

Proposed Agenda Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Regular Meeting



April 8, 2015

State Parks Headquarters, Robert B. Moran Room,
1111 Israel Road SW, Tumwater, WA 98501

April 9, 2015

Natural Resources Building, Room 172, Olympia, WA 98504

Time: Opening sessions will begin as shown; all other times are approximate.

Order of Presentation: In general, each agenda item will include a presentation, followed by board discussion and then public comment. The board makes decisions following the public comment portion of the agenda item.

Public Comment: If you wish to comment at the meeting, please fill out a comment card and provide it to staff. Please be sure to note on the card if you are speaking about a particular agenda topic. The chair will call you to the front at the appropriate time.

You also may submit written comments to the Board by mailing them to the RCO, attn: Wendy Loosle, Board Liaison, at the address above or at wendy.loosle@rco.wa.gov. Please send comments by 3:00 p.m. on Friday, April 3 so they can be distributed to board members.

Public comment will be limited to 3 minutes per person.

Special Accommodations: If you need special accommodations to participate in this meeting, please notify us at 360/725-3943 or TDD 360/902-1996

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8

*The first day of the meeting will be held at State Parks Headquarters in Tumwater

OPENING

9:00 a.m. 1. Retreat Welcome and Introduction

9:10 a.m. 2. Review agenda and retreat objectives

9:15 a.m. 3. Decide ground rules and decision-making framework for retreat

9:20 a.m. 4. Opening Roundtable

- What's on your mind?

10:05 a.m. 5. Discuss Statutory Mission

- What stands out to you as the most critical part of the board's mission?
- What is going well and what could use more effort?
- What does the board and applicant survey tell us?

11:05 a.m. BREAK

11:20 a.m. 6. Discuss 2012 Strategic Plan

- Is the plan still current?
- Does anything need updating?
- Does it align with the statutory mission and duties of the board?

12:20 p.m. LUNCH

12:50 p.m. 7. Discuss Agency Performance Measures

- What do the performance measures currently tell you?
 - Do the performance measures align with the board's mission and strategic plan?
 - What kinds of things does the board want to measure to demonstrate progress?
-

1:50 p.m. BREAK

2:05 p.m. 8. Discuss 2015-17 Work Plan

- What are the things that the board has already set in motion?
 - What other issues would the board like to work on?
 - What are the agency's most pressing policy needs for grant program management?
-

3:35 p.m. BREAK

3:50 p.m. 9. Next Steps/Summary

4:20 p.m. 10. Closing Remarks

- In one minute, what is the most important thing you are taking away from this retreat?
-

4:30 p.m. ADJOURN FOR THE DAY

THURSDAY, APRIL 9

*The second day of the meeting will be held at the Natural Resources Building in Olympia

OPENING AND MANAGEMENT REPORTS

9:00 a.m. Call to Order

- A. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum
 - B. Review and Approval of Agenda
-

Chair

9:05 a.m. 1. Consent Calendar (Decision)

- A. Approve Board Meeting Minutes – October 29-30, 2014
 - B. Approve Time Extensions
 - [11-1173D](#), USFS, Franklin Falls Trail Renovations, Phase 2
 - [11-1144D](#), Whatcom County, Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Replacement 2011
 - [10-1383D](#), State Parks, Lake Sammamish Beach Renovation and Boardwalk
 - [10-1453R](#), DNR, Camas Meadows Rare Plant Habitat Restoration
 - [10-1660D](#), City of Sumner, Trail Segments #4 and #5
 - [10-1458](#), DNR, Dabob Bay Natural Area 2010
 - [10-1629](#), WDFW, Sinlahekin Ecosystem Restoration, Phase 2
 - C. Recognition of Service for Don Hoch
- Resolution 2015-01
-

Chair

9:10 a.m. 2. Recap of the Retreat and Outcomes to be Incorporated into the Biennial Workplan

Chair

- 9:30 a.m. 3. Director's Report (Briefing)**
- A. Director's Report
 - Travel Meeting for September
 - Survey Results
 - B. Policy Report and Legislative Update
 - C. Grant Management Report
 - Featured Projects
 - D. Performance Report (*written only*)
 - E. Fiscal Report (*written only*)
- Kaleen Cottingham*
- Wendy Brown*
Marguerite Austin
Grant Staff
-

- 9:55 a.m. 4. State Agency Partner Reports**
- Department of Natural Resources
 - State Parks and Recreation Commission
 - Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Jed Herman*
Peter Herzog
Joe Stohr
-

10:10 a.m. General Public Comment for issues not identified as agenda items. Please limit comments to 3 minutes. *Chair*

BOARD BUSINESS: BRIEFINGS

- 10:15 a.m. 5. Overview of the Outdoor Recreation Economic Study** *Wendy Brown*
-

- 10:35 a.m. 6. Draft Criteria for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Farmland Preservation Program** *Leslie Connelly*
-

10:50 a.m. BREAK

- 11:05 a.m. 7. Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Update - Phase III Overview** *Leslie Connelly*
-

BOARD BUSINESS: DECISIONS

- 11:20 a.m. 8. Final Youth Athletic Facility Program Policies and Evaluation Criteria** *Leslie Connelly*
- Resolution 2015-02
- Public comment.** Please limit comments to 3 minutes.
-

- 11:45 a.m. 9. Final Boating Grant Programs Plan** *Leslie Connelly*
- Resolution 2015-03
- Public comment.** Please limit comments to 3 minutes.
-

12:05 p.m. LUNCH

- 1:00 p.m. 10. Conversion Request: City of Bellevue, Mercer Slough** *Myra Barker*
- (RCO Projects 73-026A and 78-513A) *City of Bellevue Staff*
- Resolution 2015-04 *Sound Transit Staff*
- Public comment.** Please limit comments to 3 minutes.
-

4:00 p.m. ADJOURN

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution #2015-01
April 2015 Consent Calendar**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the following April 2015 Consent Calendar items are approved:

- A. Approve Board Meeting Minutes from October 29-30, 2014
- B. Approve Time Extensions
 - 11-1173D, USFS, Franklin Falls Trail Renovations, Phase 2
 - 11-1144D, Whatcom County, Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Replacement 2011
 - 10-1383D, State Parks, Lake Sammamish Beach Renovation and Boardwalk
 - 10-1453R, DNR, Camas Meadows Rare Plant Habitat Restoration
 - 10-1660D, City of Sumner, Trail Segments #4 and #5
 - 10-1458, DNR, Dabob Bay Natural Area 2010
 - 10-1629, WDFW, Sinlahekin Ecosystem Restoration, Phase 2
- C. Recognition of Service for Don Hoch

Resolution moved by: _____

Resolution seconded by: _____

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: _____

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM

Meeting Date: April 9, 2015
Title: Time Extension Requests
Prepared By: Recreation and Conservation Section Grant Managers

Summary

This is a request for the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to consider the proposed project time extensions shown in Attachment A.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

- Request for Decision
- Request for Direction
- Briefing

Resolution #: 2015-01

Purpose of Resolution: Approve the requested time extensions.

Background

Manual #7, *Funded Projects*, outlines the board's adopted policy for progress on active funded projects. Key elements of this policy are that the sponsor must complete a funded project promptly and meet the project milestones outlined in the project agreement. The director has authority to extend an agreement for up to four years. Extensions beyond four years require board action.

The RCO received a request for a time extension for each of the projects listed in Attachment A. This document summarizes the circumstances for the requested extensions and the expected date of project completion. Board action is required because the project sponsors are requesting extensions to continue the agreements beyond four years.

General considerations for approving time extension requests include:

- Receipt of a written request for the time extension;
- Reimbursements requested and approved;
- Date the board granted funding approval;
- Conditions surrounding the delay;
- Sponsor's reasons or justification for requesting the extension;
- Likelihood of sponsor completing the project within the extended period;
- Original dates for project completion;
- Current status of activities within the grant;
- Sponsor's progress on this and other funded projects;

- Revised milestones or timeline submitted for completion of the project; and
- The effect the extension will have on re-appropriation request levels for RCO.

Plan Link

Consideration of these requests supports the board's goal of helping its partners protect, restore, and develop habitat and recreation opportunities that benefit people, fish and wildlife, and ecosystems.

Summary of Public Comment

The RCO received no public comment on the requests.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the time extension requests for projects listed in Attachment A.

Attachments

- A. Time Extension Requests for Board Approval

Time Extension Requests for Board Approval

United States Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request	Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request
11-1173 Development	Franklin Falls Trail Renovations, Phase 2	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Non-motorized category	\$82,386 (91%) Note they have also billed \$34,273 in non-reimbursable match.	6/30/2015	12 months (6/30/2016)	<p>The Snoqualmie Ranger District is reconstructing portions of the popular Franklin Falls Trail.</p> <p>The environmental assessment (EA) covering major parking area improvements for Franklin Falls, Denny Creek, and Wagon Road trails renovations was delayed. The EA was more complex than anticipated and fell behind schedule. Only work that did not require the EA could be accomplished until the EA was complete and the DN was signed. Both are now complete.</p> <p>The contractor will begin trail and viewpoint construction this spring and anticipate completing work by November 2015. Force account crews and WTA volunteers will continue working to complete trail relocation work, surface remaining portions of trail, construct additional viewpoints, and replace turnpike, puncheon and 2 short bridges. The extension will provide enough time for completion of the full scope of work.</p>

Whatcom County Parks

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request	Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request
11-1144 Development	Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Replacement	Boating Facilities Program	\$71,434.06 (28.3%)	6/30/2015	6 months (12/31/2015)	<p>Whatcom County Parks and Recreation has completed all upland elements associated with this project and has constructed the boarding floats and fishing pier, which will be attached to the new steel piles. All that remains is the removal of 6 creosote piles and the installation of 7 steel piles.</p> <p>The environmental permitting for this project has been extraordinarily challenging. The in-water work window permitted covers July 15 through October 14; however, surf smelt spawning activity must be absent during that time to conduct any in-water work. Surf smelt spawning activity prevented in-water work from occurring for the past two complete work windows. This created a permitted window when work could not occur. Whatcom County is in the process of working with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to allow for a time for the piles to be driven during a minus tide, potentially outside of the current work window.</p> <p>This 6 month extension will allow for the piles to be driven and the floats to be secured. This is the only public launch facility located on Point Roberts and it is the main access to the waters of the Strait of Georgia.</p>

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request	Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request
10-1383 Development and Restoration	Lake Sammamish Beach Renovation and Boardwalk	Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Water Access Category and State Parks Category	\$1,627,889 (74%)	6/30/2015	12 months (6/30/2016)	<p>The State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) has completed the boardwalk construction, and design for the Sunset Beach improvements at Lake Sammamish State Park.</p> <p>The environmental permitting for Sunset Beach took longer than expected. Because part of this project involves in-water construction, work can only take place during one of two fish windows in July or November. State Parks expects to have permits in place by spring 2015, but they are requesting an extension to allow for construction in November because July is one of the busiest months in the park.</p> <p>Also, the grant funds (\$500k) and match (\$500k) from project 12-1249 (Lake Sammamish Sunset Beach Phase 2) were merged into this project in October 2013 in order to create a single agreement for improvements at Lake Sammamish. State Parks can now contract for and bill the entire project, rather than prorating costs between two grant contracts. Plans are to move quickly with this phase of development so the park can be ready for the summer 2016 recreational season.</p>

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request	Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request
10-1458 Acquisition	Dabob Bay Natural Area 2010	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Natural Areas Category	\$778,138 (26.6%)	6/30/2015	6 months (12/31/2015)	<p>To date, the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has purchased 17 properties with funding from this grant totaling approximately 100 acres.</p> <p>Partnering with the US Navy has allowed DNR to make grant funding go much further than expected allowing the acquisition of significantly more property.</p> <p>This time extension would allow DNR to finish closing on one property totaling 241 acres and complete negotiations with 4 more landowners where appraisal work has been completed and negotiations are underway. Additionally it would allow time to complete post closing work, including weed control, fencing and signage on 2 more properties recently acquired.</p>
10-1453 Restoration	Camas Meadows Rare Plant Habitat Restoration	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, State Lands Restoration	\$73,709 (51%)	6/30/2015	6 months (12/31/2015)	<p>To date, the DNR has completed approximately 80% of the work to restore and enhance habitat for two rare plant species on approximately 30 acres in Camas Meadows Natural Area Preserve.</p> <p>The project encountered significant delays with major wildfires that burned to the edge of the preserve in 2012, a statewide burn ban in 2013 and federal permitting requirements for cultural resources reporting. Additionally, DNR experienced significant cost savings in the hydrologic restoration of the project and was able to leverage additional funding, leaving them with more than 50% of grant funds remaining to date.</p> <p>This time extension would allow DNR to finish the remaining restoration within the original 30 acres and also increase the scope of the agreement to restore an additional 10 acres.</p>

City of Sumner

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request	Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request
10-1660 Development	Sumner Urban to Mountain Trail, Section #4 and #5	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Trails Category	\$108,586 (11%)	6/30/2015	6 months (12/31/2015)	<p>There is no project delay. The City of Sumner is under-budget and is requesting additional time to use the remaining funds to construct porta-potty enclosures and install additional signage along the trail.</p> <p>The City has completed trail sections 4 and 5. The original scope of work included 2,000 feet of 12-foot wide paved trail and a bridge over the White River. The bids came in lower than expected, so staff approved a scope change to allow construction of another 1,900 feet of trail.</p> <p>If approved, the City will construct the enclosures and use their own funds to purchase the porta-potty units. RCO funds will be used for the concrete pads, enclosures, and signs.</p>

Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request	Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request
10-1629 Restoration	Sinlahekin Ecosystem Restoration, Phase 2	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, State Lands Restoration Category	\$71,288 (29%)	6/30/2015	12 months (6/30/2016)	<p>Progress to date includes prescription fires applied last spring to 191 acres that were harvested during the winter of 2012-13. Thinning on approximately 600 acres was completed this winter with slash and other logging fuels left on site to cure.</p> <p>Progress was hindered on this grant due to mild weather conditions over the past several winters. Frozen ground or 18 inches of snow is needed to avoid damaging soils with heaving logging equipment.</p> <p>Additional time will allow the slash from stands harvested in winter 2014-15 to finish curing so that prescriptive burns may be applied in the fall of 2015 and spring of 2016.</p>

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM

Meeting Date: April 9, 2015

Title: Management Reports: Director's Report

Summary

This memo is the director's report on key agency activities.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Direction
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Briefing

In this Report

- Agency update
- Policy report and Legislative update
- Grant management report
- Fiscal report
- Performance report

Agency Update

Economic Report Shows the Value of Outdoor Recreation

For the first time in Washington, an economic study on the value of outdoor recreation statewide has been completed. RCO's Policy Team worked with Earth Economics, a Tacoma economics firm, to produce the [Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State](#). Released to the Legislature on January 8, the study clearly shows that outdoor recreation is an economic force in Washington. With people spending \$21.6 billion every year on outdoor recreation equipment and trip-related costs, outdoor recreation brings \$20.5 billion to the state's economy and creates nearly 200,000 jobs statewide. It is also one of the largest markets in the state for moving income from urban to rural areas and building businesses in more rural areas. There has been a great deal of interest in the report findings. A [summary fact sheet](#) also is online.

RCO Develops Brochure to Promote Role of Recreation

RCO, with the help of a consultant, produced a brochure promoting the benefits of outdoor recreation in Washington. The [We'll Go Far Outside](#) brochure is available online. Funding was donated by REI for this brochure. Using the results of RCO's economic study and the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation, the brochure highlights how recreation contributes to the economy, the health of our families and environment, and the education of our children. It will help to educate the public and public decision makers about the importance of investing in outdoor recreation.

Audit Conclusion

In late 2014, the State Auditor completed an accountability audit of RCO that focused on agency accounting functions. While the auditors could have reviewed any document, they focused on four areas:

grants, travel, cash receipts, and cash disbursements. RCO had no findings in this audit. This is an outstanding result and is due in no small part to the hard work of our grants and fiscal staff.

E-billing Coming Soon

The development of e-billing in PRISM is complete and will launch March 31. Beginning that date, all grant recipients and contractors will be required to use electronic billing; no more paper billings will be used. We are proud of the staff dedication and effort that went into the development of the e-billing process. About 200 people signed up to see demonstrations in February and March, with more being added all the time. Many of our staff were involved in the development and testing of this e-billing system, but the largest kudos goes to Mark Jarasitis, RCO's Chief Financial Officer, who dreamed about e-billing in 2007 and helped shepherd it into reality over the past seven years.

WSDOT to Assist with Cultural Resources Reviews

RCO signed an agreement with archeologists at the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to review projects for possible cultural resources impacts, potentially saving our grant recipients time and money. Currently, the Department of Archeology and Historical Preservation (DAHP) requires all projects with ground-disturbing activity to survey the sites for possible cultural, Native American, or other historical resources. WSDOT's archaeology staff will review the potential projects and make a recommendation based upon their resources and expertise about which sites are the most likely to have cultural resources, increasing accuracy and potentially cutting down on the number and cost of doing surveys. Consultation with the Department of Archeology and Historical Preservation and tribes will continue to be conducted by RCO's cultural resources coordinator and staff. The current agreement runs until June 30, 2015, but it may be extended into next biennium if budget allows.

Study of the Costs of Public Lands

In the 2013-15 Capital Budget, the Legislature directed the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to conduct a study of public recreation and habitat lands. The study considers the characteristics and costs of recent acquisitions, evaluates the cost and benefit measures for these lands, and examines the potential effects of these lands on county economic vitality.

In the [initial portion of this study](#), JLARC recommended that natural resource agencies and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) develop a single, easily-accessible source for information about land acquisitions. JLARC suggested that natural resource agencies and OFM submit a proposal to the Legislature by January 2016 that outlines how to implement such a data source and estimates its associated costs. RCO and other natural resource agencies provided written responses to the draft report, including a request for funding to research and plan the multi-agency data system recommended by JLARC. The next portion of the JLARC report is due in April and will focus on how public lands impact county economic vitality. A final report is due in July.

Washington State Trails Conference a Success

More than 300 trail managers, planners, users, trail maintenance organizations, businesses, and students attended the Washington State Trails Coalition's bi-annual conference in October 2014 in Bellingham. RCO sponsors the conference, which is the state's largest and most comprehensive gathering of trail users, planners, funders, and supporters. RCO staff participated in three breakout sessions: Darrell Jennings and Leslie Connelly presented on investing in outdoor recreation; Rory Calhoun hosted a session on understanding the new federal accessibility requirements for trails; and Darrell Jennings participated in a panel discussion on the career paths of trail professionals and the future of trail jobs. RCO staff also provided staff support before and during the conference. The conference was a tremendous success and a

special thanks to the Whatcom Parks Foundation for being the host organization and to Darrell for his leadership role.

Meetings with Partners

- **Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition (WWRC):** Director Cottingham attended the coalition's board meeting and shared information about RCO's preparation for the legislative session. The board discussed future policy issues under consideration.
- **Washington Recreation and Parks Association and the WWRC:** Director Cottingham spoke at the legislative day hosted by these two partners on February 25. She spoke about the outdoor recreation economic study and RCO's request legislation and budget. Later in the day, she joined several RCFB members and staff at the coalition's annual reception in the Governor's mansion.
- **Washington Association of Land Trusts:** Director Cottingham met with the association twice for their quarterly meetings, providing updates on several ongoing issues: the state budget, the outdoor recreation economic study, the new outdoor recreation brochure, the *2014 State of Salmon in Watersheds* report, and e-billing.
- **Washington State Conservation Commission:** Director Cottingham met with the director of the Conservation Commission and his staff to discuss our respective agency's budget requests, selection of a new board member for the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, and farmland preservation criteria. We strategized together to request an increase in the level of funding for farmland preservation in Washington State through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This year, Washington State received \$1.4 million of the \$328 million available nationwide.
- **Washington Boating Alliance:** Director Cottingham made a presentation to Washington Boating Alliance members and others at the Seattle Boat Show in January. She covered the economic analysis of outdoor recreation and boating projects that recently received funding. RCO also held its quarterly boating stakeholder meeting where we talked about the legislative session and the draft boating programs plan.
- **Big Tent:** Policy Director Wendy Brown attended a legislative day hosted by the Big Tent Coalition, which is a collection of outdoor recreation providers, agencies, and supporters.
- **Washington Ag-Forestry program:** Director Cottingham participated in a panel discussion at the Ag-Forestry Education Foundation Leadership Program. She spoke about the outdoor recreation economic study and trends in recreation and fielded a lot of questions about hunting access on public and private land.

Update on Sister Boards

- **Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB):** The SRFB held its large grant funding meeting in December, awarding nearly 100 grants for \$18 million to organizations in 29 counties to restore salmon habitat and conserve pristine areas. The SRFB also approved the *Manual 18, Salmon Recovery Grants* for 2015 grants and adopted a list of large capital projects for Puget Sound restoration projects to send to the Legislature for funding consideration. The SRFB welcomed two new board members – Erik Neatherlin, the new designee from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Brian Cochrane, the new designee from the Washington State Conservation Commission. Finally, the SRFB learned of plans for the May Salmon Recovery Conference, and reviewed the [2014 State of Salmon in Watersheds](#) report and [website](#).
- **Washington Invasive Species Council:** The council met December 4 and members were briefed on the New Zealand mud snail infestation at a state hatchery, ballast water program enforcement actions, changes to the 2015 noxious weed list, and a variety of other issues. Raquel Crosier, council

coordinator, visited Washington D.C. for National Invasive Species Awareness Week in February, along with her peers from Arizona, California, Oregon, and Nevada. The group focused its time on gaining more federal support for aquatic invasive species prevention efforts, especially boat inspection programs, in the West. The council is working with the Departments of Ecology and Fish and Wildlife to plan the fifth annual New Zealand mud snail conference, which will be in Seattle in June. Council staff also is working with the Departments of Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, and Transportation to stencil "Clean, Drain, Dry" on boat launches throughout Washington. The stenciled message is aimed at increasing voluntary cleaning of watercraft and reducing the spread of aquatic invasive species. If successful, the council hopes to see this project expanded to other high-use boat launches throughout the state. The council's next meeting is March 12.

- **Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group:** The lands group published two significant reports: The [2014 State Land Acquisition Forecast Report](#) and its [annual report](#). The forecast report includes information on proposed state land acquisitions from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, and the State Parks and Recreation Commission. The annual report includes the group's 2015 work plan. The lands group will meet next March 20.

Legislative Update

RCO's Budget Submitted and Governor's Budgets Released

RCO's budgets (both operating and capital) were submitted to the Office of Financial Management in early September. The details of our budget requests have been posted on our [website](#). The Governor's budget was released in December and we expect the Legislature to release its budgets in late March. Funding amounts related to the RCFB grant programs proposed in the Governor's capital budget, as compared to current funding levels and agency requests, include the following:

Program	2013-15 Funding	2015-17 Agency Request	2015-17 Governor's Proposal
ALEA	6,000,000	6,600,000	3,600,000*
BFP	6,363,000	9,360,000	9,360,000
BIG	2,200,000	2,200,000	2,200,000
FARR	800,000	580,000	580,000
LWCF	9,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000
NOVA	8,500,000	8,670,000	8,670,000
PLIP	200,000	-	-
RTP	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
WWRP	65,000,000	97,000,000	70,000,000
YAF	3,630,000	12,000,000	3,000,000

*ALEA funds have been replaced with bonds in the Governor's budget.

In addition to our budgets, RCO's has submitted budget requests related to our salmon recovery grants and programs. RCO also submitted its request to pursue legislation to change the administrative rate charged in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. This bill requests a change from the flat 3 percent administrative rate to a rate calculation based on actual administrative costs averaged over the past five biennia. The House version of the bill (HB 1392) has moved through the House and over to the Senate and is scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Natural Resources and Parks Committee on March 12. In the Senate, the bill (SB 5320) was amended to include some additional oversight by the

Legislature, but was not moved out of the Senate by the March 11 cutoff and is considered no longer in play. We are expecting the same amendments to be added back onto the House bill. The last day of the regular legislative session is April 26.

Grant Management Report

2014 Recreation and Conservation Grants Cycle Comes to an End

The Recreational Trails Advisory Committee held its annual meeting on December 4, 2014. At this meeting, advisory committee members reviewed the results of the most recent evaluation and ranking of projects, prepared a recommendation for funding education category projects, and members discussed possible policy, program, and process changes for the grant program. Federal Highway Administration requires states to hold an annual meeting with its advisors to maintain eligibility for Recreational Trails Program grants. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will review and approve the ranked list and funding for these projects in June 2015.

This meeting officially marked the end of the 2014 grants cycle for the Recreation and Conservation section staff. The vast majority of these grants will be presented to the board for funding in June. The focus now is on managing active projects, inspections and planning for 2016.

Recreational Trails Program Annual Report

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Fiscal Year 2014 Annual Report is now available [online](#). The purpose of the report is to provide information about the program and the projects funded in federal fiscal year 2013. This report serves as a useful guide to the RTP for trail managers and the public, highlighting program funding and administration, the RTP database, and how states use funds for trail projects. It illustrates eligible project types along with award-winning examples from across the country. It documents the many benefits of the program and national trends and issues affecting trails.

Grants Section Retreat

The Recreation and Conservation Grants Section held a two-day staff meeting to re-group after the past year. The team focused on assisting applicants with their grant proposals and had the opportunity to review the 2014 grants cycle, discuss the success and challenges of the past year, and to establish priorities for 2015. The meeting included a session that gave staff a chance to ask questions about the proposed budget and the 2015 legislative session and to discuss some of the proposed policy issues under consideration. As a follow-up, staff are working on brief "issue" statements to help inform decision makers on policy challenges before a final priority list is presented to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

Deputy Director Scott Robinson also met with the team to roll out the Director's plan for delegating authority to staff for several decision making items. Marguerite Austin took the opportunity to recognize staff members for their fantastic work during a grueling, yet rewarding, grant year.

Washington Projects Receive Federal Boating Infrastructure Grants

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service awarded nearly \$1.5 million in competitive grants for four projects in Washington State through the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program. Grant recipients may use BIG funds to construct or renovate boating facilities for recreational boats that are at least 26 feet in length. The BIG program includes two funding tiers: Tier One (competitive in some states) and Tier Two (nationally competitive). Under Tier One, each state may receive up to \$100,000 in funding for eligible

projects. Tier Two funds, up to \$1.5 million annually per project, are made available through a nationally competitive process. This table provides a summary of the grants awarded.

Table 1. Boating Infrastructure Grants

Project Number	Project Name	Sponsor	Program Category	Grant Request	Funds Approved	Unfunded Balance
14-1615D	Port Angeles Transient Moorage Float Replacement	City of Port Angeles	Boating Infrastructure, Tier 2	\$268,575	\$268,575	-0-
14-1588D	Point Hudson Jetty Replacement	Port of Port Townsend	Boating Infrastructure, Tier 2	\$1,455,000	\$1,102,811	\$352,189
14-1523D	Tokeland Marina Transient Float Expansion Phase 2	Port of Willapa Harbor	Boating Infrastructure, Tier 1	\$75,970	\$75,970	-0-
14-1539D	Seaport Landing Visiting Vessel Moorage	Grays Harbor Historical Seaport Authority	Boating Infrastructure, Tier 1	\$95,000	\$55,155	\$39,845

The Port of Port Townsend will replace the north and south jetties that protect the entrance to the Point Hudson Marina on Puget Sound. The marina provides more than 50 guest moorage slips for recreational boaters headed to the Straits of Juan de Fuca. The City of Port Angeles will use its grant to replace six guest moorage docks that will accommodate boats up to 80 feet in length. Port Angeles is an important destination for boaters and provides a gateway to the Pacific Coast. Both projects are in Clallam County.

Two Tier 1 grants were given to communities in Grays Harbor County. The Port of Willapa Harbor and the Grays Harbor Historical Seaport Authority will develop guest moorage at Willapa Bay and Seaport Landing in Grays Harbor. Funds for the BIG Program are provided annually from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.

Using Returned Funds for Alternates Projects

RCO recently awarded two new grants for the alternate projects shown in Table 1. The funds are from projects that did not use the full amount of their grant awards.

Table 1. Funds for Unfunded Alternates

Project Number	Project Name	Sponsor	Program Category	Grant Request	Funds Approved
12-1160A	Edmonds Fishing Pier	Department of Fish and Wildlife	Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account	\$500,000	\$500,000
10-1643D	Swadabs Waterfront Park Expansion	Swinomish Tribe	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Local Parks Category	\$301,750	\$50,610

Project Administration

This table summarizes the outdoor recreation and habitat conservation projects currently being administered by staff:

- Active projects are under agreement.

- Staff are working with sponsors to place the “Director Approved” projects under agreement.

Program	Active Projects	Board Funded Projects	Director Approved Projects	Total Funded Projects
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)	11	0	1	12
Boating Facilities Program (BFP)	24	0	0	24
Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG)	2	0	0	2
Firearms and Archery Range Recreation (FARR)	7	0	0	7
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	2	0	3	5
Marine Shoreline Protection (MSP)	2	0	0	2
Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA)	94	0	0	94
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	58	0	0	58
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)	116	0	5	121
Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)	4	0	0	4
Total	320	0	9	329

In addition to managing the projects shown in this table, staff closed more than 60 active grants in the last few weeks and has several hundred funded projects they monitor for long-term compliance.

Fiscal Report

The following financial reports reflect Recreation and Conservation Funding Board activities as of March 5, 2015. You will see:

- The budget status of board activities by program.
- The budget status of the entire agency by board.
- Revenue collections. We are on track to meet our projections.
- A Washington Wildlife Recreation Program (WWRP) summary and history of committed and expenditures. Since 1990, \$632 million have been spent in WWRP.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Activities by Program

For the Period of July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2015, actuals through 3/05/2015 Fiscal Month 20. Percentage of biennium reported: 83.3%.

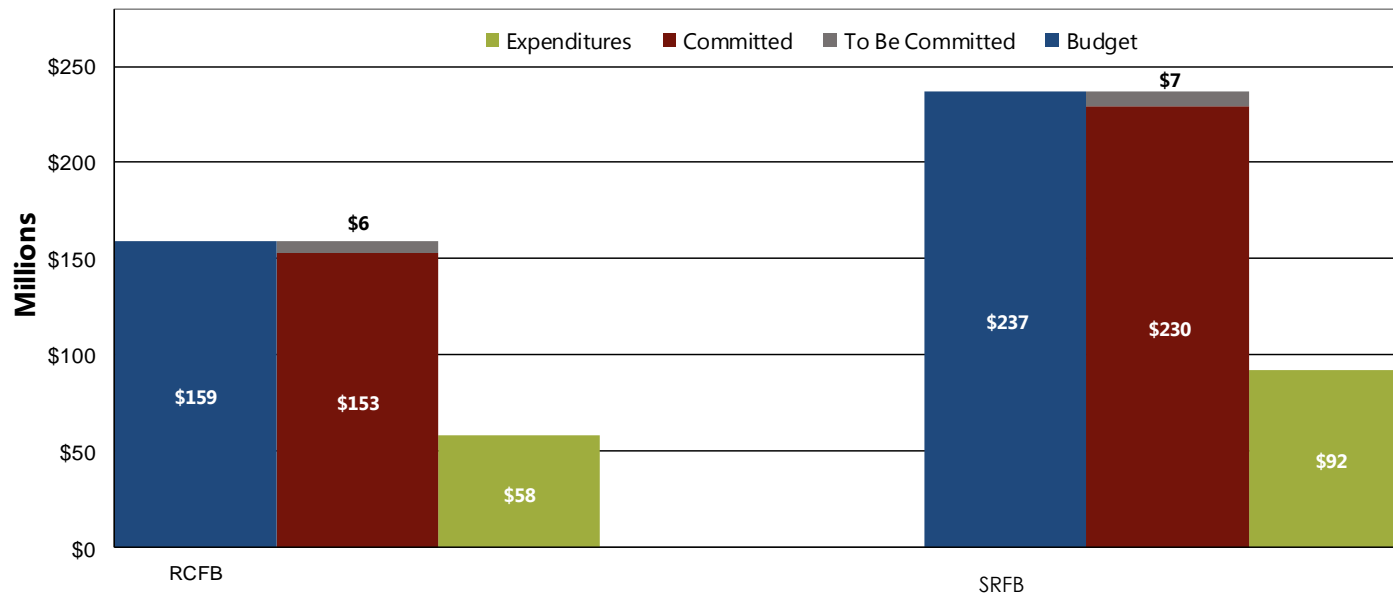
Grant Programs	BUDGET	COMMITTED		TO BE COMMITTED		EXPENDITURES	
	New & Re-appropriation 2013-2015 (\$)	Dollars (\$)	% of Budget	Dollars (\$)	% of Budget	Dollars (\$)	% Expended of Committed
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)							
WWRP Re-appropriations	\$43,402,789	\$38,568,730	89%	\$4,834,059	11%	\$13,957,741	36%
WWRP New 13-15 Funds	\$63,050,000	\$62,179,031	99%	\$870,969	1%	\$18,772,797	30%
Boating Facilities Program (BFP)							
BFP Re-appropriations	4,767,400	4,642,239	97%	125,161	3%	3,142,605	68%
BFP New 13-15 Funds	6,363,000	6,318,492	99%	44,508	1%	2,609,192	41%
Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA)							
NOVA Re-appropriations	3,912,066	3,831,859	98%	80,208	2%	2,564,451	67%
NOVA New 13-15 Funds	8,075,900	8,058,502	100%	17,398	0.2%	2,622,477	32.5%
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)							
LWCF Re-appropriations	807,276	807,276	100%	0	0%	752,042	93%
LWCF New 13-15 Funds	1,713,150	1,713,150	100%	0	0%	250,000	15%
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)							
ALEA Re-appropriations	3,160,577	3,160,577	100%	0	0%	2,046,543	65%
ALEA New 13-15 Funds	6,000,000	5,998,554	100%	1,446	0.02%	1,898,711	32%
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)							
RTP Re-appropriations	1,550,604	1,550,604	100%	0	0%	1,028,634	66%
RTP New 13-15 Funds	3,415,822	3,410,447	100%	5,375	0.2%	863,093	25%
Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)							
YAF Re-appropriations	395,675	193,559	49%	202,116	51%	163,290	84%
YAF New 13-15 Funds	3,480,444	3,480,444	100%	0	0%	1,525,260	44%
Firearms and Archery Range Recreation (FARR)							
FARR Re-appropriations	389,563	389,563	100%	0	0%	183,813	47%
FARR New 13-15 Funds	800,000	799,112	100%	888	0.1%	511,149	64%
Boating Infrastructure Grants (BIG)							
BIG Re-appropriations	495,104	495,104	100%	0	0%	183,515	37%
BIG New 13-15 Funds	0	0	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Marine Shoreline Protection (MSP)							
Marine Shoreline Protection (MSP)	1,431,329	1,431,329	100%	0	0%	59,886	4%
Sub Total Grant Programs	153,210,700	147,028,571	96%	6,182,129	4%	53,135,199	36%
Administration							
General Operating Funds	6,121,924	6,121,924	100%	0	0%	4,833,152	79%
Grant / Administration Total	\$159,332,624	\$153,150,495	96%	\$6,182,129	4%	\$57,968,351	38%

Note: The budget column shows the state appropriations and any received federal awards.

2013-15 Capital and Operating Budget Status for the Recreation and Conservation Office

For the Period of July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2015, actuals through 3/5/2015 (Fiscal Month 20). Percentage of biennium reported: 83.3%.

Board/Program	New (\$)	Re-appropriation (\$)	BUDGET	COMMITTED		TO BE COMMITTED		EXPENDITURES	
			New and Re-appropriation 2013-2015 (\$)	Dollars (\$)	% of Budget	Dollars (\$)	% of Budget	Dollars (\$)	% of Committed
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board	97,170,920	62,161,704	159,332,624	153,150,495	96%	6,182,129	4%	57,968,351	38%
Salmon Recovery Funding Board	89,156,611	147,674,212	236,830,823	229,578,327	97%	7,252,497	3%	92,365,207	40%
Governor's Salmon Recovery Office	885,380	\$0	885,380	885,380	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	480,984	54%
Invasive Species Council	200,000	\$0	200,000	200,000	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	155,974	78%
Total	\$187,412,911	\$209,835,916	\$397,248,827	\$383,814,202	97%	\$13,434,625	3%	\$150,970,516	39%



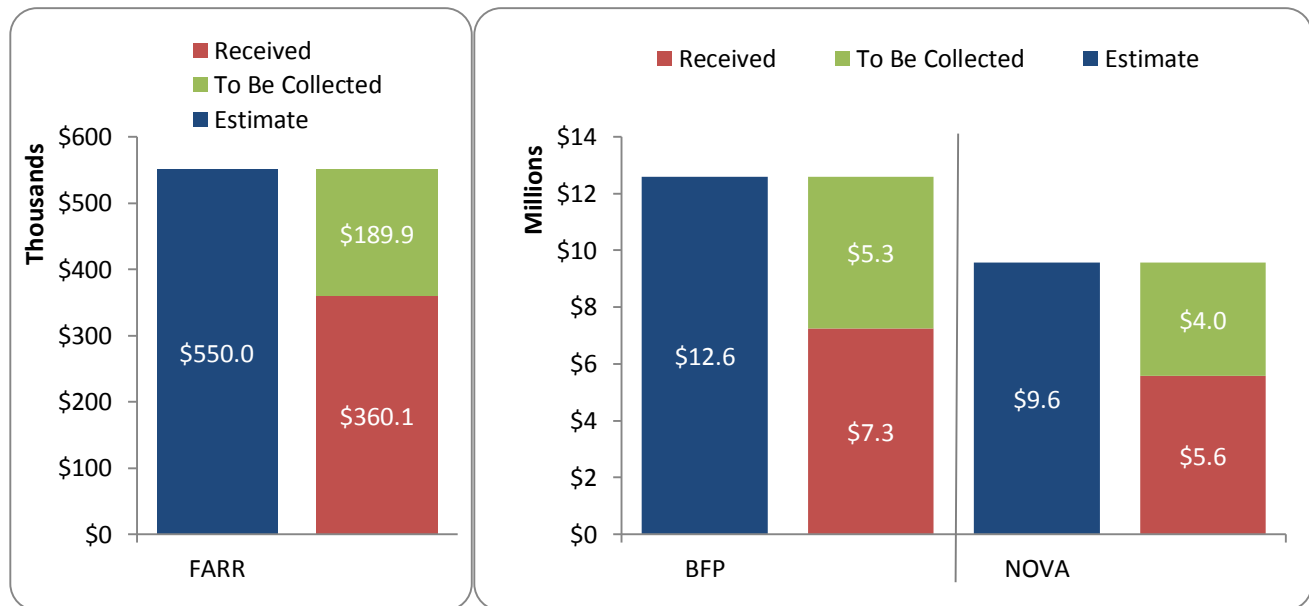
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Revenue Report

For the Period of July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2015, actuals through 01/31/2015 Fiscal Month 19. Percentage of biennium reported: 79.2%.

PROGRAM	BIENNIAL FORECAST	COLLECTIONS	
	Estimate	Actual	% of Estimate
Boating Facilities Program (BFP)	\$12,616,007	\$9,895,217	78.4%
Nonhighway, Off-Road Vehicle Program (NOVA)	\$9,521,559	\$7,453,303	78.3%
Firearms and Archery Range Rec Program (FARR)	\$550,000	\$479,862	87.2%
Total	\$22,687,566	\$17,828,382	78.6%

Revenue Notes:

- Boating Facilities Program (BFP) revenue is from unrefunded marine gasoline taxes.
- Nonhighway Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program (NOVA) revenue is from the motor vehicle gasoline tax paid by users of ORVs and nonhighway roads and from the amount paid for by ORV use permits.
- Firearms and Archery Range Rec Program (FARR) revenue is from \$3 each concealed pistol license fee.
- This reflects the most recent revenue forecast of November 2014. The next forecast is due in February 2015.



Washington Wildlife Recreation Program (WWRP) Biennial Appropriations Summary

Biennium	Appropriation (\$)
89-91 Biennium	53,000,000
91-93 Biennium	61,150,000
93-95 Biennium	65,000,000
95-97 Biennium ¹	43,760,000
97-99 Biennium	45,000,000
99-01 Biennium	48,000,000
01-03 Biennium	45,000,000
03-05 Biennium	45,000,000
05-07 Biennium ²	48,500,000
07-09 Biennium ³	95,491,955
09-11 Biennium ⁴	67,344,750
11-13 Biennium ⁵	40,740,000
13-15 Biennium ⁶	63,050,000

Grand Total **\$721,036,705**

Notes:

¹ Original appropriation was \$45 million.

² Entire appropriation was \$50 million; 3% or \$1,500,000, went to administration.

³ Entire appropriation was \$100 million; 3% or \$3,000,000 went to administration, removed \$981,000 with FY10 supplemental budget.

⁴ Entire appropriation was \$70 million; 3% or \$2,100,000 went to administration.

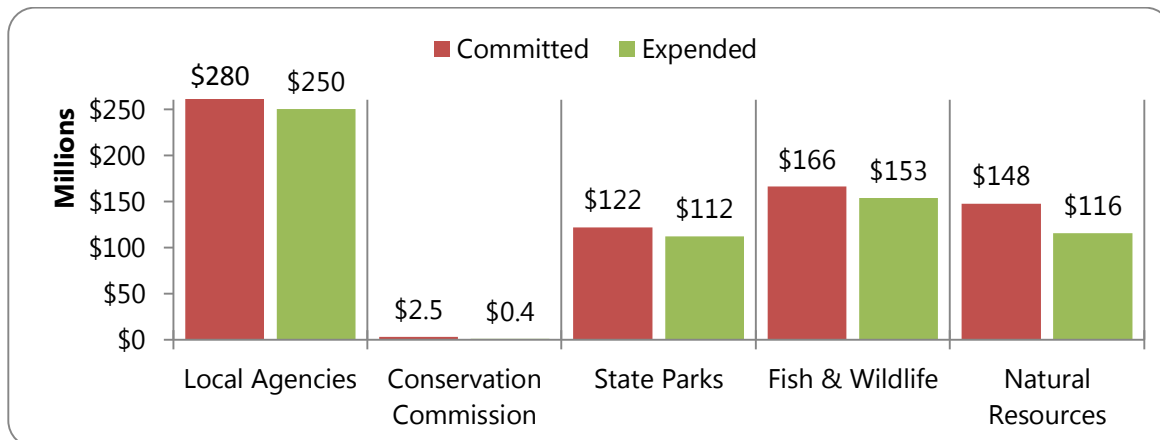
⁵ Entire appropriation was \$42 million; 3% or \$1,260,000 went to administration.

⁶ Entire appropriation was \$65 million; 3% or \$1,950,000 went to administration.

