

PARKS FORWARD INITIATIVE

STAFF WORKING DRAFT

1. Executive summary

[This section will provide a summary of the key components of the Plan, including the Commission's charge and process, the risks of failing to take action, a vision for future California parks, and key recommendations for attaining that vision.]

2. A History of Innovation

For 150 years California's state parks have preserved the iconic landscapes and diverse natural and cultural resources that are uniquely emblematic of the state. The first state park protecting Yosemite Valley was created in 1864, predating the first national park by eight years. Since then, Californians have created a vast network of cherished public spaces, stewarding state parks through periods of innovation, modernization, and strategic expansion, while also working through periods of significant challenge. This chapter describes the key periods of innovation and change for state parks and the key attributes of California's parks today, providing the context for our new vision for California parks described in Chapter 4.

a. History of leadership and innovation

The history of California State Parks is marked by milestones of adaptation, expansion, and struggle as Californians have been called repeatedly to invent and reinvent parks to be efficient and relevant for the times:

i. The Early Park Movement

At the turn of the 20th century, development and highway construction threatened California's natural and cultural heritage, and logging nearly decimated the state's old-growth redwoods.¹ Conservation leaders such as Andrew Hill emerged to address these threats, advocating for the preservation of wild, scenic spaces for future generations' physical health and mental well-being. The legislature responded to the cry of this new parks movement by creating California's first official, publicly-funded state park in 1902 – Big Basin Redwoods.² Buoyed by a staunch commitment to the natural world, this new

¹ National Park Service, "Redwood National and State Parks: Area History," 2014, <http://www.nps.gov/redw/historyculture/area-history.htm>

² KQED, "Timeline: Building California's State Parks," 12 March 2012, <http://www.kqed.com/timeline/entry/28258/Building-Californias-State-Parks/>

breed of conservation leaders organized, put forth new ideas, garnered public support, and created lasting nonprofit organizations such as Save the Redwoods League and Sempervirens Fund who continue their efforts today in promoting parks and conservation.

ii. From Parks to a Park System

State parks grew rapidly through the late 1920s, but without either a long-term vision or systematic method for selecting among the growing list of 325 new park proposals.³ In response, the legislature created the State Park Commission in 1927 to bring order and design to what had grown into a loose network of individual parks. The Commission called upon Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. to produce an inventory of California's unique landscapes, varied habitats, and historic landmarks and identify long-range goals for building a cohesive state park system.⁴ Olmsted was the right man for the job, recognizing the incalculable "magnitude and importance, socially and economically, in California, of the values arising directly and indirectly from the enjoyment of scenery and from related pleasures of non-urban outdoor life."⁵

Californians embraced Olmsted's vision, passing a \$6 million park bond by an overwhelming margin at the onset of the Great Depression. The bond provided funding to purchase additional park lands and required a 50% match of non-state funds for any project financed with bond funds, testing a parks financing tool that would be replicated numerous times in the future.⁶ California's park system expanded throughout the Depression under the guidance of Newton Drury, who later led California State Parks and the National Park Service. State parks not only protected California's natural heritage, but also put Californians back to work using the Civilian Conservation Corps to build roads, bridges, and campsites for the new parks. By 1934, the system had grown to 49 parks, covering 300,000 acres, and serving 6,000,000 Californians.

iii. Park Expansion during the 1960s and 1970s

California parks continued to grow for decades as economic prosperity led to increased leisure time, and the completion of the modern highway system facilitated access to more parks. California's growing population stoked a rise in parks visitorship to near 30 million by the early 1960s. Governor Pat Brown identified state parks among one of his three proudest achievements, along with the state water project and the state master plan for higher education.⁷ However, by the end of the 1960s state parks faced severe budget cuts. Governor Ronald Reagan's first Parks Director William Penn Mott, Jr. understood that preserving natural and cultural resources was not enough – parks

³ Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., "Report of the State Parks Survey of California," 1928, introductory letter.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47, 57.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, introductory letter

⁷ George Skelton, "Pat Brown Reigns Again in Capitol," *Los Angeles Times* March 3, 1992.

needed to engage a broader audience and better serve urban and other underserved communities.⁸ Mott stressed interpretation and education, professional training, science-based resource management, and expansion into urban areas.⁹

