

Manual 21

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account Grant Program

May 2020

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At a Glance

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account	
Purpose	The program provides funding to acquire, restore, or improve aquatic lands for public purposes. Grants may be used to provide or improve public access to those lands and associated waters.
Who may apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities and towns • Counties • Native American tribes • Special purpose districts • State agencies
Is a plan required?	No
What are navigable waters?	All projects must be associated with navigable waters of the state. Check with the Washington Department of Natural Resources aquatics land manager to see if the project is on a navigable water body.
What types of projects are eligible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development or renovation • Land acquisition • Restoration
What are the grant limits?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition: \$1 million • Development, renovation, and restoration: \$500,000 • Combination of acquisition and development or restoration: \$1 million, of which not more than \$500,000 may be for development or restoration costs.
What must I contribute?	25 percent
How is my project evaluated?	An advisory committee hears in-person virtual presentations and scores the projects.
When are applications due	June 1, 2020
When are grants awarded?	July 2021
What's new this year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted a federal disaster area match reduction policy to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. • Reduced the required match. • Removed the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement. • Updated PRISM Online to streamline the application. • Updated the Grant Application Data Tool for the Need evaluation criterion to reflect more recent data. • Re-numbered the evaluation criteria for projects meeting both program goals (protection and enhancement <u>and</u> public access) to accommodate electronic scoring. • Will conduct online review and evaluation meetings only

Section 1: Introduction

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

- ✓ ALEA program
- ✓ Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
- ✓ Where to get information
- ✓ Grant process and timeline

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account Program

The Legislature created the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account¹ (ALEA) in 1984 as a way to invest revenue raised from Washington's shorelines into projects meant to preserve and restore these valuable lands.

Aquatic lands mean all tidelands, shore lands, harbor areas, and the beds of navigable waters. These lands were dedicated at statehood for maritime trade, transportation, agriculture, and commerce, and are vital to the state's economy.

ALEA grants are funded entirely by money raised by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources from activities on those lands, such as leases to marinas on state-owned waterfront sites and the sale of harvest rights for geoduck clams.

ALEA grants may be used to buy, improve, or protect aquatic lands for public purposes. Grants also may be used to provide or improve public access to aquatic lands. The ALEA program is guided by the multiple goals of re-establishing naturally, self-sustaining ecological functions; providing people with access to the water; and increasing public awareness of aquatic lands as a finite natural resource and irreplaceable public heritage.

¹Enabling legislation is Revised Code of Washington 79.105.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

A portion of ALEA 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 lands, and help return salmon from near extinction.

Manual Authority

This manual provides policies and guidelines for the ALEA grant program. It is created under the board's authority in Chapter 79A.25.005 of the Revised Code of Washington and reflects the specific statutory requirements of Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150, Washington Administrative Code 286, and the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policies.

Who Makes 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.

Board Decisions

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

- Initial grant approval.
- A project cost increase of more than 10 percent of the project total in the grant agreement for board-funded projects. Cost increases are allowed only in certain grant programs. Review the cost increase information in this manual for more details.
- A "conversion" that changes the project site or how the site is used from that described in the grant agreement, Deed of Right, or Assignment of Rights. See *RCO's Manual 7: Long-term Obligations*.
- A significant reduction in the project's scope after receiving a grant. Typically, the board will make decisions about scope reductions if the RCO director thinks the project's evaluation score would have been different with the reduced scope. Not

included are changes that do not modify significantly the way the public uses a facility, the intended opportunity, or restoration objective funded.

- Changes in policy, for example, establishing new grant limits or eligible expenditures.
- Time extensions beyond 4 years of the board- or director-approval date.

Director Decisions

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

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

Not a Public Hearings Board

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

Where to Get Information

Recreation and Conservation Office

Natural Resources Building

1111 Washington Street

Olympia, WA 98501

[E-mail](#)

Telephone: (360) 902-3000

FAX: (360) 902-3026

Hearing Impaired Relay Service: (800) 833-6388

[Web site](#)

Mailing Address

PO Box 40917

Olympia, WA 98504-0917

RCO 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 Web site on the [ALEA 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 Web site. Each can be made available in an alternative format.

- *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 18 months, and is outlined below. While the order of the steps in this process remains consistent, visit the RCO Web site for precise dates.

Even-numbered Years

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

RCO's Web site 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 applicants to start the online application early. PRISM Online usually opens by March 1. Applicants log into PRISM Online and select the "+New Application" button to enter grant application information. RCO uses this information to assign an outdoor grants manager. This manager guides applicants through the process, reviews application materials, helps determine whether proposals are eligible, and may visit the project site to discuss site-specific details. Learn more about [PRISM's components and technical requirements](#).

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

approved a late submission in advance. Follow the requirements in the Applicant's To-Do List online.

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

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

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

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

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

Board Approves Project List. In an open public meeting, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers the recommendations of the advisory committee, written public comments submitted before the meeting, and public testimony at the meeting. The board then approves the list of projects for submittal to the Governor for inclusion in the state capital budget.

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

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

Projects that, because of their relative ranking, are beyond available funding levels are known as "alternate projects."

Governor Approves Projects. Typically, the Governor's capital budget request to the Legislature includes funding for the ALEA list.

Odd-numbered Years

Legislature Approves Projects. When it develops the state capital budget, the Legislature generally considers the project list submitted by the Governor. The Legislature may remove projects from the list submitted by the Governor.

