

# RECREATIONAL ASSETS OF STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE IN WASHINGTON STATE

## Study Report

September 30, 2019



WASHINGTON STATE  
Recreation and  
Conservation Office



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## **Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office**

Kaleen Cottingham, director

Wendy Brown, policy director

Adam Cole, natural resource policy specialist

Katie Pruitt, planning and policy analyst

Julia Marshburn, administrative assistant

## **Red Barn Communications**

Brit Kramer, principal

Shelley Dahle, member services

Larry Otos, associate

## **Recreational Assets of Statewide Significance Study Advisory Committee**

The Honorable Nancy Lilquist,  
Councilwoman, Ellensburg City Council

Jon Snyder, recreation policy advisor  
Governor's Office

Dave Schaub, member  
Spokane County Parks and Recreation  
Advisory Committee

Mike Racine, director  
Washington SCUBA Alliance

Brian Adams, director  
Skagit County Parks and Recreation  
Department

Andrea Imler, advocacy director  
Washington Trails Association

Peter Mayer, deputy executive director  
Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma

Doug Levy, principal  
Outcomes by Levy

David Patton, Northwest director  
Trust for Public Land

Owen Rowe, governmental and  
legislative affairs director  
Washington State Parks and Recreation  
Commission

Peter Schrappen, director of  
government affairs  
Northwest Maritime Trade Association

Leah Dobey, Recreation Program manager  
Washington Department of Natural  
Resources

Cynthia Wilkerson, Lands Division manager  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Chris Zipperer, physical activity coordinator  
Washington Department of Health

*Cover photograph of Clear Lake near  
Eatonville by Tony Sirgedas, courtesy of  
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Wildlife*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>Back cover</b>
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Map Analysis.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Findings .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Foundational Assets .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Exceptional Assets .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Appendix A: Asset Reports.....</b>	<b>37</b>
Air Activities .....	38
Archery.....	41
Bicycling and Walking.....	45
Boating (Motorized and Sailing) .....	50
Camping.....	55
Climbing, Bouldering, and Scrambling .....	58
Equestrian in the Backcountry.....	62
Firearms.....	66
Fishing and Shellfishing .....	70
Hiking and Backpacking .....	73
Hunting with Firearms and Bows .....	78
Leisure Activities in Parks .....	82
Mountain Biking.....	85
Mountaineering .....	90
Nature Activities.....	93
Off-Road 4x4 Riding.....	96
Off-Road All-terrain Vehicle Riding .....	100
Off-Road Motorcycling .....	104
Paddling .....	108
Paddling Whitewater.....	112
Playing Sports .....	116
SCUBA Diving.....	120
Skiing.....	123
Snowmobiling.....	125
Winter Trails.....	128
<b>Appendix B: Outreach List.....</b>	<b>132</b>





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## OVERVIEW

Washington has an abundance of natural beauty and a rich tradition of providing outdoor recreation. The state is home to diverse landscapes that provide nearly unparalleled opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. This makes Washington a great place to live, play, and do business. In addition, outdoor recreation contributes significantly to state and regional economies, public health, and environmental resiliency.

With so much to gain by investing in outdoor recreation, the Washington State Legislature funded a study in 2018 to identify future recreational needs. It tasked the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) with identifying recreational assets of statewide significance, where gaps in recreational assets exist, and investment strategies and options for addressing those gaps. The Legislature also directed that the study must address existing and projected needs of the people of Washington State.

Over the course of the study, RCO consulted more than 80 interest groups, land managers, organizations, and individuals. An advisory committee consisting of local agency directors, state policy leads, and user groups provided guidance throughout the project. In addition, RCO looked at 146 recreational activities and more than 16,000 records of assets that support them.

## DEFINING RECREATIONAL ASSETS OF STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE

The advisory committee recommended RCO study two types of recreational assets: foundational and exceptional.

**Foundational Assets** are facilities that support the most popular recreational activities in the state (exceeding 30 percent participation).<sup>1</sup> These facilities were deemed “foundational” to the recreational satisfaction and well-being of Washington’s residents. Walking trails, community parks, and swimming, are examples of opportunities provided by foundational assets. RCO mapped these assets by activity and then identified spatial gaps and levels of service by community.

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<sup>1</sup>As identified in the [State of Washington Assessment of Outdoor Recreation Demand Report](#), Prepared for RCO by Eastern Washington University, 2017

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Exceptional Assets** represent the most popular, destination-oriented, and iconic places to recreate in the state. These assets are places of greatest importance to a recreational group. RCO defined these assets through interviews of statewide user and advocacy groups, land managers, and others. These places provide a unique experience or activity, such as rock climbing, whitewater rafting, and backcountry horseback riding. Due to geography, exceptional assets may not be available in all areas of the state.

## Interactive Maps

The study resulted in three [interactive maps](#) that are unique resources in Washington. The maps on RCO's Web Site identify existing foundational assets and reveal gaps, or opportunities for future recreational development. The maps may be used as a resource to community and project planners.

## FINDINGS

### Population Growth

As Washington's population is forecast to grow from 7.4 million in 2019 to 9 million in 2040,<sup>2</sup> the State will need to increase investment in outdoor recreation to accommodate these new residents. Investments also should be made with the goal of maintaining residents' relatively high satisfaction with their recreational opportunities (74 percent were satisfied, according to a 2017 study).<sup>3</sup> Because population growth largely will be driven by people moving to Washington, there is also a need to strengthen programs that support these new residents' appreciation of the state's heritage.

Population growth will put pressure on local parks and recreation agencies to maintain and redevelop sites to accommodate increasing use. For example, in urban and urbanizing areas of the state, facilities such as athletic fields need to be upgraded to synthetic, multi-sport surfaces to increase capacity during peak use times and allow year-round availability for a diversity of sports. Similarly, trail corridors and open space facilities need to be secured to meet future needs.

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<sup>2</sup>Office of Financial Management (OFM) Population Forecast 2010-2040, OFM Forecasting and Research Division, State of Washington, 2019

<sup>3</sup>[State of Washington Assessment of Outdoor Recreation Demand Report](#), Prepared for RCO by Eastern Washington University, 2017, p47-52

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **Trails and Backcountry Recreation**

- Many statewide and regional trails lack completeness with missing links and underdeveloped segments.
- Overcrowding at backcountry sites and trailheads, and a lack of amenities.
- Missing or inadequate road access.
- Regional gaps in off-road vehicle facilities and lack of statewide, long-distance routes for off-roaders.
- Lack of a cross-state (Cascade Mountain range) mountain bike route.
- Lack of access for hunting.

## **Water-based Recreation**

- Lack of boat launches in mid and south Puget Sound, and moorage in south Puget Sound, San Juan Islands, and areas of the Columbia River.
- Lack of shoreline access for boaters and paddlers.
- Better coordination of water trail (paddling) experiences should be prioritized.

## **Volunteers and Private Recreation Lands**

- Public agencies are not well staffed to maximize the contribution of volunteers and private sector partners.
- Recreationists want more access to private forests and farmland for hunting and other forms of backcountry recreation.
- Recreationists also want more access across private lands to reach landlocked public lands and upland amenities from state-owned tidelands.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Preserve existing state funding programs that support the acquisition, development, management, and maintenance of local and state parks and recreation facilities and programs.
- Expand facilities at trailheads and backcountry destinations to serve more users and protect natural resources.
- Help local, urban and urbanizing governments maintain and add capacity to existing sites, and invest in more multisport facilities in response to population growth.
- Fill gaps in motorboat moorage, launches, and marinas in locations in Puget Sound, the San Juan Islands, and the Columbia River to better serve marine recreation.
- Fund positions at land manager agencies so they may increase partnerships and contributions from volunteers to support and expand opportunities.
- Establish a statewide trails system advisory committee to better coordinate regional and long-distance trail programs and fully fund a cross-state trail route.
- Create incentives and fund programs that expand recreational access on and through private lands.
- Fund targeted investments in backcountry road maintenance and reconstruction to preserve and expand opportunities.
- Pilot an outdoor recreation council in one or more regions of the state aimed at creating efficiencies in providing parks and recreation services with the goal of expanding opportunities.
- Improve map applications built as part of this study by regularly updating the recreational inventory and adding demographic information and other data to better identify investment priorities and measure return on investments.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## LINKING TO THE STATEWIDE PLAN

This study addresses existing and future needs of Washingtonians and helps fulfil the goals of the [\*Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan 2018-2022\*](#).<sup>4</sup> It is intended to be a resource for policy-makers at all levels of government when they plan and implement recreation and conservation initiatives.

The scope of the study supports the goals of the [\*Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan 2018-2022\*](#) in the following ways:

- Sustain and grow the legacy of parks, trails, and conservation lands.
  - Renovate facilities to meet today's recreation needs.
  - Pursue regional solutions to recreation and conservation.
  - Maintain residents' level of satisfaction in recreation.
- Position recreation and conservation as a vital public service.
  - Promote the outdoor recreation economy and other benefits.
- Improve equity.
  - Locate and build recreation facilities for underserved populations.<sup>5</sup>
  - Connect more people to popular activities.
  - Provide experiences where people go the most.
  - Enhance community health and safety.

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<sup>4</sup>[\*Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan 2018-2022\*](#), Recreation and Conservation Office, Washington State, 2018

<sup>5</sup>Underserved populations are often referred to as "at-risk populations."



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Get youth outside.
  - Provide a variety of activities for youth.
  - Build and renovate athletic facilities.
- Plan for culturally relevant parks and trails to meet changing demographics.
  - Create new and diverse opportunities.
  - Accommodate the active senior population.

## **ABOUT RCO**

RCO is a state agency that manages grant programs to create outdoor recreation opportunities, conserve wildlife habitat and working farms and forests, and help return salmon from near extinction. RCO also serves as a central planning organization for the recreational and conservation needs of the state and a repository of information for all levels of government and the public.



The first task of the study was to define recreational assets of statewide significance. To be most inclusive, RCO established two definitions: Foundational Assets and Exceptional Assets.

## FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS

These are facilities that support the most popular forms of recreation in the state as identified in the *State of Washington 2017 Assessment of Outdoor Recreation Demand Report*.<sup>6</sup> Any facility that supports the top 12 categories (at least 30 percent of residents participate) are deemed “foundational” to the recreational satisfaction and well-being of the state’s residents. These assets are in an [interactive map](#) on the RCO Web site. Below are the foundational activities and the facilities associated with them:

Foundational Activities	Facilities
Biking and mountain biking	<p>Biking facilities are trails and pathways separated from a roadway. They also may be bike parks, which are parks or areas inside a park designed for biking.</p> <p>Mountain biking facilities are trails on state, federal, and some local government recreation lands where mountain biking is allowed.</p>
Boating	Any public boat launch, dock, or marina designated for motorized boat or sailboat use, including private marinas.
Camping	Any public campground.
Fishing	Any water access point where fishing is allowed. May be a bank, pier, dock, or similar surface.
Hiking	Any trail on state, federal, and some local government recreation land.
Leisure activities in a park	Any local or state park
Nature activities	Any open space or natural area with recreational access, such as a trail or path.

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[State of Washington Assessment of Outdoor Recreation Demand Report](#), Prepared for RCO by Eastern Washington University, 2017, p57-62

# MAP ANALYSIS

Foundational Activities	Facilities
Paddling	Any public water access facility that could safely and efficiently accommodate launching a kayak, canoe, stand-up paddleboard, or similar vessel.
Playing sports	Any park or similar facility with a sport court or playfield
Swimming	Public or semi-public, <sup>7</sup> outdoor or indoor pool or freshwater beach as well as wading pools and spray pads
Walking	Trails and pathways separated from a roadway, parks, and open space including public school grounds where walking likely takes place.
Winter recreation	Any facility used for alpine or cross-country ski, snowshoe, snowmobile, or similar activity.

Staff assessed access to foundational sites by establishing limits on a reasonable distance a person would walk or drive to get there, which varied by asset type. RCO then performed three map analyses for these assets. The three maps listed below were created to show where gaps may exist.

## Gap Analysis Map

This simple gap analysis covered communities with 1,000 or more residents and all federally recognized tribal communities. The analysis shows where citizens have access to foundational assets and where they do not. The maps illustrate where lack of services may exist but do not account for the condition of the assets or how many people are served. For example, when evaluating hiking opportunities, staff identified very few gaps in the entire state, meaning that people in larger communities have access to at least one hiking point. That fact might indicate that there are enough places to go hiking but it fails to address the level of service, such as how crowded the trails are, if parking is adequate, and whether the trails are maintained adequately.

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<sup>7</sup>Includes facilities like YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs, not private swim clubs.

# MAP ANALYSIS

## **Populated Areas Service Levels Map**

This map was created to provide more context than the gap analysis map described above. It looks at communities of 5,000 residents or more<sup>8</sup> with one or more asset and depicts a service level analysis that consists of totaling assets<sup>9</sup> divided by the population of the community. This value is then shown as a user ratio in the maps and shows the level of service a category of assets provides in a community. This ratio represents a relative measure of access based on how many people likely will be using assets in an area.

## **County Service Levels Map**

This map is similar to the populated areas map but information is studied by county. Through this analysis, each county has a user ratio by activity, which allows comparison between counties.

## **EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS**

These assets are those places of greatest importance to user groups. These assets were identified by their popularity, exceptional and iconic nature, and status as a destination site.

## **Methodology**

These sites were identified through more than 80 interviews and surveys with statewide or regional user groups, land managers, and other organizations and individuals that represent specific recreationists or experiences. Staff asked them what their significant assets were, where gaps existed, challenges, and future needs. Staff distilled the information into 25 Asset and Activity Stakeholder Reports (Appendix A) and made recommendations therein.

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<sup>8</sup>Only communities in counties that plan under the state Growth Management Act were included in the analysis to allow unincorporated urban growth areas in counties and urban growth areas associated with cities and towns to be included.

<sup>9</sup>Recreation units in the community were included in this analysis as well as those available assets outside the community but within the activity opportunity measure (drive/walk time).



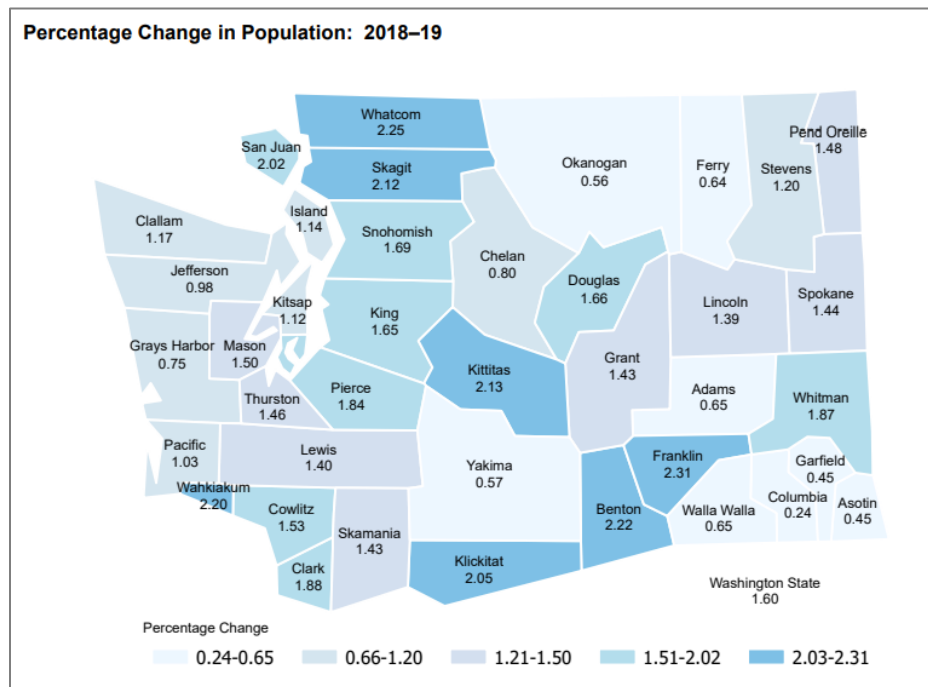
## POPULATION AND SATISFACTION

### Population Change in Washington State

Washington's population is expected to continue increasing from 7.4 million residents in 2019 to more than 9 million by 2040. The Washington Office of Financial Management<sup>10</sup> forecast for 2040 includes the following:

- 1.9 million children (0-17 years old)
- 5.3 million people of working age (18-64 years old)
- 2 million elderly (65 years old and older)
- Population growth will be attributed mostly to people moving here.
- The elderly population is increasing dramatically; 1 in 5 Washingtonians will be 65 years or older by 2028.
- In 2040, the state will have 74 dependents for every 100 people of working age.

The map to the right shows that all counties in Washington are growing, and as a



<sup>10</sup>Office of Financial Management (OFM) Population Forecast 2010-2040, OFM Forecasting and Research Division, State of Washington, 2019



# FINDINGS

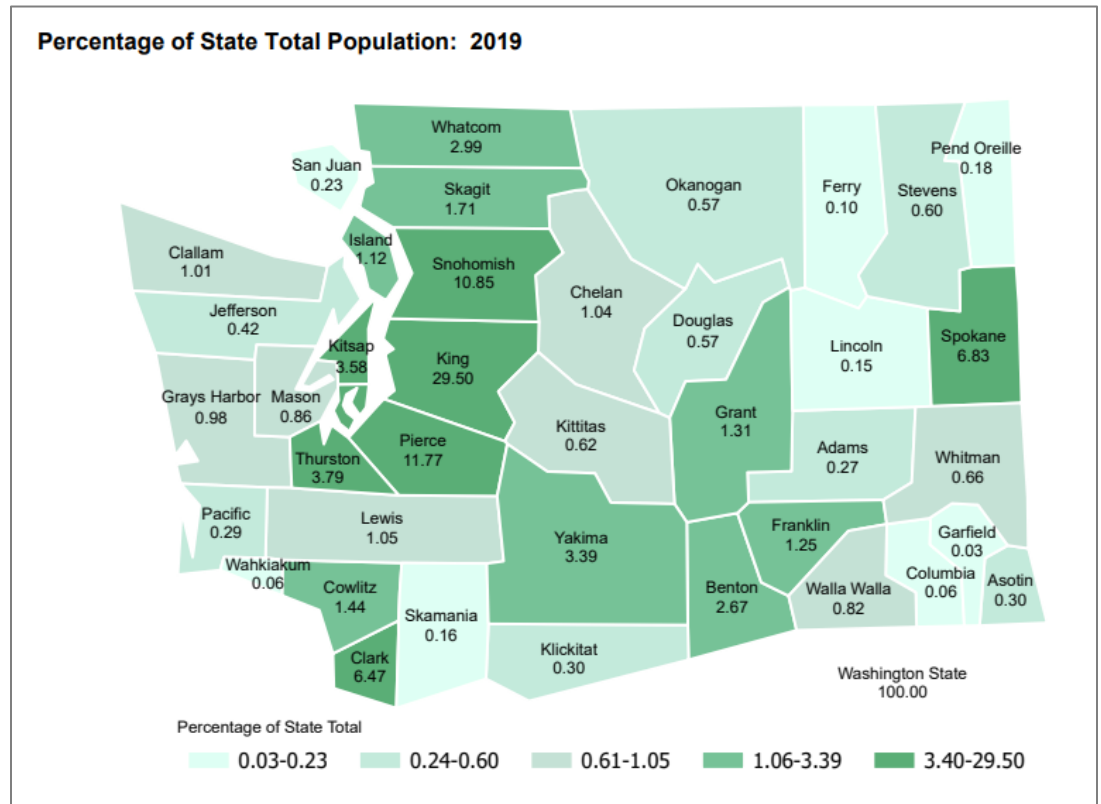
percent of growth, many counties<sup>11</sup> in 2019 grew faster than the most populated counties.<sup>12</sup>

The map to the right shows the counties with the highest percent of total state population.

