

# Proposed Agenda

August 12, 2020 – 1:30 P.M.

ONLINE MEETING



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## ATTENTION:

**Protecting the public, our partners, and our staff are of the utmost importance. Due to recent health concerns with the novel coronavirus this meeting will be held online. The public is encouraged to participate online and will be given opportunities to comment, as noted below.**

**If you wish to participate online, please click the link below to register and follow the instructions in advance of the meeting. Technical support for the meeting will be provided by RCO's board liaison who can be reached at [Wyatt.Lundquist@rco.wa.gov](mailto:Wyatt.Lundquist@rco.wa.gov).**

**Registration Link:** [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_-MZ3GIKLTAG7DjSXfoOqEQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-MZ3GIKLTAG7DjSXfoOqEQ)

**Location:** RCO will also have a public meeting location for members of the public to listen via phone as required by OPMA unless this requirement is waived by gubernatorial executive order. In order to enter the building, the public must not exhibit symptoms of the COVID-19 and will be required to comply with current state law around Personal Protective Equipment. RCO staff will meet the public in front of the main entrance to the natural resources building and escort them in.

*\*Additionally, RCO will record this meeting and would be happy to assist you after the meeting to gain access to the information.*

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

**Public Comment:** **General public comment is encouraged to be submitted in advance to the meeting in written form.** Please submit written comments to the board by mailing them to the RCO, Attn: Wyatt Lundquist, board liaison, at the address above or at [Wyatt.Lundquist@rco.wa.gov](mailto:Wyatt.Lundquist@rco.wa.gov).

**Public comment on agenda items is also permitted.** If you wish to comment, you may e-mail [Wyatt.Lundquist@rco.wa.gov](mailto:Wyatt.Lundquist@rco.wa.gov) or message using the messenger in the Webinar before the start of the item you wish to testify on. Comment for these items will be limited to 3 minutes per person.

**Special Accommodations:** People with disabilities needing an accommodation to participate in RCO public meetings are invited to contact Leslie Frank by phone (360) 902-0220 or e-mail [Leslie.Frank@rco.wa.gov](mailto:Leslie.Frank@rco.wa.gov); accommodation requests should be received July 29 to ensure availability.

## Wednesday, August 12, 2020 – 1:30 P.M.

### OPENING AND MANAGEMENT REPORTS

- 1:30 p.m. Call to Order** *Chair Willhite*
- A. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum
  - B. Overview of Online Meeting Procedures (Wyatt)
  - C. Review and Approval of Agenda
  - D. Remarks of the Chair
- 
- 1:35 p.m. 1. Consent Agenda** (*Decision*) *Chair Willhite*  
Resolution 2020-15
- A. Time Extension
    - Whatcom County, Plantation Indoor Range HVAC Replacement, RCO #14-1127D
  - B. Waiver Request
    - Rj's Kids, Burton Adventure Recreation Center Pump Track Phase 2, RCO #20-1886D
- 
- 1:40 p.m. 2. Director's Report** (*Briefing*) *Kaleen Cottingham  
Wyatt Lundquist*
- A. Director's Report
    - 2021 Calendar
- 
- 2:00 p.m. General Public Comment** for issues not identified as agenda items. Please limit comments to 3 minutes.

### BOARD BUSINESS: DECISION

- 2:05 p.m. 3. Operating and Capital Budget Requests for 2021-2023** *Wendy Brown*
- A. Proposed Operating Budget Requests
  - B. Proposed Capital Budget Requests
- Resolution 2020-17
- Public comment will occur prior to adopting the resolution. Please limit comments to three minutes.*

**3:30 p.m. ADJOURN**

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

**Meeting Date:** August 12, 2020

**Title:** Time Extension Request

**Prepared By:** Recreation and Conservation Outdoor Grants Managers

### Summary

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

### Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

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

**Resolution:** 2020-15 (Consent Agenda)

**Purpose of Resolution:** Approve the requested time extension.

## Background

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

RCO received a request for a time extension for the project listed in Attachment A. This document summarizes the circumstances for the requested extension and the expected date of project completion. Board action is required because the project sponsor is requesting an extension to continue the agreement beyond four years.

General considerations for approving time extension requests include:

- Receipt of a written request for the time extension;
- Reimbursements requested and approved;
- Date the board granted funding approval;
- Conditions surrounding the delay;

- Sponsor’s reasons or justification for requesting the extension;
- Likelihood of sponsor completing the project within the extended period;
- Original dates for project completion;
- Current status of activities within the grant;
- Sponsor’s progress on this and other funded projects;

### **Plan Link**

Consideration of this request supports the board’s goal of helping its partners protect, restore, and develop habitat, working lands, and recreation opportunities that benefit people, fish and wildlife, and ecosystems.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends approval of the time extension request for the project listed in Attachment A.

### **Attachments**

- A. Time Extension Request for Board Approval

## Time Extension Request for Board Approval

*Whatcom County*

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request
<a href="#">14-1127</a> Development	Plantation Indoor Range HVAC Replacement	Firearms and Archery Range Recreation (FARR)	\$259,012 88%	8/31/2020	01/15/2021

**Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request**

Whatcom County owns and operates a shooting facility that has an outdoor pistol and small-bore range, 300-yard outdoor rifle range, indoor pistol and small-bore range, trap shooting facility, along with classroom space for police training and hunter education. The facility serves over 23,000 shooters a year.

The original project was to replace the 25-year-old heating, ventilation, and cooling system (HVAC) at the indoor pistol range. Due to unanticipated roof damage and decay, they discovered upon HVAC inspection, they could not move forward with just an HVAC system replacement without a new roof to support the new equipment. The county applied for and received a second FARR grant in 2016 to help with roof replacement costs. With this scope revision that now included a new roof, there was a delay in securing required permits and bid documents. In addition, the county anticipated construction last summer, but the design/build firm did not provide the construction drawings and bid package in a timely manner. As a result, the county could not solicit bids and award a contract before the weather turned cold and rainy.

This has been complex process for the county, however, the project is now fully permitted and bid documents are developed and approved. Whatcom County will solicit bids and award the contract by the end of August 2020. The anticipated completion date for the construction is November 30, 2020. Whatcom County hopes to sign off on the completed project and submit the close-out documents to RCO by the end of the year.



Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

**APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM**

**Meeting Date:** August 12, 2020

**Title:** Waiver Request: Rj’s Kids, Burton Adventure Recreation Center Pump Track Phase 2, RCO #20-1886D

**Prepared By:** DeAnn Beck, Outdoor Grants Manager

**Summary**

Rj’s Kids is asking the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to allow submittal of a proposal to expand the Burton Adventure Recreation Center Pump Track. The project does not meet the eligibility criteria for a Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) grant, unless the board waives the policy that prohibits grant recipients in the YAF Small Grants Category from submitting a project that is part of a larger athletic facility. If the board approves this request, Rj’s Kids 2020 grant application will be presented to the advisory committee for evaluation and subsequently to the board for funding consideration.

**Board Action Requested**

This item will be a:  Request for Decision  
 Request for Direction  
 Briefing

**Resolution:** 2020-12 (Consent Agenda)

**Purpose of Resolution:** Approve the waiver request.

**Background**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) awarded a \$75,000 grant to Rj’s Kids to help them build a new pump track. The new Burton Adventure Recreation Center Pump Track ([RCO #18-2039D](#)) will be located on Vashon Island as part of a very unique park. Described as “THE” alternative park for all, this park features an indoor and outdoor skating facility, disc golf course, BMX bike trails, volleyball court, and a community garden.

When Rj’s Kids submitted this proposal for the Youth Athletic Facilities, Small Grants

Category, the vision was to create a small track for an underserved recreational sport. As leaders shared the vision over the last two years, community support for the project has grown. Rj's Kids hosted three public forums in 2019, disclosing the proposed design. With input from recreationists and members of the public the new updated plan calls for an expansion that would more than double the size of the original facility and would include adding several new recreation elements or features that appeal to both bikers and skaters. In addition, community members asked for other amenities that allowed access for all users and all abilities to include additional access paths and seating areas. Considering its limited capacity and finite resources, Rj's Kids began making plans for two additional phases.

To begin implementation of the larger vision, Rj's Kids prepared and submitted a 2020 grant application, Burton Adventure Recreation Center Pump Track Phase 2, ([RCO #20-1886D](#)). This proposal is a YAF Large Grants Category application since the grant request and total project cost exceed the amounts allowed in the Small Grants Category. When RCO staff reviewed the proposal, staff realized the project does not meet the existing eligibility criteria and the only way for the project to move forward is if the board waives one of these criteria.

### **Project Status**

Since the 2018 grant was awarded, Rj's Kids has been working to complete the design, secure permits, complete their cultural resources survey, and address all the essential pre-construction requirements. The permitting work has been delayed because the local permitting office is closed in response to the Governor's Stay Home, Stay Healthy Proclamation. It is unclear when the permit offices will reopen, however, King County estimates it will take four to six months for processing the permit application once they reopen.

### **Discussion and Analysis**

This request is for a waiver of a recently adopted board policy.

### **Small Grants Category**

The board's policy for the Youth Athletic Facilities, Small Grants Category is outlined in *Manual 7: Youth Athletic Facilities* on pages 10-11. Specifically, the policy states:

### Small Grants Category<sup>1</sup>

Grants in this category may be used to develop or renovate athletic facilities used for playing competitive sports. This category funds lower cost projects in small communities. Grants are limited to \$75,000.

- A small grant project must be a stand-alone project and not part of a larger athletic facility project occurring at the same time or in the near-term.
- Applicants may submit only one Small Grants Category project in a single location each biennium.
- Accessibility projects that improve access to or within an athletic facility shall be eligible as stand-alone projects in this category. The project does not need to include any “in-bounds” elements. The complete routes of travel to and within the facility must be included. Applicants may improve amenities such as drinking fountains and restrooms if the improvements will meet or exceed federal, state, or local laws for accessibility. If the laws conflict, the applicant must meet or exceed whichever law provides the most and highest standard of accessibility

### *Alternatives Considered*

Rj's Kids considered the following options:

**Do nothing.** Although considered, this option was quickly rejected because it is contrary to the whole intent of the project proposal. The goal is to develop a facility that would be attractive and inviting to the youth in the community. If the new skate facility does not offer enough challenge, community leaders are concerned that it would not meet the needs of the targeted users and would soon be abandoned.

**Expand the skate park using existing resources.** This option was rejected because this is a small nonprofit organization that does not have the resources to design and develop the facility on its own. The nonprofit is doing all it can to raise the funds needed to provide matching resources and to help Vashon Park District cover needed long-term stewardship costs. They could delay the development until they could raise enough funds, however, that could take a long time and they could lose some of the momentum they have generated

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<sup>1</sup> Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2017-34



around providing this opportunity for the youth.

**Request a waiver in order to proceed with both phases at the same time.**

This option allows the sponsor to not only proceed with first phase development but would allow it to move forward with developing the facility that youth want and that they will take pride in using. In addition, if RJ's Kids are subsequently awarded a grant, the phase two expansion will save valuable resources by reducing construction related costs such as, securing bids for a second phase, updating the permits, additional site preparation, and mobilization; since both phases could be completed at the same time.

While small organizations often rely on volunteers to help them develop recreation facilities, this scope of work requires skilled laborers for both the design and construction to ensure they get a quality, long-lasting facility

After considering these options, public comment, and what might be in the best interest of the youth, Rj's Kids decided the best option was to request a waiver of board policy. If approved, it would give them the opportunity to try to secure the funds needed to realize the community's vision. If the board does not approve the waiver request, then Rj's Kids would no longer be eligible for the 2018 grant.

### **Analysis**

When RCO staff and advisory committee members drafted policies for the Small Grants Category, the policy that says the project could "not be part of a larger athletic facility occurring at the same time or in the near-term", was included to help ensure applicants with large-scale projects would not piecemeal a project or figure out a way to circumvent the rules to qualify for this category.

