



Tour: The tour is available in-person only. The agenda is available below and citizens are expected to follow in their person vehicles only.

Meeting: Please see the information below.

Location In-person: Northwest Maritime Center, 431 Water St, Port Townsend, WA 98368. This public meeting location will allow for the public to provide comment and listen to the meeting as required by the Open Public Meeting Act. This requirement can be waived via HB 1329 if there is a declaration of emergency or if an agency determines that a public meeting cannot safely be held. If an emergency occurs, remote technology will be the primary meeting source.

Location Virtually:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_VGP-dHU-RxiUJOeuyP0gpw

Phone Option: (669) 900-6833 - **Webinar ID:** 832 6479 4475

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

Public Comment: General public comments are encouraged to be submitted in advance of the meeting in written form. Public comment on agenda items is also permitted. If you wish to comment, you may e-mail your request or written comments to Julia.McNamara@rco.wa.gov, board liaison.

COVID Precautions: Masks and hand sanitizer will be made available. The meetings rooms will be set up to allow for as much social distancing as possible and air purifiers will be placed throughout.

Special Accommodations: People with disabilities needing an accommodation to participate in RCO public meetings are invited to contact Leslie Frank by phone (360) 789-7889 or e-mail Leslie.Frank@rco.wa.gov.

TUESDAY OCTOBER 24, 2023

BOARD TOUR: JEFFERSON AND CLALLAM COUNTY

9:00 a.m.	Meet Outside Northwest Maritime Center 431 Water St, Port Townsend, WA 98368	<i>Chair Willhite</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roll Call and Determination of Quorum• Approval of October 24-25 Agenda• Van loading• Depart 9:15 a.m. to next site	
9:35 a.m.	HJ Carroll Park-JUMP Rhody Drive, Chimacum, WA	<i>Jefferson County Parks</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depart at 10:15 a.m.	
11:00 a.m.	Dungeness Recreation Area – Clallam County Parks 554 Voice of America Rd, Sequim, WA 98382	<i>Clallam County</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depart at 11:45 a.m.	
12:05 p.m.	Dungeness River Nature Center – Railroad Bridge Park 1943 W Hendrickson Rd, Sequim, WA 98382	<i>Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eat lunch in Rainshadow Hall• Depart at 1:20 p.m.	
1:50 p.m.	Port Angeles Pump Track 4 th and Race St, Port Angeles, WA 98362	<i>City of Port Angeles</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depart at 2:30 p.m.	
3:35 p.m.	Fort Worden State Park 200 Battery Way, Port Townsend, WA 98368	<i>State Parks and Recreation Commission</i>
5:00 p.m.	RECESS	<i>Chair Willhite</i>

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 25, 2023

OPENING AND MANAGEMENT REPORTS

9:00 a.m.	Call to Order <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roll Call and Determination of Quorum• 2024 Meeting Calendar Approval• Chair Remarks	<i>Chair Willhite</i>
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9:15 a.m.	1. Consent Agenda (<i>Decision</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Board Meeting Minutes<ul style="list-style-type: none">• June 27-28, 2023B. Time Extensions<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City of Bonney Lake, Allan Yorke Park Athletic Field, 18-1326• Department of Natural Resources, Lacamas Priarie Natural Area, 20-1334• King County, Foothills Trail Development 252nd Avenue-Mud Mountain Road, 16-1362• Pierce County, Chambers Creek Canyon Trail Development, 18-1267• South Whidbey Park and Recreation District, South Whidbey's Campground Phase 1, 16-1884• State Parks and Recreation Commission, Inholdings and Adjacent Properties 2016, 16-1974 <p><u>Resolution 2023-25</u></p>	<i>Chair Willhite</i>
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9:20 a.m.	2. Director's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Director's ReportB. Legislative and Policy UpdateC. Grant Management ReportD. Grant Services Report (<i>written only</i>)E. Performance Report (<i>written only</i>)F. Fiscal Report (<i>written only</i>)	<i>Megan Duffy</i> <i>Brock Milliern</i> <i>Marguerite Austin</i> <i>Kyle Guzlas</i> <i>Bart Lynch</i> <i>Mark Jarasitis</i>
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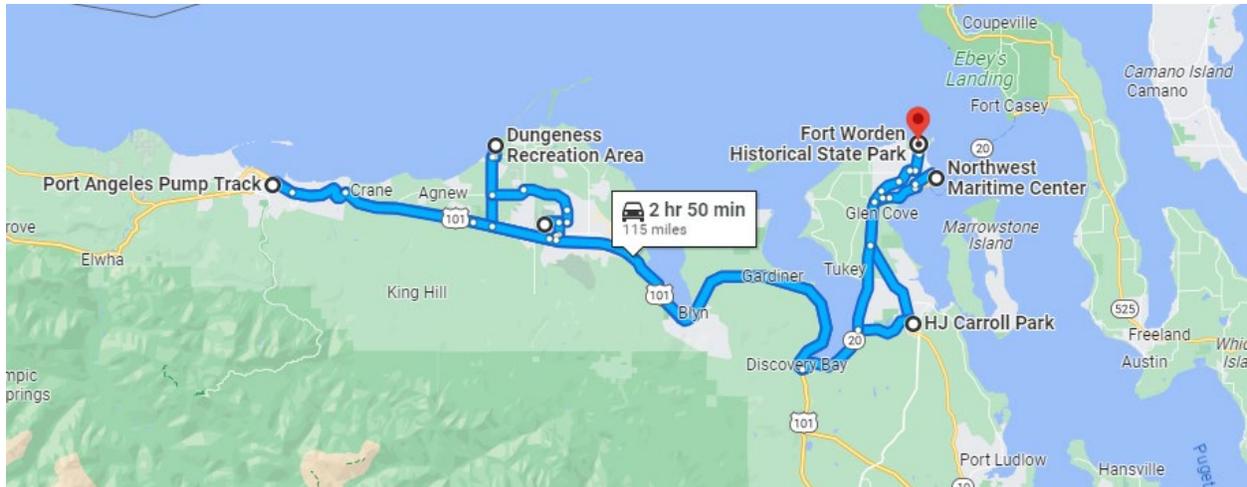
9:50 a.m.	BREAK	
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10:05 a.m.	General Public Comment for issues not identified as agenda items. Please limit comments to three minutes	
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Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Tour Jefferson and Clallam Counties: October 24, 2023

Tour Route

[Northwest Maritime Center to Fort Worden Historical State Park - Google Maps](#)



RCO Staff Guide: Andrea Hood, Outdoor Grant Manager

Schedule

Arrive – Depart Times	Event or Activity	Location	Notes
Morning			
9:00-9:15	Meet to load vehicles and travel to Stop 1	Northwest Maritime Center: 431 Water Street, Port Townsend	Board members, staff, and guests
9:35-10:15	Stop 1: Experience accessible and inclusive recreation at Jefferson Universal Movement Playground (JUMP!)	H.J. Carroll Park: WA-19/Rhody Drive, Port Hadlock-Irondale	Matt Tyler, Jefferson County Parks and Recreation Manager
11:00-11:45	Stop 2: Discuss managing day and overnight use at Clallam County Park adjacent	Dungeness Recreation Area: 554 Voice of	Don Crawford, Clallam County

Arrive – Depart Times	Event or Activity	Location	Notes
	to Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge	America Road, Sequim	Parks, Fair, and Facilities Director
Afternoon			
12:05-12:35	Lunch	Dungeness Nature Center: 1943 West Hendrickson Road, Sequim	
12:35-1:20	Stop 3: View Olympic Discovery Trail over Dungeness River at Railroad Bridge Park; discuss acquisition, development, and restoration	Railroad Bridge Park: 2151 West Hendrickson Road, Sequim	Randy Johnson, Jamestown S’Klallam Habitat Program Manager
1:50-2:30	Stop 4: Experience accessible and inclusive recreation at Port Angeles Pump Track	Erickson Park: St. Francis and East 3 rd Street, Port Angeles	Corey Delikat, Port Angeles Parks and Recreation Director
3:45-4:45	Stop 5: Tour Fort Worden State Park highlights	Fort Worden State Park: 200 Battery Way, Port Townsend	Brian Hageman, Olympic View Area Manager, Washington State Parks
4:45-5:00	Travel back to Northwest Maritime Center	431 Water Street, Port Townsend	Board members and staff

Stop 1: Jefferson Universal Movement Playground (JUMP!)

Matt Tyler - Manager, Jefferson County Parks and Recreation

Sarah Grossman - President, Jefferson Universal Movement Playground advocacy group

PROJECT NUMBER	PROJECT NAME	GRANT PROGRAM ¹	GRANT AMOUNT
20-1210D	Jefferson County Universal Movement Playground (JUMP!)	WWRP Local Parks	\$500,000
96-190D	H.J. Carroll Park	WWRP Local Parks	\$71,844
		TOTAL	\$571,844

Project Description: A Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program grant, awarded in the late 1990s, helped Jefferson County construct a restroom and a septic system at H.J. Carroll Park in Chimacum. Many years later, the board awarded another Local Parks category grant ([20-1210](#)), which Jefferson County and Jefferson Universal Movement Playground (JUMP!) organization’s volunteers used to develop the first phase of the first accessible and inclusive playground in Jefferson County.

The sea creature-themed JUMP! playground included the construction of an accessible play surface, elevated play structure, net climber, merry-go-round, spring rider, musical instruments, disk swing, swing set, an elevated play-mound with roller-slide, driftwood themed fort, serenity spot, two sea creature-themed art installations, signage, and three connected climbing rocks. The project scope also included a decorative gate, perimeter fencing, water fountain, bike fix-it station, and accessible pathways connecting the playground to other amenities in this forty-acre county park.

The community held a JUMP! project grand opening or ribbon cutting on November 18, 2022, with a large public turnout. The total cost for this phase was approximately \$1.26 million.



¹ Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

Stop 2: Dungeness Recreation Area

Don Crawford - Director, Clallam County Parks, Fair, and Facilities

PROJECT NUMBER	PROJECT NAME	GRANT PROGRAM	GRANT AMOUNT
70-023D	Dungeness Recreation Area	Bonds	\$75,000
		TOTAL	\$75,000

Project Description: Clallam County used state bond monies to develop amenities on thirty-five acres of a 216-acre park site. The Dungeness Recreation Area is located seven miles northwest of Sequim on the Strait of Juan de Fuca, west of the base of Dungeness Spit. It has sixty-six campsites and miles of pedestrian and equestrian trails.

The design goals were to enhance and manage day and overnight park use to protect the area's natural beauty. The scope of work included improving roads, parking, and utilities; and developing campsites, trails, restrooms, picnic tables, and signs. This development complemented planned boat launches and a wildlife refuge owned and managed by what was then called the U.S. Bureau of Fish and Wildlife.

Clallam County's Dungeness Recreation Area now serves as the main entrance to the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The 631-acre refuge includes Dungeness Spit, Graveyard Spit, and portions of Dungeness Bay. Dungeness Spit, which is over five miles long, is one of the world's longest sand spits. It is very narrow, with the narrowest portions measuring only fifty feet wide during high tides, causing occasional breaches. The bay teems with marine life, thus providing nutrient-rich tide flats for migrating shorebirds.

Along a 130-foot-high vertical bluff on the northwest corner of the site, the park's hiking and equestrian trails offer beautiful views of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Port Angeles, and the Olympic Mountains. Gradual erosion along the bluff has necessitated fencing during the last four years to keep people away from the bluff's edge.



Stop 3: Railroad Bridge Park

Randy Johnson - Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe Habitat Program Manager

PROJECT NUMBER	PROJECT NAME	GRANT PROGRAM²	GRANT AMOUNT
91-616A	Dungeness Bridge Acquisition	WWRP Trails	\$42,598
91-9807D	Dungeness River Railroad Bridge Park	ALEA	\$28,125
93-9809A	Dungeness River Railroad Bridge Park	ALEA	\$75,000
93-9810D	Dungeness River Railroad Bridge Park	ALEA	\$10,000
96-1174A	Railroad Bridge Park Expansion	WWRP Local Parks	\$60,233
02-1366C	ODT Railroad Bridge Trailhead Parking	WWRP Trails	\$97,128
10-1364D	Railroad Bridge Trestle Extension <i>(merged with 15-1053R)</i>	WWRP Trails	\$52,000
15-1053R	Dungeness River Railroad Reach Floodplain Restoration	PSAR	\$1,530,000
		TOTAL	\$1,895,084

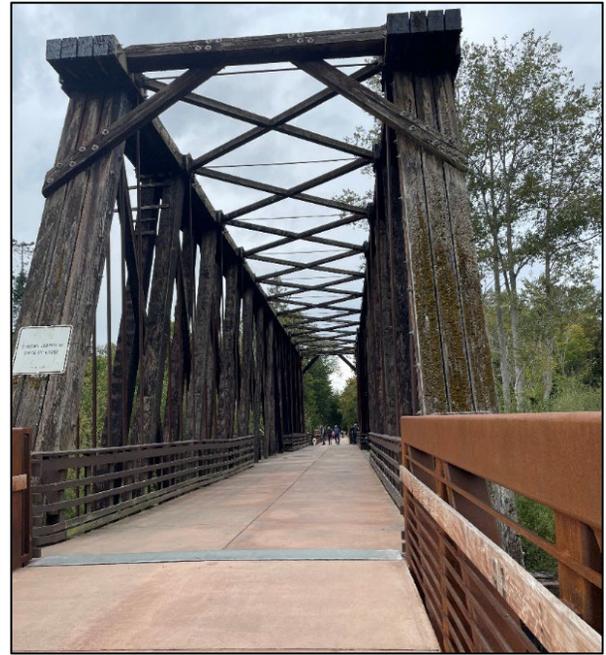
Project Description: Multiple grants have helped the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe acquire, develop, and restore areas at Railroad Bridge Park. The seventy-five-acre park is located along the Dungeness River, the ancestral watershed of the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe.

The initial grants supported the purchase of 7.62 acres on the east and west banks of the Dungeness River and an old railroad trestle bridge. Funds were used for the initial development that included parking, trails, site furnishings, and signs. The Tribe used grants awarded to 1993, 1996, and 2002 projects to purchase 29.48 acres and develop the park by improving access along both sides of the river; by constructing parking areas, non-motorized accessible trails, a picnic facility, interpretive center, and signs; by replanting native riparian vegetation; and by starting the restoration and extension of the historic railroad trestle bridge. The bridge provides access across the Dungeness River for the Olympic Discovery Trail, which is a regional trail that provides a

² ALEA = Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account, PSAR = Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration

nonmotorized route from Port Townsend to the Pacific Ocean. Currently there are about seventy miles of completed trail along the 130-mile route.

