

The Status of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Efforts to Improve the PA State Park Reservation and Revenue System (PRRS)

Report Highlights

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) introduced the PRRS system in 1998 to centralize state parks reservations, provide for automated credit card payment for state parks services, facilitate registration and permitting at parks, and account for revenues and refunds. In 2000, the Office of Comptroller Operations reported the new system did not perform key functions and recommended that it be "redesigned" to correct underlying technical problems. In late 2002, the Department of the Auditor General reported that earlier identified problems and security issues remained. Our follow-up review assessed DCNR's progress in fully resolving these prior findings.

Findings:

Sixteen of the thirty system-related problems identified in prior audits have not been fully resolved. At least 10 modifications to the system software have occurred since 1998 to mitigate system problems for consumers and staff (e.g., double bookings; incorrect refunds; and banking, credit card settlement, and PRRS revenue reports that did not reconcile). As of September 2003, PRRS still could not calculate rental fees for marina and mooring facilities, accurately calculate and post state sales and lodging taxes, accurately process all refunds, or provide appropriate audit trails. DCNR reported that full resolution of most remaining issues requires a major system redesign, which is not anticipated before 2005.

PRRS now interfaces with credit card payment processing systems. PRRS, as originally delivered by the vendor, did not include the contractually required automated credit card payment processing interface. In 2000, DCNR assumed responsibility from its contractor for the system and introduced a credit card interface at state parks in spring 2000 and at the reservation call center in spring 2002. In fall 2002, the parks were given the ability to swipe credit cards, rather than manually entering card numbers into PRRS.

DCNR has taken steps to improve security over PRRS and sensitive customer data though several essential changes have not occurred. DCNR, for example, removed a

backup production server that was not password protected from the call center, and in 2003, encrypted PRRS data processing, as required by the Governor's Office of Information Technology. In late 2002 and early 2003, the Department modified PRRS to require users to have a Commonwealth account with a unique user ID and password. DCNR has also attempted to address some security issues through improved staff training. However, additional efforts are required to address remaining issues, including:

- Written credit card data security and confidentiality policies and procedures have not been developed, and those working with such data have not been required to sign agreements that they have read and understand such policies.
- Vulnerability assessments are not systematically and routinely performed.

Detailed information concerning other remaining security issues has been provided to the Department's Secretary in a confidential letter.

Recommendation:

DCNR should request consultation from the Governor's Office of Administration/Office of Information Technology as it considers a redesign of PRRS and attempts to address ongoing PRRS security issues.