

JOINT PUBLIC MEETING  
of  
ARIZONA OUTDOOR RECREATION COORDINATING COMMISSION  
(AORCC)  
and  
THE ARIZONA STATE COMMITTEE ON TRAILS (ASCOT)  
and  
THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HPAC)  
and  
NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE (NAPAC)  
and  
THE OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE ADVISORY GROUP (OHVAG)  
of  
ARIZONA STATE PARKS (ASP)  
Arizona State Parks Office  
1300 West Washington Street  
Arizona State Parks Board Room  
Phoenix, Arizona  
January 13, 2010

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

AORCC Vice Chair Schwind called the meeting to order at 12:12p.m. No roll was taken, however, all attendees were introduced and a quorum of AORCC was confirmed.

**Commission Members Participating, either in person or by telephone:**

**AORCC**

William Schwind, Vice Chair  
Renée Bahl, Director of ASP  
Larry Voyles, Director Game and Fish  
Karla Brady via telephone

**Commission Members Absent:**

Jeff Bell, Chair  
Margaret Nyberg  
Devin Rankin

**ASCOT**

Kent Taylor via telephone  
Linda Slay via telephone

**Committee Members Absent:**

Maureen DeCindis  
Tom Fitzgerald  
Lisa Marie Gerdl  
Reba Grandrud  
Brian Grube  
Daye Halling  
Jim Horton  
Mary McMullen  
Anna Pfender  
Heather Wasgatt  
Bruce Weidenhamer

**HPAC**

Bobbie Bariola  
Pat Stein

**Committee Members Absent:**

Joe Nucci  
Theresa Nesser  
Winston Thorne

Tami Ryall  
Victor Linoff

**NAPAC**

Larry Lainge  
Rebecca Davidson  
Teresa Warner

**Committee Members Absent:**

**OHVAG**

Bob Biegel  
Hank Rogers via telephone

**Committee Members Absent:**

Drew John  
Rebecca Antle  
David Moore  
Pete Pfeifer  
John Savino

**Arizona State Parks Staff:**

Renée Bahl, Executive Director  
Jay Ziemann, Assistant Director  
Kent Ennis, Assistant Director  
Jay Ream, Assistant Director (arrived later)  
Doris Pulsifer, Chief of Grants  
Danielle Silvas, Grant Coordinator  
Annie McVay, Recreational Trails Coordinator  
Ray Warner, ASP Staff  
Bob Casavant, ASP Staff

**Guests:** Two resident from Camp Verde via telephone

**B. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND STAFF**

Members and Staff introduced themselves.

**C. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Ms. Bahl updated the commission and committee members of the recent budget reductions enacted on Arizona State Parks in the 2009 5th Special Session.

Ms. Bahl noted that the material that was covered at the Arizona State Parks Board (ASPB) meeting on December 31, 2009 would be presented to the commission and committee members. The discussion at the ASPB meeting covered two parts; what the recent cuts were and what revenue forecasts are for the coming months.

Ms. Bahl said that in addition to going over the material that was presented at the December 31, 2009 ASPB meeting, she was going over the staff recommendations that will be presented to the ASPB on January 15, 2010.

Mr. Ziemann summarized the packet that was introduced to the ASPB at the December 31, 2009 meeting. In February 2009, the budget was cut to \$27 million and in July 2009 the budget was cut again to \$19 million. At \$19 million about half the Parks system was

operating on a seasonal basis, some were closed, others were only open five days a week and a couple were functional due to other partners stepping up and providing assistance in order to keep the park open. Mr. Ziemann noted that just before Christmas the Governor signed a budget bill that brought additional cuts to State Parks. Mr. Ziemann went over the two different budgetary terms that the commission and committee members should know. One being Fund Reductions and Transfers (the Legislature reduces the amount from different funds that the State Parks is allowed to spend and then sweeps that amount into the General Fund) and the other being Excess Balance Transfers (money that is in the account and the Legislature went in and took). Mr. Ziemann then went over the different ASPB funds that were impacted by the most recent budget cuts, totaling \$8,629,600 million dollars. He noted that the Legislature crafted the bills in secret and had the votes all lined up, so that there was no opportunity for the Agency or the public to comment on the cuts.

Mr. Ennis went over the revenue forecasts for each of the funds that State Parks operates within. Mr. Ennis noted that it appears that everything is in line despite the changes in park hours and current closures. The forecast for the State Lake Improvement Fund was down almost fifty percent due to the decline in gas consumption attributed to motorized watercraft in the State of Arizona, according to the latest figures in the 2009 Watercraft survey. Mr. Ennis stated that in a typical year State Parks rolls into a new fiscal year with \$7 million dollars, and with these recent cuts we are looking at about \$100,000 in the Enhancement Fund, which is unheard of to start a new fiscal year.

