

Manual 10a

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

Outdoor Recreation Account

June 11, 2024



Table of Contents

At a Glance	1
Section 1: Introduction	6
The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program	6
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.....	8
Who Makes Decisions.....	8
Where to Get Information.....	10
Grant Process and Timeline.....	10
Time Limits and Extensions.....	14
Section 2: Policies	17
Grant Categories.....	17
Eligible Applicants.....	20
Eligible Project Types	22
Eligible Project Activities.....	25
Environmental Requirements.....	29
Property Requirements	31
Other Requirements and Things to Know.....	34
Telecommunications Facilities	38
Public Access	39
Project Area Stewardship and Ongoing Obligations.....	41
Section 3: Money Matters	43
Grant Limits.....	43
Matching Share	45
Match Reduction.....	48
Types of Match	52
Federal Rules	54
Records and Reimbursement.....	54
Section 4: Project Evaluation	56
How Project Evaluation Works	56
Evaluation Criteria	60

At a Glance

Local Parks

Purpose	The program provides grants to create or improve parks.
Who may apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local agencies • Federally recognized Native American tribes • Special purpose districts
When are applications due?	May 1, 2024
When are grants awarded?	June 2025 estimated
What types of projects are eligible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition • Development or renovation • Combination of acquisition and development or renovation
What are the grant limits?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition: \$1 million • Development: \$500,000 • Combination: \$1 million
What must the project sponsor contribute?	50 percent. See the match reduction policy for exceptions.
Is a plan required?	Applicant needs a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan to apply. See <i>Manual 2: Planning Policies and Guidelines</i> . Plan is due March 1, 2024.
How is the project evaluated?	An advisory committee hears in-person virtual presentation and scores the project.
What's new this year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added a cost increase policy for exceptional economic times. • Changed the evaluation criteria to address priorities in RCO's equity review and state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. • Youth Athletic Facilities grants are no longer eligible for match. • Included in this manual existing rules about time limits, extensions, inspections, acknowledgments, and signs.

State Lands Development and Renovation

Purpose	The program provides grants to develop or renovate state recreation lands.
Who may apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Department of Fish and Wildlife • State Department of Natural Resources
When are applications due?	May 1, 2024
When are grants awarded?	June 2025 estimated
What types of projects are eligible?	Development or renovation
What are the grant limits?	\$25,000-\$325,000
What must the project sponsor contribute?	No match required
Is a plan required?	Applicant needs a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan to apply. See <i>Manual 2: Planning Policies and Guidelines</i> . Plan is due March 1, 2024.
How is the project evaluated?	An advisory committee evaluates written application and score the projects.
What's new this year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added a cost increase policy for exceptional economic times. • Included in this manual existing rules about time limits, extensions, inspections, acknowledgments, and signs.

State Parks

Purpose	The program provides grants to buy and develop state parks.
Who may apply?	State Parks and Recreation Commission
When are applications due?	May 1, 2024
When are grants awarded?	June 2025 estimated
What types of projects are eligible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition • Development (renovation is not eligible) • Combination of acquisition and development
What are the grant limits?	None
What must the project sponsor contribute?	No match required
Is a plan required?	Applicant needs a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan to apply. See <i>Manual 2: Planning Policies and Guidelines</i> . Plan is due March 1, 2024.
How is the project evaluated?	An advisory committee hears in-person virtual presentation and scores the project.
What's new this year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added a cost increase policy for exceptional economic times. • Included in this manual existing rules about time limits, extensions, inspections, acknowledgments, and signs.

Trails

Purpose	The program provides grants to create or improve public trails open to pedestrians, equestrians, or bicyclists.
Who may apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local agencies • Federally recognized Native American tribes • Special purpose districts • State agencies
When are applications due?	May 1, 2024
When are grants awarded?	June 2025 estimated
What types of projects are eligible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition • Development or renovation • Combination of acquisition and development or renovation
What are the grant limits?	None
What must the project sponsor contribute?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local governments: 50 percent. See the match reduction policy for exceptions. • State agencies: No match required.
Is a plan required?	Applicant needs a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan to apply. See <i>Manual 2: Planning Policies and Guidelines</i> . Plan is due March 1, 2024.
How is the project evaluated?	An advisory committee hears in-person virtual presentation and scores the project.
What's new this year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added a cost increase policy for exceptional economic times. • Changed the evaluation criteria to address priorities in RCO's equity review and state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. • Included in this manual existing rules about time limits, extensions, inspections, acknowledgments, and signs.

Water Access

Purpose	The program provides grants to create or improve access to the water for nonmotorized boating and water-related recreation.
Who may apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local agencies • Federally recognized Native American tribes • Special purpose districts • State agencies
When are applications due?	May 1, 2024
When are grants awarded?	June 2025 estimated
What types of projects are eligible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition • Development or renovation • Combination of acquisition and development or renovation
What are the grant limits?	None
What must the project sponsor contribute?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local governments: 50 percent. See the match reduction policy for exceptions. • State agencies: No match required.
Is a plan required?	Applicant needs a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan to apply. See <i>Manual 2: Planning Policies and Guidelines</i> . Plan is due March 1, 2024.
How is the project evaluated?	An advisory committee hears in-person, virtual presentation and scores the project.
What's new this year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added a cost increase policy for exceptional economic times. • Changed the evaluation criteria to address priorities in RCO's equity review and state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. • Included in this manual existing rules about time limits, extensions, inspections, acknowledgments, and signs.

Section 1: Introduction

This section covers the following:

- ✓ The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program
- ✓ Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
- ✓ Who makes decisions
- ✓ Where to get information
- ✓ Grant process and timeline
- ✓ Time limits and extensions

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

The Washington State Legislature created the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)¹ 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.

Today, WWRP provides funding for a broad range of projects that conserve wildlife habitat and working forestland and farmland; buy land 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.

Accounts and Categories

State law² divides WWRP funding into three accounts, which are further divided into categories with unique funding priorities, shown below.

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

²Revised Code of Washington 79A.15

Farm and Forest Account 10 percent

- Farmland Preservation Category 90 percent
- Forestland Preservation Category 10 percent

Habitat Conservation Account 45 percent

- Critical Habitat Category 35 percent
- Natural Areas Category 25 percent
- Riparian Protection Category 15 percent
- State Lands Restoration and Enhancement Category 10 percent³
- Urban Wildlife Habitat Category 15 percent⁴

Outdoor Recreation Account 45 percent

- Local Parks Category 30 percent⁵
- State Lands Development and Renovation Category 10 percent⁶
- State Parks Category 30 percent⁷
- Trails Category 20 percent
- Water Access Category 10 percent⁸

Each WWRP account and category must receive 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

³or \$3 million, whichever is less

⁴Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2019-27: 45 percent to local agencies, Native American tribes, and nonprofit organizations; 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.

⁵Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-52: 40 percent for acquisition costs and 60 percent for development costs.

⁶or \$3 million, whichever is less

⁷Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-52: 50 percent for acquisition costs and 50 percent for development costs.

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

Funding Board's intent to meet them generally, 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 with the potential to achieve the greatest benefit.

See section 2 for more details about each category.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

WWRP is administered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, which is a governor-appointed board composed 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 and working farms and forests, and help return salmon and orca from near extinction.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board recognizes its obligation to ensure its programs and policies are equitable and inclusive and has taken steps to address disparities. The board has resolved to continue to examine its policies and reach out to diverse partners to ensure that Washington's investments are not only for a few but reflect the board's values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Read the board's [Resolution 2020-35](#) in full online.

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

Staff Decisions

Staff review the grant application to ensure it is complete, the project is eligible to compete, the grant applicant is eligible to apply, and the match is certified. Staff also score objective evaluation criteria, such as those relating to Growth Management Act

compliance. Finally, staff make routine grant management decisions about billings, reports, minor scope changes, short time extensions, and more.

Advisory Committee Decisions

Advisory committees evaluate grant applications and score them to create a ranked list of projects for the funding board to consider. Advisory committees also review proposed program policies and criteria changes, and in some cases make recommendations to the funding board or director about how funding should be distributed between agencies or funding categories.

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 sixty 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.

Board Decisions

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

Not a Public Hearings Board⁹

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

More detailed information about board and director decisions is available in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* and *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

⁹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2006-13b

Where to Get Information

Recreation and Conservation Office:

Natural Resources Building
1111 Washington Street Southeast
Olympia, WA 98501

[Email](#)

Telephone: (360) 902-3000

FAX: (360) 902-3026

Hearing Impaired Relay Service: Call 711

[Website](#)

Mailing Address

PO Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

RCO outdoor grants 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 website on the [WWRP grant page](#).

Other Grant Manuals Needed

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

- *Manual 2: Planning Policies and Guidelines*
- *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*
- *Manual 4: Development 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 eighteen months and is outlined below. While the order of the steps in this process remains consistent, visit the RCO website for precise dates.

Even-Numbered Years

Webinars. RCO conducts workshop webinars in the winter or early spring to provide information about the grant programs offered that year.

Planning Deadline. March 1 is the planning deadline. This ensures the applicant completes the planning process before applying for grants. Agencies that apply for grants in the same year that their planning eligibility expires must ensure that their planning eligibility extends through the board meeting in which the projects first are considered.

RCO's website has a list of [eligible applicants](#). To verify or establish eligibility for a specific grant program, contact RCO's planning specialist.

Entering Applications. RCO strongly encourages the applicant to start the online application early. PRISM Online usually opens by March.

To enter an application, the applicant must sign up for a [SecureAccess Washington](#) account and submit a [PRISM account form](#). When using either of these databases for the first time, the applicant must complete a double sign-in.

1. Using SecureAccess Washington credentials, login to PRISM.
2. When redirected to the SecureAccess login page, enter the SecureAccess credentials.
3. When redirected to a one-time PRISM sign-in page, enter the PRISM login credentials.
4. The applicant will be directed back to the PRSM home page.

This double sign-in will happen only once. After completing the double sign-in, the applicant will use SecureAccess Washington credentials to log into PRISM.

To begin an application, 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 the applicant through the process, reviews application materials, helps determine whether a proposal is eligible, and may visit the project site to discuss site-specific details. More information about [PRISM's components and technical requirements](#) may be found online.

Applications Due. An application typically is due in early May of even-numbered years. The application includes the data entered into PRISM and all required attachments. The applicant should *submit* the application before the deadline. The *Check Application for Errors* button on the *Submit Application* screen will indicate which pages are incomplete.

An incomplete application and an 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. The applicant is encouraged to attend a technical review meeting, to present the project virtually to a WWRP advisory committee and RCO staff. Staff review the project to ensure it is eligible, identify any issues of concern, and provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal. The applicant makes an oral presentation, illustrated with maps, graphics, and photographs using PowerPoint.[®] Grants managers will review the application also and send comments to the applicant. The applicant then may make changes to improve the project, if needed. The applicant must complete all changes and resubmit the application by the technical completion deadline.

Note: RCO uses a written review process for the State Lands Development and Renovation Category.

Technical Completion Deadline. RCO establishes a technical completion deadline by which the application must be in the final form. After this date, the applicant 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 the Governor a recommended funding amount for WWRP for the next biennium.

Project Evaluation. The applicant makes a virtual, oral presentation, illustrated with maps, graphics, and photographs in PowerPoint[®] to the evaluation committee, which scores the proposal against criteria approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. In the State Lands Development and Renovation Category, the same information is presented in writing only.

Post-Evaluation Conference. After project evaluations, RCO staff tabulate the scores and share the results with each advisory committee. The committees discuss the preliminary ranked lists and the application and evaluation processes. The public may join these advisory committee conference calls; however, to ensure a fair and equitable process, guests may not testify. Shortly after the conference calls, staff post the preliminary ranked lists on RCO's website. The resulting ranked lists of projects are the basis for the funding recommendations to the board.

Board Approves Project List. In an open public meeting, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers the recommendations of staff, written public comments submitted before the meeting, and public testimony at the meeting. The board then approves the lists of projects for submittal to the Governor by November 1.

When considering a list of projects for submittal, the board will use both anticipated funding and project evaluation results to determine the length of the lists. The lists normally will exceed anticipated funding and will include alternate projects that could be funded if higher ranked projects fail or use less money than requested. Applicants are cautioned that the board's recommendation of project lists to the Governor is not the same as funding approval.

The funding board submits alternate projects 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. An applicant with match included in the application must provide proof of the availability of matching funds by the match certification deadline, which is at least one calendar month before board approval of funding.¹⁰

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

Grant Agreements Issued. After grant awards, the applicant has two calendar months¹¹ to submit pre-agreement documents (checklist provided by grants managers.) RCO staff then prepare and issue the grant agreement. The applicant must return the signed agreement within three calendar months.¹² Once the agreement is signed, the applicant, now referred to as a project sponsor, may begin the project, according to the terms of

¹⁰Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

¹¹Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(4)

¹²Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(5)

the grant agreement. Each agreement will be written and monitored for compliance by RCO staff. See *Manual 7: Long-Term Obligations* for more information.

Successful Applicant Webinar. After the board approves funding, RCO publishes online a recorded webinar for successful grant applicants. This webinar covers the sponsor's responsibilities to comply with the grant agreement, issues that might come up when implementing a project, billing procedures, amendments for changes and time extensions, closing project procedures, and long-term compliance.

Time Limits and Extensions

The sponsor must complete the funded project promptly. For this reason, RCO staff, with sponsor assistance, establishes a timetable for project completion, including enforceable milestones and a project completion date. To avoid the risk of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board or director withdrawing the grant, the board adopted the following guidance for each project phase.

Application Phase

An applicant must provide reasonable assurance that the project can be completed on time and meet milestones. Reasonable assurance may include such evidence as the following:

- Appraisals and review are completed.
- Designs are completed.
- Bid documents are prepared.
- Environmental assessment is completed.
- Hazardous substances review is completed.
- Option agreements are signed.
- Permits are in-hand.
- Property is in escrow.
- Waiver of Retroactivity is in-hand and signed.

At least one calendar month before the funding meeting, when requested by RCO, the applicant must provide written certification of matching fund availability.¹³

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

Pre-Agreement Phase

An applicant must submit the pre-agreement materials requested by RCO within two calendar months of funding approval.¹⁴

With RCO staff assistance, the applicant must develop milestones, to be included in the grant agreement and a timeline that does not exceed two to three years.

