

Manual 10c

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

Forestland Preservation Category

May 2020

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At a Glance

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's Forestland Preservation Category	
Purpose	This program provides money to acquire and preserve opportunities for timber production by leasing the land or buying a voluntary land preservation agreement, also called a conservation easement.
Who may apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities and towns • Counties • Nonprofit nature conservancies • Washington State Conservation Commission
Is a plan required?	A plan is not needed for the grant applicant to be eligible; however, forests must be enrolled in a county's open space or forestland property tax program and a forest management plan is required.
What types of projects are eligible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of property rights through a conservation easement • Combination of acquisition and habitat enhancement or restoration.
What are the grant limits?	\$500,000
What must I contribute?	Cities, counties, and nonprofit nature conservancies must provide a one-to-one matching share. There is no match required for the Washington State Conservation Commission.
How is my project evaluated?	An advisory committee hears in-person presentations and scores projects.
When are applications due	June 1, 2020
When are grants awarded?	July 2021
What's new this year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed PRISM Online to make applications easier • The maximum grant allowed was increased to \$500,000 • Will conduct online review and evaluation meetings only

Section 1: Introduction

In this section, you'll learn about the following:

- ✓ The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program
- ✓ Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
- ✓ Where to get information
- ✓ Grant process and timeline

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

The Washington State Legislature created¹ the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) in 1990 to accomplish two goals: Acquire valuable recreation and habitat lands before they were lost to other uses and develop recreation areas for a growing population.

In 2016 the Legislature expanded the land protection goal by creating the Forestland Preservation Category within the larger WWRP to conserve the state's valuable forests for timber production.

Today, WWRP provides funding for a broad range of projects that conserve wildlife habitat, preserve working farms and forests, buy lands for parks and trails, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. This landmark legislation and subsequent funding have come about through the support of the Governor, Legislature, and groups such as the many organizations comprising the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition.

¹Enabling legislation is in Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.

Accounts and Categories

State law² divides WWRP funding into three accounts. Appendix A illustrates the distribution of funding into those accounts. The accounts are divided further into categories with unique funding priorities. The accounts and categories are below.

Farm and Forest Account

- Farmland Preservation Category
- Forestland Preservation Category

Habitat Conservation Account

- Critical Habitat Category
- Natural Areas Category
- Riparian Protection Category
- State Lands Restoration and Enhancement Category
- Urban Wildlife Habitat Category

Outdoor Recreation Account

- Local Parks Category
- State Lands Development and Renovation Category
- State Parks Category
- Trails Category
- Water Access Category

Each WWRP account and category receives a specified percentage of the money appropriated by the Legislature. While state law requires that these minimum percentages be met over the life of the program, it is the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's intent generally to meet them, by category, each biennium. However, the board may forego these statutory minimums in any one biennium, should circumstances warrant. The board's intent is to award grants to projects meeting the greatest need and those where the greatest benefit may be achieved.

²Revised Code of Washington 79A.15

Choosing a Grant Category

A grant applicant submits a proposal to a specific WWRP category. An applicant should attempt to find a grant category that best fits the project, considering the goals and evaluation criteria. RCO staff reviews the applicant's choice and recommends any changes. An applicant may appeal staff's decision to change categories to RCO's director and, if necessary, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

A WWRP project will be evaluated only in one category. At the applicant's discretion, a project appropriate to more than one category may be divided into stand-alone projects and submitted separately. An applicant must determine the best category for the project by the technical completion deadline, unless otherwise authorized by the director. See RCO Web site for WWRP [manuals about other accounts and grant categories](#).

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

WWRP is administered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, which is a governor-appointed board comprised of five citizens and the directors (or designees) of three state agencies—Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) supports the board. RCO is a small state agency that manages multiple grant programs to create outdoor recreation opportunities, protect the best of the state's wildlife habitat, preserve working farms and forests, and help return salmon from near extinction.

Manual Authority

This manual is created under the authority granted to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in WWRP's enabling legislation and Revised Code of Washington 79A.15 and 79A.25. It reflects the specific statutory requirements of Revised Code of Washington 79A.15, Title 286 of the Washington Administrative Code, and the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's policies.

Who Makes Decisions

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board makes the final decisions for funding, policy, and project changes although some decisions it has delegated to the agency director.

Board Decisions

The following list summarizes many project decisions made by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in public meetings or by subcommittees of the board. Each is in accord with statutes, rules, and board policies.

- Initial grant approval.
- A “conversion” that changes the project site or how the site is used from that described in the grant agreement, Deed of Right, Assignment of Rights, or conservation easement. See RCO’s *Manual 7: Long-term Obligations*.
- A significant reduction in the project’s scope after receiving a grant. Typically, the board will make decisions about scope reductions if the RCO director thinks the project’s evaluation score would have been different with the reduced scope. Not included are changes that do not modify significantly the way the public uses a facility, the intended opportunity, or restoration objective funded.
- Changes in policy; for example, establishing new grant limits or eligible expenditures.
- Time extensions beyond 4 years of the initial board or director approval date.

Director Decisions

The RCO director, or designee, makes many project decisions based on rules and board policies. The decisions range from authorizing payments, to approving cost increases, to approving payment of charges in excess of lower bids, to terminating projects.

A project sponsor may request that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board reconsider a decision made by the director. To request reconsideration, the project sponsor must send a letter to the board chair at least 60 calendar days before a board meeting. The request is added to the board’s meeting agenda and the project sponsor then may address the board at the meeting. The board’s decision is final.

Not a Public Hearings Board

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board is not a public hearings board and does not decide land use issues. To the extent possible, all project proposals should demonstrate adequate public notification and review and have the support of the public body applying for the grant.

Where to Get Information

Recreation and Conservation Office:

Natural Resources Building

1111 Washington Street Southeast

Olympia, WA 98501

[E-mail](#)

Telephone: (360) 902-3000

FAX: (360) 902-3026

Hearing Impaired Relay Service: (800) 833-6388

[Web site](#)

Mailing Address

PO Box 40917

Olympia, WA 98504-0917

RCO grant managers are available to answer questions about this manual and grant program. Please feel free to call. In addition, manuals, forms, and most other materials referenced in this manual are available on RCO's Web site on the [forestland grant page](#).

Other Grant Manuals Needed

The manuals below provide additional information for grants and are available on the [grant manual page](#). Each can be made available in an alternative format.

- *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*
- *Manual 5: Restoration Projects*
- *Manual 7: Long-term Obligations*
- *Manual 8: Reimbursements*

Grant Process and Timeline

RCO offers grants in even-numbered years, in conjunction with the state budget. The grant process, from application to grant award, spans 18 months and is outlined below. While the order of the steps in this process remains consistent, visit the RCO Web site [for precise dates](#).

Even-numbered Years

Webinars. RCO conducts a Webinar (an online meeting) in the winter or early spring to provide information about the grant programs offered that year.

Entering Applications. RCO strongly encourages applicants to start the online application early. PRISM Online usually opens by March 1. Applicants log into PRISM Online and select the "+ New Application" button to enter grant application information. RCO uses this information to assign an outdoor grants manager. This manager guides

applicants through the process, reviews application materials, helps determine whether proposals are eligible, and may visit the project site to discuss site-specific details. Visit RCO's Web site to learn more about [PRISM's components and technical requirements](#).

Applications Due. Applications are due in early May of even-numbered years. This year the deadline has been extended to June 1, 2020. The application includes the data entered into PRISM and all required attachments. Applicants should "submit" their applications before the deadline. The Check Application for Errors button on the Submit Application screen will indicate which pages are incomplete. Incomplete applications and applications received after the deadline will be rejected unless RCO's director has approved a late submission in advance. Follow the requirements in the Applicant's To-Do List online.

Technical Reviews. Applicants are encouraged to attend a technical review meeting, where they present their projects to an advisory committee and RCO staff, who review projects to ensure they are eligible, identify any issues of concern, and provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. Applicants make an oral presentation, illustrated with maps, graphics, and photographs using PowerPoint.® Grants managers will review the applications also and send comments to applicants. Applicants then may make changes to improve the projects, if needed. Applicants must complete all changes and resubmit their applications by the technical completion deadline.

