

CHAPTER 6

EXISTING OPERATIONS

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department contains two of the twelve divisions within Skagit County government. The Department is headed by a Department Director, who reports to the Skagit County Commissioners. This person is responsible for planning and administering the park and recreation programs and the operations of the Fairgrounds.

Two citizen advisory boards (the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Fair Advisory Board) provide citizen input on community values and issues and assist in developing operating policies. Each Board has an equal number of representatives from the three County Districts.

The Parks and Recreation Department is outlined below:

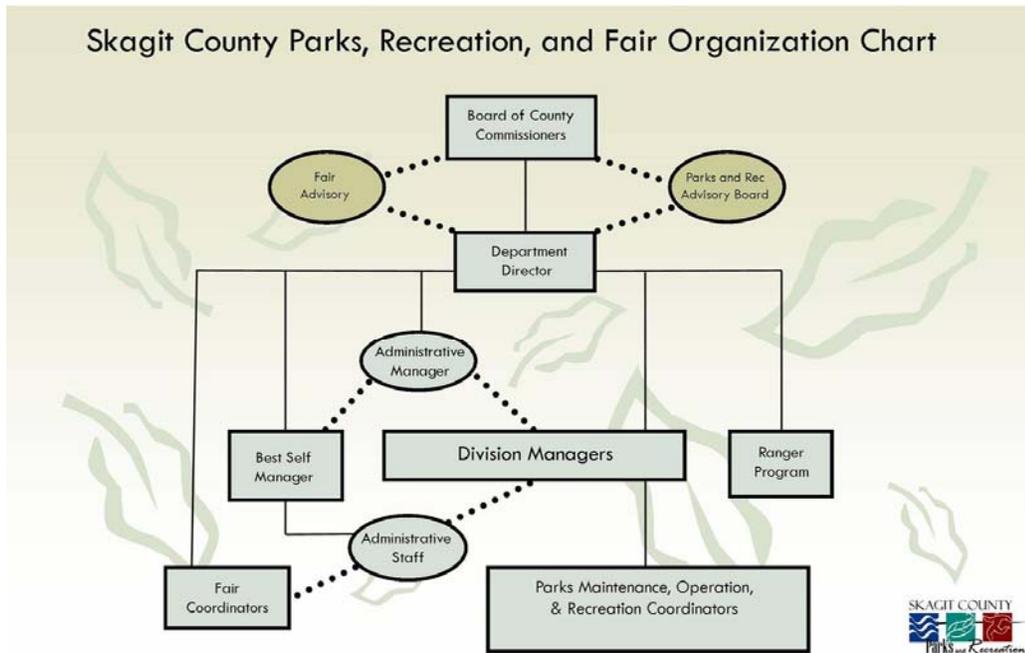


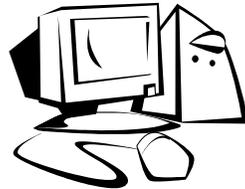
Figure 6.1
Parks and Recreation Department

During the year, the Parks and Recreation Department employs approximately 21 full-time employees and 2 part-time employees. A review of past staffing levels shows a slight increase in

permanent full-time staff within the department. Recent increases are partly due to the merger of Best Self and SCPR. This merger has increased the department by two fulltime employees.

In addition to full-time and part-time employees, the Department also employs over 250 contracted and seasonal employees. Most of these positions are in the Recreation and Fair Divisions.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION



The Administration Division is responsible for overseeing personnel, purchasing, contract administration, budget and the management of the other divisions. This division is also involved with planning, acquisition, design, development, special projects, grant preparation, and coordination of capital projects.

Each division within the Department operates relatively independently with each coordinating its own public and media relations activities. The Administration Division, however, is ultimately responsible for coordination between the divisions and with other County departments.

SKAGIT COUNTY RANGER SERVICES



The Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department currently has two Park Rangers. SCPR Park Rangers provide public assistance, emergency services, firefighting, search and rescue, nature interpretation hikes, and the patrolling of countywide park facilities. Park Rangers can be contacted by calling (360) 336-9414. Emergency calls should go to 911.

PARKS DIVISION



The Parks Division is responsible for the operation and maintenance of existing County Park and Recreation facilities. The Division is also responsible for the purchase and upkeep of maintenance materials, equipment and vehicles, fee collection at county park sites and park security.

Equipment for upriver (east of Birdsvie Road) is located at Howard Miller Steelhead Park. Equipment for downriver sites is mostly housed at the Jack Davis Shop. The remaining equipment is kept at the Skagit Playfields. Personnel work out of the newly constructed Jack Davis Shop in Burlington.

RECREATION DIVISION



The Recreation Division manages the County's recreation program which includes youth and adult sports leagues and tournaments, special events, classes and workshops, youth skills camps, and other special activities for youth. Facilities used are various public and private school gymnasiums and facilities. These facilities include The Skagit Valley College Gymnasium and Fitness Center, Mount Vernon Senior Center, and various other private and public facilities. Programs offered operate on a cost-efficient basis. That is, program fees and charges generally pay for the program expenses. In some cases, adult programs recover revenue above the cost of the operating costs. This extra revenue helps to subsidize the youth programs which may not have full cost recovery. The recreation division also operates Clear Lake Swim Beach in summer months, providing certified beach life guards and office/concession staffing. Staff wages are derived from daily entry fees charged to beach visitors.

