

# MARYLAND STATE PARKS FUNDING STUDY

A Plan to fully fund the operations of the  
Maryland Park Service



**Maryland State Parks Funding Study Work Group**

**September 12, 2007**

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The General Assembly's Supplemental Budget No. 3, 2007, Joint Chairmen's Report, included the following language:

*“The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in collaboration with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), shall submit a plan on how to fully fund the operations of the Maryland Park Service using general funds. The plan shall be submitted to the budget committees by October 1, 2007, and the budget committees shall have 45 days to review and comment following receipt of the plan.”*

### Scope of the Study

In order to clarify this charge, The Maryland Department of Legislative Services recommended that “DBM and DNR collaboratively develop a couple of different funding scenarios with justifications. These funding scenarios would include a combination of general and special funds and would meet some combination of the following funding priorities (provided by DNR) that are determined by DBM and DNR to be full funding. Full funding would include addressing the structural deficit but would not necessarily be limited to this.”<sup>1</sup>

### Maryland State Parks Funding Study Work Group

With funding from the Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment and support from the Friends of Maryland State Forests and Parks, a non-profit public interest group, DNR assembled a Maryland State Parks Funding Study Work Group of dedicated citizens and professionals with knowledge of State parks in Maryland and throughout the nation. A list of these individuals and the staff of DNR that are supporting the study is found in Appendix I of this report.

September 12, 2007

### Maryland State Parks Funding Study Work Group

With support from the Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment and assistance from the Friends of Maryland State Forests and Parks, Inc.

Contacts:  
Tim Casey  
410 785 2415

[tjwc Casey@comcast.net](mailto:tjwc Casey@comcast.net)

H. Grant Dehart  
410 280 6272

[grantdehart@comcast.net](mailto:grantdehart@comcast.net)

Major Chuck Hecker  
410 260 8178

[checker@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:checker@dnr.state.md.us)



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<sup>1</sup> Email memorandum from Andrew Gray, DLS, to Valentina Nielsen, DBM, May 14, 2007, “JCR Language for DNR – Clarification”

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**INTRODUCTION:** Parks and people have always co-existed. From the earliest organized societies in the Mesopotamia, Parks have been created for the benefit of the people. Our earliest ancestors understood the relationship from protection of water supplies, contribution to health & well being, fostering community cohesion, contribution to our pride of place, and overall “quality of life”.

Parks are Public Lands, co-joined with critical Public Services yielding cultural, historical, natural, and heritage benefits that belong to “all citizens” not just for those who pay for them. Their preservation and enjoyment necessitate a commitment to their protection and stewardship in a way that acknowledges their perpetual trust to our citizens for the benefit of future generations. Parks and its associated Services are common, public resources that exist for citizens as a common good. Parks must be seen as a Strategic Investment in the future with enormous benefits to our society.

Maryland, a progressive state, should be the National Model as the first State Park System in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to demonstrate a broad based Resource Stewardship Ethic. At this point, the reality is that Maryland’s State Parks are in a state of crisis, due to organizational changes in and inadequate funding of the Department of Natural Resources over the past several years.

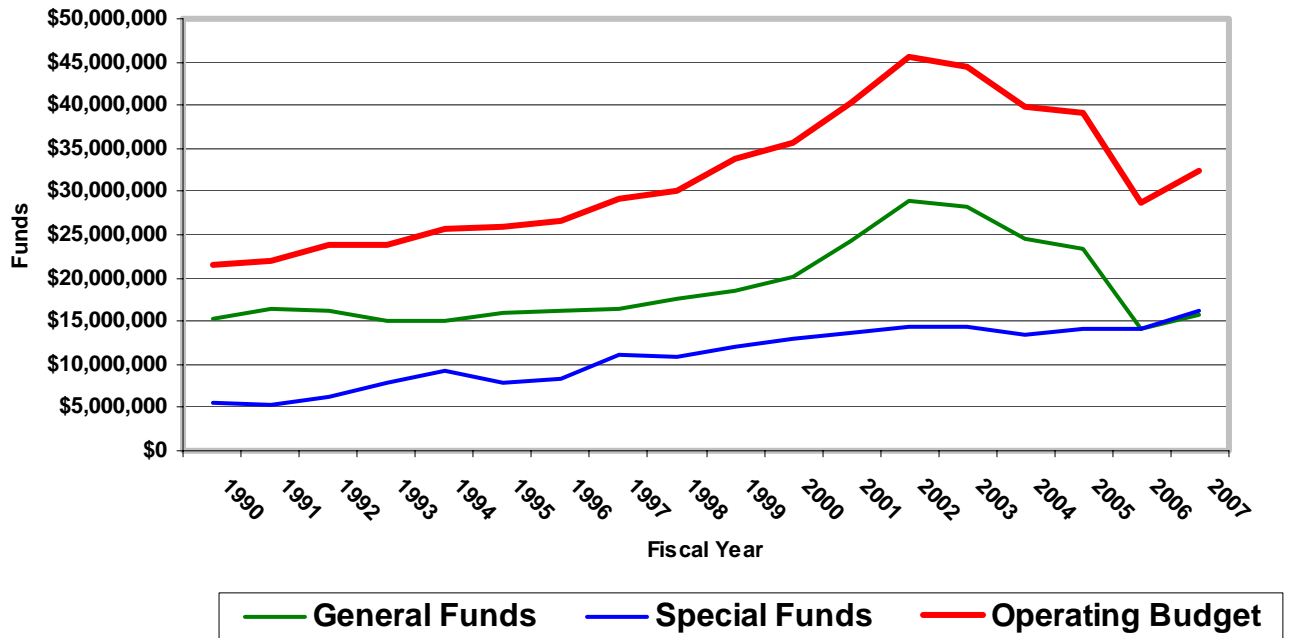
### KEY FINDINGS ILLUSTRATING THE FUNDING CRISIS:

1. A sharp 50% decline in General Funds for State Parks from a high of \$28.9 million in FY 2002 to a low of about \$14 million in FY2006. (\$8 million of this is attributable to the Law Enforcement merger)
2. General Fund support for Parks was greater in 1991 than 2007.
3. Special Funds, 91% are park revenues, increased relative to the total operating budget from 26% in 1990 to 50% in 2007.
4. The operating budget has been reduced by about 37% from 2002 through 2006.
5. Maryland’s economy and median household income for 2006 have risen to the highest in the nation. This is in stark contrast to cuts in general funds and the per capita spending for Maryland State Parks.
6. The public responsibility for operating state parks has shifted to the park users with Maryland’s fee increases. This is an “equality” issue for those Marylanders less able to pay the higher fees, but who are equally in need of the societal benefits of state parks.
7. Volunteer activities have shifted from supplemental to essential functions in state parks. Volunteers are increasingly disillusioned with the continually reduced support for state parks.
8. While annual attendance at state parks increased to an all time high of nearly 12 million, state parks lost 25 % of their full time staff between 2002 and 2006.
9. More than 50% of the 37 staff in leadership positions in the MPS are currently eligible or will be eligible for retirement by the end of FY 2010.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> MPS Management Chart in Appendix IV

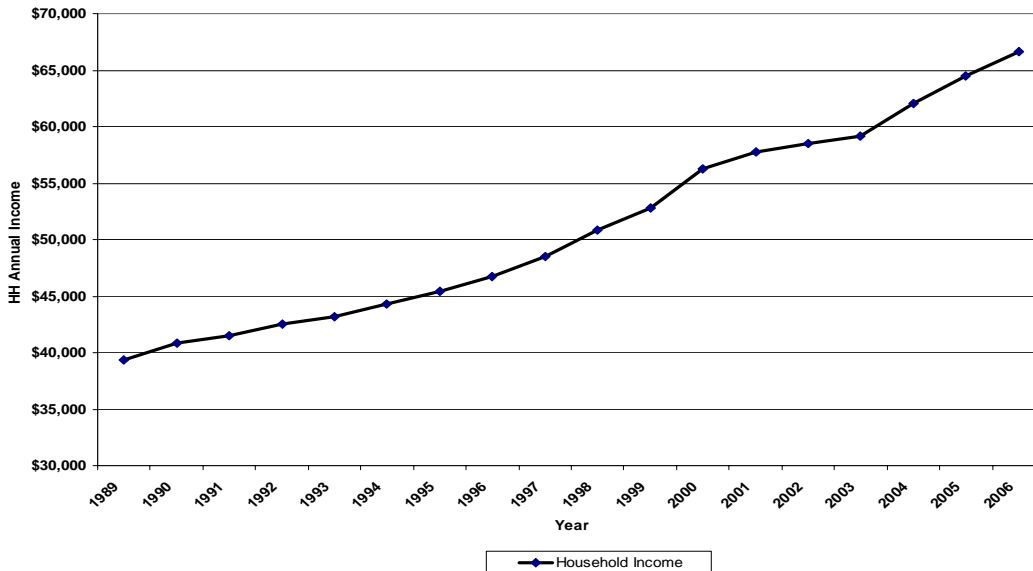
State Park Operating Budget, General and Special Funds



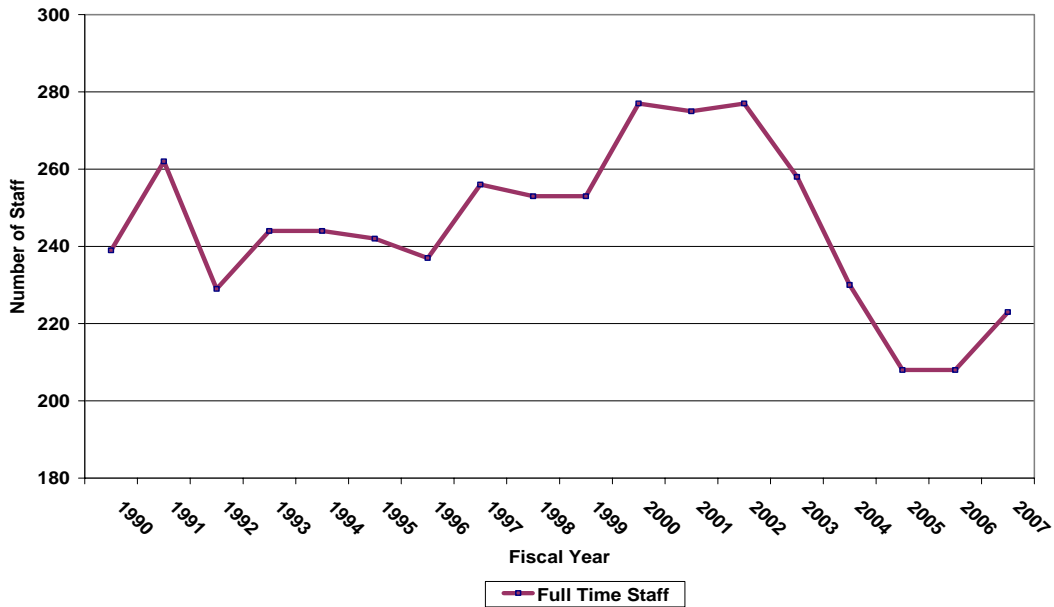
Notes for above chart:

- a. Contains MPS Operating Budget, General Funds, and Special Funds.
- b. MPS Operating Budget is a combination of General Funds, Special Funds and Federal Funds.
- c. The numbers in these charts are not adjusted for inflation; therefore they do not show the actual impact of funding cuts. If inflation were considered, the picture would be even worse.

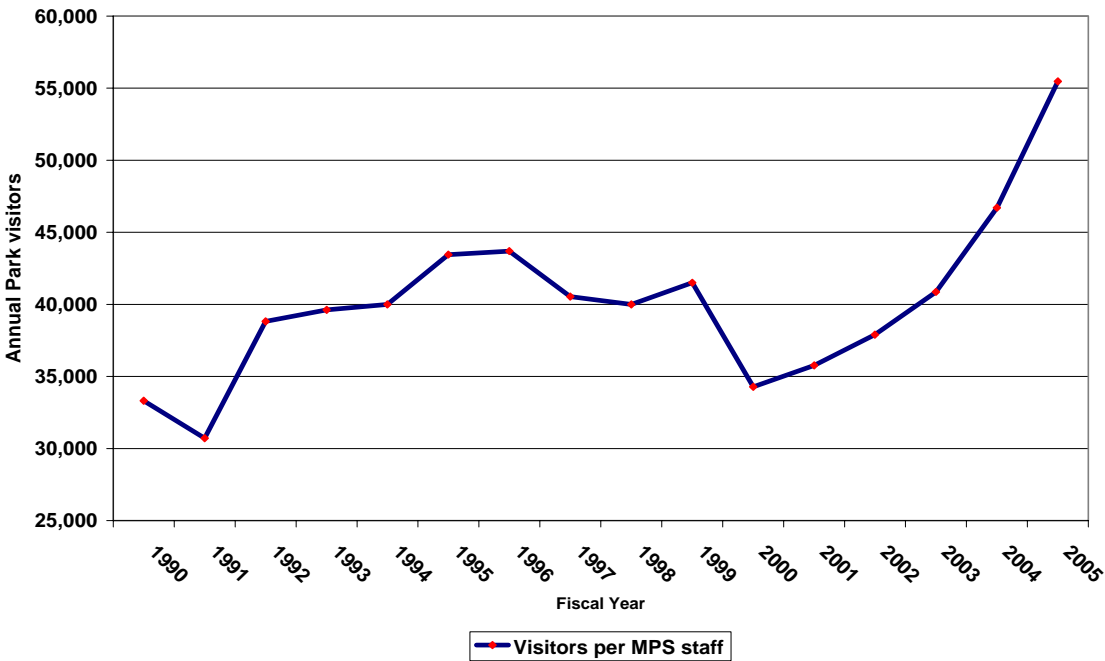
Median Household Income - Maryland



MPS Full Time Staff



Visitors per MPS staff



## GENERAL FINDINGS

- Public support will be the key to restoring the Maryland State Parks and obtaining necessary increases in appropriations from existing fund sources and a share of proposed new fund sources to accomplish this restoration. The voting public's 85% support for the 2006 Constitutional Amendment<sup>3</sup> requiring the General Assembly's authorization of any sale of state park land is testament to this support.

