



Final Peer Analysis Report for Montana State Parks - 2015

As Montana State Parks (MSP) embarks on the implementation of the Montana State Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan 2015-2020, two parallel processes have been initiated: A committee consisting of a cross section of park staff has begun the task of classifying Montana's state park units based on their significance, relevance, and accessibility. Simultaneously, a second group consisting of the five regional park managers has recently completed a draft peer analysis of neighboring state park systems, with the goal of developing a regional standard for staffing and funding. Specifically, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Idaho state park systems were analyzed.

Methodology

To accomplish this, a system was developed to compare field operations between state park systems. MSP staff utilized a wide array of park attributes to designate a series of ten indicator parks intended to represent a cross section of Montana's state park system. These indicator sites were compared with similar park units in neighboring states. MSP indicator park units and comparative metrics can be viewed in the *MSP Indicator Site Attribute Matrix* located in **Appendix A**. Park units studied during this process ranged widely in terms of size, function, visitation, revenue generation, and financial and human resources. For further clarification, park units were classified under one of three basic park types: **1. Day use only, with a visitor center** - This designation captures parks that focus entirely on providing interpretation, education, historic preservation, and day-use recreational opportunities with no overnight camping or lodging. **2. Camping and day-use** - This designation includes state park units that are focused on camping and lodging, with amenities for day-use recreation as well. These parks are typically water-based facilities. **3. Camping and day-use, with a visitor center** - This park type includes park units that offer a combination of visitor center experiences with camping and recreational opportunities.

Individual regional park managers were assigned a neighboring park system and asked to work with a counterpart from that state to jointly find park units that compared well.

Regional Staffing and Funding Standards

Staffing and funding were averaged for each aggregate of park units from adjoining state park systems that were most similar to one of the MSP indicator parks. These averages were used to determine a four-state regional standard for state park staffing and funding.

Differences in administrative structure, geography, demographics, park system mission, and priorities created challenges to finding good comparisons for all of the MSP indicator sites. Park managers spent a considerable amount of time speaking with their peers in other states and reviewing park system web pages to identify the best possible comparisons. In some cases, only certain facets of a neighboring state park were utilized for comparison. It is important to note that only field staffing and funding were contrasted to develop these standards.

Findings

Thirty-four neighboring state parks were selected for comparison with Montana’s state park system. Table 1 indicates the MSP indicator parks, followed by the four-state average for staffing and funding at comparable peer state park units.

Table 1 Legend	
	SD
	ND
	WY
	ID

Table 1. Montana State Park Indicator Site Comparisons				
State Park	FTE	Operations Budgets	MSP % of Peer State FTE Avg.	MSP % of Peer State Funding Avg.
Wayfarers	1.76	\$104,856	36%	24%
Walkers Point RA	1.60	\$58,164		
Lake Metigoshe	9.90	\$1,251,515		
Seminole SP	4.00	\$222,238		
Lake Walcot	4.12	\$202,201		
Neighbor State Average	4.91	\$433,530		

Table 1 (continued)				
Travelers Rest	1.94	\$147,995	45%	42%
Adams Homestead Nature Preserve	2.00	\$135,000		
Cross Ranch	3.36	\$411,848		
Fort Bridger	7.50	\$491,236		
Old Mission	4.52	\$375,473		
Neighbor State Average	4.35	\$353,389		
Lewis & Clark Caverns	4.09	\$245,124	70%	41%
Pierson Ranch RA	4.50	\$353,053		
Lewis & Clark	6.20	\$1,121,382		
NA*				
Bruneau Dunes	6.85	\$303,826		
Neighbor State Average	5.85	\$592,754		
Bannack	5.18	\$327,530	94%	106%
Fort Sisseton SP	4.15	\$200,000		
Fort Ransom	4.25	\$536,301		
South Pass City	9.00	\$267,276		
Massacre Rocks	4.53	\$228,625		
Neighbor State Average	5.48	\$308,051		
Giant Springs	3.74	\$264,398	67%	53%
Palisades SP	3.42	\$240,000		
Fort Abraham Lincoln	9.64	\$1,227,652		
Bear River	3.75	\$279,770		
Eagle Island	5.64	\$259,457		
Neighbor State Average	5.61	\$501,720		
First People's BJ	4.13	\$285,858	133%	94%
Adams Homestead Nature Preserve	2.00	\$135,000		
Beaver Lake	2.83	\$401,250		
NA*				
Old Mission	4.52	\$375,473		
Neighbor State Average	3.12	\$303,908		

