

DEPARTMENT OF RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

**Guiding Principles for Leases**

Adopted by the State Park System Advisory Council

2/6/2012

Overarching principles:

It is essential that all proposed leases or similar agreements for state parks be consistent with the statutory purposes of the State Park System\* as codified in RSA 216-A:1. They are, in order of priority:

- To protect and preserve unusual scenic, scientific, historical, recreational and natural areas within the state;
- To continually provide such additional park areas and facilities as may be necessary to meet the recreational needs of the citizens of all regions of the state;
- To make these areas accessible to the public for recreational, education, scientific, and other uses consistent with their protection and preservation; and
- To encourage and support tourism and related economic activity within the state.

Reasons to Lease (individually or in combination):

- Provides a greater capacity for stewardship (Forest Lake)
- Secures capital investment (Jericho Campground, Sunapee Ski Area)
- Captures third party programmatic capacity, experience and expertise (Seacoast Science Center, NE Ski Museum, Franconia Notch Ski Club)
- Lack of programmatic use for facility (Eckerd @ Coleman SP)
- Provides recreational opportunities to the public not otherwise possible
- Provides a net economic benefit to the State Park System

Guiding principles for leasing:

It is assumed that there are three circumstances under which a lease of a state park facility might be considered:

1. A proposal by the Department of Parks and Recreation to lease a facility or operation in order to achieve the above goals and the current State Park System Strategic Plan.
2. A proposal by an outside party to assume operation responsibilities of an existing park facility or to create a new activity, operation or facility within a park (such as the use of a building).
3. Renewal of an existing lease agreement.

The following criteria shall be used when evaluating a lease:

- a) The proposed lease must advance or at least be consistent with the statutory purposes of the State Park System.

- b) The proposed lease shall comply with limitations placed on the property at time of acquisition including deed restrictions, easements, programmatic restrictions (LWCF), and other statutory limitations.
- c) The proposed lease must be consistent with and supportive of the State Park System Strategic Plan, the role of the park in the State Park System, and the park plan for the individual park. In the event that a park specific plan does not exist at the time of a proposed lease, the creation and approval of the plan prepared at a scale appropriate for the nature of the request shall be a part of the lease development process.
- d) There must be net financial, resource maintenance and protection, environmental, and public experiential benefits to the State Park System and to the individual park.
- e) The proposed lease will have minimal net adverse impact on the economy, aesthetics, historical sites, public health or safety, park's operational efficiency or quality of life in a local community or in the state as a whole.
- f) The proposed lease shall not unduly impact the local communities in the areas of public safety, infrastructure maintenance and improvement, emergency and other community services.
- g) The proposed lease shall not unduly diminish the public's overall access to any state park or historic site.
- h) There shall be adequate opportunities for the public to comment on the lease and provide suggestions for revisions to any proposed lease through public meetings in the local community and other locations convenient to citizens of the state.
- i) There shall be a methodology established to measure the performance, accountability, and success of the lease as measured against the goals of the State Park System and the goals and objectives of the lease itself.
- j) The proposed lease shall demonstrate best practices in environmental sustainability, business operations, and community engagement and relations.
- k) The lease shall contain a development plan detailing proposed expansion and improvement to the property.
- l) The lessee shall possess the financial, technical and managerial capabilities to ensure that the state park shall be managed and operated in accordance with the conditions of the lease.

\* For purposes of these guidelines, a state park means any land or infrastructure, whether in whole or in part, owned by the state and managed by the Division of Parks and Recreation for recreational, cultural, historical, or educational purposes.