<sup>3</sup> SB 102 (now Chapter 617)

2. The Maryland public has an ongoing responsibility for maintenance and operations of the state parks system, and should expect that its taxes and other revenues paid to state government should be used in part for this public purpose.
3. New sources of funds must be sustainable, predictable, and dedicated over the long term, and grow with the size of the park system, with needs of park operations and with size of the population.
4. The core operations of the park system should be covered by tax supported revenues and income, including a stable and predictable share of the Department of Natural Resources' general fund revenues.
5. A share of the proposed increase in the real estate transfer tax revenue is the best potential source of funding for park operations, because:
  - It is a dedicated existing fund source,
  - A share of this source is now allocated for state park operations and capital improvements,
  - It is connected with Program Open Space, which has an established name, reputation and broad public support historically related to State Parks,
  - It serves other state purposes, including environmental education, health and welfare, environmental protection, the Chesapeake Bay and climate change, among others,
  - It directly relates to the increased value of real estate and amenities for residential communities, that the state park system contributes to, and
  - It allows state park management responsibilities and costs to keep pace with the expansion of the state park system through acquisition with POS funds.
6. DNR deserves to partner with other groups to claim a small share of other increases in tax revenue proposed for the near future, including:
  - A Maryland sales tax increase from 5% to 6% or expanded to cover goods and services currently excluded from taxation
  - Lottery, slot machines or gaming proceeds, which have a recreational dimension (e.g. horse racing & tourism)
  - Continuation of level funding from the General Fund that grows consistent with the basic day-to-day operating costs of the state park system.
7. DNR and the State, working with private partners, should seek to broaden the public constituency for the state park system by reaching out to educators, environmentalists, the arts, tourism, the sporting goods industry and other beneficiaries.
8. A survey of the Directors of the top tier state park systems, found the following factors necessary to reach and sustain this top level:
  - All state park Revenue goes directly into the state park system.
  - Each state has a defined emergency fund to handle unanticipated emergencies. Outside of natural disasters, they can handle all normal emergencies that arise.
  - Their visitors clearly see their parks as a safe, clean, and affordable form of recreation.

## **PARKS FUNDING STUDY WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Maryland should strive to be the National Model as the first State Park System in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to facilitate a Resource Stewardship Ethic widely shared by its citizens in both theory and practice.**

With sufficient funding the Work Group envisions a Maryland Park System that is ever expanding to serve the stewardship needs of the state's precious natural resources, and the growing needs of the citizens who use and enjoy the park system and all its wonders. Therefore, we recommend a diverse mix of existing and new funding sources to meet the above vision. We recognize that this vision is not attainable immediately, perhaps not fully during this decade, with present uncertainties of the state budget and the national economy. However, state leaders can contribute to the economic health of the state and its citizens, by taking bold action to ramp-up funding for state parks over the next few years.

The current level of funding for the state park system and the Maryland Park Service is inadequate.

**We recommend a three level, phased increase in new funding until this vision is achieved:**

#### **Level One - Basic Sustainability Budget \$42 Million per year operating budget (2 years)**

(Additional economic impact = \$100 Million into state's economy)

- Basic services provided and restored operating hours
- Provides resources for extra services such as interpretation, environmental quality, training
- Requires additional funding for critical maintenance backlog

#### **Level Two – Restoration Budget \$51 Million per year operating budget (3-4 years)**

(Additional economic impact = \$190 million into state's economy)

- Operating hours increased to meet demand
- Able to staff interpretive, resource management, cultural resource management and operational functions
- Increased youth conservation corps program
- Ability to improve infrastructure and cover emergency repairs
- Continuation of additional critical maintenance funding

#### **Level Three – Our State Park System is the National Model (5-6 years)**

- Predictable and sustainable funding
- Maryland is a national leader in:
  - Resource Stewardship
  - No Child Left Inside Initiative
  - Green Building Design
  - Integrating Advanced Technology In Parks
  - Energy Conservation
  - Multi-Use Trail Systems

Budget allocations for this level would be determined at a later date, based on further analysis by a State Parks Commission of outside experts and agency representatives, and progress made toward possible establishment of a "Maryland Park Service Trust Fund."

### **2. In the long term, the state should provide an increased share of general fund revenues for basic park operations.** In future budget years, the state's general fund support for state parks should not be less than 50% of the parks operating budget.

3. **A fair share of any major new tax revenues should be provided to manage the state parks,** including increases in:
  - The POS real estate transfer tax, by increasing the tax rate from 0.5% to 0.6%, and closing the “controlling interest” loophole,
  - The Maryland sales tax, proposed to be increased from 5% to 6%, or expanded to cover goods and services previously excluded from taxation,
  - New slot machine or gaming legislation.
  - Other new revenue sources proposed by the Governor or General Assembly related directly and indirectly to open space, parks and recreation, or tourism.
  - Existing state lottery revenue.
4. **The Department of Natural Resources and the General Assembly should study opportunities for lowering but not eliminating existing park fees and charges to reflect fees of neighboring states.** Maryland now has among the highest fees and charges for park use in the nation.
5. **Authorize a higher percent of the stateside portion of POS revenues that are allocated for capital development (now 25%) to be utilized for park operations,** in order to increase staff to fully encumber capital development funds and reduce the backlog of infrastructure improvements. Currently, the MPS is unable to spend more than \$4 million per year of the \$36 million authorized for capital development, because of staff shortages. This increase should not be allowed to supplant other general fund or special fund income for park operations.
6. **As staff levels improve to manage park restoration projects, consider authorizing a Park Restoration Bond Bill to reverse severe deterioration of park infrastructure and eliminate a backlog in deferred maintenance exceeding \$10 million.**
7. **Additional bond proceeds could be used to free up uses of the Forest and Park Reserve Fund or general fund revenues for capital improvements or major critical maintenance projects.**
8. **Establish a Maryland Park Service Trust Fund,** with a supporting Foundation and high level private management board, and seek state seed money for a stewardship endowment **AND**
9. **Refocus the Governor’s State Parks Advisory Commission** to guide the Department of Natural Resources and the state toward the long term vision and Level 3 funding of a National Model.



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## INTRODUCTION

After Governor Martin O'Malley's election, the Governor's Natural Resources and Environment Transition Work Group recommended a policy to: **“Restore Maryland's historic role as a national leader in the protection and stewardship of its natural lands, open space and state parks.”**

Among other actions it urged the Governor to:

- Reverse a 15 year decline and restore Maryland's park system to first-rate status.
- Identify and establish new state parks.
- Provide quality outdoor recreation and environmental educational opportunities for all citizens and visitors.
- Protect and enhance forests and parks, programs and services with an immediate infusion of funds for maintenance, improvements and operations of public lands, and
- Identify a dedicated new fund source to support operations and maintenance of the public lands system.

In the 2007 session of the Maryland General Assembly, several members of the House of Delegates and the Maryland Senate introduced legislation (HB 701, SB 325) that recognized:

*“In the current budget, park services are being insufficiently funded and provided, in that only six employees are dedicated entirely to interpretive services as naturalists and historians, a 66% reduction since 2003, and in 2006, 91 rangers were transferred to the Natural Resources Police without replacements for all of them, and any replacements that are being hired are being funded solely through Special Fund revenues, not through General Fund appropriations, which means that the money comes out of the park visitor's pocket rather than being funded as a public service.”*

These bills proposed an increase in General Fund appropriations over the Governor's fiscal 2008 budget of \$5.5 million for FY 2009 an additional \$4 million for FY 2010.

Maryland has always been respected by other states, park professionals and the traveling public as having one of the best State Park systems in the nation. This national reputation has suffered significant decline in recent years due to cutbacks in park funding and personnel, as described below and in a comparative report from Texas A&M University.

Recognizing this crisis, at the end of the Maryland General Assembly's 2007 Session, their Joint Chairmen's Report, Supplemental Budget No. 3, included the following language:

*“The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in collaboration with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), shall submit a plan on how to fully fund the operations of the Maryland Park Service using general funds. The plan shall be submitted to the budget committees by October 1, 2007, and the budget committees shall have 45 days to review and comment following receipt of the plan.”*

In order to ensure that this plan would have broad support from the citizens of Maryland, especially those that fully and frequently utilize the wonders of the State Park System, the Department of Natural Resources formed a Maryland State Parks Funding Study Work Group of key leaders in the fields of parks, tourism, outdoor recreation, the environment and land preservation. The Work Group also included representatives of DNR, the MPS and MTA.

They met in the summer and fall of 2007 to assess the current budgetary situation and related problems in the MPS, to consider options for funding State park operations, and to make recommendations for *“how to fully fund the operations of the Maryland Park Service”* in the next

few years. This document represents the findings of the Work Group and its recommendations to the Departments, the Governor O'Malley Administration and the Maryland General Assembly.

## **MARYLAND STATE PARKS VISION**

In the fall of 2000, The Governor's Special Commission on Maryland State Parks adopted the following Vision statement: ***"To maximize the benefits of the State Parks for citizens of all ages, and effectively preserve and promote the parks for the benefit of future generations of all Marylanders."***

They made seven recommendations in order to reach this Vision:

1. *Continue to favor resource management over recreation management,*
2. *Capitalize on the educational power of the State Parks,*
3. *Ensure that the SFPS has the necessary people, organization, systems, and tools to maximize the benefits of the state parks,*
4. *Expand and strengthen outreach programs,*
5. *Market the state parks*
6. *Fund Maryland state parks consistently, fairly and in perpetuity, and*
7. *Establish a permanent State Parks Commission.*

The Maryland State Parks Funding Study Work Group endorses these recommendations, and focuses this report on recommendations 3 and 6, acknowledging that reorganization of DNR functions since 2000 have separated the State Forest and Park Service (SFPS) and created the Maryland Forest Service (MFS) and the Maryland Park Service (MPS). As charged in the Supplemental Budget No. 3 language, this report is primarily focused on "how to fully fund the operations of the Maryland Park Service." It is intended to serve the Core Purpose of the MPS: ***To preserve, protect, and manage the natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources to provide the best use for the benefit of the present and future people.***

The Work Group endorses the Vision:

***To strive to be the first State Park System in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to facilitate a Resource Stewardship Ethic widely shared by its citizens in both theory and practice.***

## **THE VALUES AND BENEFITS OF MARYLAND STATE PARKS**

In HB 701 and SB 325, the General Assembly sponsors provided an excellent summary of the values and benefits of Maryland State Parks:

- "Maryland's State parks and forests provide access to ecological and biological diversity, are significant scenic, historical, and cultural assets, and are a fundamental element of our State's natural resources;"
- "State parks and forests are part of Maryland's heritage, provide an essential public service, satisfy our need to connect with the natural world, give us a sense of harmony, and help us better understand the world around us;"
- "Maryland's parks and forests are a treasure to the State and careful stewardship of this public trust is critical if future generations are to continue to enjoy them;"

- “Our State parks and forests provide an educational resource that is 260,000 acres in size and provide lifelong learning opportunities for all citizens of our State;”
- “Maryland State parks and forests are home to a great variety of fish and wildlife and, through proper stewardship of these species and their habitats, provide hunters, anglers, and wildlife observers countless opportunities to experience and continue the rich traditions of hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching;”
- “Parks and forests provide a natural setting and inspiration for exercise and activity that improve a person’s physical fitness, and therefore help with the treatment and prevention of a variety of adult and childhood diseases;”
- “Our State parks and forests play an important role in many sectors of Maryland’s economy, including tourism industries, recreational activity, retail sectors, and employment, to the extent that the economic benefit is tenfold – for every \$1 budgeted for a park or forest, \$10 goes back into the State’s economy;” and
- “During 2006, the centennial of the Maryland Forest and Park Service, more than 12,000,000 visitors enjoyed the natural beauty and resources of our parks and forests.”

There are many national studies and reports that have thoroughly documented the many benefits of parks and open space, including the benefits listed in Table 1 below. The MPS, DNR and many other groups have documented the positive effects of parks on public health and environmental education, environment, the economy of our state and the quality of life for our citizens. A few of the findings that relate directly to Maryland’s State Parks are quoted below, and referenced in Appendix II.

**Health and environmental education benefits**

“We will use the sciences not only to inform our visitors, but to preserve our parks and respond to changing conditions in our parks, on the planet, and in our society. Whether we are removing invasive species from parkland or broadening our stories to reach diverse audiences, parks will keep in step with changing times. We have enormous potential as a living classroom, where what we do and how we do it can serve as models to others—from our care of facilities and landscapes, to restoration of ecosystems, to the use of environmentally friendly technologies. All have the potential to transform both the National Park Service and America.”

