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- Prepare Guide Plan Elements for the State.
- Coordinate activities of the public and private sectors within the framework of the State Guide Plan.
- Assist municipal governments with planning.
- Advise the Governor and others on physical, social, and economic planning related topics.

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**LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THIS PLAN**

- **ATV** means “All-Terrain Vehicle”
- **BMX** means “Bicycle Motor Cross”
- **CRMC** means “Coastal Resources Management Council”
- **DEM** means “Department of Environmental Management”
- **DMO** means “Destination Marketing Organization”
- **DOH** means “Department of Health”
- **DSP** means “Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning”
- **RIPRA** means “Rhode Island Parks and Recreation Association”
- **RIHPC** means “Rhode Island Historical Preservations and Heritage Commission”
- **RRRC** means “Recreation Resources Review Committee”
- **Ocean State Outdoors** means “State Conservation Outdoor Recreation Plan”
- **SGP** means “State Guide Plan”
- **SRI** means “Soccer Rhode Island”
- **TNC** means “The Nature Conservancy”
- **USFWS** means “US Fish and Wildlife Service”

**TITLE VI – NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY & COMPLAINT PROCESS**

The Statewide Planning Program gives public notice that it is the policy of the Program to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title VI requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the Program receives federal financial assistance. Any person who believes he or she has been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with the Office of Statewide Planning. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with the Statewide Planning Title VI Coordinator within 180 days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. Title VI Discrimination Complaint Forms may be obtained from RI Statewide Planning at no cost to the complainant by calling the Title VI Coordinator at (401) 222-1236 or at http://www.planning.ri.gov/statewideplanning/transportation.
**ABSTRACT**

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<td>This document represents the tenth edition of Rhode Island’s plan for outdoor recreation. The plan establishes state goals and policies and includes a five-year “Plan for Action.”</td>
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<td>The plan was approved by the State Planning Council as an element of the State Guide Plan and by the National Park Service, as the State of Rhode Island’s State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for the 2019-2024 period.</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Rhode Island, we are poised to improve our outdoor recreation network to build wealth, renew infrastructure, reduce chronic illness, support job growth, all while giving our state economy a well-deserved shot in the arm. We have the opportunity to join with waiting partners and entrepreneurs to support outdoor recreation with targeted improvements, strategic promotions, and modern delivery of information. We live in gorgeous state with inexpensive and easily accessible outdoor recreation resources. Ocean State Outdoors aims to open the door and let opportunity walk in.

Ocean State Outdoors makes the following key findings related to outdoor recreation in Rhode Island;

**Rhode Islanders Love to Spend Time Outdoors**
Most Rhode Islanders do some form of outdoor recreation on a nearly daily basis. We tend to engage in outdoor recreation more than the typical American; everything from football and baseball, walking and hiking, beachgoing and rock climbing. Enjoying Rhode Island’s outdoor resources is important for our culture and our health.

“**Our state’s world-class beach facilities, parks, and green spaces are beloved by residents and tourists alike and generate millions of dollars for the local and state economy every year.**”
- DEM Director Janet Coit, 2018

Ocean State Outdoors is the State of Rhode Island’s plan for outdoor recreation. As a Rhode Island state policy document, Ocean State Outdoors serves several key purposes. Ocean State Outdoors serves as:

- An element of the State Guide Plan and require the consistency of Municipal Comprehensive Plans and all publicly supported activities, both planning and project implementation.
- Meets the National Park Service’s planning eligibility requirements for the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program.
- Meets the requirements of the U.S. Department of Transportation—Federal Highway Administration’s National Recreational Trails Program which provides funds to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities.
- Meets the federal Emergency Wetlands Conservation Act.

Governor Raimondo announces $4 million in community recreation grants during the Yes on 6 Kick-Off Rally in September of 2016. Another $2.16 million was conditionally awarded, pending bond approval.
Rhode Islanders Walk, Cycle and Go to the Beach
Recent demand surveys conducted for this plan found that the top four activities in RI are walking, using bike paths, visiting coastal areas and beaches and attending outdoor festivals and special events. Ocean State Outdoors recommends that RI continues to add to and maintain as many of these recreation opportunities as we can.

Rhode Islanders Continually Demand More Recreational Resources and Facilities
Despite ongoing purchase of land and investment in recreational facilities, the public continues to show a need for more, while recreation providers continue to report user conflicts and constrained resources. Ocean State Outdoors seeks to build on our existing outdoor recreational resources to meet the growing demand.

Rhode Islanders Call for Better Staffing and Maintenance of Recreation Facilities
The number of full-time staff in Rhode Island State Parks and Beaches has declined by 67%, from 123 in 1989 to 42 in 2018, but public use of these resources is growing quickly. Participants in our focus groups and surveys echoed the need for attention to maintenance and staffing. Ocean State Outdoors recommends increasing staffing to meet management needs and strategically improving existing management practices to be more effective.

Rhode Islanders Call for Better Information about Outdoor Recreation Facilities
A key finding, repeated by people in focus groups and respondents to surveys, is that information around Rhode Island outdoor recreation facilities lacks consistency, clarity, and accessibility. Ocean State Outdoors proposes action to provide better, more accessible information about Rhode Island’s outdoor recreation system so that more people can truly enjoy outdoor resources.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE IMPACT OF STATE PARKS ON THE RHODE ISLAND ECONOMY

- 9.4 MILLION VISITS
- $38.8 MILLION TAX REVENUE
- $311.9 MILLION CONSUMER SPENDING
- 3,709 JOBS SUPPORTED/CREATED ANNUALLY

Adapted from University of Rhode Island Economic Impact of Rhode Island State Parks, no publication date.
Providing for the public’s enjoyment of Rhode Island’s outdoor environment is an important responsibility of state government. This document is the tenth Rhode Island state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan produced since 1965. In those intervening decades, the interest and commitment of Rhode Islanders for outdoor recreation, conservation and open space protection has continually deepened.

Ocean State Outdoors articulates state goals and policies, guiding municipal governments and not-for-profit groups, and maps out a five-year action agenda for partners across the state.

**THE GOALS:**

**Goal 1:**
Invest in new and improved opportunities for outdoor recreation to meet the public’s needs, promote wellness and create economic benefits.

**Goal 2:**
Strengthen, expand and promote the statewide recreation network while protecting natural and cultural resources as well as adapting to a changing environment.

**Goal 3:**
Ensure sustainable operation, maintenance and management of the statewide outdoor recreation network.

**Goal 4:**
Improve access by removing barriers and enhancing information and communication systems.
PART ONE
BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, AND THE PEOPLE’S INVOLVEMENT

Welcome! Ocean State Outdoors presents a five-year plan of action for strategically managing existing outdoor recreational resources, impending threats and unfulfilled needs. The plan looks to leverage our strengths, partnerships and emerging opportunities offered in the context of a 20-year planning horizon.

BACKGROUND
Rhode Island offers an impressive range of outdoor resources including mature hardwood forests, city parks, bike paths, streams, ponds, shorelines, and, of course, our famous Narragansett Bay, opening to the majestic Atlantic Ocean. Living, playing and thriving outdoors nourishes our collective spirit and forms a cornerstone of our economy.

DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT
Analysis of Rhode Island census data indicates that the state’s demographics are rapidly changing. Rhode Island experienced relatively little population growth—only 0.4% between 2010 and 2018 (from 1,053,000 to 1,057,000), but the population growth that is occurring is largely due to the growth of the Latino population, 44% since 2000 (DOP, 2014).

The state population is also getting older. In 2010, the median age of Rhode Islanders was 39.4, an increase of 2.7 years from 2000. The largest population growth occurred in those aged 60 to 69 (37% increase to a total of 102,760 people), followed by those 50 to 59 (30% increase to a total of 151,684 people). At the same time, significant population decrease has occurred in those
30 to 39 (22% decrease to a total of 124,893 people) as well as those 18 and under (8% decrease to a total of 261,758 people) (DOP, 2014).

**Income**

In 2017, 11.6% of Rhode Islanders lived in households with income below the federal poverty level (US Census Bureau, 2017). Two-wage-earner families reported a 2012 median income of nearly $92,000, compared to families with a single-wage earner, who earned less than $49,000, and households headed by someone in the prime earning years (45-64) made nearly twice what those in the traditional retirement years (65+) earned. Married-couple families with children enjoyed a median income in 2012 of more than $98,000, while the median income for single mothers with children was just over $30,000.

When considering how to deliver outdoor recreation services, we should also consider the needs of those who are most like to rely on them. Given that people with limited incomes are most likely to live in our state’s urban core, we need to consider how limited means affects peoples ability to access outdoor recreation in those areas.

**PURPOSE**

*Ocean State Outdoors* is the Recreation Element of the State Guide Plan, which is Rhode Island’s plan for improving its outdoor recreation system. It articulates state recreation goals and policies and maps out a five-year plan of action for the Department of Environmental Management as well as other state agencies, municipalities and nonprofit organizations. It establishes the state goals and policies for outdoor recreation with which community comprehensive plans must be consistent. Its purpose, in the broadest sense, is to report on progress the state has made, assess the current situation, and set future directions for outdoor recreation. Its primary audience is state and local officials who are responsible for Rhode Island’s recreation and programs, but its themes must also be embraced by the diverse array of public and private organizations which play roles in outdoor recreation and supported by a broad cross-section of Rhode Islanders if its initiatives are to be realized.

**Integrated planning purposes:**

*Ocean State Outdoors* serves several closely related state and federal purposes, which are listed and discussed briefly below. They are presented in a single plan in order to ensure their alignment.
State Guide Plan
Through its adoption by the State Planning Council as an element of Rhode Island’s State Guide Plan, this plan has legislated stature that requires the comprehensive plans prepared by the state’s municipalities be consistent with its goals and policies. Publicly supported projects of state agencies are also required to be consistent with the Guide Plan. Other elements of the State Guide Plan support Ocean State Outdoors such as Rhode Island Moving Forward—Long-Range Transportation Plan. Transit is an integral part of providing access to outdoor recreation facilities and in many cases (e.g., bicycling), transit and recreation overlap. Inclusion of recreation goals and policies in the State Guide Plan also helps ensure that these concerns are properly coordinated with other elements covering land use, transportation, and economic development.

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
Ocean State Outdoors is also submitted by Rhode Island as the state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan to meet the National Park Service’s planning eligibility requirements for the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund program. It remains a valuable source of support for protecting resources and providing facilities for public recreational use.

State Recreational Trails Plan
Ocean State Outdoors is also incorporated as the State Recreational Trails Plan, addressing the requirements of the U.S. Department of Transportation—Federal Highway Administration’s National Recreational Trails Program that provides funds to develop and maintain

Conversion of Recreation Resources
One role of this plan is to ensure that existing open space and recreational resources are protected from conversion to other uses. Requests for conversions should be resisted, and should face the highest burden of proof of net public recreational benefit. Where conversion of recreation system land is considered, approval should be predicated on full administrative review and public scrutiny. If the resource was acquired or improved with federal funding through the National Park Service’s Land and Water Conservation Fund or Rhode Island bond funds, approval of any conversion is required to be conditioned upon a full replacement of the acreage or resource value. This same standard should be used for portions of the recreation system that do not have such official protection.

In addition, throughout Rhode Island, there are parcels of unused government land that provide unofficial recreational and open space values. Particularly in urban areas, the open space functions of such lands may have unrecognized but real importance. For example, although unsanctioned for such use, the site may serve as a “de facto” play lot for children having no other opportunities close at hand. Government decisions to part with such parcels should accord some public significance to these intangible benefits in their calculations of management efficiency or added revenues.
recreational trails and trail-related facilities. Recreational trails make up an important element of the outdoor recreation system and are heavily used by the public in Rhode Island.

**Wetlands Priority Plan**
This plan provides an update to the wetlands priority plan required under the federal Emergency Wetlands Conservation Act. Updates to the plan are submitted to the National Park Service periodically as part of updates to *Ocean State Outdoors* as the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for Rhode Island.

**Federal Role**
Federal agencies have both an operational and supporting role in Rhode Island’s outdoor recreation system. The major operational aspect of the federal role consists of the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s management of five conservation and wildlife refuges totaling over 2,460 acres along the Rhode Island coast. They are the:

- Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge in Middletown
- Trustom Pond National Wildlife Refuge in South Kingstown
- Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge in Charlestown
- John H. Chafee National Wildlife Refuge at Pettaquamscutt Cove in Narragansett
- Block Island National Wildlife Refuge in New Shoreham

Additionally, the National Park Service operates the 4.5-acre Roger Williams National Memorial in Providence, as well as the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. Created by Congress in 2014, the BRVNHP is a collection of sites located within the much larger Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, although no property is owned by the federal agency. The “nodes” of the National Historical Park include the Blackstone River including major tributaries and the canal, the RI DEM-owned and operated Blackstone River State Park, and several local historic districts in Rhode Island (as well as Massachusetts). The NPS offers expertise in park management, historic and natural resource preservation, and interpretation and education. Encompassing portions of both Rhode Island and Massachusetts, the BRVNHC was created by Congress in 1986 as an “affiliated area” of the National Park System for the purpose of preserving and interpreting the significant contributions to our national heritage of the lands, waterways, and structures. The National Heritage Corridor is stewarded by a federally-designated non-profit partner, Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. (“BHC”). BHC works closely to maximize the resources available through the National Park Service and facilitates collaboration with cities, towns, nonprofit organizations, residents and visitors to preserve, protect and promote the resources through the National Heritage Corridor.
Also quite important is the supporting role that federal agencies provide to Rhode Island’s recreation system through funding. Federal agencies involved in outdoor recreation include the National Park Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Federal Highway Administration, and the US Department of Agriculture. Federal funding is made available to both state and local agencies. Additionally, many federal agencies offer technical assistance programs.

State Role

The State’s overarching responsibility in outdoor recreation is to assure that an adequate system of conservation areas, parks, developed facilities, and other recreation opportunities are available to residents and visitors. This is accomplished through planning, direct operation of facilities, and financial and technical assistance to municipalities. The State sets overall goals and policies for outdoor recreation, conservation and open space directly through the State Guide Plan and indirectly through the approval of Community Comprehensive Plans. This Plan is the primary recreational planning document for the State.

The primary operational role for the State is to provide facilities that offer statewide or regional benefits available to all Rhode Island residents or visitors, such as major parks, bikeways, beaches, and management areas. Several State agencies are involved in the development and operation of recreational facilities. DEM is the primary State provider and manager of state-owned recreational resources. DEM also provides financial and technical assistance to municipalities and other governmental agencies.

DEM’s Parks and Recreation Division is exclusively devoted to operating and maintaining public recreational facilities. The principal roles of the Divisions of Fish and Wildlife and Forest Environment are as stewards of natural resources but both also have significant involvement in operating recreational facilities or supporting public recreational activities. The Planning and Development section of DEM operates the land acquisition program that works with various partners to acquire land, development rights to land, and conservation easements.

DEM and Rhode Island Department of Transportation (DOT) have formed a major partnership to advance construction of bikeways. What began in the 1980s as several unconnected bike paths, is now coalescing into an integrated, statewide system of connecting natural greenways, bike paths and trails, as recommended in the (1994) State Greenspace and Greenways Plan. Today the vision of a statewide greenway network is well underway with more than 50 miles of bikeways and greenways open to the public, and another 43 miles in design and planning. DEM, DOT, and municipalities share responsibility for state bikeways. DEM and DOT jointly design bike trails; DOT constructs them with FHWA funding. DEM or host municipalities are responsible for operating and maintaining the bikeways.

While not their primary responsibility, other State agencies have programs that provide or support outdoor recreation. Examples include:

- The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority provides transportation to many recreational venues, including summer beach bus routes as well as a Rack N’ Ride program for cyclists. Most RIPTA buses are equipped with bike racks.
- The Agricultural Land Preservation Commission purchases the development rights to agricultural land. Preservation of open space, habitat, historic features, and scenic views are all part of the Commission’s evaluation criteria.
- The Rhode Island Department of Health provides technical assistance to local communities to maintain the Path to Health program. The Path to Health program has mapped walking routes in 9 RI communities. The routes are marked with signage that includes maps of the trail and mileage markers. The Department’s Initiative for a Healthy Weight provides mini-grants to

Lincoln Woods, Let’s Go Fishing
communities to improve access to low-cost recreation through park improvements, trail maintenance, community programming and gardening programs.