Table 1 (continued)				
Makoshika	2.80	\$262,749	47%	65%
Bear Butte SP	2.50	\$180,000		
Turtle Lake	8.00	\$1,094,675		
Buffalo Bill	8.50	\$234,389		
Castle Rocks	4.77	\$119,546		
Neighbor State Average	5.94	\$407,153		

Pictograph Cave	2.83	\$187,232	91%	81%
Adams Homestead Nature Preserve	2.00	\$135,000		
NA*				
Fort Phil Kearney	2.80	\$181,900		
Old Mission	4.52	\$375,473		
Neighbor State Average	3.11	\$230,791		

Tongue River	3.64	\$265,891	56%	58%
Angostura RA	9.00	\$410,000		
Devils Lake	7.04	\$1,070,343		
Curt Gowdy	7.00	\$256,303		
Henry's Lake	2.75	\$85,830		
Neighbor State Average	6.45	\$455,619		

Brush Lake	0.69	\$46,034	43%	71%
Llewellyn Jones RA	1.50	\$60,000		
Little Missouri Bay	0.40	\$123,000		
Hawk Springs	2.00	\$11,425		
McCroskey	2.59	\$66,127		
Neighbor State Average	1.62	\$65,138		

68% **64%**
MSP total % of peer state average for staffing and funding.

NA* indicates that an adequate comparison could not be found.

FTE

On a system-wide comparison, MSP is at 68% percent of the four-state standard for field staffing. MSP parks that focus on day use and camping are at 47% of standard. MSP park units that operate a visitor center in addition to providing camping are staffed to

70% of standard, while parks that focus on day use and visitor center operations without camping averaged 75% of the staffing standard.

Table 2. Montana State Parks Indicator Sites by Park Type		
DAY-USE ONLY, WITH A VISITOR CENTER – MSP INDICATOR SITES		
	% of Four-State FTE Standard	% of Four-State Funding Standard
Traveler’s Rest	75%	60%
Giant Springs		
Pictograph		
First People’s Buffalo Jump		
VISITOR CENTER WITH CAMPING AND DAY-USE – MSP INDICATOR SITES		
	% of Four-State FTE Standard	% of Four-State Funding Standard
Lewis & Clark Caverns	70%	64%
Bannack		
Makoshika		
CAMPING AND DAY-USE ONLY – MSP INDICATOR SITES		
	% of Four-State FTE Standard	% of Four-State Funding Standard
Tongue River	47%	44%
Brush Lake		
Wayfarers		

Funding

As a system, MSP indicator sites are funded to 64% of the four-state standard. As with staffing, the MSP camping and day-use-only park units were significantly below the funding standard at 44% of standard.

General Observations

Camping and Lodging

Neighboring peer states tend to emphasize camping and lodging on a much larger scale than Montana’s state park system. Most of those park systems have larger campgrounds and offer significantly more cabin-style lodging opportunities. It is common to find state parks in neighboring states with multiple campgrounds. Wyoming for example manages several state parks on reservoirs, with multiple distinct campground units around the circumference of the water body. Idaho State Parks manages park units with dozens of rental cabins, yurts, marina facilities, and hundreds of RV and tent camping sites.

Cultural Preservation and Interpretation

MSP is somewhat unique for the quantity of interpretive and educational programming offered. While many of our peer states play an important role in cultural and historic preservation, MSP has a higher number of park units devoted entirely to that end. It also appears that MSP engages in more active interpretation and education overall as a state park system than surrounding states.

