

State of Vermont
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Agency of Administration

**TO: Joint Fiscal Committee
Government Accountability Committee
House Committee on Government Operations
Senate Committee on Government Operations**

FROM: Maribeth Spellman, Commissioner

DATE: September 27, 2016

SUBJECT: Forest, Parks & Recreation Position Pilot Request

In accordance with Act 179, Sec. E.100(d) as amended by 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 4, Sec. 74 and Acts and Resolves No. 172, Sec. E.100.2 in 2016 to include the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR). Secretary of Administration Justin Johnson has approved the attached position pilot request from ANR.

The written description required by Act 179, Sec. E.100(d)(4), including the method for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of the positions, as provided by ANR, is attached for your information.

The Department of Human Resources fully supports the request to create two positions with the Position Pilot Program. We believe the request is an appropriate use of the Position Pilot. Department of Human Resources has reviewed vacancies at ANR and has determined all vacancies are under active recruitment.

Summary of the Forests, Parks & Recreation Position Pilot request

The FPR request addresses long term staffing needs, including appropriately reducing reliance on temporary positions to staff year-round functions associated with State Parks by creating classified positions. The request also includes creating three additional positions that will allow the department to address priorities such as increased operational capacity, providing core staffing for recreation services, and establishing a Wood Energy Coordinator to work in cooperation with the Department of Public Service in order to promote the use of wood energy.

Specific positions are described in detail in the attached request from FPR along with the cost effectiveness information for each positions. The positions are funded through citing funds.

Any questions should be directed to Molly Paulger at 828-3517.

c: Secretary Markowitz
Commissioner Snyder
M. Paulger





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Agency of Administration

TO: Justin Johnson, Secretary of Administration
FROM: Maribeth Spellman, Commissioner
RE: Forests, Parks & Recreation Position Pilot Request
DATE: September 23, 2016

On September 2, 2016, I received the attached Position Pilot Proposal from the Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation (FPR), based on Act 179, Sec. E.(100)(d)(4) from the 2014 Session and amended by Act 172, Sec. E.100.2(1) in 2016, to include all departments of the Agency of Natural Resources in the Position Pilot. Below is our recommendation and summary of our analysis.

The Department of Human Resources fully supports the request to create twelve positions with the Position Pilot Program. We believe the request is an appropriate use of the Position Pilot. The Department of Human Resources has reviewed vacancies in FPR and has determined all vacancies are under active recruitment.

Summary of the Forests, Parks & Recreation Position Pilot request

The FPR request addresses long term staffing needs, including appropriately reducing reliance on temporary positions to staff year-round functions associated with the State Parks by creating classified positions. The request also includes creating three additional positions that will allow the department to address priorities such as increased operational capacity, providing core staffing for recreation services, and establishing a Wood Energy Coordinator to work in cooperation with the Department of Public Service in order to promote the use of wood energy.

Specific positions are described in detail in the attached request from FPR along with the cost effectiveness information for each position. The positions are funded through existing funds.

Any questions should be directed to Molly Paulger at 828-3517.



Pope, Aimee

From: Spellman, Maribeth
Sent: Friday, September 16, 2016 10:09 AM
To: Paulger, Molly; Pope, Aimee
Subject: FW: FPR Position Pilot Request
Attachments: Pilot Chart.xlsx; DFPR - Position Pilot Request Memo.Final.docx

And finally – Justin will approve this as well. Memos please.

So in total, 4 pilot requests: DCF, ANR central, F&W, FPR

Please let me know if you are missing anything. Many thanks, Maribeth

From: Martin, Trey
Sent: Friday, September 02, 2016 1:13 PM
To: Clasen, Michael <Michael.Clasen@vermont.gov>; Spellman, Maribeth <Maribeth.Spellman@vermont.gov>
Cc: Snyder, Michael <Michael.Snyder@vermont.gov>; Markowitz, Deb <Deb.Markowitz@vermont.gov>; Whipple, Craig <Craig.Whipple@vermont.gov>; Freeman, Kristin <Kristin.Freeman@vermont.gov>
Subject: FPR Position Pilot Request

Dear Michael and Maribeth,

Please find attached our memorandum and supporting chart detailing the Position Pilot Request from the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. I am submitting this request on behalf of Commissioner Snyder, who is out of the office currently. Please let me or Deb know if you have any questions about our materials or if you have any trouble opening the documents.