Continuing this vision, in 1975, Governor Jerry Brown's Parks Director Herbert Rhodes spearheaded acquisitions of urban parks such as Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, expanding diversity of park visitation. Rhodes also deliberately hired employees from all backgrounds to build a staff better reflective of California's diversity.¹⁰

Parks enjoyed continued public support during this growth period. Between 1964 and 1984, voters approved by large margins a string of five park bond measures, totaling over \$1.3 billion. These were exciting days for the environmental movement in California and nationally, as Congress passed clean air, clean water, and environmental protection acts, the first Earth Day was celebrated, and Californians voted to protect their coastal zone. The public understood that a growing California needed more parks to serve more people and to protect fragile landscapes. By 1980, the system had grown to 250 parks, covering 1,000,000 acres, serving 23.7 million Californians, and visited by 66 million people.

iv. The Phoenix Committee and Parks Modernization of the early '90s

In 1992, the Department faced renewed budgetary pressure, partially due to the delayed impact of Proposition 13, the initiative approved by California voters in 1978 to limit property taxes. Facing a 20 percent budget cut and potential park closures, Director Donald Murphy chartered the Phoenix Committee, comprised of park employees from a broad spectrum of work classifications. The Phoenix Committee was charged with taking a fresh, top to bottom look at priorities and processes and recommending steps that would create a more nimble and cost-effective organization. The Phoenix Committee recommendations attempted to shift the Department from a headquarters-centered command-and-control model to a more innovative, entrepreneurial, and field-based model. Implementing the Committee's recommendations, Director Murphy reduced staff, streamlined services, flattened the organizational structure, cut costs, and increased fees. These changes challenged employees to strengthen delivery of core park services by thinking and working differently.¹¹ While implementation of Phoenix recommendations yielded short-term improvements in Department culture and practices, changes in Department leadership and priorities compromised realization of the more lasting systemic reform envisioned by the effort.

⁸ California State Parks, "The History of California State Parks: A Gift from the People to the People," 2013, p. 6.

⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰ Engbeck, 122.

¹¹ California State Parks, "The Phoenix Committee Final Report: 1992/93 Budget Revision Project," 1992, p. 33.

v. Renewed Challenges Following Turn of the 21st Century

The tragedy of September 11, 2001 coupled with the worldwide economic plunge in 2008 changed the focus for all public agencies, including State Parks. Even as general fund reductions continued, California voters approved Propositions 12/13, 40, 50 and 84 from 2000 through 2006, providing significant funding for land and water conservation, including over \$1 billion for state parks. These, together with the burgeoning land trust movement and private funder interest in land conservation, fueled another round of significant park expansion, but without associated funding for stewardship and management. Struggling to maintain a system with deferred maintenance alone estimated in excess of \$1 billion, Department leadership reduced positions and increased fees, and in 2011, renewed talk of parks to address the continuing budget shortfalls.

b. California's world-class parks

Today's California State Parks system boasts 280 parks, covering 1,600,000 acres, serving a California population of 38 million. State parks provide Californians access to 340 miles of coast (representing over one-third of California's coastline),¹² 625 miles of lakeshores and riverbanks,¹³ 4,500 miles of trails,¹⁴ and 15,000 campsites¹⁵ throughout the state. Those interested in culture and history can experience nearly 3,200 historic buildings, explore 6 million museum objects, or learn about over 11,000 discovered archaeological sites.¹⁶

State parks draw over 68 million annual visitors¹⁷ from around the world, providing a major economic boost to gateway communities and the state at large by generating \$13 of direct economic activity for every one dollar the public invests.¹⁸ This economic activity supports 56,000 private sector jobs, contributing to the budget of four out of every five California counties.¹⁹

We have seen how parks' leaders at key places in history have risen to address challenges similar to those faced today, implementing timely changes and innovations to build the current system. Today is our turn. As with generations in the past, it is now our responsibility to make the necessary changes to address today's realities so we can gift to future generations a network of sustainable, world-class parks.

¹² California State Parks, "Statistical Report Fiscal Year 2011-2012," 2012.

¹³ California State Parks Foundation, "Did You Know?," 2013.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ California State Parks, "Statistical Report Fiscal Year 2011-2012," 2012.

