

- Recreation offers more than play
  - Can contribute to public health
  - Can contribute to personal mobility
- It is the State's interest to encourage local activity by supporting local facilities
  - Sports and play at parks *and schools*
  - Walking and cycling *on and to* local facilities

Major resource recreation activities

- Recreation that depends on natural, cultural, and other resources and the settings these resources require

Trail-Related Activities

Hiking	20.5%
4-wheel	13%
Canoe-kayak, etc.	7%
ATV	7%
Motorcycle	5%
Bicycle “Mountain trails”	4%
ATV on snow/ice	3%
Backpack	2%
Equestrian “Mountain trails”	1%
Cross-country ski	1%
Snowmobile	1%
Snowshoe	1%

Average month

Hiking (Peak Season)

- Urban trail… 8%
- Rural trail… 9%
- Mountain trail…12%
- No established trail… 6%
- Backpack… 2%
- More participation by males making more than $75K/yr, in summer

Water Peak Season Uses (Trail or Not)

- White water rafting, canoe, kayaking, other hand-powered boating… 7%
- Saltwater… 2%
- Freshwater… 5%
- Most likely to be teenagers out in the summer

Bicycle Riding, Peak Season

- Roads and streets… 24%
- Urban trails… 12%
- Rural trails… 5%
- Mountain trails… 4%
- No established trails… 2%
- Cyclists tend to be kids from higher income homes, riding in summer

ORV Participation, Peak Season

- 4-wheel… 13%
- ATV… 7%
- Motorcycle… 5%

4-Wheel, Peak Season

- Sports park… 1%
- Streets-roads… 6%
- Urban trail… 1%
- Rural trail… 2%
- Mountain/forest… 5%
- No established trail… 3%
- “Mountain/forest” users most likely young adults 20-34

ATV Participation, Peak Season

- Sports park… 1%
- Streets-roads… 1%
- Urban trails… 1%
- Rural trails… 2%
- Mountain/forest… 2%
- No established trail… 2%
- Overall, teenage males are more likely to ATV

Motorcycle, Peak Season

- Sports park… 1%
- Streets-roads… 1%
- Urban trails… 1%
- Rural trails… 1%
- Mountain/forest trails… 1.9%
- No established trails… 1.4%

Snow-Ice, Peak Season

- Cross-country ski… 1%
- Snowshoe… 1%
- Snowmobile… 1.3%
- ATV… 3%
- Winter ATV users likely to be teenage males

Equestrian, Peak Season

- Horseback overall… 4%
- Stables/grounds… 2%
- Roads/streets… 1%
- Urban trails… 1%
- Rural trails… 1%
- Mountain/forest… 1%
- No established trail… 1%
- About 25% <u>of residents</u>, especially young females, want to go horseback riding more than they currently ride

Camping

- Tent 24% in peak month of July
- RV 20% in peak month of September
- Kids and young adults are most likely to want to camp more
- “Best size” for management = 200 sites/campground; DNR averages 9 sites

Fishing

- 16% of the population fishes (boat + bank)
- Mostly males fish, females unlikely to want to fish more
- License sales tending up since 1999, but not in proportion to population growth

Hunting and Shooting

- 6% hunting participation in peak season
- Overwhelmingly male, females unlikely to want to hunt more
- License sales steady but shrinking as a percent of population

Photographing Wildlife/Nature

- As popular as gardening, about 31% participation
  - Mostly adults 50-64
  - Adults 65+ under-represented
  - Growth may be short-lived?

Key Point…

- The vast majority of resource activities do not take place on designated “recreation” lands
- It takes place on resource lands not necessarily counted as “recreation” lands

State lands, for example

- “Recreation, habitat, and environmental protection” acres: 648,498
- “Resource production/extraction” acres: 2,836,694
- Guess where recreation takes place?

Data from *Public and Tribal Lands Inventory*, RCO, 2001

State Lands

- DNR: Important venue for off-road motor sports, highly concentrated uses, high levels of user-made/modified trails
- WDFW: Low management presence, high potential for resource conflicts
- State Parks: “islands” of resource settings under extreme pressure

Of the major categories

1. Walking, hiking
2. Team/individual sports
3. Nature (photography, gardening)
4. Picnicking
5. Indoor activities
6. Water activities
7. Sightseeing
8. Bicycle riding
9. ORV use
10. Snow-ice
11. Camping
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State land hosts