*The Future of America’s National Parks, May 2007*

“Healthy South Dakota aims to reduce obesity and related chronic disease through increased physical activity and improved nutrition. ‘Parks and Recreation staff likes to describe the state parks as largest outdoor wellness centers in South Dakota. That mindset makes it very easy for us to work together to promote physical activity and the state park system at the same time,’ said Secretary of Health Doneen Hollingsworth.”

*State park system receives national public health award, South Dakota Dept. of Health, 6/8/2007*

“Parks and gardens alone cannot solve the problems faced by our cities, but they are crucial to the health of urban communities.”

*Martin J. Rosen*

## **Environmental benefits**

“Today, we find ourselves continually on the alert, chased by an unending stampede of two thousand pound automobiles and four thousand pound SUV’s. Even inside our homes the assault continues, with unsettling, threatening images charging through the television cable into our living rooms and bedrooms. At the same time, the urban and suburban landscape is rapidly being stripped of its peacekeeping inducing elements.”

*Last Child in the Woods, Richard Louv, 2006*

“It has been determined that in a city environment every tree is worth \$275 in benefit each year due to reduction in air-conditioning costs, erosion control, wildlife protection, and air pollution control.”

*Florida Department of Natural Resources*

“Forested lands control erosion, help clean the air pollutants, absorb carbon dioxide and other harmful greenhouse gases, help shelter our houses from heat and wind. Wetlands serve as wildlife habitat, absorb storm and flood water, and reduce pollutant and sediment loads in watershed runoff. Without wetlands, society would have to pay for these services. With wetlands, they are free.”

*The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Spaces, by the Trust for Public Land*

“Nature is a place where miracles not only happen, but happen all the time.” *Thomas Wolfe*

## **Economic benefits**

“The spending by campground visitors supported 3,140 jobs in Maryland in 2004. Of these, 2,276 were directly related to visitor spending at campgrounds and ancillary activities. Visitors to Maryland State Parks and private campgrounds spent more than \$139 million in the state in 2004. Campground visitor spending also generated 864 indirect and induced jobs in related businesses. Maryland campground visitor spending generated \$13.5 million in total tax revenue for state and local government.”

*Economic Impacts of Campers on the State of Maryland, MDBED, May 2005*

“According to the National Association of Homebuilders, ‘parks and recreation areas may enhance the value of nearby land up to 15-20 percent.’ Homes facing parks sold for 7-23 percent more than homes 1 block away. Enhanced value of this property results in its owner paying higher property taxes.”

*Dr John Compton, Texas A&M*

“State parks are important for nesting and migrating birds. Birdwatchers spend \$600 million dollars in Maryland and do most of this activity on public lands.”

*National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, USFW, 2006*

“Our State parks and forests play an important role in many sectors of Maryland’s economy, including tourism industries, recreational activity, retail sectors, and employment, to the extent that the economic benefit is tenfold – for every \$1 budgeted for a park or forest, \$10 goes back into the State’s economy”.

*General Assembly Sponsors of HB 701 & SB 325, 2007; MD Tourism Camping Study from 2005; Trout Unlimited Information; Economic Studies of NCR Trail*

## **Quality of life benefits**

“Within Maryland's approximate 800-mile Trail System, there are land and water trails of exemplary significance due to their immense scenic beauty, historic significance or unique landscapes representative of Maryland's geographic diversity.”

*MPS Trail System – Recommendations, Nita Settina, August 2007*

“The quality of life for the people of Texas – our very health and well-being – depends in the most basic way on the protection of nature, the accessibility of open space and recreation opportunities, and the preservation of landmarks that illustrate our history.”

*Texas Parks and Wildlife for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, November 2001*

“Each of us needs to withdraw from cares which will not withdraw from us. We need hours of aimless wandering or spates of time sitting on park benches, observing the mysterious world of ants and the canopy of treetops.”

*Maya Angelou*

## **Table 1 - Benefits of Parks and Open Space**

### **Health and Environmental educational Benefits**

Environmental and Outdoor Environmental education  
Development of a Resource Stewardship Ethic  
Exercise and Fitness  
Health – physical, emotional and mental  
Longevity and life time leisure activity  
No Child Left Inside

### **Environmental Benefits**

Improved air quality  
Improved water quality in the Bay  
Reduced pollution  
Improved native wildlife habitat  
Protection of native species  
Outdoor classrooms

### **Economic Benefits**

Reduced healthcare costs  
Increased property values  
Increased employment  
Increased tourism  
Revenue generation: direct/indirect spending  
Revenue generation: federal, state and local taxes  
Attracts new businesses

### **Quality of Life Benefits**

Improved self-esteem  
Happiness  
Stress reduction  
Sense of community  
Cultural harmony  
Family cohesion  
Low impact tourism destinations

Source: Colonel Rusty Ruszin,  
Superintendent, Maryland Park Service

# THE STATE OF THE MARYLAND PARK SYSTEM & MARYLAND PARK SERVICE

## Fall 2007

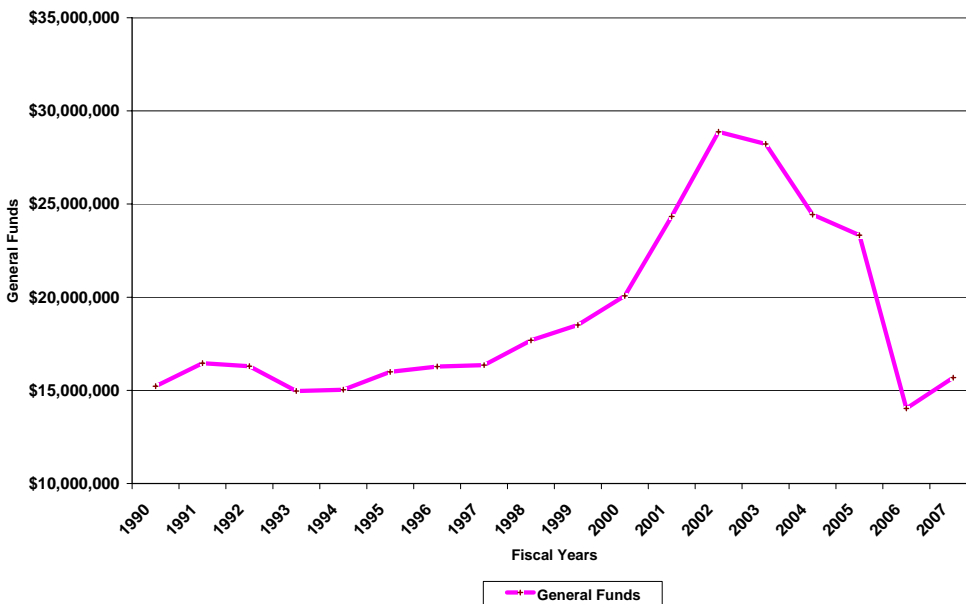
Problems, Challenges, Trends, Impacts and National Standing

### Revenue and Cost Trends

With reductions in funding for the Maryland Park Service in the past several years, the separation of the Maryland Forest and Park Service into two organizations, and the consolidation of law enforcement personnel in the Department to the Natural Resource Police, the resources of the Maryland Park Service are at an all-time low. As a result of the 2004 merger of law enforcement officers between the Natural Resource Police the State Forest and Park Service Rangers,<sup>4</sup> 91 general funded positions were lost in the MPS and only 34 replacements were provided, half of which were general funded and half were special funded. In FY 2006 as a result of the forest management responsibilities shifting to the Maryland Forest Service, \$620,295 in Park Service general funds were shifted to the MFS. The MPS is now challenged to:

- Cover more operational costs of the Park system with additional revenues from the Parks. Park service charges are among the highest of any State park system in the nation.
- Generate additional revenue to cover increases in operational costs,
- Maximize and expand charges to visitors to the parks to the limit of visitor tolerance and MPS ability to collect. While service charges are an important visitor and resource management tool for the MPS as well as a source of income, very high entrance fees discriminate against Maryland citizens of lower income.
- Respond to increased numbers of requests for free use of the parks, including from other state agencies.
- Deplete reserves available for repairs and unanticipated revenue shortages, which are no longer available for emergency situations.

MPS General Funds



<sup>4</sup> <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/dnrnews/pressrelease2004/040204a.html>

## General picture

Maryland now faces a declining and deteriorating State Park system not consistently serving the needs of Maryland's citizens, or its future opportunities. However, in spite of funding cuts:

- The Maryland Park Service manages 49 state parks and more than 130,000 acres of public land with 789 miles of trails
- Over 11 million people visit Maryland's state parks each year.
- More than 6,600 citizens volunteer each year to protect our natural, cultural and historical resources in Maryland state parks.
- Maryland state parks significantly contribute to local and state economies, generating more than \$15 million in State revenue annually and contributing more than \$200 million in economic impact.

From all of the revenues raised by the MPS from the park system, 12% or \$1.6 million is utilized to cover DNR support functions (e.g. overhead). In addition, by law, DNR must share a portion of its income from State parks with the counties where the parks are located, in lieu of property taxes.

In 2006, local governments received a total of \$1.7 million from service charges in lieu of property taxes in their jurisdictions, in addition to the economic benefits attributed to state parks. Few if any other state park systems share this income with local governments. 25% of the gross park revenues in Garrett and Allegany Counties and 15% in other counties are shared with the counties. When park operations are cut back due to budget limitations, the loss of revenue and the loss of economic benefits are shared with these counties proportionally.

**Table 2 – Distribution of Park Revenue**

Fiscal Year	Park Revenue	County Share	DNR Overhead	MPS Income	MPS %
2003	\$14.0	(\$1.6)	(\$1.6)	\$10.8	77.1%
2004	\$15.0	(\$1.9)	(\$1.6)	\$11.5	76.7%
2005	\$17.0	(\$2.4)	(\$2.4)	\$12.2	71.8%
2006	\$14.0	(\$1.7)	(\$1.8)	\$10.5	75.0%
2007	\$15.0	(\$1.9)	(\$1.6)	\$11.5	76.7%



While approximately one quarter of total revenues from State parks were shared with others, lower funding for the MPS has had significant impacts on the State's ability to maintain and equip the Parks, particularly in the areas of preventive infrastructure maintenance, equipment and fuel and utility costs.

This has resulted in a deterioration of facilities and indefinite postponement of maintenance on infrastructure systems. The current deferred maintenance backlog exceeds \$10 million, but there is an existing capacity to manage and implement only \$4 million in annual improvements. Any short-term cost savings from deferred maintenance have resulted in much higher longer term costs when equipment and infrastructure fails, as described below.

The Maryland Park Service encountered \$777,000 in unanticipated expenditures in FY 2007. Point Lookout and Assateague State Parks incurred significant unfunded expenses as a result of tropical storm Ernesto. Point Lookout had estimated damages of \$538,000, and Assateague incurred approximately \$105,000 in dune damage. Sandy Point repaired a water tower at an estimated cost of \$12,000; Seneca Creek State Park must replace its HVAC system at an estimated cost of \$15,000.

Unusually high bacteria levels reported by the local Health Departments necessitated that the Maryland Park Service temporarily close the swimming areas at Sandy Point, Elk Neck and Gunpowder Falls State Parks. The temporary closure of the swimming areas resulted in an estimated revenue loss of \$84,000.

MPS estimated that Tropical Storm Ernesto reduced attendance and thus Park Service revenue by \$206,000. Seafood Festival organizers have successfully lobbied the Governor's Office to change the service charge from \$5.00 a head to \$5.00 per car. They estimate that this change will result in the loss of at least \$67,000 of revenue for the three day Seafood Festival at Sandy Point.

- Tropical Storm Ernesto lost revenue \$206,000
- Temporary closure of swim area due to unhealthy water \$84,000
- Seafood Festival Service charge reduction \$67,000

The following are examples of infrastructure failure at just one State Park, the Fair Hill NRMA in Cecil County, which will cause increased costs in the future, including the following backlog of almost \$1.7 million:

Description	Projects	Cost
▪ Numerous headwalls & culverts in NRMA road & trail system	10	\$181,000
▪ Bridge abutment failures caused by lack of shoreline protection	4	\$100,000
▪ Bridge Failures/Replacements	2	\$307,000
▪ Septic system failures	2	\$30,000
▪ Road resurfacing	15	\$1,024,661
▪ HVAC Replacement/Boiler Replacements	2	\$46,000

In Gunpowder Falls State Park, roads at Graces Quarters Road in Chase (Hammerman /Dundee Creek), and Bunker Hill Road in the Hereford area need repair or replacement.

Assateague State Park had a failing septic system in the summer of 2007 that cost the MPS \$15,000 to replace. An inoperable septic system would cause the MPS to close two camping loops, evacuate the campers, and shut down the dumping station.

Pocomoke River State Park's Shad Landing Area had or has several problems:

- Emergency well repairs are needed due to aging water line cost the MPS nearly \$11,000 in FY2008. The well is the main water supply for the entire Shad Landing Area.

- A failing hot water heater in FY 2007 became inoperable and required replacement on a Friday evening just before campers began to arrive for their weekend vacation. Emergency repairs cost the MPS more than \$3,000 to repair.
- A failed septic system at a dump station requires the park to hire a contractor to come in and pump the system daily so service to the public can continue. Until the system is funded and replaced, the park will have to reallocate funding from other sources within their operating budget. This expense can be more than \$500 on busy weekends.