¹⁸ BBC Research and Consulting, California Outdoor Recreation Economic Study: State Park System Contributions and Benefits.

¹⁹ Ibid, California State Parks Foundation, "Did You Know?," 2013.

3. Challenges, Parks Forward Initiative, and Initial Findings

Once again, California’s state parks are at a crossroads, facing tough challenges, old and new. If California does not chart a bold new course, state parks face the very real risk of losing irreplaceable natural and cultural resources and public spaces and failing to connect with Californians of today and the future. This chapter summarizes the current crisis, the creation of the Parks Forward Initiative to help address that crisis, and the Parks Forward Commission’s initial findings that lay the foundation for a broad new vision and a focused set of recommendations to attain that vision.

a. State Response to Growing Crisis

In the summer of 2012, the state’s continuing financial problems nearly led to closure of 70 state parks. While many of the challenges facing state parks were not new, the threatened closures drew added attention. Around that time, several legislative, nonprofit, and other groups each examined the situation and reached the conclusion that California’s park system was in severe crisis. While this report is tended to focus on the future and not rehash the past, key common takeaways from these recent reports provide additional context for the acute situation we now face and useful foundation for our findings and recommendations:

- **The Park Excellence Project** led by California State Parks Foundation and Save the Redwoods League, both long-time state parks supporters, paved the way for many of the recommendations found in this report and is often quoted as setting forth a thoughtful future vision for state parks. The Parks Excellence Project called on Californians to “reexamine the ways in which our parks are supported, financed, protected, managed, promoted, and maintained.”²⁰ Only “a new vision for our state parks—a vision for the next 100 years and beyond” will allow the parks to meet “the most challenging [times] the system has ever seen.”²¹
- **The Little Hoover Commission** found the California state parks governance model obsolete, causing parks “to fall into disrepair” due to falling general support, unpredictable revenues, outdated business tools, and a department culture that does not consider outside organizations as equal partners.²² Addressing these challenges requires an entirely “new operating model”²³ that rebuilds the parks system “around shared management, innovation, greater transparency” and stable

²⁰ California State Parks Foundation and Save the Redwoods League, “A Vision for Excellence for California’s State Parks,” 2011, http://my.calparks.org/pep/PEP_Report_Final.pdf.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Little Hoover Commission Report, “Beyond Crisis: Recapturing Excellence in California’s State Park System,” 2013, <http://www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/215/FinalReport215.pdf>.

²³ Ibid.

and increased revenue sources.²⁴ This new model redefines the Department as a “leader and coordinator at the enter of a new ecosystem of parks management”²⁵ calling for “a multi-partner system that spreads park management across a wider base of players and budgets.”²⁶

- **The Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO)** noted that merely closing state parks in response to funding cuts would not solve the parks’ long-term problems – it would eliminate public access while saving little money. Instead, broader solutions are needed to ensure “the park system is adequately maintained and operated in the future”. The LAO cautioned against the potential trade-offs, if not done smartly, between cost-cutting and revenue-generating strategies, on the one hand, and ensuring broad public access to parks, on the on the other hand.²⁷

Wrestling with how to address financial and systemic challenges and avoid park closures, the California Legislature passed the California State Parks Stewardship Act (AB 1589) and Assembly Bill 1478. This legislation called for a multidisciplinary advisory council to improve the system’s long term financial sustainability in ways that better meet the needs of all Californians and create more meaningful partnerships and collaborative efforts.

b. Parks Forward Initiative Design

Several prominent California philanthropies saw the need and opportunity to support the multidisciplinary effort called for in the California State Parks Stewardship Act and AB 1478. Their goal was to support a robust independent process to craft a new course for California’s parks that protects natural and cultural resources, meets the future outdoor recreation needs of the state, and is financially stable.

In June 2013, the California Natural Resources Agency, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and Resources Legacy Fund²⁸ entered into a Memorandum of Understanding creating the Parks Forward Initiative to address the long-term financial, operational, cultural, and demographic challenges facing state parks. The Parks Forward Initiative is led by an independent Commission comprised of 12 distinguished Californians with broad expertise in business, nonprofit, academia, and public service, and is supported by public agency commitments and charitable funding coordinated through

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid, at 31.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Mac Taylor, “The 2012-13 Budget: Strategies to Maintain California’s Park System,” Legislative Analyst’s Office, March 2, 2012, <http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis/2012/resources/state-parks-030212.pdf>.

