



Transformation Progress Report

California Department of Parks and Recreation

September 2015

Introduction

The Parks Forward Commission (Commission) was appointed by the Secretary of Natural Resources in July 2013 to assess the unique challenges California's state parks face and help identify solutions to solidify the future of the department that manages them - California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks).

The Commission released its final recommendations on Feb. 6, 2015 in the report "[A New Vision for California State Parks](#)". The Commission's essential recommendations included the:

- Transforming the operations of State Parks
- Rededication to working with park partners
- Expansion of park access for all Californians

In 2014, California celebrated 150 years of its state park system. We reflected on our proud legacy of stewardship. The year also marked the beginning of a transformation of the state park system designed to lead State Parks on a path of long-term sustainability.

Transformation Needed

In 2015, State Parks developed a plan for reinvigorating the California park experience through a renewed commitment to stewardship of the state's treasured places and broader engagement of people, partners, businesses and communities. The new path, dubbed "Transformation," will alter policies, procedures, guidelines, and organizational structures to support an entrepreneurial, service-oriented, creative and collaborative culture within the state park system.

Through the Transformation initiatives, State Parks will deliver a stronger, more robust future for the state park system. Visitors will know that we care about their state parks when they interact with us at all levels. Collectively all of these initiatives will strengthen our efforts to protect and preserve state parks which include California's most significant cultural, historic and natural resources. Our sense of commitment and service will be



evident and contagious. We will inspire visitors to help us protect these special places and their resources.

In the future, as a result of the Transformation:

- ✓ We will seek a diverse leadership team that draws from broad skill sets across disciplines to lead State Parks. Department leaders will seek talent and creative ideas from inside and outside the state park system.
- ✓ We will break through the many barriers to bringing in new talent in all levels of the organization. Our classifications will be reflective of the needs of the state park system and we will have established a process to bring in talent from diverse programmatic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds to the job of managing our parks for all Californians. The organization will be more diverse and reflective of the people it serves.
- ✓ We will have a better understanding of our resources through strengthened data collection, allowing us to strategically focus our efforts and resources on compelling actions that advance our mission. We will use this enhanced information to improve our priority setting and communicate complex parks information to the public in a clear and simple way.
- ✓ We will look beyond ourselves to better serve our visitors. We will engage the power of partnerships, philanthropy, and volunteerism on a larger scale and do so thoughtfully and strategically. Through such partnerships, we can broaden our impact for more resources and enhanced services. For instance, we will partner with the healthcare community so they will view us as an important tool to advance public health initiatives.
- ✓ We will create a culture of service. We will measure our performance in terms of service to visitors. In the field and at headquarters, we will cultivate a sense of service through training, mentoring, example and accountability.
- ✓ We will pursue simplicity and clarity in all that we do. We will use fewer words to explain our actions. We will work to convey complex issues clearly and concisely.

Achieving these goals requires that we dare to imagine better solutions to problems than what we have employed in the past.

Getting There

Guided by the Commission report, the Administration began assembling a Transformation Team in the fall of 2014 with the appointment of the Transformation Team leader, Steve Szalay. The Transformation Team ([Team](#)), comprised of qualified, experienced and dedicated personnel from State Parks staff, outside entities and professional consultants, developed a tactical Transformation Action Plan ([Plan](#)). The Plan set forth four strategic goals for the state parks system:

1. Protect and Enhance Natural and Cultural Resources
2. Develop Excellent Management Systems
3. Maintain High Quality Operations and Public Service
4. Create Meaningful Connections and Relevancy to People

Employees, partners, volunteers, engaged communities and Team members together are bringing about transformation. The Team and its committees have commenced work on the top initiatives. Committees include internal and external members, contributors and peer review members. Project management consultants, Deloitte Consulting, LLP, are advising the Team and its committees.

After six months of work, some initiatives are complete. Others have been reprioritized. An iterative approach allows the Team to prioritize the most important initiatives and projects. Specifically, the team has accomplished the following chart.