Technical Completion Deadline. RCO establishes a technical completion deadline by which applications must be in their final form. After this date, applicants will not be able to make any further changes. RCO will score applicable evaluation criteria as of this date.

Board Submits Biennial Budget Request. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board sends to the Governor a recommended funding amount for WWRP for the next biennium.

Project Evaluation. Applicants make oral presentations, illustrated with maps, graphics, and photographs in PowerPoint® to the advisory committee, which scores each proposal against a set of criteria approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

Post-Evaluation Conference. After project evaluations, RCO staff tabulate the scores and share the results with the advisory committee. The committee discusses the preliminary ranked list and the application and evaluation processes. The public may join this advisory committee conference call; however, to ensure a fair and equitable process, guests may not testify. Shortly after the conference call, staff post the preliminary ranked list on RCO's Web site. The resulting ranked list of projects is the basis for the funding recommendation to the board.

Board Approves Project List. In an open public meeting, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers the recommendations of the advisory committee,

written public comments submitted before the meeting, and public testimony at the meeting. The board then approves the list of projects for submittal to the Governor by November 1.

When considering a list of projects for submittal, the board will use both anticipated available funding and project evaluation results to determine the length of the list. This list normally will exceed anticipated funding and will include alternate projects. Applicants are cautioned that the board's recommendation of project lists to the Governor is not the same as funding approval.

More projects are recommended than requested funding so that alternate projects can be ready if projects higher on the list fail or use less money than requested.

Projects that, because of their relative ranking, are beyond available funding levels are known as "alternate projects." Alternate projects are submitted in an amount equal to 50 percent of the dollar amount requested for each category. When possible, no fewer than six alternate projects are submitted.

Governor Approves Projects. Typically, the Governor's capital budget request to the Legislature includes funding for WWRP. The Governor may remove projects from the list recommended by the board but may not re-rank or add projects to the list.

Odd-numbered Years

Legislature Approves Projects. When it develops the state capital budget, the Legislature considers the project list submitted by the Governor. The Legislature may remove projects from the list submitted by the Governor but may not re-rank or add projects to the list.

Project lists approved by the Legislature in any one biennium are to be completed, to the fullest extent possible, within that biennium. Biennial project lists are active until all the funding is used or no feasible projects remain. If a biennial list is completed and money remains, it may be awarded to projects in future years.

Proof of Matching Funds. Applicants with match included in their applications must provide proof of the availability of matching funds by the match certification deadline, which is at least 1 calendar month before board approval of funding.³

Board Awards Grants. After the Legislature and Governor approve the capital budget, the board makes the final grant awards, again in a public meeting. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to attend.

³Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

- If a time extension is needed, the sponsor must submit a written request at least 60 days before expiration of the grant agreement.

By June 1 of each year, RCO reviews the status of projects that are incomplete 3 or more years from the date of funding approval. RCO will ask sponsors to provide assurances that their projects will be completed on time, such as the following:

- Executed purchase and sale agreements.
- Proof of permitting approvals.
- Awarded construction contracts.
- Progress on other significant milestones listed in the grant agreement.

If satisfactory assurances are not provided, the director may terminate the project.

Project Completion. When a project is completed, sponsors must submit the final bill, final report, and supporting documents needed to close the project as specified in the agreement.⁸ If the bill and documentation are not submitted within 6 months of the end date within the agreement, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may terminate the agreement without payment.

⁸Washington Administrative Code 286.13.040(7)

Section 2: Policies

In this section, you'll learn about the following:

- ✓ Forestland Preservation Category
- ✓ Eligible forestland
- ✓ Eligible applicants
- ✓ Eligible project types and activities
- ✓ Environmental requirements
- ✓ Property requirements
- ✓ Other requirements and things to know
- ✓ Project area stewardship and ongoing obligations

Forestland Preservation Category

Program History

The Washington State Legislature created the Forestland Preservation Category in 2016 when it made other changes to WWRP⁹ in response to a program review in 2015.¹⁰ The program review recommended creating the Forestland Preservation Category to support working forests that also provide connectivity, habitat enhancement, sustainable ecological benefits, and public access.

Funding is available for sponsors to buy a voluntary land preservation agreement, also called a conservation easement, to protect forestland forever. RCO is a party to the easement or lease but the sponsor and landowner are responsible for upholding it.¹¹

⁹[Chapter 149, Laws of 2016](#)

¹⁰[Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Review, 2015, Recreation and Conservation Office](#)

¹¹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

Purpose¹²

Focus on Timber Production

The primary purpose of this category is to acquire and preserve opportunities for timber production, consistent with local comprehensive planning. Types of forests eligible for funding include industrial, private, community, tribal, and publicly owned forests.¹³ Regardless of the type of forest, the property must be devoted primarily to timber production.

A secondary purpose is to support other benefits of preserving forestland such as jobs, recreation, protection of water and soil resources, habitat for wildlife, and scenic beauty.

Eligible Forestland

Definition of Forestland¹⁴

Forests must be enrolled in a county's open space or forestland property tax program to be eligible for funding and must remain in the county program for the duration of the conservation easement or lease. If the property owner fails to remain in the county program, it is a violation of the conservation easement and enforceable by the sponsor and RCO.

The open space and forestland property tax programs have similar definitions but differ in purpose.

Timberland Designation: The open space property tax program designates timberlands for the production of forest crops to assure the use and enjoyment of natural resources and scenic beauty for the economic and social well-being of the state and its citizens.

Forestland Designation: The forestland property tax program designates lands to enhance water supply; minimize soil erosion and storm and flood damage to people or property; provide habitat for wild game; provide scenic and recreational spaces; contribute to the natural ecological equilibrium; contribute to employment and profits; and contribute raw materials for products needed by everyone.

"Forestland" and "timberland" are defined as 5 or more contiguous acres that are devoted primarily to the growth and harvest of timber for commercial purposes.

¹²Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

¹³Property owned by an eligible sponsor is not eligible for grant funding. See Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-13, as amended.

¹⁴Revised Codes of Washington 84.33.010, 84.33.035(5) and 84.34.020(3)

Both definitions include the land only and incidental uses that are compatible with growing and harvesting timber, but not residential homesites. No more than 10 percent of the land may be for such incidental uses. It also includes the land on which appurtenances necessary for the production, preparation, or sale of the timber products exist in conjunction with land producing these products.

Required Documentation for Property Designation¹⁵

Applicants must provide a written notice from the county assessor, a current property tax notice, or a recent title report to document that each parcel in a grant application is designated as timberland or forestland by the application due date, except as noted in the following paragraph.

If a parcel is not designated as timberland or forestland by the application due date, an applicant must seek an informal or preliminary determination from the county assessor that the parcel could be designated as timberland or forestland. Acceptable documentation is a letter from the county assessor or the county assessor's approval of an application for designation. The property owner must enroll the property as timberland or forestland before RCO releases funds for the acquisition of the easement or lease.

Applicants also must submit to RCO the county-approved timber management plan, if the plan is a requirement of the county's tax program.

The RCO director may extend the deadline for documentation up to 1 calendar month before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board meeting when it approves the ranked list of projects for submittal to the Governor and Legislature.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible Applicants¹⁶

- Cities and counties
- Nonprofit nature conservancies¹⁷
- Washington State Conservation Commission

¹⁵Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

¹⁶Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(4)

¹⁷Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.010(10)

Applicant Requirements

Nonprofit Nature Conservancies

Nonprofit nature conservancies must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

- Be registered in the State of Washington as a nonprofit corporation as defined by Chapter 24.03 Revised Code of Washington AND meet the definition for a nonprofit nature conservancy in Revised Code of Washington 84.34.250.
- Demonstrate at least 3 years actively managing projects relevant to the types of projects eligible for funding in the forestland category. "Actively managing projects" means performing the tasks necessary to manage on-the-ground forestland management functions, such as negotiating for acquisition of property rights, closing on an acquisition, developing and implementing management plans, designing and implementing projects, securing and managing the necessary funds regardless of fund source, and other tasks.
- Demonstrate a proven ability to draft, acquire, monitor, enforce, and defend conservation easements.
- Provide a copy of articles of incorporation and by-laws including any amendments.

