

# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Goal

Commenter #	Comment
016	Be it resolved that the Mat-Su State Parks Citizens Advisory Board recommends that the 10 year Strategic Plan be revised to state that the primary management priority of the State Park System is to protect its natural and cultural resources, as set out on the first paragraph of Page 17 of the draft 2006-2016 Strategic Plan.
020	<p>This section, in the introductory narrative on page 17, contains some very good natural resource protection language. The Objectives and Action Strategies also contain good language that emphasizes the importance of natural resource protection and provides for (or at least lays the groundwork for) the biological inventories and other data collection and monitoring that is sorely needed. Unfortunately, the way I read the Plan, and according to what we were told at the October 24th Open House, the Plan subordinates this entire section to fully meeting and keeping pace with the recreation demands of the public. For the language of page 17 to hold sway at times when natural and cultural resources are threatened, protection and preservation needs to be identified as the top priority.</p> <p>The mission statement for our National Parks contains the words: "Congress, 'recognizing that the enjoyment by future generations of the national parks can be ensured only if the superb quality of park resources and values is left unimpaired, has provided that when there is a conflict between conserving resources and values and providing for enjoyment of them, conservation is to be predominant.'"</p> <p>As you, Jerry, correctly pointed out at the October 24th Open House, State Parks and National Parks have different enabling legislation and mission. However, I believe that the underlying logic of the above NPS excerpt and its applicability to the State Park system is clear. If push comes to shove, and recreation demands threaten the natural resource values of the Parks, then natural resource protection must be the number one priority. If it is not the number one priority, then our Parks, over time, will be irreparably degraded. The natural values will be lost and so will the wonderful visitor experiences that we enjoy today. From a protection and conservation viewpoint, the State laws and regulations do not mandate a natural resource protection priority, but they allow for it. I urge you to incorporate into the Strategic Plan language that establishes a natural and cultural resource protection priority.</p> <p>The "Natural and Cultural Resources" goal is confusing. I hope what you intend is "Preserve Alaska's cultural, natural, ecological, scenic, and scientific resources through active stewardship policies and programs."</p> <p>I do not know what the clause "pursuant to the division's parks and programs" means. Pursuant is defined as 'proceeding from and conformable to; in accordance with.' So, perhaps the intent of "pursuant to the division's parks and programs" is to conform to the nature and purpose of individual park units. For example, if a park unit has been designed for high use such as a picnic area near a population center, the focus would be on keeping the place clean and the restrooms in good condition. On the other hand, if the park unit was Denali State Park, the emphasis, and number one priority, would be on protecting the natural resource values and backcountry visitor experience. If this is your intent, and I hope it is, then it needs to be expressed clearly.</p> <p>But, the phrase "pursuant to the division's parks and programs" could be interpreted that if State Parks has, for example, a program for motorized ATV use, then that use takes priority over preservation of natural resource values. That interpretation would not bode well for the future of our Parks. I urge you to take a close look at the "Natural and Cultural Resources" goal (page 17) to ensure that its meaning and intent are clear and that the goal stipulates the priority of natural and cultural resource protection.</p>
032	For Chugach Park and probably the parks: continued preservation of the wilderness areas with no additional intrusions, development, trail construction, etc.
042	These should constitute two, separate and independent, sections, and both should be top priorities for state parks. I would place Natural Resources as the first Goal in the document. In addition to baseline natural resource inventories, I would like to see requirements for conducting natural resource inventories and for developing stewardship programs for natural resources prior to any new facilities being built. Over time, these conditions will be crucial to maintaining the integrity of our parks.
043	I suggest under one of the objectives on pages 18 and 19 that you add an item that follows up on what you said on page 17 regarding increasing collaboration with higher-education institutions- work with the U of A or outside Universities to get your inventories done through partnerships.

