

SCORP Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Input – 11/9/2017

Results from two breakout groups that brainstormed and prioritized responses to the following question:

What should Pa State Parks do differently over the next 25 years regarding:

- **Outdoor Recreation and Health**
- **Tourism and Economic Development**
- **Resource Management and Stewardship**
- **Funding and Financial Stability**

Participants self-selected to participate in two of the four group categories.

OUTDOOR RECREATION & HEALTH

(#) = number of votes from break-out group voting

(6) Strengthen connection to schools – create progression of outdoor recreation learning that starts at a school and culminates at the state park. Ex. School districts could adopt a state park – place for service and learning,

NOTE TO Paul: Dept of Education is adopting new physical education standards (per Linda Huber) that will encourage more lifetime sports learning and outdoor activity. This is significant in our world and we should learn more about this.

(5) Health systems help to explain to employees cost savings of using state park lands (better than discounts on gym membership...more health (mental, physical) benefits exercising outdoors than inside)

Educate or emphasize the benefits of exercising in the outdoors (vs indoor gyms)

(4) Determine how to engage next generation of users

(4) Determine if current state park infrastructure matches needs and desires of today's/future users?
Are we looking at all infrastructure based on demographics?

(4) Provide more free or low cost equipment rentals with kid sizes
Initiate partnerships with local entities for promotion of outdoor recreation equipment (ex. Picking equipment up at local library, offering an online equipment reservation system).

(4) Provide more information and details on ADA accommodations (ex. Grade, challenges, etc.)

(3) Provide indoor environmental education opportunities for park visitors on rainy days (staffed centers with activities/messages)

(3) Link the health and mental benefits of outdoor recreation/visiting state park to positive benefits (Helping overcoming addictions...opioid crisis...veterans' PTSD)

(2) Minimize sources of pollution that impact outdoor recreation experience.

(2) Provide opportunities for people living in environmental justice areas to get to state parks

(2) Train environmental educators and park staff on new outdoor recreation/health related programming.

(2) state parks should be at the table to help health care providers meet goals

(1) Provide more programs for women in the outdoors and for specific peer groups

(1) Sponsorships for health programs in parks

(1) Create partnerships with private fitness sector to include use of park (running classes in the park, yoga in the park, etc.)

(1) provide health focused programs in the park (ex. Yoga in the park or hike first and then yoga)

(1) state parks should collaborate more with local organizations around the park including health providers

(1) Collaborate with larger health networks with mutual marking goals

Seek funding through health network (required community health assessment plans) to bring kids to parks as helping implement the “plan”

Provide signage that illustrates health benefits or being active

Expand partnerships to be able to teach new programming trends (ex. Paddleboard lessons)

Adopt resource protection zones (impact of increased outdoor recreation)

Provide more smoke free state park areas (not just beaches)

Evaluate environmental education programs for possible need to shift staff and locations based on demand, demographics, priorities, etc.

FUNDING & FINANCIAL STABILITY

(3) Consider opportunities and impacts related with charging a use fee; and consider adjacent recreational amenities and partners

(3) Charge differential fees based on the experience

(3) Leverage recent court decision that disallows oil & gas leases to be used for general fund

(2) “Right-size” the system – consider nearby amenities

(2) Charge fees for specific services, facilities, programs (ex: membership / VIP program)

(1) Continue to utilize friend’s groups where possible – identify staff roles vs. potential volunteer roles

(1) Raise awareness of value of parks (e.g. among legislators)

(1) Use partners/ friend’s groups to fundraise

(1) Share services, facilities and equipment with local MCDs

(1) Transparency

(1) Implement plans quickly

(1) Impact of projects – stories, pictures & numbers

(1) Collaborate w/ agency partners to gain funding for specific purposes

(1) Consider health insurance industry partnership

(1) Find cost savings through energy efficiency

Implement seasonal or weekday fee variances

Make fees program-based

Provide multi-use camp sites

Partner with REI or other outdoor commercial entities

Concierge service or retail store/general store/grocery store

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & STEWARDSHIP

- (4) Educate the public about past human management and the resulting effects
 - (4) Improve the process to engage volunteers (ex: "Top 10 Ways to Help State Parks")
 - (3) Build cross-agency partnerships
 - (3) DCNR take a more active role in working with adjacent landowners through permitting process with DEP – try to influence activities on adjacent lands or subsurface activities that could have an adverse impact on the park resources or visitors' experience
 - (3) Define the appropriate boundary and re-evaluate for resource protection
 - (3) Identify carrying capacity and establish limits to protect the resources
 - (3) Develop cultural resource management plans; perhaps use independent contractors
 - (3) Develop plans for native plants for older facilities
 - (2) Form partnerships to protect/manage archaeological resources and develop preservation plans
 - (2) Develop plans to interpret cultural resources
 - (2) Increase partnerships with sportsman's groups to implement grant projects related to resource management
 - (2) Set a goal to reduce carbon footprint (recycle, energy use, etc.)
 - (1) Community service projects – Eagle Scout or girl Scout projects
 - (1) Need a volunteer coordinator – ex: PPFF
 - (1) Appropriate interpretation of cultural resources
 - (1) Educate adjacent landowners about invasives – ex: early detection monitoring for rapid response
 - (1) Work with local municipalities to address invasive species
 - (1) Work with students to plant native species
 - (1) Conduct wildlife management for game and non-game species
- Label plants for public education
- Address safety of visitors with large events

TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Bold are ones that received dots

- **Use parks as a quality of life enhancement to attract business expansion** (i.e. the Amazon pitch package should have included state parks as part of the selling features of an area)
- **Create an experience around state parks. People are looking for packaged experiences** (look at Virginia as an example)
- **Connect to the community- both physical and interpretive. Increase accessibility through transportation, sidewalks to meet ADA.**
- **Identify opportunities for businesses around state parks: outfitters, gas stations, restaurants, etc.**
- **Connect with regional tourism and economic development organizations for marketing. Use PA Wilds as a model for regional marketing: successes, growing pains**
- Use parks as a community resource and forge community connections
- Sell parks as a place to recharge
- Expand online presence
- Fund tourism promotion so more money can tout what parks have to offer
- Create “Google Moments” in state parks (look up what kind of tree that is, more info on historic markers, etc.)
- Expand connectivity: broadband, wi-fi
- Be more welcoming and connect to plain sect community
- Better connection with local marketing
- Connect with local industry to make sure their employees are aware of the opportunities at parks and the partnerships that can be made
- Add outdoor recreation staff to tourism office or create a Outdoor Recreation Office (see Maryland/CO as examples)
- Merchandizing (state park apparel and gifts)
- Outreach to connected outfitters to see where there are partnership/marketing opportunities
- Conduct and communicate local economic study of state parks
- Promote state agency cross-marketing
- Learn about the visitor experience
- Expand conservation landscapes
- Greater presence on travel sites