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Gov. Gregoire Appoints Former Natural Resources Director to Lead Recreation and Conservation Office

OLYMPIA – Governor Chris Gregoire today announced the appointment of Kaleen Cottingham of Olympia as the director of the Recreation and Conservation Office, formerly the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation. The office supports five boards that create and maintain recreation opportunities in Washington, protect the state's wild lands and contribute to salmon recovery efforts.

“The Recreation and Conservation Office is responsible for maintaining much of what gives Washingtonians such a high quality of life – recreation opportunities, a diverse biological heritage and a commitment to salmon recovery. I am excited that Kaleen Cottingham will be leading this office as they move into a new chapter,” said Governor Gregoire. “She has worked on natural resources issues in Washington her entire career and brings a depth of knowledge to the position.”

Cottingham, 51, owns a legal consulting firm, focusing on natural resources and environmental permitting and projects. As a lawyer, she has worked on a proposal to build a national research laboratory near Leavenworth, supported the Election Reform Task Force, facilitated the development of a water-planning process in King County and a dispute over the Thurston County off-road vehicle park. She also has represented Futurewise, a statewide land use advocacy group, on legislative issues.

Cottingham is a member of the faculty in the paralegal program at Tacoma Community College, where she taught environmental law, land use and basic paralegal training. She was appointed by Governor Locke as a member of the Pollution Control and Shorelines Hearings Board from 2001 - 2003, hearing appeals of decisions regarding pollution, water rights, hazardous waste facilities and shoreline development rights.

She was the Deputy Commissioner of Public Lands from 1997 – 2001 and led the agency's strategic direction and policy initiatives on a wide variety of natural resources issues. From 1993 – 1997, she was the Supervisor of the Department of Natural Resources, where she was responsible for both the day-to-day operations of the department as well as governmental and public relations. Prior to this, Cottingham served as the natural resources policy advisor and then the legal counsel for Governor Gardner.

She has been a member of the board of the Pacific Peaks Girl Scout Council since 2002 and the board of the Arboretum Foundation since 2003.

Cottingham received her Bachelor of Science degree in forest resources from the University of Washington and her Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Puget Sound law school. She received a fellowship at the University of Colorado's Natural Resource Law Center, where she conducted research on consensus approaches to natural resources issues.

Cottingham, who was born and raised in Washington, resides in Olympia.

The Recreation and Conservation Office manages 11 grant programs. In its 43-year history, the agency's boards have awarded more than 5,600 grants for recreation, conservation and salmon recovery projects, totaling more than \$1.2 billion. It has leveraged more than \$758 million in matching contributions, bringing the total investment to more than \$2 billion.

The office supports the following five boards:

- The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, which provides grants to create outdoor recreational opportunities, such as parks and trails, and conserve wild lands and farmlands.
- The Salmon Recovery Funding Board, which provides grants to restore salmon habitat and other efforts aimed at restoring salmon populations and removing them from the Endangered Species List.
- The Washington Biodiversity Council, which is drafting a statewide plan to conserve the state's diversity of plant and animal life.
- The Washington Invasive Species Council, which is drafting a statewide strategy to control non-native, invading wildlife.
- The Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health, which is tasked with developing a comprehensive strategy and action plan for measuring success in recovering salmon and maintaining watershed health.

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