

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARY MINUTES

Date: January 24, 2023

Place: Hybrid- Room 172, 1111 Washington St. SE Olympia, WA, 98501

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Members:

Ted Willhite, Chair	Seattle	Shiloh Burgess	Wenatchee
Kathryn Gardow	Seattle	Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn	Designee, Department of Natural Resources
Michael Shiosaki	Seattle	Amy Windrope	Designee, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Trang Lam	Camas	Peter Herzog	Designee; Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

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. Please note that each memo is linked in the topic below.

Call to Order

Chair Ted Willhite opened the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) meeting at 9:02 AM. He requested roll call, determining quorum, and approved of members Kathryn Gardow and Shiloh Burgess joining online.

Item 1: Consent Agenda

Chair Willhite called for introductions of all board members. He presented a resolution to recognize the service of Member Gardow, who completed her final formal term in December 2022.

Chair Willhite introduced the consent agenda, which included the October 25-26, 2022, meeting minutes, four time extensions, and three volunteer recognitions.

Motion: Approval of January 24, 2023, agenda

Moved By: Member Herzog

Seconded By: Member Shiosaki

Decision: **Approved**

Motion: Approval of Resolution 2023-01

Moved By: Member Herzog

Seconded By: Member Gardow

Decision: **Approved**

Motion: Approval of Resolution 2023-05

Moved By: Member Ohlson-Kiehn

Seconded By: Member Shiosaki

Decision: **Approved**

Item 2: Director's Report

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Director **Megan Duffy** summarized key agency activities, including work on the No Child Left Inside Grant Program, which had over 175 applications requesting over \$12 million and the Washington State Trails Coalition annual trails conference, of which Outdoor Grants Manager, Jesse Sims played a significant role. For 2023, the agency continues focus on equity work both internally and externally and plans to co-host a boating access conference in August alongside the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks).

After commending Director Duffy for her work since joining the agency, **Chair Willhite** requested a brief update on technology and RCO's efforts in leveraging technology services and information.

Director Duffy updated the board with the changes to the PRISM database, including the new cultural resources module, but promised an additional staff overview at a future meeting.

Legislative and Policy Update

Policy Director, **Brock Milliern** updated the board on the current legislative session, noting it would wrap up on April 23. Bills of interest include the following.

- House Bill (HB) 1086: Increases limit a local government can direct contract with a community service organization from \$25,000 to \$75,000.
- Senate Bill (SB) 5095: Established a "Parks Prescription (Rx)" committee at the Department of Health and requires the Department to establish pilot programs.
- SB 5145: Amends the recreational immunity in relationship to water flow from dams,
- HB 1190: Establishes the "Outdoor Recreation Account" as part of the Climate Commitment Act.
- HB 1212: Eliminates the Discover Pass and daily permit fees to make outdoor recreational opportunities more accessible by eliminating the financial barrier of the pass.
- SB 5471/5314: Allows electric assist bikes on Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and WDFW lands where bicycles are allowed.
- SB 5372: Establishes the Trust Land Transfer program at DNR.

During discussion, board members asked about the increase to the forecast for biennium, the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) capital budget request, and the focus of the elimination of the Discover Pass bill. Mr. Milliern explained that budget forecast is at \$762 million for the 2023-2025 biennium; the Governor's Budget included \$120 million for WWRP; and noted that the Discover Pass can be a financial barrier to public access for some individuals.

Grants Cycle Overview

Marguerite Austin, Recreation and Conservation Grants Section Manager, updated the board on the 2022-23 grants cycle. This includes the process that began in spring 2022, when the board approved ranked lists that were submitted to the Governor and Legislature and the fall cycle of programs, which are funded through dedicated accounts. The fall cycle applications are currently being evaluated and include the following programs: Boating Facilities (BFP), Firearms and Archery Range, Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicles and Recreational Trails. RCO staff will bring the ranked lists back in April and request final funding at the June meeting.