Visitor Amenities

Like Montana, these peer states are dependent on revenue generation for a significant portion of their operational funding. In general, our neighboring state park systems provide a larger variety of campground amenities. South Dakota State Parks, for example, provides restaurants in their flagship park units. Idaho State Parks has become very creative with off-season camping opportunities, Frisbee golf courses, and even an observatory. It appears that most of the surrounding state park systems are very active with concession operations, providing everything from sunscreen to boat rentals.

Organizational Structure and Funding Mechanisms

Like Montana State Parks, South Dakota State Parks is a division of an agency that also houses the state's fisheries and wildlife programs. The remaining three states in this comparison have stand-alone state park agencies. Typically, Montana's peer state park systems operate with a park manager and often an assistant park manager assigned to each individual state park unit. Utilizing park managers to manage clusters of park units is not as widely used in surrounding states as it is Montana. All of the park systems compared have some degree of responsibility for historic preservation, and all have involvement in state and federal trails programs.

South Dakota is similar to Montana in that there is no state general fund allocated for routine operations. Idaho parks receive a small amount of state general fund, while Wyoming and North Dakota receive significant percentages of their operating and capital budgets from general funds. In all cases, earned revenue is extremely important to annual operations of our neighboring state park systems.

Law Enforcement

North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming address law enforcement in their park systems with commissioned park officers who focus strictly on state parks. Idaho operates with non-commissioned officers who have authority to issue citations for park rule violations. All of these peer state park systems cooperate with other law enforcement agencies using a mutual aid model.

Conclusion

This analysis was generally consistent with the findings of the 2012 Environmental Quality Council *HJR 32 A Study of State Parks, Outdoor Recreation, and Heritage Resource Programs*. Montana clearly lags behind neighboring state park systems in terms of staffing and funding for its state park systems.

Visitation to Montana's state parks has increased by 29% in the past 10 years, while staffing has remained flat. Earned revenue has climbed with increasing visitation, the implementation of a campsite reservation system, and increased enterprise account activity, but the ability to convert this to improved staffing levels has been largely outside the control of MSP. As a result, MSP has an unhealthy reliance on volunteerism and is forced to task field managers with the oversight of multiple park units and elements of state trails program activities at the regional level. Somewhat surprisingly, visitor satisfaction ratings remain very high for the system as a whole.

Most of Montana's state parks have infrastructure that was installed between 30 and 50 years ago and is now in need of wholesale repair or replacement. In some cases, park units are perilously close to major systems failure due to aged underground septic and water systems that have reached the end of their expected life spans. Many park roads, administrative buildings, historic structures, boating facilities, and campgrounds are or will be soon in need of significant work. New funding for major maintenance and capital must be found in order to meet these needs moving forward.

In essence, MSP has 6.8 staff members for every 10 that are employed by our neighboring peer states for sites of similar size and function. Park managers, park rangers, maintenance workers, and park attendants are operating at maximum capacity throughout the state. Closing this staffing gap is imperative if we are to expect field staff to embrace and implement the important initiatives that lay in the future. The capacity for developing new revenue streams, networking with recreation partners, and continuing to provide high quality recreational opportunities must be developed if the system hopes to succeed into the future.

