

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Goal

Commenter #	Comment
013	<p>The Ten Year Strategic Plan is a very positive step towards making Alaska's State Parks the destinations of choice. Alaskans are the primary users of our State Parks. Parks are both recreational and therapeutic and contribute to the overall quality of life here in Alaska. Alaska State Parks are something we should all be proud of. Please support our State Parks by increasing the funding.</p>
020	<p>In the introductory narrative for this section, it might be useful (in terms of reader education) to repeat or restate the difficult budget circumstances and the effects that it has had on Park facilities, such as the huge deferred maintenance backlog, degradation of visitor experience, negative impacts on small businesses who have park concessions, etc.</p>
023	<p>Let's ask the Legislature (i.e., have the Gov's budget request) adequate funds for planning trails, signs, interpretation and facilities and for basic equipment and maintenance -- including items like a boat that can handle Southeast weather better than the undersized open boat we've had here for years that can't do the job needed. In other words, fund State Parks well! They are a tremendous economic asset -- for summer and winter. The State Division of Parks can run the parks as efficiently and effectively as anyone -- and fairly with some modicum of consistency in policies, but whoever runs them, the State Government has to put up the basic funds. Since we aren't even paying income taxes this is just using a sliver of the state's revenue from other resources to invest in another natural resource -- our beautiful areas set aside as parks and historic sites, for the enjoyment, health and recreational activities, and edification/education of Alaskans, with some sharing with visitors every year of prime spots like Mount Roberts and Denali State Park.</p>
035	<p>Parks should work with Citizen Advisory Boards (CABs) to request that legislation be introduced to allow use of fees collected in the last quarter of the fiscal year (April-June) in the first quarter (July-Sept) of the next fiscal year, when a lot of maintenance needs to occur. There may be appropriate percentage limits, but park managers need flexibility when the fiscal year occurs in the middle of the busy season for revenue.</p>
042	<p>I fully support the Goal: Stabilize and strengthen the division's financial condition.</p>
043	<p>I suggest that key informational statements such as "Market resistance to further fee increases is evidenced by park users' opposition to these increases and the fact that the facilities that are most likely to generate revenues already have fees." be shown in bold type for emphasis throughout the plan.</p>
050	<p>We do not support "contract management" (page 14). This simply means that user fees from busy and therefore profitable parks go into private hands instead of being used to subsidize parks that do not receive enough visitation to be self-supporting.</p>
057	<p>Page 13, Paragraph 1, Sentence 5: Sentence doesn't make sense. Is the word "proving" supposed to be "providing?"</p>
085	<p>Page 13 Paragraph 3, Sentence 4: Delete "they said" - extraneous. Sentence would read: "A 2004 survey of state residents showed that a significant majority were willing to pay user fees, but the amount they were willing to pay was . . ." Page 14 First line: "June 30th". Can we change the fiscal year to adjust for this? Or change the requirement to use fees in the same year. 2nd Column, 2nd Line: Replace "can" with "that".</p>

Commenter #**Comment**

086	Page 13, Paragraph 1, Sentence 1: How many are Alaskans? 80%? Alaska's State Parks are where Alaskans recreate. Any chance of legislators changing the way parks # is accounted so there is some forward funding? Or at least May & June \$ can be the beginning of the year's income instead of at the end?
091	Page 13: Emphasize need to take care of what we have - but pressure remains to add new lands to the division. Page 14: We have 25 park units or facilities managed by private contractors (call Chris 269-8702 to confirm).
092	Add figures back graph? Sup all contracted out that's possible.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective I