Item 3: Equity Review Action Plan Overview

Leah Dobey, RCO policy specialist, reviewed six high level recommendations from the 2022 report on equitable grants administration. The first phase of work on these recommendations will begin this year and focus on existing efforts, community engagement, changes to evaluation criteria, the evaluation process, and partner-oriented topics.

Existing efforts include funding requests for a tribal liaison, a diversity, equity, and inclusion coordinator, and a data management position; testing some of the recommendations in the new Planning for Recreation Access grant program; implementing equity training; and improving representation in RCO's advisory committees.

Over the coming months, communications staff will work to broaden RCO's reach by developing a more wide-reaching outreach strategy and building relationships through social media with more diverse organizations. Policy staff will analyze specific criteria and potential changes identified in the Equity Review with plans to present decisions to the board in October. Grant services staff will work to improve applicant support while other agency staff will work with outside partners to identify funding opportunities and resources for sponsors.

Director Duffy asked for the total number of new applicants in the Planning for Recreational Access Program.

Ms. Dobby said 99 were new applicants and 77 had not received a grant from the RCO in the last 10 years.

During discussion, board members recognized the importance of the work, while also recognizing that the equity review is ongoing, and they were pleased that RCO has begun acting on recommendations.

Member Shiosaki asked for clarification regarding the Planning for Recreation Access grants, as to whether they are approved by the director and do not come to the board for review.

Director Duffy confirmed that they do not come before the board.

General Public Comment:

Marie Sciacqua commented regarding the City of Federal Way Steel Lake Park Annex. According to Ms. Sciacqua, this property was purchased in 1968 and passed to Federal Way in 1991. However, RCO grants had been utilized to improve this property. The city plans to build a maintenance facility on the property which would create a conversion. Ms. Sciacqua requested RCO advise her on what she and others can do to stop the city from using the annex to build a public works facility.

Myra Barker, Compliance Unit Manager, gave an update on the potential conversion of the Steel Lake Park Annex due to a proposal to construct an operations and maintenance facility. She has met with City staff and explained the conversion approval process. The city has not formally notified RCO of their intent to convert.

Ms. Sciacqua commented that the area is going to start growing by urban measures and the citizens really need the park.

Roxanne Miles, Washington Wildlife and Parks Association (WRPA) member, suggested increasing grant limits in over-subscribed WWRP categories and the Youth Athletic Facilities program as oftentimes applicants apply to each in hopes of getting funding from one of the programs, doubling work for RCO internally and the external applicants. She would like to join the agency in a discussion regarding increasing the Youth Athletic Facilities grant limits.

BREAK: 10:27 – 10:40

Item 4: Addressing Cost Increases Process

Policy Director **Brock Milliern** discussed possible options for addressing cost increases in both the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) and WWRP grant programs. However, the board was not asked to make any policy decisions at the January meeting.

Mr. Milliern explained that ALEA is fairly straightforward like other RCO programs that allow for cost increases and is not guided by a funding formula, like WWRP which has complexities that possibly make cost increases more difficult.

RCO data indicates that there has been an average of five cost increases per year in the last seven years for RCO's recreation programs.

Members inquired if there was a difference in cost increase requests between land acquisition vs development projects? They also asked whether cost increases were not allowed in ALEA due to a prior board decision.

Marguerite Austin responded that project cost increases are associated with development projects. At times, applicants apply with a certain amount of match money and try to do a lot with a small budget, leading to necessary removal of nonessential items from their budget when the need for cost increase arises.

Mr. Milliern continued presenting the policy options for both programs.

ALEA includes:

- 1) allow the RCO director to use unspent funds to approve cost increases of up to 10 percent of the total project cost,
- 2) Leave existing approach in place.

Board members had several questions, including:

- Is ALEA is no longer oversubscribed, and if so, how come
- Is 10 percent sufficient for a cost increase allowance or should it be greater,
- If cost increase requests delay projects; and,
- If WWRP projects can amend the originally identified scopes of work.