Strategic Goal	Progress-to-Date	Benefit
Protect and Enhance Natural and Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiated discussions with key external stakeholders to drive natural and cultural improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains the focus on protecting and enhancing natural and cultural resources.
Develop Excellent Management Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented a new district superintendent position. 	Provides State Parks with the flexibility to consider candidates from all disciplines, including those outside state service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created an organization chart criteria and definitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes a strategic framework for organizational

Strategic Goal	Progress-to-Date	Benefit
	document that outlines the guiding and management principles. The Team will use these principles to reevaluate state parks' organizational structure.	chart design and decision making.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed the hiring process and identified opportunities for improvement. • Began implementation of a new software system to minimize the approvals and handoffs necessary to fill vacancies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminates complexity by deleting 20% of the steps in the hiring process. • Reduces total time for filling positions. • Uses automation to reduce processing, preparation processing, staff training time and human error.
Maintain High Quality Operations and Public Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented a more comprehensive district budget allocation process that is synced to the annual budget process with a more detailed tracking of current fiscal year expenditures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for better management of district expenditures to available resources. • Informs future resource allocations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a partnership framework that more accurately reflects the approach to partnering with external organizations for the betterment of parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves relationships with partners. • Improves the ability to seek partnerships to further the mission of State Parks.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlined Revenue Accounting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduces new revenue collection technology with improved data tracking capacity. • Allows the department to analyze and enhance revenue

Strategic Goal	Progress-to-Date	Benefit
		collection. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces revenue processing time.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloted revenue collection through smartphone technology in the Orange Coast District. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduces new technology to drive revenue collection.
Create Meaningful Connections and Relevancy to People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloted Los Angeles State Historic Park community liaison project and created a lessons learned playbook to expand program to other districts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumpstarts future relevancy/ community activities. • Sets the framework for developing culturally relevant and language accessible parks content.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloted expansion of cabins at Angel Island, Calaveras Big Trees, Big Sur, Jedediah Smith Redwoods, Prairie Creek Redwoods and Patrick’s Point state parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expands and enhances access for a broader range of park users. • Creates new opportunity to use new cabins to promote state parks statewide and nationally.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of Google Trekker Partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves park site mapping. • Modernizes and enhances visitor experience through technology.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiated expansion of Wi-Fi access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves staff operations in the field. • Improves the visitor experience.

The Team continues to work on more than 25 initiatives and projects focused on transforming internal department operations and the way it serves the public and strategic partners. Details on specific initiatives and projects are highlighted in the following pages.

Strategic Goals and Project Highlights

The tables found in the following pages highlight the progress made on key Transformation initiatives and projects to date. The projects are organized under the strategic goals outlined in the [Transformation Action Plan](#).

- **Strategic Goal 1: Protect and Enhance Natural and Cultural Resources - page 7**
State Park's mission includes the protection and preservation of California's most significant cultural and natural resources. By engaging and collaborating with other leaders in this field, we will identify best practices to strengthen our efforts in the long-term protection and enhancement of natural and cultural resources. We will propel a renewed investment in the stewardship of the globally-significant resources of the state park system. Decisions will be informed and guided by the need to protect natural and cultural resources.
- **Strategic Goal 2: Develop Excellent Management Systems - page 8**
With improved, modern management systems, State Parks can attract and develop a wider range of talent. The department also needs budget and financial management system improvements to help identify priorities, track expenditures against those priorities, and make adjustments as necessary to better serve visitors.
- **Strategic Goal 3: Maintain High Quality Operations and Public Service - page 11**
Managing State Parks' finances with a service-based budgeting approach and modern, improved techniques and technology will allow the department to better understand how fiscal resources are allocated and spent across the state. Expenditures will be tracked by key functions such as the protection of natural resources, maintenance, interpretation, etc. This greater level of detail will allow for more informed resource allocation discussions in the future.
- **Strategic Goal 4: Create Meaningful Connection and Relevancy to People - page 14**
To thrive, the state parks system must engage a broader base of park visitors and build a strong coalition of park users from across California. State Parks will identify new projects and programs to increase active participation of all Californians in state parks and expand our most relevant existing programs.

Strategic Goal 1: Protect and Enhance Natural and Cultural Resources

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Initiatives/ Project	Background	Progress-to-Date	Next Six Months - <i>projected</i>
<p>Develop Best Practices to Protect and Preserve Natural and Cultural Resources</p> <p><i>Led by the Natural and Cultural Resources Committee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Parks manages 1.6 million acres of land which include some of the most diverse natural and cultural resources of any state park system in the country. The development of best practices will provide a framework for the work of the other Transformation Team initiatives including service-based budgeting, organizational structure, partnerships and relevancy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepared a draft summary of existing department natural and cultural resource programs. Recruited and convened a high-level advisory workgroup made up of 13 natural and 15 cultural resources statewide leaders, which provided general guidance on the approach, feedback on existing content, and direction for future research. Secured a consultant to assist with research, writing and collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departmental workgroups will produce initial draft work products. A second advisory meeting will provide an opportunity for workgroup feedback on interim products. Craft final recommendations that articulate a vision that guides renewed efforts and underpins future policies. Develop state-of-the-art stewardship projects.