²⁸ Resources Legacy Fund is a public nonprofit organization that works with philanthropic partners to craft innovative approaches to conserving natural resources and improving environmental sustainability in Western North America as well as in oceans and fisheries worldwide.

Resources Legacy Fund. The initiative includes the participation of the nonprofit community, public agency staff, members of the public, and other stakeholders.

The Parks Forward Commission is unified in their commitment to a thriving and sustainable California state parks. Appointed by the Secretary of Natural Resources, the Commission is charged with undertaking a thorough evaluation of state parks and the Department and developing recommendations that will lead to the long-term financial sustainability of a system that better meets the needs of all Californians.

DRAFT

The Parks Forward Commission

Lance Conn, co-chair: Mr. Conn is a Bay Area businessman and conservationist. He serves on the boards of directors for Charter Communications and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and serves on the advisory council for Truckee Donner Land Trust.

Christine Kehoe, co-chair: Ms. Kehoe is the executive director of the California Plug-in Electric Vehicle Collaborative. From 2000 to 2012, Ms. Kehoe served in the California state legislature as a member of the Assembly and the state Senate.

Carolyn Finney, PhD: Dr. Finney is an assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management at the UC Berkeley College of Natural Resources. She chairs the Relevancy Committee on the National Parks Advisory Board.

Caryl Hart, PhD: Dr. Hart is the director of Sonoma County Regional Parks. She was a member of the California State Parks Commission, appointed by three successive governors and served from 2000 to 2013, including seven years as chair.

Stephen Lockhart, MD, PhD: Dr. Lockhart is regional vice president and chief medical officer for Sutter Health, East Bay Region. He serves as chair of the NatureBridge board of directors and is a director of REI and the National Parks Conservation Association.

Michael Lynton: Mr. Lynton is the chief executive officer of Sony Entertainment, Inc. Mr. Lynton is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and service on the boards of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Rand Corporation.

Julie Packard: Ms. Packard is the executive director of the Monterey Bay Aquarium. She serves on the boards of the California Nature Conservancy, the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and others.

Manuel Pastor, PhD: Dr. Pastor is a professor of American Studies & Ethnicity at USC, where he also serves as director of the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity and co-director of the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration.

John Reynolds: Mr. Reynolds served for 39 years in the National Park Service's Pacific West and Mid-Atlantic regions. He was executive vice president of the National Park Foundation from 2005 to 2007 and currently serves on the board of the Presidio Trust.

Hawk Rosales: Mr. Rosales is the executive director of the InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council, a non-profit tribal conservation organization of ten federally recognized Northern California tribes revitalizing traditional tribal stewardship.

Toby Rosenblatt: Mr. Rosenblatt is president and general partner of Founders Investments, Ltd. He was founding chair of the Presidio Trust and has served on the board of the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy.

Michael Woo: Mr. Woo is dean of the College of Environmental Design at Cal Poly Pomona. He chairs the board of directors of Smart Growth America and Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles.

c. Parks Forward Initiative Process

The Parks Forward Initiative was designed as an inclusive and thorough process for developing solutions to the challenges facing state parks.

Since September 2013, the Commission has held four meetings leading to this set of draft recommendations, and will hold another meeting in August 2014 to adopt final recommendations. All Commission meetings have been open to the public and have been webcast. The Commission also held numerous work group meetings throughout the state to explore more deeply a range of issues, including finance, partnerships, public health, and parks access. Meeting information and reports developed to inform Commission deliberations have been posted to the Parks Forward website, and the Commission has encouraged and received additional input from the public and stakeholders through its website, social media, and written comments.

Working with Parks Forward staff, the California State Park and Recreation Commission coordinated a series of ten workshops throughout the state to solicit input from park partners and the broader public on issues and potential solutions. Parks Forward also sought input from State Parks staff and leadership throughout the process, with nearly 1,000 employees participating in surveys and series of focus groups. The park system's leadership provided ongoing guidance and gathered broad staff feedback. Finally, the Initiative drew upon top experts to provide research and analysis on a number of issue areas, including finance, public funding, visitor attitudes and awareness, and partnership models.

