

Human Resources

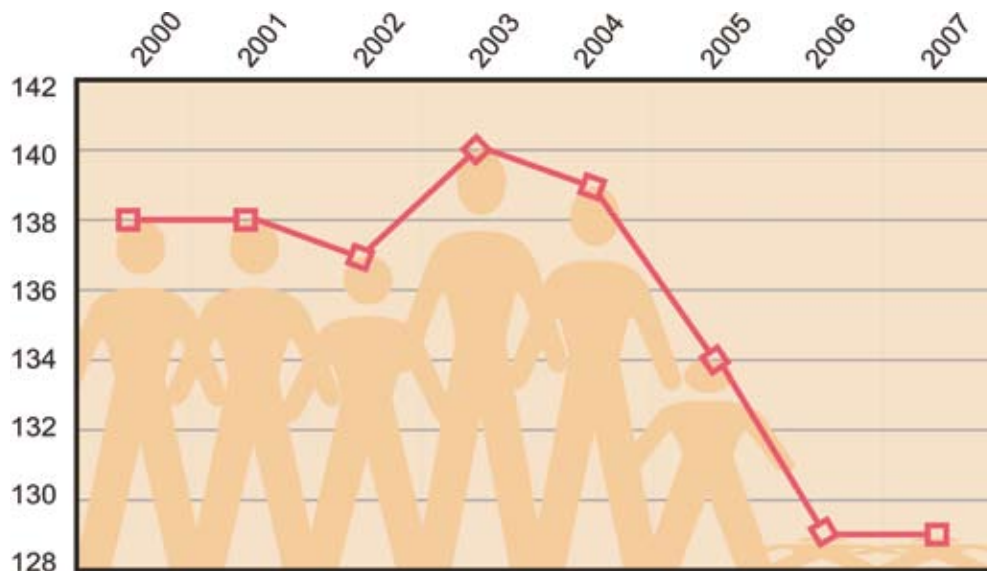
Goal: Recruit, develop and support a professional, diverse, dedicated, motivated and effective workforce.

The Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation is known for its ability to accomplish much with few staff. For years the division has ranked as one of the leanest park systems in the nation, with one of the lowest ratios of employees to both visitors and resources managed. The division has historically attracted people who are passionate about what they do, are capable of accomplishing a lot with few resources, have a wide variety of skills, and possess a deep-seated commitment to public service. In recent years however, the division has had trouble recruiting qualified candidates to fill vacant positions because of the inability to provide competitive wages and the few opportunities for advancement within the agency. In 2003 for example, the division had 140 employees. That number has dwindled to 129 employees today due in part to increased employee costs and flat funding.

The division is committed to increasing human resource investments to help staff retain and develop the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their duties at a high level and to enable the division to build and retain a creative and competent workforce.

To ensure the ability to support high quality recreation opportunities and meet increasing public demand for those opportunities, it may be necessary to complete an in-depth analysis of current staff numbers, duties and overall management structure to provide the highest level of service Alaskans have come to expect from their state park and outdoor recreation programs. The division will also strive for a workforce that exemplifies a diversity of skills, gender, ethnic backgrounds, ages, and viewpoints. As a part of this effort, the division is committed to developing a succession plan ensuring that as senior employees move toward retirement, junior employees are prepared to fill their shoes. The division must also identify the human resources needed for the future. The division must commit to creating a culture that actively encourages open internal communication, creative thinking and problem solving, to take full advantage of the collective knowledge and experience of our professional staff. Further, the outstanding work by employees will be sufficiently recognized and encouraged through a meaningful employee incentive and recognition effort.

Figure 2. Number of Park Operations Staff, 2000-2007¹



¹ Includes all permanent, seasonal and temporary staff.

Objective I.

Assure there are a sufficient number of highly-qualified employees, and the necessary resources for them to be able to efficiently serve the public.

Action Strategies:

1. Work with the Division of Administration to ensure that a career ladder exists within the division for all job classes and that wages are competitive.
2. By 2008, the division will begin to increase maintenance staffing to levels that will help the division reduce the deferred maintenance backlog and meet public needs for safe, clean and well-maintained facilities. The division will continue to add maintenance staff as necessary to achieve this end including creating a maintenance supervisor position for the entire division.
3. Evaluate current staff roles, and management strategies (such as use of seasonal employees, volunteers and contractors). As part of this effort, initiate and dedicate staff by 2008 to a time-and-motion study to understand how much time it takes to perform a job. Complete this study by 2009. The study needs to be done at every level of the division and will serve as a valuable tool to properly allocate resources to projects. Implement recommendations based on the study's findings.
4. Identify and acquire, as necessary, additional technical assistance on, realty services, planning, contracting, appeals and geographic information systems. Other staff positions may be needed to coordinate volunteers, trails management and interpretation. These positions should be identified by management by 2007 and established by 2010.
5. Develop a strategy to advertise and recruit highly qualified and motivated applicants to fill vacant division positions.
6. Establish an allocation plan, equipment standards and replacement schedules for non-DOT leased vehicles and equipment. This plan would address equipment such as snowmobiles, groomers, boats, and ATVs.
7. The parks with significant trail systems (Chena, Chugach, Kachemak and Denali) need dedicated and adequately trained trail crews. Other park areas should identify and partner with existing non-profit trail organizations (examples include the Sitka and Juneau areas), or foster the development of new trail nonprofits where none currently exist. Also see the action strategies under the Partnerships goal. The division will establish these trails crews by 2012.
8. Train to a high level at least one permanent staff member in sustainable trail management, layout and design to lend technical assistance to the entire division.
9. Work with the Division of Administration to determine how law enforcement rangers can qualify for twenty-year retirement similar to other law enforcement agencies.



Objective II.

Facilitate clear and effective internal communication.

Action Strategies:

1. Develop and evaluate communication tools to better inform staff of division issues, projects, activities, and personnel actions outside and within their immediate work environment.
2. Survey all division employees to determine ways to improve and encourage internal communications, staff creativity and innovative thinking. Conduct a confidential employee survey every two years to evaluate staff perceptions on the work environment and to measure the efficacy of strategies. Implement appropriate recommendations.
3. Identify and implement ways for staff to voice concerns and make suggestions for improvements to management.



Objective III.

Provide staff with opportunities for professional development to enable them to improve performance in their current position and to prepare employees to be qualified and competitive candidates for more advanced positions.

Action Strategies:

1. Establish and support a training committee consisting of representatives from management, administrative, ranger, technician and maintenance job classes by April 2007 to assess, prioritize and implement division-wide training needs. This committee will identify the specific skills needed for each job class and ways to receive training. The training committee will help develop and institute an annually updated succession plan, which includes an employee-mentoring program to develop existing staff for career advancement. A training officer(s) will be assigned to coordinate training and funds will be dedicated for training personnel.
2. To enhance natural and cultural resource management skills, the resource interdisciplinary team will identify baseline training needs and standards for all division employees and provide them to the training committee.
3. Promote and provide opportunities for cross-training staff statewide.
4. Implement a formal employee awards program that includes a nomination process and selection criteria. Establish procedures for encouraging and recognizing specific achievements by staff.



Objective V.

Recruit a diverse workforce for the division.

Action Strategies:

1. Provide information on the availability of job class and career opportunities within the division, targeting schools, universities, youth organizations, and state and federal youth and young adult conservation employment programs, in both rural and urban communities.
2. Participate in local job fairs and career days.
3. Develop a plan to better provide career opportunity information and investigate ways to reach diverse audiences including working with other agencies.