Based on this information, parks and recreation

facility investment should be prioritized for the most populous and fastest growing counties because a growing and changing demographic will result in changes in activity preferences and demand for new facilities. Although it is important to think about the recommendations of this study in the context of expected population change, investments also should be prioritized in those counties that are destinations for recreationists living elsewhere. These are Ferry, Garfield, Jefferson, Kittitas, Okanogan, Pacific, and Skamania Counties.<sup>13</sup>

These findings based on population should be studied further after additional functionality is built into the map applications produced for this study (see Recommendations section) and the next statewide participation survey is conducted in 2022.



<sup>11</sup>Benton, Franklin, Kittitas, Klickitat, Skagit, Wahkiakum, and Whatcom Counties

<sup>12</sup>Clark, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, and Thurston Counties

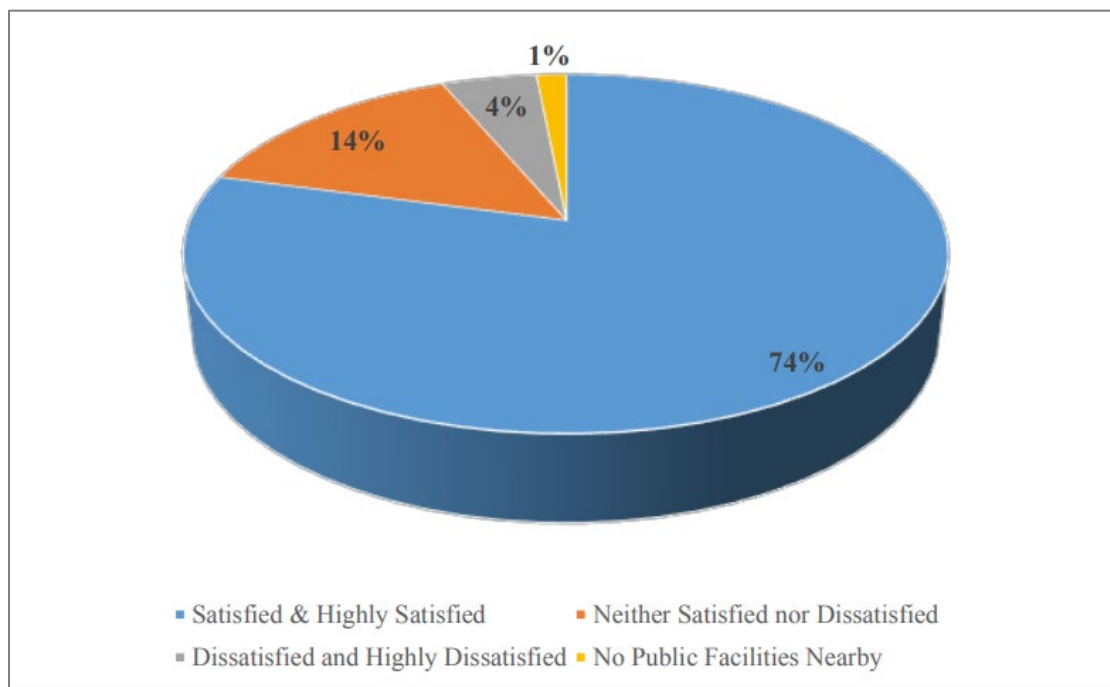
<sup>13</sup>*Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*, Earth Economics, 2015, p16-19.

# FINDINGS

## Satisfaction

As the chart below shows, residents overall are satisfied with their recreational opportunities. Investments should be prioritized to maintain this relatively high satisfaction and raise satisfaction for those activities that need improvement.

Overall Recreational Satisfaction of Washington Residents in 2017.<sup>14</sup>

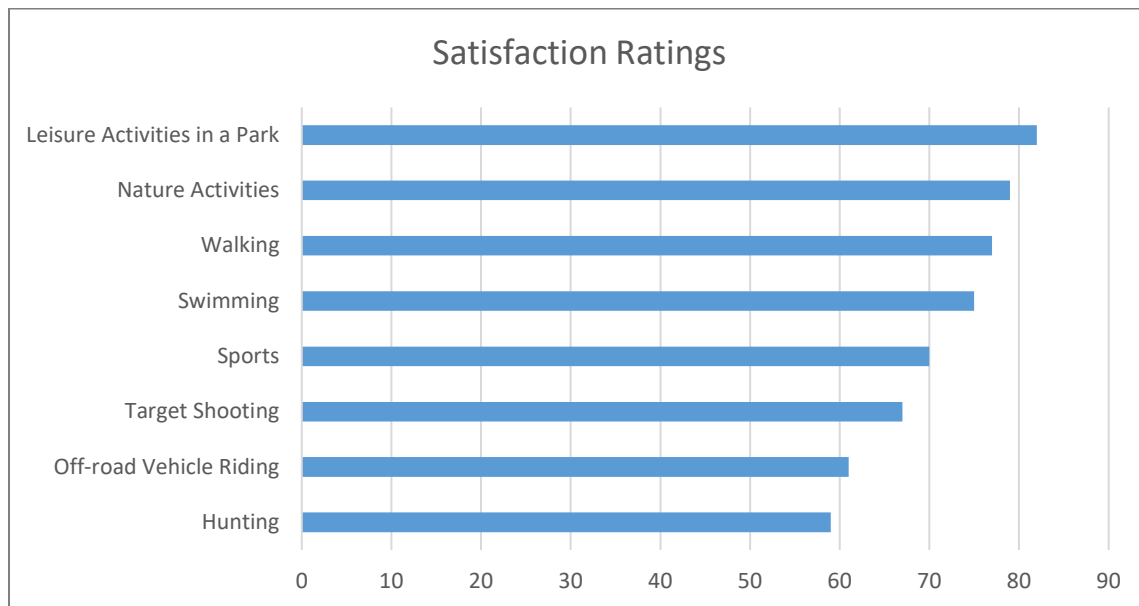


The four most popular activities (leisure and nature activities, walking, and swimming) all had relatively high satisfaction ratings (combination of "Satisfied" and "Highly Satisfied").<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup>[\*State of Washington 2017 Assessment of Outdoor Recreation Demand Report\*](#), Prepared for RCO by Eastern Washington University, 2017, p47.

<sup>15</sup>[\*State of Washington 2017 Assessment of Outdoor Recreation Demand Report\*](#), Prepared for RCO by Eastern Washington University, 2017, p47–52, and 57–62.

# FINDINGS



## SUMMARY

With consistent population growth projected for the next 20 years, use of, and competition for, assets will grow. While many assets may be able to accommodate increased demand, many will not. To maintain high satisfaction and improve it where needed, more investment is recommended. All levels of government should invest in developing new facilities, renovating areas to accommodate expanding and changing uses, and maintaining sites to optimize their use. In addition, with the increase in residents coming primarily from outside the state, interviews with land managers and stakeholders show that efforts also should be made to support and expand heritage sites, wildlife viewing, and environmental and historical interpretation programs to educate and inform these new residents on Washington's history.



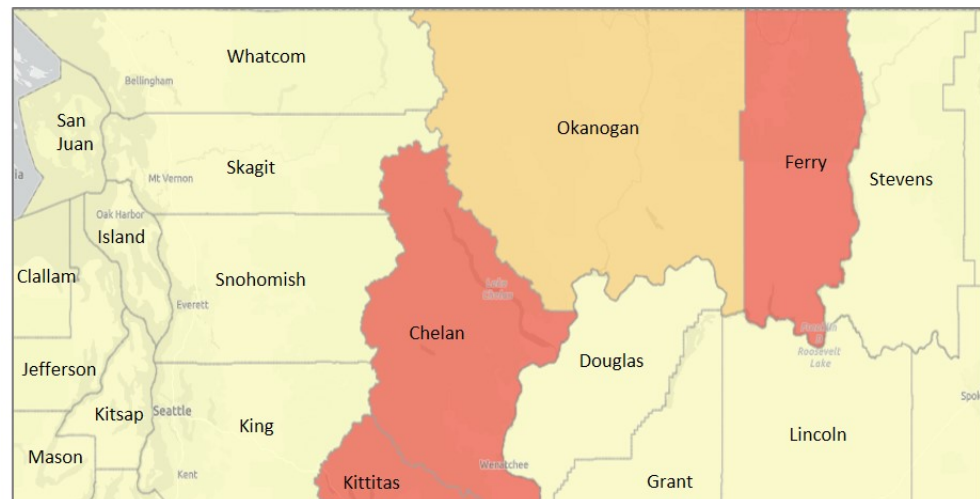
## SUMMARY

Staff created a map of foundational recreation assets across the state, which is a new dataset and resource. The limited scope of this study allowed only a high-level look at the spatial data to identify where recreational facilities exist and where they do not. Staff also examined the amount of service provided by an individual facility and type of facility. Staff would encourage more investment in this work to better identify spatial, service level, and socio-economic-demographic needs. Staff also recommends establishing service level thresholds by recreational activity to better identify needs and evaluate a return on investment.

## COUNTY SERVICE LEVELS MAP

The County Service Levels Map summarizes recreation availability by county. This map gives the best general picture of the assets and level of service and illustrates which counties have the most assets, relative to their population. What this map fails to capture is the number of out-of-county residents who use the assets. Large numbers of tourists may greatly increase the crowding of those assets and decrease the level of service.

Similar to the Populated Areas Service Map described later in this report, this map contains no level of service standard against which to measure. For example, in the map to the right for northern Washington, the yellow counties have a lower mountain bike user ratio than the orange county (Okanogan). The red counties (Chelan, Ferry, and Kittitas) have the highest user ratio.



**Mountain bike user ratio differences in northern Washington counties.** Yellow has lowest user ratio, orange (Okanogan County) has higher, and the red counties (Chelan, Ferry, and Kittitas) have the highest user ratios for mountain bike recreationists.

# FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS

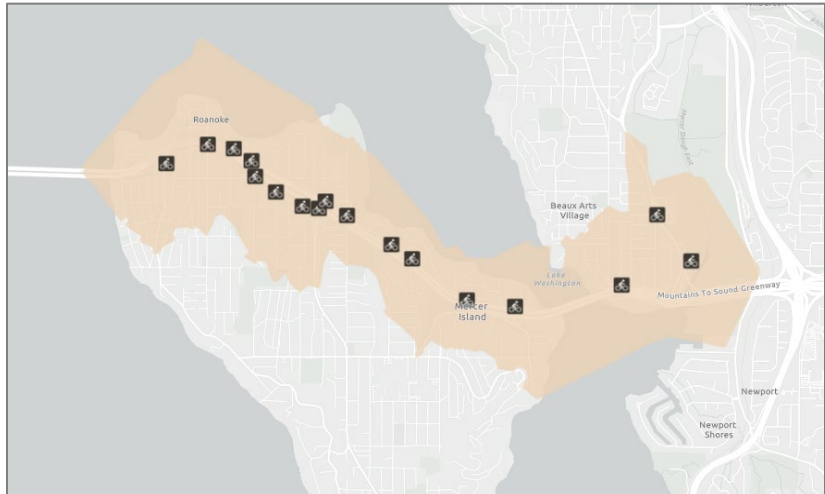
## GAP ANALYSIS MAP

The Gap Analysis Map shows where there is service in the state and where there is not by asset type. The analysis shows that most communities have service by most of the foundational assets, but there are noteworthy gaps. Details for each asset are summarized below.

### Biking

Most communities lacked sufficient biking facilities. Communities with these assets tended to be associated with major transportation routes and retired railroad lines (rails to trails) running through them. Moreover, larger

communities (a combination of space and population) tended to exhibit greater access to biking facilities than smaller communities.



**Northern Mercer Island area.** Access points for biking are indicated by a biking icon and their corresponding service areas are in orange shading. People outside the orange areas may have less access to these biking assets.

### Boating and Sailing

Nearly all the communities in the map show access for boating. However, there are notable exceptions in many small eastern Washington communities and the communities immediately next to north Seattle. The availability of water in western Washington likely explains better boating access there. Similar to sports fields, the capacity and individual service provided at each facility is likely more of a determinant of access than the presence of any boating access site.



# FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS

## Camping

The map shows service coverage for nearly all of the study communities. Although the map suggests that there is adequate camping for the state's recreationists, staff are not confident in this conclusion. The study cannot distinguish between the type of camping (recreational vehicle, bike, car, tent, yurt, etc.) or the number of sites at each campground. Upgrading the maps to allow for land managers and others to populate these data fields would improve the analysis.

## Fishing

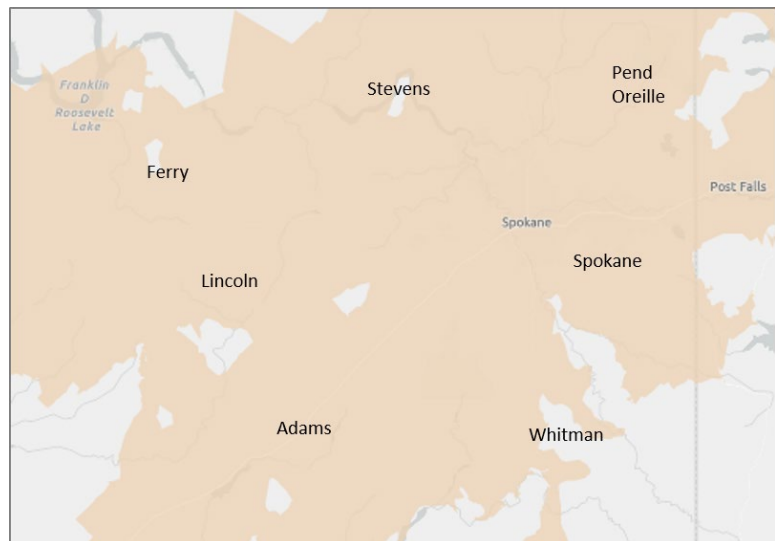
Similar to boating and sailing, there appears to be greater access to fishing opportunities in western Washington likely due to the abundance of lakes, rivers, Puget Sound, and the Pacific Ocean. There are some notable gaps in service in the Cascade Mountain foothill communities in King County and in many small eastern Washington communities.

## Hiking

Hiking is the foundational asset with the fewest gaps. Similar to mountain bike trails, hiking trails are very diffuse throughout the state and located along major transportation routes. Therefore, the vast majority of the state's populated areas have access to hiking facilities. A notable exception is northwest and southwest Seattle because these areas exceed the drive time measure (of 30 minutes) to the closest hiking opportunity, which is the Cougar Mountain Park trailhead near Newcastle and Issaquah.

### Leisure Activities in a Park

A park is defined as any park or similar open space, such as a public school, with grounds suitable for casual recreation. The opportunity measure is a 10-minute walk from a home.



**Greater Spokane and west Interstate 90 area.** Service areas for hiking are in orange shading.

# FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS

Similar to walking opportunities, which use the same measure, nearly all communities have gaps and these are more likely in the industrial areas and their peripheries.

## Nature Activities

Nature activities are defined as any natural area or nature park with some form of public access. It also includes natural areas such as beaches and other water access points. The measure of opportunity is a 10-minute walk from any home. The map shows that communities built along water have the most opportunity for nature activities because any water access site or beach was included in the definition of a natural park. Additionally, the largest and most populated communities of the state appear to have less opportunity than other areas, although many very small communities also had little or no opportunity. It appears there is room for improvement in providing natural areas in large to midsize communities. If water access sites were not included in the definition of nature activities, the gaps would be much larger in most communities.

## Mountain Biking

Mountain bike trails are very diffuse throughout the state in part because, similar to hiking, mountain bike facilities appear along all major transportation routes in populated areas. Although there are some noteworthy mountain bike parks in urban areas, highways provide quick access to backcountry

recreation areas where most mountain bike facilities exist. Therefore, the majority of the state's populated areas have access to mountain bike facilities.



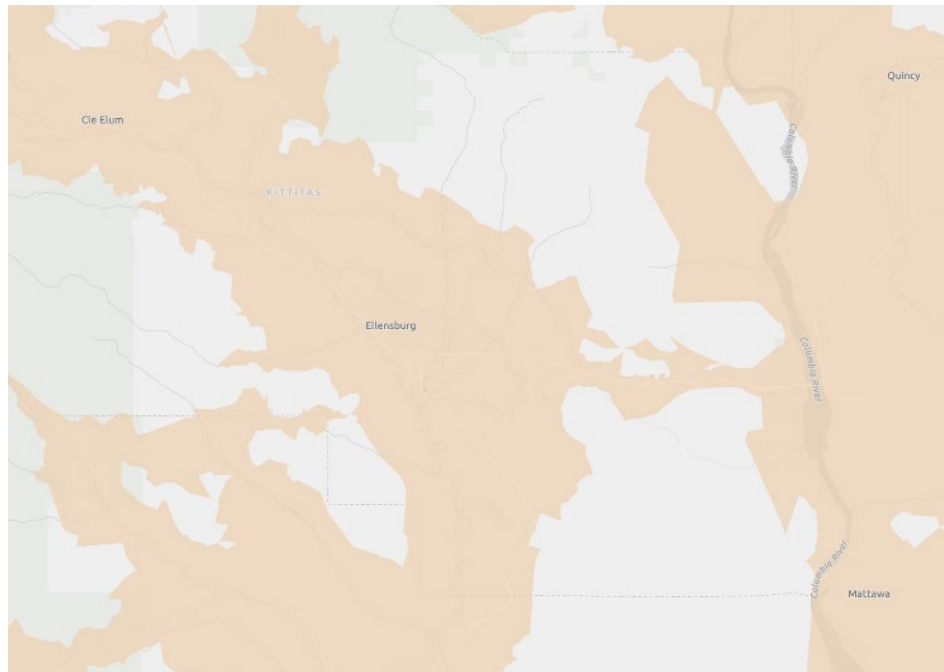
**Greater Olympic Peninsula and Puget Sound area.** Service areas for mountain biking are shaded in orange.

# FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS

## Paddling

The map shows that nearly all of the communities have adequate access for paddling. This is primarily due to the fact that most communities in Washington developed along marine waters, lakes, and rivers.

## Playing Sports (Sports Fields, Sports Complexes)



**Greater Ellensburg area.** Service areas for paddling are shaded in orange.

A sports field is defined as any local park or school facility with a playfield. The opportunity measure is a 10-minute walk from any home. A sport complex was defined as any facility with three or more playing fields and a large parking area. The map shows service coverage for nearly all of the study communities. Although the map suggests that there is adequate sports fields and complexes for the state's recreationists, staff are not confident in this conclusion. Because sports fields and complexes are typically sport-centric, and the quality of fields is a high priority for recreationists, these factors would need additional analysis. Upgrading the maps to allow land managers and others to populate these data fields would improve the analysis.

# FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS

## Swimming

Gaps in swimming pool opportunities are very hard to find in medium to large communities, however, some gaps exist in smaller communities. For swimming pools, there are notable gaps in smaller eastern Washington communities.



