



# **OVERVIEW** *of the* **Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation**

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) operates the largest state park system in the United States and supports the basic government functions of public safety, health and education by providing access to world-class outdoor recreation.

Recreation in Alaska's state parks generates economic activity and employment while providing more than \$3.4 million in state revenue through park fees. Investing in our parks ensures that these special areas contribute to the economy while enhancing the health and well-being of Alaskans.

## **Impacts to the economy**

- Recreation contributes nearly \$2.5 billion annually to Alaska's economy, supports 28,000 jobs and produces \$1.7 billion in retail sales and services—more than 5% of gross state product.
- In 2006, spending by Prince William Sound and Resurrection Bay state park visitors totaled \$7.3 million and accounted for 103 jobs.
- The economic impact of snowmobiling in the Anchorage and Mat-Su areas, most of which occurs on state park lands, totaled \$35 million in 2000 (Anchorage Economic Development Corp.).
- Millions of dollars of investment in resource development in Alaska depends on the federally-required reviews conducted by DPOR's Office of History and Archaeology.

## **Health & well-being**

- Exposure to nature and outdoor exercise has significant health benefits such as improved wellness and mental health, reduced stress and lower blood pressure.
- Access to parks means people are more likely to exercise.
- DPOR's Boating Safety Program has documented 28 cases in which people survived a near drowning because they were wearing a Kids Don't Float life jacket from one of the hundreds of life jacket loaner stations in the state.
- Alaska's boating fatalities have been reduced nearly by half, from an average of 30 per year before the boating safety program began in 2000 to 16 per year now.

# STRUCTURE & FUNCTIONS *of the* Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation



The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) operates 122 park units and is the state's lead agency for technical expertise on outdoor recreation, boating safety and historic preservation. The division is composed of six sections. User fees cover at least 41 percent of the cost of operating the state park system.

## FY2017 Management Plan Budget

PCNs	UGF	DGF	Fed	Other	Total
177	3,127.5	6,425.3	2,650.2	4,313.5	16,516.5

	PCNs	UGF	Total
<b>Field Operations</b> - Manages 122 state park units throughout Alaska.	127	2,593.2	8,110.0
<b>Director's Office and Support</b> – Oversees division budget including revenue from park fees; provides oversight and direction to area managers, section chiefs and administrative staff; manages park use permitting and administers the Land and Water Conservation Fund federal grant program.	6	101.0	2,037.7
<b>Design &amp; Construction</b> - Provides design, contract administration and oversight for state park capital improvements as well as construction projects developed by other state agencies.	17	0.0	1,926.6
<b>Alaska State Trails Program</b> – Distributes \$1.5 million in federal funds to government and community organizations for trail development and improvement. This program is funded through a capital appropriation to include \$200.0 UGF to pay for administrative costs.	2	0.0	200.0
<b>Office of Boating Safety</b> - Provides education and public outreach campaigns to reduce boating fatalities in Alaska.	5	0.0	1,750.0
<b>Office of History and Archaeology</b> – Conducts federally required reviews of all development projects in the state using a statewide inventory of historic and archaeological sites; distributes grants for historic preservation and heritage tourism projects.	20	433.3	2,492.2

# Overview of the Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation's Field Operations



**Critical Function:** Manages the largest park system in the country, including many of the most-accessible public recreation lands in Alaska.

**Economic impact without the section's services:** Reduced economic activity and employment through businesses that offer services in state parks and through consumer spending; the loss of more than \$3 million in revenue to the state through park fees; and reduced access to healthy outdoor pursuits.

## FY2017 Management Plan Budget

PCNs	UGF	DGF	Fed	Other	Total
127	2,593.2	4,392.8	0.0	1,124.0	8,110.0

**Description:** Manages more than 120 parks, recreation areas, marine parks and historic sites encompassing 3.3 million acres and recreation facilities receiving more than 5 million visits annually. These include 71 campgrounds, 900 miles of maintained hiking trails, 52 picnic shelters, 72 public use cabins, 27 developed boat launches and 41 marine parks. State parks serve as community recreation areas for residents, providing family and school-oriented activities such as picnicking, hiking, camping, walking for fitness, bicycling, skiing, snowmobiling, ATV riding, fishing, hunting and environmental education. State parks are integral to Alaska's tourism industry, providing affordable and accessible excursions for visitors.

