



TO: Mary Fleckenstein
FROM: Mark Mauren
RE: Task 3: Analyze DNR's historical funding and expenditures. Document DNR's unmet need for the last 10 years and what wasn't accomplished.
(Prepared for the Joint Transportation Committee's review of the fuel tax refunds)
Date: August 11, 2010

Analyze Historical Funding and Expenditures from respective treasury accounts

Appendix A (page 8) shows just the funding we received from the legislature from the proceeds from the gas tax. These funds do not include grants that we receive that are funded by the gas tax. Nor does it include our other funding sources such as the state general fund.

More about DNR's Recreation Program funding

Currently, funding from the ORV fuel tax is the only reliable source of funding for DNR's recreation program for **those facilities and trails not accessed by a publically funded road system**. Our other sources of funding come from the state general fund and grants. Grants, by their nature, are not a reliable source of funding, as we witnessed this past biennium when the legislature diverted the NOVA grant funding to State Parks.

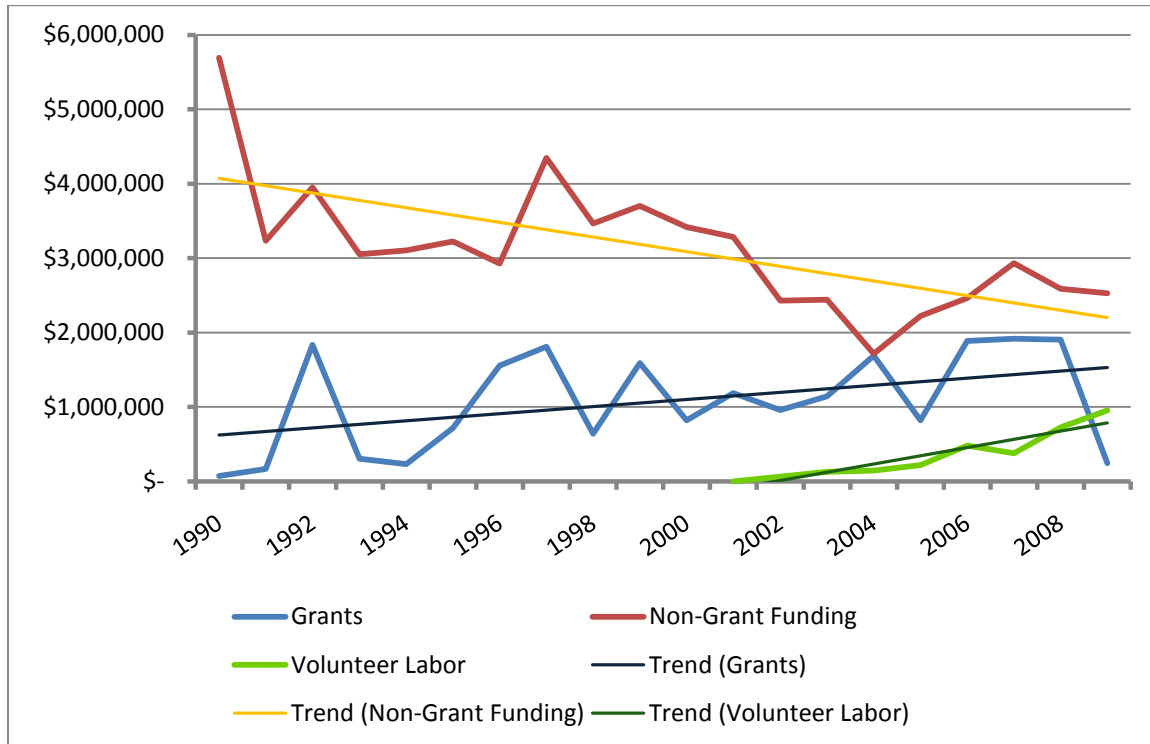
In the past, DNR developed its recreation budget based on what we thought the legislature could fund, rather than basing it on need or a well-defined strategy for managing recreation. Therefore, it is difficult to document or itemize a list of projects that didn't get completed due to a lack of funding. Figure 1 demonstrates how DNR's recreation program has had to increasingly rely on grants and volunteers to keep recreation trails and facilities open.