WWRP Expenditure Rate, by Agency or Organization

Agency	Committed (\$)	Expenditures (\$)	Percent Expended
Local Agencies	\$278,715,136	\$258,466,712	93%
Conservation Commission	2,549,463	378,559	15%
State Parks and Recreation Commission	122,400,769	113,038,191	92%
Department of Fish and Wildlife	165,226,581	158,619,090	96%
Department of Natural Resources	145,704,716	116,182,662	80%
Riparian Habitat Administration	185,046	185,046	100%
Land Inventory	549,965	549,965	100%
Subtotal Committed	\$715,331,676	\$647,420,225	91%

History of Committed and Expended Funds for WWRP Program



Performance Report

The following performance data are for recreation and conservation projects in fiscal year 2015. Data are current as of March 3, 2015. Performance so far this fiscal year was impacted by the application process, during which grant manager's workloads were prioritized to focus on application review, site visits, and sponsor support during technical review and evaluation. Managers expect that performance measures will increase during the remainder of the year, when staff resume their regular grant management duties.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Performance Measures

Measure	Target	Fiscal year-to-date	Status	Notes
Percent of Projects Issued Agreement within 120 Days of Board Funding	85-95%	88%	●	A total of 42 projects were scheduled to come under agreement this fiscal year. For projects where an agreement has been issued, staff took an average of 48 days.
Percent of Projects Under Agreement within 180 Days of Board Funding	95%	78%	●	A total of 41 projects were scheduled to be under agreement so far this fiscal year.
Percent of Progress Reports Responded to On Time	65-75%	78%	●	A total of 320 progress reports have been due so far this fiscal year. Of these, 249 were responded to in 15 days or less.
Percent of Bills Paid within 30 days	100%	79%	●	This fiscal year to date 517 bills have come due. For bills which were paid, staff took an average of 18 days. Staff anticipate that e-billing will improve performance for this measure.
Percent of Projects Closed on Time	60-70%	51%	●	Thirty-eight of 74 projects closed on time.
Number of Projects in Project Backlog	0	23	●	Staff continue to work with sponsors to get the proper documentation to close backlog projects.
Number of Post-Completion Inspections	No target set	32	N/A	
Percent of Project Sponsors Submitting Annual Bill	100%	76%	●	Of the 309 active recreation and conservation projects, 236 have submitted a bill this fiscal year. The remaining sponsors have until June 30 to submit a bill.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM

Meeting Date: April 9, 2015
Title: Overview of the Outdoor Recreation Economic Study
Prepared By: Wendy Brown, Policy Director

Summary

This memo outlines the major findings of the [Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State](#) released in January 2015.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

- Request for Decision
- Request for Direction
- Briefing

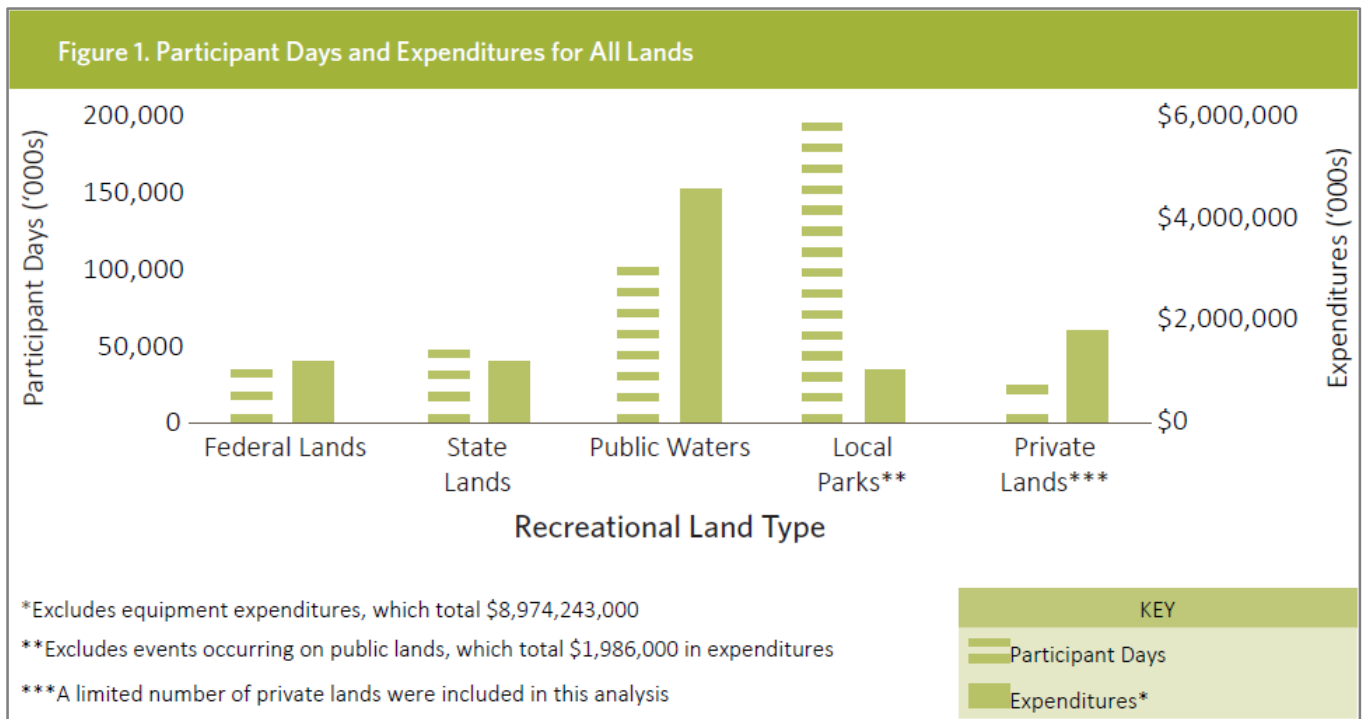
Background

In a 2014 supplemental operating budget proviso, the Legislature instructed the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to conduct an analysis of the contribution of outdoor recreation to the economy of Washington State. The analysis was conducted by Earth Economics and completed in January 2015. A summary of the major findings is presented below.

Major Findings

Outdoor recreation spending in Washington equates to roughly \$21.6 billion annually. The expenditure categories include both equipment and trip-related expenses such as lodging, gas, and food. Economic contributions of \$20.5 billion per year trickled down into the economy from these categories. In comparison, a 2012 study by the Outdoor Industry Association estimated consumer spending on outdoor recreation to be \$22.5 billion per year; but, that study only captured part of the full picture. The new study encompasses outdoor recreation statewide in a comprehensive look beyond just economic contributions.

When looking at total spending and participation rates by land type, the study found that expenditures were highest for recreation associated with public waters (Figure 1). Water recreation includes a number of activities with high equipment and trip expenditures, especially motorized boating. Ranking second were special events such as sports tournaments and races, which generally involve fees and attract overnight stays. Ranking third was recreation on private lands, which includes expensive recreation activities such as golf, skiing, off-highway vehicle riding, and hunting. Local parks are the most visited of the different land types, being the most accessible and least costly destination.



The economic contribution analysis was conducted through the use of an economic model known as IMPLAN, demonstrating how money spent on outdoor recreation flows through local and state economies, promoting exchange from one business to another. Of the \$21.6 billion spent on outdoor recreation per year, about \$9.1 billion is transferred to out-of-state producers of related goods and services. This leaves about \$12.5 billion in direct sales to circulate through the local economy, producing in turn about \$3.3 billion in supply chain activity related to recreation goods and services and \$4.7 billion in household wages that further stimulate economic activity. Thus, in total, economic contributions to the state economy amount to \$20.5 billion every year.

Nearly 200,000 jobs are supported in Washington as a result of outdoor recreation spending. A total of about 122,600 jobs, or about 62 percent, are from expenditures associated with outdoor recreation on public lands (as opposed to both public and private lands). These jobs include both full-time and part-time jobs in sectors such as food and beverage services, retail, and general recreation services. In general, these sectors are made up of many businesses ranging from small, local shops to large retailers such as REI.

Detailed results for recreation-related expenditures by land type are provided for Washington State as a whole, as well as for all individual counties and legislative districts. The results show that outdoor recreation markets play an important role bridging urban and rural communities. The recreation market is unquestionably one of the largest markets in the state for moving income from urban to rural areas and for building sustainable jobs in rural Washington counties. Out-of-county visitors support a redistribution of wealth between the place of origin and the destination for outdoor recreation. For example, Seattle residents going to Twisp for outdoor recreation redistributes income from King to Okanogan County. These dynamics are important to many rural counties.

Out-of-state visitors also play an important role in the economics of outdoor recreation. Out-of-state visitors accounted for an estimated 12 percent of all participant days and 27 percent of total outdoor recreation spending. Every dollar spent by an out-of-state traveler in Washington generates \$1.36 in economic contribution, resulting in a total of \$4.6 billion in new money circulating in the state's economy.

A total of 46,400 jobs or 23 percent of total outdoor recreation-supported jobs in Washington are the result of expenditures by out-of-state visitors. The results of the out-of-state visitor impact analysis highlights the importance of promoting outdoor recreation in Washington beyond state borders.

In addition to the monetary contribution of outdoor recreation to Washington's economy, there are a number of other benefits not accounted for within traditional economic analysis. These benefits include the satisfaction and increase in general quality of life people get from engaging in outdoor recreation and from the ecosystem services that recreational lands provide. Trees, water, and animals provide ecosystem goods and services such as swimmable water, habitat, and aesthetic beauty. Washington's 23 million acres of public land provide many of these benefits. The combined total estimated value of these non-market benefits is between \$134 and \$248 billion per year.

Communication and Outreach

The [report](#) and accompanying [fact sheet](#) were delivered to the Legislature on January 8, 2015. On January 8, there was a media event to discuss the results of the report. Subsequently, working with Pyramid Communications, a [brochure](#) was developed that combined findings from the economic study and the Governor's Outdoor Recreation Task Force. To date, the report has generated 33 articles in newspapers, Web sites, blogs, and Facebook sites. RCO Director Kaleen Cottingham and staff have also conducted several presentations on the study and will continue to do so. The findings from the economic study were widely cited during various legislative events organized by our stakeholders.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM

Meeting Date: April 9, 2015
Title: Draft Farmland Preservation Criteria
Prepared By: Leslie Connelly, Natural Resource Policy Specialist
Meg O'Leary, Policy Administrator

Summary

This memo summarizes the background of the Farmland Preservation Account (FPA) in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, reviews the evaluation criteria, and proposes a method to restructure the criteria. Recreation and Conservation Office staff seek direction from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board on revising the evaluation criteria for the FPA grant program in preparation for the next grant cycle in 2016.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

- Request for Decision
- Request for Direction
- Briefing

Background

Farmland Preservation Account History

The Legislature added the Farmland Preservation Account (FPA) to the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program in 2005.¹ Funds appropriated from the FPA "must be distributed for the acquisition and preservation of farmlands in order to maintain the opportunity for agricultural activity upon these lands".² Farmland is defined as those lands that meet the definition of farm and agricultural land in the Open Space Act.³

Funding for the FPA occurs only if the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program receives more than \$40 million in a biennium. If that happens, then the FPA receives 40 percent of any amount over \$40 million up to \$50 million and an additional 10 percent of any amount over \$50 million. Table 1 shows the funding amounts in the FPA since it was created.

¹ Section 7, Chapter 303, Laws of 2005

² Revised Code of Washington [79A.15.130\(1\)](#)

³ Revised Code of Washington [79A.15.010\(4\)](#)

Table 1. Funding Amounts in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) and Farmland Protection Account (FPA)

Biennium	WWRP Funding Amount	FPA Funding Amount	Number of Projects Funded in FPA
2007-09	\$100 million	\$9 million	15
2009-11	\$70 million	\$6 million	10
2011-13	\$42 million	\$800,000	7
2013-15	\$65 million	\$5.5 million	17
Totals	\$277 million	\$21.3 million	49

Since inception, sponsors protected 6,780 acres and extinguished 452 development rights with funding assistance from the FPA.

In 2014, applicants submitted 25 projects for funding in FPA, requesting over \$22 million. All together, the projects seek to protect 32,660 acres of farmland and extinguish 7,537 development rights. The board will award grant funds for the 2014 applications at the June 2015 meeting. The ranked list of projects is on RCO's Web site at <http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/rcfb/wwrp/2014GrantsAwarded.pdf>.

Farmland Preservation Account Review

RCO conducted a review of the FPA to assess whether any changes were needed to improve the grant program. A group of 25 people interested in the program were convened to provide feedback. The final recommendations of the work group were:

- 1) Follow-up with collection of conservation easement monitoring reports from sponsors to get a better idea of the overall program success;
- 2) Draft revisions to the evaluation criteria to correct conflicting questions, reduce the emphasis on environmental values, and streamline the questions; and
- 3) Improve the application process.

2014 Grant Application Review

In addition to the feedback received during the program review, staff collected suggestions for improving the evaluation criteria during this past year's grant evaluation process. Significant issues raised by the FPA advisory committee members were:

- The most important factor for evaluation is the potential productivity of the farmland.
- Focus should be on the opportunity to farm, not current farming practices.
- Do not rely on current economic productivity of the farm as this can change based on the types of crops grown and growing seasons.
- Congruity of the parcels within the proposed easement area is important.
- Size and location of the building envelope (i.e., the area set aside for non-farming activities) is important.

- Conflicts in the evaluation criteria between the threats of the property converting to non-farming uses versus strong local support for agriculture that will help support farming on-site.
- Lack of direction on how to evaluate community support for the project.

Analysis

Evaluation Criteria Required in State Law

The board adopted⁴ the current FPA evaluation criteria in 2007 (see Attachment A). The evaluation criteria includes the required criteria as defined in state law and other discretionary criteria. State law requires the following criteria when evaluating applications to the FPA⁵:

- 1) Community support for the project;
- 2) A recommendation as part of a limiting factors or critical pathways analysis, a watershed plan or habitat conservation plan, or a coordinated region-wide prioritization effort;
- 3) The likelihood of the conversion of the site to nonagricultural or more highly developed usage;
- 4) Consistency with a local land use plan, or a regional or statewide recreational or resource plan. The projects that assist in the implementation of local shoreline master plans updated according to RCW 90.58.080 or local comprehensive plans updated according to RCW 36.70A.130 must be highly considered in the process;
- 5) Benefits to salmonids;
- 6) Benefits to other fish and wildlife habitat;
- 7) Integration with recovery efforts for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species;
- 8) The viability of the site for continued agricultural production, including, but not limited to:
 - Soil types;
 - On-site production and support facilities such as barns, irrigation systems, crop processing and storage facilities, wells, housing, livestock sheds, and other farming infrastructure;
 - Suitability for producing different types or varieties of crops;
 - Farm-to-market access;
 - Water availability; and
- 9) Other community values provided by the property when used as agricultural land, including, but not limited to:
 - Viewshed;
 - Aquifer recharge;
 - Occasional or periodic collector for storm water runoff;
 - Agricultural sector job creation;
 - Migratory bird habitat and forage area; and
 - Educational and curriculum potential.

⁴ Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution #2007-11

⁵ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(9)

Discretionary Evaluation Criteria

In addition to the required criteria above, the FPA evaluation criteria includes the following discretionary criteria:

- Size of the property;
- Economic productivity of the farm;
- Fit of the project to local priorities;
- Proximity to roads and utilities (cropland projects only);
- Carrying capacity (rangeland projects only);
- Drainage of the property;
- Presence of other features that could hinder or restrict use for agriculture;
- Zoning of the property;
- Likelihood that the region will continue to support agriculture;
- How agricultural productivity enhances the property's environmental values;
- Cost benefit of the acquisition;
- Local match;
- Sponsor's ability to acquire, manage, monitor and enforce conservation easements; and
- Term length of the easement.

The combination of the required criteria by state law and the discretionary criteria creates for a complicated evaluation with specific elements that can appear to conflict. For example, state law requires an evaluation of whether the farmland is an occasional or periodic collector of runoff. The additional criteria addresses site drainage. A farm may be a good collector of runoff during the fallow season and therefore would not necessarily have good drainage all year. This is one example of how the criteria can be confusing for the advisory committee when evaluating applications, as well as confusing for the applicant. Other criteria such as land use, zoning, economic productivity, and cost benefit are also challenging to interpret.

Reorganizing Evaluation Criteria by Themes

RCO staff is assessing how the criteria work together, determining ways to reduce conflicts and considering how to reorganize the criteria. An initial approach bundles the criteria into four main themes: land, infrastructure, stewardship, and community values.

Table 2 illustrates how the criteria required by state law fits within four main themes. Based on the four themes, the board could add discretionary criteria to complement the required criteria.

Table 2. Potential Farmland Criteria Themes

Farmland Criteria Theme	Required Criteria by State Law
Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The likelihood of the conversion of the site to nonagricultural or more highly developed usage.• The viability of the site for continued agricultural production, including, but not limited to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Soil types;○ Suitability for producing different types or varieties of crops; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Water availability.
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The viability of the site for continued agricultural production, including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-site production and support facilities such as barns, irrigation systems, crop processing and storage facilities, wells, housing, livestock sheds, and other farming infrastructure; and ○ Farm-to-market access.
Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Benefits to salmonids. ● Benefits to other fish and wildlife habitat. ● Integration with recovery efforts for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species. ● Migratory bird habitat and forage area.
Community Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community support for the project. ● A recommendation as part of a limiting factors or critical pathways analysis, a watershed plan or habitat conservation plan, or a coordinated region-wide prioritization effort. ● Consistency with a local land use plan, or a regional or statewide recreational or resource plan. The projects that assist in the implementation of local shoreline master plans updated according to RCW 90.58.080 or local comprehensive plans updated according to RCW 36.70A.130 must be highly considered in the process. ● Viewshed. ● Aquifer recharge. ● Occasional or periodic collector for storm water runoff. ● Agricultural sector job creation. ● Educational and curriculum potential.

Request for Direction

RCO seeks direction from the board on:

1. Whether to develop revised evaluation criteria for the FPA based on the four main themes of land, infrastructure, stewardship, and community values or use the existing structure of the criteria as the framework for which to propose changes;
2. Which discretionary criteria are most relevant to include alongside the required criteria; and
3. What other discretionary criteria the board may want to include.

Next Steps

After receiving direction from the board, staff will consult with the FPA advisory committee and draft revised evaluation criteria. Staff will brief the board on the draft revised evaluation criteria at the June meeting. After the board's feedback and direction in June, RCO staff will solicit formal comment from stakeholders, applicants and the interested public this summer. Final draft evaluation criteria will be presented to the board at the October meeting for consideration and adoption.

Attachments

- A. Farmland Preservation Account Evaluation Criteria

Farmland Preservation Program Evaluation Criteria Summary Table

Criteria	Points
Agricultural Values	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Soil types; suitability for producing agricultural products; size; economic productivity; fit of the project to local priorities • Viability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-site production and support facilities; farm to market access; proximity to roads and utilities (croplands only); carrying capacity (rangelands only); water availability; drainage; presence of other features that could hinder or restrict use for agriculture; zoning; likelihood that the farm will remain in agriculture; immediacy of threat to conversion to non-agricultural uses; likelihood that the region will continue to support agriculture 	68
Environmental Values (Acquisition only projects)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species and habitat support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Description of supported species; reliance of species on the property; quality of habitat provided; impact to the species if the habitat were converted. • Bigger picture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fit of the project with local, regional, and statewide conservation priorities • Agricultural productivity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider how production activities benefit the environment 	22
OR	
Environmental Values (Combination acquisition + restoration/enhancement projects)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species and habitat support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Description of supported species; reliance of species on the property; quality of habitat provided; how restoration/enhancement will benefit the species • Bigger picture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fit of the project with local, regional, and statewide conservation priorities • Likelihood of success: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Likelihood that restoration/enhancement will achieve the anticipated benefits to species and habitat; results of any past stewardship activities • Agricultural productivity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider how restoration or enhancement will promote productivity 	22
Community Values and Priorities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community support for the project; consistency with a local land use or a regional or statewide recreational or resource plan • Other community values: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ View shed; aquifer recharge; occasional or periodic collector for storm water runoff; floods; agricultural sector job creation; educational and curriculum potential; historic value; buffer to public lands, demonstration 	12
Other	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost benefit; local match; sponsor's ability to acquire, manage, monitor, and enforce conservation easements, term 	31
Total Points Available	133

Farmland Preservation Program Evaluation Criteria Details

A. Agricultural Values: Preservation of farmlands in order to maintain the opportunity for agricultural activity.	Maximum Points
1. Importance. How important is this farmland to the region and state?	
A. Soil types; percent of property with important soil types. Consider presence of prime and unique soils; soils important or appropriate for the anticipated crops or livestock forage, and local climatic conditions; soils important to the region.	5
B. Suitability for producing the current or anticipated agricultural products.	5
C. Size. Consider whether the size of the commercially productive portion of the property is adequate for the intended agricultural use. Give preference to larger parcels, especially as compared to other parcels with the same type of agricultural activity in the same area.	5
D. Economic productivity. Give preference for farms with greater incomes or potential incomes. Compare rangeland to other ranches, rather than to cropland.	5
E. Fit of the project to local priorities. If the sponsor has a land preservation program that includes farmland and/or has developed a strategy for farmland preservation, consider the extent that the project addresses priorities in that program and/or strategy	5
2. Viability: The viability of the site for continued agricultural production and the likelihood it will remain in production:	
A. On-site production and support facilities such as barns, irrigation systems, crop processing and storage facilities, wells, housing, livestock watering, rangeland fencing, livestock sheds, and other farming or ranching infrastructure.	3 points for cropland projects, 2 points for rangeland
B. Farm-to-market access.	3
C. Cropland projects only: Proximity to roads and utilities.	3
D. Rangeland projects only: Carrying capacity.	4
E. Water availability. Does the property have legitimate water rights and adequate water to support intended or likely agriculture activities?	4
F. Drainage.	3
G. Presence of other features that could hinder or restrict use for agriculture (access, presence of frost pockets, chronic flooding, invasive species, nearby land uses or activities that could constrain agricultural activities).	0 points if no such feature. Maximum deduction -5 points.
H. Zoning. Consider whether the property is in an Agricultural Protection District or other type of protected zone (ex. "Agricultural Natural Resource Lands" zoning in Skagit).	4

<p>I. Likelihood that the farm will remain in agriculture if protected. What is the likelihood that acquiring the development rights on this property will make a difference in keeping the property in agricultural production? Consider whether there is an increased likelihood that the property will be converted to nonagricultural uses if it is not protected. What and how imminent are the threats to ongoing agricultural use? Are these new or ongoing threats? This item applies to factors that could affect long-term viability, such as landowner motivation, potential for rezoning, history of farmland conversion in the area, and anticipated development patterns.</p>	16
<p>J. Likelihood that the region will continue to support agriculture. Consider the condition of local farming infrastructure; proximity to other protected agricultural lands; other farmland protection and conservation efforts; and land use designations.</p>	7
Environmental Values (Acquisition-only Projects) Maximum Points	
<p>1. Species⁶ and Habitat Support: Which species does the property support? How does the property support the species that use it?</p> <p>A. Describe the species that rely on the property for all or part of their life functions. Which, if any, endangered, threatened, or sensitive species does the property help recover? What, if any, are the benefits to salmonids?</p> <p>B. How do the species use the property? (For example: migration, connectivity to habitat, food, water, cover, breeding and/or resting areas. The property may be important for a species entire lifecycle, or may serve a critical function during part of its lifecycle, such as seasonal habitat for migratory species).</p> <p>C. What is the quality of the habitat provided? (Are the size, condition and other characteristics of the habitat adequate to support the species? If not, describe the quality and indicate if the property contributes important habitat to surrounding protected lands that, when combined, adequately support the species. Be specific.)</p> <p>D. What would the impact to the identified species be if this habitat were converted? (How much does each species rely on this particular habitat?)</p>	10
<p>2. The Bigger Picture: How does protecting this property fit with local, regional, statewide conservation objectives?</p> <p>A. Other than benefits that support specific species, what are the other environmental benefits of protecting the property, such as aquifer recharge, flood control, connectivity to other protected land, air and/or water quality improvement, etc.?</p> <p>B. Which local, regional, and/or statewide plans support protecting the identified species and/or habitat? (For example: a watershed plan or habitat conservation plan, the Washington State Natural Heritage Plan, or a coordinated region-wide prioritization effort). Which, if any, plans identify this property as being important for conservation? Which priorities in the identified plan(s) are addressed by protecting this property?</p>	8

⁶ Species can include, for example, invertebrates, plants, and fungi.

<p>3. Agricultural Productivity: How does the agricultural productivity of this property enhance its environmental values?</p> <p>A. Describe how agricultural production activities on this property can benefit the environment. (For example: seasonal grazing to control weeds; hedgerows or other plantings to attract pollinators, and provide habitat for birds who factor into an integrated pest management plan; crops that provide habitat for small rodents, which in turn become food for area raptors.) Describe any past stewardship activities that have taken place on the property. What were the results of these activities?</p>	4
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---OR---

B. Environmental Values (Combination Projects)	Maximum Points
<p>Enhancement or restoration projects must further the ecological functions of the farmlands.</p>	
<p>Briefly describe the restoration/enhancement activity.</p>	
<p>1. Species and Habitat Support: How will the project further the ecological function of the land?</p> <p>A. Describe the species that will rely on the property for all or part of their life functions. Which, if any, endangered, threatened, or sensitive species will the property help recover? What, if any, are the expected benefits to salmonids?</p> <p>B. How do the species use the property? (For example: migration, connectivity to habitat, food, water, cover, breeding and/or resting areas)</p> <p>C. What's the quality of the habitat that will be provided? (Will the size, condition and other characteristics of the habitat be adequate to support the species? If not, do surrounding protected lands provide quality habitat that will adequately support the species? Be specific.)</p> <p>D. How will the proposed restoration/enhancement activity benefit the species identified above? (How much will each species rely on this particular habitat?)</p>	8
<p>2. The Bigger Picture: How will protecting this property fit with local, regional, and/or statewide conservation objectives?</p> <p>A. Other than benefits that support specific species, what are the other environmental benefits of protecting the property, such as aquifer recharge, flood control, connectivity to other protected land, air or water quality improvement, etc?</p> <p>B. Which local, regional, and/or statewide plans support protecting the identified species and/or habitat? (For example: a watershed plan or habitat conservation plan, the Washington State Natural Heritage Plan, or a coordinated region-wide prioritization effort.) Which, if any, plans identify this property as being important for conservation and/or restoration? Which priorities in the identified plan(s) are addressed by protecting this property?</p>	6
<p>3. Likelihood of Success: What is the likelihood that the restoration or enhancement will achieve the anticipated benefits for species and habitat?</p> <p>A. Describe how the proposed restoration or enhancement activities will achieve</p>	4

B. Environmental Values (Combination Projects)	Maximum Points
<p>the benefits for species and habitat. Are they generally accepted methods of achieving beneficial enhancement or restoration results? (For example: Who recommended the proposed activities as appropriate for this property? Was the recommendation made as part of a conservation or stewardship plan? What is the relevant expertise of the person who wrote that plan? Do the activities enjoy widespread support?)</p> <p>B. Describe any past stewardship activities that have taken place on the property. What were the results of these activities?</p>	
<p>4. Agricultural Productivity: How will the restoration or enhancement promote agricultural productivity?</p> <p>A. Describe how the proposed restoration or enhancement activities will promote agricultural productivity. (For example, if the proposal is to install water efficiencies, describe how that will allow the farmer to produce greater crop yields. If the proposal is to install a livestock well, describe how that will not only benefit water quality, but will support an increase in animal units. Address how the benefits to productivity do not cancel out the environmental benefits described in number 1. For example, describe how the lack of water may have been a limiting factor on the property, and how the increased number of livestock now supported by the well will not lead to exceeding the carrying capacity of the land).</p>	4

C. Community Values and Priorities	Maximum Points
1. Community support for the project.	6
2. Consistency with a local land use plan, or a regional or statewide recreational or resource plan. The projects that assist in the implementation of local shoreline master plans updated according to Revised Code of Washington 90.58.080 or local comprehensive plans updated according to Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.130 must be highly considered in the process.	2
<p>3. Other community values provided by the property when used as agricultural land, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View • Aquifer recharge • Occasional or periodic collector for storm water runoff and/or providing flood capacity • Agricultural sector job creation • Educational potential • Historic value • Buffer to public lands • Demonstration project 	4
Other	Maximum Points
1. Cost benefit. Consider the percentage of total acreage that is in agricultural production or set aside to preserve ecological values (versus the percentage of the property that is taken up by structures, roads, etc.; allow for acreage that is not in	5

agricultural production for the purpose of preserving ecological values, such as protected riparian buffers, CREP leases). Consider cost per acre? Consider contributions by the landowner, for example a bargain sale?	
2. Local match. Consider the amount of local (non-state, non-federal) match to be provided by the grant recipient. Includes contribution of land, labor, and materials.	2
3. Sponsor's ability to acquire, manage, monitor and enforce conservation easements. Consider the history of project sponsor in acquiring, managing and enforcing easements. Consider whether the applicant has an established farmland PDR (purchase of development rights) or conservation easement program and staff devoted to farmland protection. Consider the ability and experience of any organizations or entities assisting or partnering with the sponsor. For counties and cities without an established farmland PDR or conservation easement program, consider whether the award of a grant will provide the impetus for establishing a continuing program. Consider the presence of an endowment or other dedicated funding sources for management, monitoring, and enforcement.	4
4. Term (Staff Scored Question). The following formula will be used to determine points for duration of lease or easement:	
Duration of Conveyance	Point Value
• Perpetual Easement	20
• Easement or Lease of 60 plus years	10
• Easement or Lease of 40 plus years	5
• Easement or Lease of less than 40 years	0

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM

Meeting Date: April 9, 2015
Title: Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Phase III Overview
Prepared By: Leslie Connelly, Natural Resource Policy Specialist

Summary

This memo presents an overview of a third phase of proposed changes to Title 286 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). If so directed by the board, the Recreation and Conservation Office staff will initiate rule-making changes per the Administrative Procedures Act.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

- Request for Decision
- Request for Direction
- Briefing

Background

Administrative rules are regulations of executive branch agencies issued by authority of state statutes. The Recreation and Conservation Office's (RCO) administrative rules are found in [Title 286 of the Washington Administrative Code](#) (WAC). The rules cover a number of subjects including general authorities of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) and RCO director, general grant assistance rules, and specific program rules. The rules are organized into the following chapters:

Chapter	Title
286-04	General
286-06	Public Records
286-13	General Grant Assistance Rules
286-26	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Funds
286-27	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program
286-30	Firearms Range
286-35	Boating Facilities Program
286-40	Land and Water Conservation Fund
286-42	Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account Program

Chapters 286-04, 286-06, and 286-13 WAC are broad in scope and apply to the agency's operations and the board's grant programs. The remaining chapters are specific to certain grant programs. Note there are no specific administrative rules for grants RCO manages on behalf of other agencies, at the direction of the Legislature, or for the following board programs: Boating Infrastructure Grants, the Recreational Trails Program, and Youth Athletic Facilities.

Phase I and II Complete

In April 2014, the board approved non-substantive changes to the administrative rules which changed the name of the board and agency and updated references throughout the title. This first phase also included

substantive changes that clarified some of the grant assistance rules and deadlines in preparation for the 2014 grant cycle. This rule-making became effective May 19, 2014.

In October 2014, the board approved substantive changes to the administrative rules regarding public records in Chapter 286-06 of the Washington Administrative Code. These changes reflect the model rules adopted by the Office of the Attorney General for compliance with the Public Records Act. This rule-making became effective December 5, 2014.

Phase III WAC Revisions

In June 2014, the board directed staff to conduct revisions to [Title 286 WAC](#) that included more than the revisions to the public records chapter. Staff was unable to complete all the changes in phase II; therefore, staff is proposing a third phase to complete the revisions previously discussed in June 2014. Table 1 describes the specific changes proposed for phase III.

Table 1. Phase III WAC Changes

WAC	Subject	Summary of Proposed Changes
286-04-010	Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update definitions with state law and the project agreement. Add new definitions, as appropriate (e.g., restoration projects).
286-04-030	Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update board and agency goals.
286-04-080	Federal overlay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify the interaction of federal program requirements and board policy.
New section Chapter 286-13	Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new section and move long-term compliance rules from the program chapters. Organize compliance by project type. Address long-term compliance rules for maintenance and operation grants and equipment purchases. Address when long-term compliance rules are not required (e.g., education and enforcement projects). Address the length of the compliance period for development and restoration projects located on property owned by the project sponsor and on property not owned by the project sponsor. Define the compliance "project area". Address which programs and projects administered by the board or office are subject to the compliance rules.
New section Chapter 286-13	Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new planning section and move planning requirements in the other program chapters together.
286-13-045	Matching resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move matching share requirements from the program chapters to this section. Adjust matching requirements when one RCO grant is used to match another RCO grant.
286-13-060	Project agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update project agreement requirements to reflect current policy and procedure. Repeal parts that are better represented in the contract itself.
286-13-085	Retroactive and increased costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add restoration projects to the types of projects eligible for retroactive and increased costs.

WAC	Subject	Summary of Proposed Changes
286-13-090	Federal assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeal section or be more specific about how to use statewide planning to maximize federal funding.
286-13-110	Income, use of income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeal parts that are better represented in the contract itself.
Chapter 286-40	Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeal chapter and address in the federal overlay WAC 286-04-080.
Chapter 286-42	Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add reference to what rules, if any, apply to projects before April 1, 2004. Repeal long-term compliance. Compliance to be organized by project type in a new section in Chapter 286-13 WAC. Repeal match requirements. Matching shares to be addressed in WAC 286-13-045.
Chapter 286-35	Boating Facilities Program (BFP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeal long-term compliance. Compliance to be organized by project type in a new section in Chapter 286-13 WAC. Repeal match requirements. Matching shares to be addressed in WAC 286-13-045.
Chapter 286-26	Non-highway Off-road Vehicle Account (NOVA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeal long-term compliance. Compliance to be organized by project type in a new section in Chapter 286-13 WAC. Repeal match requirements. Matching shares to be addressed in WAC 286-13-045. Repeal unnecessary definitions.
Chapter 286-27	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeal long-term compliance. Compliance to be organized by project type in a new section in Chapter 286-13 WAC. Repeal match requirements. Matching shares to be addressed in WAC 286-13-045.
Chapter 286-30	Firearms and Archery Range Recreation (FARR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeal match requirements. Matching shares to be addressed in WAC 286-13-045.

Analysis

RCO staff have identified the following two topics for which direction is needed from the board before drafting the proposed revisions to the administrative rules.

Goals of the Board

Goals of the board are defined in the administrative rules¹ as follows:

1. Provide funds and planning assistance for acquisition and development and use of outdoor recreation and habitat conservation resources to maximize protection of the natural quality of the environment;
2. Provide funds and planning assistance for a system of public recreational facilities and opportunities for state residents and visitors;

¹ Washington Administrative Code 286-04-030

3. Aid organizations and local government, with funds and planning assistance, in providing the type of facilities and resources which, under their jurisdiction, will best serve their needs for outdoor recreation and habitat conservation; and
4. Encourage programs which promote outdoor education, skill development, participation opportunity and proper stewardship of recreation and natural resources. See also RCW 79A.25.005.

The board also has goals in its strategic plan² which are:

1. We help our partners protect, restore, and develop habitat and recreation opportunities that benefit people, fish and wildlife, and ecosystems.
2. We achieve a high level of accountability in managing the resources and responsibilities entrusted to us.
3. We deliver successful projects by inviting competition and by using broad public participation and feedback, monitoring, assessment, and adaptive management.

Question for the board: Staff would like direction from the board on whether to retain the goals in the administrative rules or remove the goals from the administrative rules and address goals only within the strategic plan.

Retaining the goals in the administrative rules could be used as a foundation for goals within the strategic plan. If retained in the administrative rules, goals should be consider long-term, stable goals that would not be frequently revised. Removing the goals from the administrative rules would provide more flexibility for the board to develop and revise goals that reflect current needs within the strategic plan.

Definition of Project Area

Project area is a geographic term used in three contexts but is not specifically defined. The first instance is in the administrative rules within the section that addresses whether sponsors may generate income at a site that received grant assistance from the board. Within this context:

The way the project or **project area** is defined varies with the source of funds provided by the board. That is, income generated in a project assisted with funds that originate from:

- A state source must be consistent with the limits of the element(s) assisted by the board (for example, within the area of an athletic field or habitat area).
- The federal land and water conservation fund must be consistent within the protected boundary as described in the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, 36 C.F.R., Part 59.86-13-110.³

The term project area is also used in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program as it relates to applicants obtaining local jurisdiction review of their applications.⁴

A state or local agency shall review the proposed project application with the county or city with jurisdiction over the **project area** prior to applying for funds for the acquisition of property under this chapter. The appropriate county or city legislative authority may, at its discretion, submit a letter to the board identifying the authority's position with regard to the acquisition project. The board shall make the letters received under this section available to the governor and the

² Adopted June 27, 2012

³ Washington Administrative Code 286-13-110

⁴ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.110

legislature when the prioritized project list is submitted under RCW 79A.15.120, 79A.15.060, and 79A.15.070.

Finally, the term project area is used in the board's compliance policy as it relates to the area which is subject to the conversion requirements.⁵

A conversion would be determined when one or more of the following takes place, whether affecting an entire site or any portion of a site funded by RCO:

- Property interests are conveyed for non-public outdoor recreation, habitat conservation, or salmon recovery uses.
- Property interests are conveyed to a third party not otherwise eligible to receive grants in the program from which funding was derived.³
- Non-outdoor recreation, habitat conservation, or salmon recovery uses (public or private) are made in a manner that impairs the originally intended purposes of the **project area**.
- Non-eligible indoor facilities are developed within the **project area**.
- Public use of the property or a portion of the property acquired or developed/restored with RCO assistance is terminated, unless public use was not allowed under the original grant.
- If a habitat project, the property or a portion of the property acquired, restored, or enhanced no longer provides the environmental functions for which RCO funds were approved originally.

The term project area also appears frequently in the context of RCO's procedures for grant compliance such as the geographic area where staff conducts inspections, where sponsors may use equipment purchased with grant funds, and where cultural resources review occurs.

Question for the board: Staff would like direction from the board on how to define the term "project area." Options for considerations are:

- Create a definition based on the use of the word in the administrative rule for income and use of income;
- Apply the same definition of project area throughout the board's policies;
- Develop different definitions depending on the context of the term; or
- Develop new terms depending on the context.

Conceptually, understanding the "project area" is fundamental to how RCO administers grants on behalf of the board. It affects where on the land staff applies the board's policies. It frames the context of the terms of the agreement between RCO and the sponsor. Application of the term "project area" also significantly matters to sponsors that are subject to the board's compliance policies and terms of the project agreement.

Phase III Schedule

The schedule for WAC revisions must fit within the deadlines established by the Code Reviser's Office for filings with the Washington State Register. If the board approves moving forward, the schedule for phase III is described in Table 2.

⁵ Resolution #2007-14

Table 2. Phase III Schedule

Date (2015)	Action
April 1	File pre-proposal statement of inquiry (CR-101)
April 9	Board meeting – briefing on the topics included in phase III
April 15	Notice of pre-proposal statement of inquiry published in Washington State Register
May 20	File notice of proposed rule-making (CR-102)
June 3	Notice of proposed rule-making published in Washington State Register
June 24 or 25	Board meeting, public hearing, final adoption
June 26	File notice of permanent rule-making (CR-103)
July 27	Effective date for phase II

Public Involvement and Comment

The Administrative Procedures Act requires at least one public hearing be conducted by the board at a scheduled meeting prior to adopting revisions to the rules. The schedule above identifies the board’s June board meeting for the formal public hearing. Interested persons may either attend the public hearing or submit formal written comments in advance. In addition to this formal opportunity, RCO staff will notify interested persons about the proposed revisions similar to the outreach it does for public comment opportunities on board policies. The revisions will also be posted on RCO’s Website.

Board Direction

RCO staff seeks board direction on whether to proceed with revisions as described in this memo. Specifically, staff seeks the board’s direction on the two issues raised in the previous section.

- Whether to retain the goals in the administrative rules or remove the goals from the administrative rules and address goals only within the strategic plan; and
- How to define the term “project area.”

Next Steps

If approved by the board, RCO staff will draft rule revisions for phase III and implement the proposed schedule in time for the board’s June meeting.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM

Meeting Date: April 9, 2015
Title: Final Youth Athletic Facility Program Policies and Evaluation Criteria
Prepared By: Leslie Connelly, Natural Resource Policy Specialist

Summary

This memo presents final policies, evaluation criteria, and program measures for the Youth Athletic Facilities Program for grant applications starting in 2015.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Request for Decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Direction
<input type="checkbox"/>	Briefing

Background

Capital Budget Request

At the July 2014 Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) meeting, staff provided background on the history and scope of the Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) grant program. During the meeting, the board discussed a potential capital budget request to reinvigorate the program, including a narrower scope of the types of projects (improving and maintaining existing facilities) and a larger scope of the types of applicants (cities, counties, park districts, Native American tribes, and non-profit sports organizations) that the program might include. The board directed staff to solicit letters of intent from prospective applicants who would like to apply for a grant should funding be appropriated in the 2015-17 capital budget.

At the August 2014 board meeting, staff presented the results of the solicitation for letters of intent to apply for a YAF grant. There were 193 submittals requesting \$38.8 million in grant funds with \$60.6 million in matching funds for a total of \$99.4 million. Individual grant request amounts ranged from \$500 to \$1.5 million; the average request was \$200,000.

Based on the letters of intent submitted, the board directed staff to request \$12 million in general obligation bond funds in the 2015-17 capital budget and a request to retain five percent of any appropriation for program administration (Resolution #2014-17). The Governor's capital budget proposal to the Legislature included \$3 million for the YAF program (House Bill 1115 and Senate Bill 5097).

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Preparation

In anticipation of funds appropriated by the Legislature, the board directed staff at the October 2014 meeting to proceed with a work plan to revise the YAF grant program (See table 1). One major goal was to allow the board the ability to award grant funds as soon as possible should the Legislature approve funds in the capital budget. Since October, staff completed draft revisions to the YAF program policy statements, evaluation criteria and procedures, solicited comments from the public, and incorporated comments into a revised draft.

Table 1: YAF Grant Program Timeline

Task	When	Status
Draft revisions to YAF program policy statements and evaluation criteria	October – December 2014	Complete
Solicit public comments and conduct stakeholder outreach	December 2014	Complete
Incorporate public comments	January – February 2015	Complete
Board review and adopt policy statements and evaluation criteria	March 2015	Pending
Prepare application materials and post on Web	April 2015	Pending
Applications open to entities that submitted a letter of intent in August 2014	May 2015	Pending
Application due date	July 1, 2015	Pending
Application evaluations	September 2015	Pending
Board approves YAF grant funding	November 2015	Pending

Public Comments Received

Public Comment Period and Response

RCO shared a draft YAF program manual with the public and solicited public comments from December 10, 2014 to January 5, 2015. RCO distributed a notice for the public comment period to 2,000 individuals by email and posted the announcement on its website. Nine individuals submitted comments (listed with RCO staff's reply in Attachment A).

Summary of Comments

The public comments received have five main themes:

1. General support for the changes.
2. Types of eligible athletic facilities:
 - a. Concern that construction of new athletic facilities is not eligible for grant funding.
 - b. Support for limiting applications to existing athletic facilities.
 - c. Clarify what "public competitive play" means.
3. Grant maximum amount of \$250,000:
 - a. Too high.
 - b. Just right.
4. Types of eligible applicants:
 - a. Applicants limited to those that submitted letters of intent: one in support, one not in support.
 - b. Clarify when the legal opinion is required for first time applicants.
 - c. Support for allowing park districts to be eligible applicants.
5. Match waiver proposal:

- a. Perceived conflict between waiving the match requirement and awarding extra evaluation points to applicants that provide additional match beyond the minimum requirement.
- b. Support for waiving match for natural disaster areas.
- c. Clarify the specific time when the natural disaster area is determined in relation to the grant application.
- d. Concern that the 80% threshold for student enrollment in the free and reduced school lunch program was the right threshold for waiving the match requirements.
- e. Concern that students in the school attendance area may not be the same youth participating in the athletic program at the YAF facility.
- f. Suggestion to reduce the match requirement for disadvantaged communities rather than waiving the match requirement.

RCO Staff Response

In response to the public comment received, RCO staff revised the draft YAF policies as follows:

- Clarified competitive play within the policy that says fields must be open to the public.
- Clarified the time when natural disaster areas are determined and that the match policy applies only to those areas directly affected by the disaster, not the entire county or jurisdiction that was subject to the declaration.
- Drafted an alternative option for the board to consider reducing the matching share for disadvantaged communities.

In addition, RCO staff clarified and refined the following policies based on additional staff review and feedback:

- Clarified the program's purpose.
- Refined the eligible and ineligible renovation activities eligible for grant funding.
- Clarified the requirement for activities to occur "in-bounds".
- Added the board's existing policy on project progress for projects that include acquisition of land.
- Clarified the parameters for scoping a grant application.
- Added the board policy on control and tenure of the property where the project occurs.
- Refined the long-term obligations to align with the board's existing compliance policies.
- Added the board's policy on using one board funded grant to match another.
- Added the board's policy on not awarding additional match points when using another board funded grant as the source of match.
- Refined the evaluation criteria.

RCO staff prepared final draft YAF policies and evaluation criteria based on comments from the public and further revisions from staff. The next section of the memo explains the YAF policies for the board's consideration.

