

# Penn's Parks



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## FOR ALL

### *Penn's Parks for All Report*

### **Results from the Summer 2017 In-Park and Online Surveys**

Prepared for the Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks

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## Executive Summary

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes and opinions of Pennsylvania state park visitors and the public regarding key issues for the future of the Pennsylvania state parks to inform the *Penn's Parks for All* strategic plan. This study involved a survey which was modeled off of the prior state park strategic plan, *State Parks 2000*. This survey questionnaire focused on seven major themes:

- Should we change the current outdoor recreation opportunities or experiences in the state parks?
- Should we enhance existing overnight accommodations in our State parks?
- How should we pay for our State parks?
- How can we protect our state parks?
- Should we provide more modern conveniences in the state parks?
- How satisfied are visitors with services and facilities at state parks?
- How appropriate are various activities for state parks?

### Methods

Penn State Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management (RPTM) researchers worked in cooperation with Bureau of State Park staff to plan and design this survey effort. Beginning in spring 2017, meetings were held with managers and staff in all state park regions, including the central office in Harrisburg, PA. The purpose of these strategic planning meetings was to solicit state park employee input on not only the future of state parks, but also on which questions should be asked in future research related to the strategic plan. Following these meetings, Penn State RPTM worked with the Bureau of State Parks to design a questionnaire to be administered both online and in the parks. In addition to the questionnaire, informational materials were developed and designed by the Bureau of State Parks to provide context on the seven major themes. The questionnaire, its design and content, was also largely guided by prior questions asked in the *State Parks 2000* surveys. *Penn's Parks for All* questionnaires were distributed both online and in the parks in summer/fall of 2017. In total, there were 4,090 in-park surveys collected and 12,940 online responses. Given the similarity between the results for these data sources, responses were merged into one sample for this report.

### Key Findings

- Across all demographic groups, support was high for the allocation of additional funding from the commonwealth to reduce the backlog of state park rehabilitation projects.
- Respondents disagreed with the institution of new annual/entrance fees (58%), the increase of existing fees (43%), or the leasing of state park facilities to private businesses or non-profit organizations (59%).
- Respondents in the current study agreed or strongly agreed with increasing existing fees within state parks (33%) less often than respondents to *State Parks 2000* (52%).
- Respondents to *Penn's Parks for All* were more likely to agree or strongly agree (82%) with increasing the allocation from the commonwealth to pay for rehabilitation projects than respondents in *State Parks 2000* (59%).

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- Visitation patterns were generally consistent across age, gender, income, and rural/urban residence. However, a few differences did emerge. For example, White respondents reported more frequent visitation (median of 8 visits per year) compared to Black, Latino, and Asian respondents (median of 2, 5, and 3 visits respectively).
- Almost all respondents (92%) agree or strongly agree that state parks should continue to emphasize healthful outdoor recreation activities.
- Respondents, on average, agreed that when impacts of over use are evident at a state park, participation should be limited.
- A total of 72% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that state parks should designate entire campground areas for quiet, wild, and remote camping experiences.
- Respondents, on average, disagreed that state parks' modern family cabin or camping areas should include a central all-purpose social hall; however, Black and Latino respondents were far more likely to agree with this item.
- Support for increasing the protection of the state parks by enlarging boundaries, devoting more staff and funding to conserving native habitat, continuing its strategic land acquisition program, and improving the water quality of streams and lakes was high and appeared consistent across all demographic groups.
- While many respondents disagreed with increasing kitchen amenities, air conditioning, and internet access, there was still not majority agreement (46%) that nothing needs to be modernized and that parks now provide adequate conveniences.
- Overall, respondents were satisfied with the services and facilities at state parks, with no mean response dropping below 'average', and the majority of responses for every item being either 'good' or 'excellent'.
- Overall, special events with greater than 1,000 attendees, trails for motorized use, and resort-style development were viewed as inappropriate, with the majority of respondents marking all of these items as either inappropriate or somewhat inappropriate.

### Summary

This report presents the results of a large survey of state park visitors and online public input. On average, responses were highly supportive of increasing state park protection by enlarging boundaries, devoting more staff and funding to conserving native habitat, continuing its strategic land acquisition program, and improving the water quality of streams and lakes. Overall, respondents were satisfied with state park services and facilities and agreed with items reflecting the existing mission of the Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks. Compared to the results of *State Parks 2000*, it appears that Pennsylvanians have become less supportive of new fees, increases to existing fees, and increased on-site hook-ups. This sample viewed resort-style development and large special events with over 1,000 attendees within the state parks as inappropriate. While many items had consistent ratings across demographic groups, some issues were valued differently across ethnic/racial groups.

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*Salt Springs State Park*



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## Introduction

This report presents findings from a survey conducted as a part of the *Penn's Parks for All* strategic planning initiative in the summer and early fall of 2017. The purpose of this survey was to evaluate the opinions of state park visitors and the public concerning the future of the Pennsylvania state park system in order to inform the *Penn's Parks for All* Strategic Planning Initiative. This report presents overall descriptive findings for each group of questions from that survey, followed by comparisons of responses by age, gender, income, ethnicity/race, and rural/urban residency. Following this, a section comparing responses from this survey with responses from a survey conducted as part of the prior state parks strategic plan, *State Parks 2000*, is presented.

## Survey Background

This survey was developed and modified by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources - Bureau of State Parks and Penn State's Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management (RPTM). The overall survey effort and questionnaire content was based on the prior *State Parks 2000* survey. Starting in spring 2016, meetings were held with managers and staff in all state park regions, including the central office in Harrisburg. The purpose of these meetings was to solicit state park employee input on not only the future of state parks, but also on which questions should be asked in future research related to the strategic plan. These meetings generated concerns of state park employees related to cultural and natural resource management, recreation, and stewardship. Following these meetings, Penn State RPTM worked with the Bureau of state parks to design a survey questionnaire to be administered both online and in the parks (See Appendix A). The questionnaire was designed to capture not only the issues identified through the employee meetings, but also to assess other known concerns related to state parks.

## Study Themes

As mentioned previously, the *Penn's Parks for All* visitor/online surveys were modeled after the *State Parks 2000* surveys which focused on eight key or thematic questions facing state parks. The current study was structured in a similar manner to *State Parks 2000* with five key issues posed as overarching questions, as well as two additional sections, one concerning satisfaction with park services and one concerning the appropriateness of various activities. Finally, the *Penn's Parks for All* survey also asked questions related to demographics. Each of the sections is briefly described below.

- ***Should we change the current outdoor recreation opportunities or experiences in the state parks?***

This section asked participants to identify whether or not we should change recreation opportunities within the state parks. Participants were asked statements regarding healthful outdoor recreation, natural resource impacts from overuse, travel and camping packages, and swimming pools.

- ***Should we enhance existing overnight accommodations in our state parks?***  
Overnight accommodations at state parks include a range of options. This section attempted to understand how people feel about this wide variety of overnight options. For example, participants were asked questions concerning modern family camping areas, social halls, inns, and quiet and remote camping experiences.
- ***How should we pay for our state parks?***  
Survey participants were asked to provide their opinions concerning state park funding. Specifically, participants were asked about the institutions of an annual pass/entrance fee, the increase of existing fees, increasing the allocation of state funds to address the maintenance backlog, closing certain state park facilities, and leasing state park facilities to private and/or non-profit organizations.
- ***How can we protect our state parks?***  
Consistent with the Bureau of state parks' mission regarding conservation, participants were asked how state parks and its resources should be protected. Participants were asked questions related to park staffing, cultural resource protection, land acquisition, water resource management, and volunteer programs.
- ***Should we provide more modern conveniences in the state parks?***  
Similar to *State Parks 2000*, participants were asked how they felt about modern conveniences in the state parks. Participants were asked about internet, air conditioning, kitchen amenities, and campsite hook-ups.

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In addition to the five themes structured around similar questions as *State Parks 2000*, we also asked respondents to report their level of satisfaction with state park services and facilities, their views on the appropriateness of various activities within state parks, as well as their demographic characteristics.

- ***Satisfaction with services and facilities at state parks.***

The survey assessed visitor satisfaction by asking respondents to rate the quality of a variety of state park services and facilities. Items rated included employees/staff, safety, trails, cleanliness, online presence, programming, and the reservation system.

- ***Appropriateness with various activities for state parks.***

Participants were asked to identify how appropriate they felt a variety of activities are within the state parks. These items included resort-style development, trails for motorized use, large special events, and adventure facilities/challenge courses.

- ***Demographics***

Participants were asked to report a variety of demographic information. This included things such as their age, ethnicity/race, gender, income and zip code. Gathering these demographic characteristics allowed for comparisons of various types of visitors across the survey items and allowed a broader comparison of the survey sample with the population characteristics of Pennsylvania.

In addition to the main survey administered in both the parks and online, online survey participants were asked two additional open-ended questions. These questions were, “What is your main concern regarding the future of the state parks?” and “Is there anything else you would like to tell us to inform the state parks strategic plan?”.



*Worlds End State Park*



## Methods

### Survey Design

The survey was designed to be administered both in-park and online. Respondents were first asked to report their visitation patterns at the state parks. After that, they were asked questions regarding the main themes. Each statement was rated on a 1 to 5 scale. For the first five main survey themes, each statement was rated from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'. For the satisfaction section, each item was rated from 'Poor' to 'Excellent', with an "N/A" or not-applicable option provided. For the appropriateness section, each item was rated from 'Inappropriate' to 'Appropriate'. At the end of the survey, participants were then asked a group of demographic questions regarding age, gender, income, zip code, and ethnicity/race. To provide survey participants with context, after questions were finalized, the Bureau of State Parks created accompanying informational materials for the survey (See Appendix B). These materials were designed to provide information on the context of each of the study themes presented below in an accessible way. The questionnaire – as well as the accompanying informational materials – were translated into Spanish by a third party translation service.

### Survey Administration

The survey was administered both in-park and online from mid-June 2017 through October 2017. Within the parks both the English and Spanish version were available, although the release of the in-park Spanish version was not available until at least a month into the survey effort. The survey was distributed in the state parks by park employees and volunteers. State park employees and volunteers were instructed to simply hand out the survey and encourage park visitors to participate. To minimize bias and comply with University review board procedures, staff/volunteers were instructed not to gain consent nor assist visitors in taking the survey. In addition to in-park administration the questionnaire was also handed out at a few RV shows and at Penn State tail-gate events by DCNR employees. Survey participants were able to either turn in the completed survey at the state park or mail the survey to the central office in Harrisburg, PA. The online survey was available to any and all that visited the [PennsParksForAll.com](http://PennsParksForAll.com) website. The survey contained the same informational materials as the in-park survey and was available in both English and Spanish. The online survey was distributed through a variety of social networks and press releases by the DCNR as well as being advertised on the DCNR webpage.



*French Creek State Park*

## Demographic Variables for Comparison

Demographic characteristics were assessed in order to compare responses of Pennsylvanians of different backgrounds. Many of these demographic variables were recoded/collapsed into smaller categories to better illustrate differences across the groups. This recoding is described below.

### Demographic Categories

Age was asked of respondents in the format of, 'In what year were you born?'. This was recoded into age by subtracting from 2017, and then categorized into five categories: 18-24, 25-34, 35-50, 51-64, 65+. Gender was asked as, 'What is your gender?'. The options were Male, Female, and Other; other in this case represents individuals who do not identify as either male or female, and are also referred to as 'gender non-conforming' in this report. The results are reported in these three categories. Income was asked as, 'Into which annual income group would you place your household?'. Participants were presented with seven options including a 'Don't know' response. For the purposes of comparison this has been reduced to three categories: \$0 - \$49,999, \$50,000 - \$99,999, and \$100,000+. Ethnicity/Race was asked as, 'Which one of the following categories best describes your race and/or ethnic background?'. The options included: White, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Mixed race, Hispanic/Chicano/Latino, and other. Again, for comparison purposes this variable was recoded into fewer (five) categories: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and other non-White. Other non-White includes American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Mixed race, and other.

State parks across Pennsylvania look different in rural vs. urban areas. Additionally, residents in urban and rural areas participate in different recreation activities and use parks differently. Rural/Urban residency was determined by using respondents' self-reported zip codes. Following this, the 2016 U.S. Census Gazetteer files were used to determine square mileage for each zip code. The 2012-2016 American Community Survey Zip Code Tabulation Area population estimates were then used to determine the population for each area for 2016. The year of 2016 was used in this instance because it is the latest year for which zip code population estimates were available at time of analysis. Zip code area population was then divided by square mileage to determine population density to arrive at a rural/urban distinction.

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania defines areas with less than 248 people per square mile as rural. This report uses this same demarcation. Individuals living in an area with 284 people per square mile were coded as urban, and those living in areas with a population density of less than 284 were coded as rural. It should be noted that this classification results in a limited distinction between level of urban. In the body of the report, all respondents living within any area ranging from 284 to 50,000 people per square mile were coded as urban. Due to the limitation of this classification, the researchers also compared resident by a third category, with 284 to 2,213 as a cut-off for 'suburban', and greater than 2,213 as urban. This cut-off was selected due to previous research finding that, on average, people below 2,213 classified their residence as 'suburban'. The results from this did not substantively change the findings, and for the most part, the trend observed between rural and urban simply continued when breaking into further categories. The full results of this additional comparison are included in Appendix B.

## **Report Structure**

This report summarizes and discusses the results of this study and is organized around the seven themes as stated earlier. The report begins by outlining the sample demographics and visitor behaviors, continues to the five overarching questions, follows with satisfaction and perceived appropriateness, and ends with a comparison between this study and *State Parks 2000*.

## **Statistics Presented**

This report presents statistics for each question asked of respondents. The main statistics presented are median, mean, and percent frequency. The median represents the value falling at the middle of the distribution of answers, with half of the responses above it and half below. The mean is the average response of all answers, when the answers have been recoded into numbers. For example, on a scale of agreement from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree, a mean of 3.9 would represent modest agreement. It is important to note that the words mean and average represent the same statistic and are used interchangeably throughout the report. Finally, throughout the report the percent frequency is presented. In this case it is most often the percent of people who selected either agree or strongly agree – among all who answered the question. The results presented here are descriptive statistics and do not predict any future outcomes; when this report uses phrases like ‘more likely to agree’ or ‘agreed more often’ it means that within this sample, more people selected whichever option is being discussed – not that people would be likely to select this option in the future.



## Survey Results

### Respondent Profile and Behaviors

#### Sample Demographics

In total, there were 4,090 in-park surveys collected and 10,186 online responses. It is important to note that these numbers are the amount of people who responded to at least one survey question. Due to incomplete surveys, many of the responses on individual survey items are less than this figure. Participants in both the online and in-park survey were demographically similar. The sample was ethnically and racially homogenous, with over 94% of respondents reporting themselves as White. The sample was evenly split by gender and age leaned toward those over the age of 45. Income distribution leaned towards wealthier households and the sample was more urban than rural. When comparing the demographic distribution of the online sample and the in-park sample, few differences were present. Additionally, in statistical tests not reported here, the online sample and in-park sample did not consistently vary on responses to the survey items. For these reasons, with the exception of the demographic questions, the online and in-park survey responses were merged into a single sample for the remainder of this report.

- This sample was significantly more White than the Pennsylvania population, with the Pennsylvania population being 81.4% White (U.S. Census Bureau) and the sample being 94.2% White. Similarly, the sample was far less Black, Latino, and Asian than the Pennsylvania population. The sample was 0.4% Black, 0.8% Latino, and 0.6% Asian, while the Pennsylvania population is 11.0% Black, 6.6% Latino, and 3.6% Asian.
- The portion of this sample over 55 was 45.3%, whereas the portion of Pennsylvania over the age of 55 is 30.3%.
- This sample was evenly split between Male and Female, which was consistent with the Census reported gender composition of Pennsylvania.
- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 45.7% of Pennsylvanian households made less than \$50,000 in 2016. Only 23.8% of respondents reported a household income of less than \$50,000. This indicates that the *Penn's Parks for All* sample is comprised of individuals making more than the average Pennsylvanian household.
- This sample is slightly more rural than the whole of Pennsylvania. The sample was 65.7% urban and 34.3% rural, while Pennsylvania is 77.3% urban and 22.7% rural.

# *PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL* ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 1. Age and Comparison of Age across Survey Mode

Age	Online Survey (N=9237)		In-Park Survey (N=3881)		Total (N=13118)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
18 – 24	310	3.4	186	4.8	496	3.8
25 – 34	1353	14.6	367	9.5	1720	13.1
35 – 44	1854	20.1	527	13.6	2381	18.2
45 – 54	1936	21.0	643	16.6	2579	19.7
55 – 64	2245	24.3	1087	28.0	3332	25.4
65+	1539	16.7	1071	27.6	2610	19.9
Mean	49		54		51	
Median	50		57		52	

Table 2. Gender and Comparison of Gender across Survey Mode

	Online Survey (N=9553)		In-Park Survey (N=3937)		Total (N=13490)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	4779	50.0	1855	47.1	6634	49.2
Female	4722	49.4	2061	52.3	6783	50.3
Other	52	0.5	21	0.5	73	0.5

Table 3. Income and Comparison of Income across Survey Mode\*

	Online (N=8733)		In-Park (N=3506)		Total (N=12239)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under \$25,000	385	4.4	216	6.2	601	4.9
\$25,000 - \$49,999	1520	17.4	797	22.7	2317	18.9
\$50,000 - \$74,999	2183	25.0	956	27.3	3139	25.6
\$75,000 - \$99,999	1866	21.4	646	18.4	2512	20.5
\$100,000 - \$149,999	1894	21.7	570	16.3	2464	20.1
\$150,000 or over	885	10.1	321	9.2	1206	9.9
Don't know	-	-	155	4.2	155	1.3

\*Income bracket percentages do not include “Don’t know” responses. Don’t know was only provided as an answer on the in-park version.