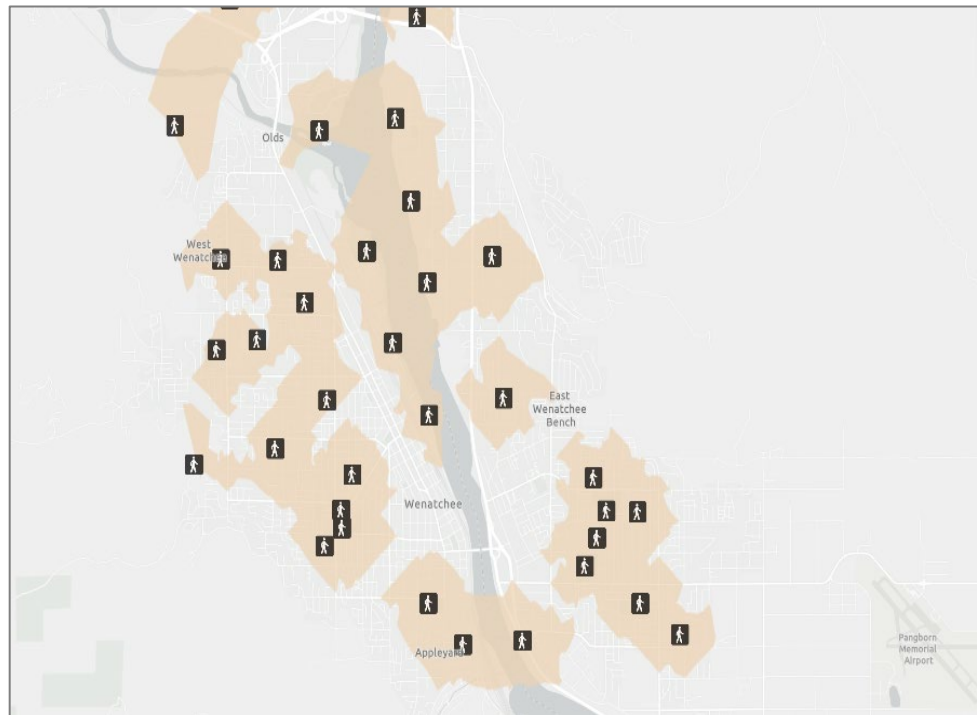
**Greater Dayton and Waitsburg area.** Service areas for swimming pools are in orange shading.

## Walking

All large cities and most communities analyzed have gaps in walking assets. For the most part, walking opportunities are in the core of residential areas rather than on the periphery or in the business and industrial areas.

## Winter Recreation

There are notable gaps in the state for nonmotorized, winter trail recreation. These areas include communities along marine waters, with the exception of King, Pierce, Skagit, Thurston, and Whatcom Counties where



**Wenatchee and East Wenatchee area.** Access points for walking are indicated by a walking icon and their corresponding service areas are in orange shading. People outside the orange areas may have less access to these walking assets.

# FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS

residents have easier access to the Cascade Mountain range. Other notable winter recreation gaps are in the Walla Walla and Tri-Cities areas.

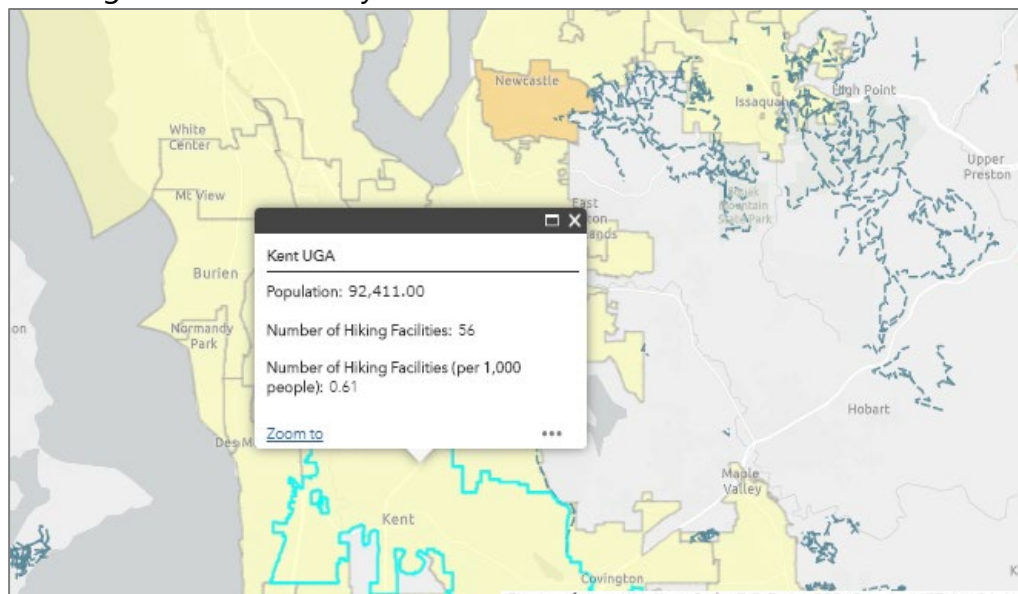
For motorized winter recreation and alpine skiing, notable gaps in service are in island communities, communities near the coast in northern Puget Sound, and the Walla Walla and Tri-Cities areas.

## POPULATED AREAS SERVICE LEVELS MAP

This map depicts a level of service analysis for a community by looking at the community's population and assets.<sup>16</sup> A community's user ratio was calculated by tallying the number of recreational units by activity per 1,000 residents. For each recreational activity and its associated foundational assets, staff noted variation in the level of service. To determine if the variation represented sufficient or insufficient access to recreational activities will require additional analysis outside the scope of this study.

The map below is an example of the user ratio for Kent described here as "Number of Hiking Facilities (per 1,000 people)." By these definitions and measures, Kent residents have access to .61 hiking facilities for every 1,000 residents.

The many analyses that can be drawn from this map are large given the number of communities and recreational activities included. This information may be useful



Hiking User Ratio for Kent

<sup>16</sup>Recreation units in the community were included in this analysis as well as those available assets outside the community but within the activity opportunity measure (drive/walk time).



# FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS

to policy-makers and planners. To make greater use of this information at the state level, additional investment in the capability of the map is needed and a measure of sufficiency needs to be established to compare communities and do more detailed analysis of the reasons why similar communities may have different user ratios, for example.



# EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Exceptional assets are recreational opportunities that are of high value to a set of recreationists. These assets may accommodate a lot of use or are destination sites. The study asked recreation user groups and land managers what their exceptional assets are, where there are gaps, what are some of the challenges at these recreation sites (and potential sites), what are future needs, and how these issues should be addressed. Below are summaries for the most salient points made by recreation user groups and land managers.

## FIREARMS AND ARCHERY RECREATION

Significant assets for firearm and archery ranges exist in all regions of the state. For those activities that traditionally rely on private outdoor shooting ranges or shooting on public lands, the following findings for exceptional assets were identified:

- **Club revenues are not sustainable.** Many nonprofit organizations say their member dues and public fees do not keep pace with capital needs.
- **Conflicts with new development.** Many firearm and archery ranges were established when surrounding areas were sparsely developed. As development has encroached on a range, the number of complaints about noise and stray bullets has skyrocketed. Also, as zoning classifications have changed from open or agriculture lands to residential lands, ranges operate under conditional use regulations, which often limit renovations or expansions of facilities.
- **Desire for more shooting on public lands.** More and more shooters are recreating on public lands, which presents safety, user conflict, and pollution (solid waste and water contamination) challenges. These challenges would be best served by a statewide, coordinated approach for hosting and developing an adequate supply of shooting opportunities on public lands.
- **Shooting on private lands.** Similar to many other forms of recreation, additional opportunities would be available if shooters could access private lands, such as timberlands, for shooting.

# EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

## TRAILS AND BACKCOUNTRY RECREATION ACTIVITIES

The following findings are made for gaps in significant assets for trail activities, such as hiking, climbing, mountaineering, mountain biking, horseback riding, off-road vehicle riding, hunting, and participating in nature activities:

- **Lack of statewide coordination of trails activities.** Trail recreationists identified a lack of statewide coordination of trail opportunities. Agencies have authority and budget to provide facilities, however, trail users desire facilities that transcend the responsibility of any one jurisdiction. Trail users desire more coordination with the goal to have agencies jointly manage the resources and prioritize connections between trails and trail networks. Where multiple jurisdictions manage different segments of the same trail, each may have different management priorities, standards, and funding. This often results in trails that have underdeveloped segments or too few access points. A coordinating body could help to set priorities and share information without such geographic limitations.
- **Lack of connectivity and completeness of trails and trail plans.** There are significant gaps in statewide and regional trails, incomplete and unfunded plans for long distance trails, and insufficient connections between regional trails and between urban and backcountry trails.
- **Lack of off-road vehicle and mountain bike statewide trail routes.** Substantial work remains to open cross-state routes in the Cascade Mountain range for off-road vehicles and mountain bikes.
- **Gaps in off-road vehicle recreation.** There are gaps for off-road vehicle trails in the Yakima Valley and Tri-Cities, and in general along the Interstate 5 corridor.
- **Lack of trails.** The increasing popularity of trail activities has created crowded conditions at the most popular trailheads and backcountry destinations. There is a need for more trails and more capacity at existing sites.
- **Backlogged trail maintenance.** Most state and federal land manager agencies say they have a backlog of annual maintenance. The more trails and other backcountry sites are used, the greater the need for maintenance. When trails are

# EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

not maintained, resource damage occurs and users are less satisfied with the experience. At times, unmaintained trails become abandoned.

- **Overcrowding.** Overcrowding at sites leads to users being turned away, causing users to recreate less or not at all. This likely has the greatest negative impact on beginner users. Relatedly, popular trail and backcountry destinations are often denuded, compacted, eroded, and polluted. Wildlife is displaced. These impacts harm the aesthetic beauty and result in the loss of a wilderness experience.
- **Lack of parking.** When users find parking lots full, they often park in unauthorized areas, damaging plants, creating safety issues, and causing social problems with neighbors and other users.
- **Unmaintained roads.** The lack of resources to maintain forest roads or rebuild washed out backcountry roads limits the ability for recreationists to get to their desired trails. Rough or hazardous road conditions and complete closures reduce opportunity. More investments should be put towards road maintenance.
- **Road closures may represent recreational opportunities.** Land managers often close roads to highway vehicles due to lack of funds to maintain them. Although this in itself may reduce access to recreational areas by highway vehicle, these closed roads could be converted easily to trail uses for off-road vehicles, bikers, hikers, and equestrians.
- **Lack of coordination.** Government agencies manage their own assets, each with their own authorities, mission, revenue, and spending priorities. While these agencies often coordinate efforts, in many cases they lack the authority and capacity to do so formally. Without a conceptual process and resources to support it, coordination cannot be maximized for the benefit of recreationists and potential efficiencies among land managers may go unrealized.
- **Leveraging volunteers.** User groups say they have more capacity to develop and maintain sites with volunteer labor. They cite the lack of agency staff and expertise to recruit and manage volunteers, as well as a need for training and policy considerations as barriers to getting more work done with volunteers.
- **Limits to recreation planning and coordination.** Planning and coordination for recreation resources that transcend agency boundaries, such as trails and roads,

# EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

may be challenging for land managers with multiple, and oftentimes contradictory, missions and management responsibilities. Resources to support systemic planning and coordination often are inadequate for the task. Without adequate funding for planning and coordination, recreational opportunity may decline.

- **Lack of natural area preservation and hunting access.** For nature seekers, including hunters, protecting habitat is very important. There is a need to provide more natural areas in the Interstate 5 corridor and around urbanizing areas. There also is a statewide need for improved road access to quality hunting lands, and more availability to hunt on private lands.
- **Overcrowding at climbing and mountaineering sites.** Impacts from overcrowding at popular rock climbing and alpine areas result in reduced quality of experience and damage to the nearby natural environment. One reason for the natural resource destruction is the lack of facilities, such as restrooms and developed camping areas.

## PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

For activities that traditionally rely on local and state parks agencies to provide desired facilities, the following findings are gaps in significant assets:

- **Resources not keeping pace with demand.** Local and state parks and recreation providers want to meet the needs of a growing recreating public. Existing facilities need to be updated for new activities and increasing use, and new facilities developed to accommodate growth. For example, there is increased need for multipurpose artificial play surfaces and lighted playfields to increase capacity for sports. Also, while there is a need to buy land to keep pace with development, many government agencies cannot afford the market rate for the land.



# EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

## WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES

For on-water activities such as motorboating, swimming, paddling, and fishing, the following findings are gaps in exceptional assets:

- **More boating and sailing infrastructure for transient boaters is needed in the following areas:**
  - Cama Beach Historical State Park (Island County)
  - Manchester (Kitsap County)
  - McNeil Island (Pierce County)
  - North shore of Columbia River in the upper Columbia Plateau
  - Pateros, on the Columbia River (Okanogan County)
  - Point No Point (Kitsap County)
  - Port Gamble (Kitsap County)
  - San Juan Islands: Blake Island, Blind Bay at Shaw Island, Cyprus Island, Hunter Bay at Lopez Island, Orcas Island. Consider installing stern ties as additional moorage (San Juan County)
  - Seattle to Olympia saltwater shoreline (for launch ramps)
  - Steilacoom (Pierce County)
- **Shore to land access restrictions prohibit sufficient access.** Although the majority of navigable waters are public, private ownership of uplands is a barrier for boaters and paddlers to get to and from the water when public access is not available. Encouraging and incentivizing private landowners to grant access easements across their lands is a cost-effective way to add access to and from the water.
- **Lack of systemic reservation system for public transient moorage.** Some users desire a reservation system for public transient moorage facilities to better plan and have greater confidence in their overnight boating trips.

# EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

- **Reduced fishing opportunities.** Users report a reduction in desirable fish stocks and length of seasons and catch limits.
- **Lack of coordination for paddle sports facilities.** Water trails offer long distance and overnight adventures. However, desired sites often are managed by different providers who do not have the means and authorities to coordinate efforts. Coordination of site standards, permitting, uniform signs, regulations, and volunteers should be developed.
- **Lack of long-term leases needed.** Marina operators and others desire longer term leases of state-owned aquatic lands than current authorities allow. Loans are more readily available for developing or upgrading facilities with longer lease terms. Users like the assurance that a desired site will continue into the long-term future.
- **Preserving public access sites in the face of intense development.** For all water-dependent recreationists, there is a desire to buy and develop shoreline sites before they are developed for other purposes. Shoreline development for recreation should keep pace with population growth and demand for shoreline and water-based recreation. Where expanding access is not possible, investments at existing sites such as adding parking, docks and piers, and hand-launch sites may add capacity for multiple types of user.

## WINTER RECREATION

For activities that traditionally rely on snow, the following findings are gaps in exceptional assets:

- **Lack of parking and transportation.** The growth in winter recreation has resulted in crowded and congested parking at trailheads and other locations. In addition, plowing at trailheads and on highways and access roads does not always meet the demands, which limits recreational opportunities.
- **Reduced suitability due to climate change impacts.** A warming climate may mean sites need to be moved to higher elevations. As seasons shorten, there may be an increasing need for parking and other visitor services to accommodate more use in shorter seasons.



## INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

The study proviso directed RCO to identify investment strategies and options for addressing gaps in recreational assets of statewide significance. The recommendations below call for investments for filling gaps. Recommendations further in the report relate to programmatic or policy considerations.

- **Preserve funding for recreation in any change to a road usage charge.** As the state considers transitioning away from the state gas tax, it should continue funding essential maintenance, development, renovation, education, and enforcement of outdoor recreation services that currently rely on gas tax revenue. Currently, gas taxes in the form of the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Account, Boating Facilities Program, and the Snowmobile Account, are the main, or only, source of funding supporting the following recreation:
  - Camping.
  - Developing and renovating boat launches and marinas.
  - Hiking, backpacking, mountaineering, and climbing.
  - Mountain biking and equestrian trail activities.
  - Paddling sports.
  - Riding off-road vehicles.
  - Snowmobiles and nonmotorized winter trail recreation.
- **Continue to fund state and local parks and recreation facilities and programs.** Continue to fund the following grant programs, which leverage local investments:
  - [Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account grant program.](#)
  - [Boating Facilities Program](#)
  - [Firearms and Archery Range Recreation](#) grant program

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- [No Child Left Inside grant program](#)
- [Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program](#)
- [Youth Athletic Facilities grant program](#)
- **Fill gaps in motorboating and sailing opportunities.** Fund feasibility assessments to look at providing more launch or moorage amenities for transient boaters in areas where they are limited, at capacity during peak seasons, or don't exist. Following are examples of these areas:
  - Cama Beach Historical State Park (Island County)
  - Manchester (Kitsap County)
  - McNeil Island (Pierce County)
  - North shore of the Columbia River in the upper Columbia Plateau
  - Pateros at the Columbia River (Okanogan County)
  - Port Gamble (Kitsap County)
  - Point No Point (Kitsap County)
  - San Juan Islands: Blake Island, Blind Bay at Shaw Island, Cyprus Island, Hunter Bay at Lopez Island, Orcas Island. (San Juan County)
  - Seattle to Olympia saltwater shoreline (for launch ramps)
  - Steilacoom (Pierce County)
- **Help local governments preserve, redevelop, and add athletic fields.** New authorities or funding programs are needed to allow new or expanded taxing authorities that address deferred maintenance and development of high-capacity sports fields. As the population concentrates in cities, there is a need to maintain and renovate local parks as well as develop multifunction, artificial turf sports fields that provide greater capacity and flexibility.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Address development needs at trailheads.** Fund needed improvements to high-use trailheads across the state. Nearly all the trail and backcountry recreation stakeholders contacted in this study made some recommendations for systemic improvements to trailheads. These include expanding parking to accommodate increasing use, especially in areas where multiple user groups use the same facilities; expanding camping at trailheads; expanding capacity for large events; and adding amenities such as more equestrian and off-road vehicle trailer parking. Relatedly, fund any planned expanded camping opportunities at state parks.
- **Support tourism through historical and cultural asset preservation and interpretation.** Continue funding state programs that preserve Washington's historical and cultural destinations, interpretation, and wildlife viewing. These include programs that support the state's recreation economy such as lighthouses, wildlife viewpoints, forts, barns, cemeteries, tribal cultural centers, and maritime sites. The following programs or sites in particular should be supported:
  - Ebey's Reserve Historic Properties (Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation)
  - Heritage Barns (Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation)
  - Heritage Capital Grant Program (Washington State Historical Society)
  - Historic Cemeteries (Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation)
  - Historic Courthouses (Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation)
  - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Watchable Wildlife
  - Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission's interpretation and folk and traditional arts.
- **Invest in clean water.** Continue to authorize [pump-out facilities grants in Puget Sound](#) to support a No Discharge Zone designation.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Build and sustain volunteer partnerships.**<sup>17</sup> Fund a new program to add capacity in land management agencies to support more partnerships and volunteers. This new program would help maintain, manage, and develop new assets through the contributions of stakeholders and volunteers. This new program would be directed towards volunteer program development, recruitment, coordination, and training; project development, leadership, and recognition; and working with agencies to formalize user-built facilities. This will increase the capacity of land managers to provide recreation and help prioritize investments.
- **Fund backcountry road maintenance and use.**<sup>18</sup> Fund targeted investments in backcountry road management, maintenance, and redevelopment that maximize access to popular recreational facilities. Also prioritize nonhighway vehicle and trail activities on roads that may be closed to highway vehicles. More funding in this area will recapture access to popular destinations and convert closed roads to trail-based recreational opportunities and may help to fill gaps in off-road vehicle opportunities in the Interstate 5 corridor and near the Tri-Cities.
- **Fund a target shooting plan.** Fund a statewide plan for target shooting on public lands that will improve coordination among land managers as well as support and expand opportunities. Continue funding for grants in the Firearms and Archery Range Recreation program.
- **Add capacity for paddling and fishing to existing water access areas.** To add capacity for nonmotorized uses at existing water access points and reduce conflict with motorboats, fund programs that increase parking and add amenities such as hand-launch boat launch areas and fishing piers.
- **Improve transportation options to outdoor recreation areas.**<sup>19</sup> Fund regional transit organizations and local parks and recreation departments to provide more opportunities to get people without cars to outdoor destinations. This will have

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<sup>17</sup>Supported by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation—Final Recommendations to the Governor 2014, Recreation and Conservation Office, p24-25

<sup>18</sup>Supported by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation—Final Recommendations to the Governor 2014, Recreation and Conservation Office, p27

<sup>19</sup>Supported by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation—Final Recommendations to the Governor 2014, Recreation and Conservation Office, p16



# RECOMMENDATIONS

the dual benefit of reducing parking congestion at trailheads and increasing outdoor opportunities for low-income people. Also, ensure adequate funding for snow removal operations that meet the needs of winter recreationists.

## CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this section are not linked to specific exceptional or foundational assets but rather address major themes or a category of assets, or otherwise maximize the utility of this study.

- **Support and promote a statewide trails system.**<sup>20</sup> Establish a state trails system advisory committee of stakeholders and land managers to advise policy-makers on funding priorities for a state trails system. The advisory committee could serve under the authority of Revised Code of Washington 79A.35 (Washington State Recreation Trail System). The advisory committee could recommend designations into the state trails and active transportation system, serve as a repository of information on trails statewide, and make recommendations on trail priorities statewide.
  - Within this effort, convene a stakeholder and land manager group to produce a feasibility study and plan to complete a cross-state trail for off-road vehicles and another for mountain bikers (with a hut-to-hut camping system) in the Cascade Mountains.
- **Build a cross-state trail route.** Recommend the Governor's Office coordinate and secure funding for a recreational, cross-state trail for nonmotorized uses. The Governor's Office could better work across governments and with stakeholders to coordinate this effort. This effort should include the State Parks and Recreation Commission,<sup>21</sup> the Department of Natural Resources,<sup>22</sup> the Recreation and Conservation Office,<sup>23</sup> and the Department of Transportation.<sup>24</sup> This cross-state

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<sup>20</sup>Supported by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation—Final Recommendations to the Governor 2014, Recreation and Conservation Office, p16.

<sup>21</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A.05.115-125

<sup>22</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A.05.115-125

<sup>23</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A.35

<sup>24</sup>Revised Code of Washington 47.01 and 47.06, and 23 USC Section 217(g)

# RECOMMENDATIONS

route should act as the backbone to connect other state, regional, and local trails and active transportation networks. In conjunction with this effort, the study recommends the Governor's Office staff coordinate efforts towards the completion of [the Great American Rail Trail segments](#) in Washington.

- **Incentivize private landowners to improve recreational access.**<sup>25</sup> Consider tax incentives and direct spending to encourage private landowners to allow the public to access their lands. These could include tax breaks or refunds, more programs to pay landowners to allow public access, or direct spending such as assistance with road maintenance, trash removal, and law enforcement. Below are five areas of emphasis any program should address:
  - **Landlocked parcels.** Many quality public recreation lands are surrounded by private property. Access easements to and from these properties would make the public land available to a wider array of recreationists.
  - **Use easements to eliminate missing links in trails.** Use on long-distance (and other) trails often is diverted to public roads, for example, when these trails come to private properties. Trail easements could close some gaps in long-distance and local trails.
  - **Hunting access.** Quality hunting opportunities exist on private forests and farms in Washington. Although many private landowners allow hunting and other uses (for a fee for example), more incentives are needed to maximize these opportunities.
  - **River, lake, and marine waters.** Many miles of water for boaters, hunters, and anglers are inaccessible because of the lack of public access. Easements are another great way to make these areas accessible.
- **Pilot an outdoor recreation coordinating council.** This is a recommendation also made in the [Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation \(2014\)](#).<sup>26</sup> Establish an outdoor recreation coordinating council

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<sup>25</sup>Supported by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation—Final Recommendations to the Governor 2014, Recreation and Conservation Office, p15

<sup>26</sup>Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Parks and Outdoor Recreation—Final Recommendations to the Governor 2014, Recreation and Conservation Office, p4, 6-9, 27

# RECOMMENDATIONS

consisting of federal, state, and local government agencies, and nonprofit and private sector representatives to serve as a cross-agency leader on outdoor recreation. This body would coordinate management and investments in a geographic area that results in more opportunity for recreationists. This would be done through identifying efficiencies in operations, reducing duplication of efforts, and changing individual priorities. It is recommended to pilot this effort with a regional scope first, and then replicate elsewhere or at a statewide level.

- **Expand trailhead law enforcement.** Law enforcement agencies have made great strides at trailheads with increased and coordinated patrols and investigations, cameras, and other efforts. However, there is a continued need for law enforcement efforts to keep pace with the expected growth in trailhead-centered recreation activities. Formation of a task force of law enforcement agencies is suggested that could identify strategies and funding options to respond to increasing use and to reduce crime at trailheads.
- **Invest in and share study resources.** This study produced three map applications that show levels of service in and around communities. RCO should present and share these map applications and its findings to federal, state, and local governments as well as stakeholder groups and businesses to aid in planning, managing, and developing recreation priorities in the state.
  - **Maintain and improve study map applications.** RCO believes it is using the most comprehensive and reliable inventory of recreation sites in the state. However, gaps in the data remain. More information and functionality is needed to maximize the usefulness of these maps in statewide recreation planning. More information and functionality will help measure return on investment by asset and location. To build on the initial investment made through this study, here is list of possible improvements:
    - Map exceptional assets.
    - Include demographic layers to better identify investment needs and populations served.
    - Include activity participation and satisfaction rates by region or county.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Map regional and long-distance trails to include missing links and possible routes.
  - Create capacity to evaluate long-distance travel (inter-county) to destination areas and tourist routes.
  - Map “walkable communities” and their connections to parks and regional trails.
  - Identify asset capacity and life expectancy.
  - Review and refine drive-time metrics and analysis.
  - Ask other agencies what they would like to add to the map applications.
- **Establish a paddle sports facilities ombudsman.** Recommend a paddle sports ombudsman at the state to coordinate paddle sports recreation programs and issues. Paddlers’ issues span multiple land management agencies and regulatory areas. This position could better coordinate the planning and management of water trail systems to include standards for development, maintenance, branding and signs, volunteers, education, and enforcement. Lastly, the ombudsman could coordinate paddle sport needs and interests by advising statutory and regulatory efforts designed to support paddlers, such as river access priorities along some state highway projects and water releases from dams.
  - **Consider a stern tie installation pilot.** Evaluate the feasibility of [stern tie installations](#) at select sites in the San Juan Islands. Stern ties may be an inexpensive way to add moorage or make moorage more efficient by adding capacity at some locations.
  - **Pilot a moorage reservation system.** Evaluate the feasibility of a pilot online reservation and payment system for public transient moorage at some facilities in Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands.
  - **Discuss options for better systemic management of climbing and mountaineering destinations.** A broad discussion with the recreation community and land managers is needed to decide the best approach to dealing with overcrowding at popular sites. Options range from investing more in

# RECOMMENDATIONS

backcountry facilities, staffing education and enforcement presence, or user management systems at select sites.

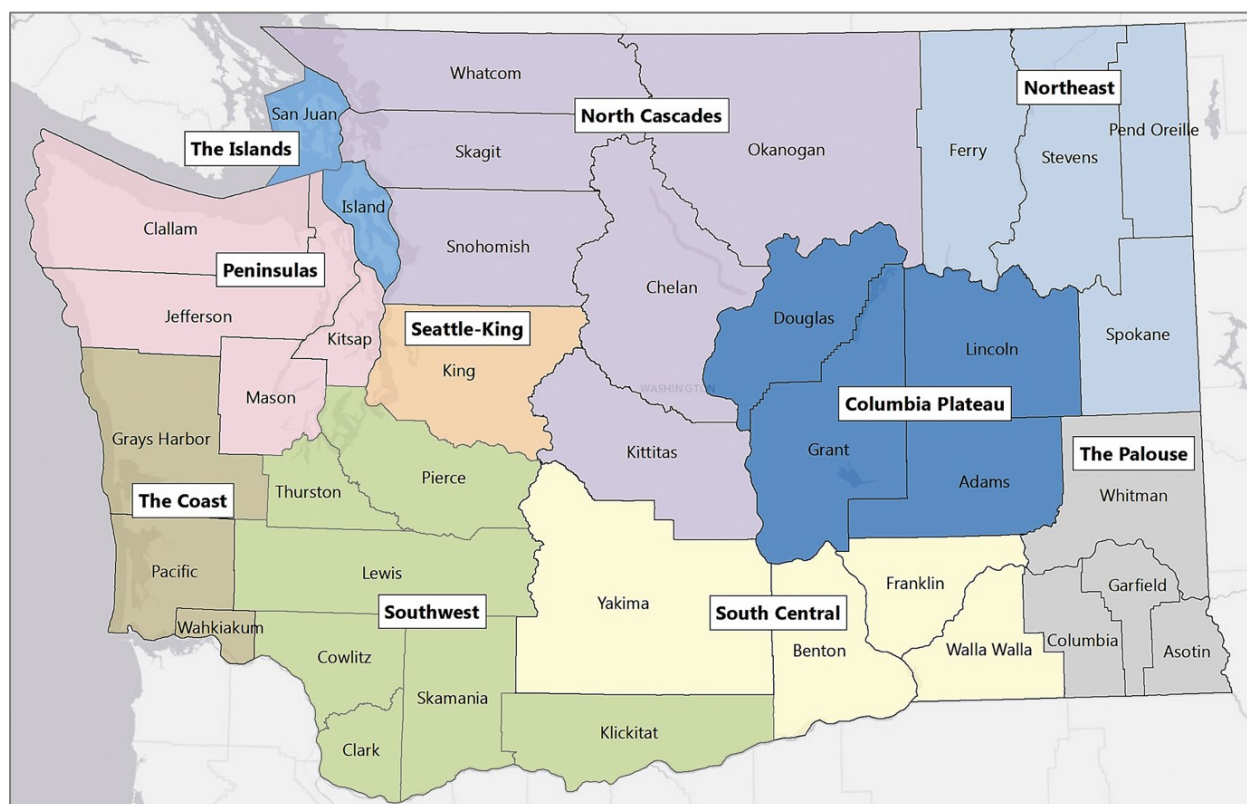
- **Ensure long-term aquatic leases.** To support private financing to develop or upgrade private marinas, ensure the State has the ability to issue long-term leases for aquatic lands as may be needed for private marina operators to obtain private sector financing.



# APPENDIX A: ASSET REPORTS

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSET REGIONS

Stakeholder-identified exceptional assets are organized by the following ten regions of the state. These regions align with the planning units of the *Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan 2018-2022*, where there is a statistically valid sample of recreation participation and satisfaction in each.



## ASSET AND ACTIVITY STAKEHOLDER REPORTS

### Description

The following reports are a synthesis of what staff heard from recreationists, stakeholder and advocacy groups, and land managers. The recommendations are the perspective of RCO.





## DEFINITION

Activities that involve personal wind-powered vehicles such as paragliders, parachutes, hang gliders, windsurfing and kitesurfing boards, and hot air balloons.

## PROFILE OF SIGNIFICANT ASSETS

Significant assets that support air activities are open spaces such as fields, dry lake beds, dunes, beaches, and large water bodies; and high elevation open spaces such as hill and mountain tops.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

- Long Beach, Pacific Ocean (Pacific County)
- Ocean Shores, Pacific Ocean (Grays Harbor County)

### Peninsulas

- Fort Flagler State Park (Jefferson County)

### Islands

- Wind Jammer Park (Island County)

### Southwest

**GAP** Insufficient access points for wind sports in the Columbia River Gorge area. Too few large access points in desired areas leads to overcrowding.

- Columbia River Gorge area where air activities are allowed. (Benton, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Pacific, Skamania, and Wahkiakum Counties)

# AIR ACTIVITIES

## Seattle-King County

- Gene Coulon Park (King County)
- Tiger Mountain Summit (King County)

## North Cascades

- Blanchard Mountain (Skagit County)

**GAP** Lack of developed access at desired locations or land manager prohibitions on air activities access in general on the eastern slopes of the Cascade Mountains.

- Lake Wenatchee State Park (Chelan County)
- Jetty Island (Snohomish County)

## South Central

**GAP** Lack of developed access at desired locations or land manager prohibitions on air activities access in general on the eastern slopes of the Cascade Mountains.

## Columbia Plateau

- Moses Lake Sand Dunes (Grant County)

## Northeast

**GAP** Potential gap

## The Palouse

- Steptoe Butte State Park (Whitman County)

## QUALITATIVE CHALLENGES AND FUTURE NEEDS

Air activities often are deemed incompatible with other permitted uses for safety and resource protection reasons. For the most part, users rely on areas developed for other recreational activities.

# AIR ACTIVITIES

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

Recommend state agencies consider allowing and developing access for air activities when developing new recreational areas.



## DEFINITION

Recreational use of a bow or crossbow for target shooting or simulated hunting or other activity.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSET PROFILE

Outdoor areas that are naturally suited or developed for recreational use of bows for target shooting and simulated hunting. These may be facilities in natural areas on public lands, in developed landscapes, or indoors on public or private lands. Facilities include formal and informal ranges as well as walking courses. Although very different from firearms in terms of public safety risk, archery facilities often are collocated at firearm ranges.

An archery recreation area should accommodate a 20- to 40-yard range with several or more shooting lanes, as well as a walking course that may require up to 1 acre of open space for each target (20-30 targets are common). Shooting positions should be covered for year-round use. Exceptional assets have large parking areas and well-maintained access roads. Archery recreation frequently consists of large competitions that require larger areas for staging and support facilities, concessions, camping, restrooms, and utilities.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

- Bear River Archers (Pacific County)
- Grays Harbor Bowmen (Grays Harbor County)

### Peninsulas

- Jefferson County Sportsman's Association Shooting Range (Jefferson County)
- KBH Archers (Kitsap County)
- Wapiti Bowmen (Clallam County)

# ARCHERY

## Islands

**GAP** Range needed in Oak Harbor Area.

## Southwest

- Capital City Bowman (Thurston County)
- Chinook Archers (Clark County)
- Lewis and Clark Bowman (Cowlitz County)
- Lucky Shot Archery (Lewis County)
- Skookum Archers Club and Range (Pierce County)
- Tacoma Sportsman's Club (Pierce County)

## Seattle-King County

**GAP** Potential gap

## North Cascades

- Darrington Archery Range (Snohomish County)
- Nock Point Archery Range (Snohomish County)
- Silver Arrow Bowman (Skagit County)

## South Central

- Kamiakin Roving Archers (Yakima County)
- Mount Clemans Archery Club (Yakima County)
- Wa-Ku-Wa Archers (Yakima County)

# ARCHERY

## Columbia Plateau

- Colyak Bowhunters Club (Benton County)

**GAP** Range needed in Ellensburg area.

## Northeast

- Evergreen Archery Club (Spokane County)
- Spokane Valley Archery (Spokane County)

## The Palouse

- Blue Mountain Archers (Walla Walla County)

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Archery is a year-round sport but due to weather conditions in Washington, indoor or covered facilities are needed for at least part of the year. Archery clubs often lack capital to build an all-weather facility.
- None of the permanent indoor ranges is large enough to host the state championship tournament, necessitating use of multiple sites with loss of prestige, uniformity, and cohesion. Archery may be practiced and competed in a multiuse facility such as large gymnasiums, convention centers, fairgrounds, pavilions, or arenas, if the lease is affordable and the equipment (targets, stands, participant and spectator seating) is available. Archery is a family activity with participation by people of all ages, genders, and capabilities. Facilities must consider needs of women, children, seniors, and disabled.
- Areas for youth to shoot. Youth programs are on the rise and finding a year-round site, which often means indoors, is difficult because of the high cost to buy or lease a facility.
- While participation is increasing, distances to suitable archery ranges may prevent participation.



# ARCHERY

- Emphasis should be on indoor or outdoor ranges with covered shooting stations and covered targets near population centers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Funding

- Maintain funding for developed archery ranges through the Firearms and Archery Range Recreation grant program managed by RCO.
- Fund a single, large state tournament site with indoor and outdoor ranges.
- Coordinate an approach to identify opportunities and partnerships for range development and improvement, with organizations such as federal, state, county, and city agencies, nonprofit conservation organizations, shooting ranges, and commercial entities.
- For backcountry archery recreation facilities, maintain funding for the Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Account in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).



## DEFINITION

In this study, bicycling is defined as riding a bike or ebike on surfaces other than those shared with highway vehicles. Biking opportunities were evaluated in the scope of riding on local or regional, hard-surface trails and pathways (concrete, asphalt, or fine hard-packed gravels or natural material) protected and separated from a roadway as well as similar trails in parks, and on public schools grounds, port properties, etc. This activity includes cycling on rough gravel trails and pathways such as rail-trail routes that do not have improved surfacing (gravel grinding). For this study, only public lands were evaluated.

Walking is low or medium intensity walking or similar movement with the use of a mobility assistance device for recreation or exercise. Walking occurs in public places including a separated and protected sidewalk along a roadway, a local or community trail, and pathway in a park or park-like setting such as school grounds or port property. This type of walking occurs on a paved or gravel path or similar surface made for walking and may be a multi-modal pathway or trail (a pathway where bicycling, scooters, and motorized scooters may be allowed). Walking described here is not associated with great elevation change or a need to navigate obstacles.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

An exceptional biking or walking facility is an area where people may walk or ride comfortably on a surface separated and protected from highway vehicles. Facilities may be in a natural, rural, suburban, or urban setting. They have more than one access point and support facilities such as potable water, resting areas, and restrooms. Access to these facilities is either by a public road or pedestrian network. Ideally, walking and bicycling routes take users through a diversity of environments and connect to community attractions and amenities.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

### The Coast

- Discovery Trail (Pacific County)


# BICYCLING AND WALKING

- Palouse to Cascades Trail (Adams, Grant, King, Kittitas, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Spokane, Thurston, and Whitman Counties)

## Peninsulas

- Olympic Discovery Trail (Clallam and Jefferson Counties)

## Islands

 Potential gap

## Southwest

- Chehalis-Western Trail (Thurston County)
- Columbia River Trail (Clark and Skamania Counties)
- Foothills Trail (Pierce County)
- Green River Trail (King and Pierce Counties)
- Klickitat Rail Trail (Klickitat County)
- Palouse to Cascades Trail (Adams, Grant, King, Kittitas, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Spokane, Thurston, and Whitman Counties)
- Willapa Hills Trail (Lewis and Pacific Counties)

## Seattle-King County

- Burke-Gilman Trail (King County)
- Discovery, Seward, Green Lake, and Washington Arboretum Parks (King County)
- Green River Trail (King and Pierce Counties)
- Interurban Trail (King and Snohomish Counties)
- Palouse to Cascades Trail (Adams, Grant, King, Kittitas, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Spokane, Thurston, and Whitman Counties)

# BICYCLING AND WALKING

## **North Cascades**

- Cascade Trail (Skagit County)
- Centennial Trail, Bellingham Trails (Skagit and Snohomish County)
- Interurban Trail (King and Snohomish Counties)
- Similkameen Trail (Okanogan County)
- White Horse Trail (Snohomish County)

## **South Central**

- Palouse to Cascades Trail (Adams, Grant, King, Kittitas, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Spokane, Thurston, and Whitman Counties)
- Sacagawea Heritage Trail (Benton and Franklin Counties)
- Yakima Greenway Trail (Benton and Yakima Counties)

## **Columbia Plateau**

- Palouse to Cascades Trail and (Adams, Grant, King, Kittitas, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Spokane, Thurston, and Whitman Counties)
- Columbia Plateau State Park Trail (Adams, Grant, and Whitman Counties)

## **Northeast**

- Centennial Trail (Spokane County)
- Ferry County Rail Trail (Ferry County)
- Palouse to Cascades (Adams, Grant, King, Kittitas, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Spokane, Thurston, and Whitman Counties)

## **The Palouse**

- Palouse to Cascades Trail (Adams, Grant, King, Kittitas, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Spokane, Thurston, and Whitman Counties)

# BICYCLING AND WALKING

- Columbia Plateau State Park Trail (Adams, Grant, and Whitman Counties)
- Bill Chipman Palouse Trail (Whitman County)

## QUANTITATIVE GAPS

- Many of the above regional trails have gaps in them. These may be physical disconnections in a trail due to alternative land use in the trail corridor, walking on a pathway not protected and separated from a roadway, or areas that are underdeveloped and not usable by a beginner.
- The Palouse region has a Blue Mountain Trails Plan, which has yet to be funded substantially.
- A cross-state trail route as described Revised Code of Washington 79A.05 (and related codes) serving as a “spine” across the state with connections to regional trails has not been fully built.

