

**December 9, 2020**  
**Special Meeting**

**ATTENTION:**

**Protecting the public, our partners, and our staff are of the utmost importance. Due to 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 interim board liaison who can be reached at [julia.mcnamara@rco.wa.gov](mailto:julia.mcnamara@rco.wa.gov).

**Registration Link:** [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ApP06byBSwW-gKzsqSEjIQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ApP06byBSwW-gKzsqSEjIQ)

**Phone Option:** (669)900-6833 - **Webinar ID:** 988 7991 0136

**Location:** **Online Only**

**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).

**Special Note:** Please see the public comment opportunity section of the agenda for a chance to provide comment to the board on the recruitment of the next RCO director.

## **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9**

### **OPENING AND MANAGEMENT REPORTS**

**10:30 a.m. Call to Order**

*Chair Willhite*

- Roll Call and Determination of Quorum
- Review and Approval of Agenda- December 9, 2020 (**Decision**)
- Remarks of the Chair

### **PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY**

**10:35 a.m. Attributes of the Next Recreation and Conservation Office Director**

*Chair Willhite,  
Scott Robinson*

- Overview of the process and timeline
- Public Comment\*

*\*As the Recreation and Conservation (RCO) director Kaleen Cottingham is set to retire in April 2021, the board is asking for the public's opinion on 1 to 3 key attributes for the ideal director of RCO. This input will assist the board in developing selection criteria. Persons who wish to make public comment should notify RCO's Julia McNamara at [julia.mcnamara@rco.wa.gov](mailto:julia.mcnamara@rco.wa.gov). Written comments may be submitted to Ms. McNamara as well.*

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**BOARD BUSINESS: EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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**10:55 a.m. Executive Session: Personnel Matter – Recruitment of a new director of the Recreation and Conservation Office (Board Members Only)**

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**12:00 p.m. ADJOURN**

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**Next Meeting:**

January 26-27, 2021, Online Meeting through the Zoom Platform

# A STRAW DOG PROPOSAL

*Subject to Further Discussion After Public Meeting of December 9, 2020*

Offered by Jim Reid

12.09.20, Edition #4

*Note: To be inserted into the RCO Director hiring announcement and used to guide the hiring process.*

## **Three Essential Qualities the Director Needs to Succeed**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) agrees that the Director of RCO must have these three essential qualifications:

### **1. Passion for RCO's Mission**

RCO is recognized as an outstanding leader in conservation, recreation, and salmon recovery. This leadership role is the result of the deep commitment by the staff, RCFB, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, and Invasive Species Council to RCO's mission. Their commitment is demonstrated by the quality of habitat, parks, open spaces, watersheds, recreation areas, wildlife, forests, aquatic lands, farmlands, and salmon habitat that is found today throughout the State of Washington.

The Director must have a passion for RCO's mission and the ability to maintain and expand RCO's leadership. The Director must provide careful oversight and guidance, not merely towards good decisions and stewardship of funding, but also towards the resilience and well-being of watersheds, estuaries, and species that the agency seeks to conserve and restore. The Director will be expected to maintain RCO as a national exemplar of how public funds can best be invested to effectively and creatively support public lands and public resources."

### **2. Energy and Creativity to Build Consensus Among Diverse Partners in a Political Environment**

RCO has earned the reputation as a stalwart partner for state, local, and tribal governments, and non-profit and community-based organizations. One partner recently stated that RCO "is the gold standard for how to work with, stay in touch with, and strategize with stakeholders." RCO's approach to collaboration and cooperation begins with this question: "How can we help you succeed?"

The Director must understand governmental systems, operations, and funding, and successfully advocate for and advance RCO's vision, mission, and goals. The Director must also appreciate the roles and responsibilities of other governmental, non-profit, and advocacy organizations, and, through collaboration and creativity, cement these partnerships for the benefit of the people of Washington State. Finally, integrity, honesty, candor, and respect for others enable the Director to resolve disagreements and unify partners and stakeholders behind mutual interests, a shared vision, and coordinated strategies.

### **3. Ability to Provide Effective Staff Leadership and Board Support**

Two primary responsibilities of the Director are to effectively lead and manage the staff and to support the Boards and Councils.

