



Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Administrative Overview October 2013

Introduction

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD), officially the State Parks and Recreation Department, was created by the Legislative Assembly in 1989, and began operations in 1990. The seven-member, governor-appointed State Parks and Recreation Commission was established to set policies, appoint OPRD's director, acquire property, promote Oregon's outdoor recreation policy, set fees, and adopt rules necessary to execute the duties of the new state agency, which was formerly a division of the Oregon Department of Transportation (O.L. 1989, Ch. 904).

History

Oregon's state park system grew primarily from the creation and development of its public highways. Advocating for "good roads legislation" in 1913, Governor Oswald West urged legislators to declare the entire length of Oregon's coast a public highway. The Legislative Assembly agreed, designating the ocean shore tideland forever open to the public (O.L. 1913, Ch. 47). The State Highway Commission was also created in this session; composed of the governor, secretary of state and state treasurer, the commission soon approved its first State Highway Plan, including the Oregon Beach Highway from Seaside to the California border (O.L. 1913, Ch. 339; ODOT, p. 13). In 1915 state legislation was passed to preserve the scenic beauty of certain waterfalls and streams in view of the Columbia River Highway (O.L. 1915, Ch. 36).

In a special message to legislators in 1921, Governor Ben Olcott highlighted the state's blessed, but rapidly disappearing, natural glory, and urged the "preservation of what should never be lost [. . .] without too great expense and without arbitrary confiscation of property." Governor Olcott recommended a series of draft bills that would empower the State Highway Commission (SHC) to acquire and enlarge rights of way along highways "for the maintenance and preservation of scenic beauties;" and prohibit the removal of trees along public roads without SHC's permission. More ambitiously, Governor Olcott proposed authorizing the state (through SHC) to acquire land along public roads for parks or parking spaces for the use, convenience and accommodation of the traveling public. The latter land acquisition proposal did not receive legislative approval, but the right of way bill did, creating new scenic preservation duties for SHC (O.L. 1921, Ch. 343).

In 1925 SHC was authorized to use state highway funds (and condemnation) to acquire property for the preservation and culture of trees (beyond the 300 foot roadway), and to establish scenic places and parking areas (O.L. 1925, Ch. 201). Between 1922 and 1927 SHC acquired nearly 2,000 acres for state parks in 14 different counties; SHC employees were not specifically assigned to the parks program, however, so administration was difficult at best (Straton, p. 14).

In 1929 Governor Isaac Patterson appointed a State Park Commission to create and develop a state park system; acquire and protect timbered strips along state highways, rivers and streams; secure public ownership of typical stands of native trees; maintain the public's right to use the ocean beaches; protect native plants; and preserve the state's natural beauty (1929-30 BB, p.12). The new commission appointed Samuel Boardman the first state parks superintendent for Oregon; often called the 'father of Oregon state parks system,' Superintendent Boardman increased Oregon's state park acreage from 4,000 to 66,000 acres before his retirement in 1950.

In 1935 SHC was authorized to compile and publish information regarding public parks, recreational grounds, and scenic and other public places for the convenience of the travelling and general public (O.L. 1935, Ch. 195). Cities and counties were authorized by the Legislative Assembly to convey lands "not desired" to the state (through SHC) for rights of way, parks, rock quarries, gravel pits, stock pile sites, or other state highway purposes (O.L. 1935, Ch. 204).

During the Depression (1929-41) financing for parks was limited, especially for development. The federal government undertook many relief programs to put people to work; some of these were especially helpful to park conservation and development. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), under the supervision of the National Park Service, carried on state park Emergency Conservation Work. In Oregon the first two CCC camps were established in October 1933 near Gold Beach in Curry County, and Benson Park east of Portland on the Columbia River. Until the requisite wartime shutdown in 1942, improvements were carried out in 45 Oregon state parks.

In 1942 Oregonians approved a legislatively-referred constitutional amendment that required motor vehicle fuel taxes to be used for the construction, maintenance, and policing of public highways, roads and streets. Voters also authorized the use of fuel taxes for the acquisition, development, and publicizing of parks, recreational, scenic and historical places (1941, SJR 11).

The postwar era saw a great increase in the number of park visitors and the complexity of park administration. In 1949 the state was divided into five park districts, each the responsibility of a supervisor. With the rise in use there was a demand for more facilities, especially camping areas.