A failing automatic gate at Janes Island State park compromises the security of campers and the facility by allowing access to unauthorized persons throughout the night. Cost to replace the system is more than \$30,000.

A failed fish cleaning station at the Somers Cove Marina causes Marina Management to hire a seasonal employee to manually haul fish remains from the cleaning station out to the Sound in a small boat. This action costs the Marina more than \$10,000 a year for the salary and maintenance and operation of the boat.

There has been a steady reduction of funding for replacement and new equipment, from \$505,130 in Fiscal Year 2003 to \$82,310 in Fiscal Year 2007, resulting in more frequent breakdowns of older equipment. Staff reductions over this period make equipment needs more critical.

While all sectors of the economy and average citizens are feeling the impacts of higher fuel costs, the MPS is especially affected in a period of reduced budgets and manpower. Utility costs for commercial customers are rising from 26% to 56%, and the MPS appropriations for fuel have risen from \$2.8 million in FY 2003, to \$4.5 million in FY 2008, a 60.7% increase.

In June 2006 the MPS Assistant Superintendent reported a summary of the many problems associated with the decline in funding for the Parks:<sup>5</sup>

“While MPS operating costs have increased significantly, much of the MPS budget has remained the same or decreased. The MPS has been challenged to cover any increases in costs or allocations by generating additional revenue. To that end, MPS has maximized amounts charged and expanded charges to the extent of visitor tolerance and MPS ability. This has in part stimulated an increase in the number of internal and external requests for Service Charge Waivers (free use).

“The MPS has become routinely dependent on the Forest or Park Reserve Fund to cover fiscal needs. This has depleted a reserve that historically was made available for emergencies and unanticipated revenue short falls due to weather and or facility failures.

“The rapid and unanticipated decline in full time MPS staffing {and the associated funding} has created an increasing dependence on seasonal part time staff and volunteers. However, the continuing decline in fiscal allocations for funding seasonal staff {object 02} creates a dilemma in providing visitor services, maintaining facilities and performing resource management. The knowledge, experience and availability of seasonal [staff] and volunteers significantly impacts services at each of these levels.

“MPS facilities continue to show visible cosmetic deterioration due to lack of adequate funding and staff. This situation has not only contributed to the cosmetic deterioration of facilities, but potentially more serious, it has caused indefinite postponements in the performance of necessary

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<sup>5</sup> Email, Rusty Ruszin to Rick Barton, June 30, 2006, “MARYLAND PARK SERVICE - A VIEW IN THE SUMMER OF 2006.”

preventative maintenance on infrastructure {sewage systems, water systems, HVAC systems, buildings, roofs, pavilions, natural & cultural resources, recreational amenities, etc.}. **Thus facility failures occur, requiring emergency expenditures, interruptions to visitor services and negative impacts on revenue.**

“The decline in allocations in Objects 10 and 11 {replacement & additional equipment} further exacerbates work accomplishments. Staff reductions make equipment needs more critical so as to work more efficiently and safely. Equipment breakdowns occur more frequently, requiring emergency expenditures and interruptions to visitor and resource management responsibilities.

“Fleet Management's recent delegation of responsibility {without funding} to the MPS for replacement of vehicles over ¾ ton has placed an additional burden on an already austere budget. The reality of actually finding funds for these replacements will be inconsistent and unscheduled.”

“The cost of gasoline has far exceeded the cost on which budgets were developed. Yet increasing visitor services, increasing property requirements, shared equipment and fewer staff requires increased mobility.”

There has been a significant impact of budget cuts on MPS staff morale, rates of retention of long-term staff, recruitment, and the overall personnel costs for managing the State Parks. The following samples of comments made during exit interviews with Park Rangers and staff that have left the MPS during lean budget years, are evidence of major personnel retention problems:

*Not making a difference, not enough interaction with the public, only got to do busy work. On duty until 12:30a.m.on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Not law enforcement trained.*

*Did not like the Operations aspect of the park, or the “security guard” assignment. Returned as a seasonal to do what she wanted, which was interpretation.*

*Used as a Security Guard, felt like she had no protection, not even verbal judo.*

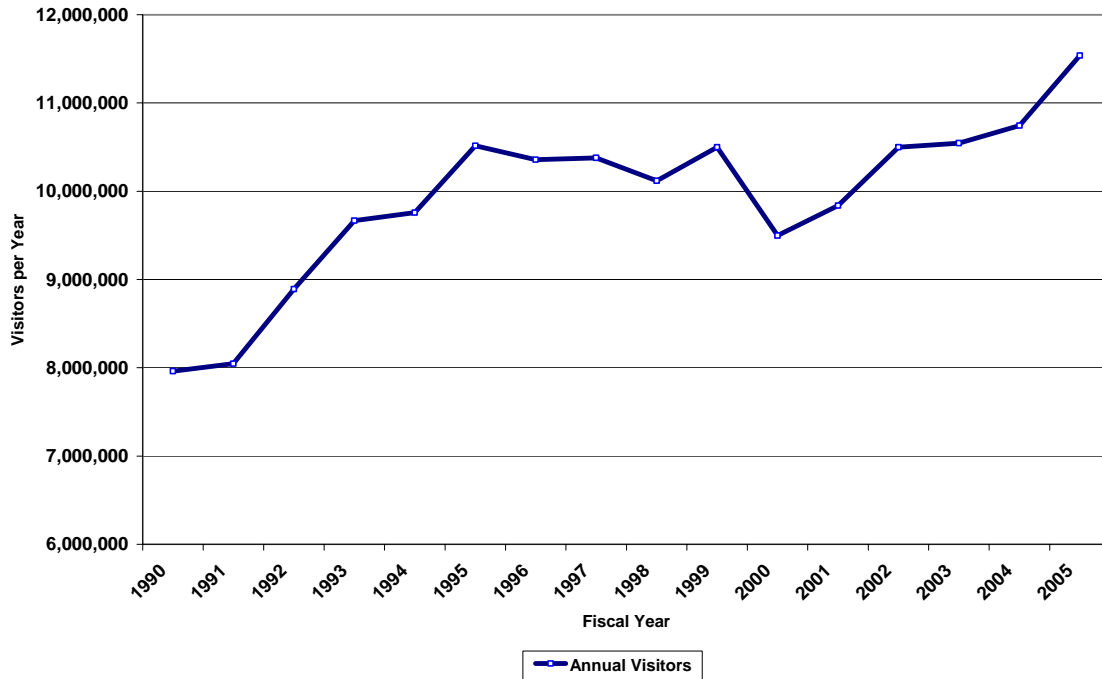
*Qualifications too high for actual job assignments.*

*Absolute only assignment was Maintenance- did not feel that the job description matched the duties. Excellent staff member and would have gone far w/ the MPS.*

*The salary structure is almost impossible to climb.*

As DNR continues to acquire new lands for State Parks through Program Open Space, and park attendance increases with an expanding population and out of state visitors, these problems are likely to increase without additional funding to hire, train and retain qualified staff.

**State Park Attendance**

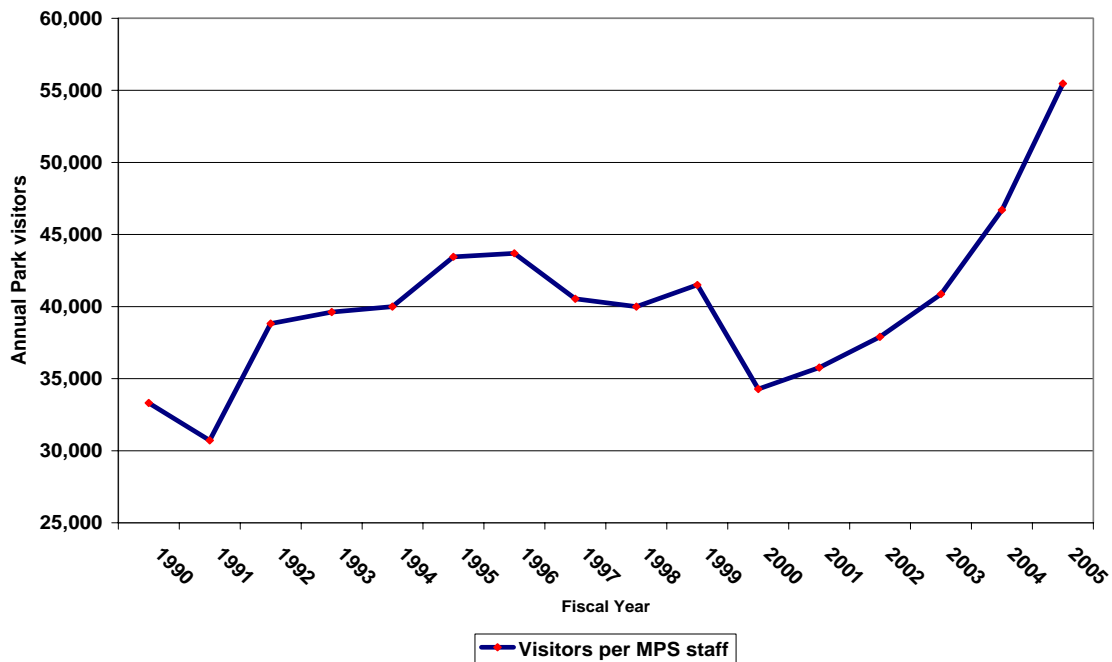


**MPS Full Time Staff**



The above charts show that as State Park attendance has grown over time, the number of State Park personnel to provide service to these visitors has diminished. In 1991 there were 30,714 visitors per full time State park staff. This has increased to 55,471 visitors per full time staff in 2005, an increase of 80% in 14 years.

Visitors per MPS staff



**The impact of budget cuts on State Park Operations**

In the Department’s Budget Presentation in February 2007, DNR indicated that without new funding to overcome prior funding and staff reductions,

“The Maryland Park Service will:

- Close visitor centers
- Stop guarding swimming areas
- Reduce hours of operation
- End Scales & Tales programming
- Reduce Access to or close some parks entirely”

The following are specific examples of the impacts of the current funding levels on park operations, and on the citizens of Maryland who use the State Parks:

Twelve MPS swimming areas will be posted “swim at your own risk” (reducing expenditures by \$379,000 and eliminating 64 seasonal lifeguards). Seven Visitor/interpretive centers will be closed (reducing expenditures by \$230,800 and eliminating 19 seasonal positions). Several marinas, boating and fishing areas will reduce hours of operation or close (reducing expenditures by \$104,600 and eliminating 12 seasonal positions). The Scales & Tales Program and its aviary centers will close (reducing expenditures by \$292,000 and creating a \$95,000 revenue reduction and eliminating 7 seasonal positions). General MPS operation reductions will result in the reduction of expenditures by \$822,500 and the elimination of 9 positions.

**State Parks at Risk**

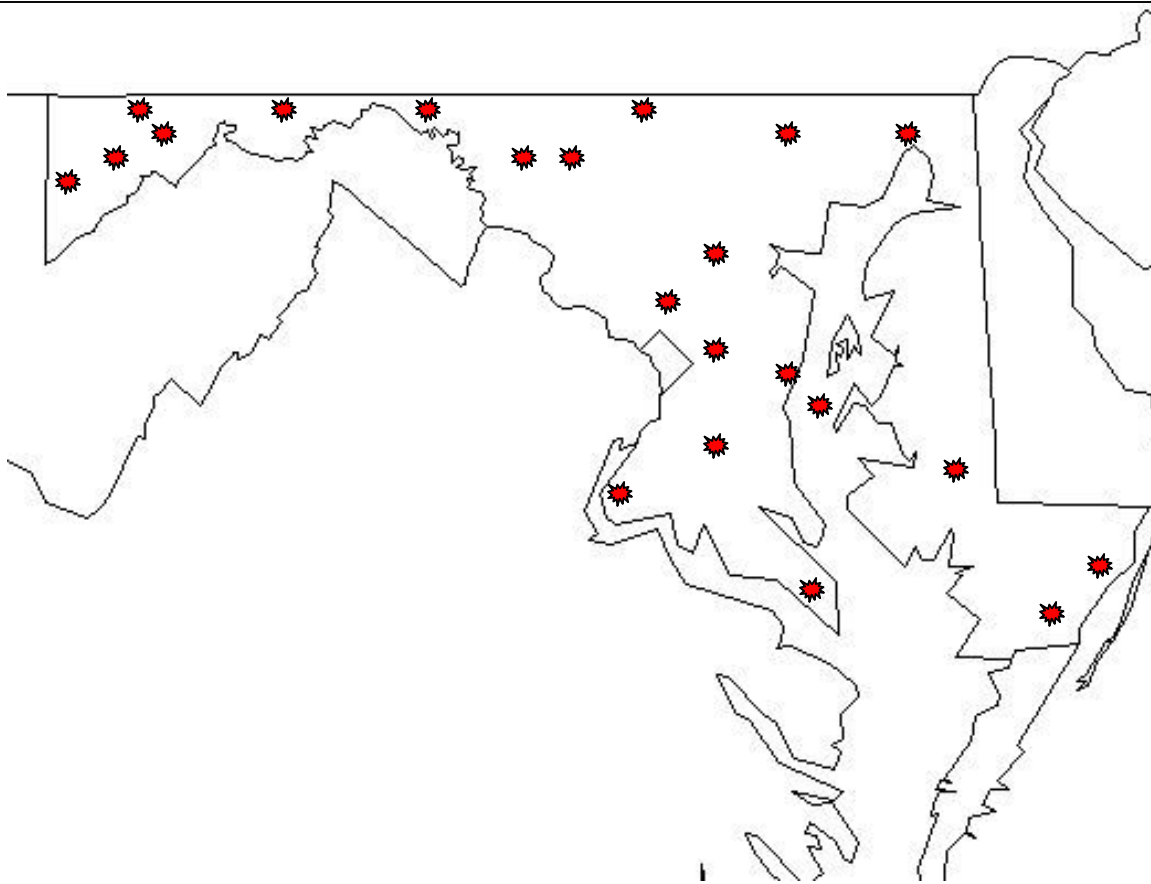
**Close visitor and interpretive centers**