Commenter #	Comment
018	Seek change in law that requires expenditure of user fees in the same fiscal year as collected. At least make it the following FY.
026	I think you should call for RFP's to privatize all of the Parks. The administration of these facilities would be much better accomplished in the private sector.
068	The "core value" articulated by park employees seem to be key to the spirit and intent of this Plan. However, as is always the case, neither the current situation nor the future visions for our State Parks can be improved upon without solid political commitment and accompanying funding to meet current and future challenges. It is most unfortunate, that a State so rich in natural, recreational resources cannot better provide for its citizens enjoyment simply from lack of priority funding. While "Plans" such as this are crucial to our desired visions, without wide spread "constituent" outcry and continued perserverance, we all will continue to struggle along.
072	One frustration that we know we share with many groups is the lack of available maintenance funds for facilities and trails. It seems there is often money for new construction, but little for maintaining the buildings, trails, and other infrastructure. We strongly support the division's effort to include maintenance funds in any and all new capital improvement projects in order to lessen the future backlog of deferred maintenance, and to provide more consistent services and financial stability.
075	We are most concerned that the lack of adequate funding from the state's general budget will drive state parks to encourage commercial facilities or services to be offered which we believe are inappropriate activities for natural settings. For example, Objective II, Recreation Section, item 6 discusses developing "at least one challenge course in a state park" or item 2 of Objective IV discusses investigating new types of parks such as "motorized recreation parks". See also item 3, Objective V, Maintaining Affordability, wherein private concession agreements for services for park visitors "outside the division's expertise or mission" could be considered.
086	Strategies 2 & 5 are highest priority.
090	One of the primary problems in meeting the stated objectives for recreation and other aspects of park management appears to be funding. In a cash-rich state it seems ludicrous that bonds should have to be raised to deal with deferred maintenance. However, we realize that this is not the fault of State Parks. Since a new state administration is inevitable, we suggest a strong emphasis on remedying under-funding directly, if possible. This could include calling upon diverse user groups to assist in lobbying the legislature and governor. As mentioned above, we feel that the costs of each type of use should be calculated independently, and those uses that cost the most per user should generally be given lower priority than those that can benefit a larger number or people with lesser impacts and lower per capita costs.
091	Prioritize: 1, 5. (include ATV and increased snowmobile registration fees. 3rd. Seek Cruise ship Tax to support facilities used by this industry. 2, 3, 6, 4, 7.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective I - Strategy 1

Commenter #	Comment
018	The plan should give primary emphasis in finding a way to stabilize the base funding for the state parks working in concert with the Governor and Legislature... It takes lots of energy for management to be dependent on inexact funding sources such as that from user fees. It leads to perpetual crisis management and is much less efficient, as it is difficult to establish priorities.
027	Parks are way underfunded, and unless people begin writing their representatives en mass, that will not change. I think in order to begin chipping away at the deferred maintenance cost, we need to as legislators to give us our allotted budget, plus allow parks to keep all monies made from user fees.
057	This would be a good place to reiterate that a stable budget means one that reflects the growth in visitation, inflation, etc. A stable budget does not mean a static one.
082	This is a bit weak using 'work with the legislature', it would be stronger if you stated actual ways you will improve that effort.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective I - Strategy 2

Commenter #	Comment
057	Please include the Chena River State Recreation Area as one of the large park units listed.
064	Anchorage Parks and Recreation supports action strategy number 2 to sponsor economic studies of large parks such as Chugach State Park that will document the park's local and statewide economic contribution and/or impact. Alaska State Parks should include within this economic study a "green infrastructure" assessment to attempt to quantify the positive economic benefits that parks provide through storm water management, soil conservation, clean air and healthy recreation opportunities.
082	This is a good idea and would be a high priority for me.
085	Run-on sentence - reads poorly.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective I - Strategy 3

Commenter #	Comment
035	Third priority.
042	This is a minor point, but more than half of the bed-tax monies in the Mat-Su Borough goes to the Convention and Tourist Bureau to attract more visitors to the Mat-Su. The remaining monies are available to communities in the Borough through grants. It would be a severe hardship for communities to loose access to these funds.
053	We think that pursuing use of bed tax revenue to fund trail enhancement is a good idea. The other proposed funding avenues make sense also. We agree that it is important to have a financially stable park sustem.
057	Add "public use cabins" to the specific programs for Bed Taxes (what better application).
061	Pursuing use of bed tax revenue to fund trail enhancement is a good idea. The other proposed funding avenues make sense also. It is important to have a financially stable park system.
062	We think that pursuing use of bed tax revenue to fund trail enhancement is a good idea. The other proposed funding avenues make sense also. We agree that it is important to have a financially stable park system.
081	I agree that we must work with cities and boroughs to use a portion of the municipalities' "bed-taxes" for trail enhancement. But, in our effort to attain more funds, we must never prostitute the lands of Alaska!