In addition to providing for public safety and law enforcement in state parks, staff participates in 30 to 35 search and rescue missions each year on average.

The division maintains area and district offices in Fairbanks, Willow, Palmer, Anchorage, Seward, Soldotna, Homer, Juneau, Haines, Ketchikan, Kodiak, and Dillingham. The Field Operations staff ensures that Alaska's state parks are clean, safe and well maintained. They are assisted in this work by hundreds of park volunteers.

The Field Operations section works with 14 local park advisory boards which provide public input on park management.

Non-UGF sources of funding for this section include interagency receipts, statutory designated program receipts, capital improvement project receipts, and boat registration fees.

# Overview of the Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation's Director's Office and Support



**Critical Function:** Oversees both operating and capital budgets for the division, including revenue from park fees; it also provides oversight and direction to area managers, section chiefs and administrative staff, manages park use permitting and administers the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP).

**Economic impact without the section's services:** Loss of financial monitoring resulting in the inability to determine program capabilities, operating costs, revenue collections and other variables. Loss of knowledge of current state and federal program issues and related impacts to services delivered resulting in loss of federal funding.

## FY2017 Management Plan Budget

PCNs	UGF	DGF	Fed	Other	Total
6	101.0	1,736.7	0.0	200.0	2,037.7

**Description:** Responsible for all Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation support functions including budget, grant administration, personnel, procurement, revenue, accounting and finance, and division website management. It performs the following critical functions:

- Provides strategic, operational, and workforce development planning as well as administrative policy development and program coordination for six park management locations throughout the state.
- Oversees the planning, development and completion of the division's operating and capital budgets.
- Anticipates the division's financial conditions and limitations, program capabilities, operating costs, revenue collections, and other variables.
- Ensures budget submissions are accurate and consistent with all OMB instructions and requirements.
- Coordinates with senior managers to draft budget narratives to express the goals and objectives of the division.
- Develops various financial scenarios, and reviews actual financial activities from prior fiscal years to identify trends and upcoming needs.
- Provides support to the Director and Deputy Director to prepare division responses on Legislative Finance, Legislative Budget and Legislative Audit.
- Cooperates with other state and federal agencies and organizations to provide grant oversight and reporting for LWCF and RTP.
- Initiates, coordinates and implements personnel activities.
- Provides procurement direction for state and federal contract purchasing, property management, acquisition of federal equipment, and state property accounting.
- Ensures departmental policies and procedures for handling and managing revenue are followed and appropriate safeguards are in place to protect state assets.

# Overview of the Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation's Design & Construction



**Critical Function:** Provides professional design and construction services to responsibly develop facilities that are safe, sanitary, functional and enjoyable to the benefit of Alaskans and visitors.

**Economic impact without the section's services:** Loss in park user revenue resulting from inadequate and substandard facilities and forfeiture of federal participation in projects that currently receive federal funding.

## FY2017 Management Plan Budget

PCNs	UGF	DGF	Fed	Other	Total
17	0.0	280.0	0.0	1,646.6	1,926.6

**Description:** Manages state park capital projects from inception to close out. Led by licensed engineers and landscape architects, the section performs planning, cost estimating, preliminary design, design, permitting, and construction activities to develop park facilities.

To keep pace with user demands, existing facilities need to be maintained and/or improved and new facilities are built when funding is available. Design & Construction (D&C) engages the public to identify project goals and objectives; develops concepts based on public input; advances concepts to engineered designs for construction; applies for permits to comply with local, state, and federal regulations; and administers the construction of the projects to ensure conformance with the plans, accountability of using public funds, and protecting the interests of the state.