Leading staff requires long-term strategic thinking and planning, daily tactical decision-making, priority setting, and resource deployment. As a relatively small state agency with limited resources and many responsibilities, RCO relies heavily on its staff to implement its vision, mission, and goals. A successful Director will provide steady, responsive, and engaged staff leadership. Ensuring that the right people are in the right jobs, that they have the organizational support they need, and that they continue to be inspired to act as passionate advocates for RCO's mission will be crucial to the agency's continuing success. This will include coaching and mentoring staff to help them grow professionally and setting high standards of accountability.

The Director's support of the Boards and Council requires similar skills. The Director must understand, respect, and assist the Boards and Council in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. This includes helping them envision the long-term future of RCO and channeling their vision into policy direction and funding decisions.

**From:** [Doug Levy](#)  
**To:** [Robinson, Scott \(RCO\)](#); [Brown, Wendy \(RCO\)](#)  
**Cc:** [McNamara, Julia \(RCO\)](#)  
**Subject:** Attributes desired in new RCO Director  
**Date:** Thursday, December 10, 2020 7:37:38 AM

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SCOTT – cc WENDY, cc JULIA:

I'm e-mailing with an up-front apology – my Wednesday absolutely got away from me and so I apologize for not being able to 'Zoom' into the RCFB discussion on Wednesday to receive public input on qualities/attributes desired in a new RCO Executive Director.

Please accept these brief comments from me on behalf of the Recreational Boating Association of Washington (RBAW):

First, we would note that Kaleen Cottingham has been an absolute pleasure to work with and has set quite a gold standard for others to follow. The RBAW, which has been looking out for the interests of recreational boaters for nearly 70 years, previously bestowed upon Kaleen the Louise B. Condon Award, which is given "for exceptional inspiration, leadership, and dedication to the advancement of women in recreational boating for the State of Washington." Between her work to keep stakeholders informed and aware of RCO's efforts, her spearheading of a special boating app, and her strong encouragement of projects such as the Lakebay Marina acquisition, Kaleen is richly deserving of the kudos she has received.

As for attributes in a new RCO Executive Director, we at RBAW believe these are particularly critical:

- **Stakeholder outreach and input:** RCO has excelled at building a regular rapport with stakeholders who are impacted by the Agency's work and the grant programs it administers. The regular stakeholder work and quarterly meetings done under Kaleen should be continued and this area of outreach should be maintained at a minimum.
- **Legislative Coalition-Building:** The RCO's Executive Director is seen as a productive partner in the hallways of the Legislature for those who work on outdoor recreation, including broad-based coalitions such as the Big Tent Outdoor Recreation Coalition and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition. RCO is also a regular participant in and major staff driver for the work of the Outdoor Recreation Caucus formed a few years ago. This coalition-building and partnership work should continue.
- **Getting to yes/Customer Service:** One of the words government officials too often fall back on, and instinctively become attached to, is 'no.' Under Kaleen, the RCO had a much more customer-service-oriented approach to working with and dealing with the public, what I would call a "get to yes" attitude. This culture should be maintained and built upon under a

new Executive Director.

I hope these are helpful and would ask that they be shared with the Board. Thanks!

Doug Levy, Owner

Outcomes By Levy, LLC

(425)922-3999 – Office/Cell

[Doug@outcomesbylevy.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:Doug@outcomesbylevy.onmicrosoft.com) (Work)

[Levy4@msn.com](mailto:Levy4@msn.com); [Levydtzc@outlook.com](mailto:Levydtzc@outlook.com) (Personal)

**From:** [Alex Conley](#)  
**To:** [Robinson, Scott \(RCO\)](#); [lancew@spsseg.org](mailto:lancew@spsseg.org); [Tricia Snyder](#); [aolivas@hccc.wa.gov](mailto:aolivas@hccc.wa.gov); [susmith@kingcounty.gov](mailto:susmith@kingcounty.gov)  
**Cc:** [McNamara, Julia \(RCO\)](#); [lancew@spsseg.org](mailto:lancew@spsseg.org); [Tricia Snyder](#); [aolivas@hccc.wa.gov](mailto:aolivas@hccc.wa.gov); [susmith@kingcounty.gov](mailto:susmith@kingcounty.gov); [Scott Brewer](#); [Moore, Amber \(PSP\)](#); [Mara Zimmerman](#); ["Steve Manlow"](#); [John Foltz](#); [Melody Kreimes](#)  
**Subject:** RE: RCO Director Recruitment - Reminder  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 8, 2020 4:49:36 PM