What the advisors may not have considered is the unfortunate impact to small communities or nonprofits like Rj's Kids who have very limited resources. These communities often bring forward smaller projects or larger projects in smaller phases because they have fewer resources to invest in a project. They often do one phase and it may be years later when they get enough money to do the second phase. When they do raise the funds for phase two, sometimes they must improve first phase elements that may be outdated.

In this instance Rj's Kids has realized an opportunity to provide a wanted facility for their community. If the board approves this waiver request, it would acknowledge the hard work that has already gone into raising funds for this project and would potentially

provide the additional resources they need to create a pump track and skating facility that can be used by beginners and intermediate users.

### **Strategic Plan Link**

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

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends approval of the proposed waiver.

### **Next Steps**

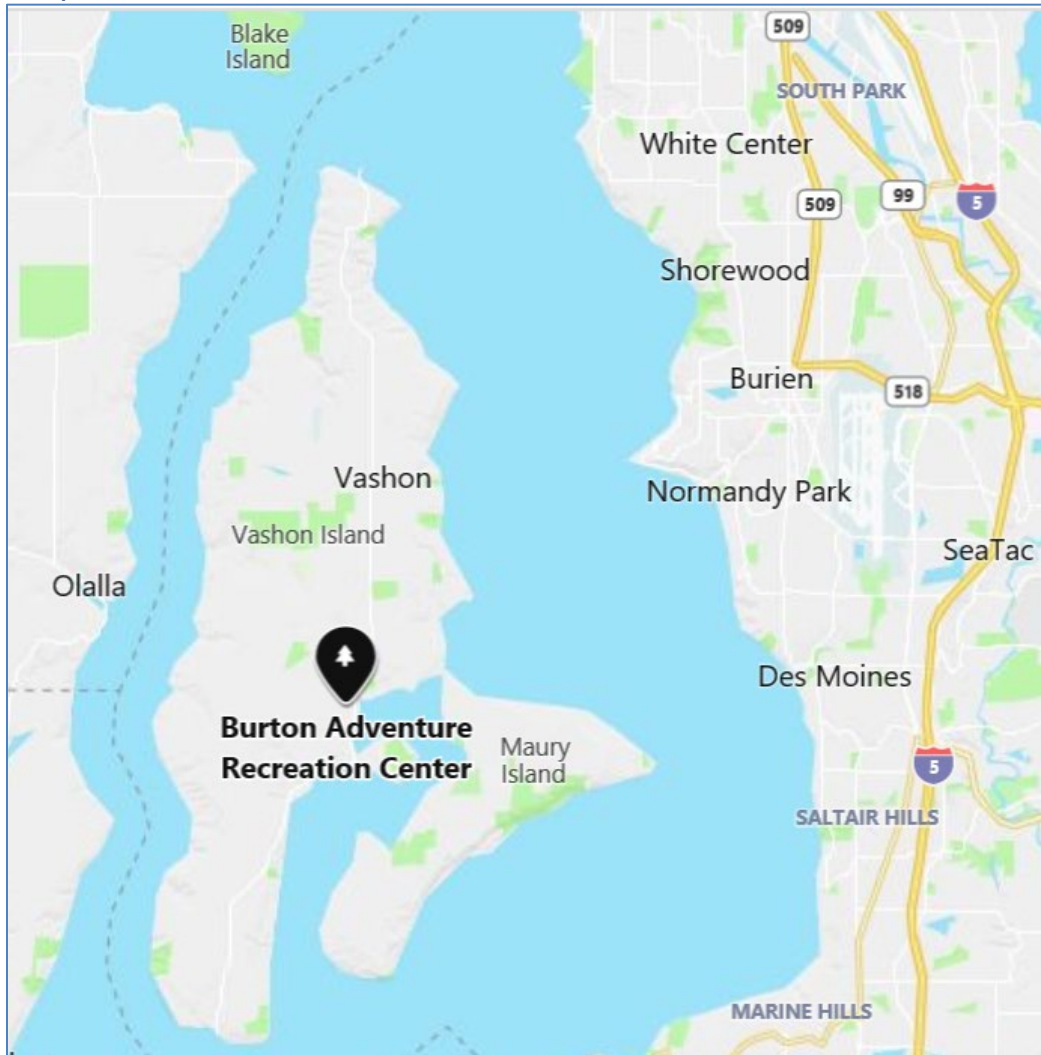
If the board approves the waiver request, Rj's Kids will retain their 2018 grant and RCO staff will allow the 2020 project proposal to move forward through the Youth Athletic Facilities review and evaluation process. The board will then consider approving the ranked list of projects at their upcoming November meeting.

### **Attachments**

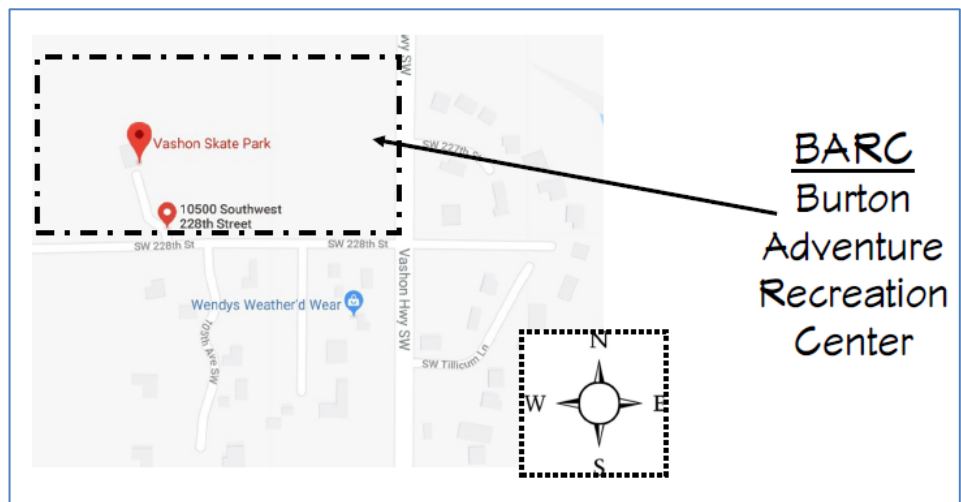
Attachment A: Maps and Plans

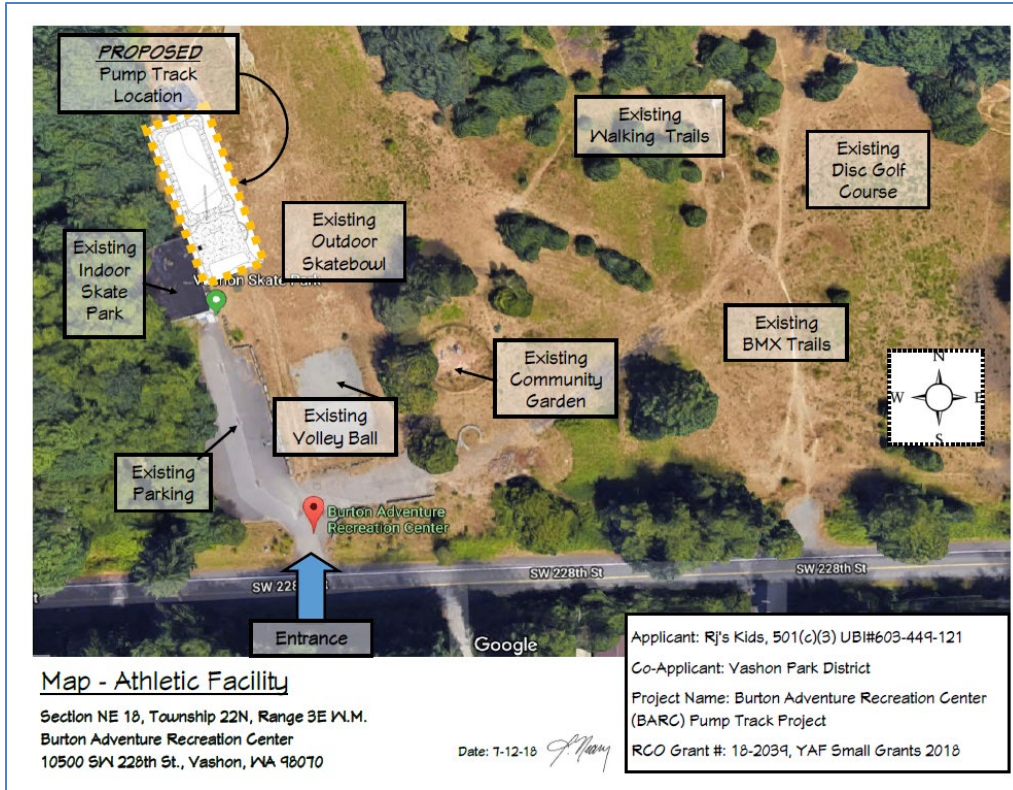
- Location Maps
- Ariel Views of the Park
- Site Plans

