



STATE OF WASHINGTON

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

June 2008

Item #17: Recommendation for Use of Remaining Boating Activities Account Funds

Prepared By: Jim Eychaner, Senior Outdoor Resource Planner

Presented By: Jim Eychaner, Senior Outdoor Resource Planner

Approved by the Director:

Proposed Action: Decision

Summary

SHB 1651, enacted during the 2007 legislative session, created the "boating activities program." The Legislature appropriated \$2 million from the general fund to fund the program. As of May 2008, \$367,000 remains in the account. Any money that is not spent by June 20, 2009 will be returned to the state general fund.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (Board) approve the funding recommendation for remaining Boating Activities Account funds (\$367,066) via Resolution 2008-029.

Background

The Legislature appropriated \$2 million to the Boating Activities Account. In accord with the bill language, the money was has been used as shown in Table 1.



Table 1: Distribution of Boating Activities Account Funds

Purpose	Amount
Transferred to State Parks' boater safety, education, and law enforcement program, including further distribution to local agencies.	\$1,452,000
RCO administrative costs.	\$60,000
Initial study of boater needs	\$110,934
Approved by Board to pay for facilitated coordination meetings of state agencies providing boating programs or services	\$10,000
<i>Remaining</i>	<i>\$367,066</i>

The fund now has approximately \$367,000 available from the appropriation. This money must be spent or accrued for activities that occur on or before June 30, 2009, (the end of the biennium) or it will revert to the state general fund. The money is available

“For grants to state agencies, counties, municipalities, port districts, federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and Indian tribes to improve boating access to water and marine parks, enhance the boater experience, boater safety, boater education, and boating-related law enforcement activities, and to provide funds for boating-related environmental programs, such as pumpout stations, to enhance clean waters for boating;” [RCW 79A.60.670(2)(b)]

Options for using the remaining funds were discussed at a boaters' workshop held in January 2008. Staff and workshop participants created a list of options for using the funds (Attachment A). However, as staff informed the Board in January, the workshop participants did not reach consensus and did not have a recommendation.

The Board created a 15-member Boating Programs Advisory Committee (committee) at its March 2008 meeting. The Director appointed members in April. The new committee considered options for use of the remaining \$367,066 at its first meeting, on May 29, 2008. Committee members are as follows:

<u>State Agency</u>	<u>Local Agency</u>	<u>Citizen At Large</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blain Reeves • Steve Sherlock • Jim French 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larry Crockett • Bill Cumming • Doug Strong • Kathy Whitman • Tammy Fine (<i>Alternate</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Branstetter • Martha Comfort • Steve Greaves • Dwight Jones • Glen Juges • Lorena Landon • Dave Smith • Reed Waite • Del Jacobs (<i>Alternate</i>)

Analysis

To help focus the committee's discussion on May 29, staff developed the options shown below in Table 2, based on the entire list of options created by staff and workshop participants.

Table 2: Options Provided to Boating Programs Advisory Committee for Consideration

Project summary (<i>details to be determined</i>)	Reason	Recommended funding amount
State agency web site enhancements. Changes could range from simple links to complex "portal" for web-based information.	Internet information has the potential to reach maximum numbers of all types of boaters. A step toward state agency coordination.	Up to \$150,000
Further study of key items found in boater needs study. <i>One possible item:</i> estimate the cost to improve existing public sites (e.g., establish standard, estimate remaining service life, estimate capital cost to improve those sites to the agreed upon standard). <i>Another possible item:</i> estimate the cost to enhance statewide marine law enforcement (e.g., increase patrol hours, fill gaps by location)	Defensible, objective data has been difficult to obtain. Could help determine cross-agency standards. Outcomes would be useful in future budget discussions. A step toward state agency coordination.	Up to \$150,000
Public outreach to remind boaters of mandatory boater education. Examples of activities: videos or TV spots, radio public service announcements, signs at boat ramps and docks	The mandatory boater education requirement is relatively new and has the potential to have a major, positive impact on boater behavior and therefore safety for all.	Remaining \$67,066

On May 29, the committee agreed to a set of temporary criteria for making an informed judgment and recommendation. The criteria are as follows:

1. Have statewide impact if possible
2. Attempt to address the needs of all types of boats
3. Have a maximum audience for high-visibility products
4. Emphasize non-capital activities in order to avoid permitting obstacles
5. Meet the end-of-biennium time frame
6. Are useful to a maximum number of parties/interests
7. Have a one-time commitment or need for funds, and
8. Avoid "mixing" Boating Activities Program (BAP) money with other boating funds.