Implementation Phase

To help ensure reasonable and timely project completion, accountability, and the proper use of funds, applicants must do the following:

- Develop milestones for project implementation that ensure timely completion of the project as follows:
 - Acquisition (single site) projects 1-2 years
 - Acquisition (multi-site) projects 2-3½ years
 - Combination projects 2-3½ years
(The acquisition portion must be completed in ninety days. See “Combination Projects” below for more information)
 - Development projects 2-3 years
 - Exceptionally complex projects 3½ years.

RCO staff monitors critical project milestones (for example, ordering appraisals and reviews, starting construction). Unsatisfactory progress may be cause for project termination or other remedies.¹⁵ (See the grant agreement section on termination and other remedies). Any RCO director decision may be appealed to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

- Begin project implementation quickly and aggressively to show measurable progress towards meeting the milestones.
- Submit a reimbursement request at least once a year.¹⁶
- Submit progress reports at intervals as designated by the RCO grant agreement.

¹⁴Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(4)

¹⁵Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2006-13b

¹⁶Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040

Every June 1, RCO reviews the status of a project that is incomplete three or more years from the date of funding approval. RCO will ask the sponsor to provide assurances that the project 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.

Extensions

The director may approve a project up to four years. When one Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant is used to match another, RCO staff will use the earliest grant to determine the four-year window.

Requests for extensions that would exceed four years may be referred to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for action.

Extension requests must be in writing and provided to RCO not less than sixty days before expiration of the project's completion date.¹⁷ The request must justify the need and commit to a new set of specified milestones.

Project Completion

The grant agreement end date will be written into the grant agreement. It is the date that is the end of the period of performance and all project work must be complete and may be extended only when authorized by the board or director.

When a project is completed, the sponsor must submit the final bill, final report, and supporting documents needed to close the project as specified in the agreement.¹⁸ If the bill and documentation are not submitted within six months of the end date in the agreement, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may terminate the agreement without payment.

¹⁷Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(8)

¹⁸Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(7)

Section 2: Policies

This section covers the following:

- ✓ Grant categories
- ✓ Eligible applicants
- ✓ Eligible project types and activities
- ✓ Environmental requirements
- ✓ Property requirements
- ✓ Other requirements and things to know
- ✓ Telecommunications facilities
- ✓ Public access
- ✓ Project area stewardship and ongoing obligations

Grant Categories

This manual contains guidelines for WWRP categories in the Outdoor Recreation Account. See RCO's website for WWRP [manuals about other accounts and grant categories](#).

Local Parks Category

Grants in this category provide for active (organized activities, higher development impact) or passive (unstructured activities, lower development impact) parks. Grants may be used to buy land or develop or renovate land or facilities for parks.

A project may contain both upland and water-oriented elements. A project with a primary focus on upland recreation elements and all outdoor swimming pools will be classified as a Local Parks Category project.

State Lands Development and Renovation Category

Grants in this category are available only to the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources for development and renovation of outdoor recreation facilities on their existing recreation lands.¹⁹ Any trails developed must meet the criteria outlined in the Trails Category below.

State Parks Category

Grants in this category are available only to the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission for acquisition and/or development of state parks. A project involving renovation of existing facilities is ineligible.

Trails Category²⁰

Grants in this category provide for projects whose primary intent is to acquire, develop, or renovate pedestrian, equestrian, bicycle, or cross-country ski trails. A project may include land and/or facilities, such as trailheads; parking; rest, picnic, or view areas; and restrooms that directly support an existing or proposed public trail. These trails and their landscapes, signs, amenities, and barriers must conform to applicable federal, state, and/or local codes and regulations. Trails funded through this program may have either hard or natural surfacing, or a combination thereof.

The intent of this funding source is to acquire, develop, or renovate statewide, regional, and community-oriented recreational trails that provide linkages between communities or other trails, or provide access to destinations of interest to recreationists. Trails in this category are routes constructed for recreational use and may be used as alternatives to other forms of transportation.

Trails in this category must be for nonmotorized use and cannot be part of a city street or county road ("roadway") such as a sidewalk or unprotected road shoulder, or any other area on the roadway such as a designated bike or combination bike and pedestrian lane.

Trails Must Be Separated from Roadways

Trails adjacent to a roadway must be separated by space and potentially physical barriers to ensure a quality recreational experience.

Where a trail funded in this category is wholly or partially along a roadway, that portion of the trail along the roadway must meet one of the following criteria:

¹⁹Lands currently owned or held in trust by the State of Washington

²⁰Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-08

- Be separated from the roadway by a pervious strip of land no less than ten feet wide (or run length)
- If less than ten feet, be separated from a roadway by no less than three feet of pervious land as long as a contiguous barrier exists between the roadway and trail.

Barriers may include the following:

- Guardrails, curbs, fence, jersey barriers, or a contiguous row of thick shrubs.
- A grade change of three feet or more between a roadway and trail.

Barriers need not be contiguous where needed to allow drainage; create trail or pedestrian connections; allow room for utilities such as a light pole; or create access for emergency or maintenance services.

A strip of land separating a trail from a roadway might not be required at or approaching a road crossing if the trail needs to be located on a bridge, in a tunnel, or in other areas that have severe spatial limitations due to geography or landownership. In these instances, a barrier other than a curb is still required.

A circulation path or access route developed for pedestrian travel to connect elements, spaces, or facilities within a site is not a trail.

The RCO director may waive non-statutory requirements.

Designed Use and Managed Uses of a Trail²¹

For each trail or trail segment, the application shall identify the designed use for the trail. The designed use determines the design, construction, maintenance parameters, and level of accessibility requirements. The managed use of a trail means the modes of travel that are actively managed and appropriate for the designed use of a trail. A trail or trail segment may have only one designed use even though there may be more than one managed use.

Water Access Category

Grants in this category are for projects that predominately provide physical access to shorelines for nonmotorized, water-related recreation activities such as, but not limited to, boating, fishing, swimming, and beachcombing. A project with a primary focus on upland recreation elements will be classified as a Local Parks Category project.

²¹Architectural Barriers Act Standards, Chapter 2, F247 Trails Advisory

Grants may be used to buy land or develop or renovate land and facilities that support water-dependent recreation such as parking, restrooms, picnic areas, access trails, fishing piers, platforms, swim beaches, boat access facilities, and water trails for nonmotorized watercraft such as canoes and kayaks.

Choosing a Grant Category

A grant applicant submits a proposal to a specific WWRP category. The applicant should attempt to find a grant category that best fits the project, considering the goals and evaluation criteria. The applicant also may want to consider whether a category prioritizes the funding of acquisition projects over development. RCO staff review the applicant's choice and recommend any changes. The 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. The applicant must determine the best category for the project by the technical completion deadline, unless otherwise authorized by the director.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants²² for each category are shown below.

Local Parks Category

- Cities, counties, towns
- Federally recognized Native American tribes
- Special purpose districts, port districts, or other political subdivisions of the state providing services to less than the entire state

State Lands Development and Renovation Category

- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington State Department of Natural Resources

²²Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.010 and 79A.15.050(4-8)

State Parks Category

- Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

Trails and Water Access Categories

- Cities, counties, towns
- Federally recognized Native American tribes
- Special purpose districts, port districts, or other political subdivisions of the state providing services to less than the entire state
- State agencies (Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and Washington State Departments of Enterprise Services, Fish and Wildlife, and Natural Resources)

Applicant Requirements

Legal Opinion for First-time Applicants²³

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/or the United States of America.
- Meet any statutory definitions required for Recreation and Conservation Funding 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 public conservation or outdoor recreation purposes.
- Develop and/or provide stewardship for structures or facilities eligible under board rules or policies.
- Undertake planning activities incidental thereto.
- Commit the applicant to statements made in any grant proposal.

²³Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2006-13b

Planning Requirements

To be eligible for a grant, the applicant must submit a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan that has been adopted by the applying organization's governing body.²⁴ This helps ensure a project has been through a public process and was prioritized by the community. The plan must be accepted by RCO by March 1 in even-numbered years.

Once RCO accepts the plan, the applicant is eligible to apply for grants for up to six years from the date the applicant organization adopted the plan. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the plan and documents are current. For further information, consult *Manual 2: Planning Policies and Guidelines*. Co-sponsors also should consult the "Joint and Cooperative Projects" section in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*, *Manual 4: Development Projects*, or *Manual 5: Restoration Projects*.

Eligible Project Types

Acquisition Projects

An acquisition project is one that purchases or receives a donation of fee or less-than-fee interests in real property. These interests include, but are not limited to, conservation easements, access and trail easements, covenants, water rights, leases, and mineral rights. Acquisition of less-than-fee interests must be for at least fifty years and may not be revocable at will. Properties must be developed within five years from the date the property was acquired. Guidelines for acquisition projects are in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

Development or Renovation Projects

A development project is construction or work resulting in new elements, including but not limited to, structures, facilities, and/or materials to enhance outdoor recreation resources. A renovation project is intended to improve an existing site or structure in order to increase its useful service life beyond current expectations or functions. This does not include maintenance activities. The applicant submitting a project for development and/or renovation must select development as the project type in PRISM Online. Guidelines for development and renovation projects are in *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

²⁴Washington Administrative Code 286-13-035(1)

Combination Projects²⁵

Combination projects involve acquisition and facility development or renovation. To help ensure timely completion of these projects, applicants must secure the property by one of the following methods at least one month before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers approving funding:

- Acquisition under the Waiver of Retroactivity policies and procedures (*Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*).
- Have property in escrow pending grant approval. Closing must occur within ninety days after the funding meeting.
- Obtain an option or purchase and sale agreement on the property that extends past the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board funding meeting. Execution of the option or agreement must occur within ninety days after this meeting.
- If the acquisition is for less-than-fee interest and if not acquired already via a Waiver of Retroactivity, the applicant must provide draft copies of all leases or easements to RCO for review. Execution of the leases or easements must occur within ninety days after the funding meeting.

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

Other Considerations

Multi-Site Development or Renovation Projects

State Lands Development and Renovation Category²⁶

To be considered a multi-site project, the project must meet the following criteria:

- All elements, across all sites, must be of the same type (for example, fishing docks, vault toilets, parking, etc.).
- All elements must be in no more than two adjacent counties and/or within the same recreation, natural, or wildlife area.

²⁵Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2004-08

²⁶Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2006-13b

- All elements must meet the Office of Financial Management’s capital project criteria, defined in the biennial publication *Washington State Capital Plan Instructions*.
- Funding for each site may total no more than \$100,000.
- No more than five sites may be included in a single project.

Trails and Water Access Categories²⁷

An application for development of trails or water trails may include more than one location under the following conditions:

- The proposed trail or water trail development at each location must meet any of the following criteria:
 - Be on the same body of water in the same county for water trail systems
 - Be on the same trail in the same county for land-based trail systems
 - Be on the same land or water trail system within two counties of the sponsor’s management unit.
- The proposed development at each location must result in a contiguous trail experience under the control of the sponsor when the project is complete. The contiguous trail experience does not need to be fully developed but it must be open and maintained for use by the public.
- The sponsor must maintain the area developed at the locations funded in the grant as well as the area of the contiguous trail experience for the period of ongoing obligations in the grant agreement.

Phased Projects

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board recommends that an applicant discuss phasing a very expensive or complex project with RCO staff. Phased projects are subject to the following parameters:

- 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 or complete recreation experience and is not dependent on the completion of future phases or work.

²⁷Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-24

- Each phase must be submitted as a separate application.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may consider progress and sponsor performance on previously funded project phases when making decisions on a current project proposal.

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.²⁸

Eligible Project Activities

Incurring Pre-agreement Costs²⁹

RCO may reimburse a sponsor 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 an acquisition project, most incidental costs incurred before a RCO grant agreement are reimbursable. Land costs are not allowable as a pre-agreement cost unless RCO has approved and issued a Waiver of Retroactivity. See *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

For development and renovation projects, preliminary costs necessary to get a project ready for the construction phase (i.e., architecture and engineering, permits) are reimbursable. The sponsor may not incur any construction cost before the period of performance in the agreement, except those defined by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. See *Manual 4: Development Projects* for further information.

Acquiring Land

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

Developing or Renovating Facilities

The Outdoor Recreation Account allows development and renovation³⁰ of active and passive public outdoor recreation and access facilities. Complete guidelines for development projects are in *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

²⁸Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2007-27

²⁹Washington Administrative Code 286-13-085 and Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2017-29

³⁰Renovation is not eligible in the State Parks category. Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.050(1)(a)

Eligible project elements by category include the following:

Local and State Parks

- Athletic fields
- Buildings (limited—see clarification below)
- Campgrounds (including overnight recreational facility structures)³¹
- Outdoor swim pools and ice rinks
- Parking
- Paths, trails
- Picnic shelters
- Play areas (playgrounds, spray parks, etc.)
- Firearm or archery ranges³²
- Fishing floats
- Pump tracks
- Restrooms
- Hard court areas such as skate parks, tennis courts, and basketball courts
- Interpretive kiosks, signs
- Roads
- View areas

In the Local and State Parks Categories, buildings are an eligible cost; however, furnishings and equipment are ineligible unless consistent with Office of Financial Management capital budget guidelines for state agency projects. These buildings typically include administrative offices, storage buildings, shops, and residences, and are eligible for reimbursement only if they are essential to the operation and maintenance of the assisted site.

³¹See *Manual 4: Development Projects* for specific details.

³²See *Manual 11: Firearms and Archery Range Recreation* for RCO policy on range and course certification.

State Lands Development and Renovation

- Campgrounds (including overnight recreational facility structures)³³
- Firearm or archery ranges³⁴
- Fishing piers and platforms
- Interpretive kiosks, signs
- Launch ramps, floats
- Parking
- Paths, trails
- Picnic shelters
- Restrooms
- Roads
- Viewpoints

Trails

- Benches, tables
- Interpretive kiosks, signs
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Roads
- Site preparation
- Trail surfacing
- Viewpoints

Water Access

- Buoys
- Campsites for water trails
- Fishing piers and platforms
- Interpretive kiosks, signs
- Hand-launch ramps, floats, docks (nonmotorized boats)
- Parking
- Paths, trails
- Picnic shelters
- Restrooms
- Roads
- Swimming beaches, floats, docks

Ineligible Project Elements

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

³³See *Manual 4: Development Projects* for specific details.

³⁴See *Manual 11: Firearms and Archery Range Recreation* for RCO policy on range and course certification.