OPERATING BUDGET

The gross cost of park and recreation services has averaged just over 2.1% of the County's total expenditures over the last five years. By comparison to other counties that provide park and recreation services, this amount is exceedingly low. For example, for 2003 the current Snohomish County Parks and Recreation Department budget represented 4.1 percent of the overall Snohomish County expenditures. The Whatcom County Parks and Recreation department represented 2.6 percent of their overall expenditures. And the Spokane County Parks and Recreation budget represented 1.9 percent of their overall expenditures. For 2003, the compiled county spending ratios of the three comparative park systems indicates the tri-county park budgets average 3.6 percent of their overall county expenditures compared with Skagit County's 2.3 percent.

Table 6.1
Parks Operating Budget to Total County Expenditures

Area	2003 Park and Rec Expenditures	2003 County Expenditures	Percentage of Park Expenditures to County Expenditures
Spokane County	2,504,491	132,116,219	1.90%
Snohomish County	27,983,007	659,000,000	4.10%
Whatcom County	2,985,032	112,937,842	2.60%
Tri-County Average	11,157,510	301,351,354	3.70%
Skagit County	2,648,825	113,540,686	2.30%

COST OF PARK AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Another means of analyzing an agency's level of park and recreation services is to compare operating costs on a per capita basis. The gross cost per capital is the total cost of the services divided by the number of persons in the service area. However, this is not necessarily the true cost to the taxpayer, because it does not reflect the net cost after revenue is deducted. Both costs are shown below for Skagit County for 2003. This assumes a 2003 county population of 105,100 persons.

Gross Cost Per Capita: \$16.75

Net Cost Per Capita: \$13.55

RECREATION PARTICIPATION

Skagit County offers a wide range of recreation activities, using its own buildings as well as school and college facilities. The table below summarizes recreation participation levels for and subsequent revenues generated. The numbers represent the number of "hours," meaning one person participating in one activity in hours.

Table 6.3
Total Recreation Participants and Revenue

Participation	1996	2002	%Change
Hours	311,392	332,620	6.8
Revenue	\$241,250	\$285,990	18.5

According to the analysis, participation since 1996 has increased by 6.8 percent while revenues have increased over 18 percent.

Assuming a 2002 County population of 105,100, total 2002 participation in county-sponsored park and recreation activities represents about 3.2 hours per capita. Table 6.4 on the following page displays activity participation as a percentage of total participation.

Table 6.4
Recreation Division Participation Hours, 1996-2002

Activity	1996	2002	Percent Change
Adult Leagues	141,596	134,538	-5.00%
Youth Leagues	57,475	75,338	23.80%
Tournaments	19,540	28,523	31.50%
Special Events	10,775	8,915	-17.30%
Youth Camps	6,869	8,562	19.80%
Classes	4,412	2,453	-44.50%
Special Activities*	70,725	74,291	4.80%
Clear Lake Beach		52,800	
Open Activities		13,785	
Trips		6,996	
Teen Activities		306	
Youth Enrichment		208	
Family Activities		196	
TOTAL	311,392	332,620	6.8%

* Since 1996, Special Activities has been broken down into more defined categories, which include: Clear Lake Beach, Open Activities, Trips, Teen Activities, Youth Enrichment, and Family Activities.

Table 6.5 below gives a breakdown on how revenue is generated amid the various categories. Adult leagues continue to generate the greatest revenue. Youth camps and youth leagues are increasing at a greater percentage.

**Table 6.5
Recreation Revenue Comparison, 1996 - 2002**

Activity	1996	2002	Percent Change
Adult Leagues	\$87,615	\$104,015	15.80%
Youth Leagues	\$47,221	\$61,570	23.30%
Tournaments	\$15,128	\$18,999	20.40%
Special Events	\$13,738	\$14,776	6.60%
Youth Camps	\$13,660	\$20,470	33..3%
Classes	\$9,018	\$8,110	-10.10%
Special Activities *	\$54,870	\$58,053	5.50%
Clear Lake Beach		\$40,242	
Open Activities		\$30,000**	
Trips		\$15,406	
Teen Activities		\$771	
Youth Enrichment		\$672	
Family Activities		\$932	
TOTAL	\$241,250	\$285,990	18.5%

* Since 1996, Special Activities has been broken down into better defined categories, which include: Clear Lake Beach, Open Activities, Trips, Teen Activities, Youth Enrichment, and Family Activities.

** Total program revenue does not include grant funds or donations.

BEST SELF PROGRAM



Skagit County created the Best SELF program in 1991 through a visionary partnership with Skagit County Government officials, school district administrators and local agencies invested in youth. The program was designed as a prevention and education program for school-aged children. Best SELF combines education, recreation and community service with day-long activities and field trips that support and encourage the child’s sense of self-esteem, accomplishment and value to the community. The program was initiated with seed money received by the County for the criminal justice system. The mission was to put some funding into preventative programming for at risk youth thereby reducing the number of juvenile and criminal offenders over time. Twelve years later, Best SELF has become a staple in the community.

SNOWMOBILE TRAIL GROOMING PROGRAM



In 1971, Washington State enacted legislation requiring snowmobile registration. The monies generated from the registration fees have created a fund for supporting local grooming programs. SCPR is a beneficiary of a local program grant and is responsible for the NW winter trail grooming. Responsibilities include operating snow-cat groomers, graders, dozers, and trucks. In addition, SCPR performs maintenance duties, including the installation and repairing of signs, constructing and repairing roads, trails, and parking lots, coordinating volunteers, developing maps and brochures, and coordinating search and rescue tasks. The groomed trails are predominantly located USFS lands in the Mount Baker National Forest. The trails are accessed within Skagit County and include areas throughout Schrieber's Meadow, Blue Lake, Anderson Creek, Finney Creek, and Segelson Creek.