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Scott, I think all none of the regional directors are available to give our input in person, but we did discuss and compile our individual thoughts into the following 3 attributes that we hope can be presented in written form or relayed to the Board by you:

**Council of Salmon Recovery Regions Key attributes for the new RCO Director:**

Robust knowledge of salmon recovery in Washington State and the roles of RCO, GSRO and other state, tribal, federal and local partners including regional salmon recovery regions and lead entities, and a demonstrated vision for how RCO and GSRO effectively drive a collaborative, voluntary approach to salmon recovery.

Ability to communicate and work collaboratively with diverse state, tribal and federal and local partners to promote, coordinate and fund RCO programs and to identify and creatively solve related issues.

Experience advocating and negotiating for statewide funding with state and federal legislatures and agencies.

Thanks for the opportunity to share these, and do let me know if you have any questions or follow-up-

Alex Conley, Council of Regions Chair

Alex Conley, Executive Director  
Yakima Basin Fish & Wildlife Recovery Board  
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1200 Chesterly Drive, Suite 280  
Yakima, WA 98902  
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**From:** Robinson, Scott (RCO) <[scott.robinson@rco.wa.gov](mailto:scott.robinson@rco.wa.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 7, 2020 4:05 PM  
**To:** Alex Conley <[aconley@ybfwrp.org](mailto:aconley@ybfwrp.org)>; [lancew@spsseg.org](mailto:lancew@spsseg.org); [Tricia Snyder](#) <[tsnyder@ybfwrp.org](mailto:tsnyder@ybfwrp.org)>;

**From:** [Robinson, Scott \(RCO\)](#)  
**To:** [McNamara, Julia \(RCO\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Search for the Next RCO Director  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 8, 2020 2:21:13 PM

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Can you keep this somewhere please Julia?

Thanks

^Scott

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**SCOTT ROBINSON** ▪ **DEPUTY DIRECTOR**  
**C: 360.867.8784**  
**RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE**

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**From:** Jeffrey Breckel <jeff.breckel@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 8, 2020 1:35 PM  
**To:** tedwillhite@gmail.com  
**Cc:** Cottingham, Kaleen (RCO) <Kaleen.Cottingham@rco.wa.gov>; Robinson, Scott (RCO) <scott.robinson@rco.wa.gov>  
**Subject:** Search for the Next RCO Director

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Ted:

I'm glad we were able to speak last week regarding the search for a new RCO director. For nearly 14 years, our boards have enjoyed the exceptional support and leadership of Kaleen Cottingham. It is through her efforts and the staff at RCO that our respective programs have enjoyed great success. The selection of the next RCO director will be critical to our continued effectiveness and success.

I understand that it is the responsibility of the RCFB to interview applicants and submit a list of recommended candidates to the Governor. I am very pleased that you recognize our mutual interests in the RCO director position. I appreciate that you are open to SRFB participation in the process to select candidates for the position. I want to assure you that I and my fellow SRFB members are willing to assist the RCFB in this important task.

While SRFB has not had the opportunity to discuss key attributes, I hope that the next RCO director fully recognizes and appreciates that:

- Our salmon and steelhead populations are of great cultural, social, and economic importance to the people of the state and are a key indicator of the health of our watersheds;
- Our overall success as a state in returning our salmon and steelhead to healthy, harvestable levels depends on an open, inclusive, and combined efforts of federal, state, tribal, and local



governments, community, business and environmental interests, landowners and individual members of the public; and that

- The SRFB efforts to restore and protect salmon and steelhead habitat depend on RCO leadership and support and a proven statewide network of regional salmon recovery organizations, lead entities and a diverse group of project sponsors.

As the RCFB proceeds in finalizing its process for identifying candidates, please let me know how the SRFB can participate and assist in this effort.