- Animal species introduction or propagation, other than biological controls for invasive species, etc.
- Any facility intended primarily for professional sport.
- Concessionaire buildings or concessionaire space.
- Costs not directly related to implementing the project such as indirect and overhead charges.
- Crop plantings.
- Elements that cannot be defined as fixtures or capital items (balls, cones, bats, etc.)
- Environmental cleanup of illegal activities (i.e., removal of contaminated materials or derelict vessels, trash pickup, methamphetamine labs, etc.).
- Fish or other wildlife production facilities, such as fish hatcheries for production of 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 projects, except for the inholdings project in the State Parks Category and those listed as eligible under "Multi-Site Projects."
- Offices, shops, residences, and meeting and storage rooms, except as described under "buildings" in the State and Local Parks section, above.
- Operation and maintenance costs.
- Properties acquired via a condemnation action of any kind. On a multi-parcel acquisition, the sponsor 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 match. Note that development projects on property previously acquired via condemnation, however, are eligible.
- 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. Also, see *RCO Manuals 3: Acquisition Projects* and *Manual 4: Development Projects* for exceptions.

Environmental Requirements

Cultural Resources Review

Governor's [Executive Order 21-02](#), *Archaeological and Cultural Resources*, requires that state agencies review acquisition and construction projects for potential impacts to cultural resources, which are defined as archeological and historical sites and artifacts, and traditional tribal areas or items of religious, ceremonial, and social uses. The goal is to ensure that reasonable action is taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate harm to those resources.

The federal government, through section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, requires similar compliance for projects with federal involvement, for example, projects on federal land, with federal funds, or requiring a federal permit.

Review Process

RCO facilitates review under the Governor's executive order. Federal agencies facilitate 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.

RCO evaluates all projects before funding and initiates consultation with the affected tribes and the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. An applicant should not initiate consultation with either of these groups. The reviews may require the sponsor to conduct cultural resources surveys or may add requirements to a grant agreement.

The applicant should budget for cultural resources work for most projects. The cost of a cultural resources investigation is highly dependent upon the size, scope, and location of the project. RCO encourages the applicant to work with qualified cultural resources professionals to estimate costs. The Association for Washington Archaeology maintains a [list of qualified consultants](#) on its website. Costs for compliance actions (e.g., survey, monitoring, permitting, redesign, and mitigation) are eligible for reimbursement and should be included in a grant application.

Any required cultural resources investigations or documentation must be complete before the sponsor may start any ground-disturbing activities, such as demolition, planting, or installing signs. Ground disturbance or demolition started without approval is a breach of the grant agreement. Typically, cultural resources approval will be authorized as part of the Notice to Proceed.

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

State Agency Lands

Cultural resources compliance for a project on land owned or managed by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Washington Department of Enterprise Services, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, or the Washington Department of Natural Resources, is the responsibility of the respective agency regardless of the sponsor. The sponsor must provide RCO with documentation of compliance with the Governor's executive order or section 106 before a Notice to Proceed will be issued or acquisition will be paid in full.

See *RCO Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* or *Manual 4: Development Projects* for additional details on the RCO cultural resource review process.

Invasive Species

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 the grant sponsor to consider how the project may spread invasive species and work to reduce that possibility. Invasive species can be spread unintentionally during construction, maintenance, and restoration activities. Here are examples of 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.
- Working in streams and moving water or sediment infested with invasive plants, animals, or pathogens from one stream to another via boots, nets, sampling equipment, or boats.
- 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 spread of invasive species 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.

Sustainability³⁵

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages grant sponsors 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.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding 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 Jurisdiction³⁶

Before applying for a grant to acquire property in WWRP, 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 it 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 or opposition of the project. The board shall make the letter available to the Governor and the Legislature when submitting its prioritized project list as part of RCO's biennial capital budget request. 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 conferral³⁷ 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 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 Project Tool Kit](#) on the RCO website.

³⁵Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2011-22 and 2014-06

³⁶Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.110

³⁷Confer 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 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 project description as it will be submitted in the grant application.
- A location map.
- A parcel map of the proposed acquisition properties.

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

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 that person's relevant organizations.
- 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 Project Tool Kit](#) on the RCO website.

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 land outside its city limits or a county acquiring land within a city's limits) must comply with the conferral requirement.

Landowner Acknowledgement for Acquisition Projects

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

Control of the Land for Development Projects

To protect investments made by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and to assure public access to those investments, a sponsor must have adequate control of the project site to construct, operate, and maintain the area 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 4: Development Projects* for more information.

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.

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 sixty 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

A local government applicant that needs to secure a use authorization must do 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.

A state agency applicant 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

Carbon and Ecosystem Service Credits³⁸

Land acquired or encumbered with an RCO grant may be enrolled in carbon credit and other payments for ecosystem service programs. These programs issue credits or direct payments to landowners for activities such as protecting land, planting trees, or improving management practices that reduce, sequester, or prevent future carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions. Read more information in *RCO Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

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. Each application must stand alone on its own merits with a viable recreation experience and not be dependent on other projects or future phases 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 the applicant contact staff to discuss options for phasing a costly, interrelated, or complex project proposal.

³⁸Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2021-02

Accessibility

Facilities or elements³⁹ constructed with RCO grants and sponsor match are required by law to be accessible regardless of whether there are specific standards adopted in the State Building Code, Americans with Disabilities Act, or Architectural Barriers Act, as amended. Other federal laws, guidelines, and best practices also may apply to achieve accessibility. In case of conflict between minimums, the one providing the most access shall prevail. RCO shall have final determination.

RCO encourages sponsors to exceed the minimum accessibility standards and use a design principle that maximizes universal accessibility for all. See *Manual 4: Development Projects* and the RCO website for detailed information about how to make the facility meet [accessibility requirements](#). Plans, project applications, cost estimates, and construction drawings must reflect compliance with facility access and signing requirements.

Competitive Bid Requirements⁴⁰

A grant sponsor shall follow current state procurement procedures or write its own. When buying things, a grant sponsor shall provide open and free competition, to the maximum extent practical. Be aware of organizational conflicts of interest. Contractors that develop specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitations for bids, or requests for proposals cannot be hired for the resulting work. A grant sponsor receiving federal money also must follow federal laws and regulations.

Fees and Income

User or other fees may be charged for areas and facilities acquired or developed with RCO grants. See *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* or *Manual 4: Development Projects*, and Washington Administrative Code 286-13-110 for more information.

Inspections

The sponsor shall provide the right of access to the project area to RCO to conduct pre-award inspections. After project funding, this access is expanded to include RCO, or any of its officers, or any other authorized agent or official of the State of Washington or the federal government, at all reasonable times, to monitor and evaluate performance,

³⁹A facility is all or any portion of buildings, structures, site improvements, elements, and pedestrian routes or vehicular ways located on site. An element is an architectural or mechanical component of a building, facility, space, or site (2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, Department of Justice, September 15, 2010).

⁴⁰RCO's grant agreement standard terms and conditions, Compliance with Applicable Law and Procurement Requirements.

compliance, and quality assurance as specified in the grant agreement. Normally, RCO staff conducts four types of project site visits:

- **Pre-award.** Made during the application phase, normally with the applicant to assess the project area and scope of work for eligibility concerns and compatibility with the grant program.
- **Interim.** This inspection, normally coordinated with the sponsor, is made sometime during the project implementation phase to help resolve any apparent or anticipated problems and to monitor project progress.
- **Final.** Before final acceptance of the contractor's work or accepting a project as complete, the sponsor shall request a final inspection by RCO. This request must be made only after the project is complete, architects and/or engineers have made their inspections, and defects have been corrected. It should be scheduled near project completion but still within the performance period of the contractor. The project must be constructed and functional as described in the grant agreement. The final inspection will review the following:
 - Completion of the project scope of work as described in the agreement.
 - Site appearance and construction quality.
 - Location of the funding or grant program acknowledgement sign. See Grant Program Acknowledgement and Signs, below.

When RCO staff's final inspection verifies that the project is complete, the final payment, including retainage, will be made.

- **Compliance.** Performed about every five years to ensure the site is managed and maintained as specified in the grant agreement.

Grant Program Acknowledgement and Signs⁴¹

Acknowledgement

The sponsor must acknowledge Recreation and Conservation Funding Board assistance, by program, if possible, in all projects. This includes the following:

- Written acknowledgement in any news release or publication developed or modified for the funded project.
- Verbal acknowledgement during all ground-breaking and dedication ceremonies.

⁴¹Washington Administrative Code 286-13-120

A sponsor should notify RCO at least two weeks before any project dedication ceremony and thirty days in advance if an RCO representative or speaker is requested at the ceremony.

Signs

The sponsor must provide prominent placement of signs at entrances and other locations unless exempted by board policy or waived by the RCO director. The sponsor may build such signs to harmonize with an existing design standard or request a standard acknowledgement sign from RCO.

For a sponsor developing its own signs, below are suggestions for how to incorporate appropriate acknowledgement:

- Funding provided by the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.
- Grant funding from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program made available from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

Funding acknowledgement signs must be posted before the grant agreement end date and final reimbursement. RCO may provide free funding acknowledgement signs for this grant program upon request. A sponsor must provide proof of the funding acknowledgement by attaching photographs or other evidence to PRISM.

Additional Rules and Instructions

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may issue additional or modified rules, instructions, interpretations, and guides from time to time as it believes necessary for the effective conduct of the grant program. Such changes may apply to all projects. Whenever possible, sufficient lead time will be given between the announcement and the effective date to minimize impacts to projects already in process at the time of announcement.

Public Disclosure Rules

RCO records and files are public records that are subject to the Public Records Act.⁴² More information about the [RCO's disclosure practices](#) is available on the website.

⁴²Revised Code of Washington 42.56

Telecommunications Facilities⁴³

Local Parks Category Only

Telecommunications facilities⁴⁴ and equipment cabinets are allowed on funded project sites provided that their placement, construction, modification, or servicing does not diminish the essential purposes of the grant and all the following criteria are satisfied:

- The antenna⁴⁵ is attached to a new or existing building or structure that furthers the outdoor recreation purposes of the grant, such as a utility pole, sign, or restroom rooftop.
- The footprint of the equipment cabinet is the minimum necessary.
- The facility and equipment cabinet are placed, constructed, and modified to have the least impairments, including cumulative impairments, to outdoor recreation opportunities. Concealed or camouflaged facilities and equipment cabinets are preferred.
- Servicing does not interfere with the recreational use of the project area.
- The building or structure to which the facility is attached is not damaged by the facility.
- Facilities and equipment cabinets no longer in use or determined to be obsolete are removed within twelve months of the cessation of use.

Leases or permits issued by the grant sponsor for telecommunications facilities are allowed in this grant category. Leases must be equivalent to market rate and managed in accordance with RCO policies on “Concessions and Leases” in manuals 3 and 4.

Income generated on the project site must be managed in accordance with RCO policies on “Income and Income Use” in RCO manuals 3 and 4.

Requests for telecommunications facilities that do not meet the criteria in this policy or are on board-funded project sites in other grant categories or programs must be reviewed under the “Allowable Uses Framework” in *Manual 7: Long-Term Obligations*.

⁴³Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2012-21

⁴⁴Telecommunications facility is defined by Federal Standard 1037C at www.its.bldrdoc.gov/fs-1037/fs-1037c.htm.

⁴⁵Antenna is defined by Federal Standard 1037C at www.its.bldrdoc.gov/fs-1037/fs-1037c.htm.

Public Access⁴⁶

Unless otherwise provided for in the Revised Code of Washington 79A.15, a project receiving a WWRP grant for development, recreational access, or fee-simple land acquisition must be accessible for public recreation and outdoor education.

Limiting or Restricting Public Access

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board authorizes limiting or restricting public access to a project area, in a project area, or a portion of a project area, for the following reasons:

- Protection of critical, important, and sensitive species, habitats, or ecosystems.
- Preserving rare or vanishing flora or fauna; or sensitive, threatened, or endangered species; or those proposed for threatened or endangered status, or otherwise a candidate for a listing status review; or a unique species or ecosystem.
- Protection of an environmentally sensitive area and to preserve the ecological integrity of a landscape or water body.
- Protection for the safety of the public. For public safety closures, the sponsor must identify a specific hazard with known consequences to visitors. As appropriate to protect the public, before any public safety closure, the sponsor first must have attempted to address public safety problems with common practices such as signs, increased patrols, fencing, or moving infrastructure (parking lots, trails, etc.) where practical.
- Protection of water quality.
- Protection of significant research and education values and resources that might otherwise be compromised by public access, and areas where there is active research or education. These include public access limits described in *The Natural Area Preserves Act*.⁴⁷
- Protection of historical or cultural resources. However, the sponsor shall allow exemptions to limits on public access in the case of cultural and spiritual uses that do not damage or otherwise adversely affect the protected resources. These exemptions shall occur only if authorized by the landowner.

⁴⁶Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2018-06

⁴⁷Revised Code of Washington 79.70

Additional Public Access Policies

- **Conservation Easements.** Although public access is encouraged, this policy does not apply to areas purchased under a conservation easement or similar less-than-fee-simple method.
- **Constraints:** Where restricting public access is authorized by this policy, such restriction shall be as narrowly constrained as possible to achieve the identified protection goal. Where year-round limits on public access are in place, the sponsor must have considered and rejected on a sound basis a partial closure (such as limited in time or geography).
- **Credentials.** Allowing access only to a specific group or class of the public based on credentials or profession shall not be considered public access.
- **Nondiscrimination.** A sponsor shall not discriminate on the basis of age, race, creed, color, sex or gender, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.
- **Priorities.** Conservation shall be the primary focus of projects in the Habitat Conservation Account, but exclusion of the general public should be avoided.
- **Providing Facilities.** Providing public access to the project area does not mean that developed facilities must be provided.
- **Public Access.** Public access means that the general public has regular access to and use of the grant-funded project area at reasonable hours and times of the year.
- **Restoring Access.** When the rationale for limiting public access is no longer valid, the area shall be made available for public access.
- **Signs.** Where restricting public access is authorized by this policy, the requirement to post signs identifying the area as open to the public is waived.

If requested by RCO, the sponsor must provide adequate justification for any limits on public access in project areas. The justification shall include the items in "Approving Additional Limits to Public Access on Case-by-Case Basis" section.

Approving Additional Limits to Public Access on Case-by-Case Basis

To limit public access for reasons other than those listed above, the board delegates its authority⁴⁸ to approve such limits on public access to the RCO director or designee. In these cases, the sponsor must provide, and RCO shall review, a written request that accomplishes the following:

- Clearly delineates the area where public access shall be limited.
- Clearly identifies each specific resource (area, habitat, species, type of water, etc.) in need of protection from public access.
- Demonstrates that public access will likely (probable, high chance of occurring) have a substantive negative impact to the resources.
- Describes the type and duration of public access restrictions.
- Describes how the public was involved in the sponsor's decision-making.