Proposed YAF Policies and Evaluation Criteria

Proposed YAF Policies for Consideration

The complete text of the final draft policies are in Attachment B. Table 2 provides a summary of the policies.

Table 2: Summary of Proposed YAF Policies

Policy	Brief Statement
#1 - Program Purpose	The Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) grant program provides money to purchase land and renovate outdoor athletic facilities serving youth.
#2 - Facilities must be Open to the Public	The facility funded with a YAF grant must be open to the public for youth or community athletic purposes.
#3 – Grant Request Limits	The minimum grant request is \$25,000. The maximum grant request is \$250,000.
#4 - Matching Share	Applicants must contribute matching resources at least equal to the amount of the grant requested.
#5 – Match Sharing for Disadvantaged Communities	Option 1: Match Waived for Disadvantaged Communities Option 2: Match Reduced for Disadvantaged Communities
#6 - Eligible Applicants	Only cities, counties, park districts, Native American tribes, and qualified non-profit organizations that submitted a letter of intent in August 2014 are eligible to apply.
#7 - Legal Opinion for First Time Applicants	The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board requires all organizations wishing to apply for a grant to RCO for the first time to submit a legal opinion.
#8 - Renovation Projects	A renovation project means the activities intended to improve an existing site or structure to increase its service life or functions.
#9 - Eligible Renovation Activities	Eligible renovation projects are those that renovate existing facilities.
#10 - Items “In Bounds” Required	Each application must include items found within the field of play or on the court or track and that are essential for the competitive sport to occur.
#11 - Combination Projects	Combination projects involve acquisition and facility renovation. Acquiring land is eligible if it is necessary to increase the capacity of an existing facility and if combined with an eligible, in-bounds, renovation element.
#12 – Progress Policy	To help ensure timely completion of these projects, at least 1 month before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers approving funds; applicants must secure the property by one of three methods: 1) acquisition under a waiver of retroactivity, 2) acquisition pending in escrow, or 3) option secured on the property.
#13 - Project Scoping	Only one park location or site is allowed in each application.
#14 - Ineligible Project Activities	Several sources are used to determine project eligibility. Examples of ineligible elements for funding consideration are listed.
#15 - Control of the Land	An applicant must have adequate control of the land where the YAF facility is located to assure that its proposal will be implemented as proposed and meet the long-term obligations for project compliance.
#16 - Long-term Obligations	Identifies the long-term obligations based on the project area, compliance period, useful life of the athletic facility, and conversions of use.

Proposed YAF Evaluation Criteria for Consideration

The complete text of the final draft YAF evaluation criteria is in Attachment C, Table 3 provide a summary of the evaluation criteria.

Table 3: Summary of Proposed YAF Evaluation Criteria

Summary of Questions and Scores					
Scored by	#	Title	Maximum Points	Multiplier	Total
Advisory Committee	1	Need and Need Satisfaction	5	3	15
Advisory Committee	2	Design and Budget	5	2	10
Advisory Committee	3	Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship	3	1	3
Advisory Committee	4	Facility management	3	1	3
Advisory Committee	5	Availability	5	1	5
Advisory Committee	6	Readiness to proceed	3	1	3
Advisory Committee	7	Support and Partnerships	5	2	10
RCO Staff	8	Matching shares	2	1	2
RCO Staff	9	Proximity to people	1	1	1
RCO Staff	10	GMA Preference	0	1	0
Total possible points = 52					

Proposed YAF Program Measures

Should the Legislature provide capital budget funding for the YAF program, RCO staff recommends the board define specific measures to track program outputs. Defining specific output measures will help tell the story of how sponsors spent grant funding and whether grants aligned with the intent of the YAF program.

Staff recommends three proposed measures. The first measure focuses on the main program purpose of the YAF program, which is funding athletic facilities for youth. The second measure tracks how much funding sponsors are leveraging in the project that is not from state sources. The third measure tracks whether the state is making progress on providing outdoor recreation opportunities for underserved communities as identified in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The data would be collected for each project and could be added together to reflect outputs for the YAF program as a whole.

The three proposed YAF program measures are:

1. The number of youth served in each project on an annual basis, both currently served and expected to be served, because of the YAF project.
2. The total amount of non-state funds leveraged in each project.
3. The percent of underserved individuals (i.e., non-white and persons with disabilities) served in each project.

Board Direction

RCO staff seeks board direction on the proposed YAF policies, evaluation criteria, and program measures. Resolution 2015-02 in Attachment D is provided for the board's consideration.

Next Steps

Should the board approve policies, evaluation criteria, and program measures for the YAF program, RCO staff will proceed with a grant application process as described in table 1. Should the Legislature not provide funding for the YAF program in the capital budget, RCO staff will halt implementation of the YAF application process.

Attachments

- A. Public Comments Received on Proposed Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) Program Changes
- B. Proposed YAF Policies for Consideration
- C. Proposed YAF Evaluation Criteria for Consideration
- D. Resolution 2015-02

Attachment A

Public Comments Received on Proposed Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) Program Changes

Comment Period: December 10, 2014 – January 5, 2015

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
Glenn Kost, Director, Parks and Community Services, City of Bellevue	<p>I have reviewed the proposed policy changes to Manual 17 (the YAF program). Regarding the new policy requiring applicants to submit a legal opinion confirming their legal status to accomplish the project:</p> <p>Is this intended to apply to ALL applicants as it currently states, or just non-governmental agencies? It seems that the requirements noted are fundamental purposes of government, and thus should not apply to eligible governmental agencies;</p> <p>Is this intended to mean first time applicants <u>to the YAF program</u>, or first time applicants <u>to any RCO managed grant program</u>?</p> <p>Other than these questions, we take no exception to the proposed policy changes to the YAF program.</p>	<p>The proposal is to require a first time applicant to RCO to provide a legal opinion in order to be eligible to apply for any RCO grant. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted this policy in 1965 but it was not applied to the YAF program when it was created in 1999.</p> <p>This proposal applies to all first time applicants, public and private. A first-time applicant provides the legal opinion once as part of their first application to RCO. They do not need to submit it with each subsequent application.</p> <p>For example, if an applicant applies for a YAF grant and they have never applied for a grant from RCO before, they need to provide the legal opinion. Once provided, the applicant may apply to any RCO grant program in the future for which they are eligible.</p>
Debbi Hanson, Director, Parks & Recreation, City of Battle Ground	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed YAF policy changes and provide comment.</p> <p>The changes are significant...I'm disappointed that it will no longer fund new construction. That may be a major funding setback for smaller communities that currently do not have any or limited number of outdoor sports facilities/fields.</p> <p>Based on the proposed changes to the Grant Limits, I feel that the funding maximum of \$250,000 for only</p>	<p>New construction of athletic facilities is typically a good fit for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), another grant program administered by RCO. The intention is to limit the overlap in the eligible types of projects in the YAF program and WWRP. However, non-profit organizations are not eligible to apply in WWRP.</p> <p>The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approved the maximum grant amounts for YAF in 2003. Increasing the maximum amount now reflects the higher cost in today's dollars for renovating athletic fields. Based on the letters of intent received in August, 89</p>

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>renovation type projects is a bit too high. The old fee structure would have provided a maximum of up to \$100,000 if you combined the "existing" with the "maintenance" funding. I would suggest a maximum of \$150,000. That would still increase the funding by \$50,000 and would potentially allow more projects to receive funding.</p>	<p>percent of the proposed projects requested a maximum grant amount of \$250,000 or less. Setting the maximum request amount at \$250,000 meets a large majority of the need. If the maximum grant amount is set at \$150,000, only 45 percent of the proposed projects would fall under this maximum grant amount.</p>
<p>Theresa Glatstein, Grant Writer, Boys and Girls Clubs of Snohomish County</p>	<p>Applicants are awarded more points for a greater match; are applicants that waive the match at a disadvantage as they have fewer points than applicants with a match? Could applicants that waive receive a standard number of points so they are not ranked too low?</p> <p>What does <i>public competitive play</i> involve? Most competitive play is in conjunction with a league. If the league is open to the public does that satisfy the public competitive play requirement?</p>	<p>Evaluation criteria #8 <i>Matching Shares</i> awards 1 or 2 points to those applicants that provide additional match above the minimum requirement. Criteria #8 has been part of the YAF criteria since 2000. If the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopts a policy that reduces or waives the match for certain applicants, they would not be eligible for the additional match points. The two policies are not intended to conflict with one another, but reward applicants that can leverage additional resources to complete a YAF project while providing a financial advantage to applicants located in a disadvantaged community.</p> <p>Yes, if the league is open to the public for participation on a non-discriminatory basis, it meets the threshold for public competitive play. A league may select participants based on skill level, but may not discriminate based on race, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or income.</p>
<p>Lynn D. Sordel, Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts Department, City of Lynnwood</p>	<p>I have served as Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Lynnwood for the past eight years and I continue to be amazed at the growth of outdoor youth programs. In our area, we have seen tremendous growth of year-round soccer, lacrosse and a steady delivery of youth baseball. I also believe there are more young girls playing these sports now than before. In our community, we cannot keep up with this growth. The Edmonds School District has been an excellent partner, but we are</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments supporting the YAF program.</p>

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>not able to consistently tap into the use of their facilities due to their demands from their own sport programs. There is a documented shortage of year-round facilities in our area.</p> <p>Accordingly, I totally support the new RCO driven initiative to create a grant funding program designed to provide to badly needed resources for these important facilities. I am aware RCFB recommended to the Governor's office an allocation of \$ 12 million for statewide bonding/funding. Earlier this year, the City of Lynnwood submitted a grant request for \$500,000 to renovate the 30 year old Meadowdale Playfields facility. We proposed the installation of artificial surfaces on the two existing soccer fields and solicited support from the School District and other partners. This new grant program would provide funding for this type of request.</p> <p>Our Mayor and elected officials have also provided written and verbal support to our local legislators, and recently, we hosted Lt Governor Owen for a day-long meeting and tour of our city. We spoke about this program and he indicated there would likely be support coming from the Governor's office as well.</p> <p>In summary, a funding program designed to improve and maintain youth athletic fields in our state is welcomed and should be supported. We sincerely hope there will be a positive outcome for this great idea.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments about this new program.</p>	

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
Jon Lunsford, Parks and Forest Lands Manager, Anacortes Parks & Recreation	<p>Thank you for taking my comments on the Youth Athletic Facilities Manual update. We would like to be able to apply for a grant this year if YAF funds become available. Our request is that agencies such as ours that didn't file a letter of intent last year be able to apply if the Legislature approves the Governor's budget request.</p>	<p>RCO announced early on and widely distributed the notice that it would be required to submit a letter of intent in order to apply for a grant in 2015. RCO staff discussed this approach with the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board at their public meetings in 2014. RCO shared the list of applicants that submitted a letter of intent with the Legislature to support the capital budget request for the YAF program; therefore, changing the approach now may disrupt the legislative process for the budget request.</p> <p>If you are interested in receiving future notices about RCO grant programs, please sign-up for our e-mail distribution on our Web site at http://www.rco.wa.gov/about/Email-list.shtml.</p>
Paul J. Kaftanski, Parks and Recreation Director, City of Everett	<p>More agencies today are considering whether "morphing" into a parks district (with voter approval) makes sense. The economic realities of competing against other general fund services, particularly public safety services, places parks and recreation services in a financial jeopardy – year after year. A more stable source of funding helps to alleviate that. They shouldn't however, be penalized for asking voters to levy additional taxes on themselves to fund park and recreation services. So to me, it just makes plain sense to include parks districts as eligible for YAF funding.</p> <p>Everett (and others) submitted letters of interest in pursuing YAF funding, knowing that there is a cap of \$250,000 per project. With the ability to match other RCO funds, this cap is acceptable. It can have an intended consequence of spreading grant money around the state, which isn't a bad outcome.</p> <p>I support the approach to focus on existing fields. There are many fields in the state and I can easily foresee would seek, for example, to convert natural turf to</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment supporting park districts as an eligible applicant.</p> <p>Thank you for your comment supporting the grant maximum and the ability to match one RCO grant to another.</p> <p>Thank you for your comment supporting the focus on renovating existing athletic facilities.</p>

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>synthetic. This would dramatically increase the capacity of field playing time without the need to acquire and develop new facilities (in other words, a less costly approach).</p> <p>I think the proposed policy of providing discretion for areas subject to a natural disaster is prudent. With respect to the 80 percent issue, I think this should be re-thought. I'll use Kasch Park in Everett as an example of my request. It is located in the Mukilteo School District at the western end of Casino Road. This area is highly transitory in terms of residents and the data would show it has a very high percentage of students on a free and/or reduced lunch program. The fact of the matter however is that Kasch Park also attracts competitive (including select) teams from across Snohomish, Skagit, Island and King Counties. I think it would have an unfair advantage in a competition. I believe that the issue is not the nearest school but rather, the income level in the school district/city. Additionally, parks facilities and programs are already delivered by many agencies today in areas such as these without special consideration. Though I understand the desired geographic nexus I think the reality is that the overwhelming use of facilities that would benefit from YAF funding is regional facilities that attract people from a very large draw area. If something needs to be done for facilities in lower income areas, applicants could be given more points in the evaluation criteria if they can demonstrate a certain percentage use of the facility by residents within a limited geographic area (surrounding the facility) that includes schools where there is a high percentage of kids getting reduced/free lunches. That would place the challenge on the agencies to ensure that there is an</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment supporting waiving the matching share requirement for applicants located in areas affected by natural disasters.</p> <p>RCO considered other methods prior to selecting the school lunch program as a threshold for a match preference. RCO considered poverty rates as an indicator of need, however, staff at the Office of Financial Management advised RCO that there is not one method for calculating poverty rates and the different methodologies produce conflicting data. OFM staff recommended using data from the school lunch program as it is more objective than the census data.</p> <p>RCO also considered different geographic scales for applying the school lunch program. At the school district level, 17 school districts meet the 80 percent rate of participation in the school lunch program in all their schools, none of which is located in an area in which a YAF project is proposed. Using the elementary school data, 24 proposed YAF projects are located in elementary school attendance areas with an 80 percent rate of participation in the school lunch program.</p> <p>We also considered whether an applicant could demonstrate the percentage of low-income youth participating in competitive sports at the proposed YAF facility. While this seemed like a preferred approach to demonstrate the direct participation by individuals, we determined that such information would be subjective and difficult for the applicant to obtain from existing sports registration data. At best, it would be an estimate of the economic situation of the players enrolled. Such information could not be objectively scored and would be difficult to evaluate.</p>

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>effort to make available these facilities to local area residents.</p>	<p>We share your concern that a proposed YAF facility may not be used by the youth located around it. Facilities constructed for competitive play often draw from a larger geographic area. The economically disadvantaged community around a facility may not be able to afford to register for the competitive sport. It is difficult to assess the local recreational benefit of an athletic facility that draws competitive play from a specific region or the state. However, the founding purpose of the YAF program is to support competitive sports. To acknowledge this dynamic of the use of the YAF facility by neighborhoods versus competitive sports, there is a new policy proposed to require the applicant to keep a facility open for play when it is not scheduled for competitive play. This policy requires the facility be open and available to the neighborhood for use while acknowledging that competitive play is its primary use.</p>
<p>Doug Levy, State Lobbyist for Washington Recreation and Parks Association</p>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the RCO's draft update of a YAF Guidance Manual – and for recognizing the holiday period by granting a comment extension until today. The comments below reflect a consensus position of the WRPA, based on outreach to and discussion with our broad-based Legislative Committee. We are of course very appreciative of the proposed funding for reinstating a statewide competitive YAF grant program, and there is a general comfort level with most of the updates to the manual such as allowing Metropolitan Park District and Park District entities to apply as eligible jurisdictions, and the focus on addressing existing fields problems vs. new fields development.</p> <p>With regard to the YAF manual proposals for waivers, we have the following comments:</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments supporting the addition of park districts as eligible applicants and the focus of the program on renovation of existing facilities.</p>

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>A preference for some match vs. zero: Our local parks officials had concerns about granting a full, 100 percent waiver, particularly based on the low-income threshold. The thought is that there should be some “skin in the game,” even if it is only through an in-kind match of some level. One of our Parks Directors suggested that if there is going to be an 80 percent threshold on the free/reduced lunch programs – maybe the match waiver is at 80 percent. I had one other Park Director suggest the RCO look at ability to pay, or base criteria on an organization’s budget;</p> <p>A need for more clarity in defining low-income areas and applying a waiver or reduction: Our folks believe a lot more work needs to be done in better pinpointing the thresholds and definition for match waivers (we would prefer match reductions) in the areas beset by lower incomes. Is the 80% threshold the right one? <i>(One of our folks noted a 70% threshold in an area near him where the Park District was very financially strapped).</i> If it is for individual schools, what is the distance the school could or should be from the application site? Should this be based on school districts or individual schools? Our local Parks directors and managers feel like this needs considerably more thought and dialogue.</p> <p>Federal disaster waiver declarations: With regard to the waivers that would be based on being in a federally-declared disaster area (wildfires, Oso landslides), our folks suggested that RCO should be ensuring this type of declaration not give applicants permanent matching dollars waiver status – in other words, there should be well-thought-through beginning and ending dates, perhaps tied just to an application cycle.</p>	<p>Based on your comment, RCO staff will present two options to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board at its meeting in April regarding matching shares. One option will be to require no matching share for disadvantaged communities. A second option will be to require \$125,000 (or 25%) matching share for disadvantaged communities.</p> <p>Disadvantaged communities will remain the same (i.e., natural disaster or school lunch program) as objective criteria that RCO can apply fairly and transparently. RCO believes the proposed 80 percent threshold is an objective measure that is fair and transparent to apply. As a clarification, RCO staff will propose to use the elementary school attendance area boundaries and the current 2014-2015 school year lunch program data to determine whether an applicant qualifies for the match waiver.</p> <p>There is precedent for the state to use participation rates in the school lunch program to award grant funds. The Office of Superintendent for Public Instruction uses the data from the school lunch program to award grants to schools. It uses 77-80 percent as participation in the school lunch program as representative of a “high need” school.</p> <p>We agree that clearing dates are needed. RCO will change the proposed policy on natural disasters to reflect a specific date in time. The new proposal will allow for a match preference if an applicant is located within in a natural disaster area, as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), at the time the RCO grant application is due which is tentatively scheduled for July 15, 2015. If FEMA declares a new disaster after the application deadline at any time during project implementation, the applicant may request the</p>

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>I hope this is helpful in assisting you and RCO staff with further finalizing the YAF Guidance Manual. We would of course appreciate a chance for direct involvement in that work as it goes forward, and we appreciate the ongoing outreach and partnership efforts by RCO.</p>	<p>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board apply the match preference policy retroactively. As a clarification, RCO staff will propose that only communities directly affected by the natural disaster be eligible for the match waiver, not the entities located within entire jurisdiction that administers the disaster area. For example, communities directly affected by a wildlife would be eligible for a match preference, but communities located within the same county but not directly affected by the natural disaster would not be eligible.</p>
<p>Lori Flemm, Director Parks and Recreation Department, City of Lacey</p>	<p>You asked for our input about the 2015 YAF Grant Program. The issue is that the RCO widely publicized the need and deadline for Letters of Intent, and notified potential applicants that a letter of intent was mandatory in order to submit an application. Now, some who did not submit a letter of intent have asked to be allowed to submit an application.</p> <p>I support you if the decision is made to NOT allow an application to be submitted from someone who did not submit a letter of intent. The dollar value of the projects included in the letters of intent exceeded the funds requested in the Governor’s budget. If the “table turns” and the funds included in the Capital Budget exceeds the dollar value of the projects included in the letters of intent, then I would support allowing those who did not submit a letter of intent to submit an application.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments.</p>
<p>Calvin White</p>	<p>Physical Fitness First, Jocks Last!!! All athletic events should be funded by participants of the event. Tax heavily people who drive to work. Put wifi in public transport. Clean neighborhoods maintained by community residential landscape workers within 10 miles of work. Military deployment for local threats only to our own domestic turf. Export 3 time offenders of domestic</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments.</p>

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>violence to Asians. Stay out the way of foreign military coups. Guard our own turf with full ride scholarships for 2 years of active service.</p> <p>END DOMESTIC TERRORISM LOCALLY BY ARMING LOCAL CONSTABULARY WITH NON- LEATHAL WEAPONS.THE WORST PUNISHMENT FOR TERRORISTS IS ALLOWING THEM TO LIVE OUT THE REST OF THEIR OWN PATHETIC LIVES IN A CAGE WITH MODEST ACCOMMODATIONS AND GAINFULLY EMPLOYED FOR 10 BUCKS A DAY TO PAY RESTITUTION TO THE VICTIMS AFTER SEIZING ALL THEIR SEPARATE NON- Family Assets. Brotherhood is relative</p>	

Attachment B Proposed YAF Policies

#1 - Program Purpose

The Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) grant program provides money to purchase land and renovate outdoor athletic facilities serving youth. An athletic facility is an outdoor facility used for playing sports or participating in competitive athletics and excludes playgrounds, tot lots, vacant lots, open or undeveloped fields, and open areas used for non-athletic play.

The program priority is to enhance facilities that serve people through the age of 18 who participate in sports and athletics. Compatible, multi-generation use – including amateur adult use – of facilities funded through this program is strongly encouraged. To achieve multi-generation use, applicants may submit proposals for facilities sized for adults but which primarily serve youth.

#2 - Facilities must be Open to the Public

The facility funded with a YAF grant must be open to the public for youth or community athletic purposes. Open to the public means that the facility is available for enjoyment by the general public for the facility's intended purpose when it is not scheduled for games or practice. For example, a family may drop in and play softball on a field if it is not scheduled for use. If the facility is on property owned by a school district or non-profit organization, the facility may be closed to the public during school hours, during school-sponsored activities, or the non-profit organization's business hours but it must be available for use for competitive play and practice or for the general public's use at all other times.

Adequate signs must be posted to identify when the facilities are available for use by the general public. Temporarily closing athletic facilities for maintenance or during the off-season is allowed. Use of YAF-funded facilities by sports leagues and other competitive organizations is allowed as long as the organization is open to the general public for registration and the organization does not discriminate as described below in the section on eligible applicants. Competitive sports organizations may charge a fee to participate in their activity and select participants based on skill level.

#3 – Grant Request Limits

The minimum grant request is \$25,000. The maximum grant request is \$250,000.

#4 - Matching Share

Applicants must contribute matching resources at least equal to the amount of the grant requested.

Matching shares of more than an amount equal to the amount requested are encouraged. Applicants can earn more points in the evaluation if they demonstrate a matching share that is 55 percent or more of the total project cost.

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

#5 – Match Sharing for Disadvantaged Communities

Option 1: Match Waived for Disadvantaged Communities

Recognizing that providing at least an equal matching share can be a challenge for some communities, the match requirement is waived for YAF facilities in a:

- Federal disaster area as declared per the Stafford Act¹ that is in active disaster status when the grant application is due to RCO and the disaster directly affected the area where the YAF facility is proposed. Projects located in a federal disaster area but not located in an area directly affected by the disaster are not eligible for a match waiver. When RCO reviews the grant application, it will determine whether a project is located within one of the designated federal disaster areas and whether the disaster directly affected the area where the project is located. If a disaster is declared after the grant application due date, the applicant at any time during the implementation of the project may request the board waive the matching share retroactively.
 - EXAMPLE: A project is located within a county designated as a federal disaster area due to a wildfire. The disaster area is in active status with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The YAF facility is located in the designated county and wildfire directly affected the area where the YAF facility is proposed. This project is eligible for a match waiver.
 - EXAMPLE: A project is located within a county designated as a federal disaster area due to a wildfire. The disaster area is in active status with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The YAF facility is located in the designated county but the wildfire did not directly affect the area where the YAF facility is proposed. This project is not eligible for a match waiver.
 - As of the publication date of this manual, the following communities are designated disaster areas by the Federal Emergency Management Agency: Chelan County, Colville Indian Reservation, Kittitas County, Okanogan County, Sauk-Suiattle Indian Reservation, Snohomish County, Stillaguamish Indian Reservation, Tulalip Indian Reservation;
 - 5 potential Youth Athletic Facilities are located in a federal disaster area;
- Within the boundary of an individual elementary school in which 80% or more of the students enrolled qualify for free or reduced lunches as determined by the United States' Child Nutrition Program guidelines.
 - 135 elementary schools have a rate of 80% or more of the students enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program based on the 2013 enrollment data. This data will be updated when the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction released the 2014 enrollment data.
 - Based on the 2013 data, 24 potential Youth Athletic Facilities projects are located within the elementary school attendance area of the 135 elementary schools with a rate of 80% or more of the students enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program.

Option 2: Match Reduced for Disadvantaged Communities

Recognizing that providing at least an equal matching share can be a challenge for some communities, the match requirement is reduced to one quarter matching share (25% of the total project) for YAF facilities in a:

- Federal disaster area as declared per the Stafford Act² that is in active disaster status when the grant application is due to RCO and the disaster directly affected the area where the YAF facility is proposed. Projects located in a federal disaster area but not located in an area directly affected by the disaster are not eligible for a reduced match amount. When RCO reviews the grant application, it will determine whether a project is located within one of the designated federal

¹ Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq. Federal disaster areas include major disasters, emergency disasters, and fire management assistance.

² Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq. Federal disaster areas include major disasters, emergency disasters, and fire management assistance.

disaster areas and whether the disaster directly affected the area where the project is located. If a disaster is declared after the grant application due date, the applicant at any time during the implementation of the project may request the board reduce the matching share retroactively.

- EXAMPLE: A project is located within a county designated as a federal disaster area due to a wildfire. The disaster area is in active status with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The YAF facility is located in the designated county and wildfire directly affected the area where the YAF facility is proposed. This project is eligible for a reduced match amount.
- EXAMPLE: A project is located within a county designated as a federal disaster area due to a wildfire. The disaster area is in active status with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The YAF facility is located in the designated county but the wildfire did not directly affect the area where the YAF facility is proposed. This project is not eligible for a reduced match amount.
- As of the publication date of this manual, the following communities are designated disaster areas by the Federal Emergency Management Agency: Chelan County, Colville Indian Reservation, Kittitas County, Okanogan County, Sauk-Suiattle Indian Reservation, Snohomish County, Stillaguamish Indian Reservation, Tulalip Indian Reservation;
- 5 potential Youth Athletic Facilities are located in a federal disaster area; or
- Within the boundary of an individual school in which 80% or more of the students enrolled qualify for free or reduced lunches as determined by the United States' Child Nutrition Program guidelines.
 - 135 elementary schools have a rate of 80% or more of the students enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program based on the 2013 enrollment data. This data will be updated when the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction released the 2014 enrollment data.
 - Based on the 2013 data, 24 potential Youth Athletic Facilities projects are located within the elementary school attendance area of the 135 elementary schools with a rate of 80% or more of the students enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program.

#6 - Eligible Applicants

Only cities, counties, park districts,³ Native American tribes⁴, and qualified non-profit organizations that submitted a letter of intent in August 2014 are eligible to apply.

A "qualified non-profit organization" is one that meets each of the following criteria:

- Is registered with the Washington Secretary of State as a non-profit corporation.
- Has been active in youth or community athletic activities for a minimum of 3 years.
- Does not exclusively use the facilities paid for through this program. The organization must allow public access to the facility funded. See the Program Purpose in Section 1 for a definition of what it means to provide public access.

³ Established by Chapters 35.61, 36.68 or 36.69 Revised Code of Washington.

⁴ Native American tribes as recognized by the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs.

- Does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or income. For example, “boys only” or “girls only” organizations would not be eligible to apply for a grant.
-

#7 - Legal Opinion for First Time Applicants to RCO (Note: This is an existing policy in other programs.)

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:

- Receive and expend public funds, including funds from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board;
- Contract with the State of Washington and the United States of America;
- Meet any statutory definitions required for Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant programs;
- Acquire and manage interests in real property for public outdoor recreation purposes;
- Develop and provide stewardship for structures or facilities eligible under Recreation and Conservation Funding Board rules or policies;
- Undertake planning activities incidental thereto; and
- Commit the applicant to statements made in any grant proposal.

Note that the legal opinion is required only once to establish eligibility in the YAF program.

#8 - Renovation Projects

A renovation project means the activities intended to improve an existing site or structure to increase its service life or functions. A renovation project does not include regular or routine maintenance activities. A renovation project retains the original playing capacity or adds playing capacity to an athletic facility by:

- **Changing use.** Changing the athletic facility from one type to another to meet community priorities. Example: Changing an unused or underused outdoor tennis court to a high-demand outdoor basketball court.
 - **Extending use.** Extending time of use or season of use. Example: Adding new lights to an existing field to allow scheduling of evening games. Example: Changing field surface types to allow more games per season or extending the number of seasons.
 - **Expanding size.** Expanding the physical size of an existing athletic facility to accommodate new or extended types, seasons, or hours of athletic use resulting in more games or events and use by more players. Example: Lengthening the outfield and base path dimensions of a youth-size softball field to accommodate broader community uses. Example: Reorienting a softball field so it can accommodate another athletic activity such as soccer.
 - **Retaining Size.** Continuing or retaining the original design and capacity of a facility to bring it to, or keep it at, an accepted standard of safe use without changing or extending use or expanding the size of the facility. In other words, the project will result in a better facility with no additional capacity. Grants may not be used for day-to-day operations or routine maintenance such as cleaning restrooms, mowing lawns, or preparing fields before games.
-

#9 - Eligible Renovation Activities

Eligible renovation projects are those that renovate existing facilities. Renovations are considered a type of development project and complete guidelines are in [Manual 4, Development Projects](#). Elements may include:

- Athletic fields (soccer, baseball, softball, football, lacrosse, etc.).
- Hard court areas (basketball, tennis, pickle ball, covered courts, etc.).
- Drainage and grading.
- Field and court re-surfacing.
- Underground irrigation systems.
- Lighting.
- "In-bounds" amenities (goals, nets, bases, fences, etc.).
- New or renovated "out-of-bounds" amenities that support the athletic facility (restrooms, roads, parking lots, paths, scoreboards, bleachers, landscaping, signs, etc.).
- Addition of accessible facilities and elements.
- Architectural, engineering and administrative costs.

#10 - Items "In Bounds" Required

Each application must include items found within the field of play or on the court or track and that are essential for the competitive sport to occur. Such items are referred to as being "in bounds," and include courts, fields, tracks, pools, and their parts such as goals, nets, bases, pitching mounds, hurdles, jumps, fences, backstops, irrigation, drainage, and field lighting.

Items that are outside the field of play or off the court or track are eligible for funding as long as there is one or more item "in bounds" in the grant application. Such items are referred to as being "out of bounds," and include scoreboards, bleachers, landscaping, restrooms, parking lots, accessible routes of travel, fire lanes, and landscaping (including shade trees or wind breaks).

#11 - Combination Projects

Combination projects involve acquisition and facility renovation. Acquiring land is eligible if it is necessary to increase the capacity of an existing facility and if combined with an eligible, in-bounds, renovation element. Acquisition includes buying real property rights such as land, easements, and leases. Acquisition of less than fee interests such as an easement or lease must be for at least 20 years and may not be revocable at will. Properties acquired must be developed within 5 years. Incidental and administrative costs related to acquisitions are eligible.

#12 – Progress Policy (Note: This is an existing policy in other programs.)

To help ensure timely completion of these projects, at least 1 month before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers approving funding; applicants must secure the property by one of the following methods:

- Acquisition under the Waiver of Retroactivity policies and procedures ([Manual 3, Acquisition Projects](#)).

- Have property in escrow pending grant approval. Closing must occur within 90 days after the funding meeting.
- Obtain an option on the property that extends past the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board 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 acquired already by 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.

#13 - Project Scoping

Only one park location or site is allowed in each application. Applicants may submit more than one application. Each application may contain one or more eligible activities but must be located at the same park location or site. 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.

#14 - Ineligible Project Activities

Several sources are used to determine project eligibility. The following project elements are examples of ineligible elements for funding consideration:

- Indoor facilities (gyms, courts, pools, ice rinks, etc.).
- Construction of new athletic facilities.
- Mobile surface irrigation systems or supplies
- Operation and maintenance costs.
- Projects that include only "out of bounds" elements.
- Any facility intended primarily for professional sport.
- Any project intended to only benefit a school district's or nonprofit organization's facility needs.
- Consumable supplies (paint, chalk, light bulbs, fertilizer, toilet paper, etc.).
- Concession buildings.
- Elements that cannot be defined as fixtures or capital items (balls, cones, bats, etc.).
- Costs not directly related to implementing the project such as indirect and overhead charges, or unrelated mitigation.
- Purchase of maintenance equipment, tools, or supplies.
- Properties acquired via a condemnation action of any kind.

#15 - Control of the Land

An applicant must have adequate control of the land where the YAF facility is located to assure that its proposal will be implemented as proposed and meet the long-term obligations for project compliance. This "control and tenure" may be through land ownership, a lease, use agreement, or easement. Details on how to meet this requirement are in RCO Manual 4, Development Projects.

#16 - Long-term Obligations

RCO recognizes that changes occur over time and that some facilities may become obsolete or the land needed for something else. The compliance policy discourages casual discards of land and facilities by ensuring that grant recipients replace the lost value when changes or conversions of use take place. 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 of an RCO grant may jeopardize an organization's ability to obtain future RCO grants.

Conversions: Interests in real property, structures, and facilities acquired, developed enhanced, or restored with YAF grants are not to be changed, either in part or in whole, not be converted to uses other than those for which the funds were originally approved.⁵ Lands converted to other uses, or not developed to provide a youth athletic facility within 5 years of acquiring the property,⁶ will be subject to compliance policies in [Manual 7, Long-term Obligations](#).

Project Area: The project area subject to the long-term obligations is defined as the area consistent with the geographic limits of the scope of work of the YAF project. It includes the physical limits of the project's final site plans or final design plans and any property acquired with YAF funding assistance. The project area also may include the surrounding area within the project sponsor's control in order to meet the public outdoor recreation benefits described in the project agreement. The RCO and sponsor will agree on a boundary map for the project area when the project is complete and include reference to the map in the project agreement.

Useful life: The sponsor must maintain the useful life of a YAF funded facility for a specific period of time. RCO and the sponsor will agree on a period of useful life when the project is complete and include reference to the useful life period in the project agreement. The useful life period may be shorter than the compliance period. If RCO and the sponsor agree on a useful life period less than 20 years, the sponsor must continue to make the project area available for outdoor recreation for the remainder of the compliance period.

Compliance Period: The compliance period for a YAF project is as follows:

- **Acquisition projects.**
 - **Perpetual acquisitions.** Land acquired in perpetuity with YAF funds must be available for outdoor recreation purposes in perpetuity.
 - **Less than perpetual acquisitions.** Land acquired that is for less than a perpetual interest with YAF funds must be available for outdoor recreation purposes for a minimum of 20 years from the date of final reimbursement or the date RCO accepts the project as complete per the project agreement, whichever is later. When the term of the acquisition ends, the compliance period ends and the long-term obligations cease.
- **Renovation projects.** Facilities renovated with YAF funds must remain for public outdoor recreation for 20 years from the date of final reimbursement from RCO or the date RCO accepts the project as complete per the project agreement, whichever is later (the same as the period for control and tenure). After the 20-year period is complete, the compliance period ends and the long-term obligations cease.

⁵ Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2007-14

⁶ Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2010-34

Attachment C: Proposed YAF Evaluation Criteria

Detailed Scoring Criteria

Questions 1-7 are scored by the advisory committee.

- 1. Need and Need Satisfaction.** What is the community's need for the proposed renovated youth athletic facility? To what extent will the project satisfy the needs in the service area?

Consider the number and condition of existing youth athletic facilities; the number of leagues, teams, or players in the community; whether the community has gone through a public process to reveal deficient numbers or quality of available facilities; and whether significant unserved or under-served user groups are identified. Your discussion of need must include measurable (quantifiable) evidence. At a minimum, please include the following information in your answer:

- Type of facility to be funded.
- Service area, either in square miles or in a radius by miles.
- The population of the service area, youth and adult (estimated or actual) and how the numbers were determined.
- Number and type of similar facilities inside the service area.
- Number of leagues, teams, and players served in the service area.
- Number of leagues, teams, and players that are expected to use the renovated facility.
- The estimated hours of competitive play at the current facility and how this project improves or maintains this use.
- Whether the project will address facility needs for underserved or disadvantaged populations as identified in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.
- Demonstrate how the proposed project will satisfy youth athletic facility needs and provide for a priority youth athletic facility.

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by 3.

- 2. Design and Cost Estimate.** How well is the project designed? How reasonable are the cost estimates, does it accurately reflect the scope of work, and are there enough funds to implement the proposed projects?

Describe the project's design and the cost estimate. Describe how the project makes the best use of the site. 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:

- Accuracy of cost estimates
- Aesthetics
- Maintenance
- Materials
- Phasing

- Recreation experience
- Risk management
- Site suitability
- Space relationships
- User-friendly, accessible design above the minimum requirements
- Value of the out-of-bounds amenities as support to the athletic facility

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by 2.

- 3. Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship.** What techniques or resources are proposed to ensure the project will result in a quality, sustainable, recreational opportunity while protecting the integrity of the environment? Describe how the project will integrate sustainable elements such as low impact development techniques, green infrastructure, or environmentally preferred building products.

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-3 points.

- 4. Facility Management.** Does the applicant have the ability to operate and maintain the facility?

- Describe your organization's structure and indicate how long your organization has been involved in youth or community athletics.
- Describe how the athletic facilities are addressed in your organizations maintenance plan..
- If the applicant does not own the property, describe the management agreement with the property owner.

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-3 points.

- 5. Availability.** When the project is complete, how often will it be available for competitive youth sports in a calendar year?

Provide details on when the facility will be open for competitive play for youth and adults or use by the general public for drop-in play. Hours when the facility is not available for competitive play or use by the general public are not considered in the evaluation.

Consider seasons of use, types of use, hours of use, and restrictions on access. Identify when the facility will be closed for competitive play, for example when the facility will be closed for use by a school or nonprofit organization. Describe the use policy for scheduling the facility: Who can schedule the facility, what sports can use it, and how do they get on the schedule?

Also, complete the application tables that describe the use by month and by type of sport or team to illustrate the current and future availability of the facility.

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points.

- 6. Readiness to Proceed.** What is the timeline for completing the project? Will the sponsor be able to complete the project within 3 years?

Explain how you can move quickly to complete the project by documenting completed appraisal and review, completed architectural and engineering work, permits secured, or availability of needed labor

or volunteers. In addition to your answer, please estimate your project timeline by providing a specific timeline for completing your project.

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-3 points.

7. Project Support and Partnerships. To what extent do users and the public support the project?

Support can be demonstrated in both financial and non-financial ways and varies depending upon the project type. In scoring this question, evaluators consider the type of support that is most relevant. Evidence includes but is not limited to: Letters of support; voter-approved initiatives, bond issues, referenda; ordinance or resolution adoption; media coverage; public involvement in a comprehensive planning process that includes this project; a capital improvement program that includes the project; a local park or comprehensive plan that includes the project by name or by type. If you submit letters of support or other documents, remember to attach them to your application in PRISM.

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by 2.

Questions 8-9 are scored by RCO staff.

8. Matching Shares. Is the applicant providing a matching share more than an amount equal to the grant amount requested?

▲ Point Range

0 points	Less than 55 percent of the total project cost
1 point	55-64.99 percent of the total project cost
2 points	More than 65 percent of the total project cost

9. Proximity to People. State law requires the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board 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.⁷ Is the project in an area meeting this definition?

▲ Point Range

0 points	No
1 point	Yes

10. Growth Management Act Preference.

Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA)?⁸

State law requires that whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant⁹ has adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations as required by Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.040.

⁷Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

⁸Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250 (Growth Management Act preference required.)

⁹County, city, or town applicants only. This segment of the question does not apply to Native American tribes, park districts, or non-profit organizations.

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.

A request from an applicant planning under state law shall be accorded no additional preference over a request from an applicant not planning under this state law.

This question is scored by RCO staff based on 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

Minus 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 Native American tribe, park district, or nonprofit organization.

RCO staff subtracts a maximum of 1 point; there is no multiplier.

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution #2015-02
Youth Athletic Facilities Program 2015**

WHEREAS, pursuant to state law, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) administers and approves policies that govern the Youth Athletic Facilities grant program and sets evaluation criteria for grant applications; and

WHEREAS, the board directed staff to request capital budget appropriations for the Youth Athletic Facility program and prepare draft policies and evaluation criteria in anticipation of funds from the Legislature; and

WHEREAS, the Recreation and Conservation Office prepared draft policies and evaluation criteria and solicited for comments from the public, and staff adjusted the policies and evaluation criteria as appropriate and recommends the board approve the final draft materials as presented in Attachments B and C;

WHEREAS, the changes are consistent with state law, the board’s administrative rules, and the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Recreation and Conservation Office prepared draft YAF program measures to track program outputs which are:

1. The number of youth served in each project on an annual basis, both currently served and expected to be served, because of the YAF project.
2. The total amount of non-state funds leveraged in each project.
3. The percent of underserved individuals (i.e., non-white and disabled) served in each project.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the board does hereby adopt the changes in the policies and evaluation criteria for the YAF program as shown in Attachments B and C and the program measures above; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the board directs RCO staff to incorporate these changes in the appropriate policy manuals with language that reflect the policy intent; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these policies shall be effective beginning with the 2015 grant cycle.

Resolution moved by: _____

Resolution seconded by: _____

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: _____

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM

Meeting Date: April 9, 2015
Title: Boating Grant Programs Plan
Prepared By: Leslie Connelly, Natural Resource Policy Specialist

Summary

This memo presents a final draft of the Boating Grants Program Plan for the board's consideration. Adoption of the plan will guide the board's grant funding in grant programs that provide funds for boating facilities starting in 2016.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Request for Decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Direction
<input type="checkbox"/>	Briefing

Background

Boating Plan Overview

The Boat Grants Program Plan was created and last adopted in 2009 to guide all of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) boating grant programs. Prior to 2009, the plan was specifically for the Boating Facility Program. In 2013, the board adopted *The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*, which provides new information regarding recreational boating participation rates. There are two additional 2013 reports that include information about recreational boating: the *Final Recommendations* from the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation and the *Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*. An update of the boating plan is needed to reflect the new information available.

The board adopts the boating plan at its discretion and it is specifically for use by the board to guide its grant programs. Other interested parties can use the boating plan as an information source on recreational boating. Statute does not require the board to adopt a boating plan.

Board Member Review

Board Member Comments

Staff prepared a draft boating plan and shared it with the board for their review in February. Board members made suggestions and staff incorporated them into the plan before it was available to the public for review. Staff addressed the board member comments by adding:

- An introductory section about the importance of boating in Washington State and reference other recreational activities that occur while boating such as scuba diving;
- A reference to the types of eligible applicants including Native American tribes and port districts;

- A reference to the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation in *Section I: Introduction*;
- The location of the board launches funded since 2009 in *Section II: Accomplishments*;
- A reference to supporting water trails in *Section V: Recommendations for the Future*; and
- A reference to investigating impacts of climate change on boating projects in *Section V: Recommendations for the Future*.

Board members also provided feedback that staff did not include in the final draft of the boating plan, as they would need further consideration by the board and more detailed analysis. These other topics are:

- Include a jobs metric that translates spending on recreation boating into the number of local jobs that are created by that spending;
- Identify statewide manufacturing impacts from recreational boat construction, maintenance, repair and services; and
- Consider how to harmonize growth patterns of population concentrated in major metropolitan areas with slower growth in rural areas and at the same time locating boating facilities in areas remote from population centers.

The board could incorporate these additional topics into the final plan or address in them through other policy initiatives, if appropriate. Should the board decide to include them in the boating plan; staff will revise the plan and need direction from the board on whether to seek additional public comments.

Public Comments Received

Public Comment Period and Response

RCO shared the draft boating plan with the public and solicited public comments from February 19 to March 6, 2015. RCO distributed a notice for the public comment period to 1,900 individuals, including other state agencies, by email and posted the announcement on its website. In addition, the Washington Boaters Alliance shared the public comment notice with its members. Seven individuals submitted comments, which are listed in Attachment A along with RCO staff’s reply to the comments.

