



Recreation Fees in Washington State

Simplicity, Consistency, Equity and Agency Fiscal Health

Recreation Access Proviso

Ruckelshaus Center & Discover Pass Team

WDFW Fish and Wildlife Commission

February 8, 2018

2016 Legislative Budget Proviso 2ESHB 2376 (excerpt)

Directed state agencies to “to work with the Ruckelshaus Center or another neutral third party” to “coordinate a process to develop options and recommendations to improve consistency, equity, and simplicity in recreational access fee systems while accounting for the fiscal health and stability of public land management.”

Situation Assessment: Aug 2016 – Jan 2017

- Background research, develop & confirm protocols
- 48 interviews with ~63 individuals
- Synthesized key issues
- Report: issues, interests, prospects for collaboration
- Led to process recommendations

EX-OFFICIO

House Agriculture &
Natural Resources
Committee

Senate Natural
Resources & Parks
Committee

House
Democratic
Caucus

AGENCY CORE TEAM

WA State Parks

Office of The Governor:
Outdoor Recreation &
Economic Development

WA Dept. of Natural
Resources

WA Dept. of Fish
and Wildlife

LEADERSHIP TEAM

WA Dept. of
Veterans
Affairs

WA Federation
of State
Employees

US Forest
Service

US Fish &
Wildlife Service

Interim
Community
Development
Association

Outcomes by
Levy, LLC

WA State Parks
Foundation

Cowlitz Tribe

Washington Off-
Highway Vehicle
Alliance

Evergreen
Mountain Bike
Alliance

Backcountry
Horsemen of
Washington

Washington
Trails
Association

National Park
Service

Washington Wildlife
Recreation Coalition

Hunter's
Heritage Council

NW Marine
Trade
Association

Washington Federation
of State Employees

Veterans
Legislative
Coalition

COORDINATION WORK GROUP

Recreation
Equipment Inc.
(REI)

Coastal
Conservation
Alliance

Washington
Trails Assn.