Ms. Austin replied that undersubscription is associated with continued work on previous projects due to the pandemic, project permitting being lengthy, water-related project costs exceeding the maximum funding requests, and the requirement that ALEA applicants provide match when other agencies do not require match for similar programs.

Mr. Milliern also explained that it is difficult to predict if a 10 percent increase will be sufficient and that project cost increases can delay project progress. Additionally, project scope can be reduced if it does not cause significant change to project intent.

Chair Willhite asked board members if they thought the approach to cost increases should be standard across all programs.

Member Shiosaki asked that we consider different options for ALEA vs WWRP as ALEA does not have the same complexities as WWRP.

Mr. Milliern then presented options for WWRP:

- 1) Allow the RCO director to use unspent funds to approve cost increases of up to 10 percent of the total project amount for WWRP Habitat Conservation and Outdoor Recreation accounts.
- 2) Modifies option 1 to include a clear priority for how funding would be distributed – first, partially funded projects would receive funding, second, projects asking for cost increases and then third, alternate projects would be funded. Mr. Milliern noted that one drawback of this approach is that it would not spread the board funding as far down the project list.
- 3) Hold back a small percentage of 2023-25 WWRP allocation to deal with potential cost increases.
- 4) Continue with no cost increases in this program.

Members suggested that unused funds should cascade to the next projects and that further exploration of option three be explored with a time constraint consideration.

Christine Mahler from Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition explained her concern with legislative response to Option 3, as withholding 1-2.5 percent could change the funding cutoff on that list. She asked to know what that 1-2.5 percent would look like in the different categories to ensure it would not affect the project positions.

Board members asked additional clarifying questions, but overall agreed that option one should be removed from consideration and directed additional RCO research into the remaining options.

Item 5: Cultural Resources Overview

Sarah Thirtyacre, Cultural Resources Unit Manager and **Sarah Johnson Humphries**, Archaeologist provided the annual overview of the RCO's cultural resources work. This included an overview of the regulatory framework, agency consultation methods, and highlighted recent process improvements.

The regulatory framework included Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1996, the Governor's Executive Order 21-02, and Revised Codes of Washington (RCWs), like 68.50.645, 27.44.055, and 68.60.055.

Executive Order 21-02 requires agencies to consult with the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) and affected tribes on the potential effects that state funded projects may have on cultural resources. A "Federal Nexus" is created by any federal agency issuing a federal permit or license or providing federal funds, and the agency must comply with Section 106. The goal of RCO's Cultural Resource program is to facilitate a comprehensive consultation process that provides a thorough review of projects proposed for funding.

Process improvements included PRISM database enhancements such as mapping GIS integration, an internal review module, grant agreement integrations, reports, and automated letters to sponsors.

During discussion, board members inquired about the data sharing agreement with DAHP and shared data between state agencies.

The cultural resource team explained that there is a signed interagency agreement with DAHP, and it is very specific and protects the data, which is only accessible to archaeological consultants and tribes in the state.

LUNCH 11:51-12:46

Item 6: Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan (SCORP): Approval of 2023 Plan

Ben Donatelle, Natural Resources Policy Specialist summarized the final 2023 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan or SCORP. Mr. Donatelle described the process and timeline of developing the SCORP, including incorporating public comments and suggestions into the final draft, which had been made available on RCO's public website. The comments from the public and the board were used to help clarify and distinguish between goals, which lead to the following results:

1. Developed general sequencing plan for Strategies 1-7,
2. Clarified that programs in Chapter 5 collectively implement the priorities discussed in Chapter 4,
3. Revised Resiliency and Connection to emphasize on the ground outcomes and practical application,
4. Revised Goal 1.1 to address safety, inclusion, and belonging. Revised Goal 1.3 to address availability of a spectrum of opportunities in urban and rural settings,
5. Revised Goal 2.1 to emphasize an "expanding" base of public and private lands,
6. Revised Goal 2.2 by clarifying goal to "provide opportunities",
7. Revised Goal 4.1 by clarifying goal to "adopt and respond to emerging changes

Mr. Donatelle reviewed the Outdoor Action Compass and some changes that aligned with those priorities, including language surrounding tribal involvement in project development. He detailed the Unified Strategy Implementation schedule for the next five years, which will start with Strategy One being the highest priority across the first year.