Following a flood in 2015 that swept away one of the supports for the trestle bridge, the last two grants awarded for this park funded a significant restoration project. The scope included removal of thirty-six creosote laden pilings that supported the railroad trestle. These were replaced with four eco-friendly piers. Work included removing fill from the river channel and along the floodplain and revegetating the construction corridor with native trees and shrubs. A WWRP Trails category grant supported construction of a 750-foot-long pedestrian bridge that accommodates a wider channel migration zone that is friendlier to salmon and natural river processes.



Stop 4: Port Angeles Pump Track

Corey Delikat – Port Angeles Parks and Recreation Director

PROJECT NUMBER	PROJECT NAME	GRANT PROGRAM	GRANT AMOUNT
20-1237D	Port Angeles Pump Track	Youth Athletic Facilities	\$350,000
		TOTAL	\$350,000

Project Description: The City of Port Angeles used grant funds to develop the largest asphalt pump track in the Pacific Northwest at Erickson Playfield, a busy 4.2-acre park centrally located in Port Angeles. The pump track’s rolling series of looping paths accommodates use by people with varying bicycle, scooter, and skateboard skill levels and includes an ADA-accessible loop designed for manual and electric wheelchairs and other adaptive devices.

Completed July 2022, the Port Angeles Pump Track offers a fun way for kids and adults to build wheeled skills in a contained environment away from traffic. The pump track

complements the park's skate park, tennis courts, playground, picnic shelter, calisthenics area, and restrooms.



Stop 5: Fort Worden State Park

Brian Hageman - Olympic View Area Manager, Fort Worden State Park

PROJECT NUMBER	PROJECT NAME	GRANT PROGRAM ³	GRANT AMOUNT
66-500A	Fort Worden State Park 66	BFP State Bonds	\$11,278 \$95,972
71-505D	Fort Worden State Park 71	BFP State LWCF	\$38,842 \$156,651
80-505D	Fort Worden Interpretive Center	BFP State Bonds	\$28,723
82-515D	Fort Worden – Small Bathhouse	Bonds	\$76,037
82-516D	Fort Worden Breakwater	BFP State Bonds	\$118,814 \$7,544
85-501D	Fort Worden Bank Protection	Bonds LWCF	\$114,000 \$74,000

³ BFP = Boating Facilities Program, LWCF = Land and Water Conservation Fund

PROJECT NUMBER	PROJECT NAME	GRANT PROGRAM³	GRANT AMOUNT
<u>86-502D</u>	Fort Worden Pier Renovation	BFP State LWCF	\$131,777 \$15,000
<u>91-502D</u>	Fort Worden Breakwater	BFP State	\$253,763
<u>16-2462P</u>	Fort Worden State Park Boat Launch	BFP State	\$313,833
<u>20-1586R</u>	Sand Verbena Moth Habitat Restoration	WWRP State Lands Restoration	\$136,741
		TOTAL	\$1,572,975

Project Description: Over one-hundred years ago, Fort Worden was part of the U.S. Army's Coast Artillery Corps. Multiple board grants over the past fifty years have helped Washington State Parks acquire, develop, plan, and restore areas of Fort Worden State Park, which is in Jefferson County on the northern outskirts of Port Townsend.

While initial funding helped acquire the northernmost part of the former Fort Worden Coastal Defense Station, Fort Worden Park today is a 432-acre multi-use park with more than two miles of saltwater shoreline. Funding in 1971 helped construct campsites, picnic sites, a restroom, a boat launch ramp with a protective breakwater, and parking. Subsequent grants were used to renovate an interpretive center and construct a bathhouse. Several projects in the 1980s and early 1990s focused on repairing breakwater structure damage, protecting the bank and shoreline along the park's north beach, and improving the boat launch area.

A 2016 planning project helped design and prepare permit applications for an elevated boat launch to better serve the public, protect habitat, and save maintenance dollars. The Fort Worden boat launch is closed until State Parks secures funding to construct the safer elevated launch.

State Parks is currently using grant funds to restore habitat for the sand-verbena moth, a critically imperiled species found in eleven locations in North America (five in Canada and six in the United States).



**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution 2023-25
October 25, 2023 - Consent Agenda**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the following October 25, 2023 Consent Agenda items are approved:

Resolution 2023-06

A. Board Meeting Minutes

- June 27-28, 2023

B. Time Extensions as seen in Item 1B Attachment A:

- City of Bonney Lake, Allan Yorke Park Athletic Field, 18-1326
- Department of Natural Resources, Lacamas Priarie Natural Area, 20-1334
- King County, Foothills Trail Development 252nd Ave-Mud Mtn Rd; 16-1362
- Pierce County, Chambers Creek Canyon Trail Development, 18-1267
- South Whidbey Park and Recreation District, South Whidbey's Campground Phase 1, 16-1884

Resolution moved by:

Member Herzog

Resolution seconded by:

Member Shiosaki

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Approved Date:

October 25, 2023

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARY MINUTES

Date: June 27, 2023

Place: Retreat – Room 172, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE; Olympia, WA

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Members:

Ted Willhite, Chair	Seattle	Shiloh Burgess	Wenatchee
Trang Lam	Camas	Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn	Designee, Department of Natural Resources
Michael Shiosaki	Seattle	Amy Windrope	Designee, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Kitty Craig	Seattle	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.

Call to Order:

Chair Willhite called the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) meeting to order at 9:00 AM and **Julia McNamara**, Board Liaison, performed roll call, determining quorum. **Member Windrope** was absent at the time of roll call and joined the meeting at 9:02.

Motion: Move to Approve the **June 27-28, 2023**, Agenda

Moved By: Member **Shiosaki**

Seconded by: Member **Ohlson-Kiehn**

Decision: **Approved**

Chair Willhite introduced new member, **Kitty Craig** before inviting members to introduce themselves and share a little about themselves.

Item 1: Carbon and Climate with Department of Ecology

Ben Donatelle, Policy Specialist, briefly reviewed board policies and initiatives regarding climate change from 2014 to present including:

- House Bill (HB) 1181: Improving the state’s response to climate change by updating the state’s planning framework.
- HB 1176: Developing opportunities for service and workforce programs to support climate-ready communities.
- HB 1578: Improving community preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience to wildland fire health and safety impacts in areas of increasing population density, including in the wildland urban interface.
- Senate Bill (SB) 5688: Providing carbon and ecosystem services in the management of public lands.

Adam Eitmann, Director of Governmental Relations at Department of Ecology, briefed the board on recently passed climate bills including the Climate Commitment Act (CCA) (SB 5126), Clean Fuel Standards (HB 1091), Clean Energy Siting (HB 1216), Alternative Jet Fuel (SB 5447), and 2023 introduced bills: Public Lands and Carbon Sequestration (SB 5688), and Ecosystem Service (HB 1789). Additionally, Mr. Eitmann detailed the CCA auction, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Riparian Grant Program and provided an update on the State’s Climate Resilience Plan and other Ecology projects, including the Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan and the Drought Preparedness and Response bill.

Following these briefings, **Chair Willhite** asked if the Columbia Aquifer is accounted for in the Walla Walla Water 2050 plan, noting that the aquifer extends into Oregon. Mr. Eitmann shared that the Columbia Aquifer is accounted for, and the plan aims to ensure that investments made in Washington receive returns in Washington.

Members of the board received clarification on SB 5688, which would allow the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to earn revenue directly from ecosystem service, such as carbon sequestration contracts. The board can expect more conversations about this in the future from additional agencies. Notably, SB 5688 will address the protective changes that carbon sequestration would provide in an area where carbon production is occurring. Members discussed CCA funding structure and potential opportunities. **Member Shiosaki** asked if the economic value is in the land or in the forests, noting the eighty-year cycle of tree harvest, and **Member Ohlson-Kiehn** shared that the value is in the carbon sequestration itself.

Member Windrope asked about HB 1216, Clean Energy Siting and whether sites for clean energy would be on pre-existing sites, noting the large contribution from eastern Washington from windmills and hydro-electric dams, and the importance of keeping climate, habitat, and species protection in mind when thinking about clean energy. Mr. Eitmann answered that this is a broad scale bill that focuses on environmental impact

statements, adding that the redevelopment of previous sites can pose challenges when an original site was built without the support of the community. Member Windrope shared that Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is looking at placing electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at hatcheries and other existing locations.

BREAK: 10:25 AM - 10:35 AM

Item 2: 23-25 Agency Policy Work Plan

Brock Milliern, Policy and Legislative Director, began by sharing some of the board-related accomplishments and highlighted the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding increase, equity review, and the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

Staff are implementing the equity review and SCORP, updating the Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) program, and criteria changes across several programs. New policy efforts include developing a Local Parks Maintenance (LPM) program, assessing appraisal waivers, multi-site eligibility, and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) review for equity. For the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB), there is the creation of an Estuary Shoreline Restoration Program (WSRP) grant manual, riparian funding, and match reform. Additionally, there is a backlog of around seventy policy tweaks.

Members of the board discussed one-time programs, like LPM, and the workload associated with developing a one-time policy. **Member Herzog** suggested creating a one-time use policy template like the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (Parks).

Mr. Milliern would like to provide a policy workplan update more regularly.

Regarding the WWRP review, **Chair Willhite** recommended bringing any statutory changes for review and approval before the board. **Member Shiosaki** sought prioritization of the WWRP and equity reviews.

Prompted by a question from **Member Windrope**, **Director Duffy** shared the new RCO budget RCO will add five positions, two grant managers, a diversity equity and inclusion (DEI) coordinator, a tribal liaison, and a riparian coordinator to the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO). Director Duffy noted additional pressure on fiscal and IT and shared that RCO is in the process of an organizational structure review that has been ongoing over the past year.

Member Lam suggested adding equity review work to topics brought to the board, noting this may help smaller communities understand the work being done.

Member Burgess left at 11:27 a.m.

Members discussed ways to improve cooperation between agencies and organizations, particularly regarding riparian systems. **Director Duffy** noted that there is cooperation between agencies like the State Conservation Commission (SCC) through the SRFB, adding that RCO is at capacity when it comes to additional workload. **Member Ohlson-Kiehn** suggested partnering with universities to help expand cooperation.

Member Ohlson Kiehn asked about technology and the legislative response to the request for trail data. Mr. Milliern believes RCO should house a trail database once funded by the Legislature. Noting over-crowding in parks, **Chair Willhite** suggested using cell phone data along with a trail data for real-time monitoring; however, Mr. Milliern pointed out that cell phone data tends to be after-the-fact and is less helpful in real-time than anticipated.

LUNCH: 11:42 AM - 12:45 PM

Member Burgess returned during the lunch break.

Item 3: Recreation Overview with Department of Natural Resources, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and State Parks

Member Herzog and **Cynthia Wilkerson** provided an overview of the DNR, WDFW, and Parks joint committee working on reporting stewardship needs and managing impacts on state lands. One-time funding of \$1.9 million was provided by the operating budget for an ecological assessment, and the America the Beautiful Grant will pay for some facilitation. Agencies are taking steps to establish a communication structure and scope the overall effort.

Member Ohlson-Kiehn shared the tribes' growing concerns about the impacts of recreation and noted the importance of bringing the board into the conversation to better respond to tribal concerns, which include the expansion of recreation access and recreation interfering with treaty rights and maintaining ecological integrity.

Member Lam asked if landowners adjacent to state lands have been brought into the conversation. Ms. Wilkerson answered that they started with pilot projects to develop shareable methods on a larger scale. These pilots are in the convening and building trust phase. Member Herzog noted that adjacent utility lands will likely share responsibility but need specificity with areas of concern.

Following interactions with tribes, **Member Windrope** wondered about next steps. Ms. Wilkerson shared that it has been a challenge moving to the next step and recognized that these conversations cannot stop with the tribes. Ms. Wilkerson shared that the concept is to work with tribes to identify and examine areas of concern. The goal is to develop a tool through this process to measure impact on resources.

Chair Willhite commented that “partnership” may not be the right word to use when working with tribes as they are separate nations. Separately, he noted this emphasizes the need for more urban recreational opportunities to provide easier access to more populated areas, while limiting the impact on areas experiencing overuse. Lastly, Chair Willhite considered that tribes may be more in agreement on critical habitat and forestry. **Member Ohlson-Kiehn** expressed that they are not yet to the point of having the dialogue to decide if habitat should be the focus.

Member Burgess shared that in Wenatchee collaboration between the city, local tribes, museums, and community events has helped to share the importance of recreation areas, while highlighting societal advances and their impacts on the land and resources.

Member Ohlson-Kiehn noted that DNR will launch their recreational plan at the Tribal Summit and ask the tribes how they want to interact with DNR. DNR would like tribes and stakeholders/partners to work parallel with each other.

Ms. Wilkerson considered where to direct recreational use and whether concentration in a few locations is better or worse than dispersed low-impact areas. **Member Herzog** noted that there is a need for more intensive management.

The board shared their appreciation for this collective approach. In a final note, **Member Craig** suggested adding federal agencies to the conversation.

Item 4: Equity Efforts

Director Megan Duffy provided an overview of the equity efforts made by RCO. These efforts are informed by internal and external guidance from agency operations and programs. Director Duffy highlighted the board’s strategic plan’s pertinent guiding principles, objectives and strategies, and key performance measures, noting the board adopted diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) statement.

RCO is addressing the recommendations made by the Prevention Institute and internal assessment review. Director Duffy noted that the technical assistance recommendations may take some time, but RCO is looking at what can be done with existing resources.

Member Shiosaki asked about establishing performance measures related to hiring and recruitment. Director Duffy shared that there are not targets in mind right now, and RCO uses state human resources.

Member Lam asked about retention of people of color (POC) and working with the office of equity. Director Duffy answered that this is a piece of implementing the recommendations.

Chair Willhite asked whether the recommendations have been incorporated into SCORP. Director Duffy answered that conceptually they are. Chair Willhite suggested requiring a DEI training module for new members.

BREAK: 2:20 PM – 2:36 PM

Item 5: Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Implementation

Ben Donatelle distributed copies of [SCORP](#) to board members and discussed the unified strategy and plan implementation. SCORP is updated every five years with funding from LWCF. Mr. Donatelle shared the diverse efforts that went into creating SCORP, explained the 2022 Survey of Resident Demand, the Outdoor Recreation Experience Survey, the Survey of Recreation Providers, and updates to the Recreation Access Inventory.

Priorities for the SCORP 2023 Action Plan can be found on pages 68 and 69 of the [publication](#). Mr. Donatelle shared the seven implementation strategies that can be found in more detail on pages 70-74, along with an implementation schedule for each strategy. Mr. Donatelle noted that what was learned from SCORP will inform improving and expanding community engagement.

Next steps include grant criteria updates, policy development, maintaining and updating data, and supporting emerging programs.

Item 6: Closing Remarks

Chair Ted Willhite noted being ahead of schedule and decided to recess early. The board was to reconvene at 9:00 am on June 28, 2023, for the business part of the meeting.

