



Washington State Parks

SUPERINTENDENT OF VISITOR PROTECTION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Recruitment Announcement

Washington State Parks is seeking a strategic, grounded, and service-oriented leader to serve as the next Superintendent of Visitor Protection and Law Enforcement - a role that sits at the heart of how the public experiences safety, support, and stewardship in parks across the state.

This position offers the chance to shape and elevate a statewide visitor-protection program that is both responsive and forward-looking. You will guide and mentor a team of rangers and law-enforcement professionals who work on the front lines every day, supporting visitors, navigating complex situations, and serving as trusted ambassadors for the outdoors. Your leadership will directly influence how staff are trained, supported, and empowered to deliver consistent, high-quality service rooted in professionalism and care.

The Superintendent will play a central role in strengthening operational systems, enhancing statewide coordination, and ensuring that policies, practices, and training reflect modern

approaches to public safety. This includes balancing compliance with education, cultivating strong relationships with local partners and allied agencies, and championing a culture of accountability, inclusion, and continuous improvement.

This is a rare opportunity for a leader who is ready to make a meaningful and lasting contribution—someone who brings sound judgment, a collaborative spirit, and a deep commitment to supporting both people and mission. If you are energized by complex problem-solving, leading through change, and helping professionals thrive in a dynamic outdoor environment, we invite you to consider this important role.



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About Washington State Parks

Washington State Parks protects some of the most diverse and most beautiful lands in the country.

From ocean beaches to mountain waterfalls, hiking trails to swimming areas, Washington's state parks welcome you to explore a wide variety of outdoor recreation and experience the state's most iconic and breathtaking natural wonders.

Washington State Parks is the steward of one of the most diverse, spectacular, and beloved park systems in the country. With more than 124 state parks, recreation areas, heritage sites, and trails, the agency manages nearly 120,000 acres of land that showcase Washington's extraordinary natural and cultural heritage—from rugged Pacific coastline and volcanic landscapes to inland forests, lakes, and historic sites.

Washington State Parks operates with a commitment to accessibility, inclusion, sustainability, and stewardship, ensuring that current and future generations can enjoy safe, meaningful, and memorable outdoor experiences. The agency is also actively engaged in expanding partnerships with local communities, tribes, and outdoor-recreation organizations to strengthen conservation efforts and enhance recreational opportunities across the state.

Mission

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission cares for Washington's most treasured lands, waters, and historic places. State parks connect all Washingtonians to their diverse natural and cultural heritage and provide memorable recreational and educational experiences that enhance their lives.

Vision

Washington's state parks will be cherished destinations with natural, cultural, recreational, artistic, and interpretive experiences that all Washingtonians enjoy, appreciate, and proudly support.

Core values

- Commitment to stewardship that transmits high quality park assets to future generations
- Dedication to outdoor recreation and public enjoyment that welcomes all our citizens to their public parks
- Excellence in all we do
- Involving the public in our policy development and decision making
- Support for one another as we translate our mission into reality





About the Position

The Superintendent of Visitor Protection and Law Enforcement leads the statewide Visitor Protection and Law Enforcement Program, integrating visitor and resource protection into Washington State Parks' broader mission. This position directs the development, coordination, and administration of the Visitor Protection and Law Enforcement Program, which includes the operational aspects of public safety, ranger law enforcement activities, risk management, while working collaboratively as a subject matter expert with Operations Division leadership, Park Area Managers, other agencies, and stakeholders.

The Superintendent provides policy direction and strategic leadership to both commissioned and limited-commissioned rangers, ensuring agency enforcement practices are mission-aligned, education-focused, and community-oriented. The position emphasizes respectful public engagement, prioritizing tactical and professional communication as a core skill in all ranger interactions. Enforcement actions are escalated only when necessary to ensure the safety of people, property, and resources.

Responsibilities of the Superintendent include:

- Provide strategic oversight and subject matter guidance of all visitor protection and law enforcement activities.
- Promote a ranger culture rooted in education, public service, and respectful enforcement.
- Lead the agency's Field Training Program for fully commissioned park rangers to ensure consistent, high-quality onboarding and mentoring of new officers.
- Train and educate staff in the use of tactical and respectful communication in all enforcement interactions, fostering voluntary compliance and minimizing conflict.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with tribal, local, and state enforcement partners to support coordinated operations and response.

The Ideal Candidate

For this important role, Washington State Parks seeks a dynamic, highly credible, unifying leader who is deeply committed to the success of the agency and is a strategic, big-picture thinker.

The next Superintendent of Visitor Protection and Law Enforcement will bring a leadership style rooted in approachability, sound judgment, and a strong customer-service ethic. This role requires someone who is comfortable being a visible, accessible resource for staff and who naturally builds trust through clear communication, consistency, and respect. The superintendent will model a calm, solutions-focused approach to visitor interactions and support a team that engages the public with professionalism, empathy, and confidence.



Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in criminal justice, public administration, natural resource management, or related field.
**Degree can be substituted with additional 4 years of relevant law enforcement leadership experience.*
- 10 years of progressively responsible law enforcement experience, with at least 5 years in a supervisory or program management role.
- Certification through POST or equivalent Basic Law Enforcement Academy.
- Current law enforcement commission in Washington State or ability to obtain it prior to appointment.
- Valid driver's license and ICS certification.
- Demonstrated background in community-oriented or education-based policing.
- Demonstrated experience actively contributing to a work environment that embraces building relationships and partnerships with key stakeholders, and recognizing the value of culture, ethnic, gender, and other individual differences.
- Demonstrated commitment to integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion practices into policing.
- Demonstrated experience setting and making policy recommendations and implementing policy direction.
- Demonstrated experience conducting research and analyzing data to inform decision making.
- Demonstrated experience in strategic planning, program management and evaluation, and experience managing program budgets.
- Experience leading and modernizing public safety programs.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Persons interested in this position must submit the following information:

- a cover letter
- a current resume.

If you have questions regarding this announcement, please call Marissa Karras at 360-956-1336. This position will remain open until filled but the screening process will move quickly. In order to be considered for the first round of interviews please submit your application materials at www.karrasconsulting.net no later than March 6, 2026.

Washington State Parks is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, creed, color, national origin, religion or beliefs, political affiliation, military status, honorably discharged veteran, Vietnam Era, recently separated or other protected veteran status, the presence of any sensory, mental, physical disability or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability, equal pay or genetic information.

Compensation

The annual salary range for this position is \$110,088 - \$143,919 dependent on candidate experience. Washington State offers one of the most generous benefit packages in the nation. More information about benefits can be found [here](#).

Washington State offers a total work/life package of pay, benefits, flexibility and workplace opportunities to help you get the most out of your career and out of life. Washington State is a great place to work, play, and be a part of a community. Washington offers a quality of life that is unsurpassed. From the high-energy urban center of Seattle, one of the nation's top-ranked cities, to the more relaxed pace of our rural communities, Washington's distinctive Northwest lifestyle blends a progressive, creative culture with a casual nature.

