



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE  
1111 Washington Street SE  
PO Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

August 26, 2006

**TO:** IAC Members and Designees  
**FROM:** Laura Eckert Johnson, Director *LEJ*  
**PREPARED BY:** Jim Fox, Special Assistant  
Marguerite Austin, Manager, Recreation and Habitat Section *MA*  
**SUBJECT:** Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program  
Process Overview and Framework  
Notebook Item #5

At the upcoming September meeting, the IAC Board will be asked to adopt ranked lists of projects for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP). In compliance with RCW 79A.15 these lists must be submitted to the Governor by November 1, 2006. The purpose of this memo is to summarize the WWRP grants process and to outline the decisions that must be made by the Board.

**WWRP PROGRAM**

WWRP grants are made to state and local agencies for acquisition, development, renovation, and restoration of parks, open space, farmland, and habitat areas. Funds allocated by the state legislature are split between the Outdoor Recreation Account (ORA), Habitat Conservation Account (HCA), Riparian Protection Account (RPA), and the Farmland Preservation Account (FPA). The following table shows the specific funding categories within each account.

ORA – Local Parks	HCA – Critical Habitat
ORA – State Lands Development & Renovation	HCA – Natural Areas
ORA – State Parks	HCA – State Lands Restoration & Enhancement
ORA – Trails	HCA – Urban Wildlife Habitat
ORA – Water Access	RPA – Riparian Protection
	FPA – Farmland Preservation



Additional information about statutory fund allocation is shown in Attachment A, *Allocation of WWRP Funds*.

## **WWRP PROCESS**

Local and state agencies applying for 2007-2009 WWRP funding submitted applications on or before May 1, 2006. The evaluation of projects occurred during June, July, and August. Before these deadlines, applicants were given the opportunity to participate in various workshops offered by IAC staff to assist them in understanding the grant application process and preparing the best possible application and evaluation presentation. This is an outline of the application and evaluation process.

1. *Announcement of WWRP Grant Cycle.* In July 2005 IAC began notifying potential applicants about the grants that would be offered in 2006. By January 2006, IAC staff had distributed announcements regarding the grants offered and provided the dates for the 2006 grants information workshops. This announcement was posted on IAC's Web site and was sent to more than 6,000 individuals, agencies, and organizations.
2. *Application Workshops.* In February IAC staff conducted seven identical grants workshops in various locations around the state. The purpose of the workshop was to provide information and answer questions from potential applicants. Staff described the application, review, and evaluation processes, and distributed computer disks that contained grant program policy manuals, application materials, program schedules, and instructions for using PRISM (IAC's grant management database) to submit project proposals. The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition sent a representative to each workshop to help share information about recent legislative changes to the program. More than 400 individuals attended the workshops.
3. *Preliminary Project Proposals.* In March, IAC received 288 preliminary project proposals indicating applicants' intent to seek more than \$137 million in WWRP project funding.
4. *Grant Manager Site Visits.* In the spring, Outdoor Grant Managers met with applicants to review potential projects and discuss grant program requirements.
5. *Application Deadline.* By the May 1<sup>st</sup> deadline, IAC received 234 WWRP applications requesting nearly \$154 million.
6. *Grant Manager Review.* Following the application deadline, IAC staff conducted a desk review of each application and provided a checklist that outlined which items were complete or incomplete and distributed these checklists with a schedule of key deadlines. Staff also attempted to visit sites they had not seen previously. During these visits, project staff met with applicants to discuss project eligibility, the technical merits of a proposal, and other issues.

7. *Project Review Meetings.* IAC held 16 WWRP project review meetings in April, June, and July. The purpose was to provide an opportunity for applicants to present their projects and receive feedback on the merits of the proposal along with suggestions for refinements to the project scope, design, cost estimates, presentation graphics, etc. IAC staff and a team of volunteers with experience or expertise in various disciplines serve as reviewers. A mid-day training was offered during each project review meeting that included:
- Sharing information on the amount and number of grant requests for each category
  - A review of the evaluation process with an outline of the responsibilities of the applicant, evaluator, and IAC staff
  - A review of the evaluation instruments with suggestions for preparing graphics and responses to the team scored criteria
  - Reminding applicants of the remaining grant process deadlines (e.g. for completing project changes, evaluation dates, etc...), and
  - A question and answer session to address other issues or concerns raised by applicants.

Although highly recommended, participation in a project review meeting was optional. Applicants sometimes attend a review meeting to hear other presentations and participate in the mid-day training session offered by IAC staff.