RECESS: 3:16 PM

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARY MINUTES

Date: June 28, 2023

Place: Hybrid – Room 172, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE; Olympia, WA and online via Zoom

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Members:

Ted Willhite, Chair	Seattle	Shiloh Burgess	Wenatchee
Trang Lam	Camas	Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn	Designee, Department of Natural Resources
Michael Shiosaki	Seattle	Amy Windrope	Designee, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Kitty Craig	Seattle	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.

Call to Order:

Chair Willhite called the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) meeting to back to order at 9:00 AM and **Julia McNamara**, Board Liaison, performed roll call, determining quorum. **Member Ohlson-Kiehn** was excused for the beginning of the meeting and was expected to join later. **Member Windrope** was absent at the time of roll call.

Item 7: Consent Agenda

Member Windrope arrived at 9:03 a.m.

Chair Willhite summarized the board retreat held the day before.

Member Ohlson-Kiehn arrived at 9:08 a.m.

Chair Willhite made note that the consent agenda includes the April 25, 2023, meeting minutes, time extensions for seven projects, and two cost increases.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2023-15**

Moved By: Member **Herzog**

Seconded by: Member **Lam**

Decision: **Approved**

Item 8: Director's Report

Director's Report

Director Megan Duffy, RCO Director, highlighted non-board programs that were funded through the recent legislative session including the Planning for Recreation Access (PRA) Program. The Legislature approved an additional \$4.7 million for this program. Combined with the original funding, RCO has funded fifty-four of the ninety-nine applications. The Community Forest Program (CFP) received \$7.5 million, which would preserve 2,897 acres of forests. The No Child Left Inside (NCLI) Program was awarded \$7 million, which provides funds for ninety-two out of one hundred and seventy-four applications. Applications for the Outdoor Learning Grants are due July 15. Director Duffy shared that the Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities (COAF) program will hold a public comment period beginning in mid-July, and the Local Parks Maintenance (LPM) Program public comment period had just ended. The State Organization for Boating Access is hosting a conference August 28-31 in Tacoma.

Director Duffy announced that RCO is in the process of hiring two grant managers, one for the Recreation team and one for the Grant Services team.

Lastly, Director Duffy shared that she attended the ribbon cutting of the Edmonds Civic Center Playground that used \$2.35 million in Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF), and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Local Parks funding.

Chair Willhite mentioned that the time extensions approved in the consent agenda are not automatic and noted that during the retreat some members expressed concern over the length of some of the extensions. **Member Shiosaki** was concerned with projects requesting both time extensions and additional funds, particularly those projects with older grant awards. He asked what was causing delays in project implementation and wanted to emphasize the importance of using grant funding in a timely manner.

Marguerite Austin, Section Manager, explained many time extensions requests are associated with delays due to COVID-19 such as permitting delays, contractor availability, supply chain issues, and capacity. **Director Duffy** noted that staff works closely with sponsors when they are asking for time extensions to understand the need and problem solve where they can.

General Public Comment

None.

Item 9: Grant Criteria Changes

Leah Dobey and **Ben Donatelle**, Policy Specialists, provided an overview of potential grant criteria changes. Ms. Dobey provided a brief summary of their April presentation, noting that making changes to the evaluation criteria is directly in line with goal one in Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) to improve meaningful access for everyone in Washington.

One finding of the equity review showed that RCO grants skew toward places with pre-existing green space.

Mr. Donatelle reminded the board that potential changes to evaluation criteria are under development for select programs including WWRP Local Parks, WWRP Water Access, WWRP Trails, LWCF, Aquatic Land Enhancement Account (ALEA), and YAF. These programs are the most subscribed to by cities and counties for building foundational recreation opportunities. Potential changes will focus on the following criteria: Need, Need Satisfaction, Project Support, and Expansion and Renovation. Mr. Donatelle noted that the Immediacy of Threat criteria, discussed in April, was eliminated as it is a listed criterion in the WWRP statute and will be considered in a later phase.

Mr. Donatelle described two anonymized spray pad case studies from the WWRP Local Parks category to highlight the criteria under review, illustrate the variety within applicant responses to those evaluation questions and in how evaluators interpret the responses. One case study, identified as Project A, was located in an urban western Washington city, and the other, identified as Project B, was located in a rural eastern Washington city. Though the two projects were very similar in scope and project elements, the scoring outcomes were different, illustrating the need to assess existing criteria.

Ms. Dobey explained the *Need* criteria, which asks applicants to describe:

- the need for the new or improved facilities;
- the availability of recreation within the service area;
- whether there is connection with local planning; and,
- Whether there is a connection to underserved population and certain health measures.

Mr. Donatelle shared the potential changes to the Need criteria, noting that the weight of the criteria varies greatly across programs.

- 1) Reconsider the criterion's relative weight and scoring method.
- 2) Provide clear direction on establishing and characterizing the project's need.

- 3) Split criteria components into objective and subjective parts.
- 4) Integrate objective metrics from the Application Data Tool into staff scored criteria.

Member Shiosaki asked if population plays a role in need. Mr. Donatelle noted there is another criterion that addresses population more directly, but applicants may choose to discuss population as part of the need discussion.

Mr. Donatelle shared that staff is looking at simplifying the application data tool process after feedback from users and recommendations from the equity review.

Ms. Dobe explained the current Need Satisfaction related criteria, including project scope, design, and suitability. Notably, there is a broad range of expertise needed by the advisory committee members for scoring these criteria.

Mr. Donatelle shared the potential changes for Need Satisfaction:

- 1) Reward projects with local input as part of design.
- 2) Create consistency in how need satisfaction/design elements are scored across programs.
- 3) Explore how technical criteria are scored.

Ms. Dobe discussed the current Project Support criteria, which are similar across programs and ask applicants how they have informed their communities of the project and what kind of support they have received. Ms. Dobe noted that a high level of support can mean different things in different communities as the types of organizations and resources are not consistent.

Potential changes to Project Support include:

- 1) Reconsider the criterion's relative weight.
- 2) Reward varied methods for informing public and gaining input.
- 3) Reward support in the context of the local community.
- 4) Consider engagement of demographic/socioeconomic groups described in the service area.

Ms. Dobe explained that the current Expansion and Renovation criteria is specific to WWRP Local Parks and WWRP Water Access and asks whether the project is expanding or renovating an existing site and whether there is a cost benefit to investing in existing sites. This concept was a priority from the 2002 and 2008 SCORPs.

Mr. Donatelle suggested one approach is to eliminate this criterion to level the playing field for places that do not have existing features.

Regarding the case studies, Project A scored high, ranking within the top ten percent of projects, while project B scored in the middle fifty percent of projects. Though many aspects of these projects were similar, the differences illustrate the potential impact of the criteria on the outcomes for communities with fewer resources and capacity to respond.

Mr. Donatelle explained that a technical workgroup has been formed and will provide feedback on potential changes to the criteria through July, before the public comment period in August. Final language will be presented to the board in October for a decision, followed by implementation in November. Mr. Donatelle sought one or two board members to join the technical workgroup. Requesting direction, Ms. Dobby asked the board members whether they see SCORP priorities reflected in the potential changes and how they would like to engage with the process.

Members agreed that these were the correct criteria to continue exploring making changes to and directed staff to proceed with public comment and present changes in October. **Member Lam** volunteered to be a part of the working group as a member of the board.

Member Herzog pointed out the difference in objective and subjective criteria, noting that staff scored questions could introduce more objectivity.

Member Burgess asked about those recommendations that would likely require statutory changes. Director Duffy responded that potential statutory changes will be considered in the future once there is a better understanding of how initial recommendation implementation impacts the programs.

Member Lam asked if there is a template for presentations. Ms. Dobby noted that a template was a recommendation of the equity review and something that is being considered, but not as part of this project.

BREAK: 10:46 AM – 11:00 AM

Item 10: Youth Athletic Facilities Program Review Changes

Brock Milliern provided an overview of the April meeting discussion by summarizing the [YAF program](#) and sharing strengths and challenges with the current program policies. YAF has a strong history of being supported by the Legislature and a fairly low barrier to access as it does not require an eligible plan; however, challenges of YAF include low grant limits, acquisition-only projects are ineligible, and low applications in the small grant category. Mr. Milliern and Mr. Donatelle shared four areas of the YAF policy for discussion and direction:

- 1) Land acquisition projects – currently ineligible. Mr. Milliern shared concern around the potential of grant-funded properties being used for non-eligible projects further down the line, and how acquisition-only projects will compete against other projects.
- 2) Increase grant limits – discussions with local parks staff indicate that general cost increases have impacted building basic projects. Mr. Milliern suggested increasing the small grant limit to \$150,000 to \$300,000 and the large grant limit to around \$750,000 to \$2.5 million.
- 3) Sliding scale for grants – Mr. Donatelle suggested an approach to support projects submitted by jurisdictions eligible for match reduction. This approach would allow for the overall maximum grant limit to increase as match obligation decreases. This would help the applicant develop a complete project while allowing them to take full advantage of their eligible match reduction.
- 4) Limit matching grants – Mr. Donatelle raised the concept of creating limitations around the ability for large multiple-sport complexes to match multiple programs.

After receiving board direction, staff will conduct a public review of these alternatives in July, and final changes will be presented to the board in October for decision.

During discussion board members shared concern with compliance issues for acquisition projects, larger communities outcompeting smaller with increased grant limits, and combining the decrease in match with increased project funding.

Chair Willhite directed staff to collect public comment on all four policy proposals and present final recommendations in October for a decision.

LUNCH: 11:43 PM – 1:00 PM

Item 11: Compliance Corrective Action Policy Proposal

Myra Barker, Compliance Unit Manager, provided an overview of RCO's existing [compliance policies](#), noting that there is not currently a policy that addresses a compliance issue that can be corrected by removing or reversing the inconsistent or incompatible use. Ms. Barker proposed a corrective action policy, which would provide flexibility, incentive, and equity in resolving a compliance issue. It also offers the option for a sponsor to remove or reverse the action that created the issue and return the project area to its intended purpose and function. This policy could be applied to unresolved compliance issues such as encroachment, ineligible structures, undeveloped sites, closed sites, or sites with no public access.

The corrective action policy proposal states: *A sponsor and RCO may mutually agree on a corrective action plan to address a period of non-compliance due to an unresolved compliance issue. The corrective action plan identifies the required actions, steps, and specific timeframe for completion. Failure to complete the corrective action to resolve the compliance issue will result in conversion. The Director may approve an extension.*

Policy criteria may include the location of non-compliant use within the grant boundary, timeframe of the non-compliant use, no conveyance of a property right, and whether the correction can be completed in less than a year are being considered.

Chair Willhite suggested that Ms. Barker be diligent in reviewing the criteria so that this policy is not used as a means or interpreted as a right for continuing non-compliance.

Director Duffy noted that this policy is meant to be a tool to bring appropriate projects into compliance more easily and quickly than the conversion process.

Member Ohlson-Kiehn liked the idea of providing more tools for better compliance through a policy like this. Additionally, where the policy says, *"A sponsor and RCO may mutually agree on a corrective plan..."* Member Ohlson-Kiehn suggested using the phrase *"may mutually develop a corrective plan for RCO's approval"* to make it clear who makes the final decision.

Member Burgess asked about the time frame and whether time extensions under this policy would come before the board, and Ms. Barker answered that extensions are currently at the director's discretion and the goal is to agree upon a timeframe that the sponsor could achieve.

Ms. Barker will continue to develop this policy to present at a future meeting.

Item 12: Bellingham Frank Geri Non-Conforming Use Update

Myra Barker reminded the board of their approved extension to the City of Bellingham for the nonconforming use at the Frank Geri Field Four through June 2024 and provided an update. Ms. Barker shared the [exception to conversion policy](#) for non-conforming use.

Since the extension was approved in October, the city has awarded a contract for site planning, design, permitting, and related services for one or more tiny house sites, and a site has been selected. The city is not anticipating any issues with meeting the deadline of June 30, 2024, and expects to complete relocation with time to clean up the parking lot and restore it to its intended use.

Item 13: Cost Increases

Brock Milliern reminded the board that last July, as they were setting the budget requests, the board discussed how much costs were increasing on some projects and requested staff develop options on how best to address cost increases. During the April meeting, the board approved cost increases in the ALEA program and discussed five options for WWRP Outdoor Recreation and Habitat Conservation accounts. Mr. Milliern provided a brief recap of the options discussed in April before sharing the staff recommended Option Seven:

By declaration of the board during exceptional economic times, allow the director to approve ten percent cost increases with priority to partially funded projects, then cost increases, and then alternatives.

Staff recommends this option because it responds to concerns expressed by the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition (WWRC), preserves existing policy work and direction, keeps the current policy in place unless the board takes further action, and allows the board to act quickly in the face of a future financial crisis.

Motion: Move to Approve Resolution 2023-16 Option Seven

Moved By: Member **Burgess**

Seconded by: Member **Ohlson-Kiehn**

Decision: **Approved**

Public Comment

None.

Item 14: Approve Grant Awards for the 2023-2025 Biennium

Marguerite Austin introduced Item 14 and explained that staff would be requesting approval of final ranked lists and grant awards for the board's grant programs. The 2023-2025 biennial budget provides both state and federal funds. These funds will primarily be used to acquire, develop, restore, and maintain outdoor recreation sites, habitat conservation areas, and working lands. Ms. Austin described the grant application process which began in 2021 and noted that board policies that had been suspended or modified for the previous grant cycle due to COVID-19, were reinstated for this grant round. These policies included match requirements, match reduction and the matching share evaluation criterion. Additionally, the board had approved cost increase policies for farms and forests since the last grant round.

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)

DeAnn Beck, Senior Outdoor Grant Manager, provided an overview of the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account ([ALEA](#)) program for the 2022 grant cycle. The ten applications submitted this grant round, could all be funded with the approved \$5,858,000 from the Legislature for this biennium. Ms. Beck requested approval of the final ranked list and grant awards for this program.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2023-17**

Moved By: Member **Shiosaki**

Seconded by: Member **Herzog**

Decision: **Approved**

Public Comment

None.

Boating Facilities Program (BFP)

Karl Jacobs, Senior Outdoor Grant Manager, provided an overview of the Boating Facilities Program ([BFP](#)). The Legislature approved \$13.8 million for this program this biennium, which is split equally between state agency and local agency applications. Mr. Jacobs requested approval of the final ranked lists for this program and asked the board to award grants as depicted in the funding tables.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2023-18**

Moved By: Member **Lam**

Seconded by: Member **Ohlson-Kiehn**

Decision: **Approved**

Public Comment

None.

Firearms and Archery Range Recreation (FARR)

Karl Jacobs provided a brief background on the Firearms and Archery Range Recreation ([FARR](#)) program and highlighted the six projects submitted this year. The Legislature provided \$840,000 for FARR projects for this biennium. Mr. Jacobs requested approval of the final ranked list and full funding for all of the projects.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2023-19**

Moved By: Member **Ohlson-Kiehn**

Seconded by: Member **Burgess**

Decision: **Approved**

Public Comment

None.

Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA)

Marguerite Austin provided an overview of the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) program for both the [Education and Enforcement](#) and [Trails](#) categories. This biennium, the Legislature approved \$12,063,000 in gas tax dollars. Ms. Austin highlighted that while match is not required for the NOVA program, ninety-two out of the ninety-six applications had match.

Ms. Austin noted a mistake in the briefing materials and asked to amend the resolution to read: *Table 1 – Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, 2023-2025; as amended to show Ferry County, Eagle Track Raceway Improvement (22-1960) as an Alternate on Table 1 for the Off-Road Vehicle category.*

Staff recommended board approval of the final ranked lists and grant awards for the four categories within this program with the above amendment.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2023-20**

Moved By: Member **Herzog**

Seconded by: Member **Burgess**

Decision: **Approved as amended**

Public Comment

None.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

Karl Jacobs provided an overview of the federal Recreational Trails Program ([RTP](#)) noting that while this program only requires twenty percent match, applicants consistently bring more than the minimum. The Legislature approved spending authority of up to \$5 million for this biennium and staff recommended board approval of the final ranked lists and grant awards as depicted in the funding tables.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2023-21**

Moved By: Member **Craig**

Seconded by: Member **Shiosaki**

Decision: **Approved**

Public Comment

None.

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)

Marguerite Austin provided an overview of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), which includes twelve grant categories: [Critical Habitat](#), [Natural Areas](#), [Riparian Protection](#), [State Land Restoration and Enhancement](#), [Urban Wildlife Habitat](#), [Farmland Preservation](#), [Forestland Preservation](#), [Local Parks](#), [State Lands Development and Renovation](#), [State Parks](#), [Trails](#), and [Water Access](#).

This grant cycle there were 165 projects requesting \$154,053,993. For this biennium, the Legislature approved \$120 million for WWRP. Ms. Austin noted that there are six categories within WWRP that are undersubscribed and six that are oversubscribed. The staff recommended lists will fully fund ninety-four projects and partially fund eight projects and includes a list of alternates.

Motion: Move to Approve Resolution 2023-22

Moved By: Member **Herzog**

Seconded by: Member **Craig**

Decision: **Approved**

Public Comment

None.

Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)

DeAnn Beck provided an overview of the Youth Athletic Facilities ([YAF](#)) program. The Legislature provided \$10,440,000 for this biennium. Board policy is to allocate ten percent of the funds to Small Grant category projects and ninety percent to Large Grant category projects. Ms. Beck noted that this year Small projects requested only \$139,500, or 1.3 percent of the available funds. Per board policy, all remaining funds are allocated to projects in the YAF Large category, resulting in full funding for both lists. Staff recommended approving the final ranked list and grant awards for YAF.

Motion: Move to Approve Resolution 2023-23

Moved By: Member **Ohlson-Kiehn**

Seconded by: Member **Lam**

Decision: **Approved**

Public Comment

None.

Chair Willhite made note that in approving these lists, two hundred sixty-eight projects have been funded for a total of \$158.8 million.

BREAK: 2:27 PM – 2:45 PM

Item 15: 2022-2023 Grant Cycle Survey Results

Tessa Cencula, Volunteer and Grants Process Coordinator, provided a briefing of the applicant and advisory committee surveys from the 2022-2023 grant cycle.

Ms. Cencula described that to make the advisory committee survey quicker and easier to respond to, the survey was restructured into two shorter separate surveys, a technical review survey and an evaluation survey. A summary of the surveys, which includes questions, comments, and conclusions, can be found in the [materials](#) for this meeting.

The results of the surveys are used at the end of each round to improve the next grant cycle. Ms. Cencula described the improvements made following the 2020-2021 surveys, and the status of the improvements, which are detailed in the [materials](#). Staff will continue incorporating these improvements for the 2024 grant round. Additionally, the 2022-2023 surveys prompted several new action items. Based on the applicant survey, staff plans to:

- Implement near-term Equity Report priority actions prior to the 2024 and 2026 grant cycles, which includes the policy team's work to update and revise key evaluation criteria.
- Consider ways to streamline the application process. Staff is piloting a simplified pre-application process in PRISM for the Community Outdoor Athletics Facilities program, which will be assessed for use in other programs.
- Consider how best to provide increased technical assistance to applicants after the results are posted by offering additional and more consistent contact with outdoor grants managers and exploring PRISM enhancements.
- Update Advisory Committee charters to achieve improved social, geographic, and sectoral representation among committee participants.
- Offer additional applicant workshops for first-time applicants for specific grant programs.
- Continue remote virtual review and evaluation meetings, which makes applying more accessible to potential applicants around the state.

Action items based on the advisory committee survey include:

- Provide a more detailed overview of process and expectations as early as possible and offer a sample scoring experience to help advisors understand expectations.
- Create more space for advisors to connect in the virtual environment and consider in-person networking opportunities for select committees.
- Explore process changes to better prepare first-time committee members by offering more guidance and opportunities for discussion of scoring criteria.
- Update conflict of interest and ethics policy for committee members, which will include providing and requiring bias awareness training prior to grant review meetings.

Immediate next steps for staff will be to follow-up with respondents of both the applicant and advisory committee surveys to explain how their feedback is being incorporated. Ms. Cencula noted that this follow-up, which is important in letting respondents know that their feedback is valuable and has been incorporated into future plans, has not always been done. Improvements to the survey process for the 2024 grant cycle will continue as well.

Chair Willhite would like to see tribal outreach reflected in the priorities of the next cycle. **Kyle Guzlas**, Grants Service Section Manager, noted that by building more relationships around the state, the number of tribal applicants will continue to increase, a notable trend that has been occurring over the last two to three grant cycles. Additionally, in the list of applicant survey action items, Chair Willhite wanted “sectoral” changed to “tribal nations” and would like diversity training for board members to be made a priority.

Addressing the action items, **Member Craig** wondered what staff capacity was for the additional workload created. Mr. Guzlas shared that, based on feedback, staff are meeting the need and recognized the existing large workload of grant managers. **Director Duffy** added that RCO is analyzing how to best address capacity issues in light of new and growing responsibilities.

Item 16: Grant Review and Evaluation Procedures

Kyle Guzlas presented the board with a request to approve the continuation of the virtual presentation process for board grant programs. Mr. Guzlas shared [Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\) 286-13-020](#) which requires the board to adopt a competitive evaluation process to guide it in allocating funds to grant applicants, and these processes are described in each grant’s program manual. The board has adopted two evaluation processes, written and presentation, for its programs.

Written application materials are available to the advisory committee using the PRISM review and evaluation module.

The presentation process involves an applicant attending an evaluation meeting to provide a presentation of their project while addressing the board adopted evaluation criteria. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, presentations were held only in-person, and a virtual process was adopted in 2020, highlighting certain inequities of the original in-person process.

As outlined in the [materials](#), the equity review recommended specific operational strategies:

- Make remote presentations (utilizing online meeting platforms) a permanent option for applicants.
- Implement strategies that help improve social, geographic, and sectoral representation within advisory committees.
- Develop a recruitment strategy to improve representation within advisory committees.
- Continue to offer advisory committee member stipends for community participants and nonprofit/tribal representatives.

These strategies work to reduce barriers to historically underserved populations' participation in RCO grant programs, as well as reduce barriers for advisory committee participation.

Staff recommends approving the continuation of virtual presentation review and evaluation meetings and to delegate the authority of this procedural action to the RCO director.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2023-24**

Moved By: Member **Shiosaki**

Seconded by: Member **Burgess**

Decision: **Approved**

Public Comment

None.

Item 17: State Agency Partner Reports

Governor's Office

Jon Snyder, Policy Specialist, shared that Governor Inslee was honored by the Rails to Trails Conservancy with the 2023 Rail Champion Award for his work on the Olympic Discovery Trail and the Palouse to Cascades Trail, which are both part of the Great American Rail Trail.

On July 19, a report on outdoor education will be discussed on TVW. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), RCO, and State Parks will be participating in this opportunity for agencies to share their work. RCO's Kyle Guzlas will be in attendance to discuss NCLI and other outdoor education grants.

Mr. Snyder will be sharing the newly released SCORP with colleagues in other states who are working on their own versions.

On June 27, Mr. Snyder attended the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) Tribal Summit in Tacoma. The topic of the summit was energy siting in sacred places, where attendees heard the perspective from tribes and their historical preservation officers.

Chair Willhite asked Mr. Snyder to convey to the governor the board's appreciation for leadership and share with him the amount of funds allocated during this meeting.

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Member Amy Windrope reported that Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) received \$24 million for a biodiversity package that will fund three main areas: habitat conservation, species conservation, and policy and outreach. Member Windrope will make the plan available to the board.

Member Windrope recognized the career of Paul Dahmer who is retiring after twenty-seven years as WDFW's assistant lands division manager. Darric Lowery will fill this role. Travis Weller will be the acquisition grants manager, which is a new position at WDFW.

The Lands 2020 Proposal Cycle, an annual internal process, will go out for public comment in November. Additionally, WDFW has submitted five proposals to the America the Beautiful Challenge and has been invited to submit two more proposals.

State Parks and Recreation Commission

Member Peter Herzog shared the State Parks Biennial Budget, which has \$254 million in the operating budget and \$100 million in capital budget. Currently, State Parks is

sixty-nine percent self-funded through the Discover Pass, camping fees, and other fees. Department of Licensing Donations account for eleven percent of the budget for State Parks.

Member Herzog highlighted the *Suciasuarus rex* being designated as Washington's official state dinosaur through HB 1020.

There was a recent ribbon cutting for the Willapa Hills Trail, State Route Six crossing near Chehalis. This has been a considerable project that placed a steel truss bridge in three sections to cross the highway. Member Herzog shared that State Park manages 466 miles of rail trails across five different trails, 4.46 miles of rail tunnel, and 6.25 miles of rail bridges.

Member Herzog reminded the board that the State Organization for Boating Access (SOBA) will take place in Tacoma August 28 -31 and is sponsored by State Parks, RCO, and WDFW. State Parks is Washington's recreational safety administrator and manages all the contracts with local marine patrols, provides safety and education trainings for local jurisdictions, and manages accident reporting and sewage pump out stations.

Department of Natural Resources

Member Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn shared that decision packages submitted by Department of Natural Resources (DNR) resulted in \$10 million of funding for this biennium for critical maintenance funding, largely due to the advocacy from partners.

DNR received half of the requested funding for Protect Public Lands and Tribal Rights, which includes more funding for law enforcement. DNR received funding for the interagency work with tribes to address recreational impacts and the Statewide Recreation Planning Process, which will launch at the Tribal Summit, as well as for a first foods program.

Member Ohlson-Kiehn noted that DNR has been scaling back on requests for capital funding in order to focus more on maintenance. DNR requested \$5.8 million from the Legislature and received \$2.9 million, highlighting the continued need for the WWRP state lands development grant for renovations and expansion. Additionally, Member Ohlson-Kiehn highlighted the backlogs created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff have worked to identify creative solutions to clear these backlogs.

DNR has a conservation program that manages over 169,000 acres of natural resource conservation areas and natural area preserves. DNR submitted a decision package to identify essential conservation areas across the state utilizing heritage data. DNR

received \$5.1 million in capital funding for preserving and accessing natural areas as well as \$120,000 for one-time use of a stewardship account.

Member Craig asked Member Ohlson-Kiehn to expand on the first foods program. Member Ohlson-Kiehn explained that over the pandemic, there was a large percentage of tribal populations who experienced difficulty accessing first foods and highlighted the need for communities' ability to access first foods. DNR tribal staff will work with tribes where first foods can be grown and establish pilot projects.

ADJOURN: 3:59 PM

The next meeting will be a travel meeting on October 24 and 25, 2023 in Port Townsend, Washington. The meeting day will be in-person at Northwest Maritime Center, 431 Water Street, Port Townsend, Washington 98368 and available virtually on Zoom and TVW. Please note, one day of the meeting will be a tour and available in-person only. The agenda is currently in development.

Approved by:

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Decision Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: October 24-25, 2023

Title: Time Extension Requests

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 extensions 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: 2023-25 (Consent Agenda)

Purpose of Resolution: Approve the requested time extensions.

Background

Each grant [program policy manual](#) outlines the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's (board) adopted policy for progress on active funded projects. The key elements of this policy are the sponsor's responsibility to complete a funded project promptly and meet the project milestones outlined in the grant agreement. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) director may give an applicant up to four years (from the award date) to complete a project. Extensions beyond four years require board action.

RCO received requests for time extensions for the projects listed in Attachment A. This document summarizes the circumstances for the requested extensions and the expected date of project completion.

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,
- Status of activities within the grant, and
- Sponsor's progress on this and other funded projects.

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of these requests 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 requests for the projects listed in Attachment A.

Attachments

A. Time Extension Requests for Board Approval

Time Extension Requests for Board Approval

City of Bonney Lake

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request
18-1326 Development	Allan Yorke Park Athletic Fields with Lighting	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large Grants	\$35,000 (10%)	10/31/2023	12/31/2023

Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request

The City of Bonney Lake received a grant to build a parking lot and restroom and to develop a new multi-use athletic field with synthetic turf and lighting at Allan Yorke Park.

There has been a delay in receiving the last site furnishings, including ten picnic tables, eight trash receptacles, and a bicycle rack. The contractor has ordered the furnishings, which are expected to be delivered during the first week of October. Installation can be completed within two weeks of arrival.

Bonney Lake is requesting a two-month time extension to install the remaining site furnishings. After installation, final billing and closeout will be completed by December 31, 2023.

Department of Natural Resources

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request
20-1334 Acquisition	Lacamas Prairie Natural Area 2020	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Natural Areas	\$8,319,452 (96%)	12/31/2023	10/31/2024

Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received a grant to acquire 218 acres of property for inclusion in the Lacamas Prairie Natural Area. This is part of a larger 620-acre property, which consists of thirty-six percent of the preserve design and is held by a sole landowner who runs a large dairy operation.

DNR initially pursued a phased purchase of the property (based on the preference of the original landowner) by securing WWRP Natural Areas funds under three grants: 87 acres ([16-1419](#)), 315 acres ([18-1520](#)), and 218 acres ([20-1334](#)). After securing the three grants, there was a change in ownership that impacted negotiations, which have been extensive and complex, because it involves a boundary line adjustment, access easements, and resolution of interim uses.

DNR and the current landowner agreed to move forward with a single 620-acre sale, which is more desirable ecologically and for management purposes. RCO combined \$5,728,927 in funds from the older 2016 and 2018 grants into the 2020 grant agreement to facilitate a single purchase.

DNR is requesting a ten-month extension to secure an updated appraisal, close on the property (subject to a county-required boundary line adjustment), and complete post-closing work including noxious weed control with a best treatment window in the fall months.