Summary of Comments

The public comments received have five main themes:

1. Support for water trails.
2. Support for funding motorized boating facilities for boats less than 26 feet in length.
3. Suggestions on data collection that would help identify the types of boaters and their needs.
4. Need for flexibility with funding sites that provide recreation for multiple types of users.
5. Support for renovating existing facilities.

RCO Staff Response

In response to the public comment, RCO staff revised the draft boating plan policies as follows:

- Specific suggestions added to the boater needs assessment recommendation.
- Clarification made to the action regarding compatible uses at boating sites.
- Suggestions added on how to update grant program priorities and evaluation criteria.
- Additional examples provided in the action to adopt the sustainability criteria in all the boating grant programs.

In addition, RCO staff clarified and refined the following policies based on additional staff review and feedback:

- Clarification made under grant program accomplishments and the boating data.
- Strategies and actions reorganized and clarified so they fit better together.
- Additional actions added related to working cooperatively with other state agencies.
- Clarification made to the action regarding defining distinct grant programs for boating.
- New recommendation added to create boating program measures.

RCO staff prepared final draft boating plan based on comments from the public and further revisions from staff.

Boating Grants Program Plan Summary

The final draft Boating Grants Program Plan is in Attachment B. Table 1 provides a summary of the strategies and actions in the plan.

Table 1: Strategies and Actions in the Boating Grants Program Plan

Strategy	Action
1 – Fund construction of boating facilities to address the most important boater needs and the most popular types of boating.	1A – Revise grant program evaluation criteria to give a priority to projects that address boater needs and boating participation rates.
2 – Define grant programs’ priorities to fund different types of boating facilities in different grant programs.	2A – Emphasize consistency with funding sources when determining boating grant programs’ priorities. 2B – Allow for compatible uses of boating facilities only if the use does not impair or displace the primary boating use of the grant program. 2C – Support facilities for transient public recreational boating uses.
3 – Support stewardship and retention of current boating infrastructure.	3A – Encourage projects that maximize the efficient use of existing boating sites and facilities. 3B – Encourage projects that use design standards and construction techniques that maximize the service life of the facility and minimize maintenance.
4 – Promote Infrastructure Projects and Construction practices that reduce environmental impacts.	4A – Give priority funding to projects that satisfy user needs in an environmentally responsible manner. 4B – Adopt the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board’s policy on sustainability in all its boating grant programs. 4C – Support actions related to invasive species prevention and control in the Invasive Species Council’s Strategic Plan.
5 – Provide accurate and timely information to boaters.	5A – Maintain and improve the Washington Water Cruiser. 5B – Maintain the boat.wa.gov Web site. 5C – Participate in the Washington Boaters Alliance. 5D – Participate in education and training seminars.

Strategy	Action
6 – Work cooperatively with other state agencies to improve boating programs and services.	6A – Coordinate and participate in the Agency Boating Committee which is comprised of RCO, WDFW, DNR, State Parks, and DOL. 6B – Work with other State Agencies to Address Control and Tenure Requirements. 6C – Participate in Other State Agency Boating Committees.

Board Direction

RCO staff seeks board direction on the final draft Boating Grant Programs Plan. Resolution 2015-03 in Attachment C is provided for the board’s consideration.

Next Steps

Should the board approve the boating plan, RCO staff will implement the plan and use it to guide recommendations for changing grant program priorities and evaluation criteria for the 2016 grant applications.

Attachments

- A. Public Comments Received on the Draft Boating Grants Program Plan
- B. Final Draft Boating Grants Program Plan
- C. Resolution 2015-03

Attachment A

Public Comments Received on Boating Grants Program Plan

Comment Period: February 19 – March 6, 2015

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
Jerome Brown	<p>I didn't see anything in the plan for <u>maximizing benefits of spending by RCO by fostering "partnerships" between Districts and Private businesses</u> except for one brief mention of Port of Morrow. In just one instance, the Port of Woodland, WA. has had off and on discussions about putting in a launching facility at Jones Beach on the Columbia but nothing ever seems to happen. It seems to me if the RCO got behind it and supported it the combination of the Port and RCO could be enough to put in a dock for launching of boats 26 ft. and less. The needs of boats greater than 26 ft. seems mostly to be anchorages and marinas.</p> <p>In the case of private businesses in launch and dock business it is the subject of occasional conversations in the Woodland area that a private party tried to get a permit and construct a private launch and dock close to the town but was denied due to some supposed impact on salmon recovery. Meanwhile a private campground at the mouth of the Lewis R. 3 miles away regularly launches and recovers boats with no apparent concern for salmon recovery.</p> <p>I highly support the concept of <u>water trails</u>. The Columbia River should be the primary focus. The anchorage at Martin's Island about 3 mi. north of Woodland is a great example of promoting and supporting those traversing the Columbia and needing overnight anchorage.</p>	<p>Typically, state law dictates who can apply for grant funding; however, partnerships can play a significant role in some projects. The most appropriate way to recognize partnerships is within the application evaluation criteria. We will add a reference to partnerships in the boating plan to support projects that are brought forward with partnerships when they are evaluated for grant funding.</p> <p>RCO is not a regulatory agency therefore cannot reply to permitting conditions for specific projects.</p> <p>Thank you for your comment supporting water trails.</p>

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>I would also support <u>collection of fees from out-of-state boaters who use non border waters with those fees to go to RCO earmarked for launching/docks</u>. An example is the very heavy use of the three reservoirs on the North Fork of the Lewis R. by residents of Oregon. An example of this in a boating related activity is the requirement for non-resident fishing licenses except when fishing from a boat on, for example, the Columbia River.</p> <p>Finally it is not clear to me why RCO has so much emphasis in their purpose statements about <u>salmon recovery</u> as I saw almost nothing in the plan about it. There are more than enough fingers in that pie and it seems to me the only statement necessary for RCO is that it will coordinate with and take into account comments by DFW regarding any Salmon impact from RCO's activities.</p> <p>Thank you for encouraging public participation and comment regarding RCO.</p>	<p>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board does not have the statutory authority to collect fees at boating facility sites. If fees are collected at boating facilities funded by the board, the landowner or site manager must reinvest the funds collected back into maintenance or development of the same or similar boating facilities.</p> <p>The Recreation and Conservation Office manages grant programs on behalf of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board as well as the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. The reference to salmon recovery in RCO's strategic plan addresses the work the agency does on behalf of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. Salmon recovery is not a specific goal of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.</p> <p>Thank you for your comments.</p>
<p>Lorena Landon, Member, Boating Programs Advisory Committee</p>	<p>After reviewing the draft of RCO policy changes, I herein submit the following comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Page 4, second paragraph: I recommend changing the words "to go boating" to "for boating access" which better defines RCO boating goals. 2. Page 5, third paragraph: under "Those grant programs are:" I recommend adding "(motor boats under 26ft only)" after the line item "Boating Facilities Grant Program" 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will make the change on page 4. 2. There is no limit on the length of boats in the Boating Facilities Program. There was a preference for trailer-able boats in the Boating Facilities Program evaluation criteria prior to October 2010.

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	3. Page 5, third paragraph from the bottom: I recommend defining "sailboats" as either "day sailor's (those without motors)" OR as "all sailboats, both with and without motors" whichever is correct. This would help clarify if all sailboats are included in this category or if only non-motorized sailboats are included in this category.	3. We will clarify the difference between motorized and non-motorized sailboats.
	4. Page 10, second paragraph: under the heading "Economic Contribution of Boating" I suggest adding "mooring fees and fuel expenditures."	4. Moorage fees and fuel expenses for operating boats was not specifically included in the economic contribution analysis. Fuel expenses to drive a boat to a destination were included.
	5. Page 26, last paragraph: under the heading "Update the Boater Needs Assessment" I recommend it be made clear that this assessment is completed for all boating groups, including those over 26 feet as well as boats under 26ft along with non-motorized craft.	5. We will add clarification that the next boating needs assessment capture needs from all boating groups mentioned.
	6. Page 27, third paragraph: under the heading "Explore Non-motorized Boating" I recommend including the fact that many boats over 26ft carry kayaks and other non-motorized craft and therefore would serve as another source of data collection for non-motorized activities.	6. We will add a reference to non-motorized boats carried on larger motorized boats as a source of data.
	7. You may want to make clear if the statistics cited in this drafted document are from boaters with vessels under 26ft only or if the statistics also include responses from boaters with vessels over 26ft. Perhaps a separate survey is needed for the larger boats/yachts which better addresses their circumstances/needs i.e. buoys, public wharfs etc.	7. We will clarify that the data is from all types of boaters regardless of the length of their boat.
		Thank you for your comments.

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
<p>Paul Thorpe, President, Recreational Boating Association of Washington</p>	<p>I think you have done a good job with this plan. I have just one comment, on Page 28, the last paragraph says there is a list of future actions following the summary. The only things following the summary are three appendices.</p>	<p>Thank you. We will make this correction in the final version.</p>
<p>Matt Goehring, Aquatic Policy, Aquatic Resources Division, Washington Department of Natural Resources</p>	<p>The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Recreation and Conservation Office's (RCO) draft Boating Grant Programs Plan. DNR is the proprietary steward of over 2.6 million acres of state-owned aquatic lands. DNR is directed to manage state-owned aquatic lands in a manner that provides for "...a balance of public benefits for all citizens of the state." DNR staff participates in the Boating Programs Advisory Committee and the Boating Grant Programs complement DNR's management directive to encourage direct public use and access (RCW 79.105.030). DNR strongly supports RCO's efforts to align grant funding with current recreational boating interests and invest in developing boating facilities that enhance public access to state-owned aquatic lands. DNR commends RCO's accomplishments since the 2009 plan was adopted and looks forward to supporting the Boating Facilities and the Boating Infrastructure Grants programs moving forward.</p> <p><u>Comments</u></p> <p>Strategy #2A – Coordinate and participate in the Agency Boating Committee. <i>The ABC was established in 2008. Although the charter was completed and signed in 2013, the group has been meeting and addressing 9 of the 10 issues the JLARC study charged them with since 2008.</i></p>	<p>We will make this change to the reference to the formation of the Agency Boating Committee.</p>

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>Strategy #6A – Satisfy user needs in an environmentally responsible manner.</p> <p><i>Please clarify the importance of a collaborative partnership with DNR. Close coordination with DNR is essential to understanding aquatic land ownership and ensuring funded proposals are compatible for overarching management guidelines for state-owned aquatic lands. Suggest including the following... "For example, RCO will work with the Department of Natural Resources, in their role as proprietary manager of state-owned aquatic lands, to ensure applicable proposals are consistent with DNR's management directives and the Aquatic Lands Habitat Conservation Plan, if adopted."</i></p>	<p>We will make this change to clarify the RCO's collaboration with DNR on proprietary issues.</p>
	<p>Recommendations for the Future</p> <p><i>DNR strongly supports items identified in the "Recommendations for the future" section. These items are of particular interest to DNR as the agency evaluates how to maintain and expand public access to state-owned aquatic lands. We look forward to working collaboratively with RCO through the ABC to identify new and emerging needs of the citizens of Washington related to accessing SOAL [state-owned aquatic lands].</i></p>	<p>We look forward to working DNR on the future recommendations in the plan.</p>
	<p>Summary</p> <p><i>This sections concludes by referencing a list of future actions that is to follow; however, "recommendations for the future" were presenting in the previous section. It seems this was intended to reintroduce or summarize those recommendations.</i></p>	<p>We will make this correction in the final version.</p>
	<p>Thank you for considering DNR's comments on the draft Boating Grant Programs Plan. DNR looks forward to collaborating with RCO on expanding boating facilities that enhance public access to aquatic lands throughout the state.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments.</p>

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	Please do not hesitate to contact myself, or Heather Gibbs, with any questions.	
Clay Sprague, Lands Division Manager, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to review and evaluate the RCO Draft Boating Grant Program Plan for 2015. As you know, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) maintains over hundreds of motorized boating facilities for outdoor recreationists across Washington State, and therefore has a vested interest in ensuring RCO grants in the Boating Facilities Program (BFP) category are evaluated fairly and consistently across the board.</p> <p>WDFW staff have had the opportunity to review the draft plan and have the following comments that we hope will be considered when grant applications are evaluated in the future:</p> <p>Page 8 -New motorized boat launches include (changes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newman Lake is a renovation project, not a new project. • Long Lake is a renovation project, not a new project. • Patterson on the Columbia River - Suggest to remove the project from the list. • Sprague Lake is a renovation project, not a new project. <p>Page 15 -Where do people go boating? Comment: From the volume of fresh water boaters, it would be beneficial to see how many are using small lakes over the large water bodies. Are they fishing, recreating, or something else? The scoring criteria seem to be geared for larger boats, but this may not always match the use.</p> <p>Page 17 -What other activities involve boating?</p>	<p>Page 8 - We will make these corrections to the list of motorized boat launches funded.</p> <p>Page 15 - The data from the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan or the Boaters Needs Assessment does not distinguish between small or large water bodies specifically. We will consider collecting this type of data in the future. The preference for trailer-able boats in the Boating Facilities Program evaluation criteria was removed in 2010.</p> <p>Page 17- The data from the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan nor the Boaters Needs Assessment does</p>

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>Comment: It would be nice to have a breakdown of boat size below 26 feet. With 53% of boaters fishing, it would be important to- see what type of facilities would match the right boat size. Also, many of our sites have different user groups based on time of day or season.</p>	<p>not distinguish to this level of detail on boat length; however, data is available from the Washington Sea Grant program on the length of boats for boat sales registered with the Washington State Department of Licensing. It would not be possible to correlate length of boats from boat sales data with fishing activities as a way to determine the length of boat that people who fish are using. We will consider collecting data related to boat length and fishing activities in the future.</p>
	<p>Page 22 -Action #1 Comment: Participation is not balanced to include small motorized boats and non- motorized boats. Consider adding fishing groups.</p>	<p>Page 22, Action #1 - The data from the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan distinguishes between motorized and non-motorized boats and motorized boats less than 26 feet in length and 26 feet or more in length. The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan also includes data on fishing in general as a recreation activity.</p>
	<p>Page 23 – Action #3 Comment: The evaluation criteria make it difficult for single item replacement, such as ramp. "Extras" in the uplands may not be needed for the boater, but must be added to score well. More projects across Washington State could be funded if projects could be simplified to match the true "boater's need," rather than the evaluation criteria.</p>	<p>Page 23, Action #3 - We will consider your comments on the evaluation criteria for the Boating Facilities Program as we prepare for the next grant applications in 2016.</p>
	<p>Comment: We are concerned that the current evaluation methods for the BFP category are clearly geared to larger boats and bodies of water, while the small boat/small lake facilities projects are being overlooked. The small boat/small lake group is the overall larger user base for WDFW projects.</p>	

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>Comment: To meet the needs for new boaters -New users will be more apt to start with smaller boats to learn the basics before moving on to larger motor boat sizes.</p>	
	<p>Page 25 -Action #4 Comment: We must recognize that there is mixed use, and changing use, on our sites. Allow grant funds to support other uses within proportion of the full grant. The benefit of being able to separate users aids in the true boating experience.</p>	<p>Page 25, Action #4 – We agree that boating facilities are often serving multiple recreational purposes such as swimming, fishing, and other types of water access activities. We will add a reference that encourages projects to provide for a mixed use of recreation while requiring pro-rating costs if needed to ensure the funding in the grant programs stays within the statutory requirements.</p>
	<p>Page 25 -Action #5 Comment: Recognize that there are changing use patterns. It would be beneficial to encourage mixed use, not discourage it.</p>	<p>Page 25, Action #5 – See previous response.</p>
	<p>Comment: The renovation of one item in need, such as a toilet or ramp, is often a better use of funds than a full site renovation. This is especially true if the full site renovation is not needed. However, though it is unfortunate, this type of renovation does not seem to score as well as the larger project.</p>	<p>Renovation of existing facilities is a need expressed also by boaters in the needs assessment. We will consider your comments on encouraging renovation of certain facilities for each boating grant program when we prepare for the next grant applications in 2016.</p>
	<p>Page 26 -Action #6 Comment: WDFW, HPA and USACE permits have been in place for years to monitor impacts to the environment. RCO's task should involve streamlining multiple agencies for a common goal.</p>	<p>Page 26, Action #6 – RCO does not have the capacity to coordinate streamlining the permitting process for boating facilities but is available to assist if such as effort was led by another agency.</p>
	<p>WDFW staff supports the following actions and strategies in the draft plan:</p>	
	<p>We agree with Strategy #3b and ask that priority be given to launches located in freshwater lakes.</p>	

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>We agree with Strategy #5a to renovate and maintain existing launch ramps as a priority instead of acquiring new sites, as that appears to be a cost efficient and effective use of grant monies.</p> <p>We strongly support Strategy #6c. We often receive feedback from our boating constituents regarding aquatic weeds that interfere with the functionality, use, and enjoyment of our launch facilities.</p> <p>Thank you, for considering our input on this important issue.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments.</p>
<p>Craig Galivan, Commodore, Olympia Outboard Association</p>	<p>The Olympia Outboard Club was established in 1950, and owns a clubhouse and dock on Steamboat Island in Thurston County. We are a group of fifty boating families, most of whom own trailered boats or moor their boats, all promote boating safety, and enjoy recreational boating on the waters of Puget Sound and freshwater lakes. Some of our members own sailboats and hand carried boats. We represent a full spectrum of boating interests.</p> <p>We have reviewed the draft plan and have the following comments that we hope will be considered as grant applications are evaluated:</p> <p>Parking at many existing launch ramps is inadequate and many times unavailable when we launch our boats. Stalls need to be lined and signed so that sunbathers, swimmers, picnickers and bank fisherman don't park in stalls designed for vehicles with boat trailers. Vehicle only stalls are often located further away from the shoreline, yet people won't walk a bit further. New and renovated facilities should provide sufficient parking.</p>	<p>We will work with grant applicants to address the issue that boating facilities need to be designed to manage for mixed use and provide adequate parking for all users. We will add reference in the Boating Grants Program Plan that adequate site management is important to addressing site with mixed uses and consider site management as part of the application evaluation.</p>

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>We agree with strategy #4B which allows for compatible uses of boating facilities only if the use does not impair or displace the primary boating use of the grant program. What we find when launching at many freshwater sites is the compatible users (swimming and wading) won't move off the launch ramp to allow us to pull our boats out of the water. At some WDFW sites without boarding floats, bank fishermen won't pull their lines in to allow boaters to beach their boats to retrieve their vehicle and trailer to pull boats off the lake. The compatible users aren't recognizing the primary boating user. We understand how difficult it is to control etiquette of compatible users, but would hope that the site manager has to demonstrate that concurrent or proposed uses are compatible.</p> <p>We agree with Strategy #5A to renovate and maintain existing launch ramps as a priority instead of acquiring new sites. Boarding floats should be a priority for WDFW sites on freshwater lakes.</p> <p>We ask that you add to Strategy #6A that pit, vault, or toilets on septic system should be upgraded to flush toilets on sanitary sewers for improved water quality.</p> <p>Thank you for considering our input.</p>	<p>We will add a reference in the Boating Grants Program Plan that encourages projects to provide for a mixed use of recreation while requiring pro-rating costs if needed to ensure the funding in the grant programs stays within the statutory requirements.</p> <p>Accommodating multiple recreational uses at water access sites can be a challenge for land managers. We will add reference in the Boating Grants Program Plan that adequate site management is important to addressing site with mixed uses and consider site management as part of the application evaluation.</p> <p>Thank you for your comment on renovation of boating facilities.</p> <p>We will add reference to encourage upgrading restroom facilities to improve water quality at boating facilities.</p>
<p>Lori Flemm, Director Parks and Recreation Department, City of Lacey</p>	<p>The City of Lacey does not manage any motorized boating facilities. The Washington State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) manages one boat launch within the city limits (Hicks Lake) and two others in Lacey's UGA (long Lake and Pattison Lake). The WDFW boat launch on Chambers Lake is just outside the city limits and UGA, but is frequently used by city residents. The City of Lacey owns and maintains Wanscher's Park with Hicks Lake water frontage which is used by hand carried</p>	

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>boaters, stand up paddlers, bank fishermen, swimmers and waders, and is located adjacent to the WDFW boat launch. The City of Lacey owns Lake Lois Habitat Reserve which is used by hand carried boaters and bank fishermen and Lake Lois Park which is used by bank fishermen. Many city residents who own trailered boats and enjoy recreational boating on freshwater lakes within the city or UGA and have expressed concerns to our staff.</p> <p>Staff has reviewed the draft plan and has the following comments that we hope will be considered as grant applications are evaluated:</p> <p>There is not sufficient parking at many existing WDFW launch ramps, and often vehicles with trailers parallel park along city street shoulders. Grant applications for new or renovated facilities should provide sufficient parking, and should develop street frontage improvements to accommodate parallel parking if that use will continue. Street frontage improvements may require dedication of land for public right-of-way, land which may have been acquired with state grant funds. Per current RCO policy it appears this would trigger conversion; we strongly suggest that this policy be revised to allow for a public purpose (parking to use the launch ramp) that is compatible with the intent of the land acquisition.</p> <p>A complaint we hear associated with lack of parking is that non-boaters (swimmers, bank fisherman, hand carried boaters) are parking in stalls designated for vehicles pulling boat trailers. Design and management solutions to address this problem could be given bonus points in evaluation criteria.</p>	<p>We understand that parking can be a challenge for some boating facility sites. We will consider your comments regarding conversion due to street frontage improvement the next time the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board reviews its compliance policies for acquisition projects.</p> <p>Accommodating multiple recreational uses at water access sites can be a challenge for land managers. We will add reference in the Boating Grants Program Plan that adequate site management is important to addressing site with mixed uses and consider site management as part of the application evaluation.</p>

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>Boaters have asked the city to install a boarding float at the WDFW Hicks Lake, Long Lake, Pattison Lake and Chambers Lake boat launches. We ask that boarding floats be given "bonus points" in the evaluation criteria.</p> <p>A complaint we often hear from boaters (fishing, pleasure, waterskiing, etc.) is that swimmers, waders and bank fishermen won't move off the launch ramp or shoreline adjacent to the ramp, or pull fishing lines in to allow boaters to retrieve boats. Adding a boarding float may offer a potential solution to this problem.</p> <p>Staff supports the following action and strategies in the draft plan:</p> <p>We agree with Strategy #38 and ask that priority be given to launches on freshwater lakes located in urban areas.</p> <p>We support strategy #48 which allows for compatible uses of boating facilities, only if the use does not impair or displace the primary boating use of the grant program, but also recognizing the demand for public use of waterfront parks is high. We don't have enough public access waterfront in the city limits or the UGA. The evaluation criteria should require that the site manager demonstrate that concurrent or proposed uses are compatible.</p> <p>We agree with Strategy #SA to renovate and maintain existing launch ramps as a priority instead of acquiring new sites, as that appears to be a cost efficient and effective use of grant monies.</p>	<p>Boarding floats may or may not be appropriate at all boating facilities. Including board floats is at the discretion of the applicant. Docks (which includes boarding floats) were not a major finding in the Boater Needs Assessment; therefore, would not be significant priority for grant funding.</p> <p>Thank you for your other comments in support of the Boating Grants Program Plan.</p>

Commenter	Comments	RCO Staff Reply
	<p>We support Strategy #6C. We often hear environmental concerns from citizens regarding aquatic weeds that interfere with use and enjoyment of the launch sites.</p> <p>We support strategy #6A and ask that priority be given to improving water quality associated with failing septic systems.</p> <p>We ask that you add bonus points to the evaluation criteria to encourage vault, or toilets on septic system, to be upgraded to flush toilets and connected to sanitary sewer systems for improved water quality.</p> <p>Thank you for considering our input.</p>	<p>We will add reference to encourage upgrading restroom facilities to improve water quality at boating facilities.</p>

Boating Grant Programs Plan



April 2015



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I. Introduction

Boating in Washington State

Recreational boating in Washington State is important to many people across the state. Significant opportunities exist on freshwater lakes, rivers, and the Columbia River as well as on saltwater in Puget Sound and the coast. Venturing out on a boat is an opportunity to float, paddle, cruise, water ski, wake board, inner tube, scuba dive, fish and camp. Boating is an activity in and of itself and a gateway to another world of birds, waterfowl, fish, frogs, turtles, otters, and seals.

The State of Washington provides recreational facilities for boating access, boating safety and law enforcement training, clean vessel programs, and grant funding. See Appendix A for a list programs related to boating administered by the State of Washington. Cities, counties, port districts, other special purpose districts, non-profit organizations and Native American Tribes also provide recreational boating programs, services, and facilities.

Purpose of the Boating Plan

The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Funding Board uses the Boating Grant Programs Plan to inform and guide its grant funding and decision-making. This plan includes non-motorized and motorized recreational boating in Washington State. It explores participation rates and other relevant data. The plan also includes information on the economic contribution of recreational boating to the state's economy.

Purpose	Guide the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's grant funding for boating facilities and provide boating program services.
Goal	Align grant funding with recreational boating interests and needs.
Objective	Fund boating facilities to support statewide trends and reflect local priorities.

To accomplish the above, this plan identifies specific actions for implementation.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted this plan in [insert month, year] during a public meeting under the authority granted in Revised Code of Washington 42.56.040 of the Public Records Act. The resolution adopting this Plan is in Appendix B.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board 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.

Mission of the Board

Provide leadership and funding to help our partners protect and enhance Washington's natural and recreational resources for current and future generations.

Services Provided by the Board

Statewide strategic investments through policy development, grant funding, technical assistance, coordination, and advocacy.

Values of the Board

Efficient, fair, and open programs conducted with integrity. The results foster healthy lifestyles and communities, stewardship, and economic prosperity in Washington.

The board administers seven grant programs that support recreational boating. Money from these grant programs support the acquisition of land; construction of boating related facilities; and, in some programs, construction planning and design, educational and navigational aids.

These grant programs are:

Facilities for motorboats:

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (motorboats up to 10 horsepower only)

Boating Facilities Program

Boating Infrastructure Grant program (motorboats 26 feet or more in length only)

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Recreational Trails Program

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Outdoor Recreation Account categories:

- Local Parks, State Parks, and State Lands Development and Renovation

Facilities for non-motorized boats:

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account

Land and Water Conservation Fund

Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Activities

Recreational Trails Program

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Outdoor Recreation Account categories:

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

For grant program purposes, motorboats include gas, diesel, and electric powered boats, sailboats and personal watercraft. Non-motorized boats include sailboats, canoes, kayaks, rowboats, rafts, paddleboards and other hand-powered boats. See Appendix C for complete definitions used by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in its grant programs.

Depending on the grant program, funds are available to cities, counties, special purpose districts, port districts, state agencies, federal agencies, non-profit organizations, and Native American Tribes.

Recreation and Conservation Office

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) supports the Recreation and Conservation Funding 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 farmland, and help return salmon from near extinction. RCO implements the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's policies through grant program rules and evaluation instruments approved by the board.

Vision of the RCO

RCO is an exemplary grant management agency that provides leadership on vital natural resource, outdoor recreation and salmon recovery issues.

Mission of the RCO

As a responsible steward of public funds, RCO works with others to protect and improve the best of Washington's natural and outdoor recreational resources, enhancing the quality of life for current and future generations.

Studies that Inform this Plan

In writing this plan, RCO relied on the following studies and data:

- [Washington Boater Needs Assessment](#), Responsive Management, 2007.
- [Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters](#), Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Ltd., October 31, 2008.
- [Activities Supporting Recreational Boating In Washington](#), Report 10-12, State of Washington Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee, December 1, 2010.
- [Outdoor Recreation in Washington, The 2013 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#), Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office, May 2013.
- [Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State](#), Earth Economics, January 2015.

Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation

In 2014, Governor Jay Inslee created the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation, [Governor's Executive Order 14-01](#). The Task Force developed a number of actions for the Governor to consider and documented in the [Final Recommendations](#). The following actions specifically relate to recreational boating:

- ACTION 11 – Continue to fund and protect current outdoor recreation grant programs, including the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Boating Facilities Program, Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Account, and others administered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.
- ACTION 12 – Remove the 23-cent cap on the portion of the gas tax attributed to off-road recreation that is transferred to the dedicated accounts for off-road vehicles (Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities program), boating (Boating Facilities Program), and the snowmobiling grant program.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board works as directed by the Governor to advance these boating related recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

II. Accomplishments Since the Last Boating Plan in 2009

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board last approved the *Boating Grant Programs Policy Plan* in October 2009 (2009 plan). One of the goals in the plan stated that funding “shall encourage projects that best meet the needs of the boating public” (Policy C-1). The 2009 plan leaned on data from the *Washington Boater Needs Assessment*, which identified needs for specific types of boating facilities, both renovation of existing boating facilities and development of new facilities.

Table 1 is a summary of the most important facility needs by the type of boater as expressed in the *Washington Boater Needs Assessment*.

Table 1 – What is the Most Important Type of Boating Facilities that Boaters Want Improved or Built?¹

Type of Boater	Improve Existing Facilities	Build New Facilities
Motor-boaters	Boat launch ramps	Boat launch ramps
Sail boaters	Mooring buoys or docks	Marinas
Paddlers	Restrooms at boat launch ramps	Boat launch ramps
Other Hand-Powered Boaters	Boat launch ramps	Mooring buoys or docks

For motorized boaters, boat launch ramps were the most important type of facility to improve or build. Since approving the 2009 plan, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board awarded grant funds to renovate 15 motorized boat launch ramps. Note that in 2012, the legislature reduced funding in the Boating Facilities Program, one of the motorized boating grant programs, by \$3.3 million. Because of this funding reduction, three new boat launch ramps were not funded.

The motorized boat launch facilities funded since 2009 are:

Renovated Motorized Boat Launches by Project Sponsor (15)

- Boating Facilities Program
 - Black Lake, Thurston County (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
 - Crow Butte, Benton County (Port of Benton)
 - Don Morse Park, Chelan County (City of Chelan)
 - Lacamas Lake, Clark County (City of Camas)
 - Lake Chelan, Chelan County (Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission)
 - Lake Samish, Whatcom County (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
 - Lake Sammamish, King County (Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission)
 - Langsdorf Landing, Clark County (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
 - Levee Street, Gray Harbor County (City of Hoquiam) – construction pending
 - Lighthouse Marine Park (Whatcom County)
 - Long Lake, Kitsap County (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
 - Newman Lake, Spokane County (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
 - Oneida, Wahkiakum County (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
 - Salisbury Point (Kitsap County)

¹ Responsive Management, *Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Compendium* (2007), 280, 292.

- Squalicum Harbor, Whatcom County (Port of Bellingham)

As a group, non-motorized boaters wanted to see existing mooring buoys, docks, restrooms, and boat launch ramps improved and new mooring buoys, docks, boat launch ramps, and marinas built. Since approving the 2009 plan, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board awarded grant funds to renovate one non-motorized launch, build seven new non-motorized launches and build 40 linear feet of new non-motorized boarding floats.

The non-motorized facilities funded since 2009 are:

Renovated Non-Motorized Boat Launches (1)

- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Water Access Category
 - Hathaway, Clark County (City of Washougal)

New Non-Motorized Boat Launches (7)

- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
 - Swadabs Shoreline, Skagit County (Swinomish Indian Tribal Community)
 - Port Angeles Waterfront, Clallam County (City of Port Angeles)
 - Islands Trailhead, Spokane County (Spokane Conservation District)
- Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicles Program
 - Similkameen River (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Water Access Category
 - Don Morse Park, Chelan County (City of Chelan)
 - Yakima River, Benton County (City of West Richland)
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program State Lands Development Category
 - Old Highway 10, Kittitas County (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)

New Boarding Float (1)

- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
 - Harper Pier, Kitsap County (Port of Bremerton)

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board also awarded grant funds for other facilities and activities beyond the top indicators shown in Table 1.

III. Data about Recreational Boating in Washington State

Notes about the Data Used in this Report

The majority of the data used in this section is from *Outdoor Recreation in Washington, The 2013 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*, produced for the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board under contract by Responsive Management. To prepare the SCORP, Responsive Management surveyed 3,114 adult residents of Washington State on outdoor recreation demand by telephone between August 27 and October 26, 2012. Random digit dialing selected the individuals who participated in the telephone survey.

To meet the regional planning requirements of the project, the random sample of individuals was stratified by the 10 planning regions in Washington as described below. See Appendix A of the SCORP for survey methodology.

Planning Regions in The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan	
Region	Counties in the Region
The Islands	Island and San Juan Counties
Peninsulas	Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, and Mason Counties
The Coast	Grays Harbor, Pacific, and Wahkiakum Counties
North Cascades	Chelan, Kittitas, Okanogan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties
Seattle-King	King County (including the City of Seattle)
Southwest	Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Lewis, Pierce, Skamania, and Thurston Counties
Northeast	Ferry, Pend Oreille, Spokane, and Stevens Counties
Columbia Plateau	Adams, Douglas, Grant, and Lincoln Counties
South Central	Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, and Yakima Counties
The Palouse	Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Whitman Counties

Responsive Management obtained a minimum of 300 completed telephone interviews in each region. Within each region, results were weighted by demographic characteristics so that the sample was representative of residents of that region when it was reported in the SCORP. For statewide results, Responsive Management weighted each region to be in proper proportion to the state population as a whole.

The SCORP defined motorized and non-motorized boating differently than RCO's grant programs. In the SCORP, motorboats do not include sailboats or personal watercraft and non-motorized boats do not include sailboats or whitewater rafts. These alternative definitions of motor and non-motorized boating are used below in the data section of this plan.

In addition, this plan uses data from the *Washington Boater Needs Assessment* conducted by Responsive Management in 2007. This study was conducted on behalf of the Recreation and Conservation Office to determine the needs of Washington boaters and priorities for allocating resources. The Washington State Legislature authorized the assessment in Substitute House Bill 1651. The study entailed focus groups of boating services providers and telephone surveys of boating service providers, the public in Washington, and registered boaters in Washington.

The data obtained from boaters in both surveys used in this plan represent all types of boats for all boaters 18 years or older.

Economic Contribution of Boating

Annually, people spend about \$4.5 billion on recreational boating in Washington State (Table 2). This makes recreational boating the second highest in expenditures when compared to other forms of outdoor recreation, behind only wildlife viewing and photography.

Recreational boating makes up almost 11 percent of all expenditures for outdoor recreation in Washington State.² Trip-related expenditures are the total spent on boating, including equipment, travel and lodging, entrance fees, and food and beverages. Trip-related expenditures do not include expenses related to boat fuel or launch and moorage fees.

Table 2: Annual Expenditures for Recreational Boating in Washington State (2014 Dollars)³

Type of Boating Activity	Trip-Related Expenditures	Equipment Expenditures	Total Expenditures
Motor-boating	\$1,648,673,371	\$2,186,800,000	\$3,835,473,371
Non-motorized boating	\$578,668,526	\$9,759,968	\$588,428,495
Rafting	\$42,323,278	\$9,759,968	\$52,083,246
Total Boating Expenditures	\$2,269,665,175	\$2,206,319,937	\$4,475,985,112

How Many People Go Boating for Recreation?

Thirty-six percent, 2.4 million,⁴ of Washington residents participate in boating for recreational purposes (Figure 1).⁵ Washington's participation rate is slightly higher than the national participation rate of 33 percent reported by the National Marine Manufacturers Association.⁶

The most popular type of boating is motor-boating,⁷ with nearly 1.7 million Washington residents, or around 25 percent of the state population participating. Eleven percent, or 740,000, of Washington

² Earth Economics, *Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State* (2015) 69.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Based on US Census data from 2010.

⁵ Recreation and Conservation Office, *Outdoor Recreation in Washington State: The 2013 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP), 161.

⁶ National Marine Manufacturers Association, *Recreational Boating Industry Trends*, December 2011.

⁷ In the 2013 SCORP, "motor-boating" does not include use of personal watercraft.

residents use non-motorized boats;⁸ 5 percent, or 34,000, use personal watercraft; 4 percent, or 270,000, go sailing; and 3 percent, or 200,000, raft whitewater.

In the past 10 years, the relative rank of Washington resident participation in non-motorized boating increased while the relative rank of motor-boating and personal watercraft use slightly decreased.⁹ There was no marked difference in the rank for sailing or whitewater rafting.

In terms of frequency, boaters, other than whitewater rafters, participate in boating an average of 15 days a year. Whitewater rafters participate in rafting an average of 6 days a year.¹⁰

While the overall participation rate for all boating recreation is 36 percent, participation rates vary by planning regions as described above (Figure 2).¹¹

⁸ In the 2013 SCORP, "non-motorized boating" does not include sailing or whitewater rafting. It also does not include other water-related activities such as surfboarding, wind surfing, water skiing, inner tubing or floating.

⁹ 2013 SCORP, 74-75. Because of differences in the survey methodology between the last three SCORPs, a direct comparison of the recreational boating participation rates over time is not possible; however, a comparison of the relative rank of each activity can be made.

¹⁰ 2013 SCORP, 19.

¹¹ Responsive Management, Results of General Population Survey in Support of the Development of the Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, (2012).

Figure 1: Washington State Resident Participation Rates in Recreational Boating, by Type of Boat

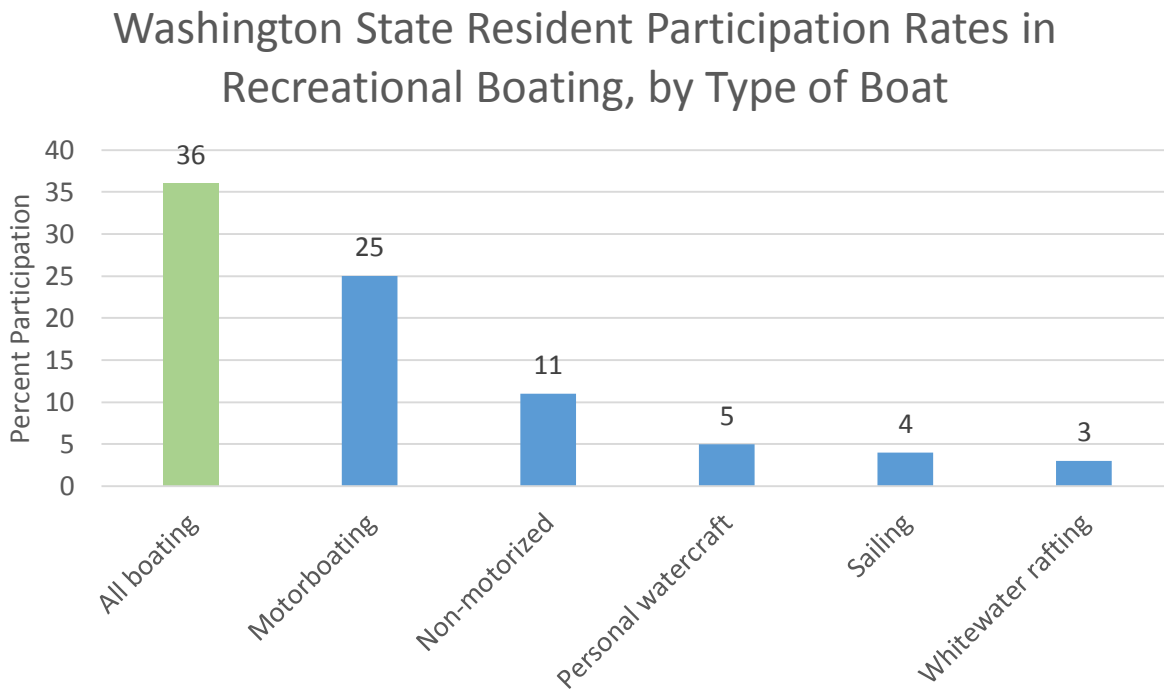
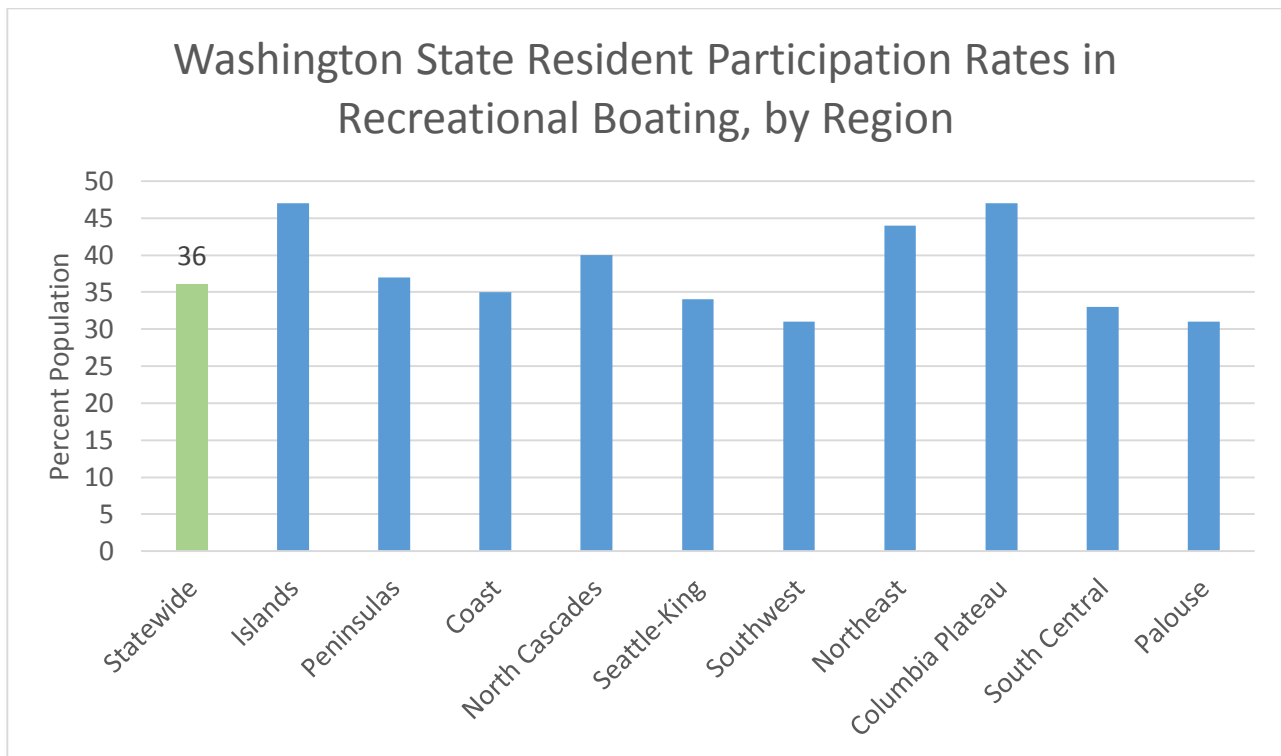


Figure 2: Washington State Resident Participation Rates in Recreational Boating, by Region



How Popular is Boating Compared to Other Types of Recreation?

Compared to other types of outdoor recreation, boating activities rank in the middle range in popularity among Washington residents (Table 3).¹²

Table 3: Rank of Boating Activity Compared to Other Outdoor Recreation Activities in Washington State

Type of Boating Activity	Percent of Washington Residents Participating	Rank Compared to All Outdoor Recreation
Motor-boating	25.8 percent	22 nd
Non-motorized boating	11.1 percent	29 th
Riding personal watercraft	5.2 percent	46 th
Sailing	3.5 percent	52 nd
Whitewater rafting	2.8 percent	56 th

Who Goes Boating?

Ownership

Not all boaters own boats. For those boaters surveyed, 58 percent of boaters own a boat and 42 percent do not. Of those who own boats, 44 percent registered their boats with the Washington Department of Licensing and 14 percent did not.¹³ In Washington State, all boats 16 feet or more in length or with 10 or more horsepower must be registered.

Gender

Boaters in Washington State are primarily male. When compared to other types of outdoor recreation, the gender gap in participation for boating ranks fourth (behind fishing or shell fishing, hunting or shooting, and golf). Forty-two percent of the male population in Washington participates in boating, compared to 29 percent of females (Figure 3). The majority of the gender difference is in motor-boating, with participation by 30 percent of the male population compared to 19 percent of females. There is less of a gender gap in participation for other types of boating such as sailing, riding personal watercraft, non-motorized boating and whitewater rafting (less than 5 percentage points difference).¹⁴

Ethnicity

Thirty-seven percent of Washington residents who identify themselves as white go boating, compared to 22 percent of non-white residents (Figure 4). This is the largest difference between white and non-white participation rates of any outdoor recreation activity for which data was available. The majority of the difference is in motor-boating and non-motorized boating. There is less of a difference in ethnicity

¹² 2013 SCORP, 48-49.