Proof of Matching Funds. Applicants with match included in their applications must provide proof of the availability of matching funds by the match certification deadline, which is at least 1 calendar month before board approval of funding.²

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

Grant Agreement Materials. After grant awards, applicants have 2 calendar months³ to submit pre-agreement documents (checklist provided by grants managers). RCO staff then prepare and issue grant agreements. Applicants must return the signed agreements within 3 calendar months.⁴ Once the agreements are signed, the applicants, now referred to as project sponsors, may begin their projects, according to the terms of the grant agreements. Each agreement will be written and monitored for compliance by RCO staff.

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

Ongoing

Project Implementation. Sponsors must complete projects promptly. To help ensure reasonable and timely project completion, accountability, and the proper use of funds, applicants must do the following:

²Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

³Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(4)

⁴Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(5)

- Develop milestones for project implementation that ensure timely completion of projects as follows:
 - Acquisition (single site) projects 1-2 years
 - Acquisition (multi-site) projects 2-3½ years
 - Combination projects 2-3½ years
 - Development projects 2-3 years
 - Restoration projects 2-3½ years

RCO may terminate projects that do not meet critical milestones included in the grant agreement.

- Begin project implementation quickly and aggressively to show measurable progress towards meeting the milestones.
- Submit a reimbursement request at least once a year.⁵
- Submit progress reports at intervals as designated by the RCO grant agreement.
- If a time extension is needed, the sponsor must submit a written request at least 60 days before expiration of the grant agreement.

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

⁵Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040

⁶Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(7)

Section 2: Policies

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

- ✓ Program goals and objectives
- ✓ Eligible locations
- ✓ Eligible applicants
- ✓ Eligible project types and activities
- ✓ Environmental requirements
- ✓ Property requirements
- ✓ Other requirements and things to know
- ✓ Project area stewardship and ongoing obligations

Program Goals and Objectives

Board Priorities

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages projects that involve both access to aquatic lands and the enhancement, improvement, and protection of aquatic lands.

ALEA Goals

ALEA grants are awarded to projects that support one or more of the following goals:

Protection and Enhancement

- Improve the ecological function of aquatic resources through the restoration and enhancement of critical marine, estuarine, and freshwater aquatic land.
- Protect existing, high-quality aquatic land that will contribute to important ecological functions and processes.

Public Access

- Provide new opportunities for people to get to the water and access aquatic resources for recreation and education.
- Renovate or improve existing public access to aquatic lands for recreation and education.
- Create small boat and pedestrian-oriented access to aquatic lands that is designed to protect the integrity of the environment.
- Increase public awareness of aquatic lands as a finite natural resource with irreplaceable public heritage.

Program Objectives

To accomplish the above goals, the ALEA grant program seeks to fund projects that meet the following objectives:

- Preserve, enhance, or improve naturally self-sustaining aquatic and riparian areas that are priorities in the larger ecological landscape.
- Address deficiencies in public access opportunities or improve existing facilities.
- Provide immediately useable waterfront access.
- Integrate public access in a way that is compatible with the physical features of the site and minimizes impacts to the environment.
- Include interpretive or educational elements.

Choosing a Primary Purpose

A grant applicant submits a proposal and selects one of three program purpose options:

- Protection and enhancement
- Public access
- Protection and enhancement and public access

An applicant should attempt to select the option that best fits the overall project after considering the ALEA program goals and evaluation criteria for each option. RCO staff reviews the applicant's choice and may recommend changes based on the scope of work. The advisory committee makes the final recommendation as part of the technical

review of the proposal. An applicant may appeal the decision to RCO's director and, if necessary, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

An applicant must concur with the advisory committee's recommendation or meet the criteria for another option by the technical completion deadline, unless otherwise authorized by the director. The advisory committee will evaluate the project using the evaluation criteria for the final option selected.

Eligible Project Locations

ALEA projects must be associated with navigable waters of the state as defined by Washington Administrative Code 332-30-106, Revised Code of Washington 79.105, and Article 17 of the State Constitution.

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. RCO staff can help you determine whether a freshwater body meets the navigability criteria.

Land adjacent to a navigable water body may be purchased with ALEA grants only if the land will contribute to the enhancement, improvement, or protection of aquatic lands or improve public access to aquatic lands.

Eastern Washington Navigable Water Bodies

The ALEA grant program strives to fund projects across the state of Washington. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages applications from eastern Washington. Known navigable freshwater bodies in eastern Washington include the following:

- Calispell Creek
- Calispell Lake
- Lake Chelan
- Cle Elum Lake
- Columbia River
- Curlew Lake
- Deer Lake
- Diamond Lake
- Eloika Lake
- Fishtrap Lake
- Kachess Lake
- Keechelus Lake
- Liberty Lake
- Loon Lake
- Lost Lake
- Medical Lake
- Methow River (lower)
- Moses Lake
- Newman Lake
- Okanogan River
- Osoyoos Lake
- Pacific Lake
- Palmer Lake

- Pend Oreille River
- Rock Lake
- Snake River
- Spirit Lake
- Spokane River
- Sprague Lake
- Waitts Lake
- Wenatchee Lake
- Wenatchee River
- West Medical Lake
- Yakima River (portions)

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include the following:

- Cities, counties, towns
- Federally recognized Native American tribes
- Special purpose district, port district, or other political subdivision of the state if legally authorized to acquire and develop public open space, habitat, or recreation lands.
- State agencies

Federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private entities are not eligible, but are encouraged to seek a partnership with an eligible entity.