8. *Project Evaluation Meetings.* In June, July, and August, 208<sup>1</sup> WWRP projects were evaluated. Evaluation teams, comprised of federal, state and local agency representatives, citizens at large, scientific experts, and representatives of organizations interested in parks, recreation, and habitat conservation, were assembled for each WWRP category. Applicants were allowed between 20-30 minutes, depending on the category, to present their project, respond to the evaluation criteria, and answer evaluators' questions. Each evaluator assigned a score for each evaluative criterion. After completion of all presentations, IAC staff tabulated the overall scores for each project and prepared ranked lists of projects for each category.
9. *Post Evaluation Conferences.* IAC staff reconvened the evaluation teams a few days after the project evaluation meetings to share the results and review the evaluation process for making future changes to the process. Attachment B, *Post Evaluation Summaries*, provides additional information on evaluators' assessment of the process, the criteria, and the results.

## **IAC BOARD ACTIONS**

Before the 2007 legislative session, the IAC must take the following actions:

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<sup>1</sup> 26 projects were either withdrawn by applicants or terminated by IAC staff for either missing established deadlines or for eligibility reasons.

- Approve ranked lists of WWRP projects for each of the eleven funding categories for submission to the Governor, and
- Decide what portion of the 2007-2009 biennial appropriation to allocate to the mitigation banking proposals submitted in the *Riparian Protection* and *Urban Wildlife Habitat* categories.

### ***IAC Approval of Ranked Lists***

Included in this notebook are the preliminary ranked lists of proposed projects for each WWRP category along with a brief summary of each proposal. Because ranked lists of projects recommended for funding are to be submitted to the Governor's Office by November 1<sup>st</sup>, IAC Board approval must occur at the September meeting. At this meeting IAC staff will make its recommendation for approval of the lists, and will provide a brief presentation of the top two ranked project proposals in each category. Public testimony will be taken and the IAC Board will then approve a final ranked list of projects for each category for submission to the Governor.

### ***WWRP Alternates***

At the June 2006 meeting, IAC Board members decided to request \$100 million for WWRP for the next biennium. Current IAC policy states that alternate projects will be submitted in each account in an amount equal to 50% of the dollar amount requested for each account, with no fewer than six alternates in each category. To help ensure an adequate list of alternates, with IAC Board approval, staff will submit the complete list of approved projects to the Governor's Office.

### ***IAC Board Recommendation***

The final ranked list of projects for each category will be forwarded to the Governor on November 1<sup>st</sup>, along with the Board's recommendation for a \$100 million biennial WWRP appropriation. The ranked list provided must include a description of each project and any required matching funds.

A new requirement now in RCW 79A.15.110 provides for review of acquisition projects by the appropriate county or city legislative authority with jurisdiction over the project area. This local legislative body may, at its discretion, submit a letter to the IAC Board identifying the authority's position with regard to the project. The Board shall make the letters received available to the Governor and Legislature when the prioritized project list is submitted. The letters received are provided for IAC review, under the cover of Attachment C, along with select letters of support.

### ***Legislative Approval***

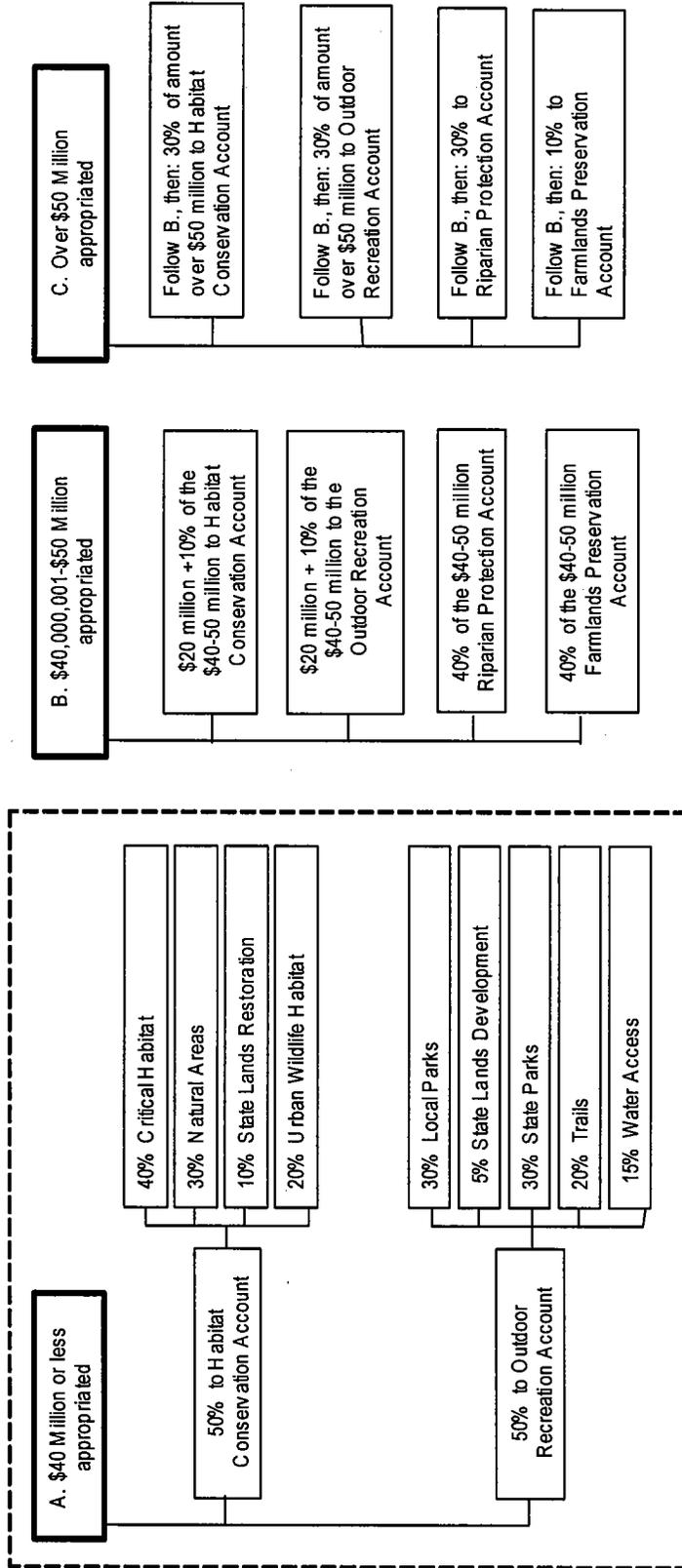
As part of the State's Capital Budget, the Governor submits the list of WWRP projects to the Legislature. The Governor may remove (but not add) projects from the list but cannot add or re-order the list. The 2007 Legislature will set the WWRP appropriation and approve the list of projects in the Capital Budget. The Legislature may also remove (but not add) projects from the list recommended by the Governor.

