

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PARKS

February 10, 1997 Hearing Room E

1:00 P.M. Tapes 5 - 6

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Rep. Mark Simmons, Chair

Rep. Michael Fahey, Vice-Chair

Rep. Leslie Lewis

Rep. Jim Welsh

**MEMBER EXCUSED:** Rep. Mike Lehman

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Pat Zwick, Policy Analyst

Marjorie Taylor, Administrative Support

**MEASURE/ISSUES HEARD:**

**Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Budget Overview**

These minutes are in compliance with Senate and House Rules. Only text enclosed in quotation marks reports a speaker's exact words. For complete contents, please refer to the tapes.

<b>Tape/#</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>TAPE 5, A</b>		
005	Chair Simmons	Calls the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m.
<b><u>OREGON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT BUDGET OVERVIEW</u></b>		
008	Bob Meinen	Director, Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department
		Presents a Budget Overview packet ( <b>EXHIBIT A</b> ), and shows charts related to a ten year proposal for parks building and repair needs. Focuses on older buildings, ADA accessibility, paving of

012	Meinen	roads, trails and electrical systems. Most buildings were constructed before 1974 and therefore need ADA access. Describes the needs of various parks in all geographic districts around the state.
064	Chair Simmons	Asks where the nearest camping areas are to Cove Palisades.
066	Meinen	A private campground is about five or six miles away. A closer private campground has been proposed.
072	Chair Simmons	Asks what type of effect another campground would have on Cove Palisades.
076	Meinen	People want water access, therefore it's hard to gauge an effect.
087	Meinen	Continues to review other areas of the state and their needs. There are detailed descriptions for four parks in the packet. Gives an overview of the ages of buildings and describes a repair schedule - there is a 30-40 year life on the buildings. In regards to building replacement - Parks Department wants to have a dedicated internal expense account that accrues interest. The account will allow the system to accrue the money to take care of buildings in the future.
145	Rep. Fahey	Asks if income from the parks is amortized from the expense account.
154	Meinen	Parks income has not been separated, but the account would provide future legislators with some spending leverage.
163	Rep. Fahey	Asks if buildings would be updated or just repaired.
166	Meinen	If the buildings are historic, then it would be restoration and repair of existing facilities. Other structures would be updated with better products and usage - the Parks Department is trying to get better prices and better materials for all projects.
187	Rep. Fahey	Agrees that the reserve fund makes sense.
188	Meinen	States that if the parks stay open, then there must be a plan for the future. Describes the current repair needs and costs of the Vista House.
202	Rep. Fahey	Asks if there is money available from outside sources for historic repairs
204	Meinen	There was at one time, but it has been cut back.
212	Meinen	Speaks of long term stable funding. There are several possibilities. Save our Parks consists of baseline investments to maintain what is currently operating. A second funding possibility is Leave a Legacy for the future. The plan is based on estimates from a while ago, but it allows the parks to grow.
285	Meinen	Focuses on the Budget Narrative.

295	Meinen	The Governor removed development grants to local governments, reducing the burden on the general fund, and acquiring once in a lifetime opportunities. The packet describes how priorities were applied to the budget. Calls for questions about the budget.
352	Meinen	Provides information about the Parks and Prisoners program. The plan proposes to utilize prisoners more effectively.
<b>TAPE 6, A</b>		
008	Meinen	Last year over 1,100 prisoners did over 83,000 hours of work.
017	Meinen	The prisons agree that there is a possibility for the prisoners to build prefab structures. Another suggestion is for mobile corrections units to move into parks in the off season so that they can work on natural resource renovation and trail development.
039	Chair Simmons	Asks about full time equivalents (FTEs) in the budget.
040	Meinen	They are needed when it comes to logistics and supplies on that scale. Currently, park and area managers do much of the communicating with the Corrections Department. The main issue with the Parks and Prisoners proposal is supervision from Corrections. It is proposed that Corrections provide security and supervision when the prisoners are in the parks. Currently, whole crews go into the field including supervision.
077	Chair Simmons	Asks how many prisoners were out last season.
079	Meinen	A little over 1,100 with over 80,000 hours of work.
084	Chair Simmons	Acknowledges the significance of their contribution.
085	Meinen	With recent storms, the prisoners were very helpful.
092	Chair Simmons	Asks what the impacts are on the Corrections budget.
095	Meinen	Offers to contact Corrections and return with the information.
098	Meinen	Focuses on legislative initiatives.
101	Meinen	Provides summaries of Parks related bills - HB 2138 restricts RV trip permits. Over \$1 million in revenues are lost each year from trip permits. HB 2140 focuses on revenue bonding.
125	Meinen	HB 2141 relating to ocean shores permits should make the permit process easier for those involved. Indicates that the assessment of fees for the process will be controversial. Parks has kept track of costs related to permits for several years and has determined that a fee must now be assessed to break even.
160	Chair Simmons	Asks what the opposition is to HB 2141.
161	Meinen	Primarily the fees that are proposed - currently there is no charge