Please note that we will be sending separately this afternoon an additional memorandum to detail our request for two limited service positions within the ANR Central Office.

Thanks very much,
Trey



Trey Martin, Deputy Secretary
Agency of Natural Resources

[phone] 802-505-0986
[email] trey.martin@vermont.gov

Please note my new email address: trey.martin@vermont.gov.

Pope, Aimee

From: Spellman, Maribeth
Sent: Friday, September 16, 2016 11:31 AM
To: Pope, Aimee
Subject: FW: Responses to questions re: position pilot request

FPR details - thanks, MB

-----Original Message-----

From: Clasen, Michael
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2016 4:06 PM
To: Spellman, Maribeth <Maribeth.Spellman@vermont.gov>
Subject: FW: Responses to questions re: position pilot request

-----Original Message-----

From: Snyder, Michael
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2016 4:02 PM
To: Clasen, Michael <Michael.Clasen@vermont.gov>
Cc: Martin, Trey <Trey.Martin@vermont.gov>; Whipple, Craig <Craig.Whipple@vermont.gov>; Freeman, Kristin <Kristin.Freeman@vermont.gov>
Subject: Responses to questions re: position pilot request

Hello, Michael. Thanks for your follow-up call regarding the FPR September 2, 2016 request to participate in the Position Pilot Program. You asked me to respond to 3 questions/requests for information. I'm happy to restate those and provide answers below:

1) Clarification of the number of temporary positions proposed to be eliminated to create new permanent positions.

In total, we are proposing to fully convert 12 temporary positions along with reducing hours from an additional 4 to create 9 new classified positions (8 permanent and 1 limited service). A few of the converted positions in our original memo indicated full conversion when, in fact, they are funded by reducing hours from other positions.

2) Further explanation of the Parks Special Fund, including its sources of revenue and sustainability.

All of the proposed Parks positions are supported by the Parks Special Fund. The Fund serves as a repository for all park revenue from sales of services, the proceeds from leases of state lands to seven major ski resorts, proceeds from vegetative management on parks lands (timber sales), proceeds from licenses for commercial mountain-top communications facilities, and a few other minor sources. The Fund supports about 95% of the total cost of operating and maintaining the park system.

Park receipts make up 60% -70% of the annual contribution into the Fund. With such recent robust park visitation, the Fund balance is quite strong. This level of use requires further investment to enhance the quality and professionalism of staff to deal with the current activity and to provide the quality service needed to sustain the level of interest that results in that level of use. All indications are that with proper management, facility maintenance and customer service, the current level of visitation should continue into the foreseeable future.

3) Timing of filling proposed positions and effect on budget.

We intend to recruit for all approved positions as quickly as possible and realized each will be subject to an open recruitment process. All but three Parks conversions to permanent status are budget neutral as other temporary staff hours and positions are being sufficiently reduced. Those will have no effect on current or future budgets. The balance of Parks conversions and other requested FPR positions requested are supported by available excess receipts and will not result in a need for any budget adjustment.