In 1947 SHC was statutorily authorized to establish a State Parks Division under its control; to appoint a state parks superintendent; and to make regulations regarding use and administration of state parks and all other recreation, scenic and other places of attraction owned or under the control of the state (O.L. 1947, Ch. 184). The ocean shore between ordinary high tide and extreme low tide from the Columbia River to the California border was again declared a public highway, except portions already sold into private ownership. The regulation of motor vehicles and rules of the road were made applicable to the beach, with 25 m.p.h. the maximum speed, unless set lower by SHC. On the recommendation of a city or county, SHC was authorized to establish beach zones of no motor vehicle use or landing of aircraft. (O.L. 1947, Chs. 493, 568)

After 1950, the State Parks organization took on a more traditional character in which the parks superintendent became the executive officer for a group of specialized staff and park managers. It took many years for park managers to be designated as managers rather than caretakers, but in the 1950s, field personnel were engaged in more than caretaking, they were developing the parks to make them more attractive and useful to the public. A new management style was established in which more responsibility was delegated to field managers working in coordination with the Salem office. Outside organizations and citizen groups more directly affected system expansion.

One citizen group to have a strong impact on the SHC state parks organization was the Save the Gorge committee of the Portland Women's Forum. The committee encouraged the Legislative Assembly to pass an act establishing a Columbia River Gorge Commission to preserve, develop and protect the recreational, scenic and historical areas of the Gorge (O.L. 1953, Ch. 475). An interim committee was appointed to study the Columbia River's economic values, recreational facilities, and opportunities for state park and boating facility development; the State Highway Department and parks superintendent were directed to assist (1953, SJR 12). The State Land Board was authorized to transfer submerged and shore lands to SHC, which was authorized to exchange all or parts for other lands (O.L. 1953, Ch. 21). Land exchanges were executed with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, and Hood River County. The State of Oregon continued to purchase and receive gifts of land to enlarge its holdings in the Gorge.

After World War II, there was a nationwide surge in outdoor recreation and family camping, and increased demand for developed recreational areas. The focus of Oregon's park program changed from land acquisition to development and management. There was a growing public interest in the creation of an independent parks department to manage Oregon's state parks (Straton, p. 17).

In 1955 Governor Paul Patterson requested SHC's Advisory Committee on Travel Information to study whether the administration of state parks should continue under the commission or under an entirely new agency. The State Park Study and Advisory Committee advocated publicizing state parks to increase their use, and scheduling hearings to learn public desires concerning state parks. Its report of findings and recommendations for the future administration and management of state parks was submitted to Patterson's successor, Governor Elmo Smith, in July 1956.

Not surprisingly, the advisory committee's conclusion was that "[s]o long as parks are financed solely from highway revenue, jurisdiction should remain with the Highway Commission." The committee suggested the creation of an advisory board of citizens, nominated by SHC and appointed by the governor, representing broad public interests, to function as an agency of SHC. The board would relieve SHC of much of its detailed work concerning programs. It would advise on policy, conduct legislative studies, and recommend statutory changes to the Legislative Assembly. The new advisory board would undertake additional studies for future park programs, development of county park and recreation departments, and coordination of federal, state and local park agencies. In August 1957, a Parks Advisory Committee was appointed by Governor Smith; beginning in 1958, the committee met regularly with staff to review state park matters.

The first formal statement of administrative policy was developed for Oregon state parks in 1957. Criteria for the acquisition of park areas included accessibility to the public, recreation, attractive features, and geographical balance. Parks were to be developed to meet recreational needs; and maintained in a neat and sanitary fashion, with roads maintained by the Highway Department. State parks were free to public entry with fees charged only for special services, such as overnight camping, and electrical hookups for trailers. River, stream and lake access was to be provided where possible; non-conforming uses, such as grazing and salvage logging, could be allowed if not detrimental to park interests; hunting was generally prohibited in state parks.

In 1959 the Legislative Assembly renamed SHC's State Parks Division as the State Parks and Recreation Division. A commission-appointed State Recreation Director position was created under the State Parks Superintendent to study and appraise the recreational needs of the state; assemble and disseminate information for tourist and local needs; and investigate and make recommendations regarding parks facility, personnel, and program needs (O.L. 1959, Ch. 611).

In 1961 the Legislative Assembly created the Scenic Area Commission within the Bureau of Labor and Industries to establish, vacate and regulate scenic areas along the state's highways (O.L. 1961, Ch. 614). In the next legislative session the commission was transferred to SHC, and it was renamed as the Scenic Area Board (O.L. 1963, Ch. 400). The board was then made a stand-alone entity (O.L. 1965, Ch. 219); ten years later it was abolished (O.L. 1977, Ch. 578).