- The State’s university and college system has extensive recreational facilities that are available for limited public usage.

Finally, the State has a major role in providing financial assistance to municipalities for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreational facilities.

**Municipal Role**

Local governments are responsible for planning and providing facilities and programming that primarily benefit the residents of the sponsoring municipality. Rhode Island law authorizes municipal governments to establish public recreation systems and requires each community to develop a community comprehensive plan that includes an open space and recreation element and a natural resources element that are consistent with State plans. Neighborhood parks, playgrounds, basketball and tennis courts, and fields for team sports (e.g. baseball, soccer, football) are typically emphasized at the local level. Many facilities are associated with schools. Several municipalities do possess special facilities of regional or statewide significance; the most notable example of these being Roger Williams Park and Zoo, operated by the City of Providence.

Municipalities manage over 13,000 acres of recreational facilities with nearly 2,000 parks and beaches. They have also joined with local partners to protect more than 30,000 acres of open space, ranging from extensive water supply watersheds to small neighborhood conservation areas. Local recreation facilities include mostly multi-purpose parks, playgrounds, community centers, and sports fields and courts. Municipalities also offer a wide variety of recreational programming from team sports, individual sports, summer recreation programs and camps for youth, instructional classes, concerts and cultural events, and special programs for seniors or people with disabilities.

While the major sources of funding for constructing municipal outdoor facilities come from state and local bonds and the National Park Service’s Land and Water Conservation Fund, local taxes provide the funds to operate and maintain local facilities. Municipal would face the potential of either overcrowding or finding additional supplies.

**Role of Nonprofit and Conservation Organizations**

Rhode Island has a vibrant nonprofit sector that includes environmental organizations, land trusts, youth organizations, historical societies, and philanthropic foundations that provide programs, facilities, and/ or resources connected to outdoor recreation. The role of each organization is guided by their individual missions but, collectively, the nonprofit sector provides significant additional land, facilities, resources, and programs that serve to supplement the public sector’s commitment to outdoor recreation and conservation. Nonprofit organizations frequently have the expertise to advise government decision-makers and promote public participation and support.

Private nonprofit organizations and local land trusts are playing an important role as partners in recreation and land protection. Notable partners include The Nature Conservancy Rhode Island Field Office, which has provided support to local land trusts and works closely with DEM on land preservation, and The Audubon Society of Rhode Island, which owns or protects over 9,000 acres of property in and around the state. Many Nature Conservancy and Audubon properties are open to the public for hiking and observing nature. Through refuge acquisition and maintenance, nonprofit organizations play an important role in the preservation of diverse habitats. Non-profit organizations have also played a pivotal role in open space and recreation by advocating for state bond funding, laws, and regulations. Save the Bay is also a key partner.
Interactive Map Used in the Outdoor Recreation “Map Survey”

The public was offered the opportunity to share comments about outdoor recreation through a web-based mapping application, which generated 850 responses (see “Map Survey” on page 15 for more details).

The People’s Involvement

This update of Ocean State Outdoors was informed by a comprehensive public outreach program including public meetings, stakeholder interviews, a survey and focus group meetings. The purpose of this multifaceted approach was to meaningfully engage the full range of the state’s diverse population, including traditionally underrepresented populations and non-English speaking groups.

Outdoor Recreation Demand Survey

DEM conducted an outdoor recreation demand survey using Survey Monkey. The public was invited to share their thoughts about outdoor recreation preferences and demand including questions about frequency of use, willingness to pay, and reasons for participating in outdoor recreation activities. 575 individuals participated in the survey.

The survey was publicized and promoted through press releases, partner organizations, social media, and at focus groups for the Ocean State Outdoors. Data collected is provided in the Appendix of this plan. Respondents tended to prefer activities that involve spending time in nature such as hiking, biking, and horseback riding (58%). Respondents also indicated a preference for recreation at the water such as beach...
Many respondents indicated that they like outdoor cultural events (47%). When asked why they participate in outdoor recreation, most respondents indicated to have fun (96%), enjoy scenic beauty (93%), or relax (92%). Many also noted an interest in health and fitness (87%).

Sixty percent of respondents said that they would like to participate in more outdoor recreation but feel they are constrained by availability of recreational resources. When asked “what keeps you from using outdoor recreation facilities more often?” respondents tended to note crowding (31%), difficulty locating facilities (30%) and distance (28%).

**Map Survey**

The public was also offered the opportunity to share comments about public outdoor recreation facilities through a web-based mapping application that allowed respondents to “drop a pin” on a map to identify a point of interest and then make a comment about it. 850 individual pins were placed. General results echo the findings of other recent outdoor recreation studies in Rhode Island and provide new insights from residents as well as out of state tourists.

- Respondents say that camping, trails, beaches and access to the shore are elements of outdoor recreation that all work well.
- Respondents also say that maintenance, communication, signage and coordination with user groups are all elements of providing outdoor recreation that could all be improved.
- Respondents identified missing elements such as dedicated ATV sites, opportunities to work with DEM on trail maintenance, integration of historic context at recreation sites, outfitters to provide gear, better opportunities for residents when compared to tourists, general information about the “rules of the road,” and swimming lessons.

Respondents referred most frequently to camping (271 responses) and trails (90 responses). Biking (50 responses) and boating (61 responses) were also frequently cited. Respondents expressed appreciation for the facilities provided but often noted maintenance issues, lack of signage, and conflicts between user groups. Responses generally echoed the input we received from focus groups.

**State Recreation Facility Customer Satisfaction Survey**

In the summer of 2018, DEM staff surveyed 457 users of state parks and beaches as well as 671 users of state campgrounds on satisfaction levels with the quality and service at these facilities. Major findings indicated that current users of our facilities have a high satisfaction level with our parks, beaches, and bike paths with only 5% or less expressing dissatisfaction with one or more areas of service. Of park and beach visitors, over half (54%) were residents, while approximately one-third (38%) of campers are residents.
What Would Improve Your Visit?

This word cloud represents the most frequently found words when 457 outdoor recreation facility users were asked “what would have improved your visit today?”

Source: Survey of Outdoor Recreation Facility Users (DEM, 2018)

Focus Groups

Beyond surveys of the public, public engagement was also accomplished through 11 focus groups, which were conducted at strategic locations throughout the state. Most focus groups addressed a specific outdoor recreation topic such as fishing, hunting, biking, parks/ playgrounds and others. The purpose of these Focus Groups was to gather specific information regarding “What is Working,” “What Could be Improved,” and “What is Missing” in relation to the statewide system and a range of outdoor recreation activities.

Over 100 Rhode Islanders participated in the focus groups. Focus group participants openly shared their ideas about outdoor recreation in the Ocean State. Some key findings are summarized below.

- Development in some areas is threatening sensitive resources.
- Provide better information about connectivity between recreation facilities.
- Improve signage and information at outdoor recreation facilities.
- Health should receive more consideration as part of outdoor recreation planning.
- Provide better communication about potential conflicts between usage (e.g., hunting and hiking uses can conflict with each other).
- Improve programming to unlock the potential of recreational resources (e.g., provide swimming lessons).
- Provide more outdoor recreation opportunities and open space in urban centers.

Lincoln Woods, September 2018
Targeted Interviews
We interviewed several experts in providing specific aspects of outdoor recreation including the areas of youth and low-income population outreach, senior populations, climate change, urban recreation and access, placemaking, historic preservation, access paddling and connectivity. Each of these issues had been raised during our public outreach and we felt needed to be more completely addressed in our planning. We specifically asked about gaps in providing outdoor recreation and how to address those gaps. Interviewees responded with the following recommendations:

- Focus on urban needs such as enhanced programming, youth recreational opportunities, opportunities for aging populations, and placemaking.
- Provide for connectivity and access using means of transit other than the traditional privately owned automobile.
- Provide better access to information especially to non-English speakers.
- Provide more camping and portage access along paddling routes.
- Ensure that our approaches to providing outdoor recreation are keeping up with changing needs and demands.
- Consider that climate change is both changing the way we should design facilities and interfering with the operation of our existing facilities.

Public Meetings
Two public meetings were held to receive comments on a preliminary draft of *Ocean State Outdoors*.

State Guide Plan Approval Process
Once approved the 2019 edition of *Ocean State Outdoors* will replace 2009 edition as an element of the State Guide Plan. The State Guide Plan technical review and approval is a series of formal public meetings that allow for public comment.
PART TWO
OUTDOOR RECREATION YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

The following are findings and general conclusions on facility and land needs for outdoor recreation based on a variety of input provided through surveys of the general public, focus groups on specific outdoor recreation topics, surveys of municipal recreation directors, and the Ocean State Outdoors Advisory Committee. Key findings were also informed by several previous state studies conducted by University of Rhode Island, DSP and DEM.

Rhode Islanders Love to Spend Time Outdoors

Recent public survey data, collected as part of the Rhode Island Outdoor Recreation Survey (DEM, 2018), indicate that the typical Rhode Islander engages in some type of outdoor recreational activity almost daily and uses outdoor facilities more intensively than the national average. Data from the same survey shows that Rhode Islanders participate in a wide range of outdoor activities including team sports like football and baseball, walking and more novel passions such as rock climbing. It’s clear, Rhode Islanders have integrated use and enjoyment of the outdoors deeply into their individual lifestyles, a finding having profound social, economic and public policy implications.

Rhode Islanders Walk, Cycle and Enjoy Nature

Perhaps unsurprisingly, recent surveys have found the top three activities in Rhode Island in terms of total demand to be walking, visiting coastal areas and beaches and attending outdoor festivals and special events. When it comes to recreation, most people engage in outdoor physical activities that are readily available to them.

Rhode Islanders Continually Demand More Recreational Resources and Facilities

Despite ongoing purchase of land and investment in recreational facilities, the public continues to show a need for more, while recreation providers continue to report user conflicts and constrained resources.

Survey data continues to point to a high demand for “providing public beaches,” “protection of water resources,” “providing natural habitats,” and “preserving historic sites and scenic vistas.” Yet our state’s real estate market continues to consume land for private uses.
A need for additional recreation facilities was also indicated by local system managers in the survey. Municipal recreation directors reported organized sports to be highly popular among younger Rhode Islanders. The top three sports were soccer, baseball/softball and basketball.

**Rhode Islanders Call for Better Staffing and Maintenance of Recreation Facilities**
Focus group and survey participants repeatedly called for better staffing and increased programming at our recreation facilities. Over approximately the last three decades, the number of full-time staff managing Rhode Island State Parks has declined by about two-thirds, but number of facilities and the intensity of their use keeps growing. Outdoor recreation facilities suffer as a result.

**Rhode Islanders Call for Better Information about Outdoor Recreation Facilities**
A key finding, repeated by people in focus groups, respondents to surveys, and in the Rhode Island Parks Organization Manager and Operations Study (DEM, 2019), is that information around Rhode Island outdoor recreation facilities lacks consistency, clarity, and accessibility. Ocean State Outdoors proposes action to address the following critical issues:

**Wayfinding**
Wayfinding refers a system of maps and directional signage that helps users get around safely and effectively so they can truly enjoy their outdoor experience. *Ocean State Outdoors* proposes to update wayfinding for Rhode Island’s outdoor recreation system. The idea is to allow users to readily access trail, bike, blue way other mapping to find connections between facilities and to get around within facilities. This information should be consistent across physical and digital platforms.

**Rules and Usage**
If we expect outdoor recreation facility users to use facilities appropriately, we need to present clear rules and guidance that can be followed with relative ease. Use rules should be displayed where visitors can readily find them and should be echoed by easily accessible information online. Rules and guidance should address the potential for conflict between uses (e.g., hunting and trail walking).

**Trail Information**
Rhode Islanders love to walk outdoor trails but not all trails are mapped, easy to find, or readily accessible to potential users. Rhode Islanders need a better on-the-ground information at trail heads as well as a comprehensive, searchable and up-to-date online map that covers both state and local trails.
The table below summarizes the statewide inventory of publicly owned recreation facilities based on surveys conducted in 2001 and 2019.

### Inventory of Public Outdoor Recreation Facilities As of 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Sites</th>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bike Paths</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat Ramps</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing Access Sites</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball fields</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer fields</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football field</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-use field</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Rinks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping Sites</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,073</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Pools</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skate Parks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball court</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis Courts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball Courts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaches</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playgrounds</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,378</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,489</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,871</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. The data in the table is based on a 2001 survey of publicly owned recreation facilities in the state and was updated in 2019 using GIS analysis combined with detailed information from the DEM divisions that operate park and recreation facilities. These sites can be located using an online mapping tool at DEM’s RI Great Outdoors Map.
2. Local trail number reflects only those mapped online at ExploreRI.org.
3. Trails and bike paths are reported as number-of, but in past years were reported as miles-of.

Public demand for outdoor recreation continues to rise but resources to maintain outdoor facilities continue to fall off. The result is understaffing of facilities and rapidly aging infrastructure with approximately $50 million in deferred maintenance.

Source: DEM, 2018
A MORE DETAILED LOOK AT NEEDS

**Staffing Needs**
According to The Rhode Island Parks Organization Management and Operations Study (DEM, 2019), the number of full-time staff members in Rhode Island State Parks has declined by 67%, from 123 employees in 1989 to 42 employees in 2018. At the same time, the number of visitors to the system, the number of facilities managed by DEM, and the length of the outdoor recreation season have all increased. The study called for specific strategies to address existing facility operation and maintenance needs. Ocean State Outdoors echoes the call to:

- Increase the number of maintenance technicians to meet the industry standard of one full-time staff person for every 30 maintained acres.
- Add appropriately skilled full-time employees to reduce outsourcing of maintenance.
- Provide administrative support for managers and staff so that these technical experts can focus on management and operational needs.

• Create two to three positions dedicated to business development to raise facility income and improve the bottom line.
• Geographically realign the Division of Parks and Recreation to improve efficiency.
• Establish best practice maintenance standards to better reflect existing facility use.

On the local level, more than half of municipal recreation directors report that their maintenance and staffing needs are underfunded. This issue also arises in recreation surveys of the general public.

**Funding Needs**
- Rhode Island’s outdoor recreation system needs a better, more responsive, and more consistent funding system if it is to meet if it is to meet the needs of Rhode Island citizens. Our outdoor recreation system has aging infrastructure representing $50 million in deferred maintenance and significant growth in use. Rhode Island’s state outdoor recreation system is currently
ranked 47th for expenditure per visit. That means, despite the outstanding outdoor recreation system we offer, there are only three states that expend less for the level of use sustained. We cannot continue this way. This is echoed at the local level, where 46% of municipal recreation directors report that since 2015, their budgets have remained flat, and 8% report a decrease in funding.

- As we allow our outdoor recreation system to decline, we risk lost revenue and miss out on an important economic development opportunity. The outdoor recreation industry is thriving. According to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis it continues to outpace the larger economy and represents over 2% of the gross domestic product. Visitors to our Rhode Island outdoor recreation facilities spent over $300 million in 2016, which generated over 3,700 jobs. These numbers are not sustainable if we do not take better care and properly finance of our outdoor recreation facilities.

Following the guidelines in the Rhode Island Parks Organization Management and Operations Study, Ocean State Outdoors recommends:

- Establishing a business development office with two to three full-time staff who concentrate on revenue generating strategies including cost accounting, sponsorship and donor development, grant opportunities, fees, concessions, leases, and fiscal entrepreneurship.
- Establishing new pricing and fee setting policies for special events, site rentals, special uses, etc. based on the market value, cost of service, and the classification of the service depending on essential, important, or value-added criteria.
- Working with the General Assembly and the Office of Management and Budget to develop a new budget process that includes incentives to increase revenue by allowing earned revenue to be re-invested in state parks with a consistent minimum annual capital funding level that DEM can count on for facility and infrastructure needs.
- Evaluating expansion of recreation and business opportunities within each park with a strategic program and business plan to increase revenue generation and visitor experiences. This should include an assessment of which type of entity is best suited to develop and manage operations (e.g., state parks, nonprofit, and/or private sector).