Strategic Goal 2: Develop Excellent Management Systems

With improved, modern management systems, State Parks can attract and develop a wider range of talent. The department also needs budget and financial management system improvements to help identify priorities, track expenditures against those priorities, and make adjustments as necessary to better serve visitors.

Initiatives/ Project	Background	Progress-to-Date	Next Six Months - <i>projected</i>
<p>New District Superintendent Career Path</p> <p><i>Led by the Human Resources and Operations committees</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district superintendent position is the top field managerial position in the state park system. State Parks has been limited to candidates from one area of discipline—law enforcement. The department needed the flexibility to consider candidates from all disciplines, including those from outside state service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Parks completed development of the new District Superintendent I and II positions in November 2014. The new positions were approved by the State Personnel Board in May 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create the examination for this new job position. Refine career paths. Develop initial leadership training curriculum by leveraging programs at other state agencies, academia, etc.
<p>Rethinking the Organizational Structure</p> <p><i>Led by the Operations Committee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Team is examining the existing organizational structure to identify opportunities to streamline operations, lower administrative and operating costs, and delegate responsibility and authority to an appropriate management level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoroughly researched other state park departments' organizational structures, reviewed previous organizational structures (dating back to the mid-1970s), and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather input from other initiatives that impact organization structure (e.g. relevancy, partnerships, service-based budgeting [SBB]). Draft field organization models.

Initiatives/ Project	Background	Progress-to-Date	Next Six Months - <i>projected</i>
		<p>evaluated a multitude of organization models.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created a detailed organization chart criteria and definitions document, which describes the committee’s vision-and approach, design principles, management practices, required programs, and service-driven functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather input from SBB for final establishment of classifications. Refine headquarters structure and review with leaders.
<p>Streamlining Staff Hiring Process</p> <p><i>Led by the Human Resources Committee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Team is reviewing the staff-hiring process and identifying opportunities for improvements that allow for more nimbleness, while still meeting important state hiring requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed a flow chart to document the process currently used to hire employees. Engaging the state’s experts at the California Department of Human Resources and the California Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize the development of an “online tool kit” that will provide better support to staff as they navigate the hiring process. The kit will make available online for the first time standardized duty statements, easily adjustable digital organization charts and a process to track the

Initiatives/ Project	Background	Progress-to-Date	Next Six Months - <i>projected</i>
		<p>Operations Agency to identify models of excellence in other state agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began implementation of a new software system to minimize the approvals and handoffs necessary to fill vacancies. 	<p>location of the hiring package, which will allow for better tracking and more efficient processing of necessary hiring documents.</p>

Strategic Goal 3: Maintain High Quality Operations and Public Service

Managing State Parks' finances with a service-based budgeting approach and modern, improved techniques and technology will allow the department to better understand how fiscal resources are allocated and spent across the state. Expenditures will be tracked by key functions such as the protection of natural resources, maintenance, interpretation, etc. This greater level of detail will allow for more informed resource allocation discussions in the future.

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<p>Service-Based Budgeting (SBB)</p> <p><i>Led by the Budget and Finance Committee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Parks' current budget methodology does not effectively communicate the level of service that can be delivered given any particular funding level. Increased information is needed to improve priority setting and communicate the relationship between resource and service levels in a clear and simple manner. SBB will be a tool used to help determine the budget based on the costs of operational tasks and activities that make up the major services the department provides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established a baseline of current costs. Designed SBB framework and developed instructions for the subcommittees. Formed subcommittees and held first working sessions to establish task lists and standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In fall 2015, SBB will be tested on a sample of state parks and offices to better inform the development of the structure and the process to gather more details on a broader scale. This is a complex project and the Team is utilizing the expertise of Deloitte Consulting LLP, as well as consulting with other state entities.