***Final Approval***

While IAC submits its funding recommendation to the Governor and Legislature this fall, final approval and funding of projects will not be made until the June 2007 meeting.

Until the final funding levels are set, it is difficult to predict exactly which projects will receive funding approval. Some categories have statutory minimum percentages required for acquisition projects. It is quite possible that higher ranked development projects will be skipped over to meet the statutory requirements. Prospective grantees (and the Board) are cautioned to not use the September list as a final funding list.

Allocation of WWRP Funds



RCW 79A.15.030:  
 (a) Appropriations for a biennium of \$40 million or less must be allocated equally between HCA and ORA.  
 (b) If appropriations for a biennium total more than \$40 million, the money must be allocated as follows:  
 (i) \$20 million to HCA and \$20 million to ORA;  
 (ii) Any amount over \$40 million up to \$50 million shall be allocated as follows:  
 (A) 10% to HCA; (B) 10% to ORA; (C) 40% to RPA; (D) 40% to FPA;  
 (iii) Any amount over \$50 million must be allocated as follows:  
 (A) 30% to HCA; (B) 30% to ORA; (C) 30% to RPA; and (D) 10% to FPA.

50% of the funds allocated to the Local Parks and State Parks categories must be used for acquisition.  
 75% of the Water Access category funds must be used for acquisition.

Under distribution scenarios B and C, Habitat Conservation Account and Outdoor Recreation Account funds are distributed as shown in the nine categories under scenario A.

**Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program  
Potential Funding Allocations**

<b>WWRP Accounts and Categories</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>\$50 Million</b>	<b>\$75 Million</b>	<b>\$100 Million</b>
<b>Habitat Conservation Account</b>				
<i>Critical Habitat</i>	40%	8,148,000	11,058,000	13,968,000
<i>Natural Areas</i>	30%	6,111,000	8,293,500	10,476,000
<i>State Lands Restoration &amp; Enhancement</i>	20%	4,074,000	2,764,500	3,492,000
<i>Urban Wildlife Habitat</i>	10%	2,037,000	5,529,000	6,984,000
<b>Outdoor Recreation Account</b>				
<i>Local Parks</i>	30%	6,111,000	8,293,500	10,476,000
<i>State Lands Development &amp; Renovation</i>	5%	1,018,500	1,382,250	1,746,000
<i>State Parks</i>	30%	6,111,000	8,293,500	10,476,000
<i>Trails</i>	20%	4,074,000	5,539,000	6,984,000
<i>Water Access</i>	15%	3,055,500	4,146,750	5,238,000
<b>Riparian Protection Account</b>				
<i>Riparian Protection</i>		3,880,000	11,155,000	18,430,000
<b>Farmland Preservation Account</b>				
<i>Farmland Preservation</i>		3,880,000	6,305,000	8,730,000

\*The amounts identified for each category show the amount available for grants after a deduction of 3% for program administration.