Appendix A. MSP Indicator Site Attribute Matrix

State Park	Annual Visitation	Acres	Classification: Day Use Only=DU, Day Use & VC=DUV, Camping & Day Use=CD, Camping, Day Use & VC=CDV,	Total Fee & Enterprise Revenue	Camping (# of Campsites) tips or cabins TC	Complex Buildings: Visitor Center =VC, Ranger Station = RS, Administrative Building = AB, Maintenance Shop = MS, staff housing=SH, Historic Structures (HS)	Amenities: public showers =SW, rv pump outs= RP, boating facilities (docks, ramps, slips)=BF, concession or retail building=RT, amphitheater=AP, swimming area = SA, playground=PG, trails=TR	Concessions	Snowmobile/Recreation Trails Admin (Park Manager duty)	Law Enforcement (Commissioned Officers Assigned?)	Interpretive Service / guided tours=G,T, campfire talks or ranger led programs= RG, interp displays = IT	Events: large annual events = AV	FTE (to be completed after interview)	Operations Budgets (to be completed after interview)
Warblers	133,473	67.34	CD	\$96,578.97	30	RS, MS	SW, RP, BF, SA, PG, TR							
Travelers Rest	29,684	64.42	DUV	\$14,603.73	-	VC, SH, HS	TR			RG, IT	Y			
Lewis & Clark Caverns	67,740	2,920.18	CDV	\$679,509.80	43, TC	VC, MS, HS, AB	SW, RT, AP, TR, RP	Y		GT, RG, IT				
Bannock	34,030	1,529.45	CDV	\$36,651.11	25, TC	VC, AB, MS, SH, HS, RT	RT, TR			RG, IT	Y			
Madison Buffalo Jump	13,851	638.40	DU	\$2,816.00			TR	Y		GT, IT				
Giant Springs	316,483	3,095.58	DUV	\$17,676.13		RS, HS	TR, PG	Y		Y	Y			
First Peoples BI	17,910	2,166.75	DUV	\$41,352.66		VC, MS, HS	AP, TR			GT, RG, IT	Y			
Malheur	77,352	11,633.98	CDV	\$51,319.91	21	VC, MS, SH, HS	RT, AP, RT, TR			RG, IT	Y			
Photograph Cove	66,889	93.12	DUV	\$36,524.18		VC, MS	RT			GT, RT, IT				
Tongue River	68,387	641.86	CD	\$181,812.12	156	AB, MS, SH	BF, RT, SA, PG	Y	Y					
Brush Lake	7,038	450.00	CD	\$6,048.51	12	MS	RP, RT, SA							

Appendix B. Regional Park Manager Narratives for Neighboring State Park Systems.

South Dakota State Parks – Peer Analysis Conducted by Matt Marcinek

Basic Structure

South Dakota State Parks (SDSP) is a division of South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks. The Parks Division manages a total of 13 state parks, 44 recreation areas, 4 nature areas, and 68 lakeside use areas. The park units are managed within 17 districts, and the division recently downsized from 6 regions to 4 regions. South Dakota's park districts are comparable in the way Montana State Parks is organized, with a park manager often being responsible for multiple parks.

Operating budgets for South Dakota State Parks are comprised of 64% from park entrance license and camping fees, 17% federal funds, 12% general fund, 3% motorboat fuel tax, and 4% miscellaneous (timber and bison sales, concession revenue, agricultural leases, etc.). Personnel and O&M budgets are administered at a district level. Precise budgets are not allocated to each specific park as in Montana; the budgets are managed district-wide with the park manager having some discretion on where to allocate resources. Estimates for the specific parks used in the peer analysis were provided by the assistant director of operations based on knowledge of the operations as well as by individual park managers.

Staffing

South Dakota State Parks has 112 permanent and permanent part-time field FTE and 107 seasonal field FTE, for a total of 218.4 field FTE (compared to 86 field FTE for Montana State Parks). It is important to note that 25% of South Dakota's total field FTE is located at Custer State Park. As described below, South Dakota also has approximately 8 field FTE dedicated to conducting winter snowmobile trail grooming and operations in the Black Hills, which is something that Montana State Parks doesn't do (snowmobile clubs perform the grooming in Montana).

SDSP has 9.1 FTE in their snowmobile program, with 8 FTE in the Black Hills, with managers as well seasonal employees for trail maintenance and snowmobile trail grooming (on USFS land). They conduct trail grooming activities with their own paid staff in the Black Hills area. In the east they have a grant program and own the groomers, but the clubs do the grooming work, a similar set up to Montana State Parks in the eastern part of SD.