Project Area Stewardship and Ongoing Obligations⁴⁹

A RCO grant comes with long-term obligations to maintain and protect the project area⁵⁰ after a project is complete. The long-term obligations are in RCO's grant agreement. A [sample grant agreement](#) can be found on RCO's website.

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 land and facilities by ensuring that the grant sponsor replaces 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 outdoor recreation, habitat protection, farmland preservation, or salmon recovery purposes, for as long as defined in the grant agreement. For development and restoration projects, the period is determined by the type of control and tenure provided for the project.

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

⁴⁸Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.030(5)

⁴⁹Revised Code of Washington 79A.25, Washington Administrative Code 286, RCO's grant agreement standard terms and conditions, and *Manual 7: Long-term Obligations*.

⁵⁰Washington 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.

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.

Section 3:

Money Matters

This section covers the following:

- ✓ Grant limits
- ✓ Matching share
- ✓ Match reduction
- ✓ Types of match
- ✓ Federal rules
- ✓ Records and reimbursement

Grant Limits

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants are intended to expand the sponsor's existing capacity, not replace funding that would have been used for a project without the grant.⁵¹

The board establishes grant limits for its programs. The grant limits for each category are shown below.⁵² WWRP funds may not exceed 50 percent⁵³ of a project's total cost, except for state agency projects. See the match reduction policy for other exceptions.

Project Type	Grant Request Limit
Local parks acquisition project	\$1 million
Local parks development project	\$500,000
Local parks combination project (acquisition with development or renovation)	\$1 million Not more than \$500,000 may be for development or renovation costs
State lands development and renovation project	\$25,000 to \$325,000

⁵¹Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(6)

⁵²Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2007-25, 2008-09

⁵³Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(4)

Project Type	Grant Request Limit
State parks, trails, water access projects	None

Funding Priorities

Local Parks and State Parks Categories Only⁵⁴

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted a policy to direct its funding and meet statutory requirements for distribution of funds for both acquisition and development projects. Grants will be awarded as follows:

- Fund the Local Parks Category at 40 percent acquisition costs and 60 percent development costs.
- Fund the State Parks Category at 50 percent acquisition costs and 50 percent development costs.

The intent is to accomplish the goals and needs of the local parks community, meet the needs of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and its stakeholders, and provide transparency for the Legislature and others interested in the funding strategy.

Water Access Category⁵⁵

By law, 75 percent of the funds in this category must be awarded to acquisitions.

Cost Increases

By declaration of the board, during exceptional economic times, the RCO director may use unspent funds to approve cost increases up to ten percent of the total project amount. In addition, unspent funds are prioritized in the following order: finish funding partially funded projects, approve pending cost increases, then funding alternates on the board-approved ranked lists.⁵⁶

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will not reimburse more than the sponsor’s actual out-of-pocket expenditures.

⁵⁴Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-52, Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.050

⁵⁵Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.050

⁵⁶Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-16

All Projects: Administration, Architecture, Engineering

Direct administrative costs for acquisition of real property are limited to no more than 5 percent of the total acquisition cost.

Administrative (including architecture and engineering) costs for development and renovation projects are limited to 20 percent of the total development and renovation project cost.

Additional information about eligibility and reimbursement maximums for these elements is contained in the administrative costs sections of *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* and *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

Matching Share

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.⁵⁷

Local Agencies and Native American Tribes

By statute, local agencies and Native American tribes must contribute matching resources at least equal to the amount of the grant requested.⁵⁸ 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. The applicant's share may be reduced if the project meets the needs of an underserved population, federal disaster area, county in need, or a community in need.⁵⁹ See the "Match Reduction" section below.

In addition, local agencies must contribute at least 10 percent of the total cost of a project in the form of a local contribution, not from a state or federal source.⁶⁰ This does not apply to Native American tribes. 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.

⁵⁷Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(2)

⁵⁸Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2020-09

⁵⁹Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(4), Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2017-33

⁶⁰Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2005-24

State Agencies

State agencies do not need to provide a match.⁶¹ However, all applicants are encouraged to contribute matching shares and reduce government cost.

Eligible Match

Applicant resources used to match board funds must be eligible in the specific WWRP category, and may include the following:

- Appropriations and cash
- Bonds—council or voter
- Conservation futures
- Corrections labor
- Donations—the value of using donated cash, equipment, labor, land, materials, property rights, or services (see “Types of Match” section below)
- Force account—the value of using the sponsor’s equipment, labor, or materials (see “Types of Match” section below)
- Grants—federal, state, local, and private (see “Types of Match” section below)
- Local impact and mitigation fees (see “Types of Match” section below)
- Proceeds of a letter of credit or binding loan commitment
- Other Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants that meet the requirements outlined below

Not Allowed as Match

- Costs that are not eligible for a grant.
- Costs that are not necessary or an integral part of the project scope.
- Costs that are double counted. (A cost incurred by a sponsor in a project that already has been reimbursed or used as match in one RCO project shall not be used as a match on another RCO project.)

⁶¹Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(5)

- Costs associated with meeting a mitigation requirement unrelated to the funded project. See "Mitigation Funds as Match" below.
- Existing sponsor assets such as real property or developments.

Match Requirements

Before the board awards a grant, the required match must be secured so the project can move forward.

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 recreation use forever apply to the donated land as well.

Except for grant applications submitted within the same biennium, matching resources or board grant funds committed in one board-funded project must not be used as match in another board-funded project.⁶²

The board may require the applicant to provide a portion of its matching resources in local resources.⁶³

Match Availability and Certification

To help ensure the project is ready for implementation when approved, the applicant must have matching funds available for expenditure before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves funding. The applicant must sign and submit a Certification of Match Form to ensure the project is included in the funding recommendations. The applicant is advised to plan for projects with match dependent on citizen votes or ballot measures. This certification is due at least one calendar month before Recreation and Conservation Funding Board action.⁶⁴ The form and deadlines for certifying match are on the RCO website.

⁶²Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(7)

⁶³Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(4)

⁶⁴Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

RCO may declare a project ineligible if there is no guarantee that matching funds are available. That project may be passed over in favor of a project 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 conditioned on receipt of the other grant or on the sponsor providing the match from other resources. To prevent a backlog of unspent grants, the sponsor must finish the project by the earliest completion date of the two grants.⁶⁵

Match Reduction⁶⁶

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted the following four policy statements to reduce match for local governments:

- Communities in need
- Underserved populations
- Counties in need
- Federal disaster

To see what organizations qualify, visit the [match reduction page](#) on RCO's website.

Communities in Need

If the grant applicant is a city, town, tribe, or eligible special purpose district with 20,000 residents or fewer, and the median household income is less than \$82,400 (the state median household income),⁶⁷ the applicant's match is identified below.

Minimum Match for Communities in Need

Jurisdiction's Median Household Income as a Percent of State Median Household Income	Minimum Match Required
0-50%	10% minimum match required
50.01-60%	20% minimum match required
60.01-80%	30% minimum match required
80.01-99.99%	40% minimum match required

⁶⁵Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2004-08 and 2006-13b

⁶⁶Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2017-33

⁶⁷2017-2021 American Community Survey

Additional requirements are as follows:

- The maximum reduced match for a single project is \$500,000.
- At least 10 percent of total project cost must be provided in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution.
- If a project is sponsored by more than one organization, all must qualify for some match reduction. Minimum match shall be assigned based on the primary sponsor of the application.
- If the jurisdiction is home to a college or university and 20 percent or more of the jurisdiction’s population is college-enrolled (as identified by the U.S. Census Bureau), the jurisdiction’s median family income, and state’s median family income shall apply in place of its median household income and the state median household income. Removing the college-enrolled population will result in a smaller population and therefore the jurisdiction may be eligible for a reduced match.

Underserved Populations

If the grant applicant is a city, town, tribe, or special purpose district with a median household income less than \$82,400 (the state median household income),⁶⁸ and the project is located in a census block group where the median household income is less than \$57,680 (70 percent of the state median household income), the following minimum match in table below applies.

Minimum Match for Underserved Populations

Census Block Group’s Median Household Income as a Percent of State Median Household Income	Minimum Match Required
0-55%	10% minimum match required
55.01-60%	20% minimum match required
60.01-65%	30% minimum match required
65.01-69.99%	40% minimum match required

Additional requirements are as follows:

- The maximum reduced match for a single project is \$500,000.
- At least 10 percent of total project cost must be provided in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution.

⁶⁸2017-2021 American Community Survey

- If a project is sponsored by more than one organization (co-sponsors), all must qualify for some match reduction. Minimum match shall be assigned based on the primary sponsor of the application.
- If the jurisdiction is home to a college or university and 20 percent or more of its population is college enrolled (as identified by the U.S. Census Bureau), the jurisdiction’s median family income, and state’s median family income shall apply in place of its median household income, and state median household income. Removing the college-enrolled population also may qualify the jurisdiction for the community in need policy.

Counties in Need

A county shall have match reduced if its median income is less than \$57,680 (70 percent of the state median income), it is distressed (as defined by Washington Employment Security Department), and 60 percent or more of its land base is in a non-taxable status.

The table below shows the match reductions (from 50 percent) for counties. The reductions are cumulative if the county meets more than one condition.

County Match Reductions

Variables (Any or all may apply)	50% Match Shall be Reduced by the Following: (Cumulative)
County Median Household Income less than 70% of State Median Household Income	10%
County Median Household Income less than 65% of State Median Household Income	10%
County is “Distressed” as defined by Washington Employment Security Department	10%
60% or more of land is non-taxable*	5%
75% or more of land is non-taxable*	5%

**Includes properties where the county receives payments in lieu of taxes from a government entity.*

Example:

County A: Starting minimum match is 50 percent. The county has a median household income of 68 percent of the state median income, which is a 10 percent reduction in required match. The county meets no other variables. Minimum match requirement in this case is 50 percent minus 10 percent. County A’s minimum required match is 40 percent.

County B: Starting minimum match is 50 percent. The county has a median household income of 64 percent of the state median income, is a “Distressed” county, and

80 percent of its land is non-taxable. County B has met all five equaling a match reduction of 40 percent (50 percent minus 40 percent is 10 percent). County B's minimum required match is 10 percent.

Additional requirements are as follows:

- The maximum reduced match for a single project is \$500,000.
- At least 10 percent of total project cost must be provided in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution.
- If a project is sponsored by more than one organization, all must qualify for some match reduction. Minimum match shall be assigned based on the primary sponsor of the application.

Federal Disaster⁶⁹

If the grant applicant is a city, town, county, tribe, or special purpose district that is, or is located in, a federally declared disaster area ([Major Disaster](#) under the Stafford Act), the minimum match is 25 percent for an application submitted within five years of the disaster incident period and that meets the following criteria:

- The value of damage to the applicant's assets is at least twice the county per capita public assistance eligibility dollar amount (currently \$4.60)⁷⁰ (based on the applicant's population).

Or

Applicant's annual gross revenues since the disaster incident period have declined by 40 percent.

Additional requirements are as follows:

- The maximum reduced match for a single project is \$500,000.
- If a project is sponsored by more than one organization, the minimum match shall be based on the primary sponsor of the application.
- A grant request using this federal disaster match policy shall be limited to two per jurisdiction, per program for each biennium.

⁶⁹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2017-33

⁷⁰As reported to Washington Military Department and eligible for public assistance. Per capita dollar value to be doubled will be the current public assistance county or tribal damage threshold as published annually by the Federal Emergency Management Agency or the Washington Military Department.

- Only non-temporary, permanent work costs shall be considered towards meeting the per capita amount established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- The applicant must show damage recovery costs and revenue declines.

Policy Intent

- Reduce the match required for smaller jurisdictions and counties whose ability to raise match is constrained.
- For a low-income jurisdiction (city, town, tribal area, eligible special purpose district) of any population size, reduce the match required for a project in a census block where the income is less than the jurisdiction as a whole.
- Reduce the match required for a jurisdiction adversely impacted by a federally declared disaster to support the recovery of assets as well as long-term economic and community recovery.

Data Sources

For all four policy statements, the data source for income and population shall be the best and most currently available from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, the Washington State Office of Financial Management, or other sources as may be appropriate.

For a jurisdiction's boundary that does not align with U.S. Census or other data geographies, RCO shall estimate population and income based on U.S. Census block groups or other reliable data sources.

If the applicant's determination of its income, population, or taxable land base does not align with RCO estimates, it may provide alternate data, which may be approved by the RCO director.

Types of Match

Donations and Force Account

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 the applicant to secure written confirmations of all donations planned as match and to attach the donation letters to the application.

Donated land must expand existing recreation lands or stand on its own as a viable recreation area. 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 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 a separate grant program as its match. Other grants are eligible if 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 match and are not reimbursable.

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

The applicant 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 Match⁷¹

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 the match.
- Each grant is evaluated independently and on its own merits, as if the match were coming from elsewhere.
- Local agencies only must provide at least 10 percent of the total costs of the eligible elements being matched. This 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 projects that qualify for reduction in match under the federal disaster policy,
- The grant applications are submitted in the same biennium.⁷²

⁷¹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2005-24

⁷²Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(7)

- A grant from the Youth Athletic Facilities program may not be used as match in the Local Parks Category.⁷³

For evaluation scoring, an RCO grant used as match will not count toward the award of matching share points.⁷⁴

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.

Federal Rules

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

Records and Reimbursement

Sponsors Must Pay First

RCO pays grants through reimbursement. A sponsor may request reimbursement only after paying employees and vendors. RCO does not provide money before vendors are paid. Except as otherwise provided below, RCO will pay only at the percentage identified in the grant agreement after the sponsor has presented an invoice documenting cost incurred and compliance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

RCO will not pay more than the grant sponsor's out-of-pocket costs.

Reimbursement shall not be approved for any donations, including donated land.

RCO may pay an escrow account directly for RCO's share of the approved cost of land and related costs if the sponsor indicates a temporary lack of money to buy the land on

⁷³Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-26

⁷⁴Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-02

a reimbursement basis. Before release of RCO grants into escrow, the sponsor must provide RCO with a copy of a binding agreement between the sponsor and the seller, all required documentation, and evidence of deposit of the sponsor's share, identified in the grant agreement, into an escrow account. See *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* for more information on escrow payments.

Billing procedures are explained further in *Manual 8: Reimbursements*.