King County

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request
16-1362 Development	Foothills Trail Development 252nd Avenue - Mud Mountain Road	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails	\$1,503,025 (54%)	12/31/2023	12/31/2024

Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request

King County received grant funds to build a 0.9-mile nonmotorized multi-use trail in Enumclaw that will complete the 20-mile Foothills Trail connecting King and Pierce Counties. The project includes design and construction of trail along a former rail corridor and renovation of a historic bridge over Boise Creek. The northern portion of this trail section (252nd Ave to Boise Creek Bridge) was completed in 2021.

King County is requesting a twelve-month extension to complete construction of the trail. The southern portion of this trail section (Boise Creek Bridge to Mud Mountain Road) was delayed due to cultural resources findings in the project area necessitating redesign and additional permitting. King County has worked through these changes and is now at 100 percent design. King County is prepared to go out to bid this fall, with construction starting in January 2024 and lasting approximately seven months.

Pierce County Parks and Recreation

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request
18-1267 Development	Chambers Creek Canyon Trail Development	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails	\$609,506 (86%)	01/31/2024	12/31/2024

Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request

Pierce County Parks and Recreation received a grant to construct a 1.2-mile section of pedestrian trail through Chambers Canyon that will connect and improve existing trail segments on either side of the canyon. The scope of work includes a 140-foot pedestrian bridge, a small footbridge across Peach Creek, 1,970 linear feet of boardwalk, and a trailhead along Zorcon Drive.

The engineering analysis that was completed to advance the project's design identified significant challenges to completing this project, resulting in higher costs. The engineering team explored alternative routes and other options to connect the trail through the canyon but found similar challenges. Further analysis confirmed that the project as originally scoped was the most sustainable and cost-effective solution. Pierce County, the City of Lakewood, and the City of University Place are committed to closing this funding gap.

Pierce County is requesting an eleven-month time extension to allow local budgets to accommodate the increased cost of this project. The sponsor is submitting permit

applications this fall, with construction anticipated to begin in spring 2024. After construction, final billing and closeout will be completed by December 31, 2024.

South Whidbey Parks and Recreation District

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request
16-1884 Acquisition and Development	South Whidbey Campground Phase 1	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks	\$206,866 (50%)	12/31/2023	12/31/2024

Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request

The South Whidbey Parks and Recreation District (SWPRD) received grant funds to acquire thirty acres and develop phase one of a new campground adjacent to South Whidbey Community Park. SWPRD completed the acquisition but has not constructed the campground due to staff changes and permitting challenges.

The SWPRD board of commissioners is committed to seeing this project to completion. This summer, they established a relationship with the new county planner assigned to the project and hired a new executive director. With new staff in place, this project can move forward. A supplemental project narrative is currently being reviewed by Island County Health and Public Works Department. Once the review is finished and permits are in hand, SWPRD can begin clearing, grading, and gravelling the access road and complete the campground.

South Whidbey is requesting a one-year time extension to complete the campground development and administrative closeout.

State Parks and Recreation Commission

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request
16-1974 Acquisition	Inholdings and Adjacent Properties 2016	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State	\$48,091 (4.8%)	10/31/2023	12/31/2023

		Parks		
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Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission used this grant to complete the acquisition of key inholding and adjacent properties at six different parks. These properties will enable State Parks to better manage the parks and protect their long-term boundaries and operations.

The acquisitions have been completed and State Parks staff is in the process of recording the Deed of Right on one of the properties, and their cultural resources contractor is wrapping up a survey and report. A short time extension is needed to complete these activities.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: October 24-25, 2023

Title: Recreation and Conservation Office Report (Director's Report)

Prepared By: Megan Duffy, Marguerite Austin, Kyle Guzlas, Mark Jarasitis, Bart Lynch, and Susan Zemek

Summary

This memo summarizes key agency activities.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

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

Agency Updates

RCO helps Organize National Boating Conference

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff were key players in organizing this year's States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA) conference in Tacoma. Established in 1986, SOBA is a national, nonprofit working to improve access to waterways by promoting the public acquisition, development, and maintenance of recreational boating facilities. This year's conference was co-hosted by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, RCO, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Director Duffy welcomed more than 170 attendees from around the country, including the territories of Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and Virgin Islands. The theme of the conference was "Waterways for All." Watch the [promotion video](#) featuring Director Duffy.



A special part of the event was the recognition given to former RCO accessibility specialist, Rory Calhoun, for his

years of service to boating access. Rory advised project sponsors on ways to make recreation facilities more accessible to people with disabilities.

Washington Invasive Species Council staff had informational trailers on hand, as well as Fin, the invasive mussel-sniffing dog—both a big hit. In addition, Jessica La Belle presented at the conference and Karl Jacobs gave a Boating Infrastructure Grant presentation during the field trip portion. Karl also starred in interviews for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s “Partner with a Payer” program. Henry Smith helped connect RCO with the Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma and City of Gig Harbor staff who gave great presentations during the field trip at Point Defiance and Gig Harbor waterfront. Marguerite Austin and Monica Atkins joined the field trip day, which was organized by Allison Dellwo and Karl. Susan Zemek developed the field trip guide and helped behind-the-scenes.



Grants Applications Pour in for RCO’s Newest Grant Program

Nick Norton and Dan Haws introduced RCO’s newest grant program to more than 330 people who attended an August 15 application webinar for the Local Parks Maintenance Program. These grants will be awarded to local and tribal governments to help them address backlogged or deferred maintenance needs. While routine maintenance is not allowed, grants may be used to make repairs to halt progressive deterioration of a recreation facility and keep it at an acceptable level of functionality.



Grants also may be used to buy capital equipment needed to implement the applicant’s deferred maintenance program. By the September 18 deadline, 220 applications were submitted. On November 1, Director Duffy will award nearly \$5 million in grants.

Employee News

Stephanie Helms joined RCO as the executive coordinator for Washington's Invasive Species Council in August. Stephanie has a broad background in invasive species management, urban forestry, and program coordination. Stephanie began her career in Baltimore, Maryland, where she built programs and partnerships focused on invasive species, contributed to emerald ash borer response and white-tailed deer management, and revamped the Weed Warriors volunteer program. After moving to Washington, she served as an urban forester for the City of Seattle where she oversaw street tree care and provided a municipal perspective to the statewide steering committee for the Washington Urban Forest Pest Readiness Playbook. While serving in this role she also founded and chaired the Seattle Committee on Invasive Pests. Stephanie holds a bachelor's degree in Geography and Environmental Planning with a focus in geographic information systems from Towson University. Also, she is an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist Municipal Specialist. In her free time, she enjoys traveling abroad, backpacking through Washington's ample backcountry, and paddle boarding with her husband. She also enjoys collecting music and films for Western Washington's many rainy days.



Kate McLaughlin joined the Salmon Grants Section June 16 as an outdoor grants manager. Kate spent the past five years at the WDFW as a fisheries biologist and scientific technician working on the Fish Passage Diversion Screening Inventory and evaluating fish passage barriers around the state. Kate also spent more than three years with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife monitoring steelhead populations, conducting habitat surveys, and serving on that state's technical review team and as a grant manager for the California Fisheries Restoration Grant Program. Kate earned a bachelor of arts degree in biology from Boston University and a master of science degree in natural resources from Humboldt State University. She lives with her husband and daughter. Fun fact—she's a retired ultimate Frisbee player.



Greer Maier joined RCO in September as the science coordinator in the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office. Greer brings more than twenty years of experience in salmon recovery in the Northwest. Her expertise and skills cross multiple disciplines, including technical facilitation and writing, collaboration and conflict resolution, conservation planning and prioritization, natural resource policy and management, and science integration and



communication. Greer has experience working with federal, state, and local governments, tribes, and nonprofits on a wide range of conservation issues. Greer has a bachelor of science degree in marine biology from the University of Miami and a master of science degree in fisheries and aquatic sciences from the University of Washington. She was a Knauss fellow in Washington D.C. in 2007 and worked as a fish biologist for the U.S. Geological Survey, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Forest Service before spending ten years as the science manager for the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board. She has spent the past two years working for Triangle Associates as a technical facilitator on statewide issues related to hydropower, fisheries management, fish passage, ecosystem planning, and orca recovery. Greer lives in Winthrop with her family and enjoys hiking, camping, skiing, and especially getting out on the rivers across the state.

Russell Malburg joined RCO in September as an outdoor grants manager with the Recreation and Conservation Grants Section. Russell spent Labor Day weekend driving west from Southfield, Michigan, where he managed a team of eleven full-time and one-hundred part-time staff in his capacity as the recreation operations manager for Southfield's Parks and Recreation Department. Russell worked for eight years in intercollegiate athletics at Indiana University, Fresno State University, and Michigan State University before transitioning to parks and recreation. He has a bachelor's degree in public affairs from Indiana University, is a certified park and recreation professional, and in 2022 received a professional certificate in geographic information systems. Russell grew up in Armada, Michigan. He likes sports of all kinds and enjoys live music, bar trivia, playing cards, watching Jeopardy, occasionally screenwriting, canning veggies, quilting, and seeing new places.



Edison Velez joined RCO in September as an outdoor grants manager working on the No Child Left Inside and Outdoor Learning Grants programs. Edison brings experience, knowledge, and passion in working with youth. Edison comes from Disney World, Florida, and came west after completing his bachelor of arts in political science at the University of Florida. Edison spent most of his youth and young adult summers working and recreating in the outdoors, often traveling far from Florida to explore beyond swamps and pine forests. After a handful of summers in New Mexico and a quick jaunt to California, Edison landed in the Northwest for a summer and became enchanted with staying. Since transplanting, he's helped grow Northwest Youth Corps programming with his start as a crew leader to overseeing Northwest Youth Corps youth and young adult programs in Washington. When he is not



enjoying the outdoors professionally, he can be found cycling to coffee shops and trying to organize a sea of photos from the past several years of work and travel.

Legislative and Policy Update

Staff will provide an update on legislative requests for the 2024 legislative session. This will include capital and operating budget requests, an overview of the budgeting process, and legislative timeline.

For policy related issues, staff will update the board on a change from the federal government on the use of the term “urban clusters” at the federal level. Staff will provide an overview of the change, how it impacts RCO’s Urban Wildlife category, and the path forward for addressing the change.

News from the Boards

The **Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group** met August 30 and discussed legislative updates, the RCO trails database, and Department of Natural Resources’ Biodiversity package.

The **Invasive Species Council** met in September and heard updates on White-nose Syndrome in bats, discussed the update of the council’s Invasive Species Prioritization Assessment Tool, and heard presentations on the Tribal Invasive Species

Workshop and a proposal to form a multiagency working group to be comprised of a person from each member organization tasked with responding to new invasive species introductions in Washington. The council also recognized councilmember Allen Pleus, who is retiring from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, for his accomplishments throughout his career and on the council. Finally, the council’s new executive coordinator talked about revisiting and recommitting to current council priorities, as well as holding a discussion on new possible opportunities for the council.

The **Salmon Recovery Funding Board** met in September and approved \$81 million in new salmon recovery grants!



Grant Management Section

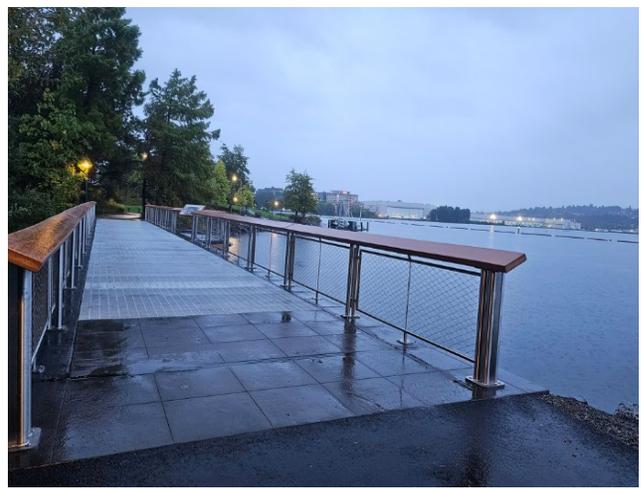
Director Approve Grants

Using Returned Funds for Alternate and Partially Funded Projects, the director has approved nearly \$24 million in grants for alternate and partially funded projects. Eight million in unspent funds went to Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)

Farmland Preservation projects and almost \$6 million went to WWRP Riparian Protection alternates. The awards are comprised of unused funds from previously funded projects. Attachment A, Funds for Alternate and Partially Funded Projects, shows the grant awards for alternate projects (Table A-1) and the additional funding for partially funded projects (Table A-2).

Successful Bridge Installation

DeAnn Beck conducted the final inspection of Renton’s Gene Coulon Beach Park’s Trestle Bridge on September 27. The \$500,000 grant provided a third of the funds needed for this structure, which is a critical component of the park's pedestrian trail. It links with the regional Eastrail Trail and provides connection within this popular waterfront park. Over the years, Renton has received five federal grants; one Housing and Urban Development and four Land and Water Conservation Fund grants, totally nearly \$1.6 million for acquisition and development in this park. Here are before and after pictures of the bridge.



Gene Coulon Trestle Bridge (before and after photos)

Trails Caucus

The Washington State Trails Coalitions is hosting its biennial one-day gathering on October 5, 2023, in Mercer Island. This event provides an opportunity for people to meet with trail colleagues from across the state. Ted Wilhite, Chair of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will welcome attendees. There will be a panel discussion on public-private partnerships and how to close the gaps in the active transportation system. RCO’s Ben Donatelle and Leah Doby will provide updates on Washington State’s Recreation and Conservation Plan and provide an overview of plans for implementing recommendations included in SCORP and the equity study.

Project Administration

Staff administer outdoor recreation and habitat conservation projects as summarized in the table below. Active projects are under agreement and in the implementation phase. Board approved and director approved projects include grant awards made by the board or RCO director after receiving board-delegated authority to award grants. Staff are working with sponsors to secure the materials needed to place approved projects under agreement.

Program	Active Projects	Board and Director Approved Projects	Total Funded Projects
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)	29	7	36
Boating Facilities Program (BFP)	61	10	71
Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG)	10	0	10
Community Forests Program (CFP)	4	3	7
Firearms and Archery Range Recreation (FARR)	10	3	13
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	25	3	28
No Child Left Inside (NCLI)	79	22	101
Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA)	86	69	155
Outdoor Learning Grants (OLG)	0	27	27
Planning for Recreation Access (PRA)	26	28	54
Recreation & Conservation Office Recreation Grants (RRG)	3	2	5
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	36	27	63
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)	245	67	312
Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)	44	17	61
Total	658	285	943

Viewing Closed Projects

Attachment A lists projects that closed between June 1 and September 30, 2023. The team closed seventy-nine projects. Select the project number to view the project description, grant funds awarded, photos, maps, reports, etc.