In all, the Parks Forward Commission has held more than 70 hours of public meetings, surveyed nearly 1,000 parks employees, conducted [35] hours of staff focus groups, and reviewed reports, articles, and documents numbering into the thousands of pages.

d. Parks Forward Commission Initial Findings

Two key findings form the foundation for the remainder of this report. First, California's parks legacy is strikingly imperiled from an outdated organizational structure and processes, exacerbated by an underinvestment in technology and business tools, leading to a reactive, and at times ineffective culture that places at risk the system's important natural and cultural resources. Second, only fundamental change will transform the system into one that will sustainably serve Californians into the future.

i. An Imperiled Legacy

State Parks has not been able to keep pace with the times and now faces significant systemic, financial, and organizational challenges. These challenges place at risk the system's continued viability, as well as the public's trust and confidence in the Department charged with caring for the state's natural and cultural resources. Current challenges facing state parks include the following:

- Existing state parks do not adequately serve California’s current or projected future populations, particularly youth and people of color.
- Lack of staff training and capacity, as well as state and Department processes, severely limit the ability to broaden visitation, expand services, and increase revenues.
- Department structure and organizational culture impede risk-taking, innovation, and entrepreneurship.
- Department technology, tools, systems, and procedures do not produce adequate data on cost, revenue, or visitor use to support operational budgeting and financial planning at the park unit, sector, district, or Department level.
- Funding shortfalls create growing maintenance, operational, and programming obligations; and undependable levels of annual funding make it difficult to make thoughtful funding decisions.
- Significant barriers exist to prevent many talented and motivated staff from attaining leadership positions, including salary compaction, unequal training and benefits, and a management structure favoring promotion among peace officer class.
- State processes and requirements discourage coordinating regional management and stewardship of state parks with other protected lands, which could improve service and finances.
- State parks stewardship and management practices are under-equipped to address current threats such as climate change, invasive species, park fragmentation, and road development, which, left unchecked, will irreparably degrade California’s natural and cultural resources and impair California’s important aquatic resources.

ii. A Need for Fundamental Change

We need fundamental change – in the vision for all California parks, in the way that vision is achieved, and in the Department itself.

We have a bold new vision for California’s parks that focuses not only on protecting our state’s natural and cultural resources, but also on ensuring access to parks for all Californians, especially in urban areas, engaging youth, and promoting public health through outdoor park connections. This vision includes all of California’s parks, not just those that are part of the State Park system. Barriers to coordinated stewardship and programming across the jurisdictional boundaries of adjacent parks and protected lands should be removed. Park visitors generally do not differentiate between different types of parks and operators – they focus on their activities and experiences. So while State Parks are part of the statewide park system, the goal should be achieving an overarching vision for all California parks and protected lands, rather than trying to differentiate a distinct

state park system. The vision is achievable only through a broad network of parks accessible to all Californians.

The Department must fundamentally change the way it accomplishes these goals by working with new and old partners throughout the state, collaborating on an unprecedented scale. This collaboration is not just about financial efficiencies; it is about adding value by capitalizing on the expertise, commitment, and resources of partners, and in the process building their connection and commitment to parks. In the course of our work, many of these partners have come forward – from other public agencies and nonprofits to academic institutions, health care providers, and technology companies. They share the goal of a vibrant, sustainable system of parks. Realizing this vision of collaboration will take the collective action and commitment of a broad network of partners, along with state leaders and new and broader coalitions of engaged Californians.

The Department must fundamentally transform itself to achieve this new vision as well. Financial accountability and transparency are critical, but just the beginning. A re-envisioned Department must seek out external expertise in effecting its transformation. The Department needs to be ready to accept a new role of facilitating and enabling effective collaborations. The Department’s budget and staff must be realigned with the new, broader vision. The culture must be one of entrepreneurship and innovation which requires both the support of Department leadership, as well as focused training and incentives for advancing new projects and practices. In addition, we recognize the Department cannot be all things, but must focus on its unique core responsibilities and strengths, which means some aspects of the Department’s work will require external support and in some cases may be better provided by other entities.