Overall, these changes did not alter the direction of the SCORP but clarified the statewide priorities and reduced the overlap between goals and strategies. Mr. Donatelle explained the next steps in finalizing and publishing the plan, including retaining a graphic designer to produce the final plan publication. Subject to the board's decision, RCO staff will prepare the final plan report for publication and submit it to the Governor's Office and then the National Park Service for final approval. RCO will publish the final plan online and notify stakeholders. Further details on the changes made can be found in the board memo for the 2023 SCORP linked in the item title above.

Overall, the board agreed that this document is a helpful guide as its data has use to other land-owning agencies, addresses the needs of both Western and Eastern Washington, and aligns with other state agencies recreational priorities.

Public comment

Roxanne Miles, WRPA representative, expressed three key elements 1) The Association appreciates the way the SCORP collates and formalizes information and makes connections and gaps visible moving forward 2) information in the plan reflects that citizens want opportunities close to home and the strategy might not address this enough and 3) there is a large discrepancy in per capita access. There is a challenge in making sure that the denser areas have access to parks. The concept of density per capita did not feel like it was as strongly represented in the plan as WRPA would like to see.

Motion: Approval of Resolution 2023-02
Moved By: Member Windrope
Seconded By: Member Herzog
Decision: **Approved**

Item 7: Farmland Preservation: Buy-Protect-Sell

Kim Sellers, Temporary Senior Outdoor Grants Manager updated the board on a recent clarification from the Attorney General's Office (AGO) that makes it easier for applicants to implement a Buy-Protect-Sell (BPS) option within the Farmland Preservation Category of the Farm and Forest Preservation Account. This involves the Doctrine of Merger of Title. The Merger Doctrine does not apply to easements purchased under the Farmland Preservation category due to two conditions: 1) The Recreation and Conservation Office is a third party to the easements and, 2) Easements include a no-merger clause specifically stating that there shall be no merger of title should the same party own both the underlying land and the easement. BPS is a process that allows an applicant to purchase farmland prior to placing an easement on the property and hold the land until an appropriate farmer is identified and able to purchase the property. The AGO interpretation that the merger Doctrine does not apply means that the rules of the Farmland Preservation category are protected in that grant funds are to be used to purchase an easement on the property that will be retained through the life of the easement. RCO staff will update manuals and application materials for the 2024 grant cycle to reflect this and will work with sponsors to begin implementation of the changes immediately.

Chair Willhite appreciated the presentation. No comment from the board.

Item 8: Farmland Cost Increases

Kim Sellers and **Andrea Hood**, Outdoor Grants Managers presented projected cost increases proposed by The Columbia Land Trust and the Methow Conservancy that seek approval from the board for three projects funded through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), Farmland Preservation Category. The cost increases are needed due to an unforeseen and significant rise in land costs, incidental cost increases, reduced capacity to secure donations and federal match challenges. At their April 2022 meeting, the board approved a resolution that allowed cost increases for the Farmland and Forestland Preservation Category-until 2024.

Member Gardow commented that these are two areas of the state with extremely valuable farmland and a lot of people would love to have homes there. The pressure on these areas is phenomenal and the cost increases are not surprising.