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Table 4. Ethnicity/Race and Comparison of Ethnicity/Race across Survey Mode

	Online (N=9237)		In-Park (N=3881)		Total (N=13305)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
White	8952	94.8	3577	92.7	12529	94.2
American Indian or Alaskan Native	17	0.2	17	0.4	34	0.3
Asian	40	.04	40	1.0	80	0.6
Black or African American	30	0.3	25	0.6	55	0.4
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	4	0.04	6	0.2	10	0.1
Mixed Race	118	1.2	40	1.0	158	1.2
Hispanic/Chicano/Latino	41	0.4	61	1.6	102	0.8
Other	243	2.6	94	2.4	337	2.5

Table 5. Rural/Urban Status and Comparison of Rural/Urban across Survey Mode

	Online (N=9087)		In-Park (N=3479)		Total (N=12566)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rural*	3052	33.6	1261	36.2	4313	34.3
Urban	6035	66.4	2218	63.8	8253	65.7

\*Rural is defined as a population density of less than 284 per sq. mile



## Visitation Patterns

Given that in-park surveys were assumed to be visitors, only the online sample was asked whether they had visited a state park. Here, almost all respondents from that online sample had previously visited at least one state park. The vast majority of visitors visited more than one park and went to a state park more than once over the past twelve months. Tables 6 to 8 present the descriptive results for visitation patterns, while Tables 9 through 13 present demographic comparisons across visitation patterns.

- On average, study participants visited four state parks in the past twelve months. The median number of parks visited was three.
- The median number of visits reported to state parks by this sample was 8, while the mean was 17. The maximum number of reported days in the state parks was 365.
- Visitation patterns were generally consistent across age, gender, income, and rurality.
- White respondents reported more frequent visitation (median of 8 visits per year) compared to Black, Latino, and Asian respondents (median of 2, 5, and 3 visits per year respectively).



*Ricketts Glen State Park*

PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 6. Have you ever visited a PA state park?\*

	N (N=10,186)	Percent
Yes	10118	99.3
No	68	0.7

\*Only asked of online respondents

Table 7. How many different PA state parks have you visited in the past twelve months?

Number of different state parks	N (N=13961)	Percent
None	394	2.8
1	1764	12.6
2	2595	18.6
3	2816	20.2
4	2061	14.8
5	1443	10.3
6	1124	8.1
More than 6	1764	12.6
Mean	4.1	
Median	3.0	
Min	0	
Max	121	

Table 8. How many total visits have you made to any PA state park in the past twelve months?

	N (N=13880)	Percent
0	295	2.21
1 – 5	5034	36.3
6 – 10	3384	24.4
11 – 30	3698	26.6
31+	1469	10.7
Mean	17	
Median	8	
Min	0	
Max	365	

## Visitation Comparisons across Demographic Characteristics

### Comparison by Age

Table 9. Comparison by Age – Visitation Patterns

	18-24		25-34		35-50		51-64		65+	
Statement	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Number of different state parks in twelve Months	5.0	4.0	4.4	3.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	4.1	3.0
Number of visits to a state park in twelve months	22.3	8.0	20.9	10.0	15.4	10.0	16.0	7.0	17.2	6.0

### Comparison by Gender

Table 10. Comparison by Gender – Visitation Patterns

	Male		Female		Other	
Statement	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Number of different state parks in twelve Months	4.4	4.0	3.9	3.0	3.9	3.0
Number of visits to a state park in twelve months	18.4	8.0	16.2	7.0	16.9	7.0

### Comparison by Income

Table 11. Comparison by Income – Visitation Patterns

	\$0 - \$49,999		\$50,000 - \$99,999		\$100,000+	
Statement	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Number of different state parks in twelve Months	4.1	3.0	4.3	3.0	4.2	3.0
Number of visits to a state park in twelve months	16.5	7.0	17.3	8.0	17.8	8.0



### Comparison by Ethnicity/Race

Table 12. Comparison by Ethnicity/Race – Visitation Patterns

Statement	White		Black		Hispanic/ Chicano/ Latino		Asian		Other non-white	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Number of different state parks in twelve Months	4.2	3.0	3.8	2.0	3.6	3.0	3.1	2.0	4.6	4.0
Number of visits to a state park in twelve months	17.3	8.0	18.5	3.0	17.1	5.0	21.3	3.0	19.6	10.0

### Comparison by Rural/Urban residency

Table 13. Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence – Visitation Patterns\*

Statement	Rural		Urban	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Number of different state parks in twelve Months	4.5	4.0	4.1	3.0
Number of visits to a state park in twelve months	18.6	9.0	17.6	8.0

\*Rural is defined as a population density of less than 284 per sq. mile



## Responses to Core Survey Themes

### Should We Change the Current Outdoor Recreation Opportunities in State Parks?

We looked at the current recreational opportunities, as well as whether or not visitors felt that they should change these opportunities in state parks. Overall, respondents overwhelmingly support the mission of the state parks regarding healthful outdoor recreation activities, as well as the importance of managing for a quiet, natural, and wild experience. There was some support for management activities to limit impacts, but less support for vacation packages and splash playgrounds. Table 14 presents the descriptive results for outdoor recreation opportunity items, while Tables 15 through 19 present demographic comparisons across recreation opportunity items.

- Almost all respondents (92%) agreed or strongly agreed that state parks should continue to emphasize healthful outdoor recreation activities.
- The vast majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (87%) that visitors to state parks should expect a quiet, natural and/or wild experience.
- A majority of respondents (65%) agreed or strongly agreed that when impacts of over use are evident at a state park, participation should be limited.
- On average, the sample was fairly neutral about travel and camping vacation packages and splash playgrounds, with means of 3.0 and 2.9, respectively. However, Black and Latino respondents were much more supportive of these items with means for travel and camping vacation packages of 3.7 and 3.8 respectively, and means for splash playgrounds of 3.7 and 3.6 respectively.
- Urban respondents slightly agreed or strongly agreed more often than rural respondents (50% urban; 44% rural) that the natural resources of some state parks are being impacted by over use.
- Counter to what might be expected, both old and young respondents rated active adventure recreation facilities similarly, with all age groups expressing moderate levels of agreement that these types of offerings should be increased.



*Black Moshannon State Park*

## Overall Results for Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

Table 14. Should we change the current outdoor recreation opportunities or experiences in state parks?

Statement	Mean	Percent*				
		Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
State parks should continue to emphasize healthful outdoor recreation activities	4.4	1	1	6	39	54
Visitors to state parks should expect a quiet, natural and/or wild experience	4.3	2	2	9	36	51
When impacts of over use are evident at a state park, participation should be limited	3.6	3	11	22	48	17
Some parks should offer more active adventure recreation activities	3.5	5	11	29	40	14
The natural resources of some state parks are being impacted by over use	3.4	2	14	37	32	15
Travel and camping vacation packages for more programmed vacation experiences should be provided	3.0	9	23	33	27	8
Parks should develop additional "splash playgrounds" in some parks in place of swimming pools	2.9	14	21	37	23	6

\*Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding

**Outdoor Recreation Opportunities – Comparisons by Demographic Characteristics**

**Comparison by Age**

Table 15. Comparison by Age – Should we change the current outdoor recreation opportunities or experiences in state parks?

	18-24		25-34		35-50		51-64		65+	
Statement	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
State parks should continue to emphasize healthful outdoor recreation activities	4.4	93	4.5	94	4.5	93	4.5	94	4.4	92
Visitors to state parks should expect a quiet, natural and/or wild experience	4.3	87	4.3	85	4.3	87	4.4	89	4.4	89
When impacts of over use are evident at a state park, participation should be limited	3.7	65	3.7	64	3.7	66	3.7	65	3.7	65
Some parks should offer more active adventure recreation activities	3.5	59	3.6	58	3.5	57	3.4	53	3.4	49
The natural resources of some state parks are being impacted by over use	3.5	49	3.5	48	3.5	48	3.4	45	3.4	46
Travel and camping vacation packages for more programmed vacation experiences should be provided	3.0	32	3.1	37	3.0	35	3.0	34	2.9	29
Parks should develop additional “splash playgrounds” in some parks in place of swimming pools	2.8	27	2.9	30	2.9	30	2.9	29	2.8	27

\*Percent who said either ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’

## Comparison by Gender

Table 16. Comparison by Gender – Should we change the current outdoor recreation opportunities or experiences in state parks?

Statement	Male		Female		Other	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%
State parks should continue to emphasize healthful outdoor recreation activities	4.4	92	4.5	94	4.4	90
Visitors to state parks should expect a quiet, natural and/or wild experience	4.3	86	4.3	88	4.2	84
When impacts of over use are evident at a state park, participation should be limited	3.6	64	3.7	66	3.6	58
Some parks should offer more active adventure recreation activities	3.5	55	3.5	54	3.5	49
The natural resources of some state parks are being impacted by over use	3.4	48	3.5	47	3.7	59
Travel and camping vacation packages for more programmed vacation experiences should be provided	3.0	34	3.0	35	2.8	25
Parks should develop additional “splash playgrounds” in some parks in place of swimming pools	2.8	27	2.9	31	2.7	26

\*Percent who said either ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’

## Comparison by Income

Table 17. Comparison by Income – Should we change the current outdoor recreation opportunities or experiences in state parks?

Statement	\$0 - \$49,999		\$50,000 - \$99,999		\$100,000+	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%
State parks should continue to emphasize healthful outdoor recreation activities	4.4	93	4.5	94	4.5	93
Visitors to state parks should expect a quiet, natural and/or wild experience	4.4	88	4.3	87	4.3	86
When impacts of over use are evident at a state park, participation should be limited	3.6	63	3.7	65	3.7	66
Some parks should offer more active adventure recreation activities	3.5	56	3.4	53	3.5	57
The natural resources of some state parks are being impacted by over use	3.5	48	3.5	49	3.4	45
Travel and camping vacation packages for more programmed vacation experiences should be provided	3.1	38	3.0	33	3.0	33
Parks should develop additional “splash playgrounds” in some parks in place of swimming pools	2.9	30	2.9	29	2.8	29

\*Percent who said either ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’

### Comparison by Ethnicity/Race

Table 18. Comparison by Ethnicity/Race – Should we change the current outdoor recreation opportunities or experiences in state parks?

Statement	White		Black		Hispanic/ Chicano/ Latino		Asian		Other non- white	
	Mean	%*	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
State parks should continue to emphasize healthful outdoor recreation activities	4.5	93	4.5	89	4.5	96	4.5	93	4.4	93
Visitors to state parks should expect a quiet, natural and/or wild experience	4.3	87	4.3	82	4.3	87	4.5	94	4.3	84
When impacts of over use are evident at a state park, participation should be limited	3.6	65	3.8	71	3.8	68	3.7	66	3.6	65
Some parks should offer more active adventure recreation activities	3.5	55	3.8	70	4.0	78	3.4	48	3.3	48
The natural resources of some state parks are being impacted by over use	3.4	47	3.3	46	3.4	46	3.2	35	3.7	55
Travel and camping vacation packages for more programmed vacation experiences should be provided	2.9	34	3.7	66	3.8	65	3.3	44	2.9	31
Parks should develop additional “splash playgrounds” in some parks in place of swimming pools	2.9	29	3.7	64	3.6	57	2.9	32	2.9	33

\*Percent who said either ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’

### Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence

Table 19. Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence – Should we change the current outdoor recreation opportunities or experiences in state parks?

Statement	Rural**		Urban	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%
State parks should continue to emphasize healthful outdoor recreation activities	4.4	93	4.5	93
Visitors to state parks should expect a quiet, natural and/or wild experience	4.3	86	4.4	88
When impacts of over use are evident at a state park, participation should be limited	3.6	63	3.7	66
Some parks should offer more active adventure recreation activities	3.5	55	3.5	54
The natural resources of some state parks are being impacted by over use	3.4	44	3.5	50
Travel and camping vacation packages for more programmed vacation experiences should be provided	3.0	35	3.0	34
Parks should develop additional “splash playgrounds” in some parks in place of swimming pools	2.9	29	2.9	29

\*Percent who said either ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’;

\*\*Rural is defined as a population density of less than 284 per sq. mile



*Hickory Run State Park*



## Should we Enhance Existing Overnight Accommodations in our State Parks?

When considering the existing overnight accommodations in our state parks, the vast majority of respondents agreed that parks should designate entire campground areas for quiet, wild, and remote camping experiences. There was less support for multiple family cabins and central all-purpose social halls, with overall responses averaging on the disagreement end of the scale. Black and Hispanic respondents were far more supportive of larger multi-family cabins, central all-purpose social halls, and increased inns than White respondents. Table 20 presents the descriptive results for overnight accommodations items, while Tables 21 through 25 present demographic comparisons across overnight accommodations items.

- A total of 72% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that state parks should designate entire campground areas for quiet, wild, and remote camping experiences.
- A plurality of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (47%) that current state park accommodations are sufficient.
- Although respondents did not, on average, agree that parks should construct larger cabins that can accommodate multiple families at once (mean of 2.8), Black (57%) , Latino (47%), and Asian (46%) respondents were far more likely than White (27%) respondents to agree or strongly agree with this statement.
- Respondents did not, on average, agree that state parks' modern family cabin or camping areas should include a central all-purpose social hall (mean of 2.7). Again, Black and Latino respondents were far more likely to agree with this item (3.5 Black; 3.5 Latino)



*Sinnemahoning State Park*

## Overall Results for Overnight Accommodations

Table 20. Should we enhance existing overnight accommodations in our state parks?

Statement	Mean	Percent*				
		Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Parks should designate entire campground areas for quiet, wild, and remote camping experiences	3.9	2	8	18	43	29
Current state park accommodations are sufficient	3.4	3	17	34	37	10
Parks should develop a few more inns in carefully selected locations	3.0	13	21	30	30	6
Parks should construct larger cabins that can accommodate multiple families at once	2.8	12	28	34	21	6
Parks' modern family cabin or camping areas should include a central all-purpose social hall	2.7	13	29	36	18	5

\*Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding



## Overnight Accommodations – Comparisons by Demographic Characteristics

### Comparison by Age

Table 21. Comparison by Age – Should we enhance existing overnight accommodations in our state parks?

	18-24		25-34		35-50		51-64		65+	
Statement	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
Parks should designate entire campground areas for quiet, wild, and remote camping experiences	4.0	76	3.9	73	3.9	73	3.8	70	3.8	70
Current state park accommodations are sufficient	3.5	54	3.4	50	3.4	49	3.3	47	3.4	48
Parks should develop a few more inns in carefully selected locations	2.9	33	3.0	37	2.9	36	3.0	37	2.9	35
Parks should construct larger cabins that can accommodate multiple families at once	2.8	27	2.9	29	2.9	28	2.8	26	2.7	24
Parks' modern family cabin or camping areas should include a central all-purpose social hall	2.8	25	2.8	24	2.8	23	2.7	21	2.6	20

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

### Comparison by Gender

Table 22. Comparison by Gender – Should we enhance existing overnight accommodations in our state parks?

	Male		Female		Other	
Statement	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%
Parks should designate entire campground areas for quiet, wild, and remote camping experiences	3.9	73	3.9	71	4.0	73
Current state park accommodations are sufficient	3.4	48	3.4	47	3.4	48
Parks should develop a few more inns in carefully selected locations	2.9	36	3.0	38	2.7	26
Parks should construct larger cabins that can accommodate multiple families at once	2.7	24	2.9	30	2.6	22
Parks' modern family cabin or camping areas should include a central all-purpose social hall	2.7	22	2.7	22	2.6	19

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

### Comparison by Income

Table 23. Comparison by Income – Should we enhance existing overnight accommodations in our state parks?

Statement	\$0 - \$49,999		\$50,000 - \$99,999		\$100,000+	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%
Parks should designate entire campground areas for quiet, wild, and remote camping experiences	3.9	74	3.8	71	3.9	72
Current state park accommodations are sufficient	3.4	50	3.4	49	3.3	43
Parks should develop a few more inns in carefully selected locations	2.9	34	2.9	36	3.0	41
Parks should construct larger cabins that can accommodate multiple families at once	2.8	27	2.8	26	2.8	28
Parks' modern family cabin or camping areas should include a central all-purpose social hall	2.8	24	2.7	22	2.7	22

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

### Comparison by Ethnicity/Race

Table 24. Comparison by Ethnicity/Race – Should we enhance existing overnight accommodations in our state parks?

Statement	White		Black		Hispanic/ Chicano/ Latino		Asian		Other non- white	
	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
Parks should designate entire campground areas for quiet, wild, and remote camping experiences	3.9	72	4.0	75	4.0	78	3.9	72	4.0	74
Current state park accommodations are sufficient	3.4	48	3.4	44	3.5	50	3.5	53	3.5	51
Parks should develop a few more inns in carefully selected locations	3.0	37	3.5	58	3.5	56	3.1	42	2.7	29
Parks should construct larger cabins that can accommodate multiple families at once	2.8	27	3.5	57	3.4	47	3.3	46	2.6	21
Parks' modern family cabin or camping areas should include a central all-purpose social hall	2.7	22	3.5	56	3.5	53	3.1	39	2.7	23

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

**Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence**

Table 25. Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence – Should we enhance existing overnight accommodations in our state parks?

Statement	Rural**		Urban	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%
Parks should designate entire campground areas for quiet, wild, and remote camping experiences	3.8	68	3.9	74
Current state park accommodations are sufficient	3.4	50	3.3	46
Parks should develop a few more inns in carefully selected locations	2.9	34	3.0	38
Parks should construct larger cabins that can accommodate multiple families at once	2.8	27	2.8	26
Parks' modern family cabin or camping areas should include a central all-purpose social hall	2.7	23	2.7	22

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree';

\*\*Rural is defined as a population density of less than 284 per sq. mile



## How Should We Pay for our State Parks?

Similar to *State Parks 2000*, an important question of this study was the issue of state park funding. Participants were asked how they felt about a variety of funding related issues. Across all demographic groups, there was strong support for increasing the allocation of commonwealth funding for the backlog of state park rehabilitation projects. There was modest support for converting low-usage parks to primitive and rustic parks. However, across all groups there was uniform disagreement with the institution of a new annual/entrance fee, or increasing existing fees. Additionally, there was broad disagreement with the leasing of select park areas to private businesses or non-profit organizations. Table 26 presents the descriptive results for paying for our state parks items, while Tables 27 through 31 present demographic comparisons across paying for our state parks items.