**DEM Outdoor Recreation Grant Program Requests and Awards in 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016 grant round:</th>
<th>Unmet need:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>92</strong> rec applications submitted worth <strong>$16M</strong> to cities &amp; towns</td>
<td><strong>12M</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4M</strong> awarded in grants to <strong>18</strong> cities &amp; towns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demand for outdoor recreation grants far exceeds supply. Many of our outdoor recreation facilities are underfunded and lower-income communities face unique challenges supporting maintenance and upgrades.

to participate in more outdoor recreation but feel they are constrained by availability of recreational resources. When asked “what keeps you from using outdoor recreation facilities more often?” respondents tended to note crowding (31%), difficulty locating facilities (30%) and distance (28%).

**What’s Most Important to Rhode Islanders**

In the 2018 Rhode Island Outdoor Recreation Survey, Rhode Islanders expressed a preference for a wide range of outdoor recreation resources. When asked to indicate how important it is to provide various types of park and recreation facilities, Rhode Islanders showed the greatest preference for wilderness (64% indicating very important), environmental and outdoor education (58% indicating very important), recreation at lakes and ponds (51% indicating very important), trails for nonmotorized activities (50% indicating very important), and boat launches (45% indicating very important).

Respondents tended to prefer activities that involve spending time in nature such as hiking, biking, and horseback riding (58%). Respondents also indicated a preference for recreation at the water such as going to the beach (49%). Many respondents indicated that they like outdoor cultural events (47%). When asked why they participate in outdoor recreation, most respondents indicated to have fun (96%), enjoy scenic beauty (93%), or relax (92%). Many also noted an interest in health and fitness (87%).

According to the State Recreation Facility Customer Satisfaction Survey, many users of our state parks and beaches are heavy users, with 64% of respondents visiting state recreational facilities five or more times.
2017 State Parks and Beaches Attendance by Month

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>299,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>327,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>344,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>563,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>628,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>895,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>1,023,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>1,238,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>780,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>542,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>348,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>271,216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
These figures do not include bike paths. They also do not capture beach attendance before Memorial Day or after Labor Day or after 4 p.m. between Memorial Day and Labor Day.
Source: DEM, 2018

Federation of State High School Associations). In addition, club and private leagues are an increasingly popular option for youth sports. For example, Soccer Rhode Island was founded in 2000 and now serves over 22,000 youth players across 33 Town Associations and eight Premier Clubs throughout Rhode Island.

Recreation Facility Usage
People make over 6 million visits to state-managed recreational facilities (beaches, campgrounds, state parks) annually. Improved counting technology will be coming online soon and is estimated to increase these numbers dramatically.

Included in the 6 million figure are visits to DEM-managed campgrounds. DEM Parks manages five campgrounds throughout the state with a total of 1,048 sites. On a peak summer night, the campgrounds are often at capacity with approximately 3,150 campers. George Washington Campground recently added 25 campsites to handle the demand. Last year, the total number of visitors to our state campgrounds was nearly 80,000 (DEM, 2018).

Including both fresh and saltwater beaches in Rhode Island on the local and state level, visitation numbers top 20 million annually. Beach visits are defined as one person visiting a beach for any part of a day. Clearly our beaches are a highly regarded and significant outdoor recreation asset.

In addition, the USFWS estimates that 424,000 people visit their five National Wildlife Refuges annually for hiking, hunting, and more.
The high volume of visitors that our recreational facilities receive are testament to the importance of outdoor recreation to Rhode Islanders and visitors to our state. But this high volume of use can also cause significant wear and tear on our facilities and demonstrate the need to adequately fund upkeep and restoration.

**Needed Facility Improvements/Upgrades**
The State of Rhode Island made a comprehensive analysis of all state-owned capital assets, including DEM’s recreational infrastructure. The analysis included data on necessary maintenance, repair and replacement projects including deferred maintenance items, and major capital improvements that needed attention in the next 10 years. This analysis provided DEM with vital information that enabled planning and budgeting for facility repairs and upgrades.

In addition, DEM has an active capital development program, systematically improving and modernizing the facilities at its state beaches and parks. All facility upgrades include green design and alternative energy generation along with resilient infrastructure to handle impacts associated with climate change, where appropriate.

Recently, DEM completed several large recreation development projects, including:

- Lincoln Woods’ new beach pavilion and concession area ($5.3 million project).
- Fisherman’s Campground improvements ($3 million), including electric, water, some sewer work, and the phased construction of three new bath houses and restroom facilities, which will make the site more attractive on the shoulder season.
- George Washington Campground restroom and shower facility, new lighting and adding 25 campsites.
- Development of a new State Park at Rocky Point Park in Warwick.
- World War II Park rebuild including a water park and major landscaping project.

These improvements reflect basic and critical facility upgrades. Many other infrastructural needs and deferred maintenance issues remain unfunded.
PART THREE

THE PLAN FOR ACTION

This plan for action is the essence of the Ocean State Outdoors. It proposes strategies through which the public’s recreational needs and desires can be actualized. Actions proposed encompass planning and coordination activities, legislative initiatives, programmatic modifications, regulatory needs, and capital investment measures (land acquisition and facility development).

VISION & GOALS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

THE VISION:

Rhode Island seeks to welcome and inspire residents and visitors to enjoy our iconic and connected outdoor recreation network with diverse opportunities across a variety of geographies. The recreation network ensures inclusive opportunities that inspire a culture of stewardship, wellbeing and shared resources.

THE GOALS:

Goal 1: Invest in new and improved opportunities for outdoor recreation to meet the public’s needs.

Goal 2: Strengthen, expand and promote the statewide recreation network while protecting natural and cultural resources as well as adapting to a changing environment.

Goal 3: Ensure sustainable operation, maintenance and management of the statewide outdoor recreation network.

Goal 4: Improve access by removing barriers and enhancing information and communication systems.

CRITICAL NEEDS & ISSUES

Through the development of the Ocean State Outdoors, seven critical needs and issues emerged, which informed the development of the Ocean State Outdoors vision, goals, policies and actions.

Health and Wellness

An Example of Outdoor Recreation Improving Health and Wellness

The Park Rx program enables health providers to refer patients to recreation activities to improve their patients’ health. The Westerly Land Trust and South Kingstown Land Trust have worked closely with the South County Health Equity Zone to pioneer this program in Rhode Island and organize hiking events to “fill prescriptions” for healthy outdoor activities. A statewide program could encourage more healthful behavior for both Rhode Island adults and children.

A Vision for Outdoor Recreation in Rhode Island, 2016

Modern life tends toward sedentary lifestyles, stress and that manifests as chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure. Exercise and recreation—especially outdoors in beautiful natural surroundings—helps to rejuvenate us and prevent disease. Unfortunately, many people for a variety of reasons are unable to access and take advantage of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Consider these DOH statistics from 2013 and 2014:
• 50% of Rhode Island adults do not meet physical activity recommendations, while one in four reported doing no physical activity or exercise other than their regular job (DOH, 2014).
• In 2014, DOH reported that nearly 63% of Rhode Islanders are overweight and that Rhode Islanders spend $539 million annually on obesity-related healthcare costs.
Promotion of outdoor recreation perpetuates use of outdoor facilities which in turn results in improved health and wellness, reduced health costs, improved individual productivity that will serve Rhode Islanders for generations to come. Outdoor Foundation’s Outdoor Participation Reports found introducing outdoor recreation and physical activities early in life has a lasting effect. Among adults who are current outdoor participants, 75% had physical education and 42% enjoyed outdoor activities in elementary school.

**Percent of Rhode Island Adults in Healthy and Unhealthy Weight Categories**

- Healthy Weight: 37%
- Obese: 25%
- Overweight: 38%

In a 2014 study, Rhode Island DOH found only 37% of Rhode Island adults to be of a healthy weight (DEM, 2016).

**Urban Needs**

Many urban outdoor recreational needs currently go unmet. We interviewed several experts in providing specific aspects of outdoor recreation and found providing services to urban populations to be one of the most frequently cited unmet needs. Interviewee comments included the need for:

- Youth opportunities for outdoor recreation, especially less traditional opportunities and facilities like street workouts, skateboarding, bicycle motor-cross (BMX) and parkour courses.
- Playing fields, especially for soccer and lacrosse, which are both rising rapidly in popularity.
- Dog parks.
- Age friendly programming, including gardening, drawing, photography, and painting groups, which support people with physical limitations.
- Connectivity, signage, and wayfinding for walkers, hikers, cyclists, and paddlers. Signage and wayfinding should be designed to address the needs of non-English speakers.
- Focusing on nonautomotive transit options, such as may be provided through bike share programs and complete streets, to enhance access and connectivity.
- Enhanced placemaking and stewardship through adopt-a-spot programs.

**What’s Parkour?**

Parkour is a training discipline using movement that developed from military obstacle course training. Practitioners aim to get from one point to another in a complex environment, without assistive equipment and in the fastest and most efficient way possible.

*Source: Wikipedia*
Climate Change
Recent weather records indicate highly accelerated climate and a clear need for a new way of thinking about building and improving our recreational infrastructure. For example, our fishing piers, boat ramps, beach pavilions, and wetlands, are all vulnerable to climate change impacts, a fact showcased during Superstorm Sandy, which resulted in $77.4 million in federal assistance and $102 million in private insurance claims.

For these very reasons, our future recreational infrastructure plans must incorporate climate change resiliency into all improvements, reconstruction and new facilities. This is a necessity to protect our assets going forward and to reduce public expenditures. Similarly, green infrastructure design should be incorporated into any improvements, reconstructions, or new facilities. Keeping the carbon footprint of our recreation infrastructure as low as possible ensures that our recreational facilities are not exacerbating climate change impacts locally. Additionally, it helps protect our natural resources and reduces the heating, cooling and water demands of the facility.

Habitat and Conservation
More than just a pleasure to behold, Rhode Island’s environs offer many unique opportunities for wildlife. For example, wetlands provide incredibly valuable habitat as well as recreational resource function throughout the state. Twenty freshwater wetland habitats, excluding rivers and lakes, along with estuarine salt marshes and brackish marshes have been identified as key habitats for Rhode Island’s Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the 2015 Rhode Island State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP).

Ocean State Outdoors recommends actions aimed to provide opportunities to recreate in the outdoors while ensuring preservation of environmental resources. This theme calls for park and recreation facility managers to operate and grow outdoor recreation resources in way that is sensitive to environmental resources. This theme also calls on users to be aware and responsible.

Project Wild
Is an international supplementary wildlife education curriculum for K-12 that encourages conservation, awareness, and appreciation of nature, culture, and social interaction with wildlife.

Tourism
Tourism is one of Rhode Island’s largest industries. The Ocean State’s unique natural features and recreation opportunities provide for a wealth of tourism opportunities throughout the state. State beaches along the southern coast derive a significant portion of their parking revenue from out-of-state visitors. Much of the state’s tourism is linked to activities such as recreational boating and fishing in Narragansett Bay and offshore. Visitors are also drawn to management areas that offer hunting, golfing, skiing, biking, hiking, and bird watching, among other activities. Birding groups of between 20 and 200 visit regularly to observe the fall migration. The tourist industry depends on the same features that are important to Rhode Island residents: a clean, healthy, and accessible bay and beaches, our natural, cultural, scenic, and historic resources, and attractive, safe and accessible parks, management areas, and other open spaces.

It is crucial to maintain the balance between high-quality recreational experiences, meeting local recreational demands, and tapping the tourist market to ensure that tourists’ use of recreation and open space facilities does not overtax them and displace resident users. Increased coordination and mutual understanding between recreation managers and the tourism industry can help protect Rhode Island’s natural resource base while continuing to generate tourism revenue.

What Recreation Opportunities do Wetlands Offer and Support?
Some recreation opportunities include—waterfowl hunting, birding, fishing, hiking, boating or canoeing, and general nature observation. Kids love to see and play with tadpoles, salamanders, turtles and toads.

Burlingame State Park
Collaboration
Ocean State Outdoors represents a proposal for collaboration between all proponents of outdoor recreation. Providing for our outdoor recreational needs requires a team effort involving management professionals, experienced staff, local volunteers, trainers and educators, local officials and many others. Partnerships with non-profit organizations, particularly The Nature Conservancy, the Audubon Society and the dozens of local land trusts, have played a pivotal role in protecting open space and recreational resources around the state. Private businesses have also contributed to support recreation facilities and programs. Some local sports leagues help maintain ball fields. Businesses, individual volunteers, and environmental groups help organize and provide workers for cleanups and special events.

Equity
Communities need good outdoor recreation facilities. Outdoor recreation increases the likelihood that people will be active. Access to parks is a matter of equity and justice as well as health.

While Rhode Island has great physical access to parks and greenspace, simple distance to a park is not a sufficient measure. The quality of the park needs to be included in the assessment. Some parks, particularly in low-income areas can be seen as unattractive, unwelcoming, or unsafe havens for illegal activity. Because of this these parks can be rendered essentially inaccessible, particularly for children. As public recreation budgets shrink or flatline, urban parks in low-income areas disproportionately suffer. While wealthy neighborhoods may have the resources to advocate for their parks and create non-profits to maintain and sustain their parks, low-income neighborhoods often do not.

A key part of ensuring equitable access to outdoor recreation resources is to acknowledge that some communities are traditionally underrepresented as users of outdoor recreation resources. One potential source of this disparity is that some groups may not feel welcome in places where they don’t see people that look like them - they may not feel that the space is “for them”. One way to address this is to formally welcome traditionally under represented groups via cultural programming and signage. For example, in Rhode Island, the Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project (RI MPCPMP) promotes the recognition of the state’s history as a major actor in the transatlantic human trade, as the home of multiple ports receiving enslaved people who survived the Middle Passage, as well as the vital role that Africans and their descendants played in the development of both Rhode Island and the Americas. Physical markers are displayed at historic locations throughout the state. Incorporating as many of these markers and events as possible in state parks and other recreational areas can make these resources more accessible.

Access
Outdoor recreation can positively impact Rhode Islander’s health and quality of life, ensuring that everyone can access quality outdoor recreational opportunities is paramount. Accessibility improvements can be made by all sectors of the recreational community; therefore, Ocean State Outdoors calls for action to:

- Improve access to safe and inviting outdoor recreation opportunities through targeted upgrades to recreational infrastructure where there are known gaps.
- Increase attendance and participation in outdoor recreation by activating existing parks through increased programming sourced from outside the public sector.
- Making stronger connections between our recreational resources to allow for by foot, bike, or public transit whenever feasible.
- Improving wayfinding and informational signage at our recreation sites. Signage and wayfinding should be designed to address the needs of non-English speakers.
- Enhancing our digital presence with the most comprehensive and up-to-date information about outdoor recreation facilities.

Rhode Island Shoreline Access
A critical element of access in Ocean State Outdoors is shoreline access. Shoreline access is a Rhode Island tradition going back to the very founding of the state. As set out in the Rhode Island State Constitution, “the people shall continue to enjoy and freely exercise all rights of fishery, and privileges of the shore” (Article I, Section 17).
The following section summarizes policies and actions for achieving the goals and vision of Ocean State Outdoors.

The goals, policies and actions in this plan form a hierarchy, that is, actions have been placed under the policies they are intended to implement; and in turn policies have been placed under their associated goal. Actions are organized in chronological groups—ongoing, short term, medium term, and long term. Ongoing actions are in process and are expected to continue throughout the five-year term of the plan. Short-term actions are anticipated to begin within the first year after approval. Medium-term actions are anticipated to begin between Year 1 and Year 4. Long-term actions are planned to initiate after Year 3 and before Year 5.

**Goal 1: Invest in new and improved opportunities for outdoor recreation to meet the public's needs.**
Outdoor recreation provides us both direct and indirect benefits. This goal recognizes the public’s needs broadly related to outdoor recreation. Setting this goal helps us to address key findings related to Rhode Islanders love of the outdoors, demand for more services, and call for better staffing and maintenance. It also addresses the critical issues of urban needs, equity and access.