Motion: Approval of Resolution 2023-03

Moved By: Member Gardow
Seconded By: Member Shiosaki
Decision: **Approved**

Public comment

None

Item 9: Department of Fish and Wildlife Policy Waiver Request: Boating Facilities Program Multi-Site Cost Limits Increase

Ashly Arambul, Outdoor Grants Manager presented a request by WDFW that asked the board to waive the maximum per site cost for a multi-site Boating Facilities Program (BFP) project because of escalating construction costs. (Current policy caps costs at \$50,000 per site.) All four projects are in Pierce County and include ADA access to new restrooms. WDFW asked the board to allow them to spend up to \$100,000 per site. Staff considered three options; 1) Asking the board to waive the grant limit for each worksite and allow the project to move forward as proposed, 2) require WDFW to break the proposal into separate grant applications for each worksite and 3) require WDFW to break the proposal into separate applications for each work type. Staff are recommending approval of option one. The intent of the multi-site development policy is to allow for upgrades to these sites that are cost effective.

Member Gardow suggests that the policy be updated in general for these types of facilities. The policy has not been updated in 20 years and she supports increased funding for these types of projects.

Chair Willhite expressed concern over whose burden it is to increase cost capacity for restroom facilities throughout the state and suggested it may be a topic for future discussion.

Motion: Approval of Resolution 2023-04
Moved By: Member Windrope
Seconded By: Member Gardow
Decision: **Approved**

Public comment

None

BREAK 2:20-2:35

Item 10: Compliance Report

Myra Barker, and **Chris Popek**, Compliance Specialists provided an update on the agency's compliance program and a briefing on proposed additions to the Exception to Conversion policy. Staff are asking the board to comment on the proposed additions to the policy before seeking public comment.

Ms. Barker explained that the RCO's compliance program helps to ensure that sponsors and funded projects remain in compliance with their grant agreements. The long-term obligation or compliance period applies to acquisition, development or renovation, and restoration project types. The compliance period varies by grant program and ranges from 10 years to perpetuity. Most of the board's funded projects have a perpetual compliance period.

Staff reported in 2022 there were 345 compliance inspections completed and 29 compliance issues were resolved and closed. In addition, seven allowable use requests and five exceptions to conversion requests, and six conversions were approved.

Chris Popek gave an overview of how staff prepare for a compliance inspection. He shared information on a few of the 2022 site inspections. Mr. Popek explained the number of grants and total board investment at each site and displayed the boundary maps that he created for each project. The boundary map is sent with each inspection report to remind the sponsor of the grant obligation.

Staff briefed the board on a proposed revision and on additions to the Exception to Conversion policy. Those are:

Revise the "Relocation of an Easement" Exception to include related infrastructure.

Add new exceptions to conversion for:

a new easement and/or right-of-way and related infrastructure,

a new easement and/or right-of-way for a culvert replacement or improving fish passage that has minimal impact to the intended purpose and use of the project area,

changes to an existing easement, right-of-way, or encumbrance (and related infrastructure) that would have minimal impact to the intended purpose and use of the project area; and

telecommunications and related infrastructure (such as tower, fencing, equipment, access and related lease or easement) that has minimal impact on the intended purpose and use of the project area and enhances safety for the public.

Staff will seek public comment on the additions to the Exception to Conversion policy and bring a final proposal to the board for approval in April 2022.

Director Duffy commented on Mr. Popek's dedication and hard work in creating grant boundary maps for the sites inspected that identify the area subject to compliance.

Chair Willhite expressed concern with the number of inspections occurring and projects out of compliance. Ms. Barker explained project inspections prior to 2017 have limited data, drawing out the process. She also explained that sponsors can be reluctant to self-report compliance issues, often leaving this up to RCO staff during site visits.

On several occasions, Mr. Willhite suggested annual notifications to project sponsors of their obligations.

Director Duffy asked to put the compliance "problem" into perspective, as 1) over 80 percent of projects are in compliance 2) notices are not always effective and 3) staff has limited capacity as a team of two. She also indicated that she could consult with the agency's PRISM experts to see if automatic notices are a possible function of the system.