- Across all demographic groups, support for the allocation of additional funding from the commonwealth to reduce the backlog of state park rehabilitation projects was high, with 82% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.
- Respondents expressed consistent disagreement with the addition of new annual/entrance fees (58%), the increase of existing fees (43%), or the leasing of state park facilities to private businesses or non-profit organizations (59%).
- While the average values remained below the neutral point of 3.0 for all income brackets, as income decreased, support for a new annual or daily entrance fee or parking permit also decreased.
- Those in lower income groups agreed less often with increasing existing fees for camping, marinas, cabins, swimming pools, picnic pavilions, etc. than high income respondents.



*Bald Eagle State Park*

## Overall Results for Paying for our State Parks

Table 26. How should we pay for our state parks?

Statement	Mean	Percent*				
		Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
The commonwealth should allocate additional funding to reduce the backlog of state park rehabilitation projects	4.1	1	4	13	44	38
Parks should convert low-usage parks to primitive and rustic parks with minimal on-site staff and facilities	3.3	4.8	20	25	42	8
Parks should increase the existing fees for camping, marinas, cabins, swimming pools, picnic pavilions, etc. for all visitors	2.8	15	28	23	28	5
Parks should institute a new annual or daily entrance fee or parking permit system	2.5	28	30	16	21	6
Facilities that are expensive to operate and maintain should be closed	2.4	16	39	32	10	3
The operation of select park areas should be leased to private businesses or non-profit organizations to reduce costs	2.3	37	22	19	18	4

\*Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding





**Paying for our State Parks – Comparisons by Demographic Characteristics**

**Comparison by Age**

Table 27. Comparison by Age – How should we pay for our state parks?

	18-24		25-34		35-50		51-64		65+	
Statement	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
The commonwealth should allocate additional funding to reduce the backlog of state park rehabilitation projects	4.1	77	4.2	83	4.1	81	4.1	82	4.1	82
Parks should convert low-usage parks to primitive and rustic parks with minimal on-site staff and facilities	3.3	49	3.3	51	3.3	50	3.3	49	3.2	48
Parks should increase the existing fees for camping, marinas, cabins, swimming pools, picnic pavilions, etc. for all visitors	2.7	29	2.8	33	2.8	34	2.7	31	2.7	30
Parks should institute a new annual or daily entrance fee or parking permit system	2.4	24	2.4	26	2.5	27	2.5	27	2.4	27
Facilities that are expensive to operate and maintain should be closed	2.4	10	2.4	12	2.4	11	2.5	12	2.5	16
The operation of select park areas should be leased to private businesses or non-profit organizations to reduce costs	2.3	20	2.3	22	2.2	21	2.4	24	2.3	21

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

## Comparison by Gender

Table 28. Comparison by Gender – How should we pay for our state parks?

Statement	Male		Female		Other	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%
The commonwealth should allocate additional funding to reduce the backlog of state park rehabilitation projects	4.1	82	4.1	82	3.9	71
Parks should convert low-usage parks to primitive and rustic parks with minimal on-site staff and facilities	3.4	54	3.2	47	3.5	57
Parks should increase the existing fees for camping, marinas, cabins, swimming pools, picnic pavilions, etc. for all visitors	2.8	34	2.7	31	2.7	29
Parks should institute a new annual or daily entrance fee or parking permit system	2.5	28	2.5	26	2.4	25
Facilities that are expensive to operate and maintain should be closed	2.5	16	2.4	10	2.7	18
The operation of select park areas should be leased to private businesses or non-profit organizations to reduce costs	2.3	23	2.3	20	2.1	17

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

## Comparison by Income

Table 29. Comparison by Income – How should we pay for our state parks?

Statement	\$0 - \$49,999		\$50,000 - \$99,999		\$100,000+	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%
The commonwealth should allocate additional funding to reduce the backlog of state park rehabilitation projects	4.1	79	4.2	83	4.2	84
Parks should convert low-usage parks to primitive and rustic parks with minimal on-site staff and facilities	3.3	50	3.3	50	3.3	53
Parks should increase the existing fees for camping, marinas, cabins, swimming pools, picnic pavilions, etc. for all visitors	2.7	29	2.8	32	3.0	39
Parks should institute a new annual or daily entrance fee or parking permit system	2.4	23	2.5	27	2.6	31
Facilities that are expensive to operate and maintain should be closed	2.5	13	2.4	13	2.4	12
The operation of select park areas should be leased to private businesses or non-profit organizations to reduce costs	2.3	22	2.3	21	2.3	23

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

### Comparison by Ethnicity/Race

Table 30. Comparison by Ethnicity/Race – How should we pay for our state parks?

Statement	White		Black		Hispanic/ Chicano/ Latino		Asian		Other non- white	
	Mean	%*	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
The commonwealth should allocate additional funding to reduce the backlog of state park rehabilitation projects	4.2	83	3.9	71	3.9	68	4.0	77	4.0	75
Parks should convert low-usage parks to primitive and rustic parks with minimal on-site staff and facilities	3.3	50	3.5	57	3.1	40	3.4	51	3.4	54
Parks should increase the existing fees for camping, marinas, cabins, swimming pools, picnic pavilions, etc. for all visitors	2.8	33	2.8	35	2.8	33	2.7	30	2.8	36
Parks should institute a new annual or daily entrance fee or parking permit system	2.5	27	2.7	31	2.7	36	2.7	27	2.6	30
Facilities that are expensive to operate and maintain should be closed	2.4	12	2.6	20	2.6	22	2.8	29	2.7	23
The operation of select park areas should be leased to private businesses or non-profit organizations to reduce costs	2.3	22	2.7	38	2.5	29	2.4	23	2.3	22

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

### Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence

Table 31. Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence – How should we pay for our state parks?

Statement	Rural**		Urban	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%
The commonwealth should allocate additional funding to reduce the backlog of state park rehabilitation projects	4.1	79	4.2	84
Parks should convert low-usage parks to primitive and rustic parks with minimal on-site staff and facilities	3.2	46	3.3	52
Parks should increase the existing fees for camping, marinas, cabins, swimming pools, picnic pavilions, etc. for all visitors	2.7	30	2.8	35
Parks should institute a new annual or daily entrance fee or parking permit system	2.4	25	2.5	27
Facilities that are expensive to operate and maintain should be closed	2.4	12	2.5	13
The operation of select park areas should be leased to private businesses or non-profit organizations to reduce costs	2.4	23	2.3	21

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree';

\*\*Rural is defined as a population density of less than 284 per sq. mile

## How can we Protect our State Parks?

All items concerning the protection of state parks were rated favorably in this sample. Respondents were especially supportive of improving water quality in streams and lakes, the continuation of land acquisition, the incorporation of volunteers, and the devoting of more staff and funding to conserving quality native habitat. The majority disagreed that there was no need to acquire more land for the state park system. These attitudes held across all demographic groups, with the exception that Latino respondents agreed more often that there is no need to acquire more land. Table 32 presents the descriptive results for protecting our state parks items, while Tables 33 through 37 present demographic comparisons across protecting our state parks items.

- The majority of respondents (66%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that there is no need to acquire more land for the state park system
- Latino respondents were more likely to agree or strongly agree (28%) that there is no need to acquire more land for the state park system, compared to the overall sample (12%).
- Support for increasing the protection of the state parks appeared consistent across all demographics groups.
- A sizable majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the state parks should continue its strategic land acquisition program (74%).



*Promised Land State Park*

## Overall Results for Protecting our State Parks

Table 32. How can we protect our state parks?

Statement	Mean	Percent*				
		Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Parks should conduct more resource management activities to improve the water quality of streams and lakes**	4.0	1	3	20	49	28
Parks should continue its strategic land acquisition program	3.9	1	5	20	46	28
State parks should invest more time and resources in their volunteer and friends group programs	3.9	1	2	24	52	20
The boundaries of some State parks should be enlarged to protect immediate watersheds and adjacent lands that could impact park habitat and recreation experiences	3.9	2	7	20	44	29
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to resource management activities that conserve quality native habitats	3.9	1	5	21	50	23
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to protecting cultural resources (e.g. historic sites, buildings, and artifacts)	3.7	1	7	25	49	18
There is no need to acquire more land for the state park system	2.2	31	35	23	9	3

\*Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding

\*\*Not included in online survey

## Protecting our State Parks – Comparisons by Demographic Characteristics

### Comparison by Age

Table 33. Comparison by Age – How can we protect our state parks?

	18-24		25-34		35-50		51-64		65+	
Statement	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
Parks should conduct more resource management activities to improve the water quality of streams and lakes**	4.2	83	4.1	79	4.0	77	4.0	76	4.0	75
Parks should continue its strategic land acquisition program	4.0	77	4.0	78	4.0	74	3.9	73	3.9	73
state parks should invest more time and resources in their volunteer and friends group programs	3.8	68	3.9	73	3.9	71	3.9	74	3.9	72
The boundaries of some State parks should be enlarged to protect immediate watersheds and adjacent lands that could impact park habitat and recreation experiences	4.1	79	4.0	75	4.0	74	3.9	70	3.9	71
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to resource management activities that conserve quality native habitats	4.0	79	3.9	74	3.9	75	3.8	71	3.8	71
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to protecting cultural resources (e.g. historic sites, buildings, and artifacts)	3.7	66	3.8	66	3.8	68	3.7	65	3.7	67
There is no need to acquire more land for the state park system	2.1	9	2.1	10	2.2	11	2.2	12	2.3	13

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

\*\*Not included in online survey



## Comparison by Gender

Table 34. Comparison by Gender – How can we protect our state parks?

Statement	Male		Female		Other	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%
Parks should conduct more resource management activities to improve the water quality of streams and lakes**	4.0	74	3.9	78	3.9	68
Parks should continue its strategic land acquisition program	4.0	76	3.9	72	3.9	71
State parks should invest more time and resources in their volunteer and friends group programs	3.9	73	3.9	72	3.8	56
The boundaries of some State parks should be enlarged to protect immediate watersheds and adjacent lands that could impact park habitat and recreation experiences	3.9	71	4.0	74	3.3	67
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to resource management activities that conserve quality native habitats	3.8	70	4.0	76	3.9	71
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to protecting cultural resources (e.g. historic sites, buildings, and artifacts)	3.7	65	3.8	68	3.8	100
There is no need to acquire more land for the state park system	2.1	12	2.2	11	2.0	10

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

\*\*Not included in online survey

## Comparison by Income

Table 35. Comparison by Income –How can we protect our state parks?

Statement	\$0 - \$49,999		\$50,000 - \$99,999		\$100,000+	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%
Parks should conduct more resource management activities to improve the water quality of streams and lakes**	4.0	76	4.0	77	4.0	78
Parks should continue its strategic land acquisition program	3.9	72	3.9	74	4.0	79
State parks should invest more time and resources in their volunteer and friends group programs	3.9	73	3.9	74	3.9	72
The boundaries of some State parks should be enlarged to protect immediate watersheds and adjacent lands that could impact park habitat and recreation experiences	3.9	74	3.9	72	3.9	73
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to resource management activities that conserve quality native habitats	3.9	74	3.9	74	3.9	72
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to protecting cultural resources (e.g. historic sites, buildings, and artifacts)	3.8	69	3.8	67	3.7	64
There is no need to acquire more land for the state park system	2.2	13	2.2	12	2.1	9

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

\*\*Not included in online survey

### Comparison by Ethnicity/Race

Table 36. Comparison by Ethnicity/Race – How can we protect our state parks?

Statement	White		Black		Hispanic/ Chicano/ Latino		Asian		Other non- white	
	Mean	%*	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
Parks should conduct more resource management activities to improve the water quality of streams and lakes**	4.0	76	4.5	88	4.2	88	4.0	74	4.2	83
Parks should continue its strategic land acquisition program	4.0	74	4.2	82	4.2	87	3.8	70	3.8	68
State parks should invest more time and resources in their volunteer and friends group programs	3.9	73	4.0	82	3.9	74	3.9	73	3.9	72
The boundaries of some State parks should be enlarged to protect immediate watersheds and adjacent lands that could impact park habitat and recreation experiences	3.9	73	4.1	78	4.1	82	3.9	71	3.9	71
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to resource management activities that conserve quality native habitats	3.9	73	4.0	71	4.1	83	3.8	70	3.9	70
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to protecting cultural resources (e.g. historic sites, buildings, and artifacts)	3.7	66	4.0	72	4.1	78	3.7	66	3.8	68
There is no need to acquire more land for the state park system	2.2	11	2.3	15	2.7	28	2.6	15	2.3	17

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

\*\*Not included in online survey

### Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence

Table 37. Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence – How can we protect our state parks?

Statement	Rural**		Urban	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%
Parks should conduct more resource management activities to improve the water quality of streams and lakes**	3.9	71	4.0	78
Parks should continue its strategic land acquisition program	3.8	70	4.0	77
State parks should invest more time and resources in their volunteer and friends group programs	3.9	71	3.9	73
The boundaries of some State parks should be enlarged to protect immediate watersheds and adjacent lands that could impact park habitat and recreation experiences	3.8	67	4.0	75
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to resource management activities that conserve quality native habitats	3.8	69	3.9	75
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to protecting cultural resources (e.g. historic sites, buildings, and artifacts)	3.7	65	3.8	66
There is no need to acquire more land for the state park system	2.3	15	2.1	10

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree';

\*\*Rural is defined as a population density of less than 284 per sq. mile (Center for Rural Pennsylvania, 2017)

## **Should we Provide more Modern Conveniences in the State Parks?**

As technology advances and the population ages, modern conveniences in the state parks are often a topic of discussion. Within this sample, attitudes tended to be against increased modern conveniences. On average, this sample was not supportive of increasing kitchen amenities and air conditioning in cabins. They were the least supportive of state parks offering internet access to visitors. While this trend held across the overall sample, it should be noted that Black and Latino respondents were far more supportive of additional on-site water, sewer and electrical hook-ups, enhanced kitchen amenities, air conditioning, and internet access than White and Asian respondents. Table 38 presents the descriptive results for modern conveniences items, while Tables 39 through 43 present demographic comparisons across modern conveniences items.

- While many respondents disagreed with increasing kitchen amenities (39%), air conditioning (46%), and internet access (58%), there was still not majority agreement (46%) that nothing needs to be modernized and that parks now provide adequate conveniences.
- The majority of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (58%) that state parks should offer internet access to visitors.
- Black and Latino respondents were much more supportive of all suggested increases in modern conveniences than White and Asian respondents.
- Rural respondents agreed or strongly agreed more often (42%) that state parks should add more on-site water, sewer, and electrical hook-ups for campsites than urban respondents (35%).



*Kooser State Park*

## Overall Results for Modern Conveniences

Table 38. Should we provide more modern conveniences in the state parks?

Statement	Mean	Percent*				
		Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Nothing needs to be modernized. Parks now provide adequate conveniences	3.2	6	24	25	33	13
Add more on-site water, sewer and electrical hook-ups for campsites	3.1	10	23	31	26	11
Parks should enhance kitchen amenities in cabins	2.7	14	25	39	19	4
Some modern cabins should have air conditioning	2.7	20	26	25	23	5
State parks should offer internet access to visitors	2.4	29	29	19	16	7

\*Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding

## Modern Conveniences – Comparisons by Demographic Characteristics

### Comparison by Age

Table 39. Comparison by Age - Should we provide more modern conveniences in the state parks?

	18-24		25-34		35-50		51-64		65+	
Statement	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
Nothing needs to be modernized. Parks now provide adequate conveniences	3.4	53	3.3	48	3.3	48	3.2	44	3.2	43
Add more on-site water, sewer and electrical hook-ups for campsites	2.9	33	3.0	33	3.0	34	3.2	41	3.2	42
Parks should enhance kitchen amenities in cabins	2.7	20	2.7	23	2.7	22	2.7	22	2.7	22
Some modern cabins should have air conditioning	2.6	27	2.7	30	2.7	30	2.7	29	2.6	26
State parks should offer internet access to visitors	2.3	19	2.4	21	2.3	21	2.5	26	2.5	24

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

### Comparison by Gender

Table 40. Comparison by Gender - Should we provide more modern conveniences in the state parks?

	Male		Female		Other	
Statement	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%
Nothing needs to be modernized. Parks now provide adequate conveniences	3.2	45	3.2	45	3.3	49
Add more on-site water, sewer and electrical hook-ups for campsites	3.1	38	3.1	37	2.8	29
Parks should enhance kitchen amenities in cabins	2.8	23	2.7	22	2.7	24
Some modern cabins should have air conditioning	2.7	28	2.7	28	2.6	29
State parks should offer internet access to visitors	2.4	23	2.4	22	2.4	23

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'



### Comparison by Income

Table 41. Comparison by Income - Should we provide more modern conveniences in the state parks?

Statement	\$0 - \$49,999		\$50,000 - \$99,999		\$100,000+	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%
Nothing needs to be modernized. Parks now provide adequate conveniences	3.3	49	3.2	46	3.2	42
Add more on-site water, sewer and electrical hook-ups for campsites	3.1	38	3.1	37	3.1	37
Parks should enhance kitchen amenities in cabins	2.7	24	2.7	22	2.7	22
Some modern cabins should have air conditioning	2.7	28	2.7	29	2.6	28
State parks should offer internet access to visitors	2.5	24	2.4	22	2.4	24

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

### Comparison by Ethnicity/Race

Table 42. Comparison by Ethnicity/Race - Should we provide more modern conveniences in the state parks?

Statement	White		Black		Hispanic/ Chicano/ Latino		Asian		Other non- white	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
Nothing needs to be modernized. Parks now provide adequate conveniences	3.2	45	3.0	40	3.2	48	3.4	56	3.3	48
Add more on-site water, sewer and electrical hook-ups for campsites	3.1	38	3.6	53	3.5	50	3.2	37	2.8	27
Parks should enhance kitchen amenities in cabins	2.7	22	3.4	51	3.4	46	2.9	31	2.7	24
Some modern cabins should have air conditioning	2.7	28	3.5	55	3.4	50	2.8	30	2.5	25
State parks should offer internet access to visitors	2.4	23	3.2	49	3.2	46	2.8	35	2.3	22

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

**Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence**

Table 43. Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence – Should we provide more modern conveniences in the state parks?