Over the last four biennia, DNR's general fund appropriation has fluctuated from zero to \$1.2 million dollars, with the average being around \$540,000 per biennium. Last biennium, our general fund was cut by more than 50 percent from \$1.2 million to \$530,000.

While the majority of our grant funding comes from RCO's NOVA program, we also receive some grant funding from the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP). In 2003, we received \$500,000 in grants from NOVA. In 2009, our grant funding was \$1.9 million. This increase illustrates our growing dependency on grant funding. On average, DNR's recreation program receives \$1.5 million per year in grant funding, 75 percent of which comes from the ORV account—or 38 percent of our entire budget.

Compounding our funding challenges is an overall increase in recreational use on DNR-managed lands and a diminishing amount of privately managed lands to meet the demands of increased use. In addition, there is added pressure from new forms of outdoor recreation and technologies, as well as increased sales in outdoor equipment and off-road vehicles.

Figure 1. DNR Recreation Program Funding 1990-2009 (adjusted for inflation). Non-grant funding includes the ORV account and state general fund.



Document unmet need for the last ten years and what wasn't accomplished
DNR's Recreation Program has identified the following four main categories of need that have historically been underfunded: **resource damage, safety, maintenance, and new construction.**

► **Resource damage—prevention and restoration**

Unmet need:

- Insufficient materials, supplies, and equipment to maintain existing facilities and trails to prevent environmental impacts and protect public safety.
- Lack of adequate staffing to provide management oversight, maintenance, education and enforcement to ensure sustainable recreational opportunities.
- Lack of training for recreation staff and users in the latest maintenance, education, enforcement, and development practices
- Enough trails and facilities to meet high demand from the public.
- Lack of recreation planning and implementation of plans, so new areas can be opened up for recreational opportunities..
- Lack of staff to assess and address resource damage from unauthorized and even authorized trails and structures.

In the past 20 years, DNR has not constructed any new recreation trail systems or facilities while the demand for more places to recreate has increased. The demand for more trails has led some people to create their own unauthorized trails when public providers of recreation have been unable to meet the need. These unauthorized trails and structures (such as bridges) were built without permits or proper design to address safety and environmental impacts. Both non-motorized and motorized recreation users have contributed to the problem.

The increased unauthorized recreational use on DNR-managed lands has put incredible pressure on the natural resources and the ecosystems that support them and poses a threat to water quality.

DNR recently inventoried all unauthorized, user-built trails in the Western Yacolt Burn Forest and Reiter Foothills Forest. The Western Yacolt Burn Forest has 49 miles of authorized recreation trails and 170 miles of unauthorized trails. Reiter Foothills Forest has 0 miles of authorized trails and 51 miles of unauthorized trails. We extrapolated on these two inventories and estimated that there are well over 5,000 miles of unauthorized trails just on DNR-managed trust lands.

These unauthorized trail systems are not sustainable, cause public safety issues, and major damage to state trust assets. At Reiter Foothills alone we calculated the restoration cost to be around \$1.5 million dollars. (Appendix B. Reiter restoration map).

Photos from Reiter Foothills Forest illustrate the impacts of unauthorized trails such as damage to streams, wetlands, tree roots, bark, soils and unique habitats. (Appendix B.)

The environmental cost to natural resources, habitats, wildlife, and trust assets statewide by underfunding DNR's recreation program is in the tens of millions of dollars.

What wasn't accomplished:

- Restoration of damage to streams and wetlands caused by unauthorized use, which creates large financial obligations for the future.
- Protection of damage to trees and unique habitats from unauthorized use.
- Protection of soils from the impacts of unauthorized use.
- Developing and implementing routine maintenance schedules to help prevent environmental damage.
- No new trails or facilities built since the mid 1980s to address growing demand.
- Unable to assess and document repair needs for sites, trails, and structures.
- Monitoring program to assess environmental impacts.
- Fully implementing recreation plans.
- Providing adequate, consistent user education and awareness.