South Dakota has 1.0 FTE in Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Recreational Trails Program (RTP), and Coast Guard grant administration in their Pierre headquarters. They do not have an off-highway vehicle (OHV) grant program. Federal funds are spent primarily on trails they manage. Their central office has 13.3 FTE assigned to it for administration. This administrative FTE is not included in the peer analysis.

Volunteers are a major component of their operations, as they are in Montana. In my discussions with SD park managers, I got the sense that they have made significant efforts to

provide quality camping locations for their volunteers, with full hook ups so they can attract longer-term volunteers. These volunteers perform maintenance throughout the parks where they are located; they also staff ranger stations, conduct trail work, and serve as park hosts. These volunteers are in addition to the camp hosts that traditionally assist with campground operations.

Basic Operational Structure

There is a park manager for each district, usually stationed at the largest park in the district, with assistant park managers assigned to some districts. Staff housing is provided at many of their districts, as well as provided for assistant managers. The regional park offices are located in an administrative office within a park and a regional parks supervisor is stationed there. The lakeside use areas (LUA) are also managed by the State Parks Division, but none of the parks selected for this peer analysis have LUA responsibilities, so costs and manpower associated with those areas is not a factor in the analysis.

SDSP has six fully certified park rangers strategically located throughout the state. They mentor approximately ten armed seasonal park rangers each summer – strategically located. The rangers are supervised by district managers or regional park supervisors. The figures provided for the peer analysis include estimates of the shared regional or district-wide law enforcement if applicable to the selected park. Volunteer fee compliance rangers are used at Custer State Park. Game wardens do not appear to be a major aspect of state park enforcement or public safety efforts.

General Observations

There are similarities between South Dakota and Montana park systems, with regional (district) maintenance staff, divisional design & construction, capital projects, etc. I feel the two states are similar in terms of park managers managing several parks and sharing regional/district maintenance resources. The figures listed for South Dakota include estimates of district maintenance support. It was not feasible to analyze all the various division and regional/district support factors during this process.

South Dakota State Parks offers primarily seasonal interpretation (mostly passive, with some guided hikes and talks) at a few parks, but interpretation is not as much of an emphasis as in Montana State Parks. Many of their parks contain significant overnight accommodations and larger campgrounds than Montana, and ranger talks are a popular aspect of their interpretation at those sites. A full time naturalist is located at Custer State Park. Their Adams Homestead is the only other site where interpretation has a heavy emphasis.

Most South Dakota state parks are more extensively developed than Montana state parks, with a greater emphasis placed on revenue generation and amenities than in Montana. In general, South Dakota parks have higher revenue-to-budget ratios than Montana parks, with Custer State Park and three districts being revenue positive. They have an additional 3 districts operating at above 90% revenue to budget ratios (i.e., close to being self-sustaining).

Special Notes:

There was difficulty in finding a close comparison in South Dakota for our unique indicator park, Lewis & Clark Caverns (larger multi-use park with a very key feature requiring significant FTE & O&M to operate that feature). They don't have a park with a cave or similar attraction requiring trained staff to tour or interpret. For the peer analysis, the FTE and O&M clearly dedicated to the Caverns operations were removed from our figures and compared to South Dakota's Pierson Ranch Recreation Area (busy multi-use park with similar overnight accommodations, trails, and infrastructure demands).

South Dakota does not have an urban day-use-only park like Giant Springs, so the park manager of Palisades State Park estimated the staffing and O&M related to their campground operations, and we removed those costs from the calculations. The result is Palisades State Park day-use operations only to compare more closely with Giant Springs.

North Dakota – Doug Habermann

Basic structure

North Dakota State Parks continue to go through changes and adjustments to their system much as Montana State Parks has. The addition of Bakken oil revenue has helped on a general fund basis, funding permanent staff and capital improvements. Seasonal staff funding and much of operations is funded from earned revenue, which has been robust lately and is their only other source of funding.