I hope this provides what you need. Please do let me know if you need anything further and thanks much for your assistance and consideration. m

Michael Snyder
Commissioner,
VT Forests, Parks & Recreation

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Agency of Natural Resources

Commissioner Michael C. Snyder
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TO: Justin Johnson, Secretary, Agency of Administration
Maribeth Spellman, Commissioner, Department of Human Resources
CC: Michael Clasen, Deputy Secretary, Agency of Administration
THROUGH: Deborah Markowitz, Secretary, Agency of Natural Resources
FROM: Michael Snyder, Commissioner, Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation
DATE: September 2, 2016
RE: Position Pilot Request

Summary

The Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation is pleased to be able to participate in the Position Pilot Program. We propose converting nine temporary positions into eight permanent and one limited service position, as well as adding three new positions to address high priority needs for the Department (two permanent and one limited service). The management team and staff worked together to identify the areas of most critical need considering long-term strategic planning, operational needs at the division and central level, conversion of temporary positions for cost savings, and available funding. As noted below funding is available for all of our requests with no additional request from the general fund.

Please see the attached chart which provides line item detail for each of the positions we are proposing.

Background

All the positions proposed address priority needs of FPR, most of which have existed for a considerable length of time. The Position Pilot Program finally gives an opportunity to come significantly closer to satisfying these demands in ways that are clearly financially sustainable. The Position Pilot opportunity is particularly important and timely for the State Parks program. State Parks have been operated and maintained for many years using as many as 350 seasonal temporary employees annually. Although this model has been successful, we are seeing symptoms that indicate the demands and complexities of managing such a large public park system are requiring an investment in our workforce to increase their knowledge, skills and professionalism. To that end, the parks management team brainstormed the need for seventeen new full time positions. After deliberating, we have narrowed the request from State Parks down to the eight proposed positions that are our highest priorities.

New Position Requests

Director of Operations and Recreation

The need for a high level, department wide professional manager has become increasingly apparent. There is a need for a position to coordinate and direct activities across division lines, to continually monitor, evaluate and make changes to department systems and processes to assure outcome efficiency, and to assure progress toward a common vision for the organization. Functionally serving as a Deputy Commissioner, this position would relieve the Commissioner from many internal management duties leaving the Commissioner with greater capacity to perform necessary external functions and serve a leadership role. Perhaps equally important, the position will serve a pivotal role to provide stability of continued operation over the next few years as the department faces a complete transition of top level management of all three major program areas due to retirement (Parks, Forestry and Lands Administration). In addition, this position would take on the role of directing the department's recreation programs and services adding high level, across-division strength and providing for sustained attention and resources to this critical aspect of the department's work. The position will be funded by non-General Fund resources with approximately \$60,000 from federal indirect fund balance and \$60,000 from parks special fund.

Field Recreation Specialist

Recreation services have always been an important function of FPR, but they have been provided by staff across divisions who are balancing other higher priority duties. With rapidly growing public demand for outdoor recreation, FPR has come under considerable pressure to expand our offerings and do so with a higher degree of professionalism and commitment. With the recent addition of the position of Recreation Program Manager, the department has expanded and strengthened our relationships with external partner organizations, galvanized our recreation oriented staff and as a result, made significant strides toward addressing our recreation challenges and opportunities. Even with the emphasis on accomplishment through partners, the pinch point limiting continued progress remains with our field staff. There is very limited capacity to perform the necessary up front work of assessment and planning to cue up projects for partners to perform and to manage on site execution. We propose creating a new full time classified position, Field Recreation Specialist, to increase capacity at the field level to accomplish this much needed work. The position will be completely financed by a combination of state Recreational Trails funding and administrative overhead funding from the VTrans Bike and Ped Program/FPR managed grant program for VYCC projects with \$64,000 from the state Recreational Trails fund and \$10,000 from the VTrans Bike and Ped Program. As such, it will be cost and budget neutral.