## Maps and Plans



Burton Adventure Recreation Center  
Vashon Park District  
Vashon, WA 98070



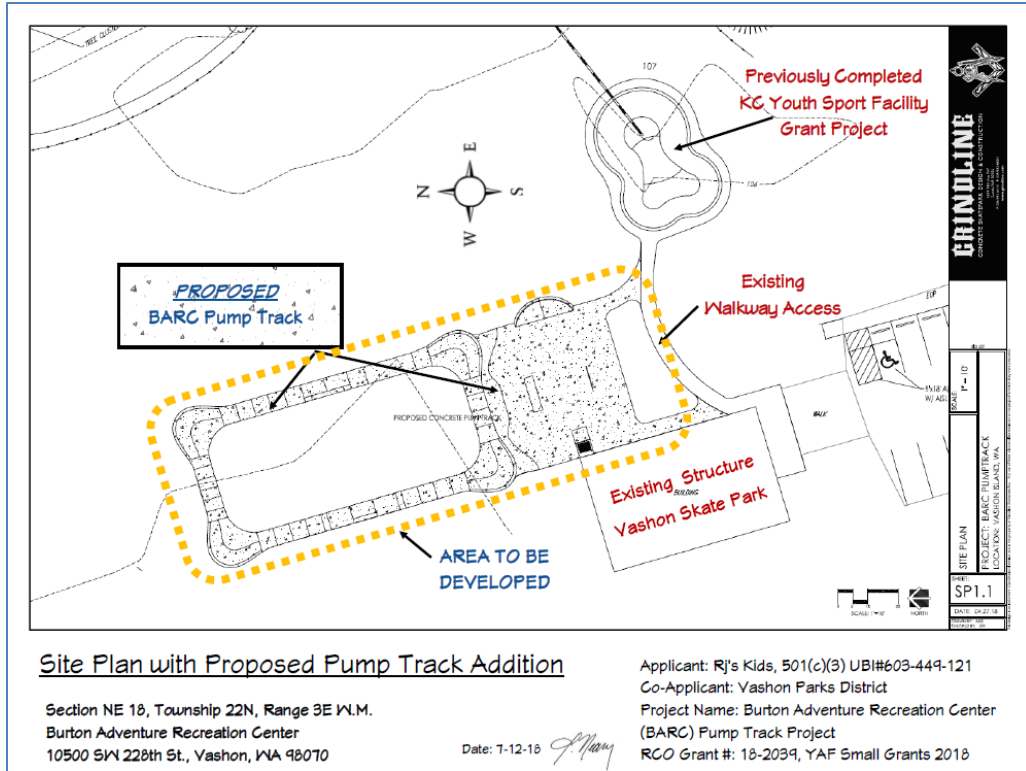


2018 Grant Proposal

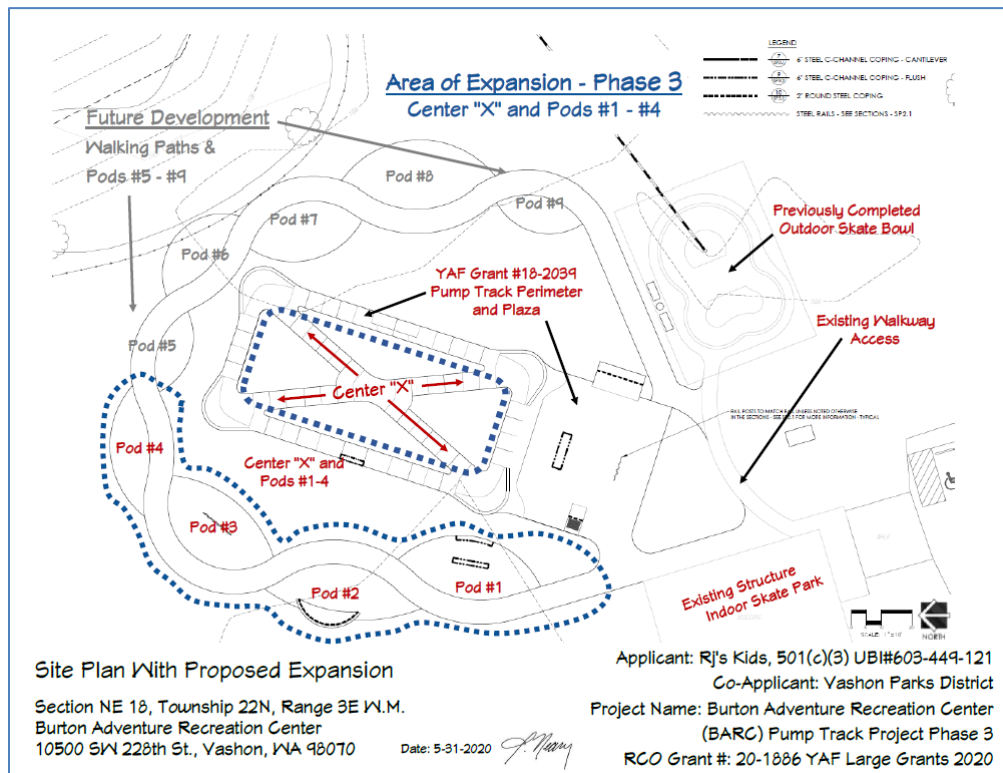


2020 Grant Proposal





2018 Grant Proposal



2020 Grant Proposal

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

### APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM

**Meeting Date:** August 12, 2020 (Memo from July 2020 meeting)  
**Title:** Operating and Capital Budget Requests for the 2021-23 Biennium  
**Prepared By:** Wendy Brown, Policy Director

#### Summary

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) will submit operating and capital budget requests for the 2021-23 biennium to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) in September 2020. This memo provides background to assist the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) in making decisions on the final budget requests for RCO to include in its Operating and Capital Budget proposals related to programs that are administered by the board. In particular, the board will recommend funding levels for the following bond-funded programs: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Youth Athletics Facilities Program, and the new Community Forest Program. Additional information will be provided for board programs funded with dedicated funds.

#### Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

- Request for Decision
- Request for Direction
- Briefing

#### Resolutions:

### Operating Budget

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) receives administrative funds from a variety of sources. The agency uses a portion of dedicated funds from the Recreation Resources Account, the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Program Account, Aquatic Lands and Enhancement Account, and the Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Account to support the administration of the agency. Additionally, agency administration is also supported by funds in the capital budget; RCO charges a percent of programs as determined by statute or interagency agreement, such as the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) Program, Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board, Washington Coastal Restoration

Grants, and Salmon Federal funding. Finally, the administration of the agency is supported by some programs which are charged the agency's federally-approved indirect rate, including the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Program, Puget Sound Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP), Recreational Trail Program (RTP), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Boating Infrastructure Grants (BIG) program. RCO combines these funds to pay for the administrative support functions of the agency. These functions include grant management, compliance, policy work, communications, information technology, fiscal/budgeting, and management.

RCO receives limited general funds in the operating budget primarily to support specific salmon recovery efforts. These funds cover the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO), a portion of the RCO Director and the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, and pass-through funds for lead entity organizations (who review and present salmon projects to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board). RCO also receives funding in the operating budget to support the Washington Invasive Species Council (WISC). For recreation and conservation, funding for grant program administration comes almost entirely from the administrative rate of our capital appropriations and dedicated funds in the operating budget. Rarely, such as the hiking, biking, walking study funded in the 2018 supplemental operating budget, does the agency receive general funds for special projects.

Washington State enacts budgets on a two-year cycle, effective on July 1 of each odd-numbered year. The budget approved for the 2021-23 biennium will be effective from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023.

RCO will submit its 2021-23 biennial budget request to OFM in September 2020. The board will make decisions at its August 2020 meeting regarding the amount of state funds that RCO should include in its operating and capital budget requests related to outdoor recreation activities and programs.

### **Impacts of COVID-19 on the State Operating Budget**

When COVID-19 reached Washington State in February, it didn't take long for the state's economy to come to a crashing halt. Many businesses closed their doors, unemployment hit a high of 16.3 percent in April (from 5.1 percent in March and 3.8 percent in February), housing construction took a steep decline, car and truck sales declined, and so on. As a direct result, the revenue from taxes on sales and service, business and occupation, tobacco, and transportation, which fund a large portion of the state's budgets, took a nosedive. Knowing a budget crisis was on the horizon, the Governor vetoed 147 new spending items in the 2020 supplemental operating budget for a total savings of \$445 million over the next three years. However, on June 17, 2020, the full extent of the budget shortfall was announced when the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council released its most current budget outlook, indicating a reduction in

state general fund of \$4.5 billion in the current biennium (2019-21) and \$4.4 billion in the upcoming biennium (2021-23).

Prior to release of the official revenue forecast in June but with a strong indication of the impacts, on May 13, 2020, the Governor and OFM director issued several directives aimed at addressing COVID-related impacts to the current budget. Agencies were directed to freeze all hiring, large equipment purchasing, and new personal services contracts, with some exceptions. Agencies were also asked to prepare plans to cut 15 percent of their general fund expenditures in the current biennium. RCO submitted this plan, which provides for cuts in a new orca recovery position that was funded in the 2020 supplemental budget, as well as some cuts to new salmon-related projects also funded in the 2020 supplemental. No cuts to recreation-related projects or programs were submitted.

The most recent directive by the Governor to address the state's multi-billion-dollar shortfall came on June 24, 2020, in the form of rescission of the July 1, 2020 general wage increase for some state employees and furloughs for most state employees. For RCO, the target savings from these two directions equates to \$184,000 in the current biennium from both the agency's general fund appropriation and our dedicated accounts. We expect the Legislature to consider extending these cost-savings measures into the 2021-23 biennium.

The 2021-23 budget instructions direct agencies to submit budget proposals that identify reductions equal to 15 percent of near general fund maintenance levels. Because RCO receives such limited general funds in the operating budget, which almost all support salmon recovery programs, this additional 15 percent will not affect RCO's recreation and conservation administrative funding. However, there are other impacts from COVID-19 to some of our dedicated accounts that are mentioned below.

Given the general fund impacts, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board will not submit any operating budget decision packages. The board is, however, developing their capital budget requests to be finalized at their August meeting.

## **Capital Budget**

### **Bond Funding Capacity**

The 2021-23 capital budget will also be impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, but to a lesser degree than the operating budget. At the end of the 2020 legislative session, bond capacity was estimated to be \$3.327 billion. However, following the June 2020 revenue forecast, bond capacity is now predicted to be \$3.108 billion – down by \$219 million. In addition, if there is a 2020 supplemental capital budget to help with economic recovery, those supplemental bond appropriations would use a portion of that \$3.108 billion capacity, leaving a lesser amount available in 2021-23.



The two bond-funded recreation programs administered by RCO include the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) and Youth Athletics Facility Program (YAF). In recent biennia given constraints on the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA), the Legislature has also funded the ALEA Grant Program with bonds, and we expect a similar outcome in 2021-23. Also, in Section 3050 of the 2020 Supplemental Capital Budget, RCO was directed to develop criteria and create a list reviewed by the board of community forest projects to be considered for funding in the 2021-23 biennium. Should any of these projects received funding, we expect the fund source to be bonds. In August, staff will present a recommendation for a funding level for this new Community Forest program.

### **Dedicated Funds**

Many of RCO's programs depend on dedicated funds that are collected for and dedicated to certain purposes. The budget requests for these programs will be based on the amount of expected revenue collections for the 2021-23 biennium. As with all other forms of state revenue, collections from these dedicated funds have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. Two of these dedicated accounts are funded by fuel tax refunds – Boating Facilities Program and Nonhighway Off-Road Vehicle Activities – and in the current biennium fuel taxes have taken the hardest hit of any of the transportation revenue sources. In 2019-21, fuel taxes have been reduced by \$188 million or 5 percent; in 2021-23, fuel tax reductions are estimated at \$80.3 million or 2 percent. The predicted impacts based on the June 2020 forecast are presented in Table 1. The ALEA revenue, from geoduck harvest sales and aquatic land leases, is seemingly unaffected by COVID-19, even though geoduck harvest auctions were temporarily closed in early 2020. Revenue from concealed pistol license sales also is relatively unaffected by the pandemic.

Table 1. Dedicated Fund Sources for RCO Programs and Predicted Impacts from COVID-19

Program	Revenue Source	Change in Revenue Forecast, 2019-21	Change in Revenue Forecast, 2021-23*
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account	Revenue from DNR managed aquatic lands, including sale of geoduck harvested from state lands	+1.54 m	+\$0.07 m
Boating Facilities Program	Motor vehicle fuel tax attributed to boating	-\$1.19 m	-\$0.47 m
Firearm and Archery Range Recreation (FARR)	Concealed pistol permits (a portion)	-0.044 m	No impact
Nonhighway Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA)	Motor vehicle fuel tax attributed to off highway usage and off-road vehicle permits	-\$0.84 m	-\$0.13 m

\*These numbers will likely be adjusted in future forecasts.

### Federal Funds

Several of the programs administered by RCO receive federal funds. The budget requests for these programs will be based on the amount of expected federal grant awards for the state 2021-23 biennium. With the near passage of the Great American Outdoors Act, which will permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), we expect to see an increase of LWCF apportionment to Washington from approximately \$3 million per year to an amount roughly between \$7-\$10 million per year. For the other federal funds, our expectation is a status quo funding level. These recreation and conservation programs are found in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Federal Fund Sources for RCO Programs

Program	Revenue Source	Expected 2021-23 Spending Authority Request
Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Department of Interior	\$2.2 m
Land and Water Conservation Fund	National Park Service/Department of Interior	\$22 m
Recreational Trails Program	Federal transportation funds dedicated to trails	\$5 m
Salmon Recovery – Federal	Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	\$50 m

### 2021-23 Budget Requests

At the July meeting, the board will discuss the amount of 2021-23 funds to include in RCO’s budget request for the following recreation and conservation programs: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and Youth Athletics Facilities Program. The board will then make final funding decisions at their meeting in August. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board will make the same determination on funds for salmon recovery at their August meeting. Several other RCO-managed grant programs will have funding requests proposed by partner organizations (Department of Natural Resources, Puget Sound Partnership, and Washington Department Fish and Wildlife).

### Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)

The WWRP is funded in the capital budget with general obligation bonds. This memo provides some optional ways to determine an appropriate WWRP funding request: 1) base the request on the percent of total bonds appropriated for WWRP in the past, 2) base the request on a per capita foundation; or 3) based on the percent of applications received.

### Background and History of WWRP Funding Levels

For background purposes, Table 3 shows the amount of bonds requested by the board and the amount appropriated by biennia. For the 2015-17 biennium, the Legislature appropriated funds for projects on the WWRP list to two different programs – the WWRP (\$55 million) and the RCO Recreation Grants (\$34 million) – the figure used in the table below and in all following analyses is the combined appropriation of \$89

million. On average since 1995, the program has received 69 percent of the amount requested by RCO.