Statement	Rural**		Urban	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%
Nothing needs to be modernized. Parks now provide adequate conveniences	3.2	46	3.2	44
Add more on-site water, sewer and electrical hook-ups for campsites	3.2	42	3.0	35
Parks should enhance kitchen amenities in cabins	2.7	22	2.7	23
Some modern cabins should have air conditioning	2.7	29	2.6	28
State parks should offer internet access to visitors	2.4	23	2.4	22

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree';

\*\*Rural is defined as a population density of less than 284 per sq. mile

## **Satisfaction/Perceived Quality of State Parks' Services and Facilities**

Most respondents were satisfied with every state park service/facility they were asked about. As with previous state park studies, respondents were allowed to select a 'not applicable' option for every satisfaction item. This was performed to prevent respondents from evaluating topics with which they did not have experience. On average, all items were rated as above average. The most highly rated items were the feeling of safety and trail conditions. The items rated as the least satisfying in terms of quality were the availability of education programs, and the reservation system. Black respondents and gender non-conforming respondents rated the feeling of safety as less satisfactory than their relevant comparison groups. Urban residents rated the availability of education programs as slightly less satisfactory than their rural counterparts. Table 44 presents the descriptive results for satisfaction/perceived quality items, while Tables 45 through 49 present demographic comparisons across satisfaction/perceived quality items.

- Overall, respondents were satisfied with the services and facilities at state parks, with no mean response dropping below 'average', and the majority of responses for every item being either 'good' or 'excellent'. The items most likely to be rated as good or excellent were the feeling of safety (90%), the trail conditions (83%), and the responsiveness of employees (81%).
- Although the overall feeling of safety was rated highly at state parks, with 90% of respondents rating it 'good' or 'excellent', Black (74%) and gender non-conforming (71%) respondents rated safety as good or excellent less frequently.
- Respondents were least satisfied with the availability of education programs (mean=3.7) and the reservation system (3.6).



## Overall Results for Satisfaction with State Park Services and Facilities

Table 44. Satisfaction with State Park Services and Facilities

Statement	Mean*	Percent**					Percent
		Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Average (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)	N/A
Feeling of safety	4.5	2	2	6	29	61	21
Trail conditions	4.2	3	3	11	33	50	12
Responsiveness of employees	4.1	9	2	8	29	52	16
Sanitation and cleanliness	4.1	2	5	14	35	44	9
State parks' online presence	4.0	7	6	16	34	37	10
Level of interaction with park staff	3.9	9	4	12	33	41	12
Availability of outdoor recreation program activities	3.8	10	5	17	34	34	9
Availability of education programs	3.7	11	6	18	34	32	9
Reservation system (e.g. campgrounds, pavilions, etc.)	3.6	18	5	10	28	38	12

\*Mean with N/A responses excluded

\*\* Percent when not including N/A; Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding

## Satisfaction with State Park Services and Facilities – Comparisons by Demographic Characteristics

### Comparison by Age

Table 45. Comparison by Age – Satisfaction with the following services and facilities at state parks

	18-24		25-34		35-50		51-64		65+	
Statement	Mean	%*	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
Feeling of safety	4.5	90	4.5	92	4.4	88	4.5	91	4.4	89
Trail conditions	4.3	83	4.3	85	4.3	84	4.2	84	4.1	78
Responsiveness of employees	4.1	81	4.1	80	4.1	79	4.2	83	4.2	74
Sanitation and cleanliness	4.1	77	4.2	80	4.1	76	4.1	80	4.1	79
State parks' online presence	3.8	67	4.0	73	3.8	68	3.9	74	3.9	72
Level of interaction with park staff	4.0	74	4.0	75	3.9	74	4.0	76	4.0	77
Availability of outdoor recreation program activities	3.8	67	3.9	70	3.7	67	3.8	68	3.7	65
Availability of education programs	3.8	67	3.8	67	3.6	63	3.7	65	3.7	66
Reservation system (e.g. campgrounds, pavilions, etc.)	3.7	68	3.6	67	3.6	66	3.7	69	3.8	70

\*Percent who said either 'Good' or 'Excellent'

### Comparison by Gender

Table 46. Comparison by Gender – Satisfaction with the following services and facilities at state parks

	Male		Female		Other	
Statement	Mean	%*	Mean	%	Mean	%
Feeling of safety	4.6	90	4.5	90	3.9	71
Trail conditions	4.2	83	4.3	84	4.0	74
Responsiveness of employees	4.2	81	4.1	80	3.6	64
Sanitation and cleanliness	4.1	79	4.1	79	3.6	63
State parks' online presence	3.9	71	3.9	72	3.4	57
Level of interaction with park staff	4.0	75	3.9	74	3.4	59
Availability of outdoor recreation program activities	3.8	67	3.8	69	3.3	55
Availability of education programs	3.7	66	3.7	66	3.2	48
Reservation system (e.g. campgrounds, pavilions, etc.)	3.7	67	3.6	67	3.3	54

\*Percent who said either 'Good' or 'Excellent'

### Comparison by Income

Table 47. Comparison by Income – Satisfaction with the following services and facilities at state parks

Statement	\$0 - \$49,999		\$50,000 - \$99,999		\$100,000+	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%
Feeling of safety	4.4	89	4.5	91	4.5	91
Trail conditions	4.2	82	4.3	84	4.3	85
Responsiveness of employees	4.1	82	4.2	82	4.1	79
Sanitation and cleanliness	4.2	80	4.2	80	4.1	79
State parks' online presence	3.9	71	3.9	73	3.9	73
Level of interaction with park staff	3.9	74	4.0	76	3.9	75
Availability of outdoor recreation program activities	3.8	69	3.8	69	3.8	68
Availability of education programs	3.7	66	3.7	67	3.6	65
Reservation system (e.g. campgrounds, pavilions, etc.)	3.7	68	3.7	68	3.6	65

\*Percent who said either 'Good' or 'Excellent'

### Comparison by Ethnicity/Race

Table 48. Comparison by Ethnicity/Race – Satisfaction with the following services and facilities at state parks

Statement	White		Black		Hispanic/ Chicano/ Latino		Asian		Other non- white	
	Mean	%	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
Feeling of safety	4.5	90	4.1	74	4.4	89	4.5	94	4.3	83
Trail conditions	4.3	84	4.1	80	4.3	83	4.2	83	4.2	80
Responsiveness of employees	4.1	81	4.1	80	4.2	79	4.0	80	4.2	81
Sanitation and cleanliness	4.1	79	4.0	77	4.1	82	4.1	81	4.1	74
State parks' online presence	3.9	72	3.8	69	3.9	77	3.9	76	3.8	69
Level of interaction with park staff	4.0	75	3.8	70	3.9	71	4.1	79	3.9	72
Availability of outdoor recreation program activities	3.8	68	3.6	64	4.2	82	3.9	72	3.8	65
Availability of education programs	3.7	66	3.4	58	3.8	68	3.8	64	3.6	59
Reservation system (e.g. campgrounds, pavilions, etc.)	3.6	67	4.0	74	3.8	73	3.8	70	3.7	67

\*Percent who said either 'Good' or 'Excellent'

### Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence

Table 49. Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence – Satisfaction with the following services and facilities at state parks

Statement	Rural**		Urban	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%
Feeling of safety	4.4	89	4.5	90
Trail conditions	4.2	81	4.3	85
Responsiveness of employees	4.2	82	4.1	80
Sanitation and cleanliness	4.2	79	4.1	79
State parks' online presence	3.9	73	3.9	72
Level of interaction with park staff	4.0	75	3.9	75
Availability of outdoor recreation program activities	3.8	70	3.7	68
Availability of education programs	3.8	69	3.6	65
Reservation system (e.g. campgrounds, pavilions, etc.)	3.7	67	3.6	66

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree';

\*\*Rural is defined as a population density of less than 284 per sq. mile



## **Appropriateness of Activities within State Parks**

One issue discussed during the DCNR-state parks staff/manager meetings was the appropriateness of various activities, amenities, and management activities. To address visitor perceptions of these issues, the survey assessed respondents' perceived level of appropriateness for four issues: adventure facilities, specific events, motorized trails, and resort-style development. Overall, respondents felt that special events with more than 1,000 attendees, trails for motorized use, and resort-style development were generally inappropriate for state parks. Respondents rated adventure facilities/challenge courses as only slightly above neutral. However, these attitudes varied slightly by demographic groups. Older respondents viewed adventure facilities as less appropriate and men thought trails for motorized use were more appropriate than women or non-conforming individuals. Similar to other topics in this report, the attitudes of Black and Latino respondents varied from White and Asian individuals. Black and Latino respondents viewed all four items as more appropriate, with the largest differences being in the case of resort-style development and special events with greater than 1,000 attendees. Table 50 presents the descriptive results for the appropriateness items, while Tables 51 through 55 present demographic comparisons across the appropriateness items.

- The item viewed as the most inappropriate was resort-style development, with 79% of respondents rating resort-style development as either somewhat inappropriate or inappropriate.
- Respondents, on average, were generally neutral in their perception of adventure facilities/challenge courses (3.1 on a 5 point score).
- Overall, a majority of respondents felt that special events with greater than 1,000 attendees (62%), trails for motorized use (68%), and resort-style development (79%) were somewhat inappropriate or inappropriate for Pennsylvania state parks.
- Older respondents (ages 51+) viewed adventure facilities and challenge courses as less appropriate, when compared to younger respondents. They were also less supportive of trails for motorized use and large special events.
- Black and Latino respondents viewed all items as more appropriate than White or Asian respondents, with the largest difference being in the case of resort-style development. However, the mean values were still on the inappropriate side of the scale for trails for motorized use and resort-style development for both Black and Latino respondents.

### Overall Results for Appropriateness of Items for State Parks

Table 50. Please indicate how appropriate the following items are for state parks

Statement	Mean	Percent*				
		Inappropriate (1)	Somewhat Inappropriate (2)	Neutral (3)	Somewhat Appropriate (4)	Appropriate (5)
Adventure facilities/challenge courses	3.1	17	13	27	29	15
Special events with greater than 1000 attendees	2.2	41	21	22	12	5
Trails for motorized use	2.1	48	19	15	11	7
Resort-style development	1.7	63	16	12	7	3

\*Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding

### Appropriateness of Items for State Parks – Comparisons by Demographic Characteristics

#### Comparison by Age

Table 51. Comparison by Age – Please indicate how appropriate the following items are for state parks

Statement	18-24		25-34		35-50		51-64		65+	
	Mean	%*	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
Adventure facilities/challenge courses	3.4	56	3.2	47	3.2	48	3.1	41	2.9	36
Special events with greater than 1000 attendees	2.4	22	2.2	18	2.2	16	2.1	16	2.1	14
Trails for motorized use	2.2	22	2.1	18	2.2	18	2.0	16	2.0	15
Resort-style development	1.7	10	1.7	9	1.7	9	1.7	10	1.7	10

\*Percent who said either ‘Somewhat Appropriate’ or ‘Appropriate’

## Comparison by Gender

Table 52. Comparison by Gender – Please indicate how appropriate the following items are for state parks

Statement	Male		Female		Other	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%
Adventure facilities/challenge courses	3.1	43	3.1	44	3.1	48
Special events with greater than 1000 attendees	2.2	17	2.1	15	2.2	20
Trails for motorized use	2.2	21	2.0	15	2.0	18
Resort-style development	1.7	10	1.7	8	1.8	16

\*Percent who said either 'Somewhat Appropriate' or 'Appropriate'

## Comparison by Income

Table 53. Comparison by Income – Please indicate how appropriate the following items are for state parks

Statement	\$0 - \$49,999		\$50,000 - \$99,999		\$100,000+	
	Mean	% *	Mean	%	Mean	%
Adventure facilities/challenge courses	3.2	44	3.1	43	3.2	48
Special events with greater than 1000 attendees	2.3	17	2.1	16	2.1	16
Trails for motorized use	2.2	19	2.1	17	2.1	19
Resort-style development	1.8	10	1.7	8	1.7	10

\*Percent who said either 'Somewhat Appropriate' or 'Appropriate'

### Comparison by Ethnicity/Race

Table 54. Comparison by Ethnicity/Race – Please indicate how appropriate the following items are for state parks

	White		Black		Hispanic/ Chicano/ Latino		Asian		Other non- white	
Statement	Mean	%*	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%
Adventure facilities/challenge courses	3.1	44	3.6	65	3.7	70	3.0	40	3.1	44
Special events with greater than 1000 attendees	2.2	16	3.2	48	3.0	39	2.3	22	2.2	18
Trails for motorized use	2.1	18	2.8	36	2.9	38	2.2	18	2.2	24
Resort-style development	1.7	9	2.7	41	2.8	40	2.3	23	1.6	9

\*Percent who said either 'Somewhat Appropriate' or 'Appropriate'

### Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence

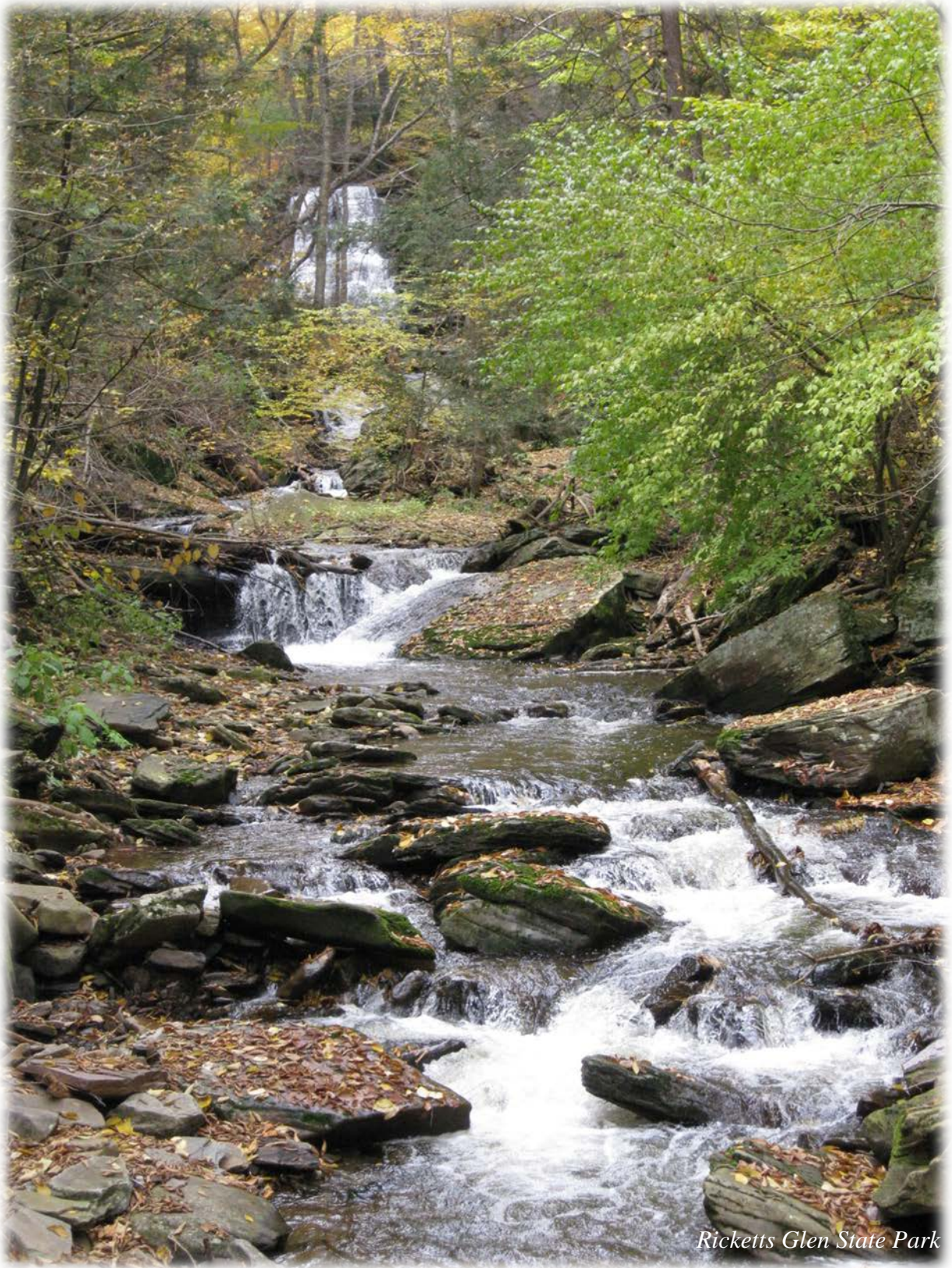
Table 55. Comparison by Rural/Urban Residence – Please indicate how appropriate the following items are for state parks

	Rural**		Urban	
Statement	Mean	%*	Mean	%
Adventure facilities/challenge courses	3.2	45	3.1	44
Special events with greater than 1000 attendees	2.2	18	2.1	16
Trails for motorized use	2.3	23	2.0	15
Resort-style development	1.7	10	1.7	9

\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree';

\*\*Rural is defined as a population density of less than 284 per sq. mile







## Comparison of Results with *State Parks 2000*

Many of the items used in the current survey were based upon items used in the *State Parks 2000* surveys – thus allowing for general comparisons between the two samples. This section begins by comparing the demographics of the *State Parks 2000* in-park survey sample and the sample used for this survey. Following this, the statements deemed as similar across the two time periods were compared by mean values and the percent that agreed or strongly agreed with a statement. In terms of demographics, the *Penn's Parks for All* sample is older and more female than the *State Parks 2000* sample. This may be due to an aging population of visitors, as well as a smaller amount of young adult visitation.

