



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE  
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**TO:** IAC Committee Members and Designees

**FROM:** Laura Eckert Johnson, Director 

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**SUBJECT:** Next Steps: State Action for Trails

In July of last year, staff presented an assessment of the status of recreational trails in Washington State. Since then, staff has met with interested parties in different parts of the state to present the assessment and to gather opinion on the question of the Interagency Committee's role in the recreational trails arena. Meetings were held in Port Angeles, Spokane, Wenatchee, and Mount Vernon.

The key question for the people attending these meetings was: what is the best role for state government generally, and IAC in particular, in providing or helping to provide trails, especially those potential actions other than money or grants?

Overall, the idea of developing a new or revised "state trails plan" did not generate sufficient support or enthusiasm to result in a staff recommendation to do so at this time.<sup>1</sup> However, other ideas were repeated often enough to warrant a basis for a draft staff recommendation on a number of strategies and actions related to trails.

The draft recommendations, linked to Priorities of Government, are listed below.

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<sup>1</sup> Concerns were expressed about duplicating planning already done or underway in other agencies or jurisdictions.



**Priorities of Government Addressed:**

- improve recreational opportunities,
- improve health,
- improve personal mobility, and
- protect state natural resources.

**Strategy 1.** Continued funding through the Nonhighway and Offroad Vehicle Activity (NOVA) program, the National Recreational Trails Program (NRTP), the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and the “trails” category of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP).

Reason: Addresses improvement of recreational opportunities.

**Strategy 2:** Encourage local agencies to connect via “shared use paths” for walking and bicycling.

Reasons: most trail use is close-to-home walking and bicycling, and shared use paths address these activities while addressing priorities of government in recreation, health, and mobility

IAC actions:

- Provide funding through grant programs
- Map existing and proposed shared use paths statewide, with an emphasis on regional connectors
- Seek mitigation from major development projects statewide (e.g., hydro projects under FERC jurisdiction, Sound Transit, I-405 widening, etc)
- Provide forums for information sharing and coordination (trails conference, workshops for local agencies)

**Strategy 3.** Provide state-to-local connections through implementation of State Parks’ Centennial 2013 Plan.

Reasons: the proposed long-distance corridors are natural cross-state connectors, and provide a goal for local connection, and the shared use paths meet multiple priorities of government (recreation, health, mobility)

IAC actions:

- Help develop or simply support trail budget proposals in POG
- Work with Parks and WSDOT to identify “safe routes” to State Parks for walking and bicycling (e.g., shared used paths).

**Strategy 4.** Support DNR's direction to specialize in "dispersed" recreation (e.g., trails).

Reasons: to improve recreation opportunities, and to protect state trust resources and build support for trust management

IAC actions:

- Help develop or simply support budget proposals for dispersed recreation in POG

**Strategy 5.** Encourage Congress to better fund federal agencies to support federal trail systems and programs.

Reasons: federal projects should be fully supported by federal government in order to improve recreational opportunities, increase management efficiency, and to release state funds for state projects.

IAC actions:

- Propose a policy consistent with SCORP concerning priority use of state resources to support state-owned facilities<sup>2</sup>
- Draft a Governor's letter to the State's Congressional delegation concerning funding.

## **Next Steps**

Staff suggests that these draft recommendations be circulated for additional public review.

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<sup>2</sup> "In view of the pressing renovation needs at the local and state level, state funding of federal facilities should be reconsidered." Page 64, *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*, IAC October 2002.