**Policy 1.1 Strengthen connections between health and outdoor recreation.**
In our culture, we are in the midst of health crisis of our own making, which results from chronic inactivity. One of the best available cures is outdoor recreation but sadly many people either do not or cannot take advantage of outdoor facilities. Strengthening the connection between health and outdoor recreation, raises awareness of this issue and improves the likelihood of good healthful behaviors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Items</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate with Health Equity Zones to highlight the importance of outdoor recreation</td>
<td>DOH</td>
<td>DOH, Health Equity Zones</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand the Park RX program</td>
<td>Land Trusts</td>
<td>Advocacy groups, User groups</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess fitness station equipment in parks and provide upgrades and creative designs that support use by people of all fitness and ability levels</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Advocacy groups, User groups, Private vendors</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure outdoor recreation facility users have access to shade and sunscreen</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Private vendors</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Policy 1.2 Activate parks through programming and education.**

Although many of our outdoor recreational resources are overtaxed with use, Rhode Island also has many parks that are presently underutilized, and some are essentially unused. Parks that are not used are both lost opportunities and targets for vandalize and other forms of misuse. Programming activates parks for their highest and best purposes. A park that is used regularly is much less likely to sustain abuse.

Programming can be used to engage people who have not traditionally used facilities and make them feel more at home. In this way, programming can be used as part of a strategy to improve the equity of use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Items</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop and support family targeted tool kits and programs to encourage outdoor recreation, such as the Rhode Island Great Outdoors Pursuit</td>
<td>Land Trusts</td>
<td>Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission to fund, install, and maintain interpretive displays that highlight cultural and historic sites, e.g., Middle Passage</td>
<td>DEM, RIHPHC</td>
<td>Preserve Rhode Island, Providence Preservation, DMOs, Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage private sector operators to provide in-park services, including sailing, canoe and boat rentals, refreshments, concerts, and horseback riding</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Private partners</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Policy 1.3 Incorporate targeted additions to our recreational infrastructure – build where there are demographic and geographic gaps and ensure equal access to high quality opportunities.**

Overall, Rhode Island outdoor recreation system brings a wide range of excellent opportunity. Targeted additions are needed to fill the gaps and address access limitations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Items</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify top priority trail gaps and work to close them within 5 years</td>
<td>DEM, TNC, Municipalities</td>
<td>Land Trusts, Municipalities, User groups</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and prioritize needed boating and fishing access site additions and improvements and fund their completion</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Land Trusts, TNC, User groups</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create an option for legal all-terrain vehicle use</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Land Trusts, User groups</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess portage opportunities and parking options and work to ensure they meet needs</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>TNC, Municipalities</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify opportunities for new canoe and kayak rental operations in close proximity to put-ins</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>DOT, Municipalities</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Freshwater swimming opportunities: identify top priority gaps and work to close them within 5 years.

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<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and prioritize needed bike path additions and connections and fund their completion</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>Private vendors, Municipalities, Advocacy groups, User groups</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand and enhance shoreline access by acquiring and developing key access points and coordinating the improvement and expansion of facilities</td>
<td>CRMC, DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Land Trusts, User groups, Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goal 2: Strengthen, expand and promote the statewide recreation network while protecting natural and cultural resources as well as adapting to a changing environment.

Outdoor recreation has both the potential to compliment and conflict with natural and cultural resources. Ensuring that outdoor recreational opportunities do not negatively impact important habitats, animal and plant species, and historic resources is of paramount importance. Adapting to rising sea levels, increasing temperatures, and other climate change impacts will also become increasingly critical.

Setting this goal helps us to directly address key findings related to Rhode Islanders love of the outdoors, demand for more services, and call for better staffing and maintenance. This goal directly addresses the critical issues of habitat and conservation and climate change. Furthermore, it calls for collaboration to enhance tourism and to ensure protection and recognition of natural and cultural resources.

Policy 2.1 Ensure that outdoor recreation facilities are built and operated in a manner that provides for the protection of natural and cultural resources.

Much of our outdoor recreation system depends on high quality natural surroundings and cultural resources. Clearly, we must build and operate outdoor recreational facilities in a manner protects natural and cultural resources.

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<th>Action Items</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote low-maintenance design, preventative maintenance, green and sustainable design, and other practices that will reduce maintenance costs while conserving natural resources</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>Municipalities, RIDOT, RIPRA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with environmental agencies and organizations to ensure new or expanded recreation facilities and uses protect wildlife habitat</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>Recreation providers</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve the Historical Preservation Society, the Narragansett Indian Tribe, other tribal organizations, and other advocacy groups to ensure that cultural heritage sites are recognized and protected when expanding outdoor recreation opportunities</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Preserve Rhode Island, Tribal organizations, DMOs, State Historic Preservation Society, Providence Preservation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest in appropriate infrastructure to mitigate and adapt to flooding and heat that may result from climate change</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>CRMC, DOT</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
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</tbody>
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### Action Items

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<th>Action Items</th>
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<th>Support</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include resiliency in outdoor recreation design through strategies such as floodable parks</td>
<td>DEM, CRMC</td>
<td>CRMC, DOT, Municipalities</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work to enforce the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission run-of-the river policy to protect aquatic resources</td>
<td>DEM, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, DSP</td>
<td>Recreation providers</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibit the loss of recreation and open space system land through conversion to alternative uses and enhance open space recreation use</td>
<td>DSP</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibit the conversion of land that has been dedicated to green space, recreation and open space and—if ever such proposals may be considered—scrutinize them closely while ensuring consistency with local comprehensive plans and the State Guide Plan.</td>
<td>DSP</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency to establish priorities and procedures for the purchase of storm-damaged properties, particularly barrier beaches and other flood prone areas to use for recreational areas as part of hurricane preparedness planning</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>RIEMA, Municipalities</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Policy 2.2 Work together to promote outdoor recreation opportunities.

To properly promote outdoor recreation requires cooperation between agencies and organizations.

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<tr>
<th>Action Items</th>
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<th>Support</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish a liaison at the State Tourism office to coordinate with recreation advocates such as DEM</td>
<td>DEM, Commerce RI</td>
<td>Conventions and Visitors Bureau, Destination marketing organizations</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a plan to communicate the economic and community benefits of outdoor recreation to legislators and the general public</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>General Assembly, Stakeholders</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with environmental education advocacy groups to promote successful environmental curriculum that encourages stewardship of outdoor resources such as “Project Wild”</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>School districts, Education providers, Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand successful engagement initiatives such as DEM’s hunting and wildlife education programs to cultivate support for the protection of wildlife and fish habitat</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>User groups</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal 3: Ensure sustainable operation, maintenance and management of the statewide outdoor recreation network.

By their nature, facilities and systems require operation, maintenance, and management. The ideal is to make operation, maintenance, management as simple and cost effective as possible to maximize delivery. This goal focuses on sustainable and effective delivery of service.

Setting this goal helps us to address key findings related to Rhode Islanders call for better staffing and maintenance. This goal addresses all key issues, but directly addresses collaboration to ensure the sustainability of outdoor recreation facilities.

Policy 3.1 Build partnerships for the sustainable stewardship of outdoor recreation facilities.

A key finding of *Ocean State Outdoors* is that state and municipal resources for managing outdoor reaction facilities are stretched beyond capacity and causing deterioration of facilities. Partnering with allied organizations to share work could relieve some of the current stress.

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<th>Action Items</th>
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<th>Timeframe</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the creation of and collaboration with organizations such as watershed organizations, friends-of-park groups, and user groups to support stewardship of specific facilities and parks</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Advocacy groups, User groups</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an umbrella nonprofit/affinity organization for outdoor recreation (e.g., a “Friends of State Parks”) that can help maintain recreation facilities</td>
<td>Advocacy groups</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owners of outdoor facilities should continue to empower user groups to undertake activities such as trail clearing and maintenance and upkeep of athletic fields</td>
<td>DEM, Land Trusts, Municipalities, Conservation agencies</td>
<td>User groups, Watershed associations</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide clear and meaningful opportunities for outdoor recreation stewardship for the private sector (e.g., retailers)</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Private partners</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request nominations from local recreation agencies for the Top 10 Endangered Parks list</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>Municipalities</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy 3.2 Dedicate funding to outdoor recreation in a manner that reflects its value and the evolving needs of the public.

Current budgeting offers little tethering to evolving needs or the return on invest that outdoor recreation offers. Clearer connection between user fees, the cost of providing service and the value realized links funding to management and will help to ensure the viability of outdoor recreation facilities.

<table>
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<th>Action Items</th>
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<th>Support</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase capital investment for outdoor recreation facilities and improve funding at the state and municipal level</td>
<td>General Assembly</td>
<td>General Assembly, Town and city councils, DOT, Federal Highway Administration</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Action Items

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<tr>
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<th>Support</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop support for adjusting usage fees to be commensurate with other New England states and apply proceeds to capital investments</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>General Assembly, Advocacy groups, User groups</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide for dedicated and restricted funding for recreational resources in a manner that incentivizes proper operation and maintenance</td>
<td>DEM, General Assembly</td>
<td>Advocacy groups, User groups</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work to secure funding to continue state and local land protection programs and propose a statewide open space bond referendum for consideration for the 2020 and 2022 election.</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>General Assembly, Advocacy groups, User groups</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study establishment of a self-perpetuating trust fund for contingent acquisition of storm or flood damaged properties in coastal areas and along rivers.</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>General Assembly, Advocacy groups, User groups</td>
<td>Long term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Policy 3.3 Provide and support training opportunities for staff of outdoor recreation facilities.
Providing and supporting training opportunities is paramount to ensuring the effective maintenance of our outdoor recreation facilities. In the face of staffing and budget cuts across the state, targeted training can expand capacity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Items</th>
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<th>Support</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the RIPRA to establish an information clearinghouse and to hold workshops on park system management for recreation staff</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>RIPRA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a recreation technical assistance program to connect recreation agencies with experts on recreation management</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>Municipalities, RIPRA, nonprofit organizations</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider establishing a “Gold Medal Award” for local park and recreation agencies</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>RIPRA/ RRRC</td>
<td>Long term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Goal 4: Improve access to the outdoor recreation network by removing barriers and enhancing information and communication systems.
Complete access is an ideal requiring an ethic of continual improvement to remove barriers to the use of our outdoor recreation system. An important part of this work is exchange of information through the most modern means such as the internet.

Setting this goal helps us to address key findings related to the need for better information about outdoor recreation facilities as well as improving opportunities to walk, cycle, and enjoy nature since it provides for connectivity between uses. In doing so, this goal helps to address the critical issues of health and wellness, urban needs, equity, and access.
Policy 4.1 Use the internet to maximize the exchange of information related to outdoor recreation.
The general public demands easily accessible and comprehensible information about outdoor recreation resources. Rhode Island’s numerous providers across all sectors need to cooperate to ensure proper implementation.

<table>
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<th>Action Items</th>
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<th>Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide a unified outdoor recreation web portal and mobile app that provides information about local, state, private, and federal programs.</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>Commerce RI, Chambers of Commerce, DMO, Explore RI, RIRPA, Advocacy groups, User groups</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement a unified communications and social media strategy across agencies and organizations</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>Commerce RI, DOT, DMO, Municipalities, Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide improved general information and communications for non-English speaking audiences</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>Commerce RI, Chambers of Commerce, DMO, Explore RI, RIRPA, Advocacy groups, User groups</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy 4.2 Provide for adequate capacity and safe connections to, from and between outdoor recreation facilities.
A well-connected outdoor recreation system that enables residents to travel to and between recreation opportunities safely via bus, bike, sidewalks, or boat can enhance recreation opportunities for the whole community. In addition, connecting existing recreational opportunities to each other can make those opportunities more readily useable.

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<th>Action Items</th>
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<th>Timeframe</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using such approaches as Complete Streets, improve public transportation networks and bike paths leading to recreation spaces and make grants available for this work</td>
<td>RIPTA, DOT</td>
<td>DEM, DOP, Municipalities, User groups, Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve safety on bike paths with a focus on high-risk areas such as entrances-exits and integration and crossing with other modes of transit such as walking and automotive</td>
<td>DEM, DOT, Municipalities</td>
<td>Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance and integrate special interest recreation access, such as mountain biking and urban BMX courses, by providing better information about opportunities, addressing potential user conflicts and adding infrastructure where appropriate</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Advocacy groups, User groups</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve connectivity within the recreation network, including bikeways, walking paths, paddling routes as well as connections to recreation destinations</td>
<td>DOT, Municipalities</td>
<td>Municipalities, RIPTA, Land Trusts, DOP, User groups, Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Long term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Policy 4.3 Seek to resolve and avoid creating user conflicts at outdoor recreation facilities.

In our dense and populous state, conflicts between user groups create inconvenience and, sometimes, safety issues. Resolving these conflicts removes barriers to use and allows for more effective promotion of outdoor recreation facilities.

<table>
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<th>Action Items</th>
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<th>Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better designate and define trail networks with consideration for user conflicts</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>Municipalities, RIPTA, Land Trusts, DOP, User groups, Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEM’s Management Area Councils and special use permit system should continue as a means to provide coordination, minimize user conflicts, and establish the responsibility of user groups to maintain order and respect the facilities they are permitted to enjoy</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>User groups, Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better designate trails and public access areas to protect natural resources by diverting uses to appropriate terrain.</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>Land Trusts, Municipalities, User groups, Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with user groups on public education to protect natural resources and minimize conflicts among hikers, bikers, hunters and other user groups</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>Land Trusts, Municipalities, User groups, Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Policy 4.4 Use signage, displays and related information technology to improve communication about proper use of outdoor recreation.

Lack of easily available information about how to properly use outdoor recreation facilities can result in user conflicts and major inconveniences. Easy-to-read displays on site with references to readily accessible online information will facilitate the use of our outdoor recreation system.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utilize digital and printed materials to improve signage and wayfinding at recreational facilities, while ensuring that information is up to date, readily available, standardized, and friendly to non-English speaking populations</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Land Trusts, Municipalities, User groups, Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erect educational signage to encourage responsible behavior in outdoor resources</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Land Trusts, Municipalities, User groups, Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement standardized symbology for signage to simplify and clarify information, such as National Park Service Signage and Style Guides (NPS, 2019a; NPS, 2019b)</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Land Trusts, User groups, Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better designate public shoreline access sites through signage and information online to clarify the rules of use</td>
<td>CRMC</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install educational, hands-on displays that utilize QR codes or other interactive features</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>Land Trusts, User groups, Advocacy groups</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Policy 4.5 Provide for an outdoor recreation network that is fully accessible to potential users.
Fairness and equity are critical tenets in the delivery of outdoor recreation opportunities. A universally accessible outdoor recreation network is the desired goal.

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<th>Action Items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address barriers to public shoreline access in local comprehensive planning efforts and regulations, as well as through creation of improved physical access and rights of way.</td>
<td>Municipalities, DSP</td>
<td>DEM, CRMC</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide new/enhanced recreational opportunities for people with limited mobility that go beyond adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act.</td>
<td>DEM, Municipalities</td>
<td>DOT</td>
<td>Long term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
a. Acronyms and other abbreviations in the tables above are listed and defined in Appendix XX.
b. Timeframes are defined as “ongoing,” which means currently in process and likely to continue during the planning period; “short term,” which means likely to occur within one year of Ocean State Outdoors adoption; “medium term,” which means likely to be initiated within 1 – 3 years of Ocean State Outdoors adoption; and “long term,” which means likely to be initiated within 3 – 5 years of Ocean State Outdoors adoption.
APPENDICES

PROTECTION OF WETLANDS AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES

Lincoln Woods, September 2018
PROTECTION OF WETLANDS AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES

Wetland protection is a top priority for the State. Coastal and freshwater wetlands perform critical functions including purifying and maintaining groundwater supplies, flood and stormwater control, erosion and sedimentation control, fish and wildlife habitat, nutrient production and cycling, open space, education and scientific research opportunities and under appropriate circumstances, substantial recreational opportunities. Protection measures utilized in Rhode Island include federal and state regulation of alterations to wetlands, acquisition of land (and interests in land) connected to wetlands, programs to restore degraded wetlands, and efforts to educate and involve the public in the protection of wetlands. Parks can provide an effective protection and management tool for wetlands and natural resources throughout Rhode Island.

These valuable functions have been recognized through regulatory programs and other measures designed to provide protection for wetlands. In Rhode Island, freshwater wetlands are defined by statute in Chapter 2-1-20 of RI General Laws and are one of the oldest and strongest state wetlands protection measures in the nation. Avoiding the loss and degradation of wetlands, and restoring previously degraded wetlands, remains an environmental issue of national and state significance.

The federal Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 authorizes federal funds, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund, for wetlands acquisition. The statute also directs the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and each state to prepare a Wetlands Priority Plan to guide and direct protection efforts. State plans are to be included as part of their SCORP and are to identify wetland types or areas that are priority for protection through acquisition programs.

