



PROPOSED: State Parks Category – Evaluation Criteria Changes

Public Comments Requested by August 31, 2021

Background

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) provides grants for purchase of valuable recreation and habitat lands, preservation of farmland, and construction of recreation and public access sites for a growing population. The State Parks category in the WWRP Outdoor Recreation Account is open only for projects proposed by the State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission).

WWRP State Parks category projects may consist of acquisition, development, or combination of acquisition and development; projects involving renovation of existing facilities are not eligible. There is no minimum or maximum grant request per project. State Parks does not need to provide a match for WWRP State Parks category grants.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) approves policies that govern WWRP including how standing advisory committees evaluate projects. The current, board-adopted process for evaluating projects in the WWRP State Parks category is included in [Manual 10a, WWRP Outdoor Recreation Account](#).

Based on feedback and recommendations from the WWRP State Parks Advisory Committee, State Parks staff, the State Parks Commission, and the Commission's Real Estate Committee, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff suggest changes to the existing evaluation criteria in preparation for the 2022 grant cycle.

Issues

The criteria by which projects are evaluated in the WWRP State Parks category are currently based on the Commission's 2013 Transformation Strategy. They were last updated in April 2016 to refine the scoring process for the Commission question on priorities among other refinements. After that update, the Commission approved the Statewide Acquisition and Development Strategy in July 2016 to guide land acquisition and park development. The

overarching goal of the strategy is for Washington's state parks to be recognized as the collection of places and experiences that are distinctly Washington.

State Parks staff have been working with RCO to update the WWRP State Parks evaluation criteria and project eligibility with the goals of:

1. Reflecting the Commission's current strategic goals for land acquisition and park development expressed in the Statewide Acquisition and Development Strategy; and
2. Incorporating consideration of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI); and
3. Reorganizing elements of the evaluation to appropriate criteria.

Summary of Changes

The changes proposed to the Evaluation Criteria are summarized as follows:

1. **Public Need and Need Satisfaction** – Limit criteria to *public need* only because *need satisfaction* is better addressed in *threat and impact* (acquisition) and in *project design* (development) criteria, and incorporate DEI.
2. **Project Significance** – Clarify that this reflects the Commission's current goals of the Statewide Acquisition and Development Strategy rather than consistency with the 2013 Transformation Strategy, and incorporate DEI.
3. **Threat and Impact** – Address *need satisfaction*, consider *acquisition priority*, remove *operational impacts*, and incorporate DEI. State Parks operational impacts will be considered during the agency's operating budget development process.
4. **Project Design** – Revise criterion to address *need satisfaction*, *status of design*, *climate change*, and *sustainable development*, and incorporate DEI.
5. **Sustainability and Stewardship** – Limit criterion to *resource stewardship* only because *sustainability* is better addressed in *project design* (development) criteria.
6. **Expansion or Phased Project** – no change.
7. **Project Support** – Remove *voter-approved initiative* which rarely applies to State Parks and address underrepresented populations.
8. **Partnerships or Match** – Emphasize *secured* match and include underserved groups.
9. **Readiness to Proceed** – Limit consideration to *readiness to proceed* and remove *economic impact analysis* and *business plans*. Those factors will be considered during the agency's operating budget development process.
10. **Commission Priorities** – no change.
11. **Proximity to People** – no change.
12. **County Population Density** – no change.

How to Comment

The Recreation and Conservation Office is requesting public comment on these proposed evaluation criteria changes. Comments may be submitted by sending an email to karl.jacobs@rco.wa.gov with “State Parks Criteria” in the subject line. Comments must be submitted **by August 31, 2021**. Please contact karl.jacobs@rco.wa.gov with any questions or for more information.

PROPOSED: State Parks Category – Evaluation Criteria Changes

Evaluation Criteria Summary

The following shows the proposed changes to the criteria. Changes are in red text and with strikeouts and underlines.

State Parks Criteria Summary					
Score By	#	Question	Project Type	Maximum Points Possible	Focus*
Advisory Committee	1	Public Need and Need <u>Satisfaction</u>	All	5	State
Advisory Committee	2	Project Significance	All	15	Agency
Advisory Committee	3	Threat and Impact <u>Acquisition Priority</u>	Acquisition Combination	10 5	State
Advisory Committee	4	Project Design	Development Combination	10 5	Technical
Advisory Committee	5	Sustainability and <u>Environmental Resource</u> Stewardship	All	10	State
Advisory Committee	6	Expansion/Phased Project	All	15	State
Advisory Committee	7	Project Support	All	10	Agency
Advisory Committee	8	Partnership or Match	All	5	State
Advisory Committee	9	Readiness to Proceed	All	10	Agency
State Parks Commission	10	Commission Priorities	All	6	Agency
RCO Staff	11	Proximity to People	All	1.5	State
RCO Staff	12	County Population Density	All	1.5	State