Legal Opinion for First-time Applicants¹⁸

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board requires all organizations wishing to apply for a grant for the first time to submit a legal opinion that the applicant is eligible to do the activities below. The legal opinion is required only once to establish eligibility.

- Contract with the State of Washington and the United States of America.
- Meet any statutory definitions required for board grant programs.
- Receive and spend public funds including funds from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.
- Acquire and manage interests in real property for conservation or outdoor recreation purposes.
- Develop and/or provide stewardship for structures or facilities eligible under board rules or policies.

¹⁸Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolutions 2010-08 and 2016-37

- Undertake planning activities incidental thereto.
- Commit the applicant to statements made in any grant proposal.

Eligible Project Types¹⁹

Acquisition Projects

Grants are available to buy development rights and other less-than-fee interests in real property through a conservation easement or lease.²⁰ Less-than-fee interests include access, water, air, carbon, mineral, and other rights that aid in preservation of the forest for secondary benefits supported by the category.

An acquisition must include purchase and extinguishment of all development rights and be in perpetuity. Acquisitions must be recorded at the county auditor's office where the land is located.

Incidental and administrative costs related to acquisitions are eligible including a baseline inventory and a forest stewardship plan as described below. Additional policies for property acquisition are in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

Multiple Parcels

Applications may include one or more parcels.

- All parcels proposed for acquisition must be identified in the grant application by the technical completion deadline.
- Each parcel must be shown on a map with a county parcel number.
- All parcels must be contiguous or within the same ownership.²¹ "Ownership" means the individual, individuals, or businesses that hold title to a parcel of land. "Contiguous" means two or more parcels that physically touch one another along a boundary or a point. Land divided by a public road, but otherwise an integral part of a forestry operation, is considered contiguous.

¹⁹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

²⁰Revised Code of Washington 70A.15.130(3)

²¹Revised Code of Washington 84.34.020(6)(b)(i) and (ii)

Combination Projects²²

Combination projects involve acquisition and habitat enhancement or restoration. Habitat enhancement and restoration activities must occur within the area acquired. Additional policies for enhancement and restoration activities are in *Manual 5: Restoration Projects*.

To help ensure timely completion of combination projects, applicants must secure the property at least 1 month before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers funding by using one of the methods listed below.

- Acquisition under Waiver of Retroactivity policies outlined in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.
- Have property in escrow pending board grant award. Closing must occur within 90 days after this meeting.
- Obtain an option on the property that extends past the board funding meeting. Execution of the option must occur within 90 days after this meeting.

If property rights were not acquired already via a Waiver of Retroactivity, then applicants also must provide draft copies of all leases or easements to RCO staff for review. Execution of the leases or easements must occur within 90 days after the funding meeting.

For the acquisitions to remain eligible, sponsors must follow all the requirements and procedures outlined in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

Fish Passage Barriers

Projects must include correcting all fish passage barriers on property owned by a private, small forest landowner. A private, small forest landowner harvests less than 2 million board feet of timber each year from land they own in Washington. Funding from other RCO administered programs, except for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, are eligible sources of match for this restoration activity. Fish passage barriers on other forestland are not eligible for grant funding because property owners must correct barriers in their Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plans as required by the Forest Practices Act.

²²Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

Other Considerations

Phased Projects²³

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board recommends that applicants discuss phasing very expensive and large projects with RCO staff. Phased projects are subject to the following conditions:

- Approval of any single phase is limited to that phase. No approval or endorsement is given or implied toward future phases.
- Each phase must stand on its merits as a viable project.
- Each phase must be submitted as a separate application.

Progress and sponsor performance on previous grants may be considered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board when making decisions on current project proposals.

If two or more projects are ranked equally through the evaluation process, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will give preference to a project that has had a previous phase funded by the board.²⁴

Eligible Project Activities

Acquiring Property

Acquiring property includes purchasing or receiving a donation of less-than-fee interest in real property. Incidental costs related to acquisition are eligible. Additional rules for land acquisition are in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

Acquiring and Restoring Property²⁵ (Combination Projects)

For combination projects, in addition to the costs for acquiring property, preliminary costs necessary to get a project ready for the construction phase (i.e. architecture and engineering, permits) are allowable for reimbursement. The sponsor may not incur any construction cost before the period of performance in the agreement, unless approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

²³Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37 and 2007-27

²⁴Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2007-27

²⁵Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

Habitat enhancement or restoration activities within a project must further the ecological functions of the forestland. Projects should enhance the viability of the preserved forestland to provide timber production while conforming to any legal requirements for habitat protection. Restoration activities should be based on accepted methods of achieving beneficial enhancement or restoration results.²⁶ Guidelines for restoration and enhancement projects are in *Manual 5: Restoration Projects*. Examples of eligible project elements include the following:

- Bridging watercourses
- Fencing, gates, and signs
- In-stream habitat such as bank stabilization
- Habitat enhancement such as native plantings and invasive plant removal
- Removal of structures
- Replacing culverts

Aquatic restoration projects should follow the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's aquatic habitat guidelines for water crossings, stream restoration, and stream bank protection.

- [Water Crossing Design Guidelines](#)
- [Integrated Streambank Protection Guidelines](#)
- [Stream Habitat Restoration Guidelines](#)

Preparing a Baseline Inventory²⁷

A baseline inventory is required. A baseline inventory records and characterizes the condition of the property at the time acquisition. The inventory provides the basis for future easement or lease monitoring and, if necessary, enforcement. See *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects, Appendix F* for baseline inventory requirements.

The baseline inventory must be prepared before closing and signed by the landowner and sponsor at closing. In the event of poor seasonal conditions for documenting all conservation values, an interim baseline with a completion schedule must be signed at closing. If the baseline has been completed and a significant amount of time has elapsed

²⁶Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(13)

²⁷Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

before the easement is transferred, it should be reviewed and possibly updated before closing.

Preparing a Forest Management Plan²⁸

A forest management plan is required and must follow the [Integrated Forest Management Plan Guidelines](#) produced by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Department of Revenue, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Forest Service, and American Tree Farm System. One of the cooperating agencies listed above approves the plan. Grant sponsors are strongly encouraged to include the county assessor in review and approval of any forest management plans.

The maximum allowable cost for development of a new forest management plan or updating an existing plan is \$10,000.

EXCEPTION: When another funding agency provides matching funds to a WWRP forestland preservation project, the RCO director may approve an alternative plan if it meets the intent of the *Integrated Forest Management Plan Guidelines*.

Developing a Site Stewardship Plan

Applicants may request up to 1 percent of the total project cost or \$10,000, whichever is less, for development of a site stewardship plan. An outline for the stewardship plan must be submitted with the grant application and, at a minimum, it must contain the following elements:

- Long-term stewardship goals and objectives
- Monitoring goals and objectives
- Restoration goals and objectives (if applicable)
- Short-term land management goals and objectives
- Description of the project area, including the following:
 - U.S. Geological Survey quadrant map and county assessor's parcel map
 - Map²⁹ showing all human-made and natural features
 - Narrative description of the property

²⁸Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

²⁹Further guidance provided in Appendix F of *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

- Photographs taken at permanent photograph points
- A detailed stewardship plan implementation budget that also identifies the source of funding

Incurring Pre-agreement Costs³⁰

RCO may reimburse sponsors for certain allowable expenses incurred before the start date of a grant agreement. However, any costs associated with the preparation or presentation of the grant application are ineligible.

For acquisition projects, most incidental costs incurred before an RCO grant agreement are allowable for reimbursement. Property costs are not allowable as a pre-agreement cost unless a Waiver of Retroactivity has been approved. See *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

For restoration projects, preliminary costs necessary to get a project ready for construction (i.e. architecture and engineering, permits) are allowable for reimbursement. No construction costs may be incurred before the period of performance in the agreement unless approval has been given by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. See *Manual 5: Restoration Projects*, and *Manual 4: Development Projects* for further information.