Legal Opinion for First-time Applicants

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 all 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 board grant programs.
- Receive and spend public funds including funds from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.
- Acquire and manage interests in real property for conservation or outdoor recreation purposes.
- Develop and/or provide stewardship for structures or facilities eligible under board rules or policies.

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

Eligible Project Types

Acquisition Projects

An acquisition project is one that purchases or receives a donation of fee or less than fee interests in aquatic lands or adjacent lands. 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 50 years and may not be revocable at will. Properties must be developed within 5 years from the date the property was acquired. Acquisition must result in an opportunity for reasonable public access. Additional rules for land acquisition are in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

Restoration (Enhancement) Projects

A restoration project brings a site back to its historic function as part of a natural ecosystem or improves the ecological functionality of a site. Restoration projects may include planting native vegetation, altering or removing structures, and other activities that would make the site a self-sustaining, predominantly natural ecosystem that doesn't require continual intervention to function. Restoration projects must allow or provide public access to aquatic lands. Restoration projects with interpretive or educational elements are strongly encouraged. Additional requirements for restoration projects may be found in *Manual 5: Restoration 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. Applicants submitting projects 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*.

Multi-Site Trails⁷

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

⁷Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-24

- The proposed trail or water trail development at each location meets one of the following descriptions:
 - On the same body of water in the same county for water trail systems.
 - On the same trail in the same county for land-based trail systems.
 - 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.
- Sponsors 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.

Combination Projects

Combination projects involve two or more of the following project types: acquisition, development, or restoration. To help ensure that combination projects with an acquisition component are finished on time, at least 1 month before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers approval of funding, applicants must secure the property by one of the following methods:

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

If the acquisition is for less-than-fee interest, and if not already acquired via a Waiver of Retroactivity, applicants also must provide draft copies of all leases or easements to RCO for review. Execution of the leases or easements must occur within 90 days after the funding meeting.

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

Other Considerations

Phased Projects

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board recommends that applicants consider the potential problems expensive and large-scale projects usually create and discuss phasing them with RCO staff. Phased projects are subject to the following rules:

- 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 not be dependent on the completion of future phases or work.
- 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 current project proposals.

Puget Sound Projects

The law⁸ prevents the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board from funding any project in this grant program that is in conflict with the Puget Sound Partnership's *Action Agenda*. A project may be in conflict with the *Action Agenda* if it results in water quality degradation in Puget Sound or the loss of ecosystem processes, structure, or functions, and the impacts are not fully mitigated using state-approved protocols.

An applicant for a project in the Puget Sound area, which is defined as the geographic areas within Water Resource Inventory Areas 1 through 19, inclusive, must include in the adopted resolution or application authorization a statement certifying that the project is not in conflict with the *Action Agenda*.

The law⁹ requires the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to give funding consideration to projects in this program that are referenced in the *Action Agenda*. Applicants for projects in the Puget Sound area may address a question in the evaluation criteria that addresses whether the project is referenced in the *Action Agenda*. There are no additional points for this question, but the evaluator has the ability within the current point system to give points based on the answer to this question. The [Action Agenda](#) may be found on the Puget Sound Partnership's Web site.

⁸Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150

⁹Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150

Eligible Project Activities

Acquiring Land

Grants typically are used for 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

Grants typically are used to improve, renovate, or provide new facilities that help people get to the waterfront for water-dependent activities. Examples include the following:

- Fishing piers and platforms
- Interpretive signs and kiosks
- Launch and moorage facilities for small boats¹⁰
- Non-motorized circulation paths or access routes, trails, ramps, stairs
- Open-water swim areas
- Park furniture including benches and tables
- Parking lots and entry roads
- Restrooms
- Viewpoints, platforms, blinds for observing wildlife

Development projects including interpretive or educational features are strongly encouraged. Additional guidelines for development projects are found in *Manual 4: Development Projects*. If applicants propose developing archery or firearm ranges, they must meet RCO's safety policy found in *Manual 11: Firearms and Archery Range Recreation*.¹¹

Restoring Habitat

Guidelines for restoration and enhancement projects are in *Manual 5: Restoration Projects*. Eligible project elements include the following:

¹⁰Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2004-03. "Small boats" are non-motorized boats that may be launched by hand, or motorboats under 16 feet and with motors of less than 10 horsepower.

¹¹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-21

- Ecological restoration
- Equipment and boot decontamination facilities
- Estuary and shoreline restoration
- Fencing, gates, and signs
- In-stream habitat such as bank stabilization, channel reconfiguration, and woody materials placement
- In-stream passage improvements
- Habitat enhancement such as native plantings and invasive plant removal
- Removal of structures like bulkheads, dikes, levees, tide gates, and piling
- Site augmentation to establish restoration elements
- Transplanting and re-vegetation
- Upland erosion control

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

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

Incurring Pre-agreement Costs¹²

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

For acquisition projects, most incidental costs incurred before an RCO grant agreement are allowable for reimbursement. 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*.

¹²Washington Administrative Code 286-13-085 and Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2017-29

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

Ineligible Project Activities

Several sources are used to determine project eligibility. The following project elements are ineligible for ALEA grants:

- Animal species introduction or propagation, other than biological controls for invasive species, etc.
- Concessionaire buildings or concessionaire.
- Costs associated with meeting a mitigation requirement unrelated to the funded project. See Mitigation Funds as Match below.
- Costs not directly related to implementing the project such as indirect and overhead charges.
- Crop plantings and other agricultural activities.
- 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 the production of sport fish populations.
- Indoor facilities such as swimming pools, community centers, museums, and interpretive or environmental learning centers.
- Offices, shops, residences, and meeting and storage rooms.
- Operation and maintenance costs.
- Legally mandated clean-up or costs of actions required as mitigation not associated with the approved project. Costs associated with mitigation directly related to the funded project are eligible, provided the cost does not exceed 25 percent of the total project cost.
- Monitoring costs related to long-term compliance (i.e. conservation easements).
- 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.