## POST EVALUATION CONFERENCES

The evaluation teams for the WWRP habitat projects were comprised of diverse, knowledgeable professionals with a good blend of experience and expertise regarding natural resources protection. Individuals chosen to evaluate WWRP outdoor recreation projects were also selected for their expertise related to local land use issues, park and recreation resource management and protection, and specific experience associated with the various funding categories. The newly created Farmland Advisory Committee evaluated projects submitted for farmland preservation

Approximately 50% of the evaluators were scoring projects for the first time. There were many positive comments from team members about the openness of the process, the quality of the projects and presentations, and the desire to see as many of the projects funded as is possible. Team members also expressed their thanks for having had the opportunity to be part of IAC's open project selection process and volunteered to serve as reviewers and evaluators in the future.

IAC staff conducts two post evaluation conferences with each evaluation team. The first is held immediately after the evaluation meeting, and the second one is held a few days later when tabulated rankings are available for review. These conferences provided an opportunity for staff and evaluators to discuss the evaluation process, criteria, and results. Evaluators provide feedback at the meetings and/or through written comments submitted at their convenience.

Examples of post evaluations comments or suggestions related to the process include:

- Consider adding caps to the Trails, Water Access, and Urban Wildlife Habitat categories.
- Continue to emphasize participation in project review sessions. This was often reflected in the quality of the final presentation. Most of those that participated did a better job than those that did not.
- Continue using the written evaluation process for the two State Lands categories, but provide more detailed instructions to applicants on how to prepare their evaluation packets.
- Eliminate the Project Narrative requirement for the State Lands categories. Most of the information was duplicated in the project description or responses to the evaluation criteria.
- Encourage applicants to bring their technical or scientific experts to help address the evaluation criteria and follow-up questions.
- Include time for state agency overviews of their priorities in the Critical Habitat, Natural Areas, and State Parks categories.

### **Criteria**

At each post evaluation session, staff asks evaluators for feedback on the evaluation criteria used for each category. Criteria for WWRP habitat and riparian categories focus on the quality of the habitat, the species protected, the long-term manageability or

viability of the habitat area, threats to the habitat and species, on-going stewardship, public benefits, project support, and public use. The evaluation instruments for outdoor recreation projects focus on the need for additional recreational facilities, state and local priorities, design, site suitability, threats to the availability of recreational sites, diversity of recreational opportunities, trail connectivity, water access, project support, cost efficiencies, and more.

As expected, there were suggestions for clarifying some of the criteria to make it easier for applicants to present the information needed for scoring. Examples of the post evaluation comments, concerns, or suggestions on criteria include the following:

- Add a criterion on “cost benefit” for habitat acquisitions.
- Address the challenge of how evaluators should score public access when public access could have a negative impact on the resources that need to be protected.
- Applicants had difficulty making the distinction between the *Threat to the Species* element listed under the *Species and Communities with Special Status* criteria and the *Immediacy of Threat to the Site* element under the *Manageability and Viability* criteria. Members of the team that helped create this instrument recommend a review of the criteria and clarification to assist applicants and evaluators. One way to address the issue is to combine the two elements into one criterion.
- Consider breaking out and creating a separate *Threat* criterion for Farmland Preservation projects. It seemed to emerge as a pivotal scoring element.
- Emphasize the importance of water availability and protection of water rights for farmland projects.
- Emphasize to applicants the importance of understanding local zoning, critical areas ordinances, and other land use practices and how this can help them address some of the evaluation criteria.
- Encourage applicants to clearly identify specific properties proposed for acquisition and their acquisition strategy for prioritizing purchases.
- Encourage applicants to provide more details on design or plans for implementing restoration projects. Highlight the importance of the “bigger picture” criteria used for habitat projects.
- The *Expansion/Renovation* criterion in categories like Local Parks is hard to apply when scoring acquisition projects. Should there be a question that allows an evaluator to reward an applicant for purchasing property before there are significant threats?
- Difficulty in scoring the Immediacy of Threat question for acquisition projects once the applicant has acquired the property under an IAC approved Waiver of Retroactivity.

- The *Performance Measures* criterion in the State Lands Development category was very difficult to score since applicants did not seem to grasp the concept. Suggest the criteria be expanded to include examples of performance measures.
- There should be more emphasis on restoration and long-term stewardship for Riparian category projects.
- Wildlife Habitat Connectivity is difficult to score when trail projects typically involving paving the trail. IAC may need to look at assessing reduced impacts to wildlife rather than connectivity.

Staff plans to conduct criteria review sessions with constituents to address some of the revisions recommended by the evaluators. Any substantive changes will be submitted to the Board for approval before the next grant round.