Grant Services Section

Compliance Unit

RCO was awarded a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant to fund a compliance grants manager. The position will be dedicated to LWCF post-completion/stewardship work that includes working with project sponsors through the National Park Service LWCF conversion approval process, conducting compliance inspections, and working with sponsors to resolve compliance issues. The administrative grant will help fund improvements to the compliance workbench, a module of the RCO's PRISM grant database, including creating an automatic notification of long-term grant obligations. The staff position and database improvements will support RCO and National Park Service goals for assuring natural and recreational resources remain available and accessible for current and future generations.

Stipend Policy Updates

In 2021, RCO implemented the Advisory Committee and Workgroup Member Compensation policy, which provides stipends for advisors and workgroup members not otherwise compensated for their committee participation. RCO created this policy to reduce barriers to participating on advisory committees and workgroups and acknowledge the important work and insight advisors contribute. Since then, Second Substitute Senate Bill 5793 (2SSB 5793) was passed, guiding agencies in offering community members compensation for their committee work. In early 2023, the Washington State Office of Equity released its recommendations for how to implement 2SSB 5793. Based on this guidance, RCO has recently completed updating its Advisory Committee and Workgroup Member Compensation policy. As part of these updates, RCO increased the rates paid for stipends to closer align with the Office of Equity recommendations. RCO also now offers reimbursement to advisors and workgroup members for child and adult care, separately from the stipend they are paid. Finally, RCO expanded eligibility for stipend payment to include nonprofit organizations and Tribal governments. RCO is hopeful that these updates will continue to expand participation on our advisory committees and workgroups.

Conflict of Interest Guidelines Update

RCO recently implemented a new conflict of interest policy for its Recreation and Conservation Funding Board advisory committees. Under this new policy, advisory committee members who evaluate grant proposals may participate in project evaluation but must recuse themselves from scoring projects with which they have a conflict of interest. Section staff will work with the PRISM development over the next year to develop this new process in the review and evaluation module.

Fiscal Report

For July 1, 2023-June 30, 2025, actuals through August 31, 2023 (Fiscal Month 02). Percentage of biennium reported: 8.3 percent. The "Budget" column shows the state appropriations and any received federal awards.

Grant Program	BUDGET	COMMITTED		TO BE COMMITTED		EXPENDITURES	
	Includes Re-appropriations 2023-2025	Dollars	% of Budget	Dollars	% of Budget	Dollars	% Expended of Committed
Grant Programs							
ALEA	\$19,241,000	\$16,800,755	87%	\$2,440,245	13%	\$307,613	2%
BFP	\$42,320,000	\$40,189,959	95%	\$2,130,041	5%	\$655,867	2%
BIG	\$7,828,000	\$7,828,000	100%	\$0	0%	\$446	.01%
FARR	\$2,099,000	\$1,327,080	63%	\$771,920	37%	\$13,701	1%
LWCF	\$42,140,000	\$42,140,000	100%	\$0	0%	\$1,062,645	3%
NOVA	\$25,022,000	\$23,830,607	95%	\$1,191,393	5%	\$179,414	1%
RTP	\$11,384,000	\$11,151,824	98%	\$232,176	2%	\$168,547	2%
WWRP	\$300,016,000	\$282,956,568	94%	\$17,059,432	6%	\$5,112,980	2%
RRG	\$6,576,000	\$5,777,954	88%	\$798,046	12%	\$1,096,218	19%
YAF	\$37,339,000	\$32,833,342	88%	\$4,505,658	12%	\$952,607	3%
Subtotal	\$493,965,000	\$464,836,089	94%	\$29,128,911	6%	\$9,550,038	2%
Administration							
General	\$13,053,79						
Operating Funds	7	\$13,053,797	100%	\$0	0%	\$1,007,536	8%
Grand Total	\$507,018,797	\$477,889,886	94%	\$29,128,911	6%	\$10,557,574	2%

Acronym	Grant Program
ALEA	Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
BFP	Boating Facilities Program
BIG	Boating Infrastructure Grant
FARR	Firearms and Archery Range Recreation
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
NOVA	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities
RTP	Recreational Trails Program
WWRP	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program
RRG	RCO Recreation Grants
YAF	Youth Athletic Facilities

Board Revenue Report

For July 1, 2023-June 30, 2025, actuals through July 31, 2023 (Fiscal Month 01).

Percentage of biennium reported: 4.2 percent

Program	Biennial Forecast		Collections
	Estimate	Actual	% of Estimate
Boating Facilities Program (BFP)	\$18,667,900	\$892,976	4.8%
Nonhighway, Off-Road Vehicle Program (NOVA)	\$13,713,850	\$673,372	4.9%
Firearms and Archery Range Rec Program (FARR)	\$658,500	\$22,204	3.3%
Total	\$33,040,250	\$1,588,552	4.8%

Revenue Notes:

- BFP revenue is from the un-refunded marine gasoline taxes.
- NOVA revenue is from the motor vehicle gasoline tax paid by users of off-road vehicles and nonhighway roads, and from the amount paid for by off-road vehicle use permits.
- FARR revenue is from \$2.16 of each concealed pistol license fee.
- These figures reflect the most recent revenue forecast in March 2023. The next forecast will be in September 2023.

WWRP Expenditure Rate by Organization (1990-Current)

Agency	Committed	Expenditures	% Expended
Local Agencies	\$391,609,895	\$325,865,261	83%
Department of Fish and Wildlife	\$250,883,567	\$216,385,641	86%
Department of Natural Resources	\$219,477,206	\$161,984,474	74%
State Parks and Recreation Commission	\$185,247,770	\$145,728,423	79%
Nonprofits	\$69,612,239	\$41,795,650	60%
Conservation Commission	\$15,224,264	\$3,000,727	20%
Tribes	\$2,807,431	\$1,742,117	62%
Other			
Special Projects	\$735,011	\$735,011	100%
Total	\$1,135,597,383	\$897,237,304	79%

Performance Measures for Fiscal Year 2024

The following performance data are for recreation and conservation projects in fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024). Data current as of September 20, 2023.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) Performance Measures

Measure	Target	Fiscal Year-to-Date	Status	Notes
Grant agreements mailed within 120 days of funding	90%	83%	●	Five of six agreements have been mailed on time this fiscal year.
Progress reports responded to within 15 days	90%	97%	●	RCFB staff received 226 progress reports and responded to them in an average of five days.
Projects closed within 150 days of funding end date	85%	75%	●	Six of eight projects have closed on time.
Projects in Backlog	5	13	●	There are thirteen RCFB projects in the backlog needing to be closed out.

Attachments

Attachment A: Funds for Alternate and Partially Funded Projects

Attachment B: Table of Closed Projects from June 1 – September 30, 2023

Funds for Alternate and Partially Funded Projects

Table A-1: Funds for Alternate Projects,

Project Numberⁱ	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Grant Award	Grant Program: Category
22-2063 D	Clallam County	Lake Pleasant Dock Renovation	\$110,625	\$110,625	Boating Facilities Program: Local
22-2244 D	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Spectacle Lake Access Area Improvements	\$454,000	\$454,000	Boating Facilities Program: State
22-2075 D	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Hamilton Landing Boat Launch Phase 2	\$500,000	\$500,000	Boating Facilities Program: State
22-2283 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger District	Naches Wilderness Trails Maintenance and Operations	\$150,000	\$150,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
22-2119 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Capitol Forest Nonmotorized Trail and Facility Maintenance	\$149,100	\$149,100	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
22-1950 D	King County	Taylor Mountain Trail Bridge Development Phase 2	\$200,000	\$200,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
22-2375 P	U.S Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee River Ranger District	Upper Wenatchee Valley Sustainable Trails Planning	\$195,000	\$195,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
22-2108 M	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Mount Baker Ranger District	Mount Baker Ranger District Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$150,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
22-2015 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Blanchard and Harry Osborne Maintenance and Operations	\$150,000	\$150,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized

Project Numberⁱ	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Grant Award	Grant Program: Category
22-1956 P	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Headquarters	Alpine Lakes Collaborative Visitor Use Study	\$150,000	\$150,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
22-2016 D	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Olsen Creek Bridge	\$200,000	\$200,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
22-1649 A	Washington Farmland Trust	Spencer Farm	\$271,750	\$271,750	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation
22-1617 A	Okanogan Land Trust	Similkameen-Wahl Ranch	\$648,375	\$648,375	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation
22-1722 A	Washington Farmland Trust	Parlette Orchard	\$528,175	\$528,175	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation
22-1711 A	Washington Farmland Trust	Torres Dairy	\$401,562	\$401,562	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation
22-1668 A	Washington Farmland Trust	Coyote Bank Farm Conservation Easement	\$146,750	\$146,750	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation
22-1455 D	South Whidbey Parks and Recreation District	South Whidbey Sports Complex Pickleball Courts	\$250,000	\$250,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
22-1453 D	Yakima	Martin Luther King Jr. Park Community Pool	\$500,000	\$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
22-1239 A	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	North Okanogan County Inholdings	\$295,000	\$295,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Riparian Protection

Project Number ⁱ	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Grant Award	Grant Program: Category
22-1238 A	Kittitas Conservation Trust	Thorp Reach Acquisition	\$1,245,089	\$1,245,089	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Riparian Protection
22-1245 A	Great Peninsula Conservancy	Tahuya River Protection	\$1,113,600	\$1,113,600	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Riparian Protection
22-1598 A	Seattle Public Utilities	Cedar River Upper Royal Arch Reach Acquisition	\$1,000,000	\$476,676	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Riparian Protection
20-1599 A	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission	Twin Harbors State Park Residential Acquisition	\$733,785	\$733,785	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks
22-1564 D	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission	Fort Casey Admiralty Head Lighthouse Americans with Disabilities Act	\$1,500,000	\$1,324,860	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks
22-1469 D	Camas	South Lacamas Creek 3rd Avenue Trailhead Improvements	\$500,000	\$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails
22-1417 D	Bellingham	Sunset Pond Trail	\$1,000,000	\$715,881	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails

Table A-2: Funds for Partially Funded Projects

Project Number ⁱ	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Previous Grant Awards	Current Grant Funding	Grant Program: Category
22-1865D	Des Moines	Redondo Boat Launch Restroom Facility	\$681,903	\$91,050	\$681,903	Boating Facilities Program: Local
22-2029D	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Glen Williams Access Development Phase 2	\$1,465,000	\$1,385,000	\$1,465,000	Boating Facilities Program: State

Project Numberⁱ	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Previous Grant Awards	Current Grant Funding	Grant Program: Category
22-2141E	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission	Riverside Education and Enforcement Ranger	\$183,160	\$146,463	\$183,160	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement
22-2240D	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Snoqualmie Ranger District	Denny Creek Trail Rehabilitation	\$200,000	\$189,105	\$200,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road
22-2272M	U.S. Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Cowlitz Valley Ranger District	Nonmotorized Trails Maintenance and Operations	\$149,700	\$94,648	\$149,700	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
22-2270P	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission	Riverside State Park Off-Road Vehicle Area	\$320,000	\$120,318	\$320,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle
22-1990M	U.S. Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Cowlitz Valley Ranger District	Mount Saint Helens National Volcanic Monument Front Country Trails	\$140,000	\$19,183	\$140,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
22-2176M	Mountain Trails Grooming Association	Methow Area Snowmobile Trail Maintenance and Grooming	\$122,968	\$17,920	\$122,968	Recreational Trails Program: General
22-1544A	Washington State Conservation Commission	Swauk Prairie Farms	\$6,373,917	\$659,126	\$6,373,917	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation
20-1646A	Bellingham	Bakerview Neighborhood Park Acquisition	\$1,000,000	\$264,127	\$376,508	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
22-1433D	Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma	First Creek Park and Trail Improvements	\$500,000	\$228,020	\$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
22-1650A	Manson Parks and Recreation District	Leffler Field Acquisition	\$574,550	\$573,638	\$574,550	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
22-1239A	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	North Willapa Bay Estuaries and Shoreline	\$3,950,000	\$1,922,000	\$3,950,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Riparian Protection

Project Numberⁱ	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Previous Grant Awards	Current Grant Funding	Grant Program: Category
22-1607D	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission	Cape Disappointment Three Waters Trail	\$387,474	\$88,492	\$387,474	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks
22-1723A	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission	Hoko River State Park Schultz Property	\$1,036,711	\$955,630	\$1,036,711	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks
22-1483D	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission	Olympic Discovery Trail Anderson Lake Extension	\$1,397,000	\$1,317,360	\$1,397,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails
22-1378A	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Mt Si, Middle Fork, and West Tiger Mountain Natural Resources Conservation Areas	\$5,474,856	\$3,548,059	\$5,474,856	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Urban Wildlife Habitat

ⁱA=Acquisition, C=Acquisition and Development, D=Development, E=Education/Education and Enforcement, M=Maintenance, O=Operation R=Restoration

Projects Completed and Closed from June 1, 2023, to September 30, 2023

Project Number and Type ⁱ	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
18-2425D	Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation	Keller Ferry Boat Launch Phase 2	Boating Facilities Program: Local	8/28/2023
20-2115D	Port of Whitman County	Boyer Park and Marina Dock Replacement	Boating Facilities Program: Local	6/26/2023
18-2498D	Tacoma	15th Street Transient Moorage Replacement	Boating Facilities Program: Local	6/7/2023
16-1778A	Eastmont Metropolitan Parks and Recreation District	East Wenatchee 9th Street Acquisition	Land and Water Conservation Fund	7/27/2023
18-1335D	Mountlake Terrace	Mountlake Terrace Ballinger Park ADA Playground	Land and Water Conservation Fund	9/14/2023
16-1934D	King County	Skyway Park Revitalization	Land and Water Conservation Fund: Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership	8/11/2023
20-2371E	Auburn Parks and Recreation	Auburn Mountain Bike Expansion	No Child Left Inside: Tier 1	9/29/2023
20-2238E	Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group	Project WOW (Watching Over the Watershed)	No Child Left Inside: Tier 1	8/4/2023
20-2347E	Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group	Hood Canal Environmental Education Project	No Child Left Inside: Tier 1	8/24/2023