Ineligible Activities and Costs

Several sources are used to determine project eligibility including Revised Code of Washington 79A.15. The following project elements are ineligible for funding consideration:

- Animal species introduction or propagation, other than biological controls for invasive species, etc.
- Concessionaire buildings or concessionaire space in existing or proposed structures.
- Consumable supplies such as fuel, fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides, except as one-time applications if they are necessary parts of eligible restoration activities.
- Costs not directly related to implementing the project such as indirect and overhead charges or unrelated mitigation.
- Crop plantings.

³⁰Washington Administrative Code 286-13-085

- Elements that cannot be defined as fixtures or capital items.
- Environmental cleanup of illegal activities (removal of contaminated materials or derelict vessels, trash pickup, methamphetamine labs, etc.).
- Fish or other wildlife production facilities, such as fish hatcheries for producing sport fish populations.
- Indoor facilities such as community centers, environmental education or learning centers, gymnasiums, swimming and therapy pools, and ice-skating rinks.
- Multi-site acquisition projects.
- Offices, shops, residences, and meeting and storage rooms.
- Operation and maintenance costs.
- Purchase of land already owned by an applicant or sponsor described in Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(4) except as allowed by other board policy.
- Purchase of land already owned by a government agency. Limited exceptions may apply so check with a RCO grants manager.
- Purchase of land by a condemnation action of any kind. On multi-parcel acquisitions, sponsors may acquire those parcels that cannot be purchased from a willing seller via condemnation using only non-WWRP funds. Complete documentation of parcels acquired by WWRP funding versus those acquired entirely by sponsor funds under condemnation must be maintained and available. The value of parcels acquired via condemnation may not be used as part of the matching share. Note that development projects on property previously acquired via condemnation; however, are eligible.
- Protection of land for the purposes of satisfying a Habitat Conservation Plan under the Endangered Species Act.
- Purchase of maintenance equipment, tools, or supplies.
- Purchase of rights for a term of less than perpetuity.
- Restoration work done before a grant agreement is signed between the applicant and the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. This work also cannot be used as match.
- Restoration work required under the Forest Practices Act or other regulatory mitigation requirement, except as described under the Fish Passage Barriers section.

- Specific projects identified as mitigation as part of a habitat conservation plan approved by the federal government for incidental take of endangered or threatened species, or other projects identified for habitat mitigation purposes.
- Transfer of development rights. Development rights acquired under this program may not be transferred to other property or for other uses.
- Utility payments such as monthly water or electric bills.

Also, see *RCO Manuals 3: Acquisition Projects* and *Manual 4: Development Projects* for exceptions.

Environmental Requirements

Cultural Resources Review

[Governor's Executive Order 05-05](#), Archaeological and Cultural Resources, directs state agencies to review all acquisition and construction projects for potential impacts to cultural resources³¹ to ensure that reasonable action is taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to these resources. The federal government, through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, requires the same compliance for projects with federal involvement, for example, projects on federal lands, with federal funds, or those that require a federal permit.

Review Process

RCO facilitates review under the Governor's executive order. The appropriate lead federal agency facilitates review under the National Historic Preservation Act. If the federal review covers the entire RCO project area, there is no additional review needed to meet state requirements. Both processes require review, analysis, and consultation with the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and affected Native American tribes.

After the initial consultation, a funded project may be required to complete further cultural resources review and continue the consultation process to determine next steps. Costs for cultural resources review (survey, monitoring, etc.) are eligible for reimbursement and should be included in the grant application.

Sponsors must complete the consultation process and all requirements satisfied before any ground-disturbing activities (including demolition) may occur. Ground disturbance or demolition started without approval will be considered a breach of the grant

³¹Cultural resources are archeological and historical sites and artifacts, and traditional tribal areas or items of religious, ceremonial, and social uses.

agreement. Typically, cultural resources approval will be authorized as part of the notice to proceed.

For acquisition projects, cultural resources requirements must be completed before final reimbursement will be made.

See RCO Manuals 3, 4, or 5 for additional details on the cultural resource review process.

Invasive Species³²

The Washington Invasive Species Council developed [protocols](#) for preventing the spread of invasive species while working in the field. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages grant sponsors to consider how their projects may spread invasive species and work to reduce that possibility. Invasive species can be spread unintentionally during construction, maintenance, and restoration activities. Here is how it could happen:

- Driving a car or truck to a field site and moving soil embedded with seeds or fragments of invasive plants in the vehicle's tires to another site. New infestations can begin miles away as the seeds and fragments drop off the tires and the undercarriage of the vehicle.
- Sampling streams and moving water or sediment infested with invasive plants, animals, or pathogens via boots, nets, sampling equipment, or boats from one stream to another.
- Moving weed-infested hay, gravel, or dirt to a new site, carrying the weed seeds along with it, during restoration and construction activities. Before long, the seeds germinate and infest the new site.

The key to preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species on restoration projects is twofold: Use materials that are known to be free of invasive plants or animals in the project and clean equipment both before and after the job. Equipment to clean should include, but not be limited to, footwear, gloves, angling equipment, sampling equipment, boats and their trailers, and vehicles and tires.

Sustainability³³

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages grant recipients to design and build sustainable projects to maximize the useful life of what they build and do the least amount of damage to the environment.

³²Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

³³Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37 and 2011-22

The board encourages sponsors to use sustainable design, practices, and elements in their projects. Examples may include use of recycled materials; native plants in landscaping; pervious surfacing material for circulation paths and access routes, trails, and parking areas; energy efficient fixtures; onsite recycling stations; and composting.

Property Requirements

Reviewing the Project with the Local Jurisdiction³⁴

Before applying for a grant to acquire property rights, the applicant must review the proposed project with the county or city with jurisdiction over the project area. The applicant then must provide documentation that the applicant has conferred with the local county or city officials. The jurisdiction's legislative authority may submit a letter to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board stating its support of, or opposition to, the project. The board shall make the letter available to the Governor and the Legislature when submitting its prioritized list as part of RCO's biennial capital budget request.³⁵ The applicant must complete this local review for each new application, even if resubmitting a project from a previous grant cycle.

To meet this requirement, the applicant must demonstrate that the conferral³⁶ process has begun by providing each member of the county commission or city council with a packet including all the following information:

- A cover letter referencing Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.110 along with a request to confer with the city or county officials about the project. The letter must state the option for the county or city to send a letter to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board stating its position on the project. A sample letter is available in the [Acquisition Tool Kit](#) on RCO's Web site.
- The project description as it will be submitted in the grant application.
- A location map.
- A parcel map of the proposed acquisition.

A copy of the packet must be attached to the project application in PRISM before the application deadline.

³⁴Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

³⁵Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.110

³⁶"Confer" is defined as a dialogue between project sponsors and local county or city officials with the purpose of early review of potential projects. The dialogue may include any matter relevant to a particular project, which may include, but need not be limited to, the following: project purpose and scope; project elements; estimated project cost; costs and benefits to the community; plans for project management and maintenance; and public access.

The applicant also must document that the conferral process took place. The documentation must be attached to the project application in PRISM before the technical completion deadline and must include all the following:

- Conferral dates
- Name and title of each person participating in the conferral process and his/her relevant organization
- A list or map of acquisition properties under consideration
- A list of the county or city official's key questions or concerns
- A description of any project revisions resulting from the conferral process
- A summary of any relevant follow-up actions

A sample documentation form is available in the [Acquisition Tool Kit](#) on RCO's Web site.

A local government proposing to acquire property within its own political boundaries meets this requirement by submitting the adopted resolution that is required with the RCO grant application before the application deadline. A local government proposing to purchase property outside its jurisdiction (e.g. a city acquiring property outside its city limits or a county acquiring property within a city's limits) must comply with the conferral requirement.