¹³ Responsive Management, *Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary* (2007), 5.

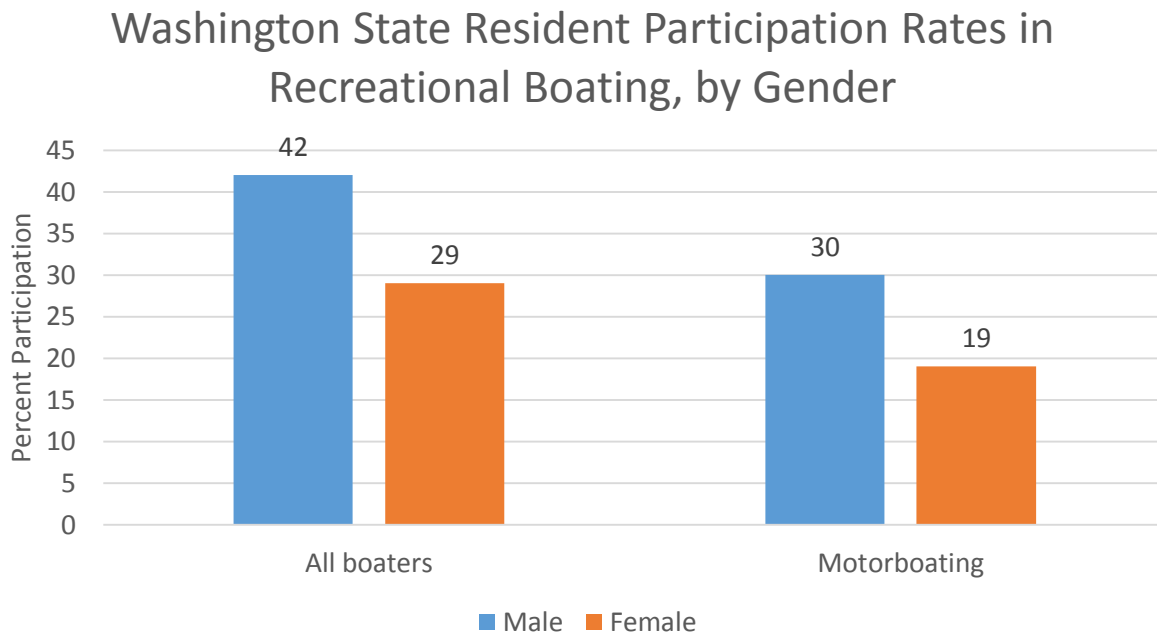
¹⁴ 2013 SCORP, 64; supplemented with additional data received from Responsive Management, 2014.

for other types of boating such as sailing, riding personal watercraft, and whitewater rafting (less than 5 percentage points difference).¹⁵

Age

The adult boating population in Washington is distributed across age groups, with the majority of boaters between the ages of 25-54 (Figure 5).¹⁶ Motor-boaters tend to be slightly younger than other types of boaters.¹⁷

Figure 3: Washington State Resident Participation Rates in Recreational Boating, by Gender



¹⁵ 2013 SCORP, 66. According to the SCORP, non-white survey participants “included black/African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Native Americans, Asians, and other ethnicities.”

¹⁶ Data received from Responsive Management, 2014.

¹⁷ 2013 SCORP, 65. motor-boating excludes personal watercraft.

Figure 4: Washington State Resident Participation Rates in Recreational Boating, by Ethnicity

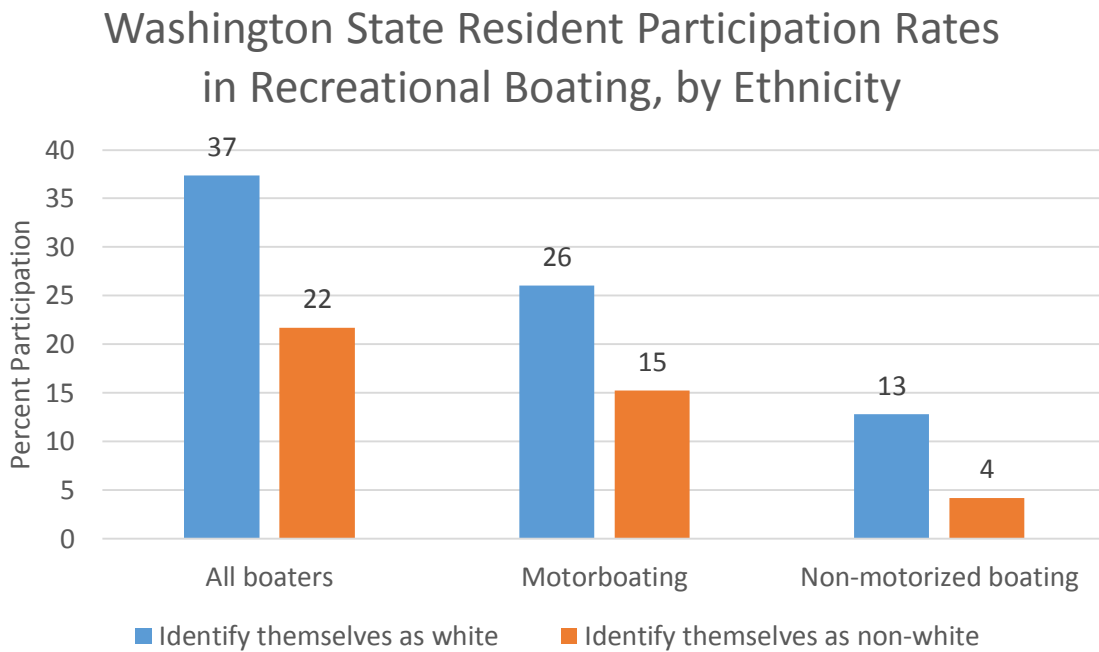
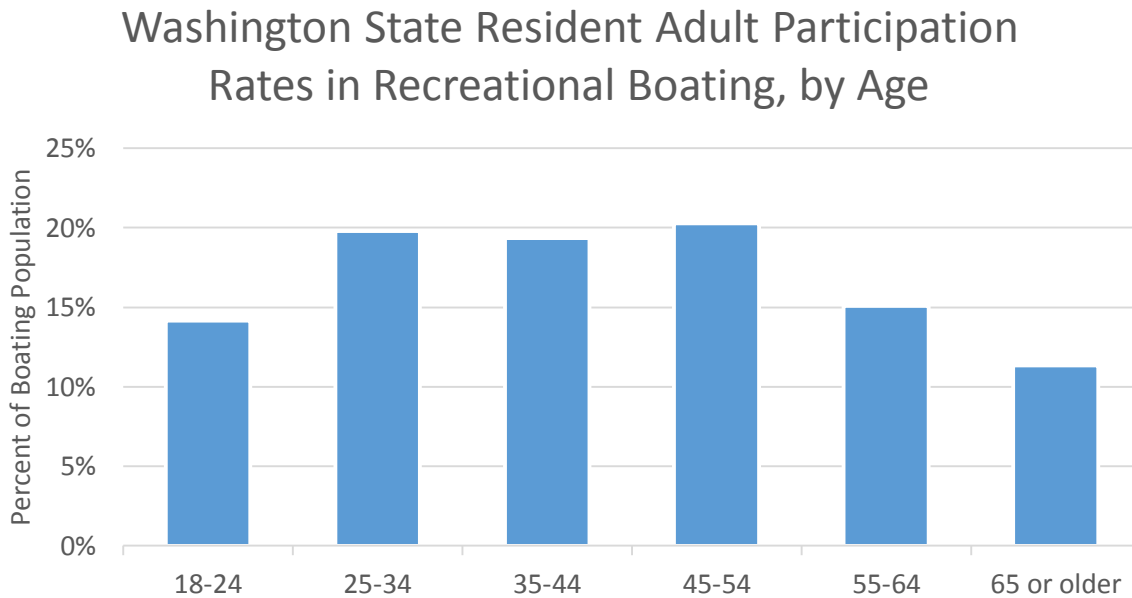


Figure 5: Washington State Resident Adult Participation Rates in Recreational Boating, by Age



Motivation

In the boater needs assessment, boaters said they boated for relaxation (49 percent), fishing (29 percent), to be with friends and family (26 percent), for general recreation (14 percent), and to be close to nature (11 percent).¹⁸

¹⁸ Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 10.

Where do People Go Boating?

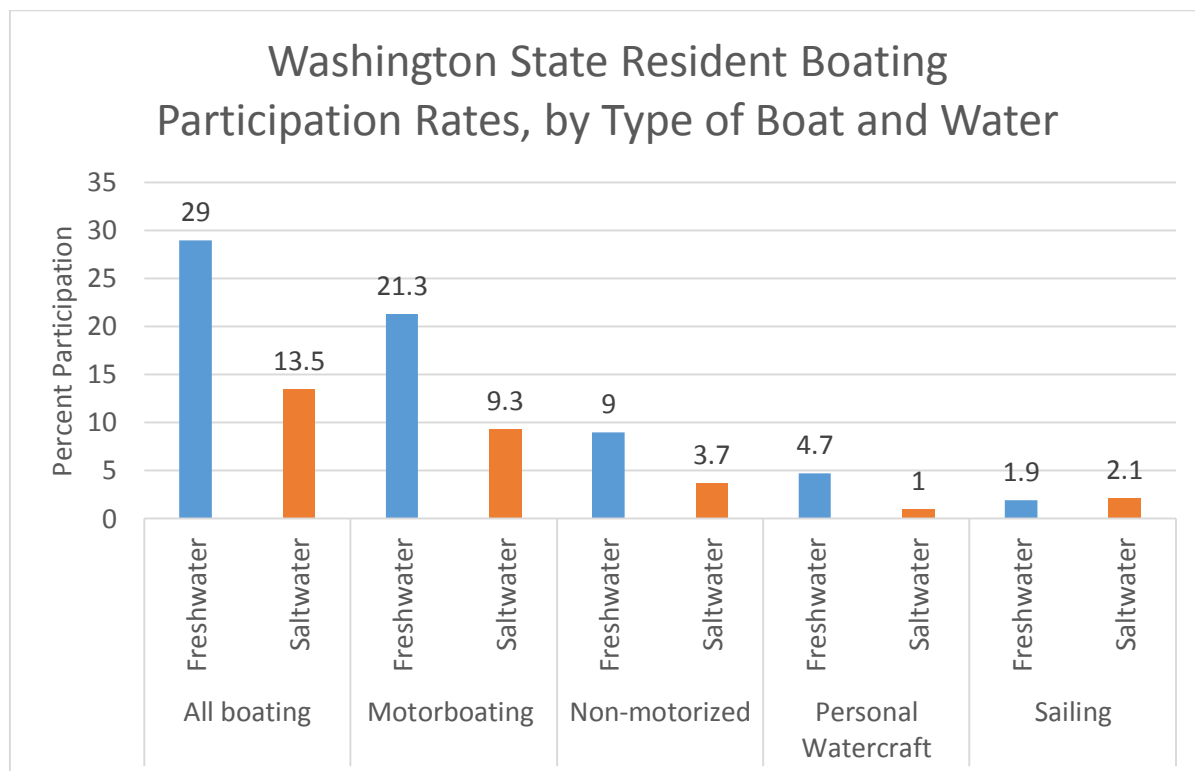
Fresh versus Saltwater

Overall, more than twice as many boaters in Washington State recreate in freshwater compared to saltwater (Figure 6).¹⁹ More than 6 percent boat in both freshwater and saltwater.²⁰

Body of Water

When measured by days boated in the past two years (2007 survey), most boating occurred in freshwater: Columbia River (12.7 percent), Lake Washington (8.7 percent), Lake Roosevelt (3.5 percent), and the Snake River (2.2 percent).²¹ However, as a specific destination, Puget Sound was the most popular body of water (25 percent of the days boated).

Figure 6: Washington State Resident Boating Participation Rates, by Type of Boat and Water



Location

A majority of boaters (62 percent) went boating where they lived in the previous 2 years. King County leads the way in the most days where boaters went boating (18.4 percent boated the most days there), followed by Pierce County (8.2 percent), Snohomish County (6.6 percent), Clark County (4.4 percent), and San Juan County (4.3 percent).²²

¹⁹ 2013 SCORP, 161.

²⁰ 2013 SCORP, 161. This total was calculated by aggregating the total participation rate of saltwater and freshwater boaters and subtracting the total participation rate of all boaters.

²¹ Responsive Management, *Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary* (2007), 8.

²² Responsive Management, *Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary* (2007), 7.

What Types of Facilities Do Boaters Use?

Twenty-three percent of Washington residents use a boat launch ramp and 8 percent use a marina.²³

Boaters ranked the management of existing ramps ahead of the development of new launch ramps in terms of importance for boaters. Similarly, boating service providers also ranked management of existing ramps ahead of development of new launches.²⁴ Improved parking and launch ramps also were cited as priorities by boaters and boating service providers.²⁵

What Size are Motorboats and Sailboats?

More than four times as many Washington residents motorboat in boats less than 26 feet in length compared to boats longer than that. For sailboats, the lengths are more evenly distributed (Figure 7).²⁶ Similarly, 96 percent of boats registered in 2012 were less than 26 feet in length.²⁷

What Other Activities Involve Boating?

Almost 19 percent of Washington residents fish from a private boat and 3 percent fish using a guide or charter boat.²⁸ Almost 5 percent of Washington residents camp with or in a boat.²⁹

Boaters said they did the following activities while boating: fishing (53 percent), sightseeing and fish and wildlife viewing (35 percent), water skiing (19 percent), relaxing or entertaining friends (17 percent), being with family and friends (17 percent), and water tubing (15 percent).

Are Boaters Satisfied with their Boating Experience?

There is a high level of satisfaction among boaters concerning the opportunities to go boating and the facilities available: 86 percent were highly satisfied or satisfied with the facilities for boating in Washington State and 90 percent were highly satisfied or satisfied with the opportunities for boating in Washington State.³⁰ A large majority of boaters (72 percent) indicated that access issues, such as crowding at boat launch ramps, had taken away from their boating satisfaction.

²³ 2013 SCORP, 161.

²⁴ Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 33.

²⁵ Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 34.

²⁶ 2013 SCORP, 161. Results for motorboats do not include personal watercraft because the data was not available. Results do not include non-motorized boating because the data was not available.

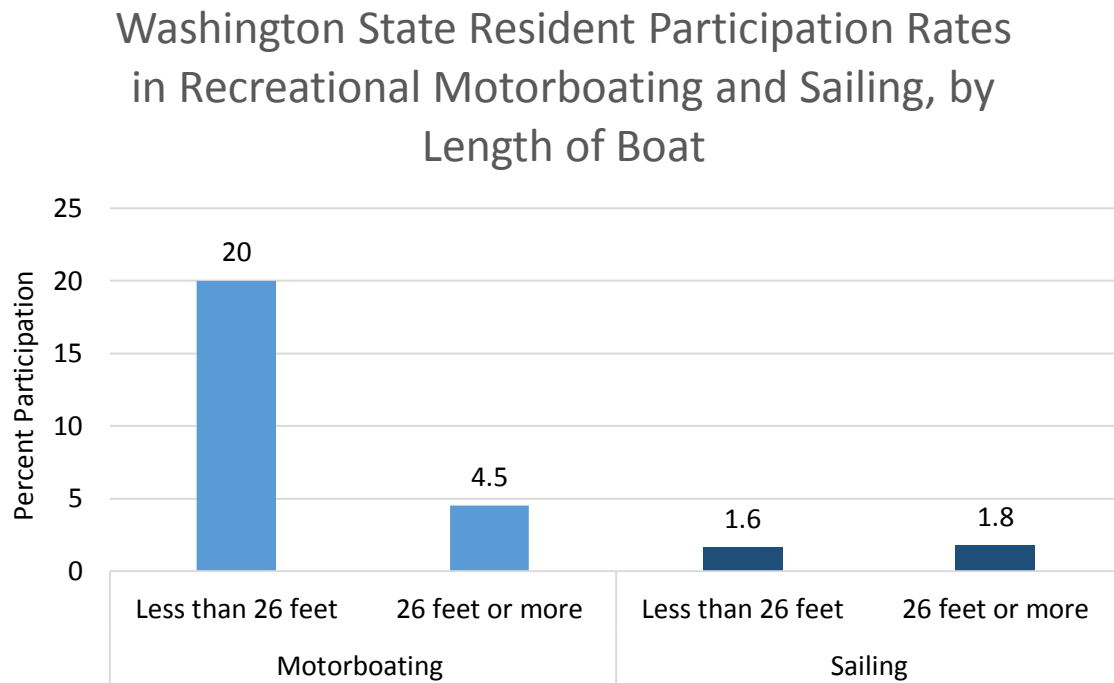
²⁷ Washington Department of Licensing and Washington Sea Grant Program

²⁸ 2013 SCORP, 160.

²⁹ 2013 SCORP, 163.

³⁰ Responsive Management, Results of General Population Survey in Support of the Development of the Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2012), xv. Results do not include whitewater rafters because the data was not available.

Figure 7: Washington State Resident Participation Rates in Recreational Motor-boating and Sailing, by Length of Boat



Who Else Wants to Go Boating?

Of the Washington residents that do not go boating, almost 6 percent said they would like to canoe or kayak and the same percentage of people said they would like to boat generally (Figure 8).³¹ These rank sixth and eighth, respectively, out of all of the outdoor recreation activities identified. More than 4 percent of Washington residents who already go boating desire to boat more (Figure 9).³²

³¹ 2013 SCORP, 72.

³² 2013 SCORP, 73.

Figure 8: Percent of Washington Residents who would like to Participate in an Outdoor Recreation Activity

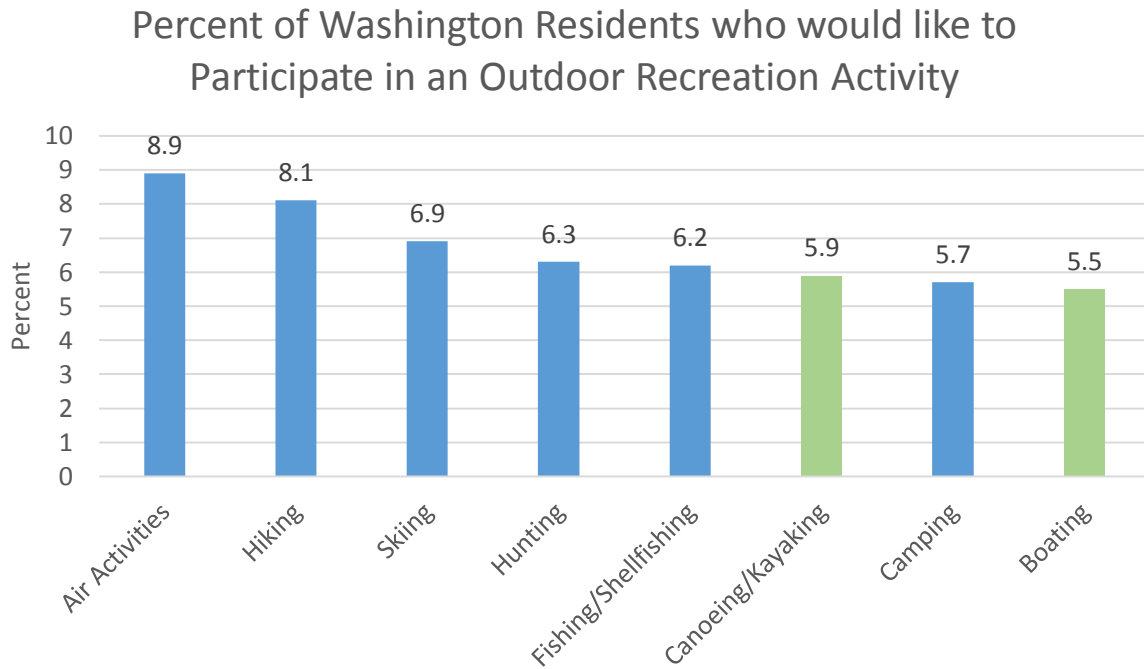
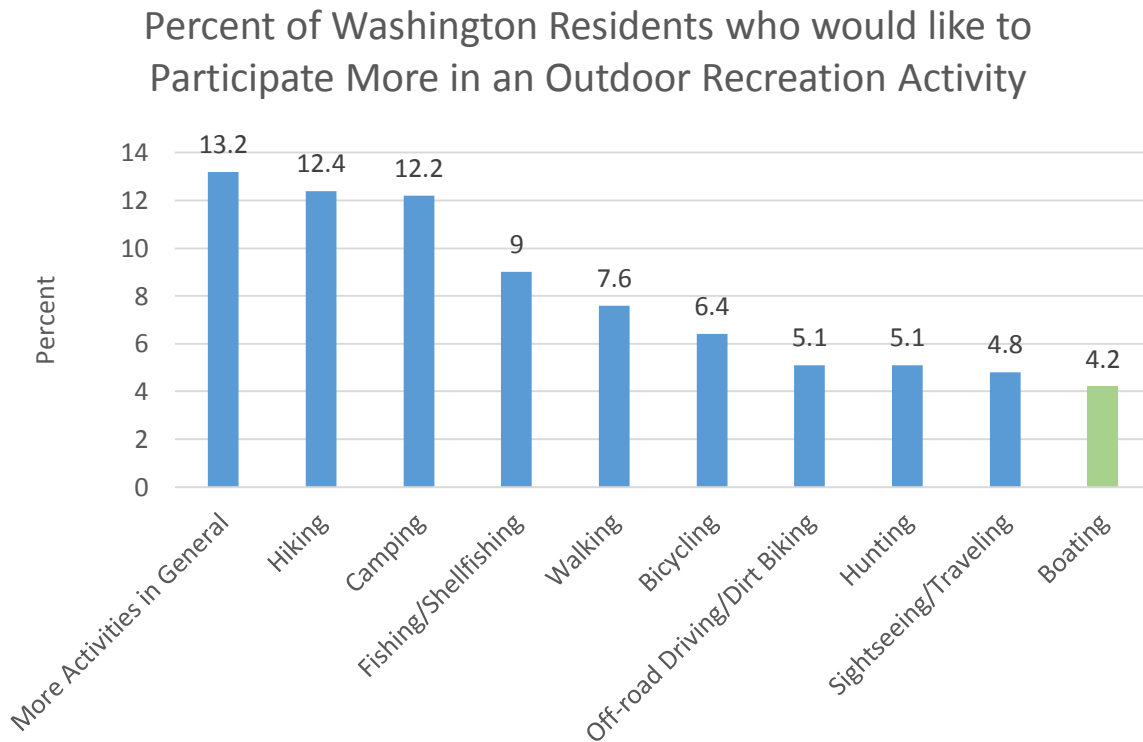


Figure 9: Percent of Washington Residents who would like to Participate More in an Outdoor Recreation Activity



Summary of Data and Findings

Highlights of the data and findings are:

- One out of three residents in Washington State boat during the year.
- Boating ranks in the middle range in popularity among Washington residents compared to other types of outdoor recreation.
- More people boat in freshwater than saltwater, and in boats less than 26 feet in length.
- More men boat than women, more white people boat than non-white people, and most boaters are around the age of 46.
- During the past 10 years, non-motorized boating increased in popularity.
- Non-motorized boating does not have a significant difference between the gender and age of the participant.
- Boating is one of the most expensive types of outdoor recreation, particularly motor-boating, which ranks second only to wildlife viewing for its economic contribution to the state.
- Overall, existing boaters are satisfied with the boating facilities and opportunities in Washington State.

IV. Actions to Support the Boating Grant Programs

As previously stated in Section I, the purpose, goal and objective of this plan are to:

Purpose	Guide the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board’s grant funding for boating facilities and providing boating program services.
Goal	Align grant funding with current recreational boating interests and needs.
Objective	Fund boating facilities to support statewide trends and reflect local priorities.

To accomplish the above, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will implement the actions in Table 4 to support boating in Washington State.

Table 4: Strategies and Actions to Support the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Boating Grant Programs

Strategy	Action
1 – Fund construction of boating facilities to address the most important boater needs and the most popular types of boating.	1A – Revise grant program evaluation criteria to give a priority to projects that address boater needs and boating participation rates.
2 – Define grant programs’ priorities to fund different types of boating facilities in different grant programs.	2A – Emphasize consistency with funding sources when determining boating grant programs’ priorities. 2B – Allow for compatible uses of boating facilities only if the use does not impair or displace the primary boating use of the grant program. 2C – Support facilities for transient public recreational boating uses.
3 – Support stewardship and retention of current boating infrastructure.	3A – Encourage projects that maximize the efficient use of existing boating sites and facilities. 3B – Encourage projects that use design standards and construction techniques that maximize the service life of the facility and minimize maintenance.
4 – Promote Infrastructure Projects and Construction practices that reduce environmental impacts.	4A – Give priority funding to projects that satisfy user needs in an environmentally responsible manner. 4B – Adopt the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board’s policy on sustainability in all its boating grant programs. 4C – Support actions related to invasive species prevention and control in the Invasive Species Council’s Strategic Plan.

Strategy	Action
5 – Provide accurate and timely information to boaters.	5A – Maintain and improve the Washington Water Cruiser. 5B – Maintain the boat.wa.gov Web site. 5C – Participate in the Washington Boaters Alliance. 5D – Participate in education and training seminars.
6 – Work cooperatively with other state agencies to improve boating programs and services.	6A – Coordinate and participate in the Agency Boating Committee. 6B – Work with other State Agencies to Address Control and Tenure Requirements. 6C – Participate in Other State Agency Boating Committees.

Strategy 1 - Fund Construction of Boating Facilities to Address the Most Important Boater Needs and the Most Popular Types of Boating.

Action 1A - Revise grant program evaluation criteria to give a priority to projects that address boater needs and boating participation rates.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will revise its grant program evaluation criteria for the 2016 grants to reflect the data in this plan. For example, the board should consider whether grant funding should be prioritized based on the information that most boating occurs on freshwater in boats less than 26 feet in length and that non-motorized boating is increasing in popularity. The board could also include evaluation criteria to encourage funding projects that will meet the needs of underserved communities such as non-whites and women.

Strategy 2 - Define Grant Programs' Priorities to Fund Different Types of Boating Facilities in Different Grant Programs.

Action 2A – Emphasize consistency with grant funding sources when determining boating programs' priorities.

Each grant program will strive to fund boating facility projects that are consistent with the source of funds that support the program. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board accomplishes this objective by adopting policies to guide the funding priorities in each grant program. The board will revisit grant program eligibility and priorities on a biennial basis to ensure this consistency. The board will also consider revising grant program priorities to reduce redundancy in funding opportunities. For example, the board could consider giving funding preference to water trails in the Water Access category of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. The board will make clear when specific elements are not eligible in specific funding sources. A summary of each grant program's priorities for the boating community are in Table 5.

Table 5: Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Boating Grant Programs and Types of Boats Served

Grant Program	Types of Boats Served
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account	Motorized up to 10 horsepower and non-motorized boats ³³
Boating Facilities Program	Motorized boats ³⁴
Boating Infrastructure Grant	Motorized boats 26 feet or more in length ³⁵
Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Activities - Nonhighway Road Category	Non-motorized boats at sites accessed via a non-highway road ³⁶
Recreational Trails Program	Motorized and non-motorized boats using water trails in a backcountry experience ³⁷
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program - Water Access and Trails Category	Non-motorized boats ³⁸
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Local Parks, State Lands Development and Renovation, and State Parks Categories	Motorized and non-motorized boats ³⁹
Land and Water Conservation Fund	Motorized and non-motorized boats ⁴⁰

Action 2B – Allow for compatible uses of boating facilities only if the use does not impair or displace the primary boating use of the grant program.

While boating facilities are primarily for the intended users in the grant program, public use of a facility by other types of recreationists, including non-boating recreationists, is allowed as long as it does not impair or displace the targeted boating community in that grant program. For example, it is compatible to allow non-motorized use or fishing use of a motorized boating facility as long as the non-motorized use or fishing use does not impair or displace the motorized boating use at the facility. In this example, the non-motorized use and fishing use is a secondary or minimal benefit to the public because of the motorized boating project.

³³ *Manual 21: Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account Grant Program* (March 1, 2014).

³⁴ *Manual 9: Boating Facilities Program* (March 1, 2014).

³⁵ Code of Federal Regulations Section 86.11

³⁶ *Manual 14: Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Activities Program* (May 1, 2014)

³⁷ *Manual 16: Recreational Trails Program* (May 1, 2014)

³⁸ *Manual 10a: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Outdoor Recreation Account* (March 1, 2014)

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ *Manual 15: Land and Water Conservation Fund* (March 1, 2014)

Allowing compatible uses of publicly funded boating facilities to conserve government budget and resources while protecting the facilities' primary uses. The board will adopt policies that allow for compatible use of boating sites and require pro-rating costs to ensure consistency with Action 2A. The board will also consider adding a preference in the evaluation criteria to on the importance of active site management in order to avoid user conflicts when sites have multiple uses.

Action 3C – Support facilities for transient public recreational boating uses.

Facilities supported by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants must be available for the “transient” use by the general boating public. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board defines transient use as a maximum of 14 consecutive days of moorage.⁴¹

Strategy 3 - Support Stewardship and Retention of Current Boating Infrastructure

Action 5A – Encourage projects that maximize the efficient use of existing boating sites and facilities.

Boating grant programs should focus on maximizing the efficient use of the existing facilities rather than the acquisition of land for and construction of new facilities. Use of existing sites avoids time-consuming and costly land acquisition. Renovation can extend facility service life and reduce need for costly maintenance and repairs. To the extent practicable, the board will consider a preference for projects that includes public-private partnerships in site construction and management. This action is consistent with recommendations in the boater needs assessment that prioritized funding to maintain existing boating facilities rather than build new ones.⁴²

Action 3B – Encourage projects that use design standards and construction techniques that maximize the service life of the facility and minimize maintenance.

Projects often may incorporate design elements and construction standards that reduce maintenance. Adequate consideration of maintenance during the design phase can result in long-term savings that far outweigh most short-term construction cost increases.

Strategy 4 - Promote Infrastructure Projects and Construction Practices that Reduce Environmental Impacts

Action 4A – Satisfy user needs in an environmentally responsible manner.

In making funding available to facility providers, RCO recognizes its responsibility as a partner in the stewardship of the natural environment. To this end, RCO will work cooperatively with regulatory and permitting agencies to address environmental issues at the grant program level. For example, RCO will work with the Department of Natural Resources as a propriety steward of state-owned aquatic lands to ensure applications are consistent with that agency's management directives and its *Aquatic Lands Habitat Conservation Plan*, if adopted. RCO also will work with Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission to coordinate needs for funding boating pump out facilities. RCO's grant sponsors must

⁴¹ The United States Fish and Wildlife Service defines transient moorage as ten days or less for the Boating Infrastructure Grant program.

⁴² Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 33.

ensure funded projects meet regulatory and permit requirements. This objective is in response to a recommendation to consider environmental issues when administering boating programs.⁴³

Action 4B – Apply the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board’s policy on sustainability in all its boating grant programs.

In 2014, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted an evaluation criterion to address sustainability and applied it to the following grant programs in which boating activities are eligible for funding:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Activities
- Recreational Trails Program
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program categories:
 - Local Parks
 - State Lands Development
 - State Parks
 - Trails
 - Water Access

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will consider adding an evaluation criterion on sustainability to the Boating Facilities Program and Boating Infrastructure Grants program. The evaluation criteria for the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account grant program already addresses sustainability. Specific efforts toward sustainability include improving water quality by upgrading restrooms, providing education signage about oil spill prevention from recreational boats, rewarding participation in the Clean Marina program, and implementing best management practices as described in the state’s *Aquatic Habitat Guidelines*.

Action 4C – Support actions related to invasive species prevention and control in the Invasive Species Council’s Strategic Plan.

The Washington State Invasive Species Council provides coordination for combating harmful invasive species throughout the state and preventing the introduction of others that may be potentially harmful. The council will adopt a new strategic plan in 2015. RCO will work with the council to incorporate specific strategies that prevent the spread of invasive species at boating facilities in RCO’s grant programs. RCO also will recommend policy changes to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in response to the new strategic plan, as appropriate. This objective is in response to a recommendation to consider environmental issues when administering boating programs.⁴⁴

Strategy 5 - Provide Accurate and Timely Information to Boaters.

Action 5A – Maintain and improve the Washington Water Cruiser.

In 2013, RCO launched the Washington Water Cruiser to provide the recreational boating community with a resource to locate boating facilities and services. This application, available on a Web site and through a mobile application, was in direct response to a recommendation to create a digital map of

⁴³ Responsive Management, *Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary* (2007), 41.

⁴⁴ Responsive Management, *Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary* (2007).

public boating facilities statewide.⁴⁵ RCO will seek partners and sponsors to assist with storage costs, maintenance of the application and updating the data during the next 3 years.

Action 5B – Maintain the boat.wa.gov Web site.

In 2009, RCO launched the boat.wa.gov Web site to provide the recreational boating community with a centralized place to find boating related information such as boat registration, boating laws and education, fishing licenses, moorage and launch sites, weather, and tide information. RCO created the Web site in response to recommendations to increase communications with recreational boaters through a cross-agency Web portal.⁴⁶ RCO will continue to maintain this Web site for the next 5 years and regularly update information in coordination with other state agencies.

Action 5C – Participate in the Washington Boaters Alliance.

RCO will participate actively in the Washington Boaters Alliance as a non-voting member. The mission of the Washington Boating Alliance, an all-inclusive alliance of boating-related organizations, is to develop, advance, and implement consensus positions and proposals to enhance the recreational boating experience in Washington. RCO participates in the alliance to share information with the recreational boating community and learn about emerging issues and concerns from recreational boaters.

Action 5D – Participate in education and training seminars.

RCO will participate actively in educational and training seminars for the recreational boating community hosted by other organizations such as the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Washington Boater Alliance, and the Northwest Marine Trade Association. The focus of this effort is to foster communication between RCO and boaters and to receive feedback from a broad audience. This goal is in response to a recommendation to participate in regular conferences about recreational boating services.⁴⁷

Strategy 6 – Work Cooperatively with other State Agencies to Improve Boating Programs and Services.

Action 6A – Coordinate and participate in the Agency Boating Committee.

RCO will coordinate regular meetings of the Agency Boating Committee. In 2008, the state agencies created this committee in response to recommendations for better coordination.⁴⁸ The committee is comprised of staff members from Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Licensing, Department of Natural Resources, State Parks and Recreation Commission, and RCO. Agencies use this forum to coordinate boating programs, grant opportunities, and services targeted to the recreational boating community.

Action 6B – Work with other State Agencies to Address Control and Tenure Requirements

⁴⁵ Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters, (2008).

⁴⁶ Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 39, and Ross & Associates, 2008.

⁴⁷ Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters, (2008).

⁴⁸ Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007), 36, and Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters, (2008).

RCO will engage with other state agencies who own or management state lands to develop guidelines on control and tenure requirements for boating projects that occur on state lands. The board will consider whether control and tenure requirements need to be revised to meet grant program objectives, funding requirements, and other state proprietary needs.

Action 6C – Participate in Other State Agency Boating Committees

RCO will participate in other state boating committees as requested such as the Boating Program Advisory Council coordinated by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

V. Recommendations for the Future

Recommendations for the Future

The ideas that follow would further assist and guide the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in making funding decisions based on current needs and trends in recreational boating. The board will consider implementing these recommendations as time and funding allow.

Update the Boater Needs Assessment

To understand the boating population and the types of facilities they need, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board should prepare a boater needs assessment periodically, perhaps once every 5 years in conjunction with the SCORP survey. The needs assessment would assist the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board with identifying funding priorities for its grant programs. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board produced an initial assessment in 2007 in response to a legislative mandate, Revised Code of Washington 79A.60.680.⁴⁹ A new assessment in 2017 would provide an update on boater needs in advance of or in conjunction with the next State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Specific data needs could include a needs assessment for boating groups by the length of the vessel, by specific water bodies, by fishing and other activities while boating, and the location of facilities in urban and rural locations. Data collected could also distinguish how many boaters participate in both motorized and non-motorized boating.

Inventory Boating Facilities

To further enhance the information in a boater needs assessment as well as in the Washington Water Cruiser, RCO should conduct an inventory of all public recreational boating facilities, motorized and non-motorized by 2017. A more robust inventory is responsive to a recommendation for RCO to create a statewide map of public boating facilities.⁵⁰ Such an inventory may be accomplished in partnership with other state agencies, private organizations, and boaters. The inventory would include all public motorized and non-motorized boat launches, access sites, transient moorages, buoys, and supporting facilities such as restrooms, pump outs, parking lots, camping and fishing facilities, and laundry services. Either this inventory can be generated through crowd sourcing in the Washington Water Cruiser Application (Strategy #1A) or as a separate inventory that is integrated into the application later.

Explore Non-motorized Boating

Paddle sport popularity is increasing, but there is sparse data available to understand this type of recreation. Non-motorized boaters do not need to obtain a Boater Safety Card nor are their vessels

⁴⁹ Responsive Management, Washington Boater Needs Assessment: Data Summary (2007).

⁵⁰ Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Improving Coordination of State Services to Recreational Boaters, (2008).

registered through the Department of Licensing. Therefore, it is difficult to estimate the number of non-motorized boats available. RCO will work with other state agencies, boating organizations, and recreation and maritime industries to collect information and data on non-motorized boating. In addition, RCO will incorporate additional non-motorized data collection in the boater needs assessment and the next State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Update the Boating Plan with SCORP

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is the source of much of the data in this plan. RCO updates SCORP every 5 years to meet certain federal grant program requirements. The next SCORP is due in 2019. To streamline RCO's planning efforts and better utilize the SCORP framework, the next Boating Grant Programs Plan will be produced in conjunction with the next SCORP in 2019.

Support Water Trails

Water trails are important trail systems that allow boaters to explore, find shelter, and rest. The State Trails Plan includes a recommendation to develop more water trails and encourage them in a designated statewide trail system. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board should work to connect the links between this Boating plan and the State Trails Plan and work with other state agencies and local organizations to incorporate water trails into a state trails system.

Address Climate Change

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board should assess how to address climate change within its boating grant programs. For example, rising sea levels may affect projects proposed along the coast or Puget Sound. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board should develop mechanisms to engage project sponsors and boaters in this discussion to ensure facilities constructed with grant funds can withstand changes over time due to climate change.

Develop Boating Grant Program Measures

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board should develop specific program measures for its boating programs to track progress toward meeting the most important needs identified by boaters and service providers. Data collected with each grant project should have the ability to be cumulative to communicate the types of boating facilities funded across grant programs.

Appendix A – State Agency Boating Programs

The following state agencies administer their respective boating programs as assigned by the Governor or State Legislature.

Recreation and Conservation Office

Boating Activities Program
Boats.wa.gov Web Site
Washington Water Cruise
Washington State Invasive Species Council

Washington State Parks

State Parks, Boat Ramps, Marine Parks and Mooring Buoys
Mandatory Boater Education Law
Washington State Boater Education Card
Life Jacket Loaner Program
Marine Law Enforcement Education Program
Clean Vessel Program

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Water Access Sites, Boat Ramps, and State Wildlife Areas
Fishing and Shellfishing Regulations
Hydraulic Code Permits
Invasive Species Enforcement and Education

Washington Department of Natural Resources

Port Management Areas on State Aquatic Lands
Derelict Vessel Removal Program

Washington State Department of Licensing

Vessel Registration and Renewal

Local Law Enforcement

Boating Accidents Reports

Appendix B – Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution

PLACEHOLDER - Insert final resolution adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

Appendix C – Definitions Used for Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Grant Programs

Boating – Unless otherwise noted, boating includes non-motorized and motorized recreational boating.

Non-motorized boats – Non-motorized boats includes all forms of paddle craft, sail only craft, and rowboats.

Motorized boats – Motorized boating includes gas, diesel, and electric powered boats, sailboats, and personal watercraft.

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution #2015-03
Boating Grant Programs Plan 2016**

WHEREAS, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) funds boating facilities projects through multiple grant programs; and

WHEREAS, the RCFB has been entrusted with public funds to help pay for water access projects serving citizens who wish to enjoy the use of boats of all types; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the state that the RCFB administer grant programs and funds on a foundation of good data based on sound research, systematic analysis, and public involvement; and

WHEREAS, the Boating Grant Programs Plan has been developed according to these principles; and

WHEREAS, approving the plan supports the board's strategic plan to make strategic investments through policy development, grant funding, technical assistance, coordination, and advocacy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the board approves the Boating Grant Programs Plan for immediate use; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the director will review the plan after a five-year period and recommend to the board whether to revise or re-approve the plan.

Resolution moved by: _____

Resolution seconded by: _____

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: _____

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM

Meeting Date: April 9, 2015

Title: Conversion Request: City of Bellevue, Mercer Slough Phase 1 (RCO Project 73-026A) and Mercer Slough (RCO Project 78-513A)

Prepared By: Myra Barker, Compliance Specialist

Summary

The City of Bellevue and State Parks are asking the board to approve a conversion of 1.06 acres at Mercer Slough Nature Park. The conversion is due to the Sound Transit East Link light rail project, which will impact a portion of the western edge of the park.

The board was briefed on the proposed conversion in April 2014. The board was asked to approve the conversion request in October 2014. The board tabled the decision at that time pending additional information.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

- Request for Decision
- Request for Direction
- Briefing

Resolution: 2015-04

Purpose of Resolution: Approve or deny the conversion.

Summary of the October Meeting

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) tabled the conversion decision, Resolution 2014-32, at the October 2014 meeting. They requested additional information specifically regarding:

- the board's authority on a conversion and its ability to require reversionary rights on the proposed conversion areas;
- the characteristics and use of the proposed conversion areas;
- the legal challenges to the East Link light rail project that is creating the conversion; and
- the impact of the light rail on park use, the park's hydrology, vegetation, wetlands, and wildlife.

The City of Bellevue and Sound Transit provided the requested information on the conversion areas, alternatives considered, legal challenges, and impacts of the East Link light rail project on the park. The information may be found in Attachment A: Supplemental Information for the Conversion Request for Mercer Slough Nature Park.

The Role of the Board in Conversions

Because needs and values often change over time, federal law and board policy allow conversions of grant-funded property under carefully scrutinized conditions. If a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) or state-funded project is converted, the project sponsor must replace the converted interests in real property, structures, or facilities. The replacement must have at least equal market value and have reasonably equivalent recreation utility and location.

Under current policy¹, the board's role is to consider:

- if practical alternatives to the proposed conversion, including avoidance, have been evaluated on a sound basis,
- if the proposed replacement property is of equivalent value and utility, and
- if the public has had an opportunity to comment on the proposed conversion and replacement.

The board either approves a conversion or denies the request if the conditions above are not met to the board's satisfaction. The board does not have the ability to accept other types of mitigation, levy additional penalties or conditions, or dictate the future use of the property being converted.

Because one of the projects involved here was partially funded by the federal LWCF, the role of the board is to decide whether to recommend approval of the conversion to the National Park Service (NPS). To do so, the board:

- evaluates the list of practical alternatives that were considered for the conversion and replacement, including avoidance, and
- considers if the replacement property has reasonably equivalent recreation utility and location.

The NPS has the legal responsibility to make the final decision of whether or not to approve the conversion related to the LWCF project.

At the October meeting, the board discussed placing reversionary rights on the conversion areas.

Question: Does the board have the authority to require reversionary rights on the converted property?

Answer: Under current policy, adding a reversionary right would be an additional condition of approving the conversion and is beyond the authority of the board.

When a conversion is approved for an acquisition project, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) deed of right is released on the converted property and is added to the replacement property. The converted property is no longer subject to Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policy.

