

December 18, 2007

**Topic #8: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Proposal to Change Evaluation Scoring Procedures for Combination Grants in the Local Parks Category**

**Prepared and Presented By:** Darrell Jennings

**Approved by the Director:**

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**Proposed Action:** Adopt Resolution #2008-5

**Summary**

Recreation and Conservation Office staff submits for Board consideration modifications to the evaluation criteria used for combination projects (a grant application that contains both land acquisition and development costs) in the Local Parks category of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP).

**Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends adoption of Option 2, which will require all applicants seeking funding for combination projects to address both the acquisition and development criteria.

**Background**

In November 2007 the RCFB approved an increase in the cap limits for the Local Parks category. This action potentially increases the likelihood that an applicant will request equal amounts of grant funds to be used for acquisition and development costs.

In the Local Parks category, applicants for all project types respond to criteria 1 – 2 and 6 – 8. (See the attached Table 1). Question 3 (Project Design) is specifically for development projects and questions 4 (Immediacy of Threat) and 5 (Site Suitability) are for acquisition projects.

Presently, applicants with combination projects respond to the criteria that correspond to where the majority of grant funding will be applied. For example, if a majority of grant funds will be used to acquire land, then the applicant would respond to questions 4 and 5, but not 3. In rare situations where a sponsor may have requested equal amounts of grant funding to be used towards acquisition and development costs, staff has worked with the sponsor to adjust costs so that a majority of the funding request is in one project type. Applicants are then instructed to answer the

corresponding criteria for that project type. This is an institutionalized practice, but as far as we can determine, not an adopted policy. Combination projects consist of about twelve percent of the current active local parks projects.

**Discussion**

The following options are for your consideration.

Option 1

For combination projects where equal amounts of development and acquisition grant funds are requested, the applicant would respond to both acquisition and development criteria. In order to keep the total available points the same for all projects, the point totals for questions 3 – 5 would need to be reduced by half so that combination projects would not have an inherent preference. Other combination project applicants would follow the current practice. For reference see Table 2.

Pro's	Con's
Limited to a potentially very small number of projects where grant funds are equally allocated to both acquisition and development costs.	May be confusing for evaluators having to score combination projects in two different ways, depending on how funds are divided.
Projects are evaluated on the entire scope and merit, not just the portion where the most grant funds will be used.	May be confusing for applicants.
Develops a clear policy for how combination project will be evaluated.	Applicants will have to respond to one or two additional criteria during the evaluation session.

Option 2

Have all applicants of combination projects respond to both acquisition and development criteria. In order to keep the overall evaluation criteria the same, the point totals for questions 3 – 5 would need to be reduced by half so that combination projects would not have an inherent preference. For reference see Table 2.

Pro's	Con's
Projects are evaluated on the entire scope and merit, not just the portion where the most grant funds will be used.	Applicants will have to respond to one or two additional criteria during the evaluation session.
All combination projects are evaluated the same.	
Develops a clear policy for how combination project will be evaluated.	
Should be clear to applicants and evaluators which evaluation criteria apply to the project.	

Option 3

No change. Staff would continue to assess where grant funds are being applied. In situations where grant funds are equally divided between acquisition and development costs, RCO staff would decide which criteria applicants would respond to.

Pro's	Con's
Applicants and staff are familiar with this institutionalized process.	Projects are not scored on the full scope and merit of the proposal.
	There is no formalized policy on which questions should be scored for combination projects.
	There is no formalized policy or clear direction for how to score projects when grant funding is to be applied equally between acquisition and development costs.

**Next Steps:**

Currently staff is soliciting public comments on the proposed recommendations. Comments received will be distributed to the Board prior to final decision at the January meeting.

Any changes adopted by the Board will be incorporated into Manual #10a, *WWRP: Outdoor Recreation Account Policies and Project Selection*, and will affect grant requests beginning with the 2008 grant cycle.