Attachment C

***WASHINGTON WILDLIFE  
AND RECREATION  
PROGRAM***

**2007 – 2009 BIENNIUM**

***CITY-COUNTY REVIEW &  
LETTERS OF SUPPORT***

#06-1807A



Kittitas County, Washington

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

District One  
David B. Bowen

District Two  
Alan Crankovich

District Three  
Perry D. Huston

March 2, 2006

Governor Christine O. Gregoire  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Honorable Governor Christine Gregoire:

I am writing to express my support for the Skookumchuck Conservation Project in Kittitas County. The Skookumchuck area located in Commissioner District No. 1, which I represent, is important to the citizens of Kittitas County for a variety of historical uses, including hunting, bird watching, horseback riding, camping, cattle grazing, and hiking.

The planned land acquisition would preserve these existing uses, protect fish and wildlife habitat, ensure a public access corridor and improve land management on adjacent wildlife areas owned and/or managed by the Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife.

The Skookumchuck Conservation Project has the support of several local stakeholder organizations and individuals who have collaborated on long-term management plans for the area.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance in working with your office on this project.

Sincerely,

David B. Bowen  
Kittitas County Commissioner  
District # 1, Chairman



Kittitas County, Washington

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

District One  
David B. Bowen

District Two  
Alan Crankovich

District Three  
Perry D. Huston

July 18, 2006

The Office of Interagency Committee  
P.O. Box 40917  
Olympia, Washington 98504-0917

RE: Upper Yakima River Floodplain Project Support (06-1817)

We, the Kittitas County Board of Commissioners, are writing in support of the Upper Yakima River Floodplain project, in which the Hundley Family Trust LLC is working with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Yakama Nation and Kittitas Conservation Trust, to permanently conserve up to 500 acres of riverine and forested habitat in the Easton reach of the Yakima River.

This project compliments hundreds of acres of protected property, and includes up to 3 miles of riparian habitat and ~40+ acres of associated ponds and wetlands. The Easton reach of the Yakima River has been identified in both the Lead Entity Strategy for Salmon Recovery, and the Yakima Subbasin Plan as one of the highest priority areas for acquisition projects.

Kittitas County believes that all proposals to acquire additional public land should be critically evaluated on their own merits. In this instance, the proximity of this property to other public lands and to the Suncadia Master Planned Resort lends itself to public acquisition. The maintenance of an excellent wildlife corridor and critical wetlands provides a public benefit that outweighs the loss of potentially developable lands.

Sincerely,

THE KITTITAS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

David B. Bowen, Chairman

Alan Crankovich, Vice-Chairman

Perry D. Huston, Commissioner

#06-1814A



# Klickitat County BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

205 S. COLUMBUS AVENUE, ROOM 103, MS-CH-04, GOLDENDALE WASHINGTON 98620 • FAX 509 773-6779 • VOICE 509 773-46

DONALD G. STRUCK, DISTRICT 1

JOAN FREY, DISTRICT 2

RAY THAYER, DISTRICT 3

August 1, 2006

Guy Norman, Regional Director  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Southwest Regional Office  
2108 Grand Boulevard  
Vancouver, WA 98662

RE: Stanley Crocker Property  
Swale/Warwick Vicinity

Dear Guy:

The Board of Commissioners extends our appreciation to you for informing us of the potential land purchase in Klickitat County as referenced above. We are familiar with the particular parcel which is under consideration for acquisition by the Department of Fish and Wildlife as well as its many attributes.

Klickitat County has taken a position of opposition to any land purchases by State and Federal agencies largely due to the negative effect on the local tax base. In this instance it is our opinion that WDFW ownership and management of this particular parcel would serve the public interests with hunting and recreation opportunities as well as continuation of the stewardship that has kept this habitat in prime condition.

Along with our letter of support we request that WDFW strongly consider two conditions of acquisition as follows:

- 1) This property will be made available to grazing which will not only enhance Klickitat County's agricultural economy but will also reduce wildfire fuel loads.
- 2) This property will remain in WDFW ownership and will not be transferred to another entity at any point in the future.

Should you have questions or concerns please feel free to contact our office at (509) 773-4612.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
Klickitat County, Washington

Ray Thayer, Chairman

Donald G. Struck, Commissioner

Joan Frey, Commissioner

Cc: Stan Crocker

#06-1937A



*Pend Oreille County*

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*Board of Commissioners*

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*Dean Cummings*  
District #1

*Mitch Brown*  
District #2

*Ken Oliver*  
District #3

*Chris Mylar*  
Clerk of the Board

(509) 447-4119  
FAX: (509) 447-0595

Post Office Box 5025  
Newport, WA 99156-5025

E-mail: [commissioners@pendoreille.org](mailto:commissioners@pendoreille.org)

June 27, 2006

Mr. John Andrews  
2315 N. Discovery Place  
Spokane Valley, WA 99216-1566

Dear Mr. Andrews:

We, the Pend Oreille County Commissioners, support the Washington State Department of Fish and Game's acquisition of the property in southern Pend Oreille County known as Rustler's Gulch.