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Money to maintain new facilities. Grants and other targeted funding programs exist for building or enhancing pedestrian networks, multimodal pathways, and trails but not for routine maintenance.
- A statewide plan to identify projects and investments to extend regional trail networks in the context of a statewide trails system is needed.
- Communities without interconnected trail and low stress pedestrian networks.
- Communities without adequate parks and open space with walking facilities.
- Opportunities for families and beginning cyclists off of roadways.
- Missing links in trails, and trail and active transportation plans that have not been funded and built.

# BICYCLING AND WALKING

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Establish an advisory committee to recommend policy and trail designations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's statewide trails plan.<sup>27</sup> The advisory committee would have three tasks: 1) develop a statewide trails plan; 2) advise the board and other agencies on the status and priorities of a statewide trails system; and 3) serve as a repository of information on local and regional trails that connect to the state trails system.
- Build a cross-state trail. Recommend the Governor's Office coordinate and secure funding for a recreational, cross-state trail for nonmotorized uses. The Governor's Office could better work across governments and with stakeholders to coordinate this effort. This effort should include the State Parks and Recreation Commission,<sup>28</sup> the Department of Natural Resources,<sup>29</sup> the Recreation and Conservation Office,<sup>30</sup> and the Department of Transportation.<sup>31</sup> This cross-state route should act as the backbone to connect other state, regional, and local trails and active transportation networks. In conjunction with this effort, the study recommends the Governor's Office staff coordinate efforts towards the completion of [the Great American Rail Trail segments](#) in Washington.

### Funding

- Continue to fund the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program to help agencies develop regional and statewide trails.
- Identify a fund source to help communities and other agencies maintain their new sections of regional trail systems.
- Continue to provide planning, funding, and other assistance for walkable and bikeable inclusive communities and a statewide system of trails.

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<sup>27</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A

<sup>28</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A.05.115-125

<sup>29</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A.05.115-125

<sup>30</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A.35

<sup>31</sup>Revised Codes of Washington 47.01 and 47.06, and 23 USC Section 217(g)





## DEFINITION

Boating consists of operating or riding on a motorboat or sailboat (with or without a motor) on any type of water suited for the vessel.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSET PROFILE

Exceptional boating facilities are on-water with upland amenities that support boating. These facilities provide access to and from destination water bodies. They allow for on-water experiences such as cruising, fishing, sightseeing, and water skiing, and provide protection from the elements. Facilities primarily are used for launching, retrieving, and mooring vessels including dinghies, as well as providing needed services such as sanitary pump-out, water, and fuel. Exceptional sites also provide access to upland amenities desired by boaters such as trails or other recreation facilities, restrooms, parking (including trailers), and businesses. Facilities may be publicly or privately owned.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

- Illwaco (Pacific County)
- Tokeland (Grays Harbor County)
- Westport Marina and Boat Launch (Grays Harbor County)

### Peninsulas

- Bremerton Marina (Kitsap County)

**GAP** Manchester (Kitsap County): More developed transient moorage is needed for access to desired uplands.

- Neah Bay (Clallam County)
- Pleasant Harbor (Jefferson County)

# BOATING

**GAP** Port Gamble (Kitsap County): There is no developed transient moorage or access to upland areas.

- Port Haven Boat Launch and Marina (Jefferson County)
- Quileute Marina (Clallam County)
- Sekiu (Strait of Juan de Fuca, Pacific Ocean)

## Islands

**GAP** Cama Beach Historical State Park (Island County): There is no developed transient moorage or access to upland areas.

- Fisherman Bay (San Juan County)

**GAP** Point No Point (Kitsap County): There is no developed launch or transient moorage.

- Roche Harbor (San Juan County)

**GAP** San Juan Islands: Blake Island, Blind Bay at Shaw Island, Cyprus Island, Hunter Bay at Lopez Island, Orcas Island, and some private land trust properties. (San Juan County): There is limited transient moorage and access to upland areas in peak season.

- Sucia Island State Park (San Juan County)

## Southwest

- Foss Water Way (Pierce County)

**GAP** McNeil Island (Pierce County): There is little developed transient moorage or access to upland areas.

**GAP** Saltwater shoreline from Seattle to Olympia. (Pierce and Thurston Counties): There is a lack of launch ramps in this stretch of shoreline.

**GAP** Steilacoom (Pierce County): There is little developed transient moorage or access to upland areas.

# BOATING

## Seattle-King County

- Don Armeni Boat Launch (King County)
- Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park (King County)
- Lake Sammamish State Park (King County)
- Port of Seattle Facilities (King County)

**GAP** Saltwater boat launch ramps from Seattle to Tacoma (King and Pierce Counties): There is a lack of launch ramps in this stretch of shoreline.

## North Cascades

- Don Morris Park and Marina (Chelan County)

**GAP** Pateros (Okanogan County): There is no developed transient moorage and limited boat launch parking.

- Port of Bellingham (Whatcom County)
- Port of Everett (Snohomish County)
- Vantage Boat Launch (Kittitas County)

## South Central

- Columbia Point and Park (Benton County)
- Crow Butte Park (Benton County)

## Columbia Plateau

- Moses Lake launch ramps (Grant County)
- Steamboat State Park (Douglas County)

# BOATING

## Northeast

- Fort Spokane (Stevens County)
- Kelly Ferry Boat Launch and Marina Park (Ferry County)
- Long Lake (Stevens County)

**GAP** There is a lack of boat launching facilities on the north shore of the Columbia River in this area.

## The Palouse

- Clarkston boat launches (Asotin County)
- Heller Bar Access Area (Asotin County)

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Reduced fishing opportunities due to fewer fish.
- Shortage of marina capacity in high-demand locations.
- Shortage of marine haul-out and repair facilities.
- Inability to reserve public moorage space.
- Aging boating infrastructure.
- Costs for in-water work rising due to updated regulatory requirements.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

#### Moorage and Launch Capacity

- South Puget Sound and San Juan Islands: Recommend that state agencies evaluate the feasibility of providing more launch ramps, transient moorage, and

# BOATING

access to desired uplands in southern Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands. Evaluation of moorage may be limited to peak use seasons.

- Recommend state agencies pilot stern tie installations at one or more sites in the San Juan Islands. Stern ties may be an inexpensive way to add moorage or make moorage more efficient (add capacity) at some locations.
- Pilot an online reservation and payment system for public transient moorage facilities in Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands.
- Provide incentives for private landowners to grant public access easements to and from tidelands to allow travel from vessel to upland amenities and vice versa.
- Study ways to incentivize local governments to provide launch and marina facilities in areas with high need.
- To support private financing of marina facilities, authorize longer term leasing options for state-owned aquatic lands.
- Create authorities where none may exist that prioritize boating infrastructure needs over other forms of development in areas with limited boating facilities.
- Find ways to reduce competition from Canadian facilities, which charge lower taxes than Washington State for interstate boaters.

## Funding

- Continue funding Boating Facilities Program grants in the context of any implementation of a [road usage charge](#).
- Continue to fund pump facilities in Puget Sound to support possible future No Discharge Zone designation.
- Continue to fund the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account to support development of more water access opportunities.



## DEFINITION

This activity is characterized by traveling to a developed campground in a rural or natural setting and spending one or more nights there. For this study, only publicly owned camping locations were considered. Camping areas are overwhelmingly at, or near, attractions such as water, mountains, geographic landmarks, and historical or scenic landscapes. Users may drive to and park at their campsites. Users also may enjoy nature or be near opportunities for other types of recreation such as sightseeing, hiking, off-road vehicle riding, hunting, fishing, biking, swimming, or boating.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

An exceptional camping facility is near a desired destination area such as a natural area or near water. These facilities have well-developed access roads and full or partial amenities such as hardened tent or trailer platforms, recreational vehicle sites, utility hookups, potable water, trash facilities, and restrooms. Exceptional camping areas have many sites as well as special sites for large groups. These facilities may have their own beaches, boat launches, trails, viewpoints, and docks. They also may have services for rent such as cabins or yurts, fishing gear, paddle boats, and bikes. These facilities often have camp hosts or resident staff and are maintained daily.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

- Cape Disappointment State Park (Pacific County)

### Peninsulas

- Olympic National Park: Fairholme Campground, Hoh Rainforest Campground, Kalaloch Campground (Multiple Counties)
- Salt Creek Recreation Area (Clallam County)

### Islands

- Cama Beach State Park (Island County)

# CAMPING

- Fort Casey Historical State Park (Island County)
- Moran State Park (San Juan County)

## **Southwest**

- Capitol State Forest: Marguerite McKinney Campground and Trail Head (Thurston County)
- Elbe Hills and Tahoma State Forest (Pierce County)
- Mount Rainier National Park: Cougar Rock, Ohanapecosh, and White River (King, Lewis, and Pierce Counties)

**GAP** Need more camping in and near Mount Rainier National Park to accommodate peak season users (King, Lewis, and Pierce Counties)

## **Seattle-King County**

- Camping areas in the Interstate 90 corridor east of North Bend (King County)

## **North Cascades**

- Eight Mile Campground (Okanogan County)
- Methow Valley Camping Areas (Okanogan County)
- Pearrygin Lake State Park (Okanogan County)
- Sinlahekin Wildlife Area (Okanogan County)
- Steamboat Rock State Park (Lincoln County)

## **South Central**

- Crow Butte Park (Benton County)

## **Columbia Plateau**

- Quincy Lakes (Grant County)



# CAMPING

- Sun Lakes–Dry Falls State Park (Douglas County)

## Northeast

- East Sullivan Campground (Pend Oreille County)
- Riverside State Park (Spokane County)

## The Palouse

- Wooten Wildlife Area (Columbia County)

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- More group camping at popular sites.
- More yurts and cabins (systemic).
- More hut-to-hut camping opportunities for long-distance recreationists to include mountain bikers and winter recreationists.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Funding

- Fund expanded camping opportunities at state parks. The Washington state parks system is a premier destination<sup>32</sup> for camping and nature activities. Fund expansion of camping opportunities at state parks including yurt and cabin development.
- Maintain funding for backcountry recreation activities such as camping in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).

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<sup>32</sup>[State of Washington Assessment of Outdoor Recreation Demand Report](#), Prepared for RCO by Eastern Washington University, 2017, p3, 42-46



## DEFINITION

This activity is characterized by climbing natural rock features either as cliff faces, boulder fields, or other steep terrain. Climbing is generally done with the assistance of climbing gear and safety devices. Climbing routes may have affixed hardware and include areas with permanent anchors for top-roping. For this study, only public lands were evaluated.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Significant climbing areas are those that offer unique or multiple climbing experiences. These include climbing routes for the beginners, training routes, climbs with varying degrees of difficulty, remote experiences, and group experiences. A significant site has well-maintained access roads and trails, ample parking, a large staging area, and opportunities for camping with potable water. Desired elements are dedicated maintenance, an education and enforcement presence, and designated areas for different skill levels.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

**GAP** Potential gap

### Peninsulas

**GAP** Potential gap

### Islands

**GAP** Potential gap

### Southwest

- Beacon Rock State Park (Skamania County)

# CLIMBING, BOULDERING, AND SCRAMBLING


## **Seattle-King County**

- Little Mount Si (King County)
- Ollalie State Park (King County)

## **North Cascades**

- Icicle Canyon (Chelan County)
- Mount Index and Index Town Walls (Snohomish County)
- Newhalem climbing area (Whatcom County)
- Peshastin Pinnacles State Park (Chelan County)
- The Enchantments (Chelan County)
- Washington Pass and Upper Methow Valley (Okanogan County)

## **South Central**

 Potential gap

## **Columbia Plateau**

- Frenchman Coulee (Grant County)

## **Northeast**

- Deep Creek, Minnehaha (Spokane County)
- Metaline Falls (Pend Oreille County)

## **The Palouse**

 Potential gap

# CLIMBING, BOULDERING, AND SCRAMBLING

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Increasingly users want to camp at, or close to, trailheads and in the backcountry at climbing destinations. Quality and quantity of sustainable camping opportunities, restrooms, and potable water are lacking at many popular front-country and backcountry sites. Access to many sites are user-created so there are minimal parking, maintenance, and staff presence.
- Many facilities have inadequate access due to road and trail washouts, blowdowns, and overgrown vegetation. Lack of regular maintenance may lead to closure of access roads
- Turnover of staff at land manager agencies means partnerships stall.
- Multiple or complex permit systems for users.
- More maintenance funding needed to keep sites open and optimal.
- Inadequate coordination between land manager agencies.
- Car prowls at trailheads.
- Missing links in trails. Incentivize landowners to allow recreational trails on and through their lands.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Evaluate the desirability of a reservation system for use of popular backcountry climbing areas.

### Funding

- Continue funding backcountry recreation activities such as climbing in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).

# CLIMBING, BOULDERING, AND SCRAMBLING

- Continue or increase the following:
  - Development of new sites to keep pace with growth in the sport.
  - Investment in camping areas at popular trailheads and in the backcountry.
- Fund additional staff at land manager agencies to enable them to create and enhance partnerships that will maintain and expand climbing opportunities. This may include volunteer recruitment coordination, training, recognition, and project leadership.
- Evaluate the feasibility and use of developing a new source of revenue for the protection, enhancement, and maintenance of popular backcountry climbing areas. This new resource should fund the following:
  - Investment in bathrooms and developed camping areas at backcountry sites to reduce natural resource impacts.
  - Investment in road repair and maintenance to keep opportunities open.

## NOTE

Stakeholder groups report that land management agencies are increasingly seeing climbing and bouldering as part of their missions.



## DEFINITION

Equestrian in the backcountry consists of riding horses and leading pack animals on trails in a wilderness or other natural setting. Riding also may take place on regional trails in a natural setting with a separate pathway (soft shoulder) specifically designed for equestrian travel.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Facilities that support this activity offer soft surface or gravel trails in a natural setting that are designated for equestrian recreation. These facilities have well-developed and well-maintained access roads, parking areas with ample parking for trailered vehicles, and amenities such as corals, hitching rails, loading ramps, water, and bathrooms. Trails start at or reach open areas that facilitate large gatherings and camping. Where backcountry equestrian recreation is collocated with other compatible recreation activities, equestrian facilities are separate and signed for that use. Because equestrians may travel further than hikers or other recreationists, there is a greater need for longer routes of travel.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

This section includes trails listed under the Bicycling and Walking section that also are used for equestrian recreation.

### The Coast

**GAP** Potential gap


### Peninsulas

- Miller Peninsula Park (Kitsap County)

**GAP** Need more horse camps on the Olympic Peninsula (Clallam, Jefferson, and Kitsap Counties)

# EQUESTRIAN IN THE BACKCOUNTRY

## Islands

 Potential gap

## Southwest

- Battle Ground Lake State Park (Lewis County)
- Capitol State Forest (Thurston County)
- Kalama Horse Camp (Lewis County)
- Whipple Creek Park (Clark and Vancouver Counties)
- Yacolt Burn State Forest (Clark, Cowlitz, and Skamania Counties)

## Seattle-King County

- Middle Fork of Snoqualmie River (King County)
- Iron Horse State Park (King and Kittitas County)

## North Cascades

- Blanchard Mountain and Lake Whatcom Recreation Areas (Whatcom County)
- Iron Horse State Park (King and Kittitas County)
- Les Hilde Trails (Skagit County)

## South Central

 Potential gap

## Columbia Plateau

- Palouse to Cascades Trail (Adams, Grant, and Lincoln Counties)

## Northeast

- Mount Spokane State Park (Spokane County)



# EQUESTRIAN IN THE BACKCOUNTRY

## The Palouse

**GAP** Potential gap

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- The amount of backlogged maintenance on trails and access roads in some cases leads to closing facilities and loss of opportunity.
- Frequent turnover in land manager staff makes partnerships hard to establish and maintain.
- Insufficient parking for trailers and other amenities at some popular trailheads.
- Multiuse trails often are built and maintained primarily for hikers and mountain bikers and not to equestrian standards, which require safe approaches to bridges, bypass trails for steep downhill grades, high clearing limits, etc.
- Lack of an enforcement presence, which often leads to misuse of recreation areas and degraded conditions.
- As trail use overall increases, need funding for more multipurpose trails as well as equestrian-centric facilities.
- User conflicts with motorized recreationists.
- Expanded parking, including for trailers, at busy trailheads.
- Missing links in trails. Provide incentives for landowners to allow recreational trails on and through their lands.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Establish a new authority to fund additional staff at land manager agencies to enable them to create and enhance partnerships that will maintain and expand

# EQUESTRIAN IN THE BACKCOUNTRY

riding opportunities. This may include volunteer recruitment coordination, training, recognition, and project leadership.

- Align rules and regulations across government agencies to streamline opportunities for volunteering.
- Provide incentives for private landowners to allow trails across their lands to eliminate missing links on trails.

## Funding

- Continue funding equestrian opportunities through existing programs and consider support for these programs in any implementation of a [road usage charge](#).
- Support equestrian opportunities on Washington Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Forest Service lands by maintaining roads, trails, and trailheads; developing more camping and trailer parking at popular sites; and funding more education and enforcement presence.
- Fund more trails near urban areas. Where able, conserve land for backcountry equestrian and other nonmotorized uses near urbanizing areas.

## NOTE

Pack horses are becoming more popular with many user groups to carry backcountry gear, which allows people to venture deeper into wilderness for longer periods of time. Wagon riders also are a significant user group in some areas (Iron Horse State Park).



# FIREARMS

## DEFINITION

Firearms recreation other than hunting (see “Hunting” in a separate section). Users participate in this activity individually and in groups, indoors and outdoors, in dispersed or concentrated areas, and in a wide range of landscapes from natural to highly developed. Individual disciplines exist within this activity such as rifle, pistol, and shotgun, as well as sub-disciplines such as short- and long-range activities, practical shooting, black powder, and semiautomatic firearms; and skeet, trap, and sporting clay sports.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Significant sites for firearm recreationists are those facilities that have a diversity of shooting opportunities to accommodate different types of firearm and shooting sports. These facilities have a clubhouse for gatherings and transactions, restrooms, large parking areas, covered firing lines, safety and sound abatement devices, and developed outdoor amenities such as picnic areas and camping areas with utility hookups.

Another type of significant facility is an informal but large shooting area on public land. This type of facility has developed and well-maintained road access and large backstop and side berms to contain projectiles.