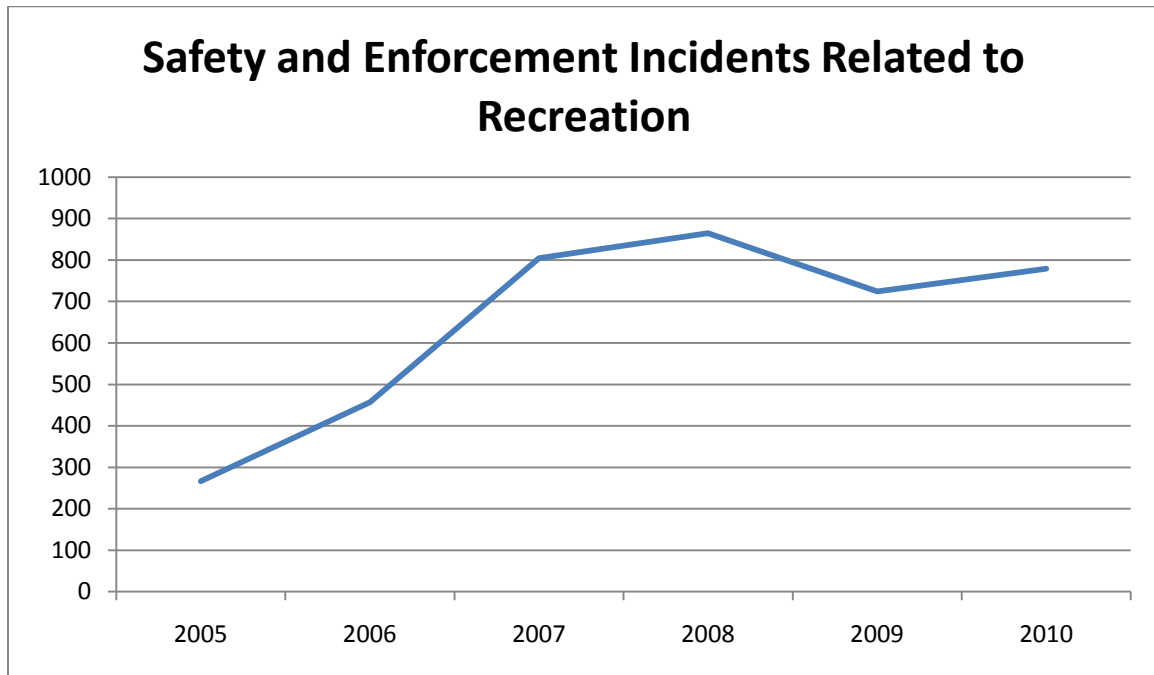
► Public safety and illegal activities

Unmet need:

- Greater enforcement presence.
- Staff training.
- Clear and concise signage.
- Public education campaign about proper behavior, safe conduct, etc.
- Materials and supplies for forest watch program.

DNR has seven commissioned law enforcement officers to patrol 3 million acres of state trust lands and 300,000 acres of natural areas. Nearly 82 percent of DNR's law enforcement encounters are recreation related. The remaining time is spent dealing with theft of special forest products and timber, and trespass. Nineteen of DNR's recreation field staff have authority to write citations, but this role is just a part of their overall duties with the agency. Before the loss of the NOVA grant funding, DNR was able to fund an additional five education and enforcement wardens who were stationed at some of the most frequently used facilities. Figure 2 demonstrates that even in the best of times DNR is unable to keep up with or reduce the number of recreational related incidents on department managed lands.

Figure 2. Safety and enforcement incidents related to recreation.



Because of the low ratio of law enforcement officers to the significant tracks of land DNR manages, we must focus law enforcement efforts in the areas that experience the most traffic and illegal activity.

DNR's forest watch program involves citizen volunteers who patrol DNR-managed lands. But their role is to educate the public about appropriate behavior and to report any suspicious activities to law enforcement.

As mentioned previously in the resource damage category, unauthorized, user-built trails pose a tremendous threat to the environmental health of DNR-managed lands. In addition, these trails and structures also pose a threat to public safety and create liability issues for DNR.

What wasn't accomplished:

- Unable to hire additional law enforcement officers to adequately patrol DNR-managed lands and provide a measure of safety, which the public expects and deserves.
- Effective forest watch program on all our major recreation landscapes.