Mercer Slough Nature Park and the Proposed Conversion Areas

Mercer Slough Nature Park is the largest of Lake Washington's remaining freshwater wetlands and serves as a regional park for the greater Puget Sound. It is also one of the City of Bellevue's largest parks, with over 320 acres of wildlife habitat, agriculture, and freshwater wetland ecosystems. The park offers about seven miles of trails, including a canoe trail and opportunities for environmental education and wildlife viewing. The public may access the park from five points on the eastern side of the park and from nine points on the western side of the park. The western access points include two watercraft launches.

¹ Manual 7, Long-Term Obligations

The East Link light rail system will impact board-funded sites in two separate locations: 1) on the western edge of the park adjacent to Bellevue Way SE, and 2) on the park's Periphery Trail, a wide sidewalk located within the street right-of-way. This will create a conversion of a total of 1.06 acres (Attachment B).

The North Conversion Area, funded with LWCF, is adjacent to the park's Periphery Trail, a wide sidewalk that separates the park from Bellevue Way SE. The north conversion area is approximately 35 feet in width and approximately 530 feet in length located in the northwest section of the park. The area is sloped and consists of cottonwoods, wetlands, blackberry vines, and an outfall from Wye Creek. The conversion area is visible from the sidewalk and from a kayak or canoe at the water level from the northwest corner of Mercer Slough.

The South Conversion Area, funded with state bonds, is also adjacent to the park's Periphery Trail. The south conversion area is approximately 35 feet in width and located approximately 170 feet south of the Winters House. The area provides pedestrian access into the park and a driveway that provides vehicular access to the blueberry farm. A portion of the Heritage Loop Trail, a compacted natural trail to the Winters House, and an A-frame residence are located within the conversion area. The undeveloped area consists of dense vegetation.

The conversion areas include both permanent acquisition and temporary construction easements. The temporary easements extend beyond the 180-day allowable timeframe,² thereby creating a conversion.

Each temporary construction easement area will be revegetated and landscaped when light rail construction is completed.

In addition to providing six acres of replacement property, the City of Bellevue's mitigation includes constructing a trail on the replacement property to link with the Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center and an interior park trail; construction of a boardwalk trail to replace a natural surfaced trail; and widening the Periphery Loop Trail and installing landscaped strips.

Additional maps, visuals of the conversions areas, and impacts of the light rail system on the conversion areas may be found in Attachment A, pages 3-15 through 3-27.

Responses to the Board's Questions

Responses to the board's questions regarding the alternatives considered and the impacts of Segment B of the East Link light rail on Mercer Slough Nature Park were provided by the City of Bellevue and Sound Transit (see Attachment A).

References to respective page numbers for additional information on each topic are provided as follows.

Question: Were practical alternatives, including alternatives B7 and B7R, a tunnel, and avoidance, evaluated and rejected for sound reasons?

Answer: The City of Bellevue participated in the alternatives analysis for the East Link Extension light rail project which was conducted by Sound Transit in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

² LWCF and RCFB policy limits temporary non-conforming uses of funded sites to 180 days; exceeding 180 days creates a conversion (Manual 7: Long-term Obligations).

Sound Transit evaluated 8 alternatives for Segment B during the scoping phase, 5 alternatives during the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, and 6 alternatives during the Final EIS process.

Avoidance alternatives considered included:

- Locating the light rail within I-90,
- Locating the light rail west of the park through the Enatai residential neighborhood, and
- Locating the light rail on Bellevue Way SE.

The City of Bellevue concurred with the analysis conducted under Section 4(f) of the National Transportation Act on the use of publicly-owned parks, recreation areas, or wildlife and waterfowl refuges for federal transportation projects. (Attachment E).

A timeline of the alternatives considered in the environmental impact statement process may be found in Attachment A, page 2-4. Details and reasons for rejecting the alternatives B7 and B7R and a tunnel may be found on page 3-1 and for the avoidance alternatives on page 3-4. Information on the selected alternative, B2M, may be found on page 1-6.

Question: What were the legal challenges and outcomes?

Answer: The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was challenged under the State Environmental Policy Act and was upheld in King County Superior Court. The Final EIS was challenged under the National Environmental Policy Act and was upheld in the Western District of Washington, United States District Court. The Shoreline Substantial Development permit issued by the City of Bellevue and the Shoreline Variance permit issued by the Washington State Department of Ecology have been appealed to the Washington State Shorelines Hearing Board.

A timeline of the East Link light rail project scoping and environmental review, including the legal challenges to the project, may be found in Attachment A, page 2-3. Information on the legal challenges may be found in Attachment A, pages 3-5 to 3-6.

Question: What are the interim and long-term changes in use of the park?

Answer: Information on the pre-construction, construction, and post-construction closures and changes to access to the park and park facilities may be found in Attachment A, pages 3-7.

Question: What are the impacts of the light rail project to public access to the park and its facilities?

Answer: There are currently 14 access points to the park. Twelve access points are for pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicle parking and 2 access points are for watercraft access only.

A description and map of park access currently, during construction, and following construction may be found in Attachment A, pages 3-8 through 3-10.

Question: What are the hydrologic impacts of the light rail project?

Answer: An explanation of the trench design, and groundwater and stormwater flow into the slough may be found in Attachment A, page 3-11.

Question: What are the vegetation and wetlands impacts of the light rail project?

Answer: There are 148 trees that will be removed in the conversion areas and 543 trees will be removed in other areas of the park. Forty-three trees will be planted in the conversion areas and 2,830 trees will be planted in other areas of the park.

Details on the trees that will be removed and added may be found in Attachment A, pages 3-11 through 3-12.

The total amount of wetlands and wetland buffers in the conversion areas that are impacted is 0.91 acres. A total of 4.29 acres of wetlands and wetland buffers will be impacted in other areas of the park.

Details on the impacts to wetlands, wetland buffers, and streams and mitigation may be found on pages 3-12 through 3-13

Question: What are the impacts to wildlife of the light rail project?

Answer: Information on the impacts to wildlife may be found in Attachment A, pages 3-13 through 3-14.

Question: What are the visual impacts of the light rail project?

Answer: Visual impacts to the conversion areas may be found in Attachment A, pages 3-19, 3-20, and 3-25 through 3-27. Visual impacts to other parts of the park may be found on pages 3-28 through 3-30.

Additional photos of the interior of the park may be found on pages 3-32 through 3-33.

Background on Funded Projects

The projects in question are Mercer Slough Phase 1 (RCO Project 73-026A) and Mercer Slough (RCO Project 78-513A).

Project Name:	Mercer Slough Phase 1	Project #:	73-026A
Grant Program:	Referendum 28 (bond funds) Land and Water Conservation Fund	Board funded date:	May 23, 1971
LWCF Amount	\$ 410,874.66	Original Purpose: This project acquired about 60 acres to preserve a natural peat bog ecosystem.	
Referendum 28 Amount	\$ 205,437.33		
Project Sponsor Match	\$205,437.33		
Total Amount:	\$ 821,749.32		

The City of Bellevue used the Mercer Slough Phase 1 grant in 1975 to acquire approximately 60 acres for a nature park. This park is now called Mercer Slough Nature Park.

Project Name:	Mercer Slough	Project #	78-513A
Grant Program:	Referendum 28 (bond funds)	Board funded date:	May 23, 1971
Referendum 28 Amount	\$ 206,000	Original Purpose: This project acquired about 24 acres.	
Project Sponsor Match	\$206,000		
Total Amount:	\$ 412,000		

State Parks used the Mercer Slough grant in 1981 to acquire approximately 24 acres to expand the Mercer Slough Nature Park.

The City of Bellevue and State Parks formed a partnership in the 1970's to maintain an ecological resource in an urban area. Mercer Slough Nature Park was created and the agencies established an inter-local agreement for the operation and maintenance of the park.

The City of Bellevue is the lead agency for the conversion approval process for these two projects. At the city's request, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission has approved the transfer of all of State Parks' interests in Mercer Slough to the City of Bellevue. Final property transfer negotiations are underway.

Since the original grants to acquire property, RCO has made the following investment at the park:

- Mercer Slough Habitat, #91-225D, WWRP-UW, which constructed a trail bridge and trail and enhanced habitat by creating a pond and adding landscaping.

The Conversion

The conversion at Mercer Slough Nature Park is caused by the expansion of Sound Transit Light Rail system from downtown Seattle to Redmond. A segment of the 18-mile East Link project will impact two areas on the western boundary of the park, creating a conversion (Attachment B).

The light rail system will enter the park at its southwestern edge, near I-90, on an elevated structure to a station located at the existing South Bellevue Park and Ride. From the station, the rail proceeds north along western edge of the park, descending from elevated piers to a retained cut profile below the grade of Bellevue Way SE. The retained cut includes a lidded trench section in front of the Winters House. The Winters House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its Spanish Eclectic style and its link with early agricultural activities in the area.

The light rail system will impact the board-funded sites in two separate locations on Bellevue Way SE, creating a conversion of 1.06 acres (Attachment B). The conversion areas include both permanent acquisition and temporary construction easements. The temporary easements extend beyond the 180-day allowable timeframe,³ thereby creating a conversion.

The remainder of the light rail system within the park area, approximately 2,410 linear feet, lies outside of RCO project boundaries.

Light rail construction is expected to begin in 2015 and be completed in 2019. The East Link light rail is anticipated to open in 2023.

³ LWCF and RCFB policy limits temporary non-conforming uses of funded sites to 180 days; exceeding 180 days creates a conversion. (Manual #7: Long-term Obligations)

Details of Proposed Replacement Property

Location

The proposed replacement property includes 6 acres located at 1865 118th Avenue SE, Bellevue. It is bordered by the city street to the east and Mercer Slough Nature Park to the north, south, and west.

The property consists of two parcels totaling 6.16 acres, however, the city is reserving 0.16 acres on the property's eastern edge adjacent to the city street as future right-of-way. (Attachments C).

Property Characteristics

The proposed replacement property is rectangular-shaped and contains significant wetlands on the westernmost parcel that borders Mercer Slough. It is unimproved and covered with vegetation. The city will preserve it as open space and wetland habitat that will provide a connection between previously separated parts of the park.

Planned Development

The city plans to construct a trail on the proposed replacement property that will link to the Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center Trail and to the Bellefields Loop Trail (Attachment D). The trail will provide opportunities for hiking, wildlife watching, and environmental education activities. Trail construction is expected to begin sometime this year. In addition, the city plans to construct a boardwalk trail to replace a natural surfaced trail and to widen the Periphery Loop Trail and install landscaped strips where sidewalk width allows.

Analysis

As described previously, when reviewing conversion requests, the board considers the following factors, in addition to the scope of the original grant and the proposed substitution of land or facilities.⁴

- All practical alternatives to the conversion have been evaluated and rejected on a sound basis.
- The fair market value of the converted property has been established and the proposed replacement property is of at least equal fair market value.
- Justification exists to show that the replacement property has at least reasonably equivalent utility and location.
- The public has opportunities for participation in the process.

Evaluation of Practical Alternatives

Sound Transit began formal planning for the East Link project in 2006 to expand light rail service from Seattle to Bellevue and Redmond. The East Link Extension was evaluated through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review process. The City of Bellevue and Sound Transit executed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2011 which helped facilitate a formal collaborative design process.

As stated earlier, Sound Transit evaluated 8 alternatives for Segment B during the scoping phase, 5 alternatives during the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, and 6 alternatives during the

⁴ Manual #7: *Long-term Obligations*

Final EIS process. Three alternatives that would avoid Mercer Slough Nature Park were considered and rejected in the analysis.

The proposed replacement property was selected by the City of Bellevue based on the following factors:

- The property is an inholding within the overall park boundaries and provides a connection to two parts of the park that have been bisected.
- It provides for additional access to the park from its eastern edge.
- The replacement property is consistent with state and local plans.

Evaluation of Fair Market Value

The conversion areas and replacement property have been appraised for fee title interests with market value dates that meet board policy.

	Conversion Property	Replacement Property	Difference
Market Value	\$495,000	\$633,120	+\$138,120
Acres	1.06 Acres	6 Acres	+4.94 Acres

Evaluation of Reasonably Equivalent Location

The replacement property is located within the overall park boundary in the northeastern part of Mercer Slough Nature Park.

Evaluation of Reasonably Equivalent Utility

The replacement property has similar characteristics as much of the slough, the nature park, and of the conversion areas. It is undeveloped open space consisting of wetlands, wetland buffers, and natural vegetation. The replacement parcel will provide similar utility with wetland habitat that attracts migratory birds and other wildlife and opportunities for hiking, wildlife watching and environmental education with the planned trail development. The city plans to construct a trail on the replacement property in 2015.

LWCF policy allows for wetland areas to be considered as reasonably equivalent utility if wetlands are identified in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The state's adopted plan identifies wetlands as important for wildlife and recreation.

Evaluation of Public Participation

Sound Transit is the lead agency for public participation in the East Link project National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review process. The transit agency held numerous open houses, hearings, and workshops to gather public comment. The City of Bellevue also participated in the public outreach efforts.

The City of Bellevue published public notice on the conversion and proposed replacement property as required by board policy. A notice was published in the Bellevue Reporter newspaper. In addition, the city sent a notice via email to subscribers to the Bellevue Parks and Community Services Board on August 20, 2014, and posted the notice on the city's webpage for the Parks and Community Services Board. A notice was placed at the park's trailhead kiosks and at the Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center Visitor's Center. The Parks and Community Services Board held a public meeting on September 9, 2014.

Other Basic Requirements Met

➤ Same Project Sponsor

The replacement property will be administered by the same project sponsor (City of Bellevue).

➤ Satisfy Needs in Adopted Plan

The replacement property satisfies the needs as described in the City of Bellevue Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan by acquiring available land adjacent to existing community parks, specifically citing Mercer Slough Nature Park, and helping to expand those parks' capacity for passive recreation, wetland stewardship, preservation of wildlife habitat, and education.

➤ Eligible in the Funding Program

The replacement property meets eligibility requirements and was acquired under a state and federal waiver of retroactivity for the purpose of satisfying the conversion.

Next Steps

If the board chooses to recommend approval of the conversion, RCO staff will prepare the required federal documentation and transmit that recommendation to the National Park Service. Pending NPS approval, staff will execute all necessary amendments to the project agreement, as directed.

In addition, if the board chooses to approve the state-funded conversion, staff will execute all necessary amendments to the project agreement, as directed.

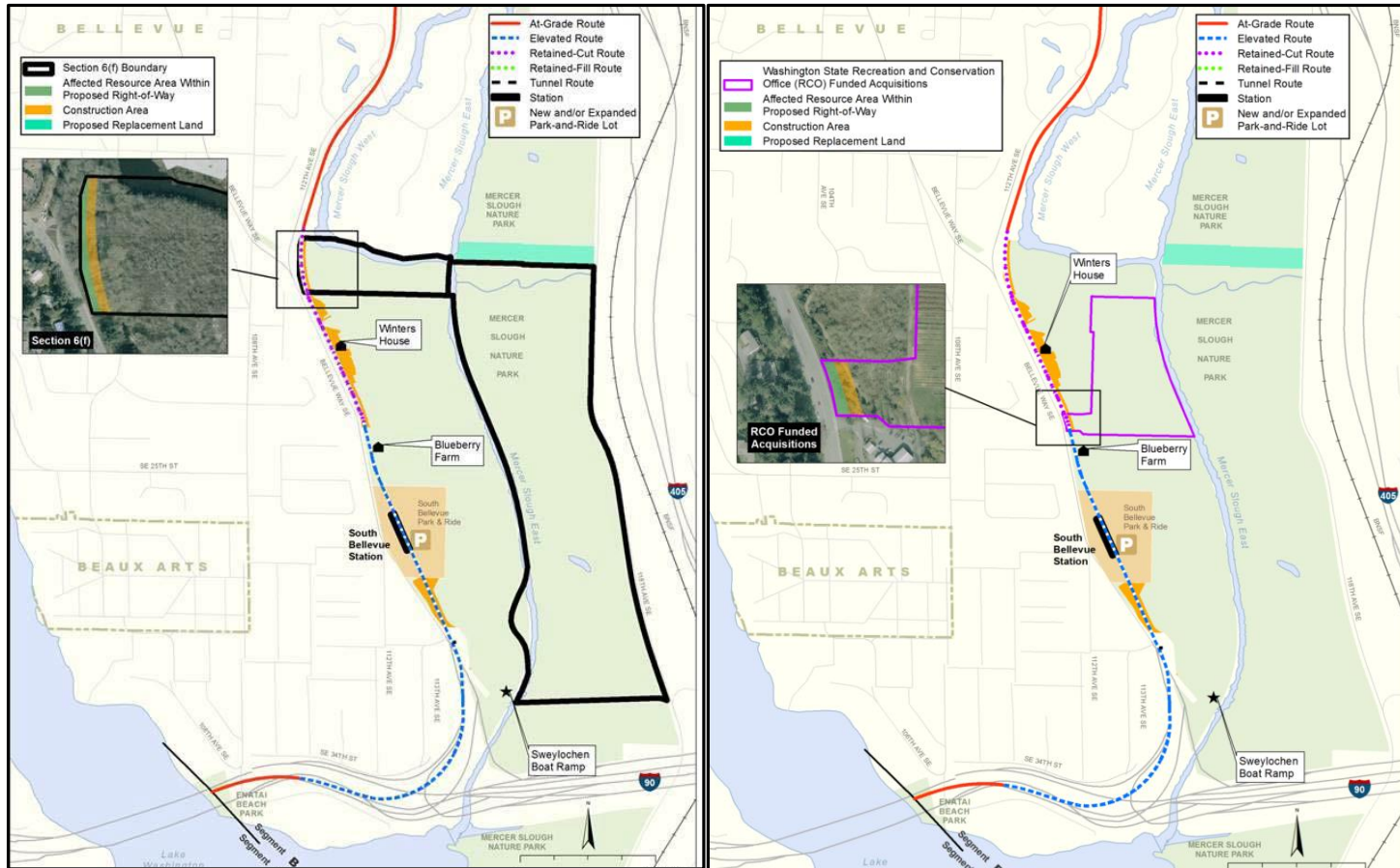
Attachments

- A. Supplemental Information for the Conversion Request for Mercer Slough Nature Park
- B. Sound Transit East Link Route Map along West Edge of Mercer Slough Nature Park; Detail Map of Conversion Areas
- C. Map of Proposed Replacement Property
- D. Visual of Planned Trail on Proposed Replacement Property
- E. City of Bellevue Concurrence with Sound Transit 4(f) Evaluation (23 CFR 774.111, Section 4(f))
- F. Resolution 2015-04

Sound Transit East Link Route Map along West Edge of Mercer Slough Nature Park; Detail Location Map of Conversion Areas

North Conversion Area

South Conversion Area



Map of Proposed Replacement Property



Proposed Replacement Property

Visual of Planned Trail on Proposed Replacement Property



**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution 2015-04
Approving Conversion for Mercer Slough Nature Park
(RCO Projects #73-026 and 78-513)**

WHEREAS, the City of Bellevue and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission used state bond funds and a grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to acquire land to expand the Mercer Slough Nature Park; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission is in the process of transferring their grant interests to the City of Bellevue,

WHEREAS, the construction of Sound Transit’s East Link Light Rail project will convert of a portion of the property; and

WHEREAS, as a result of this conversion, a portion of the property no longer satisfies the conditions of the RCO grant; and

WHEREAS, the city is asking for Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) approval to replace the converted property with property purchased under a waiver of retroactivity; and

WHEREAS, the proposed replacement property is in close proximity to the conversion sites, has an appraised value that is greater than the conversion site, and has greater acreage than the conversion sites; and

WHEREAS, the site will provide opportunities that closely match those displaced by the conversion, will consolidate public ownership in the park’s overall boundary, and meets needs that have been identified in the city’s comprehensive plan as acquiring land adjacent to existing community parks, expanding wetland preservation of wildlife habitat, thereby supporting the board’s goals to provide funding for projects that result in public outdoor recreation purposes; and

WHEREAS, the sponsor sought public comment on the conversion and discussed it during an open public meeting, thereby supporting the board’s strategy to regularly seek public feedback in policy and funding decisions;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves the conversion request and the proposed replacement site for RCO Projects #73-026 and 78-513 as presented to the board in April 2015 and set forth in the board memo prepared for that meeting; and

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the board hereby authorizes the RCO director to give interim approval for the property acquired with LWCF funds and forward the conversion to the National Park Service (NPS) for final approval.

Resolution moved by: _____

Resolution seconded by: _____

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: _____

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARIZED AGENDA & ACTIONS
April 8-9, 2015

Agenda Items

Item	Formal Action	Board Request for Follow-up
1. Consent Calendar A. Approve Board Meeting Minutes – October 29-30, 2014 B. Approve Time Extensions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11-1173D, USFS, Franklin Falls Trail Renovations, Phase 2 • 11-1144D, Whatcom County, Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Replacement 2011 • 10-1383D, State Parks, Lake Sammamish Beach Renovation and Boardwalk • 10-1453R, DNR, Camas Meadows Rare Plant Habitat Restoration • 10-1660D, City of Sumner, Trail Segments #4 and #5 • 10-1458, DNR, Dabob Bay Natural Area 2010 • 10-1629, WDFW, Sinlahekin Ecosystem Restoration, Phase 2 C. Recognition of Service for Don Hoch	Resolution 2015-01 Decision: APPROVED	No follow up action requested.
2. Recap of the Retreat and Outcomes to be Incorporated into the Biennial Work plan	Briefing	Staff will follow the scoping recommendations as set forth by the board and prepare a briefing for the June meeting.
3. Director's Report A. Director's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel Meeting for September • Survey Results B. Policy Report and Legislative Update C. Grant Management Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Featured Projects D. Performance Report (written only) E. Fiscal Report (written only)	Briefing Briefing Briefing	No follow up action requested. No follow up action requested. No follow up action requested.
4. State Agency Partner Reports	Briefing	No follow up action requested.

Item	Formal Action	Board Request for Follow-up
5. Overview of the Outdoor Recreation Economic Study	Briefing	Staff will provide the report and the PowerPoint presentation to board members following the meeting.
6. Draft Criteria for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Farmland Preservation Program	Briefing	Staff will return in June and present a refined criteria briefing.
7. Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Update - Phase III Overview	Briefing	No follow up action requested. A public hearing will be held in June to receive comment on the proposed changes.
8. Final Youth Athletic Facility Program Policies and Evaluation Criteria	Decision: Amended Resolution 2015-02 APPROVED	Revisit the match waiver requirement for the 2016 grant round in the next biennium.
9. Final Boating Grant Programs Plan	Decision: Resolution 2015-03 APPROVED	Staff will prepare a finalized version to be published online.
10. Conversion Request: City of Bellevue, Mercer Slough	Decision: Resolution 2015-04 APPROVED	No follow up requested.

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD RETREAT NOTES

Date: April 8, 2015

Place: Olympia, WA

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Members Present:

Harriet Spanel	Chair, Bellingham	Jed Herman	Designee, Department of Natural Resources
Betsy Bloomfield	Yakima	Peter Herzog	Designee, State Parks & Recreation Commission
Mike Deller	Mukilteo	Joe Stohr	Designee, Department of Fish & Wildlife
Pete Mayer	Renton		
Ted Willhite	Seattle		

Summary

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) met on April 8, 2015 in a retreat/workshop format, facilitated by Neil Aaland. The purpose was to spend some time reviewing its mission, strategic plan, performance measures, and potential items for the 2015-2017 work plan. The following summarizes the key points discussed at the retreat and some proposed work to be done as a result.

Mr. Aaland suggested directing staff to review this summary and come back at the next board meeting with proposed changes to appropriate documents.

Opening Roundtable: What's on your Mind?

This agenda topic was intended to allow participants to express any issues or concerns they had outside of the structured agenda. It was not intended to result in any items for the annual work plan, but as a way to get dialogue started.

Statutory Mission

The mission statement from RCW 79A.25.005 (1) was reviewed and discussed. Key discussion points included:

1. Statutory mission statement has a recreation and open space focus
2. Mission references a "unified statewide strategy"; what is this?
 - a. Roll up relevant plans from other agencies, including the board's various plans
 - b. Quality of life and healthy communities as a focus
 - c. Be more explicit in strategies – how to define and measure quality of life and healthy communities
3. Be more strategic – the current SCORP plan doesn't adequately set the bar
4. Keep in mind that government boards are limited in what they can do
5. Is the Board's role broader than implement grant programs?
6. Legislature provides funding and the board facilitates or directs how it's spent

What should the Board consider?

1. *The board and staff should do further work regarding how to fulfill the statutory “unified statewide strategy.” This should include:*
 - a. *Reviewing relevant plans from partner agencies and referencing them*
 - b. *RCO plans including SCORP, Trails plan, NOVA Plan, Boating Plan*
 - c. *Potential to include a plan for athletic facilities*
2. *Consider ways for better civic engagement (e.g. helping communities engage their constituents) and look for modern/social media/electronic town halls as means to achieve*

Review of the 2012 Strategic Plan

Key discussion points included:

1. It is useful – crisp, concise
2. Staff refers to it in communications with the board
3. Need to address issue of “quality of life” and how to respond to emerging trends
4. How should the board encourage meaningful civic engagement
5. Not necessary to have major changes to strategic plan
6. Should evaluate how to communicate the true costs of board’s investments; include volunteer time, broader match leveraged, on-going costs of operations and maintenance (these are not reflected in board’s current process)

What should the Board consider?

1. *The board should think about how to address quality of life and responding to emerging trends. Discussion first centered on developing a new principle #6, but these may already be included in principles 1 and 2.*
2. *Consider how to reflect other investments or costs leveraged by the board’s investments. For example, volunteer time is not currently captured as part of the true benefit of a project. Volunteer time has been part of project work since the beginning, but may not be adequately accounted for. This tells a story about the benefit of project and the value of volunteer time. Also discussed how to capture future costs of operating and maintaining projects into the future.*

Agency Performance Measures

Key discussion points included:

1. The current monthly report includes performance measures that are agency-specific – necessary, but not sufficient – the board needs more. The measures are useful but operational metrics, not strategic metrics.
2. What do you need to know as board members?
 - a. Is the funding going to the right places?
 - b. Some uses, such as trails, span several categories, want to understand the total picture for these uses – sort by total, not funding source
 - c. Compile historic data and compare to a recent span of time – last two years, or last five years. Start with the charts recently distributed by the director (labeled cheat sheet).
3. Measure warrants continued discussion by the board but don’t change very often
4. Think about measures that align with a “unified statewide strategy”

What should the Board consider?

1. *Direct staff to research additional performance measures that reflect item 2 above.*

2. *Direct staff to look at why the agency hasn't measured the items adopted on page 4 of strategic plan, and develop recommendations to do so.*
3. *Have further discussion about measures that would better align with a unified statewide strategy.*

2015-2017 Work Plan

The board reviewed the status of the 2013-2015 work plan and ideas generated by staff (and from the surveys) for consideration to be included in a 2015-2017 work plan.

Key discussion points included:

1. The remaining items from 2014-2015 should be rolled over into the new work plan.
2. Consider including a placeholder for Governor or Legislative directives, including the follow up to the Joint Legislative and Audit Review Committee (JLARC) economic report.
3. Of the policy issues on the list, two were discussed at length. 1) Need to think about the water rights issue on funded acquisitions. This could be a useful policy but needs to be scoped and refined (and may result in including language in the contract); 2) the climate change issue needs to be carefully scoped and perhaps included as part of the sustainability policy and/or as a pilot effort.
4. Three issues not on the work plan list were added by the board for further consideration: 1) Issue of landowner liability coverage related to trails legislation discussed last year; 2) How to structure or develop the "unified statewide strategy"; and 3) a strategic plan for the Youth Athletic Facilities program, similar to the plan that is derived from SCORP.

What should the Board consider?

1. *The board asked staff to refine and categorize the list of proposed ideas, and come back with a proposed work plan at the next board meeting in June. The categorization includes looking at what are technical changes, what are major policy changes, and what are minor policy changes. The board noted that the 3-tiered approach has been helpful. Also, identify which issues are necessary for the 2016 grant round and which are independent of the grant application timeline.*
 - a. *Staff should consider the additional discussion points as they refine this list*
2. *Staff should update the board on the current communications plan and its status.*

Closing

The workshop adjourned for the day at 4:30.

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARY MINUTES

Date: April 9, 2015

Place: Olympia, WA

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Members Present:

Harriet Spanel	Chair, Bellingham	Jed Herman	Designee, Department of Natural Resources
Betsy Bloomfield	Yakima	Peter Herzog	Designee, State Parks & Recreation Commission
Mike Deller	Mukilteo	Joe Stohr	Designee, Department of Fish & Wildlife
Pete Mayer	Renton		
Ted Willhite	Seattle		

It is intended that this summary be used with the materials provided in advance of the meeting. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) retains a recording* as the formal record of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) meeting.

**The recording is intermittent due to technical difficulties from the beginning of the meeting through morning break.*

Call to Order

Chair Spanel called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Cindy Gower called roll, and a quorum was determined.

Item 1: Consent Calendar

The board reviewed Resolution #2015-01 Consent Calendar, which included the following:

- A. Approve Board Meeting Minutes – October 29-30, 2014
- B. Approve Time Extensions
 - [11-1173D](#), USFS, Franklin Falls Trail Renovations, Phase 2
 - [11-1144D](#), Whatcom County, Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Replacement 2011
 - [10-1383D](#), State Parks, Lake Sammamish Beach Renovation and Boardwalk
 - [10-1453R](#), DNR, Camas Meadows Rare Plant Habitat Restoration
 - [10-1660D](#), City of Sumner, Trail Segments #4 and #5
 - [10-1458](#), DNR, Dabob Bay Natural Area 2010
 - [10-1629](#), WDFW, Sinlahekin Ecosystem Restoration, Phase 2
- C. Recognition of Service for Don Hoch from State Parks and Recreation Commission for his service to the board.

Resolution 2015-01

Moved by: Member Mike Deller

Seconded by: Member Peter Mayer

Resolution: APPROVED

Item 2: Recap of the Retreat and Outcomes to be Incorporated into the Biennial Work Plan (As Possible)

Neil Aaland provided a summary of the retreat held April 8, 2015, to review the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) Strategic Plan. The four main workshop discussions revolved around the board's statutory mission, review of the board's strategic plan and direction, key agency performance measures, and the 2015-17 agency work plan. (Please refer to the retreat notes above for details.)

Member Willhite thanked Mr. Aaland for his summary.

Member Mayer noted that at yesterday's retreat, during the discussion of the 2015-17 policy work plan, the board also identified the need for a strategic plan for the Youth Athletic Facilities program. In the retreat summary provided by Mr. Aaland, the section notes for the 2015-17 work plan reflect two items not included in the original policy work plan that were added by the board (bullet four of the list); Chair Spanel recommended adding the YAF plan here to total three items. The board agreed to amend the summary to add this item.

Item 3: Director's Report

Director's Report: Director Cottingham announced that the travel meeting for September 16-17, 2015 will be held in Spokane. The board will tour several funded sites and hold a business meeting on the second day.

Director Cottingham briefly highlighted several agency news items.

- A new brochure, [We'll Go Far Outside](#), was released in January with the purpose of promoting the benefits of outdoor recreation in Washington.
- RCO recently released the greatly anticipated [e-billing system](#). Ms. Cottingham acknowledged the leadership of Mark Jarasitis, RCO Chief Financial Officer, and staff dedication that contributed to the successful development of the e-billing process.
- RCO signed an agreement with archeologists at the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to review projects for possible cultural resources impacts, potentially saving our grant recipients time and money.
- The State Auditor completed an accountability audit of RCO that focused on agency accounting functions; RCO had no findings in this audit.

Finally, Director Cottingham shared information about the study of public recreation and habitat lands completed by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC). RCO and other natural resource agencies provided written responses to the draft report, including a request for funding to research and plan a multi-agency data system (recommended by JLARC). The next portion of the JLARC report is due in April and will focus on how public lands impact respective counties' economic vitality.

Policy, Legislative, and Budget Updates: Wendy Brown provided an update of the current legislative session. Ms. Brown provided an update on the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) program administration bill, which has been slightly amended by the Senate and is still alive and moving. Other bills of interest include Senate Bill (SB) 5843, which creates a senior policy advisor on outdoor recreation in the Governor's Office and funds \$1M for the *No Child Left Inside* initiative and is progressing through smoothly. HB 1738, SB 5987, refunds a portion of the gas tax to several grant category accounts, including NOVA, BFP, and boating grant programs.

Ms. Brown shared information about the Senate's budget proposal released yesterday and responded to questions from the board regarding RCO grant program impacts. Concerns arose around the WWRP bill and issues around land stewardship.

Survey Results: Scott Robinson, Deputy Director, provided an overview of the results from three surveys conducted in 2014. One survey collected feedback from grant sponsors, one from RCO grant management staff; a third survey collected feedback from board members. Survey topics included issues around the application and evaluation processes, grant manager satisfaction, and board member needs.

Mr. Robinson concluded by sharing the action items that staff will be implementing as a result of the surveys. Action items from the 2014 grant round surveys included improvements to the PRISM database, releasing grant manuals earlier in the application process, and improving the orientation process and diversity of the advisory committee. Action items from the board survey included holding a retreat to focus on the board's strategic plan and performance measures, develop better ways to link meeting topics to the strategic plan, and additional time for board discussion and public comment in meeting agendas (this occurred at yesterday's retreat session).

Grant Management Report: Marguerite Austin, Recreation and Conservation Section Manager, provided a status update on recent grant management activities. Grant management staff are attending the International Trails Symposium, preparing the final Youth and Athletic Facilities (YAF) program materials, and are testing new tools to support applicants through the grant application process.

Ms. Austin commended Laura Moxham, Outdoor Grant Manager, for her outstanding work with Boating Infrastructure Grant applicants to ensure applications were timely; out of the \$12 million awarded nationwide, Washington applicants received nearly \$1.4 million in grants for this program.

Karl Jacobs, Outdoor Grants Manager, presented information about two featured projects. The City of Bremerton, Evergreen Rotary Park Inclusive Playground (RCO Project #[12-1464D](#)), was funded in the WWRP Local Parks category. The City wanted to replace the aging play equipment at Evergreen Park with new, inclusive, fully accessible play structures. This was the #1 ranked Local Parks project in 2013.

The City of Sumner, Sumner Link Trail (RCO Projects #[08-1262D](#) and #[10-1660D](#)), was funded with two grants in the WWRP Trails category to construct missing trail segments that would link significant gaps in the 5-mile trail, which also connects to a 30-mile trail network.

Director Cottingham invited Rory Calhoun, Outdoor Grant Manager, to speak to the board regarding accessibility issues within the City of Bremerton's project. Mr. Calhoun also shared information about common accessibility issues and constraints, offering potential solutions, and highlighting this critical participation component.

Item 4: State Agency Partner Reports

Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR): Member Herman provided an update for DNR, including a brief legislative summary of bills of interest. The agency submitted four major proposals and is currently awaiting the negotiation process. Member Herman described a project in which Oso landslide memorial event data may help local and state governments project natural hazard sites and funding for prevention research. He concluded by sharing a collaborative effort carried out in coordination with State Parks regarding the use of trails in a WWRP project. The agencies meet on Discover Pass issues and collaborate to solve delivery and implementation issues, including fee generation issues that have come

up in the Legislature. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and DNR completed wildlife recreations plan that covered over a million acres north of Ellensburg in Chelan County.

Washington State Parks: Member Herzog shared information about the budget proposals as they affect State Parks, summarizing the capital and operating budget requests as they compared to the Governor's, House, and Senate proposals. Discover Pass revenues continue to rise, a positive upturn in budget projections, and further outreach is planned. Several ribbon-cutting opportunities are coming up this summer and board members are invited to attend.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW): Member Stohr briefed the board on the WDFW budget, providing a handout of the main budget summaries. He discussed challenges, including funding options that may cover the budget shortfall: fee packages that address gaps with increases in fishing and hunting licenses, increasing general fund state spending authority, and reducing and eliminating programs and services. WDFW is working with stakeholder groups and media to garner awareness and support in solving these challenges.

**The meeting recording issues were resolved at this point in the agenda.*

General Public Comment

Vlad Gutman, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition (WWRC), came to discuss the WWRP potential funding and the legislatively imposed alterations that have affected the program. He provided an overview of the positive aspects of the budget, and concerns regarding how funding was distributed and prioritized across categories. Some categories did not receive funding, and some projects were dropped. WWRC views the actions of the Legislature as a trend that will continue and has the potential to undermine the WWRP program. Projects that remain unfunded will be in jeopardy. Mr. Gutman encouraged that discussions be transparent. After the session ends, the WWRC intends to thoroughly review the WWRP legislation and invites the board and other statewide stakeholders to join this effort.

Member Willhite asked about potential budget cut effects in the program on rural communities, specifically economic impacts. Mr. Gutman noted that the outdoor recreation economic study helped to support the case that the work in these areas have a profound impact on more rural counties and areas.

Karen Daubert, Washington Trails Association, Kathryn Hollis, The Mountaineers, and Glenn Glover, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, came to speak regarding funding for soft-surface trails (also known as dirt trails). They requested that the board review the submitted analysis to assess the funding allocations in this category, noting that even small amounts can significantly impact development. Additionally, they stated that restoring balance in funding will more closely align with the original intent of the WWRP. Local community access and use are highly referenced with this request, driving the need for greater funding. The issue was brought last year, but too late to adjust the category criteria. Their letter of support, analysis, and fact sheet are included in the board materials.

Member Mayer commended the work of Ms. Daubert in compiling the materials that frame the issue. The analysis clearly demonstrates the challenges and issues.

Director Cottingham noted that the policy priorities reviewed at yesterday's retreat still include the trails category issues.

Member Deller requested information about how a more balanced split between rough and soft surface trails would be established. The team responded by sharing project highlights that demonstrate how funding could significantly impact development in positive ways.

Member Willhite thanked the team for joining the meeting today and commended the work of their respective organizations. In regards to the letter, Member Willhite applauded the manner in which the issues were clarified and brought to light in the analysis. Soft-trails are largely supported by volunteer hours and this should be noted.

Break 10:52 – 11:08 a.m.

Board Business: Decisions

Item 8: Youth Athletic Facilities Program (YAF) – Part 1

**This item presented out of order due to time. The second half of the briefing was resumed after Item 5.*

Leslie Connelly, RCO's Natural Resource Policy Specialist, presented an overview of the proposed 2016 Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) policies, evaluation criteria, and program performance measures. During last year's budget request formulation, the board approved a total \$12M ask for funding. She provided an update on the public comment received to date and changes made to the grant criteria in response to the comments. In addition, staff added policies from existing board policies from other programs and included them in the YAF program. Staff also clarified the program purpose, types of eligible and in-eligibility activities, inbound activity requirements, the scope of a project, compliance and evaluation criteria.

An overview of the proposed policy changes, proposed evaluation criteria, and performance measures are included in the board materials (Item 8). Ms. Connelly highlighted a special policy on matching share, unique to this grant program. She requested direction from the board on pursuing one of two options that affect projects located in disadvantaged communities.

Ms. Connelly drew the board's attention to item 5 on the policy list in Attachment B, which gives advantage to communities hit by a natural disaster or communities that have 80% or more of students enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program. Ms. Connelly presented two options to the RCFB for consideration: a special match policy for disadvantaged communities in which no match or 25% match would be required rather than the standard 50% match.

Member Bloomfield offered a third option for the match that involved a staggered calculation. Member Deller asked for more information about the eligibility for match reduction as it relates to natural disasters. Ms. Connelly noted that eligibility is addressed in the policy criteria and explained how eligibility is determined in these cases. The policy states that if a disaster occurs at any time during the implementation of a project, the applicant sponsor may come back to the board and request to retroactively waive or reduce the match.

Public Comment:

Doug Levy and John Keates, Washington Recreation and Parks Association (WRPA), provided an update on the current legislative actions that affect their interests. Mr. Levy expressed his appreciation that the public comments submitted prior to the meeting were included in the board materials. He encouraged support for this program, noting that having more data and detailed metrics to report will fuel funding. He mentioned the reduced match options and disaster declarations, stating that feedback received demonstrates significant interest but expressed support for requiring some level of match from

applicants. While Mr. Levy agreed with the goal of improving existing facilities, he expressed the value in acquiring and creating new facilities. He asked for clarification on the requirement to provide a legal opinion for first time applicants.

Mr. Keates expressed appreciation that this program is being revitalized. He encouraged the board to consider the unique local community attributes that may affect eligibility or access. A potential provision for these communities is suggested. He shared positive feedback on the new criteria added, such as eligibility and match requirements. For the latter, he asked that the eligibility criteria be more open to a diverse group of applicants. He noted concern for the 80% threshold of students enrolled in free or reduced lunch programs, and asked for the percent threshold to be lowered .

Member Willhite asked about the match requirements for a disaster community versus a community with high participation in a free/reduced lunch program, offering potential different calculation options for match in either case. Mr. Levy agreed, stating that waiving match for communities in disaster areas is concerning. He leaned towards supporting this group, although it is a difficult decision.

Director Cottingham replied to the question regarding legal opinion, stating that it is a one-time, all-inclusive requirement for any applicant in all grant programs. It is a statement of eligibility.

Member Mayer spoke to the disaster area support, advocating for a narrow window.

Member Willhite asked whether a distinction can be made between disadvantaged communities affected by natural disasters versus economic needs.

Board Business: Briefings

Item 5: Overview of the Outdoor Recreation Economic Study

**The board chose to hear this presentation prior to a decision on Item 8 YAF due to staff time conflicts.*

Wendy Brown, Policy Director and Legislative Liaison, advised RCO conducted an analysis of the contribution of outdoor recreation to the economy of Washington State. The statistics covered overall outdoor recreation expenditures, the contributions to the Washington State economy, out-of-state tourism contributions, taxes generated, and valuation of ecosystem services. Outdoor recreation spending in Washington equates to roughly \$21.6 billion annually. The report demonstrates the relative public use (measured by day use) as compared to funding expended across various land types, including expenditures by land type and by legislative district.

One key finding from the report highlighted how expenditures and resulting contributions are shifted from urban to more rural areas, using outdoor recreation as a mechanism. Other findings show that in a national comparison of tourism spending by state, Washington State is unique in that it does not fund tourism. Typically, states agencies do not provide advertising and marketing for tourism; however, some agencies may use other funding sources to support counties.

Director Cottingham commended the work of Ms. Brown in developing this report and sharing it with stakeholders and the public.

Member Willhite asked whether the report considers data on volunteer hours. As it does not, he recommended that tracking this data be somehow accomplished and incorporated in future studies. He

also asked whether the tax revenues correlate with rural county expenditures in recreation. Ms. Brown noted that the study does not address this level of data.

Ms. Brown noted that there are efforts to share this broadly with legislators, and she is also conducting public outreach and awareness through presentations upon request.

Member Mayer and Member Willhite agreed and expanded upon the need to share this with legislators and potential funders.

Member Bloomfield noted that local and county commissions, and the Association of Counties are appropriate audiences for this information. Member Mayer noted that WRPA can help staff reach out to the Association of Counties.

Member Herzog stated that public health benefits are a critical missing piece and should be considered for future studies.

Board Business: Decisions

Item 8: Youth Athletic Facilities Program (YAF) – Part 2

**The board resumed discussion on this item after the presentation of Item 5.*

Member Mayer asked whether the choice between options, or choice to remove both options is possible. Director Cottingham noted that this issue is before the board by request of several key legislators, and may be part of the budget proviso. She recommended the board approve some type of match waiver or reduction to address requests these requests from legislators.

Member Mayer moved to adopt items 1-16 of the policies in Attachment 2 of the board memo, except for item 5. Under item 5, Member Mayer proposed requiring the same match as other applicants which is at least equal to the grant amount requested. He also proposed the board adopt option 1 of item 5 in Attachment B on the policy list which would allow match to be fully waived in communities affected by a federally declared natural disaster, allowing for further definition by staff to allow a longer recovery period.

The board discussed the motion and requested clarity on the definitions and distinctions between state and federal natural disaster declarations. Ms. Connelly stated that the state has many more disaster declarations than the federal government. The policy proposed uses the federal disaster declarations to limit the number of communities eligible for the match waiver or reduction. Ms. Connelly also stated that the length of time that a federal disaster can remain active is quite long as it can take a long time for a community to recover. Member Bloomfield stated the standard match requirements is equal to one to one.