Applicants may want to review, *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*, *Manual 4: Development Projects*, and *Manual 5: Restoration Projects* for other ineligible costs.

Environmental Requirements

Cultural Resources Review

[Governor's Executive Order 05-05](#), Archaeological and Cultural Resources, directs state agencies to review all acquisition and construction projects for potential impacts to cultural resources¹³ to ensure that reasonable action is taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to these resources. The federal government, through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, requires the same compliance for projects with federal involvement, for example, projects on federal lands, with federal funds, or those that require a federal permit.

Review Process

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

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

Sponsors must complete the consultation process and all requirements must be satisfied before any ground-disturbing activities (including demolition) may occur. Ground disturbance or demolition started without approval will be considered a breach of the grant agreement. Typically, cultural resources approval will be authorized as part of the notice to proceed.

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

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

¹³Cultural resources are archeological and historical sites and artifacts, and traditional tribal areas or items of religious, ceremonial, and social uses.

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 grant sponsors to consider how their projects may spread invasive species, and work to reduce that possibility. Invasive species can be spread unintentionally during construction, maintenance, and restoration activities. Here is how it could happen:

- Driving a car or truck to a field site and moving soil embedded with seeds or fragments of invasive plants in the vehicle's tires to another site. New infestations can begin miles away as the seeds and fragments drop off the tires and the undercarriage of the vehicle.
- 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 introduction and 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.

Sustainability

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

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

Property Requirements

Landowner Acknowledgement for Acquisition Projects¹⁴

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

Control of the Land (Development or Restoration Projects)

To protect investments made by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and to assure public access to those investments, sponsors must have adequate control of project sites to construct, operate, and maintain the areas for the term required by the grant program and grant agreement. This "control and tenure" may be through land ownership, a lease, use agreement, or easement. See *Manual 4: Development Projects* or *Manual 5: Restoration Projects* for more information.

Projects on State-owned Aquatic Lands¹⁵

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 60 days after board funding approval to show control and tenure for the site. The lease or easement is required before the project will be placed under agreement, unless RCO's director approves an extension in advance. Review the control and tenure requirements in *Manual 4: Development Projects* or *Manual 5: Restoration Projects*.

¹⁴Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2010-34

¹⁵Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2018-03

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

Applicants who need to secure a use authorization meeting board policy must do all the following:

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

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

Other Requirements and Things to Know

Number of Grant Proposal Allowed

In general, RCO does not limit the number of grant proposals from a single applicant during the biennial grant cycle. However, each application must be for only one park location or site. Each application may contain one or more eligible activities.

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 applicants contact staff to discuss options for phasing costly, interrelated, or complex project proposals.

See "Multi-site Trails" earlier in this section for exceptions.

Accessibility

Facilities or elements¹⁶ 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.

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 Web site 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.

Public Disclosure Rules

RCO records and files are public records that are subject to the Public Records Act.¹⁷ More information about [RCO's disclosure practices](#) is available online.

Project Area Stewardship and Ongoing Obligations¹⁸

An RCO grant comes with long-term obligations to maintain and protect the project area¹⁹ after a project is complete. The long-term obligations are in RCO's grant agreement. A [sample grant agreement](#) may be found on RCO's Web site.

RCO recognizes that changes occur over time and that some facilities may become obsolete or the land needed for something else. The law discourages casual discards of land and facilities by ensuring that grant sponsors replace the lost value when changes or conversions of use take place.

In general, the project area funded with an RCO grant must remain dedicated to the use as originally funded, such as outdoor recreation, habitat protection, farmland preservation, or salmon recovery purposes, for as long as defined in the grant

¹⁶A 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).

¹⁷Revised Code of Washington 42.56

¹⁸Revised Code of Washington 79A.25, Washington Administrative Code 286, RCO's grant agreement standard terms and conditions, and *Manual 7: Funded Projects*.

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

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 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 sponsors to resolve the issue. Unresolved, identified issues could result in restrictions on applying for or receiving future grants.

Section 3:

Money Matters

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

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

Grant Limits

The grant limits for each project type is shown in the table below. ALEA funds may not exceed 75 percent of a project's total cost²⁰

Category	Maximum Grant for Each Project
Acquisition	\$1 million
Development	\$500,000
Restoration	\$500,000
Combination project (acquisition with either development or restoration)	\$1 million, not more than \$500,000 may be for development or restoration costs.
Combination project (development and restoration)	\$500,000

Cost Increases Not Allowed

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

²⁰Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2020-09

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.

Architecture and engineering costs for development, renovation, and restoration projects are limited to 20 percent of the total development, renovation, and restoration project cost.

Additional information about eligibility and reimbursement maximums for these elements is contained in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* (administration costs), *Manual 4: Development Projects* (architectural and engineering costs) and *Manual 5: Restoration Projects*, (architectural and engineering costs).