Wetlands Conservation Priorities

While recognizing that all wetlands contribute in a valuable way to the State’s ecological health, priorities must be established to direct and manage conservation efforts and investments. The Natural Heritage Program has identified more than 50 natural community types in the state, eight of which are unique in the state and region and therefore are important conservation priorities. The eight community types may be found within the seven bioregions of Rhode Island that contain biological features of critical importance to maintaining the state’s biodiversity. Among the eight community types unique to Rhode Island, the following six types are wetland communities, and are therefore important conservation priorities:

- Atlantic White Cedar swamps
- Freshwater pond shores that support coastal plain species
- Freshwater tidal marshes
- Floodplain forests
- Open peatlands
- Sea level fens

Several state efforts underway will further inform and refine wetlands conservation priorities in the future. DEM’s Office of Water Resources has developed a statewide freshwater wetland monitoring plan which has identified long and short-term objectives for freshwater wetlands. The companion coastal wetlands protection and restoration plan developed by the Habitat Restoration Team, is being implemented. These plans are being developed with other state agencies, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations such as Save the Bay. When completed, these plans will provide comprehensive, coordinated wetlands strategies and priorities for Rhode Island.

Regulatory and Protection Programs

Federal, state and local governments and private sector organizations all play important roles in protecting wetlands. State wetlands protection regulations administered by the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) play the most important regulatory role in protecting Rhode Island’s freshwater and coastal wetlands. The following components play an integral part in preserving and protecting the State’s wetlands and natural resources:

- Rhode Island’s Freshwater Wetlands Act, Chapter 2-1 of the General Laws
- CRMC regulation of saltwater wetlands, Chapter 46-23 of the General Laws
- State Land Acquisition Program, DEM Planning and Development Section
- Municipal, local and non-profit land conservation organizations

State Guide Plan Element: Ocean State Outdoors
| Appendices
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Meredith Brady, Secretary, Rhode Island Division of Planning, Associate Director
Peter Alviti, Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Director
Jeanne Boyle, Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, President’s Designee
Lisa Bryer, AICP, Rhode Island League of Cities & Towns, Local Government Representative
Janet Coit, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Director
Jeanne Cola, Representative of Nonprofit Housing
Roy Coulombe, Public member
Brian Daniels, Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, Executive Director
Barbara Fields, Executive Director, Rhode Island Housing
Grover Fugate, Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council
Carol Grant, Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources, Executive Director
Marcus Mitchell, Small Business Representative
Thomas Mullaney, Rhode Island Department of Administration, Budget Office
Bonnie Nickerson, AICP, City of Providence - Department of Planning and Development, Director
Anne M. Nolan, RI Housing Resources Commission, Chair
Sandy O’Connor, Governor’s Designee
Scott Avedisian, CEO, RI Public Transit Authority
Stefan Pryor, Secretary of Commerce
M. James Riordan, AICP, Public Member (Recused)
Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, Rhode Island Department of Health, Director
Girard R. Visconti, Esq., Employer with more than 50 Employees
Scott Wolf, Environmental Advocate
STATE PLANNING COUNCIL’S TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

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Roberta Groch, AICP, Secretary, Division of Statewide Planning
Caitlin Chaffee, RI Coastal Resources Management Council
John Chambers, Fuss and O’Neill
Jeffrey Davis, AICP, RI Chapter of American Planning Association
Michael Gannon, RI Department of Transportation
Carrie Gill, RI Office of Energy Resources
Nicole LaFontaine, AICP, North Kingstown - Planning Department
Mark Motte, Ph.D, Rhode Island College
Randy Warden, Federal Highway Administration, Assistant Division Administrator
Paul Jordan, RI Department of Environmental Management
Mason Perrone, Town of Cumberland
Mia Patriarca, RI Department of Health
Ashley Sweet, Exeter Town Planner
Michael Walker, Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
Jane Weidman, AICP, Charlestown Town Planner
Diane Williamson, AICP, Bristol Planning Director
### SCORP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frank Floor (or Designee)</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>RiDEM, Parks and Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...Designee of DEM Parks &amp; Rec:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Ogren</td>
<td>Deputy Chief</td>
<td>RiDEM, Parks and Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terri Bisson</td>
<td>Chief Program Development</td>
<td>RiDEM, Bureau of Natural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mia Patriarca</td>
<td>RIDOH- Ctr. For Health Promotion</td>
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<td>Joshua Giraldo</td>
<td>Chief of Staff</td>
<td>Central Falls</td>
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<td>Veronica Berounsky (or Designee)</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Rivers Council</td>
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<td>John Torgan (or Designee)</td>
<td>State Director</td>
<td>The Nature Conservancy</td>
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<td>...Designee of TNC: Tim Mooney</td>
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<td>Meg Kerr</td>
<td>Senior Director of Policy</td>
<td>RI Audubon</td>
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<td>Sarah Mitchell (or Designee)</td>
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<td>RI Bicycle Coalition</td>
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<td>...Designee Bicycle Coalition:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Roseland</td>
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<td>RI Bicycle Coalition</td>
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<td>Theresa Murphy</td>
<td>Parks &amp; Rec. Dir.</td>
<td>South Kingstown</td>
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<td>Phil Hervey</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Barrington</td>
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<td>Raena Blumenthal</td>
<td>Rec. Director</td>
<td>Coventry</td>
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<td>Tiffany Rhodes</td>
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<td>Johnson &amp; Wales</td>
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<td>Anna Lockmer, REI</td>
<td>Store Manager</td>
<td>REI, Outdoor Rec. Retailer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chuck Horbert</td>
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<td>RI Canoe and Kayak Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steven O’Donnell</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>YMCA Greater Providence</td>
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APPENDICES

SURVEYS AND FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

Lincoln Woods, September 2018
Ocean State Outdoors

Rhode Island’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Welcome to the home of the Rhode Island Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The Project Team, led by Rhode Island DEM and the Division of Statewide Planning, will be using this site to engage and communicate with the public. We look forward to providing updates on project happenings and progress. If you have any comments or questions, please share them with us. We will compile your comments and review them with the Project Team.

Learn more about the SCORP

Get Involved

**We Want to Hear From You!** Partners, stakeholders, and all Rhode Islanders interested in outdoor recreation are invited to participate in the sessions and share their feedback on the draft SCORP.

View the draft SCORP
Selection process for DEM Outdoor Recreation Grants and National Park Service’s Land & Water Conservation Fund

Public Meetings

We’re hosting two public meetings to solicit feedback on our early drafts of the plan.

View Upcoming Meetings

RI SCORP Submissions
Frequently Asked Questions

What does outdoor recreation include?

How does Rhode Island's SCORP impact me?
Public Meetings

**Tuesday, May 21**
URI Coastal Institute, Hazard Room, South Ferry Road, Narragansett
5:30 PM

**Wednesday, May 22**
DEM Headquarters, Room 300, 235 Promenade Street, Providence
3:00 PM

View the draft SCORP

Resources

- Ocean State Outdoors: Rhode Island’s Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2009)
- Outdoor Recreation Council - Presentation 2016
- Outdoor Recreation Council - Executive Summary
- Outdoor Recreation Council - Final Report
- URI Study: The Economic Impact of Rhode Island State Parks
- Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan
- RI Great Outdoors Interactive Map
Get Involved

Rhode Island’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

We Want to Hear From You! Let us know which recreational resources are working for you, where improvements are needed, and where there are opportunities to add resources. Feedback from Rhode Islanders and visitors alike will be used to provide insight into outdoor recreation in Rhode Island and help inform the latest Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

Public Meetings

Please join us at an upcoming meeting to discuss the draft Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

Tuesday, May 21
URI Coastal Institute, Hazard Room, South Ferry Road, Narragansett
5:30 PM
**Wednesday, May 22**  
DEM Headquarters, Room 300, 235 Promenade Street, Providence  
3:00 PM

**Frequently Asked Questions**

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<td>How does Rhode Island's SCORP impact me?</td>
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**Rev. 5/16/19**

**SCORP Quick Links**

- Overview
- Get Involved
- Resources/Documents

**About the SCORP**

**Resources**

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<tr>
<th>Meeting Materials</th>
<th>Related Documents</th>
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</table>
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- Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan
- RI Great Outdoors Interactive Map
Are you a Rhode Island resident or visitor/tourist?

- [ ] Resident
- [ ] Visitor/Tourist
If you are a Rhode Island resident, what city/town do you live in?

Barrington
Bristol
Burrillville
Central Falls
Charlestown
Coventry
Cranston
Cumberland
East Greenwich
East Providence
Exeter
Foster
Glocester
Hopkinton
Jamestown
Johnston
Lincoln
Little Compton
Middletown
Narragansett
New Shoreham
Newport
North Kingstown
North Providence
North Smithfield
Pawtucket
Portsmouth
Providence
Richmond
Scituate
Smithfield
South Kingstown
Tiverton
Warren
Warwick
West Greenwich
West Warwick
Westerly
Woonsocket

Other
What outdoor recreation activity are you commenting on?

- Hunting/Fishing
- Trails/ATV/Mountain Biking/Winter Recreation (Ice Skating, Cross-Country Skiing, Skiing, Snowboarding, Snowmobiling, etc.)
- Boating/Paddling/Freshwater or Shoreline Access, Beach or Pool Access, Swimming
- Passive Recreation (Birding, Scenic Views, Photography)
- Camping
- Biking (Dedicated Bike Paths/Lanes, Signed-Shared Roadways)
- Parks/Playgrounds (Skate Parks, Splash/Spray Parks)
- Access to Outdoor Recreation (ADA/Universal Access, Evening/Night-time Access)
- Athletic Fields/Facilities (Basketball, Baseball, Softball, Soccer, Football, Lacrosse, Tennis, Multi-Use/Multi-Purpose Fields)
Where is the activity/facility you are commenting on?
Pan the map to navigate the pin to the desired location.

Lat: 41.64286  Lon: -71.54987
What's working...what are you happy with?
Please comment.

Please input 1-255 characters

What could be improved?
Please comment.

Please input 1-255 characters
What’s missing…what is needed to better utilize the site?
Please comment.

Please input 1-255 characters

General Comments
Please input 1-255 characters

Photo of the activity/facility
Submitting a photo is not required, but highly appreciated. If you submit a photo, you agree to it being used by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.
Click here to upload image file. (<10MB)
Photo Credits
Please submit photo credits, so that you can be credited for your submission.

Please input 1-100 characters
Notice of Upcoming Outdoor Recreation Focus Groups!
(Boiler Plate Used for Developing Individual Notices)

Greetings!

It’s time to update the 2009 Statewide Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and we need your help. The goal of this project is to clearly document the existing status, needs, and future vision for outdoor recreation and open space protection across the state. The SCORP ensures the continued provision of accessible recreation for a growing and changing population, and sets goals and strategies for protecting wildlife habitat, water quality, scenic resources, and agriculture.

As part of this SCORP update, an intensive public engagement process will be implemented throughout the fall of 2018. The public engagement effort will include eleven Focus Groups conducted at strategic locations throughout Rhode Island. The majority of the Focus Groups will focus on a specific outdoor recreation topic such as Fishing, Hunting, Biking, Parks/Playgrounds, or others. However, each Focus Group will also include time to discuss issues and concerns outside of the designated focus area.

The purpose of these Focus Groups is to gather specific information regarding ‘What is Working’, ‘What Could be Improved’, and ‘What is Missing’ in relation to a range of outdoor recreation activities. You are being invited to participate in a Focus Group because you have been identified as a stakeholder to a specific outdoor recreation activity.

_________________________ will be hosting the ____________ Focus Group on ________________ , located at ____________________________ from ______ to ______.

For more information of the SCORP update, please visit the project website at: ______________________________. To contribute information related to outdoor recreation independent of participating in a Focus Group, please visit the Survey 123 link here: ____________________________.

The SCORP update process is led by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) in cooperation with the Rhode Island Division of Planning (DOP). The document will be updated in collaboration with a Working Group (DEM and DOP staff) and an Advisory Committee, which includes a broad representation of stakeholders such as state and municipal officials, environmental organizations, and private-sector stakeholders.
Ocean State Outdoors  
RI’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)  
Roundtable Discussions - Facilitator Instructions

Objective: to understand which recreational resources are working, where improvements are needed, and where there are opportunities to add resources.

As facilitator your role is to:
• Guide conversation so that it stays on-topic and within the timeframe allotted.
• Work with your group to identify common themes that emerge from the ideas presented.
• Report out.

The larger group will be divided into smaller groups. At each table will be:
• Post-its and pens
• Markers
• Dots (each participant receives 6 dots)
• Poster-size chart on the wall or easel
• Map of open space/rec. resources
• Participant Comment Forms

General instructions for facilitators:
• Participants can place more than one voting dot in a theme, if desired.
• Ideas should be about recreational programming and facilities.
• Post-it and dot color do not matter.
• Some lead-in questions are provided to help guide discussion under each main question.
• One idea per Post-it. Participant Comment Forms can be used if they would like to provide more ideas. Collect them at the end of the exercise, as needed.
• Assure participants that all ideas will be considered and “voting” is to help identify priorities.

PROCESS (60 minutes)
Introduce yourself and ask everyone to also introduce themselves. Explain that the group is going to spend 20 minutes on each question to generate ideas and group them into common themes. For two of the three questions, the group will be able to “vote” on their top priorities.

Question 1 – What is working? (20 minutes)
What is the State doing well by way of providing recreational opportunities for residents (programming, facilities, or communication)?

Example: The ADA-accessible launch at Blackstone Landing is great!

• Ask participants to write one idea on a Post-it and place it on the chart. Ask them to read their idea to the group and give a brief explanation. (15 minutes)
• Ask the group to identify common themes among all the ideas. Rearrange Post-its so they are grouped by theme and circle. (5 minutes)
  Note – dot voting does not take place for this question.
Question 2 – What could be improved? (20 minutes)

What existing recreation facilities could benefit from improvements? How could they be improved?

Example: ADA-accessible pads adjacent to existing benches would be a good addition for passive recreation.

- Ask participants to write one idea on a Post-it and place it on the chart. Ask them to read their idea to the group and give a brief explanation. Try to keep the conversation focused on improvements in a positive light (e.g. “It would be even better if we did this...”). (10 minutes)
- Ask the group to identify common themes. Rearrange Post-its and circle. (5 minutes)
- Using their 3 dots, ask the group to vote for their top 3 priorities. (5 minutes)

Question 3 – What is missing? (20 minutes)

What are new recreational opportunities that should be considered?

Example: Restrooms are needed at this site.