Member Shiosaki recognized that agencies have universally struggled to maintain that all their projects are in compliance, simply because they do not have the information from the past to do so. He states that all that data is not readily available to agencies.

Member Gardow asked about project inspective prioritization.

Ms. Barker explained that RCO focuses on acquisitions because they have a perpetual obligation, and they inspect LWCF sites because it can affect the federal funds that are allocated to our state. Additionally, they make special effort to get to a site if there are compliance concerns.

Member Burges asked if RCO partners with the WA Association of Counties for elected officials, who likely do not know about RCO's requirements.

Myra said that this is an area that the agency can look into.

Member Herzog asked if there were things from a policy standpoint that the compliance team has identified that could be eliminated to ease the compliance burden.

Ms. Barker said we are always looking for pathways to compliance and there are different approaches we are discussing with executive management. One of those is a potential corrective action policy. This is in the early stage of internal discussion.

Chair Willhite expressed that compliance will be one of the challenges moving forward in serving underserved communities. It will be our responsibility to inform them of their obligations.

Chair Willhite asked how the compliance team plans to tackle so many site visits in 2023.

Ms. Barker said she and Mr. Popek do not have any extra staff to help yet, but will be looking at strategy, targeting places they have not been and filtering options available to them.

Item 11: State Agency Partner Reports

Governor's Office

John Snyder began by discussing the two bills currently in the legislature concerning electric-assist bike use in places where bicycles are currently allowed. There is concern over bicycle-pedestrian safety, which will be addressed at an upcoming press conference along with other policies in the legislature. Mr. Snyder went on to share that this week the governor visited Hawthorne Elementary School in Seattle to participate in a strider giveaway, followed by a visit to Maritime High School and observed the students' making boats and learning about fish health. The San Juan Islands National Monument, which will be ten years old in March, has finally finished its Resource Management Plan, which includes some changes that the Governor's Office suggested regarding dispersed camping and discharge of firearms that will help protect habitat and cultural resources. Most of the action for RCO items in the legislature moving forward is in the budget. Mr. Snyder's office is working to strike a balance between funding new ideas of the legislature and upholding priorities in the Governor's budget.

Chair Willhite informed Mr. Snyder that the SCORP will be passing the governor's desk soon.

Department of Natural Resources

Member Ohlson-Kiehn summarized the capital, operating, and policy requests made by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) during the legislative session. The capital asks included \$5.8 million for Safe and Sustainable Recreation to improve recreational opportunities on DNR-managed lands (\$2.4 million is funded in the Governor's budget) and \$5 million for Safe and Responsible Use of Natural Areas, to maintain 36 Natural Areas statewide (\$4 million is funded in the Governor's budget).

DNR's operation funds requests include:

- 1) \$9.9 million for the conservation Corps Partnership (funded in Governor's budget at \$4.98 million),
- 2) \$7.8 million to increase DNR's law enforcement, to work with Washington State Parks Commission and WDFW to understand recreation activity impacts on natural resources in response to tribes' requests, to conduct statewide planning, and fund a "First Foods" program (fully funded in Governor's budget),
- 3) \$3.35 million to create a statewide conservation priority map and add staffing support for the Natural Areas program (fully funded in Governor's budget), and
- 4) \$10 million for the 2023-2025 biennium to address deferred maintenance for recreational infrastructure (fully funded in Governor's budget).

Finally, she touched on the Trust Land Transfer policy bill. The Legislature established the Trust Land Transfer Program in 1989 to transfer underperforming trust lands with high ecological value and/or public benefits to other public agencies. The program was never codified. In 2021 the legislature directed the DNR to strengthen and improve transparency of the program. DNR convened work groups and developed a set of recommendations, including using the RCO's evaluation criteria process, to rank a set of parcels proposed for transfer from DNR to other public agencies. DNR submitted this ranked list of parcels to the Legislature with a request legislation bill to codify the program and to fund the transfer of the parcels. More information on these requests can be found on the please visit the [DNR's legislative webpage](#).