US Forest
Service

Hunter's
Heritage
Council

Washington Off-
Highway Vehicle
Alliance

Cowlitz Tribe

Evergreen
Mountain Bike
Alliance

WA State
Parks

Gov. Office,
Outdoor
Recreation

WA Dept. of Fish
and Wildlife

WA Dept. of
Natural
Resources

EXEMPTION WORK GROUP

WA Dept. of
Veterans
Affairs

WA State Parks
Foundation

WA State
Parks

US Forest
Service

Economic Services Administration,
Dept. of Social and Health Services

Interim Community
Development
Association

WA Dept. of Fish
and Wildlife

Gov. Office,
Outdoor
Recreation

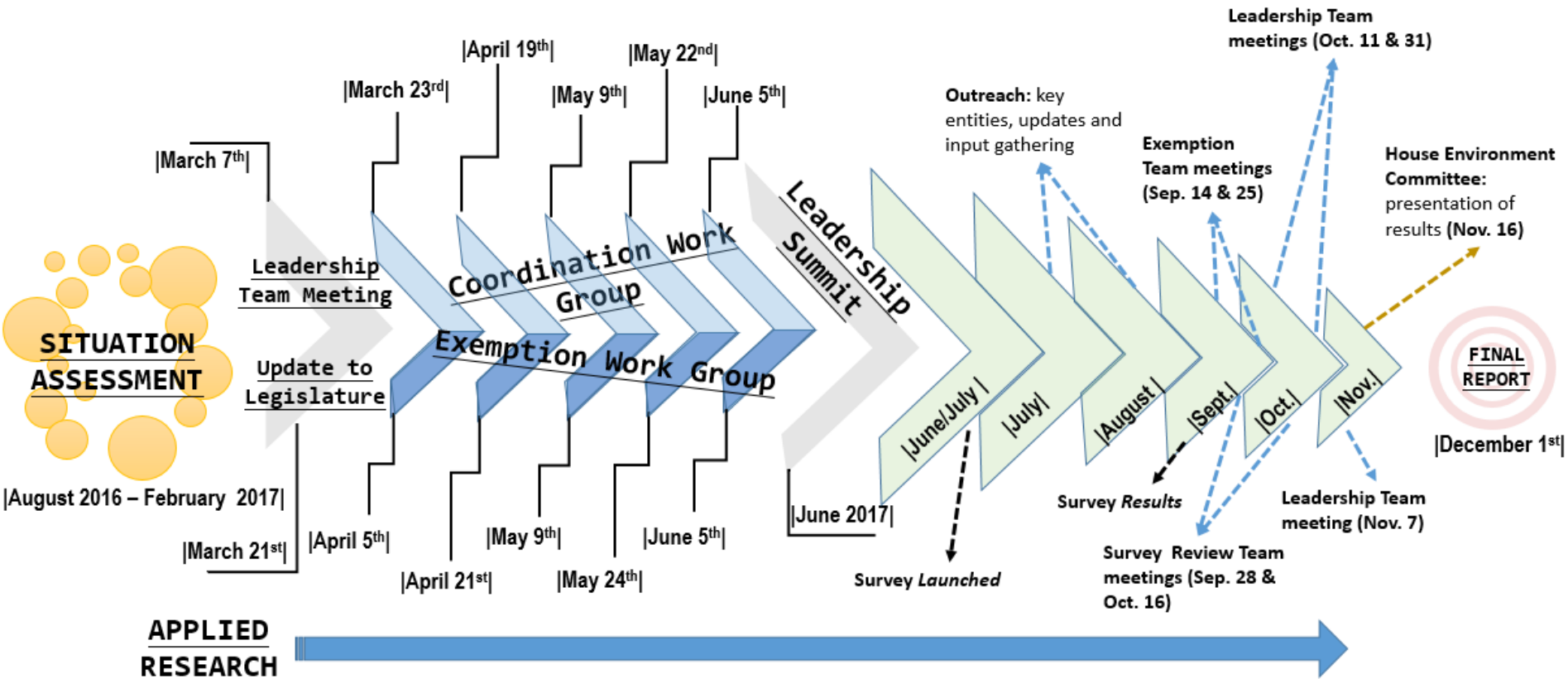
WA Dept. of
Natural
Resources

Veterans
Legislative
Coalition

Salmon for
Soldiers

Washington Federation
of State Employees

Process



Public Opinion Research

- Statewide Random Resident
1,464 respondents, 95% conf. interval
- CAMIS - State Parks reservation system users
4,087 total respondents, 99% conf. interval
- WILD – WDFW online portal for fishing, hunting licenses
1,389 respondents, 95% confidence interval
- Convenience Surveys
16,432 total respondents, viral & non-random

Some Key Findings

- Majority of pass purchasers indicate they purchase a DP (73%), second most purchased was Annual NWFP
- Nearly half of all pass purchasers (46.6%) say the existing system is confusing, difficult to navigate
- Strong support for combined state/federal pass
- Least preferred pass format was license tab. Strong preference for hangtag (all-surveys) and window-sticker (random resident)
- Over half of pass purchasers in all surveys (66%) feel adequately funding public lands is very important
- Reducing the number of permits/passes required (63.6%) is a very important consideration for planning a new system

Options & Recommendations

- *Pass-Free Access System*
- *Two-Vehicle Pass System ('Builds on Success')*
- *Single-Vehicle Pass System ('Reduced Fees')*
- Equity in Recreation Fees: Decision Tool Criteria

Pass-Free	Two-Vehicle	One-Vehicle
Eliminates state passes required for vehicle access	Retains DP for 2 cars	Converts DP to reduced fee 1 vehicle pass
Identify sustainable and dedicated funding source	User-based fees provide some funding	User-based fees provide some funding
n/a	Available at DOL, online and in person	Available at DOL, online and in person
n/a	No DP req for towed-in ORV	No DP req for towed-in ORV
n/a	Consistent DP price	Consistent DP price
n/a	Pursue single state/fed pass	Pursue single state/fed pass

Common Elements

- General funding to manage public resources
- Reimbursement to agencies for exemptions
- Consistent free days across state recreation lands
- Evaluation criteria to consider exemptions
- Develop state/federal information portal

Leadership Team Consensus



The “pass-free access package” is the preferred recommendation, based on the voting members of the Leadership Team seeing it as the best fit with the parameters of the proviso. The “two-vehicle pass system/building on success package” and “one-vehicle pass system/reduced fees package” were also considered and are recommended as potential improvements to the status quo.