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective I - Strategy 4

Commenter #

Comment

057 YES!

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective I - Strategy 5

Commenter #	Comment
035	Fourth priority. You should include snowmachine registration fees.
066	b.(?) Support the implementation and administer an ATV registration program similar to the snowmobile program, that will provide funding to conduct ATV safety and ethics education, and provide a funding pool for OHV trail enhancements.
086	Same w/snowmachine registration \$.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective I - Strategy 6

Commenter #	Comment
035	First priority. We need to more effectively tap into volunteer desires in the communities, but make sure the foundation monies are outside of legislative oversight so good intentions of the public donors are not misrouted by politicians.
086	This needs to be a grassroots venture. The previous "tapdown" foundation didn't work. Without grassroots support, I'd drop 36 and really push #7 - all the benefits without the admin hassle.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective I - Strategy 7

Commenter #	Comment
035	Second priority. We need to more effectively tap into volunteer desires in the communities, but make sure the foundation monies are outside of legislative oversight so good intentions of the public donors are not misrouted by politicians.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective II

Commenter #	Comment
010	I suggest adding the following action strategy to support this objective: Conduct title and boundary surveys for park units that need them. (Parks receive a lot of money from Land and Water Conservation Fund grants. Parks will no longer receive these funds if these boundary and title surveys are not conducted. Grants sought by private individuals or organizations to support park projects are also conditioned on proving by survey that there is public access to the park and, in some cases, on conducting an archaeological survey. This deters many organizations from applying for grants to do volunteer work in the park. More grants would be awarded for park projects if the park boundary was surveyed.)
073	As a resident of Alaska, I would like to see the management of recreational trail and related facility grant programs focus on quality based outcomes from project funding. Recreational grants should be managed as to provide funding for projects that consider the "best management practices" for planning, design, construction and continued maintenance, which includes sustainable trail design and construction standards.
084	I also like Objective II. Grant programs are a great way to get citizens and local communities involved in developing and maintaining state park resources. Trails are important to my family and me, so I am pleased that Action Strategy 6 calls for more state trail grant programs, which are less restrictive than federal programs.
086	Strategies 1 & 2 are highest priority. Bond for trails?
091	Add ATV registration fee for ATVs.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective II - Strategy 1

Commenter #	Comment
035	Second priority.
057	Need to mention not only Boating Safety and HPO, but especially LWCF. LWCF is the only federal funding that the state can match that allows our park units to improve without constraints that come with other federal programs (like D-J and federal-aid highway funds).
081	There must be better matching of federal to state funds and larger grants.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective II - Strategy 2

Commenter #	Comment
002	Many people in the Delta Junction Area, including myself, are opposed to an increase in snowmobile registration fees. We have been paying the fees for years and have yet to ride on a groomed trail. This is not an equitable program.
048	Add to expand trail etiquette education and enforcement.
057	Please add OHV or ATV registration fees to the mix of new legislation to expand our trail development efforts.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective II - Strategy 4

Commenter #	Comment
035	First priority. Should be introduced by a legislative member in the majority this coming session (work with CABs).
082	This should be recommended regardless of the plan. This should be high priority.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective II - Strategy 5

Committer #	Comment
035	Third priority.
066	YES

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective III

Comment Financial Management - Objective III

019 Will the Advisory Boards be able to make comments?

048 Add a category to identify critical habitat and scenic viewsheds that should be preserved inside existing parks.

086 Strategy 4 has highest priority.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective III - Strategy 1

Commenter #	Comment
038	b. In many cases, visitation rates are limited by accessibility to these areas. While this could be a good overall indicator, contributing factors due to "mother nature" could change accessibility to areas that otherwise might be utilized more frequently; i.e.; flooding, downed beetle killed trees limiting access to areas, landslides and other acts of nature.
043	Change "which areas should be surplusd" to "which areas, if any, should be surplusd".
074	I believe that the plan should list specific points relating to the protection of our State Parks. Specifically, that no state park land will be lost/traded/sold, etc. AND the parks should be looking for opportunities to expand current parks and add additional parks and park land. State Parks are a valuable resource for residents and visitors alike and with the burgeoning tourist industry and the increase in the state's population, State Parks should be looking to preserve (at all costs) its current holdings and be aggressive in expanding and obtaining more land. ASP are an economic resource related to tourism - protection and expansion of ASP can only enrich and increase the positive economic impact of tourism in our state.
086	I'm worried about the "surplus" language. If not an overwhelming reason to surplus - leave along, even if not currently developed or in high demand - selected for future needs. If an ILMA isn't costing anything don't assume it has no value. Leave it in the system! SE marine parks are set aside for future needs now - it's maintaining opportunities. b. And ability to meet future recreation needs. Some ILMAs are created with future needs in mind. c. Deleted? Public process.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective III - Strategy 2