1. Walking, hiking
2. Team/individual sports
3. Nature (photography, gardening)
4. Picnicking
5. Indoor activities
6. Water activities
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8. Bicycle riding
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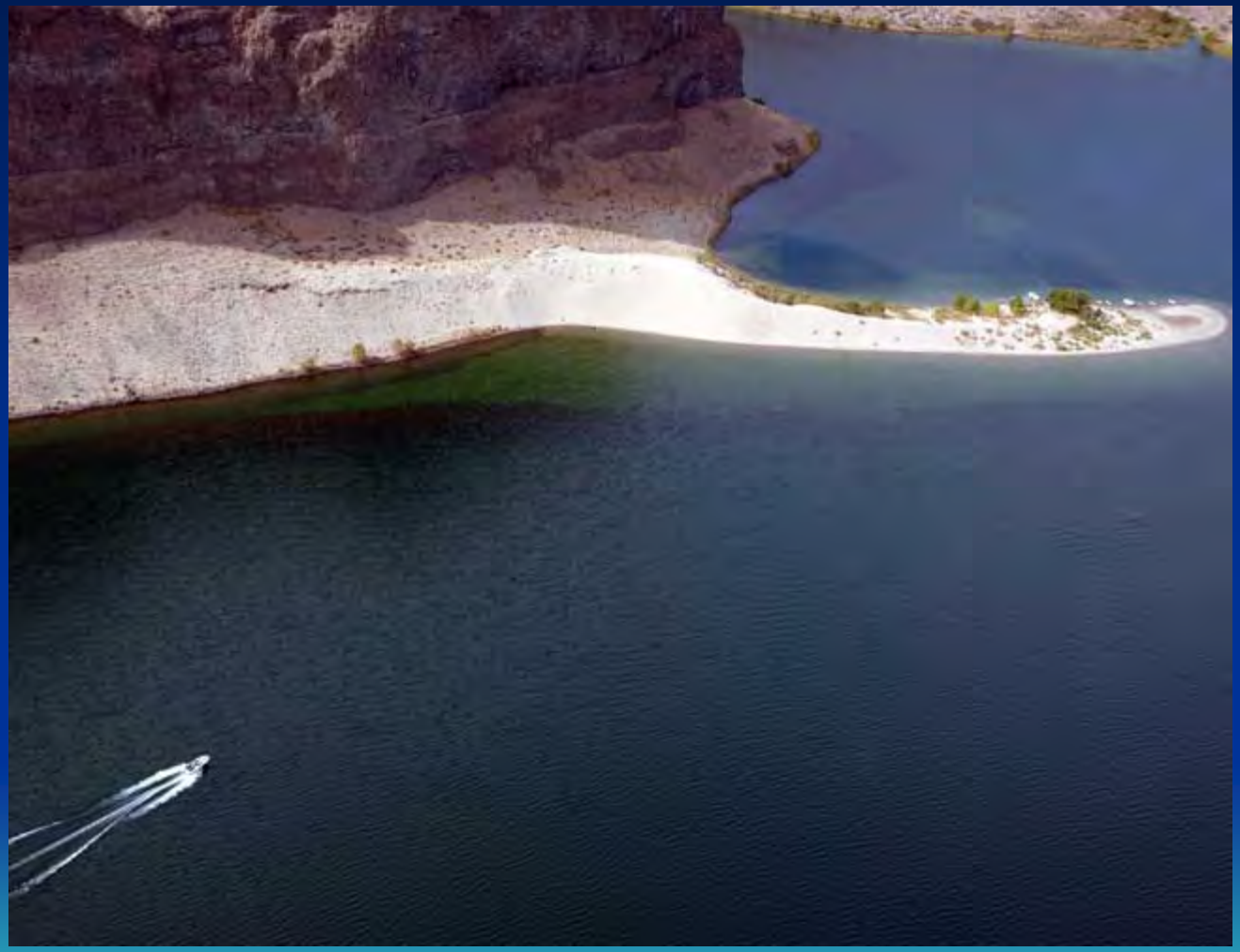
Therefore state lands are crowded

- And state lands are usually closer to town than federal lands
- Visitors do not have to leave motor vehicles behind
  - “It’s like a weekend invasion!”

Signs of Stress on State Property

- DNR incidence of “user-made” trails may be 250% or more than the official trail inventory
- State Parks require reservations months ahead of peak season
- Wildlife recreation land sees unintended undesirable uses



Federal Estate (Front Country)

- Huge landscape
- High number of uses
- Road oriented
- Significant ORV use
- Highly zoned
- Low management presence
  - “Anything goes.”

Federal Estate (Backcountry)

- Wilderness visits declining (down 30% in Gifford Pinchot)
- National Park visitation declining
  - “Wait long enough, and you’ll have the place to yourself.”

Key Management Issues

- All providers struggle with insufficient tools, resulting in under-managed land and infrastructure, official and unofficial
- Capital dollars easier to find than stewardship dollars

Key Messages

- Our state has become more urban, and in-town recreation activities are the most popular
- Close-to-town state lands seeing more use
- Federal Wilderness and Parks are experiencing a decline in backcountry use but the front country is as popular as ever, especially for sight-seeing