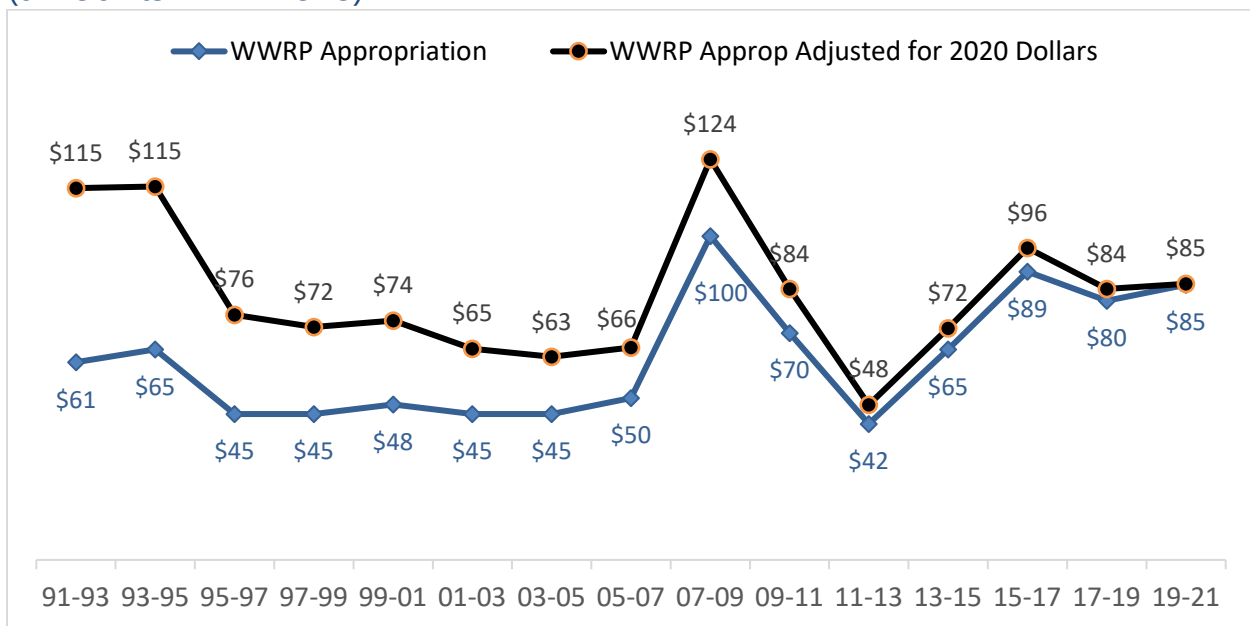
Table 3: WWRP Requests, Appropriations, and Percent Difference

<b>Biennium</b>	<b>WWRP Request</b>	<b>WWRP Appropriation *Amount that Includes RRG Appropriation</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<i>---- Dollars in Millions ----</i>			
95-97	\$90	\$45	50%
97-99	\$113	\$45	40%
99-01	\$70	\$48	69%
01-03	\$90	\$45	50%
03-05	\$55	\$45	82%
05-07	\$50	\$50	100%
07-09	\$100	\$100	100%
09-11	\$100	\$70	70%
11-13	\$100	\$42	42%
13-15	\$90	\$65	72%
15-17	\$97	\$89*	92%*
17-19	\$120	\$80	67%
19-21	\$130	\$85	65%

*\*Figure includes RRG Grants funding for 2015-2017.*

Figure 1 shows the value of past appropriations based on nominal 2020 dollars. The purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate that the \$61 million appropriation in 1991 is worth \$115 million in today's dollars. The average appropriation based on 2020 dollars is \$82 million.

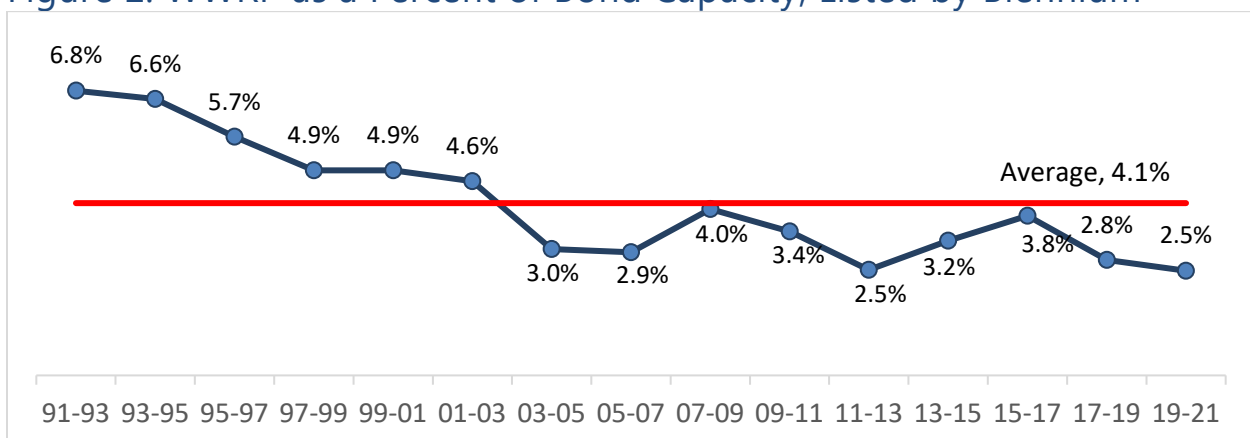
Figure 1: WWRP Appropriation by Biennium, Adjusted for 2020 Dollars (amounts in millions)



**Option 1: Set the Funding Request Based on a Percent of Bond Capacity**

To determine the amount of bonds the board should request for WWRP, there are a few possible options. One option is to base the request on the past percent of WWRP appropriation of the total amount of bonds available (bond capacity).

Figure 2: WWRP as a Percent of Bond Capacity, Listed by Biennium



The average percentage of WWRP appropriations of the total bond capacity since the 1991-93 biennium is 4.1 percent. The amount of bond capacity available for the 2021-23 biennium is expected to be \$3.1 billion.<sup>1</sup> If the average percentage of WWRP funds to total bond capacity is used to determine the budget request, the board would request **\$127.4 million**.

### ***Option 2: Set the Funding Level on a Per Capita Basis***

Another way to view the budget request amount for WWRP is the amount appropriated per capita. Since 1992, the average per capita appropriation (adjusted for inflation<sup>2</sup>) for WWRP is \$13.19.

Washington's population continues to increase. Annual estimates prepared by the Office of Financial Management show the state's population increased by approximately 232,000 people in the past two years and nearly 600,000 people in the past five years. This steady increase in population is expected to continue over the next decade and likely beyond.

The population growth is putting additional pressure on the use of and need for additional recreation opportunities and conservation space.

---

<sup>1</sup> OFM, Personal communication.

<sup>2</sup> The Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index calculator was used to adjust to 2018 nominal dollars. The calculator uses the average Consumer Price Index for a given calendar year. The data represents changes in prices of all goods and services purchased for consumption by urban households.

Table 4: WWRP appropriations per capita, adjusted for 2020 dollars

Biennium	WWRP Appropriation (Adjusted to 2020 dollars)	State Population	WWRP per Capita
<i>----- Dollars in Millions -----</i>			
91-93	\$115	5.14	\$22.33
93-95	\$115	5.36	\$21.51
95-97	\$76	5.57	\$13.59
97-99	\$72	5.75	\$12.50
99-01	\$74	5.89	\$12.55
01-03	\$65	6.06	\$10.76
03-05	\$63	6.21	\$10.10
05-07	\$66	6.42	\$10.22
07-09	\$124	6.61	\$18.71
09-11	\$84	6.72	\$12.46
11-13	\$48	6.82	\$7.02
13-15	\$72	6.97	\$10.26
15-17	\$96	7.18	\$13.41
17-19	\$84	7.43	\$11.27
19-21	\$85	7.66	\$11.12

The estimated population for 2019-21 is approximately 7,687,328. If the WWRP budget request is based on the average per capital since 1991 of \$13.19, the request amount would be **\$104.5 million**. An argument can also be made for WWRP projects built now as serving a population well beyond the next two years into the future. Taking a longer view point of a per capita estimate 10 and 20 years from now, using the same WWRP per capita average of \$13.19 and population projections in 2030 and 2040, a per capita-based budget request would equate to **\$113 million for the Washington state population in 10 years** and **\$123 million for the population in 20 years**.

### **Option 3: Applications Received and Funded**

Table 7 displays the amount needed to fund all applications received each biennium since 1999 and the actual WWRP appropriation. Historically, the appropriation has met an average of 49 percent of the funding requested.

Table 5. Percentage of Applications Funded Through Appropriation

Biennium	Total Applications (\$)	WWRP Appropriation	Percent of Applications (\$) Funded
<i>----- Dollars in Millions -----</i>			
99-01	\$78.9	\$48	61%
01-03	\$62.6	\$45	72%
03-05	\$116.7	\$45	39%
05-07	\$85.1	\$50	59%
07-09	\$161.1	\$100	62%
09-11	\$272.2	\$70	26%
11-13	\$192.3	\$42	22%
13-15	\$129.8	\$65	50%
15-17	\$157.7	\$89	56%
17-19	\$163.4	\$80	49%
19-21	\$196.9	\$85	43%

The amount needed in 2021-23 to fund 50 percent of the applications received in 2020, which is currently \$174.6 million (subject to change following completion of the technical review period), is **\$87.3 million**. The amount needed to fund 75 percent of the applications is **\$130.9 million**.

We have, in the past, used a metric of funding at least 50 percent of the applications in each category. Running that calculation on the 2020 list yields a value of **\$202 million**, which is an amount greater than the total list. The reason for this mathematical outcome is two-fold: we have a relatively smaller list in terms of total funds requested and one very large category, Trails. To fund 50 percent of the Trails list and remain true to the statutorily defined distribution of funds would require an amount greater than the total. Because this metric yields a higher request amount than the entirety of the 2020 WWRP list, we recommend that board not consider it in their funding decision.

### Summary

Using the metrics outlined above, the range of WWRP funding request presented in this memo is between \$87.3 million and \$130.9 million. Here is how it breaks down (see Figure 4):

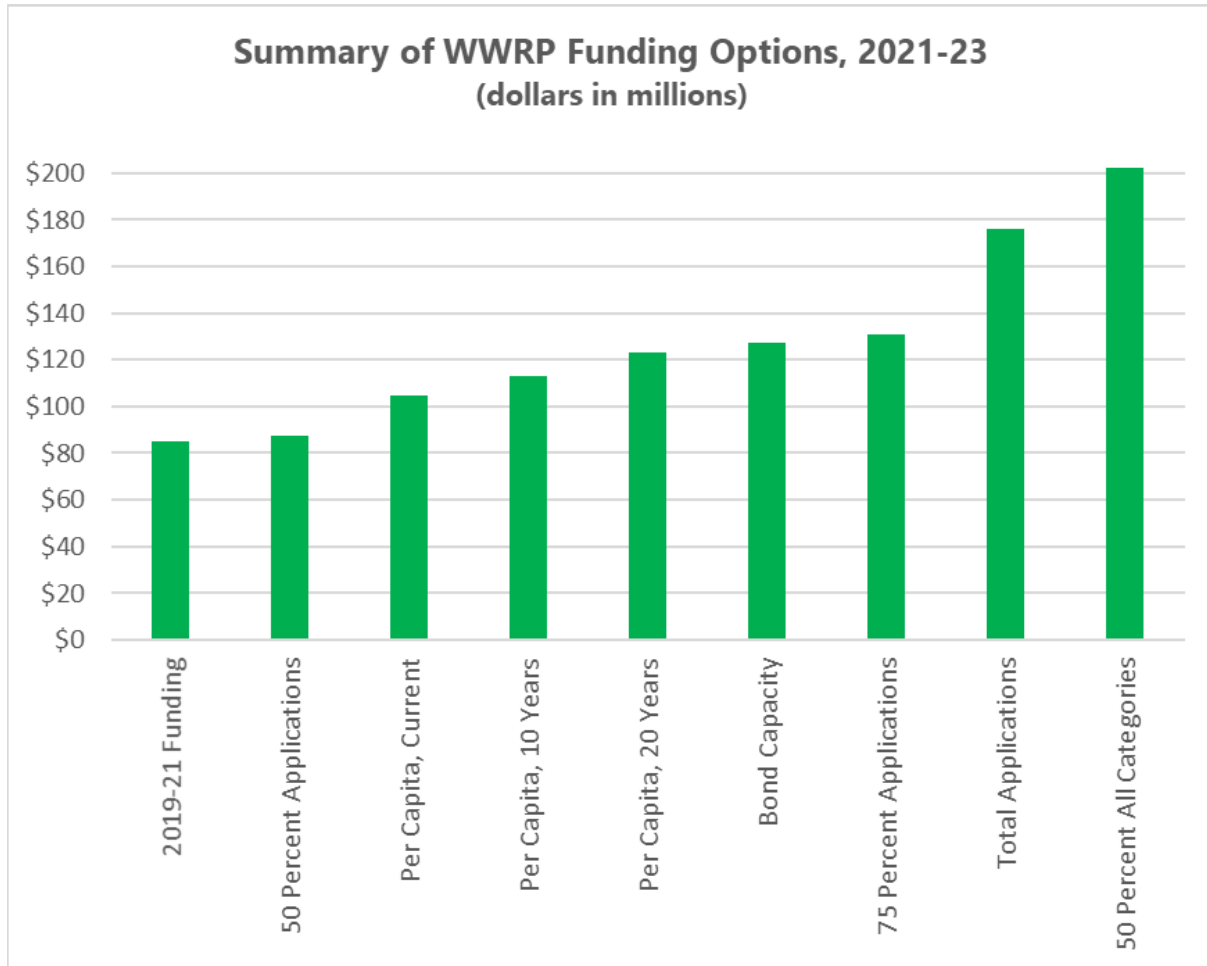
- 1) A request based on bond capacity would be **\$127.4 million**.
- 2) A request based on per capita spending for the current population would be **\$104.5 million**; a request based on per capita spending for future populations would range between **\$113 and \$123 million**.