Match Requirements

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.²¹

Applicants must contribute matching resources of at least 25 percent of the project's total project cost.²²

Eligible Match

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

- Appropriations and cash
- Bonds—council or voter
- Conservation futures
- Corrections labor
- Donations—the value of using cash, equipment use, labor, land, materials, property rights, or services (see note below)

²¹Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

²²Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2020-09

- Force account—the value of using sponsor’s equipment, labor, or materials (see note below)
- Grants—federal, state, local and private (see notes below)
- Local impact and mitigation fees (see note 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

- Existing sponsor assets such as real property or developments.
- Costs that are double counted. (A cost incurred by a sponsor in a project that has been reimbursed by RCO shall not be used as a match on another RCO project.)
- Cost that are not eligible for grant assistance.
- Cost that are not an integral part of the project scope.
- Cost associated with meeting a mitigation requirement for another project or action (e.g. permit requirement Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing, Habitat Conservation Plan, legal settlement, etc.). See *Mitigation Funds as Match* below.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Match Requirements

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants are intended to be the last source of funding for a project. In other words, before the board awards the grant, the required match must be secured so the project may move forward. Board grants also are intended to supplement the existing capacity of a sponsor. They are not intended to supplant existing programs or fund projects that would have been undertaken without grant funding.²³ Therefore, applicants should not seek grants from the board to replenish their cash accounts. Grants should be used to expand an applicant’s existing capacity to provide outdoor recreation facilities to its users.

All matching resources must meet all 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.

²³Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

- 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 public 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.

The board may require the applicant to provide a portion of its matching resources in local resources.²⁴

Match Availability and Certification

To help ensure Recreation and Conservation Funding Board projects are ready for implementation upon approval, applicants must have matching funds available for expenditure before the board approves funding. All applicants are required to sign and submit Certification of Match Forms to ensure their projects are included in the funding recommendation. Applicants are advised to plan for projects whose match depends on citizen votes or passage of ballot measures. This certification is due at least 1 calendar month before Recreation and Conservation Funding Board action.²⁵ The forms and deadlines for certifying match are on the RCO Web site.

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

When another Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant is used as match, the certification of match will be tentative, conditioned on receipt of the other grant or on the sponsor providing the match from other resources. To prevent a backlog of unspent grants, the sponsor must finish the project by the earliest completion date of the two grants.

Match Reduction²⁶

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted the following policy to reduce match for 2020 grant applicants.

²⁴Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

²⁵Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

²⁶Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2020-09

Federal Disaster

If the applicant is a city, town, county, tribe, special purpose district, or state agency in Washington State, the minimum match is 25 percent for applications submitted by June 1, 2020.

Additional requirements are as follows:

- The maximum reduced match for a single project is \$500,000.
- All match may be provided in the form of a state or federal contribution.
- If a project is sponsored by more than one organization, the minimum match shall be based on the primary sponsor of the application.
- Grant requests using this federal disaster match policy shall be limited to two per jurisdiction, per program for each biennium.

Policy Intent

- Reduce the match required for jurisdictions whose ability to raise match is constrained.
- Provide relief to agencies and organizations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic so they may continue their parks and recreation investments in support of public health, community development, and economic development goals.

Types of Match

Donations

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

Donated land must expand existing habitat land or stand on its own as a viable recreation or conservation 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

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

Other Grants

In some cases, a sponsor may use funds awarded from a separate grant program as its match. Other grants are eligible as long as the purposes are similar and grant sources do not restrict or diminish the use, availability, or value of the project area.

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

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

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Grants as Match²⁷

Another Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant may be used to help meet the match requirements if the following criteria are met:

- The grants are not from the same Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant program.
- Only elements eligible in both grant programs are counted as the match.
- Each grant is evaluated independently and on its own merits, as if the match were coming from elsewhere.
- The grant applications are submitted in the same biennium.²⁸

For evaluation scoring, an RCO grant used as match will not count toward the award of matching share points.²⁹

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

²⁷Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2005-24

²⁸Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

²⁹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-06

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

Records and Reimbursement

Sponsors Must Pay First

RCO pays grants through reimbursement. Grant sponsors 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 costs incurred and compliance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

The amount of reimbursement may never exceed the cash spent on the project.

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 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.

Complete reimbursement procedures are found in *Manual 8: Reimbursements*.

Records

Sponsors 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.

Section 4: Project Evaluations

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

- ✓ How project evaluation works
- ✓ Advisory committee
- ✓ Evaluation criteria

How Project Evaluation Works

Project evaluation is the competitive process adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to guide its grant awards.³⁰ It is based on a set of board-approved evaluation questions. The questions are created from statutory and other criteria developed through a public process. The evaluation questions for each project purpose are on the following pages.

There are two sections to the evaluation criteria. In the first section, the advisory committee uses subjective criteria to score each project. Scores are based on each applicant's response to evaluation questions, graphics presented during the evaluation meeting, and summary application material made available in advance of the presentation.

In the second section, RCO staff scores the projects using objective measures, such as matching share, population, and conformance to growth management planning. Scores are based on material submitted by applicants and information obtained from the state Office of Financial Management and the Department of Commerce.

Scores from sections one and two are combined for a project's total evaluation score. The resulting ranked list is the basis for funding recommendations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, which makes the final funding decisions in an open public meeting.

³⁰Washington Administrative Code 286-13-020

Evaluating Projects

Each project is evaluated and scored to determine which will be submitted to the Governor's Office for funding consideration. Applicants are required to make an in-person presentation. **Note: During the 2020 grant cycle, RCO will host online, virtual review and evaluation meetings only. This change is for applications submitted by June 1, 2020.**

While evaluation meetings are open to anyone, they are not public hearings. As such, only authorized applicant representatives may address the evaluation team. At these meetings, an RCO staff member serves as moderator. Scoring is confidential. Following the meeting, *all* scores are tabulated and compiled to establish a ranked list of projects.