State park facilities fall into disrepair at a faster rate than their maintenance staff can fix with available funds, resulting in a deferred maintenance backlog of \$64.2 million. D&C is focused on keeping the division's deferred maintenance backlog in check if not significantly reduced.

State parks projects rely on federal funds, passed through from other agencies, to supplement state capital appropriations. Typically, the federal government reimburses its portion of project costs only after the project is completed and all of the state's commitments have been fulfilled. These commitments include technical oversight and reporting to ensure accountability of public funds and safeguard federal participation. *(Note: No federal funds are allocated through the DNR operating budget for design and construction services.)*

D&C's expertise in managing capital projects is well-recognized by other DNR divisions and state/federal agencies, leading them to enlist D&C to develop their projects to successful completion. For example, D&C has led projects for DNR's divisions of Mining, Land and Water, and Forestry; the departments of Fish and Game, and Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF); and numerous federal agencies. The D&C Chief is one of two DNR employees authorized by DOT&PF to exercise higher than normal state contracting authority.

# Overview of the Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation's Alaska State Trails Program



**Critical Function:** Grants \$1.5 million in federal funds to government and community organizations for trail development and improvement projects statewide under the National Recreational Trails Grant Program.

**Economic impact without the section's services:** Not supporting this section will result in a loss of \$1.5 million in federal dollars that would eliminate funds for building and maintaining both motorized and non-motorized trails and trail facilities statewide.

## FY2017 Management Plan Budget

PCNs	UGF	DGF	Fed	Other	Total
2	0.0	0.0	0.0	200.0	200.0

**Description:** As more and more residents and visitors turn to Alaska's vast trail system for recreation, subsistence and basic transportation between communities, the need for a more extensive and better-maintained trail system continues to grow. Many existing trails are being lost as property is sold, subdivided, or developed without reserving trail easements.

In FY2016, the Recreational Trails Program funded 31 projects totaling \$1,178,902 to state and local governments, trail organizations, and private citizens throughout Alaska. This program is funded through a capital appropriation to include \$200.0 UGF to pay for administrative costs.

This program is effectively identifying, maintaining and expanding the Alaska trail system for both summer and winter trails. Legal, safe, well-maintained, and easy-to-use trails are reducing trespass situations, search and rescue occurrences, and public safety concerns. Because these are matching grant programs, grantees provide cash, labor, and equipment to match between 9 and 25% of grant funds, effectively stretching existing funding. Public recreational trails contribute to Alaska's economy by providing construction and maintenance jobs, attracting tourists and visitors, stimulating the business of outfitters, guides and tour companies, and improving the mental and physical well-being of the work force. In addition, these programs ensure that:

- Grantees obtain legal access;
- Projects are consistent with federal, state and local land use plans, and laws;
- Social and economic impacts are analyzed;
- Archeological and historical resources are protected;
- Projects are analyzed for impacts on threatened or endangered species, fish and wildlife, wetlands, flood plains, and bodies of water;
- Water and air quality are checked and maintained;
- Hazardous waste is checked for and identified;
- The noise resulting from projects are analyzed; and
- There is public involvement.

# Overview of the Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation's Office of Boating Safety



**Critical Function:** With the intent to reduce boating deaths, injuries and property damage, the mission of the Office of Boating Safety is to “promote the safety of persons and property in and connected with the use, operation, and equipment of non-commercial boats on the water of the state and the uniformity of laws relating to boat safety.” (AS.05.25.050)

**Economic impact without the section’s services:** Loss of millions of dollars in federal grant funds available to Alaska which would then be reallocated to the other states; potentially higher costs for search, rescue, and body recovery, and increased financial impacts to Alaskans resulting from accidents.