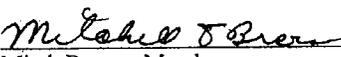
We believe the Fish and Game Department is the ideal steward of this approximately 3000 acre parcel because a very significant portion of it is wetlands.

Our support is conditioned on the property remaining open to the public for hunting, fishing, hiking and horseback riding.

Respectfully,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ken Oliver, Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean Cummings, Vice-Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mitch Brown, Member



# San Juan County Council

350 Court Street No. 1, Friday Harbor, WA 98250 • (360) 378 - 2898  
Alan Lichter, Dist. 4 • Bob Myhr, Dist. 6 • Kevin M. M. Ranker, Dist. 1

May 2, 2006

Derek Gustafson  
Parks Planner 3  
Northwest Region  
220 N. Walnut Street  
Burlington, WA 98233

06-1639A

Dear Mr. Gustafson:

On behalf of San Juan County, we strongly support the acquisition of the Point Lawrence property on Orcas Island by the State Parks and Recreation Commission. The property is currently leased from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for a 30-year period. At the end of the lease it will revert to DNR to be transferred out of the state lands inventory.

The Point Lawrence Connector has 1400 feet of shoreline fronting the Strait of Georgia and Rosario, and abuts two properties now managed by State Parks, both with old-growth stands of Douglas-fir and sensitive plant communities. The rugged shoreline of this area is punctuated by several gravel beaches important to wildlife. The connection will consolidate Parks ownership in the eastern part of Orcas and create 317 acres of significant forest with two miles of undeveloped shoreline.

Equally as important, this acquisition will allow for development of public facilities and public access to this incredible natural resource.

We urge you to take advantage of the opportunity to provide permanent protection for this unique and irreplaceable area. Our citizens and the thousands who visit San Juan County each year will be forever grateful for the legacy this acquisition will create.

Please don't hesitate to contact Dr. Lincoln Bormann, our Land Bank Director, with any questions or if you require further assistance. He may be reached at (360) 378-4402 or [lincoln@rockisland.com](mailto:lincoln@rockisland.com).

Sincerely,

**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**SAN JUAN COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Alan Lichter, Chair  
District No. 4

Bob Myhr, Vice Chair  
District No. 6

Kevin M. M. Ranker, Member  
District No. 1

c: Lincoln Bormann, Director, SJC Land Bank  
Dona Wuthnow, Superintendent, SJC Parks

**RECEIVED**

MAY 04 2006

# 06-1816A



## SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

DON MUNKS, First District  
KENNETH A. DAHLSTEDT, Second District  
TED W. ANDERSON, Third District

July 11, 2006

Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation  
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program  
The Office of the Interagency Committee  
1111 Washington Street SE,  
Olympia, Washington 98501

To Whom It May Concern:

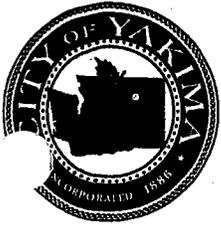
On behalf of Skagit County I would like to express my support for the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife's acquisition of the Skagit Forks property. Skagit County and WDFW have been working in cooperation with the agricultural interests and with fish and wildlife habitat restoration interests in our community to achieve common objectives of the restoration of our natural fish and wildlife resources and the preservation of a viable farming economy in the Skagit Valley. Projects such as the Skagit Forks acquisition provide an example of how habitat preservation can advance without an impact to our local farming community. The preservation and public ownership of the parcels identified in the Skagit Forks project will add to the Skagit's natural resource recreation opportunities that have long been considered highly important to residents of Skagit Valley as well as to the residents of Western Washington.

Skagit County has reviewed the Skagit Forks acquisition proposal and is confident that the project is in the interest of Skagit County residents and it is aligned with the County's planning objectives. WDFW is one of many public landowners in Skagit Valley; we are pleased to continue to support the objectives of our public land stewards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kenneth A. Dahlstedt".

Kenneth A. Dahlstedt, Chairman



**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER**  
**129 North Second Street**  
**CITY HALL, Yakima, Washington 98901**  
**Phone (509) 575-6040**

#06-1833A

July 12, 2006

Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation  
Natural Resources Building  
1111 Washington Street S.E.  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

RE: Oak Flats Riparian Protection

ATTN: Leslie Ryan-Connelly, Grants Manager

Dear Committee Members:

The City of Yakima has reviewed the Oak Flats Riparian Protection project proposed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and supports its efforts to acquire and manage these lands.