Landowner Acknowledgement of Application³⁷

As part of any grant application for acquisition of an easement or lease, the applicant must demonstrate that the landowner is aware of the applicant's interest in purchasing an easement. Applicants may meet this requirement by completing one of four options detailed in *RCO's Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

Compliance with the Forest Practice Act³⁸

Property owners must comply with the Forest Practices Act.³⁹ RCO will consult with the Washington Department of Natural Resources to determine compliance after an application is submitted. If a parcel in the application is not in compliance, the property owner must correct the violation before RCO issues the grant agreement. If the property owner fails to comply with the Forest Practices Act after a conservation easement or

³⁷Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

³⁸Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

³⁹Chapter 76.09 Revised Code of Washington

lease is acquired, it is a violation of the conservation easement and enforceable by the sponsor and RCO as well as the Department of Natural Resources.

For more information on compliance with the Forest Practices Act, contact the Washington State Department of Natural Resources' [Forest Practices Compliance Monitoring Program](#) at (360) 902-1400 or fpd@dnr.wa.gov.

Preference for Community Priorities⁴⁰

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board recognizes that interest and commitment to preserve forestlands will vary by community. Communities may exhibit their commitments to forestland preservation through a variety of mechanisms including zoning, adopted strategies for forestland preservation, and dedicated funds to purchase development rights on land.

Consistency with community priorities is one element within the evaluation criteria. To assist evaluators, applicants may submit any combination of the following to RCO:

- Letters of endorsement or support from local governments, chambers of commerce, and other organizations
- A copy of the applicant's current capital facilities plan or capital improvement program in which the project is listed by name or by type
- A copy of results of a needs assessment or community survey
- A copy of a survey or plan for preserving forestlands with a resulting priority list of acquisitions
- Documented results of a series of community meetings that may have resulted in consensus for forestland preservation

Control of the Land

To protect investments made by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and to assure public access to those investments, sponsors must have adequate control of project sites to construct, operate, and maintain the areas for the term required by the grant program and grant agreement. This "control and tenure" may be through land ownership, a lease, use agreement, or easement. See *Manual 5: Restoration Projects* for more information.

⁴⁰Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

Building Envelopes⁴¹

The concept of a building envelope is common in conservation easements. Building envelopes identify the footprint within which buildings are located or may be constructed in the future. Sponsors should work closely with landowners to identify appropriate locations for these envelopes to minimize disruption to the forest's timber values. For example, if a building envelope is in the middle of a forest to take greatest advantage of a view, this not only will constrain logging, but also encourage estate-type development thereby creating a property value reflective of an estate rather than a forest. In general, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages building envelopes to be near property edges and roads, where they won't degrade long-term viability of the forest.

If there are no buildings, the sponsor should consider whether reserving the right to develop a future home site or other buildings would increase the long-term viability of the forest and reserve the rights needed to allow such development. The appraisal must reflect the number and type of reserved rights. If there is an existing home site that will remain, at least one development right must be retained to allow the home site to continue to exist.

Locations of building envelopes and allowed improvements must be identified in the conservation easement. The sponsor should identify general locations by the time the project is evaluated so evaluators can consider their impact to the long-term viability of the forest. It also will be important for the appraiser to be made aware of building envelopes to factor that into the market value analysis. Building envelopes must be identified, preferably by survey, on a site map that will become an exhibit to the easement.

Projects on State-owned Aquatic Lands

If a project will occur over, in, or alongside a navigable body of water, an authorization to use state-owned aquatic lands may be needed.

All marine waters are, by definition, navigable, as are portions of rivers influenced by tides. Navigable rivers and lakes are those determined by the judiciary, those bounded by meander lines, or those that could have been used for commerce at the time of statehood. The Department of Natural Resources' aquatic land managers will help the grant applicant determine if the project will fall on state-owned aquatic lands and provide more information on its authorization process. See the [land manager coverage map](#) online for contact information for the Department of Natural Resources aquatic land managers.

⁴¹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

If the project is on state-owned aquatic lands, the grant applicant will need to secure a lease or easement (use authorization) to use those lands from the Washington Department of Natural Resources. Securing a lease or easement may take up to a year. RCO requires the executed lease or easement within 60 days after board funding approval to show control and tenure for the site. The lease or easement is required before the project will be placed under agreement, unless RCO's director approves an extension in advance. Review the control and tenure requirements in *Manual 4: Development Projects* or *Manual 5: Restoration Projects*.

The following online resources may be helpful to review:

- [Grant Projects on State-owned Aquatic Lands](#)
- [Leasing State-owned Aquatic Lands](#)
- [Boundaries of State-owned Aquatic Lands](#)
- [Caring for Washington's Nearshore Environments](#)

Department of Natural Resources' Review of Project Scope

Local and tribal governments and nonprofit nature conservancy applicants that need to secure a use authorization meeting board policy must do all of the following:

- Meet with the Department of Natural Resources to review the proposed scope of work.
- Complete a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA) and give a copy to the Department of Natural Resources.
- Attach to the grant application a Scope of Work Acknowledgement Form (signed by the Department of Natural Resources) by the technical completion deadline.

State agency applicants must follow the same procedure when developing a new facility where one currently does not exist. RCO will coordinate an interagency, in-person review of proposals for all other state agency projects.

Other Requirements and Things to Know

Number of Grant Proposals Allowed

In general, RCO does not limit the number of grant proposals from a single applicant during the biennial grant cycle. However, each proposal must be for a different scope of work.

A grant proposal for the same project or scope of work may be submitted to another RCO grant program only if it is being used as match. Each proposal must identify the other RCO matching grant proposal. RCO recommends applicants contact staff to discuss options for phasing costly, interrelated, or complex project proposals.

Public Access⁴²

By state law, the acquisition of a property interest does not provide a right of access to the property by the public unless explicitly permitted by the landowner in the conservation easement or other form of deed restriction.⁴³

If a willing property owner, or future property owner, and the sponsor agree to allow public access in the conservation area, such use shall be identified as a permitted use and included in the forestland conservation easement or lease or amended into the easement or lease at a later date. Examples of public access may include walking, public trails, water access sites, and areas for wildlife viewing, hunting, and fishing.

By state law, acquisition priorities for the Forestland Preservation Category shall consider whether a forestland conservation easement is consistent with a regional or statewide recreation plan.⁴⁴ Evaluators shall give higher consideration to applications that are consistent with such plans when scoring the other benefits in the "Community Values" evaluation question.

Permitted Uses⁴⁵

The area subject to a conservation easement or lease may contain the permitted uses below as long as they are not inconsistent with the primary and secondary purposes of the forestland program and the designated tax program status as described above. Any foreseen uses that would be inconsistent with the program must be excluded from the conservation easement or lease area.

- Fire defense and other emergencies
- Forest research
- Habitat enhancement and restoration
- Limited building rights for forest management purposes and ranching facilities
- Limited utilities consistent with forest management purposes

⁴²Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-23 and 2016-37

⁴³Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(6)

⁴⁴Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(12(d))

⁴⁵Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

- Non-timber forest harvest and collection
- Recreational or educational uses
- Ranching activities consistent with an approved forest management plan
- Sale of carbon credits for the purposes of prolonging the life of the timber stand
- Timber harvest and forest management in accordance with a forest management plan and the Forest Practices Act
- Use of chemicals for forest management purposes

Prohibited Uses⁴⁶

The following uses are inconsistent with the primary or secondary purposes of the forestland program and are prohibited within the conservation easement or lease area:

- Agriculture
- Alteration of watercourses, except those required to comply with the Forest Practices Act
- Commercial feed lots
- Commercial mining or excavation
- Commercial signs or billboards unrelated to the forest management purposes of the property
- Construction of new buildings, structures, or improvements, except as permitted above
- Game farming or game farm animals
- Hazardous materials disposal
- Industrial, commercial, or residential activities
- Intentional introduction of nonnative and invasive species
- Subdivision of the property to smaller parcels
- Surface or subsurface mineral extraction, except for forest management purposes

⁴⁶Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

- Third party compensatory mitigation, including wetlands, and other habitat mitigation activities purchased by a third party to offset regulatory requirements
- Topographic modifications, except for forest management purposes
- Unregulated use or activity that causes significant erosion or pollution
- Waste disposal
- Wireless communication facilities

Public Disclosure Rules⁴⁷

RCO records and files are public records that are subject to the Public Records Act.⁴⁸ More information about the RCO's [disclosure practices](#) is available online.