Wood Energy Coordinator

This proposed three-year limited service position will be managed in joint cooperation with the Vermont Department of Public Service to promote the use of wood in energy applications. This staff member will be responsible for promotional, marketing, planning and development work within the forest products sector to promote the use of wood in energy applications. Specific duties will include design and delivery of a comprehensive modern wood heating information and education program in Vermont to reduce market barriers to adoption of wood energy applications; implementation of Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan recommendations as they relate to wood energy and state policy



for promoting sustainable forestry practices; and staff assistance to Wood Utilization Program Leader, Division Director and Commissioner on issues related to wood energy. This work is also intended to expand markets for the variety of Vermont forest products. Funding will be provided through a new federal grant with matching funds provided by the Public Service Department. This position will be cost and budget neutral. The federal grant will fund an estimated \$40,000 of this position and the Public Service Department will fund an estimated \$34,000

Conversion Position Requests

Reservation Call Center Agent (Data Clerk)

The small state park reservation call center has been staffed for many years with part time, temporary employees. The service has been highly successful from the customer perspective as the temporary call center agents are well supervised, closely monitored and thoroughly oriented to the offerings, policies and practices of state park sales and services. Multiple times consideration had been given to outsourcing this service to a contract provider. Each time, we have chosen to retain our in-house model to better control customer service in a park system that has a somewhat complex variety of fees, rules, and experiences. Our customers regularly compliment this effort and we are convinced it is the model for our success. Despite our success, there is a fair amount of staff turnover mostly due to the seasonal fluctuation in workload. New agents require a significant amount of training and supervision to perform. To provide increased stability and assistance with new staff training, we are proposing to convert one agent position to full time classified status. The \$42,000 position will be paid through the parks special fund and will be fully budget neutral as hours from other part time agents will be reduced to offset the additional hours for this position.

Park Maintenance Technician – Parks Northeast Region

Currently, all the facility maintenance, renovation and rehabilitation for three major parks in the northeast region of the state (Brighton, Crystal Lake and Maidstone State Parks) is being performed by a long term seasonal temporary Maintenance Technician and a shorter term maintenance mechanic. Contemporary park facility maintenance is sophisticated, complex, high stakes work that is critical to the continued success of the state park system. For seasonal employees, we do not have the benefit of the time needed to adequately train and supervise in order for them to perform at the required high level. Temporary staff have been found to be very helpful in this effort but cannot effectively substitute for the professional level requirements necessary. We propose converting two temporary positions (Park Maintenance Technician and Maintenance Mechanic B) into a full time classified Park Maintenance Technician. The costs are 100% Parks Special Fund and fully budget neutral with an anticipated cost of \$60,000.

Park Maintenance Technician – Parks Southeast Region

Currently the Southeastern Parks Region manages 16 state parks with the recent addition of Muckcross State Park. The new park has a total of 10 buildings, a hydroelectric plant, a dam and 0.7 miles of roadway. Additionally, improvements to Lowell Lake State Park are anticipated due to the untapped recreational opportunities of the park combined with the existing significant amount of use. Lowell Lake has experienced a recent increase of day use activity of 60%. When contemplated improvements are made, attendance will likely double. Even without these additions, the workload to maintain the



massive infrastructure of the region exceeds our current capacity. Adding a Maintenance Technician in the region will allow for the proper allocation of workloads among the technicians to service and otherwise be available to all parks, including the new state park and the Lowell Lake build-out and allow the Parks Electrician (who has been performing those services) the time to focus on code compliance and permitting with fewer disruptions. We propose converting two seasonal maintenance positions into one full time classified Maintenance Technician. Costs for the position will be 100% from the Parks Special Fund. The anticipated cost is \$60,000 with \$56,000 provided by the conversion of the existing positions with the remaining \$4,000 needed to fully fund the permanent position can sustainably be drawn from the Parks Special Fund.

Park Maintenance Technician – Parks Northwest Region

As with the other administrative regions, the capacity to adequately support the maintenance of the infrastructure in the Northwest Region has not kept pace with the aging facilities and increased pressure due to higher visitation. Relying so heavily on temporary seasonal workers to perform complex professional maintenance work is clearly not sustainable. We propose to convert two existing seasonal maintenance positions into one full-time permanent Maintenance Technician position to guarantee an operating model that will work for the long term. Having a full time classified Maintenance Technician provides us the opportunity for training, professional skill development and continuity that is needed to adequately deal with the complexities of contemporary park facility maintenance. The position is estimated to cost \$60,000 and will be 100% Parks Special Fund supported. Eliminating the two temporary positions provides all but \$17,800 to cover the cost of the conversion. The \$42,200 balance can sustainably be supported from increased revenue to the Parks Special Fund due to higher levels of visitation.