Project Number and Type ⁱ	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
20-2382E	Kitsap County	Youth Outdoor Science Engagement Ladder Turning	No Child Left Inside: Tier 1	9/15/2023
20-2416E	Salish Sea Sciences	Salish Sea Sciences	No Child Left Inside: Tier 1	9/28/2023
20-2208E	Spokane Conservation District	Outdoor Learning Labs	No Child Left Inside: Tier 1	8/22/2023
20-2214E	Washington Outdoor School	Kittitas County Environmental Education	No Child Left Inside: Tier 1	8/3/2023
20-2263E	World Relief Seattle	Refugee Youth Programming	No Child Left Inside: Tier 1	8/3/2023
20-1961E	Child and Family Hope Center	Tacoma Outdoor Learning Opportunities for Low-Inco	No Child Left Inside: Tier 2	8/7/2023
20-2279E	Foss Waterway Seaport	Eco-Kayaking on the Thea Foss Waterway	No Child Left Inside: Tier 2	8/23/2023
20-2178E	Lifeline Connections	Blazing Trails at Camp Mariposa	No Child Left Inside: Tier 2	8/24/2023
20-2276E	Mount St. Helens Institute	Volcano Outdoor School for All Mount St. Helens	No Child Left Inside: Tier 2	8/23/2023
20-2154E	Mountains to Sound Greenway	Greenway Trust Youth Internships	No Child Left Inside: Tier 2	8/23/2023
20-2364E	Swinomish Indian Tribal Community	Swinomish Tribe's 13 Moons Curriculum	No Child Left Inside: Tier 2	8/10/2023
20-2359E	Tiny Trees Preschool	Full-Day Outdoor Preschool in King County	No Child Left Inside: Tier 2	9/5/2023

Project Number and Type ⁱ	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
20-2366E	Glacier Peak Institute	Momentum in Snohomish and Skagit Outdoor Education	No Child Left Inside: Tier 3	8/23/2023
20-2328E	Lummi Nation	Lummi Youth Living and Protecting Schelangen	No Child Left Inside: Tier 3	9/1/2023
20-2186E	Nisqually River Foundation	Nisqually Tribal Youth Explore and Connect 2	No Child Left Inside: Tier 3	8/23/2023
20-2342E	Pierce County	Pierce Outdoor LIFE for 21-23	No Child Left Inside: Tier 3	9/19/2023
20-2209E	Swinomish Indian Tribal Community	Swinomish Between Two Worlds Indigenous Science Program	No Child Left Inside: Tier 3	8/1/2023
20-2406E	The Service Board	Core and Summer Leadership Impact Programs	No Child Left Inside: Tier 3	8/23/2023
20-1960E	Yakima Valley Farm Workers	Outdoor Adventure Program	No Child Left Inside: Tier 3	8/23/2023
18-2474D	Seattle	Rattlesnake Ledge Trail Maintenance and Restoration	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized	7/21/2023
18-2481E	US Forest Service, Okanogan Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee River Ranger District	Wilderness and Backcountry Education and Enforcement 2020-2021	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement	6/23/2023
18-2545E	US Forest Service, Mt Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Skykomish Ranger District	Skykomish Ranger District Wilderness Education and Enforcement	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement	7/20/2023

Project Number and Type ⁱ	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
18-2497D	US Forest Service, Okanogan Wenatchee National Forest, Methow Ranger District	North Summit Horse Camp Phase II Development	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road	6/1/2023
18-2546M	US Forest Service, Mt Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Skykomish Ranger District	Skykomish Ranger District Trailhead and Dispersed Site Maintenance	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road	8/22/2023
16-2451D	Department of Natural Resources	Yacolt Burn State Forest Off-Road Vehicle Trail Development	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle	6/30/2023
22-1832E	Community Boating Center	Snow to Sea Nooksack Valley Watershed	Outdoor Learning Grants	8/8/2023
22-1882E	Lopez Island Family Resource	Youth Outdoor Learning Opportunity (YOLO) Salish Sea	Outdoor Learning Grants	9/1/2023
22-1847E	Lower Columbia Estuary Partner	Explore Local	Outdoor Learning Grants	8/22/2023
22-1853E	Lummi Nation	Lummi Youth Shelangan Outdoor Program	Outdoor Learning Grants	8/9/2023
22-1939E	Swinomish Indian Tribal Community	Swinomish Between Two Worlds Indigenous Science Program	Outdoor Learning Grants	8/10/2023
22-1836E	Thurston Conservation District	Community FieldSTEM in Thurston County	Outdoor Learning Grants	8/2/2023
19-1687D	Van Rippers Resort	Van Rippers Resort Moorage	RCO Recreation Grants: Local Parks	7/18/2023

Project Number and Type ⁱ	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
14-1693D	Tacoma Metropolitan Park District	Owen Beach Water Access	RCO Recreation Grants: Water Access	7/14/2023
18-2551M	Piston's Wild Motorsports	Yacolt Burn Motorized Trails Maintenance SW Washington	Recreational Trails Program: General	9/20/2023
18-2409M	US Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Cowlitz Valley Ranger District	Wilderness Trails Operation and Maintenance	Recreational Trails Program: General	6/14/2023
18-2271M	US Forest Service, Mt Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Darrington Ranger District	Backcountry Trail Maintenance	Recreational Trails Program: General	8/22/2023
20-2261M	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission	Mt. Baker Snowmobile Sno-Parks and Trail Maintenance	Recreational Trails Program: General	6/8/2023
20-2272M	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission	Pyramid Peak Snowmobile Trails	Recreational Trails Program: General	6/7/2023
20-2322M	Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission	Stampede Pass Multiple Use Sno-Park Trails	Recreational Trails Program: General	6/7/2023
20-1405A	Jefferson Land Trust	Hannan Farm	WWRP Farmland Preservation	7/06/2023
19-1350A	Washington Farmland Trust	Bob's Corn and Pumpkin Farm	WWRP Farmland Preservation	9/08/2023
16-1922A	Washington State Conservation Commission	Blain Ranches	WWRP Farmland Preservation	7/26/2023

Project Number and Type ⁱ	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
16-1923A	Washington State Conservation Commission	Lazy Cross Ranch	WWRP Farmland Preservation	6/22/2023
19-1530A	Whidbey Camano Land Trust	Kristoferson Farm Working Farmland	WWRP Farmland Preservation	6/22/2023
19-1531A	Whidbey Camano Land Trust	Kristoferson Farm Working Forest	WWRP Forestland Preservation	6/22/2023
18-1612A	Des Moines	Van Gasken Sound View Park	WWRP Local Parks	8/09/2023
16-1740D	King County	Jim Ellis Memorial Park Preston Mill Development	WWRP Local Parks	9/11/2023
18-1586D	Soap Lake	Smokiam Park Basketball Court Improvements	WWRP Local Parks	7/19/2023
16-2084D	Twisp	Twisp Sports Complex Renovation Phase 1	WWRP Local Parks	7/18/2023
18-1247C	Wenatchee	Kenzie's Landing	WWRP Local Parks	7/11/2023
18-1855A	Winthrop	Winthrop Open Space Park Acquisition	WWRP Local Parks	8/08/2023
16-1417A	Department of Natural Resources	Cypress Island Natural Area 2016	WWRP Natural Areas	8/01/2023
14-1249A	Department of Natural Resources	Dabob Bay Natural Area Shoreline 2014	WWRP Natural Areas	8/01/2023

Project Number and Type ⁱ	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
20-1512A	Whatcom Land Trust	Skookum Creek Acquisition II Upper Skookum Creek	WWRP Riparian Protection	7/10/2023
16-1541D	Department of Natural Resources	Morning Star Trails and Campground Renovation	WWRP State Lands Development and Renovation	7/11/2023
16-1611R	Department of Fish and Wildlife	Rock Creek Tieton Forest Restoration	WWRP State Lands Restoration	6/6/2023
16-1715R	Department of Natural Resources	Klickitat Canyon Natural Resources Conservation Area Habitat Restoration South	WWRP State Lands Restoration and Enhancement	7/11/2023
20-1440A	Colville	Colville Mountain Trailhead Land Acquisition	WWRP Trails	6/5/2023
16-1471D	Spokane	South Gorge Trail	WWRP Trails	9/06/2023
20-1268D	Buckley	Rainier Gateway Court	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	7/20/2023
20-1355D	Aberdeen	Little League Field and Restroom	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	7/03/2023
18-1693D	Burien	Moshier Memorial Park Sports Field Improvements	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	6/23/2023
18-1916D	Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation	Nespelem Youth Athletic Field	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	7/17/2023
18-1788D	Des Moines	Des Moines Field House Park Field Renovation	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	8/09/2023

Project Number and Type ⁱ	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
20-1826D	Pacific Little League	So Kids Can Play 2.0!	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	8/30/2023
18-2039D	Rj's Kids	Burton Adventure Recreation Center Pump Track	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	6/6/2023
20-1880D	Boys and Girls Clubs of the Olympic Peninsula	Youth Outdoor Activity Area Sequim Boys and Girls	Youth Athletic Facilities: Small	7/06/2023
20-1747D	Fairfield	The Pit Youth Facilities	Youth Athletic Facilities: Small	7/13/2023

ⁱA=Acquisition, C=Acquisition and Development, D=Development, E=Education/Education and Enforcement, M=Maintenance, R=Restoration
WWRP = Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program



Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: October 24-25, 2023

Title: Grant Criteria Changes

Prepared By: Leah Dobey and Ben Donatelle, Natural Resource Policy Specialists

Summary

This memo details several proposed changes to evaluation criteria, including quantitative measures to help assess need, changes to the weight of individual criteria, and the removal of redundancy across criteria.

These changes are being considered alongside others, detailed in Attachment A, that were proposed in June, within the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program’s Local Parks, Trails, and Water Access categories, and the Youth Athletic Facilities programs. These changes align with recommendations from the Recreation and Conservation Office’s 2022 equity review and the 2023 Washington Recreation and Conservation Plan.

Board Action Requested

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

Background

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) recently completed several studies and reports that identify actions the Recreation Conservation Funding Board (board) and agency can take to advance equity in RCO grant programs. These include reports directed by the state legislature, such as [the Physical Activity Task Force \(PATF\) Report](#) which identifies gaps in youth physical activity and opportunities to address them, and the Prevention Institute’s [Equitable Grantmaking: A Comprehensive Review of Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office Grant Programs \(equity review\)](#). The equity review identifies opportunities toward improving equitable distribution of recreation grants and reducing barriers that might prevent underserved communities’

success in RCO programs. Additionally, the [2023 Washington Recreation and Conservation Plan \(SCORP\)](#) includes multiple strategies related to equitable access to, and distribution of grant funds. This SCORP update satisfies planning required by state Law and is a requirement to receive federal funds through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Following recommendations from these efforts, staff have been exploring potential changes to several evaluation criteria. The criteria that remain under review are Project Need, Need Fulfillment (including Project Scope and Project Design), Public Support, and Expansion or Renovation. These criteria are commonly used across six grant programs: Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) – Local Parks, Trails, and Water Access, and Youth Athletic Facilities Program (YAF). By changing evaluation criteria, RCO aims to close gaps in access to parks, trails, and greenspace, and better reward project proposals that have been developed with public input and support. At the June board meeting, staff detailed challenges with the identified criteria and potential strategies for addressing them. Outreach and engagement on this effort was conducted during the summer months and will continue through fall 2023.

This memo provides detail on quantitative metrics that can help identify project need, as well as administrative changes needed to maintain scoring value and eliminate redundancy.

Using Data to Determine Need

In current grant criteria, the need for a project is evaluated based on the applicant's narrative response to a multipart question as well as demographic and socioeconomic information gathered from RCO's "[Application Data Tool](#)". Guidance for evaluators does not include specific direction about how to use the variety of information in scoring projects, which leads to differences in the way evaluators weigh elements of the applicant's response.

An opportunity to correct for these differences is recommended in Strategy 1 of SCORP, which states that RCO can "Identify, incorporate, and weight measures to help address disparate outcomes in outdoor recreation and conservation funding." This concept is also recommended in the equity review, noting that RCO can use defined metrics to clarify project need and weigh its impact within the scoring rubric.

Staff have selected three metrics that can be used to identify communities in need. These measures are social vulnerability and poor health outcomes, which are both

sourced from the Washington Tracking Network’s (IBL) mapping tool, and a third measure of greenspace availability from the equity review spatial data analysis. Together, these data sets are valuable for comparing communities relative to statewide priorities. However, the data are limited to census tracts and do not tell the whole story of a community’s need. As such, these metrics will be scored by RCO, but the evaluation committee will continue to use narrative description of need, as described by the project applicant, to understand the context of the project within the community.

Social Vulnerability

Scoring for social vulnerability corresponds to the Washington Tracking Network’s Social Vulnerability Index. This index uses a combination of sixteen social and economic conditions, listed below. A grant project located in a census tract with higher IBL social vulnerability rank would receive more points within RCO’s evaluation process.

<p>Household Composition & Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population 65+ • Population Under 18 • Population with a Disability • Single Parent Household 	<p>Race, Ethnicity & Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited English • People of Color
<p>Housing Type & Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing with 10+ Units • Mobile Homes • No Access to a Private Vehicle • Overcrowded Housing • Population Living in Group Quarters 	<p>Socioeconomic Determinants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Median Household Income • No High School Diploma • Population 19 to 64 with No Health Insurance • Population Living in Poverty • Unemployed

Poor Health Outcomes

Scoring for poor health outcomes corresponds to the Washington Tracking Network’s Health Disparities – Poor Health Outcomes Index. This index uses a combination of five social and economic conditions, listed below. A grant project located in a census tract with higher IBL poor health outcomes rank would receive more points within RCO’s evaluation process.

- Cancer Deaths
- Death from Cardiovascular Disease

- Low Birth Weight
- Lower Life Expectancy at Birth
- Premature Death

Greenspace Availability

To prioritize projects in areas with low amounts of park or greenspace, RCO can use the spatial analysis developed for the equity review. This analysis categorized each census tract as having high, medium, or low greenspace availability, based on the number of acres per 1,000 residents. A project located in a census tract with low park or greenspace per capita would receive more points within RCO's evaluation process.

During the board meeting, staff will review the above measures and their geographical representation.

Administrative Flexibility

Removing Redundancy

As project input has been collected, it is observed that several concepts are threaded throughout various criteria, some of which are outside the general scope of this project. While implementing any board adopted updates, staff will fold changes in with existing criteria by simply removing redundancy of concept but refrain from making any major changes to the existing criteria.

For example, several programs include a Site Suitability criterion to assess whether a location is well suited for a particular project. Within ALEA, this criterion asks applicants to address a multipart question including whether "the location and natural features of the site, for example the size, topography, soil conditions, and natural amenities, are well suited for the intended use." However, the proposed new Project Scope criterion overlaps with this prompt by asking the applicant to describe the natural and built features of a site. Rather than requiring applicants to address this concept twice, staff would remove this element of the Site Suitability criterion.

Another example is found in the YAF Readiness to Proceed Criterion. This question asks for the applicant's timeline for completing a project, including their timeline for completing architectural and engineering work and securing permits. This concept has also been drafted into the new proposed Project Design criterion. Again, rather than requiring applicants to address the same idea twice, staff would remove the redundancy from the existing criterion or from any newly approved Design criterion.

In making any necessary adjustments, RCO staff will strive to remove redundancies to eliminate the need for applicants to address the same concept more than once.

Criteria Weight

Currently, the relative value of the four identified criteria varies across the six grant programs. For example, the Need criteria is valued at thirty percent in ALEA whereas it is valued at eighteen percent in WWRP Trails. One goal of this project is to make the relative values of the criteria consistent across each program. In addition, the equity review recommends that the Need criteria be worth approximately thirty percent of the total available points.