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.³¹ The board gives preference through evaluation scoring to towns, cities, and county applicants who are required to plan under Act.³² Scoring for compliance with the Growth Management Act and other staff-scored evaluation criteria is 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; out of compliance status results in a minus one score.

At the time of application, applicants should consult their organizations' planning departments or contact the Washington State Department of Commerce's [Growth Management Act Division](#) to determine their 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 and/or restoration 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 and/or development and/or restoration projects.

³¹Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250

³²Revised Code of Washington 36.60A

Advisory Committee

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

In recruiting members for the committee, RCO seeks to appoint people who possess a statewide perspective and are recognized for their experience and knowledge relative to aquatic lands, habitat, ecosystem functions, recreation, and public access issues.

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

More information about the [advisory committee](#) is on RCO's Web site.

Do Not Fund Recommendation³³

Occasionally during evaluations, the advisory committee may express significant concerns about a project, such that it would like to discuss a "Do Not Fund" recommendation. If this occurs, the advisory committee may discuss its concerns at the post-evaluation meeting, which takes place after application scores are tabulated.

If a "Do Not Fund" recommendation is scheduled to be considered, RCO will notify the applicant in writing, identify the significant concerns expressed by the evaluators, and invite the applicant to attend the post-evaluation meeting to respond to questions. The applicant also may submit a written response to the evaluators' concerns. To ensure all projects are treated equally, no additional testimony from applicants or visitors is taken at the post-evaluation meeting. The advisory committee determines a "Do Not Fund" recommendation by a simple majority vote of the committee members that participated in application evaluations.

RCO staff will forward to the board a summary of the "Do Not Fund" recommendation and any committee member comments. The board will consider the advisory committee's recommendation at a regularly scheduled public meeting, before the ranked list is adopted (consideration may take place at the same meeting, but the "Do Not Fund" recommendation will be discussed before the ranked list is adopted). The board retains discretion in awarding all grant funds.

³³Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-06

Evaluation Criteria

The ALEA program strives to fund projects focused on the following two main program purposes:

- **Protection and Enhancement:** to improve or protect aquatic lands for public purposes
- **Public Access:** to provide and improve public access to aquatic lands.³⁴

Below are three tables that reflect the evaluation questions based on the two project purposes above and the seven project types below:

- Acquisition
- Acquisition, Development, and Restoration
- Acquisition and Development
- Acquisition and Restoration
- Development
- Development and Restoration
- Restoration

³⁴Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(1)

Projects Meeting **Both Purposes: Protection and Enhancement** AND Public Access Projects

Project Types: Acquisition; Acquisition, Development, and Restoration; Development and Restoration

Question	Purpose	Project Type	Points	
Scored by the Advisory Committee				
1	Fit with Protection Goals	Protection and Enhancement	All Project Types	10
2	Fit with Public Access Goals	Public Access	All Project Types	10
3	Need for Protection	Protection and Enhancement	All Project Types	10
4	Need for Public Access	Public Access	All Project Types	10
5	Suitability for Protection	Protection and Enhancement	All Project Types	5
6	Suitability for Public Access	Public Access	All Project Types	5
7	Urgency and Viability	All Purposes	Acquisition	10
			Acquisition, Development, and Restoration	5
8	Restoration Design and Viability	Protection and Enhancement	Development and Restoration	5
			Acquisition, Development, and Restoration	2.5
9	Development Design and Viability	Public Access	Development and Restoration	5
			Acquisition, Development, and Restoration	2.5
10	Community Support	All Purposes	All Project Types	10
Scored by RCO Staff				
11	Growth Management Act Preference	All Purposes	All Project Types	0
12	Proximity to People	All Purposes	All Project Types	1
			Total	71

Projects Meeting the **Single Purpose** of Protection and Enhancement

Project Types: Acquisition, Acquisition and Restoration, and Restoration

Question	Purpose	Project Type	Points
Scored by the Advisory Committee			
1	Fit with Protection Goals	Protection and Enhancement	All Project Types 15
3	Need for Protection	Protection and Enhancement	All Project Types 20
5	Suitability for Protection	Protection and Enhancement	All Project Types 10
7	Urgency and Viability	All	Acquisition 10
			Acquisition and Restoration 5
8	Restoration Design and Viability	Protection and Enhancement	Restoration 10
			Acquisition and Restoration 5
10	Community Support	All	All Project Types 10
Scored by RCO Staff			
11	Growth Management Act Preference	All	All Project Types 0
12	Proximity to People	All	All Project Types 1
Total			66

Projects Meeting the **Single Purpose** of Public Access

Project Types: Acquisition, Acquisition and Development, and Development

Question	Purpose	Project Type	Points	
Scored by the Advisory Committee				
2	Fit with Public Access Goals	Public Access	All Project Types	15
4	Need for Public Access	Public Access	All Project Types	20
6	Suitability for Public Access	Public Access	All Project Types	10
7	Urgency and Viability	All	Acquisition	10
			Acquisition and Development	5
9	Development Design and Viability	Public Access	Development	10
			Acquisition and Development	5
10	Community Support	All	All Project Types	10
Scored by RCO Staff				
11	Growth Management Act Preference	All	All Project Types	0
12	Proximity to People	All	All Project Types	1
			Total	66

Evaluation Questions

Because not everyone answers every question, applicants must look in the charts above and note which questions they need to answer based on the project purpose and project type.