Records

The applicant must keep detailed records of all funded project costs including force account values and donated contributions. Refer to *Manual 8: Reimbursements* for details and instructions regarding audits, record retention, and documents required for reimbursement.

Audits

All records relevant to projects funded by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board must be on file with the grant sponsor and are subject to audit by the State and inspection by RCO. If the auditor's inspection of the records discloses any charges incorrectly claimed and reimbursed, cash restitution of the incorrect amount must be made to the board.

Section 4: Project Evaluation

This section covers the following:

- ✓ How project evaluation works
- ✓ Evaluation criteria by category

How Project Evaluation Works

The evaluation process begins when the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopts the evaluation process⁷⁵ and evaluation criteria during public meetings.

The RCO director appoints people to serve on advisory committees to evaluate the grant proposals. Representatives from the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and State Parks and Recreation Commission also serve on each advisory committee, except on the State Parks Advisory Committee.⁷⁶

In recruiting members for the committees, RCO seeks to appoint people who possess a statewide perspective and are recognized for their experiences and knowledge of outdoor recreation in Washington.

The director may appoint *ex officio* members to the advisory committees to provide additional representation and expertise. Below is a list of the advisory committees. Visit RCO's web site for [membership and other details](#).

- Local Parks Advisory Committee
- State Lands Development Advisory Committee

⁷⁵Washington Administrative Code 286-13-020

⁷⁶Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-07

- State Parks Advisory Committee
- Trails Advisory Committee
- Water Access Advisory Committee

For the **Local Parks, State Parks, Trails, and Water Access Categories**, an applicant prepares a PowerPoint presentation to address the evaluation criteria and delivers it to the advisory committee during a virtual, oral presentation.⁷⁷ Advisory committee members may ask follow-up questions before they score the grant proposal. The virtual online presentation process is broadcast live on YouTube for the public, but the public is not invited to comment.

The advisory committee then scores the grant application using the responses to the criteria, graphics included in the applications or provided during the presentations, and summary application materials.

For the **State Lands Development and Renovation** Category, an applicant prepares written responses to address the evaluation criteria. Advisory committee members individually review the written responses, graphics included in the applications, and summary application materials, and score the project.

At the same time, RCO staff score the objective sections of the application, such as the amount of matching share an applicant is providing and conformance to growth management planning. Staff scores are based on information submitted by the applicant and obtained from the state Office of Financial Management and the state Departments of Commerce and Health.

For all categories, scoring is confidential. The advisory committee's and staff scores are combined for an application's total evaluation score. The resulting ranked lists are the basis for funding recommendations that the RCO director submits to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, which makes the final decision about funding in public meetings.⁷⁸ The public is given an opportunity to comment on the grant proposals before the board makes its decision.

There are some variations of this process. See below.

Growth Management Act Compliance

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers an organization's compliance with the Growth Management Act when awarding grants for public facilities.⁷⁹ The board

⁷⁷Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2006-13b and Resolution 2023-24

⁷⁸Washington Administrative Code 286-13-050

⁷⁹Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250

gives preference through evaluation scoring to towns, cities, and county applicants that are required to plan under the Growth Management Act.⁸⁰ Scoring for compliance with the Act and other staff-scored evaluation criteria are based on the organization's status as of the category's technical completion deadline. RCO uses information reported by the Washington State Department of Commerce for scoring Growth Management Act compliance. Agencies in compliance receive a zero score on the question while out of compliance status results in a minus one score.

At the time of application, the applicant should consult its planning department or the [Washington State Department of Commerce's Growth Management Services](#) to determine its compliance status. If the organization is out of compliance, this advance inquiry may give the organization time to change its status before the technical completion deadline. RCO is not responsible for changing an organization's compliance status with the Growth Management Act.

Evaluating Combination Projects

Projects involving both acquisition and development are evaluated on all criteria for both types of projects. To ensure equal treatment for combination projects, the scoring multiplier for some evaluation criteria is half of that used for individual acquisition or development projects.

Evaluating the State Lands Development and Renovation Category

In this category, applicants **submit written responses** to evaluation criteria in PRISM Online and prepare the following additional materials and attach them to PRISM:

- A maximum of a two-page PDF for graphics (photographs, graphs, etc.).
- A maximum of two, single-sided pages for maps (regional and site location).
- One, single-sided page for a site development plan.

These materials along with an application fact sheet comprise the documents that are viewed electronically by evaluators.

⁸⁰Revised Code of Washington 36.60A

Evaluating the State Parks Category

Evaluation Process Steps

Because the State Parks and Recreation Commission is the only sponsor of these grants, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted the process outlined below for this category.⁸¹

1. State Parks staff will submit a list of candidate projects to the State Parks and Recreation Commission at a regularly scheduled meeting. The commission may add or withdraw projects before approving the list of grant applications for the State Parks Category. This meeting is open to the public.
2. State Parks staff will submit grant applications to RCO by established timelines. RCO staff will review the project proposals to determine eligibility, completeness, and consistency with board policies.
3. State Parks (or the advisory committee) will conduct a technical review of the proposed projects with the purpose of improving clarity, substance, and delivery of the presentations. State Parks staff involved with this review may or may not serve as evaluators. RCO staff will moderate and serve as reviewers.
4. State Parks staff will present the projects to the commission, which will score the evaluation question that addresses how well the project implements the commission's priorities. The evaluation scores will remain confidential until after the commission's scoring process. The meeting is open to the public and members of the public may provide written or oral comments.
5. State Parks staff will make virtual, oral presentations to the advisory committee, which will score all projects using board-approved evaluation criteria. RCO staff will moderate the evaluation meeting.
6. After evaluation, State Parks staff will share the preliminary ranked list with the commission. The commission will not have the ability to change the ranking but may withdraw projects.
7. RCO staff will present the preliminary ranked list to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for final approval and inclusion with the board's recommendation to the Governor and the Legislature.

⁸¹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-07

Evaluation Criteria

Local parks provide property or facilities for active or passive outdoor recreation. They may contain both upland and water-oriented elements.

Local Parks Category

Summary of Criteria

Criteria	Project Type	Maximum Points	Focus*	
Unscored				
Project Introduction	All Project Types	0 points	State Focus	
Scored by the Advisory Committee				
1	Need–Local Priorities	All Project Types	25 points	State and Local Focus
2	Project Scope	All Project Types	20 points	Local Focus
3	Immediacy of Threat	Acquisition Projects	10 points	Local Focus
		Combination Projects	5 points	
4	Site Suitability	Acquisition Projects	15 points	Technical Focus
		Combination Projects	5 points	
5	Project Design-Fit	Development Projects	15 points	Technical Focus
		Combination Projects	5 points	
6	Project Design-Budget	Development Projects	5 points	Technical Focus
		Combination Projects	5 points	
7	Project Engagement-Methods	All Project Types	5 points	State and Local Focus
8	Project Engagement-Community	All Project Types	5 points	State and Local Focus
9	Project Engagement-Partnerships	All Project Types	5 points	State and Local Focus
10	Sustainability	Development Projects	5 points	State Focus
		Combination Projects	5 points	
11	Cost Efficiencies	All Project Types	5 points	State and Local Focus
Scored by RCO				
12	Green Space Availability	All Project Types	3 points	State Focus
13	Social Vulnerability	All Project Types	3 points	State Focus
14	Health Outcomes	All Project Types	3 points	State Focus
15	Proximity to People	All Project Types	0.5 point	State Focus
16	County Population Density	All Project Types	0.5 point	State Focus

Criteria	Project Type	Maximum Points	Focus*
17 Growth Management Act Preference	All Project Types	0 points	State Focus
Total Points Possible: 100			

*Focus—Criteria orientation in accordance with the following priorities:

- State—Those that meet general statewide needs (often called for in Revised Codes of Washington or State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan [SCORP])
- Local—Those that meet local needs (usually an item of narrower purview, often called for in local plans)
- Technical—Those that meet technical considerations (usually more objective decisions than those of policy).

Detailed Evaluation Criteria

Project Introduction. In less than one minute, introduce the project’s location and goals to set the stage for the project.

- Locate the project on statewide, regional, and site maps to help orient the evaluators to the project area and its context in the service area.⁸²
- Summarize the site’s condition; the project’s acquisition, development, or renovation goals; and the recreation opportunities the project will provide.

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

1. Need—Local Priorities. Describe the need for new or improved recreation facilities, how the need is known, and why existing amenities in the service area do not satisfy the need. A complete response should include the following:

- A simple inventory and condition of relevant outdoor recreation opportunities in the service area.
- Description of gaps in access, opportunity, or service delivery.
- Description of the current and/or anticipated use of the project site and any factors that contribute to fluctuations in use or demand for service.
- Description of how the need for this project has been identified and prioritized, including whether it is linked to local recreation or open space plans.

⁸²The service area is the geographic area where most of the anticipated users live, as defined by the applicant.

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points, which are multiplied later by two and a half.

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

2. Project Scope. Describe the site’s existing natural and built features. Describe what is being proposed in the project, including land acquisition and/or elements to be built or renovated, and for what purpose.

- What recreation opportunities will this project provide?

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points, which are multiplied later by two.

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

3. Immediacy of Threat (acquisition and combination projects). Is there a threat to the public availability of the resources the site possesses?

Consider the availability of alternatives. Where none exists, the significance of a threat may be higher.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two for acquisition projects.

Zero points	No evidence presented
One to two points	Minimal threat; site resource opportunity appears to be in no immediate danger of a loss in quality or to public use in the next thirty-six months.
Three points	Actions are under consideration that could result in the opportunity losing quality or becoming unavailable for public use.
Four to five points	Actions will be taken that will result in the opportunity losing quality or becoming unavailable for future public use or a threat situation has occurred or is imminent and has led an organization to acquire rights in the land at the request of the applicant agency.

Revised January 2008, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2008-05

4. Site Suitability (acquisition and combination projects). Is the site to be acquired well suited for the intended recreational uses?

Compare the site’s physical features against the proposed use. Consider the size, topography, soil conditions, natural amenities, and location of the site to determine if

it is well suited for the intended uses. In general, sites most compatible to the uses proposed score higher.

- ▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by three for acquisition projects.

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

- 5. Project Design-Fit** (development and combination projects). Describe how the design aligns with the need, location, and project scope. Describe how the design addresses any constraints and whether the design provides access for users of all abilities. Applicants may choose to describe design elements such as parking and site access, accessibility features, environmental considerations, green infrastructure, cultural or historic interpretation, mitigation of public use impacts, etc. If available, include design visuals.

- ▲ Point Range: zero to five, which are multiplied later by three for development projects.

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

- 6. Project Design-Budget** (development and combination projects). Provide an overview of the project budget and how the cost estimate was determined. If the proposal includes additional site design and permitting, what is the process and anticipated schedule to be construction-ready?

- ▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

- 7. Project Engagement-Methods.** RCO encourages applicants to use a variety of methods to gather input on the project. How were the people who will be most impacted by the project engaged? Describe what methods were used and the populations engaged, including underserved populations and/or Native American tribes. Describe the relevance of that participation for the population size, demographic, or socioeconomic conditions of the community or service area.

- ▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

8. Project Engagement-Community. How has community input influenced the project design?⁸³

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

9. Project Engagement-Partnerships. Describe any community partnerships that are providing support for the project whether through financial, in-kind, project delivery, or other means. Partnerships may be formal or informal. Describe the significance of the partnerships within the community or service area.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

10. Sustainability (development and combination projects only). Sustainability reflects choices made to balance the desired benefits and potential impacts of a project on the surrounding landscape and community. Please discuss how the project's location or design supports the applicant's organization's sustainability plan or how ecological, economic, and social benefits and impacts were considered in the project plan.

Examples of sustainability factors that could be part of a project or maintenance plan are provided below for consideration but are not all-inclusive. Applicants and evaluators should treat this list as a guide, not a checklist. Applicants are encouraged to be creative in expressing the sustainability factors of their projects, and evaluators should score projects based on the extent to which applicants have considered and addressed the benefits and impacts of their projects whether they discuss one of the factors below or many.

Ecological Factors

- Minimizes impacts to, or improves ecological function of, surrounding lands
- Includes low-impact design or other green building techniques that reduce water, energy, resource consumption, or greenhouse gas footprint
- Provides a buffer to future natural disasters or anticipated climate impacts
- Includes landscaping that supports native species and/or pollinator habitat

⁸³For acquisition projects, RCO staff suggests focusing on how community input influenced site selection.

Social Factors

- Encourages access via multi-modal and active transportation choices
- Promotes opportunities for physical activity, social, and cultural connections, or community education

Economic Factors

- Uses materials that support local producers, are recycled or recyclable, increase the project's anticipated lifespan, or reduce future maintenance costs
- Creates efficiency in the provision of public services (i.e., stormwater infiltration, increased tree canopy, carbon sequestration, etc.)
- Maximizes lifespan or reduces future operational costs
- Supports a local economic development initiative

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

11. Cost Efficiencies. To what extent does this project demonstrate efficiencies or a reduction in government costs through documented use of donations or other resources?

- Donations—cash, real property, volunteer labor, equipment use, or materials
 - What are the donations for this project?
 - Who is making the donations?
 - What is the value of the donations and how were the values determined?
 - Are the donations in hand?
 - If the donations are not in hand, is there a letter of commitment from the donor that specifies what is being donated and when?
 - Are the donations necessary for implementation of the project? Are donations included in the project proposal?
- Private grants awarded by non-governmental organizations
 - Is there a private grant that is being used as match for this project?

- Who awarded the grant?
- What is the grant amount?
- What is the purpose of the grant?
- When will grant funds be available?
- Are there other efficiencies for this project that will result in cost savings?
 - What is the cost efficiency?
 - Who is providing it?
 - What's the value?
 - When was the commitment made and when does it expire?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Revised February 2016, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-04.

12. Green Space Availability (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Green space availability scores are determined using spatial data analysis from RCO's equity review of grant programs. For that review, census tracts were classified as having High (more than eight acres per one thousand residents), Medium (three to eight acres per one thousand residents), and Low (less than three acres per one thousand residents) green space per capita.

▲ Point Range: one to three points

One point	High green space
Two points	Medium green space
Three points	Low green space

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

13. Social Vulnerability (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Social vulnerability scores use a combination of sixteen social and economic conditions such as limited English, crowded housing, or population living in poverty. The scores are based on information from the Washington Tracking Network's [Information by Location mapping tool](#).