Significant sites may accommodate large tournaments with a statewide, national, or international draw.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast


**GAP** Potential gap

### Peninsulas

**GAP** Potential gap

# FIREARMS

## Islands

 Potential gap

## Southwest

- Capitol State Forest, Triangle Pit (Thurston County)
- Evergreen Sportsman's Club (Thurston County)

## Seattle-King County

- Black Diamond Gun Club (King County)
- King County Shooting Sports Park (King County)

## North Cascades

- Kenmore Shooting Range (King County)

## South Central

- Sun Valley Shooting Park (Yakima County)
- Tri Cities Shooting Association (Benton County)
- Wenas Wildlife Area (Yakima County)

## Columbia Plateau

- Lynden Gun Club (Adams County)

## Northeast

- Spokane Gun Club (Spokane County)

## The Palouse

 Potential gap

# FIREARMS

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Cost of operating a recreational range is expensive. Gun clubs typically do not have a large capital reserve, and operating costs may not keep pace with membership-driven revenue. The higher costs associated with shooting at a gun club likely result in more informal shooting on public lands, which may be less desirable than at a formal facility where safety and resource protection may be better managed.
- Many established and sustainable ranges are on leased lands. The development market has pushed many landowners to sell, which means clubs have to close or move to smaller, less desirable properties with longer drive times for users.
- New development near established ranges raises nuisance and other regulatory challenges.
- Many established clubs are operating with a conditional use permit (nonconforming uses permit), which often prevents clubs from renovating or expanding.
- With an increase in population and participation, managing safe and sustainable target shooting opportunities on public land is becoming more challenging, yet more important. Therefore, emphasis should be on supporting safe outdoor ranges with covered shooting stations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Evaluate and update authorities that preserve shooting opportunities in developing areas.

### Funding

- Fund a statewide public lands shooting plan to better coordinate and manage sustainable outdoor shooting opportunities.
- Provide incentives for private landowners to allow shooting on their properties.

# FIREARMS

- Maintain funding for range projects through the Firearms and Archery Range Recreation grant program.
- Maintain funding for backcountry recreation activities such as firearms recreation in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).

## NOTE

Concerns for dispersed shooting on public lands includes fire starts in eastern Washington.



# FISHING AND SHELLFISHING

## DEFINITION

Fishing for freshwater or saltwater fish from a bank or built infrastructure such as a jetty, pier, or dock. Includes digging for clams at public beaches.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Exceptional assets are those next to or over a water body with a desired fish or shellfish species. These assets exist in developed or natural landscapes. Access to significant sites is by a well-developed and maintained roadway, trail, or sidewalk. Day-use amenities such as seating, open lawn space, and restrooms are provided.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### Statewide

- Hundreds of miles of underused perpetual streambank fishing easements held by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

### The Coast

- Illwaco (Pacific County)
- Long Beach (Pacific County)
- Ocean Shores (Clamming, Grays Harbor County)
- Westport (Grays Harbor County)

### Peninsulas

- Hoe River (Jefferson County)

### Islands

**GAP** Potential gap



# FISHING AND SHELLFISHING

## **Southwest**

- Mayfield, Merwin, and Riffe Lake Access Sites (Lewis County)

## **Seattle-King County**

- Angle Lake Park (King County)
- Des Moines Marina fishing pier (King County)
- Green Lake Park (King County)
- Lake Washington (King County)
- Gene Coulon Memorial Park (King County)

## **North Cascades**

- Edmond's pier (Snohomish County)
- Lake Roosevelt (Douglas and Okanogan Counties)
- Methow Valley River Access Areas (Fly Fishing, Okanogan County)

## **South Central**

- Lower Yakima River (Benton and Yakima Counties)

## **Columbia Plateau**

- Banks Lake (Douglas County)
- Pothole Lakes (Grant County)
- Sprague Lake (Adams and Lincoln Counties)

## **Northeast**

- Kettle River (Stevens County)
- Liberty Lake Regional Park (Spokane County)

# FISHING AND SHELLFISHING

- Long Lake (Spokane County)
- Spokane River (Spokane County)

## **The Palouse**

- Lake Roosevelt Access Areas (Douglas and Okanogan Counties)
- Quincy Lakes Access Areas (Grant County)

## **QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS**

- Private property restrictions. Inability to access water where private property abuts state waters.
- Insufficient fish stocks at desired locations.
- Beginners and nontraditional users don't know where to go.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Funding**

- Continue funding for water access projects in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account grant program.
- Evaluate the need for more funding at the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to provide public information on fishing opportunities and programs for new anglers.
- Expand hatchery services to keep pace with development and increased fishing pressure. Fewer marine opportunities mean more need for upland stocks. Maintain fish stocks to keep pace with increases in recreational anglers.
- Support sturgeon fishing in the Columbia River Gorge area, which is the only place to catch the fish in the state).



## DEFINITION

This activity is characterized by walking on trails in a natural setting. The experience can be a single day, overnight, or multiple nights. For day hikes, camping is not part of the experience. Backpacking is an overnight experience and recreationist bring all the items needed for an overnight stay in the backcountry.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Significant sites are those with long-distance trails, loop trails, or those that are part of a larger trail network. Exceptional sites also may be trails in natural settings with a shorter or non-strenuous hike for beginners, families, or for those with less mobility or mobility assist devices. These trails typically have a natural material surface but may be hardened surfaces such as gravel or boardwalks. Hiking consists of walking on trails with constant to intermittent elevation changes. The hiking experience is typically characterized by walking to destination experiences such as a geographic feature, view, or something culturally or historically significant. Hiking or backpacking may be done alone or in a group and trail users may need a permit to access an area. Trailheads have ample parking, restrooms, potable water, and may have day-use areas such as picnic shelters or other amenities. For this study, only public lands were evaluated.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

This section includes those trails listed under the Bicycling and Walking section that also are used for hiking. Therefore, the Quantitative Gaps section of the Bicycling and Walking section also applies.

### The Coast

**GAP** Potential gap

### Peninsulas

- Lake Cushman area trails (Mason County)
- Olympic Coast Trails (Clallam and Jefferson Counties)

# HIKING AND BACKPACKING

## Islands

- Mount Constitution (San Juan County)

## Southwest

- Columbia River Gorge (Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania Counties)
- Mount Rainier National Park (Pierce County)
- Mount Saint Helens National Volcanic Monument (Skamania County)

**GAP** Pacific Crest Trail Corridor (Chelan, King, Kittitas, Lewis, Pierce, Skagit, Skamania, Snohomish, Okanogan Counties): Areas of this corridor are not protected and sections need redevelopment.

## Seattle-King County

- Alpine Lakes Wilderness (King and Kittitas Counties)
- Mount Si (King County)

**GAP** Pacific Crest Trail Corridor (Chelan, King, Kittitas, Lewis, Pierce, Skagit, Skamania, Snohomish, and Okanogan Counties): Areas of this corridor are not protected and sections need redevelopment.

- Snoqualmie Pass Area (King County)
- Tiger Mountain (King County)

## North Cascades

**GAP** Cascade Trail (Skagit County)

- Enchantments (Chelan County)
- North Cascade National Park (Skagit County)

**GAP** Pacific Crest Trail Corridor (Chelan, King, Kittitas, Lewis, Pierce, Skagit, Skamania, Snohomish, and Okanogan Counties): Areas of this corridor are not protected and sections need redevelopment.

# HIKING AND BACKPACKING

**GAP** Pacific Northwest Trail (Chelan, Ferry, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Skagit, Stevens, and Whatcom Counties). Some sections have not been developed and protected as part of this regional route.

- Pasayten Wilderness (Okanogan County)
- Washington Pass and North Cascades Scenic Byway Corridor Trailheads (Okanogan and Whatcom Counties)

## South Central

- William O Douglas and Goat Rocks Wildernesses (Yakima County)

## Columbia Plateau

**GAP** Potential gap

## Northeast

- Dishman Hills (Spokane County)
- Ferry County Rail Trail (Ferry County)
- High Drive Park and South Hill Bluff (Spokane County)
- Mount Spokane and Riverside State Parks (Spokane County)

**GAP** Pacific Northwest Trail (Chelan, Ferry, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Skagit, Stevens, Whatcom Counties). Major sections have not been developed and protected.

## The Palouse

**GAP** Potential gap

## QUANTITATIVE GAPS

- The above gaps for existing trails include missing links or unprotected portions of the trail (not in public ownership), and areas that are underdeveloped or lack formal access points.

# HIKING AND BACKPACKING

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- More public transportation to trailheads is needed.
- Maintenance of trails and support facilities such as restrooms, parking areas, and access roads that have not had routine maintenance in any previous year. If maintenance is deferred too long, use diminishes and areas may be closed.
- A variety of experiences available at a single trailhead. For example, a 1- or 2-mile loop trail for beginners may be desirable at popular trailheads that also have longer hikes.
- More urban to backcountry connections.
- New trails and trail connections to keep pace with, and expand opportunity, in light of ongoing growth in activity.
- Additional trailhead parking at popular destinations. Parking often encroaches on private property or creates safety hazardous on county roads. Available parking is not keeping pace with growth in participation.
- Frequency and intensity of wildfires threatens sustainability of trails. Fires damage trails and the subsequent unchecked erosion washes them away in the seasons that follow. Fires also destroy bridges and other structures, which then limits access to areas hikers value. There also are too few resources to repair washed out access roads.
- The increasing cost of land reduces the ability to fill the gaps in long-distance trails and to connect urban areas with the backcountry.
- Car prowling issues at trailheads.
- Access pass requirements may be confusing to users.
- Missing links in trails and dead-end trails that abut private lands.

# HIKING AND BACKPACKING

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Provide incentives for private landowners to allow trails and access points.
- Fund additional staff at land manager agencies to enable them to create and enhance partnerships that will maintain and expand recreational opportunities. This may include volunteer recruitment coordination, training, recognition, and project leadership.
- Establish an advisory committee to recommend policy and trail designations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's statewide trails plan.<sup>33</sup> The advisory committee would have three tasks: 1) develop a statewide trails plan that identifies all the resources and projects that contribute to a statewide trails system; 2) advise the board and other agencies on the status and priorities of a statewide trails system; and 3) serve as a repository of information on local and regional trails that connect to the state trails system.
- Create additional authorities to purchase land for trails in urbanizing communities, and that link community and backcountry trails.

### Funding

- Maintain funding for backcountry recreation activities such as hiking in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).
- Evaluate and identify new revenue that provides sustainable funding to develop new opportunities and keep trails and roads open and well-maintained to support growth in participation.
- Create authorities that increase enforcement at trailheads to reduce crime.

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<sup>33</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A





# HUNTING WITH FIREARMS AND BOWS

## DEFINITION

This activity consists of people accessing natural areas on foot, bicycle, off-road vehicle, highway vehicle, or a mobility assist device to shoot game and other animals with firearms or bows. Types of firearms and bows used and animals sought depend on licenses, permits, and regulations of government agencies and policies of private landowners. Hunting takes place in a natural setting but may occur near developed areas. Hunting generally is a solitary activity but hunting in pairs or small groups is common. Hunting water fowl may occur from a boat.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Exceptional assets for this activity are those that have habitat elements that support specific animal species or communities of species. For sites where wildlife is released for the hunting, the release date is more important than quality of habitat. It is important to note that the natural supply of animals in any given locale often is cyclical over a few years.

Hunters may desire a hunting camp experience to allow for multiple day hunts from a single location. In these instances, access roads, trails, and large open areas are important. As hunting is generally a solitary or small group activity, large trailheads, parking, and support facilities to accommodate large crowds are not a necessity although some parking and amenities are preferred. Pull-off or shoulder parking along an access road is typically sufficient.

For hunters who prefer to hunt from boats, a site with adequate launch capacity and parking, including for trailers, is essential.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

**GAP** Potential gap

# HUNTING WITH FIREARMS AND BOWS

## Peninsulas

**GAP** Potential gap

## Islands

**GAP** Potential gap

## Southwest

- Gifford Pinchot National Forests (Lewis and Cowlitz Counties)

## Seattle-King County

**GAP** Potential gap

## North Cascades

**GAP** Chelan Butte Wildlife Area (Chelan County). Needs road maintenance and redevelopment.

**GAP** Chesaw Wildlife Area (Ferry and Okanogan Counties). Needs road maintenance and redevelopment.

**GAP** Methow Valley Area (Okanogan County): Developed access displaces hunting opportunities.

- Murray Wildlife Area (Okanogan County)
- Sinlahekin Wildlife Area (Okanogan County)
- Skagit and Whatcom Counties for water fowl.

## South Central

- L.T. Murray Wildlife Area (Kittitas and Yakima Counties)

**GAP** Wenas Wildlife Area (Kittitas and Yakima Counties). Road maintenance and redevelopment needed.

# HUNTING WITH FIREARMS AND BOWS

## Columbia Plateau

- Pothole Lakes (Grant County)
- Banks Lake (Douglas County)

## Northeast

**GAP** Potential gap

## The Palouse

- Chief Joseph Wildlife Area and 4-O Ranch (Asotin County)

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- “Pay to Play” on private lands is cost prohibitive (in excess of \$400 for annual access, on top of required licenses to hunt). Prohibitions for camping on private land is a barrier.
  - People leave Washington to hunt because it is cheaper and better areas are open (more private access).
  - Private forests often landlock public lands that are otherwise good for hunting.
  - Diversity of land uses in Washington limits the quantity of suitable private lands.
  - Lands for beginner hunters are more likely to be private.
- Places where the habitat supports the desired species and adequate motor vehicle access and parking is provided.
- Changing habitat conditions, including natural disasters such as fires, limit hunting and create cycles of good and bad hunting years.
- Insufficient access to public and private lands that have been thinned or logged. These areas are often good places to hunt.

# HUNTING WITH FIREARMS AND BOWS

- Where dispersed use is desired, access roads do not provide a pull-off or shoulder parking.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Authorize additional incentives to private landowners to open land to public hunting and host hunting opportunities for beginners.
- Where good hunting is available on private lands, authorize incentives to private landowners to develop roads to a recreational standard rather than an agricultural standard, and provide funding for their upkeep as needed.
- Find ways to increase hunting licenses sales, which in turn supports the needs of hunters.

### Funding

- Increase funding to build roads and redevelop or improve existing roads in areas where desired wildlife is plentiful or where it may be plentiful in the near-term.
- Maintain funding for backcountry recreation activities such as hunting in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).
- Fund additional habitat improvements where needed.
- Purchase good hunting areas (may be less than fee title) for public use.



## DEFINITION

This activity consists of people recreating in a local or community park or other destination setting such as a developed state park. Recreation activities in this category include socializing, barbecues, picnics, lawn games, swimming and water play, playing on playgrounds, art and nature viewing, visiting historical places and structures, recreating with pets, hosting social events, attending community events and concerts, and walking or riding bikes.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Facilities that support this activity have medium to large lawn spaces or plazas suited for leisure activities, restrooms, and covered recreation areas such as picnic shelters, viewpoints, and gazebos. Facilities also have paved access roads and large parking lots. Desired locations have access roads for dropping off people and supplies. Areas are well-maintained, may have a staff presence, and may have concessionaries. These facilities may have a central attraction such as a historical landmark or other human-made items, water access, trails, spray parks, or sport courts. Users also should have universal access to all areas and amenities.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

- Public beaches (Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties)

### Peninsulas

**GAP** Potential gap

### Islands

**GAP** Potential gap

### Southwest

- Point Defiance Park, Ruston Way, and adjacent parks (Pierce County)

# LEISURE ACTIVITIES IN A PARK

## **Seattle-King County**

- Ballard Locks (King County)
- Cal Anderson, Green Lake, Lincoln, Outdoor Art Museum, Seward, and Volunteer Parks (King County)
- Downtown Park (King County)
- Gene Coulon Memorial Park (King County)
- Lake Sammamish State Park (King County)
- Richmond Beach Saltwater Park (King County)
- Lake Meridian Park (King County)

## **North Cascades**

- Boulevard Park (Whatcom County)
- Kiwanis Park (Chelan County)
- Larrabee State Park (Whatcom County)
- Legion Park (Snohomish County)

## **South Central**

- Columbia Park (Benton County)

## **Columbia Plateau**

 Potential gap

## **Northeast**

- River Front Park (Spokane County)

## **The Palouse**

- Sunnyside Park (Whitman County)

# LEISURE ACTIVITIES IN A PARK

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Both state and local parks and recreation agencies are struggling with a growing maintenance backlog that affects both the upkeep and usability of playfields.
- Small public agencies with a large number of low-income residents or low property values struggle with funding renovation of facilities and building parks.
- In light of predicted population growth, local governments have a need for additional revenue sources to support park acquisition, renovation, and maintenance. Their existing revenue sources of property taxes and general revenue increasingly do not meet the needs of local parks departments.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Evaluate and identify new taxing authorities that support park development and maintenance for all types of local governments and state parks.
- Consider authorities that allow governments not planning under the Growth Management Act to establish park impact fees.

### Funding

- Continue to fund grant and other programs that support local park development priorities.
- Establish an additional funding program for artificial, multisport, athletic fields in urban or urbanizing communities.





## DEFINITION

This a trail riding activity using specialized mountain bikes equipped to handle a diversity of terrain and typically takes place on dirt roads, double-track, or single-track trails. Riders also may ride bikes with electric motors on all motorized trails as well as on double- or single-track trails depending on land manager policies. In addition to riding on trails, mountain bikers also may ride in mountain bike parks, which are properties designed exclusively for mountain bikes. These parks offer skill-building trails with different levels of difficulty, and at times provide lift service to the top of a ride. Riders may use forest or primitive roads that link trails. Riders may recreate alone or in small groups and may compete in mountain bike events.

## PROFILE OF SIGNIFICANT ASSETS

Significant assets for mountain bikers includes trails in a natural setting, both in front country and backcountry settings, as well as bike parks with trails exclusively for mountain biking. Significant facilities have well-developed and maintained access and/or shuttle roads, ample parking, and likely have trailhead facilities such as bathrooms, potable water, and day-use areas for picnicking. Riding areas used for community events or competitions have large open areas for staging and bike maintenance, popup shelters, and portable concessionaires. For this study, only public lands were evaluated.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

This section includes trails in the Bicycling and Walking section that also are used for mountain biking. Therefore, the Quantitative Gaps section of the “Bicycling and Walking” section also applies.

### The Coast

**GAP** Potential gap

# MOUNTAIN BIKING

## Peninsulas

- Olympic Discovery Trail Adventure Route (Clallam County)
- Port Gamble open space (Kitsap County)

## Islands

- Moran State Park (San Juan County)

## Southwest

- Capitol State Forest (Thurston County)
- Columbia River Gorge (Clark and Cowlitz Counties)

**GAP** Mount Rainier area (Lewis and Pierce Counties): This area has fewer opportunities than other Cascade Mountain locations.

- Swan Creek Park (Pierce Country)
- Yacolt State Forest (Lewis County)
- Coyote Wall Trails (Klickitat County)
- Gifford Pinchot National Forest and Mount Saint Helen's Monument areas (Lewis County)

## Seattle-King County

- Duthie Hill Bike Park (King County)
- Grand Ridge (King County)
- Ollalie Trail (King County)
- Tiger Mountain and Raging River State Forests (King County)

## North Cascades

- Bellingham to Baker Trail (Whatcom County)

# MOUNTAIN BIKING

- Chuckanut Mountain Park and Larabee State Park (Skagit County)
- Derby Canyon (Okanogan County)
- Echo Ridge (Chelan County)
- Galbraith Mountain (Skagit County)
- Lake Padden and Boulevard Parks (Skagit County)
- Lookout Mountain (Whatcom County)
- Sage Hills (Chelan County)
- Ski Hill and Freund Canyon Trails (Okanogan County)
- Squilchuck State Park (Chelan County)
- Sun Mountain and Buck Mountain (Okanogan County)

## **South Central**

- Yacult Burn State Forest (Clark County)

## **Columbia Plateau**

 Not identified yet

## **Northeast**

- Abercrombie Mountain, Silver Creek (Pend Oreille County)
- Beacon Hill (Spokane County)
- High Drive Park and South Hill Bluff (Spokane County)
- Kettle Crest Trails (Ferry, Pend Oreille, and Stevens Counties)
- Micah Peak (Spokane County)

 Spokane County. This area has disproportionately fewer trail miles than other urban areas.