- 3) A request based on funding 50 percent of the applications received in 2020 would be **\$87.3 million**, to fund 75 percent of the applications received in 2020 would require a **\$130.9 million** request.

We expect other recommendations to come from our stakeholder groups. Their analysis may use different metrics.

Figure 3: Summary of 2021-23 WWRP Funding Level Options Compared to the 2019-21 Funding Level



### WWRP Administrative Rate

In 2015, the Washington Legislature passed a bill that changed how the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) calculates the administrative rate of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation grant Program (WWRP). The new language changed the rate from a constant 3 percent to a rate that is calculated as an average of actual administrative costs. Per RCW 79A.15.030, *“The portion of the funds retained for administration may not exceed: (a) The actual administration costs averaged over the previous five biennia as a percentage of the legislature’s new appropriation for this chapter; or (b) the amount*

specified in the appropriation, if any. Each biennium the percentage specified under (a) of this subsection must be approved by the office of financial management and submitted along with the prioritized lists of projects to be funded in RCW 79A.15.060(6), 79A.15.070(7), 79A.15.120(10), and 79A.15.130(11)."

Using option (a) in the statute, RCO has calculated the new administrative rate for 2021-2023 to be 4.17 percent (see table below), which is an increase in administrative rate as compared to the current biennium by 0.13 percent (4.04% to 4.17%). RCO will submit this request to OFM for approval in advance of submitting the final WWRP list to the Governor.

**Table 6: WWRP Administrative Rate Calculations**

	09-11	11-13	13-15	15-17	17-19	Average
----- Dollars in Millions -----						
<b>WWRP Share of Admin Costs from the RCO Total Administrative Cost</b>	\$3.291	\$2.146	\$2.177	\$2.171	\$3.236	\$2.604
<b>WWRP Appropriation</b>	\$70	\$42	\$65	\$55	\$80	\$62.5
<b>Calculated WWRP Admin Rate</b>	4.70%	5.11%	3.35%	3.92%	4.04%	4.17%

### Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) Program

The Youth Athletic Facility (YAF) program was created as part of the Stadium and Exhibition Center bond issue approved by voters as Referendum 48 in 1997. Referendum 48 required the professional football team affiliate to deposit at least \$10 million into the YAF account. The referendum also required that any funds in the Stadium and Exhibition Center Account not required for payment of bond principal and interest or for reserves must be transferred to YAF. Bond principal and interest payments for the stadium and exhibition center project are scheduled to end in 2021, and no transfers to YAF have yet occurred. For a variety of reasons, it is not expected that any funds will trickle down to the YAF program from this referendum. Because of this, the Legislature has used bond funds to provide funding for youth athletic facilities.

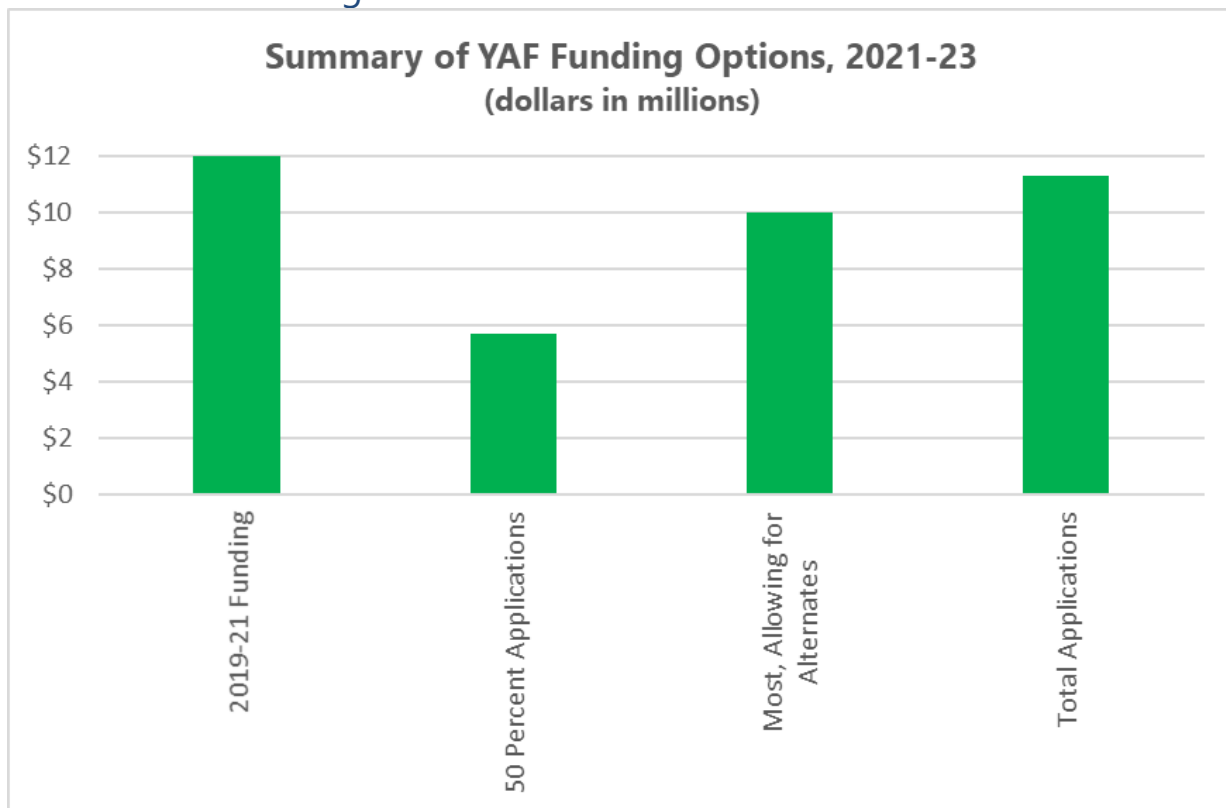
The Legislature appropriated \$12 million for the 2019-21 biennium, which funded 78 percent of the YAF projects on the 2018 list and signaled continued strong support for this program. The total amount requested in YAF applications in 2020 is \$11.3 million (subject to change following completion of the technical review period), which includes both the large (\$10.9 million in requests) and small (\$0.46 million in requests) YAF grant categories. Funding is allocated between the two categories in the following way: 90

percent of funds to the large grant category and 10 percent to the small grant category. Should there be too few small grant categories to use the entire 10 percent, the remainder of funds in the small grant category would shift over to the large grant category.

The board has several options for determining a YAF request level for the 2021-23 biennium, including:

- Option 1. Request an appropriation to fund 50 percent of the 2020 applications, for a total of **\$5.7 million**.
- Option 2. Request an appropriation to fund all 46 applications, for a total of **\$11.3 million**.
- Option 3. Request an appropriation to fund most of the 46 projects on the list, allowing for 3-5 alternate projects, for a total of **\$10 million**.

Figure 4: Summary of 2021-23 YAF Funding Level Options Compared to the 2019-21 Funding Level



### Next Steps

The board will decide on the amount of 2021-23 funds to request for all the recreation and conservation the programs at the August meeting. Staff will prepare and submit final budget requests to the Office of Financial Management by late September 2020.

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution #2020-17  
Recommending a Funding Level for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation  
Program  
for the 2020-23 Biennium**

**WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) must submit a 2021-23 Capital Request Budget to the Office of Financial Management; and

**WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) finds there is a continuing and compelling need for funding to maintain and enhance the state's quality of life and ecosystem health by investing in outdoor recreation opportunities and important plant, fish and wildlife habitat; and

**WHEREAS**, the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program is a critical component to furthering the goal of maintaining and enhancing the state's quality of life and healthy ecosystems; and

**WHEREAS**, requesting budget support for these grant programs, and the RCO administration necessary to implement those grant programs, enables the board to fulfill its mission and goals;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the board hereby approves the 2021-23 Budget request shown below, including retaining 4.17 percent of any appropriation for program administration.

Program	2021-23 Request
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program	\$_____

*Resolution moved by:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Resolution seconded by:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)*

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution #2020-18  
Recommending a Funding Level for the  
Youth and Community Athletic Facilities Program for the 2021-23 Biennium**

**WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) must submit a 2021-23 Capital Request Budget to the Office of Financial Management; and

**WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) finds there is a continuing and compelling need for funding to maintain and enhance the state's quality of life by investing in outdoor recreation opportunities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Youth and Community Athletic Facilities program is a critical component to furthering the goal of maintaining and enhancing the state's quality of life and healthy lifestyles; and

**WHEREAS**, requesting budget support for this grant program, and the RCO administration necessary to implement it, enables the board to fulfill its mission and goals;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the board hereby approves a general obligation bond capital budget request for 2021-23 biennium in the amount shown below and a request to retain up to 4.12% of any appropriation for program administration.

Program	2021-23 Request
Youth and Community Athletic Facilities Program	\$ _____

*Resolution moved by:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Resolution seconded by:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)*

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution #2020-19  
Recommending a Funding Level for Recreation and Conservation Office  
Administration and Grant Programs in the 2021-23 Biennium**

**WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) must submit a 2021-23 Operating Request Budget to the Office of Financial Management; and

**WHEREAS**, the operating budget will be in conformance with the Office of Financial Management instructions, including carry-forward, maintenance level, and enhancement items; and

**WHEREAS**, the RCO must also submit a 2021-23 Capital Request Budget to the Office of Financial Management; and

**WHEREAS**, for federally supported programs and revenue-supported state programs, the amounts requested will need to reflect estimated federal apportionments (LWCF and BIG), and the current revenue projections by the Departments of Transportation and Licensing; and

**WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) finds there is a continuing and compelling need for funding to maintain and enhance the state's quality of life and ecosystem health by investing in outdoor recreation opportunities and important plant, fish and wildlife habitat; and

**WHEREAS**, the RCO administered grant programs are important components furthering the Governor's initiatives of having a clean environment and healthy communities; and

**WHEREAS**, requesting budget support for these grant programs, and the RCO administration necessary to implement those grant programs, enables the board to fulfill its mission and goals;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

1. The board hereby approves the 2021-23 budget requests shown below.

<b>Program</b>	<b>2021-23 Request</b>
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account	\$6,600,000
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account Bonds	\$2,500,000
Boating Facilities Program	\$20,400,000
Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG)	\$4,400,000
Firearm and Archery Range Recreation (FARR)	\$670,000
Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$20,000,000

Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA)	\$14,400,000
Recreational Trails Program	\$5,000,000

2. The Director is authorized to modify and/or update the amounts as new revenue forecasts become available or to comply with Office of Financial Management budget instructions or directives. The Director also shall modify and/or update the request as necessary to meet the budget needs of the affiliated boards and councils, and to provide for scheduled rent, services, personnel increment dates, labor contract costs, and other operations costs.
3. The Director is authorized to apply for outside funding sources to supplement the capital and operating budgets consistent with the board and agency mission.
4. The Director shall submit any necessary re-appropriation requests.
5. The Director shall seek concurrence by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board in the submittal of any operating and capital budget requests within their jurisdiction.
6. The Director shall coordinate with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, and the Puget Sound Partnership in any jointly administered grant program budget requests.
7. The Director shall coordinate with the Washington Invasive Species Council in budget requests related to the administration of that Council.