Administrative Rule Exceptions⁴⁹

The following Washington Administrative Codes do not apply to projects funded in the Forestland Preservation Category:

- Washington Administrative Code 286-13-110 Income, use of income
- Washington Administrative Code 286-13-120 Permanent project signs
- Washington Administrative Code 286-13-035 Planning requirement

Project Area Stewardship and Ongoing Obligations⁵⁰

An RCO grant comes with long-term obligations to maintain and protect the project area⁵¹ after a project is complete. The long-term obligations for the Farm and Forest Account are in state law⁵² and RCO's grant agreement. A [sample grant agreement](#) may be found on RCO's Web site.

RCO recognizes that changes occur over time and that some facilities may become obsolete or the land needed for something else. The law discourages casual discards of

⁴⁷Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

⁴⁸Revised Code of Washington 42.56

⁴⁹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

⁵⁰Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

⁵¹Washington Administrative Code 286-04-010(19). Project area is the geographic area that delineates a grant-assisted site, which is subject to application and grant agreement requirements.

⁵²Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.030(9) and Washington Administrative Code 286-13-160

land and facilities by ensuring that grant sponsors replace the lost value when changes or conversions of use take place.

In general, the project area funded with an RCO grant must remain dedicated to the use as originally funded, such as forestland preservation, for as long as defined in the grant agreement. For acquisition projects, the period is determined by the rights that are acquired.

A conversion occurs when the project area acquired, developed, or restored with RCO grant funding is used for purposes other than what it was funded for originally. See *RCO Manual 7: Long-term Obligations* for a discussion of conversions and the process required for replacement of the public investment. Non-compliance with the long-term obligations for an RCO grant may jeopardize an organization's ability to obtain future RCO grants.

After a project is complete (that is, after RCO's final reimbursement and acceptance of the project), RCO documents that were signed by the sponsor continue to govern the project area described in the boundary map for which funds have been granted.

Changes may be made only with the prior approval of the board. If a compliance issue arises, RCO staff works with the sponsor to resolve the issue. Unresolved, identified issues could result in restrictions on applying for, or receiving, future grants.

Easement Compliance⁵³

The model agricultural conservation easement template requires that each easement include a provision to provide access to the project sponsor and RCO to conduct a general inspection of the easement area and to monitor compliance with the easement terms. Project sponsors must develop and implement a plan to monitor RCO-funded conservation easements.

Due to the complexity of the conservation easement and the long-term implications for the landowner, RCO advises sponsors to strongly encourage landowners to consult with attorneys before granting an easement.

Easements and leases must be recorded through the assessor's office in the county where the land lies. The easement or lease will be between the landowner and the sponsor. Partners, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service, or another eligible co-grantee, also may be named as parties to the easement. RCO must be named as a third-party beneficiary, and its director must sign the easement before closing.

⁵³Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

Section 3: Money Matters

In this section, you'll learn about the following:

- ✓ Grant limits
- ✓ Match requirements
- ✓ Types of match
- ✓ Federal rules
- ✓ Records and reimbursements

Grant Limits⁵⁴

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board establishes grant limits for its programs. The maximum grant request can be \$500,000. There is no minimum grant amount.

Habitat enhancement or restoration activities must be less than 50 percent of the acquisition cost of the project including any in-kind contribution by any party.⁵⁵ For example, if the total acquisition cost is \$200,000, restoration costs may not exceed \$100,000, for a total project cost of \$300,000. Total project cost includes the grant amount and sponsor's matching share.

Administration, Architecture, and Engineering Costs

- Direct administrative costs for acquisition of real property are limited to no more than 5 percent of the total acquisition cost.
- Architecture and engineering costs for restoration are limited to 20 percent of the total restoration costs.

⁵⁴Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

⁵⁵Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(13)

Additional information about eligibility and reimbursement maximums for these elements is contained in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* (administration costs) and *Manual 5: Restoration Projects*, (architectural and engineering costs).

Cost Increases Not Allowed

Cost increases are not allowed. This means the requested grant amount may not be increased once the project has been evaluated. Project cost overruns become the responsibility of the sponsor. Also, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will not reimburse more than the sponsor's actual out-of-pocket expenditures.

Match Requirements

Matching Share⁵⁶

Match is the project sponsor's contribution to a project. By requiring a match for grants, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board intends to foster and demonstrate local commitment to the projects and to spread the money from the grant program to a greater number of projects.

Cities, Counties, and Nonprofit Conservancies

By statute,⁵⁷ cities, counties, and nonprofit organizations, must contribute matching resources at least equal to the amount of the grant requested. For example, if an applicant requests a \$250,000 grant, the applicant must contribute \$250,000 for a total project cost of \$500,000. This is called providing a 50 percent or one-to-one matching share.

Applicants must provide a minimum of 10 percent of the total cost of a project in the form of a local contribution, not from a state or federal source. For example, if a total project cost is \$500,000, the applicant must provide \$50,000 in matching share from a local source such as local government appropriation, cash, grants, or in-kind donations.

Matching shares of more than 50 percent are encouraged. Applications that include a higher match than the required minimum receive additional points in the evaluation.

State Conservation Commission

There is no match requirement for the Washington State Conservation Commission. However, all applicants are encouraged to contribute matching shares and reduce

⁵⁶Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(9), Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

⁵⁷Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060 (4) and 79A.15.120(7)

government cost. If the commission partners with another eligible applicant, the match requirement does apply.

Eligible Match

Applicant resources used to match board funds must be eligible in this grant program. A sponsor's matching share may include one or a combination of the following:

- Appropriations and cash
- Bonds—council or voter
- Conservation futures
- Corrections labor
- Donations—the value of using cash, equipment, labor, materials, property rights, or services (see the Types of Match section below)
- Force account—the value of using sponsor's equipment, labor, or materials (see the Types of Match section below)
- Grants—federal, state, local, and private (see the Types of Match section below)
- Other Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants that meet the requirements outlined below⁵⁸

Not Allowed as Match

- Existing sponsor assets such as real property or developments.
- Costs that are double counted. (A cost incurred by a sponsor in a project that already has been reimbursed or used as match in another RCO project shall not be used as a match on another RCO project.)
- Cost that are not eligible for grant assistance.
- Cost that are not necessary or an integral part of the project scope.
- Cost associated with meeting a mitigation requirement unrelated to the funded project. See Mitigation Funds as Match below.

⁵⁸Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Match Requirements

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants are intended to be the last source of funding for a project. In other words, before the board awards the grant, the required match must be secured so the project can move forward. Board grants also are intended to supplement the existing capacity of a sponsor, not to replace existing funding that would have been used for a project without grant funding.

All matching resources must meet the following criteria:

- Be an integral and necessary part of the approved project.
- Be part of the work identified in the application and grant agreement.
- Be for eligible work types or elements.
- Be committed to the project.

RCO rules governing projects apply to the grant applicant's match. For example, if a grant applicant uses donated land as a match, RCO rules requiring the land to remain in conservation use forever apply to the donated land as well.

Except for grant applications submitted within the same biennium, matching resources or board grants committed in one board-funded project must not be used as match in another board-funded project.

The board may require the applicant to provide a portion of its matching resources in local resources.⁵⁹

Match Availability and Certification

To help ensure Recreation and Conservation Funding Board projects are ready for implementation upon approval, applicants must have matching funds available for expenditure before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves funding. All applicants are required to sign and submit certification of match forms to ensure their projects are included in the funding recommendation. Applicants are advised to plan ahead for projects whose match depends on citizen votes or passage of ballot measures. This certification is due at least 1 calendar month before Recreation and Conservation Funding Board action.⁶⁰ The forms and deadlines for certifying match are on the RCO Web site.

⁵⁹Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(4)

⁶⁰Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

RCO may declare projects ineligible if there are no guarantees that matching funds are available and those projects may be passed over in favor of projects with the match in place. Such decisions are based on the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's confidence in the applicant's ability to have the match in place when required.