Operational investments

Unmet need:

- Skilled, trained labor to perform the work.

- Demand for more trails and facilities.
- Materials, supplies, and equipment.
- Planning.

Most of our existing facilities were built in the late 1960s through the early 1980s. Very little has been done to restore or replace facilities since then. The facilities are outdated and in desperate need of renovation. Since the early 1980s, the Recreation Program's budget has gradually diminished. In 1990, DNR had adequate funding to maintain the 143 recreational facilities and more than 1,000 miles of trails the agency manages. At that time, DNR did not use volunteers or grants to maintain recreation trails and facilities.

Today, DNR depends on 90,000 volunteer hours a year (the equivalent of 44 FTEs) and \$1.5 million dollars in grants to maintain the same number of recreation facilities and miles of trails. To keep facilities open, we have had to lower the level of maintenance and service due to our reduced state general funds and the failure of the ORV account to keep up with inflation. As mentioned earlier, we have an ever-escalating demand on the same amount of recreation trails and facilities that existed 20 years ago.

While volunteers provide a great deal of help on DNR-managed lands, they are limited in what they can do and how much time that they can provide. We can't use volunteers to manage facilities, represent DNR at user group meetings, answer complaints, develop and manage contracts, provide enforcement, and lead planning efforts, for example.

Grants are very time consuming to develop, submit, track, and bill, so DNR limits the grants that we apply for to those we believe we will be successful in obtaining. We tend to be more successful in receiving grants for lands located along the I-5 corridor because they are close to the state's population center. Unfortunately, this leaves out eastern Washington, Olympic Peninsula, southwest Washington, and other remote recreation facilities and trail systems.

DNR's maintenance schedule is based on three levels: Level 3 is regular maintenance. Level 1 is limited maintenance and repairs. Level 2 falls somewhere in between. In the early 1990s, the Recreation Program was able to maintain most of DNR's recreation facilities at a level 3. In 2000, we were down to a mix of level 2 and 3. By 2006, we were mostly 2. Now, we operate at primarily level 1.

In addition, we had to reduce services at or close many of our recreation facilities in 2009 when our general fund budget was cut and we lost access to NOVA grant funding.

What wasn't accomplished:

- Routine maintenance. Instead, we focused on those facilities most in need of repair.
- Maintenance on bridges and outhouses—putting users and the environment at risk.
- Up to date facility and trail design to meet today's needs, such as larger off-road vehicles.
- Full implementation of adopted recreation plans.
- Training for recreation staff on how to build and maintain structures and facilities.
- Development of new facilities and trails.

► Capital investments

Unmet need:

- New recreation facilities and trail systems to meet demand.
- Renovation of facilities that are more than 40 years old and do not meet users' needs or current environmental standards.
- \$4 million dollars in deferred maintenance.
- Acquisition funds to pay for leases of 39 recreation facilities that have expired or are about to expire.

DNR has not built any new facilities or trails since the early 1980s due to reduce funding (capital and maintenance). Yet, in the past 30 years, we've seen significant changes in the types of outdoor recreation activities and equipment that are stressing facilities and trail systems that were not designed for the new uses and levels of users. For example, mountain bikes were just starting to come on the scene in the 1970s, and their popularity began to climb 20 years ago. The state's growing population, adding more visitors to the outdoors, has created more demand for areas to recreate.

Over the same timeframe, the Recreation Program's operation and capital budget have been reduced by 50 percent. As a result, DNR has had to forego replacing worn-out structures, such as bridges and outhouses. We have not been able to update facilities to sustainably accommodate current types of equipment and user experiences. In addition, a majority of the facilities do not need current environmental standards. For example, a large number of our campgrounds are located within riparian areas.

We have recently inventoried all user-built trails in the Western Yacolt State Forest and Reiter Foothill Forest. The Western Yacolt State Forest had 49 miles of authorized recreation trails and 170 miles of unauthorized trails and the Reiter Foothills Forest had 0 miles of authorized trails and 51 miles of unauthorized trails. Based on the results of these two inventories, we estimate there are well over 5,000 miles of unauthorized trails just on DNR managed trust lands.