*Resolution moved by:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Resolution seconded by:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)*

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution #2020-20  
Recommending a Funding Level for the  
Community Forests Program for the 2021-23 Biennium**

**WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) must submit a 2021-23 Capital Request Budget to the Office of Financial Management; and

**WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) finds there is a continuing and compelling need for funding to maintain and enhance the state's quality of life by investing in community forests and myriad benefits they provide; and

**WHEREAS**, the Community Forests Program was newly created by the legislature in 2020 and is a critical component to furthering the goal of maintaining and enhancing the state's working forests; and

**WHEREAS**, requesting budget support for this grant program, and the RCO administration necessary to implement it, enables the board to fulfill its mission and goals;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the board hereby approves a general obligation bond capital budget request for 2021-23 biennium in the amount shown below and a request to retain up to 4.12% of any appropriation for program administration.

<b>Program</b>	<b>2021-23 Request</b>
Community Forests Program	\$ _____

*Resolution moved by:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Resolution seconded by:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)*

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_



**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution #2020-21  
Recommending a Funding Level for  
Outdoor Recreation for Communities Most in Need for the 2021-23 Biennium**

**WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) must submit a 2021-23 Capital Request Budget to the Office of Financial Management; and

**WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) finds there is a continuing and compelling need for funding to maintain and enhance the state's quality of life by investing in outdoor recreation opportunities, especially for those communities most in need and without the capacity to compete in other board funded programs; and

**WHEREAS**, the need to be more flexible in our funding and in our processes is a critical component to furthering the goal of maintaining and enhancing the state's quality of life and healthy lifestyles; and

**WHEREAS**, requesting budget support for this new grant assistance program, and the RCO administration necessary to implement it, enables the board to fulfill its mission and goals;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the board hereby approves a general obligation bond capital budget request for 2021-23 biennium in the amount shown below and a request to retain up to 4.12% of any appropriation for program administration.

Program	2021-23 Request
Communities Most in Need	\$ _____

*Resolution moved by:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Resolution seconded by:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)*

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

# Capital Budget Requests for the 2021-23 Biennium

Wendy Brown

Item 7



WASHINGTON STATE  
Recreation and Conservation  
Funding Board

# 2021-23 Budget Requests

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- Bond Programs:
  - WWRP
  - YAF
  - Community Forests
  - Outdoor Recreation for Communities Most in Need
- Dedicated Account Programs:
  - ALEA
  - BFP
  - NOVA
  - FARR



# WWRP Statutory Allocation

RCFB August 2020

45% to Habitat  
Conservation Account

35% Critical Habitat Category

25% Natural Areas Category

15% Riparian Protection Category

10% or \$3 Million, whichever is less,  
State Lands Restoration and Enhancement Category

15% Urban Wildlife Habitat Category

45% to Outdoor  
Recreation Account

30% Local Parks Category

10% or \$3 Million, whichever is less,  
State Lands Development and Renovation Category

30% State Parks Category

20% Trails Category

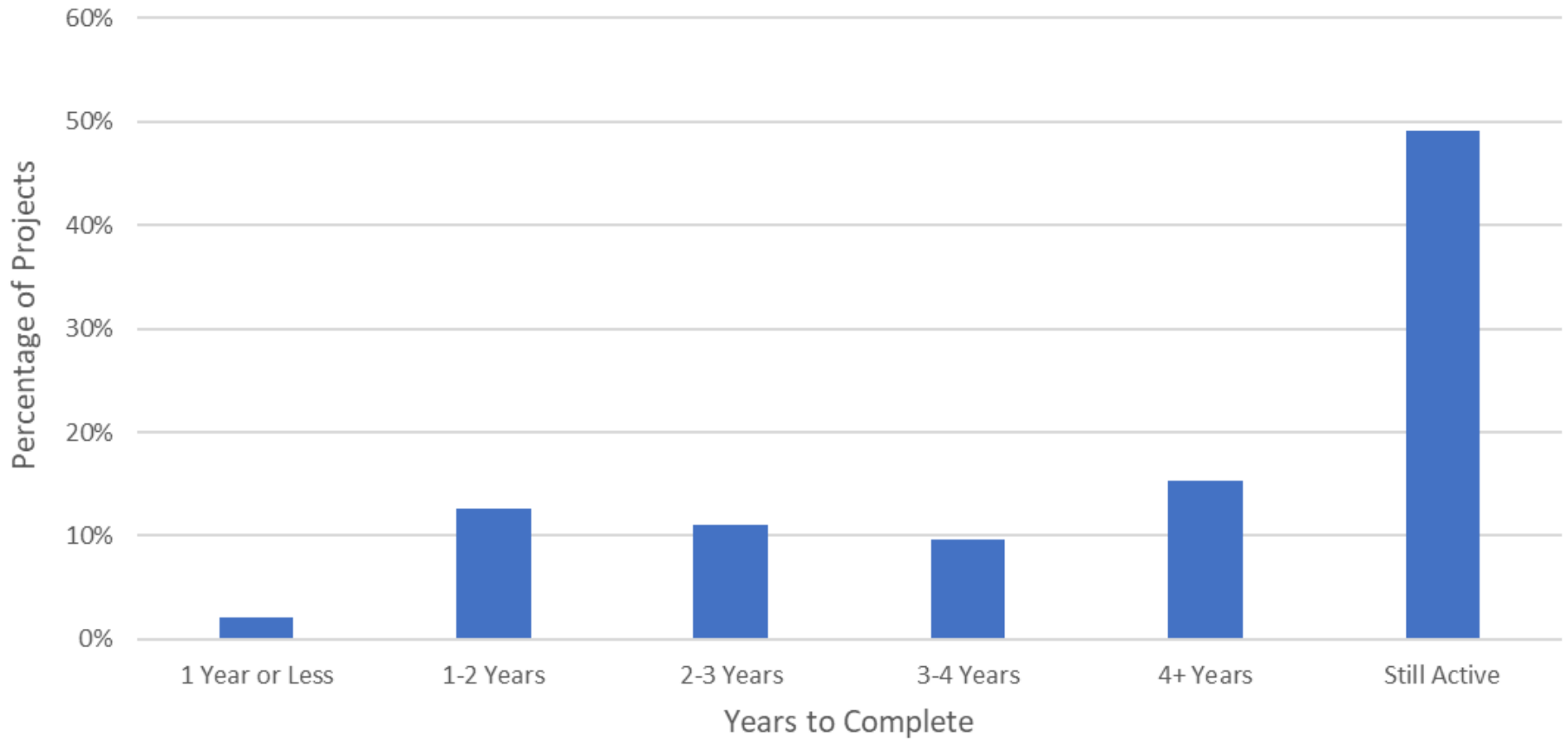
10% Water Access Category

10% Farm and Forest  
Account

90% Farmland Preservation Category

10% Forestland Preservation Category

## How Long Does it Take to Complete a Project? WWRP Projects 2010-2018 (N=468)





# WWRP Options

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- 2020 Total Applications: \$176.5 m
- Bond Capacity: \$127 m
- Per Capita: \$105 m, \$113 m, \$123 m
- Percent of Applications Received:
  - \$87 m (50%)
  - \$131 m (75%)





# YAF Options

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- 2020 Total Applications = \$11.3 m
  - Large Projects = \$10.9 m
  - Small Projects = \$0.4 m
- Options:
  - 100% of Applications = \$11.3 m
  - Most Applications = \$10 m (leaves 3-5 alternates)

# Community Forests

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- Preliminary List: \$24.3 m
  - Based on survey of land trusts, additional projects likely to be forthcoming.
- Of these projects, all but 3 have a high degree of readiness (\$20 m)
- Recommended Request: \$22 m





# Outdoor Recreation for Communities Most in Need

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- A new grant program
  - Small-sized outdoor recreation projects of all types serving those communities most in need
  - Facility repair and updates (safety), planning, small developments and no match requirement
  - RCO would request funding and develop the program with RCFB assistance
  - Recommended request: \$5 m
- 



# Dedicated Accounts

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Program	2021-23 Funding Recommendation
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account	\$9.1 m*
Boating Facilities Program	\$20.4 m
Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Activities	\$14.4 m
Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Activities	\$0.67 m

\*\$6.6 m in ALEA funds, \$2.5 m in bonds

July 29, 2020

Mr. Ted Willhite, Chair, and Board Members  
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB)

***Sent Via Electronic Mail***

RE: Requested Funding Levels for WWRP, YAF, and ALEA Programs

Dear Chair Willhite and Board Members:

We are writing in our roles as President, Executive Director, and Legislative Steering Committee Chair of the Washington Recreation and Park Association (WRPA), a 501(c)3 organization with over 2,100 members and a 73-year history of representing the interests of local parks and recreation agencies throughout the state.

As you prepare for an Aug. 12 Board Meeting that will involve decisions on Capital Budget funding levels to request for key programs such as the Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program (WWRP), Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF), and the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA), we wanted to go on record in asking you to be bold in your thinking. The 2021-23 Capital Budget presents a unique opportunity to use capital infrastructure investments to stimulate the economy and create construction jobs; to steward the great outdoors that is a foundation of our quality of life; and to reinforce parks and open and natural spaces that our residents have increasingly flocked to since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Now more than ever, our residents have gained a recognition of the importance of outdoor recreation and the fitness, public health, and social growth values provided by our local parks systems.

We would also note, at a time when our nation is working to combat system racism and as we see the Black Lives Matter movement shining an even brighter spotlight on the critical battle for racial justice and equality, that our parks can be hallmarks of equity. One of the best things about our local parks is that they are available to everyone regardless of race, income, religious faith, or sexual orientation. These local parks systems truly belong to all of us.

Looking ahead, we respectfully urge you to recommend robust funding levels for WWRP, YAF, and ALEA, especially in light of a severe economic downturn that is making it exponentially harder for local agencies to construct projects and find matching funds. That means the funding you provide, and in some cases the reduced match you are requiring, becomes even more of a lifeblood to parks agencies run by cities, counties, Metropolitan Park Districts (MPDs), and Park Districts.

We ask you to consider the following funding levels:

**WWRP -- \$140 Million**

We concur with the suggested funding level put forth by the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition (WWRC). Similar to the analyses performed by Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff, the principals at WWRC looked at several models in arriving at their \$140 million recommendation.

We know RCO staff determined levels such as \$127 million based on available bond capacity and over \$130 million based on a 75 percent level of funding of applications received. We believe 140 million, in light of the importance of Capital Budget as a stimulus tool, is an appropriate figure to shoot for.

In advocating for this funding level, we underscore that the WWRP is a national model for funding local parks, trails, water access, habitat, and more in a fair and equitable manner. The WWRP is a program our state should be justifiably proud of.

### **YAF -- \$11.3 Million**

We urge a YAF funding level that would cover the approximately \$11.3 million in applications to date and keep this important program near the \$12 million funding level set by the Legislature in the 2019-21 Capital Budget.

We would suggest that the slight dip in YAF applications is directly attributable to the economic difficulties and uncertainties our local communities are facing. Financing projects that supply fields and courts and spaces for our youth is a challenge even in the best of economic times – and these are among the most trying times in our state's and nation's history.

