

**MINUTES OF THE  
NATURAL RESOURCES APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
February 3, 2005  
Room W130, West Office, Building, State Capitol Complex**

MEMBERS PRESENT:      Sen. Thomas Hatch, Co-Chair  
                                 Rep. Bradley T. Johnson, Co-Chair  
                                 Rep. Kerry W. Gibson  
                                 Rep. John G. Mathis  
                                 Rep. Ronda R. Menlove  
                                 Rep. Michael E. Noel  
                                 Rep. Carl W. Duckworth  
                                 Rep. James R. Gowans

MEMBERS ABSENT:      Sen. Beverly Evans  
                                 Sen. Ron Allen  
                                 Sen. Parley Hellewell  
                                 Rep. Ben C. Ferry  
                                 Rep. Rebecca Lockhart

STAFF:                      Ivan Djambov, Fiscal Analyst  
                                 Cindy Hopkin, Committee Secretary

SPEAKERS:                Leonard Blackham, Commissioner, Dept. of Agriculture and Food  
                                 Mary Tullius, Acting Director, Parks and Recreation  
                                 Jeffrey S. Packer, Director of the Board of Parks and Recreation

**Note:**    A list of visitors and a copy of handouts are filed with the committee minutes.

Rep. Johnson called the meeting to order at 2:18 p.m.

Commissioner Blackham spoke to the committee regarding the market comparability portion of the budget. Each year the administrative services does a review of the wage rates of state employees, compare those rates to the competition in the area, and come up with a percentage of the wage rate for state employees compared to the private sector and local government. Some of the departments have been extremely low in comparison. The Department of Agriculture has some areas where they had basically 100% turnover. These employees are being hired away after the department trains them because the compensation is 20% to 30% under comparable.

MOTION: Sen. Hatch moved to approve the minutes of February 2, 2005. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Evans, Sen. Allen, Sen. Hellewell, Rep. Ferry, Rep. Lockhart, and Rep. Duckworth absent for the vote.

Ivan Djambov, Fiscal Analyst, presented the administration budget for the Division of Parks and Recreation. The Division of Parks and Recreation is responsible for the management and development of the current 42 state parks, as well as the statewide boating and off-highway vehicle safety.

The Division's Funding Sources for FY 2006 are from the General Fund, which is about 1/3 of the total funding; and under the category "other" which includes, the 3 restricted funds: Boating, Off-highway Vehicles, and State Parks Restricted accounts.

Currently the major issues for the division are: the rapidly rising fixed and variable costs, and The growing pressure to do more with less.

The Division's first 3 requests deal with facilities operations and maintenance. In the last several years, during the economic downturn, the division has experienced some serious budget cuts. As a result, many of the maintenance needs were postponed, which only worsened ongoing problems.

--For their existing facilities, the division is requesting for FY 2006, an ongoing General Fund appropriation of \$600,000.

--For the operation and maintenance of their new facilities, the division is requesting for FY 2006, an ongoing General Fund appropriation of \$129,100.

--Last year the Legislature reallocated, from the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands; \$100,000 dollars one-time money, for the operation and maintenance of the newly built Field House of Natural History in Vernal. The Division is requesting for FY 2006, \$80,000 of ongoing General Fund appropriation for that purpose. The analyst recommends the Legislature consider placing all three of these requests on its priority list.

The Division is estimated to have approximately \$75 million dollars in artifacts in state park museums, which are not covered by insurance. In order to get coverage, the division has to go through Risk Management and the premium is assessed to be \$30,000 per year. The Division is requesting for FY 2005 a supplemental appropriation from the General Fund of \$30,000 and for FY 2006 ongoing appropriation from the General Fund of \$30,000. The analyst recommend this request also be placed on the priority list for funding.

The Division's next two requests deal with personnel.

--The Division is requesting funding from the General Funds Restricted - Off-Highway Vehicle account to hire 1 additional Park Ranger. For FY 2005 a supplemental appropriation of \$70,000; and for FY 2006 an ongoing appropriation of \$70,000.

--The Division is having a hard time recruiting seasonal deputy rangers because the salaries are too low. In order to be able to offer more attractive salaries, the division is requesting funding from General Funds Restricted - Boating. For FY 2005 a supplemental appropriation of \$68,900; and for FY 2006 an ongoing appropriation of \$68,900. The Analyst recommends the Legislature consider approving both of these funding increases.

The Soldier Hollow Golf Course is still running at a deficit. This year the Division is requesting a one-time General Fund appropriation of \$120,000.

In order to provide trail maps, signs, and safety education for winter and summer riding, the Division is requesting increases from General Funds Restricted - Off-Highway Vehicle. For FY 2005 a supplemental appropriation of \$36,900; and for FY 2006 an ongoing appropriation of \$273,900.

The capital line item provides funding for construction projects and also matching funding for federal and local government dollars for capital acquisition and development. More than 50% of the funding comes from the Federal Government; under "other" again we have the 3 restricted funds; and the General Funds portion is very small.

Last year the Division received appropriation from the General Funds Restricted - Off-Highway Vehicle account to begin working, in cooperation with the Federal Government, on the development of the Shoshone trail; but the Federal Government did not provide matching funds. The Division's plan is to approach the Federal Government again, sometime in the near future, for this project. For now, the division is requesting a return of the \$260,000 to the restricted account.

The Division is requesting for FY 2006, a one-time General Fund appropriation of \$2,000,000 for its capital needs.

The members of the Board of Parks and Recreation were introduced and Dir. Packer was asked to share a few words with the committee.

Dir. Tullius, assisted by Stephen Ogilvie, presented the goals, challenges and performance measures of the Division. The Utah Legislature created the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation in 1957 to be the recreational authority for the state. The legislature also directed Utah State Parks to formulate a long-range, comprehensive plan and program for the acquisition, planning, protection, operation, maintenance, development, and wise use of areas of scenic beauty, recreational utility, historic, archaeological or scientific interest, to the end that the health, happiness, recreational opportunities and wholesome enjoyment of life of the people may be further encouraged..."

The Division has a new plan that meets the management needs of the Division and the mandate of the state legislature. Their mission is to provide opportunities to improve the quality of life in Utah through parks, programs and employees serving the public.

Some of the challenges the Division faces in implementing their plan include:

- The lack of sufficient funding to keep pace with increasing operations and maintenance costs.
- The lack of Dedicated Money to meet increased market demands in user needs.
- The perception that Utah State Parks have managed well without intervening support to date.
- Increasing population, aging facilities and infrastructure and more sophisticated customers who expect high quality facilities.

The Division has increased revenues via the user fee system. They have developed a successful volunteer program with 96,000 volunteer hours in 2004. They have pursued limited partnerships for in-kind donations and specific fund raising projects and implemented cost efficiency measures.

The Division proposes that the committee support their efforts to rehabilitate aging facilities, enhance inadequate facilities and programs, capitalize on new opportunities for State Parks, and establish a dedicated ongoing funding source at \$5 million annually for capital improvements.

MOTION: Rep. Gowans moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Evans, Sen. Allen, Sen. Hellewell, Rep. Ferry, and Rep. Lockhart absent for the vote.

Rep. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 3:35 p.m.

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Rep. Bradley T. Johnson, Co-Chairman

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Sen. Thomas Hatch, Co-Chairman