State Parks Criteria Summary					
Score By	#	Question	Project Type	Maximum Points Possible	Focus*
Total Points Possible				89	

Detailed Scoring Criteria for the State Parks Category

Advisory Committee Scored

1. Public Need ~~and Need Satisfaction~~. What is the need for the proposed project? ~~To what extent will the project satisfy the need?~~ Consider whether the project is cited in an agency, regional, or local plan. the following: Are there specific plans that have identified the need for these park lands or these facilities to serve people of all races, ethnicities, national origins, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, religions, veteran status, and ages?

- ~~Whether the project is cited in an agency, regional, or local plan, for example:~~
 - ~~Cited in a Classification and Management Plan (CAMP), if one exists.~~
 - ~~Identified in a park master plan or other approved planning document.~~
 - ~~Included in the current State Parks' 10-year capital plan.~~
 - ~~Consistent with State Parks' strategic plan.~~
- ~~Whether the project or property is suited to serve the state need.~~

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points

0 points	Not included in a plan, indirectly or does not implement the mission.
1-2 points	Not included in a plan but supports the mission.
3-4 points	Consistent with state, regional, or local plans, and implements the mission.
5 points	High priority in state, regional, or local plan and strongly implements the State Parks mission and vision.

Revised April 2016. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-20.
 Updated April 2020, per Delegation Authority, Resolution 2020-10.

2. Project Significance. Describe how this project supports State Parks' strategic goals. Does it support one or more of the following goals of State Parks' Statewide Acquisition and Development Strategy. In addition, describe how the project will serve people of all races, ethnicities, national origins, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, religions, veteran status, and ages.

- Places to Be: Connecting people with Washington's iconic landscapes
- Stories to Know: Engaging people in authentic Washington stories
- Things to Do: Providing Washington's recreation mainstays
- Ways to Grow: Inviting novices to experience Washington's outdoors
- Something for Everyone: Improving the quality of life for all Washingtonians

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

0 points	Does not directly support any of the goals
1-2 points	Indirectly supports one or two goals
3-4 points	Directly supports at least one goal
5 points	Strongly and directly supports multiple goals

Revised January 2014, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-07
Updated April 2020, per Delegation Authority, Resolution 2020-10.

3. ~~Threat and Impacts~~ Acquisition Priority (acquisition and combination projects only). Describe why it is important to acquire the property now. Consider the following:

- Does the acquisition satisfy the described need?
- Does the acquisition expand access and provide opportunity for people of all races, ethnicities, national origins, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, religions, veteran status, and ages?
- Is there an immediate threat to the property that will result in a loss in quality or availability of habitat or future public use?
- Is the acquisition needed to adapt to climate change?

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by 2 for acquisition projects

0 points	No evidence of threat to the property
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1-2 points	Minimal threat to the property
3-5 points	Imminent threat of the property losing quality or becoming unavailable for future public use, or a threat led to a land trust acquiring rights in the land at the request of State Parks

Updated April 2020, per Delegation Authority, Resolution 2020-10.

4. Project Design (development and combination projects only). Is the project well designed? Describe your project in detail. Consider the following:

- Does the design satisfy the described need?
- Where are you in the design process (e.g., concept, schematic, detailed, completed construction documents)?
- Does this property support the type of development proposed? Describe the attributes: size, topography, soil conditions, natural amenities, location and access, utility service, wetlands, etc.
- How have the potential impacts to or from climate change been considered in your design? How has climate change been incorporated into the project?
- How does this project exceed current universal accessibility requirements and provide equal access for people with disabilities?
- How does the project design address the needs and desires of the state's diverse population? What specific improvements or features are designed to serve people of all races, ethnicities, national origins, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, religions, veteran status, and ages?
- ~~Does the design appeal to diverse populations of the state?~~
- Does the nature and condition of existing or planned land use in the surrounding area support the type of development proposed?
- Is the project permissible? Are there likely to be environmental permitting complications that will need to be overcome with this project? What, if any, are the mitigation requirements?
- Describe how the project will integrate sustainable elements such as low impact development techniques, green infrastructure, environmentally preferred building products, or reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Is the cost estimate realistic?

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by 2 for development projects

0 points	Design is not appropriate for the site or the intended use.
1-2 points	Design is moderately appropriate for the site and the intended use.
3-4 points	Design is appropriate for the site and the intended use, and cost estimates are accurate and complete.
5 points	Design is appropriate for the site, construction documentation is complete and addresses all elements of the question very well, and cost estimates are accurate and complete.