In the 1960s, state parks land acquisition policy was to acquire key tracts of land, but to limit the purchase of private land. The federal government was encouraged to transfer surplus lands to the state for park purposes. In 1963 the acquisition and administration of historic places was officially added to SHC's public highway and state parks statutory duties (O.L. 1963, Ch. 601).

Following a recommendation of the National Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, in 1964 the U.S. Congress passed the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, which provided a fund to assist state and federal agencies in meeting public outdoor recreation needs (P.L. 88-578). In Oregon, the federal matching grants aided state recreation planning, development and acquisition. In addition, pass-through grants were funneled to local governments for recreation development and acquisition. Coordination of this work was delegated to the State Recreation Director. The State Parks and Recreation Division thus became a focal point for coordinating federal, state, local and private efforts in outdoor recreation.

In 1964 the Parks and Recreation Division began a beach access program – acquiring access sites adjoining beaches at approximately three-mile intervals, providing user facilities, encouraging public use of beaches, and preventing private owners from barring beach access (Straton, p. 18). The following year the Legislative Assembly designated Oregon's ocean shore a 'state recreation area' (instead of a public highway), thus a unit of the state parks system (O.L. 1965, Ch. 368). Legislators also passed a state outdoor recreation policy, statutorily establishing the desirability that all present and future Oregonians be assured outdoor recreation resources, and specifying appropriate state actions (including the protection of open spaces) that would be needed to be taken in order to meet the state's growing recreation needs (O.L. 1965, Ch. 299; Straton, p. 19).

By 1965, despite previous state legislation and widespread public belief to the contrary, there was rising concern in the Parks and Recreation Division regarding the state's legal basis entitling the public full access to Oregon's beaches. The principal recreational playground – the dry sand portion (landward of the ordinary high tide line) – was often privately owned, according to property deeds, and federal shore land case decisions; and there was a significant lack of clear state law regarding the landward boundary of the state's beach ownership (Straton, pp. 19-22).

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) was enacted in 1966, establishing a nationwide program to inventory, register and protect places of historic interest through the National Register of Historic Places, and State Historic Preservation Offices (P.L. 89-665). The Parks and Recreation Division was designated as Oregon's NHPA administrative agency. The first NHPA funds for development of the Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties were obtained in 1969.

In June 1967 the Legislative Assembly passed HB 1601, the Beach Bill, which essentially declared that the public's frequent and uninterrupted use of the ocean shore had created easements that vested ownership of the land in the State of Oregon; and prohibited construction on any property between the extreme low tide and the elevation of 16 feet, without prior SHC approval. The commission was directed to survey the entire shoreland to establish the landward boundary; authorized to police, protect and maintain all state recreation areas, and contiguous

property for public use; and directed and to undertake court proceedings necessary to protect the public's rights and easements (O.L. 1967, Ch. 601). In 1969 SHC's "line of vegetation" survey results were completed and accepted, and Oregon's ocean shore ownership was established and described in statute; SHC was directed to protect, maintain and promulgate rules governing the use of state recreation areas, easements, and areas abutting those lands (O.L. 1969, Ch. 601).

Another significant Oregon parks and recreation development in this period was the launching of the Willamette River Greenway concept by Governor Tom McCall, who appointed a task force to study, and a Willamette Recreational Greenway Committee to plan for, the comprehensive preservation of a relatively cleaned-up river for public recreational use (EO 67-2). Legislators accepted the parks aspect of the governor's greenway proposal, statutorily establishing a public interest in the acquisition and development of a Willamette River Park System; state funds were allocated to SWC to assist local governments in the acquisition of park lands (without eminent domain); and the governor was directed to appoint a Willamette River Park System Committee (a continuation of the group established by executive order) to further the realization of this recreational system (O.L. 1967, Ch. 551). Administratively, SHC determined policy and funding; the governor's committee set grant policy and approved grant requests; and Parks and Recreation processed local grant requests, and carried out needed studies and appraisals (Bauer, pp. 51-68).

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) was created in by the Legislative Assembly in 1969; the Highway Department was renamed the Highway Division (within ODOT), and included SHC and the Parks and Recreation Division (O.L. 1969, Ch. 599; ODOT, p. 62).

The Scenic Waterways Act became law in December 1970, having been approved by voters as an initiative petition the previous month. The Oregon Scenic Waterways System was established, requiring the maintenance of the free flowing character of the listed waterways, chiefly for recreation, fish and wildlife uses. SHC was designated as the primary administrator of the system, and directed to undertake a continuing study of its health and status (O.L. 1971, Ch. 1).