Over the past 25 years, attitudes toward a few topics/issues seemed to have shifted. For example, *Penn's Parks for All* respondents were more supportive of increasing the number of inns, the introduction of all-purpose social halls, and the increased allocation of commonwealth funding to address maintenance than respondents from *State Parks 2000*. *Penn's Parks for All* respondents were noticeably less supportive of instituting a new annual pass/entrance fee, increasing existing fees for services, or increasing the number of on-site water, electric, and sewer campsite hook-ups. Tables 56 through 58 present demographic comparisons between *Penn's Parks for All* and *State Parks 2000*, while Table 59 presents comparisons across repeated items for *Penn's Parks for All* and *State Parks 2000*.

- The sample for *Penn's Parks for All* is noticeably older than that of *State Parks 2000*, with 65% of respondents being over the age 45 for the current survey and only 42% being over 45 for *State Parks 2000*.
- The sample for *Penn's Parks for All* is more evenly split on gender than *State Parks 2000*, with an almost even split in the current study compared to the *State Parks 2000* sample being 63% male.
- Respondents to *Penn's Parks for All* were in stronger agreement (82% agree or strongly agree) with increasing the allocation from the commonwealth to pay for rehabilitation projects than respondents in *State Parks 2000* (59%).
- *Penn's Parks for All* respondents were far less supportive than *State Parks 2000* respondents in their support of a new annual or daily entrance fee or parking permit system. Only 27% of *Penn's Parks for All* respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this item, compared to 50% of respondents from the *State Parks 2000* surveys.
- Respondents in the current study were less likely to agree or strongly agree with increasing existing fees within state parks (33%) than respondents to *State Parks 2000* (52%).
- Respondents to the current study showed less support for increased water, sewer, or electrical hook-ups for campsites. In *State Parks 2000*, 67% of visitors agreed or strongly agreed with this item, compared to just 38% in the current study.
- While support remained relatively low within the *Penn's Parks for All* sample, support for additional inns in state parks increased from *State Parks 2000*. In *State Parks 2000*, 24% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the placement of additional inns, compared to 36% in the *Penn's Parks for All* sample.

## Demographic Comparison

Table 56. Comparison of Age Distribution with *State Parks 2000*

	<i>State Parks 2000</i> (N=10860)		<i>Penn's Parks for All</i> (N=13118)	
	N	%	N	%
Under 18*	194	2	-	-
18 – 24	540	5	496	4
25 – 34	2341	22	1720	13
35 – 44	3146	29	2381	18
45 – 54	1997	18	2579	20
55 – 64	1626	15	3332	25
65+	1016	9	2610	20

\*Individuals under 18 were not included in the *Penn's Parks for All* survey

Table 57. Comparison of Gender Distribution with *State Parks 2000*

	<i>State Parks 2000</i> (N=10437)		<i>Penn's Parks for All</i> (N=13417)	
	N	%	N	%
Male	6536	63	6634	49.4
Female	3901	37	6783	50.6



# PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

## Comparison of Items

Table 59. Comparison with Similar Items *State Parks 2000*\*

	State Parks 2000		<i>Penn's Parks for All *</i>	
	Mean	% **	Mean	%
State parks should continue to emphasize healthful outdoor recreation activities; <i>Continue the existing policy which emphasizes natural outdoor recreational activities</i>	4.6	92	4.4	93
Parks should develop a few more inns in carefully selected locations; <i>Develop a few modern lodges of rustic design in several carefully selected locations with recreation facilities such as golf courses, tennis courts, marinas and indoor/outdoor swimming pools</i>	2.2	24	3.0	37
Parks' modern family cabin or camping areas should include a central all-purpose social hall; <i>Develop modern family cabins around central dining and social facilities as alternatives to lodges</i>	2.1	19	2.7	23
The commonwealth should allocate additional funding to reduce the backlog of state park rehabilitation projects; <i>Pay for rehabilitation projects through capital budget appropriations or bond issues</i>	3.7	59	4.1	82
Parks should increase the existing fees for camping, marinas, cabins, swimming pools, picnic pavilions, etc. for all visitors; <i>Increase the existing fees for camping, marinas, cabins, swimming pools, picnic pavilions, etc.</i>	3.3	52	2.8	33
Parks should institute a new annual or daily entrance fee or parking permit system; <i>Institute a new annual or daily entrance fee or parking permit system</i>	3.1	50	2.5	27
Facilities that are expensive to operate and maintain should be closed; <i>Close facilities that are expensive to operate and maintain and have low use</i>	2.7	31	2.4	13
The operation of select park areas should be leased to private businesses or non-profit organizations to reduce costs; <i>Private operators should run park facilities when feasible</i>	2.3	25	2.3	22
Parks should continue its strategic land acquisition program; <i>Continue acquisition of land for future parks</i>	3.9	64	3.9	74
There is no need to acquire more land for the state park system; <i>Do not acquire any more land for new parks</i>	2.1	17	2.2	12
Nothing needs to be modernized. Parks now provide adequate conveniences; <i>Nothing needs to be modernized. Parks now provide adequate conveniences</i>	3.0	41	3.2	45
Add more on-site water, sewer and electrical hook-ups for campsites; <i>Add on-site water and electrical services at some existing campsites and build additional modern bathhouses with showers and hot water</i>	3.9	67	3.1	38

\**State Parks 2000* statements are in italics

\*\*Percent who said either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'

## Online Open-Ended Responses

Survey respondents who took the survey in the online format were presented with two open-ended questions:

**Question 1. What is your main concern regarding the future of the state parks?**

**Question 2. Is there anything else you would like to tell us to inform the state parks' strategic plan?**

Of the 10,186 respondents to receive the open-ended questions, 7,481 respondents wrote in an answer to Question 1 and 4,663 respondents wrote in an answer to Question 2. In an effort to synthesize this large amount of data, a subset of answers were coded by two Penn State researchers. Using a random number generator, 800 responses were selected for coding. This amount was deemed sufficient, as coding further responses would result in data saturation, meaning that additional coding would not provide additional insight. Responses were coded into major themes and sub-themes for each question. If necessary, responses were coded into multiple categories, which is why there are more than 800 responses presented in Tables 60 and 61. The quotes presented for each theme are instrumental and have been intentionally selected due to their nature as a good hallmarks for each sub-theme. In general, three quotes have been selected for each theme, except in the case of 5 or less responses. Major themes are emphasized in Tables 60 and 61 in **bold**, sub-themes are presented in ***bold italics*** and further sub-themes are in normal font. Each quote starts on a new line with a dash.

There were five major themes for Question 1: agency management, funding, park management, preservation, and modernization (Table 60). The most frequent major theme was funding (37%), followed by park management (27%). The most common sub-theme was general funding concerns. An example of a response to this common sub-theme is, "Removal of funding for programs and maintenance; I am concerned they will lose funding and a lot of them will end up becoming obsolete; Provide necessary funding to maintain and modernize infrastructure". The most common park management sub-theme was concerns related to infrastructure. An example of an infrastructure concern is, "I think a larger emphasis on mountain bike trail construction is really lacking in the state parks. Trails should be built to be accessible for all skill types with green, blue and black type trails around central camping areas and specific climbing trails to get everyone back to the top. Look at the successes seen across the country in bike development situations. If you build it, people will come."

There were four major themes for Question 2: agency management, funding, park management, preservation, and modernization (Table 61). The most frequent theme for Question 2 was park management (38%), followed by funding (20%). The most frequent sub-theme for Question 2 was responses related to infrastructure improvements. An example of a response coded as being related to infrastructure improvements is, "Please focus on increasing the number of campsites that offer electricity. There could be a plan in place to allow persons to choose to use the service or not. I feel that most individuals today who own an RV would opt for the service; I think that bathroom facilities at some of the parks need to be improved. For example the changing room/bathroom at Moraine State Park is gross; Get rid of the swimming pools. Especially at French creek state park. Loud music and overcrowded." Another common park management sub-theme was related to the diversity of activity offerings in the state parks. An example of this sub-theme is, "PA State Parks need more winter activities to keep things going year round."

PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 60. What is your main concern regarding the future of the State Parks?

Themes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<b>Funding</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>36.96</b>	
<i>General</i>	158	15.78	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Removal of funding for programs and maintenance</li> <li>- I am concerned they will lose funding and a lot of them will end up becoming obsolete</li> <li>- Provide necessary funding to maintain and modernize infrastructure.</li> </ul>
<i>Privatization</i>	80	7.99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- That they will be developed into commercial resorts</li> <li>- I'm extremely concerned about resort-like building in our parks. They are meant to be natural, not resorts. Leave them alone. If additional funding is needed, cut waste (i.e. state government representative's ridiculous benefits). Stop taking from the people you represent!!!</li> <li>- That the land will be privatized and open space destroyed in order to make more hotels, golf courses, etc.</li> </ul>
<i>No Fees (open for all)</i>	63	6.29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parks need to be accessible to families free of charge. In our depressed economy, some families will not be able to go to parks if they have to pay an entrance fee; They are nice the way they are AND WE LIKE VISITING OUR STATE PARKS WITHOUT ENTRANCE FEES!!!</li> <li>- That they remain free for public use.... to walk, bike ride, hike, evening car rides, use of beaches. For many families this is all they have as family time and free access. Let's not take this away too. Many thing are cost prohibitive. At least let them have this.</li> <li>- That they stay available for everyone</li> </ul>
<i>Closure</i>	56	5.59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I don't want to see anymore campgrounds close. It was very sad to my family and myself when Tuttle campground was closed. We loved and had been going there for years. What a beautiful park. It was level for biking and on the lake. Too bad it was closed.</li> <li>- That they will close.</li> <li>- I am afraid they will vanish. I look for places that offer a place where the ecosystem is top priority.</li> </ul>

PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 60 continued. What is your main concern regarding the future of the State Parks?

Themes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<i><b>Increase Fees</b></i>	11	1.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I do think paying a small fee or annual fee would maybe make some people more responsible; Charging daily or monthly parking/entry fees would help create more revenue. They do this in Alaska.</li> <li>- I do think paying a small fee or annual fee would maybe make some people more responsible.</li> <li>- Additionally, charging daily or monthly parking/entry fees would help create more revenue. They do this in Alaska.</li> </ul>
<i><b>Volunteers</b></i>	2	0.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better communications between park/preserve management and Friends groups.</li> <li>- Support for volunteer groups that maintain trails and other outdoor facilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Park Management</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>27.07</b>	
<i><b>Infrastructure</b></i>	88	8.79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I think a larger emphasis on mountain bike trail construction is really lacking in the state parks. Trails should be built to be accessible for all skill types with green, blue and black type trails around central camping areas and specific climbing trails to get everyone back to the top. Look at the successes seen across the country in bike development situations. If you build it, people will come.</li> <li>- More hiking more trails more bike trails I also would like to see more kayaking more sightseeing</li> <li>- Lack of maintenance on existing facilities in some parks such as roads, trails, bath houses, swimming areas.</li> </ul>
<i><b>Diversity of Activity Offerings</b></i>	54	5.39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PA State Parks need more winter activities to keep things going year round.</li> <li>- It is nice to have choices depending what adventure one is choosing for that day, combined with time limitations.</li> <li>- More activities at the State Parks for young people and elderly alike.</li> </ul>
<i><b>Over Use</b></i>	37	3.70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overuse and or misuse of land and natural resources</li> <li>- Overcrowding of day use areas.</li> <li>- The overcrowding of our parks during the warm months.</li> </ul>

PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 60 continued. What is your main concern regarding the future of the State Parks?

Themes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<i>User Conflict</i>	37	3.70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Too many out-of-state residents (NJ and NY) are coming to PA State Parks because it's a cheap vacation since there is no fee</li> <li>- The parks' facilities and recreational swim areas are overused and becoming contaminated. Locals can't or wouldn't try to even use their own facilities because of the traffic jams, contaminated swimming water, and excessive litter and refuse left behind by people who don't call this area their home; You have to stop the free swimming. Or stop it completely. All you are accomplishing is filling your parks with bottom feeders. People with no respect for anything let alone nature.</li> <li>- The way people treat the parks. Always wrappers or beer cans laying around. Some people don't clean up after themselves.</li> </ul>
<i>Staffing</i>	18	1.80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding limitations directed towards personnel or hours of staffing. I would like to see an increase in staff at most of the parks I visit, especially in the parks where we camp.</li> <li>- Not being staffed enough to keep up with maintenance of trails and structures.</li> <li>- Security for the people and the park. The staffing is very bad rangers and maintenance</li> </ul>
<i>Motorized Rec</i>	14	1.40	
Bad	4	0.40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I believe that motorized recreation on trails harms water quality, contributes to carbon emissions, impacts diversity, and creates noise pollution that impacts many all for the benefit of a few.</li> <li>- Anything to encourage less noise - less motorized activities, incentives to listen for bird calls</li> </ul>
Good	10	1.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I'm concerned we don't have enough access to trails for motorized vehicles like street legal registered dual sport motorcycles.</li> <li>- As I grow older and less able to hike I want to be able to ride my Street legal dirt bike in the park to see her beauty. I can do this in New Jersey. Why do I have to cross State Lines and enjoy their state instead of mine? The use of our bikes creates narrow hikeable trails for all to use that costs the state nothing. We are responsible polite and willing to pay a permit or use fee.</li> <li>- More access for motorized vehicles.</li> </ul>

PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 60 continued. What is your main concern regarding the future of the State Parks?

Themes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<i><b>Pets</b></i>	6	0.60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Camping and pets, I often choose to camp because I have a pet with me. PA is one of the more difficult state park systems regarding pets. I normally choose to go outside of PA.</li> <li>- Parks should be more open to pets</li> <li>- Pet friendly sites are limited and many people camp to adventure with their pets.</li> </ul>
<i><b>Accessibility - Disability</b></i>	8	0.80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need more handicap trail for people with wheelchairs--and more signs or rules in Spanish that seem to be our second language of USA.</li> <li>- Wheelchair accessibility.</li> <li>- There are many senior citizens/ handicap in PA-who would like to swim-lakes/ ponds are not safe for many- more pools are needed.</li> </ul>
<i><b>Education</b></i>	6	0.60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kids need to learn to value nature for what it is, as well. Where else are people going to learn this? Education programs in parks provide an essential service and should be continued.</li> <li>- Educational experiences that interest children. Hiking with a ranger. Fishing with a ranger. Nature scavenger hunts. Summer camps on a week by week basis.</li> <li>- More educational programs.</li> </ul>
<i><b>Alcohol</b></i>	3	0.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allowing adults to drink alcohol responsibly.</li> <li>- Allow alcohol consumption main reason I do not frequent more often.</li> </ul>
<b>Preservation</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>14.89</b>	
<i><b>General</b></i>	121	12.09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- That they are maintained in a way that allows current and future enjoyment of our natural resources</li> <li>- That the parks have areas that remain wild. Also, that resources are managed properly, especially lakes and reservoirs.</li> <li>- Protecting historic monuments in state parks.</li> </ul>

PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 60 continued. What is your main concern regarding the future of the State Parks?

Themes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<i>Environmental</i>	23	2.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I worry about the effects of climate change and habitat fragmentation and impacts of invasive species on Pennsylvania wildlife and flora, which is why I support acquiring buffer zones.</li> <li>- Improve water conditions and water shed areas to reduce PCBs and increase the standard of life for wildlife by improving and understanding their habitat.</li> <li>- Protecting and preserving the natural habitat and its creatures, plants, etc. Limit use of modernizing and motorized vehicles, etc. that conduct noise or ruin tree roots and trails. Keep it in its natural state for all to enjoy quietly, while maintaining a healthy habitat.</li> </ul>
<i>Encroaching Development</i>	5	0.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encroachment on the borders of the park</li> <li>- That hunting areas will be smaller with any development.</li> <li>- That they and their adjacent properties are being logged and possibly leased out for oil and gas exploration and that water sheds are not being protected adequately, note enough trash cans for trash.</li> </ul>
<b>Agency Management</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>10.69</b>	
<i>Governance</i>	37	3.70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not enough enforcement of laws.</li> <li>- They must become self-supporting.</li> <li>- My main concern is that state parks will lose sight of the mission. Need to keep the focus on providing opportunities for outdoor recreation with the conservation of our resources given the first consideration.</li> </ul>
<i>Oil and Gas</i>	36	3.60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State legislators increasingly seem to view parks (and forests) as potential natural gas revenue sources or low priorities rather than conservation gems in which we must invest</li> <li>- No selling off the land for energy development!</li> <li>- Will be opened up to drilling/development by politicians.</li> </ul>



Table 60 continued. What is your main concern regarding the future of the State Parks?

Themes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<b><i>Relevance</i></b>	16	1.60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keeping the younger generation involved.</li> <li>- Ensuring current and future generations can enjoy and appreciate our natural areas and being outdoors.</li> <li>- Many parks still operate under an old system which doesn't encourage our youth to visit them. There is a need to tap into the next generations to get them engaged in the outdoors and our state park systems.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Decreased Use</i></b>	9	0.90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- My main concern is the respect/interest that future generations are going to have in the parks. I feel that providing more activities, both guided and non-guided, would greatly improve the likeliness that future teens/young adults are going to be interested in continuing the upkeep of these parks.</li> <li>- I'm worried not enough people take advantage of our state parks. Would love to get more people involved!</li> <li>- Getting more people to go to the state parks.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Land Acquisition</i></b>	5	0.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some counties are disproportionately benefited by state parks. There should be more state parks and fewer conservancy lands, in my opinion</li> <li>- Acquisition of new land and up keep/maintenance of current ones.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Website</i></b>	4	0.40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The camping reservation system needs to be reviewed. Too many people reserve campsites many months in advance only to not use them and they only lose one night fee. The system needs to have a waiting list or notification system when camping sites become available. Also I believe that campground hosts should only serve a maximum of two years at a specific campground and then should move on to a different one or should have to allow others the opportunity to serve in that capacity.</li> <li>- The only concern that I have is the current reservations system. I feel they do not do a good job and still charge a \$5 fee for the transaction. It was easier before the ReserveAmerica came on board. People then were more knowledgeable and helpful. Also the website was easier to use in determining availability of sites.</li> </ul>

Table 60 continued. What is your main concern regarding the future of the State Parks?