What wasn't accomplished:

- Renovation of old facilities to meet current recreation and environmental standards.
- Replacement of bridges and outhouses have been deferred putting human and environmental health at risk
- New facilities and trails that are constructed to meet demand.
- Facilities, structures (such as bridges), have not been replaced once they surpass their life expectancy.

Appendix A: Historical funding for Recreation Program from fuel tax.

Biennium 1999-2001

			Allotted		Spent	
			FY 00	FY 01	FY 00	FY 01
ORV	364	S&B	0	0	398,444	515,047
		G&S	0	0	9,637	17,025
		Travel	0	0	23,243	22,146
	365	S&B	0	0	206,732	208,601
		G&S	0	0	28,592	17,115
		Travel	0	0	16,045	38,005
	367	S&B	0	0	0	212,753
		G&S	0	0	0	109,348
		Travel	0	0	0	40,125
	368	S&B	0	0	0	102,127
		G&S	0	0	0	39,116
		Travel	0	0	0	10,947
369	S&B	0	0	0	0	
	G&S	0	0	0	0	
	Travel	0	0	0	0	
NOVA	36C	S&B	0	0	0	0
		G&S	0	0	0	0
		Travel	0	0	0	0

Key to Project Index codes

364 — Recreation Planning and Program Management

All time, related travel, and goods and services associated with recreation planning, program management, grant coordination and implementation of public use policy for ORV funded facilities and trails.

365 — Public Involvement/Outreach

All time, related travel and goods and services associated with the recreation program's volunteer coordination, or public involvement and outreach efforts, such as coordinating and attending focus/user group meetings, conducting public meetings, preparing information for trail/site maps and brochures, etc. **NOTE:** Environmental education and fire-related activities (e.g. Smokey Bear) should be charged to the responsible program(s).

367 — Maintenance and Operations of Non-highway Road Recreation Facilities

All time, related travel, equipment rental, and other goods and services associated with routine maintenance and operations of developed trails, trailheads, campgrounds, and day-use areas that meet the criteria of a non-highway road recreation facility as defined in RCW 46.09.

368 — Maintenance and Operations of Off-Road Vehicle Recreation Facilities

All time, related travel, equipment rental, and other goods and services associated with routine maintenance and operations of developed trails, trailheads, campgrounds, and ORV-use areas that meet the criteria of an off-road vehicle recreation facility as defined in RCW 46.09.

369 — Maintenance and Operations of Non-motorized Recreation Facilities

All time, related travel, equipment rental, and other goods and services associated with routine maintenance and operations of developed trails, trailheads, campgrounds, and day-use areas that meet the criteria of a non-motorized recreation facility as defined in RCW 46.09.

36C — Public Use Outreach on State Lands

All activities associated with the implementation of the Reiter and Ahtanum landscape plans and installation of signs to support ORV facilities.

Biennium 2001 - 2003

			Allotted		Spent	
			FY 02	FY 03	FY 02	FY 03
ORV	364	S&B	0	566,300	514,095	512,701
		G&S	0	67,200	48,907	51,424
		Travel	0	32,700	59,498	68,616
	365	S&B	0	249,100	195,719	90,096
		G&S	0	12,900	32,951	42,196
		Travel	0	31,700	17,965	24,601
	367	S&B	0	197,400	162,253	189,086
		G&S	0	67,800	97,159	90,346
		Travel	0	44,400	33,356	37,118
	368	S&B	0	123,100	153,324	136,415
		G&S	0	34,000	58,704	28,403
		Travel	0	45,600	36,533	17,680
369	S&B	0	0	0	0	
	G&S	0	0	0	0	
	Travel	0	0	0	0	
NOVA	36C	S&B	0	0	0	0
		G&S	0	0	0	0
		Travel	0	0	0	0