Lawmakers passed the Oregon Recreational Trails System Act in 1971, instituting a system of recreational trails and prescribing methods and standards for the addition of components. SHC was directed to establish the Oregon Recreational Trails Advisory Council (ORTAC), and to consult with them regarding trails, rights of way, maintenance, and administration; ORTAC was composed of eight members, with two from each congressional district (O.L. 1971, Ch. 614).

The 30-member Oregon Coastal Conservation and Development Commission, and four coordinating committees for designated coastal districts, were created by the Legislative Assembly in 1971 to study the natural resources of the coastal zone, and their highest and best uses. The new commission was directed to prepare findings and a comprehensive plan for preservation and development by January 1975 (O.L. 1971, Ch. 608). The Oregon Motorist Information Act of 1971 also passed in this session, instituting a Travel Information Council to establish travel information centers; the chair of SHC (or a designee) was named a member of the council, as were ten governor-appointed interest group representatives (O.L. 1971, Ch. 770).

The State Highway Commission (SHC) was abolished by Oregon lawmakers in 1973; its duties were transferred to ODOT; the Oregon Transportation Commission was also created (O.L. 1973, Ch. 249). The nascent Willamette River Park System was officially designated as the Willamette River Greenway; SHC (or successor, ODOT) was directed to prepare a plan for the development

and management of the Willamette River Greenway, and to submit it to the State Land Board, which was directed to investigate and approve or revise the plan (O.L. 1973, Ch. 558).

In 1973 the Legislative Assembly created the Natural Area Preserves Advisory Committee as an advisory body to the State Land Board; it was composed of seven governor-appointed members; and the State Game Director, State Forester, Administrator of Highways, and Chancellor of State Board of Higher Education (or designees) were named ex officio members (O.L. 1973, Ch. 532).

Another important development in 1973 that affected resource management and Oregon state parks activities was the creation of the Department of Land Conservation and Development and its directorate, the Land Conservation and Development Commission (O.L. 1973, Ch. 80).

In 1975 the maintenance and preservation of Oregon properties of historic significance was declared to be in the best interest of the state; the governor was directed to appoint a State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to adopt rules regarding the determination of entitlement of historic properties to a special property tax assessment – the nation's first state-level historic preservation tax incentive. SHPO was directed to notify county assessors of its approval or disapproval of historic property applications (O.L. 1975, Ch. 514).

The Legislative Assembly abolished the Travel Information Council in 1977, transferring its duties to the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) (O.L. 1977, Ch. 810). In the next session a Travel Information Advisory Council was created to advise OTC (O.L. 1979, Ch. 478).

In 1979 the Parks and Recreation Division was legislatively created as a full division of ODOT; the director of ODOT was directed to appoint the division head – the ‘administrator,’ statutorily substituting for the defunct superintendent position (O.L. 1979, Ch. 186). The Historic Properties Committee was established in the state Department of General Services (O.L. 1979, Ch. 205).

Following the energy crisis in the late 1970s, when gasoline tax revenues were severely reduced, there was public pressure for non-gas tax funding of state park and recreation operations. In May 1980 Oregon voters approved a legislatively-referred constitutional amendment precluding use of the Oregon Highway Fund for anything but road construction related expenses (1979, SJR 7). Parks and Recreation Division’s operations were now supported by General Funds from the Legislative Assembly, park user fees, recreation vehicle fees, federal funds, and miscellaneous sources. While severance of state parks from the Highway Fund ultimately created greater public awareness of state park matters, shortages in state General Fund monies resulted in park budget reductions. In the years from 1980 to 1989, while the Parks and Recreation Division remained in the Department of Transportation, only limited funds were available for state park purposes.

In 1981 a Travel Information Section was created in ODOT (O.L. 1981, Ch. 700). In the next legislative session it was abolished, and a Tourism Division was established in the Economic Development Department (EDD); the Oregon Tourism Council was created to advise the new division (O.L. 1983, Ch. 324). EDD, ODOT and every other state agency having responsibility for the promotion of travel and tourism were directed to include as a basic part of their programs the preservation, promotion and funding of historic and cultural resources of the state (1983, SJR 6). The nine-member governor-appointed State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation was created to review and make recommendations regarding nominations by SHPO of properties to the state and national registers of historic properties and places (O.L. 1983, Chs. 268, 720).

Governor Victor Atiyeh created the Oregon Trail Advisory Council in 1984 to evaluate the condition of the Oregon Trail (EO 84-10). The council's final report was published in 1988.