Themes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<b>Modernization</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>9.79</b>	
<i>Against Modernization</i>	93	9.29	<p>- In addition to this I fear parks becoming too modernized. Parks should not have more buildings, or internet access. The purpose of these areas are for them to be left mostly as nature intended, and adding more buildings and fancy things will take that away. Nature is nature and it shouldn't need to be modernized for people to enjoy it and doing so would be a major disappointment; I am afraid that over-modernization will further blur the lines between campgrounds and amusement parks. It's hard enough to close that door when it's opened. Can't find solitude now. There are many options if that isn't what you are looking for. It's an entitlement society already.</p> <p>- Too much modernization is happening at some state parks. These parks are meant to be rustic and rural. Modernization is taking away the real joy of being in the outdoors.</p> <p>- Keep them clean and safe! Do not bring fancy accommodations Keep Natural!!</p>
<i>More Modernization</i>	5	0.50	<p>- We need modern cabins in more parks. As we aged, my husband and I appreciate modern cabins, but they are only available in a few parks.</p> <p>- Upgrade of camping area like restroom and more full hook up.</p>
<b>NA/Nothing</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.60</b>	
<i>NA</i>	4	0.40	- NA
<i>Nothing</i>	2	0.20	- Keep up the good work.
<b>Total</b>	<b>1001</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

Table 61. Is there anything else you would like to tell us to inform the State Parks' strategic plan?

Major Codes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<b>Park Management</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>37.53</b>	
<i>Infrastructure</i>	122	12.79	
General	114	11.95	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Please focus on increasing the number of campsites that offer electricity. There could be a plan in place to allow persons to choose to use the service or not. I feel that most individuals today who own and RV would opt for the service</li> <li>- I think that bathroom facilities at some of the parks need to be improved. For example the changing room/bathroom at Moraine State Park is gross</li> <li>- Get rid of the swimming pools. Especially at French creek state park. Loud music and overcrowded</li> </ul>
Improve current first	8	0.84	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refurbish the buildings that are there instead of adding new "state of the art" buildings.</li> <li>- Focus on improving and maintaining what you have.</li> <li>- Update existing facilities but do not build more</li> </ul>
<i>Rules</i>	42	4.40	
Enforcement	33	3.46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Noise has become an issue. Quiet time is not being enforced like it used to be. We have had to report several noise complaints in the past couple years</li> <li>- Better enforcement of alcohol ban in state parks, especially campgrounds. I have frequently stayed in campgrounds where campers ignore quiet hour rules and flagrantly violate the ban on alcohol. Should parents have to explain to their children why nobody enforces the rules? Leonard Harrison State Park is a particular problem, I have informed them of my concerns, apparently to no avail.</li> <li>- Keep people under control. They are the biggest danger to our wonderful park system</li> </ul>

PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 61 continued. Is there anything else you would like to tell us to inform the State Parks' strategic plan?

Major Codes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
Alcohol/Smoking	10	1.05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allow some responsible drinking. More people would visit or camp if they could have alcohol while doing so. More people should bring more money</li> <li>- I prefer state parks over other outdoor recreation areas because they are alcohol-free and most of the facilities are well-maintained. I would love to see state parks also become smoke and vapor -free.</li> <li>- Smoking should ABSOLUTELY be banned within every state park at every area and facility. These are family areas. The health and wellness of visitors should be the number one priority! Pets should be permitted in every Campground with rules established and enforced.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Pets</i></b>	29	3.04	
Good	26	2.73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would like to see more pet site availability. Some parks that we like, example Locust Lake, has limited areas for pet camping, with large areas that we would enjoy but cannot use.</li> <li>- I would like to see a dedicated dog park and a state rv/tent camp ground on presque isle state park in Erie, Pa.</li> <li>- There should be more dog sites available at the campgrounds.</li> </ul>
Bad	3	0.31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The maintenance of grounds, cabins and restrooms as well as trails at some of the parks needs improved. Having pets in state parks takes away from the quiet and opportunities to see wildlife.</li> <li>- Limit the use of generators and limit/control the allowance of pets. Barking.,roaming or tied animals are a distraction to a peaceful vacation and disturb the nature habitats of the area which is part of the reason to visit the parks.</li> </ul>

PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 61 continued. Is there anything else you would like to tell us to inform the State Parks' strategic plan?

Major Codes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<b>User Conflict</b>	24	2.52	
General	17	1.78	<p>- As a Pennsylvania resident, I would be happy to either pay a yearly fee or a day use fee if it would help prevent issues such as what occurred at Beltzville on July 4th. I attempted to go there on a weekend last year, and I was appalled by what I saw. It would not have been enjoyable if I had stayed. When it is overpopulated, the feeling of beauty and peace in a natural habitat is gone. It is replaced by children running around without supervision, trash and unsanitary conditions, loud and boisterous people/music, and waters polluted with e.coli.</p> <p>- Can not stress the importance of separating hardcore camping from modern camping. People should be requesting what they want. It's not good to mingle those groups. When one party wants a legit camping experience and the other want a resort experience.</p> <p>- It is extremely disappointing to find trails and remote areas filled with garbage.</p>
Out of State	7	0.73	<p>- I think out of state visitors are getting too much of a free ride. At our public beach they use the available facilities but don't contribute to cleaning up after their visit.</p> <p>- Better park rule enforcement and ranger presence should be enacted in more popular/heavily-used parks, such as Beltzville. Some visitors breaking the rules make the park experience negative for families, and many state residents/families avoid these parks. Higher maintenance needs and costs are required at these parks. A nominal fee for state residents could help defray maintenance costs.</p> <p>- Increase rates for out of state residents. Discourage unsupervised, large noisy group activities.</p>

PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 61 continued. Is there anything else you would like to tell us to inform the State Parks' strategic plan?

Major Codes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<b><i>Programs</i></b>	22	2.31	
Education	13	1.36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The need for replacing a Naturalist in state parks is very important. So important that you don't realize how much one has done with so many children until they are gone. Our children learning about the "great outdoors" is crucial!</li> <li>- I have seen many cool native plants out and about while hiking in several of the state parks, namely French Creek. If DCNR is looking to expand programming in an educational setting, guided native plant walks/hikes would be very interesting. Another neat thing might be some educational signage along some of the hiking trails, explaining things like forest succession or the general flora/fauna makeup of an area of interest.</li> <li>- More educational materials.</li> </ul>
General	9	0.94	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More state parks should offer a women only event like Black Moshannons 'women in the wild' day.</li> <li>- Invest in good staff to maintain and offer programs in our state parks.</li> <li>- I would like to see a variety of organized hikes to be offered on weekends. I am a new hiker and am more comfortable in a group. I also enjoyed the astronomy workshop that was offered at Kings Gap a couple weeks ago.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Staffing</i></b>	15	1.57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staffing levels are unsatisfactory and do not allow for protection of natural resources</li> <li>- My last visit, had wonderful experience interacting with ranger and he was very knowledgeable and helpful.</li> <li>- Yes you need more rangers at your campgrounds and more interaction with them</li> <li>- Stop events with large groups of people and cars</li> </ul>
<b><i>Special Events</i></b>	7	0.73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You should do more things for the public. Have more public dances through the year. Host events where people can meet, like dances, films, dinners, etc.</li> <li>- Parks should be venues for special events, festivals, farmers markets, micro-brew and winery events. And I might consider a fee for out of state plates.</li> </ul>

PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 61 continued. Is there anything else you would like to tell us to inform the State Parks' strategic plan?

Major Codes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<b><i>Motorized Rec</i></b>	4	0.42	
Bad	1	0.10	- No ATVs and higher impact activities.
Good	3	0.31	- I enjoy going on the motorized licensed vehicle trails in Bald Eagle State Forest. Any expansion of motorized trails in other State Forests and Parks would be great. - Park motorized vehicle users generate more money for the local/state economy than all other user groups with their purchases of gas, food, lodging and trail permits. Yet these users seem to always be frowned upon by the park user groups who walk in for free, carry in their own food and then leave the park area without spending a dime.
<b>Funding</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>20.23</b>	
<b><i>Increase Fees</i></b>	50	5.24	- Texas limits number of people in parks and charges a fee. Fee should be charged for non-PA residents since they do not contribute to purchasing and maintaining parks or paying employee salaries - If funding from the state is not adequate, I'd like to see them charging a fee for yearly passes and a small fee for daily passes rather than allowing the parks to deteriorate or have less services. - Minimum entrance fees or annual passes, senior citizen lifetime passes could help with finances. (similar to National Parks)



PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 61 continued. Is there anything else you would like to tell us to inform the State Parks' strategic plan?

Major Codes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<b><i>Privatization</i></b>	48	5.03	
Bad	44	4.61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Please do not commercialize the parks. Everyday life is so loud and fast even in the suburbs. There's nothing like the peace and quiet of the woods</li> <li>- Don't sell out to private companies. Utilize non-profits if need be.</li> <li>- I think resort style lodges are pushing it and I think allowing private business in is a slippery slope.</li> </ul>
Good	4	0.42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The State should look for more private funding to keep up the everyday function. I was in the YCC when I was younger. Put the people that are collecting unemployment or welfare to work part time doing what they can (answering the phones, cleaning trails etc.)</li> <li>- I believe the DCNR should use the land and assets on the land to generate money for ongoing improvements. As much as I would like everything to stay status quo, and natural, I realize that capital needs to be generated to move forward.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Volunteers</i></b>	43	4.51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You could probably publicize volunteer opportunities more, especially to people who are actually at the park. More people might participate in trash pickup, for instance, if they got info when they checked in about getting a bag from the hosts or something like that. That'd free up the rangers a little to do other more important stuff.</li> <li>- I think a volunteer program for some of the work would be a good idea. People like to pitch in and become part of the solution. I hope the park rangers aren't reduced. I believe that's a necessary thing for overall safety and a feeling of help in time of trouble. Main thing: keep the parks, especially state parks, free from noise and resort affiliations. Keep them natural and a place to get away too.</li> <li>- Give Friends' groups more authority to maintain parks when staff is limited.</li> </ul>
<b><i>No Fees (open for all)</i></b>	31	3.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Admission should continue to be free, so that no matter how limited a family's funds, if they can get there, they can enjoy at least a walk in the park</li> <li>- NY parks are not free, and I find that a disadvantage. I hope to see PA parks stay free to enter.</li> <li>- FREE of charge parks and public lands are a KEY feature of our system. I have lived all over this country and our state park system in PA is a shining star.</li> </ul>

PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 61 continued. Is there anything else you would like to tell us to inform the State Parks' strategic plan?

Major Codes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<b><i>General</i></b>	21	2.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outdoor recreation is a strong economic development and quality of life driver, yet the first to be cut from budgets! Our legislators need to recognize the importance and legacy of our park system.</li> <li>- Establish a long term sustainable funding source to maintain park resources.</li> <li>- Adequate funding is critical.</li> </ul>
<b>Agency Management</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>14.27</b>	
<b><i>Governance</i></b>	44	4.61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perhaps more accessible and more frequent updating of strategic plan so the public participates and has more buy in</li> <li>- Yes, rather than increase the budget, how about finding ways to operate more efficiently, just like everyone in the private sector has to do?</li> <li>- While state parks have areas of advancement and improvement on the horizon, such actions should be advanced with a long-term implementation plan in mind. The outdoor industry is notorious for having fads that wear off in 3-5 years (at the most). I would caution placing a large portion of funding into these fads, such as a challenge courses and water pads, and instead focus funding on areas that are in-line with state park goals.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Outreach</i></b>	24	2.62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State parks reps ought to visit local schools to draw up interest from student organizations for volunteerism as well as stays. Marketing should be focused on. There is a lot of great things to do in Pennsylvania but Pennsylvanians are not aware of it. Start with visiting schools. Offer free one-night stays for student groups that provide education as well as fun. Offer service learning experiences to students where they can help on a park project and feel like they have accomplished something.</li> <li>- The state park employees I've been in contact with work very hard and do a great job. It would be great to pair with youth groups like 4H to help with projects and have the youth partner with the parks to get work done or attract more visitors.</li> <li>- Please, with the federal govt. taking money away from parks and the environment, we need you to reach out to local communities to educate them on why these places are important. I think outreach and education should be your main priority.</li> </ul>

PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 61 continued. Is there anything else you would like to tell us to inform the State Parks' strategic plan?

Major Codes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<i>Website</i>	21	2.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Website and online improvements would be nice. I often find that navigating the park system website to be less than intuitive.</li> <li>- ReserveAmerica is very user-unfriendly. Changes here would be greatly appreciated.</li> <li>- The online reservation system needs an overhaul, it is horrible to not be able to stay a week at a site because someone has it booked for sat/sun.</li> </ul>
<i>Land Acquisition</i>	13	1.36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to keep the State Parks as aesthetic as possible and when feasible keep attempting to purchase adjoining lands through agency funding or acquisition through conservancy groups to protect buffer areas or expand out from existing boundaries limiting development.</li> <li>- Enlarging them for future generations to go.</li> <li>- Expand state parks. Don't cut services or park managers. Really a nice and inexpensive vacation</li> </ul>
<i>Oil and Gas</i>	12	1.26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The resource extraction activities associated with the gas industry are taking public lands out of public use and their exemptions from important laws are destroying our natural resources!</li> </ul>
<i>Bad</i>	10	1.05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Please keep oil and gas drillers out of our state parks. Do not disturb the wild.</li> <li>- Don't allow gas, oil and other companies to set up shop in our State Parks to do fracking, digging, mining or anything other activities that would destroy the nature of our State Parks.</li> </ul>
<i>Good</i>	2	0.21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most of the larger state parks could easily lease an out of sight area to developers, revenues could probably run the rest of the park. Each park should also have a few fracking wells to pay for the park... They should be paid for by taxes only</li> </ul>

Table 61 continued. Is there anything else you would like to tell us to inform the State Parks' strategic plan?

Major Codes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<i>Survey</i>	7	0.73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback</li> <li>- I think that increasing diversity within parks is absolutely important. Are PA parks actually serving everyone? I worry that only current park users will take the survey, but other voices need to be heard as well</li> <li>- I answered many question as "neither agree or disagree" because they were too generalized and vague.</li> </ul>
<i>Relevance</i>	6	0.63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The plan needs to address the trend that more Americans spend less time in and around nature and what can be done to turn that around.</li> <li>- State parks are a valuable resource to the youth and families of the commonwealth. parks should be expanded and opened up to more activities and educational opportunities to bring more residents into the commonwealth cast resources.</li> <li>- Engage school districts and community groups</li> </ul>
<i>Other states</i>	5	0.52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spend time on researching other successful state parks nationally and federal parks and don't forget privately run operations that are successful. Understand others successes and failures and use them to mold your own idea with an eye on the future.</li> <li>- We visit NY state parks along the St Lawrence every year. There is a small entrance fee. They have new playgrounds that were built here in PA. Clean bathrooms near, swimming areas with life guards. I would like to see the same here.</li> </ul>
<i>Marketing</i>	4	0.42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would love to see a big marketing campaign to get people to the outdoors in PA. People only care or protect what they know and are connected to. I would love to see more programs getting people involved in hiking, biking, kayaking, etc. (Ohiopyle has been doing this for veterans- more programs offered like this but for public/students).</li> <li>- Paid services like camping should be marketed more intensively to out of state tourists.</li> </ul>

PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 61 continued. Is there anything else you would like to tell us to inform the State Parks' strategic plan?

Major Codes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<b>Modernization</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>10.06</b>	
<b>Bad</b>	59	6.18	<p>- I believe the state parks system should be a NATURAL resource, not tremendously developed. I rarely camp or use private campgrounds because they are too developed. PA parks do not need to compete with private camping. They do not generally appeal to the same customers</p> <p>- Please do not add on more modern amenities. That is not the point of going to a park to be with nature.</p> <p>- We have plenty of resorts. State parks should stay wild. Focus on nature, outdoor education, and keeping PA natural areas natural</p>
<b>Balance</b>	21	2.20	<p>- While modernizing and expanding the parks can be a very good thing, I wouldn't want to see a large amount of the parks become almost too modern with a large amount of inns, pools, outdoor sports - basically I don't want to see a bunch of parks that actually look like resorts or water parks. While having parks with some of these resources is good, I don't want to see any Park become overdone so that it's unrecognizable as a place of nature.</p> <p>- Although I do not favor resort style development, I feel that many of our campgrounds need updated. My wife and I camp in a travel trailer every other weekend from April through November and notice that many camp sites with electric are full and campsites without electric are empty. Also, many camp sites are too small to accommodate mid-large size trailers which seems to be the increasing equipment of choice among many campers. The improvements that I do see being made in this regard, I feel are moving in the right direction.</p> <p>- I favor a healthy balance of preservation of natural woodlands and maintenance of recreation areas in our state parks. One should not take precedence over the other.</p>

PENN'S PARKS FOR ALL ONLINE AND VISITOR SURVEY REPORT

Table 61 continued. Is there anything else you would like to tell us to inform the State Parks' strategic plan?

Major Codes	Frequency	Percent	Example Quotes
<i>Good</i>	16	1.68	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I think it is appropriate to have wireless internet in certain portions of a park if camping is provided. Although older generations tend to disagree with this statement, it's the 21st century and the world we live in, so it's what needs to be done</li> <li>- I would love to see very upscale or up to date amenities in a certain area of a park alongside nothing but nature. The best of both worlds.</li> <li>- Include more full hook ups for campers with travel trailers and RV's as there are more opportunities for such people</li> </ul>
<b>Preservation</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>9.85</b>	
<i>General</i>	83	8.70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- While trying to meet the needs of everyone, remember the first priority is to protect PA's natural resources for the future, not to make money off of it; Keep it wild and natural!</li> <li>- Keep the nature vibe alive.</li> <li>- Please maintain the natural beauty of our parks.</li> </ul>
<i>Plant Management</i>	8	0.84	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are timber sales and/or resource extraction permitted? Some park areas look like they could use some good timber stand management and in the process acquire some income</li> <li>- Many of our parks could benefit from an active forest management plan.</li> <li>- Maybe add programs geared towards preserving Pennsylvania's native species, both plant and animal and how people can aid their development in parks and in their own community.</li> </ul>
<i>Historic Resources</i>	3	0.31	- Preserve and protect the natural and historical resources.
<b>NA/Nothing</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>7.97</b>	
<i>Nothing</i>	62	6.50	- We are very pleased with our experience
<i>NA</i>	14	1.47	- N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>953</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

## Summary and Conclusion

This study assessed attitudes of Pennsylvania state park visitors and the public towards seven major themes relevant to the future of state parks. With almost 14,000 responses, this survey gives the Bureau of State Parks important insights for their future, as well as the future of the *Penn's Parks for All* strategic planning initiative. Each of the seven themes, as well as a comparison with *State Parks 2000* was presented in the main body of this report. The in-park survey instrument is presented in Appendix A, and the informational materials created by the Bureau of State Parks are presented in Appendix B. This section will provide an overall summary/interpretation of survey findings.