Ask participants to write one idea on a Post-it and place it on the chart. Ask them to read their idea to the group and give a brief explanation. Keep the conversation focused on new opportunities rather than improvements to existing activities, facilities, or resources. (10 minutes)

- Ask the group to identify common themes. Rearrange Post-its and circle. (5 minutes)
- Using their 3 dots, ask the group to vote for their top 3 priority themes. (5 minutes)

REPORT OUT (10 minutes)

As facilitator, you will be asked to report out for your group. Each facilitator will be assigned one question. Tell the larger group about the most popular theme and some of the ideas in that theme. (2-3 minutes for each group)

Ground Rules
- Everyone should have an equal opportunity to talk.
- Focus on the questions asked and your group’s discussion.
- Respect limited time – “land the plane.”
- Listen, be honest, and avoid criticizing or commenting on others’ ideas.
- Turn off your cell phone!
Ocean State Outdoors
R.I. Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Roundtable Discussion: Biking
Date: November 27, 2018
Location: Quinta gamelan Community Center (Bristol)
No. of Participants: 14
Identified Themes: seems to be a general acceptance of benefits of biking/amenities...information/communication is needed...connectivity is needed

What’s Working:

Group 1
- Existing paths, signs, amenities, restrooms are well maintained
- Paths ‘go places’...East Bay Bike Path connects to Barrington, Warren, and Bristol. Serve as alternative transportation and economic development
- The concept of the bike path and connections (Rhode Islander’s perceptions)
- The Bike Mobility Plan (establishing meaningful connections)
- Positivity when listing real estate (eyes on the backyard, good for new bike path development)
- Paths work when utilizing existing infrastructure (ROW, rail lines)
- Provides health and wellness, activity for all ages
- Serves as social infrastructure...brings communities out
- Heightening awareness of biking (share the road, sharrow, bike share programs)

Group 2
- Easy access to facilities
- New/recent repaving of East Bay Bike Path
- Many beautiful country roads to ride bikes on
- Existing bike path network...range of opportunities for multiple user groups
- Generally well maintained
- State and local leaders are starting to understand the importance of biking
- Local walkability/bikability groups
- RI Bridge and Turnpike Authority partnerships...bike routes across bridges
- Multi-purpose uses of bike paths...recreation, exercise, getting to school
- First mile in Newport is happening soon...harbor area, eventually up west side of island
- Bike Mobility Plan

What Could be Improved:

Group 1
- ADA-accessible bathrooms
- Maintenance (East Bay Bike path, Blackstone Bike path) **(PRIORITY #1, 6 VOTES)**
  - Now becomes Town responsibility with new paths, inconsistency between towns
- Provide funds to towns to maintain (state funds, DOT through non-profits...Woonasquatucket Greenway)
- Consider as part of Recreation Grant Selection Process

- Safety *(PRIORITY #3, 1 VOTE)*
  - Community programs, educate
  - Offer incentives to participate
  - Possibly through driver’s education/license acquisition

- Dedicated lanes on existing roads *(PRIORITY #2, 4 VOTES)*
- Not a planned system...no prioritization of existing destinations *(PRIORITY #3, 1 VOTE)*
- Release Bike Mobility Plan

Group 2
- Bike Mobility Plan isn’t being released yet...spring release date
- Existing bike path system needs to be connected...currently disjointed *(PRIORITY #1, 5 VOTES)*
- Missing opportunities for tourism
- Better signage...more consistent from path to path (signs at intersections, more ‘smart signs’ that flash when cross traffic is approaching *(PRIORITY #3, 1 VOTE)*
- Prioritize bike path traffic where path traffic is heavier than street traffic *(PRIORITY #3, 1 VOTE)*
- Re-brand bike paths as ‘recreational paths’ and focus on different user groups *(PRIORITY #3, 1 VOTE)*
- Need better infrastructure on city streets to make it safe for bikers (separated paths, ideally) *(PRIORITY #2, 4 VOTES)*
- Better snow plowing for bike paths

What’s Missing:

**Group 1**
- Data capture (estimates of funds brought in by bike paths...economic development, crime statistics, property values, tourism to show that they are valuable *(PRIORITY #1, 4 VOTES)*
- Lack of a coordinated, integrated vision plan *(PRIORITY #1, 4 VOTES)*
- Kiosks/signage for what is available within the immediate area off the bike path (mile markers, wayfinding signage, street signs/cross streets, flora/fauna, historic panels)...partner with non-profits? *(PRIORITY #2, 2 VOTES)*
- Dedicated on-street lanes that are separated in urban areas
- Driver’s Education...‘share the road’ education opportunity
- Plowing of snow on bike paths
- Mt. Hope Bridge crossing/bridges overall

**Group 2**
- MBTA trains that don’t allow bikes on board (rush hour trains) *(PRIORITY #2, 2 VOTES)*
- Need to fill potholes on the roads...
• Need bridges over Route 1 to get to beaches and other facilities
• Money dedicated to fund investments
• Strong, creative leaders who focus on alternative transportation (PRIORITY #1, 3 VOTES)
• Need legislation that gives a legal status for e-bikes. Acknowledge three levels of e-bikes, and where they are allowed to be used (PRIORITY #2, 2 VOTES)
• Need transportation equity...that alternative modes are available to everyone, regardless of income, neighborhood, affordability, accessibility (PRIORITY #2, 2 VOTES)
• Better leadership in RI tourism offices to promote bike tourism...cyclists spend money! (PRIORITY #2, 2 VOTES)
• Restrict extendable leashes for dogs...safety issue...keep dogs from bolting down the bike path
• Separated bike lanes

General Recreation Comments:
Ocean State Outdoors
R.I. Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Roundtable Discussion: Boating, Paddling, and Shoreline Access
Date: October 23, 2018
Location: URI Coastal Institute, Narragansett
No. of Participants: 9
Identified Themes: Signage/information and awareness/communication of outdoor recreation amenities emerged as a general theme.

What’s Working:
- Improve mapping of existing resources with better access to the public (what currently exists is a great start), would be good to have handouts explaining where access points are...Facilitator’s Note: this was moved to the ‘What Could Be Improved’ discussion.
- City/Town Harbor Management Plans required to report of status of access points...a good place to start
- Just because a point isn’t on CRMC’s list doesn’t mean it isn’t public
- Parking in Town/State-owned lots is well used, could use a map of additional on-street parking
- Point Judith private parking lot works well (free)
- RI has lots of access points all over the state...better than other states
- Where are the signs that show you are in a public place?
- VisitRI.com and ExploreRI are good websites to build upon
- Land Trust networks do a great job
- Sachuest Point is a great place for fishing and friendly to all sorts of people
- Fisherman’s memorial State Park is great
- Boat ramps in Galilee are great
- RIPTA provides access to many outdoor places

What Could be Improved:
- Improve mapping of existing resources with better access to the public (what currently exists is a great start), would be good to have handouts explaining where access points are
- Maps and signage (PRIORITY #2, 5 VOTES)
- Awareness of amenities to general public
- Filing in the blanks/gaps...legal points that aren’t mapped or signed
- Improve public and legal private parking...Where parking is allowed...increased opportunities for on-street parking (a city/town decision) (PRIORITY #1, 6 VOTES)
- Aquaculture is seen as crowding out recreation opportunities for boaters, clammers, etc...pushes various recreation users closer together and creating conflicts
- Signage...boating access signs are poor...need a map and information on what a visitor can expect...Have a QR code or other weblinks...do better at connecting the dots (how do you get from one spot to another)...Watershed Councils do some of this
- Need canoe/kayaking camping sites for multi-0days trips
- Increase RIPTA transit routes to the beaches
- Fees for beach access are high...charge out-of-state-visitors more and funnel money back to the site for maintenance (DEM is currently analyzing all state recreation fees)  
  (PRIORITY #3, 3 VOTES)
- Universal access is generally poor (wheelchair access)
- Put trash cans back at beaches and maintain
- Better placement of port-o-pots...pair with trashcans, otherwise each serves for the other
- Some parking lots are for boating trailers but should be for boating of any kind...signs need a phone number to call if people are parking illegally
- Shellfishing areas should be more clearly marked

What’s Missing:
- Pawtuxet River Watershed has very poor access, and the water quality has been improved...could serve many underserved populations  
  (PRIORITY #2, 5 VOTES)
- Coordination among land trusts, non-profits, and others with state/local government (marketing, maintenance, etc.)  
  (PRIORITY #1, 6 VOTES)
- Coordination of all the various tools that advertise outdoor recreation resources  
  (PRIORITY #2, 5 VOTES)
- Clear public process for identifying new access points and those that are already legal, yet not in the inventory

General Recreation Comments:
- Few good places for ATVs
- Bike lanes/safe bike access...connections to other resources whether paths or on-street
Ocean State Outdoors
R.I. Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Roundtable Discussion: Camping and Winter Recreation
Date: December 13, 2018
Location: Jesse M. Smith Memorial Library
No. of Participants: 7
Identified Themes: Signage/information, parking and public/private partnerships emerged as themes.

What’s Working:
- Passionate volunteers who get people to these outdoor spaces (those that promote them)
- Round Top Pond has good access
- Great natural beauty at Wallum Lake
- Grace Note Farm owner does winter horseback riding and cross country skiing on trails at George Washington
- DEM does a good job with land acquisition
- Ice fishing on Wilson Reservoir

What Could be Improved:
- State could approve more recognition of volunteers and help to facilitate their work (PRIORITY #2, 1 VOTE)
- More outfitters beyond LL Bean and REI
- Work with special retailers to promote winter recreation and camping gear (Job Lot...value)
- Better access to Wallum Lake on RI Side (PRIORITY #1, 2 VOTES)
- Identify summits and high points (PRIORITY #1, 2 VOTES)
- Lack of parking in winter (PRIORITY #1, 2 VOTES)
- Guidance on potential conflicts between cross country skiers and snowmobiles
- Parking off Olney Keech Road (private road)
- More access to trails in North Smithfield
- Potential to connect Buck Hill and George Washington (unique history of this area...Benson family) (PRIORITY #1, 2 VOTES)

What’s Missing:
- North-South Trail passes Wallum Lake but there is no loop trail around the lake (PRIORITY #2, 3 VOTES)
- Lack of signage for trailheads (PRIORITY #1, 4 VOTES)
- Parking (PRIORITY #3, 2 VOTES)
- Better private-public partnerships (PRIORITY #3, 2 VOTES)
General Recreation Comments:

- Strong internet information (blueways and greenways, geo-cache, Appalachian Mountain Club)
- RI general public is more supportive of funding for open space and recreation
- Need to dedicate one day per week for ‘no hunting’
- Need to preserve Echo Lake Campground...DEM should look into operating the campground
- Need better parking at locations...Route 100 – Wallum lake (state property) and other locations throughout the state
- Trails are not clearly marked, particularly Black Hut and Buck Hill Management Areas
- Need a state website with comprehensive information
- Better signage (geo-referencing trails, all-trails app to coordinate with DEM and Land Trusts)
- Need legal trails for ATVs and motor bikes (consider utility/power lines)...should review Statewide Planning meetings from 2000 on this topic
- The people who ride the trails should police the trails (see Vermont/MA)
- Better education on ATV and motorbike use
Ocean State Outdoors
R.I. Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Roundtable Discussion: General Recreation - North Kingstown
Date: November 13, 2018
Location: Cold Spring Community Center
No. of Participants: 10
Identified Themes: Information exchange, re-opening the Bay Island Park System, and revising the recreation grant selection process to include funds for operations and maintenance were identified as themes.

What’s Working:
Group 1
- Bikepath
- RI provides a lot of options for recreation
- Brenton Point and Fort Adams
- Land Trust coalition
- Facebook Page...Re-discover NK
- New skate park at McGinn Park in North Kingstown

What Could be Improved:
Group 1
- Improve breakwater in Wickford Harbor
- Central location/calendar with links to various groups’ events (Land Trusts, Natural History Survey, Audubon, Save the Bay, etc.)
- Clean the bike paths (sand/leaves)
- Maintenance at John Chaffee Preserve (dog waste is an issue)
- Better signage for CRMC Public Shoreline access
- Re-focus on the history of Narragansett Bay (Bay Island Park System) (PRIORITY #2, 2 VOTES)
- Cyclist safety...maybe at RI DMV and Driver’s Education?
- Entice more kids to be outdoors
- Trail signage improvements
- Provide better information on hunting season
- Improve swimming at Town Beach in North Kingstown (Calf Pasture Point)
- Need parking/restrooms at Calf Pasture (PRIORITY #2, 2 VOTES)
- Provide grant funding for operations and maintenance (PRIORITY #1, 4 VOTES)
- Better trail maintenance and signage at Cocumcussoc
- Improve bike path surfaces (roots are coming through pavement in places) (PRIORITY #2, 2 VOTES)
- Better signage at NK boat ramp (non-motorized) near Intrepid Drive (PRIORITY #2, 2 VOTES)
What’s Missing:

**Group 1**

- Engage high school students in on-line community survey or roundtable discussion
- Engage senior centers
- Double-wide porta-johns for ADA accessibility
- Recreation train on weekends (connectivity to other outdoor recreation resources) *(PRIORITY #2, 4 VOTES)*
- Splash park in NK...just because we are need the coast, doesn’t mean everyone has access to the water
- Re-open Dutch Island and include it in the Bay Island Park System *(PRIORITY #1, 5 VOTES)*
- Change recreation grant selection criteria to include maintenance *(PRIORITY #2, 4 VOTES)*

**General Recreation Comments:**
Ocean State Outdoors
R.I. Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Roundtable Discussion: General Recreation
Date: December 6, 2018
Location: Woonsocket Harris Library
No. of Participants: 8
Identified Themes: Significant concerns for the potential threat to open space/environmental resources with the threat of a new power plant in the area, connectivity of various amenities, and information/awareness of resources.

General Comments:
A number of participants were in attendance to represent the ‘No New Power Plant’ movement in Burrillville. Two participants read aloud their opposition statements (attached) regarding the potential degradation of critical environmental resources and the need for RI DEM to step in and advocate for the preservation and protection of numerous resources.

Another participant spoke on the importance of the future of Zambarano Hospital. The site, at approximately 25% utilization, includes a number of existing buildings in disrepair. Acquisition of the property could facilitate the continuation of the hospital’s limited operations, while also providing physical access and connectivity to Wallum Lake (shared resource between Burrillville and Douglas, MA).

What’s Working:
Group 1
- Fishing opportunities, especially at Little Round Top Road/Sherman Pond (fishing for under 13)
- Pulaski Park is great for cross-country skiing
- Existing bike path network is good
- Wilson’s Reservoir is good for kayaking
- Woonsocket at River Falls Restaurant has two great canoe launches
- Nice parks across the state
- The connectivity between Woonsocket and Burrillville residents…each use each other’s amenities

What Could be Improved:
Group 1
- The recreational/environmental preservation potential at Zambarano Hospital site (mentioned above). Could provide physical and visual access/enjoyment of Wallum Lake, not primarily accessible via Douglas, MA (PRIORITY #1, 6 VOTES)
- Bike connections, primarily to North Smithfield (Branch Village), and including connectivity to Blackstone/Woonsocket path, Spring lake, other recreation amenities (fishing, public parks, non-motorized boat launches), and ADA accessibility
Parking at Lincoln Woods in Lincoln...especially on summer days.

Signage/Wayfinding...Woonsocket has several river access points, but no one knows about them/how to get to them for non-motorized boat launching. Also in the Spring, the low water levels make it difficult to navigate (should repair the river).

Fish ladders should be repaired/replaced to allow the herring to come upstream...would be great for tourism (PRIORITY #2, 3 VOTES).

The North-South trail in some parts is on-road and not safe/conducive to hiking, unless you have the right gear.

Passive recreation along rivers (benches, information) so folks can stop, sit, and enjoy the rivers.

RI DEM stocking of ponds...limited and decreasing (PRIORITY #3, 2 VOTES).

Beaches are great, but the 'Carry in – carry out' policy is not working. Likely costs more to hire people to clean up trash than if they hired staff to maintain regularly.

Land trusts are great at acquisition/preservation of sites, but the majority of them don’t have capacity to purchase areas for parking, so there is limited access.

Wayfinding signage at Black Hut, George Washington, Buck Hill for mountain biking (PRIORITY #3, 2 VOTES).

What’s Missing:

**Group 1**

- Universal access at trails and other sites, especially Spring Lake (PRIORITY #1, 4 VOTES)
- Wallum Lake – complete access...majority of users access via Douglas, MA (discussion mentioned earlier). Zambarano Hospital site could be redeveloped similar to Pulaski Park...passive recreation and boat launch opportunities...could also serve to secure open space for residents, as well as a water source for future drinking water needs.
- There are no outfitters/tourism businesses along the rivers to facilitate utilization by those who don’t own private boats (canoes/kayaks) (PRIORITY #2, 3 VOTES).
- Protocols for 'user conflicts’ on trails
- Enforcement of engine size, especially on Wallum Lake (PRIORITY #1, 4 VOTES).
- Need a law limiting casting for fishing...need a 25-foot buffer from shore/private docks (PRIORITY #2, 3 VOTES).
- How do we reconcile preservation of resources/habitat with alternative energy needs...is RI DEM looking into that for the SCORP?
- Integrating all state, local, non-profit resources...what is available in my area?
NEWS RELEASE

RI Department of Environmental Management
235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02905
(401) 222-2771 TDD/(401) 222-4462

For Release: July 2, 2012
Contact: Gail Mastrati 222-4700 ext. 2482

DEM PURCHASES CRITICAL 189-ACRE PARCEL IN BURRILLVILLE, CONNECTING OVER 7,000 ACRES OF PROTECTED LAND

PROVIDENCE - The Department of Environmental Management has acquired 189 acres of land in Burrillville from the Boy Scouts of Rhode Island. The parcel is situated adjacent to over 7,000 acres of state-preserved land. To the north of the property lies the 2,084-acre Duck Hill Management Area, and to the south is the 5,203-acre George Washington/Durfee Hill Management Area. The property also abuts Connecticut's Quaddick State Forest to the west. This property is considered among the highest priority conservation parcels in the state, and the high concentration of protected land in the area allows for increased habitat protection with minimal disturbance.