Staffing

North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD) is a stand-alone agency. NDPRD has two levels of parks, which is reflected in their staffing. All but three parks have their own full-time manager, with those three being managed as satellite parks. Park Manager Ones manage the medium size parks, with $\frac{3}{4}$ -time rangers, maintenance workers, and seasonals. Park Manager Twos manage the largest, most complex parks with a full-time ranger and maintenance lead as well as seasonals. Volunteers are generally limited to camp host positions. The parks work with local organizations on special projects and trade resources for special events. A number of state parks are now managed by towns as part of their park systems and are no longer considered part of the system; this seems to be working well.

Basic Operational Structure.

Many of NDPRD seasonals are long term, such as three-quarter time. They now receive health insurance and retirement benefits. Housing is provided for all permanent staff as well as most seasonals. They have their own certified law enforcement personnel, typically the park managers and permanent full-time rangers. They recently "decriminalized" their regulations, so there are fines, but no further penalties for typical park rules violations such as failure to pay. They work closely with area game wardens and the local court system to resolve any more serious criminal activity in the parks. Fines go back to the counties. They have pretty much

stopped using concessionaires and use their own staff to run everything, including such items as a commissary and bar at Fort Abraham Lincoln.

General observations

They utilize a campsite reservation system, have full-service visitor centers in many of their parks and provide campground programs in many of their parks. They do historic preservation of historic buildings within their sites, which range from CCC-era structures to large, historic buildings such as at Fort Abraham Lincoln.

NDPRD's parks are focused primarily on camping and water access. They do not manage any day-use or historic sites, unless contained within a larger park. Trails are a major offering in their system. They also manage state recreation areas and state natural areas, which are often small and unmanned, with very few amenities and no real comparability to Montana State Parks. NDPRD sites typically have relatively large seasonal staffs. Both their operations and seasonal staff funding is through earned revenue, which is substantial due to their focus on campgrounds. They recently raised their entrance and camping fees to sustain their large infrastructure system. Their focus is contained in their vision statement(s) from their department webpage:

- Create welcome, safe, and accessible state parks and programs responsive to changing public trends to enhance North Dakota's quality of life;
- Provide quality customer service within the limits of appropriation authority;
- Maintain essential state park facilities and programs to ensure a quality recreation experience through a cost recovery fee system supporting resource operations and maintenance; and
- Foster an appreciation and understanding of North Dakota's natural heritage through responsible public stewardship programs on park-managed lands.

Adjustments made during individual park comparisons

Finding comparable parks was hampered by this distinction, and after matching up camping parks as well as coming as close as possible with the remaining NDPRD and Montana State Parks (MSP) day-use parks, Pictograph Cave SP, with its proximity to Interstate 90 and Billings, and Madison Buffalo Jump SP, with its low visitation and lack of facilities or programs, still remained without comparable parks.

Park managers at comparison parks were contacted. Cross Ranch SP is paired with Travelers Rest SP as they have similar visitation and trail systems, and are considered historic sites. Cross Ranch provides river, not lake, access so although it has a 70-unit campground, its relatively low visitation compared to other NDPRD units is probably a result of its remote location. The manager there estimated they expend about 20% of their budget and FTE on their relatively small campground, which is closed in the winter.

The comparison of Fort Abraham Lincoln SP and Giant Springs SP lacks some significant shared features, notably that FAL has several campgrounds as well as historic structures. However, Giant Springs has twice the visitation and three times the acreage. They both are close to larger towns, have extensive trail systems, and host several large events. The Fort Abraham Lincoln manager estimated they spend about 40% of their resources on campground management and maintenance, although they also have a large commercial operation at their gift store and food and beverage operation.

Beaver Lake SP and First People's SP are again a comparison of a camping park and a day-use park. They do both have extensive trail systems and similar visitation. The manager there estimated about 25% of their resources go to operating their campground.