Commenter # Comment

053	The proposed financial analysis of each park is a good idea. We agree with the need for maintaining the parks in good order through appropriate routine maintenance.
061	The proposed financial analysis of each park is a good idea. I support the need for maintaining the parks in good order through appropriate routine maintenance.
062	The proposed financial analysis of each park is a good idea. We agree with the need for maintaining the parks in good order through appropriate routine maintenance.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective III - Strategy 3

Commenter #	Comment
035	Second priority.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective III - Strategy 4

Commenter #	Comment
027	I also think in some aspects and park units, if the state began running them as a business we could up the amount parks pulls in every season. The challenge course, targeting certain park units, offering some sorts of imterpretive programming on a regular basis and charge more for fees.
035	First priority.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective IV

Commenter #	Comment
010	I suggest adding the following action strategy to support this objective: Secure funding to develop GIS capacity for State Parks. (A GIS database would allow managers to operate state parks more efficiently with ultimately lower costs, while providing improved opportunities for park users. A GIS database would facilitate searches and rescues, indicate where crime happens, where wildlife viewing opportunities occur, where optimal soil and water conditions exist for developing facilities. Managers could determine why parking areas need to be expanded and which trails are getting the most use. They could provide web-based mapping programs so park users could go online and print out maps of routes they want to do, and maps could be provided at all trailheads. If there was a fire and they needed to get trucks into an area, they could quickly determine trail widths and know instantly how wide a vehicle to dispatch.)
082	Add a statement about improving communications with other Departments (such as Transportation), when their projects are adjacent to or in some other way affect park land or activities.
086	Strategies 2 & 3 have highest priority.
091	Prioritize: 2, 1, 3, 4.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective IV - Strategy 1

Commenter #	Comment
002	Communication with DOT in our area is very good. This does not improve the shape of our park roads. It is not DOT's responsibility to maintain the roads in most of our parks. I believe we should research the idea of transferring management of all park roads to DOT by possibly designating park roads as DOT right-of-ways. We need to find out if relieving us of the maintenance burden would be worthwhile.
035	Third priority.
057	Not the top priority for this Objective - move to a lower priority in the list (we have little to gain except in very specific locations that should be working locally, not at a policy level, because it will come at a huge price tag).

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective IV - Strategy 2

Committer #	Comment
035	First priority.
057	Yes!

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective IV - Strategy 3

Commenter #	Comment
035	Second priority.
057	Absolutely! There are several options we should pursue, such as installing solar power entry stations that offer automated payment machines or using other commercial vendors to sell daily passes, so we don't have to handle those fees.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective V

Commenter #	Comment
023	The fees collected must be able to be used after June 30 of the SFY in which they are collected -- we heard about the problem of fees coming in during June and returning to the general fund if not spent by June 30. Ask the legislature to fix that -- with a rotating fund or other workable plan.
042	I have some problems with the objective, but I don't know how best to reword it. I know that in today's world, state parks have to collect fees to support parks and programs. On the other hand, I think it is imperative that every state park have some access and programs that are free to the citizens of Alaska. State Parks is a resource that must be available to all Alaskans, regardless of wealth, and that needs wording stronger than, "maintain the affordability of..."
050	Increasing permit fees for large-scale commercial operators is an obvious solution. Of course operators will whine and show "resistance" (page 13). However commercial use permits should, at the very minimum, generate enough revenue to pay to maintain and enforce the rules of the areas being used. In the best of all possible worlds, the general public would benefit from commercial users contributing a larger part of the funding puzzle than just what covers their impact. There is a big difference between asking Joe Public to pay a small user fee for his enjoyment of state parks and asking large-scale commercial tour operators who make a profit from using public resources to pay a larger per person user fee.
082	I fully support items 1-3, and the second #4. I question the first #4 and both #5's...it's a fine line to rely on user fees to pay for the parks and they can too easily be commercialized.
084	I particularly like Objective V which emphasizes maintaining the affordability of state parks. State parks are assets that belong to the citizens of Alaska and should remain accessible to them. I accept the necessity of user fees, but they should remain low.
086	Strategy 3 has highest priority.
091	Prioritize: 1, 3, 5, 2, 4, 6, 7.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective V - Strategy 1