▲ Point Range: zero to three points

Zero points	Vulnerability rating one to two
One point	Vulnerability rating three to five
Two points	Vulnerability rating six to seven
Three points	Vulnerability rating eight to ten

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

14. Health Outcomes (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). This score is from the Washington Tracking Network’s [Information by Location mapping tool](#), which shows the Health Disparity Index scores and Poor Health Outcomes ranking.

▲ Point Range: one to three points

Zero points	Health outcome rating one to two
One point	Health outcome rating three to five
Two points	Health outcome rating six to seven
Three points	Health outcome rating eight to ten

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

15. Proximity to People(applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Is the project in the urban growth boundary of a city or town with a population of five thousand or more?⁸⁴

RCO uses a map provided by the applicant to help score this question. To receive a score, the map must show the project location and project boundary in relationship to a city’s or town’s urban growth boundary.

▲ Point Range: zero or half a point

Yes	Half a point
No	zero points

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

⁸⁴Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

- C. A request from an applicant planning under state law shall be accorded no additional preference based on subsection "B" over a request from an applicant not planning under this state law.

RCO staff score this question using information from the state Department of Commerce, Growth Management Division. Scoring occurs after RCO's technical completion deadline. If an agency's comprehensive plan, development regulation, or amendment has been appealed to the Growth Management Hearings Board, the agency cannot be penalized during the period of appeal.

▲ Point Range: RCO staff subtracts a maximum of one point.

Minus one point	The applicant does not meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.
Zero points	The applicant meets the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.
Zero points	The applicant is a nonprofit organization, state, or federal agency.

State Lands Development and Renovation Category

This project category is reserved for the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources for development and/or renovation of state recreation lands.

Summary of Criteria

Criteria	Maximum Points	Focus*
Scored by Advisory Committee		
1 Public Need	20 points	State Focus
2 Site Suitability and Design	15 points	Technical Focus
3 Sustainability	5 points	State Focus
4 Diversity and Compatibility	10 points	State Focus
5 Performance Measure	5 points	State Focus
6 Public Benefit and Project Support	5 points	State Focus
Score by RCO		
7 Population Proximity	1 point	State Focus
Total Points Possible: 61		

*Focus—Criteria orientation in accordance with the following priorities:

- State—Those that meet general statewide needs (often called for in Revised Codes of Washington or the *State Recreation and Conservation Plan*)
- Local—Those that meet local needs (usually an item of narrower purview, often called for in local plans)
- Technical—Those that meet technical considerations (usually more objective decisions than those of policy).

Detailed Evaluation Criteria

- 1. Public Need.** Considering the availability and use of existing facilities within the service area, what is the need for new or improved facilities?⁸⁸

Establish the recreation need by describing all available outdoor recreation opportunities (quality and quantity) within the service area. In general, areas with fewer outdoor recreation sites will score higher than those with more. Other considerations are the following:

- Existing capacity: Are nearby sites used to capacity?
- Are there unserved or under-served user groups?
- Is there a threat to the public availability of the resources the site possesses?
- What are the demonstrated needs for development or renovation?
- Long-term manageability: How does the improvement or renovation contribute to ongoing management and maintenance of the facilities?
- How well will this project satisfy the needs identified?
- What is the expected or potential use upon completion of this project?
- Describe existing conditions and explain how this project will improve the visitor experience.
- Describe the project's statewide or regional significance.
- Consider whether the project is named by location or type as a priority in an adopted plan.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by four

Revised January 2008, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2008-09

- 2. Site Suitability and Project Design.** Does the project demonstrate good design criteria? Does it make the best use of the site?

- Measure the quality of the functional and aesthetic aspects of the site design as related to the site and the proposed uses.

⁸⁸Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State, 2002-2007, Chapter 5

- Will site resources be made available appropriately for public use or recreation?
- Will natural, environmental, or other important values be protected by the proposed development?
- How well does the project satisfy the identified needs?

Consider the size, topography, soil conditions, natural amenities, and location of the site to determine if it is well suited for the intended uses. Some design elements that may be considered include the following:

- Accuracy of cost estimates
- Aesthetics
- Complexity of permitting
- Environmentally friendly design
- Innovation and sustainability
- Maintenance
- Materials
- Phasing
- Recreation experiences
- Readiness to proceed
- Risk management
- Site suitability
- Space relationships
- Suitability of the proposed improvements
- User friendly and universally accessible

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by three

Revised January 2008, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2008-09

3. Sustainability. Sustainability reflects choices made to balance the desired benefits and potential impacts of a project on the surrounding landscape and community. Please discuss how the project's location or design supports the applicant's organization's sustainability plan or how the ecological, economic, and social benefits and impacts were considered in the project plan.

Examples of sustainability factors that could be part of a project or maintenance plan are provided below for consideration but are not all-inclusive. Applicants and evaluators should treat this list as a guide, not a checklist. Applicants are encouraged to be creative in expressing the sustainability factors of their projects, and evaluators should score projects based on the extent to which applicants have considered and addressed the benefits and impacts of their projects whether they discuss one of the factors below or many.

Ecological Factors

- Minimizes impacts to, or improves ecological function of, surrounding lands
- Includes low-impact design or other green building techniques that reduce water, energy, resource consumption, or greenhouse gas footprint
- Provides a buffer to future natural disasters or anticipated climate impacts
- Includes landscaping that supports native species and/or pollinator habitat

Social Factors

- Addresses an identified disparity in social or environmental services
- Encourages access via multi-modal and active transportation choices
- Promotes opportunities for physical activity, social and cultural connections, or community education

Economic Factors

- Uses materials that support local producers, are recycled or recyclable, increase the project's anticipated lifespan, or reduce future maintenance costs
- Creates efficiency in the provision of public services (i.e., stormwater infiltration, increased tree canopy, carbon sequestration, etc.)
- Maximizes lifespan or reduces future operational costs
- Supports a local economic development initiative

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Adopted January 2020, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2020-06

4. Diversity of and Compatibility of Recreational Uses. To what extent does this project provide diversity of possible recreational uses?⁸⁹

Sites can provide the opportunity for a variety of recreational uses. In general, projects providing more *compatible* recreation uses will score better than projects providing just one type of opportunity.

⁸⁹Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State 2002-2007, Chapters 1 and 5

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two

- 5. Outcome-Focused Performance Measures.** To what extent does the project result in measurable progress toward goals and objectives for the recreation or access area?

A grant award should be considered an investment with a measurable, positive return to the public in the long run. This question's intent is to find out what unique benefits the project provides and how those benefits are measured so the applicant knows if it was successful. In general, applicants who provide evidence or documentation of the goals and objectives associated with the project site and describe how the project results in measurable progress toward those goals should score higher.

Outline the proposed project schedule, timelines, and who will perform the work. Describe how the project will impact the habitat, fish and wildlife resources, and provide public benefits.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Revised January 2008, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2008-09

- 6. Public Benefit and Project Support.** To what extent does this project result in measurable benefits for the community impacted as a result of this development or renovation?

Benefit is the gain realized with the requested level of public investment. It can be a gain for the environment, the general public, or other gain. Proposals demonstrating greater net benefits should score higher than proposals with limited value or with value at too great a cost. Cost can be unacceptable harm to the environment or something that causes unnecessary ill will.

Broadly interpret the term "Project Support" to consider the following:

- Explain the extent of efforts by the applicant to identify and contact all parties, i.e., an outreach program to local, regional, and statewide entities.
- To what degree do communities, governments, landowners, constituent groups, or academia benefit from, or support, the project?
- How have these groups been involved in project development?
- Is there known opposition? Explain.
- Describe and document any monetary means that have been secured to help with implementation of the project (i.e., endowments, grants, donations,

public/private management agreements, etc.)

- Identify endorsements or other support from advisory boards and user or friends groups.
- Describe the support or partnerships with the community, interest groups, volunteers, public agencies, etc.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Adopted February 2006, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2006-04

7. Population Proximity (applicant does not answer). Is the project in a populated area?⁹⁰

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's policy is to give funding preference to projects located in populated areas. Populated areas are defined (Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250) as a town or city with a population of 5,000 or more, or a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile. Is the project in an area meeting this definition?

▲ Point Range: RCO staff award a maximum of one point.

Adopted February 2006, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2006-04

⁹⁰Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

State Parks Category

This project category is reserved for the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission for acquisition and/or development of state parks.

Summary of Criteria

Criteria	Project Type	Maximum Points Possible	Focus*	
Scored by the Advisory				
1	Public Need	All Projects	5 points	State Focus
2	Project Significance	All Projects	15 points	Agency Focus
3	Acquisition Priority	Acquisition Projects	10 points	State Focus
		Combination Projects	5 points	
4	Project Design	Development Projects	10 points	Technical Focus
		Combination Projects	5 points	
5	Resource Stewardship	All Projects	10 points	State Focus
6	Expansion/Phased Project	All Projects	15 points	State Focus
7	Project Support	All Projects	10 points	Agency Focus
8	Partnership or Match	All Projects	5 points	State Focus
9	Readiness to Proceed	All Projects	10 points	Agency Focus
10	Commission Priorities	All Projects	6 points	Agency Focus
Scored by RCO				
11	Proximity to People	All Projects	1.5 points	State Focus
12	County Population Density	All Projects	1.5 points	State Focus
Total Points Possible:			89	

*Focus—Criteria orientation in accordance with the following priorities:

- State—those that meet general statewide needs (often called for in Revised Codes of Washington or the *Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan*)
- Agency—those that meet agency needs (usually an item of narrower purview, often called for in the State Parks and Recreation Commission’s plans)
- Technical—those that meet technical considerations (usually more objective decisions than those of policy).

Detailed Evaluation Criteria

1. Public Need. What is the need for the proposed project? Consider whether the project is cited in an agency, regional, or local plan.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Zero points	Not included in a plan.
One to two points	Not included in, but consistent with, a plan.
Three to four points	Included in and consistent with state, regional, or local plans.
Five points	High priority in state, regional, or local plan.

Revised January 2022. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2022-03.

2. Project Significance. Describe how this project supports one or more of the following goals of State Parks' Statewide Acquisition and Development Strategy:

- Places to Be: Connecting people with Washington's iconic landscapes
- Stories to Know: Engaging people in authentic Washington stories
- Things to Do: Providing Washington's recreation mainstays
- Ways to Grow: Inviting novices to experience Washington's outdoors
- Something for Everyone: Improving the quality of life for all Washingtonians

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by three

Zero points	Does not directly support any of the goals
One to two points	Indirectly supports one or two goals
Three to four points	Directly supports at least one goal
Five points	Strongly and directly supports multiple goals

Revised January 2022. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2022-03.

3. Acquisition Priority (acquisition and combination projects only). Describe why it is important to acquire the property now. Consider the following:

- Does the acquisition satisfy the described need?
- Does the acquisition expand access and provide opportunity for people of all races, tribal affiliations, ethnicities, national origins, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, religions, veteran status, incomes, ages, and more?
- Is there an immediate threat to the property that will result in a loss in quality or availability of habitat or future public use?
- Is the acquisition needed to adapt to climate change?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two for acquisition projects

Zero points	No evidence the property addresses the considerations above.
One to two points	The property addresses some of the considerations above.
Three to five points	The property addresses most or all the considerations above.

Revised January 2022. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2022-03.

4. Project Design (development and combination projects only). Is the project well designed? Describe the project in detail. Consider the following:

- Does the design satisfy the described need?
- Which design phase describes the status of the project (e.g., concept, schematic, detailed, completed construction documents)?
- Does this property support the type of development proposed? Describe the attributes: size, topography, soil conditions, natural amenities, location and access, utility service, wetlands, etc.
- How have the potential impacts to or from climate change been considered in the design?
- How does this project exceed current universal accessibility requirements and provide equal access for people with disabilities?
- How does the project design address the needs and desires of the state's

diverse population? What specific improvements or features are designed to serve people of all races, tribal affiliations, ethnicities, national origins, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, religions, veteran status, incomes, ages, and more?

- Does the nature and condition of existing or planned land use in the surrounding area support the type of development proposed?
- Is the project permissible? What are the likely environmental permitting complications? What, if any, are the mitigation requirements?
- Describe how the project will integrate sustainable elements such as low-impact development techniques, green infrastructure, environmentally preferred building products, or reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- Is the cost estimate realistic?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two for development projects

Zero points	Design does not address any of the considerations above.
One to two points	Design addresses some of the considerations above.
Three to four points	Design addresses several of the considerations above.
Five points	Design addresses most or all the considerations above.

Revised January 2022. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2022-03.

5. Resource Stewardship. What techniques or resources are proposed to ensure the project will result in a quality, sustainable, recreational, heritage preservation, or educational opportunity, while protecting and/or improving the integrity of the ecological resources? Describe how the project will protect and/or enhance natural and cultural resources.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two

Zero points	No stewardship elements.
One to two points	Contains stewardship elements and avoids impacts to natural or cultural resources.

Three to four points	Has numerous stewardship elements that protect, enhance, or restore natural or cultural resources.
Five points	Maximizes natural or cultural resource protection, enhances or restores natural or cultural resources, and contains innovative and outstanding stewardship elements.

Revised January 2022. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2022-03.

6. Expansion/Phased Project. Does this project implement an important phase of a previous project, represent an important first phase, or expand or improve an existing site? Consider the following:

- Is the project part of a phased acquisition or development?
- To what extent will this project advance completion of a plan or vision?
- Is this project an important first phase?
- What is the value of this phase?
- How does the project complement an existing site or expand usage, preservation, or education within a site?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by three

Zero points	Neither a significant phase or expansion, nor a distinct stand-alone project
One to two points	Project is a quality or important phase or expansion
Three to four points	Project is a key first phase or expansion or moves a project significantly towards realizing a vision
Five points	Project is a highly important first phase, final (or near final phase), moves a project a great deal towards realizing a vision.

Revised April 2016. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-20.

7. Project Support. What statewide community and user groups were consulted and what support has been demonstrated for this project? How has the applicant’s organization informed and engaged people about the project including those whose interests have been historically marginalized or excluded?

- Describe the extent of the applicant’s organization’s efforts to identify and

contact all parties, (i.e., an outreach program to local, regional, and statewide entities).

- Describe the extent of the project support. Broadly interpret the term “Project Support” to include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - Public participation and feedback
 - Endorsements or other support from advisory boards and user and friends groups
 - Media coverage

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two

Zero points	No evidence presented.
One to two points	Marginal community support. Opportunities for only minimal public involvement (i.e., a single adoption hearing), or little evidence that the public supports the project.
Three points	Wide support and adequate opportunity presented for participation.
Four to five points	The public has received ample and varied opportunities to provide meaningful input into the project and there is overwhelming support, or the public was so supportive from the project’s inception that an extensive public participation process was not necessary.