The proximity of these parcels to the surrounding Oak Creek Wildlife Area assures continuity and long-term management objectives that will benefit fish and wildlife resources along the Naches River and will increase and enhance outdoor recreational opportunities for the citizens of Yakima County, and for the many thousands of other visitors that enjoy the aesthetics and natural landscapes of our public lands in eastern Washington.

These lands are currently owned by the City of Yakima Water/Irrigation Division. In the early 1900's this property was developed and used to provide the drinking water for city residents. When the Naches River Water Treatment Plant was constructed downstream in the 1970's, these lands became surplus to the City's needs. However, they have remained off-limits to public use to protect the City against liability issues. The City lacked funds to make the property conducive to public use. Under WDFW ownership, these lands would be improved and opened to public recreation, with resulting economic benefit to local businesses and Yakima County.

These 300 acres are zoned Remote / Limited Development, a designation which allows subdivisions and development to occur, with parceling of the large existing riparian tracts into smaller ownerships. If these sales occurred, it may create problems that Yakima County would have to address, such as: conflicts with Yakima County's Comprehensive Plan and Critical Areas Ordinance, additional demands for fire and law enforcement services in remote areas, and additional traffic. More importantly, the subdivision of a remote wild area of the county such as the Oak Flats property would fundamentally change it from a naturally functioning riparian corridor to multi-use residential homes or hobby farms—a



change that the City would not want to see occur. Therefore the City has determined to work with WDFW for their acquisition of this property.

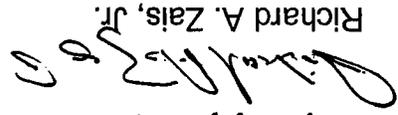
The City was instrumental in the development of both the Watershed Management Plan; Yakima Basin and the Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Plan. We continue to be active members of the Boards that are in the process of implementing these plans. While this specific property acquisition is not identified in the plans, it is consistent with the goals and objectives of both plans. Protecting and restoring the riparian zones meets the goals and objectives of both plans by improving water quality, habitat and flood plain operation. The protection and connecting of the uplands areas meets the goals and objectives of the Yakima River Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Plan by improving the connectivity for upland wildlife.

The question of: if the City feels so strongly about maintaining this property as a prime riparian area, why not simply deed it to WDFW? Unfortunately, the City can not give away property, even to another public agency, particularly in a case where the asset is owned by a utility rather than the general government. Such "shifting" is precluded by the Washington State Constitution.

The acquisition of these parcels by WDFW and subsequent incorporation into the Oak Creek Wildlife Area would protect long-term water quality in the Naches River, as part of the City's drinking water source protection programs, which is highly important and will help the City meet drinking water standards. It would also facilitate use and movement of elk, deer, and bighorn sheep within the river corridor, and greatly enhance public recreational opportunity. All of these benefits would be lost if these parcels are sold for private development.

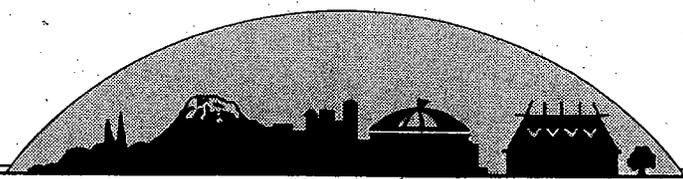
We strongly encourage the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to consider the application by WDFW for acquisition of the Oak Flats project.

Very truly yours,



Richard A. Zais, Jr.  
City Manager

#06-1833A



**BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

★ District One  
**Michael D. Leita**

★ District Two  
**Ronald F. Gamache**

★ District Three  
**Jesse S. Palacios**

July 10, 2006

TO: Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation  
Natural Resources Building  
1111 Washington Street S.E.  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

ATTN: Leslie Ryan-Connelly  
Grants Manager

Subject: WDFW Oak Flats Project

The Board of Yakima County Commissioners has reviewed the Oak Flats Riparian Protection project proposed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and supports its efforts to secure federal and state funds to acquire and manage these lands.

The proximity of these parcels to the surrounding Oak Creek Wildlife Area assures continuity and long-term management objectives that will benefit fish and wildlife resources along the Naches River, and will increase and enhance outdoor recreational opportunity for the citizens of Yakima County, and for the many thousands of other visitors that enjoy the aesthetics and natural landscapes of our public lands in eastern Washington.

These lands are currently owned by the City of Yakima, and have been developed and used in the past to provide a source of water for city residents. When a modern treatment plant was constructed downstream in the 1970's, these lands became surplus to the City's needs. However, they have remained off-limits to public use, to protect the City against liability issues. Under WDFW ownership, these lands would be open to public recreation, with resulting economic benefit to local businesses and Yakima County.