Idaho – Chet Crowser

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation

Basic Structure

The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) is responsible for managing Idaho State Parks, which is comprised of 30 park units including three major trailways. IDPR is also responsible for managing registration programs for boats, snowmobiles, and off-highway vehicles as well as grant and funding programs that support recreation opportunities in Idaho. As a stand-alone agency, they have their own dedicated administrative, management, and finance staff that provide support to the state park program.

The operational side of IDPR is led by an operations division administrator who oversees two state park regional manager positions and a recreation bureau chief, who in turn supervise park managers and program staff. In some cases there can be potential to share funding for services between recreation and state park management staff, but they are predominantly managed as two separate program areas with separate program budgets and responsibilities.

IDPR receives some allocation from the Idaho general fund, but that amount has decreased significantly over the past several years, necessitating new and creative ways to address funding shortfalls. Fee and enterprise revenue are both important funding sources and include daily and annual entrance fee options for residents and nonresidents as well as camping fees, park store sales, and facility and equipment rentals. Idaho also has a state park passport program that allows Idaho residents to purchase an annual park entrance pass for \$10 when they register their vehicle. The passport program is only in its second year, but has generated revenue of about \$1.2 million annually. Partnerships with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) can also be found at a handful of water-based parks where BOR typically contributes funding to park management conducted by IDPR.

Staffing

FTE allocated to the department by the legislature is primarily used for full-time park managers and park rangers with the number of seasonal staff positions hired (not tied to FTE) determined by available funding levels. Budgets for seasonal staff are allocated to parks based on individual need, with park managers having some degree of latitude to determine pay rates. Most often, increases in pay are related to required job skills or to address retention issues. Volunteers are also an important part of accomplishing tasks within the parks, with some parks having more reliance on volunteers than others. Volunteer hours reported by parks used in the comparison ranged from the equivalent of approximately .5 FTE to 1.5 FTE per park.

Basic Operational Structure

As a rough estimate, about two-thirds of Idaho's state park managers are responsible for a single park rather than multiple parks or other program responsibilities. The remaining one-third who manage more than one unit are usually responsible for trailways or nearby park units that are smaller, less developed, or have lower visitation. Most park managers are supported by at least one park ranger and in some cases assistant park managers are employed to manage nearby park units under the supervision of a park manager. Staff housing is present in a number of Idaho's state parks.

IDPR does not have commissioned law enforcement officers in their system nor are there commissioned officers assigned to individual state parks. They do have compliance enforcement officers (usually two per park) who are park managers or park rangers that have authority to issue citations for park violations, but receive limited enforcement training, do not have lethal force or power of arrest authority, and carry only pepper spray for self defense. When commissioned officers are needed by park staff, county officers are most frequently contacted to respond. In a few cases, Idaho Fish and Game wardens can provide assistance, but the effectiveness of that approach varies depending on the park and individuals involved.

General Observations

Idaho and Montana share similarities in the types of parks that can be found in both systems. Water-based recreation and camping opportunities are common in both, as are historically significant sites and interpretation. However, the majority of state parks in Idaho have more extensive facilities, amenities, and diverse recreational opportunities than comparison state parks in Montana. Camping is offered at most Idaho state parks, with campgrounds being much larger and commonly offering more services such as showers, flush toilets, RV dump stations, park stores, rental equipment, WiFi, and cabin or yurt accommodations. Trails, visitor centers, disc golf courses, interpretive displays, programs, and guided tours are also frequently found in Idaho State Parks. State parks in Idaho also had a more developed off-season range of recreational offerings, including a number of overnight winter accommodation options and

open campgrounds, than those in Montana. Other unique facilities within Idaho State Parks included an observatory, conference center, and Smithsonian-quality museum.

The integration of friends groups to support individual parks is not a common model in the Idaho State Park system. Friends groups were more popular in the past, but as IDPR developed enterprise accounts and focused managers' efforts on revenue generation at state parks about 12 years ago, many of those groups disappeared. There is currently one statewide friends group for Idaho State Parks and a friends group for Harriman State Park.