Thanks,

Jeff Breckel, Chair  
Salmon Recovery Funding Board



December 9, 2020

TO: The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office Funding Board

FROM: Paul Simmons, WRPA President  
Roxanne Miles, WRPA Legislative Chair

RE: Attributes of the Recreation and Conservation Office Director

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the attributes those in the parks and recreation field most desire and need from the leader of Washington State's Recreation and Conservation Office.

We have had a long history of working collaboratively, connecting local agencies with state resources and priorities, to form a strong system of park and recreation facilities and programs statewide. We would like that legacy to continue as RCO transitions to new leadership.

WRPA's believes the RCO Director must be:

1. **A collaborative convener of industry stakeholders.** Regular engagement with WRPA leadership should continue on no less than a quarterly basis. The practice of vetting policy and grant issues through existing coalitions and memberships should continue, with an open and thoughtful consideration of issues and needs presented.
2. **A champion and leader in public lands.** The Director must be visionary and influence other state agencies (DNR, State Parks, DFW) to identify common issues, and come to agreement on intersections, hand off points and find general alignment through cooperative vision and policy statements. The role RCO has to collect and maintain meaningful data, as well as their plan and policy review function, positions RCO well for leadership of a state-wide systems approach to public lands management, even without changes in authority.
3. **Action-oriented, building strategies toward solutions.** RCO has a broad portfolio of grants and charter responsibilities. These all need to be advanced in an equitable and balanced way, so no single element takes precedence over others, nor are charter responsibilities allowed to lag. All functions need equal intention and tactical strategies for advancement.

Thank you for consideration of these attributes. We look forward to being involved in the hiring and orientation process. WRPA is committed to working collaboratively with RCO to advance a system of local and regional parks and services that provide all Washingtonians with a high quality of life, while promoting the economic benefits of tourism and personal health and well-being.

The Washington Salmon Coalition appreciates the opportunity to provide its feedback on key attributes for the new RCO director. Below are our recommendations:

- Strong understanding of the foundational salmon recovery structure across the state—both through the Lead Entity program and complementary programs with strong support for the WA Way;
- Strong understanding of state budget, accompanied by fiscal creativity and the ability to problem solve;
- Supervisory style that allows for the necessary flexibility to foster staff creativity and problem solving;
- A willingness to communicate and listen across scales, has a sense of building a community, and a collaborative nature that can work to build consensus.

**RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARIZED MEETING  
AGENDA AND ACTIONS**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2020**

Item	Formal Action	Follow-up Action
<b>OPENING AND MANAGEMENT REPORTS</b>		
<p><b>Call to Order</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll Call and Determination of Quorum</li> <li>• Review and Approval of Agenda</li> <li>• Remarks of the Chair</li> </ul>	<p><b>Decision</b></p> <p><u>Approval of December 9, 2020 Agenda</u></p> <p><b>Moved by:</b> Member Shiosaki</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> Approved by consensus</p>	
<b>PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY</b>		
<b>Overview of the process and timeline</b>		
<b>Public Comment</b>		
<b>BOARD BUSINESS: EXECUTIVE SESSION</b>		
<b>Executive Session: Personnel Matter- Recruitment of a new director of the Recreation and Conservation Office (Board Members Only)</b>		
<b>ADJOURN</b>		

## RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARY MINUTES

**Date:** December 9, 2020

**Place:** Online

### Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Members:

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<b>Ted Willhite, Chair</b>	Seattle	<b>Shiloh Burgess</b>	Wenatchee
<b>Kathryn Gardow</b>	Seattle	<b>Brock Milliern</b> (Recused)	Designee, Department of Natural Resources
<b>Michael Shiosaki</b>	Seattle	<b>Joe Stohr</b>	Designee, Department of Fish and Wildlife
<b>Henry Hix</b>	Okanogan	<b>Peter Herzog</b> (Recused)	Designee; Washington State Parks

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**This summary is to be used with the materials provided in advance of the meeting. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) retains a recording as the formal record of the meeting.**

### Call to Order

**Chair Ted Willhite** opened the meeting at 10:30 a.m. To determine quorum, **Julia McNamara**, interim Board Liaison, called roll and determined a quorum was present. Following, Chair Willhite thanked the audience members for joining the webinar and noted the meeting topic: the retirement and replacement of Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Director, **Kaleen Cottingham**. Director Cottingham's last day with RCO will be April 30, 2021.