4. California Parks’ Future

Now is the time for setting the path for a vital, efficiently managed system of parks that will meet the state’s needs for decades to come. Our vision is dynamic, connecting California’s broad network of parks and protected lands with California’s changing needs and people.

Outlined below are the elements of this vision. [*Key long-term metrics of success to be developed following issuance of draft report and incorporated into the final report.*]

a. Natural resources, iconic landscapes, rich history, and diverse culture are valued and protected

Parks play a key role in the long-term protection and stewardship of our state’s natural and cultural resources. They are managed across regions and jurisdictions to ensure their long-term protection and vital role in the lives of Californians. We envision a future where parks create large, connected landscapes across the state, and provide a link to the

history and culture that make California unique.

b. All Californians have access to a network of parks

Parks serve all Californians, regardless of their location or means. Every neighborhood has a quality park close by and improved transportation options for getting there. Parks are integrated into the fabric of all Californians' lives, bringing social, health, and economic benefits to all corners of the state. Parks provide a variety of services and amenities that increase visitation throughout the state. Technology enables more people to enjoy and learn about parks.

c. Parks promote healthy, active lifestyles and communities

California's network of parks allows people to experience the outdoors, exercise, and improve their physical and emotional health through a wide range of activities. Everything from swing sets to soccer fields to hiking trails is available. Parks also provide communities with opportunities to build safe places to come together and venues for special events.

d. Youth are actively engaged in parks

Parks are California's largest classrooms, and nothing can match them for experiential learning. They foster deep connections with nature and healthy lifestyles and teach visitors about California's history and cultural heritage. Active engagement with youth builds new parks supporters, users, and professionals to guide parks in the future.

e. The California Department of Parks and Recreation is a capable and focused agency and partner

The Department plays a critical role in bringing this new parks vision to California. The Department is a receptive, flexible partner to other park systems, nonprofits, and others that share this vision. It coordinates joint programs and lends specialized expertise. Park managers have the financial resources they need to succeed, including stable public funding.

* * *

We believe wholeheartedly that this vision of a re-imagined park system is necessary. While it is a bold vision, it is one that California is uniquely capable of accomplishing. As difficult as the task may be, Californians' dedication to their parks is greater – a unified coalition of public agencies, parks professionals, nonprofit organizations, partners, volunteers, businesses, civic leaders, and advocates is up to the task.

The next chapter lays out a roadmap to accomplish this vision. All of our recommendations are designed to be practical and effective. Many can be implemented quickly to put parks back on track. In some cases, we have already launched initiatives

that hold promise of near-term impacts. Other changes will build the strong institutions, managers, and funding sources that will provide the bedrock for longer-term improvements.

5. Charting a New Course (10-12 pages)

Many aspects of the broad new vision set forth above have been proposed previously, both internally by the Department as far back as the Olmsted report, as well as externally by park supporters in reports such as the Parks Excellence Project. What is most striking, however, is the fact that despite years of well-intentioned external reports and internal strategic plans, the Department has yet not been able to achieve this vision. In building our recommendations below, we have carefully considered why the changes necessary for this vision have been so difficult to implement, in order to ensure that our recommendations can yield specific, demonstrable action and results. We also recognize the urgency of now, which compels progress on all components of the new vision concurrently, and not sequentially. Today, we no longer have the luxury of waiting for a transformed Department to implement this vision, nor do we think such an incremental approach is a reasonable strategy for success, given past efforts and current realities.

With this backdrop, we have designed our recommendations using a tiered analysis that first considered what core functions must be performed to achieve all aspects of this new vision. Second, we analyzed which of those core functions should be provided by a fully-functioning and transformed Department and which might more appropriately be provided by other existing and potentially new entities. Finally, we considered the actions that need to be taken to transform the Department into a modernized and effective agency that can efficiently provide the primary functions that all agree it must perform. The following recommendations flow from this functional framework.

