

Thank you to each of you that made the time to contact the folks in Olympia. Some of you shared what sounded like positive responses. . . .

However, it looks like a big hit for State Parks, saying "keep them open" without providing funding is being deceptive. There are some details in the email chain below. The legislative session is winding down. Now would be a good time to contact your elected state senators and representatives to express your opinions. The Large numbers of voters contacting them and asking them to support the "Opt-out" program and pass the Senate's version of the budget is probably the least Draconian choice available.

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>
will find them for you if you don't know who they are.

Thank You,

Arthur Wright

PS. If you want to opt-out of email on this issue or want off my email lists, just reply to this email and let me know and I'll make the change.

----- Forwarded message -----

Date: Wed, Apr 8, 2009 at 8:36 PM

Subject: FW: Some thoughts on the House Ways & Means operating budget

Unfortunately, the "opt out" option seems to be the only hope left to avoid massive State Parks closures. Both houses of the legislature call for it, but the house proposes such a drastic cut that even with the opt out, the cuts and effects will be severe. Our union sent out an email today saying that there does not seem to be the votes even to create the "opt out" program. So without continual pressure (lots of calls and emails) the legislature will either not implement the opt out program which will result in up to 48 State Parks being closed or will go with the House budget which although it will "prohibit" parks from closing it will in effect do just that. State Parks definitely should take a cut just like everyone else but we shouldn't close 1/3 of our parks or cut them so badly that they are "mortally wounded". So please, even if you already have contacted your legislators, do so again and let them know if State Parks are important to you to: support the "opt out" program and pass the Senate's version of the budget. Thanks

> Date: Wed, 8 Apr 2009 07:52:40 -0700

> From: cpr4parks@yahoo.com

> Subject: Some thoughts on the House Ways & Means operating budget

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> First thought:

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> By House Ways & Means fiat- fiat apertus aria (anyone feel free to correct my Latin)- our state parks are to remain open. Not enough money to keep them open, but who needs money when we have a legislative declaration proposed- "The state parks and recreation commission shall not close any parks during the 2009-11 biennium."

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> Adjusted for change in maintenance level since December, and backing out the merger with the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Governor Gregoire proposed a total State Parks budget of \$146,199,000- \$90,116,000 GF-S and \$56,083,000 other funds. At that level, the budget required the transfer or closure of 13 parks, the mothballing of two others, and seasonal closures.

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> Even with an estimated revenue of \$28 million from the opt-out license tab plan, the House budget as proposed is LOWER than the Governor's. At \$144,838,000- \$60,223,000 GF-S and \$84,615,000 other funds- how does the House expect State Parks to keep all parks open with LESS than a funding level that required the transfer or closure of 13 parks and mothballing of two others, as well as seasonal closures?

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> No proviso language can cover a severe funding shortfall. If the opt-out plan comes up short, we are into a closure level BEYOND the Governor's proposal. If all hoped-for revenue materializes, we start at least at a closure or transfer level the same as the Governor's budget.

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> This is an egregious legislative cop-out.

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> Second thought:

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> While the House Ways & Means budget raids the Recreation Resource Account, the NOVA Program Account, and other outdoor recreation accounts to the tune of about \$30 million, there is now language in the budget that reads "Transfers from natural resource funds in Part VIII of the 2009-11 operating budget are intended to support natural resource agencies."

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> No amount of language can hide the fact that none of these transferred funds will benefit the natural resource agencies, although it is interesting that the language in essence implies that state park lands will be sold to meet state park operating needs (the \$3 million transfer from the Parklands Acquisition Account).

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> Third thought:

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> At this time, the people of the state need transparency and clarity in the state budget and the budget discussions. The budget, and the process, are increasingly opaque. How do legislators expect to build public support for the decisions they must make, while being less than forthright with the public and while refusing to invite the public into their discussions?

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> Bottom line- the operating budget reported by the House Ways & Means committee guarantees a collapse of State Parks. Unable to close parks without legislative permission until sometime next year, but not having the funding to adequately operate all of the state parks, there will be no choice available but a massive cut in operations and maintenance, followed by a report to the Legislature in January that it will be necessary to close at least two dozen parks in the second year of the biennium to balance the State Parks budget.

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> Everyone needs to take the approaching train wreck very seriously, and work hard to see that the Senate prevails in the budget negotiations.

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