Initiatives/ Project	Background	Progress-to-Date	Next Six Months – <i>projected</i>
<p>New Partnerships Policies/ Procedures and a New Management Structure that Fosters Positive Relationship with New and Existing Partners</p> <p><i>Led by the Partnerships Committee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships are a key component for a successful state parks system. Policies and organizational changes over the years have affected State Parks' ability to fully realize the maximum potential of partnerships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee is developing a new "simple form" for engaging partners for certain types of activity. The committee is now preparing a draft plan for a partnerships function including role authority, staffing, relationships with field staff and partners. The draft plan will be discussed in engagement workshops involving partners from all categories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The final plan is expected in November 2015. Also in November, the committee will develop updated partnership policies for State Parks' Park Operations Division review and recommendation to executive staff.
<p>Streamlining Revenue Accounting</p> <p><i>Led by the Project Team</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the current process, a dollar collected at a park could take several months to register in the department's accounting systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The accounting system, referred to as the Electronic Report of Collections (eROC), is an electronic platform where park attendants enter the summary of revenue transactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The eROC system was first tested in March 2015 in State Parks' Orange Coast District. To date, 10 districts have implemented eROC as their revenue reporting platform. The department expects eROC to be implemented statewide by

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		<p>for each shift daily. The eROC replaces all manual systems and electronically reconciles all transactions with banks.</p>	<p>January 2016.</p>
<p>Enhancing Revenue Collection through Smartphone Technology</p> <p><i>Led by the Project Team</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project will enhance a district's ability to collect parking revenue by allowing the visitor to pay an hourly rate (rather than daily) by using smartphone technology. Visitors receive email notifications with 15-minute warnings about parking meter expiration. Visitors can add time by using the app without having to walk back to a parking lot to feed a parking meter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In spring 2015, a pilot project was launched in the Orange Coast District. Currently three state parks accept this form of payment: Huntington, San Clemente (Calafia parking lot) and San Onofre (Trestles parking lot). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Parks is examining opportunities to further expand the project throughout the state park system.

Strategic Goal 4: Create Meaningful Connection and Relevancy to People

To thrive, the state parks system must engage a broader base of park visitors and build a strong coalition of park users from across California. State Parks will identify new projects and programs to increase active participation of all Californians in state parks and expand our most relevant existing programs.

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<p>Community Liaison Pilot Project</p> <p><i>Led by the Relevancy Committee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Parks' Los Angeles State Historic Park (LASHP) is scheduled to open in January 2016. The proposed project advances the development and implementation of an innovative outreach and engagement model for State Parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of the success of the new LASHP is due to staff engagement with the local community. Development of a community liaison pilot proposal which includes best practices and lessons learned from this historic park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine proposal, identify resources and monitor progress.
<p>State Park Cabin Project</p> <p><i>Led by the Relevancy Committee</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing more cabins in the state park system is a joint effort between Resources Legacy Fund and State Parks. Additional cabins provide expanded access. Through the Parks Forward collaborative, Dean Michael Woo (Parks Forward Commissioner) at Cal Poly Pomona developed an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified the following state parks as pilot cabin sites: Angel Island, Calaveras Big Trees, Big Sur, Jedediah Smith Redwoods, Prairie Creek Redwoods and Patrick's Point. Completed scoping and initiated site preparation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify funding solution for Angel Island and Big Sur sites. Complete site preparation. Prepare for design activities.

Initiatives/ Project	Background	Progress-to-Date	Next Six Months - <i>projected</i>
	<p>innovative college based curriculum for modern cabin designs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In spring 2014, State Parks invested approximately \$300,000 to conduct a statewide survey for potential cabin locations. This survey resulted in the potential citing of 750 cabins at 84 locations in 51 state parks. 		
<p>Google Trekker Expansion</p> <p><i>Led by the Project Team</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In September 2015, Google launched Trekker in cooperation with State Parks. Trekker is an online viewing platform like Google Street View, but based on natural landscapes such as trails and beaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google has been actively collecting images in state parks and beaches for the last year. Google has finished filming most of the coast and has collected images from more than 100 state park properties including: Santa Cruz, Monterey, Orange Coast, San Diego, Sonoma, and Mendocino, including iconic parks such as Big Basin Redwoods and Mt Tamalpais. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Parks continues to work with Google on the collection of images at additional parks.

Initiatives/ Project	Background	Progress-to-Date	Next Six Months - <i>projected</i>
<p>Expansion of Wi-Fi Access</p> <p><i>Led by the Project Team</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As we look to interacting with visitors in a more modern way, establishing a Wi-Fi platform throughout the state park system is a priority. Wi-Fi also would help State Parks update its internal systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Parks analyzed the level of Wi-Fi availability across the state park system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline approach to expanding Wi-Fi. Identify implementation strategies and infrastructure capabilities.