The land features a myriad of uncommon species and habitats of both plants and animals. Plant species include locally-common conifers such as White Pine and Eastern Hemlock and tree species such as American Larch and Black Spruce, which are typically associated with northern forest habitats. Many rare plants have been identified on the property, including Common Oak Fern, Round-leaved Orchid, One-flowered Pyrola. Identifying and protecting these species helps ensure that diverse habitats such as that of the Burrillville property are sustained.

Preservation of the property strongly aligns with the state's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, which aims to identify and conserve those species in greatest need for conservation, while retaining a holistic view of all wildlife within the state. Croff Farm Brook runs through the property and fosters an array of aquatic habitats that are not typically found in Rhode Island. The Croff Farm Brook area contains springs which are considered uncommon, isolated habitats; as well as several rare species identified by the conservation strategy as Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

"DEM was so pleased to work in partnership with the Boy Scouts to protect this valuable habitat," said DEM Director Janet Coit. "This acquisition is particularly exciting because it will ensure that Rhode Islanders will be able to continue to use this property, a place where many scouts and others have enjoyed this spectacular natural area. Because this parcel sits within one of the largest undisturbed areas in all of Rhode Island, it is particularly valuable..."
Hello my name is Suzanne Dumas....thank you for allowing me to speak one last time...We are all here tonight because an out of state corporation, Invenergy has proposed a power plant with a kind of a kind of whimsical name "Clear River"...However this plan is anything but whimsical....instead the plan will bring an ominous threat that will not only impact Burrillville but much of RI

I am a true face of RI...this has always been my home.

As a child I grew up in Woonsocket....city living was not the ideal place to enjoy a hot summer day...city sounds and smells abounding, so much hot pavement and so little grass...Mother Nature was not easy to find and enjoy. However on the week-end we escaped with family and friends and made our excursions to Wallum lake...our true haven....clean air, sparkling cool water and the pure sounds of Mother Nature and happiness all around....shade of so many marvelous trees and OH so much green. Those are memories I still revel in today even though more than 50 years have passed.

We were so blessed to have those excursions and so many others right here in Northern RI...the boys got to spend time at the scouting facilities of the Buckhill areas. Our family members camped and fished at Bowdish Lake. My husband, son and brothers hunted in this area...This locale became our true breath of fresh air.

So much time, effort and resources have been set aside over many decades to preserve our RI paradise. To site a power plant in the midst of all this is not what people had in mind when they set out to conserve and preserve this land....when they set out to protect our environment, and wild life habitat....a power plant was NEVER a part of that vision. YET here we stand doing just that...trying to build a giant power plant THERE...kind of like fitting a square peg into a round hole.

I am now blessed to have my forever home here in Burrillville on Wilson's Reservoir...where the nights have dark velvety skies that twinkle with a
million stars, the lake waters shimmer and are teeming with fish...the air is so fresh and the sights and sounds of nature are common place. THIS will all be impacted by what Invenergy has planned for us,

We do not want it....we do not need it!

I along with so many fine RI citizens just want to keep our corner of the world the way it was always meant to be....a peaceful place where the beauty of Mother Nature abounds...a relaxing place for recreation at its best, a true asset to RI....a playground for the young and old alike. Please keep it the way it is for future generations to enjoy. It is a totally inappropriate place for this project. WHO EVER heard of a mega power plant in the middle of a National Park Corridor?

Never lose sight of the memoires made by a little girl who found her paradise right here in Northern RI

I implore you PLEASE DO NOT SITE A POWER PLANT HERE!

Thank you

Suzanne Dumas

75 Manly Dr.

Pascoag, RI
Ocean State Outdoors
R.I. Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Roundtable Discussion: Health
Date: November 8, 2018
Location: Health Equity Zone HUB
No. of Participants: 3
Identified Themes: Health should be a larger factor in parks and recreation planning, programming and funding for O&M is critical for park/site activation

What’s Working:
Group 1
- Parks are free and open to the public
- Health Equity Zones provide advocacy platform...more support from public health sector, serves as a primary point of contact.

What Could be Improved:
Group 1
- Better databases...improve 2014 GIS data (update)
- Dr. Zare (Washington D.C.) is addressing the childhood obesity epidemic by asking physicians to write prescriptions to kids to ‘go outside and recreate’. Physicians finding this difficult to do with only 13-15 minutes per patient. Physicians also concerned that some trails (as an example) are ‘rough’ and concerns for patients’ health. Others are providing outdoor recreation mapping for physicians who can then, based on patient’s neighborhood, download area parks and recreation facilities they can utilize (Celeste Cochran is the champion). Also, others are developing Pokémon-like characters, placing them at the terminus of trails/hikes, and having kids take pictures of them once they finish the trail and send it to their physicians to show they’ve been outdoors, moving (Blue Ridge Park Association, North Carolina).
- Making parks more accessible...safer access, NRPA standards, links to municipal comprehensive plans, better mapping
- More community gardens...should coordinate with Health Equity Zones...they help with climate change impacts
- Do things to get kids outdoors more (programming)
- Allocate revenue from state beaches and parks back into that specific site/facility (no redirection to general fund) for operations and maintenance
- Coordinate programs with health equity zones
- Maps done by Trust for Public Land are incorporating surface temperature data to educate public
- ‘Placekeeping’ rather than placemaking...locals should determine what is best for their community

What’s Missing:
Group 1

- Consider grants as a way to pay for operations and management
  - Revenue stream like Community Preservation Act in MA
  - Differential fee structure for out-of-state visitors
  - Enterprise fund
- Mechanisms for parks...private partnerships, ‘friends of’ community groups
- Better clarification of hunting season, with outreach
- Forums with DEM officials, not just as part of SCORP update process (maybe start annually)
- Educate local officials about needs Climate change impacts should be incorporated into grants selection process

General Recreation Comments:
- Climate change and tick-borne illness impacts education correlated with parks and recreation
- ExploreRI, 75 hiking trails on it. Only comprehensive trail mapping.
Ocean State Outdoors
R.I. Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Roundtable Discussion: Hunting and Fishing
Date: November 28, 2018
Location: Exeter Public Library
No. of Participants: 3
Identified Themes: Communication/information identified as a theme...also user conflicts/etiquette in the woods

What’s Working:
Group 1
- Long hunting season
- Access to a lot of varied outdoor opportunities, more land coming available (The Nature Conservancy, Land and Water Conservation Fund)
- Hunter education course (with Scott Travers)
- DEM Fish and Wildlife (Office of Hunter Education)
- Hunter Education (bear tracking/turkey survey with Jenn Brooks)
- Great shoreline access for fishing
- New/updated boat ramps are making saltwater fishermen happy

What Could be Improved:
Group 1
- Signage and mapping. GIS is not user friendly, just consider ‘Onyx’ (PRIORITY #2, 1 VOTE)
- Hunters would like the sport to grow
- Improve on hunting/fishing users interface with other recreational users (PRIORITY #2, 1 VOTE)
- Improve on communication about hunting with general public (hunting ‘culture’, through social media) (PRIORITY #1, 2 VOTES)
- Netflix podcasts on cooking
- Better communication by land trusts regarding hunting on their land
- Better social media at state-level to ‘inform’ YouTube/Facebook (PRIORITY #1, 2 VOTES)
- Better communication between recreational and commercial fishermen

What’s Missing:
Group 1
- A designated area for ATVs and dirt bikes...user conflicts arise (PRIORITY #1, 2 VOTES)
- Mentorship programs on behavior in the woods/wilderness. Check Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Program, recreational interactions (PRIORITY #1, 2 VOTES)
- Designated area for walking dogs ‘off-leash’...user conflicts arise (PRIORITY #2, 1 VOTE)
• Swan-hunting season (PRIORITY #2, 1 VOTE)

General Recreation Comments:
• Better monitoring and regulation of dirt bikes and ATVs (see Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont as examples)...suggest locations designated for both use
What’s Working:
Group 1

• Community gardens in parks (Providence)
• Multi-use activities in parks (gardens, dog parks, night activities)
• Greenways
• Businesses (private sector) using parks (Yoga, Crossfit)
• Programming in parks (Burnside Park, recreational partnerships)
• Stormwater/rainwater (Green Infrastructure) in parks (Roger Williams Park)
• Fix-your-own bike stations around the state
• Green Infrastructure, particularly in parking lots

What Could be Improved:
Group 1

• Grant opportunities that provide/allow for maintenance upgrades (PRIORITY #2, 2 VOTES)
• Funding for programs in urban parks (research what others are doing) (PRIORITY #1, 3 VOTES)
• Better connections to trails and greenways (PRIORITY #1, 3 VOTES)
• ‘Playcore’ type (more creativity) with kids (Providence is doing this, replicate in other areas)
• How to find water parks
• Where do kids learn to swim in urban areas? Bring in programming. Existing pools are challenged (funding and staffing)
• More private-public partnerships. Provide free and fee-based programs. Partner with colleges/universities for shared-use agreements (PRIORITY #2, 2 VOTES)
• Improve city/urban parks

What’s Missing:
Group 1

• Winter activities (ice skating...check what Minneapolis is doing) (PRIORITY #2, 3 VOTES)
• Not enough activities for ages 16 – 30 (yoga, walking, farmers markets) (PRIORITY #1, 4 VOTES)
• Urban parks are not interesting for adults
• Neighbors need to take an interest (PRIORITY #3, 2 VOTES)
- Environmentally friendly vendors
- Higher-quality food vendors
- Residents need better access to the correct agency for positive programming
- Regional approach and connections

**General Recreation Comments:**
- Bike trails are working well (rails-to-trails, Woonasquatucket Greenway)
- Issue: a disconnect in the urban center...amenities are not connected
- Limited biodiversity – observe and photograph reptiles (connect wetlands to parks, create habitat, manage stormwater
- Cemeteries to become habitat for wildlife
- Consider ‘floodable’ parks, particularly in urban areas
Roundtable Discussion: Trails and Mountain Biking
Date: October 30, 2018
Location: Kettle Pond Visitor’s Center
No. of Participants: 30
Identified Themes: Signage/information and awareness/communication of outdoor recreation amenities emerged as a general theme.

What’s Working:

Group 1
- Land Trust hiking trails (South Kingstown) are great
- Charlestown has great hiking trails
- Various Land Trust websites are great (Charlestown Citizen’s Alliance)
- Trails Advisory Committee is helpful
- Communication has improved between State and user groups
- DEM signage works
- Mountain biking resources across the State are great
- Galilee decking along the coast (Salty Brine Beach) is widely used/popular
- Canonchet Farm group does a great job with their trail

Group 2
- Lots of access points, good parking
- Improvements:
  - Stepping Stone Falls
  - Shelters
  - Bridges
- Better cooperation
  - Organized events
  - Maintenance for trails
- User groups are great resources for manpower

Group 3
- Some fantastic trails in RI (good network/variety of users)
- User groups have improved the safety and friendliness of many parks...people feel safe
- DEM staff have been more willing to collaborate with user groups
- Many more people are using recreation facilities than in years past (good utilization)
- Small trails grants/Trails Advisory Committee are good resources

What Could be Improved:

Group 1
• State should utilize user groups as assets (especially around maintenance) (PRIORITY #1, 5 VOTES)
• Need more mountain bike trails that are purpose-built rather than conversions of other trails (they would last longer if constructed properly)
• Need centralized resource/repository for mountain bike use
• Need more resource management help (maintenance/stewardship) (PRIORITY #2, 4 VOTES)
• Need facility improvements (signage/restrooms at trailheads)
• Need more beginner mountain bike trails with information (rating)
• Need universal signage across local/state/private trails for consistency/recognition (PRIORITY #2, 4 VOTES)
• Permitting process for events could be expanded/better
• Need signage that states who has the right-of-way along trails and at intersections (PRIORITY #2, 4 VOTES)
• Better outreach/communication (schools/municipal recreation departments)

Group 2
• Relationships...where do user groups get funds?
• Signage/Blazes (PRIORITY #3, 4 VOTES)
• Steel posts with QR codes
• Visitor confidence
• DEM at Woody Hill (directions/signage)
• Need central site for structured volunteer activities (PRIORITY #2, 5 VOTES)
• Who is allowed to use chainsaws?
• Improve permissions and workflow for user groups (PRIORITY #1, 7 VOTES)
• Permitting to perform maintenance should be easier
  o Users with experience should be approved fast
  o Wetlands permitting takes years
  o Who has authority...make it clear!
  o Paperwork for trail work is too much
• Trails should be accurately marked

Group 3
• Trail Advisory Small Grants Program
  o Process for reimbursement can be too onerous for small groups...takes too long
  o Reduces the number of groups eligible to accept funds
• Mapping of trails on state properties (PRIORITY #1, 5 VOTES)
  o Many are not mapped...try to get them all on ExploreRI.com
  o Better signs with system maps...could be helpful for emergency response as well
  o Blues Hills (MA example)...has a good system of named and numbered intersections
    o You may get information before you go, but no signs once you get there
• Need easier engineering standards to build trails (if on wetlands)
- Handicap-accessible trails aren’t always maintained to support ADA access
- Better communication about etiquette between user groups...particularly when groups pull a use permit. Head-off user group conflicts from the start...some trails may need to be use-specific (PRIORITY #2, 4 VOTES)
- Get user groups to have annual/quarterly discussions/eblasts
- Many unsustainable trails that shouldn’t be used anymore
- Certain number of trails should be blazed for beginners
- Better engagement of volunteers for maintenance (PRIORITY #3, 2 VOTES)

What’s Missing:

Group 1
- Enforcement (who to contact, stricter fines) (PRIORITY #1, 6 VOTES)
- Universal signage (PRIORITY #1, 6 VOTES)
- Centralized updated information/data (PRIORITY #2, 5 VOTES)
- Biking/Mountain Biking/Hiking trails map all in one (PRIORITY #1, 6 VOTES)
- DEM and Tourism Council/Chamber of Commerce coordination for visitors
- User group assistance with emergency situations (they want to help)
- On-line mapping with ratings/color coding

Group 2
- Some areas don’t have trails (East Greenwich hunting areas) (PRIORITY #2, 4 VOTES)
- Formal user group meetings (maintenance, trail conduct) (PRIORITY #1, 5 VOTES)
- Previous sources from Feds. Diverted...new sources?
- Good DEM trail head material
  - Ownership
  - Restrictions
  - General information
- Obstructions for 4-wheelers
- Dedicated 3 and 4-wheel trails
- Selected parking areas
- DEM mountain bike permission (PRIORITY #3, 3 VOTES)
  - Season pass?
  - Reporting mechanism?
- Human waste-disposal systems

Group 3
- Compost toilets (PRIORITY #1, 3 VOTES)
- More water stops
- Where do e-bikes fall?...something to consider for the future
- Set a place for motorcycles and 4-wheelers to ride (motorbikes)
- Better safety for different users where trails cross roadways
- Need a termination of life cycle of an activity
• Arcadia – no signage and lots of user conflict
• Need a way to consistently have user groups report on problems
• Communication structure for coordinating long term maintenance
• More direct partnerships with user groups to develop and maintain trails (PRIORITY #1, 3 VOTES)
• Combine recreation trails with historical markers and interpretive signage
• Need to connect recreation resources to economic development (attractive to young professionals) (PRIORITY #1, 3 VOTES)
• After-dark activities for the parks

General Recreation Comments:
• Better information and marketing of off-season recreation in South County (birding)
• Poor communication and enforcement of coastal access
• Need better bike/pedestrian connections between resources (DEM sites and beaches)
• Towns need more help dealing with invasives management
• Pulaski Park...could it be groomed for cross country skiing?
• Better enforcement of 4-wheeler/ATV restrictions
• Towns need assistance with signage for parks (what activities can you do there?)
• Narragansett Resident: Recreation Grant Evaluation Criteria - Needs to be updated with criteria that are understandable to public and communities without interpretation...what is a park plan?
• Charlestown Resident: Shoreline Access – not much is working...enforcement of shoreline access (ROW, Beaches, paths, and parking)
• Providence Resident: Mountain bikes and Trails – the trails we do have are great and they appeal to a diverse variety of users. DEM communication with user groups and communication between user groups could be improved (User-specific trails, scheduled trail maintenance and build days). Missing are connections to economic development, more signage and mapping to make areas like Big River and Arcadia more accessible to newer users. Look at other states to see how they embrace mountain biking, perhaps at funding to elevate our areas to be as user friendly as areas in Vermont and New Hampshire.
• Charlestown Resident: Trails – There are many hiking trails in South County, Charlestown for example has a variety of ‘owners’ (DEM, USFW, Town of Charlestown, Charlestown Land Trust). Each has similar issues, some of which are covered, some not (toilets at trail heads, trail maintenance, invasive species control, public education about use of trails and things to do/not to do, the value of open space for recreation, wildlife habitat, resource protection of air, water, and soil). Trails also need maps at the beginning and indications along the way of which trail they are on, distance and degree of difficulty as visitors are hesitant about getting lost, getting too tired or falling and how to get back to the parking lot and how far at strategic points. Mountain Biking – I would not like to see mountain biking on any of the current trails not already available as I believe Burlingame is the only one in Charlestown that allows mountain bikes. I feel they intimidate hikers and damage trails and create erosion.
Regular Biking and Racing – Biking trails on roads should have demarcation or signage to alert motorists to be alert for bikes. Where roads are wide enough, a lane with bike markings is helpful. On country roads, there should be signage to share the road and public education about the need to be patients behind a bike on hills and bends. Also, the bikes should have reflectors, lights, and bells. There is a criterion track at Ninigret Park and an all-purpose trail with quiet roads.