The *Penn's Parks for All* visitor/online sample was demographically older, Whiter, and wealthier than the general population of Pennsylvania. The gender make-up of this sample was representative of the Pennsylvania population. In terms of rural/urban residency, this sample was slightly more rural than the state as a whole. In terms of state park visitation, it appears that visitation patterns were generally stable across demographic groups, with the exception of White visitors reporting a higher visitation frequency than Black, Latino, or Asian respondents.

In the case of outdoor recreation opportunities, it appears that respondents viewed state parks as primarily locations for healthful outdoor recreation activities. The respondents were fairly neutral about the prospect of travel and camping vacation packages and splash playgrounds, however Black and Latino respondents were noticeably more supportive of both of these items. The vast majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that visitors to state parks should expect a quiet, natural, and/or wild experience. When impacts of over use are evident, respondents tended to agree that participation should be limited.

The designation of quiet, wild and remote camping experiences was popular with this sample, with the majority of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with this item. Less popular items included the construction of larger cabins that can accommodate multiple families and central all-purpose social halls, although it should be noted that Black and Latino respondents were more supportive of these ideas. Additionally, a sizable number of respondents (just under half) agreed or strongly agreed that state park accommodations are currently sufficient.

When it comes to park funding, there was strong agreement across all groups for the allocation of additional funding from the commonwealth to reduce the backlog of state park rehabilitation projects. Survey respondents did not want to see fees implemented or increased, and believed that funding for state park rehabilitation projects should come from the commonwealth. There was consistent disagreement across all sub-groups of the sample with instituting a new annual/entrance fee, increasing of existing fees, and leasing of state park facilities to private or non-profit companies.

There was strong support in this sample for items regarding the protection of state parks. A majority of the sample agreed or strongly agreed that state parks should improve water quality in streams and lakes, continue strategic land acquisition, increase efforts to work with volunteers, and devote more staff and funding to conserving quality native habitat and protecting cultural resources. The majority of this sample disagreed with the notion that there is no need to acquire additional state park land.

When considering whether or not state parks should provide more modern conveniences, there were notable differences between ethnicity/race. Black and Latino respondents were more likely to agree or strongly agree with increasing on-site water, sewer, and electrical hook-ups, enhancing kitchen amenities, increasing air conditioning in cabins, and increasing internet access for visitors. It should be



noted that although the levels of agreement were higher among Black and Latino respondents, the percentage of these two groups agreeing or strongly agreeing were all around 50%. Overall, a plurality of the sample agreed that nothing needs to be modernized and parks now provide adequate conveniences.

Satisfaction with state park services and facilities was above average for all items. Respondents were the least satisfied with the availability of education programs and the reservation system. Levels of satisfaction were similar across all demographic groups, with the exception of Black and gender non-conforming respondents rating safety as slightly lower than the other groups.

When considering the appropriateness of various activities within state parks, special events with greater than 1,000 attendees, trails for motorized use, and resort-style development were all viewed as inappropriate. The item rated as the most inappropriate of the four issues assessed was resort-style development. Respondents were fairly neutral about adventure facilities/challenge courses, with older respondents being less likely to view them as appropriate. Black and Latino respondents viewed all items as more appropriate than White or Asian respondents. The item with the largest ethnic/racial differences was resort-style development. While Black and Latino respondents viewed resort-style development as more appropriate, the mean values still rated the item as inappropriate overall.

When comparing the results of this study with those of *State Parks 2000*, there are a number of notable differences. Attitudes towards fees among state park visitors and the public appears to have changed. *Penn's Parks for All* respondents were far less supportive of the implementation of a new annual/entrance fee, with only 27% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with this item, compared to 50% of *State Parks 2000* respondents who agreed or strongly agreed. Similarly, attitudes toward increasing existing fees appear to have changed. In *State Parks 2000*, 52% of visitors supported increasing existing fees, compared to only 33% in the *Penn's Parks for All* sample. While maintenance was a concern of the *State Parks 2000* plan, respondents from the current study more strongly agreed that the commonwealth should increase funding to address the maintenance backlog. This may reflect the increasing size of the maintenance backlog in state parks over the past 20 years. Finally, attitudes toward increased on-site hook-ups in campgrounds appear to have changed. Respondents to *Penn's Parks for All* were in less agreement with increasing the number of campsites with on-site hook-ups. This may reflect the substantial efforts undertaken by the state parks to increase on-site hook-ups over the past 25 years.

In terms of the open ended questions, it appears that the primary concern within this sample is related to funding for the state park system and park management. These themes were the most common for both open ended questions. Respondents were concerned about future funding for the state parks, as well as upkeep of park infrastructure. While a number of concerns were cited relating to user conflict, modernization, and preservation, park management and funding were the most common concerns within this sample.

In conclusion, this report presents the results from a large sample of state park visitors and the public. It appears that Pennsylvanians still support the mission of the Bureau of State Parks, are less supportive of fees than during the time period of *State Parks 2000*, and are more supportive of public efforts to address the maintenance backlog than in *State Parks 2000*. However, attitudes toward a number of possibly contentious issues may differ noticeably across ethnic/racial groups. It will be important to examine these differences carefully in future research conducted as a part of the *Penn's Parks for All* strategic planning initiative. Future research using probability samples, as well as demographically stratified samples will be important to validate these results and help determine if the opinions presented here hold across all Pennsylvanians, or are unique to those who accessed this survey.



## Appendix A Survey Instrument

Park # \_\_\_\_\_

### State Park Visitor Survey

Researchers from Penn State are working with Pennsylvania State Parks to help inform the strategic plan for the next 25 years. Your opinions, perspectives, and experiences as a visitor are important for informing State Parks' future management. Please fill out this survey and return it to a park office/visitor center or drop it in the mail. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and responses are anonymous. We appreciate your input.

How many **different** PA State Parks have you visited in the past 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_ different State Parks

How many **total visits** have you made to any PA State Parks in the past 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_ total visits

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Should we change the current outdoor recreation opportunities or experiences in State Parks?</b>					
Visitors to State Parks should expect a quiet, natural and/or wild experience	1	2	3	4	5
Some parks should offer more active adventure recreation activities	1	2	3	4	5
State Parks should continue to emphasize healthful outdoor recreation activities	1	2	3	4	5
The natural resources of some State Parks are being impacted by over use	1	2	3	4	5
When impacts of over use are evident at a State Park, participation should be limited	1	2	3	4	5
Travel and camping vacation packages for more programmed vacation experiences should be provided	1	2	3	4	5
Parks should develop additional "splash playgrounds" in some parks in place of swimming pools	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Should we enhance existing overnight accommodations in our State Parks?</b>					
Parks' modern family cabin or camping areas should include a central all-purpose social hall	1	2	3	4	5
Parks should designate entire campground areas for quiet, wild and remote camping experiences	1	2	3	4	5
Parks should construct larger cabins that can accommodate multiple families at once	1	2	3	4	5
Parks should develop a few more inns in carefully selected locations	1	2	3	4	5
Current State Park accommodations are sufficient	1	2	3	4	5
<b>How should we pay for our State Parks?</b>					
Parks should convert low-usage parks to primitive and rustic parks with minimal on-site staff and facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Parks should institute a new annual or daily entrance fee or parking permit system	1	2	3	4	5
Parks should increase the existing fees for camping, marinas, cabins, swimming pools, picnic pavilions etc. for all visitors	1	2	3	4	5
The commonwealth should allocate additional funding to reduce the backlog of State Park rehabilitation projects	1	2	3	4	5
Facilities that are expensive to operate and maintain should be closed	1	2	3	4	5
The operation of select park areas should be leased to private businesses or non-profit organizations to reduce costs	1	2	3	4	5

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	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
<b>How can we protect our State Parks?</b>						
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to resource management activities that conserve quality native habitats	1	2	3	4	5	
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to protecting cultural resources (e.g. historic sites, buildings and artifacts)	1	2	3	4	5	
The boundaries of some State Parks should be enlarged to protect immediate watersheds and adjacent lands that could impact park habitat and recreation experiences	1	2	3	4	5	
Parks should continue its strategic land acquisition program	1	2	3	4	5	
Parks should conduct more resource management activities to improve the water quality of streams and lakes	1	2	3	4	5	
There is no need to acquire more land for the State Park system	1	2	3	4	5	
State Parks should invest more time and resources in their volunteer and friends group programs	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Should we provide more modern conveniences in the State Parks?</b>						
Nothing needs to be modernized. Parks now provide adequate conveniences	1	2	3	4	5	
Add more on-site water, sewer and electrical hook-ups for campsites	1	2	3	4	5	
State Parks should offer internet access to visitors	1	2	3	4	5	
Some modern cabins should have air conditioning	1	2	3	4	5	
Parks should enhance kitchen amenities in cabins	1	2	3	4	5	
	N/A	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
<b>Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following services and facilities at State Parks.</b>						
Responsiveness of employees	0	1	2	3	4	5
Reservation system (e.g. campgrounds, pavilions, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Feeling of safety	0	1	2	3	4	5
Trail conditions	0	1	2	3	4	5
Level of interaction with park staff	0	1	2	3	4	5
Sanitation and cleanliness	0	1	2	3	4	5
State Parks' online presence	0	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of outdoor recreation program activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of education programs	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Inappropriate	Somewhat Inappropriate	Neutral	Somewhat Appropriate	Appropriate	
<b>Please indicate how appropriate the following items are for State Parks.</b>						
Resort-style development	1	2	3	4	5	
Special events with greater than 1,000 attendees	1	2	3	4	5	
Trails for motorized use	1	2	3	4	5	
Adventure facilities/challenge courses	1	2	3	4	5	

What is your home zip code? \_\_\_\_\_ In what year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other

Into which annual income group would you place your household?

☐ Under \$25,000 ☐ \$25,000 - \$49,999 ☐ \$50,000 - \$74,999 ☐ \$75,000 - \$99,999  
☐ \$100,000 - \$149,999 ☐ \$150,000 or over ☐ Don't know

Which one of the following categories best describes your race and/or ethnic background?

☐ White ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native ☐ Asian ☐ Black or African American  
☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ☐ Mixed race ☐ Hispanic/Chicano/Latino  
☐ Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return to a park office/ visitor center or mail to:**

PA Bureau of State Parks  
P.O. Box 8551  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8551

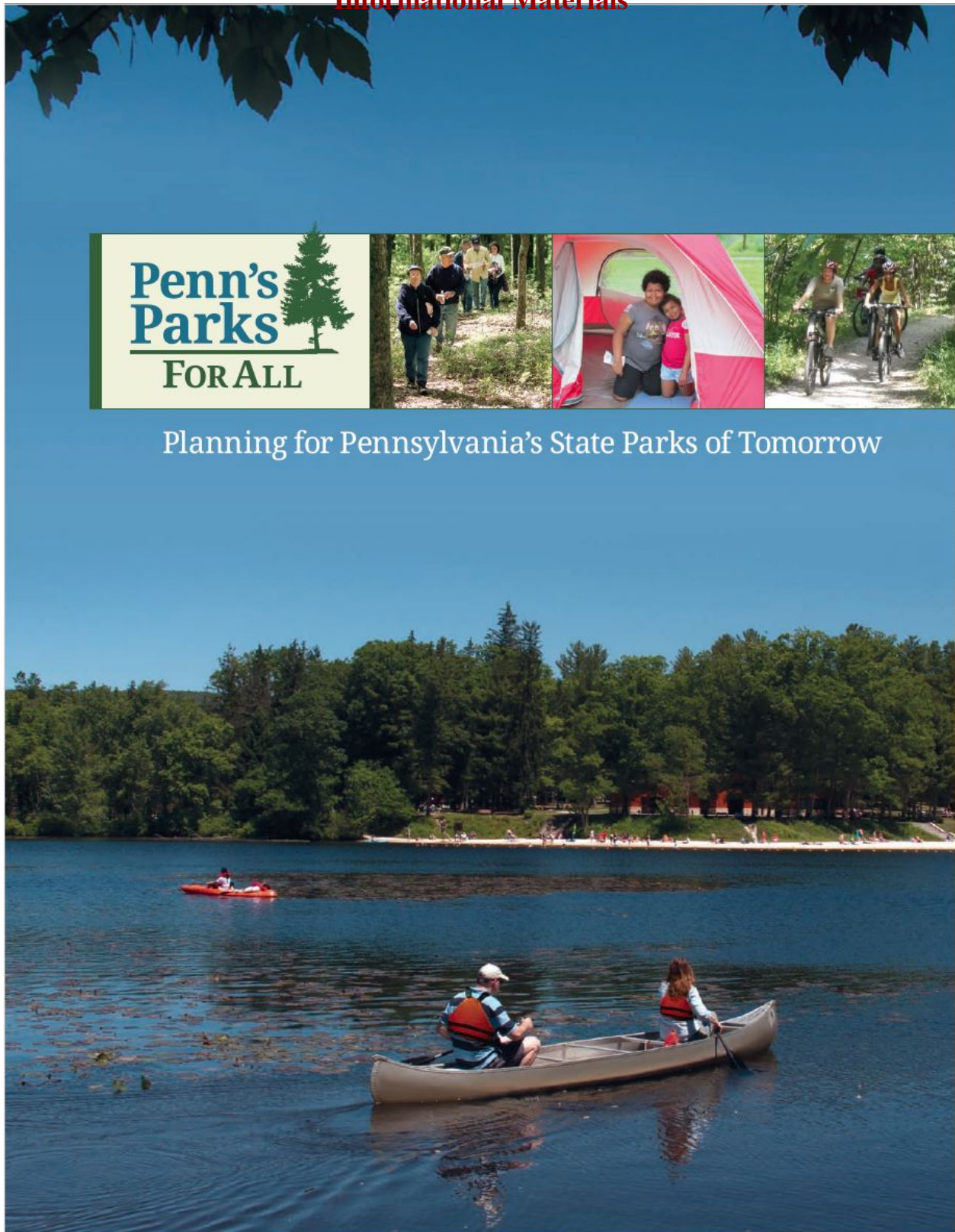
**Thank you for participating.**

**Please contact:**

Andrew J. Mowen, Ph.D.  
and his research team at  
PennsParksForAll@gmail.com  
with any questions or concerns.



**Appendix B**  
**Informational Materials**



## Pennsylvania State Parks Mission

The primary purpose of state parks is to provide opportunities for enjoying healthful outdoor recreation and to serve as outdoor classrooms for environmental education. In meeting these purposes, the conservation of the natural, scenic, aesthetic, and historical values of the parks should be given first consideration. Stewardship responsibilities should be carried out in a way that protects the natural outdoor experience for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

### Message from the Secretary

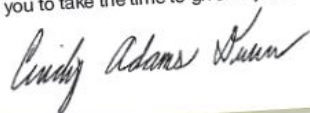
Dear Fellow Pennsylvanians:

Our award-winning system of 121 state parks is now well into its second century of service. With a state park within 25 miles of nearly every Pennsylvanian, we have a remarkable variety of types and sizes of parks located throughout the commonwealth.

Over the last 25 years, we have made tremendous improvements in most parks such as modernizing facilities, adding comfortable cabins, and expanding recreation opportunities. We have also worked to better conserve and manage the parks' natural resources, and expand the number of education staff and programs.

As we begin planning for the decades ahead, we want to ensure that our state park system will remain as relevant and valuable to future generations as it has been to current and past generations.

Your help is needed to guide this important *Penn's Parks for All* strategic planning process, and I encourage you to take the time to give us your thoughts.



### Help us answer these questions:

*Should we change the current outdoor recreation opportunities or experiences?*

*Should we enhance overnight accommodations in our state parks?*

*How should we pay for our state parks?*

*How can we protect our state parks?*

*Should we provide more modern conveniences within state parks?*

*How is visitor satisfaction with park services and facilities?*

*How appropriate are certain facilities and activities in our state parks?*



Cucumber Falls at Ohiopyle State Park





## Today's Parks – at a Glance

Pennsylvania's amazing system of 121 state parks making up nearly 300,000 acres of land across the commonwealth provides a network of green oases for outdoor recreation, spiritual renewal, education, and a great diversity of habitats and wildlife.

The mission of providing outdoor recreation and education includes the caveat that first consideration be given to conserving our natural and cultural values, so care must always be taken to balance the potential impacts of activities and facilities with the resources that exist within a park or a region.



Clear Creek State Park

State parks receive nearly 40 million visits each year:  
36.3 million day visits and 1.6 million overnight visits.

# 40,000,000



Today, state park visitors can enjoy the outdoors in many ways. Activities range from leisurely to action-adventure, including hiking up a slope past beautiful waterfalls, strolling to the edge of an overlook for magnificent vistas, watching a meteor shower against the backdrop of the Milky Way, riding a bicycle through fall foliage, paddling a quiet stream, skiing on a cross-country trail or downhill slope, and much, much more.

### It's been 25 years...

since the Bureau of State Parks underwent its last strategic planning effort, *State Parks 2000*. The list of 18 recommendations from that process included the modernization of bathrooms and other facilities, expanding education program offerings, and designating natural areas in parks to better protect sensitive or special natural resources.