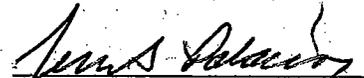
These 300 acres are zoned Remote / Limited Development, but that would still allow sales and development to occur, and parceling of the large existing riparian tracts into smaller ownerships. If these sales occurred, it may create problems that Yakima County would have to address, such as: conflicts with Yakima County's Comprehensive Plan and Critical Areas Ordinance, additional demands for fire and law enforcement services in remote areas, and additional traffic congestion on County roads. The sub-division of a remote wild area of the county such as the Oak Flats property into multi-ownerships

would fundamentally change it from a naturally functioning riparian corridor to multi-use residential homes or hobby farms—a change that the County would not want to see occur.

The acquisition of these parcels by WDFW and subsequent incorporation into the Oak Creek Wildlife Area would protect long-term water quality in the Naches River, facilitate use and movement of elk, deer, and bighorn sheep within the river corridor, and greatly enhance public recreational opportunity. All of these benefits would be lost if these parcels are sold for private development.

We strongly encourage the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to consider the application by WDFW for acquisition of the Oak Flats project.

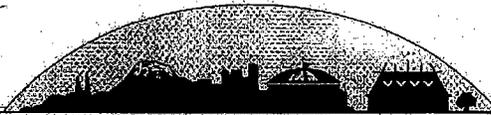
Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jesse S. Palacios, Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael D. Leita, Commissioner

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ronald F. Gamache, Commissioner

#06-1835A



**BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

★ District One  
James M. Lewis

★ District Two  
Ronald F. Gamache

★ District Three  
Jesse S. Palacios  
STATE OF WASHINGTON  
JUL 15 2004  
DEPT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
YAKIMA OFFICE

July 14, 2004

Jeff Tayer, Regional Director  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
1701 S 24<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Yakima WA 98902

Dear Jeff,

The Board of Yakima County Commissioners would like to acknowledge your efforts to secure federal and state funds to protect known critical fish and wildlife habitats in the Cowiche Watershed, through the purchase of conservation easements and/or fee simple ownership. We support your protection efforts, and assure you that our interest in this project is to reduce issues surrounding dispersed development in areas identified as critical fish and wildlife habitat, and to reduce the potential cost to the citizens of Yakima County by linking state and federal properties for fish and wildlife habitat corridors.

Yakima County is developing a Non-Regulatory Critical Areas and Natural Resources Program (Non-Regulatory Program). This program is designed to help protect critical and natural resource areas using non-regulatory landowner incentives (e.g. conservation easement purchases). We are also currently updating our Critical Areas Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan, which call for the protection of fish and wildlife habitat through region-wide and coordinated efforts. We believe, however, that regulatory measures should not be the only tool available to protect critical fish and wildlife habitat. We want to encourage WDFW to work with Yakima County to find funding for non-regulatory solutions, and hope that these funds can be further leveraged with our program to protect critical areas in the Cowiche Project Area.

We encourage WDFW and their partners to continue their efforts to protect the critical habitat values found in the Cowiche Project Area. We also look forward to supporting your efforts through our incentive-based Non-Regulatory Program.

Please keep us apprised of your efforts to protect this critical habitat.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

*James M. Lewis*  
James M. Lewis, Chairman

*Ronald F. Gamache*  
Ronald F. Gamache, Commissioner

*Jesse S. Palacios*  
Jesse S. Palacios, Commissioner

change that the City would not want to see occur. Therefore the City has determined to work with WDFW for their acquisition of this property.

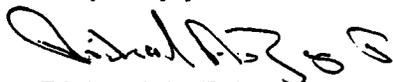
The City was instrumental in the development of both the Watershed Management Plan; Yakima Basin and the Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Plan. We continue to be active members of the Boards that are in the process of implementing these plans. While this specific property acquisition is not identified in the plans, it is consistent with the goals and objectives of both plans. Protecting and restoring the riparian zones meets the goals and objectives of both plans by improving water quality, habitat and flood plain operation. The protection and connecting of the uplands areas meets the goals and objectives of the Yakima River Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Plan by improving the connectivity for upland wildlife.

The question of: if the City feels so strongly about maintaining this property as a prime riparian area, why not simply deed it to WDFW? Unfortunately, the City can not give away property, even to another public agency, particularly in a case where the asset is owned by a utility rather than the general government. Such "shifting" is precluded by the Washington State Constitution.

The acquisition of these parcels by WDFW and subsequent incorporation into the Oak Creek Wildlife Area would protect long-term water quality in the Naches River, as part of the City's drinking water source protection programs, which is highly important and will help the City meet drinking water standards. It would also facilitate use and movement of elk, deer, and bighorn sheep within the river corridor, and greatly enhance public recreational opportunity. All of these benefits would be lost if these parcels are sold for private development.

We strongly encourage the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to consider the application by WDFW for acquisition of the Oak Flats project.

Very truly yours,



Richard A. Zais, Jr.  
City Manager