



# Recreation and Conservation Funding Board



## Recreation and Conservation Office

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## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Members

- Ted Willhite, Chair, Seattle
- Shiloh Burgess, Wenatchee
- Kathryn Gardow, Seattle
- Henry Hix, Okanogan
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle
- Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Department of Natural Resources
- State Parks and Recreation Commission

## Voting in a Tax

The board began in 1964 when citizens voted for Initiative 215, which created the board and gave it authority to spend gas taxes from boaters to develop boating facilities.

## 2019-2021 Budget

- Operating \$7 million
- Capital \$292 million

## Keeping Washington a Great Place to Live, Work, and Play

Washington is blessed with an abundance of rich, natural lands that provide jobs, attract tourists, and give residents places to recreate and rejuvenate.

Each year, people spend \$26.5 billion on outdoor recreation in Washington, supporting 264,000 jobs and many different businesses here.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, conserving parks and other natural areas provides vital habitat for wildlife, increases property values, and ensures that Washington remains a great place to live.

## One-Stop Shopping for State Investments

With so much at stake, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board ensures that only the best projects receive funding. The board administers ten state and federal grant programs that fund a variety of organizations to build parks, trails, ball fields, firearm and archery ranges, and boating facilities; conserve and restore wildlife habitat; and preserve farmland and working forests. The board sets the criteria and ensures projects meet state, local, and national priorities for outdoor recreation and conservation. Consider:

- The board's grants are the largest source of state funding for local parks and trails.
- The board is a significant financial contributor to conserving some of the state's most pristine natural areas for plants and animals at risk of extinction.
- The board offers the only state grants for protecting important farmland from being converted by development.

## Involving Citizens

All of the board's grant processes are open and competitive. Generally, grant applications are accepted in even-numbered years. The grant applications first are reviewed by panels of volunteers, experts, and staff. The panels weigh the merits of the applications against established grant program criteria, strategic plans, and in some cases, national priorities. They compile ranked lists of projects that the board considers for funding. In some cases, the board makes recommendations for funding to the Governor, Legislature, or federal government.

## Funding

Funding for the grants comes from federal funds, state gas taxes, fees, and the state's sale of general obligation bonds.

## Grants Awarded

Since 1966, the board has awarded more than \$1.5 billion for nearly 6,300 projects in every county of the state.

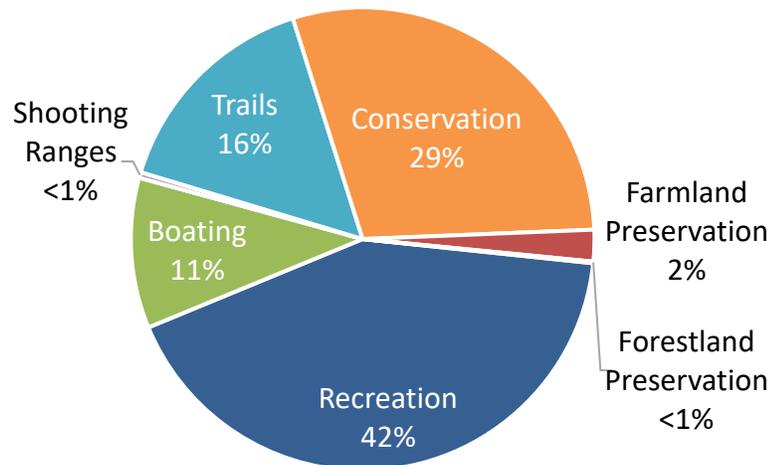
Grant recipients have contributed more than \$1 billion, bringing the total investment to nearly \$2.7 billion in Washington's great outdoors.

This investment is protected long-term through contracts managed by the Recreation and Conservation Office.

## Other Responsibilities

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board is more than a grant-making agency. In addition, the board has a number of other responsibilities. For example, the board has created statewide plans for recreation, boating, and trails to enable the state to qualify for federal grants. The board also hosts a statewide Web site for boaters called the [Boating Information Portal](#). The board also frequently completes reports and legislative studies on a range of topics including public ownership of lands, recreation trends, and levels of service for park departments.

**Grant Awards  
Percent of \$1.5 Billion  
1966-2020**



<sup>1</sup>Mojica, J., Fletcher, A., 2020. *Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State, 2020 Update*. Earth Economics. Tacoma, WA, p. 3.