Chair Willhite and **Member Ohlson-Kiehn** discussed whether the level of use of DNR land has been sustained post-Covid. The level is higher than before Covid but not at the same level as the spike in use seen during Covid.

State Parks and Recreation Commission

Member Herzog said State Parks found that 25 percent of state parks land came from DNR through initial transfers, and 12 percent of that came through trust land transfers. They have been a huge beneficiary of the Trust Land Transfer process just mentioned by **Member Ohlson-Kiehn**.

Member Herzog went on to say that State Parks is tracking many of the same bills as RCO, including E-bikes and budget. For their operating budget they asked for \$27 million for new programs and in the Governor's budget they received about \$12 million for maintaining park lands, trails, DEI, climate change adaptation, capital planning around tribal relations and cultural resources. These funds will also go towards new park funding for Miller Peninsula and No Child Left Inside (NCLI). On the capital side they asked for \$140 million in new projects. The Governor's budget included \$98 million in new appropriations, including about \$36 million for park development at Nisqually State Park in partnership with the Nisqually Indian Tribe.

He spoke about how State Parks would soon be approving their priorities for the upcoming year, including adding more overnight accommodations, and placing an emphasis on employee development, education, and training. **Member Herzog** announced State Park's recent hires including a new Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Janette Chenn, a new Tribal Affairs Director, Jenna Bowman from the Tulalip Tribe, and their new Human Resources Director, Amber Erdahl from Department of Health.

Member Herzog presented data of the State Parks total attendance between 2018-22, mentioning that camping only represents about five percent of state parks use but half of their revenue. State Parks use has declined but not back to where it was prior to the pandemic. He noted that the figures shown on the graphs did not include December 2022. He made note that 2020 saw a drop due to facilities needing to be closed, while 2021 was the banner year and the height of the usage, and 2022 has seen a drop in attendance, but not as far as pre-pandemic levels. **Member Herzog** finished by sharing the State Park's new logo.

Chair Willhite and **Member Herzog** discussed State Parks continuing to learn about the use impacts across state lands and the need to take a more intentional approach to managing these lands and cooperating with Washington Tribes.

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Member Windrope addressed what WDFW learned from 2020. She acknowledged that state agencies are much more effective when collaborating. WDFW has learned that its lands are being used more by different kinds of users and that more infrastructure is needed in order to maintain them. Additionally, they have learned that how people are using state lands is changing, and the importance of people being able to access lands close to where they live.

WDFW is working with the Governor's Office regarding riparian conservation and is looking at pushing forward the department's number one request which is improving biodiversity in the state. They are continuing to educate legislators about the need to invest in living with wildlife.

Regarding e-bikes, DFW collectively feels that individual wildlife areas need a more tailored approach for how e-bikes would be used given the specifics of place/community/natural resources. The bill was one-size-fits-all and they recommend more conversation to bring in a more tailored approach.

The Lands 2020 Approval Process was approved to pursue funding for 14 potential projects. They completed the 350-acre second phase of the Violet Prairie acquisition in Thurston County and are moving into the final piece which is a total of 1600 acres of prairie in the South Sound.

They received \$15 million for recreation lands maintenance in the last supplemental budget and are putting that to use with more than 20 new full-time employees doing various work.

Chair Willhite and **Member Windrope** discussed the pattern of land use shifting from "regular" use to "non-consumptive" use, and how WDFW is continuing to adapt to the needs of their users and the unique impacts they have on the land.

Chair Willhite confirmed with the three agencies represented that they are working with the tribes as sovereign nations and listening to their input. He then adjourned the meeting by expressing his gratitude to the board for their work in making a difference. The next meeting will be April 25-26, 2023, in person at the Natural Resource Building.

Adjourn

Chair Willhite adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted Willhite". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and "W".

Ted Willhite