During the 1980s the Parks and Recreation Division initiated a number of efforts to offset rising costs and declining income caused by the loss of Highway Fund revenues, the reduction of federal aid programs for parks and recreation, and the depressed Oregon economy. One such effort was creation of the park host volunteer program in March 1980. Originally started in some state park campgrounds, this successful program expanded over the years to encompass all the campgrounds and other facilities in the Oregon State Parks system. In 1985, the Legislative Assembly authorized the administrator of the Parks and Recreation Division to make agreements with private, nonprofit cooperative associations to foster or operate interpretive and educational facilities at local, regional or state parks (O.L. 1985, Ch. 303). The first such "friends" group was established as early as 1969, and it was instrumental in creating Tryon Creek State Park in 1971.

In 1987, OTC appointed a State Parks 2010 Citizen Committee to make recommendations for a 20-year plan. The Oregon State Parks 2010 Plan was released in 1988, providing dollar estimates and recommendations on the following subjects: rehabilitation of park facilities, land acquisition, campgrounds, special needs of the public, interpretive services, ocean beaches, recreational trails, scenic waterways, marketing the system and coordination of outdoor recreation in Oregon.

In November 1988 Oregon voter approved an initiative petition (Measure 7), which doubled the state's scenic waterways (O.L. 1989, Ch. 2). OPRD was created as a stand-alone state agency in 1989 with the State Parks and Recreation Director as its executive head; a seven-member governor-appointed State Parks and Recreation Commission (OPRC) was created to appoint the director (to a term of four years unless removed sooner), establish policies, adopts administrative rules necessary to execute OPRD's duties; set fees; acquire property; and promote the state's outdoor recreation policy. OPRD began independent operations in 1990 (O.L. 1989, Ch. 904).

U.S. Congress passed the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1989 (P.L. 101-601). Oregon's Legislative Assembly subsequently directed SHPO to review state statutes and administrative rules on historical remains and artifacts for compliance with NAGPRA, and to make recommendations to legislators and agencies (O.L. 1991, Ch. 616).

In 1991 Oregon statutorily established ORTAC within OPRD; at least one of its seven OPRC-appointed members was required to represent each congressional district (O.L. 1991, Ch. 257). The Legislative Assembly also referred two parks-related constitutional amendments to voters: Measure 1, authorizing up to \$250 million in bonds for state parks (1991, SJR 13), and Measure 2, authorizing use of some motor fuel tax revenue for parks (1991, SJR 12); both were rejected. The State Treasurer was authorized to issue coins commemorating Oregon history, people and resources, with sale proceeds appropriated continuously to OPRD for park land acquisition and development, and historical observances related to historic areas and sites (O.L. 1991, Ch. 582).

The Historic Properties Committee was renamed as the Historic Properties Commission, and transferred from the Department of General Services to Secretary of State (O.L. 1991, Ch. 240). The Travel Information Council was made semi-independent state agency (O.L. 1993, Ch. 745).

In 1995 the Oregon Heritage Commission was established in OPRD, with nine governor-appointed voting members, and six ex officio members. The commission was designated as the primary agency for coordinating state heritage activities. The Historic Properties Commission

was also abolished in this legislation (O.L. 1995, Ch. 428). In the next legislative session, SHPO was added to the ex officio members of the Oregon Heritage Commission (O.L. 1997, Ch. 112).

The Pioneer Cemetery Commission was established by the Legislative Assembly in 1995; its five governor-appointed members were directed to assist in the coordination of restoration, renovation and maintenance of Oregon's pioneer cemeteries (i.e. any burial place containing the remains of one or more person who died before 1940); the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) was directed to provide staff support (executive secretary) (O.L. 1995, Ch. 457).

The Historic Assessment Review Committee was established with three SHPO-appointed members (O.L. 1995, Chs. 5, 693). OPRD was authorized by Oregon lawmakers to work with property owners and the Oregon Trail Coordinating Council in preparation for the bicentennial celebration of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery expedition (O.L. 1995, Ch. 479). The Oregon Tourism Council was abolished, and its duties were transferred to the new Oregon Tourism Commission, with continuing staff support provided by EDD (O.L. 1995, Ch. 362).