## FY2017 Management Plan Budget

PCNs	UGF	DGF	Fed	Other	Total
5	0.0	0.0	1,450.0	300.0	1,750.0

**Description:** This program’s achievements include the following:

- Total *Kids Don’t Float Education Program* attendance numbers through the end of FY2016 reached **148,647** students in **4,473** classes, pool sessions, and youth ambassador trainings.
- A total of **58,374** life jackets have been provided for the *Kids Don’t Float* life jacket loaner program.
- *Kids Don’t Float* loaner life jackets have helped save at least **28** lives.
- Observed life jacket wear rates in Alaska are now higher than the national average in all age groups.
- Boating fatalities have trended downward since the program began.

When the Alaska Boating Safety Act (AS 05.25) was signed into law on May 11, 2000, Alaska became the last state to receive federal grant funding for boating safety. The Alaska Office of Boating Safety is funded entirely through the federal Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund and a portion of Alaska’s boat registration receipts. The office performs the following functions:

- Secures the benefits available to the State under 46 U.S.C. 13101 - 13110; and takes the actions necessary for Alaska to continue to qualify for the State’s share of federal grant funding.
- Works with other state and federal agencies and organizations to provide boating safety programs statewide.
- Provides boating safety education programs to increase public awareness of boating risks and the knowledge, skills, and abilities of Alaska’s boaters:
  - Develops educational materials relevant to the needs of both urban and rural boaters
  - Provides programs for children and high - risk groups (e.g., *Kids Don’t Float*)
  - Trains, certifies, and supports boating safety instructors
  - Evaluates, on an ongoing basis, of the effectiveness of programs
  - Conducts comprehensive social marketing campaigns (e.g., *Pledge to Live*)
- Provides support for the Governor-appointed Alaska Boating Safety Advisory Council.
- Administers Alaska’s boat accident reporting system, in accordance with federal requirements.
- Facilitates boating law enforcement training for the Department of Public Safety.
- Promotes the uniformity of laws relating to boating safety.

# Overview of the Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation's Office of History & Archaeology



**Critical Function:** Provides statewide historic preservation programs to identify, document, protect and restore prehistoric, archaeological and historic sites and buildings.

**Economic impact without the section's services:** Millions of dollars in increased costs and slowdown in development of state and federal projects in Alaska.

## FY2017 Management Plan Budget

PCNs	UGF	DGF	Fed	Other	Total
20	433.3	15.8	1,200.2	842.9	2,492.2

**Description:** Serves as the state's historic preservation agency, administering state and federal programs to identify, document, protect and restore sites and buildings, and advises the Commissioner of Natural Resources, Governor and Legislature on issues relating to history, prehistory, archaeology, and geographic names. The Office of History and Archaeology (OHA) also serves as state liaison to federal agencies, representing the state's interests in protecting its heritage resources. The federally-required programs implemented by OHA include Section 106 project reviews, historic preservation planning, cultural resource surveys, nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, public education and training, investment tax credits, maintenance of a statewide inventory, and local government assistance through the Certified Local Government program. To carry out these programs, the office receives a federal Historic Preservation Fund grant which is matched 60/40. The OHA also administers the Alaska Historical Commission's programs, including the Geographic Names Board. OHA conducts cultural resource investigations in cooperation with local, state and federal agencies, universities, and museums.

The OHA maintains the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRs), a restricted inventory of over 46,000 reported cultural resources (historic, prehistoric, and archaeological sites, locations, remains, or objects) and some paleontological sites within the State of Alaska. The survey is a central repository for Alaska's cultural resources information used by federal and state agencies, private companies, and professional consultants when a proposed project involves state or federal land, jurisdiction, funding, permits, or other authorizations. Learning about reported cultural resources early in planning can help guide permitting and construction decisions, prevent unnecessary destruction of cultural resources and avoid possible project delays.

OHA performs the following functions:

- Reviews all development projects for impacts to cultural resources;
- Maintains statewide inventory of reported cultural resources;
- Serves as the state liaison office to implement federal regulations and programs for project review, statewide inventory (AHRs), National Register of Historic Places, grants, historic preservation planning, investment tax credits, and local government programs; and
- Issues Cultural Resources Permits for investigations on state land.