(\$230,800 savings, 1 full time equivalent, 18 seasonal positions)

	<u>Positions</u>	<u>Savings</u>
○ Monkton Train Station (visitors center) at Gunpowder Falls State Park	1	\$30,500
○ Takos Visitor Center at North Point State Park	1	\$37,300
○ Janes Island State Park visitor center	4	\$20,000

○ Fort Frederick State Park visitor center	1	\$12,000
○ Point Lookout State Park visitor center	3	\$28,000
○ Merkle Visitor Center	0	\$13,000
○ Deep Creek Lake Discovery Center	3	\$40,000
○ Central Region will reduce office hours (9 a.m. – 3 p.m.) at 5 locations	5	\$30,000
○ New Germany State Park Lake House	1	\$20,000
<b>Eliminate guarded swimming areas</b>		
(\$379,000 savings, 64 seasonal positions)		
○ Hammerman area of Gunpowder Falls State Park	7	\$40,000
○ Assateague State Park	10	\$70,000
○ Cunningham Falls State Park	7	\$50,000
○ Greenbrier State Park	9	\$52,000
○ Rocky Gap State Park	4	\$24,000
○ New Germany State Park	2	\$9,000
○ Herrington Manor State Park	2	\$5,000
○ Deep Creek Lake State Park	2	\$9,000
○ Sandy Point State Park	10	\$69,000
○ Point Lookout State Park	3	\$10,000
○ Pocomoke River State Park swimming pool	8	\$35,000
○ Dan's Mountain State Park swimming pool	0	\$6,000
<b>Close or reduce operations at several marinas, boating and fishing areas</b>		
(\$104,600 savings, 12 seasonal positions)		
○ Boat Center at Seneca Creek State Park	2	\$33,600
○ Dundee Creek Marina Building at Gunpowder Falls State Park	2	\$22,500
○ Rogue Harbor Marina Building at Elk Neck State Park	2	\$22,500
○ Reduce marina operations (by 2 months) at Sandy Point State Park	6	\$20,000
○ Limit to daylight hours only the fishing pier operation at Point Lookout State Park	0	\$6,000
<b>Eliminate Scales &amp; Tales Program</b> (\$ 292,000 savings)		
(1 full time equivalent, 6 seasonal positions & \$95,000 revenue reduction)		
○ Statewide Direction Operating Budget	0	\$107,000
○ Soldiers Delight NRMA Aviary	3	\$99,000
○ Rocky Gap State Park Aviary	1	\$17,000
○ Cunningham Falls State Park Aviary	1	\$30,000
○ Tuckahoe State Park Aviary	0	\$5,000
○ Pocomoke River State Park Aviary	2	\$34,000
<b>General operational reductions</b> (\$822,500 savings, 9 positions)		
○ Deep Creek Lake State Park MES charges total \$230,000 yet 3 of 6 comfort stations primarily serve Deep Creek Lake NRMA; therefore, move ½ of MES charges (\$115,000) to Deep Creek Lake NRMA	0	\$115,000
○ Eliminate MPS patrol of the Appalachian Trail	2	\$6,000
○ Eliminate seasonal assistance at Greenwell State Park	1	\$12,000
○ Eliminate new horticultural plantings and visitor tours at the Tawes Garden:	1	\$9,500
○ Increase vacancies by filling current & anticipated HQ vacancies by internal recruitment & promotion without filling the resulting vacancies	5	\$540,000
○ Eight MPS LEO employees are projected to enter the drop during FY08 eliminating the contribution to the LEOPS retirement system	0	\$140,000

## Geographic Impact of Maryland State Park FY'08 Budget Reductions



 = Maryland State Parks Impacted

### Impacts of staff reductions

While annual attendance at Maryland State Parks increased to an all time high of nearly 12 million, parks lost 25 % of their full time staff between 2002 and 2005. This situation is likely to get worse if funding is not restored, since more than 50% of the 37 staff in leadership positions in the MPS are currently eligible or will be eligible for retirement by the end of FY 2010. Immediate funding is needed to hire more staff to train new leaders to assume management of parks.<sup>6</sup>

Work Group members described the implications of this. They said:

*“[The State] is responsible for the well being of visitors who put themselves, their children and their grandchildren, in their care at state parks. The scary fact is that with 12 million visitors last year that means there was 1 full time park staff person for every 67,796 visitors! How many of our legislators would want to go camping with family under those circumstances, especially if they knew that not only is there often no law enforcement on the property, there are times when there is no staff on the property.”*

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix IV

Members of the Work Group noted that, in some Maryland State Parks today, there is little or no official MPS presence on-the-ground.

*“If a visiting family has a problem in a State park, there is no one in the park to help them. It’s a public safety issue.”*

*“Maryland’s Parks are places of Democracy. All citizens have equal access and an opportunity to participate. Our demographics are changing and the MPS must keep up with the changing needs.”*

### **New challenges**

The decisions of the military Base Relocation and Closure Commission (BRAC) will result in an influx of thousands of new citizens to Maryland, including those with working class and high-tech jobs. These people will need outdoor places to visit, recreate and learn about Maryland’s rich natural resources. State Parks are an essential part of the public infrastructure of amenities that need to be supported to accommodate this population growth.

In the past, Maryland’s school systems had an “outdoor environmental education” curriculum requirement, which brought many school children to State and local parks and outdoor places for meeting these requirements. A Work Group member predicted that State Parks will be a primary resource for meeting future curriculum requirements for outdoor environmental education.

### **Maryland’s standing among other State Park Systems**

In November 2006, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism Sciences of Texas A&M University prepared a detailed report entitled, “Trends in Texas’ Expenditures for State Parks and Recreation Services.”<sup>7</sup> It tracked revenues and expenditures of all 50 states between 1990 and 2005, based on the National Association of State Park Directors’ Annual Information Exchange Data for this period. This report shows a significant decline in Maryland’s national standing in several categories, when compared to other States, as shown in the following charts and Tables.

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<sup>7</sup> *Trends in Texas’ Expenditures for State Park and Recreation Services*, John L. Crompton, and Juddson Culpepper, Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences, Texas A&M University, November 2006.



**Table 4. Maryland's Rank with other State Parks**

<b>Selected Measure or Indicator</b>	<b>15 year rank</b>	<b>16 year rank</b>	<b>2004 rank</b>	<b>2005 rank</b>	<b>Change in rank</b>
Capital expenditures for Parks and Recreation	7		10		-3
Per capita Capital expenditures for Park and Recreation	6		10		-4
Total Expenditures for State Parks as % of Total Expenditures	10		24		-14
Total Expenditures for State Parks		9		18	-9
Operating Expenditures for State Parks		11		14	-3
Per Capita Operating Expenditures for State parks		16		21	-5
Total Capital Investment		6		20	-14
Fixed Capital Outlays		9		15	-6
Per Capita Expenditures for State Parks		10		23	-13
Per Capita Capital Expenditures for State Parks		6		29	-23

(Rank was determined on a 15 year mean for some measures between 1990 and 2004, or a 16 year mean for other measures between 1990 and 2005, where data was available)  
 Source: Texas A&M University, Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism Studies

### **Maryland's ability to fund State Parks**

On October 31, 2006 the Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute presented a conference on *Understanding the Maryland Budget Process*, in which Henry Bogdan showed that "Maryland lags the nation on revenues as a % of Income." The charts below show that Maryland's median household income has raised substantially over the past 17 years, while overall revenue sources have remained stable and appropriations of operating funds for Maryland parks have declined substantially. The Work Group believes that Marylanders can afford to restore the State's reputation as one the leading State Park Systems in the Nation, and due to the significant contribution State Parks make to the general economy, they can't afford not to.

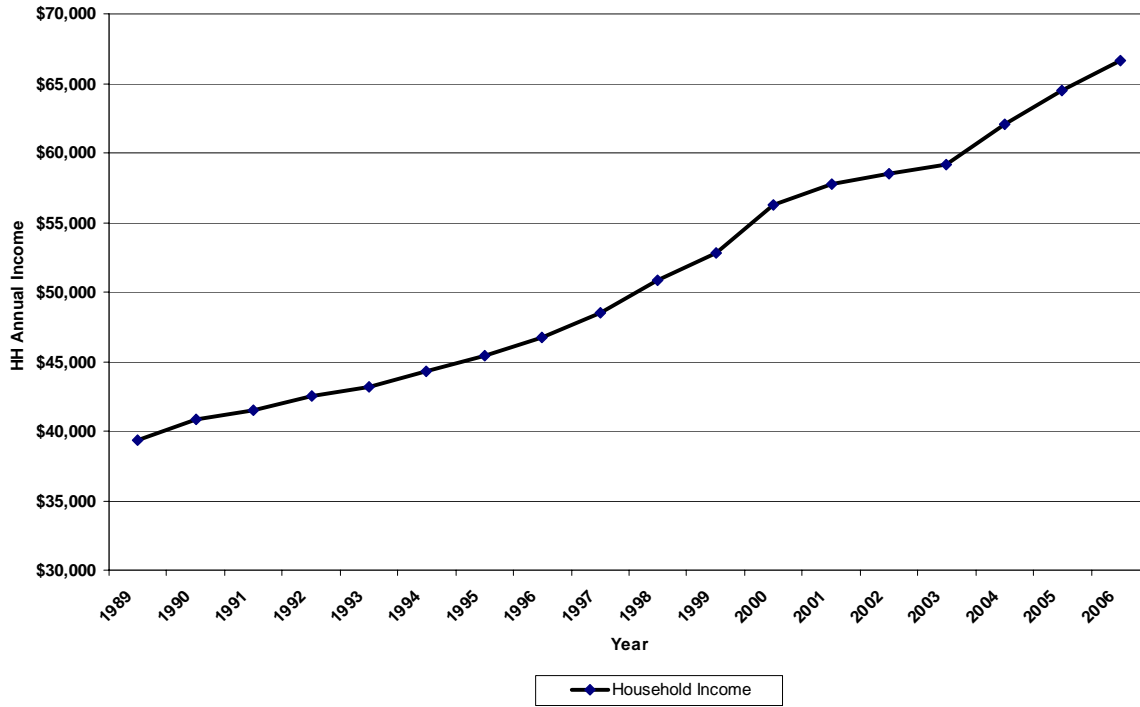
**State and Local "Own-Source"  
General Revenues as % of Personal Income\*  
Fiscal Year 2005**

State	Revenue (millions)	Revenue/Income	
		Percentage	Rank
Alabama	\$20,162	15.19%	35
Alaska	\$7,272	31.70%	1
Arizona	\$25,538	14.92%	37
Arkansas	\$11,695	16.09%	24
California	\$215,526	16.56%	17
Colorado	\$24,686	14.53%	41
Connecticut	\$23,170	14.25%	45
Delaware	\$5,459	18.07%	6
Florida	\$90,962	15.57%	29
Georgia	\$39,606	14.49%	42
Hawaii	\$7,590	17.80%	9
Idaho	\$6,423	16.27%	20
Illinois	\$65,361	14.46%	43
Indiana	\$31,917	16.67%	16
Iowa	\$15,042	16.22%	21
Kansas	\$13,518	15.34%	31
Kentucky	\$17,715	15.42%	30
Louisiana	\$22,029	17.74%	10
Maine	\$7,207	18.01%	7
<b>Maryland</b>	<b>\$31,733</b>	<b>13.95%</b>	<b>47</b>
Massachusetts	\$39,930	14.59%	40
Michigan	\$52,790	16.05%	25
Minnesota	\$30,084	15.98%	26
Mississippi	\$11,793	16.55%	18
Missouri	\$25,368	14.32%	44
Montana	\$4,285	16.20%	22
Nebraska	\$9,594	16.84%	14
Nevada	\$13,134	15.78%	28
New Hampshire	\$6,089	12.57%	50
New Jersey	\$55,812	14.97%	36
New Mexico	\$9,750	18.66%	5
New York	\$144,874	19.30%	3
North Carolina	\$39,828	15.23%	34
North Dakota	\$3,276	17.08%	13
Ohio	\$59,981	16.68%	15
Oklahoma	\$15,242	14.77%	38
Oregon	\$18,070	15.81%	27
Pennsylvania	\$64,777	15.27%	32
Rhode Island	\$6,041	16.18%	23
South Carolina	\$20,521	17.54%	12
South Dakota	\$3,153	12.77%	49
Tennessee	\$24,596	13.71%	48
Texas	\$103,335	14.15%	46
Utah	\$11,794	17.98%	8
Vermont	\$3,511	17.58%	11
Virginia	\$40,614	14.73%	39
Washington	\$33,935	15.26%	33
West Virginia	\$8,805	18.76%	4
Wisconsin	\$29,620	16.39%	19
Wyoming	\$4,269	23.29%	2
District of Columbia	\$5,290	17.38%	
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>\$1,582,770</b>	<b>15.84%</b>	