In 1996 financial pressure caused by the lower than projected revenue and implementation of a new campground reservations system forced OPRC to consider closing 64 state park properties. Emergency funding from the Legislative Emergency Board averted a crisis, funding operations through June 1997. OPRD's General Fund appropriation was increased in the next legislative session; the issuance of lottery revenue bonds (Oregon Parks for the Future Fund) was authorized to fund deferred park facility maintenance (O.L. 1997, Ch. 800; 1997 LFO, p.12). Lawmakers continuously appropriated half the funds from sales of the new salmon vehicle license plates to OPRD (O.L. 1997, Ch. 672). The department was directed to establish an Adopt-a-Park program, allowing volunteers to assist in the operation of state parks (O.L. 1997, Ch. 718). OPRD was also directed to use state prison labor for maintenance work whenever feasible (O.L. 1997, Ch. 533).

In 1998 Oregonians approved initiative Measure 66, amending the state constitution to dedicate 15 percent of net lottery proceeds to the restoration and protection of parks, beaches, watersheds and critical fish and wildlife habitat. In 1999 lawmakers transferred the state's all-terrain vehicle (ATV) programs, regulation and funding from ODOT to OPRD. An ATV Advisory Committee was created to advise the department on planning and implementing its ATV program, including the acquisition, development and maintenance of recreation areas; and the education and safety training of operators; OPRC was directed to appoint committee members (O.L. 1999, Ch. 977).

Governor John Kitzhaber renamed the Oregon Trail Advisory Council in 1998 as the Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Council; the nine-member governor-appointed group was directed to serve as advisory body for activities involving historic trails, and to report to OPRC (EO 98-16).

In 1999 OPRD was directed to coordinate with local governments to provide increased access to the ocean shore by ensuring that access sites are posted for public use. County assessors were authorized to exempt private landowners from property taxes in exchange for the provision of a legally recorded easement providing free and open public beach access (O.L. 1999, Ch. 872.)

The Oregon Pioneer Cemetery Commission was established in OPRD to list, protect, restore, and maintain historic cemeteries and gravesites via grant funding and technical assistance; OPRD's director was directed to appoint the commission's members. The Pioneer Cemetery Commission was abolished (O.L. 1999, Ch. 731). Four years later the Oregon Pioneer Cemetery Commission was renamed in statute as the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries (O.L. 2003, Ch. 173).

In 2001 the Historic Preservation Revolving Loan Fund Review Committee was established by the Legislative Assembly to review applications for loans from the Historic Preservation Revolving Loan Fund; make recommendations regarding loan approval to SHPO; and establish interest rates to be charged for the loans. SHPO was directed to appoint three committee members representing the interests of the Housing and Community Services Department, SHPO, and financial institutions. SHPO was also directed to adopt rules establishing standards and guidelines for the rehabilitation of historic property. The Historic Assessment Review Committee's membership was made a governor (not SHPO) appointment (O.L. 2001, Ch. 540).

In May 2004 Governor Ted Kulongoski launched the Park-A-Year initiative, charging OPRD with creating one new state park each year for the next ten years. Stub Stewart State Park opened to the public in 2007; it was the first new state park in Oregon in more than 30 years.

In 2005 the duties, functions and powers of the Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center, State Fair Commission, and State Fair were transferred to OPRD; the director was directed to appoint a seven-member State Fair Advisory Committee to provide advice (O.L. 2005, Ch. 777). OPRD was also directed to adopt rules regarding funding assistance to nonprofit veterans' organizations for the construction and restoration of war memorials on public property (O.L. 2005, Ch. 398).

In 2007 lawmakers transferred the grounds surrounding the State Capitol and Capitol Mall area from DAS to OPRD, establishing the area as State Capitol State Park (O.L. 2007, Ch. 892).

In November 2010 Oregonians approved initiative petition Measure 76, amending the state constitution to permanently dedicate 15 percent of lottery proceeds each year to parks and natural resources; the original dedication, approved by the voters in 1998, had been set to expire in 2014.

In 2011 the Legislative Assembly abolished the Natural Heritage Advisory Council, and transferred its duties, and those of the State Land Board relating to the Natural Areas Plan and Natural Areas Program, from the Department of State Lands to OPRD (O.L. 2011, Ch. 319).

In 2013 Oregon lawmakers created an independent public corporation, the State Fair Council, to conduct the State Fair and maintain the fairground and exposition center; the State Fair Advisory Committee was abolished. The governor was directed to appoint the State Fair Council's members by the end of 2013; OPRD was directed to complete the transfer of the State Fair to the State Fair Council by the end of 2015 (O.L. 2013, Ch. 492).

Current Organization

The State Parks and Recreation Commission (OPRC) appoints the director of the State Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD); establishes policies; adopts administrative rules to execute OPRD's duties; sets fees; acquires property; and promotes the state's outdoor recreation policy.