Special Notes

There was not a suitable way to separate resident entrance fees collected at individual Idaho State Parks from other sources of revenue. This would have provided a more accurate comparison to Montana where only nonresident entrance fees are collected at individual parks. This discrepancy should be considered when comparing revenue generation between Montana and Idaho state parks.

Because seasonal positions are not allocated FTE in Idaho, an estimate of FTE was established by dividing the money spent on seasonal employees by an average wage. In visiting with staff in Idaho, they indicated that pay rates for seasonal positions vary, but a reasonable average is \$9.50/hour. This is the amount used in calculating seasonal FTE for the matrix.

Wyoming – John Taillie

Wyoming State Parks, Historic Sites, and Trails is a division of Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources. The Cultural Resources Division includes the Wyoming Arts Council, state museums, and the State Historic Preservation Office. Their state park program merged with their historic site program in the late 1980s. Their system is comprised of large reservoir-type parks with campgrounds that generate a majority of their earned revenue and subsidize many of the smaller historic sites, which generate much less revenue and visitation. There are seven large reservoir parks including Glendo, Buffalo Bill, Boysen, Keyhole, Guernsey, Seminoe, and Curt Gowdy. Six of these reservoirs are managed and maintained by Wyoming for the Bureau of Reclamation, and Wyoming receives some funding for these parks from the BOR. Wyoming manages and maintains these reservoir parks under agreements with the BOR. Wyoming manages and maintains these reservoir parks under agreements with the BOR. Wyoming State Parks also administers RTP grant funding and permitting for both a snowmobile and OHV program.

Wyoming State Parks is funded from several sources. Approximately \$2,987,000 is received annually from general fund for operations and maintenance. Their Capital Enterprise Account - earned revenue mainly from camping fees - generates approximately \$2,000,000 per year.

This account is used primarily for capital projects, although up to 25% can be used for operations. They also receive \$1,600,000 annually from the general fund for major maintenance projects. They receive approximately \$500,000 annually from a motorboat fuel tax.

Wyoming State Parks is staffed with a division administrator who oversees two section heads. The field section head is over two regional managers who supervise individual park superintendents and assistant superintendents. The other section head oversees headquarters and support staff. Some superintendents do manage more than one park, usually an unstaffed smaller site. Seasonal FTE is allocated biannually by the state legislature, which usually authorizes up to 150 positions that are funded up to 6 months. These positions are allocated out to individual parks as needed. The positions are funded at an hourly rate between \$8 and \$9 per hour. Due to remote park locations and low rate of pay, these positions are difficult to recruit and retain. Wyoming State Parks has an active volunteer program counting over 22,000 hours or the equivalent of 11 FTE last year. They utilize a special budget for recruiting and retaining camp hosts. Seven historic sites and three state parks currently have friends groups.

Camping generates the most revenue for Wyoming as their large water-base parks have numerous campgrounds with hundreds of sites. Boysen and Keyhole Reservoirs both have over 200 sites each, including marina/ concession facilities. Glendo has over 400 campsites. Interpretation at specific parks is very limited, and there is minimal staffing devoted to provide any at the field level. The Wyoming Territorial Prison relies entirely on site hosts for their guided tours. The site hosts are unpaid, but are similar to camp hosts and receive a free camping space including water, electricity, and septic during their tenure.

Wyoming charges resident fees - \$4/car or \$33 for annual pass. Nonresident fees are \$6/car, \$53 for an annual pass. They utilize Reserve-America at a number of parks, but only allow reservations for approximately 25% of their campsites. Campsites cost \$10 per night for residents (includes day-use fee), and \$17 for nonresidents (includes day-use fee). It is an extra \$5 per night for water and electric.

Historic sites vary in size and scope. South Pass City has numerous historic buildings, with a larger maintenance staff. Most of the historic sites have very limited staff, and some have no on-site staff.

It was a difficult process to match up Wyoming parks to the Montana parks. There were no comparable matches for a number of parks listed in our matrix.