Thus, we ask that you fund the approximately \$11.3 million in applications received. The value you get in funding YAF is incredible, as it enables our local agencies to build or renovate ballfields, courts, swimming pools, mountain bike tracks, skate parks, and more. YAF funds can be used toward both new construction and renovation/maintenance, and while the program puts an emphasis on youth, it nearly always results in fields and courts and spaces that are available to all ages.

### **ALEA - \$9.1 Million**

Similar to our YAF request, we ask that the Board provide a \$9.1 million funding level for ALEA to cover the value of applications received for this program.

The ALEA is another of Washington's hallowed grant programs, with a 3 ½-decade-long track record of using leases from aquatic lands to protect and enhance those lands adjacent to lakes, rivers, tidelands, shore lands, and harbor areas. ALEA funds help our local communities protect the areas abutting our navigable waterways and give those same communities a powerful community restoration and economic development tool to provide the access and the open spaces their residents cherish.

Thank you for your consideration of our request for funding levels of \$140 million for WWRP, \$11.3 million for YAF, and \$9.1 million for ALEA. We will plan to be at your Aug. 12 Board meeting to speak to these funding requests and stand ready to answer any questions you may have.



Paul Simmons, President



Tiffany Hanzo Martin, Exec. Dir.



Roxanne Miles, Legislative Chair

Ted Willhite, Chair  
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Attn: Wyatt Lundquist  
P.O. Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

My name is Cherie Kearney and I am the Forest Conservation Director at Columbia Land Trust. We achieve conservation in partnerships with diverse communities along the lower 250 miles of the Columbia River. We work in five ecoregions and we work with countless iterations of community including rural, urban and tribal on to the west and east of the Cascade Mountains.

We strongly support the RCO staff recommendation to include \$22 million for community forests in the agency's 2021-2023 capital budget request.

Columbia Land Trust was a founding member of the Northwest Community Forest Coalition. We understand that the greater the breadth of funding and tools available for community forests, the more we will see our Northwest forests stay on the landscape. Our conservation vision includes the vital economic and ecological importance of forestry. We understand that community forests are another important model to ensure forests and forestry are woven into the fabric of our culture, economy and ecology.

Throughout the lower Columbia River region we have joined with rural communities, tribes and counties to grow community forestry. In collaboration with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe and other county and community partners, we are excited to apply for community forest funding to support the development of a community forest in southwest Washington.

Finally, we cannot say enough good about the work of RCO developing, piloting and administering new grant programs as well as ensuring the success of the overall grant programs in their purview. We look forward to working with with RCO as an applicant in the Community Forest Grant Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CK', written in a cursive style.

Cherie Kearney  
Forest Conservation Director  
Columbia Land Trust



Washington  
**Wildlife &  
Recreation**  
C O A L I T I O N

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Christine B. Mahler

\*Deceased

\*\*Non-Board Member

July 29, 2020

Ted Willhite, Chair

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

1111 Washington Street SE

Olympia, Washington 98501

**SUBJECT: COALITION'S RECOMMENDATION FOR WWRP 2021-23 FUNDING LEVEL**

Dear Chair Willhite:

Thank you, especially in this time of great need, for your steady leadership to ensure equitable access to recreation and to protect critical habitat for wildlife. During challenging times like these, your dedication to Washington's great outdoors is more important than ever. The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition ("Coalition") shares your goal of ensuring all Washingtonians have access to the outdoors, and that our most important natural areas are not lost to development. To that end, I write to request that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board consider supporting the Coalition's \$140 million budget request for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) for the 2021-23 biennium.

The WWRP and the Coalition have a shared and braided history. Over thirty years ago, the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition led the creation of the WWRP, and remains the bipartisan independent nonprofit partner to this day, advocating for the strong funding and integrity of the Program. Our founders succeeded in creating a grand and practical compromise meeting both a long-standing, deep-seated desire for more parks, shoreline access, and trails to benefit people, coupled with a need to protect critical habitat for fish and wildlife, including game animals and endangered species. Together with the RCFB and RCO, we have made impressive gains in the intervening decades. Yet, those original concerns are no less pressing today; indeed, as our current crisis demonstrates, perhaps even more so.

As in prior years, the Coalition considered several indicators to develop the \$140 million funding request, which was passed unanimously by our board. As laid out below, these indicators indicate that \$140 million for WWRP is both appropriate and aspirational, and, quite frankly, needed to accommodate the growing demand for recreation and need for conservation in our state. It is also important to recognize the difficult budget situation our state is in right now; Coalition representatives discussed this challenge with budget leaders in the Legislature and with Governor's office and the Coalition Board has considered their feedback in our deliberations.

The following are the key quantitative indicators considered in developing our recommendation:

- **Indicator 1: Original WWRP funding level adjusted for inflation.** Adjusting the original WWRP appropriation (\$53 million in 1990) for inflation would suggest a 2021-23 appropriation of \$112.8 million.
- **Indicator 2: WWRP appropriation as a percentage of total bond funding capacity.** The WWRP is funded in the capital budget with general obligation bonds. Since the 1991-93 biennium, on average 4.02% of the state's total bond capacity has been appropriated to the WWRP. For the 2021-23 biennium, the available bond capacity is currently projected to be \$3.108 billion, which would suggest a WWRP appropriation of \$124.92 million.
- **Indicator 3: WWRP requests adjusted for state REET collections.** State real estate excise tax (REET) collections, which are roughly correlated to increases in land values, are an additional angle from which to consider WWRP funding level needs. Since 1990, annual state REET tax collections have increased at an average linear rate of about 7.4%. This rate of increase would suggest a 2021-23 WWRP funding request of \$139.62 million.
- **Indicator 4: WWRP requests per capita, adjusted for 2020 dollars.** Since 1989, the average funding request made by the RCO for WWRP has been \$20.54 per Washington resident (adjusted for inflation). The estimated state population for 2021-23 is 7.97 million, which would suggest a WWRP appropriation of \$163.7 million.
- **Indicator 5: Percentage of WWRP Applications funded through appropriation.** According to RCO, the legislature has historically funded an average of 49% of the WWRP funding requested. In order to fund 50% of the applications received in 2020 (which total \$176.3 million; subject to change following completion of the technical review period), the legislature would need to fund WWRP a \$88.15 million. The amount needed to fund 75% of the applications is \$132.23 million.

However, this is a unique time, and the above numbers do not tell the whole story. The Coalition also considered several more qualitative factors in our recommendation, including increased need and demand, as demonstrated by COVID19, the need for equity in the outdoors, and the need for economic stimulus.

### **NEED & DEMAND AS HIGHLIGHTED BY COVID19**

#### ***Mental and Physical Health***

Study after study has indicated how much healthier people's minds and bodies are when they engage in outdoor activities, whether it's a walk through a local park or hiking in the backcountry. For example, RCO released a literature review on the "Health Benefits of Contact with Nature" last year. That study noted that contact with nature may be associated with a broad range of health conditions, including cardiovascular health, cancer, respiratory illness, diabetes, and death. Meanwhile, outdoor exercise, the report noted, "has

been demonstrated to improve mood, restore attention, and decrease anger, depression, and stress, compared to indoor exercise.”

**However, there’s nothing like personal experience to bring scientific studies to life in a new way.** Each and every Washingtonian—and really everyone around the world—discovered just what an important role the outdoors plays in their lives once they were no longer able to enjoy it at will. Everyone discovered just how healing that neighborhood walk can be when undergoing intensely difficult situations like those encountered during the COVID19 pandemic.

### ***Demand***

Just as they flocked to near-to-home parks and trails during the “Stay at Home” order, as the restrictions lifted around the state, people once again flocked to their favorite state park, hiking trail, or wildlife area. Even those who had never visited such a place before developed interest in experiencing these things. **In many cases these places were overwhelmed—and remain so even to today, months later.** Land managers report “holiday weekend” level of usage every weekend this summer, and “weekend-level” usage throughout the week as well.

Washingtonians are seeking solace in their favorite places. More people are discovering the joys of the outdoors. **This is absolutely wonderful. However, increased use centralized on just a few locations is dangerous.** This leads to overflowing parking lots, impeded emergency access, and increased COVID19 exposure, not to mention the environmental impact to plant and animals of having so many more people moving through the area. This makes the continued acquisition and development of additional recreation opportunities imperative. Without it, we risk losing the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts due to insufficient and overused parks and trails.

### **EQUITY**

Just as COVID19 has demonstrated the need and demand for outdoor recreation opportunities in Washington, it has also demonstrated that such opportunities are not available to everyone. During the “Stay at Home” order, Washingtonians were encouraged to recreate close to home. “If you have to take the car, it’s probably too far” was a useful rule of thumb shared informally by the Governor’s office. This made a lot of sense on the surface, as it helped avoid overcrowding at popular local parks, and kept unnecessary trips to a minimum.

**However, communities of color are far less likely to have a local park or trail.** And even if they do, it is more likely to be smaller, outdated, or simply not as beautiful and scenic as those in more affluent neighborhoods. These measures made clear how important equitable access to the outdoors is. And the WWRP is ideally suited to help address these inequities, especially in light of the emphasis on underserved communities. For the record, the Coalition does not believe the WWRP alone is enough to solve these inequities, but it does believe robust funding will continue to help as we work together to develop more comprehensive solutions. The Coalition appreciates the work you, your board and the RCO have begun to examine these inequities and design innovative programs to mitigate them and pledges its help in that important undertaking.



## ECONOMIC STIUMULUS

As the state faces an extremely tough budget year, it is critically important to note that WWRP-funded projects will play a critical role in the state's economic recovery. By the very nature of the grant application process, WWRP projects are some of the state's most fully-planned and shovel-ready job creation tools. This year's grant cycle creates an immediate opportunity for a much-needed economic stimulus. The economic impact is both short- and long-term: immediate construction jobs and local spending, combined with multi-generational boosts in property values, tourism and other outdoor recreation-driven activity, and improved health and quality of life.

These benefits have been clearly demonstrated by several studies, including the recent study conducted by the RCO in combination with Earth Economics. This study concluded that outdoor recreation in Washington is responsible for **264,000 jobs** and an annual contribution of **\$26.5 billion in consumer spending, \$3.4 billion in state and local taxes, \$40.3 billion in overall economic contribution, and roughly \$240 billion in ecosystem service values.**

## RECOMMENDATION

With all these factors in mind, the Washington Wildlife & Recreation Coalition respectfully requests that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board join it in requesting \$140 million in funding for the WWRP grant program in the 2021-23 Capital Budget.

Thank you for your unrelenting efforts to support communities across the state in protecting our natural world for the benefit of the people and wildlife who live here.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christine Mahler', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Christine Mahler  
Executive Director

July 29, 2020

Ted Willhite, Chair  
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Attn: Wyatt Lundquist  
P.O. Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

My name is Darcey Hughes and I am the Director of Conservation Transactions for Forterra. Forterra is a Washington based non-profit that conserves land, develops innovative policies, and supports rural and urban development. In our 30-year history, we have helped conserve nearly 250,000 acres of farmlands, riparian areas, and forests. On behalf of our organization, I am writing in strong support of the RCO staff recommendation to include \$22 million for community forests in the agencies 2021-2023 capital budget request.

Forterra is a member of the Washington Association of Land Trusts (WALT). WALT conducted a survey of likely applicants and found that the RCO staff recommendation of \$22 million would be enough to provide funding for a majority of the proposed projects. Funding at this level is a reasonable request in the context of the overall demands on the upcoming capital budget.

In the coming months, Forterra is exploring partnerships with municipalities like the Cities of Hoquiam and Aberdeen on applications for community forest funding to support the development of local community forests in the Chehalis Basin. When municipalities are in control of their watershed ecosystems, they are accountable to their residents for the responsible management of the public resource, providing a stable and accessible landscape that supports healthy ecosystems. Management of these watersheds provides steady revenue for the cities and their residents; this is an important component of rural communities' ability to provide needed services, as well as a responsible and sustainable way to ensure that the public has access to clean and abundant resources. These prospective projects are a small sample of the ways that community forests are bringing people together to help spur local engagement and provide local forest benefits across our diverse state.