In closing, Ms. McNamara covered webinar rules and etiquette.

### Overview of the process and timeline

**Scott Robinson**, RCO Deputy Director, provided details on the hiring process for a new director. He noted that the recruitment release is targeted for Friday, December 11, 2020, and to close January 11, 2021. From February 9-11, 2021, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) will interview candidates. On February 15, three of the candidates will be submitted to the governor, who will go through his own process to decide who to appoint. It is hoped that the new RCO director will start on between April 1-15, 2021.

Following Mr. Robinson's briefing, **Chair Willhite** welcomed comment and commended Director Cottingham and Mr. Robinson for their work at RCO. Chair Willhite then welcomed public comment on attributes the board should seek in a new director.

*Public Comment:*

**Christine Mahler**, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition (WWRC), began by thanking Director Cottingham for her leadership at RCO and all the facets of her position.

She then listed the three qualities that WWRC expects out of the new RCO director:

- 1) They must have the desire to improve equity at and through RCO by knowing the history of the exclusivity of recreation and conservation, by living through the inequity, and by coming from a community of color.
- 2) The new director should be adept to representing RCO effectively, including all aspects of relationship management. This would include internal management, relationships with the Governor's Office and legislature, local level relationships, and Tribal partnerships.
- 3) A director that is open to consistent growth and change.

**Tricia Snyder**, Washington Salmon Coalition (WSC), discussed three attributes that WSC expects to see in the new RCO director.

- 1) Someone who has a strong understanding of the foundation surrounding salmon recovery structure.
- 2) Someone who has a strong understanding of the state budget, accompanied by the fiscal creativity and ability to problem solve.
- 3) Someone who is willing to listen and communicate across all programs.

**Roxanne Miles**, Washington Recreation and Parks Association (WRPA), stated three key attributes that the RCO director should possess.

They should be:

- 1) A collaborative convener of industry stakeholders.
- 2) A champion in public lands who is visionary and influential with other state agencies, especially with DNR and State Parks who often play a role in data collection, planning and policy reviews through RCO.
- 3) Action oriented and able to build strategies that are broad based, ensuring that no elements are winning against another in the recreation and conservation world.

**Nick Norton**, Washington Association of Land Trusts (WALT), thanked RCO for the opportunity to provide comment and expressed thanks for working with Kaleen over the years.

Three key attributes that WALT expects from a director include:

- 1) Strong visionary leadership. Externally, the director would be a committed vocal ambassador for outdoor recreation and conservation and the environment. Internally, this would be someone who would create an environment of empowerment, dedication and accountability among staff at all levels
- 2) Dedication to community building through relationships with key stakeholders, the building of new relationships and responsiveness to partners with work on the ground.
- 3) Politically savvy- meaning they pay strong attention to programmatic details and demonstrate experience and success in working on policy issues with elected officials.

**Executive Session: Personnel Matter- Recruitment of a new director of the Recreation and Conservation Office (Board Members Only)**

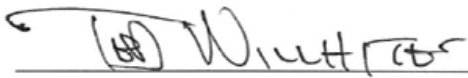
**Chair Willhite** explained the RCFB members would be convening for an executive session to discuss the hiring process of the new RCO director. This session would include RCFB members, RCO staff members Director Kaleen Cottingham and Deputy Director, Scott Robinson, and Jim Reid, a contracted process facilitator. Through [RCW 42.30.110\(g\)](#), the RCFB entered an Executive Session that was extended until 12:20 P.M.

**ADJOURN- Meeting adjourned at 12:20 P.M.**

When returning to adjourn the meeting, **Chair Willhite** noted the executive session only held discussion of a personnel matter, with no decisions made.

*The next meeting will January 26-27, 2021, Online- Subject to change considering COVID. If another special meeting is convened before January 26, 2021 to address this personnel issue, proper notice will be given to partners and the public.*

**Approved by:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Theodore Willhite, Chair

1-26-2021  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date