Administrative Assistant A – Parks Northeast Region

The Northeast Region has the largest number of parks in our system and covers a significantly large geographic area due to collapsing two former park regions into a single region a number of years ago. As a result, to support the operations of this complex area and to deal with the significant increase in administrative requirements, the administrative workload in the regional office has increased far beyond the traditional January through April timeframe to a year-round requirement. Our use of a long term temporary position for this is no longer adequate. Having a full-time classified position dedicated to the Northeast Region will ensure that administrative resources are adequate to manage the continued and ever-increasing burden in the regional office. We propose converting the long term temporary position combined with another seasonal support position into one full time classified position. The anticipated cost is \$50,000 which will be 100% Parks Special Fund supported and will be completely budget neutral.

Park Manager II – Parks Northeast Region (Smugglers' Notch area)

Full-time Park Manager services are now needed year-round in the Mount Mansfield public lands and surrounding area due to a tremendous amount of public use in all seasons. Smuggler's Notch State Park became a corridor park in 2000 from the Barnes Camp Visitor Center to the Northern Gateway. Activity centers such as Bingham Falls, the Vermont State Ski Dorm, the Stone Hut, Barnes Camp Visitor Center, the Picnic Area, Big Springs and various trail heads and the Notch proper all



require park management services to monitor facilities and provide services to the public to meet the recreational demands. In addition, the park manager coordinates regularly with the Green Mountain Club to coordinate use of the Stone Hut in the summer and area trails in the winter and to provide oversight for the most Special Use Permits and Licenses processed by any other state-managed lands area. We are proposing to convert the existing long term Park Manager position combined with another seasonal support position into one full time classified position. The position will be 100% Parks Special Fund supported and will be completely budget neutral based on the conversion of existing positions. The anticipated cost is \$59,000.

Innkeeper II – Parks Northeast Region (Seyon Lodge)

Seyon Lodge is unique in the Vermont State Park system and operates virtually year-round. When the Seyon lodge renovation was completed in 2002, the business plan recommended having at least one year-round, full-time, classified position at Seyon to best serve the multiple and intensive needs of the lodge and park guests. To date, this position is still needed to provide the lodge with the consistency necessary to build a repeat customer base through marketing and to provide excellence and consistency in customer service. Since 2002, there have been seven different sets of Innkeepers. By establishing one of the Innkeepers as a full time permanent position, the turnover rate will be reduced, thereby minimizing the need for continued repetitive training and ensuring that the quality of services will remain at high levels. We propose converting the existing long term Innkeeper position combined with another seasonal position from Seyon Lodge into one full time classified position. The position will be 100% Parks Special Fund supported and will be completely budget neutral at an estimated cost of \$68,000.

Program Services Clerk – Parks Central Office

Much of the recent success of the state park system can be attributed to a robust program of marketing and promotion that relies heavily on social media and other web based communication tools. We have relied on a long term temporary position to provide the necessary support so this effort can be effective. We propose to convert that position to full time classified status so that we can meet increasing demand for social-media based customer service and marketing. This position will also provide critical assistance with the training and supervision of seasonal customer service staff of the reservation call center and will allow us to increase our capacity to manage volunteers and complete large scale off-season projects. The position will be 100% Parks special Fund supported. Converting the position will cost \$44,500 which is \$15,677 more than the long term temporary position, a funding level which can easily be sustainably supported by additional revenue in the Parks Special Fund.