Numerous surveys of Pennsylvanians since then have provided valuable guidance to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources on issues related to outdoor recreation and natural resource protection; but it's time again to ask specific questions regarding our state parks.





## History and Natural Wonders of Pennsylvania State Parks

Valley Forge was Pennsylvania's first state park in 1893, which became part of the National Park System in 1976.

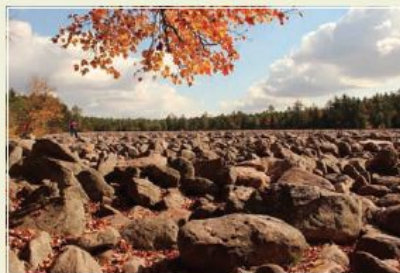
Throughout the early 1900s, parks for picnicking, swimming, and camping were carved out of state forests and known as "state forest parks." As the number of outdoor recreation sites continued to grow across the state, a separate Bureau of State Parks was created in 1929.



Caledonia State Forest Park, circa 1922

### PA Administrative Code of 1929

The Bureau of State Parks was officially created in 1929 and was charged with the purpose of "...promoting healthful outdoor recreation and education and making available for such use natural areas of unusual scenic beauty, especially such as provide impressive views, waterfalls, gorges, creeks, caves or other unique and interesting features..."



Hickory Run State Park's Boulder Field is one of seven National Natural Landmarks within the state park system that are federally designated as nationally significant natural areas.



Caledonia State Park is one of several historic iron furnace sites found in state parks.



Washington Crossing Historic Park is one of three state parks designated as National Historic Landmarks.

◀ Cook Forest State Park, which includes an old growth stand of hemlock and white pine, was our first state park acquired to protect a natural landmark (1927). The "Forest Cathedral" in the park was later designated as a National Natural Landmark.



## **Penn's Parks** **FOR ALL** Strategic Planning Process

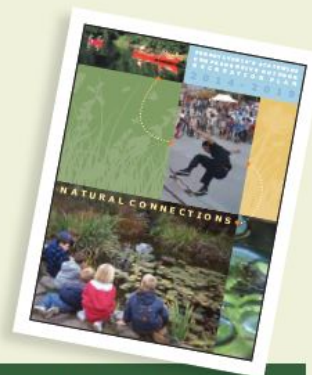
It's been 25 years since the Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks did an assessment of its many and diverse facilities, programs, and services provided for park visitors.

The *Penn's Parks for All* strategic planning process will guide our park system for the next 25 years. It will include a variety of public input opportunities, and a preliminary report for review in 2018. The following pages will provide valuable background information and some questions to consider about major topics of interest concerning our state parks.

Check our website for an online version of the public survey, and for updates and details as this process moves forward: [dcnr.pa.gov/stateparks](http://dcnr.pa.gov/stateparks)



Pine Creek Gorge



### **What We Know**

**From Pennsylvania's  
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor  
Recreation Plan 2014–2019...**

Pennsylvanians have said they like to walk, visit historic sites, take scenic drives, picnic, and swim. Increasingly, they also like to kayak, watch wildlife, and participate in winter sports.

**In addition, Pennsylvanians  
want their park systems to:**

- Conserve and protect Pennsylvania's natural places — protect critical habitat areas, watersheds, riparian corridors
- Direct more resources to maintain existing park, trail, and recreation areas, rather than acquire new lands
- Improve access for Pennsylvania's aging population
- Provide more picnic areas, rental cabins, and natural and wild areas

# Outdoor Recreation

**The Bureau of State Parks' mission** is to provide healthful outdoor recreation opportunities, while giving first consideration to the conservation of natural, scenic, aesthetic, and historical values of the parks.

**Day Use Facilities:**

- 11 marinas
- 15 swimming pools
- 2 equestrian stables
- 4 ski areas
- 56 swimming beaches  
(70% of which are now smoke free)
- 2 golf courses

There are more than 1,500 miles of trails within state parks. Trail types include: hiking, running, bicycling, mountain biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling.

## Types of Recreation

**Passive recreational activities** include activities that are usually quiet, do not involve structures (except for foot bridges or picnic tables), and have a low impact on the surrounding environment. Permitted activities include walking, hiking, fishing, hunting, picnicking, and wildlife watching.

**Active recreational activities** include activities that require facilities, the use of motorized vehicles, or horseback riding; or non-walking/hiking activities involving large groups. Examples include disk golf courses, orienteering meets, running races, mountain bikes, snowmobiles, or other activities that would result in a measurable footprint that would impact the quality of the natural habitat and quiet aesthetics of the area.

## Questions to consider:

- What recreational activities fit within the state parks' mission that could enhance your state park experience?
- What activities will diminish any of these valued resources for future generations?
- What actions should be taken if natural resources within a park are being harmed by over use?

6 | Penn's Parks For All





## Overnight Accommodations



### Current Overnight Facilities:

- 2 inns
- 5,689 modern campsites
- 451 rustic campsites
- 413 cabins & camping cottages
- 161 organized group tenting sites
- 40 parks with organized group tent areas
- 53 parks with pet camping
- 41 pet cabins/camping cottages/yurts



During the late 1980s and through the 1990s, many modern cabins were constructed statewide in response to the desire by many to have cabins with bathrooms, running water, and kitchen facilities.



More recently, state parks added small lodges, referred to as "inns," with a bed and breakfast-type atmosphere. The Nature Inn at Bald Eagle (above) is our largest inn. The other is at King's Gap Environmental Education Center.

### Types of Campsites

Campsites vary from primitive sites with a flat area and fire ring (below), to full-service sites enabling a recreational vehicle to connect to sewer, water, and electricity.



### Questions to consider:

- Should state parks construct an all-purpose building within selected campgrounds and cabin areas where friends and families can gather?
- Are campgrounds getting too noisy for those desiring a quiet, wild camping experience?
- Are other changes needed for overnight accommodations or are park users satisfied with the current mix of options?

## Paying for State Parks



The total need for all major maintenance projects in state parks is more than

**\$500 million.**

The rapid growth of the state park system from the 1960s through the 1970s was funded from dedicated funds and state bond initiatives. These funds paid for land costs and initial construction but were not designed to cover ongoing maintenance costs.

Most of our parks have extensive infrastructure that is expensive to maintain for visitor safety and recreation, including: drinking water and sewage treatment systems; roads, bridges and parking areas; swimming pools; dams for outdoor recreation and/or flood control; restrooms and shower houses; cabins; visitor centers; offices; and maintenance buildings.

### Major Maintenance Backlog

Decades of state budget reductions has resulted in major maintenance delays for many state park facilities. The below list provides a general idea of the system-wide need that exists to fix or improve the aging infrastructure in all our state parks.

**Administration/ Visitor Support** – includes facilities such as park visitor centers, offices, contact stations, and maintenance and service facilities. Approximate need is \$77 million.

**Dams/ Impoundments** – includes dams and related structures and components, and lake dredging. Approximate need is \$53 million.

**Overnight Facilities** – includes campgrounds, cabins, inns, camping cottages and associated buildings (bathhouses, restrooms, etc.). Approximate need is \$48 million.

**Recreation Support** – includes a wide range of facilities and work specifically tied to recreation such as invasive plant and hazardous tree removal, stream bank stabilization, comfort stations, pavilions, pools, trails, playgrounds, picnic areas, ski areas, marinas etc. Approximate need is \$221 million.

**Transportation Infrastructure** – includes roads, bridges and any related structures (such as guard rails, curbs, etc.). Approximate need is \$82 million.

**Water and Sewer Infrastructure** – includes water and sewer conveyance and treatment facilities such as pump stations, treatment plants, canal structures, pipelines, and in-takes. Approximate need is \$56 million.

### Did you know?

State park infrastructure requiring regular maintenance includes:

- 72 dams
- 489 miles of roadways
- 300 vehicle bridges
- 772 pedestrian bridges
- 3,600 buildings
- 126 drinking water treatment systems
- 58 wastewater treatment systems
- 15 swimming pools





**Pennsylvania has never charged an entrance fee to state parks.**

Annual funding for state parks is made up of:

- General fund allocations (state taxes)
- User fees (overnight accommodations, marinas, swimming pools, etc.)
- Oil and gas revenues
- Key 93 funding (a portion of the state's realty transfer tax)
- Other funds restricted for land acquisitions or construction projects

State parks receive  
**0.16 of one percent**  
of the state's General Fund budget.

**Economic Value:** \$12.41 is returned to Pennsylvania's economy for every \$1 invested in state parks. In 2016, the total contribution of visitor spending to the state economy was approximately \$1.1 billion and supported nearly 12,630 jobs.



The Bureau of State Parks partners with approximately 125 private entities to help provide visitor services including but not limited to: food and refreshment, swimming pools, watercraft and bicycle rentals, marina services, camp stores, firewood, whitewater rafting, equestrian, skiing, golf, and disc golf.

**Questions to consider:**

- *What changes should be made if the general fund allocation continues to be less than is needed to properly operate and maintain all 121 state parks?*
- *Should any user fees be raised or should state parks receive more funds from elsewhere?*
- *Should some lower-utilized parks have reduced services and facilities so funds could be used at other parks that receive higher visitation?*



## Protecting Our Parks

"... the conservation of the natural, scenic, aesthetic, and historical values of the parks should be given first consideration."

– From the PA State Parks Mission



State parks provide habitat protection for many species of plants and animals.

### Definition of Values

**Natural values** include well-functioning ecosystems and habitats, with native plants and animals, and clean water, soil and air.

**Scenic** means having pleasant or beautiful views of natural park scenery.

**Aesthetic** refers to all-around beauty, pleasant natural smells and sounds, the feel of sunshine, or the artistic qualities of a park's resources.

**Historical values** include the human history that took place within and around a park, going back as far as the first Native Americans' use of a site.

### Did you know?

- 23 "State Natural Areas" have been officially designated in parks throughout the state with special protections for those areas.
- 59 recreational lakes within parks have aquatic management plans, and dozens have received treatment for nuisance and invasive aquatic vegetation.
  - More than 250,000 acres (86%) of state park land and water is open to hunting.
  - Resource management plans have been developed for nearly every state park.

Land management work, like this prescribed burn to restore native habitat, is coordinated by state park resource managers to keep healthy natural ecosystems in our parks. Hundreds of acres of habitat have been improved statewide.

Restoring and protecting aquatic habitat is an on-going need. In 2016 alone, invasive aquatic plant management projects took place at 25 parks; stream and lakeshore habitat projects were completed at 13 parks; and 30 acres of stream edge were improved with plantings and invasive plant removal.

### State Parks Strategic Land Acquisition Program

The current priority is to purchase land within or along a park boundary to:

1. Protect or enhance existing park resources;
2. acquire an inholding property;
3. or modify the boundary to improve park operations.

### Questions to consider:

- What is the appropriate balance between recreation and conservation of resources?
- Should some parks enlarge their boundaries to better protect park resources?
- Is there a greater role for volunteer groups to do resource conservation activities?
- Are water resources getting enough care and attention?



## Modern Conveniences

**Over the past two decades, many camping facilities have been modernized:**

- Replaced primitive toilet facilities in many campgrounds with flush toilets and showers, and added laundry facilities
- Added 129 modern cabins
- Added full-service campsites – recreational vehicle (RV) hookups for electrical, water, and sewer – at 15 state parks with 233 campsites statewide
- 56 state parks allow pets in campgrounds, and 22 allow dogs in cabins

### Full service campsites

which provide sewer, water, and electric hookups for RVs, are in much greater demand than rustic campsites. Parks currently have more than 230 full service campsites, with a goal of adding additional sites as future funding allows.



Pets have increasingly become a part of the camping experience for many families, and pets are now permitted in most campgrounds.



### Questions to consider:

- *Have enough improvements been made to camping facilities, or are additional features still needed?*
- *Should cabin kitchens be stocked with pots, pans, silverware, and other amenities?*
- *How important is internet access in parks?*

Modern cabins, which have been added to 14 parks to provide a less rustic overnight option, include a bathroom complete with shower, electric heat, carpeting, and a kitchen.







P.O. Box 8551,  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8551  
[dcnr.pa.gov/stateparks](http://dcnr.pa.gov/stateparks)

Help us plan for the future  
of Pennsylvania's state parks  
by taking the public survey  
online or a paper version  
available in parks.

Get to know your Pennsylvania State Parks system  
and our community by visiting us on social media:



## Appendix C.

### Rural, Suburban, and Urban Comparisons

The comparisons presented in this appendix are between three population density levels. Each Pennsylvania zip code was classified as either rural, suburban, or urban. Rural was defined as less than 284 persons per square mile, suburban was defined as between 284 and 2,213 persons per square mile, and urban was defined as greater than 2,213 persons per square mile. In general, the differences presented in this report continued along a trend, meaning that if urban and rural respondents were different in the main body of the report, they were still different in this analysis, with suburban often falling in-between the two.

Question	Rural		Suburban		Urban	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
How many different PA State Parks have you visited in the past twelve months?	4.48	4.11	4.21	4.42	3.89	3.90
How many total visits have you made to any PA State Park in the past twelve months?	18.43	34.82	18.09	34.74	16.32	34.36
Visitors to State Parks should expect a quiet, natural and/or wild experience	4.30	0.88	4.35	0.83	4.38	0.83
Some parks should offer more active adventure recreation activities	3.50	1.01	3.44	1.03	3.49	1.05
State Parks should continue to emphasize healthful outdoor recreation activities	4.43	0.69	4.46	0.70	4.52	0.66
The natural resources of some State Parks are being impacted by over use	3.37	1.01	3.49	0.97	3.56	0.92
When impacts of over use are evident at a State Park, participation should be limited	3.60	0.99	3.66	0.95	3.77	0.91
Travel and camping vacation packages for more programmed vacation experiences should be provided	3.02	1.09	2.98	1.09	3.03	1.09
Parks should develop additional “splash playgrounds” in some parks in place of swimming pools	2.87	1.11	2.85	1.10	2.91	1.11
Parks’ modern family cabin or camping areas should include a central all-purpose social hall	2.72	1.04	2.68	1.03	2.80	1.06
Parks should designate entire campground areas for quiet, wild, and remote camping experiences	3.80	1.01	3.91	0.97	4.07	0.92

Table 62 continued. Rural, Suburban, and Urban Comparisons						
Question	Rural		Suburban		Urban	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Parks should construct larger cabins that can accommodate multiple families at once	2.81	1.08	2.78	1.07	2.84	1.08
Parks should develop a few more inns in carefully selected locations	2.91	1.13	2.97	1.13	3.08	1.13
Current State Park accommodations are sufficient	3.37	0.99	3.33	0.97	3.35	0.93
Parks should convert low-usage parks to primitive and rustic parks with minimal on-site staff and facilities	3.21	1.04	3.31	1.02	3.38	0.99
Parks should institute a new annual or daily entrance fee or parking permit system	2.38	1.26	2.49	1.26	2.54	1.23
Parks should increase the existing fees for camping, marinas, cabins, swimming pools, picnic pavilions, etc. for all visitors	2.69	1.16	2.83	1.16	2.88	1.13
The commonwealth should allocate additional funding to reduce the backlog of State Park rehabilitation projects	4.07	0.91	4.17	0.85	4.29	0.81
Facilities that are expensive to operate and maintain should be closed.	2.42	0.97	2.47	0.97	2.41	0.95
The operation of select park areas should be leased to private businesses or non-profit organizations to reduce costs	2.34	1.24	2.29	1.25	2.09	1.22
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to resource management activities that conserve quality native habitats	3.81	0.87	3.89	0.83	4.09	0.78
Parks should devote more staffing and funding to protecting cultural resources (e.g. historic sites, buildings, and artifacts)	3.71	0.88	3.73	0.86	3.89	0.83
The boundaries of some State parks should be enlarged to protect immediate watersheds and adjacent lands that could impact park habitat and recreation experiences	3.78	0.98	3.94	0.91	4.20	0.82
Parks should continue its strategic land acquisition program	3.84	0.92	3.97	0.86	4.17	0.81

Table 62 continued. Rural, Suburban, and Urban Comparisons						
Question	Rural		Suburban		Urban	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Missing online: Parks should conduct more resource management activities to improve the water quality of streams and lakes	3.89	0.83	3.99	0.80	4.26	0.72
There is no need to acquire more land for the State Park system	2.28	1.08	2.14	1.04	2.00	0.99
State Parks should invest more time and resources in their volunteer and friends group programs	3.86	0.79	3.90	0.77	3.92	0.77
Nothing needs to be modernized. Parks now provide adequate conveniences	3.22	1.13	3.21	1.11	3.28	1.09
Add more on-site water, sewer and electrical hook-ups for campsites	3.16	1.15	3.04	1.14	2.90	1.11
State Parks should offer internet access to visitors	2.44	1.27	2.40	1.24	2.39	1.23
Some modern cabins should have air conditioning	2.70	1.17	2.65	1.17	2.61	1.20
Parks should enhance kitchen amenities in cabins	2.73	1.02	2.73	1.03	2.75	1.06
Responsiveness of employees	4.17	1.16	4.09	1.25	4.07	1.32
Reservation system (e.g. campgrounds, pavilions, etc.)	3.67	1.43	3.60	1.52	3.62	1.53
Feeling of safety	4.45	0.84	4.46	0.85	4.46	0.88
Trail conditions	4.21	0.98	4.28	0.94	4.30	0.95
Level of interaction with park staff	3.98	1.18	3.91	1.24	3.94	1.29
Sanitation and cleanliness	4.16	0.97	4.12	0.99	4.13	1.00
State Parks' online presence	3.93	1.15	3.90	1.18	3.87	1.20
Availability of outdoor recreation program activities	3.84	1.17	3.76	1.26	3.69	1.33
Availability of education programs	3.82	1.19	3.67	1.30	3.55	1.37
Resort-style development	1.73	1.10	1.66	1.05	1.70	1.11
Special events with greater than 1000 attendees	2.22	1.23	2.13	1.20	2.18	1.21
Motorized trails	2.26	1.37	2.01	1.26	1.96	1.22
Adventure facilities/challenge courses	3.15	1.30	3.10	1.29	3.20	1.28