Publicity – More publicizing RI as a passive recreation place is needed especially emphasizing the shoulder periods of spring, fall, and winter. Cross country skiing is available at Ninigret Park, Trustom Pond Refuge and possibly other places like Burlingame when snow is available but groomed trails are not needed as there is insufficient reliable snow. Winter ducks are a draw at Trustom and Sachuest and other locations along the coast. Spring and fall migration is also popular for birders. Many counties and parks nationwide advertise in magazines such as Audubon, Birds and Blooms, or Cornell University’s Living Bird magazine, extolling the virtues of their county/state for birders, or holding festivals with both actual people and printed guides, information or tables from optical companies selling binoculars and spotting scopes. There are also sites for accessing bird information about the state and even birding pals where someone offers to show visitors good birding sites. The RI Office of Tourism and South County Tourism could do more to advertise. RI does not have birding listed under its outdoor activities section. This would attract ecotourism in the off-season which helps small businesses locally to survive. We do not want to ‘love our places to death’ but encouraging off-beach activities is helpful. Summer publicizing trails might attract some of off days away from the beach. South County Tourism site does not list Charlestown Town or land Trust or other sites on its pages. Are these bought or are they a product of State tourism dollars? There was a birding publication or online listing good spots for birding. We need a new one.

Resource Help – It would help towns if there was resource help and money in the way of resource management. Towns often do not have items in their budget for outbreaks of diseases, major storm events. Management guidelines for land trusts and conservation commissions and someone to contact for advice. Identification of significant species, information about invasive pests and diseases and plants to be aware of and how best to combat. Grants to allow improvements such as trails heads, signage, etc. help with significant damage such as the dead trees from gypsy moth invasions especially along trails where they pose a danger to visitors. I believe there are some trail grants. These need to be more prominent. Regular periodic contact to find out where issues are needed to be addressed. Publicize trail days widely.

Beaches and Rivers – More public access to beaches and rivers (fishing, sitting, launching).
Ocean State Outdoors
R.I. Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Roundtable Discussion: Universal Access
Date: November 19, 2018
Location: AARP - Providence
No. of Participants: 1
Identified Themes: Lack of open space/recreational amenities within the Summit neighborhood in Providence.

What’s Working:
Group 1
- The City of Providence had an Open Space and recreation Plan from the 60’s that was great.

What Could be Improved:
Group 1
- Whatever happened to the roadside rest areas? Some were granted to towns, and then taken back.
- Miriam Hospital has been consuming open space, former schools, and residential buildings and replacing them with surface parking lots. The City should require parking decks/structured parking and give back land for parks/open space.

What’s Missing:
Group 1

General Recreation Comments:
Appendix A
Rhode Island’s Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
Recreation Grant Selection Process

I. Introduction

This part of the Rhode Island State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) establishes and describes the Recreation Grant Selection Process (RGSP) and procedures governing the RI Recreation Resources Review Committee (RRRC). The State of Rhode Island utilizes the RGSP to solicit, evaluate, and select outdoor recreational land acquisition and facility development projects eligible for grant assistance under the State Outdoor Recreation Development and Acquisition Grant Program funded through State bonds. In addition, the RGSP serves as the state’s Open Project Selection Process (OPSP), as required by the National Park Service in its allocation of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The National Park Service requires that the procedures be designed to ensure that projects are selected for funding in a rational and systematic manner open to public scrutiny, that the Fund is accessible to members of the public consistent with the purposes of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, and that projects selected meet priority recreational needs.

The Governor has designated the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) as Rhode Island’s state liaison agency for administering the federal LWCF monies. DEM also administers the State bonds supporting the State Outdoor Recreation Development and Acquisition Grant Program, which are allocated to municipalities. DEM establishes the Recreation Resources Review Committee to assist in the review of grant applications and advising the DEM Director on funding project applications.

The RGSP considers the allocation of funds, funding categories, criteria for applicant eligibility, the level of public participation required in project formulation, and criteria for scoring project proposals. Scoring criteria is based on how well the application meets the goals, objectives, and action items identified in the SCORP and other applicable State plans. Scoring criteria also considers the accessibility of proposed projects to all segments of the population including minority populations, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, other underserved populations, and other LWCF requirements (found in Parts 640 and 660 of the LWCF Grants Manual).

II. The Recreation Resources Review Committee

The Recreation Resources Review Committee (RRRC) is established for the purposes of evaluating and establishing the relative priority of recreation grant projects and submitting funding recommendations to the DEM Director. In order to effectively carry out these responsibilities and to guarantee a representative and balanced evaluation, the membership of the RRRC is structured to provide both the professional expertise and the diversity of interests needed to accurately and fairly evaluate and rank the variety of project proposals.

The RRRC consists of at least six but not more than twelve experts in outdoor recreation, natural resource management, and conservation of open space, selected with the objective of providing balanced representation of state, municipal, public, and private constituencies. Permanently represented on the RRRC are the Governor’s Office, the Department of Environmental Management (which serves as the State Liaison Office to the National Park Service), and the RI Department of Administration’s Division of Statewide Planning. The DEM
Director shall appoint additional committee members for staggered terms of up to three years and shall make every effort to include minority representation and representation from: urban, suburban and rural communities; the full spectrum of outdoor recreational interests; municipal interests; environmental and land conservation interests; planning interests; and local parks and recreation interests. The DEM Director shall solicit at a minimum the RI League of Cities and Towns, the RI Parks and Recreation Association and the RI Chapter of the American Planning Association to ascertain their interest in participating on the RRRC. Existing members may be reappointed. Vacancies are filled in the same manner as regular appointments. The RRRC shall elect a chair and a vice-chair. If a member misses three consecutive meetings, the RRRC will report the absence to the DEM Director and may make a recommendation to remove the individual from the Committee.

III. Allocation of Federal and State Funds

Allocation of Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds - Under the LWCF, states are given the prerogative of determining the most equitable allocation of available funds among the various categories of applicants (generally state and municipal). The State may use up to 10 percent of the total LWCF apportionment for planning projects and for maintaining an updated SCORP. The remaining funds (not less than 90 percent) shall be allocated in support of DEM projects to implement the SCORP.

Allocation of State Acquisition and Development Bonds, Appropriations, and other Sources of Funds - State funds are allocated as provided in the authorizing legislation, or regulations issued pursuant thereto, of the specific funding program. The Department of Environmental Management establishes the amount of State funding to be made available within a particular grant round, consistent with applicable laws and regulations governing the source of the State funding.

IV. The Recreation Grant Selection Process

Funding Cycle

Funding cycles are determined by the availability of funds, coordination with other State funding processes and shall occur not less than every two years pending availability of funds. Following the proposal submission closing date, DEM staff and the RRRC undergo evaluation and ranking of the proposals. Funding cycles conclude with notification to all applicants and the transmittal of funding commitment letters to those applicants selected for funding.

Setting Funding Categories and Limits

DEM staff is responsible for informing the RRRC of LWCF and State funds available and any restrictions on those funds. The RRRC shall establish funding categories and scoring criteria that promote equity and efficiency. At a minimum, funding categories shall include:

1) Recreational Development projects which include
    a. Renovation of Existing Recreational Facilities
    b. Construction of New Outdoor Recreational Facilities

2) Acquisition of Land for Outdoor Recreation
The RRRC may also set a minimum required rating score for each proposal to promote selection of the highest quality projects. If a proposal does not attain the minimum score, it will not be recommended for funding.

Accordingly, at the outset of each grant round, the RRRC may:

- Set a maximum per project funding limit for each category.
- Establish a maximum number of submissions per municipality for project proposals.
- Establish additional funding categories and allocations for each category.
- Set a financial match requirement for grant recipients.

Note: If a surplus occurs because: 1) total funding requests are less than the available monies for a category, or, 2) state or local projects do not score high enough to qualify for funding, the RRRC may recommend to the DEM Director that such funds be reallocated to another category or reserved for a future grant round.

Financial match requirement:
Grant recipients will generally be required to match a percentage of the total project cost to be determined by the RRRC. However, the RRRC may raise or lower the match requirement for any grant round or category, as circumstances require.

Applicant Eligibility
Both DEM and municipalities may apply for funding under these RGSP procedures. DEM projects applying for LWCF monies will be ranked by the RRRC according to the Priority Rating System on page 11. Municipally sponsored projects will compete for funding under the guidelines that follow. Non-municipal entities must partner in grant proposals with a municipality, which must be the applicant.

Solicitation of Proposals
DEM initiates the solicitation of grant proposals. The State Liaison Officer is responsible for sending a notice to the Chief Elected Official and the manager/administrator of all cities and towns. The notice shall include the procedures to be followed for submitting a grant application, project eligibility, match requirements, the deadline for submission of project proposals, and other materials deemed appropriate. DEM shall also advertise and post information on the DEM website regarding application procedures for the grant round.

Public Participation Requirements
The RGSP requires public involvement to ensure that the projects selected have widespread public acceptance and support, best reflect current needs and desires of State residents and are, to the maximum extent possible, free from potential problems. The required minimum public participation for a grant application to qualify for review is as follows:

- All projects shall require the consent of the local governing body.
• All projects shall require public notice and at least one public hearing or meeting held not more than 6 months prior to the grant submission.

The RRRC encourages all project sponsors to exceed these minimum public participation requirements (particularly for larger-scale projects) by means of public informational meetings, a project advisory committee, neighborhood surveys, or similar measures.

Preliminary Evaluation of Applications

Upon receipt of applications and the close of the application period, DEM staff will conduct a preliminary evaluation to determine the completeness of applications. Completeness is determined by:

• Determination that the submission is made by an eligible applicant.
• Documentation demonstrating the public participation requirements have been met;
• Determination that the application has been completed in accordance with directions and contains sufficient information to allow the proposal to be rated.
• Determination that the proposed project is in accordance with the Guidance Document available on the DEM website.

DEM staff will also be reviewing applicant’s compliance with program requirements including conversion issues.

As part of the preliminary evaluation, DEM staff will prepare a brief report for each application to be reviewed by RRRC members.

Final Evaluation of Applications

Following the preliminary evaluation period, the RRRC will hold priority-rating sessions at which all complete applications will be evaluated and RRRC members will assign points to each application under the criteria contained in the priority rating system established in this Appendix. These sessions are conducted as open public meetings.

Project Selection and Funding Commitment

When RRRC evaluation and scoring of all eligible projects within the grant round has been completed, the RRRC will hold a meeting to review the list(s) of proposals ranked by final score. Proposals will be recommended for funding in rank order of final score within the limit of available funding within each category, with the following exceptions:

• If the RRRC has established a minimum point score threshold, funding will not be recommended for projects whose final score is below the threshold score regardless of their ranking within a grant category.
• If the RRRC has established a limit to the number of grants awarded to a single applicant in one grant round, funding will not be recommended for lower ranking projects exceeding the limit.

The RRRC will, by vote, adopt a recommendation for proposals to be funded based upon the ranked list(s) of projects and funding available within each category and will forward this recommendation to the Director of DEM.

The Director of DEM shall review the RRRC grant award recommendations and have authority to adjust such grant awards, including consideration as to whether one community may be receiving a disproportionate amount of the funds available and so that a reasonable geographic distribution of funds is achieved.

DEM will notify all applicants in writing of the Director’s decision and the grant amount offered for those applications selected for funding.

The grant amount offered is contingent on the proposed scope of work as presented in the application. Therefore if any element of the proposed project scope of work changes before the grant contract is signed, applicants are required to notify DEM and obtain approval for the proposed changes. DEM is in no way obligated to support a project outside of the approved project description and scope of work.

V. Priority Rating System Overview

The RRRC uses a rating system to identify which project proposals will best serve communities and Rhode Islanders. The Priority-Rating System form used by the RRRC for scoring all applications follows this section.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria Name</th>
<th>Criteria Description</th>
<th>Maximum Points</th>
<th>Points Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to Need</td>
<td>Points will be awarded based on the need and/or demand for the proposed recreational activity in the area. OR IF FOR LAND AQUISITION Points will be awarded based on the need and/or demand for parks or other recreational land in the area.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Planning Consistency</td>
<td>The project satisfies priority needs documented in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and any other State Guide Plan elements identified as applicable by the RRRC. Points will be awarded based on the number and/or importance of recommended actions supported by the proposal.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to Community Planning</td>
<td>The project advances elements of a larger community planning process.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant Priority</td>
<td>The applicant’s highest priority application will receive 5 points. All other applications will receive 0 points.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-community or Regional Needs</td>
<td>The project demonstrates how it will address multi-community or regional needs.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Revitalization</td>
<td>The project will improve the economy of an area. Examples can include projects that spur local business activity, tourism, job creation, town center redevelopment, etc.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic &amp; Cultural Preservation</td>
<td>Projects that protect and restore historic and cultural resources, educate the public about the importance of these resources via interpretive signage, etc.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat Creation &amp; Restoration</td>
<td>Projects that create and/or substantially restore areas of wildlife habitat.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownfield Redevelopment</td>
<td>The redevelopment of a brownfield as defined by DEM Remediation Regulations.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectivity</td>
<td>The project creates a connection between two existing recreational resources or from a population center to a recreational resource.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Equity, Service, | The project will expand the recreational opportunities available to disadvantaged segments of the population.  
A) The project is located within or provides enhanced service to neighborhoods in which low income and/or minority residents are over-represented.  
B) The project is located in a densely populated neighborhood or a neighborhood identified for revitalization by State or community programs.  
C) The project is served by public transportation (within ¼ mile of a bus stop) or is proximate to a bikeway.                                                                                     | 15 (5 each) |
| and Accessibility|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |       |
| Exceptional      | The project has special features not noted elsewhere in the application. For example, promotes arts, supports healthy aging, special programming, etc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 3     |
| Features         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |       |

**Supplemental Criteria for Outdoor Recreation Development Projects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expanded Usage</td>
<td>The project adds to the number of recreational amenities or hours of usage (e.g. additional fields are added to a facility or lights are added so it can be used at night).</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Uses</td>
<td>The project appropriately integrates a variety of recreational opportunities providing activities for a mix of age groups and degrees of physical abilities.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved User</td>
<td>The project provides for the addition of bathrooms, fencing to separate recreational activities, benches, shade trees, shelters over picnic tables, etc.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort or Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>The project provides activity or amenity features that expand the recreational opportunities for physically or mentally challenged individuals (such features to be in excess of normally mandated barrier-free accessibility standards).</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for physically or mentally challenged individuals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Green Design | • Green building design/LEED features (water or energy conservation, recycled materials, etc.);
• Conservation development design;
• Green infrastructure techniques (site/landscape construction using natural and artificial components to soften urban hard structures, provide climate-change resiliency, shade, air quality improvement, infiltrate stormwater etc.) | 3 (1 each) |
| Maintenance | The applicant has documented that the facility proposed for renovation has been maintained consistent with industry standards. | 0 to -5 |