When another Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant is used as match, the certification of match will be tentative, conditioned on receipt of the other grant or on the sponsor providing the match from other resources. The applicant will have 6 months from the time of the first grant award to certify the match requirements of that grant. To prevent a backlog of unspent grants, the sponsor must finish the project by the earliest completion date of the two grants.⁶¹

Types of Match

Donations

Donations are eligible only as matching funds and are not reimbursable. This means RCO will not pay more than the sponsor's out-of-pocket expenses. Valuing donations of equipment, labor (including inmates, community service labor, and volunteers), and material is discussed in *Manual 8: Reimbursements*. RCO strongly encourages applicants to secure written confirmation of all donations planned as match and to attach the donation letters to the PRISM Online application.

Donated property rights must expand existing forestland or stand on their own as a viable forest. Review Manual 3: Acquisition Projects before taking title to property that will be donated and used as match. Manual 3 outlines the requirements for valuing the property and for securing a donation statement from the seller.

Force Account

Force account refers to use of a sponsor's staff (labor), equipment, or materials. These contributions are treated as expenditures for billing purposes.

Other Grants

In some cases, a sponsor may use funds awarded from another grant program as its match. For example, federal forest easement program grants might be used to match forestland preservation grants. Other grants are eligible as long as the purposes are similar and grant sources do not restrict or diminish the use, availability, or value of the project area. These grants are eligible only as matching funds and are not reimbursable.

⁶¹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2004-08 and 2006-13b

The eligibility of federal funds to be used as a match may be governed by federal requirements and thus will vary with individual program policies.

Applicants must clearly identify in the grant application all grants to be used as match. RCO will help determine if the source is compatible with Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Grants as Match⁶²

Another Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant may be used to help meet the match requirements if the following conditions apply:

- The grants are not from the same Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant program.
- Only elements eligible in both grant programs may count as match.
- Each grant is evaluated independently and on its own merits, as if the match were coming from elsewhere.
- The applicant must provide a minimum of 10 percent of the total costs of the eligible elements being matched. This sponsor match may not be from federal or state funds and may include in-kind contributions. This policy does not apply to Native American tribes or state and federal agencies.
- The grant applications are submitted in the same biennium.⁶³

For evaluation scoring purpose, an RCO grant used as match will not count toward the award of matching share points.⁶⁴

Matching resources also must conform to the deadlines discussed in Section 1 Grant Process and Timeline.

Mitigation Funds as Match

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board allows use of impact fees and mitigation cash payments, such as money from a fund established as a mitigation requirement, as match if the money has been passed from the mitigating entity to an eligible applicant, and the board's grant does not replace mitigation money, repay the mitigation fund, or in any way supplant the obligation of the mitigating entity.

⁶²Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2006-04 and 2016-37

⁶³Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

⁶⁴Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-02

Third-party Match⁶⁵

Cash spent on restoration by a third party may be used as match, if the value of the labor, equipment, and materials applied toward the activity is a donation to the sponsor. The value would be based on the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's existing donation policy, not necessarily on the amount the activity originally cost the third party. If the sponsor pays the third party for the value of the restoration, it becomes an expenditure and is eligible as in-kind match.

A sponsor may not use the value of development rights granted to a party other than the sponsor as a donation.

Federal Rules

For all projects funded with federal funds or other grants that are used by RCO as match to a federal source, grant sponsors must comply with [Part 200—Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#) and RCO may require additional information.

Records⁶⁶ and Reimbursements

Sponsors Must Pay First⁶⁷

RCO pays grants through reimbursement. Sponsors may request reimbursement only after having paid their employees and vendors. RCO does not provide money before vendors are paid. Complete reimbursement procedures are found in *Manual 8: Reimbursements*. Other rules to note include the following:

- When the value of donations exceeds the value of expenditures, grant reimbursement cannot exceed the total out-of-pocket expenses.
- Costs associated with preparing this, or any other grant application, cannot be submitted for reimbursement.

Records

Applicants must keep detailed records of all funded project costs including force account values and donated contributions. Refer to *Manual 8: Reimbursements* for details and

⁶⁵Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

⁶⁶Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

⁶⁷Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

instructions regarding audits, record retention, and documents required for reimbursement.

Section 4: Project Evaluation

In this section, you'll learn about the following:

- ✓ Project evaluation
- ✓ Advisory committee
- ✓ Evaluation criteria by category

How Project Evaluation Works⁶⁸

Project evaluation is the competitive process adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to guide it in allocating funds to grant applicants.⁶⁹ The board develops the questions through a public process from statutory and other criteria. The evaluation questions are below.

Grant applicants present their proposed projects to the Forestland Preservation Advisory Committee in person by responding to evaluation criteria in PowerPoint® presentations. While evaluation meetings are open to anyone, they are not public hearings. As such, only authorized applicant representatives may address the evaluation team. At these meetings, an RCO staff member serves as moderator. **Note: In 2020, RCO will host online, virtual review and evaluation meetings only. This change is for applications submitted by June 1, 2020.**

There are two sections to the evaluation criteria: advisory committee-scored questions and RCO-scored questions. In the first section, the advisory committee uses subjective criteria to score each project. Scores are based on each applicant's response to evaluation questions, graphics presented during the evaluation meeting or included in the application, and summary application material made available in advance of the project's evaluation. Scoring is by confidential ballot.

⁶⁸Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

⁶⁹Washington Administrative Code 286-13-020

In the second section, RCO staff scores the match criterion based on material submitted by applicants.

Scores from sections one and two are combined for a project's total score and a preliminary ranked list is created.

The director provides the preliminary ranked list to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in the fall of even-numbered years.⁷⁰ The board approves the preliminary ranked list in an open public meeting and submits it to the Governor and Legislature as part of RCO's budget request. After the Legislature authorizes funding, the board awards grants to the ranked projects in an open public meeting.

Advisory Committee

RCO manages the Forestland Preservation Category with the assistance of a standing advisory committee. The advisory committee's roles are to recommend policies and procedures to RCO for administering grants and to review, evaluate, and score grant applications.

In recruiting members for the Forestland Preservation Advisory Committee, RCO seeks to appoint people who possess a statewide perspective and are recognized for their experience and knowledge of forestland preservation and management in Washington. RCO staff do not participate on the committee as members but do staff the committee and moderate application evaluations.

RCO's director may appoint *ex officio* members to the advisory committee to provide additional representation and expertise.

Check RCO's Web site for [membership and other details](#).

⁷⁰Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(14)

Evaluation Criteria

Forestland Preservation Category

Scored By	Criteria	Maximum Score
Advisory Committee	1 Viability of the Site	15
Advisory Committee	2 Forestland Stewardship	8
Advisory Committee	3 Stewardship Practices	2
Advisory Committee	4 Threat to the Land	8
Advisory Committee	5 Community Values	4
Advisory Committee	6 Community Support	2
Advisory Committee	7 Multiple Benefits	2
RCO Staff	8 Match	2
Total Possible Points		43

Detailed Scoring Criteria for Forestland Preservation⁷¹

Advisory Committee Scored

- 1. Viability of the Site.** What is the viability of the site for commercial timber production?

 - What are the major tree species and their size, age, and condition?
 - What is the long-term forest management strategy? Will it result in ongoing commercial timber production?
 - Is there enough income generated on the property to sustain the long-term forest management strategy goals?
 - How many acres is the area proposed for conservation? Evaluators provide a preference for larger areas.

▲ Point Range: 0-15 points based on the viability of the site for commercial timber production.
- 2. Forestland Stewardship.** What stewardship practices beyond the Forest Practices Act are in place that support timber production or provide ecological benefits?⁷² What is the experience of the applicant to monitor the conservation easement to ensure the forest stewardship activities proposed are realized?