To narrow the options, each committee member then identified her or his top two choices from the list in Attachment A. The process revealed support for the items presented by staff. Table 3 shows the committee's recommendations for funding.

Table 3: Fund Allocation Recommended by Committee

Project summary (<i>details to be determined</i>)	Committee recommended funding amount
State agency web site enhancements.	\$100,000
Further study of key items found in boater needs study.	\$200,000
Public outreach to remind boaters of mandatory boater education	\$67,066

The committee also recommended that outreach and education activities emphasize signs at boats and docks.

Next Steps

If the Board approves Resolution 2008-029, staff will work with the committee to implement the recommended activities. Staff's intent is to contract for the activities with consulting firms or sister agencies.

Attachments

Resolution 2008-029

A. Options for Expending Remaining Boating Program Funds

Resolution 2008-029

Use of Remaining Boating Activities Account Funds

WHEREAS, Substitute House Bill 1651 (C 311 L 07) created the Boating Activities Account and Boating Activities; and

WHEREAS, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (Board) approved the formation of a Boating Programs Advisory Committee, consistent with SHB 1651, to provide advice and recommendations concerning the Boating Activities Program, the Boating Facilities Program, and the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, the Boating Programs Advisory Committee met to review the status of the Boating Activities Program and to consider the needs of the state's recreational boating community; and

WHEREAS, the Boating Programs Advisory Committee has recommended funding state agency web site services for boaters, additional data collection on questions important to both recreational boaters and boating service providers, and one-time outreach to the boating community on the State's mandatory education requirement; and

WHEREAS, funding these activities is consistent with the Board's strategy to provide funding to enhance recreation opportunities, including programs that provide improved recreation data;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board does hereby direct its staff to implement the Boating Programs Advisory Committee recommendation in cooperation with the committee, consistent with memo #17, June 20, 2008, and to report on progress at a future meeting of the Board.

Resolution moved by: _____

Resolution seconded by: _____

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: _____

Attachment A: Options for Expending Remaining Boating Program Funds

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Augment grant funding for an existing approved high-ranked only partially funded through the Boating Facilities Program. Example: Castle Rock	Requires no evaluation time. No new program rules needed.	Project amendments would take time. May miss construction season. No "visibility" for the new program money.
2. Provide maintenance funding for state and local launch sites	Addresses key public/provider need	Difficult to determine where the money would best be directed. Limited time in which to create an application/review process. Likely to miss construction season.
3. Provide emergency funding for access sites damaged by winter floods; example: Friends Landing	Addresses emergent need. May have high publicity value.	Uncertainty about amount of money needed per site. Difficult to determine where the money would best be directed. Limited time in which to create an application/review process. Selecting sites now could be perceived as arbitrary.
4. Update and enhance state boating web pages to provide a virtual "state boating services," including links to access site information, refuges and camp sites, pump out locations, etc	RCO and Parks have existing web sites known to be popular and useful. Boating study recommends a centralized web site. Would improve coordination.	Not all boaters have Internet access.
5. Provide funding for training marine law enforcement personnel on invasive species	Known unmet need. Addresses multiple recommendations of the boater needs study (coordination, law enforcement, environmental).	Not a direct service to the boating community. Turnover in law enforcement personnel may limit effectiveness.
6. Fund communications plan on environmental issues	Recommended in boater needs study. Easy to develop RFP if contracting out.	Not a direct service to the boating community.

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
7. Fund on-going coordination of state boating programs, assist in development of a "Boating Council" modeled on other standing councils (e.g., Invasive Species)	Better coordination recommended in boater needs study. Some advocates seeking higher visibility for boating programs.	May be unnecessary duplication of existing programs.
8. Pay for grading access roads to WDFW launch sites	Known need.	Serves a limited segment of the boating public.
9. State Parks enhanced web site serving all boaters	Serves all boaters. No permits needed. High visibility.	May duplicate existing information.
10. Pay for additional studies (e.g., capital investment needed to improve sites statewide; how much boaters pay into state general fund; how much money the state returns in services)	Additional data of use to boaters, agencies, others.	A share of this year's funds have already been spent on the boater needs study.
11. Outreach (PR) regarding mandatory boater education	Help public comply with the law.	May not serve all boaters.