Revised January 2022. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2022-03.

8. Partnerships or Match. Describe how this project supports strategic partnerships or leverages secured matching funds. Consider the following:

- Does the project help form strategic partnerships with other agencies, tribes, community-based organizations, or nonprofits? (A strategic partnership is one that ultimately is expected to offset expenses, leverage investments, or stimulate activity that directly or indirectly generates a financial return.)
- Does the partnership facilitate a key State Parks’ goal or objective?
- Does the project have a match of cash, grants, or in-kind services?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Zero points	No partners or match
One to two points	One partner or up to 10 percent match
Three to four points	Two partners or 10.01-24.99 percent match
Five points	Three or more partners or 25 percent or more match

Revised January 2022. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2022-03.

9. Readiness to Proceed. Describe the project’s timeline. Is the project ready to proceed? Consider the following:

- For development projects, is it fully designed and permitted?
- For acquisition projects, is there written documentation indicating a willing seller?
- For acquisition projects, is there a written sales agreement or option with the property owner?
- Are there any significant zoning, permitting issues, or encumbrances?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two

Zero points	Not ready. (Acquisition) No agreement with landowner. (Development) No construction drawings.
One to two points	(Acquisition) Willing seller identified (Development) Construction drawings less than 60 percent complete.
Three to four points	(Acquisition) Property (purchase) secured in some way by legal instrument to include a letter of intent or being held in trust or by a non-governmental organization (for example). (Development) Construction drawings at or more than 60 percent complete.

Five points

(Acquisition) State Parks has a purchase and sale agreement or option signed, and the purchase will be made within its existing term.

(Development) Plans completed and all permits in hand.

Revised January 2022. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2022-03.

10. Commission’s Priority (applicant does not answer). How well does this project implement the commission’s priorities?

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission evaluates this criterion. The commission provides RCO with a ranked list of its applications.

RCO assigns a point value to each project based on its rank. The highest priority project shall receive a point score equal to the number of applications ranked. The second highest ranked project shall receive a point score one less than the one above it, and so on. The lowest priority application shall receive a value of 1.

RCO will apply a variable multiplier to the scores so the highest ranked application will receive a point value of 6, and all other applications will have a point value less than 6 and proportional to their rank.

▲ Point Range: zero to six points (after multiplier)

Revised April 2016. Board Resolution 2016-20

The example below assumes thirteen projects evaluated, all with a multiplier of six out of thirteen or 0.462.

Project	Commission’s Rank	RCO-Assigned Point Value	Final Point Value
Project A	Ranked 1	13 RCO-assigned points	6 final points
Project B	Ranked 2	12 RCO-assigned points	5.54 final points
Project C	Ranked 3	11 RCO-assigned points	5.08 final points
Project D	Ranked 4	10 RCO-assigned points	4.62 final points
Project E	Ranked 5	9 RCO-assigned points	4.15 final points
Project F	Ranked 6	8 RCO-assigned points	3.69 final points
Project G	Ranked 7	7 RCO-assigned points	3.23 final points
Project H	Ranked 8	6 RCO-assigned points	2.77 final points
Project I	Ranked 9	5 RCO-assigned points	2.31 final points
Project J	Ranked 10	4 RCO-assigned points	1.85 final points
Project K	Ranked 11	3 RCO-assigned points	1.38 final points
Project L	Ranked 12	2 RCO-assigned points	0.92 final points

Trails Category

Summary of Criteria

Trails means public ways constructed for, and open to, pedestrians, equestrians, or bicyclists, or any combination thereof, other than a sidewalk constructed as a part of a city street or county road for exclusive use of pedestrians.⁹³

Criteria	Project Type	Maximum Points Possible	Focus*	
Unscored				
Project Introduction	All Projects	0 points	State Focus	
Scored by the Advisory Committee				
1	Need–Local Priorities	All Projects	15 points	State and Local Focus
2	Project Scope	All Projects	10 points	Local Focus
3	Immediacy of Threat	Acquisition Projects	15 points	Local Focus
		Combination Projects	5 points	
4	Project Design-Fit	Development Projects	5 points	Technical Focus
		Combination Projects	2.5 points	
5	Project Design-Budget	Development Projects	5 points	Technical Focus
		Combination Projects	2.5 points	
6	Project Engagement-Methods	All Projects	4 points	State and Local Focus
7	Project Engagement-Community	All Projects	3 points	State and Local Focus
8	Project Engagement-Partnerships	All Projects	3 points	State and Local Focus
9	Sustainability	Development Projects	5 points	State Focus
		Combination Projects	5 points	
10	Enhancement of Wildlife Habitat	All Projects	10 points	State Focus
11	Linkages Between Trails	All Projects	8 points	State and Local Focus
12	Linkages Between Communities	All Projects	8 points	State and Local Focus
13	Water Access or Views	All Projects	5 points	State Focus
14	Scenic Values	All Projects	5 points	State Focus

⁹³Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.010

Criteria	Project Type	Maximum Points Possible	Focus*
15 Cost Efficiencies	All Projects	3 points	State and Local Focus
Scored by RCO			
16 Green Space Availability	All Projects	3 points	State Focus
17 Social Vulnerability	All Projects	3 points	State Focus
18 Health Outcomes	All Projects	3 points	State Focus
19 Proximity to People	All Projects	1 point	State Focus
20 County Population Density	All Projects	1 point	State Focus
21 Growth Management Act Preference	All Projects	0 points	State Focus
Total Points Possible: 100			

*Focus—Criteria orientation in accordance with the following priorities:

- State—those that meet general statewide needs (often called for in Revised Codes of Washington or the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan)
- Local—those that meet local needs (usually an item of narrower purview, often called for in local plans)
- Technical—those that meet technical considerations (usually more objective decisions than those of policy).

Detailed Evaluation Criteria

Project Introduction. In less than one minute, introduce the project’s location and goals to set the stage for the project.

- Locate the project on statewide, regional, and site maps to help orient the evaluators to the project area and its context in the service area.⁹⁴
- Summarize the site’s condition; the project’s acquisition, development, or renovation goals; and the recreation opportunities the project will provide.

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

1. Need–Local Priorities. Describe the need for new or improved recreation facilities, how the need is known, and why existing amenities in the service area do not satisfy the need. A complete response should include the following:

- A simple inventory and condition of relevant outdoor recreation opportunities in the service area.

⁹⁴The service area is the geographic area where most of the anticipated users live, as defined by the applicant.

- Description of gaps in access, opportunity, or service delivery.
- Description of the current and/or anticipated use of the project site and any factors that contribute to fluctuations in use or demand for service.
- Description of how the need for this project has been identified and prioritized, including whether it is linked to local recreation or open space plans.

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points, which are multiplied later by one and a half

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

2. Project Scope. Describe the site’s existing natural and built features. Describe what is being proposed in the project, including land acquisition and/or elements to be built or renovated, and for what purpose.

- What recreation opportunities will this project provide?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two.

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

3. Immediacy of Threat⁹⁵ (acquisition and combination projects only). Does a threat to the public availability of a part of the trail exist?

Consider the availability of alternatives. A project threatened with the loss of a critical link will merit more evaluation points than a proposal where other routes exist.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by three for acquisition projects

Zero points	No evidence presented.
One to two points	Minimal threat; trail opportunity appears to be in no immediate danger of a loss in quality or to public use in the next thirty-six months.
Three points	Actions are under consideration that could result in the opportunity losing quality or becoming unavailable for public use.
Four to five points	Actions will be taken that will result in the opportunity losing quality or becoming unavailable for future public use.

⁹⁵Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(a)(ii)

or

A threat situation has occurred or is imminent that has led an organization to acquire rights in the land at the request of the applicant agency.

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

- 4. Project Design-Fit** (development and combination projects). Describe how the design aligns with the need, location, and project scope. Describe how the design addresses any constraints and whether the design provides access for users of all abilities. Applicants may choose to describe design elements such as parking and site access, accessibility features, environmental considerations, green infrastructure, cultural or historic interpretation, mitigation of public use impacts, etc. If available, include design visuals.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by a half for combination projects.

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

- 5. Project Design-Budget** (development and combination projects). Provide an overview of the project budget and how the cost estimate was determined. If the proposal includes additional site design and permitting, what is the process and anticipated schedule to be construction-ready?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by a half for combination projects.

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

- 6. Project Engagement-Methods.** RCO encourages applicants to use a variety of methods to gather input on the project. How were the people who will be most impacted by the project engaged? Describe what methods were used and the populations engaged, including underserved populations and/or Native American tribes. Describe the relevance of that participation for the population size, demographic, or socioeconomic conditions of the community or service area.

▲ Point Range: zero to four points

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

7. Project Engagement-Community. How has community input influenced the project design?⁹⁶

▲ Point Range: zero to three points

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

8. Project Engagement-Partnerships. Describe any community partnerships that are providing support for the project whether through financial, in-kind, project delivery, or other means. Partnerships may be formal or informal. Describe the significance of the partnerships within the community or service area.

▲ Point Range: zero to three points

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

9. Sustainability (development and combination projects only). Sustainability reflects choices made to balance the desired benefits and potential impacts of a project on the surrounding landscape and community. Please discuss how the project's location or design supports the applicant's organization's sustainability plan or how the ecological, economic, and social benefits and impacts were considered in the project plan.

Examples of sustainability factors that could be part of a project or maintenance plan are provided below for consideration but are not all-inclusive. Applicants and evaluators should treat this list as a guide, not a checklist. Applicants are encouraged to be creative in expressing the sustainability factors of their projects, and evaluators should score projects based on the extent to which applicants have considered and addressed the benefits and impacts of their projects whether they discuss one of the factors below or many.

Ecological Factors

- Minimizes impacts to, or improves ecological function of, surrounding lands
- Includes low-impact design or other green building techniques that reduce water, energy, resource consumption, or greenhouse gas footprint
- Provides a buffer to future natural disasters or anticipated climate impacts
- Includes landscaping that supports native species and/or pollinator habitat

⁹⁶For acquisition projects, RCO staff suggests focusing on how community input influenced site selection.

Social Factors

- Encourages access via multi-modal and active transportation choices
- Promotes opportunities for physical activity, social and cultural connections, or community education

Economic Factors

- Uses materials that support local producers, are recycled or recyclable, increase the project's anticipated lifespan, or reduce future maintenance costs
- Creates efficiency in the provision of public services (i.e., stormwater infiltration, increased tree canopy, carbon sequestration, etc.)
- Maximizes lifespan, or reduces future operational costs
- Supports a local economic development initiative

▲ Point Range zero to five points

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

10. Enhancement of Wildlife Habitat.⁹⁷ How will this proposal enhance wildlife habitat beyond what may be required by a development or land-use authority such as statute, ordinance, permit, rule and regulation, mitigation requirement, etc.?

- What are the potential outcomes of the applicant's efforts? Why and how will they benefit wildlife?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two.

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

11. Linkage Between Trails.⁹⁸ Does the trail project connect existing trails?

- Describe to what extent the proposed trail or trailhead links and serves existing trails and trail networks or will provide potential linkages?
- Does a coordinated plan identify the proposed linkages?
- Does the project enhance a statewide, regional, or community trails network?

⁹⁷Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(a)(viii)

⁹⁸Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(a) (iv)

▲ Point Range: zero to eight points

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

12. Linkage Between Communities.⁹⁹ Does the trail project connect communities?

Applicant should show how the project will create linkages between communities.

Broadly interpret the term “Community” to include, but not be limited to, the following linkages:

- Neighborhoods, subdivisions, business districts
- Urban and rural areas
- Destinations, such as parks, landscapes, scenic overlooks, schools, churches, libraries, cultural sites, or trail systems
- Disparate groups of people

▲ Point Range: zero to eight points

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

13. Water Access or Views.¹⁰⁰ Does the project provide direct access to water (physical access by person or boat) or views?

Considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How long does it take to reach the water access?
- What quality is the access (for example, are there obstructions—vegetation, mud, inclines, etc.)?
- What percentage of visitors likely will use the access?
- Does the project provide views?
- How long does it take to reach the view area?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

⁹⁹Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(a)(iii)

¹⁰⁰Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(a)(vii) and 79A.15.070(6)(a)(ix)

14. Scenic Values.¹⁰¹ Does the project provide scenic values?

Considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How long does it take to reach an area of scenic value?
- What percentage of visitors likely will access these?
- Are there scenic values of high quantity and quality?
- How does distance and perspective affect the scenic value?
- How much scenic variety is provided?

▲ Point Range. zero to five points

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

15. Cost Efficiencies. To what extent does this project demonstrate efficiencies or a reduction in government costs through documented use of donations or other resources?

Donations—cash, real property, volunteer labor, equipment use, or materials

- What are the donations for this project?
- Who is making the donations?
- What are the values of the donations and how were the values determined?
- Are the donations in hand?
- If the donations are not in hand, do you have a letter of commitment from the donors that specifies what is being donated and when?
- Are the donations necessary for implementation of the project? Are donations included in the project proposal?

Private grants awarded by non-governmental organizations

- Is there a private grant that is being used as match for this project?
- Who awarded the grant?
- What is the grant amount?

¹⁰¹Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(a)(ix)

- What is the purpose of the grant?
- When will grant funds be available?

Are there other efficiencies for this project that will result in cost savings?

- What is the cost efficiency?
- Who is providing it?
- What's the value?
- When was the commitment made and when does it expire?

▲ Point Range: zero to three points

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

16. Green Space Availability (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Green space availability scores are determined using spatial data analysis from RCO's equity review of grant programs. For that review, census tracts were classified as having High (more than eight acres per one thousand residents), Medium (three to eight acres per one thousand residents), and Low (less than three acres per one thousand residents) green space per capita.

▲ Point Range: one to three points

One point	High green space
Two points	Medium green space
Three points	Low green space

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

17. Social Vulnerability (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Social vulnerability scores use a combination of sixteen social and economic conditions such as limited English, crowded housing, or population living in poverty. The scores are based on information from the Washington Tracking Network's [Information by Location mapping tool](#).

▲ Point Range: zero to three points

Zero points	Vulnerability rating one to two
One point	Vulnerability rating three to five

Two points Vulnerability rating six to seven

Three points Vulnerability rating eight to ten

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

18. Health Outcomes (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). This score is from the Washington Tracking Network’s [Information by Location mapping tool](#), which shows the Health Disparity Index scores and Poor Health Outcomes ranking.