**Commenter #****Comment**

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044	I wonder why the plan in general and the Vision Statement and section on Natural and Cultural Resources de-emphasizes the wilderness character of Alaska's larger parks. The larger parks - most notably Chugach, Denali, Kachemak Bay, Shuyak, and Wood-Tikchik - and their wilderness values are in large part what separate Alaska's State Parks system from those in the rest of the nation.
047	Instead of "The division needs to strengthen efforts..." it should read "The division must strengthen efforts..." Instead of "To accomplish this, the Historic Preservation Office and the Office of History and Archeology need to conduct surveys to identify and evaluate sites, buildings and structures needing this treatment." it should read "To accomplish this, the Office of History and Archaeology, needs to conduct surveys to identify and evaluate sites, buildings and structures." Instead of "These offices also need to encourage communities to conduct surveys, document..." the sentence should read "The office also needs to encourage communities to conduct surveys, develop historic contexts, document..." Instead of "To promote recognition...the section needs to document properties on the National..." it should read "...the section must document properties to be listed on the National..." We would like to see at least one cultural resource photo included on this page.
048	2nd paragraph, last sentence: Add that parks need to be adequately staffed to meet goals. Overall there needs to be more strong language on protecting the natural environment that draws people to the state parks to recreate.
050	We fully support the Natural Resource Goal of proactive stewardship (page 17) and the objectives and action strategies articulated. We recommend that at least one biologist position be created at DPOR to ensure that the articulated objectives will be met.
051	The emphasis of management should be on protection and conservation.
057	Page 17, Paragraph 1, Sentence 2: Why mention only "3.2 million acres" without mentioning "121 park units?" I get sort of tired of reading 3.2 mm acres, but if someone only reads one or two goals, I guess you have to repeat the big numbers. 121 units goes here too. Page 17, Paragraph 3: This paragraph talks solely about the need to protect the historical and cultural resources. We really need a similar paragraph in this section about the natural resources. We don't have any idea what the condition of our park units are - who uses them, why, and what impacts we're receiving from the use. Something that sort of echoes the Planning write up?
078	Natural resource protection is a fundamental first step to all other State Park goals, and should be emphasized and implemented before all else.
080	I do recognize that the majority of the people may use the state park system for recreation, and it may be that use of "sustainable" in Recreation Goal on p. 8 may be one method of partially addressing my concern above. Perhaps "sustainable" could be defined somewhere and should include the sustainability of the natural resources, not just the facilities. I'm thinking in terms of how many people some parking lots and trails may be able to handle without eroding or excessive impacts on vegetation. Some people may not understand the concept, as became obvious at a recent meeting including motorized and non-motorized trail users. Some of the issues are a matter of education. Put "natural" in there - "Alaska's natural, cultural, . . ."

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081	<p>I have a similar concern with the "Natural and Cultural Resources" portion of the Draft. The stated goal is to "improve and sustain Alaska's cultural, ecological, scenic, and scientific assets through proactive stewardship pursuant the division's parks and programs." My question: How does one "improve" nature? Do people not visit the state parks because of their natural beauty? If they wanted to see development, they could go to Multnomah Falls in Oregon (cement, switchback trails, and many stores), or Anchorage!</p> <p>The goal of the DPOR must first be to "sustain" Alaska's assets. Without these "assets" there would be no state parks.</p> <p>Therefore, the second paragraph under Natural and Cultural Resources should strike the words "where appropriate and possible" when referring to the ADPOR's responsibility to "serve as models of healthy, natural, sustainable ecosystems." The ADPOR must ALWAYS model healthy, natural methods of sustaining ecosystems; this aspect of the agency must not be compromised.</p>
085	<p>Paragraph 1, Line 7, "for all time": Sounds very lofty, and possibly overconfident/arrogant. How about "for the foreseeable future."</p> <p>Paragraph 3, Line 8: Replace "if" with "of".</p>
086	<p>Second paragraph, sentence 1: change where in second line to wherever.</p>
088	<p>Natural resources are finally addressed somewhat, but I'd like to see more emphasis or prominence.</p>