The Directors Office is responsible for overall agency management; support of OPRC activities; coordination with the governor, legislature, and other government entities; and development of broad policy direction. It also provides public information, reviews agency programs, and coordinates rulemaking in its efforts to improve agency performance. The Director's Office also oversees the department's human resource, and safety and risk management programs.

The Administration Division provides fiscal support, budgeting, contracting and procurement, information services, and internal auditing for the department. Its Central Business Services program works with private service provider Reservations Northwest, a centralized telephone campsite reservation center; and Active Network, which provides internet reservation services.

The Operations Division oversees, operates, develops and maintains park facilities through the department's headquarters and field offices. It manages natural resources and real property; plans the development and expansion of park facilities; provides interpretive services; coordinates volunteers; conducts surveys and mapping; and designs new facilities for the state park system.

Regions are the chief administrative units, and direct the three geographic areas of operations. OPRD regions are responsible for scoping, implementing, and overseeing park-related programs and projects; and are staffed by personnel at the District and Management Unit level.

OPRD Districts provide oversight and direction to Management Units to ensure adherence to policy and standards. Along the coast, each District operates designated Beach Ranger patrols for public safety and resource protection.

Management Units are the smallest administrative units within OPRD; each oversees multiple parks and facilities. Management Units are composed of permanent employees (management and staff), seasonal hires, and volunteers. In addition to maintaining and upgrading facilities, Management Unit staff maintain grounds; ensure the public's safety; provide interpretive services; sell firewood and other items; and collect fees.

The Heritage and Community Programs Division promotes the preservation, understanding and enjoyment of Oregon's historic and cultural heritage while providing leadership and direction to improve outdoor recreational opportunities. Staff provides coordination, technical expertise and leadership to ensure the integration of activities and resources, and delivery of programs to internal and external customers. Customers include heritage organizations, OPRD programs; local, state, federal and tribal governments; property owners; and associated stakeholders. Grant programs include the All-Terrain Vehicle program, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Local Government Grant program, Recreational Trails Grant program, and Recreational Vehicle Grant program. It also administers federal and state programs for historic and archeological resource planning and preservation, and supports the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

The Oregon Heritage Commission coordinates heritage initiatives by public and private organizations, advocates for heritage support, educates the public about its extent and value, and promotes and celebrates heritage diversity. It carries out its mission through grants, technical assistance to heritage organizations, declarations of statewide heritage celebrations, a statewide conference, and an inventory of state-owned historic artifacts.

The Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries coordinates the restoration, renovation and maintenance of historic cemeteries statewide.

The State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation reviews nominations to the National Register of Historic Places in Oregon and votes on their eligibility. When the committee determines that a nomination is eligible, it recommends that the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) sign the nomination and forward it to the National Register office, for review and listing. Nominations are brought forward by the National Register coordinator. The committee also advises SHPO on matters of program policy and budget.

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) operates under a mandate from the federal government as well as state law, managing programs that allow Oregonians as individuals, organizations and local governments to become directly involved in the protection of significant historic and cultural resources. State and federal grants are available for the rehabilitation of historic properties as well as for other preservation related activities. Programs of the SHPO include: National Register of Historic Places, Historic/Prehistoric Survey and Inventory, Archaeological Permit Process, Historic Preservation Special Assessment for Historic Properties, Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, Historic Preservation Comprehensive Planning, and Section 106 Compliance.

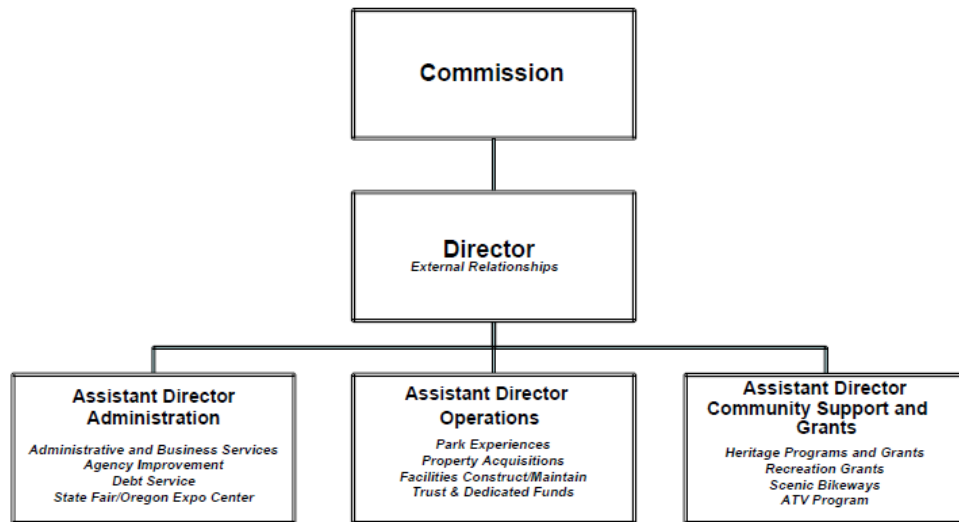
The Historic Assessment Review Committee serves as the appeals body for all decisions made by the State Historic Preservation Office.