Member Mayer amended his motion to reduce the match requirement to twenty-five percent for communities with 80% or more students enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program, which is option 1 of item 5 of the policy list in Attachment B. Member Willhite seconded the motion as moved by Member Mayer, with zero match waiver for disaster communities.

Director Cottingham spoke to the definition of economically disadvantaged communities, noting that the advice from other agencies was to remain objective. School lunch programs are one of the most objective evaluations of economically disadvantaged communities. Member Mayer is not certain that this captures

the true audience necessary for this grant category as the youth who participate in athletics may not be the same youth living around the funded facility.

For clarity, Ms. Connelly suggested addressing the match options for economically disadvantaged communities versus a community affected by a natural disaster separately.

Member Mayer withdrew his motion; Member Willhite withdrew the second.

Chair Spanel asked for a motion to address the options for communities affected by natural disaster separately. Member Willhite moved to address the options for communities affected by natural disaster separately, specifically moving to approve a zero match for federal declared disaster areas area which is identified as option 1 of item 5 in Attachment B of the policy list. Member Bloomfield seconded and the motion was approved.

The board discussed the option for reduced match for economically disadvantaged communities based on enrollment in free/reduced lunch programs. Member Willhite moved to approved an 80% enrollment in free/reduced lunch programs to qualify for reduced match in economically disadvantaged communities which is identified as option 2 of item 5 in Attachment B of the policy list. Member Deller seconded, adding a stipulation that the initial program would be considered a pilot and the data reviewed after two years. The motion was approved.

Member Mayer moved to approve a 50%, or one quarter matching share for disadvantaged communities based on enrollment in free/reduced lunch programs. Member Willhite seconded, adding a stipulation that the program would be re-evaluation after two years in the following biennium. The motion was approved.

The board clarified that from the options presented in the staff memo, and based on the motions made thus far, Option 1 under item 5 in Attachment B is most appropriate for the federal disaster areas and Option 2 under item 5 in Attachment B is most appropriate for the free/reduced lunch program enrollment qualifications for reduced match. The resolution was moved and seconded.

Resolution 2015-02

Moved by: Member Ted Willhite

Seconded by: Member Mike Deller

Resolution: APPROVED

Item 6: Draft Criteria for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Farmland Preservation Program

Leslie Connelly, Natural Resource Policy Specialist, began by acknowledging the contributions of Meg O'Leary, Policy Administrator, who assisted with this agenda topic. Ms. Connelly then summarized the background of the Farmland Preservation Account (FPA) criteria, provided a program overview including eligibility criteria and program funding history. She briefly addressed the reasons for revising the criteria, and then presented the proposed method to restructure the criteria.

Ms. Connelly highlighted discretionary criteria and other policy issues that may be adjusted, requesting direction from the board prior to initiating the public comment process.

Member Willhite supports the new criteria structure, and clarified the timeline for adoption of the new criteria and advocated for addressing the ability to allow for trails in the future on farms protected in the program.

Member Herman supports the new criteria structure, and provided some background on farmland definitions and process for interpreting criteria and program needs.

Member Bloomfield supports the new criteria structure, and noted there is a need to distinguish between rangelands and intensive agriculture. She agrees with the anti-prohibition move to allow for trails on protected farmland.

Member Deller supports the new criteria structure, and asked a question about public comment to the discretionary criteria. Ms. Connelly noted staff has not initiated public comment yet and that many of the changes were suggested during the evaluation process by the advisory committee and the applicants.

Member Stohr spoke to the criteria around zoning, as it seemed redundant.

Member Mayer supports the new criteria structure, and would like to see the discretionary criteria about local match, fit to local priorities, and the easement term length remain.

Chair Spanel supports the new criteria structure. Staff will return in June and present a refined set of evaluation criteria and draft policies before public comment.

Public Comment: No public comment was received.

Item 7: Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Update - Phase III Overview

Leslie Connelly, Natural Resource Policy Specialist, presented an overview of a third phase of proposed changes to Title 286 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). In terms of the timeline, should the changes be approved by the board, RCO staff will draft rule revisions for phase III and implement the proposed schedule in time for the board's June meeting.

Ms. Connelly presented two requests for direction: 1) should the board's goals in WAC be retained, amended, or removed? And 2) how should project area be defined?

Member Herman suggested including goal statements that address the strategic plan in line with the discussion held at yesterday's retreat.

Member Mayer supports a meaningful revision of the board's goals, but is not opposed to removing language that is not relevant or does not reflect the goals established at the retreat. Member Herman responded, stating that one benefit for keeping goals in WAC is that there is a public process to review the goals whereas there is typically not a public process when the board adopts goals in the strategic plan.

Member Willhite supports following through with a revision and incorporate the retreat goals to further align strategies.

Ms. Connelly presented the second issue for the board's consideration concerning "project area," including examples and potential definitions. She then presented options for defining this term and its purpose.

Member Mayer asked whether the definition would be all-category inclusive. Staff responded that yes, it will be inclusive. He furthered his question by comparing the definition with other geographic terms used in the grant process, e.g. geographic envelope, work site, etc. He would like to see the relationships and definitions of these terms in the next briefing before the board, in order to see pros/cons as it effects various categories or an across all categories.

Member Herzog reiterated the need to be agile and creative with the definition of project area, noting that some opportunities for use of state parks would be subject to the rules linked to the project area and are not specifically addressed under allowable uses. He cautioned against a narrow definition of project area that would hinder future options for state parks.

Member Deller asked for some analysis of the benefits or consequences of the definition as it is applied individually to projects or across categories.

Board Business: Requests for Decisions

Item 9: Boating Program

Leslie Connelly, Natural Resource Policy Specialist, presented a final draft of the Boating Grants Program plan for the board's consideration. Adoption of the plan would guide the board's grant funding in grant programs that provide funds for boating facilities starting in 2016.

Member Willhite expressed appreciation of the comprehensive inclusion of board comment in the revised plan.

Resolution 2015-03

Moved by: Member Ted Willhite

Seconded by: Member Mike Deller

Resolution: APPROVED

Public Comment:

No public comment was provided on this item.

Item 10: Conversion Request: City of Bellevue, Mercer Slough

Chair Spanel began by stating the authority of the board as it pertains to decisions on conversions. She outlined the logistics for providing comment: 1) If practical alternatives to this conversation have been evaluated on a sound basis, 2) if the proposed replacement property is of equal value and utility 3) if the public has had opportunity to comment on proposed conversion and replacement. She reminded staff and the audience that the board does not review the decision of the local government to allow a conversion at a park or funded site; land use decisions, such as a projects location, environmental impact, zoning or other effects on a community are outside the board's authority.

Member Herzog recused himself. Chair Spanel confirmed his recusal.

Myra Barker, Compliance Specialist, summarized the Mercer Slough conversion request brought before the board in April 2014 and October 2015, including required criteria and assessment of the proposal. The City of Bellevue and State Parks asked the board to approve a conversion of 1.06 acres at Mercer Slough Nature Park. The conversion is due to the Sound Transit East Link light rail project, which will impact a portion of the western edge of the park. Because one of the projects involved was partially funded by the federal LWCF, the role of the board is to decide whether to recommend approval of the conversion to the National Park Service (NPS).

Member Mayer clarified the required 180-day timeframe for conversions and potential exemptions. There are no exemptions per federal rule.

Sound Transit: James Irish, Deputy Director of Environmental Affairs and Sustainability Office, and Don Billen, East Link Deputy Project Director, presented an overview of their conversion request and the research behind their proposal. They provided a brief history of the project planning and design, legal processes and preparations, and partnerships with the City of Bellevue. In their presentation, they provided an animated video of the proposed conversion areas for the project, stating that all practical alternatives to the conversion have been evaluated, and rejected on a sound basis, through an eight year study and public processes. Mr. Irish summarized the history of the project, as well as the public comment process and feedback received during that process. The main controversy resides in the alignment of the rail along one side of Mercer Slough or the other side. Mr. Irish shared that after extensive debate over the alignment since 2006, the current proposal is the most appropriate. Mr. Irish summarized the EIS and SEPA processes, and shared that Sound Transit is nearly the end of the final design phase for the project. Sound Transit hopes to begin construction this fall or early next year.

Member Deller clarified what is still under consideration with the shoreline hearings board. Mr. Irish explained that the issues being considered pertain to how the project complies with the shoreline code resources that are protected, in terms of access, views and natural resources that are within the shoreline.

City of Bellevue: Shelley McVain, Deputy Director of Parks, and Camron Parker, Senior Planner, provided an overview of the mitigation plan for Mercer Slough Nature Park which has involved many years of negotiation and collaborative design with Sound Transit. A slide of access points was presented, demonstrating their potential changes during construction, should the project continue, and the location of the future access points once the project is completed. Mr. Parker also summarized the East Link Mitigation Plan.

Ms. Barker presented the staff recommendation to the board, stating that the request meets all the conversion policy requirements.

Director Cottingham shared that the agency's attorney general is present to answer questions. Member Mayer confirmed that all public comment submitted was available to the board and they have had a chance to review it.

Public Comment:

RCO Deputy Director Scott Robinson acted as timekeeper for the public comment portion of this agenda item.

Geoffrey Bidwell, Save the Mercer Slough Committee, provided a history of his involvement with the Mercer Slough Nature Park over the past several decades. He shared that the Mercer Slough Comprehensive Plan did not address transportation impacts initially, and the proposed rail will be a

significant nuisance. He described the efforts to coordinate and communicate with the organizations proposing the rail structure, and the challenges therein. Mr. Bidwell clarified several points of the current proposal, and recommended denial of the request. He shared that the current proposal will be a detriment to the decades of work gone into establishing the park.

Erin Powell, Save the Mercer Slough Committee, shared a handout with the board developed by Hugh Jennings, field trip chairman for the East Side Audubon Society, who could not provide testimony in person. From the handout remarks, she highlighted the impacts of this project to wildlife, particularly birds, and the recreationers who use the park for birding observations. Data that supports the bird populations and sightings was shared with the board. The impacts from the project will impact the park and populations irreparably.

Ms. Powell then moved to share her own remarks. She described her personal experiences with the park, history of participation, and support for rejection of the proposal as planned. She shared that the LWCF grant requires conservation in perpetuity, and the project would destroy this park. She pleaded with the board to reject the request, and protect the parkland and continuous urban tree canopy. Ms. Powell described the potential impacts to wildlife, and losses, resulting from noise nuisances. The participation in the park will increase in the future, and need this park resource to remain in tact to support their quality of life. She shared that during the October 30 meeting, Member Mayer asked whether the citizens had input to the city council to which Mr. Parker replied in the negative. She shared the City of Bellevue vision statement from 1999, which does not encompass community input as needed. She closed by urging denial of the conversion request.

Bill Popp, Save the Mercer Slough Committee, presented hard-copy slides to the board for consideration. The slides include aerial maps that show a noise analysis, and existing structures (walls) that are included in the project area. Mr. Popp shared a slide with his edits that shows that a metal-link fence supplements some lower concrete walls lining the railway. The slides show the lack of visibility from the walls that block the park view. It is estimated near 40,000 people will use the causeway lined by these walls. Mr. Popp reiterated his testimony from October's meeting, that there are alternatives to this project as planned that are less detrimental to the park.

Alfred Cecil, Building A Better Bellevue, presented his comments in opposition of the East Rail project. He brought forth reasons against the conclusion that alternatives to the rail alignment were fully considered and adequately selected. In a historical summary of the assessment of project alternatives, Mr. Cecil stated that the analysis was not appropriately or adequately conducted. He recommended that the request be denied as presented, and viable alternatives, particularly a tunnel, be considered by the project engineers.

Renay Bennett, Bellevue Resident, began by reading the mission statement of the board. She shared that allowing Sound Transit to place the rail on the west side of the park does not meet the mission statement objectives. She contested the statements made by the project advocates, stating that the rail would be disruptive to visual and audio qualities of the park. The train would obstruct the view of the park, and includes an insufficient buffer to Bellevue Way. She cited other projects with wider buffers, and a statement by the project engineers that the park is several hundred feet from the rail. She contested this point and the analysis, and furthered her comments to address several inadequate points of engineering and construction design. She highlighted the opportunities for public comment and the feedback received so far, stating that no public comments have supported this project decision. The alternatives to use a tunnel or put the rail where an existing track remains were stated. She urged rejection of the conversion request.

Anita Neil, Save the Mercer Slough Committee, discussed shoreline regulations and their requirements for visual access. Ms. Neil brought up several points including conversion versus restoration and planting trees in the wetlands, and discussed the weaknesses, gaps, and lack of sound scientific analysis backing these points in the conversion policy and plan.

Bruce Nurse, Bellevue Resident, shared two points for board consideration: the material provided to the board for the meeting and the impacts of the light rail in the park. He discussed the supplemental document (Item 10, Attachment A) included in the board materials, in particular Question 2, which addresses, why a tunnel was not considered to be a viable alternative. Mr. Nurse stated that the selection of the currently proposed alternative is driven by Sound Transit, not sound analysis of alternatives. He shared that Sound Transit shared a document in December that outlined the frequency of trains per day. Mr. Nurse requested a delay of decision while the alternatives are considered more fully.

Don Davidson, Bellevue resident, stated that he agreed with all public comment provided in the meeting today. Mr. Davidson provided personal background regarding his work and educational expertise. Mr. Davidson described the context of the project in terms of larger urbanization issues, stating that the project is an "ecological disaster." He encouraged the board to reject the conversion request as planned. He stated that construction is far from reaching the slough, and there is time to delay a decision to build on or near the park.

Joe Rosmann, Chair, Building a Better Bellevue, spoke to Mr. Irish's comments, clarifying some points. He noted that in 2008, Sound Transit published a document that described an overall development plan and the reason for building an East Link system. He wanted to share that Building a Better Bellevue is not against rail, but strongly considers environmental impacts. Other factors that justified the system was to get people out of their cars, maximize use, and reduce greenhouse gasses. The factors do not make sense in the context of station placement along the slough. In 2007, there were discussions about the placement of the rail and reasons behind the current option. It was stated that there were nine alternatives, but this study is no longer available. Later, a study by Building a Better Bellevue justified a tunnel in an independent study, and the engineers and financial planners of Sound Transit told the board that a tunnel was a viable alternative. It was rejected for political reasons. Further examination of alternatives were considered, but continued to meet controversy and challenges as documented in materials provided to the board. He discouraged approval of the conversion, urging a delay so that Sound Transit may not use the decision with the Shoreline Hearings Board as leverage.

Will Knedlik, Eastside resident, thanked the board for taking their roles seriously. He stated that that delayed decision in October allowed for the public to gain greater awareness of the issue at hand, and new issues arising on the south side of the park. He stated that the plan is a multi-phase destruction of a unique water and park resource, and approval of the conversion is essentially approval of a phase of this destruction. He reiterated that the board has the responsibility to consider all viable alternatives, which has not occurred sufficiently based on the information submitted to the board and public comment received today. The lack of transparency has made impossible a thorough assessment of alternatives, forcing the board to rely on information from advocates whose mission is not in line with the board's goals and objectives. He stated that a practical analysis has not been conducted, and the requestors have not met these conversion requirements.

April Putney, representing King County Executive Dow Constantine, requested that the conversion be approved, citing the three conversion criteria that the board must address. She reiterated the three criteria

requirements, stating that the information and analysis submitted satisfies the conversion questions and requirements.

Bryce Yadon, State Policy Director of Futurewise, advocated strongly for approval of the resolution before the board. He stated that Futurewise agrees that all three required criteria have been met for approval of the conversion. He stated that public comment opportunities have been sufficient, and urged approval of the request.

Rachel Smith, Vice Chair of the Board for Transportation Choices Coalition, stated that the proposal is about more than park conservation; it is about a regional public transportation plan. She discussed the transportation goals, climate change goals, achieved by the plan. She asked the board to respect the extensive planning, public comment processes that have taken place and approve the resolution.

The board discussed the request prior to vote. Member Willhite inquired about whether the public comment submitted between October's meeting and today's meeting was reviewed and taken into consideration. Ms. Barker stated that materials provided prior to online publishing were thoroughly reviewed; exceptions include late arriving comments received within a few days of the meetings initiation. Member Willhite also inquired whether consideration of alternatives was included in the review. Ms. Barker affirmed.

Member Mayer inquired about the zoning category of the conversion. Lori Peterson, City of Bellevue, addressed the zoning question, which is categorized as R1, same as the conversion property.

Member Stohr asked for guidance on how to interpret the information provided on the potential alternatives to the conversion proposal. RCO's attorney general representative addressed the board, stating the project sponsor must demonstrate analysis that is not arbitrary or capricious. The board is not deciding whether the sponsor is making the right choice of alternatives, but that the choice was thoughtful and not arbitrary.

Member Willhite stated that it's clear that the sponsor has considered a number of alternatives, endorsing the current decision. Member Deller clarified that the decision is also based on conversion property alternatives.

Member Mayer clarified that the deliberations between the City of Bellevue and Sound Transit to avoid impacts were sufficient. Ms. Barker stated that it is her understanding that avoidance was considered, but the City of Bellevue would need to speak to this statement. Mr. Parker stated that the letter from the City of Bellevue (March 10) speaks to these issues.

Member Willhite stated that the delayed decision from October was well-justified. New information brought to light on the issue provides confidence that the opportunity to review additional information has been fulfilled. Under the board authority and statutory conversion authority, the opportunity to be heard has been sufficiently satisfied as a required part of the process. Upon reviewing the materials, Member Willhite found that the issues were satisfied by the courts and the decisions not under the authority of the board have already been answered. He stated that the decision before the board is regarding appropriateness of the conversion. He expressed confidence in the staff analysis, there are no stays, no federal appeals, and in terms of public comment he is greatly appreciative. Member Willhite believes the recommendation is not erroneous, not arbitrary or capricious, and the open public process has been conducted fairly and appropriately. He ensured that the board takes their role seriously and are

not making decisions to simply move along, noting that the record reflects that the conversion meets several criteria consistent with the board objectives and statutory obligations. He added that from the information presented, the alternatives were sufficiently considered.

Member Mayer thanked the public for attending and providing comment. He expressed appreciation to Sound Transit for being responsive to board questions. Conversions continue to be of high concern and importance, and as members of the board, it is paramount that funds administered are consistent with the way in which they were granted. He shared that experience making decisions relative to conversions is difficult, but the board takes these issues very seriously. He agreed with Member Willhite's comments regarding alternatives, park benefits, acreage ratios, and finally that mitigation efforts are persuasive even though not under the purview of the board. He also agreed that sufficient public comment has been gathered, even though the opportunity to be heard may not be reflected in the ultimate decision. He concurred that the three conversion requirements have been satisfied.

Member Deller agreed with Members Willhite and Mayer, and thanked the public and members of the City of Bellevue and Sound Transit for commenting. He agreed that the three conversion requirements have been met.

Chair Spanel agreed, acknowledging the work that has gone into this issue from all sides. She stated that the requirements that the board must review and consider have been met.

Director Cottingham noted a typo on the third paragraph of the resolution language; an extra "of" should be removed.

The board had moved to table a decision on the resolution at the October 2014 meeting. Member Herman moved to remove the resolution from the table, in order to be considered for decision today. Member Mayer seconded, and the motion was carried.

Resolution 2015-04

Moved by: Member Mike Deller (as amended to remove the typo noted)

Seconded by: Member Pete Mayer

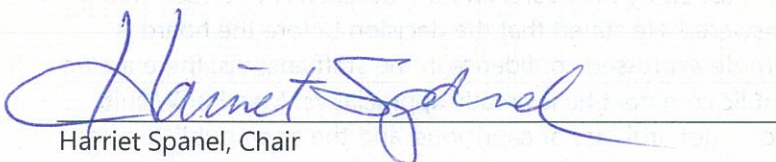
Resolution: APPROVED

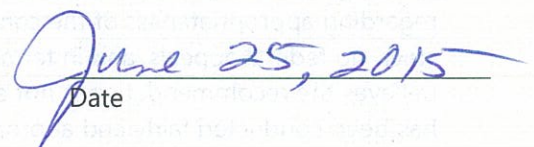
Closing Remarks

Director Cottingham noted that the next board meeting will be held in Olympia, Washington on June 24 and 25, 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 p.m. by Chair Spanel.

Approved by:


Harriet Spanel, Chair


Date

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution #2015-01
April 2015 Consent Calendar**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the following April 2015 Consent Calendar items are approved:

- A. Approve Board Meeting Minutes from October 29-30, 2014
- B. Approve Time Extensions
 - 11-1173D, USFS, Franklin Falls Trail Renovations, Phase 2
 - 11-1144D, Whatcom County, Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Replacement 2011
 - 10-1383D, State Parks, Lake Sammamish Beach Renovation and Boardwalk
 - 10-1453R, DNR, Camas Meadows Rare Plant Habitat Restoration
 - 10-1660D, City of Sumner, Trail Segments #4 and #5
 - 10-1458, DNR, Dabob Bay Natural Area 2010
 - 10-1629, WDFW, Sinlahekin Ecosystem Restoration, Phase 2
- C. Recognition of Service for Don Hoch

Resolution moved by: Mike Deller

Resolution seconded by: Peter Mayer

Adopted Date: April 9, 2015



WASHINGTON STATE
Recreation and Conservation
Funding Board

A Resolution to Recognize the Service of

Don Hoch

To the Residents of Washington State and the Recreation and Conservation Office

WHEREAS, from January 2013 through March 2015, Don Hoch provided excellent service to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and the people of Washington; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hoch guided the distribution of more than \$102 million in grants for 278 projects statewide, leveraging matching resources of more than \$58 million, for a combined investment of more than \$160 million in making Washington a great place to live, work, and play; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hoch participated actively in board discussions, decisions, tours, and the general work of the board, making sure always to be thoughtful in his comments; and



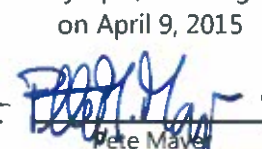



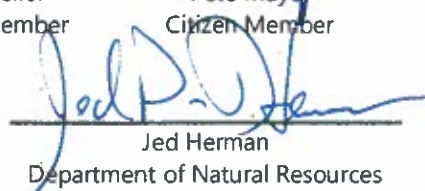
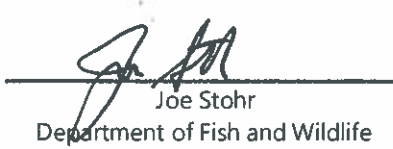
WHEREAS, Mr. Hoch represented well the concerns and desires of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, and ensured that his fellow board members understand his agency's goals and direction; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hoch's intellect, wise counsel, and graciousness made him a valuable board member; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hoch has decided to designate someone else to represent the Parks' Commission at the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, and members of the board wish to recognize his leadership and service;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that on behalf of the residents of Washington and in recognition of Mr. Hoch's dedication and excellence in performing his responsibilities and duties as a member of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, his peers and staff from the Recreation and Conservation Office extend their sincere appreciation and compliments on a job well done.

Approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
in Olympia, Washington
on April 9, 2015

 Betsy Bloomfield Citizen Member	 Mike Deller Citizen Member	 Pete Mayer Citizen Member	 Harriet Spänel Citizen Member	 Ted Willhite Citizen Member
 Peter Herzog Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission	 Jed Herman Department of Natural Resources	 Joe Stohr Department of Fish and Wildlife		

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution #2015-02
Youth Athletic Facilities Program 2015**

WHEREAS, pursuant to state law, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) administers and approves policies that govern the Youth Athletic Facilities grant program and sets evaluation criteria for grant applications; and

WHEREAS, the board directed staff to request capital budget appropriations for the Youth Athletic Facility program and prepare draft policies and evaluation criteria in anticipation of funds from the Legislature; and

WHEREAS, the Recreation and Conservation Office prepared draft policies and evaluation criteria and solicited for comments from the public, and staff adjusted the policies and evaluation criteria as appropriate and recommends the board approve the final draft materials as presented in Attachments B and C;

WHEREAS, the changes are consistent with state law, the board's administrative rules, and the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Recreation and Conservation Office prepared draft YAF program measures to track program outputs which are:

1. The number of youth served in each project on an annual basis, both currently served and expected to be served, because of the YAF project.
2. The total amount of non-state funds leveraged in each project.
3. The percent of underserved individuals (i.e., non-white and disabled) served in each project.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the board does hereby adopt the changes in the policies and evaluation criteria for the YAF program as shown in Attachments B and C and the program measures above; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the board directs RCO staff to incorporate these changes in the appropriate policy manuals with language that reflect the policy intent; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these policies shall be effective beginning with the 2015 grant cycle.

Resolution moved by: Ted Willhite

Resolution seconded by: Mike Deller

Adopted Date: April 9, 2015

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution #2015-03
Boating Grant Programs Plan 2016**

WHEREAS, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) funds boating facilities projects through multiple grant programs; and

WHEREAS, the RCFB has been entrusted with public funds to help pay for water access projects serving citizens who wish to enjoy the use of boats of all types; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the state that the RCFB administer grant programs and funds on a foundation of good data based on sound research, systematic analysis, and public involvement; and

WHEREAS, the Boating Grant Programs Plan has been developed according to these principles; and

WHEREAS, approving the plan supports the board's strategic plan to make strategic investments through policy development, grant funding, technical assistance, coordination, and advocacy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the board approves the Boating Grant Programs Plan for immediate use; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the director will review the plan after a five-year period and recommend to the board whether to revise or re-approve the plan.

Resolution moved by: Ted Willhite

Resolution seconded by: Mike Deller

Adopted Date: April 9, 2015

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution 2015-04, Amended
Approving Conversion for Mercer Slough Nature Park
(RCO Projects #73-026 and 78-513)

WHEREAS, the City of Bellevue and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission used state bond funds and a grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to acquire land to expand the Mercer Slough Nature Park; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission is in the process of transferring their grant interests to the City of Bellevue,

WHEREAS, the construction of Sound Transit's East Link Light Rail project will convert ~~of~~ a portion of the property; and

WHEREAS, as a result of this conversion, a portion of the property no longer satisfies the conditions of the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant; and

WHEREAS, the city is asking for Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) approval to replace the converted property with property purchased under a waiver of retroactivity; and

WHEREAS, the proposed replacement property is in close proximity to the conversion sites, has an appraised value that is greater than the conversion site, and has greater acreage than the conversion sites; and

WHEREAS, the site will provide opportunities that closely match those displaced by the conversion, will consolidate public ownership in the park's overall boundary, and meets needs that have been identified in the city's comprehensive plan as acquiring land adjacent to existing community parks, expanding wetland preservation of wildlife habitat, thereby supporting the board's goals to provide funding for projects that result in public outdoor recreation purposes; and

WHEREAS, the sponsor sought public comment on the conversion and discussed it during an open public meeting, thereby supporting the board's strategy to regularly seek public feedback in policy and funding decisions;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves the conversion request and the proposed replacement site for RCO Projects #73-026 and 78-513 as presented to the board in April 2015 and set forth in the board memo prepared for that meeting; and

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the board hereby authorizes the RCO director to give interim approval for the property acquired with LWCF funds and forward the conversion to the National Park Service (NPS) for final approval.

Resolution moved by: Mike Deller

Resolution seconded by: Pete Mayer

Adopted Date: April 9, 2015



OKANOGAN COUNTY

Board of Commissioners

Shellah Kennedy
Commissioner District 1
Ray Campbell
Commissioner District 2
Jim DeTro
Commissioner District 3
Laleña Johns
Clerk of the Board

February 3, 2015

Recreation and Conservation Office
P.O. Box 40917
Olympia, Washington 98504-0917

Dear RCO Funding Board:

The Okanogan Board of County Commissioners opposes any public funding for the purchase of conservation easements on the property identified as Tunk Valley and Soriano Ranch.

The State of Washington is under court order for its failure to perform one of the few mandates found in the Constitution of the State of Washington namely to fund the education of our children. If there was ever a time that a clear message was written by the hand of reality now is clearly it. We must change the way we conduct the business of government.

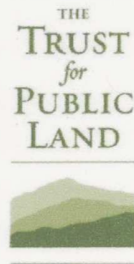
The Okanogan County Board of Commissioners, despite changes in three election cycles, has sent a consistent message to both Olympia and Washington D.C. Stop buying our land and development opportunities for the sake of catering to the perspective of a handful; albeit well-funded, special interests groups. Considering the millions of acres already in public ownership there is no compelling government interest in owning more. The same can be said for conservation easements. Considering the very firm regulatory grip government has on private property there is no compelling interest in the government owning the little develop opportunity that is left. This is once again money spent to satisfy special interest groups that are working hard to protect their own "quality of life" with little concern for the long term consequences of these actions.

And to be sure there are long term consequences to the land and development opportunity acquisition programs. The acquisition itself costs money that could be directed to other more compelling uses. The maintenance of public land costs the public money that could be directed to other more compelling uses. The artificial restriction of housing stock creates a situation with inflated prices which leaves many unable to afford their own home. Some parts of the state already face scenarios where professionals such as teachers cannot afford to purchase homes in the communities they serve. Not having enough or sufficient variety of housing stock has long been an obstacle to areas trying to retain expanding companies or to

Telephone
509.422.7100

123 Fifth Avenue N. * Room 150 * Okanogan * Washington * 98840
TTY/Voice use 800.833.6388

Fax
509.422.7106



March 17, 2015

Sen. Brian Dansel
Washington State Senate
115B Irv Newhouse Building
PO Box 40407
Olympia, WA 98504

Rep. Joel Kretz
Washington House of Representatives
335A Legislative Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

Rep. Shelly Short
Washington House of Representatives
427A Legislative Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: State Funding for Agricultural Conservation Easements in Okanogan County

Dear Senator Dansel and Representatives Kretz and Short:

Our organizations are writing to provide our perspectives on the request submitted by the Okanogan County Board of Commissioners to the Recreational and Conservation Office ("RCO") that the State Legislature not provide funding for agricultural conservation easements in Okanogan County. While we respect the role of county commissioners in expressing viewpoints on behalf of Okanogan County, we believe that agricultural conservation easements are a critical tool to protect working farm and ranchlands, preserve the agricultural economy, and provide financial benefits to Okanogan County.

A number of years ago, Okanogan County Commissioners and legislators in the 7th District expressed opposition to state agency land acquisitions, but did not oppose agricultural conservation easements. Since then, we have focused on agricultural conservation easements because they had political support at the local and state level, and because they did not involve government ownership of more land – the landowner remains the owner of the property.

In recent years, the opposition to funding agricultural conservation easements in Okanogan County has cost county residents and the county itself the benefits of millions of

dollars in investments. Because of Okanogan County Commissioner opposition, \$3.1 million in state conservation easement funding was not funded in 2013. This resulted in the loss of an additional \$3.1 million in matching funds. This year, additional \$4.1 million in state funding could be awarded through WWRP for agricultural conservation easements, and would result in an addition \$2.1 million in matching funds.

In total, \$12.4 million in agricultural conservation easement values could be lost. How would these funds have benefitted Okanogan County? Landowners use conservation easement funds to reinvest in their farm and ranch operations with local businesses, ensuring continued existence for large working ranches in Okanogan County and supporting other agricultural businesses. The irony is that in opposing such funds in Okanogan County, the funds simply go elsewhere, benefitting other parts of the state. Refusing conservation easement funding does not result in funding for other types of projects that Okanogan County Commissioners would prefer.

In 2008, The Trust for Public Land contracted with Headwaters Economics to provide a detailed, transaction-based analysis of real estate trends involving working agricultural lands in Okanogan County, titled "Land Ownership Change and the Ranching Economy in the Okanogan Valley and Eastern Okanogan County, Washington." This report detailed the trends involving the loss of productive agricultural lands to subdivision development activity, and the increasing cost pressures on agricultural landowners.

This report detailed that between 1993 and 2008, approximately 45% of large ranches in the Okanogan County study area (those over 400 acres) changed ownership. Of these transactions, over 50% resulted in changes of use that ended or significantly limited agricultural production. During this same period, the State Legislature directed the Washington Department of Agricultural ("WDOA") to prepare a Strategic Plan for agriculture in Washington State. WDOA produced a report entitled Future of Farming, which detailed the loss of productive agricultural land and its impact on local agricultural businesses as one of the major threats to the industry:

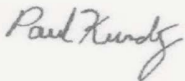
However, that land base is under constant threat of erosion since privately-owned agricultural land is also in heavy demand for nonagricultural uses such as roads, houses, industry, commerce, and schools and other public services, especially on urban fringes. That demand is tied closely to population changes. If the population of Washington increases by one third to 8 million people by 2025, as currently forecast, it would lead to a commensurate increase in non-agricultural demand for land. **As land is progressively lost, the core infrastructure for farming in the region falls below its critical mass, increasing costs to the remaining farmers and encouraging future conversion to other uses.**

Future of Farming, Washington Department of Agriculture p. 51 (2009) (emphasis added)

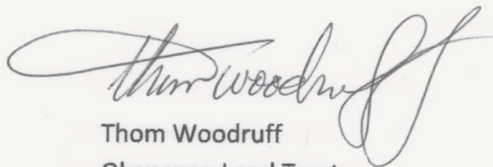
In addition to the direct economic benefits to agriculture from preserving lands, agricultural conservation easements also support fish and wildlife that is the foundation of the outdoor recreational economy. The RCO recently released a report requested by the State Legislature on the economic impacts of outdoor recreation in Washington State, and found that the 7th District had over \$57 million in expenditures for recreation on public lands, and that outdoor recreation contributes over \$117 million in economic activity in Okanogan County. *Earth Economics, Economics of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State, Appendices G and H.* In addition to preserving the agricultural economy, conservation easements preserve fish and wildlife habitat that in turn support outdoor recreation and related tourism and local businesses.

Finally, the reason our organizations continue to work on agricultural conservation easements in Okanogan County is not because of these economic statistics or because local and state elected officials once said they preferred easements over state agency acquisitions. The reason we continue to work on these projects is because of the ongoing and increasing demand from landowners. Most of these landowners are multi-generation residents of Okanogan County, and all of them seek to preserve large, in-tact, functioning agricultural businesses that drive the economy of Okanogan County. They understand that conservation easements enable them to reinvest in their operations and support other local businesses and agricultural operators, and we believe that this is a business decision that the county and state should support.

Sincerely,



Paul Kundtz
The Trust for Public Land



Thom Woodruff
Okanogan Land Trust

cc: Sen. Andy Hill, Chair, Senate Ways & Means Committee
Sen. Jim Hargrove, Ranking Member, Senate Ways & Means Committee
Sen. Jim Honeyford, Vice-Chair, Capital, Senate Ways & Means Committee
Sen. Karen Keiser, Ass't Ranking Member, Capital, Senate Ways & Means Committee
Rep. Hans Dunshee, Chair, House Capital Budget Committee
Rep. Richard DeBolt, Ranking Member, House Capital Budget Committee
Okanogan County Board of Commissioners
Kaleen Cottingham, Director, RCO

recruit new ones. With a tax system based on commerce and the value added development of property it will be impossible to meet the demands of funding

education without a profound change in the priorities of government as established by those charged with conducting the business of the people.

The recent report released by the JLARC raises serious questions regarding the goals and objectives of the land acquisition efforts by state agencies. We welcomed the JLARC report as we have posed many of the same questions to WDFW for years. It was apparent to us that the acquisition of land and development rights was in itself the goal of WDFW and in fact their only measurement of success was the total acres purchased or placed under conservation easements. The more they acquired the more they touted the success of their program. This was circular reasoning at best and failed in any way to answer the question we often posed "how much is enough". We believe the dedication of any public money to the acquisition of property or development rights should be suspended until these questions are answered and until the true effects of the conversion of more private land and development rights to public ownership is clearly understood.

We ask you to oppose any request to utilize public money of any sort for the acquisition of land or the purchase of development rights in Okanogan County.

Sincerely,

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners



Jim DeTro, Chairman



Ray Campbell, Member



Sheilah Kennedy, Member

CC: Kaleen Cottingham, 7th and 12th District Delegation
Senator Honeyford

Telephone
509.422.7100

123 Fifth Avenue N. * Room 150 * Okanogan * Washington * 98840
TTY/Voice use 800.833.6388

Fax
509.422.7106

Natural Resources Building
1111 Washington St. S.E.
Olympia, WA 98501

P.O. Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917



(360) 902-3000
TTY (360) 902-1996
Fax: (360) 902-3026

E-mail: info@rco.wa.gov
Web site: www.rco.wa.gov

STATE OF WASHINGTON

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

February 9, 2015

Okanogan County Commissioners
123 Fifth Avenue N, Room 150
Okanogan, WA 98840

RE: Tunk Valley, RCO #14-1089A, Soriano Ranch, RCO #14-1652A

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing in response your letter, dated February 3, 2015, in which you raised concerns about two projects proposed for funding in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP). These projects are the Department of Fish and Wildlife's grant application for Tunk Valley (#14-1089) and the Okanogan Land Trust's application for the Soriano Ranch (#14-1652). Both projects involve acquisition of property rights or conservation easements.

You may recall the WWRP statute (RCW 79A.15.110) requires applicants to notify the appropriate county commissioners or city council of its proposed projects prior to application. The County Commission or Council then has an opportunity to submit a letter to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) identifying its position with regard to the acquisition project. These letters are most effective when submitted prior to the board's decision ranking the projects (normally in October of each even-numbered year). If the board receives any letters, it sends them to the Governor along with the ranked project lists by November 1st of each even numbered year.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Okanogan Land Trust each notified the County Commission of their intent to apply for the WWRP grants at issue. (RCO would be happy to make copies of these letters available to you.) Each project was fully vetted by the respective advisory committee and scored using the board-adopted criteria. The board was presented with the proposed project lists on October 29, 2014 and approved them for presentation to the Governor and the Legislature.

The two projects referenced above were included in project lists submitted to the Governor and the Legislature. As the board has approved the ranked lists, the decision on what to fund rests with the Legislature. I would suggest you contact them directly to express your concerns.

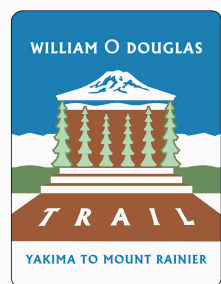
Although your letter arrived too late for inclusion with the ranked list to the Governor, I will include your letter in the briefing materials for the board. Their next meeting is April 8-9, 2015. The agenda and briefing materials will be posted on our Web site two weeks prior to the meeting http://www.rco.wa.gov/boards/rcfb_meetings.shtml.

Sincerely,

Kaleen Cottingham
Director

cc: 7th District Delegation
12th District Delegation
Senator Jim Honeyford
Joe Stohr, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jacquelyn Wallace, Okanogan Land Trust
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board





December 16, 2014

Ms. Kaleen Cottingham, Director
Washington Recreation and Conservation Office
P.O. Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

RE: William O. Douglas Trail Connections WWRP Grant # 06-1851C

Dear Director Cottingham:

During 2008-2010, recreation land and facilities were acquired or developed with State WWRP grant funds for the William O. Douglas Heritage Trail. Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group (MCFEG) and Cowiche Canyon Conservancy (CCC) now propose to demolish and remove these facilities, part of the William O. Douglas Rail-Trail along Lower Cowiche Creek in Yakima County. MCFEG and CCC plan to use SRFB funds to convert WWRP land and facilities from recreation trail use to fish habitat use — conversion to a use other than that for which WWRP funds were originally approved.

The William O. Douglas Trail Foundation originated the trail concept in 2005, and the Trail Foundation partnered with the City of Yakima and Yakima County on the WWRP Grant # 06-1851C. As the leading trail advocate since 2005, WOD Trail Foundation contributed \$582,047 in transportation enhancement matching funds for this project and has devoted countless hours of volunteer time to develop and maintain this trail system.

We are writing this letter because we understand RCO Board member Betsy Bloomfield recently coordinated meetings with MCFEG, CCC, RCO, WDFW, and the City regarding the William O. Douglas Trail. But the William O. Douglas Trail Foundation was not notified and not given any opportunity to attend those meetings. Since 2011, MCFEG and CCC have consistently chosen not to involve the Trail Foundation and the public trails community in their proposal to remove WWRP trail facilities along Cowiche Creek.

We are concerned about the lack of transparency regarding use of RCO funds. MCFEG and CCC have not disclosed significant facts about environmental and cultural impacts

to the William O. Douglas Trail and historic North Yakima & Valley Railway facilities, and in some instances agencies have been given inaccurate or misleading information.

Here are some key facts from RCO's PRISM website for WWRP Grant # 06-1851C:

- (1) The "**Critical Project Milestone**" was to acquire four parcels owned by **BNSF Railway Co.** by 6/30/2010 — this "**Special Condition**" was met and is shown on PRISM as "**Complete**" by the target date.
- (2) WWRP Project Description — "A physically separated pedestrian/bicycle bridge will be constructed over Cowiche Creek, together with bridge approaches to access the **trail located on abandoned railroad land.**"
- (3) WWRP funds totaling **\$817,107.49** were spent on acquisition and development in Cowiche Canyon to fulfill the William O. Douglas Trail Connections Grant.
- (4) PRISM indicates that 34 acres of land connected to or adjacent to the BNSF Railway facility in Cowiche Canyon were acquired at a cost of \$652,181.45 together with associated development costs of \$164,926.04.
- (5) WWRP Acquisition and Development expenses for the "**Ketchen**" parcel (3.98 acres adjacent to BNSF Railway) totaled **\$189,738.98**.
- (6) Engineering expenses were billed to the WWRP Grant for the Cowiche Creek rail-trail bridge design.
- (7) Progress reports were submitted to RCO concerning the location of the pedestrian bridge across Cowiche Creek, using the historic railroad prism as the trail.
- (8) City of Yakima Engineering Division sent an April 12, 2010 request to RCO for a grant "Time Line Extension" to replace "**a former BNSF bridge**" for the trail using existing railroad piers — they committed to construct the rail-trail bridge across Cowiche Creek by the end of 2010.

Yakima County Courthouse records show that the four BNSF Railway parcels were acquired for the William O. Douglas Trail on October 28, 2008.

Acquisition and use of the former BNSF Railway facilities along Lower Cowiche Creek as a Rails-to-Trails project was essential for the William O. Douglas Trail Connections Grant. The rail bed facilities (now proposed for demolition) provided a "ready-made" trail grade without the need for any further trail development actions, other than a creek crossing. And replacing the 60 foot long former BNSF railway bridge on existing piers makes it possible to connect the Yakima Greenway Path system to Cowiche Canyon and also enables the William O. Douglas trail connection from Yakima to Mt. Rainier.

The existing railroad bridge support structures are above the 100-year floodplain. Demolishing the railroad grade and existing bridge support structures eliminates the only feasible creek crossing for the pedestrian/bicycle trail because regulatory agencies rarely allow new bridge structures to be built in floodplains.

MCFEG project documents propose extensive alterations to and habitat restoration activities on the **Ketchen** property (purchased and developed by WWRP) — conversion of **Ketchen** parcel from recreation trail use to fish habitat use.

Although the Cowiche Creek trail bridge has not yet been built, the public has used the existing rail bed facility for trail use — see attached photo of trail on **Ketchen** parcel. No feasible alternative exists for relocating the current rail-trail facilities, without first acquiring nearby private lands from willing sellers.

MCFEG and its SRFB Grant Partner CCC did not disclose the William O. Douglas Trail Connections WWRP Grant in SEPA or NEPA Environmental Checklists, SRFB grant submittals, cultural resources reports, nor in permit applications seeking to remove the rail-trail facilities. In August 2014, MCFEG awarded a contract bid for demolition of historic rail-trail facilities without first consulting the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

During the last three years, Recreation & Conservation Funding Board member Betsy Bloomfield advocated removal of WWRP Trails facilities along Cowiche Creek. In 2013, Ms. Bloomfield scheduled a “planning/strategy meeting” at the CCC office “to discuss the lower Cowiche” with City and MCFEG officials and has met with various agencies and government officials to seek removal of part of the William O. Douglas Trail rail bed facility and instead replace the trail on the “**shoulder of Cowiche Canyon Road.**”

For example, documents on the City of Yakima website indicate:

- (1) Betsy Bloomfield email to city’s attorney re: Cowiche Creek rail line (Mar. 2014) — “Using the **road shoulder as the trail** still makes the most sense for all the reasons we’ve already discussed.”
- (2) Bloomfield email to City management (Dec. 2013) — “I’ve offered to help make sure the City doesn’t get inadvertently crosswise with the **William O Douglas WWRP grant**, and I’d like to get together with you to go over the original contract.”
- (3) Bloomfield email to MCFEG and City (Mar. 2014) — “the quit claim deed from BNSF to the City was not a Rails to Trails project.”