# MOUNTAIN BIKING

## The Palouse

**GAP** Potential gap

## Statewide

**GAP** Cross-state mountain bike trail: Connection to the Oregon Timber Trail. (Chelan, King, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lewis, Okanogan, Pierce, and Skamania Counties)

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Lack of developed mountain bike facilities in and near urbanizing communities. Although places like Duthie Hill in Issaquah exist, they quickly reach capacity at peak times because the sport is growing so fast. Mountain bikers prefer more frequent rides close to home over destination experiences, which still are valued greatly.
- Cascade Mountain Range: There is a lack of connectivity with larger trail networks and trail experiences that offer an alpine experience or viewpoint.
- Mountain biking is prohibited in all designated wilderness areas.
- Trail maintenance funding is not keeping pace with growth in this activity.
- Non-sustainability of user built trails on U.S. Forest Service lands. Unapproved development under threat of decommissioning.
- Parking areas frequented by mountain bikers often at capacity and riders must seek out more distant access points.
- Underdeveloped policies (in places) for e-bikes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Establish a new authority to fund additional staff at land manager agencies to enable them to create and enhance partnerships that will maintain and expand

# MOUNTAIN BIKING

mountain biking opportunities. This may include volunteer recruitment coordination, training, recognition, and project leadership.

- Establish an advisory committee to recommend policy and trail designations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's statewide trails plan.<sup>34</sup> The advisory committee would have three tasks: 1) develop a statewide trails plan that identifies all the resources and projects that contribute to a statewide trails system; 2) advise the board and other agencies on the status and priorities of a statewide trails system; and 3) serve as a repository of information on local and regional trails that connect to the state trails system.
- Create additional authorities to purchase lands for trails in urbanizing communities, and that link community and backcountry trails.
- Provide incentives for land manager agencies to support mountain bike development on ski slopes in the off-season.
- Evaluate any policy needs with regard to ebikes on trails.
- Provide incentives for private landowners to allow trail activities on their lands.

## Funding

- Maintain funding for backcountry recreation activities such as mountain biking in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).
- Dedicate more funds to trail maintenance and larger trailheads at popular trails.
- Fund mountain bike facility development in urbanized areas to bring riding opportunities close to home.
- Fund trail development to connect existing networks for longer rides.

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<sup>34</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A



## DEFINITION

Mountaineering involves ascending mountains, which may include traversing areas of snow and ice. Mountaineering usually requires special climbing and safety equipment and may include overnight camping in the backcountry or at a trailhead. Mountaineers may train by hiking, backpacking, and climbing in low-elevation areas.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Exceptional sites are high altitude natural areas with mountain peaks. These areas are accessed by developed trails that typically end in an alpine environment. Mountaineering may be done alone or in a small group and may be led by a paid guide. Mountaineers may stay overnight in a backcountry, dispersed camping areas near the destination climb. Trailheads that support mountaineering have ample parking, restrooms, potable water, and may have day-use areas such as picnic shelters or other amenities. For this study, only public lands were evaluated.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

**GAP** Potential gap

### Peninsulas

- Olympic National Park (Clallam and Jefferson Counties)

### Islands

**GAP** Potential gap

### Southwest

- Mount Saint Helens National Monument (Cowlitz County)
- Mount Rainier National Park (Pierce County)

# MOUNTAINEERING


## Seattle-King County

- Alpine Lakes Wilderness (King and Kittitas Counties)
- Mount Index (King County)


## North Cascades

- Enchantments (Chelan County)
- Mount Baker (Whatcom County)
- North Cascades National Park (Whatcom County)


## South Central

 Potential gap


## Columbia Plateau

 Potential gap

## Northeast

 Potential gap

## The Palouse

 Potential gap

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Lack of needed facilities such as restrooms and developed camping areas in or near the alpine areas. Over-use of popular sites in the alpine environment damages the natural resources there and reduces the quality of experience and may lead to closures.
- Insufficient trailhead parking at significant sites when other recreational users visit as well.



# MOUNTAINEERING

- More capacity (parking, trail maintenance) at low-elevation trails used for training. These areas often are overcrowded because they are popular with other nonmotorized trail activities.
- Limitations due to quotas and permits.
- Car prowling issues at trailheads.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Together with the recommendations for climbing, evaluate the desirability of a reservation system for use of popular mountaineering areas.

### Funding

- Add more parking at trailheads that serve mountaineers and other nonmotorized users.
- More security and enforcement at trailheads to reduce car prowls.
- More maintenance of, and facilities at, backcountry sites to address resource damage from over use.
- Maintain and develop more low-elevation sites that support training experiences for mountaineers.
- Maintain funding for backcountry recreation such as mountaineering in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).



## **DEFINITION**

Nature activities in parks or natural areas consists of experiencing and enjoying those things that occur in the natural world. This includes beachcombing, wildlife viewing, sightseeing of nature, visiting gardens and arboretums, spending time in a natural area, nature photography, environmental education, etc. Staff evaluated nature activities rather than the existence of conservation lands or open space that do not provide access.

## **PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS**

Significant places to engage in nature activities are parks and natural areas with well-developed access roads and parking areas. These access points have amenities such as restrooms and day-use areas. These areas also may have interpretive signs and trails, boardwalks with viewing platforms, nature centers, and environmental education programs.

## **EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS**

### **The Coast**

- Long Beach (Pacific County)

### **Peninsulas**

- Hoh Rainforest (Jefferson County)
- Ozette Coast (Clallam County)

### **Islands**

- State Parks' properties (Island and San Juan Counties)

### **Southwest**

- Columbia River Gorge (Benton, Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania Counties)

# NATURE ACTIVITIES

- Mount Rainier National Park (Pierce County)
- Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (Clark County)
- Scatter Creek Wildlife Area (Lewis County)
- Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge (Clark County)



Few natural areas in the Interstate 5 corridor from Vancouver to Olympia.

## **Seattle-King County**

- Discovery, Seward, and Washington Arboretum Parks (King County)

## **North Cascades**

- Jetty Island (Snohomish County)

## **South Central**

- Cowiche Canyon (Yakima County)
- Oak Creek Wildlife Area (Yakima County)

## **Columbia Plateau**

- Hanford Reach National Monument (Grant County)
- Columbia National Wildlife Refuge (Grant County)

## **Northeast**

- Dishman Hills (Spokane County)

## **The Palouse**



Few large public or private land trust land holdings in the Palouse area.

# NATURE ACTIVITIES

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Finding adequate resources for stewardship efforts to maintain the ecological integrity of a large land mass.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Evaluate the need for a statewide land manager and stakeholder group to evaluate and prioritize investment needs in natural areas in the state.



## DEFINITION

Off-road 4x4 recreation is driving or riding in a four-wheeled vehicle built for off-road purposes, with a wheel for a steering device.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Significant sites for 4x4 recreation are double-track trails, primitive or other non-highway roads, and non-habitat protected open areas in a natural setting. Highly developed sports parks, which offer a variety of custom terrain also are included as potential exceptional assets. Off-road 4x4 riding also may be a means to do other recreational activities in the backcountry such as hunting, fishing, and camping. Exceptional trails will have loops and long-distance routes that connect to other opportunities and open areas for group gatherings. Because 4x4s generally are larger than all-terrain vehicles and motorcycles they require larger facilities. Exceptional assets have large parking areas with trailer parking, restrooms, potable water, day-use areas, and overnight camping areas. Places that host competitive events have areas for staging, mobile concessionaires, and utility hookups.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

**GAP** Potential gap

### Peninsulas

**GAP** Potential gap

### Islands

**GAP** Potential gap

### Southwest

- Elbe Hills and Tahoma State Forests (Lewis County)

# OFF-ROAD 4x4 RIDING

**GAP** Trail routes originating in Eatonville and Packwood that link these areas

## **Seattle-King County**

**GAP** Potential gap

## **North Cascades**

**GAP** Adequate Jeep trails in the Lake Wenatchee area (Chelan County)

**GAP** Areas near Wenatchee (Chelan County)

- Cle Elum Ranger District (Kittitas County)

**GAP** Conconully Area (Okanogan County)

- Gallagher Lake Jeep Trail (Kittitas County)

**GAP** Low-evaluation trails east of the Cascade Mountains that open in the spring

## **South Central**

- Ahtanum State Forest (Yakima County)

**GAP** Easy to access trails near the Tri-Cities and in the Yakima Valley (Benton and Yakima Counties)

- Juniper Dunes Off-highway Vehicle Area (Franklin County)
- Naches Ranger District's Funny Rocks and Moon Rocks (Yakima County)
- Saddle Mountain Off-highway Vehicle Area (Yakima County)

## **Columbia Plateau**

**GAP** Adequate developed rock crawls on Bureau of Land Management land near Vantage (Grant County)

- Beverly Sand Dunes (Grant County)
- Crab Creek Wildlife Area (Grant County)

# OFF-ROAD 4X4 RIDING

- Moses Lake Sand Dunes (Grant County)

## Northeast

- Liberty Lake (Spokane County)
- Riverside State Park (Spokane County)

## The Palouse

**GAP** Potential gap

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Establishing and maintaining partnerships with land managers. Staff turnover and lack of capacity limits effective partnerships.
- Maintenance of trails and related areas to keep them open.
- Many of the most popular areas are not large enough for special events.
- Closing sites because of land manager's lack of capacity to manage impacts.
- Newer off-road vehicle recreationists not steeped in best practices have disproportionate negative impacts.
- Missing links in trails and between trail networks. Provide incentives to landowners to allow recreational trails on and through their lands.
- Expensive infrastructure needs, such as bridges to protect waters and wildlife, are hard to fund.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Establish a new authority to fund additional staff at land manager agencies to enable them to create and enhance partnerships that will maintain and expand



# OFF-ROAD 4x4 RIDING

off-road vehicle opportunities. This may include volunteer recruitment coordination, training, recognition, and project leadership.

- Establish an advisory committee to recommend policy and trail designations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's statewide trails plan.<sup>35</sup> The advisory committee would have three tasks: 1) develop a statewide trails plan that identifies all the resources and projects that contribute to a statewide trails system; 2) advise the board and other agencies on the status and priorities of a statewide trails system; and 3) serve as a repository of information on local and regional trails that connect to the state trails system.
  - Within this effort, convene a stakeholder and land manager group to produce a feasibility study and potential plan to complete a cross-state off-road vehicle trail in the Cascade Mountains ([Backcountry Discovery Route](#)).
  - Create a task force to work with federal land managers and Washington State Department of Natural Resources towards expanding off-road vehicle use of roads (either open or closed).
- Provide incentives to landowners to allow recreational trails on and through their lands.

## Funding

- Provide more funding for education and enforcement patrols to reduce resource damage and increased maintenance needs.
- Maintain funding for off-road recreation activities such as 4x4 recreation in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).

## NOTE

Off-road vehicles are the only way many people may experience the backcountry at their own pace and independently.

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<sup>35</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A



# OFF-ROAD ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE RIDING

## DEFINITION

Riding off-road, all-terrain, and utility vehicles for recreation. These vehicles have three or four wheels, may be permitted for highway use, generally are smaller and lighter than a highway vehicle, and may be driven with or without handlebars. These vehicles are defined in state law.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSET PROFILE

An exceptional all-terrain vehicle asset are areas that have long-distance, double-track trails or non-habitat protected open areas. Trail experiences consist of a loop trail experience instead of an out-and-back experience. Exceptional assets also may be developed sports parks, which provide a variety of riding experiences such as rock crawls and obstacle courses. Exceptional sites have large open areas for camping, special events, and competitions. All-terrain vehicle riding is also a way to do other forms of backcountry recreation such as hunting, fishing, and camping. Exceptional assets also may connect to highways where all-terrain vehicles and utility vehicles may drive legally.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

- Straddleline ORV Sports Park (Grays Harbor and Thurston Counties)

### Peninsulas

- Tahuya State Forest (Kitsap County)

### Islands

 Potential gap

### Southwest

- Capitol State Forest (Thurston County)
- Elbe Hills and Tahoma State Forests (Lewis County)

# OFF-ROAD ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE RIDING

**GAP** [Washington State Back Country Discovery Route](#) (Extends through Washington from Canada to Mexico). Gaps, including roads that don't allow off-road vehicles, exist along the route. Many areas need redevelopment.

## Seattle-King County

**GAP** Potential gap

## North Cascades

- Colockum Wildlife Area (Kittitas County)

**GAP** Omak to Naches route using a combination of highway and backcountry trails

**GAP** [Washington State Back Country Discovery Route](#) (Extends through Washington from Canada to Mexico). Gaps, including roads that don't allow off-road vehicles, exist along the route. Many areas need redevelopment.

- Washington's Green Dot road system

## South Central

- Ahtanum State Forest (Yakima County)
- Juniper Dunes (Franklin County)

**GAP** [Washington State Back Country Discovery Route](#) (Extends through Washington from Canada to Mexico). Gaps, including roads that don't allow off-road vehicles, exist along the route. Many areas need redevelopment.

## Columbia Plateau

- Beverly Sand Dunes (Grant County)
- Moses Lake Sand Dunes (Grant County)

## Northeast

- Golden Tiger Pathway (Ferry County)

# OFF-ROAD ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE RIDING

## The Palouse

**GAP** Potential gap

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Areas where all-terrain vehicles cannot use highways to reach riding areas or link riding areas together. This limits riding opportunities and tourism routes where they may be desired.
- Inadequate resources to maintain some high-demand riding areas. This often leads to closure of the site.
- State and federal land managers do not have enough capital to develop new sites to keep pace with need.
- Shrinking federal staff capacity limits partnerships that are needed to keep sites open and to develop new sites.
- Missing links in trails. Provide incentives to landowners to allow recreational trails on and through their lands.
- U.S. Forest Service roads currently closed to highway vehicles but could be open to all-terrain vehicles.
- Need more off-road vehicle trail experiences within driving distance of the Tri-Cities and in the Interstate 5 corridor.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Establish a new authority to fund additional staff at land manager agencies to enable them to create and enhance partnerships that will maintain and expand off-road vehicle opportunities. This may include volunteer recruitment coordination, training, recognition, and project leadership.

# OFF-ROAD ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE RIDING

- Establish an advisory committee to recommend policy and trail designations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's statewide trails plan.<sup>36</sup> The advisory committee would have three tasks: 1) develop a statewide trails plan that identifies all the resources and projects that contribute to a statewide trails system; 2) advise the board and other agencies on the status and priorities of a statewide trails system; and 3) serve as a repository of information on local and regional trails that connect to the state trails system.
  - Within this effort, convene a stakeholder and land manager group to produce a feasibility study and potential plan to complete a cross-state off-road vehicle trail in the Cascade Mountains ([Backcountry Discovery Route](#)).
- Create a task force to work with federal land managers and Washington State Department of Natural Resources towards expanding off-road vehicle use of roads (either open or closed).
- Broaden the authority for local governments to allow all-terrain vehicle use of highways to connect riding areas.
- Consider additional resource development to address the growth in utility vehicles use.

## Funding

- Provide more funding for education and enforcement patrols to reduce resource damage and increased maintenance needs.
- Maintain funding for off-road recreation activities such as all-terrain vehicle recreation in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).

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<sup>36</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A



## DEFINITION

Off-road motorcycling is riding a motorcycle on trails in a natural setting, open areas suitable for off-road motorcycle riding, or at an off-road motorcycle sports park.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Off-road motorcycling at significant sites is characterized by riding on single-track trails or non-habitat protected open areas in a natural setting with mountains and views, or in a more developed setting such as a sports park with human-made obstacles and terrain that offers experiences for a diversity of skill. Trail systems typically are large and connect to other trails. Significant assets will have loop trails and open areas for riding as well as open areas for group gatherings. These facilities are supported by large parking areas with trailer parking, restrooms, potable water, day-use areas, and overnight camping areas. Facilities well-suited for competitive events have areas for staging, mobile concessionaires, and utility hookups.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

**GAP** Potential gap

### Peninsulas

**GAP** Tahuya State Forest (Kitsap County)

### Islands

**GAP** Potential gap

### Southwest

- Capitol State Forest (Thurston County)
- Cowlitz Valley and Mount Adams areas (Cowlitz, Skamania, and Yakima Counties)

# OFF-ROAD MOTORCYCLING

**GAP** Need more trails in the Interstate 5 corridor from Vancouver to Olympia.

## Seattle-King County

**GAP** Potential gap

## North Cascades

**GAP** Better trail development and maintenance in the Cabin Creek, Old Bluet Pass, and Teanaway areas (Kittitas and Yakima Counties)

- Cle Elum Area: Lion's Rock, and the Manastash and Teanaway Forests, (Chelan and Kittitas Counties)
- Entiat Ranger District area (Chelan County)
- Mission Ridge Area (Kittitas County)

**GAP** Need more trails in the Monroe area (Snohomish County)

## South Central

**GAP** Potential gap

## Columbia Plateau

**GAP** Potential gap

## Northeast

**GAP** Potential gap

## The Palouse

**GAP** Potential gap

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Need more loop trail experiences: out-and-back trails are not sufficient or sustainable for motorcycle recreation.



# OFF-ROAD MOTORCYCLING

- Need longer trails than those provided for nonmotorized recreation because a motorcyclist can cover more miles in a single ride.
- Lack of trail maintenance often leads to the closure of trails.
- Balance land-use policy between motorized and nonmotorized users.
- Off-road motorcycle recreation (along with other motorized forms) are becoming family activities. Need to provide experiences that appeal to multiple generations.
- More camping opportunities at trails and trailheads.
- Missing links in trails: Provide incentives to landowners to allow recreational trails on and through their lands.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Fund additional staff at land manager agencies to enable them to create and enhance partnerships that will maintain and expand off-road vehicle opportunities. This may include volunteer recruitment coordination, training, recognition, and project leadership.
- Establish an advisory committee to recommend policy and trail designations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's statewide trails plan.<sup>37</sup> The advisory committee would have three tasks: 1) develop a statewide trails plan that identifies all the resources and projects that contribute to a statewide trails system; 2) advise the board and other agencies on the status and priorities of a statewide trails system; and 3) serve as a repository of information on local and regional trails that connect to the state trails system.
  - Within this effort, convene a stakeholder and land manager group to produce a feasibility study and potential plan to complete a cross-state off-road vehicle trail in the Cascade Mountains ([Backcountry Discovery Route](#)).

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<sup>37</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A

# OFF-ROAD MOTORCYCLING

## **Funding**

- Provide more funding for trailhead camping.
- Maintain funding for motorcycle activities such as backcountry motorcycle recreation in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).