2017-18 Legislative Session

- SHB 2652 and SHB 1177
 - Implement Leadership Team Consensus Items
 - Budget Proviso – Governor's Budget
 - \$75K to analyze fiscal implications of proposed packages
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2HB 2652

- Eliminates Discover Pass with Sno-Park
- Eliminates Discover Pass for towed-in ORVs
- Extends disabled veteran's exemption to all lands
- Extends free days to all lands



Questions?

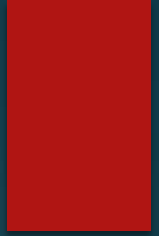
For more information, visit:

<http://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/projects/current-projects/recreation-fees-in-washington/>





Additional Info on Packages



Pass-Free Access Package

- ▶ Format, Pricing, & Purchasing: user-based fees on state lands no longer required for Washington residents. Further analysis required to determine cost/benefit of requiring passes for out-of-state residents.
- ▶ Access to and usability of information: Encourage/support state agencies (DNR, DFW, and State Parks) to coordinate with federal agencies and other appropriate entities to develop common information portal.
- ▶ State/Federal Fee Coordination: Support state agencies (State Parks, DNR, DFW) to engage with federal agencies to develop a revenue sharing agreement.

Pass-Free Access Package

- ▶ Identify sustainable and dedicated funding sources to replace current and projected user-based fee revenue.
- ▶ Exemptions/discount programs:
 - ▶ Use evaluation criteria/tool for existing/proposed exemptions,
 - ▶ retain exemptions for veterans, except transaction fee, extend day use access to DNR & DFW.
- ▶ Reimburse agencies to implement exemptions/discount programs: Agencies provide biennial estimates of cost to implement exemption programs to Office of Financial Management and Legislature.

Two-Vehicle Pass System



- ▶ Pass Format: Discover Pass remains a hangtag, transferable between two personal vehicles. State agencies offer a sticker for open-top vehicles and motorcycles.
 - ▶ Pass Purchasing: Retain existing opportunities to buy Discover Pass during vehicle registration, online, and in-person.
 - ▶ Informed Discover Pass pricing: Conduct further analysis and market research on price elasticity, consistent price point for the public (inclusive of transaction fees, consideration for incentive at DOL), and inflation.
 - ▶ State/Federal Fee Coordination: Encourage/support state agencies to engage with federal to create a single pass.
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Two-Vehicle Pass System

- ▶ Access to and usability of information: Encourage/support state agencies (DNR, DFW, and State Parks) to coordinate with federal agencies and other appropriate entities to develop common information portal.
- ▶ Motor-vehicle access*: If a street-legal vehicle has an ORV license and is attended, vehicle does not also need a Discover Pass.
- ▶ Exemptions/discount programs: Use evaluation criteria/tool, retain exemptions for veterans.
- ▶ Consistent Fee Free Days*: Implement policy of up to 12 free days at lands managed by State Parks, DNR, and DFW.

Single-Vehicle Pass System/Reduced Fees

- ▶ Pass Format & Pricing: Current Discover Pass hangtag would be replaced with a reduced price, valid for one-vehicle sticker (for license plate or window).
- ▶ Pass Purchasing: Purchasing a pass at the time of vehicle registration becomes the incentivized option.
- ▶ Informed Discover Pass pricing: Conduct further analysis and market research on price elasticity, consistent price point for the public (inclusive of transaction fees), and inflation.
- ▶ Simplicity on state lands: DNR, State Parks, DFW, in consultation with appropriate user groups, develop proposals to bundle and simplify state agency/activity passes, but users not asked to pay more out of pocket, without corresponding benefits.
- ▶ Consistent Free Days: State Agencies coordinate.

Single-Vehicle Pass System/Reduced Fees

- ▶ Motor-vehicle access: If a street-legal vehicle has an ORV license and is attended, vehicle does not also need a Discover Pass.
- ▶ Exemptions/discount programs:
 - ▶ Use evaluation criteria/tool for existing/proposed exemptions,
 - ▶ retain exemptions for veterans, except transaction fee, extend day use access to DNR & DFW.
- ▶ Funding: reimbursement for exemptions/discount programs, support usability of facilities through consultation with people with disabilities, continue to explore additional funding opportunities.

Considered, But Not Recommended

- ▶ State and Nationwide Pass
- ▶ Agency-specific license plates
- ▶ Fee Coordination Board
- ▶ Pass transferable among 3+ vehicles
- ▶ New mechanism to disperse state/federal pass revenue