Updated April 2020, per Delegation Authority, Resolution 2020-10.

5. **~~Sustainability and Environmental Resource Stewardship~~**. What techniques or resources are proposed to ensure the project will result in a quality, sustainable, recreational, heritage preservation, or educational opportunity, while protecting and/or improving the integrity of the ecological resources environment? Describe how the project will protect and/or enhance natural and cultural resources ~~and integrate sustainable elements such as low impact development techniques, green infrastructure, or environmentally preferred building products, or reduce greenhouse gas emissions.~~

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

0 points	No or little stewardship elements.
1-2 points	Contains stewardship elements and avoids impacts to natural or cultural resources. Consistent with State Parks' Sustainability Plan and goals.
3-4 points	Numerous stewardship elements, protects, enhances, or restores natural or cultural resources. Implements many of State Parks' sustainability goals.
5 points	Maximizes natural or cultural resource protection, enhances or restores natural or cultural resources, and contains innovative and outstanding stewardship elements. Implements many of State Parks' sustainability goals.

Revised April 2016. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-20.

Updated April 2020, per Delegation Authority, Resolution 2020-10.

6. Expansion/Phased Project (no change). Does this project implement an important phase of a previous project, represent an important first phase, or expand or improve an existing site? Consider the following:

- Is the project part of a phased acquisition or development?
- To what extent will this project advance completion of a plan or vision?
- Is this project an important first phase?
- What is the value of this phase?
- How does the project complement an existing site or expand usage, preservation, or education within a site?

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

0 points	Neither a significant phase or expansion, nor a distinct stand-alone project
1-2 points	Project is a quality or important phase or expansion
3-4 points	Project is a key first phase or expansion or moves a project significantly towards realizing a vision
5 points	Project is a highly important first phase, final (or near final phase), moves a project a great deal towards realizing a vision.

Revised April 2016. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-20.

7. Project Support. How has your organization informed and engaged interested parties about the project including marginalized and/or underrepresented populations? What statewide, community, and user grounds were consulted and what support has been demonstrated for this project? the public (statewide, community, or user groups) about the project and how has the public shown support for the project?

- Describe the extent of your organization's efforts to identify and contact all parties, (i.e. an outreach program to local, regional, and statewide entities).
- Describe the extent of the project support. Broadly interpret the term "Project Support" to include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - ~~Voter approved initiative~~
 - Public participation and feedback

- o Endorsements or other support from advisory boards and user and friends groups
- o Media coverage

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

0 points	No evidence presented.
1-2 points	Marginal community support. Opportunities for only minimal public involvement (i.e. a single adoption hearing), or little evidence that the public supports the project.
3 points	Adequate support and opportunity presented for participation.
4-5 points	The public has received ample and varied opportunities to provide meaningful input into the project and there is overwhelming support. The public was so supportive from the project's inception that an extensive public participation process was not necessary.

Revised April 2016. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-20.

8. Partnerships or Match. Describe how this project supports strategic partnerships or leverages secured matching funds. Consider the following:

- Does the project help form strategic partnerships with other agencies, tribes, underrepresented groups, or nonprofits? (A strategic partnership is one that ultimately is expected to offset expenses, leverage investments, or stimulate activity that directly or indirectly generates a financial return.)
- Does the partnership facilitate a key State Parks' goal or objective?
- Does the project have a match of cash, grants, or in-kind services?

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points

0 points	No partners or match
1-2 points	One partner or up to 10 percent match
3-4 points	Two partners or 10.01-24.99 percent match
5 points	Three or more partners or 25 percent or more match

9. Readiness to Proceed. Describe the project's timeline. Is the project ready to proceed? Consider the following:

- For development projects, is it fully designed and permitted?
- For acquisition projects, is there written documentation indicating a willing seller?
- For acquisition projects, is there a written sales agreement or option with the property owner?
- Are there any significant zoning, permitting issues, or encumbrances?

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

0 points	Not ready, business case not evident. (Acquisition) No agreement with landowner and fiscal impact will be substantial. (Development) No construction drawings.
1-2 points	(Acquisition) Willing seller identified. (Development) Construction drawings less than at or near 60 percent complete.
3-4 points	(Acquisition) Property (purchase) secured in some way by legal instrument to include a letter of intent or being held in trust or by a non-governmental organization (for example). (Development) Construction drawings at or more than 60 percent complete.
5 points	(Acquisition) State Parks has purchase s and sale s agreement or option signed and the purchase will be made within its existing term. (Development) Plans completed and all permits in hand.

No changes are proposed to Commission scored question 10 or to RCO Staff scored questions 11 and 12. The text of those questions are available in Manual 10a on [RCOs Grant Manuals webpage](#).