Biennium 2003 - 2005

			Allotted		Spent	
			FY 04	FY 05	FY 04	FY 05
ORV	364	S&B	62,730	0	421,519	493,620
		G&S	9,080	0	37,291	58,922
		Travel	9,950	0	75,841	69,075
	365	S&B	49,210	0	177,651	189,953
		G&S	1,990	0	22,462	31,756
		Travel	7,050	0	14,434	23,753
	367	S&B	105,630	0	186,640	219,387
		G&S	35,320	0	115,568	132,091
		Travel	27,190	0	24,125	51,295
	368	S&B	36,680	0	120,348	111,317
		G&S	19,700	0	33,363	70,201
		Travel	13,190	0	13,921	36,960
369	S&B	0	0	0	0	
	G&S	0	0	0	0	
	Travel	0	0	0	0	
NOVA	36C	S&B	0	0	0	0
		G&S	0	0	0	0
		Travel	0	0	0	0

Biennium 2005 - 2007

		Allotted		Spent		
		FY 06	FY 07	FY 06	FY 07	
ORV	364	S&B	538,270	547,388	567,351	765,505
		G&S	104,078	104,078	58,053	56,365
		Travel	69,214	69,214	53,574	85,351
	365	S&B	283,153	288,480	263,190	228,063
		G&S	38,598	38,598	54,872	60,143
		Travel	31,705	31,705	26,212	36,463
	367	S&B	151,680	154,986	150,792	145,674
		G&S	77,861	77,720	63,471	100,030
		Travel	33,835	33,860	36,759	27,892
	368	S&B	98,427	100,557	71,189	107,104
		G&S	60,639	60,339	54,585	57,273
		Travel	31,461	31,358	41,780	46,251
369	S&B	687,723	70,323	37,488	41,359	
	G&S	35,642	35,642	37,177	63,125	
	Travel	14,980	14,980	7,146	15,598	
NOVA	36C	S&B	0	0	0	0
		G&S	0	0	0	0
		Travel	0	0	0	0

Biennium 2007 - 2009

		Allotted		Spent		
		FY 08	FY 09	FY 08	FY 09	
ORV	364	S&B	1,053,582	958,114	985,702	941,888
		G&S	130,501	251,494	146,797	70,041
		Travel	70,490	73,148	81,286	71,521
	365	S&B	293,739	302,038	231,806	245,074
		G&S	28,627	24,806	42,044	39,326
		Travel	30,635	26,991	35,085	37,357
	367	S&B	176,201	167,845	145,910	178,095
		G&S	64,633	73,629	61,569	84,569
		Travel	22,696	26,680	37,594	34,529
	368	S&B	126,134	103,815	107,487	166,752
		G&S	43,772	65,261	49,625	65,051
		Travel	34,663	38,430	30,980	56,230
369	S&B	87,655	85,544	52,790	68,758	
	G&S	19,206	19,210	60,864	60,946	
	Travel	29,359	27,174	10,426	16,359	
NOVA	36C	S&B	83,800	114,532	48,997	173,495
		G&S	8,500	(2,671)	1,978	789
		Travel	6,500	(2,000)	301	0

Biennium 2009-2011

			Allotted		Spent	
			FY 10	FY 11	FY 10	FY 11
ORV	364	S&B	652,500	617,100	673,348	1,346
		G&S	35,700	35,800	43,421	666
		Travel	23,700	23,700	33,419	79
	365	S&B	260,600	229,700	229,678	234
		G&S	36,400	36,400	17,078	82
		Travel	24,200	24,200	18,132	0
	367	S&B	170,000	170,800	176,468	0
		G&S	46,100	46,100	57,763	629
		Travel	30,700	30,700	34,500	0
	368	S&B	195,500	196,300	173,574	0
		G&S	49,400	49,400	49,979	973
		Travel	32,900	32,900	47,123	0
369	S&B	170,300	165,500	157,807	0	
	G&S	45,600	45,600	55,936	434	
	Travel	30,400	30,400	25,647	0	
NOVA	36C	S&B	288,900	279,400	329,260	0
		G&S	90,800	90,800	24,726	56
		Travel	60,600	60,600	17,930	0

Appendix B: Examples of damage from unauthorized trails on state lands.



Damage to streams.



Erosion.



User-built structures such as this log bridge with chicken wire nailed to the top present risks to public safety and potential liability issues for DNR.

Appendix C: Areas identified for restoration in Reiter Foothills Forest.