**Attachments**

- Resolution 2008-05
- Table 1 – Current Evaluation Criteria
- Table 2 – Proposed Evaluation Criteria

**RESOLUTION #2008-05**  
**Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program**  
**Outdoor Recreation Account Local Parks Category**  
**Evaluation Instrument Revision**

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 79A.15 RCW established the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP); and

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 79A.15 RCW authorizes the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) to adopt policies and rules for WWRP; and

**WHEREAS**, the RCFB desires to incorporate a change to the WWRP policy manual regarding the evaluation instrument for the Local Parks category; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed revision has been made available for review and comment by individuals and organizations that have expressed an interest in WWRP; and

**WHEREAS**, final adoption of this policy revision will be incorporated into Manual 10a: *WWRP: Outdoor Recreation Account: Policies and Project Selection*; and

**WHEREAS**, adoption of this resolution furthers the RCO 2007-2011 Strategic Plan objective to provide leadership through policy development by considering new and updated policy recommendations (Goal 1, Strategy 1.1);

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the evaluation instrument for the Local Parks category be revised as shown in Table 2 in memo topic #8; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that RCO staff is directed to take the necessary steps for implementation of these revisions beginning with the 2008 grant cycle.

*Resolution moved by:*

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*Resolution seconded by:*

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*Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)*

*Date: January 15, 2008*

**Table 1 – Current Evaluation Criteria  
Local Parks Category**

*Local Parks provide property or facilities for active or passive outdoor recreation. They may contain both upland and water oriented elements, although their primary focus is on uplands and/or swimming pools.*

RCO Manual 10a.

<b>WWRP - Local Parks Criteria Analysis</b>					
Score	#	Title	A/D	Mult/Mx	Focus
Team	1	Public Need	A/D	3/15.0	Local
Team	2	Project Scope	A/D	3/15.0	Local
Team	3	Project Design	D	3/15.0	Technical
Team	4	Immediacy of Threat	A	2/10.0	Local
Team	5	Site Suitability	A	1/5.0	Technical
Team	6	Expansion/Renovation	A/D	1/5.0	Local
Team	7	Project Support	A/D	2/10.0	State/Local
Team	8	Cost Efficiencies	A/D	1/5.0	State/Local
RCO Staff	9	GMA Preference	A/D	1/0	State
RCO Staff	10	Population Proximity	A/D	1/3.0	State
<b>TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE</b>				<b>A = 70 / D = 70</b>	

**KEY:**

- RCO Staff = Criteria scored by *RCO staff*
- Team = Criteria scored by interdisciplinary evaluation *team*
- A/D = Acquisition or Development specific question
- Mult/Mx = Multiplier and maximum points possible for this criterion
- St/Loc/Tech = State priority, local priority, or technical consideration
- SCORP = Statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan
- Focus = *St/Loc/Tech*; Criteria orientation in accordance with SCORP policy of developing evaluation systems based on three need factors: those that meet general *statewide* needs (often called for in RCW or SCORP), those that meet *local* needs (usually an item of narrower purview, often called for in local plans), and those that meet *technical* considerations (usually more objective decisions than those of policy).

**Table 2 – Proposed Evaluation Criteria  
Local Parks Category**

*Local Parks provide property or facilities for active or passive outdoor recreation. They may contain both upland and water oriented elements, although their primary focus is on uplands and/or swimming pools.* RCO Manual 10a.

<b>WWRP – Local Parks Evaluation Questions and Scores</b>									
				<b>Acquisition Projects</b>		<b>Development Projects</b>		<b>Combination Projects</b>	
Score	#	Question	Evaluators Score 0-5 Points	Multiplier	Maximum Total Points	Multiplier	Maximum Total Points	Multiplier	Maximum Total Points
Team	1	Public Need	5	3	15.0	3	15.0	3	15.0
Team	2	Project Scope	5	3	15.0	3	15.0	3	15.0
Team	3	Project Design	5	NA	NA	3	15.0	<u>1.5</u>	<u>7.5</u>
Team	4	Immediacy of Threat	5	2	10.0	NA	NA	<u>1</u>	<u>5.0</u>
Team	5	Site Suitability	5	1	5.0	NA	NA	<u>.5</u>	<u>2.5</u>
Team	6	Expansion/Renovation	5	1	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0
Team	7	Project Support	5	2	10.0	2	10.0	2	10.0
Team	8	Cost Efficiencies	5	1	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0
RCO Staff	9	GMA Preference	0	1	0.0	1	0.0	1	0.0
RCO Staff	10	Population Proximity	3	1	3.0	1	3.0	1	3.0
<b>TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE</b>					<b>68.0</b>			<b>68.0</b>	<b>68.0</b>

**KEY:** RCO Staff = Criteria scored by *RCO staff*; Team = Criteria scored by interdisciplinary evaluation *team*