⁷¹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-37

⁷²Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(12)(f)

Examples of stewardship that achieve sustainable forest management include practices in accordance with any of the following:

- Integrated forest management plan
- Forest stewardship plan (approved by the Washington Department of Natural Resources)
- Conservation activity plan (National Resources Conservation Service)
- Tree farm management plan (Washington Tree Farm Program)

Ecological benefits include clean air, clean water, stormwater management, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, and other benefits. Examples of stewardship that achieve ecological benefits include the following:

- Managing for wildfire
- Managing the spread of invasive species
- Managing for forest health and climate change
- Obtaining a third-party certification (e.g. Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Forest Stewardship Council, American Tree Farm System)
- Demonstrating an estimate of the amount of biological carbon stored in trees and understory plants
- Efforts to protect state priority plant and animal species and ecosystems
- Flood reduction and floodplain connections
- Removal or correction of fish passage barriers
- Dedication of stream and wetland riparian areas larger than the minimum requirements in the Forest Practices Act

▲ Points Range: 0-8 points

0 points There are no specific stewardship practices in place and the applicant has minimal experience managing easements or leases.

1-4 points There are one or more stewardship practices planned and the applicant has moderate experience managing easements or leases.

5-8 points There are one or more stewardship practices in place and the applicant has strong experience managing easements or leases.

- 3. Stewardship Practices.** What voluntary stewardship practices (described in Question 2) will be included in the terms of the conservation easement or lease as required stewardship practices?

▲ Point Range: 0-2 points.

- 4. Threat of the Land.** What is the likelihood the land will be converted to some other use than forestland if it is not protected?⁷³

Score the question based on the severity of the threat that the property will be converted to some use other than forestland within the next 5 years. Threat may include lack of protection of the land, landowner circumstances, adjacent land uses, zoning supports ability to develop the land, or other conditions.

▲ Point Range: 0-8 points

0 points Low likelihood it will be converted to another use.

1-4 points Medium likelihood it will be converted to another use.

5-8 points High likelihood it will be converted to another use.

- 5. Community Values.** How will protecting the land for timber production provide benefits to the community? Do the community and area Native American tribes support the project?⁷⁴

Preference is provided to projects that are identified in community planning efforts in one or more of the following ways:

- Is the project recommended in a limiting factors analysis or critical pathways analysis?
- Is the project recommended in a watershed plan developed under Revised Code of Washington 90.82 or other planning effort?
- Is the project recommended in a conservation plan (other than a habitat conservation plan required under the Endangered Species Act)?
- Is the project recommended in a coordinated, region-wide prioritization effort?

⁷³Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(12)(c)

⁷⁴Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(12)(a), (b), and (d)

- Is the project consistent with a regional or statewide recreational or resource plan?
- Is the project consistent with the local comprehensive plan as forestland of long-term significance or other local planning effort?
- Does the project assist in the implementation of a local shoreline master plan updated according to Revised Code of Washington 90.58.080?

Benefits to the community also may include the following:

- Creation or protection of jobs
- Support for local mills
- Viewshed and scenic beauty
- Research and educational opportunities

Support from the community and Native American tribes may be demonstrated by letters of support or donations to assist with implementing the project.

▲ Point Range: 0-4 points

0-2 points The project will provide few additional benefits to the community.

3-4 points The project will provide many additional benefits to the community.

6. Community Support. Are there one or more letters in the application that demonstrate community support for the project?

▲ Point Range: 0 or 2 points

0 points There are no letters of support in the application.

2 points There are one or more letters of support in the application that demonstrate community or Native American tribal support for the project.

7. Multiple Benefits

- Does the project area include recreational uses that are compatible with habitat conservation?

Explain these recreational uses and how they are compatible with the habitat conservation objectives of the project.

- Provide an evidenced-based explanation of compatibility.
 - Explain how recreational uses are managed on the landscape and balanced with habitat conservation.
 - Discuss the quality of the recreational experience.
- Does the project area include resource uses or management practices that are compatible with, and provide the ability to achieve, additional conservation benefits?

Describe the resource uses or management practices and explain how they are compatible with conservation and achieve additional conservation benefits.

- Provide an evidenced-based explanation of 1) compatibility with conservation and 2) achieving additional conservation benefits.
- How will these resource uses and management practices be managed?
- Describe how the local or regional communities and their leaders value these resource uses or management practices.

Evidence provided by the sponsor showing local support for conservation due to the applicant continuing a compatible historic use or practice that would otherwise be threatened may be considered as meeting the criteria of achieving additional conservation benefits.

Scoping the project to avoid impairing a locally preferred resource use or management practice may be considered as meeting the criteria of achieving additional conservation benefits.

▲ Point Range: 0-2 points

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 0 points | No multiple benefits provided or multiple benefits are not compatible with or achieve additional conservation benefits. |
|----------|---|

- 1-2 points More points shall be given to the extent multiple benefits exist, recreational uses are compatible with conservation, and resource uses and management practices achieve additional conservation benefits.

RCO Scored

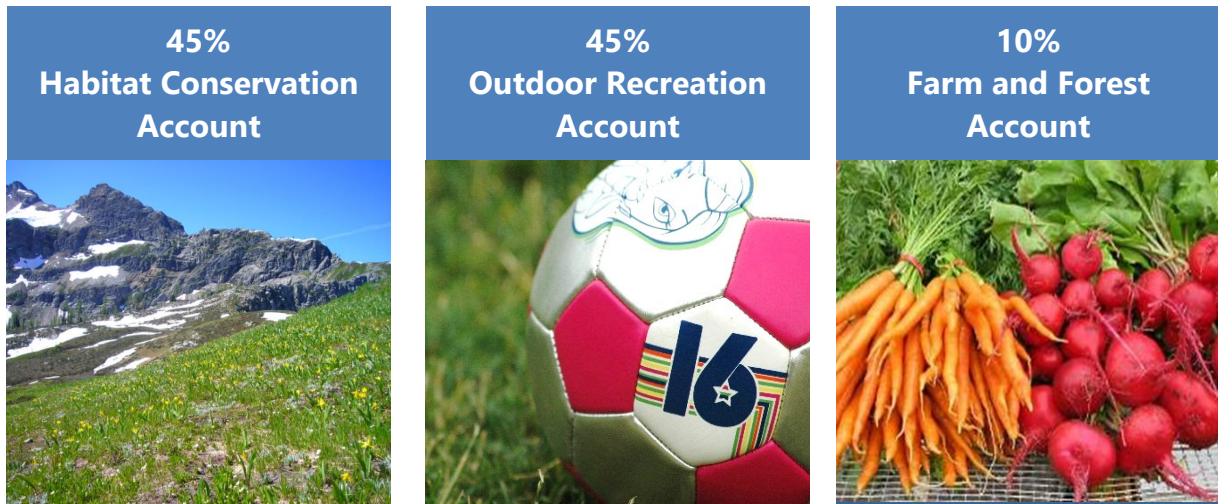
- 8. Match.** Is the applicant providing additional match above the minimum requirement?

For evaluation scoring purpose, an RCO grant used as match will not count toward the award of matching share points.

▲ Point Range: 0 or 2 points

- 0 points The applicant is providing less than 55 percent match.
- 2 points The applicant is providing 55 percent or more match.

Appendix A: WWRP Funding Formula



Categories					
35%	Critical Habitat	30%	Local Parks ³	90%	Farmland Preservation
25%	Natural Areas	10% ¹	State Lands Development and Renovation	10%	Forestland Preservation
15%	Riparian Protection	30%	State Parks ⁴		
10% ¹	State Lands Restoration and Enhancement	20%	Trails		
15%	Urban Wildlife Habitat ²	10%	Water Access ⁵		

¹or \$3 million, whichever is less

²Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2019-27: 45 percent to local agencies, Native American tribes, nonprofit organizations, and salmon recovery lead entities; 45 percent to state agencies; 10 percent to fully fund partially funded local agency, Native American tribe, and nonprofit organizations; then fully fund partially funded state agency projects, and apply any remaining amount to the next highest ranked project(s), regardless of sponsor.

³Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-52: 40 percent for acquisition costs and 60 percent for development costs.

⁴Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-52: 50 percent for acquisition costs and 50 percent for development costs.

⁵75 percent must be acquisition costs. Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.050 (2)(d)