The Oregon Historic Trails Advisory Council oversees and provides advice on Oregon's 16 historic trails, including locating, preserving and encouraging the use of these trails, evaluating and recording trail conditions and discussing opportunities for the marking and interpretation of the trails. Goals include collecting and sharing trail information; encouraging local communities and agencies to develop directional and interpretive signs, brochures and maps; and finding resources to protect these corridors of history.

The Oregon Recreation Trails Advisory Council advises OPRD and OPRC on statewide trail matters; and makes recommendations to other trail managing agencies and non-governmental groups. The council focuses on trails for hiking, equestrian use, bicycling, cross-country skiing and non-motorized boating.

The Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center conducts the annual Oregon State Fair. OPRD also provides services for other activities at the state fairgrounds, including recreational vehicle and organization meetings, concerts, and consumer products and services shows. In 2013 OPRD was directed by the Legislative Assembly to transfer the Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center to the State Fair Council, a new public corporation, by the end of 2015 (O.L. 2013, Ch. 492).

Organizational Chart



Source: Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, 2013-15 Ways & Means Budget, March 2013

Primary Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) and Administrative Rule (OAR) Chapters

ORS 97.740 – 97.784

ORS 271.715 – 271.795

ORS 273.563 – 273.591

ORS 358

ORS 390

ORS 565

OAR 736

Chronology

- 1913** State Highway Commission created by Legislative Assembly.
Oregon lawmakers declare state's ocean shore tideland forever open to the public.
- 1921** State Highway Commission authorized to acquire rights of way along public highways for the maintenance and preservation of scenic beauties; gives birth to state park system.
- 1927** State parks: 46. State park acreage: 4,000.
- 1929** Governor Isaac Patterson appoints State Park Commission to create state parks system. Samuel Boardman appointed Oregon's first state parks superintendent.
- 1942** Oregonians approve use of motor vehicle fuel taxes for public highways, and the acquisition, development, and publicizing of parks, recreational, scenic, historic places.
- 1947** State Highway Commission authorized to establish a State Parks Division.
Oregon's ocean shore tideland again declared a public highway.

- 1950** State parks: 181. State park acreage: 66,000.
- 1957** First permanent State Parks Advisory Committee established.
- 1959** State Parks Division renamed as the State Parks and Recreation Division.
- 1964** U.S. Congress passes Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.
- 1965** Oregon designates ocean shore a state recreation area (instead of a public highway).
- 1966** U.S. Congress passes National Historic Preservation Act.
- 1967** Oregon Beach Bill signed into law.
Willamette Recreational Greenway Committee appointed to plan for recreational use.
- 1969** Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) created.
- 1970** Oregon voters approve Scenic Waterways Act.
- 1971** Oregon Recreational Trails System Act enacted.
- 1973** State Highway Commission abolished, duties transferred to ODOT.
- 1975** Oregon enacts nation's first state-level historic preservation tax incentive.
- 1979** Parks and Recreation Division becomes a full division of ODOT.
- 1980** Oregon voters preclude use of Highway Fund for parks and recreation purposes.
- 1989** State Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) created as stand-alone state agency.
U.S. Congress passed the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.
- 1995** Oregon Heritage Commission established in OPRD.
- 1998** Oregon voters approve Measure 66, dedicating 15 percent of lottery proceeds to restoration and protection of parks, beaches, watersheds, and critical fish/wildlife habitat.
- 2005** Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center transferred to OPRD.
- 2010** Oregon voters approve Measure 76, permanently dedicating 15 percent of state lottery proceeds to parks and natural resources.
- 2011** Natural Areas Program and Plan transferred from Department of State Lands to OPRD.
- 2012** State parks: 250. State park acreage: 108,000.
- 2013** State Fair Council created to conduct the State Fair and maintain the fairground and exposition center. OPRD directed to transfer State Fair to the council by the end of 2015

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