Commenter #	Comment
023	For areas of the state like Juneau and probably some others, it would make sense to STOP charging parking "user" fees for areas traditionally open to the public without charge for decades -- like Eagle Beach picnic area. The fees have cut back drastically on use and have driven people to the undeveloped areas up the road without outhouses and trash containers, tables, etc., so we're getting much more destructive abuse of the shoreline and we're not seeing Eagle Beach fulfill its potential. It makes sense to charge for the campground and the pavilion (the sheltered areas at least for organized groups) -- but let's not try to force the issue for parking at the beach area for picnicking! (Many of us can see the legitimacy of an annual pass or day use fee for developed areas up north especially where folks have access to multiple parks and developed facilities.)
035	First priority.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective V - Strategy 2

Commenter #	Comment
034	Consider expanding the park pass proceeds to cover expenses of leased operations such as the Eagle River Visitor Center, so that the park pass covers parking at that center. It is discouraging to buy a pass that doesn't fit all circumstances.
035	Second priority.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective V - Strategy 3

Commenter #	Comment
002	We should not provide services that are outside of the division's mission, whether or not it's through park concession agreements. "or mission" should be deleted from the strategy as the strategic plan should at all times support the mission. The implications of the earlier wording, "appropriate" would also suggest that services provided should be within our mission.
057	Be consistent with wording structure - delete "The division will" and start with "Encourage . . ."

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective V - Strategy 4

Commenter #	Comment
019	Some concessions are not acceptable w/in parks. Guidelines should be set for what goods/services/concessions are allowed keeping the Vision's Mission Statement in mind.
020	In addition, I think that the discussion of facility/unit management contracts, goods and services concessions, and commercial use permits, should include clear and strong language that ensures that the nature, scope, and number of contracts or permits be administered to ensure that neither the natural resources and values nor the visitor experience are degraded. Objective V, Action Strategy 4. on page 16 should be worded more strongly in this regard.
081	I disagree with this strategy. The ADPOR should NOT "broaden the range of goods and services concessions are allowed to offer in state parks." Although the sentence states that the agency would take into "consideration excessive commercialization of state parks," the impetus of the aforesaid statement is clearly upon the commercialization of the park system. This must never happen. The Alaska State Parks are a rare treasure that must not be sold to the highest bidder.

PRD Comments - Financial Management - Objective V - Strategy 5

Commenter #	Comment
035	Third priority.
042	I strongly object to including, "Propose capital improvement project funding that contributes to the design, construction and operation of the South Denali Visitor Complex." as a strategy under any goal in this document. It is absurd to include under a goal of stabilizing and strengthening one's financial condition, a strategy that will destabilize and weaken one's financial condition. South Denali will require a huge capital outlay, more staffing than currently exists in the entire Matanuska-Susitna division of state parks, maintenance requirements that neither the state nor the federal government has expressed any willingness to assume. South Denali will drain state parks' budget, not add to it. Visitors fees and contributions from the cruise industry will never be sufficient to pay for it. Please delete this strategy.
059	24.5 mile Airport Facility would benefit the local public's economy and transportation needs well into the future and could be realised within the scope of 2006 - 2016 final draft Ten Year Strategic Plan as a Park revenue and concession's earning prospective. Park user permits, aircraft tie-down space, all vehicle parking and multi-use recreation and transportation opportunities may be a valuable market that has been (under-utilized) within your parks' many boundaries. Funding sources are possible as the Denali Commission, Federal Aviation Administration, other Department of Transportation related grant funding may be applied for that improves 24.5 mile Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve Airport and Multi-use Area as a community resource exceeding nominal transportation needs providing for aircraft, boat RV parking and camping, tourists and locals, as well as, park design and construction. Please have interest in design and construction of this public airport / seaplane base of operations resource that has comprehensive community interests.
087	If DPOR is considering increasing motorized recreation or adding motorized recreation parks, a mechanism for fee collection from motorized users should be proposed, either through individual use at the specific park location or as proposed legislation to establish a program to enhance and expand Alaska's trail development and maintenance efforts.