Ms. Bahl introduced the Parks matrix criteria for closing a park and the grants program account balances that was presented to the Board on December 31st. Ms. Bahl stated that it is not the goal of the Parks Board and staff to close any parks, however, the Agency is in a financial situation and needs to increase the cash flow by \$3 million dollars in order to keep the recommended parks open.

Ms. Bahl summarized the January 15, 2010 Parks Board Report, to consider plans to reduce the Parks operating budget. There are four criteria; high total revenue, parks that operate at net revenue or low total cost, and parks that have their high season in the summer. There will be nine parks that will stay open if the \$3 million cash flow problem is resolved. Ms. Bahl went over all the Parks that were recommended to close and their closure dates.

Ms. Bahl went into the recommended solutions to maximize the agency budget, which require a Parks Board endorsement so that staff can move forward. These would include status remedies for FY 2010 and FY2011. The first three items in the recommendation would affect the Heritage Fund. The fourth recommendation is to use the pass through Law Enforcement Boating Safety Fund monies for State Parks law enforcement at State Parks lakes. The fifth recommendation is for the Off-Highway Vehicle Fund to be redirected for Parks operations. The sixth recommendation is to reduce or eliminate the recent cuts and sweeps. The seventh is to remove the limitation on the Kartchner line item and a legislative change to extend the repayment of a \$1.9 million loan that was taken in FY 2009 to be repaid in a year. The eighth is to seek

endorsement from the Parks Board to move non-operating budgets into operating budgets (backfills). No current funds have been identified and this ultimately has to be reviewed by the Joint Legislative Budget Committee. In addition, staff will review all open State Parks projects and grant projects and a recommendation will likely be made public at the February 2010 Park Board meeting. Staff will look into a line of credit or loan to help with the cash flow issue and will be pursuing an extension on the lease purchase payment that is due in August 2010 for Tonto. Ms. Bahl stated that none of these options are good options for the agency or for our partners. It is not what our agencies mission stands for, it is the item of last resort and everything is on the table.

Vice Chair Mr. Schwind opened the floor for questions from the group.

Mr. Rogers from OHVAG requested that Ms. Bahl repeat the recommendation in regards to the Off-Highway Vehicle Fund. Ms. Bahl emphasized that the Parks Board would only be endorsing staff's recommendation to pursue a statutory change that would allow State Parks to use the Off-Highway Vehicle Fund for Parks operations.

Ms. Bahl discussed the Morrison Institute Study and the Arizona Sustainable Parks Task Force recommendation to the Governor's office. The recommendation is to have a license tax on all non-commercial vehicles that would bring in approximately \$39 million as annual funding to State Parks.

There was further discussion on the Off-Highway Vehicle Fund and whether the Legislature will sweep the new decal money and the fact that the Off-Highway Vehicle community that supported the inception of this fund does not support these dedicated funds to be used for other purposes.

Ms. Bariola from HPAC asked if there was anything in the future that would keep the Legislature from taking the funds that remain. Ms. Bahl stated that unfortunately there are no guarantees that the Legislature will not come back and sweep more funds. The only funds that are protected are those that are covered under the Voter Protection Act, and funds that leverage federal funds seem to be fairly safe.

Mr. Schwind from AORCC asked what was the language in the Heritage Fund statute that was approved by voters that did not allow it to be covered under the Voter Protection Act. Mr. Ziemann stated that the Voter Protection Act was passed in early 1998 and the Heritage Fund predates that act and is, therefore, not covered.

Mr. Voyles from AORCC added to the discussion by stating that the Legislature is looking at doing away with the Voter Protection Act in order to allow them to use the protected funds to help balance the budget.

There was further discussion on the statutory changes that staff is proposing to the Parks Board at the January 15, 2010 meeting. Ms. Bahl clarified that staff has a menu of options that the Parks Board is going to review and everything is going to be open to the public for comment. Ms. Bahl also highlighted that there is a cost to operating a closed park. On average it equals ten percent of the total operating budget for that

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park, in the case that we would need to leave a Ranger, which would consequently raise the cost.

Ms. Bahl stated that no other state has ever closed a Parks System. Therefore, there is no model to follow. The Parks Board and staff has about six months to realize the affects of the actions after the closures. Staff is focusing on solutions to help carry the Parks into the next fiscal year.

**D. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

There were no further comments

**E. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Schwind adjourned the meeting at 1:23p.m.