



Handout 1.6—The Division of Public Recreation (DPR) Overview

The Division of Public Recreation (DPR) is a state agency in the state of Columbia. Its mission is to monitor and encourage safe recreational use of Columbia's waterways. The Headquarters Office is in Springfield and serves as the office of record only for administrative records, such as personnel, time, and attendance records. Each program is responsible for creating and maintaining the records and information related to its particular role. The Administrator's office is in Springfield, while the Deputy Administrator is located in Washington Grove and reports to the Springfield office.

Current Administrative Structure and Activities in the Jacksonville Regional Office

The Assistant Administrator for Recreation currently also serves as the director for the Three Lakes Advisory Commission. The Commission is comprised of agency heads from other state agencies as well as from state and local governments that border the Mancove, Charleston, and Savannah Lakes. The Charleston Lake is within the boundary of the National Forest. The Commission focuses on finding ways to protect the lakes environment against the effects of gas-powered engines (this includes engines powering boats and jet skis) on the lakes' environment. The lakes are currently home to three endangered species of fish and several types of endangered plant life. The Commission has passed a mandate allowing only electric motors to be used on the lakes, which led to public outcry.

Due to this public controversy, the Columbia State legislature asked to be kept informed of all proposed Commission decisions. Therefore, the Legislative Liaison for DPR is now required to attend all Three Lakes Advisory Commission meetings.

The Public Affairs Office (PAO) is currently trying to keep up with the public's requests for information about this controversy. The Deputy Director is responsible for clearing PAO press releases.

The Environmental Quality Office (EQO) monitors and protects the health of the waterways, including conducting water-quality studies and approving permits for recreational watercraft wishing to use federally-protected waters. In addition, the EQO generates Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) documenting the effects of recreational usage on the waterways. This office has issued several EISs which differ from those issued by other state and local agencies. The laboratory in the EQO houses hazardous chemicals which are used in the testing. At the request of the Commission, the lab is currently testing water samples from the lakes.

The Procurement Office administers routine procurement files and issues and monitors grants to local governments, as well as to universities and private companies in connection with the Advisory Commissions programs. Subject to public review, these grants often lead to controversy and protest.



The Records

The *Records Liaison* oversees all records created at the local office.

The *Deputy Administrator* submits monthly reports to the Administrator, HQ, Springfield. The Deputy Administrator receives biweekly reports from each of DPR's five departments. He manages documents that support the Delegation of Authority and the Orders of Succession, which are stored in a locked drawer in the Deputy Administrator's desk.

The *Assistant Administrator for Resources Evaluation, Research, and Policy* files support policy development that helps preserve land for recreational purposes and oversee such offices as the Environmental Quality Office.

Public Affairs records include all DPR communications, recreational education, and media relations activities.

General Counsel records document numerous pieces of legislation sponsored in full or in part by DPR, including active and closed files.

Administrative Services holds procurement and grant files which contain original contracts with grantees and complete records of all grants and monitoring activities, including the final reports of projects, as well as payroll, personnel, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaints, and personal injury case files. Administrative Services is located at headquarters, in Springfield, and all their records are maintained in their office. Only the previous month's time information is stored at the regional office.

Assistant Administration for Recreation is the official repository for Advisory Commission records. It maintains records created by the Terrestrial and Aquatic Recreation Office, which includes Site Containment and Cleanup Files, Critical Habitat Maps, and Waterway Charts.

Information Technology staff completes weekly system backups and maintains system documentation and manuals.

The Building

Located on the southeastern seaboard in Danville, Columbia, the building lies 20 miles north of Washington Grove. The area is prone to severe weather and is located near an alligator- and snake-infested swamp and an airport. DPR, one of four tenants in a three-story building owned by the state, occupies offices on the second and third floors and an area in the basement. The building was constructed in 1964 with a metal-framed glass-curtain exterior wall. None of the windows opens. A sprinkler system was installed in the building in 1967; almost 30 years later a sprinkler pipe leak caused a flood in both the DPR offices and records storage room. A hot-water and chilled-water system, installed in 1996 features pipes which snake back and forth between the ceiling of one story and the floor of the story above it. The ceilings also contain plumbing pipes. Asbestos tiles still hang above drop ceilings installed in the 1970s.



The Holdings

Few filing cabinets can be found throughout DPR's offices, which face the inoperable windows. Due to lack of space in the offices, the basement has become the central file room. That room consists of 10 file cabinets containing the agency's current files. One can often find mice scurrying around in the basement, along with other vermin and insects. There is no air conditioning or heating in the basement. The basement has a ground floor walk-out door leading to the public parking lot.

The DPR keeps about 200 boxes of older records—including closed contracts that must be retained—in a roomy cage, secured by a wire-link fence. The boxes rest on wooden shelving, the bottom shelf of which lies directly on the floor. So that the bottom tier of boxes is only one inch above the floor. You can find a set of leather-bound final reports regarding grant projects in the General Counsel's Office. That office—also in the basement—holds multiple additional copies in boxes stacked in the basement storage area.

A file cabinet in the upstairs office space of the EQO contains agency reports. When the drawers become too full (about every six months) upstairs, workers refile them in the basement. The agency receives hazardous chemical report data both electronically and on paper that they plot electronically on maps in the EQO computer tracking program. For awhile the agency recorded data from paper reports via scans, but were not able to sustain that effort.

The Procurement Office stores the current year's contracts in its office file cabinet. The office keeps open grant files in its office, while it keeps closed files in the basement. The Terrestrial and Aquatic Recreation Office keeps its large-format charts and maps in boxes and tubes on wooden shelving. It holds current, small-format documents in the upstairs office, with most in the basement file drawers.

Public Affairs is unable to store anything in its office space due to a lack of storage space. Instead, it routes everything to basement filing. Seven years earlier, DPR installed a LAN. They situated the file server in a small room carved from the General Counsel Office space in the basement. The LAN is backed up nightly within itself and onto tape weekly. The agency stores backup tapes in the same room as the file server. Shortly after the installation, when backups were a year old, they were destroyed. But some five-year-old files still lurk on PC hard drives, backwaters where records management has seldom delved. Over the years, fewer and fewer files have been printed and filed, despite the fact that paper-format long remained the "official record copy." As a result, records that are two, three, and four years old are partly paper and partly electronic. Some are in both formats. Last year, DPR specified electronic format as the record copy standard. Scanning incoming paper enjoyed a very brief popularity before it was sidelined as too time-consuming. DPR continues to navigate in a world of paper and electronic records.



A COOP Plan was written in FY 1993 and was last updated in 1999. Currently, there is no designate assigned responsibility for the plan. So, although a file plan exists, not all offices put the protocols into practice. Because the Deputy Administrator does not seem to understand the concept of essential records, no one has identified essential records.