▲ Point Range: zero to three points

Zero points Health outcome rating one to two

One point Health outcome rating three to five

Two points Health outcome rating six to seven

Three points Health outcome rating eight to ten

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

19. Proximity to People (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Is the project in the urban growth boundary of a city or town with a population of five thousand or more?¹⁰²

RCO uses a map provided by the applicant to help score this question. To receive a score, the map must show the project location and project boundary in relationship to a city’s or town’s urban growth boundary.

▲ Point Range: zero or one point

Yes One point

No Zero points

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

20. County Population Density (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Is the project in a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile?¹⁰³

RCO uses county population data from the Office of Financial Management to score this question.

¹⁰²Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

¹⁰³Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

▲ Point Range zero or one point

Yes	One point
No	Zero points

Revised December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

21. Growth Management Act Preference(applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?¹⁰⁴

State law requires that:

- A. Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant¹⁰⁵ has adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations as required by Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.040.
- B. When reviewing such requests, the state agency shall accord additional preference to applicants that have adopted the comprehensive plan and development regulations. An applicant is deemed to have satisfied the requirements for adopting a comprehensive plan and development regulations if it does any of the following:
 - Adopts or has adopted within the time periods specified in state law.
 - Adopts or has adopted by the time it requests a grant or loan.
 - Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than six months out of compliance with the time periods has not demonstrated substantial progress.
- C. A request from an applicant planning under state law shall be accorded no additional preference based on subsection "B" over a request from an applicant not planning under this state law.

RCO staff score this question using information from the state Department of Commerce, Growth Management Division. Scoring occurs after RCO's technical completion deadline. If an agency's comprehensive plan, development regulation, or

¹⁰⁴Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250 (Growth Management Act-preference required.)

¹⁰⁵County, city, or town applicants only. This segment of the question does not apply to state agency or tribal government applicants.

amendment has been appealed to the Growth Management Hearings Board, the agency cannot be penalized during the period of appeal.

▲ Point Range: RCO staff subtracts a maximum of one point.

Minus one point	The applicant does not meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.
Zero points	The applicant meets the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.
Zero points	The applicant is a nonprofit organization or state or federal agency.

Revised July 1999 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Resolution 99-15

Water Access Category

Water access means boat or foot access to marine waters, lakes, river, or streams.¹⁰⁶

Summary of Criteria

Criteria	Project Type	Maximum Points Possible	Focus	
Unscored				
Project Introduction	All Projects	0 points	State Focus	
Scored by the Advisory Committee				
1	Need-Local Priorities	All Projects	20 points	State and Local Focus
2	Project Scope	All Projects	15 points	Local Focus
3	Immediacy of Threat	Acquisition Projects	20 points	Local Focus
		Combination Projects	10 points	
4	Site Suitability	Acquisition Projects	15 points	Technical Focus
		Combination Projects	10 points	
		Development Projects	5 points	
5	Project Design-Fit	Development Projects	10 points	Technical Focus
		Combination Projects	5 points	
6	Project Design-Budget	Development Projects	5 points	Technical Focus
		Combination Projects	2.5 points	
7	Project Engagement-Methods	All Projects	5 points	State and Local Focus
8	Project Engagement-Community	All Projects	5 points	State and Local Focus
9	Project Engagement-Partnerships	All Projects	5 points	State and Local Focus
10	Sustainability	Development Projects	10 points	State Focus
		Combination Projects	5 points	
11	Diversity of Recreational Uses	Development Projects	5 points	State Focus
		Combination Projects	2.5 points	
12	Cost Efficiencies	All Projects	5 points	State and Local Focus
Scored by RCO				
13	Green Space Availability	All Projects	3 points	State Focus
14	Social Vulnerability	All Projects	3 points	State Focus
15	Health Outcomes	All Projects	3 points	State Focus
16	Proximity to People	All Projects	0.5 point	State Focus

¹⁰⁶Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.010

Criteria	Project Type	Maximum Points Possible	Focus
17 County Population Density	All Projects	0.5 point	State Focus
18 Growth Management Act Preference	All Projects	0 points	State Focus
Total Points Possible: 100			

*Focus: Criteria orientation in accordance with the following priorities:

- State—those that meet general statewide needs (often called for in Revised Codes of Washington or the *Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan*)
- Local—those that meet local needs (usually an item of narrower purview, often called for in local plans)
- Technical—those that meet technical considerations (usually more objective decisions than those of policy).

Detailed Evaluation Criteria

Project Introduction. In less than one minute, introduce the project’s location and goals to set the stage for the project.

- Locate the project on statewide, regional, and site maps to help orient the evaluators to the project area and its context in the service area.¹⁰⁷
- Summarize the site’s condition; the project’s acquisition, development, or renovation goals; and the recreation opportunities the project will provide.

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

1. Need–Local Priorities. Describe the need for new or improved recreation facilities, how the need is known, and why existing amenities in the service area do not satisfy the need. A complete response should include the following:

- A simple inventory and condition of relevant outdoor recreation opportunities in the service area.
- Description of gaps in access, opportunity, or service delivery.
- Description of the current and/or anticipated use of the project site and any factors that contribute to fluctuations in use or demand for service.
- Description of how the need for this project has been identified and prioritized, including whether it is linked to local recreation or open space plans.

¹⁰⁷The service area is the geographic area where most of the anticipated users live, as defined by the applicant.

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points, which are multiplied later by two

Revised in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

2. Project Scope. Describe the site’s existing natural and built features. Describe what is being proposed in the project, including land acquisition and/or elements to be built or renovated, and for what purpose.

- What recreation opportunities will this project provide?

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points, which are multiplied later by one and a half

Revised in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

3. Immediacy of Threat (acquisition and combination projects only). To what extent will this project reduce a threat to the public availability of water access?¹⁰⁸

Consider the availability of alternatives. Where none exists, the significance of a threat may be higher.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by four for acquisition projects and two for combination projects

Zero points	No evidence presented.
One to two points	Minimal threat; water access opportunity appears to be in no immediate danger of a loss in quality or to public use in the next thirty-six months.
Three points	Actions under consideration could result in the opportunity losing quality or becoming unavailable for public use.
Four to five points	Actions will be taken that will result in the opportunity losing quality or becoming unavailable for future public use.
	Or
	A threat situation has occurred or is imminent that has led an organization to acquire rights in the land at the request of the applicant agency.

Revised in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

¹⁰⁸Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(b)(iii)

4. Site Suitability. Is the site well suited for the intended recreational uses?¹⁰⁹

Compare the physical features of the site against the proposed use. In general, sites most compatible to the uses proposed score higher.

- **Acquisition projects.** Is the site to be acquired well suited for the intended recreational uses?

Or

- **Development projects.** Will site resources be made available appropriately for recreation; will environmental or other important values be protected by the proposed development?

Or

- **Combination projects.** Is the site to be acquired well suited for the intended recreational uses? Will site resources be made available appropriately for recreation; will environmental or other important values be protected by the proposed development?

- ▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by three for acquisition projects and two for combination projects

Revised in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

5. Project Design-Fit (development and combination projects). Describe how the design aligns with the need, location, and project scope. Describe how the design addresses any constraints and whether the design provides access for users of all abilities. Applicants may choose to describe design elements such as parking and site access, accessibility features, environmental considerations, green infrastructure, cultural or historic interpretation, mitigation of public use impacts, etc. If available, include design visuals.

- ▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two for development projects

Revised in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

6. Project Design-Budget. (development and combination projects). Provide an overview of the project budget and how the cost estimate was determined. If the proposal includes additional site design and permitting, what is the process and anticipated schedule to be construction-ready?

¹⁰⁹Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(b)(v)

- ▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by a half for combination projects.

Revised in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

- 7. Project Engagement-Methods.** RCO encourages applicants to use a variety of methods to gather input on the project. How were the people who will be most impacted by the project engaged? Describe what methods were used and the populations engaged, including underserved populations and/or Native American tribes. Describe the relevance of that participation for the population size, demographic, or socioeconomic conditions of the community or service area.

- ▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Revised in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

- 8. Project Engagement-Community.** How has community input influenced the project design?¹¹⁰

- ▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Revised in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

- 9. Project Engagement-Partnerships.** Describe any community partnerships that are providing support for the project whether through financial, in-kind, project delivery, or other means. Partnerships may be formal or informal. Describe the significance of the partnerships within the community or service area.

- ▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Revised in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

- 10. Sustainability** (development and combination projects only). Sustainability reflects choices made to balance the desired benefits and potential impacts of a project on the surrounding landscape and community. Please discuss how the project's location or design supports the applicant's organization's sustainability plan or how the ecological, economic, and social benefits and impacts were considered in the project plan.

Examples of sustainability factors that could be part of a project or maintenance plan are provided below for consideration but are not all-inclusive. Applicants and evaluators should treat this list as a guide, not a checklist. Applicants are encouraged to be creative in expressing the sustainability factors of their projects, and evaluators should score projects based on the extent to which applicants have considered and

¹¹⁰For acquisition projects, RCO staff suggests focusing on how community input influenced site selection.

addressed the benefits and impacts of their projects whether they discuss one of the factors below or many.

Ecological Factors

- Minimizes impacts to, or improves ecological function of, surrounding lands
- Includes low-impact design or other green building techniques that reduce water, energy, resource consumption, or greenhouse gas footprint
- Provides a buffer to future natural disasters or anticipated climate impacts
- Includes landscaping that supports native species and/or pollinator habitat

Social Factors

- Encourages access via multi-modal and active transportation choices
- Promotes opportunities for physical activity, social, and cultural connections, or community education

Economic Factors

- Uses materials that support local producers, are recycled or recyclable, increase the project's anticipated lifespan, or reduce future maintenance costs
- Creates efficiency in the provision of public services (i.e., stormwater infiltration, increased tree canopy, carbon sequestration, etc.)
- Maximizes lifespan or reduces future operational costs
- Supports a local economic development initiative

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two for development projects.

Revised in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

11. Diversity of Recreational Uses (development and combination projects only). To what extent does this project provide diversity of possible water-based recreational activities?¹¹¹

Water access can provide the opportunity for a variety of recreational uses including swimming, fishing, boating, picnicking, viewing, and shellfish gathering. In general,

¹¹¹Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.070(6)(b)(iv)

projects providing more *compatible* recreation uses will score better than projects providing just one type of water access opportunity.

- ▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by a half for combination projects

Revised May 7, 2003

12. Cost Efficiencies. To what extent does this project demonstrate efficiencies or a reduction in government costs through documented use of donations or other resources?

Donations—cash, real property, volunteer labor, equipment use, or materials

- What are the donations for this project?
- Who is making the donations?
- What are the values of the donations and how were the values determined?
- Are the donations in hand?
- If the donations are not in hand, do you have a letter of commitment from the donors that specifies what is being donated and when?
- Are the donations necessary for implementation of the project? Are donations included in the project proposal?

Private grants awarded by non-governmental organizations

- Is there a private grant that is being used as match for this project?
- Who awarded the grant?
- What is the grant amount?
- What is the purpose of the grant?
- When will grant funds be available?

Are there other efficiencies for this project that will result in cost savings?

- What is the cost efficiency?
- Who is providing it?
- What's the value?

- When was the commitment made and when does it expire?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points

Revised February 2016, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-05.

13. Green Space Availability (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Green space availability scores are determined using spatial data analysis from RCO's equity review of grant programs. For that review, census tracts were classified as having High (more than eight acres per one thousand residents), Medium (three to eight acres per one thousand residents), and Low (less than three acres per one thousand residents) green space per capita.

▲ Point Range: one to three points

One point	High green space
Two points	Medium green space
Three points	Low green space

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

14. Social Vulnerability (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Social vulnerability scores use a combination of sixteen social and economic conditions such as limited English, crowded housing, or population living in poverty. The scores are based on information from the Washington Tracking Network's [Information by Location mapping tool](#).

▲ Point Range: zero to three points

Zero points	Vulnerability rating one to two
One point	Vulnerability rating three to five
Two points	Vulnerability rating six to seven
Three points	Vulnerability rating eight to ten

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

15. Health Outcomes (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). This score is from the Washington Tracking Network's [Information by Location mapping tool](#), which shows the Health Disparity Index scores and Poor Health Outcomes ranking.

▲ Point Range: zero to three points

Zero points	Health outcome rating one to two
One point	Health outcome rating three to five
Two points	Health outcome rating six to seven
Three points	Health outcome rating eight to ten

Adopted in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-27.

16. Proximity to People (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Is the project in the urban growth boundary of a city or town with a population of five thousand or more?¹¹²

RCO uses a map provided by the applicant help score this question. To receive a score, the map must show the project location and project boundary in relationship to a city's or town's urban growth boundary.

▲ Point Range: zero or half a point

Yes	Half a point
No	Zero points

Revised in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

17. County Population Density (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Is the project in a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile?¹¹³

RCO uses county population data from the Office of Financial Management to score this question.

▲ Point Range: zero or half a point

Yes	Half a point
No	Zero points

Revised in December 2023 by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-28.

¹¹²Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

¹¹³Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

18. Growth Management Act Preference (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?¹¹⁴

State law requires that:

- A. Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant¹¹⁵ has adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations as required by Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.040.
- B. When reviewing such requests, the state agency shall accord additional preference to applicants that have adopted the comprehensive plan and development regulations. An applicant is deemed to have satisfied the requirements for adopting a comprehensive plan and development regulations if it does any of the following:
 - Adopts or has adopted within the time periods specified in state law
 - Adopts or has adopted by the time it requests a grant or loan
 - Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than six months out of compliance with the time periods has not demonstrated substantial progress.
- C. A request from an applicant planning under state law shall be accorded no additional preference based on subsection "B" over a request from an applicant not planning under this state law.

This question is scored by RCO staff based on information obtained from the state Department of Commerce, Growth Management Division. Scoring occurs after RCO's technical completion deadline. If an agency's comprehensive plan, development regulation, or amendment has been appealed to the Growth Management Hearings Board, the agency cannot be penalized during the period of appeal.

▲ Point Range: RCO staff subtracts a maximum of one point.

Minus one point

The applicant does not meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.

¹¹⁴Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250 (Growth Management Act-preference required.)

¹¹⁵County, city, or town applicants only. This segment of the question does not apply to state agency or tribal government applicants.

Zero points The applicant meets the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250).

Zero points The applicant is a nonprofit organization or state or federal agency.

Revised July 1999, Recreation and Conservation Funding Resolution 99-15