Thank you for working so closely and diligently with stakeholders to develop a strong community forest grant program to guide public investment. We look forward to continuing to work closely with RCO to ensure that this Community Forest program is effective, well-subscribed, and serves as a strong foundation for future efforts.

Sincerely,



Darcey Hughes  
Director of Conservation Transactions  
Forterra



Ted Willhite, Chair  
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Attn: Wyatt Lundquist  
P.O. Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

I am the Conservation Director at the Great Peninsula Land Trust, and am writing to strongly support the RCO staff recommendation to include \$22 million for community forests in the agencies 2021-2023 capital budget request.

The Kitsap Peninsula is a perfect example of why the community forest program is so important. With growing development pressure and land values, much of the small forest landowner landbase is being subdivided and converted to large-lot single family residences. With the community forest program, combined with other federal and local grants, we will finally have the resources needed to protect working forestlands, and provide a greater suite of local forest benefits moving forward. We are currently pursuing two potential projects in northern Kitsap County which would conserve about 700 acres of timberland that is highly threatened and slated to be turned into large-lot residences.

Thank you for working so closely and diligent with stakeholders to develop a strong community forest grant program to guide public investment. We look forward to continuing to work closely with RCO to ensure that this Community Forest program is effective, well-subscribed, and serves as a strong foundation for future efforts.

Sincerely,

Erik Steffens  
Conservation Director  
Great Peninsula Conservancy



## WESTERN RIVERS CONSERVANCY

July 27, 2020

Ted Willhite, Chair  
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Attn: Wyatt Lundquist  
P.O. Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

Dear Chair Willhite,

My name is Sue Doroff and I am the President at the Western Rivers Conservancy. I am writing to strongly support the RCO staff recommendation to include \$22 million for community forests in the agencies 2021-2023 capital budget request.

Based on a survey of likely applicants performed by the Washington Association of Land Trusts, the staff recommendation of \$22 million would be enough to provide funding for a majority of the proposed projects, allow for alternates should that be necessary, all while being a reasonable request in the context of the overall demands on the capital budget.

In collaboration with Chelan County, we are excited to apply for community forest funding to support the development of the Nason Ridge Community Forest. The previous RCO evaluation and ranking of potential community forest projects ranked Nason Ridge #1 in Washington State. A Community Forest Management Plan has already been prepared for the property and submitted to RCO. A MOU regarding management of the Nason Ridge Community Forest is in the process of being signed by Chelan County, Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, Kahler Glen Community Association, Washington State Parks, U.S. Forest Service, and Nason View LLC. Our project is just one example of the ways that community forests are bringing people together to help spur local engagement and provide local forest benefits across our diverse state.

Thank you for working so closely and diligent with stakeholders to develop a strong community forest grant program to guide public investment. We look forward to continuing to work closely with RCO to ensure that this Community Forest program is effective, well-subscribed, and serves as a strong foundation for future efforts.

Sincerely,

Sue Doroff  
President  
Western Rivers Conservancy



Nisqually Community Forest  
620 Old Pacific Highway SE  
Olympia, WA 98513  
[www.nisquallycommunityforest.org](http://www.nisquallycommunityforest.org)

July 29, 2020

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Ted Willhite, Chair  
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Attn: Wyatt Lundquist  
P.O. Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

Dear Mr. Willhite:

On behalf of the Nisqually Community Forest, I am writing to strongly support the RCO staff recommendation to include \$22 million for community forests in the agency's 2021-2023 capital budget request.

As the first community forest established in the Puget Sound region, we have witnessed firsthand the powerful positive impact "re-localizing" ownership and management of working forestlands can have on a community.

Established in 2014 in collaboration with the Nisqually Indian Tribe, the Nisqually Land Trust, and the Nisqually River Council, our community forest has generated hundreds of thousands of dollars in local employment in forestry and recreation jobs and greatly advanced the recovery of our Chinook salmon and steelhead trout populations, both of which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

We have also entered into one of the first carbon-credit projects in the state, providing yet another source of income for our local rural economies.

We are excited by the potential to support further development of the Nisqually Community Forest. The RCO has already been a great partner in our project through several of your existing programs, and we look forward to growing this relationship even further.

Sincerely,

Bryan Bowden  
President, Nisqually Community Forest

*The Nisqually Community Forest acquires and manages working forests in the Nisqually Watershed to provide sustainable economic, environmental, and social benefits to local communities.*





# JEFFERSON LAND TRUST

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Ted Willhite, Chair  
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Attn: Wyatt Lundquist  
P.O. Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

Dear Mr. Willhite,

My name is Sarah Spaeth and I am the Director of Conservation and Strategic Partnerships at Jefferson Land Trust. As one of the 32 land trust Washington Association of Land Trust members working across the state, Jefferson Land Trust strongly supports the RCO staff recommendation to include \$22 million for community forests in the agencies 2021-2023 capital budget request.

Based on a survey of likely applicants performed by the Washington Association of Land Trusts, the staff recommendation of \$22 million would be enough to provide funding for a majority of the proposed projects, allow for alternates should that be necessary, all while being a reasonable request in the context of the overall demands on the capital budget.

In collaboration with The Trust for Public Land; Navy; Washington State Legislature; EFM; Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe; Northwest School of Wooden Boat Building; Chimacum Corner Farmstand; Port Townsend School of Woodworking; Finnriver Farm & Cidery; Cedar Root Folk School; Washington State University Jefferson County Cooperative Extension; Jefferson LandWorks Collaborative; Back Country Horsemen; Washington Environmental Council; Olympic BioChar Group and North Olympic Salmon Coalition, we are excited to apply for community forest funding to secure and support the development of the Chimacum Ridge Community Forest. The 918-acre Chimacum Ridge property (65 acres are currently secured) is an entirely forested prominent landscape feature seen upon entering the peninsula towards Port Townsend. The ridge is surrounded by numerous vibrant farms, many of them permanently protected by Jefferson Land Trust conservation easements. This forested hillside provides clear water to these farms and salmon-bearing Chimacum Creek.

Creating a community forest means working with many partners to build recreational trails and nature play areas where families and school groups can experience nature. It also means caring for and managing the forest to better support a diverse forest habitat that is sustainably harvested in small batches and milled locally. The harvest will support the local wood movement in our community. For example, our partners at the Northwest School of Wooden Boat Building will use certain trees for masts; the Port Townsend School of Woodworking will teach courses that start with a tree and end with custom furniture; and tribal partners plan to use certain trees for totem poles, all keeping local traditional skills alive. Our project is just one example of the ways that community forests are bringing people together to help spur local engagement and provide local forest benefits across our diverse state.

Thank you for working so closely and diligent with stakeholders to develop a strong community forest grant program to guide public investment. We look forward to continuing to work closely with RCO to



ensure that this Community Forest program is effective, well-subscribed, and serves as a strong foundation for future efforts.

Sincerely,



Sarah Spaeth  
Director, Conservation & Strategic Partnerships  
Jefferson Land Trust

July 30, 2020

Ted Willhite, Chair  
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
P.O. Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

Dear Chair Willhite and Members of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board,

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is writing to express strong support of the Recreation Conservation Office (RCO) staff recommendation to provide for \$22 million for community forests in RCO's 2021-23 capital budget request.

Over the last few years, there has been growing interest across Washington for the creation of a community forest program to provide communities with a flexible tool for local stewardship of our forest resources that recognizes that every community forest has unique circumstances and community-set objectives.

Through community forest projects, entities such as nonprofit organizations, local governments, and tribes will be empowered to control decisions on forest management and use, and to derive multiple benefits from both. Some of these benefits may include promoting healthy forests through active management and forest health treatments that reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires, providing local jobs in forest products and outdoor recreation, protecting working forests from conversion to the development, and conserving clean water supplies and healthy fish and wildlife habitat.

Community forests help us achieve our vision of a world where people and nature thrive together.

TNC would like to express its appreciation for the dedication and determination of RCO staff and other stakeholders on the Community Forests Advisory Committee in developing the program with such speed, inclusiveness, and transparency. We look forward to working with RCO to make sure the community forest program is successful in attracting eligible projects and achieving the support it needs through the budget writing process.

Sincerely,



James Schroeder  
Director of Conservation





- American Farmland Trust
- Bainbridge Island Land Trust
- Blue Mountain Land Trust
- Capitol Land Trust
- Center for Natural Lands Mgmt.
- Chelan-Douglas Land Trust
- Columbia Land Trust
- The Conservation Fund
- Cowiche Canyon Conservancy
- Dishman Hills Conservancy
- Friends of the Columbia Gorge
- Forterra
- Great Peninsula Conservancy
- Inland Northwest Land Trust
- Jefferson Land Trust
- Lummi Island Heritage Trust
- The Nature Conservancy
- Nisqually Land Trust
- North Olympic Land Trust
- Okanogan Land Trust
- Palouse Land Trust
- PCC Farmland Trust
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- San Juan Preservation Trust
- Skagit Land Trust
- Community Farmland Trust
- The Trust for Public Land
- Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust
- Western Rivers Conservancy
- Whatcom Land Trust
- Whidbey Camano Land Trust

Ted Willhite, Chair  
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Attn: Wyatt Lundquist  
P.O. Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

My name is Nicholas Norton and I am the Executive Director of the Washington Association of Land Trusts. On behalf of our 32 land trust members working across the state, I am writing to strongly support the RCO staff recommendation to include \$22 million for community forests in the agencies 2021-2023 capital budget request.

Community forests are forests owned and actively managed for the benefit of local stakeholders. In this way, community forests allow for people living in rural areas to participate in forest management decisions, have access to diverse recreational opportunities, and develop revenue to support critical public needs. Community forests keep the working landscape working by protecting important forestlands from conversion and development, all while providing forest sector jobs and securing the conservation values of the land in perpetuity. Though they will look different, all community forests are uniquely designed to maximize the multiple benefits forestland provide for the benefit of local citizens.

Based on our extensive outreach to our land trust members, we have identified a strong group of community forest projects in need of funding from all across the state. These projects involve a diverse array of partnerships between land trusts, cities, counties, and tribes, and have demonstrated public support. Based on our estimate of the demand, the staff recommendation of \$22 million is enough to provide funding for a majority of these projects, allow for alternates should that be necessary, all while being a reasonable request in the context of the overall demands on the capital budget.

Thank you for working so closely and diligently with stakeholders to develop a strong community forest grant program that recognizes the diverse benefits that locally owned and managed forestland can bring to Washingtonians. We look forward to continuing to work closely with RCO to ensure that this Community Forest program is effective, well-subscribed, and serves as a strong guide for any future efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nick Norton".

Nicholas Norton  
Executive Director  
Washington Association of Land Trusts



Ted Willhite, Chair  
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Attn: Wyatt Lundquist  
P.O. Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

7/27/2020

My name is Gabe Epperson and I am the Executive Director at the Whatcom Land Trust. I am writing to strongly support the RCO staff recommendation to include \$22 million for community forests in the agencies 2021-2023 capital budget request.

Based on a survey of likely applicants performed by the Washington Association of Land Trusts, the staff recommendation of \$22 million would be enough to provide funding for a majority of the proposed projects, allow for alternates should that be necessary, all while being a reasonable request in the context of the overall demands on the capital budget.

In collaboration with Whatcom County, the Evergreen Land Trust and the Nooksack Tribe we are excited to apply for community forest funding to support the development of the Stewart Mountain Community Forest. Our project would support long term forestry jobs, protect water quality and salmon habitat in the Nooksack River and provide non-motorized public recreation access to Stewart Mountain. We've worked with local businesses, agencies and residents in the South Fork Nooksack Valley for several years and this project embodies the goals they've reiterated through the planning process. Our project is just one example of the ways that community forests are bringing people together to help spur local engagement and provide local forest benefits across our diverse state.

Thank you for working so closely and diligent with stakeholders to develop a strong community forest grant program to guide public investment. We look forward to continuing to work closely with RCO to ensure that this Community Forest program is effective, well-subscribed, and serves as a strong foundation for future efforts.

Sincerely,

Gabe Epperson, Executive Director  
Whatcom Land Trust