[This section will set forth the specific recommendations for advancing the vision described in the previous section. Following are some initial ideas the Commission is discussing. This section is not yet complete and will change and be completed as the Commission continues its discussion and consideration.]

a. Protect Natural and Cultural Resources

- Use Partnerships to Expand Capacity to Steward and Restore
- Implement Preservation and Community Partnerships for Cultural Sites

b. Provide Access to a Network of Parks

- Expand Access to Parks in Underserved and Urban Areas
- Increase Transportation Options
- Create a Seamless System of Park Lands: Local, Regional, State, and Federal
- Create Online and Digital Tools to Promote and Facilitate Parks Use
- Increase the Number and Variety of Overnight Accommodations

c. Promote Healthy Lifestyles and Communities

- Expand Urban Recreation Opportunities
- Expand Special Events in Parks (Performing Arts, Festivals, Athletic Events)
- Create Partnerships with Healthcare Providers to Support Projects

d. Engage Youth

- Increase K-12 Education and Outdoor Recreation Opportunities
- Recruit and Train Youth as Volunteers and Seasonal Aids
- Recruit and Train Diverse, Young Park Professionals

e. Build an Effective Department of Parks and Recreation

- Focus on Priority Functions

[This section will focus on the fact that in some instances the Department will provide services directly, while in others, it will serve as a facilitator or manager instead of a direct service provider in order to achieve the best outcome. For those functions that will be provided by outside entities, the Department will collaborate and support the outside entities' work.]

- Protect Natural and Cultural Assets
- Conduct Statewide Parks Planning and Support Local and Regional Parks
- Oversee Operations, Management, Stewardship, Interpretation of State Properties

- Ensure Public Health and Safety
- Align and Modernize Staffing, Governance, Technology, and Systems Around these Priority Functions

[This section will recognize the evolving role of the Department and a need to shift key elements of decision-making and significant resources to the local or regional level. This section will also clarify the role of headquarters and that of the field.]

- Develop Tools and Processes to Optimize Financial and Operational Performance
 - Deploy Zero-Based Financial Planning Across the Department
 - Facilitate Measurement of Key Operating and Customer Metrics
- Assess and Realign Staffing Levels, Classifications, Functions, and Locations
- Provide Training and Advancement Opportunities for All Staff
- Recruit and Develop a Diverse Future Workforce
- Instill Culture of and Reward Collaboration, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship
- Ensure Successful Implementation by Investing in Expertise and Providing Authority to Achieve Alignment and Modernization

[This section will explore options for engaging experts, especially those with public sector turnaround experience, from within and outside the Department, providing authority to achieve these goals, ensuring timely implementation, and creating means of coordination and collaboration with outside support organization(s).]

f. Create New or Expanded Organization(s) that Support Local, Regional, and State Parks

- Focus on Priority Functions for Parks Support

[This section will describe how to ensure all duties conform to the Department's mission and goals including those relating to expanding access, ensuring protection of natural and cultural assets, and meeting the future needs of the state. This section will also consider whether and how the new organization(s) can assist with or provide oversight of the Department's Realignment and Modernization and will specify the specific functions and means of mechanisms that will guide a new organization(s).]

- Strategic Planning and Coordination Among all Entities Responsible for Oversight of Protected Lands
- Communications, Marketing, and Digital Information and Tools
- Enterprise Functions: Revenue Generation, Business Development, Concessions, Partnerships
- Operational, Financial, and Strategic Support for Park Support Organizations
- Land Acquisition
- Fundraising and Financing Solutions - Including traditional private fundraising, as well as new, creative approaches that may include crowd funding, philanthropic loans, and commercial equity/debt raises
- *[This section will also describe the type of organization or organizations that can best and most effectively meet these goals, ensure effective governance and transparency, most effectively receive, distribute or match public funding, and align efforts with existing organizations.]*

g. Secure Predictable, Stable Sources of Public Funding for Local, Regional, and State Parks

[This section will set forth the options for providing consistent sources of public funding along with general fund and revenue generation.]

6. Implementation

[This section will set forth the changes to processes, funding, laws, structures, governance, and policy to support the recommendations. Because there are both near and long term tasks, implementation will proceed in phases. And, in some cases, substantial work remains to be done to create detailed implementation plans. While all recommendations will identify next steps, timing, roles of agencies, partners, and stakeholders, some will be less detailed pending the outcome of further work.]

7. Conclusion

[This section will summarize the key themes, highlight critical next steps, emphasize the need to act now, and call state leaders, the department, stakeholders, and the public to action.]