Financial Specialist

This proposed conversion to a two-year limited service position is a key component of a business office staff restructuring plan to implement more efficient systems, address an ongoing backlog of work, and develop cross training for continuity of operations. We aim to reclassify one vacant financial position in the business office to a grants and contracts administrator to centralize responsibility, make systems more efficient, and to relieve pressure on the business manager, staff attorney, parks project coordinator, and staff who currently write contracts and grants (approximately 40). With the reclassification of a financial position to a grants and contracts administrator critical work will need to be shifted to another position.



We propose adding this limited service financial specialist to manage a high quantity of accounts payables and receivables, to provide administrative support for recreation grant managers, and to address a backlog of FEMA project recordkeeping. This position is estimated to cost \$60,000 and would be funded through a combination of one-time sources: federal and state recreational trails fund balance and FEMA fund balance with approximately \$20,000 of funding coming from each of the three noted sources.

FPR Position Pilot Request

Position Title	Pay Grade	Estimated Annual Cost	Funding Source(s)	Permanent or Limited Service	Summary
Director of Operations and Recreation	30	120,000	Federal Indirect Funds, Parks Special Fund	Permanent	Professional high level coordination across all divisions for efficiency and continuity of operations. Assist the Commissioner with internal management duties and direct recreation programs.
Field Recreation Specialist	23	74,000	State Recreational Trails Program, VTrans Bike and Pedestrian Funds	Permanent	Coordinate recreation projects with outside partners and internal staff by conducting project assessments, engaging in planning efforts and assisting with partner relationships.
Wood Energy Coordinator	23	74,000	Federal Grant, Public Service Department Funds	Limited Service	Promote the use of wood in energy applications including the design and delivery of a comprehensive modern wood heating information and education program and the implementation of Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan recommendations as they relate to wood energy and state policy for promoting sustainable forestry practices.
Recreation Call Center Agent	12	42,000	Parks Special Fund	Permanent	Provide improved stability, knowledge and training resources within the parks call center by establishing a permanent position to work in conjunction with the temporary staff workforce.
Park Maintenance Technician - Parks Northeast Region	19	60,000	Parks Special Fund	Permanent	Professional facility maintenance for three major parks in the northeast region.
Park Maintenance Technician - Parks Southeast Region	19	60,000	Parks Special Fund	Permanent	Professional facility maintenance for the parks southeast region.
Park Maintenance Technician - Parks Northwest Region	19	60,000	Parks Special Fund	Permanent	Professional facility maintenance for the parks northwest region.
Administrative Assistant A - Parks Northeast Region	17	50,000	Parks Special Fund	Permanent	Year-round administrative support to address increased administrative workload and requirements.
Parks Manager II - Parks Northeast Region (Smuggler's Notch)	15	59,000	Parks Special Fund	Permanent	Address high level of public use in Mount Mansfield public lands and the surrounding area.
Innkeeper II - Seyon Lodge	19	68,000	Parks Special Fund	Permanent	Provide consistency necessary to serve the multiple and intensive needs of the lodge and park guests to build a repeat customer base.
Program Services Clerk - Parks Central Office	15	44,500	Parks Special Fund	Permanent	Provide critical assistance with the training and supervision of seasonal customer service staff of the reservation call center and to increase our capacity and meet demand for social media based customer service and marketing.
Financial Specialist II	19	60,000	Federal and Recreational Trails Funds, FEMA Fund Balance.	Limited Service	Part of a restructuring effort to improve business office efficiency and continuity of operations, this position will focus on accounts payable, receivable and department administrative support.

Position Title	Pay Grade	Salary	50% Bene	Total
Director of Operations and Recreation	30	75,483	37,742	113,225
Field Recreation Specialist	23	49,067	24,534	73,601
Wood Energy Coordinator	23	49,067	24,534	73,601
Recreation Call Center Agent	12	27,955	13,978	41,933
Park Maintenance Technician	19	39,395	19,698	59,093
Financial Specialist II	19	39,395	19,698	59,093