

# Is Somebody Attempting to Close State Parks?

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## Abstract

Seems that Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission just might be playing some money games whilst considering elimination of existing open- and operating-State Parks. So, let's use this article to just review some presented information.

## Contents

<b>Parks closing?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SSB 5600 Says</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>What's wrong?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Closures meeting</b>	<b>3</b>

## List of Tables

1	Requested current law budget . . .	3
2	§ 303 Parks Budget . . . . .	5



Figure 1: A State Park's Colors

## Why close State Parks but get more money?

The problem is this:

- Prob. 1. State Parks are to received more money FY 2010–11;
- Prob. 2. New ‘Taxpayers’ tax on vehicle license for benefit of State Parks; and
- Prob. 3. New Wash. Legis. Sess. 2010–11 SSB 5600 is mandating t r a n s f e r r i n g State Parks to others;
- Prob. 4. State Parks management and commission is meeting to consider more State Parks closures in April.

## What does SSB 5600 present

One of the conditions or stipulations contained within SSB 5600 is this:

(3) The commission shall actively pursue transferring ownership of state parks to local governments, tribes, or other entities that have expressed an interest in operating the park. The commission shall provide biannual updates of this effort to the office of financial management and the appropriate fiscal committees of the legislature. The first report shall be submitted no later than December 1, 2009.

**Source:** SSB 5600 §303-3, at 81[[SSB5600](#), § 303, p.81]

Let’s just do a simple summary review the mission for State Parks. The State of Washington, Office of Financial Management, presents this:

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission is responsible for the long-term care and protection of Washington’s state parks. Charged with a dual mission, the commission seeks to provide recreation access to and public enjoyment of a diverse park system while caring for the parks’ stewardship needs which are necessary to preserve the system’s values for future generations.

### Agency Mission

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission acquires, operates, enhances, and protects a diverse system of recreational, cultural, historical, and natural sites. The Commission fosters outdoor recreation and education statewide to provide enjoyment and enrichment for all and a valued legacy to future generations. **Source:** OFM, Agency 465, State Parks[[OFMSP](#), p.1]

## How much money for State Parks Tomorrow?

Looking at SSB 5600 Total Appropriation for FY 2010–11 we see \$157,252,000

Table 1: Requested current law budget

Request	\$154,975,000
Net change from current biennium	\$4,373,000
Percent change from current biennium	2.9-%

Source: [OFMSP, p.1]

for the benefit of State Parks and Recreation Commission.[SSB5600, § 303, p.81].

So, if OFM presented the December 2008 State Parks requested at \$154,975,000 within Table 1, p. 3 but the current SSB 5600 (Table 2) Total Appropriation equals \$157,252,000; as a result, this gives the average ‘Citizen’ or ‘Taxpayer’ the impression that State Parks Agency is proposed to receive not a 2.9-percent increase from the current biennium, but a 4.4-percent increase for the current biennium.

As a result, with this \$6,680,000 increase from FY 2007–09 (estimated) to this new FY 2010–11 (proposed) using data from SSB 5600 and OFM (\$150,572,000).

But, we find within SHB 1244 budgeted \$146,198,000[SHB1244, § 1202, p.352] proposed for FY 2008–09 that is a decrease from the OFM \$150,572,000; however, now, if SSB 5600 is proposing \$157,252,000; it follows, that is a 7.5-percent increase proposed for State Parks spending for FY 2010–11.

## So, what is wrong with State Parks budgets?

We can see that State Parks are proposed a 4.4- to 7.5-percent budget increase for FY2010–11 operating budgets, but as SSB 5600 says: “**The commission shall actively pursue transferring ownership of state parks to local governments, tribes, or other entities that have expressed an interest in operating the park.**” [SSB5600, § 303(3), p.81] (emphasis added to original)

## State Parks meet to discuss closures?

ITEM E-9: Status of Parks Proposed for Transfer or Mothballing

This item will report to the Commission on the status of plans to transfer up to 13 state parks and mothball up to 32 state parks. This is in response to potential additional cost savings required by agency budget reductions. This item complies with the Centennial 2013 Plan elements, “Our Commitment – Financial Strategy.”

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**Source:** State Parks Meeting Agenda 23 Apr. 2009 Item E-9, at 14[[SPmtg](#), Item E-9, at 14]

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Table 2: NEW SECTION. § 303. FOR THE STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

<b>Description</b>	<b>\$</b>
General Fund–State Appropriation (FY 2010)	\$26,746,000
General Fund–State Appropriation (FY 2011)	\$25,989,000
General Fund–Federal Appropriation	\$5,927,000
General Fund–Private/Local Appropriation	\$73,000
Winter Recreation Program Account–State Appropria- tion	\$1,561,000
Off-Road Vehicle Account–State Appropriation	\$240,000
Snowmobile Account–State Appropriation	\$4,845,000
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account–State Appropria- tion	\$369,000
Parks Renewal and Stewardship Account–State Appropria- tion	\$71,840,000
Parks Renewal and Stewardship Account–Private/Local Appropriation	\$300,000
Recreation Resources Account–State Appropriation	\$9,802,000
NOVA Program Account–State Appropriation	\$9,560,000
<b>TOTAL APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>\$157,252,000</b>

Source: SSB 5600 §303.3, at 81[SSB5600, § 303, p.81]

## References

[SHB1244] State of Washington, Wash. Legis. Sess. 2009–10, Substitute House Bill 1244, § 1202, p.352, (FY 2008–09), [SHB 1244](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2009-10/Pdf/Bills/House%20Bills/1244-S.pdf), available at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2009-10/Pdf/Bills/House%20Bills/1244-S.pdf> (Adobe PDF document) (last visited 17 Apr. 2009).

[SSB5600] State of Washington, Wash. Legis. Sess. 2009–10, Substitute Senate Bill 5600, § 303, p.81, [Substitute Bill \(WM 09\)](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2009-10/Pdf/Bills/Senate%20Bills/5600-S.pdf) available at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2009-10/Pdf/Bills/Senate%20Bills/5600-S.pdf> (Adobe PDF document) (last visited 17 Apr. 2009).

[OFMSP] State of Washington, Office of Financial Management (OFM), Agency 465, *Current Law Budget, State Parks and Recreation Commission*, 16 Dec 2008, available at <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/budget09/detail/c1465.pdf> (last visited 17 Apr. 2009).

[SPmtg] State of Washington, The State Parks and Recreation Commission, Commission Meetings, *2009-04-23 detailed Commission agenda items.doc*, (DOC document), (agenda items for 23 Apr. 2009 meeting) (last visited 17 Apr. 2009).

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