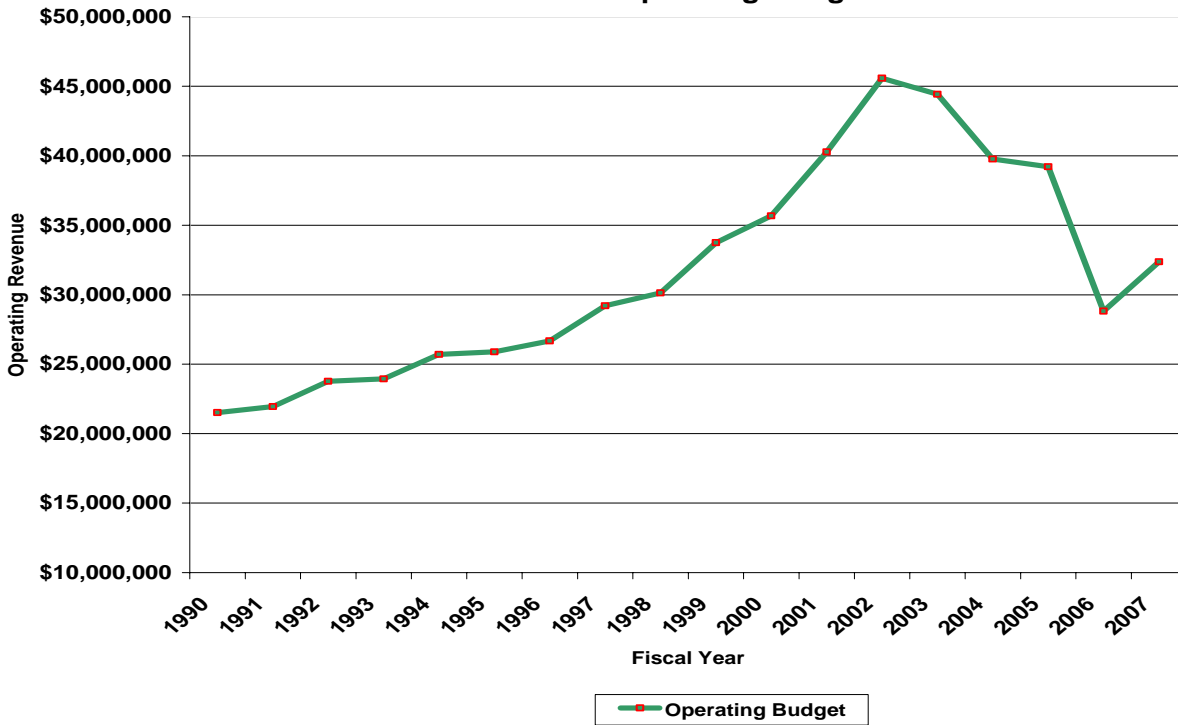
\* Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute, August 2007

Prepared by the Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute,  
a project of the Maryland Association of Nonprofit  
Organizations  
For information contact Henry Bogdan, Director of Public  
Policy,  
at 410-727-6367, ext 18  
Calculations by the Maryland Budget and Tax Policy  
Institute  
FY 2005 Personal Income Data from U.S. Bureau of  
Economic Analysis,  
(U.S. Dept of Commerce) quarterly estimates for Fiscal  
Year 2005 (MD), at  
<http://www.bea.gov/regional/sqpi/default.cfm?sqtable=SQ1>  
FY 2005 "Own-Source" General Revenue for State and  
Local Governments,  
from U.S. Census Bureau, State and Local Government  
Finances: 2004-05, at  
<http://www.census.gov/govs/www/estimate05.html>  
Population estimate as of July 1, 2005 from U.S. Census  
Bureau,  
Annual Population Estimates 2000 to 2006, at  
<http://www.census.gov/popest/states/NST-ann-est.html>

### Median Household Income - Maryland



### MPS Operating Budget



**Table 5. Maryland's Park Expenditures compared to other Top Tier State Parks**

State	Population 2006 Est.*	Income Med. '06 Household	State Parks 2005		State Park Expenditures FY 2005 (\$1000s)		
			Parks	Total Acres	Capital	Operations	Total
California	36,457	\$56,645	278	1,554,401	\$120,453	\$273,834	\$394,287
<b>Florida</b>	18,090	\$45,495	160	695,997	\$43,785	\$71,942	\$115,727
Kentucky	4,206	\$39,372	52	58,413	\$11,665	\$79,282	\$90,947
<b>Maryland</b>	5,615	\$65,144	49	130,000	\$12,692	\$37,567#	\$50,259
Missouri	5,842	\$42,841	49	136,153	\$8,134	\$29,410	\$38,167
New Jersey	8,724	\$64,470	115	397,332	\$43,387	\$33,942	\$77,329
New York	19,306	\$51,384	950	1,366,571	\$49,531	\$164,896	\$214,427
No. Carolina	8,856	\$42,625	64	187,430	\$26,258	\$34,250	\$60,508
<b>Ohio</b>	11,478	\$44,532	74	174,214	\$21,005	\$66,477	\$98,280
Pennsylvania	12,440	\$46,259	120	290,600	\$28,819	\$68,050	\$96,869
Tennessee	6,038	\$40,315	53	103,113	\$5,774	\$60,692	\$66,837
Texas	23,507	\$44,922	113	588,621	\$26,329	\$51,355	\$77,687
Washington	6,396	\$52,583	46	71,978	\$21,379	\$45,518	\$70,792

\* In thousands

# not including POS special funds for operations

## OPTIONS FOR FULL FUNDING OF MARYLAND PARK SERVICE OPERATIONS

The Work Group and MPS Staff have reviewed a number of studies and reports identifying a broad range of revenue sources and techniques for funding park operations and capital facilities. The following is a general summary of the more common options considered by the Work Group, and comments about these options regarding their potential and applicability in Maryland.

In assessing these options, the Group considered a number of factors, including:

- Potential to reach the *Vision*
- Relative revenue potential
- Benefits of revenue source
- Ability to clean up backlog of deferred maintenance, equipment, etc.
- Sustainability and predictability of revenues for growing operations, maintenance, capital improvements and expansion of parks
- Political Feasibility, (e.g. support from the Governor, legislature, park users, and the public)
- Susceptibility to diversion to other budget priorities in down economy
- Whether increase in revenue would supplant existing sources
- Affordability (e.g. debt affordability for bond financing)
- Implementation costs
- Impacts on citizens and interest groups
- Impacts on state budget (e.g. taxes, debt service, competition)
- Impacts on park use (environmental, public use, sustainability)

### Summary – most common funding options for State and Local Parks

#### General Funds

- 44 states receive some General Fund appropriations. (Maryland receives 50% of total operating budget from General Fund). Only Alabama, Florida, Michigan, Montana, Oregon, and New Hampshire receive no General Fund support.

### **Park Fees**

- 42 states charge an entrance or parking fee (Maryland utilizes visitor service charges). Only Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania do not charge an entrance or parking fee. (These fees are also visitor and resource management tools – not just revenue tools)

### **Vehicle and vessel licensing and fuel**

- 20 states receive a portion of the funds from their snowmobile, off road vehicle or boat registration fees. (Maryland receives Waterway Improvement funds for boating amenities only)
- 18 states receive a portion of the funds from their state's motor fuel tax.
- 17 states receive a portion of the funds from motor vehicle license/permit fees

### **Property Taxes**

- In the past 10 years, 541 state and local governments have enacted increases in property taxes through ballot initiatives or referenda to support funding for open space, parks and recreation.
- For laws passed by public election, property tax increases are the most favored option (44.6%). Citizens throughout the U.S. have shown repeatedly that they are willing to tax themselves and their own property to provide parks, recreation and open space.<sup>8</sup>

### **Bond proceeds**

- In the past 10 years, bond bills have been enacted by ballot initiative or public referendum in 478 state and local jurisdictions. This option is the second most preferred after property tax increases when voters go to the polls in support of open space, parks and recreation. Approval rates for ballot measures and referenda for these purposes have averaged 75% in favor over the past ten years, ranging from 90% in 1999 to 74.4% in 2006.<sup>9</sup>

### **Other funding options**

- General Funds Appropriations
- Tax Check-off
- Impact Fees
- Sales Tax
- Land / Property Transfer Tax
- Hotel / Lodging Tax
- Grants
- Private Sources
- Lottery / Gaming
- Leasing Public Lands
- Trust Funds / Endowments
- Revenues: Direct and Indirect
- Special Fees
  - License plate sales
  - Hunting / Fishing License Fees
  - User stamps

### **Work Group Assessment of Options**

In two days of workshops attended by the Work Group, key DNR Officials and MPS staff, these experts reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of the options above, along with others suggested by the group. The following is a summary of this assessment.

### **Other options offered for consideration**

A few other options were offered by members of the Work Group for consideration, including:

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<sup>8</sup> Trust for Public Lands, LandVote Database, 2007

<sup>9</sup> TPL, LandVote, ibid

- Partnerships with State and local agencies with compatible missions, and ability to help fund park operations and programs, including environmental education, community health (e.g. childhood obesity), environmental protection and climate change, tourism and public safety.
- Stewardship funds committing a certain portion of acquisition funds for maintenance and operations of new parks (e.g. Nature Conservancy preserves).
- Federal grants for programs that can be implemented in Maryland State Parks, e.g. *No Child Left Inside* (proposed), Chesapeake Bay, *Save America's Treasures* (historic preservation).
- Reinstate nature and heritage tourism initiatives in partnership with state and local agencies.
- Linkage with proposed new State legislation with potential large revenue streams for purposes compatible with State Parks, especially for:
  - Lottery and slot machines
  - Increase in State sales tax
  - Increase in Program Open Space Real Estate Transfer tax and closing of *controlling interest* loophole.

### **General funds**

General funds currently make up 50% of total revenues for Maryland State Park operations. While they may be the easiest and most appropriate source for the core operating functions of the Maryland State Park System, they are also the most vulnerable to diversion by the legislature. They are subject to significant fluctuations with the economy, and park operations must compete with all other state programs and functions that use general funds. They need to be supplemented with other revenue sources that are more sustainable and predictable, and that grow with inflation and increasing demands for the use of existing parks and future acquisitions. The ability to obtain any substantial increase in general funds in the 2008 General Assembly will be difficult due to the reported \$1.5 billion projected shortfall and other competing demands. The Work Group recommends “holding the line” on the existing amount of general funds appropriated for Parks, unless new sources of general revenues close this gap, such as from slot machines or a sales tax increase.

### **Real estate transfer tax**

An increase in the POS real estate transfer tax from 0.5% to 0.6% has been proposed by legislators in the recent past, along with a closing of the “controlling interest loophole” for LLCs and other entities. Another bill proposing these changes is expected in the 2008 legislative session. There are several advantages for changing the existing real estate transfer tax in ways that will help pay for park operations and maintenance, including

- Allowing the use of the 0.1% increase for park operations and maintenance could produce several million annually for park operations and maintenance, and help clear up a \$10 million backlog in deferred maintenance and equipment.
- There would be a direct link between the demonstrated increase in real estate values near or adjacent to state parks, and the proposed 0.6% real estate transfer tax levied on the sale of these properties.<sup>10</sup>
- An increase in the transfer tax would continue land acquisition for new parks without diverting additional POS revenues to capital improvements or operations.
- There is a strong rationale for sharing an increase in transfer tax for park operations. Acquiring more parks requires additional funds to manage these lands. The POS transfer tax law was

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<sup>10</sup> The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space, Trust for Public Land, Constance T.F. de Brun  
[http://www.tpl.org/tier3\\_cdl.cfm?content\\_item\\_id=1145&folder\\_id=727](http://www.tpl.org/tier3_cdl.cfm?content_item_id=1145&folder_id=727)

originally enacted to support parks and open space, with the concept that when a family buys a house they help buy and improve their local and state parks, which are then used by these residents.

- Closing the controlling interest loophole for limited liability corporations (LLCs) provides additional funds that will benefit other companies, e.g. sporting goods manufacturers and retailers, recreation goods suppliers, etc. Closing the loophole will treat all corporate property transfers equally and equitably.

The Work Group strongly recommends that a fair share of the additional revenue generated by an increase in the real estate transfer tax and closing of the controlling interest loophole be dedicated to critical maintenance and operations of the Maryland State Parks. In order to gain support for this increase and the dedicated use of the transfer tax funds, local governments should have the option to use an increase in the funds generated by closing the controlling interest loophole at the local level for their park operations and critical maintenance.

### **Sales Taxes**

Proposals for the 2008 legislative session to increase the Maryland Sales Tax from 5% to 6% have been reported in news media. It has been estimated that a 1% increase would raise general fund revenues by approximately \$750 million annually.

In Missouri, voters passed a referendum in 1984 that created a 1/10 cent sales tax with the proceeds dedicated to state parks and the prevention and correction of soil erosion problems. The fund generates approximately \$82 million annually split equally between parks and soil conservation.

Voters in Arkansas passed a referendum in 1998 that created a dedicated fund for operations and capital programs based on a 1/8 cent sales tax, which produces about \$68 million annually. If a bill to increase the Maryland sales tax is introduced in 2008, it would represent an opportunity to encourage the Governor and members of the General Assembly to dedicate a portion of the revenues for park operations and maintenance, as other states have done. Just 1% of the overall increase (or *a Penny for the Parks*), could produce more than \$7 million annually for State Park operations. Dedicating a share of the increase to the parks could help sell the need for the increase to the public.