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# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Objective I

Commenter #	Comment
020	<p>Regarding this objective, biological inventories are important, and especially so in Denali State Park which is facing significant development pressures from both inside and outside the Park. The action Strategies, however, don't stipulate that such inventories be conducted. Action Strategies 1, 2, and 3 are preparatory steps. Please add a number 4 that provides for conducting the actual inventories.</p> <p>Jerry correctly stated at the October 24th Open House that the State Park system is large enough to accommodate a full range of recreational opportunities. The system can run the gamut of heavy recreational use on one end of the spectrum to protected natural areas on the other. The system as a whole can, within reason, be all things to all people, but "individual parks or recreation areas cannot, and should not, be all things to all people." This concept is important and should be incorporated somehow into the strategic plan to help strike a balance between use, access, and development on one hand and natural resource protection coupled with wilderness backcountry (quiet, self-reliance, etc.) opportunities on the other.</p>
035	Same order as listed for priority.
047	As a fourth action strategy, we would like to see, "Continue the development of an integrated business system within the Office of History and Archaeology for tracking and managing cultural resources.
080	<p>This is where I would think some partnering or collaborating with universities may be helpful. UAF's SNRAS (School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences) is a unit that should have students potentially interested in learning inventory methods and interpretations for management. You can't manage land well without knowing what's there. This is why I think the Natural and Cultural resource stewardship should have highest priority. This could include both the natural and cultural resource inventories as well as land usage surveys (types and frequency of users, or whatever). I recognize funding is limited / non-existent on both sides, but if some type of program is setup, it sometimes makes it easier to apply for grants. Perhaps a program from a State Parks Foundation or "Friends" or something separate. I believe NPS has setup something with SNRAS, but I'm not sure. You might check with the Dean. Other UA campuses and APU may also have biological or land management units that might be interested. Look at their potential plans for science learning centers.</p>
082	YES!
086	Strategy 3 has highest priority.

# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Objective I - Strategy 1

Commenter #	Comment
010	I fully support this strategy.
028	Since the 10 year Plan will guide park trails management for the next 10+ years, instituting a systematic GPS/GIS inventory program, utilizing a specialty team, within a systematic BTMP program would be a invaluable strategic step for long-term trails management for the state parks system.
047	The term "cultural resources" should be included with "trail, facilities, roads..." etc.
066	Utilize GPS and other current technologies to map data such as park boundaries, trails, facilities, roads, and inholdings in at least 5% of the larger park units per year. Integrate data into a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database and provide the training and infrastructure to help promote better resource management for managers. Emphasis should be placed on park boundary location and verification (survey) when warranted.

# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Objective I - Strategy 2

Commenter #	Comment
057	Extremely important!
058	We support and appreciate the Plan's natural and cultural resource objectives of inventorying resources; managing/monitoring for intact resources, viewsheds and ecological communities; and coordinating with others to collect, share and disseminate information. Remote, undeveloped wild lands are essential to our operations and these objectives line up well with protecting the resources that make our state parks wild. While we recognize that the parks have substantial facilities maintenance needs, we hope that those needs will not overshadow the importance of the undeveloped park areas.
067	I'm very happy to read in the draft that a baseline inventory of natural resources will be created for each park unit.
090	NAEC applauds the objectives outlined in this section of the plan. Collection of baseline information is particularly important to successful long-term conservation planning. Sharing information between agencies may prove useful and cost-effective.

# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Objective I - Strategy 3

Commenter #	Comment
010	I fully support this strategy.
047	The sentence should read "...to meet the natural and cultural resource inventory..."
086	Emphasis on partnering with other agencies, universities.

# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Objective II

Commenter #	Comment
005	I believe that a separate division should be established to manage the historical sites. They need separate attention and financing.
028	The goal of State Parks should be to build and upgrade all of its trails to a "sustainable" standard. It will take well over 10 years to accomplish this, but this plan should identify that as a long term goal.
032	For Chugach Park and probably the parks: a transition to requiring that snow machines, boat motors, and ATVs use 4 cycle engines in areas open to motorized use.
035	I am not aware that "best management practices" are defined for monitoring in state parks (if they are, this is a major communications need!).
044	I think there should be some mention of protecting the health of the wildlife populations that inhabit Alaska's state parks, both within the vision statement and the section on Natural and Cultural Resources. I actually have a problem with the overuse of "natural resources," because it implies for human use/consumption. The larger, wilder units in Alaska's State Parks system have great value beyond the recreational opportunities they provide. They are, indeed, naturally wild treasures, not merely resources. And protecting them should be the highest priority, higher even than recreational opportunities. To underplay notions of wildness and wilderness is a big mistake, I believe. The plan needs to address the impacts of motorized vehicles, particularly snowmobiles where they conflict with other recreational uses, and aircraft overflights and landings, which can be extremely disruptive if not controlled. Especially in the larger, wilder units, state parks planners need to ask: what activities are appropriate; and what activities most threaten wilderness values.
048	Add a 5th item to include staffing for education and resource protection.
052	The Strategic Plan needs to stress that it is imperative to balance accessibility yet keep habitat restoration and natural resource conservation and protection a priority, too. Alaska State Parks is entrusted to provide outdoor public recreational opportunities while reflectively considering public access, conservation, and resource protection; stewarding parks for future generations.
053	We want ASP to go in the direction of quiet (non-motorized) recreation on a substantial portion of ASP land. We believe that ASP should primarily encourage human-powered recreation to reduce or eliminate the tremendous damage that ATVs can do to wetlands and streams, reduce environmental pollution, reduce noise pollution, reduce littering, help combat obesity, and decrease American's reliance on foreign energy.
060	You should consider adding more language on protection and preservation of State Park units. Your document is leaning towards development for income.
061	I want ASP to go in the direction of quiet (non-motorized) recreation on a substantial portion of ASP land. I believe that ASP should primarily encourage human-powered recreation to reduce or eliminate the tremendous damage that ATVs can do to wetlands and streams, reduce environmental pollution, preserve the natural soundscape, reduce littering and help combat obesity.
062	We want ASP to go in the direction of quiet (non-motorized) recreation on a substantial portion of ASP land. We believe that ASP should primarily encourage human-powered recreation to reduce or eliminate the tremendous damage that ATVs can do to wetlands and streams, reduce environmental pollution, reduce noise pollution, reduce littering, help combat obesity, and decrease American's reliance on foreign energy.

Commenter #	Comment
063	We regret that more emphasis has not been placed on the conservation and protection of the natural values and resources of Alaska parks. We hope that a final plan has a strong base for the protection of the qualities and characteristics that make our parks special.
065	I urge you to consider all aspects of park protection as you draft a plan for Alaska's beautiful scenic parklands. We need a plan that is not vague in addressing important protection needs that surround this issue. If the language in the plan were stronger there would then be a higher priority placed on natural and cultural resources. Conservation, over recreational access.
066	Add Action Strategy 5: Develop a system and plan for trail inventories and assessments that can be used to help prioritize trail maintenance scheduling, repairs, decommissioning or identifying new trail needs.
069	My concern is the lack of focus on protection and conservation of our parks. Recreation and facilities management are, of course, necessarily important parts of any plan for our state parks. However, if our parks are not protected, any degradation may be felt for many future generations. I strongly feel that protection of our parks needs to be the first and foremost goal for the strategic plan and needs stronger emphasis and commitment in this plan.
074	While access for recreation and management of facilities is a vital part of ASP, your first priority needs to be protecting the current and future parks and conserving these valuable recreational resources for future generations. If it's to be a ten year plan, state clearly that ASP wants to preserve its parks for the users to come. I realize that the state legislature has not been particularly supportive of ASP in recent years - that is all the more reason to create a strategic plan that asserts the need for preservation and conservation of all current cultural and natural resources.
078	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ATV use must be restricted and the restrictions enforced. ATV use is the primary means of ecosystem degeneration.</li> <li>2. Enforcement of existing restrictions on motorized activity needs priority funding.</li> </ol>
083	Essentially, the plan should prioritize protection and conservation for future generations first, and recreational access and facilities management to the extent that these activities are consistent with the first goal.
086	Strategies 1 & 3 have highest priority. Add "and fully functioning" to objective statement, on second line, between "intact" and "for".

# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Objective II - Strategy 1

Commenter #	Comment
028	Since the 10 year Plan will guide park trails management for the next 10+ years, instituting a systematic GPS/GIS inventory program, utilizing a specialty team, within a systematic BTMP program would be a invaluable strategic step for long-term trails management for the state parks system.
035	First priority.
047	The sentence should read "...division staff and external natural and cultural resource issues..."
057	Not as high a priority in my book as # 2 & 3. Strategy 1 is somewhat nebulous - then what? For what purpose? Can we be more specific - how it might be used or applied?
067	I would like to see Alaska residents and commercial operators included in this "interdisciplinary team". I have had a commercial operator permit with Denali State Park since they were required many years ago. There are 'no' department people who have spent as much time on the ground in Denali State Park as I have. I have also spent hundreds of hours flying over Denali State Park in all months of the year. I am sure that there are many other state park units where residents and/or commercial operators are quire more intimate with the park unit than a bureaucrat in Anchorage or Juneau. Current on-the-ground information coupled with past experience for comparison can provide excellent insight for park management. Embrace this talented resource.

# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Objective II - Strategy 2

Commenter #	Comment
035	Third priority.
057	Good idea.

# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Objective II - Strategy 3

Commenter #	Comment
035	Second priority.
057	. . . along with associated funding requests."

# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Objective II - Strategy 4

Commenter #	Comment
047	The sentence should read, "...assistance to parks for natural and cultural resource issues (e.g., noxious weeds and native revegetation and historic building rehabilitation)..."
057	Seems like a weak strategy, perhaps because of the example. What is "stewardship program staff assistance?" Isn't this issue implied in strategy 2 & 3? What does the last half of the sentence mean: "address . . .?" Does that mean "fund?"

# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Objective III

Commenter #	Comment
064	Anchorage Parks and Recreation supports and encourages your involvement in Municipal trail planning, Anchorage district park planning, resource management and land management efforts that have a direct relationship between Municipal parkland and Chugach State Park.
066	Add new Action Strategy: Integrate wise trail stewardship, design, and maintenance requirements into the Recreational Trail Grant program to assure funding is used in an appropriate manner.
080	Is there any type of database of studies that have happened on state park land, so if someone is looking for information, it might be readily found? I know various federal agencies have such databases, some (most?) of which are web-searchable by public.

# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Objective III - Strategy 2

Commenter #	Comment
035	First priority.
057	The first sentence of this strategy should stand alone. Move the second sentence to the combined strategies 4 & 5.

# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Objective III - Strategy 3

Commenter #	Comment
034	Ensure that cultural resources has the funds to perform needed survey work or to contract for such work including pure research in undeveloped areas and those at risk for destruction of cultural resources.
035	Second priority.

# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Objective III - Strategy 4

Commenter #	Comment
035	Third priority.
048	Add environmental protection and add "environmental" as a resource that can be affected or impacted.
086	Change "recreation" to "natural".

# PRD Comments - Natural and Cultural Resources - Objective III - Strategy 5

Commenter #	Comment
034	Ensure that cultural resources has the funds to perform needed survey work or to contract for such work including pure research in undeveloped areas and those at risk for destruction of cultural resources.
057	Reword to combine strategy 4 & part of 2: "Promote incorporation of recreation and cultural preservation issues in plans; participate in regional planning efforts and in planning projects that affect recreational and cultural resources or that may impact units of the state park system."
086	Add "natural and" in front of "cultural resources".