## DEFINITION

Paddling on oceans and lakes requires sitting in or standing on a small boat (typically a kayak, canoe, or stand-up paddle board) and propelling and steering it through water by human power. This activity does not include surfing.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Significant paddling sites are the ocean and destination lakes with paddling access points available to the public. Significant assets have natural and developed shorelines, or a mix thereof, and scenic vistas, historic or interesting shoreline development, or other attractions. Significant access sites offer easy and safe access to and from the water, and have ample parking, camping, and day-use facilities such as restrooms and open areas for staging and relaxation. A significant access site may be natural, such as a gravel beach or lawn, or developed, such as a dock, pier, or launching ramp.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

- Lower Columbia River Water Trail (Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Pacific, Skamania, and Wahkiakum Counties)
- Willapa Bay Water Trail (Pacific County)

### Peninsulas

**GAP** Potential gap

### Islands

- Cama Beach (Island County)

### Southwest

- Lower Columbia River Water Trail (Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Pacific, Skamania, and Wahkiakum Counties)

# PADDLING

**GAP** Need more developed access points in the Columbia River Gorge.

- Northwest Discovery Trail (Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Garfield, Klickitat, Walla Walla, and Whitman Counties)
- Point Defiance Park (Pierce County)

## **Seattle-King County**

- Gene Coulon Park (King County)
- Lakes to Locks Water Trail (King County)
- Sail Sand Point and Magnuson Boat Launch at Sand Point Magnuson Park (King County)

## **North Cascades**

- Lake Chelan State Park (Chelan County)
- Steamboat Rock State Park (Okanogan County)
- Wenatchee Confluence State Park (Chelan County)

## **South Central**

- Northwest Discovery Trail (Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Garfield, Klickitat, Walla Walla, and Whitman Counties)

## **Columbia Plateau**

**GAP** Potential gap

## **Northeast**

- Pend Oreille River Water Trail (Pend Oreille County)
- Spokane River (Spokane County)

# PADDLING

## The Palouse

**GAP** Potential gap

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- For water trail routes, multiple landowners make coordination a challenge. Coordination could include education and enforcement activities, policy issues such as camping and access site standards, development, redevelopment, maintenance, signs and branding, and volunteer efforts.
- Water trails are expensive to expand because waterfront property is costly.
- Coordinating dam flows with recreationists. For waters that are dammed, the flow of water is key to providing more or less access and trip planning.
- Access sites that are leased may not have a long-term future.
- Marinas often prioritize in-water boat storage space over hand-launch areas. More cost-effective to offer long-term leases to boaters than providing space for paddlers.
- Private property restrictions. Inability to access upland amenities where private property abuts state tidelands.
- Signs and camping along the established water trails that are too far apart.
- More parking will be needed to accommodate growth in this sport. Inexpensive, quality equipment makes beginning this sport easy, which means growth will continue.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Create a state office to coordinate paddle sports because this sport spans multiple land manager agencies and regulatory bodies. This office should better coordinate the planning and management of water trail systems to include

# PADDLING

standards for development, maintenance, branding and signs, volunteers, education, and enforcement, as well as coordinate paddle sport needs with dam operators.

- Develop authorities that direct marinas to offer hand-launch opportunities to the public if no other opportunity exists in an area.
- As able, create additional authorities for dam operators to support paddling recreation.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of authorities designed to encourage more water access for paddlers.
- Provide incentives to private landowners for access easements to and from tidelands to allow travel between paddle craft and upland amenities.

## Funding

- Buy more land for access to the water to support paddling as needed.
- Maintain funding for backcountry paddling activities in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).

## NOTE

Paddle sports continues to grow due to new developments in equipment and accessories that reduce barriers to participate (lighter, less expensive gear and accessories). Kayak fishing is on the rise.



# PADDLING WHITEWATER

## DEFINITION

Whitewater paddling is the recreational pursuit of sitting in or standing on a small boat (typically a kayak or raft) or paddleboard and propelling and steering it through water by human power. This is performed on moderate- to fast-moving rivers with a rating scale Class I-V to indicate the level of skill needed and the difficulty of navigation.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Exceptional whitewater paddling sites are destination water bodies with paddling access points available to the public. Exceptional access sites are those that offer easy and safe access to and from the water, and have ample parking and day-use facilities such as restrooms and open areas for staging and relaxation. A significant access site may be natural such as a gravel beach or lawn, or developed such as a boat launch.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

**GAP** Need more access developed on the Wynoochee River (Grays Harbor County)

### Peninsulas

- Olympic Peninsula Rivers (Clallam, Jefferson, and Mason Counties)

### Islands

**GAP** Potential gap

### Southwest

- Green River (King and Pierce Counties)
- Little White Salmon River (Skamania County)
- White Salmon River (Klickitat County)

# PADDLING WHITEWATER

## Seattle-King County

- Forks of Snoqualmie River (King County)
- Green River (King and Pierce Counties)

## North Cascades

- Methow River (Okanogan County)

**GAP** More access sites needed on North Fork Nooksack River.

**GAP** Need access sites to quality whitewater on the Skykomish River.

- Skagit River (Skagit County)
- Skykomish River (Snohomish County)
- Stillaguamish River, South Fork (Skagit and Snohomish Counties)
- Wenatchee River (Chelan County)
- Wenatchee River in Leavenworth (Okanogan County)

## South Central

- Yakima River and Cooper River (Yakima County)

## Columbia Plateau

**GAP** Potential gap

## Northeast

- Spokane River (Spokane County)

## The Palouse

**GAP** Potential gap



# PADDLING WHITEWATER

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Drought and climate change impacts. Reduced snow pack is expected to reduce the length of season that rivers may be accessible.
- Some private forestlands require permits that are cost prohibitive.
- Develop more river corridor plans for popular rivers where no plans exist.
- Federal and state land management agencies have inadequate resources to provide ample river access points.
- Private landowners and Native American tribes are able to provide access but are concerned about resource and liability impacts to their land.
- Rivers in Washington are unique and losing a site or access could negate that opportunity statewide.
- As population grows, so does development pressure on rivers. Need to have a plan in place to evaluate access points before development in urbanizing counties takes place.
- Evaluate the impact standup paddleboards are having at access sites. This is a growing segment of whitewater paddling.
- River access points are underfunded for maintenance and redevelopment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Create a state office to coordinate paddle sports because this sport spans multiple land manager agencies and regulatory bodies. This office should better coordinate the planning and management of water trail systems to include standards for development, maintenance, branding and signs, volunteers, education, and enforcement, as well as coordinate paddle sport needs with dam operators.

# PADDLING WHITEWATER

- Evaluate the efficacy of authorities in Washington that support whitewater paddling and other paddle sports and make improvements as needed. These include authorities and programs that encourage general public river access on private properties, state and federal wild and scenic river designations, hydropower licensing requirements and programs, Washington State Department of Transportation public access authorities, and other state agency programs (State Parks, Department of Natural Resources, etc.).

## **Funding**

- Develop a funding mechanism for maintenance, planning, and acquisition of river access sites.
- Maintain funding for paddling activities in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).



## DEFINITION

Outdoor athletics activities include participating in pick-up or league play in team or individual sports. This activity considers both youth and adult sports performed on a court or field designed and developed for one or more specific sports. These sports include but are not limited to, baseball, basketball, cheer, cricket, football, ice sports (hockey, figure skating, etc.), lacrosse, soccer, softball, tennis, track and field, ultimate Frisbee and Frisbee golf, and volleyball. For this study, only public lands were evaluated.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Exceptional sport and athletic facilities generally consist of four or more sports fields with ample parking for large events. These facilities also have restrooms, storage and maintenance structures, concessioner buildings or dedicated space for mobile concessions, utility hookups throughout, and lighted fields or courts. A facility may be dedicated to one sport or multiple sports with playing surfaces that are multi-functional. An exceptional asset also may be a single, well-maintained playing surface with stadium seating, scoreboards, announcer's booth, and concession area, and may have indoor changing facilities for players.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

- Bishop Athletic Complex (Grays Harbor County)

### Peninsulas

**GAP** Potential gap

### Islands

**GAP** Potential gap

# PLAYING SPORTS

## **Southwest**

- Regional Athletic Complex (Thurston County)
- Tom O'Shanter Park (Cowlitz County)

## **Seattle-King County**

- Bannerwood Ball Park (King County)
- Big Fin Hill Park (King County)
- Lower Woodland, Magnuson, and West Seattle Stadium Parks (King County)
- Marymoor Park (King County)
- Ravensdale Park (King County)
- Sammamish River Regional Park (King County)

## **North Cascades**

- Eastside Park (Okanogan County)
- Rotary Park (Kittitas County)

## **South Central**

- Columbia Play Field (Benton County)
- Kiwanis Park (Yakima County)
- TRAC Softball/Playfields Complex (Benton County)

## **Columbia Plateau**

- Kenroy Park (Douglas County)
- McDonald Park (Whitman County)

# PLAYING SPORTS

## Northeast

- Dwight Merkel Sports Complex (Spokane County)
- Plante's Ferry Sports Complex (Spokane County)

## The Palouse

**GAP** Potential gap

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- High purchase and installation cost of artificial playing surfaces and lights. These facilities are needed where there is high demand for playing time. Artificial fields do not need down time to regenerate and are playable in any weather, and lights extend play opportunities into the evening.
  - Concerns over the impact on human health of certain playfield surfaces, such as crumb-rubber, has limited how and where sports fields are built and is likely to increase the cost of constructing field surfaces.
- Marathons, triathlon, and ultra races. Land managers often are hard to work with to establish staging areas for long races.
- Growth of sports surfaces and courts needs are not keeping pace with population changes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Develop new revenue authorities for public agencies experiencing significant population growth, and areas of the state without destination tournament sites, to fund multisport, artificial playing surfaces (new or redevelopment) and lighting projects.
- Develop authorities and programs to help low-income sports leagues obtain use of quality fields and courts at the desired seasons and times of day.

# PLAYING SPORTS

## **NOTE**

Artificial playing surfaces have a higher initial cost but also create higher revenues because they have more availability than natural surfaces and reduce maintenance costs.



## DEFINITION

SCUBA (Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus) diving is any underwater activity outside of a vessel where the recreationists has its own artificial breathing device. SCUBA divers also may use propulsion assist devices and vehicles.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

Exceptional SCUBA diving assets are natural waters where boat or other water activities are restricted to allow people to recreate underwater safely. These underwater areas are scenic and offer interesting features or wildlife. Exceptional sites provide safe and easy access to the water, have well-developed and maintained roads and parking areas, running water, and restrooms.

### The Coast

**GAP** Potential gap

### Peninsulas

**GAP** Access for SCUBA divers at Twanoh State Park (Mason County)

- Fort Ward Park (Kitsap Country)
- Potlach State Park (Mason County)

**GAP** More access for SCUBA divers at Camano Island (Island County)

### Southwest

**GAP** More access for SCUBA divers needed at: Joemma Beach, Kopachuck, and Penrose Point State Parks (Pierce County), and Tolmie State Park (Thurston County)

# SCUBA DIVING

## Seattle-King County

- Redondo Beach Park artificial reef project (King County)
- Saltwater State Park (King County)
- Seacrest Park (King County)

## North Cascades

- Brackett's Landing Park (Snohomish County)

## South Central

**GAP** Potential gap

## Columbia Plateau

**GAP** Potential gap

## Northeast

**GAP** Potential gap

## The Palouse

**GAP** Potential gap

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Lack of funding to maintain the sites.
- Generally need better beach access and ample restrooms and parking. Because SCUBA diving activities often are collocated with other recreational activities there is more competition for support facilities.



# SCUBA DIVING

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Direct agencies who manage or regulate waterfront property or development to better coordinate with the SCUBA diving community in their planning, acquisition, development, maintenance, and regulatory programs.

### Funding

- Continue to support funding of water access sites, and tideland and bedlands stewardship.



# SKIING

## DEFINITION

Alpine skiing, or downhill skiing, is the pastime of sliding down snow-covered slopes on skis with fixed or free-heel bindings or on snowboards. Alpine skiing includes services such as ski lifts to bring skiers to the higher elevation to begin their skiing, groomed skiing surfaces, a ski patrol presence, and lighted ski runs to extend skiing into the evening. Backcountry skiing is similar except the skier is in a more remote and undeveloped setting and they do not rely on ski lifts to gain elevation, and the skiing surface is natural, ungroomed snow.

## PROFILE OF EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS

Alpine skiing significant assets consist of alpine ski areas that have multiple routes of different length and difficulty, ski lifts, lighting for evening use, large parking areas with developed comfort facilities such as warming areas, restaurants, shops, and rental equipment. These areas have well-maintained access roads and other routes of travel. Nearly all alpine ski areas in Washington are privately operated on leased government lands.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

- None

### Peninsulas

- Hurricane Ridge (Clallam County)

### Islands

- None

### Southwest

- Crystal Mountain Resort (Lewis County)

# SKIING

- White Pass Ski Area (Lewis County)

## Seattle-King County

- Snoqualmie Pass Ski Areas (King County)

## North Cascades

- Mission Ridge (Chelan County)

## South Central

**GAP** Potential gap

## Columbia Plateau

**GAP** Potential gap

## Northeast

- 49 degrees North Mountain Resort (Stevens County)
- Mount Spokane State Park (Spokane County)

## The Palouse

**GAP** Potential gap

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Warmer temperatures mean less desirable conditions and shorter seasons.
- Overcrowding, limited facilities, and constrained parking.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**GAP** Continue and expand where needed snow plowing efforts to keep downhill ski areas and parking areas open.



## DEFINITION

Snowmobiling is riding a motorized vehicle designed for winter travel and recreation on snow. A snowmobile typically has a single belt track on the rear for propulsion and one or two skis on the front that the operator controls with handlebars. It is designed to be operated on snow and ice and does not require a road or trail. Most are driven on open terrain or groomed trails.

## PROFILE OF SIGNIFICANT ASSETS

Significant snowmobiling assets are areas covered in snow in a natural setting where snowmobiling is allowed. Riding areas are composed of open areas or trails or both. Significant sites have large plowed parking and staging areas suitable for trailers and campers, well-maintained access roads, and may have warming huts and restrooms. For large events, larger areas are needed for staging and mobile concessionaires.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

- None

### Peninsulas

**GAP** Potential gap

### Islands

**GAP** Potential gap

### Southwest

- Greenwater Sno-Park (Kittitas and Yakima Counties)

### Seattle-King County

**GAP** Potential gap

# SNOWMOBILING

## North Cascades

- Blewett Pass Sno-Park (Kittitas County)
- Crystal Springs Sno-Park near Stampede Pass (Kittitas County)
- Goat Creek Sno-Park Area (Okanogan County)
- Lake Wenatchee and Fish Lake Sno-Park Area (Chelan County)
- Manastash Area Sno-Park (Kittitas County)

## South Central

**GAP** Potential gap

## Columbia Plateau

**GAP** Potential gap

## Northeast

- Mill Creek Area Sno-Park (Pend Oreille County)

## The Palouse

**GAP** Potential gap

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Land use policies, such as allowing resource extraction, may take away from the snowmobiling experience.
- Lack of lodging options near snowmobile areas.
- Maintenance and grooming funding is not keeping pace with increasing need.
- Keeping highways, access roads, and parking areas clear of snow and ice in the winter.

# SNOWMOBILING

- Concerns about environmental impacts may pose a challenge for increased access.
- Changing climate limiting snowmobiling season.
- Insufficient parking and support facilities at trails and trailheads where multiple winter recreational activities are allowed.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Evaluate effectiveness of maintenance and plowing as it relates to providing recreational access to desired sites.

### Funding

- Maintain funding for the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission's [Snowmobile Program](#) and [Sno-Park Program](#) activities in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).



## DEFINITION

Cross-country skiing, skate-skiing, and snowshoeing are forms of winter trail activities that are nonmotorized. These recreationists rely on their own power to move across snow-covered terrain, rather than using ski lifts or other assistance. Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing mostly take place on groomed trails; skate-skiers require a trail that is groomed.

Snowshoeing is a type of hiking that involves walking over snow using specialized footwear (snowshoes).

Snowshoers and cross-country skiers may stay overnight in a natural setting. Those doing so carry supplies in a backpack or on sled that is attached to the user's waist and towed behind.

## PROFILE OF SIGNIFICANT ASSETS

Nonmotorized winter trail activity assets are backcountry and front country natural areas where snow accumulates to a desired minimum depth. Activities take place on groomed trails although cross-country skiing and snowshoeing also occur on non-groomed trails and open areas including alpine areas. Trails should travel through scenic or historical areas with viewpoints. Significant assets have large, snow-plowed access roads and parking areas, and may have warming huts and restrooms. Assets used for large events and competitions must have extra room for staging and mobile concessionaires.

## EXCEPTIONAL ASSETS AND GAPS

### The Coast

- None

### Peninsulas

**GAP** Potential gap

# WINTER TRAILS

## Islands

- None

## Southwest

- Mount Tahoma Trail System (Lewis County)

## Seattle-King County

- Cabin Creek Sno-Park (King County)

## North Cascades

- Echo Ridge Trails (Chelan County)
- Lake Wenatchee State Park Sno-Park (Chelan County)

**GAP** Mazama and Winthrop winter trails (Okanogan County): More infrastructure development needed to keep pace with growth in sport in the Methow Valley. These needs include roads, parking, snow plow services, utilities, backcountry education, and public safety personnel.

- Salmon Ridge Sno-Park (Skagit County)

## South Central

- Pleasant Valley Trail System (Yakima County)

## Columbia Plateau

**GAP** Potential gap

## Northeast

- Frater Lake Sno-Park (Pend Oreille County)
- Mount Spokane (Spokane County)



# WINTER TRAILS

## The Palouse

**GAP** Potential gap

## QUALITATIVE GAPS AND FUTURE NEEDS

- Warmer temperatures for longer duration may reduce snow accumulation, which may shorten winter recreation season.
- Coordinating large trail systems with multiple land managers. Staff turnover stalls partnerships.
- Competing land uses such as resource extraction may change the user experience.
- Maintaining access roads in harsh conditions including the interstate highway system in Washington.
- Inadequate parking. Roadside and dispersed parking is undesirable in winter conditions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy

- Establish a new authority to fund additional staff at land manager agencies to enable them to create and enhance partnerships that will maintain and expand winter trail opportunities. This may include volunteer recruitment coordination, training, recognition, and project leadership.
- For the Methow Valley, authorize a stakeholder and land manager group to coordinate planning and prioritization of investments needed to respond to growth in winter trail recreation. Subjects should include a plan to improve and expanded facilities, operations and maintenance goals, and public safety and transportation priorities and improvements.
- Evaluate highway road maintenance and plowing funding as a priority as it relates to providing recreational access to desired sites.

# WINTER TRAILS

## **Funding**

- Maintain funding for State Parks' Sno-Park program activities and backcountry winter recreation funding in any establishment of a [road usage charge](#).



## APPENDIX B: OUTREACH LIST

49 Degrees North Mountain Resort	Mount Vernon Parks Foundation
Access Fund	National Parks Service
American Alpine Club	Nisqually River Foundation
American Whitewater	North American Power Kite Association
Back Country Horsemen of Washington	Northwest Marine Trade Association
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers	Northwest Motorcycle Association
Cascade Mountain Runners	Pacific County Tourism Bureau
Clark County Horse Council	Pacific Northwest Four Wheel Drive Association
Cross-Washington Mountain Bike Route	Pacific Northwest Ski Association
Discover Your Northwest	Pacific Northwest Trails Association
Dishman Hills Conservancy	Palouse to Cascades Trail Coalition
Ducks Unlimited	Pasco
Everett Steelhead and Salmon Club	Peninsula Trails Coalition
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance	Pierce County Parks and Recreation Services
Ferry County Rail Trail Partners	Port of Chinook
Friends of Capital Forest	Port of Everett
Friends of the Centennial Trail	Port of Ilwaco
Friends of the Tekoa Trestle	Port Townsend
Inland Northwest Trails Coalition	Recreational Boaters of Washington
Kittitas County Field and Stream Club	Renton
Latino Outdoors	Richland Rod and Gun Club
Leavenworth Mountain Association	Ruffed Grouse Society
Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership	Sail Sand Point
Methow Trails	Sierra Club
Methow Valley Climbers	Sierra Club, Washington Chapter
Mount Baker Ultra	

## APPENDIX B: OUTREACH LIST

Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department	Washington Off-Highway Vehicle Alliance
Spokane Gun Club	Washington Recreation and Parks Association
Spokane Parks and Recreation Department	Washington SCUBA Alliance
The Mountaineers	Washington State Archery Association
Traditional Bowhunters of Washington	Washington State Department of Health
U.S. Forest Service	Washington State Department of Transportation
Vancouver Audubon Society	Washington State Park and Recreation Commission
Visit Long Beach	Washington Trail Riders Association
Waggoner Cruising Guide	Washington Trails Association
Washington Alpine Club	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition
Washington ATV Association	Washingtonians for Wildlife Conservation
Washington Climbers Coalition	Wenatchee Row and Paddle Club
Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation	Whatcom Mountain Bike Coalition
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Yakima Valley Dust Dodgers
Washington Department of Natural Resources	