Scored by the Advisory Committee

- 1. Fit with Protection Goals.** How well does this project fit the goals to enhance, improve, or protect aquatic lands?³⁵

Additional guidance on ALEA program goals and objectives are in Section 1 of this manual.

- How will this project do the following:
 - Protect existing, high value aquatic land that will contribute to important ecological functions and processes?
 - Improve the ecological function of aquatic resources through the restoration and enhancement of critical marine, estuarine, and freshwater aquatic land?
 - Preserve or establish naturally, self-sustaining aquatic and riparian areas that are a high priority in the larger ecological landscape?
- What are the environmental benefits of the proposed project?³⁶

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points. The points for projects meeting both protection and enhancement and public access purposes are multiplied later by 2. The points for projects meeting only the protection and enhancement purpose are multiplied later by 3.

- 2. Fit with Public Access Goals.** How well does this project improve or provide public access to aquatic lands?³⁷

- How will this project do the following:
 - Provide new opportunities for people to get to the water and access aquatic resources for recreational and educational purposes?

³⁵Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150

³⁶Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(2)

³⁷Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150

- Renovate or improve existing public access to aquatic lands for recreational and educational use?
- Create non-motorized boating or small boat and pedestrian-oriented access to aquatic lands that is designed to protect the integrity of the environment?
- Integrate public access in a way that is compatible with the physical features of the site?
- Increase public awareness of aquatic lands as a finite natural resource with irreplaceable public heritage?
- What are the environmental benefits of the proposed project?³⁸

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points. The points for projects meeting both protection and enhancement and public access purposes are multiplied later by 2. The points for projects meeting only the public access purpose are multiplied later by 3.

3. Need for Protection. What is the need for this project and how will this project address the priorities for underserved populations and health in the *Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan 2018-2022*?

- How does the project address priorities in an approved watershed plan, shoreline master plan, species recovery plan, or other state or local plan? Is the project mentioned specifically in the plan?
- How does the project enhance or complement other nearby protection and enhancement efforts in the watershed or on the shoreline?
- How is the need for this project supported in studies, surveys, and other analyses?
- Will the project benefit sensitive, threatened, or endangered species or critical plant and animal communities? If so, how?
- For Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19, how is the project referenced in the *Action Agenda* developed by the Puget Sound Partnership? The [Action Agenda](#) can be found at the Puget Sound Partnership's Web site. Evaluators should ignore this question for projects outside Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19.

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points. The points for projects meeting both protection and enhancement and public access purposes are multiplied later by 2. The points

³⁸Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(2)

for projects meeting only the protection and enhancement purpose are multiplied later by 4.

Revised October 2017, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2017-32.

4. Need for Public Access. What is the need for this project and how will this project address the priorities for underserved populations and health in the *Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan 2018-2022*?

- Does the project address the priorities contained in an approved public access or recreational plan or other state or local plan? Is it mentioned specifically in the plan?
- How is the need for this project supported in studies, surveys, and other analysis?
- How does this project provide opportunities for unserved or underserved recreational need, especially for water dependent uses?
- Does the project include interpretive or educational elements?
- For Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19, how is the project referenced in the Action Agenda developed by the Puget Sound Partnership? The [Action Agenda](#) can be found at the Puget Sound Partnership's Web site. Evaluators should ignore this question for projects outside Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19.

To assist you in answering the questions about underserved populations and the health recommendations, locate your project on the [Grant Applicant Data Tool](#) to determine whether your project is in a census tract in which one or more of the populations listed below are present. You also may provide more specific data about the demographics and health conditions of the population within the service area of the proposed project.

Demographic Measures for Underserved Populations

- The median household income level in the census tract where the project is located is below the median statewide household income level (\$66,174 as of 2017).
- Based on percentage, there are more people of color in the census tract where the project is located than the statewide percentage (31 percent as of 2017).
- Based on percentage, there are more people with a disability in the census tract where the project is located than the statewide percentage (13 percent as of 2017).

Opportunities for Health Improvements

- The body mass index for ages 16-19 in the census tract where the project is located is higher than the statewide body mass index (22.94 as of 2017).
 - The mortality rate in the census tract where the project is located is higher than the statewide mortality rate (682.91 as of 2017).
- ▲ Point Range: 0-5 points. The points for projects meeting both protection and enhancement and public access purposes are multiplied later by 2. The points for projects meeting only the public access purpose are multiplied later by 4.

Revised October 2017, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2017-32.

5. Suitability for Protection. Is the site well suited for the intended uses?

- Are the location and natural features of the site, for example the size, topography, soil conditions, and natural amenities, well suited for the intended uses?
 - What are the historic and current human uses of the site?
 - What are the historic and current ecological functions of the site?
 - What steps will be taken to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to the site once it has been acquired, restored, enhanced, or developed? Possible impacts to address could include flooding, extreme tides, storms, sources of contamination, and long-term impacts due to development and climate change.
 - Are there similar sites available near the area that provide a similar opportunity or is this property a one-of-a-kind opportunity to address an ecological need?
 - Is the site size and configuration sufficient to meet the specified ecological goals on its own? Possible things to address include water quantity and flow patterns at the site, patch size and shape, edge and interior habitat, and habitat corridors.
 - Is the site contiguous with other conservation areas or actions that address similar ecological functions and processes?
- ▲ Point Range: 0-5 points. The points for projects meeting only the protection and enhancement purpose are multiplied later by 2.