		for the process.
172	Chair Simmons	Asks what HB 2141 is related to.
173	Meinen	Dredging and filling of waterways.
176	Rep. Fahey	Asks if the jurisdictions in the bill are clearly defined.
182	Meinen	Acknowledges that there are a few problems.
190	Rep. Fahey	Asks if some people use trip permits on their RVs for insurance purposes.
194	Meinen	Expresses concern about people who are avoiding registration. Indicates that with the Department of Motor Vehicles, it's pretty easy to avoid registration with a cheap 120 day permit.
230	Meinen	SB 151, SB 152, and SB 154 are related to the Heritage Commission.
236	Meinen	SB 153 is aimed at protecting beach access. Subdivisions have developed requests to abandon old right-of-ways to the beach.
288	Rep. Welsh	Asks how many parcels the park holds that aren't parks.
295	Meinen	At a later date, a paper will be provided that outlines that information.
304	Rep. Welsh	Asks the approximate value of the unused parcels.
307	Meinen	That value will be added to the table.
314	Rep. Fahey	States that rangers and their assistants are not over paid.
319	Meinen	Pay is definitely an issue and needs to be upgraded.
327	Rep. Fahey	States that the salaries are shockingly low
328	Meinen	Indicates that seasonal employees are paid even less.
335	Rep. Welsh	Asks for discussion of the parks reservation system.
341	Meinen	The system was developed in joint partnership with the state of Washington. The old hand system brought in about 50,000 reservations/year at \$6 each. Staffing for the old method cost about double the revenues generated. The Parks Department tried to be as cost effective as possible when implementing the electronic reservation system.
<b>TAPE 5, B</b>		
005	Meinen	Oregon started taking reservations for 26 of 50 parks with campgrounds. Oregon and Washington had over 170,000 reservations in the first year, and the system blew up. The users were surveyed to suggest improvements to the registration

		process. The system now meets about 90% of what was requested. Money has been requested to help retain good phone operators.
060	Rep. Welsh	Asks if the reservation system is effective with cancellations.
065	Meinen	The cancellation process has been changed such that by the same day at 2:30, sites will be opened if not filled.
079	Rep. Welsh	Asks if the State Parks are competitive with private sites.
082	Meinen	Costs in general, of comparable products; State Parks run at or a little over market value.
100	Meinen	State Parks does not want to compete with private enterprise.
103	Chair Simmons	Asks for more information on seasonal FTEs.
124	Meinen	For the 1995-1997 budget, there were 428 FTE which made approximately 364 seasonal and 255 permanent positions.
142	Chair Simmons	Asks if the reservation system is cost competitive with the private sector
144	Meinen	California State Parks uses a private system which charges \$6 per reservation which is about the national average. Private and public systems run about the same cost and problem wise.
182	Rep. Fahey	Indicates that comparing private to public parks isn't a fair comparison since each offers it's own advantages and disadvantages.
208	Rep. Lewis	Asks if the Parks Department is planning to put the reservation system on the internet.
216	Meinen	That is a possibility for next season, and the internet system is being developed now. Consumer protection is a concern when dealing with confirmations.
253	Chair Simmons	Asks whose idea it was to separate Parks from Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).
258	Meinen	It was a Governor's initiative in 1989-1990, so possibly Governor Goldschmidt. It was a difficult and healthy choice to make, but Parks still values a good working relationship with ODOT.
288	Chair Simmons	Asks if the funding problems originated immediately after the division.
290	Meinen	Since 1980, resources have not been available to keep the Parks in the best condition.
320	Meinen	Indicates that there needs to be a widening of financing of various programs.
362	Chair Simmons	Ask if the Parks Department would have been better off had they stayed with ODOT.

364	Meinen	No, since there would have been such an effort made to make sure Parks was not related to the gas tax.
<b>TAPE 6, B</b>		
014	Chair Simmons	Inquires if the Parks Department has picked up other responsibilities after the separation from ODOT and what they are.
017	Meinen	Last legislative session Parks picked up the unfunded Historic Trails and funded Heritage Commission programs.
033	Chair Simmons	Asks if both programs were brought on by the legislature.
035	Meinen	Answers affirmatively.
036	Chair Simmons	Asks if the Parks Department has sought out other responsibilities.
041	Meinen	The Adopt-A-River program was originated by Parks but given to the Marine Board.
045	Chair Simmons	Asks if there is a cost to the Adopt-A-River program.
047	Meinen	Very small, basically disposal of waste and some administrative costs.
056	Chair Simmons	Calls for other questions from the committee.
059	Chair Simmons	Adjourns the meeting at 2:32 p.m.

Submitted By, Reviewed By,

Marjorie Taylor, Pat Zwick,

Administrative Support Policy Analyst

**EXHIBIT SUMMARY**

**A - Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Budget Overview, Bob Meinen, 80 pp.**