### **Bond funds**

Proceeds from the sale of bonds are typically limited to capital projects, land acquisition or infrastructure enhancement, and are not available for core operations costs (e.g. salaries, routine maintenance or equipment). However, bond proceeds could be used to free up uses of the Forest or Park Reserve Fund or general fund revenues for capital improvements or major critical maintenance projects, if approved by the legislature. However, while the 25% share of POS Stateside revenues produced about \$36 million for capital projects in FY2007, the law limits the use of these funds to \$1.2 million for park operations. With this limit on these funds, together with the cutbacks in special and general funds, the current MPS staff only has the capacity to manage about \$4 million in capital improvement projects annually.

General obligation bonds (GO bonds) are much preferred for park infrastructure capital projects over other non-PAYGO forms of financing, such as dedicated revenue bonds or variable rate bonds for capital park projects.<sup>11</sup> Dedicated revenue bonds also count against the State's debt affordability limit, but a portion of future revenues from the real estate transfer tax would be removed from open space or park use, sacrificing future revenues to pay current needs. GO bonds are also easier to administer without a separate funding authority, and have more favorable terms than dedicated revenue bonds.

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<sup>11</sup> See *Bond Funding for Land Conservation*, Maryland DNR, Capital Grants and Loans Administration, August 2002.

An amendment to the Program Open Space law in 1990 allowed up to 25% of the stateside portion of POS transfer tax funds to be used for capital improvements on DNR land. In 1995 the law was further amended to allow “*up to 12.5% of the State’s share of funds available for capital improvements may be used to operate State forests and parks, under certain limits.*” (e.g. 12.5% of 25% of the stateside funds, or 3.125% of stateside POS funds). However, since 1990 these new special funds were treated by DBM as a new source of PAYGO funds to offset and supplant GO bonds previously used for State Park capital improvements. As a result, GO bonds for DNR capital projects declined from \$7 million in FY 1991 to \$1.1 million in FY 1995, and are no longer used for State Park projects. If additional bond funds for capital infrastructure were to be authorized, the General Assembly should consider reinstating this amount to the original POS law’s provision to the language cited above, which would have allowed about \$4.3 million for operations in the FY2007 budget.

Any new GO bonds authorized specifically for clearing up the \$10 million backlog in needed critical deferred maintenance for the parks should be dedicated to enhancing rather than supplanting existing POS special funds for these projects.

### **Lottery, Gaming and Slots**

Lottery proceeds are used to support State parks and open space in Arizona, Colorado, Maine, Minnesota and Oregon. 44% of Oregon’s annual operating and capital expenditures for parks are from lottery revenues. In Maryland lottery revenue has been used for debt service on bonds to construct the Baltimore stadiums for the Ravens and Orioles, so a link to sports and recreation has been made.

The Work Group recommends further study of opportunities to fund the state parks with a share of the State lottery, if they can be guaranteed to be used for this purpose.

Legislation has been introduced in each session of the General Assembly for several years to allow slot machines at horse racing tracks and other locations, but none have been enacted. Some Governors and legislative leaders have supported slots and others have opposed them. The media have reported on future proposals for gambling on a limited scale expected in the 2008 Session. As discussed above, Oregon’s state lottery proceeds include revenues from video gaming machines, which are similar to slot machines.

If the State is to approve slots or gambling as a new income source, many of the visitors to Maryland and these venues are likely to visit state parks during their visit to the State. The Work Group recommends that a small portion of the total revenues be dedicated to State park operations and maintenance, to enhance the overall visitor experience.

### **Private Investment**

Corporate and other private contributions to State and local park systems are used extensively in St. Louis, Central Park in New York, and by the National Park Service’s National Park Foundation. Public-private ventures have been used by the U.S. Forest Service for more than ten years, and under Granger-Thye permits, private investments are expected to increase, providing funds for project development and operations.<sup>12</sup>

In Maryland, the Rocky Gap Lodge and Golf Course in Allegheny County is an example of a private partnership with DNR and MEDCO for the use of a State Park, which has produced mixed results as a model for support of the Maryland Park Service. At a smaller scale, the Maryland Curatorship Program has served as a national model for public park systems, and has been successful in attracting millions of dollars of private investment to restore abandoned or dilapidated historic and residential

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<sup>12</sup> Toolbox for the Great Outdoors, PPV – Private Investments in Public Recreation Facilities, (cite web site)



structures in the State parks, by allowing life estates for the private investors. It has also preserved many valuable historic properties that would otherwise have been too expensive to restore and maintain.

There are several advantages of increasing the use of private contributions or partnerships for State Parks, as well as some potential drawbacks. When leveraged through a private support foundation, state funds can raise private funds on a 50% - 50% basis. A strong independent support foundation or Trust Fund can insulate funds from diversion to other purposes, and can direct them to projects of greatest need or public benefit. Maryland is one of a few states that can create their own management authority for private activities, e.g. Baltimore Municipal Golf Corporation and MEDCO. There may be no need for private corporations to play this role.

However, private and corporation donations for, or use of State parks:

- Need extensive recognition of private donors
- May need state seed money to attract private investors
- May lead to inappropriate “corporate branding” of park facilities or services
- Could supplant existing state general or special funds for park operations or maintenance
- Could limit MPS’s participation in or control over the use of funds
- Could limit full public access and use of State’s park lands
- Funds from privatized use of parks often flow out of state, rather than benefit the parks
- May be a negligible source of sustainable or predictable income.

The Work Group recommends further exploration of private funding and partnership opportunities to support MPS operations, maintenance and capital improvements, but this source should only be a small piece of the overall budget, based on prior experience with this source. In some cases, these projects have resulted in higher costs to the parks than the ventures have produced in revenue, and have limited the use of public land for other valuable purposes.

## **Leasing**

The MPS and Maryland Forest Service manages hundreds of leases of State park and forest lands each year, for dwellings and other structures, agricultural lands, land fills, hunting, equestrian and limited use recreational purposes. DNR currently manages more than 470 lease agreements covering 23,733 acres, earning income of \$3 million annually. This revenue is reported into the Fair Hill Improvement Fund, the Forest or Park Reserve Fund, and the Natural Resources Property Management Fund. However, in the next two to four years income from the Days Cove rubble land fill agreement will end in Gunpowder Falls State Park diminishing this annual income to the \$2.2 million range.

DNR has recently increased leasing rates for agricultural, housing, hunting and other uses to market rate. Private leases of park facilities such as Rocky Gap, Woodmont Rod & Gun Club and North Bay, have not produced revenues that exceed maintenance and operations expenses. Some leases of State Parks, such as hunting leases, can be politically sensitive if certain groups pay for specific rights to use public lands for private use, while excluding others that might also want to use these lands for the same purpose.

The Work Group does not recommend a significant increase in private leases of State parks as a primary revenue source, considering the Vision and first recommendation of the Governors Special Commission on the Maryland State Parks: *“To maximize the benefits of the State Parks for citizens of all ages, and effectively preserve and promote the parks for the benefit of future generations of all Marylanders,”* and to *“Continue to favor resource management over recreation management.”*

## **Park fees and charges**

Increasing park user fees has been utilized in the recent past to supplant lost general fund and special fund revenues for operations and maintenance.

To justify increasing park revenues and fees, a cost-benefit study is needed. This study should evaluate:

- The economic value of state parks for nature and heritage tourism, recreation, and the revenues earned by hotels, equipment providers and related industries;
- The increased value of real property near or adjacent to state parks, and the increased property taxes attributable to this increase; and
- The attraction of Maryland as a location for businesses and residences for the amenities that state parks provide to job satisfaction and quality of life for employees and employers.

Some state park systems, including those in Alabama, Colorado, Hawaii, Indiana, Kansas, Nebraska and Vermont have managed to generate revenues from the state parks for more than 65% of total state park operating expenses in 2005.<sup>13</sup> However, due to some of the issues discussed by the Work Group below, a senior DNR official made clear that: *“We are not planning to go the way of West Virginia or Kentucky in privatizing state parks.”*

Other issues related to park fees and charges include:

- High park fees inhibit public use of the parks, and discriminate against some citizens more than others.
- Honor systems for collecting park revenues have not worked where there is insufficient staffing to watch the deposits.
- There may be some opportunities to enhance multiple year uses of parks for annual country fairs, bass tournaments, etc, but single use opportunities are limited.
- Differential pricing of camping fees or sites should be considered.
- Public Lands Stamps, for use of the parks by various user groups should be explored

## **Trust Funds**

Trust Funds are used for funding park operations and maintenance in California, Florida, Texas and other states. Florida’s park system has access to five different dedicated funds, including Conservation and Recreation Lands, Land Acquisition, the Florida Forever Trust, Grants and Donations and State Park operations. Florida is one state that receives no General Fund appropriations for operations or capital projects, but instead receives revenues through the Trust Funds from deed stamps (real estate transfer tax), bonds, gifts, grants and park revenues.

In Maryland, the Fair Hill Improvement Fund, the Forest or Park Reserve Fund, and the Natural Resource Property Management Fund, could be considered Trust Funds. They do not necessarily generate their own revenue, but are a way of holding and managing several revenue sources and reserving them exclusively for park purposes.

To operate well, Trust Funds often need to have a strong private foundation that can leverage private or other governmental funds, and safely manage the funds exclusively for park operations, maintenance and capital improvements.

The Work Group believes that Trust Funds:

- Work well when established with an endowment for land stewardship

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<sup>13</sup> *Trends in Texas’s Expenditures for State Park and Recreation Services, Op. Cit*

- Are most successful when funds are matched by State contributions
- Can be enhanced by periodic private fund raising campaigns
- Need a firewall to prevent diversion or use of funds for non-park purposes
- Need to be targeted to special programs or projects
- Can partner with local governments or state agencies and private foundations. (e.g. environmental education, health, environment)

The Work Group recommends further study of other opportunities to establish a Trust Fund, including examining the National Park Foundation as a potential model. A new Maryland State Parks Trust Fund should be considered in the long-term as a way of managing the proposed increase in the POS real estate transfer tax to produce sustained long term funding for State park operations and maintenance.

### **Income tax check-off**

Maryland has an income tax check-off for environmental purposes, which allows taxpayers to contribute any amount they wish to the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund. Contributions are distributed to the Chesapeake Bay Trust and DNR's Wildlife and Heritage Division. Contributions to this fund support projects to restore wetlands, plant trees and protect threatened plants and animals. The donations are divided evenly between the Chesapeake Bay Trust and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Often referred to as the "*Chickadee Check off*," the amount contributed reduces the amount of a taxpayer's refund or increases their taxes due.

A new dedicated tax check-off would require new legislation to determine how the revenue would be allocated. The current tax check-off programs produce relatively small amounts of revenues for the purpose.

Any substantial gains in revenues from a new income tax check-off may offset or supplant existing revenue sources for the State park operations. Any new check-off for the State park operations could be seen as competing with the existing programs for the Chesapeake Bay and endangered and threatened species.

### **Development impact fees**

In 2007 members of the Maryland General Assembly introduced legislation for a state impact fee, called the *Chesapeake Bay Green Fund* (House Bill 1220 and Senate Bill 901). It was a dedicated funding source for Bay-improvement practices that will help Maryland meet its Chesapeake 2000 Agreement (C2K) commitments, fund Tributary Strategy practices, and promote Smart Growth. The impact fee was to be levied on construction projects which added impervious surfaces, such as driveways, parking lots, etc. Passed with wide margin in the House, the bill did not come out of the Senate.

Impact fees on development are typically enacted by local governments pursuant to Adequate Public Facilities ordinances (APFOs), to cover costs of infrastructure, schools, and other facilities impacted by specific development projects. Case law has evolved to where most impact fees levied by local governments require a nexus between the specific projects that cause the impact, and the use of these fees to help pay for facilities needed to relieve these impacts. They cannot be used for general park income everywhere. An example of a State law requiring impact fees is the Forest Conservation Management Act, which requires either on-site mitigation of woodlands lost through development, or contributions into a local forest mitigation fund. However, these funds are administered at the local level.

The Work Group chose not to recommend any impact fees that might provide funds for State Park operations and maintenance, because it is likely that Green Fund legislation will be reintroduced in the 2008 Legislative session.