6. Suitability for Public Access. Is the site well suited for the intended uses?

- Are the location and natural features of the site, for example the size, topography, soil conditions, and natural amenities, well suited for the intended uses?
- What are the historic and current human uses of the site?
- What are the historic and current ecological functions of the site?
- What steps will be taken to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to the site once it has been acquired, or developed? Possible impacts to address could include flooding, extreme tides, storms, sources of contamination, and long-term impacts due to development and climate change.
- Are there similar sites available near the area that provide similar access opportunities or is this property a unique opportunity to address a specific access need?
- Can the site support facilities necessary for the intended type and quantity of use?
- Is the site of adequate size to accommodate the facilities proposed?

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points. The points for projects meeting only the public access purpose are multiplied later by 2.

7. Urgency and Viability. Only acquisition and combination projects (acquisition and development and/or restoration) answer this question.

- Why purchase this particular property at this time? How viable are the anticipated future uses and benefits of the site?
- If ALEA funding is not made available, will high priority aquatic land habitat and/or public access be lost?
- What are the alternatives to acquiring the property?
- Is there an immediate threat or will the property be available for acquisition or enhancement at a later time?
- What is the likelihood that the property will be converted to a non-recreational use or that aquatic habitat resources will be impacted or lost if the property is not acquired now?
- Is there a threat to the public availability of the resources at the site?

- Will the site be available immediately for public use or will the site require some improvement to make it available for public use? If improvements are necessary, when will the improvements be made?
- What is the nature and condition of existing surrounding land use as well as future factors such as shoreline designation, zoning, or comprehensive or project-specific planning that may impact the viability of the site?
- Describe land management practices in the area that may affect the viability of the site?
- Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available for that maintenance?

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points. The points for acquisition-only projects are multiplied later by 2.

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8. Restoration Design and Viability. Only restoration or combination projects that include restoration answer this question.

- How does the project address the stated restoration or enhancement need? Is the project well designed? Will the project lead to sustainable ecological functions and processes over time?
- How will the site be treated to re-establish the desired ecological processes and functions?
- What habitat functions will be enhanced or restored?
- How well does the proposed restoration or enhancement design or actions address desired long-term results?
- What is the certainty that the restoration or enhancement actions will be successful?
- Will the project require decreasing involvement over time?
- What is the habitat quality and land management practices in the area that may affect the viability of the site?
- What is the nature and condition of existing surrounding land use as well as future concerns such as shoreline designation, zoning, or comprehensive or project-specific planning?

- How will the site be managed over time to maintain the desired ecological processes and functions?
- Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available to do it?

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points. The points for restoration-only projects are multiplied later by 2. The points for projects that combine acquisition, development, and restoration are multiplied later by 0.5 point.

9. Development Design and Viability. Only development or combination projects that include development answer this question.

- How well does the project address the stated public access need? Is the project well designed? Will the project result in public access to aquatic lands that protect the integrity of the environment?

Some design elements that may be considered include accuracy of cost estimate, aesthetics, maintenance requirements, materials, phasing, risk management, recreational experience, spatial relationships, universal accessibility, and user-friendly design.

- Does the project demonstrate good design criteria; does it make the best use of the site?
- Does the design provide equal access for all people, including those with disabilities?
- Does the proposed development protect the natural resources on site? For example, does the project include low impact development techniques, green infrastructure, or environmentally preferred building products?
- Is the site design visually integrated into the landscape features?
- How will the site be designed to handle projected use?
- What is the nature and condition of existing surrounding land use as well as future concerns such as shoreline designation, zoning, or comprehensive or project-specific planning?
- How likely are the proposed public use facilities given the required regulatory and proprietary approvals, funding, etc.?
- Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available to do it?

- What outdoor environmental education elements are included in the project?
 - How much effort is dedicated to interpreting the value of the aquatic lands?
 - Are the themes or concepts appropriate to the specific site?
 - Does the content in the display match the intended audience?
 - Is the interpretive display accessible to wide variety of users?

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points. The points for development-only projects are multiplied later by 2. The points for projects that combine acquisition, development, and restoration are multiplied later by 0.5 point.

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10. Community Support.

- To what extent has the community been provided with an adequate opportunity to become informed about the project and provide input? What is the level of community support for the project?

Examples of community involvement may include public meetings, notices in local papers, newsletters, media coverage, and involvement in a local planning process that includes the specific project.

Examples of community support may include voter-approved initiatives, bond issues, or referenda; endorsements or other support from advisory boards and user or "friends" groups; letters; letters to the editor; or private contributions to the project.

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points, which is multiplied later by 2.

Scored by RCO Staff. Applicants Do Not Answer in Evaluation Session

11. Growth Management Act Preference. Has the applicant³⁹ made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?⁴⁰ State law requires the following:

- A. Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant has adopted a

³⁹Applicant in this question means counties, cities, and towns only. This segment of the question does not apply to state agencies, tribes, nonprofits, or lead entities.

⁴⁰Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250

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:
- 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; or
 - Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than 6 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.

Scores for this this question are based on information from the state Department of Commerce, Growth Management Division. If an agency's comprehensive plan, development regulations, or amendments have been appealed to a Growth Management Act Hearings Board, they cannot be penalized during the period of appeal. Scoring occurs after RCO's technical completion deadline.

▲ Point Range: -1 to 0 points.

- 1 point The applicant does not meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250).
- 0 points The applicant meets the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.
- 0 points The applicant is a state, tribal, or federal agency.

12. Proximity to People. RCO is required by law to give funding preference to projects in populated areas. Populated areas are defined 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.⁴¹

⁴¹Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

- Is the project in an area meeting this definition?

▲ Point Range: 0-1 point.

0 points No

1 point Yes