In October 2014, after a briefing by Betsy Bloomfield, the CCC Board voted to support Mid-Columbia Fisheries’ salmon recovery project [removing the Rail Bed Trail], and CCC proposed an alternative trail “occupying the **shoulder of Cowiche Canyon Road** near Powerhouse Road.”

In November 2014, CCC Board Meeting minutes state: “Betsy briefed the board on her work with the City of Yakima based on the City/CCC MOU to ensure the City understands its contractual obligations under the 2007 **WODT grant.**” and “Betsy reported on her meeting with the City of Yakima, Mid-Col. FE and RCO regarding the city’s grant obligations for **east end of C. Canyon.**”

According to PRISM, Betsy Bloomfield (representing both CCC and RCO) was a “Project Contact” with management authority over the WWRP Grant, and CCC invoiced RCO for the WWRP Grant. PRISM contains this — “Only Betsy Bloomfield, Dana Kallevig, or Doug Mayo can submit the final report.” PRISM indicates the Final Report was not submitted before final payment and grant closeout.

Ms. Bloomfield signed a SRFB “Project Partner Contribution Form” (6/1/2011) as CCC Executive Director, and CCC billed Bloomfield’s time to the SRFB Grant. MCFEG paid SFRB funds for Bloomfield’s “project development” work.

The William O. Douglas Trail Foundation is concerned about: MCFEG’s and CCC’s proposed removal of WWRP Rail-Trail facilities along Cowiche Creek without any feasible replacement trail; the lack of transparency about the use of RCO funds; lack of public involvement; and inadequate disclosure of impacts to environmental and cultural resources. We respectfully ask RCO to include the William O. Douglas Trail Foundation in future meetings and processes concerning the William O. Douglas Trail.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

/s/

Andrew Stepniewski, Vice-President
William O. Douglas Trail Foundation
williamodouglastrail@gmail.com

cc: Joan Davenport
Richard Visser
Marguerite Austin
Kay Caromile



Trail on Ketchen Parcel



DEPARTMENT OF UTILITIES AND ENGINEERING

Debbie Cook, PE, Director

**Engineering Division
129 North Second Street
Yakima, Washington 98901
(509) 575-6111 • Fax (509) 576-6305**

December 16, 2014

Washington Recreation and Conservation Office
Attn: Laura Moxham
PO Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

Re: William O. Douglas Trail Connections

Dear Ms. Moxham,

It was a pleasure to meet with you and Sarah Thirtyacre on November 17, 2014 to discuss and review the William O. Douglas Trail (Trail). The meeting was the result of allegations by the William O. Douglas Trail Foundation (Foundation) that a project proposed by the Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group (MCFEG), and supported by the City of Yakima, would jeopardize the Trail. This letter is being written to update you on the status of the Trail and describe efforts that have been taken by the City and others to further its development.

The original proposed Trail alignment, as envisioned by the president of the Foundation, followed the old railroad bed within this lower reach of Cowiche Creek. As the City's Engineering Division looked further into this alignment, we realized that it wouldn't work in many locations, and therefore, purchased the Ketchen parcel (181309-34013), a strip of the Garretson parcel (181309-34017) and the Funkhauser parcel (181316-22412). As we have researched it further, we realize that there are other problems with using the old rail bed, such as, requiring two new bridges, angry neighbors and questions regarding the legitimacy of the quit claim deed received from BNSF. Although aligning the trail on the old rail bed remains the preferred location by the Foundation, the City has abandoned this idea due to the reasons listed above.

The Foundation is of the opinion that the two new bridges would be less costly due to the fact that the existing railroad berm could be used as bridge abutments. However, in response to the Foundation's statement that, "Floodplain regulatory agencies will allow the replacement of bridges that use existing berms that are above the 100-year flood level, but will not allow the creation of new berms in or bridges below the 100-year flood elevation," Perry Harvester of the State of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) stated in a letter dated September 25, 2014 to the MCFEG, "New water crossing structure capacity requirements and calculations are not based on remaining elements of old structures. The Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 220-110-070(1(h)) states, '... that abutments, piers, piling, sills, approach fills, etc., shall not constrict the flow so as to cause any appreciable increase (not to exceed 0.2 feet) in backwater elevation (calculated at the 100-year flood) or channel wide scour and shall be aligned to cause the least effect on the hydraulics of the watercourse.' When old bridges reach the end of their design life, are removed or fail, the new bridge must meet conditions of the WAC without consideration of old abutments. Thus, a new bridge structure and associated abutments, piers, piling, sills, approach fills must be sized as if the old structure never existed. Thus, there is no benefit in leaving old remnants of a bridge structure intact as it is not considered in new designs. A professional hydraulic analysis is required to be submitted with a permit application for a new bridge regardless of the location selected."

Some of the property owners have expressed displeasure in having a trail go through "their yards." The City is considering three new Trail alignment options that are shown on the attached figure.

The proposed alignment options move the trail further from their yards, and in all but one case, options 2 and 3 move the trail to the other side of the creek. Option 1 continues the Trail adjacent to Cowiche Canyon Road to its intersection with Cowiche Canyon Lane. Option 2 continues the trail adjacent to the road to the southern edge of the Ketchen parcel, then crosses over Cowiche Creek and constructs the Trail at the base of the hill above the 100-year floodplain approximately parallel to the old rail alignment up to the Funkhauser parcel, then through this parcel (north of the creek) to Cowiche Canyon Lane. Option 3 constructs the Trail over Cowiche Creek near the northern edge of the Ketchen parcel and constructs the Trail at the base of the hill above the 100-year floodplain approximately parallel to the old rail alignment up to the Funkhauser parcel, then through this parcel (north of the creek) to Cowiche Canyon Lane. Option 3 would require purchasing the Dilley parcel (181309-31002). Once the proposed Trail alignments are further scrutinized and additional funding is secured, the Trail alignments will be evaluated under the appropriate regulatory environment for their impacts to the Cultural Resources.

In 2010, the City and the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy received a letter from an attorney working for one of the property owners adjacent to the former BNSF Railway property claiming that his client owned the portion of the former railroad bed adjacent to their property. The letter stated that when the railway was abandoned in the 1980's, his clients had retaken the ground and returned it to its natural state. The letter also stated that the railway had been located on an easement over his client's property.

The proposed Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) project 11-1320 administered by MCFEG does not affect the plans for the future facilities of the William O. Douglas Trail. The project will remove the old railroad berm that constricts Cowiche Creek on the former BNSF parcel adjacent to the Ketchen parcel, and plant non-invasive species within the Ketchen parcel. On the Ketchen parcel, the project will remove concrete and debris, and plant native species. The restoration project will change the elevation on the former BNSF parcel by removing the railroad berm, which at one time was being considered as the alignment for the trail. The restoration project:

- does not alter or diminish options for the eventual location of the Trail;
- does not change the factors that will be considered by the appropriate agencies in determining the final location of the Trail through this area;
- does not change legal requirements or estimated costs associated with a potential bridge within the project area;
- does not alter legal public access to these parcels; and,
- does not alter or change the potential of using these parcels (including the Ketchen parcel) for the purposes that they were acquired for.

Although the old railroad berm alignment was at one time being considered as the alignment for the Trail, it has since been abandoned due to the reasons described in this letter. The current proposed alignments move the trail further from the Creek, and only impact the floodplain at the crossing locations for Options 2 and 3. A trailhead and a section of the Trail are still planned for the Ketchen parcel. We have spoken with the Yakama Nation and they are in favor of the restoration project. There are also discussions underway among various partners including Yakima County, Yakama Nation and MCFEG about the potential purchase of the Dilley parcel for habitat conservation and restoration. If the Dilley parcel is able to be purchased, it would increase the feasibility of Option 3. It is too early in the process to know if this potential acquisition will proceed or not.

The City continues to seek for opportunities to enhance the Trail. As part of Yakima County's realignment of Cowiche Canyon Road, a 10-foot asphalt pathway was constructed adjacent to the road. The City also has acquired a Transportation Alternative Project (TAP) grant to construct a section of sidewalk that will extend the sidewalk from 40th Avenue to Cowiche Canyon Road.

If you have any other questions, feel free to call me at (509) 576-6797.

Sincerely,



Brett H. Sheffield, PE
Chief Engineer

Natural Resources Building
1111 Washington St. S.E.
Olympia, WA 98501

P.O. Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917



(360) 902-3000
TTY (360) 902-1996
Fax: (360) 902-3026

E-mail: info@rco.wa.gov
Web site: www.rco.wa.gov

STATE OF WASHINGTON

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

January 20, 2015

Brett Sheffield, Chief Engineer
City of Yakima
129 North Second Street
Yakima, WA 98901

Re: William O. Douglas Trail, RCO #06-1851AD

Dear Mr. Sheffield:

This letter is in response to your letter, dated December 16, 2014, updating our agency on the above referenced project. The information you provided is very helpful in understanding the options the city is considering for the segment of the trail corridor located near Cowiche Canyon Road and Powerhouse Road.

I am responding on behalf of our agency to questions about compliance with the terms and conditions of the William O. Douglas Trail project agreement (RCO #06-1851) and the relationship between that trail project and the proposed restoration activities along Cowiche Creek funded by a grant awarded to the Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group (RCO #11-1320). One of the properties identified for restoration under RCO #11-1320 is the Ketchen property, which was acquired under RCO #06-1851.

Habitat enhancement (which includes restoration) is an allowable activity on WWRP-Trails funded sites as long as a trail and public outdoor recreation opportunities are not precluded. It is my understanding from your letter and the restoration project details, that the proposed restoration project will not prevent future development of a trail on the Ketchen property. Your letter confirms that the city plans to construct a trailhead and a portion of the trail on the Ketchen property.

Therefore, given what we know today, there is no compliance concern associated with the restoration activities proposed for the Ketchen property.

We are very interested in the city moving forward to finalize the trail route and the plans for the properties funded with the trails grant. Should the city determine that any of the properties acquired with the WWRP-Trails grant will not be used for trail purposes, please contact me so that I may offer guidance on the compliance issues that would create.



It would be helpful to understand the city's timeline for making those determinations and for development of the trail. Please be aware that the next opportunity to seek RCO funding for trail development will be in 2016.

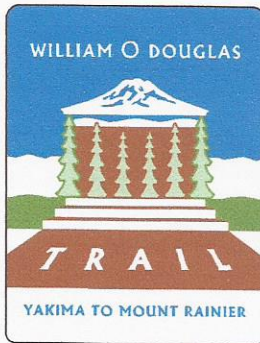
If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Myra Barker". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Myra Barker
Compliance Specialist

cc: Margaret Neuman, MCFEG
Laura Moxham, RCO
Kay Caromile, RCO
Sarah Thirtyacre, RCO



January 16, 2015

Ms. Kay Caromile
Ms. Laura Moxham
Washington Recreation & Conservation Office
P.O. Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

RE: William O. Douglas Trail Connections WWRP Grant # 06-1851C
Lower Cowiche Creek Restoration SRFB Grant # 11-1320

Dear Ms. Caromile and Ms. Moxham:

This letter is submitted in response to a map entitled "Trail Alignment Options.pdf," which was posted to RCO's PRISM website for SRFB Grant # 11-1320 with a PRISM Attach Date of 01/02/2015. The PRISM website indicates that on December 16, 2014, Yakima engineer Brett Sheffield sent this map to Laura Moxham, and the map purports to show three trail alignment options.

The William O. Douglas Trail Foundation originated the trail concept in 2005, and the Trail Foundation partnered with the City of Yakima and Yakima County on the WWRP Grant # 06-1851C. As the leading trail advocate since 2005, William O. Douglas Trail Foundation contributed \$582,047 in transportation enhancement matching funds for this project and has devoted countless hours of volunteer time to develop and maintain this trail system.

The most essential "William O. Douglas Trail Connection" was successfully accomplished by acquiring the 2-mile BNSF Railway corridor along Lower Cowiche Creek as a Rails-to-Trails project (10/28/2008). The WWRP Project Agreement on PRISM explicitly recognized the BNSF rail bed as indispensable by stating a "**Critical Project Milestone**" was to acquire parcels owned by **BNSF Railway Co.** by 6/30/2010 — this "**Special Condition**" was met and is shown on PRISM as "**Complete.**"

The Dec. 16 engineer's letter says the BNSF Railroad bed has been "abandoned" as a trail, and the map suggests three replacement trail options. But none of these new replacement trail options has been determined to be feasible, and there are major legal, financial, and private property impediments to "Trail Options 1, 2, and 3."

Trail Option 1-Cowiche Canyon Road is Not Feasible for the following reasons:

- State Law and RCO Manual 10a prohibit WWRP-funded trails on unprotected road shoulders and sidewalks next to roads because it is unsafe for non-motorized trail users
- No right of way has been acquired along Cowiche Canyon Road
- Existing rail-trail facility is already paid for and available to public
- No replacement funds are available to build a new 2-mile trail prism along Cowiche Canyon Road
- Cowiche Canyon Road is closer to houses than existing rail-trail
- Replacing existing natural area rail-trail with road-trail eliminates public access to creek and natural area
- Replacement trail along Cowiche Canyon Road provides no access to natural area
- City and County Trail Plans show William O. Douglas Trail on elevated railroad bed along Cowiche Creek, NOT on road
- Abandoning the existing rail-trail facility means WWRP funds totaling **\$817,107.49** were spent to acquire 34 interconnected recreation acres and to develop connecting trail along Cowiche Creek — these WWRP-funded recreation facilities will go unused and public recreational access will be cut off.

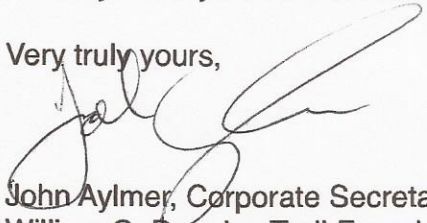
Trail Options 2 and 3 are Not Feasible at this time for the following reasons:

- Additional private land acquisition is needed to locate a new replacement trail route above the 100-year floodplain
- Additional funds are needed to construct a new replacement trail prism above the 100-year floodplain
- Mid-Columbia Fisheries wants to demolish the existing bridge support platform on the rail grade now located above the 100-year floodplain
- The long-planned 60-foot trail bridge span may become as much as a 200-foot span to stay out of the altered floodplain as a result of the Mid-Columbia project
- Mid-Columbia Fisheries has not identified any funding to investigate the feasibility of Options 2 and 3 nor any funding to cover substantial cost increases to replace the existing elevated rail-trail

Mid-Columbia Fisheries' proposal to convert grant-funded William O. Douglas Trail facilities to fish habitat has not gone through public review processes such as SEPA, NEPA, and cultural/historic resources. This lack of transparency concerns us. We respectfully ask RCO to include the William O. Douglas Trail Foundation in future meetings and processes concerning the William O. Douglas Trail.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Aylmer', written over a faint, illegible background.

John Aylmer, Corporate Secretary
William O. Douglas Trail Foundation
williamodouglastrail@gmail.com

Natural Resources Building
1111 Washington St. S.E.
Olympia, WA 98501

P.O. Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917



(360) 902-3000
TTY (360) 902-1996
Fax: (360) 902-3026

E-mail: info@rco.wa.gov
Web site: www.rco.wa.gov

STATE OF WASHINGTON

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

January 20, 2015

Andrew Stepniewski
William O. Douglas Trail Foundation
Yakima, WA 98901

Re: William O. Douglas Trail, RCO #06-1851AD

Dear Mr. Stepniewski:

I am responding to your letter, dated December 16, 2014 expressing the Foundation's concerns with the Lower Cowiche Creek Restoration project (RCO #11-1320) as it relates to the William O. Douglas Trail project.

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) and its respective funding boards do not make land use determinations. Each project sponsor is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits to conduct the scope of work funded by a project agreement.

The City of Yakima used a Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Trails category (WWRP-Trails) grant to acquire several properties and easements for development of a portion of the William O. Douglas trail and for future trail development. The RCO did not participate in funding acquisition of railroad right-of-way.

The trail grant does not require the trail corridor to be located on railroad right-of-way. The city may locate the trail on alternative routes different than the original proposed alignment.

The Ketchen property, which was acquired with RCO grant #06-1851, is the only WWRP-Trails funded property identified in the restoration activities in the Lower Cowiche Creek Restoration project, RCO #11-1320. Habitat enhancement (including restoration) is an allowable activity on WWRP-Trails funded sites as long as a trail and public outdoor recreation opportunities are not precluded. The city recently advised my staff of their plans to construct a trailhead and a portion of the trail on the Ketchen property.



January 20, 2015
William O. Douglas Trail Foundation
Page 2

The restoration activities proposed for the Ketchen property do not constitute a conversion. At this time, there is no compliance concern associated with the restoration activities proposed for the Ketchen property.

If you have any questions, please contact Myra Barker, compliance specialist, at (360) 902-2976 or email myra.barker@rco.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Kaleen Cottingham
Director

cc: Myra Barker, RCO
Kay Caromile, RCO

From: Barker, Myra (RCO)
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 12:53 PM
To: John Aylmer
Cc: Caromile, Kay (RCO); Moxham, Laura (RCO); Austin, Marguerite (RCO); Brett Sheffield (Brett.Sheffield@yakimawa.gov); 'Margaret Neuman'
Subject: FW: William O. Douglas Trail RCO #06-1851C

Mr. Aylmer,

I was forwarded your letter by Kay Caromile.

In response to your letter, I'm forwarding to you the response we provided to Mr. Stepniewski's December 16, 2014 letter and our response to the City of Yakima's letter that you referenced.

I believe these responses address many of the concerns you raise.

As stated in our response to Mr. Stepniewski's letter, the trail grant does not require the trail corridor to be located on railroad right-of-way.

Should the city decide to locate the a portion of the trail property acquired with RCO funding adjacent to a roadway, that portion of the trail must be physically separated from the road in order to be in compliance with RCO policy.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Myra Barker
Compliance Specialist
Recreation and Conservation Office
PO Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504
360-902-2976
360-902-3026 Fax



From: Barker, Myra (RCO)
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 12:16 PM
To: Andrew Stepniewski (williamodouglastrail@gmail.com)
Cc: Brett Sheffield (Brett.Sheffield@yakimawa.gov); 'Margaret Neuman'; Caromile, Kay (RCO); Moxham, Laura (RCO); Austin, Marguerite (RCO)
Subject: William O. Douglas Trail RCO #06-1851C

Mr. Stepniewski,

Please find attached our director's response to your December 16, 2014 letter regarding the William O. Douglas Trail project and the related restoration project.

In addition, attached is our response to the City of Yakima to their December 16, 2014 letter that outlined options for the trail and the planned restoration project.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Myra Barker
Compliance Specialist
Recreation and Conservation Office
PO Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504
360-902-2976
360-902-3026 Fax



February 19, 2015

Michael W. Hoge
MHoge@perkinscoie.com
D. (206) 359-8900
F. (206) 359-9900

VIA EMAIL

Kaleen Cottingham, Director
State of Washington Recreation and Conservation Office
PO Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

**Re: William O. Douglas Trail Foundation (WODTF), RCO #06-1851
Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group (MCFEG), RCO #11-1320**

Dear Director Cottingham:

This letter, on behalf of our client William O. Douglas Trail Foundation, is written to follow up on your letter of January 20, 2015 to WODTF board vice president Stepniewski, in which you indicated that the above-referenced grant to MCFEG does not amount to an impermissible conversion.

WODTF is the founder and key advocate for the WOD Trail. WODTF is a major grant partner, contributing over \$500,000 in matching Transportation Enhancement funds as part of the above WWRP Grant, which WODTF helped write, present, and implement.

We request that you reconsider the January 20 conclusion in light of the following:

WAC 286-27-045 states in part:

A "conversion" occurs when interests in real property and facilities acquired, developed, renovated, enhanced or restored are converted to uses other than those for which the funds were originally approved and described in the project agreement. Interests in real property include, but are not limited to, options, rights of first refusal, conservation easements, leases, and mineral rights.

WAC 286-27-066 states in part:

- (1) Except as provided in this section, interest in real property and facilities acquired, developed, renovated, enhanced or restored shall not, without prior approval of the board be converted to uses other than those for which the funds were originally approved.
- (2) The board shall assure the substitution or replacement of interest in real property and/or facilities in accordance with this chapter.
- (3) The board shall only approve conversions when:

- (a) All practical alternatives to the conversion have been evaluated and rejected; and
- (b) The sponsor or successor will provide another interest in real property(s) and/or facilities to serve as a replacement. The replacement must:
 - (i) Be of equivalent or greater usefulness and location;
 - (ii) Be administered by the same sponsor or successor unless otherwise approved by the board;
 - (iii) Satisfy need(s) identified in the most recent plan(s) required under WAC 286-27-040;
 - (iv) Be eligible to receive a grant in the WWRP account or category from which funds were originally allocated, unless otherwise authorized by the board;
 - (v) If acquisition of interests in real property: Be interest in real property(ies) of at least equal market value and public benefit at the time of replacement;
 - (vi) If a development: Provide a facility of at least equal market value and public benefit as that which existed at the time of the original investment of WWRP funds; and
 - (vii) If a restoration or enhancement project: Provide restoration or enhancement activities necessary to replicate the ecological benefit intended by the project.

As more thoroughly explained in Mr. Stepniewski's letter of December 16 to you, the project agreement for project #06-1851 described the Trail's location on the abandoned railroad land and bridge site over Cowiche Creek, and the sponsor City of Yakima carried out portions of the grant's requirements by purchasing the railroad land and taking some of the other actions described in the project agreement.

The proposal in #11-1320 to demolish the rail route and bridge supports fails in significant respects to be of equivalent usefulness and location as the original Trail route described in the #06-1851 project agreement, or to meet several of the other requirements of section -066(3) above.

And, of course, it is wasteful of public funds to demolish key portions of a highly-ranked, exhaustively vetted, earlier-funded project (especially without first involving the earlier-project's proponents to explore whether a more win-win overall solution is feasible). The WODTF is not opposed to fish restoration efforts, and in fact has cooperated on similar projects in the past, but is opposed to having its legitimate interests undercut, often by stealth, with no financial assistance or other mitigation to undo the proposed destruction of its earlier-funded efforts that produced a bargain, ideal, ready-made trail route.

We understand that demolition of the railroad grade and pedestrian/biking bridge approaches envisioned by project #11-1320 is a conversion of project #06-1851 according to RCW 79A.15.030(8) and the agency's regulations and policies.

A focus only on which dollars may have been used to purchase the historic railroad grade, or on whether the non-Ketchen properties were purchased with non-WWRP funds, inappropriately narrows the issue that WODTF has attempted to raise with the RCO. The conversion issue is broader than the Ketchen property, and broader than which dollars, out of the coordinated funding the City had available due to the RCO grant and the matching funds secured by WODTF, were earmarked (if at all) for the Ketchen purchase or for the other activities covered by the project agreement.

Conversion of the other properties funded in part by grant #06-1851 and its matching funds is also at issue. The agency's regulations and policies define conversion more broadly than to permit a subsequent grantee to demolish earlier grant objects simply by claiming that certain non-grant funds, as part of an overall required package of project funding (see, e.g., RCW 79A.15.070(4)), were used to carry out specific activities required by the earlier project agreement. Under the approach taken in the January 20 response to Mr. Stepniewski, the requirements of any RCO grant conditioned on matching funds could easily be avoided by a sponsor's claim that other, non-RCO portions of the required, coordinated funding package paid for the matters in specific question, and that thus a prior project agreement has no force respecting a new proposal to destroy the objects of the earlier-funded project.

We recognize that the history and facts to be absorbed prior to making an informed decision in this matter are complex, and believe a meeting with appropriate RCO personnel would be a useful way to share the necessary information. If you agree, members of the WODTF board will make it a priority to identify and convene at an early mutually-convenient time.

Thank you for your consideration of this input. If your reconsideration does not change your conclusion, please consider this letter as our request to go next to the full RCO Board for a declaratory order under WAC 286-04-085 that grant #11-1320 causes an unlawful conversion with respect to the objects of grant #06-1851. (In that event, the facts to be considered are summarized in Mr. Stepniewski's December 14 letter, and will be supplemented prior to the board's meeting on the petition.)

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Kaleen Cottingham, Director
February 19, 2015
Page 4

Please forward a copy of this letter to the Deputy or Assistant Attorney(s) General with responsibility for the RCO's representation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Hoge", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael W. Hoge

MWH

cc: WODTF Board

Natural Resources Building
1111 Washington St. S.E.
Olympia, WA 98501

P.O. Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917



(360) 902-3000
TTY (360) 902-1996
Fax: (360) 902-3026

E-mail: info@rco.wa.gov
Web site: www.rco.wa.gov

STATE OF WASHINGTON

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

February 27, 2015

Mr. Michael Hoge
Perkins Coie
1201 Third Avenue, Suite 4900
Seattle, WA 98101-3099

RE: William O. Douglas Trail, RCO #06-1851C

Dear Mr. Hoge:

This correspondence is in response to your letter dated February 19, 2015 in which you shared the William O. Douglas Trail Foundation's opinion that a conversion will occur at the above referenced project as a result of the Lower Cowiche Creek Restoration project, RCO #11-1320R.

I want to clarify the role my agency has in regard to the trail. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) does not prescribe specific site locations to grantees within the acquired parcels for a funded project. For this reason, the grant agreement for the trail (#06-1851) does not mandate use of a specific alignment on abandoned rail right-of-way or bridges. It is the City of Yakima's decision, as the trail project sponsor, to determine the final location of the trail corridor and trail bridges following all pertinent environmental and land use laws. RCO's interest is ensuring the funded properties are used for outdoor recreation trail purposes. Habitat restoration is an allowable activity on WWRP trail grants as long as a trail is completed and accomplishes the objectives of the grant.

I encourage the Trail Foundation to work with the City of Yakima on finding a mutually agreed upon location for the trail and trail bridges or in understanding why they are proposing alternative routes.

If, after receiving this letter, you would still like to appear before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to discuss this issue, you may find the board meeting dates at <http://www.rco.wa.gov/boards/rcfb.shtml>. The board holds time on its agenda, generally in the morning of its business meeting, for public comment on issues not on its agenda.

Sincerely,

Kaleen Cottingham
Director

cc: Brett Sheffield, City of Yakima
Brian Faller, Office of the Attorney General
Myra Barker, RCO ✓
Kay Caromile, RCO



Back Country Horsemen of Washington
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance
The Mountaineers
Washington Trails Association

March 30, 2015

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Recreation and Conservation Office
1111 Washington Street S.E.
Olympia, Washington 98501

Dear Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Members:

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program is essential in providing outdoor recreation experiences that create healthy, economically vital communities. Since 1989, the successful implementation of the program has demonstrated a commitment to finding solutions that fulfill unique community needs, facilitate the participation of underserved populations and reflect the demonstrated intent of the legislature to fund trails that are so fundamental to accessing the state's great outdoors, whether that is on a mountain top or right in town.

According to the 2013 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, recreation providers were asked to rank the "importance of activity" for a number of recreation activities. Soft surface (ex. dirt) and hard surface trails tied for third place just behind picnic areas and equipped play areas, demonstrating the importance of having high quality trail systems in Washington. Yet the WWRP Trails category distributes 85% of funding to hard surface trails and only 15% to soft surface trails – a clear imbalance in funding distribution.

In order to better represent the needs of Washington's trail users, **we request that the funding board utilize the analysis that we have conducted on the Trails Category and research the disparity.** The outcome we seek is to determine why there is such an imbalance between the funding of hard and soft surface trails and how it may be remedied.

We appreciate the partnership of the RCO and RCFB and look forward to working with you to fully realize these goals in the future. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can assist you in any way or answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Karen Daubert
Executive Director, Washington Trails Association

Trygve Culp
President, Back Country Horsemen of Washington

Glenn Glover
Executive Director, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

Martinique Grigg
Executive Director, The Mountaineers

Enclosed: WWRP Trails Category disparity one pager; Dec. 2013 WTA analysis

Back Country Horsemen of Washington
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance
The Mountaineers
Washington Trails Association

December 20, 2013

Dear Kaleen Cottingham, Recreation and Conservation Office Director
Harriet Spanel, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Chair

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the funding criteria for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Trails category. The Washington Trails Association (WTA), the Back Country Horsemen of Washington (BHW), the Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance (EMBA), and the Mountaineers share a common interest in facilitating meaningful opportunities for all Washington residents to engage in outdoor recreation. Every year, our members contribute thousands of hours to ensure that existing trails are safe and sustainable and to meet an ever-growing demand for new soft-surface trails. We have a strong stake in creating opportunities that introduce a younger and more diverse group to the outdoors: they will be our future stewards. We are grateful for the opportunity to work alongside the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and RCO Staff to re-examine and revise the existing criteria to reflect the current and future recreation needs of Washington residents.

Outdoor recreation is essential to Washington's communities. Residents engage in outdoor recreation to enjoy nature, relax, spend time with family and friends, and to be active and healthy. Outdoor recreation promotes a sense of community and unites diverse users. As the state's population continues to grow over the next decade, our organizations will need to ensure that we are sustaining outdoor opportunities that respond to increased urbanization, an aging population, and growing minority communities.

Recreation in Washington has fundamentally changed. The number of people who can take multiple days to traverse linear trails is decreasing. The new face of outdoor recreation in Washington wishes to have a meaningful outdoor experience on a more compressed time schedule. We need to acknowledge this change to ensure that we are funding trails that address the most pressing needs of our community. To do this, we need to support the front-country and suburban soft-surface trails that will best meet the needs

of large communities with less time, but a persistent desire to spend time outdoors. This is the mission that unites our organization, and motivates the recreation components of WWRP funding—the desire to get more people outdoors.

The 2012 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) study illustrates the need for more soft-surface trails. The results demonstrate that Washington residents have a growing interest in hiking and mountain biking, desire more outdoor recreation opportunities close to home, and that younger and more diverse populations are becoming more interested in outdoor activities. The study showed that 90% of Washington residents participate in walking, hiking, climbing and mountaineering, and 37% participate in biking. The percentage of hikers has increased from 20% in 2008 to 54% in 2012. Among children, 41% hike and 29% bike. Similarly, from 2002 to 2012, hiking went from the #8 most popular outdoor recreation activity to #6.

Between 2006 and 2012, snowshoeing, camping in remote locations, hiking, and climbing or mountaineering were among the activities with the greatest increase in participation. Each of these activities saw at least a 10% increase. Furthermore the SCORP report states that “from 2006 to 2012, the importance of snowshoeing (supported by snow and ice trails) and horseback riding (supported by designated bridle trails) both increased in ranking based on participation rates. Because of the increased use of snow and ice trails and designated bridle trail.....it is reasonable to conclude that additional opportunities in these activities would be welcomed by Washington State residents.”

The central finding of this study is that the supply is not meeting the demand. Although Washington residents have a growing interest in activities that necessitate more soft-surface suburban and front country trails, the current funding criteria strongly favors hard surface trails.

The WWRP is a powerful and responsive program. Originally, the Trails category was created with soft-surface trails in mind. But over the last twenty years, the administrative criteria have become distanced from the priorities that initially motivated the fund. Under the current criteria, the WWRP Trails category distributes 85% of funding to hard surface trails and only 15% to soft-surface trails. These hard surface trails are very expensive and are by necessity constructed by government contractors, not volunteers. In the last ten years, all of the WWRP-funded hard surface projects combined have used less volunteers hours than each of our organizations utilizes in a single year. Any increase in funding will go a long way because soft-surface trails are so much less expensive to build and maintain.

Because the existing criteria favors hard-surface trails, soft surface trail applicants are in effect cut off from a significant source of funding. All grant applications are valuable, and grant distribution is often decided along very slim margins. Thus, the exact language provided to guide the advisory board is often crucial to the success of those applications. While there are significant sources of potential funding for hard-surface trails, there are virtually no other sources to fund the soft-surface trails that Washington residents so desperately need. The Olallie State Parks Trail project is illustrative of the uphill battle that soft-surface grant applicants face. In 2010, State Parks pursued funding for the Olallie State Park trail in the Trails category. Although the advisory committee was very receptive to the application, adherence to the criteria resulted in the application scoring next to last out of 26 applications. Two years later, State Parks pursued, and received, funding for that project through the State Parks category. For other similarly deserving soft-surface projects that are ineligible for state parks funding, WWRP funding is unattainable.

Refocusing funding on soft-surface trails in suburban or front country areas is essential to provide adequate opportunities for younger and more diverse populations to participate in outdoor recreation. According to the SCORP survey, two of the most underserved populations are minority groups and those living in suburban and urban areas. In addition, the study demonstrated that those 18 and younger spend the least amount of time participating in outdoor activities out of all age groups. Targeted soft-surface trail projects can address this need and encourage these populations to enjoy and protect Washington's natural spaces. For example, the Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance is developing a soft-surface system of mountain biking trails in Swan Creek Park, a diverse community in Tacoma. The aim of this project is to target a more diverse population of youth to get them involved in mountain biking, and to clear the misconception that money is a barrier to involvement in the mountain biking community. EMBA members themselves will build the trail system and donors funded one-third of the project. EMBA's trail maintenance and youth outreach programs are targeted to bolster involvement, and have been very successful in doing so. This example demonstrates how the development of soft-surface trails, which are built by volunteers and not government contractors, encourages underserved communities to become involved in outdoor recreation and stewardship.

With a few subtle adjustments, the existing criteria can be tailored to better address the needs of Washington residents. All of these suggested changes can be made administratively and do not require any changes to the language of the RCW to be given full effect. We strongly support the following revisions to the existing Trails category criteria:

- **“Water Access, Views, and Scenic Values” Criterion:** The existing criterion places undue emphasis on access to or views of water. Where the RCW instructs the board to consider the “water access, views, and scenic values” of the proposed trail, with no demonstrated preference, the RCO criterion explicitly favors water access and water views: “Water access is the primary criterion; scenic values or views of water are secondary.” (RCO Project Evaluations Manual). This interpretation neglects the legislature’s intent to consider other views and scenic values that are unrelated to a natural water body. Because this criterion is currently weighted at 10 points, the undue emphasis on water access and water views has a significant impact on the applications that receive funding and may outweigh other fundamental factors. Although water access and water views may indicate the greater desirability of an application if all other fundamental factors are equal, it should not be given greater weight than the other fundamental factors. This criterion should be revised to give equal weight to water access, water views, and scenic values unrelated to a natural water body. This revision will allow the board to more broadly interpret the scenic value of a proposed trail site to ensure that WWRP funding is distributed in a manner consistent with the needs of Washington residents.
- **“Project Design” Criterion:** Currently, this criterion places a heavy emphasis on the accessibility of a proposed trail and an applicant’s score often turns on that factor. Out of context, a hard surface trail is essentially more accessible and will always score higher than a soft-surface trail if the criterion is interpreted in this manner. But when assessing a community’s need for a trail, context is inescapable. If a community has a pressing need for a soft-surface front country trail or connector, the accessibility of that trail can only be judged within the context of that need. When the legislature developed the guidelines, the legislature intended for the accessibility of a trail to be judged depending on the nature and purpose of the trail and the corresponding need.

Although similar guidelines have not yet been developed for non-federal trails, the guidelines to ensure that federal trails comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) illustrate a context-specific interpretation of accessibility. These guidelines provide exceptions for situations where terrain and other factors make compliance impracticable or where compliance would fundamentally alter a site’s function or purpose. (Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines; Outdoor Developed Areas). Given the nature of many surface trail projects, guaranteeing full accessibility would be prohibitively expensive and would fundamentally alter significant natural features of the trail. Instead, the

accessibility requirement should be interpreted to require that trails are accessible *to the greatest extent possible*, given the context and purpose of the trail.

- **“Trail and Community Linkages” Criterion:** This criterion is unnecessarily limited and literal. Currently, this criterion envisions trails as a means of transportation between two points. But trails are not meant to act as natural highways; trails are destinations in and of themselves. An effective trail connects communities culturally, not necessarily physically. The community criterion should be re-interpreted to emphasize the importance of trails as a place for diverse communities to gather and relate to one another through outdoor recreation. This interpretation is also consistent with the language of the Manual, which states that the RCO should “broadly interpret” the term “community” to include the stated factors, but that the board’s review is “not limited to” those factors. This criterion is currently weighted at 15 points, so this criterion is weighted more heavily than other fundamental factors that may favor soft surface trails.

These changes are essential to ensure the long-term stability of WWRP funding. WWRP is a broad coalition of diverse interests, from acquisitions and farmland to parks and trails. There is strong concern that the legislature will not support continued funding of the WWRP. To convince legislators that WWRP funding is necessary and worthwhile, we need to demonstrate that the current program is meeting the recreational needs of the largest number of people. These changes will help convince our legislators in Olympia that WWRP funding is an indispensable resource that is responsive to their constituents’ needs.

Our organizations are committed to finding a solution that addresses the most pressing outdoor recreation needs of our communities, facilitates the participation of underserved populations, and reflects the demonstrated intent of the legislature to fund the soft-surface trails that are so vital to the enjoyment of the outdoors in our state. We appreciate the partnership of the RCO and look forward to working with you and the rest of the Committee to fully realize these goals in the future. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can assist you in any way or answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Karen Daubert
Executive Director, Washington Trails Association

Trygve Culp
President, Back Country Horsemen of Washington

Glenn Glover
Executive Director, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

Martinique Grigg
Executive Director, The Mountaineers

» Gaps in Funding For Soft Surface Trails



Each year, 72% of Washingtonians use trails.

Funding for soft-surface trails has decreased while demand continues to increase.



WTA FILE PHOTO

BACKGROUND: Growing Demand for Trails Not Matched by Funding

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) is the largest source of funding for bike and ski trails in our state and is also a critical source of funds for hiking trails and walking paths. Funded in the state capital construction budget, proposals are competitively ranked with the intention that only the best projects are funded.

Currently, only 15% of WWRP Trail funds go to soft-surface trails. 51% of Washingtonians hike each year and another 21% use trails for other outdoor activities like biking, walking their dogs, you name it. While Washington residents have a growing interest in activities that necessitate more soft-surface suburban and front country trails, the current funding criteria strongly favors hard surface trails, such as paved paths.

OUR SOLUTION: Restore Balance in Trail Grats, Honor WWRP's Original Intent to Serve Community-Specific Needs

The founders of the program intended WWRP funding to be flexible for community-specific needs. The unbalanced funding of trails is a missed opportunity to recognize regional needs. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board should **reevaluate its approach to the WWRP scoring criteria and increase funding for soft surface trails from 15 to 30%.**

- “Water Access, Views, and Scenic Values” Criterion: This criterion should **give equal weight to water views, and scenic values unrelated to water.** Prioritizing water views fails to recognize Washington’s diverse landscape, putting many communities at a disadvantage.
- “Project Design” Criterion: Stating that hard surface trails are more accessible fails to recognize context. **Accessibility must be judged within the scope of the community’s need.** For example, a proposal for a soft-surface trail in Wenatchee should not rank lower than a hard surface trail in Kirkland simply because one is paved while the other isn’t if the community need is the same for each.
- “Trail and Community Linkages” Criterion: Trails are not meant to be highways; **trails themselves are destinations.** This criterion should emphasize the importance of trails as places for diverse communities to gather and relate to one another through outdoor recreation.

Case Study:

Olallie State Park Trail

In 2010, State Parks pursued funding for the Olallie State Park trail in the WWRP Trails category. Despite positive reception for the project, it went unfunded in favor of paved trails.

Unlike many other similarly deserving projects, the trail was eligible for alternative funding in the state parks category.

However, this is not a common story and funding was not received until two years after the original application.

» Action Needed to Meet Outdoor Recreation Demand

RATIONALE: Growing Need for Recreation, Public Health and Cost Reduction

We need to demonstrate that the current program is meeting the recreational needs of the largest number of people in order to ensure its longterm viability.

WWRP is meant to represent diverse interests, from habitat conservation and farmland to parks and trails. These changes will help convince our legislators in Olympia that WWRP funding is an indispensable resource that is responsive to their constituents' needs.

Recreation in Washington has fundamentally changed. The number of people who can take multiple days to traverse long trails is decreasing but dayhiking, mountain biking and other trail activities have gained popularity.

- As the state's population grows exponentially over the next decade, we need to **ensure that we are sustaining outdoor opportunities that respond to increased urbanization, an aging population, and growing minority communities.**
- **There are limited sources outside of the WWRP to fund soft-surface trails** that Washington residents so desperately need.
- **Creating abundant outdoor opportunities is critical to community health.** Doctors in Wenatchee have even begun to prescribe hiking outside as preventive medicine. (From "Wenatchee Latino Population Encouraged To Hike Outdoors For Health," NW News Network, June 9, 2014)
- **Soft-surface trails cause construction and maintenance cost reduction.** Soft-surface trails are much less expensive to build and maintain, so any increase in funding will go a long way toward meeting recreation needs while being sensitive to the fiscal climate.

SUPPORTERS

The proposal to increase soft-surface trail funding through the WWRP is supported by:

- Bill Chapman, former RCFB president
- Back Country Horsemen of Washington
- Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance
- The Mountaineers
- Washington Trails Association



PHOTO BY EBENEZER HIKERS

For more information, contact:

Andrea Imler, Advocacy Director: 206.799.6197 (cell) 206.965.8558 (office) aimler@wta.org

March 30, 2015

Leslie Ryan Connelly
WA State Recreation and Conservation Office
1111 Washington Street NE
Olympia, WA 98501

RECEIVED
APR - 6 2015
WA STATE
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE



Dear Leslie,

I am writing on behalf of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Bellevue in reference to the YAF Grant program for 2015. I understand the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will be making final YAF grant program decisions at its meeting on April 9th and I would like to encourage you to consider Boys & Girls Clubs of Bellevue in your discussions.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Bellevue is in an active campaign to significantly address the recreation needs of the Eastside with construction of a new athletic Fieldhouse in partnership with the City of Bellevue. This effort, which began in 2010 provides a state-of-the-art athletic facility for youth, adults and seniors in our community.

I understand the application process for this round of funding differed from past processes, and unfortunately, our Club did not receive notification about the LOI process for the YAF grant. We therefore did not have the opportunity to demonstrate the relevance of this project and the impact it will have in our local community.

My hope is, with this letter, to provide some general information about our project so that you might consider Boys & Girls Clubs of Bellevue. Our project is very well aligned with the YAF goal of providing athletic facilities to support youth sports and a multi-generational approach to programming through our long-time partnership with the City of Bellevue. With the support of YAF Funds, the Club can have a significant impact in our community.

Our Club is currently in a capital campaign to raise \$21M dollars with funds designated to a 25,000 sf Fieldhouse in Hidden Valley—recently opened—and the construction of a new Main Club in downtown Bellevue. The Fieldhouse includes three full-sized basketball courts, and is designed for junior & senior basketball, volleyball, and badminton and pickle ball. It also has three indoor batting cages, a classroom, concessions and indoor and outdoor restrooms. We partnered with the City of Bellevue to upgrade existing baseball fields which can be used for football, lacrosse and soccer. Our agreement with the City included \$2.5M to upgrade the fields making them usable year-round. Additionally, through our partnership with the City the facility will be open during off hours to be used as a senior and community center.

We would be most grateful for your consideration of accepting our LOI during your upcoming approval session in April and will be happy to forward any additional information you may need.

Sincerely,

Michèle Heffron
Director of Development

Capital Campaign Steering Committee:

Robbie Bach
Leo Backer
Rich Bray
Scott Cameron
Jim Voelker, Campaign Chair
Rip Warendorf
Gloria Wildeman
Phil Wood

GREAT FUTURES START HERE.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF BELLEVUE

Staff and Consultant:
Kathy Haggart, President and CEO
Ryan Scott, COO
Michèle Heffron, Director of Development
Blair Rasmussen, Consultant
209 100th Avenue N
Bellevue, WA 9800
425.454.616

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