**A PROPOSED PLAN FOR FUNDING THE MARYLAND PARK SERVICE**

**MPS Funding Levels Continuum -- Present Situation to a National Model**

With sufficient funding the Work Group envisions a Maryland Park System that is ever expanding to serve the stewardship needs of the State’s precious natural resources, and the growing needs of the citizens who use and enjoy the Park System and all its wonders. Therefore we recommend a diverse mix of existing and new funding sources to meet the following Vision. We recognize that this Vision is not attainable immediately, perhaps not fully during this decade, with present uncertainties of the State budget and the national economy. However, as suggested above, State leaders can contribute to the economic health of the State and its citizens, by taking bold action to ramp-up funding for State Parks over the next few years. [see Appendix III for explanation of budget categories below]

**The Vision**

*To strive to be the first State Park System in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to facilitate a Resource Stewardship Ethic widely shared by its citizens in both theory and practice.*

**Current level funding at \$32 Million per year operating budget**

(Economic impact = Reduced revenue into State’s Economy)

- The Park system is non-sustainable at this level
- Services are greatly reduced
- Unable to keep up with infrastructure and facilities maintenance
- Unable to support extra services such as interpretation, environmental quality, training

<b>Current Level Budget</b> <sup>14</sup>	Annual
Public Safety	\$375,000
Education	\$650,000
Environmental Quality	\$765,000
Public Health and Recreation	\$21,500,000
Economic Engine	\$4,710,000
MPS Infrastructure	\$4,000,000

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<sup>14</sup> See Appendix III for description of budget categories

**Level One - Basic Sustainability Budget \$42 Million per year operating budget (2 years)**

(Additional economic impact = \$100 Million into State's Economy)

- Basic services provided and limited restored operating hours
- Unable to support extra services such as interpretation, environmental quality, training
- Requires additional funding for critical maintenance backlog

Public Safety	\$900,000
Education	\$3,100,000
Environmental Quality	\$2,600,000
Public Health and Recreation	\$24,900,000
Economic Engine	\$6,500,000
MPS Infrastructure	\$4,000,000

**Level Two – Restoration Budget \$51 Million per year operating budget (3-4 years)**

(Additional economic impact = \$190 Million into State's Economy)

- Restores budget to 1990 level
- Operating hours increased to maximum level
- Able to staff interpretive, resource management, cultural resource management and operational functions
- Increased youth conservation corps program
- Ability to improve infrastructure and cover emergency repairs
- Continuation of additional critical maintenance funding

Public Safety	\$1,400,000
Education	\$6,100,000
Environmental Quality	\$3,800,000
Public Health and Recreation	\$25,300,000
Economic Engine	\$7,500,000
MPS Infrastructure	\$6,900,000

**Level Three – Our State Park System is the National model (5-6 years)**

- Predictable and sustainable funding
- Maryland is a National Leader in:
  - Resource Stewardship
  - No Child Left Inside Initiative
  - Green Building Design
  - Integrating Advanced Technology In Parks
  - Energy Conservation
  - Multi-Use Trail Systems

Budget allocations for this Level would be determined at a later date, based on further analysis by a State Parks Commission of outside experts and agency representatives, and progress made toward possible establishment of a "Maryland Park Service Trust Fund."

## **APPENDIX I**

### **MARYLAND STATE PARKS FUNDING STUDY WORK GROUP**

Tim Casey	Friends of Maryland State Forests and Parks, Inc.
Chris Delaporte	Parks and People Foundation
Tom Ross	MD Recreation and Parks Association, Executive Director
Sandy Maruchi-Turner	Cecil County Tourism Coordinator
Curtis King	W. L. Gore & Associates/ Corporate Communications
Eric Christensen	MTA Deputy Administrator, Finance and Administration
Steve Bunker	Nature Conservancy/ Partners for Open Space Chair
Joe O'Neill	MNCPPC Division Chief
Marcia Verploegen Lewis	Campaign Director, Partners for Open Space
Eric Schwaab	Deputy Secretary, Maryland DNR
Daryl Anthony	MPS Regional Parks Manager
Robin Melton	MPS Park Manager

### **AGENCY STAFF**

Kristin Saunders	Assistant Secretary, Maryland DNR
Rusty Ruszin	MPS Superintendent
Chuck Hecker	MPS Assistant Superintendent
Chris Bushman	MPS Assistant Superintendent
Chip Price	Program Manager, DNR Grants and Loans, Program Open Space
Wendell Jones	MPS Training and Employee Development Manager
Nita Settina	MPS Chief, Resource Management and MD Conservation Corps
Barbara Knisely	MPS Chief, Mission Support and Customer Service
Jen Cline	MPS meeting recorder and logistics

### **FACILITATOR**

H. Grant Dehart	Land Preservation Consultant
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## APPENDIX II

### Maryland State Parks Key Programs and Services: An Executive Summary

*Objective: Present a comprehensive list of Key Maryland State Park Programs and Services that:*

- 1) *Are required to achieve the stated Mission of the Maryland State Parks, which is: “to manage the natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources to provide the best use for the benefit of people”.*
- 2) *Are required to provide a first rate Maryland Park Experience for Visitors;*
- 3) *Have been reduced and/or eliminated over the last 10 years that prohibit achieving the Mission and Visitor Experience.*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Programs/Services</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>
<p><b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b>  <i>(Professional park staffs are diligent in providing the best in visitor protection, both proactively and reactively, striving to assure visitors a safe and enjoyable experience.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First Responder/EMS Services</li> <li>▪ Search and Rescue</li> <li>▪ Law Enforcement Partnership w/NRP</li> <li>▪ Voluntary Compliance</li> <li>▪ Hunter Safety</li> <li>▪ Boating Safety</li> <li>▪ Fire Protection</li> <li>▪ Natural Disaster Response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Significant reduction and/or elimination of trained and certified staff.</li> <li>▪ Lack of adequate Law Enforcement staff in NRP for park coverage.</li> <li>▪ Lack of funding for increased training needs of civilian staff.</li> </ul>
<p><b>EDUCATION</b>  <i>(Through engaging and enriching interpretive programs, exhibits, and publications; park rangers, naturalists, and historians help visitors better understand, appreciate, and protect the resources.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scales &amp; Tales</li> <li>▪ Junior Rangers</li> <li>▪ Park Pals</li> <li>▪ Cultural/Historical Interpretation</li> <li>▪ Living History</li> <li>▪ Resource Stewardship Education</li> <li>▪ Day/Residential Camp Programs</li> <li>▪ Curriculum based School Outreach</li> <li>▪ Ranger/Naturalist/Historian Educational Presentation</li> <li>▪ Nature/History Interpretive Centers</li> <li>▪ Interpretive Signage/Exhibits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Significant reductions and/ or elimination of interpretive staff.</li> <li>▪ Lack of funding for exhibits, educational equipment, and supplies.</li> <li>▪ Lack of funding for training and certification of existing staff.</li> <li>▪ Closures and/or reduced hours of operation in Visitor/Interpretive Centers</li> </ul>
<p><b>ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY</b>  <i>(On-going resource management is a critical element assuring sustained viability of the natural and cultural/historical resources otherwise impacted by recreational use.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wildlife Management</li> <li>▪ Resident Waterfowl Depredation</li> <li>▪ Managed Hunting Areas</li> <li>▪ Forest Management</li> <li>▪ Water Quality</li> <li>▪ Riparian Re-forestation</li> <li>▪ Hazardous Tree Removal</li> <li>▪ Invasive Species Control</li> <li>▪ Hazardous Trail Maintenance</li> <li>▪ Erosion Control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Significant reductions in staffing to carry out resource management programs.</li> <li>▪ Lack of funding for training and certification of existing staff.</li> <li>▪ Lack of funding for equipment and supplies</li> </ul>

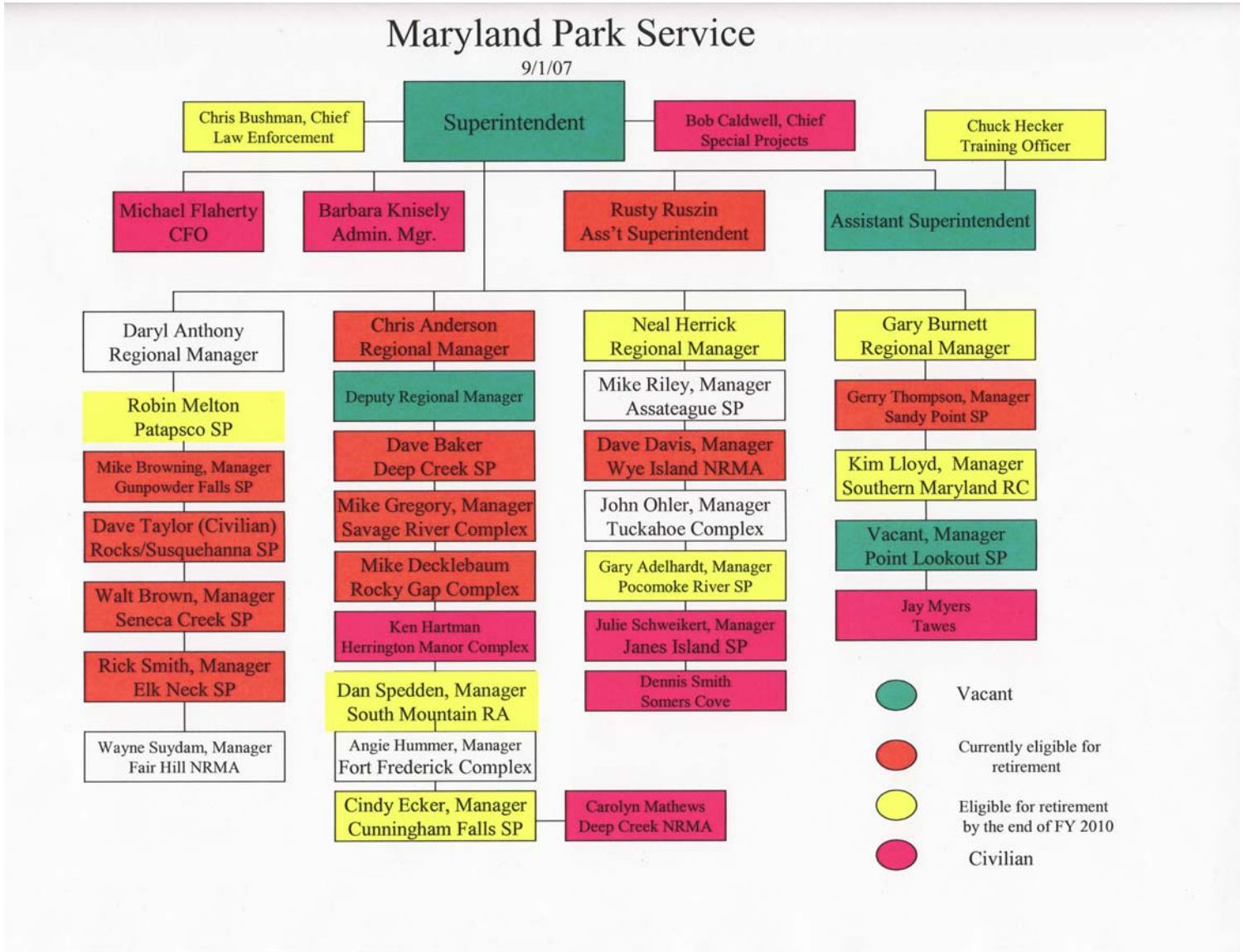
<b>Category</b>	<b>Programs/Services</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>
<p><b>PUBLIC HEALTH AND RECREATION</b>  <i>(Maryland State Parks offer visitors a wide variety of recreational facilities and services for healthy outdoor activities, contributing to overall wellness and quality of life.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Open Spaces (undeveloped/developed)</li> <li>▪ Picnic Areas</li> <li>▪ Pavilions</li> <li>▪ Campgrounds</li> <li>▪ Cabins</li> <li>▪ Playgrounds</li> <li>▪ Hiking/Biking/Paddling/Equestrian Trails</li> <li>▪ Lake, River, Bay, and Ocean Beach Operations</li> <li>▪ Lake, River, Bay, and Ocean Boating Access</li> <li>▪ Visitor Contact Stations</li> <li>▪ Camper Registration Offices</li> <li>▪ Routine Trail Maintenance</li> <li>▪ Central Reservation System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Significant reductions in staffing &amp; equipment for operating and maintaining facilities &amp; services for 12-14 hrs/day, 7days/wk @ each site.</li> <li>▪ Reduction and/or Elimination of direct visitor contact.</li> <li>▪ Overall degradation of visitor facilities and services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ECONOMIC ENGINE</b>  <i>(Maryland State Parks significantly contribute to the economy of the state, counties, and local communities.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Facility/Service Charges</li> <li>▪ Concession Programs</li> <li>▪ Eco-Tourism Partnerships</li> <li>▪ Heritage Tourism Partnerships</li> <li>▪ Entrepreneurial Initiatives</li> <li>▪ Job Opportunities</li> <li>▪ County Grants</li> <li>▪ Economic Stimulus for Local Communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need for revenue has driven service charges to the highest 2 states in the nation.</li> <li>▪ Reductions in funding and staff have greatly reduced concession opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Lack of funding for Entrepreneurial enhancements.</li> <li>▪ Overall reduction in economic stimulus to local communities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b>  <i>(A wide variety of buildings, structures, and facilities are involved in routine operation of state parks above and beyond those directly involved in visitor services and recreational use.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Critical Facilities Maintenance</li> <li>▪ Building Maintenance and Upgrades</li> <li>▪ Grounds Maintenance</li> <li>▪ Drinking Water and Sewage Treatment</li> <li>▪ Boundary Recovery and Maintenance</li> <li>▪ Utilities Maintenance and Upgrades</li> <li>▪ Roadway/Parking Lot Improvements</li> <li>▪ Heavy Equipment Maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduced funding has allowed capital maintenance needs to go unaddressed.</li> <li>▪ Significant reductions in staff have lead to overall degradation of facilities &amp; grounds.</li> <li>▪ Lack of adequately certified and licensed staff.</li> <li>▪ Lack of funding reduces opportunities for contractual services.</li> </ul>



**APPENDIX III**

**MARYLAND STATE PARK SERVICE MANAGEMENT CHART**

With Retirement eligibility



## APPENDIX IV

### REFERENCES

Partial list of Source Documents used in developing the content of the Maryland State Parks Funding Study Report.

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