As RCO staff implement any adopted criteria updates by merging new language and values with the remaining criteria, some changes to the value of existing criteria may be necessary. Point values may need to change for existing criteria to maintain consistency both in their relative weight within each program and to achieve consistency across grant programs.

In making any necessary adjustments, RCO staff will strive to:

- 1) Weight the Need criteria (combined narrative and data measures) at approximately thirty percent of the total point value. In addition, RCO staff will strive to achieve a roughly 2:1 ratio between the narrative and data portions of the Need criteria.
- 2) Weight the total value of the revised criteria at fifty to seventy-five percent of the total depending on the program and the number of existing criteria with which they will be merged.
- 3) Maintain the current relative value of the remaining criteria.

The following tables illustrate the possible weighting and valuation of the new criteria as they are merged with the existing (current) criteria. For each example below, the current (2022) criteria summary table is shown with point values and the corresponding relative value followed by the proposed 2024 criteria with only the relative value. In the tables showing proposed 2024 criteria, the new criteria are identified by bold font.

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Local Parks Category

WWRP Local Parks Evaluation Criteria Summary – 2022 (Current Criteria)				
Criteria Title	Scored By	Project Type	Maximum Points	Relative Value
Public Need	Advisory Committee	All	15	20.5%
Project Scope	Advisory Committee	All	15	20.5%

WWRP Local Parks Evaluation Criteria Summary – 2022 (Current Criteria)				
Criteria Title	Scored By	Project Type	Maximum Points	Relative Value
Immediacy of Threat	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	10	13.6%
		Combination	5	6.8%
Project Design	Advisory Committee	Development	15	13.6%
		Combination	7.5	10.3%
Sustainability	Advisory Committee	Development	5	6.8%
		Combination	5	6.8%
Site Suitability	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	10	13.6%
		Combination	2.5	3.4%
Expansion/ Renovation	Advisory Committee	All	5	6.8%
Project Support	Advisory Committee	All	10	13.6%
Cost Efficiencies	Advisory Committee	All	5	6.8%
Growth Management Act Preference	RCO Staff	All	0	0%
Proximity to People	RCO Staff	All	1.5	2%
County Population Density	RCO Staff	All	1.5	2%
Total Points Possible			73	

WWRP Local Parks Evaluation Criteria Summary – Proposed 2024 Criteria Summary			
Criteria Title	Scored By	Project Type	Relative Value
Project Introduction	Not Scored	All projects	0%
Need Narrative	Advisory Committee	All projects	25%
Project Scope	Advisory Committee	All projects	20%
Project Design	Advisory Committee	Development	20%
		Combination	10%
Project Engagement	Advisory Committee	All Projects	15%
Site Suitability	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	15%
		Combination	5%
Immediacy of Threat	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	10%

		Combination	5%
Sustainability	Advisory Committee	Development	5%
		Combination	5%
Cost Efficiencies	Advisory Committee	All projects	5%
Need: Social Vulnerability	RCO	All projects	3%
Need: Health Outcomes	RCO	All projects	3%
Need: Greenspace Availability	RCO	All projects	3%
Growth Management Act Preference	RCO	All projects	0%
Proximity to People	RCO	All projects	0.5%
County Population Density	RCO	All projects	0.5%
		All Projects	80%
		Development Only	100%
		Acquisition Only	100%
		Combination	100%
		Total Possible	100%

Land and Water Conservation Fund

LWCF Evaluation Criteria Summary – 2022 (Current Criteria)				
Criteria Title	Scored by	Project Type	Maximum Points	Relative Value
Need	Advisory Committee	All projects	15	28%
Need satisfaction and diversity of recreation	Advisory Committee	All projects	10	18%
Immediacy of threat and viability	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	15	28%
		Combination	5	9%
Project design	Advisory Committee	Development	10	18%
		Combination	5	9%
Sustainability	Advisory Committee	Development and Combination	5	9%

LWCF Evaluation Criteria Summary – 2022 (Current Criteria)				
Community support	Advisory Committee	All projects	5	9%
Cost efficiencies	Advisory Committee	All projects	5	9%
Proximity to people	RCO Staff	All projects	1.5	2.8%
County population density	RCO Staff	All projects	1.5	2.8%
Applicant compliance	RCO Staff	All projects	0	0%
Total Points Possible			53	

LWCF Evaluation Criteria Summary – 2024 Proposed Criteria			
Criteria	Scored By	Project type	Relative Value
Project Introduction	Not Scored	All Projects	0.0%
Need	Advisory Committee	All projects	25.0%
Scope	Advisory Committee	All projects	20.0%
Design	Advisory Committee	Development	15.0%
		Combination	10.0%
Immediacy of threat and viability	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	20.0%
		Combination	5.0%
Project Engagement	Advisory Committee	All projects	20.0%
Sustainability	Advisory Committee	Development	5.0%
		Combination	5.0%
Cost efficiencies	Advisory Committee	All projects	5.0%
Need: Social Vulnerability	RCO	All projects	3.0%
Need: Poor Health Outcomes	RCO	All projects	3.0%
Need: Greenspace Availability	RCO	All projects	3.0%
Proximity to people	RCO	All projects	0.5%
County population density	RCO	All projects	0.5%
Applicant compliance	RCO	All projects	0.0%
All Projects			80%
Development Only			100%

Acquisition Only	100%
Combination	100%
Total Possible	100%

Next Steps

Staff will continue to engage with interested parties on the proposed changes and prepare for an upcoming board decision on this topic in December in preparation for the 2024 grant round. Staff will also prepare for outreach and communications to new and existing applicants regarding these changes, should they be adopted by the board.

Attachment A: Draft Criteria Language as of August 17, 2023

New: Project Introduction

Before addressing scored criteria, applicants will be asked to provide a brief unscored introduction to their project and service area. The purpose of this is to give evaluators a high-level project overview as context for the rest of the evaluation. Similar language is currently used in the WWRP – Urban Wildlife category.

Proposed Language:

Project Introduction

(1-2 minutes for presentations or 1 short paragraph for written applications)

Introduce your project's location and goals to set the stage for your project.

- Locate the project on statewide, regional, and site maps to help orient the evaluators to the project area and its context within your service area.
NOTE: The service area is the geographic footprint within which most of the anticipated users live, as defined by the applicant.
- Summarize the site and the project's goals and objectives. For example, highlight the site's current condition and acquisition, development, or renovation goals.

Need

Changes to the Need criterion add objective, staff scored measures, eliminate the Grant Application Data Tool, and lead applicants through a simplified criterion that is consistent across programs.

This proposal incorporates several objective elements. Two measures are sourced from the Washington Tracking Network's [Information by Location](#) mapping tool, while a third objective measure uses spatial greenspace data. Each of these measures would be integrated into PRISM for automatic scoring. This combination of measures looks at many characteristics of a project's census tract (including but not limited to income, race and ethnicity, housing availability, death from cardiovascular disease, and availability of park/greenspace), allowing RCO to identify high need areas.

Statewide data is valuable but it cannot tell the full story of communities' needs for services. For example, census tracts do not line up with service areas and therefore may not fully characterize

a projects' user base. As such, the Need criterion continues to include a narrative prompt that guides applicants through specific information to show the need for a project.

With this change, Need would account for approximately 20-30% of the total evaluation score.

Proposed Language:

Need

Location Based (Statewide priorities)

Points will be awarded based on **social vulnerability**, **health outcomes**, and **greenspace availability**. Social vulnerability and health scores will be taken from the [Washington Tracking Network's Information by Location](#) mapping tool.

The scores result from the Social Vulnerability Index ranking and the Health Disparity Index's Poor Health Outcomes ranking. The greenspace equity scores will be determined by using spatial data analysis from RCO's equity review of grant programs. For that review, census tracts were classified as having High (>8 acres/1,000), Medium (3-8 acres/1,000), and Low (<3 acres/1,000) greenspace/capita.

- Social Vulnerability Index
 - 5 points for vulnerability rating 8-10
 - 3 points for vulnerability rating 6-7
 - 2 points for vulnerability rating 3-5
 - 1 point for vulnerability rating 1-2

- Health Disparity Index - Poor Health Outcomes
 - 5 points for health outcome rating 8-10
 - 3 points for health outcome rating 6-7
 - 2 points for health outcome rating 3-5
 - 1 point for health outcome rating 1-2

- Greenspace Availability
 - 5 points for low greenspace
 - 3 points for medium greenspace
 - 1 point for high greenspace

Continued on next page

Need:

Narrative Based

Describe the need for new or improved recreation facilities, how the need is known and why existing amenities within the service area do not satisfy the need. A complete response should include the following:

- Inventory of existing publicly accessible outdoor recreation opportunities within your organization's service area and their condition.
- Description of any relevant gaps in access, opportunity, or service delivery.
- Description of the current and/or anticipated use of the project site and any factors that contribute to fluctuations in use or demand for service.
- Description of how the need for this project has been identified and prioritized.

Point range: 0-X points

Need Satisfaction (Scope + design)

This proposal eliminates the Need Satisfaction criteria and instead uses Project Scope and Project Design criteria to determine how well a project meets the identified need.

The revised Project Scope criterion reduces the number of elements for the applicant to address and guides the applicant through a scope description. The proposed Project Design criterion is simplified to help the applicant describe how the design aligns with the need, site, and scope. Project Design also addresses how the applicant developed the project budget and, if not already there, how the applicant plans to become ready for construction.

Proposed Language:

Project Scope

- Describe the project site location and existing natural and man-made features. Describe what is being proposed at the project site including the land acquisition and/or elements to be constructed or renovated, and for what purpose.

What recreation opportunities will this project provide? How does the project link with local recreation or open space plans?

Point range: 0-X points

Project Design

- Describe how the design aligns with the described need, site location, and project scope. Describe how the design addresses any constraints and whether the design provides equal access for users of all abilities. You may choose to describe design elements such as parking and site access, accessibility features, environmental considerations, green infrastructure, cultural or historic interpretation, etc. If available, include design visuals.

Point range: 0-X points

- Provide an overview of the overall project budget. How was the cost estimate determined? If the proposal includes funds to complete the site design and permitting, what is the process and anticipated timeline to be construction ready?

Point range: 0-X points

Project Support (Engagement)

RCO proposes renaming Project Support to Project Engagement and the broadening the criterion. This change prompts the applicant to describe their methods of engagement and what the level of public engagement means in the project's local community, how that engagement influenced design, and whether partnerships are being leveraged for the project. As proposed, these elements would be scored separately to consistently define the weight of each within the overall project score.

Proposed Language:

Project Engagement

- RCO encourages you to use a variety of methods to gather public input on the project. Describe your engagement methods and the populations that you engaged, including underserved populations. Describe the level of participation and the significance of that participation within the community or service area.

Point range: 0-X points

- How has community input influenced the project design?

Point range: 0-X points

Continued on next page

- Describe any existing or emerging community partnerships that are providing financial, in-kind, or other forms of support for engagement or project delivery. Partnerships may be formal or informal. For example, partnerships may exist with schools, recreation or health organizations, governmental or non-governmental entities, Native American tribes, community groups, etc. Describe the significance of the partnership(s) within the community or service area.

Point range: 0-X points

Expansion or Renovation

This proposal eliminates the Expansion or Renovation criterion to remove scoring preference for projects in locations with existing greenspace. Projects to renovate facilities or expand existing sites continue to have value for communities, but need for such projects can be captured in responses to the narrative portion of the Need criterion.

Proposal:

Eliminate the Expansion or Renovation (WWRP Local Parks) and Expansion (WWRP Water Access) criteria.



A Resolution to Recognize the Service of

Ted Willhite

To the Residents of Washington State and the Recreation and Conservation Office

WHEREAS, from January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2023, Ted Willhite has served with distinction and displayed exceptional public service as a member and chair of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Willhite oversaw the investment of more than \$800 million in more than 2,000 outdoor recreation, conservation and farm and forest preservation projects within Washington state; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Willhite prioritized inclusive, equitable, and climate forward changes to Recreation and Conservation Office grant programs, policies and projects, which was specifically demonstrated in the adoption of Resolution 2020-35 – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement; and

WHEREAS, his love for outdoor recreation and access for all Washingtonians has been displayed by his intelligence, knowledge of community issues, and deep care and persistence in funding excellent projects; and

WHEREAS, his work in the development of the 2018 and 2023 Washington State Conservation and Recreation Plans was incomparable; and

WHEREAS, his exuberance for everything related to trails and hiking is greatly admired;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that on behalf of the citizens of Washington State and in recognition of Mr. Willhite's dedication in performing his duties as Recreation and Conservation Funding Board chair, fellow board members and Recreation and Conservation Office staff extend their sincere appreciation and compliments on a job well done.

Approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
in Port Townsend, Washington
on October 25, 2023

Handwritten signature of Kristen Ohlsen-Kiehn in black ink.

Kristen Ohlsen-Kiehn
Washington Department of
Natural Resources

Handwritten signature of Amy Windrope in black ink.

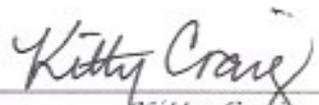
Amy Windrope
Washington Department of Fish
and Wildlife

Handwritten signature of Peter Herzog in black ink.

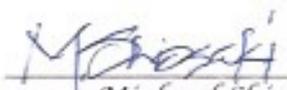
Peter Herzog
Washington State Parks and
Recreation Commission



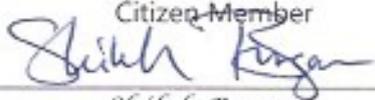
Trang Lam
Citizen Member



Kitty Craig
Citizen Member



Michael Shiosaki
Citizen Member



Shiloh Burgess
Citizen Member



Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: October 24-25, 2023
Title: Youth Athletic Facilities Program Changes
Prepared By: Ben Donatelle, Policy Specialist
Brock Milliern, Policy and Legislative Director

Summary

This memo provides a summary of four proposed policy changes for the Youth Athletic Facilities program, feedback received from a public review period held between July 25 and August 20, and staff recommendations for policy changes. These proposed changes intend to enable the Youth Athletic Facilities program to address the need for athletic facility projects more adequately and reduce the number of athletic facilities proposed for funding through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Local Parks category.

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

Background

The Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) grant program provides money to purchase land and develop or renovate outdoor athletic facilities serving youth. The program's priority is to enhance facilities that serve people through the age of eighteen who participate in sports and athletics.

After providing YAF program history and programmatic questions for Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) consideration in April, staff presented four potential policy changes to address stakeholder requests to improve the program's function and reach in June. A parallel goal of these proposed changes is to reduce the number of athletic facility projects in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Local Parks category.

The four policies proposed for consideration are:

1. Allowing acquisition only projects
2. Increasing maximum grant limits
3. Developing a sliding scale grant limit
4. Limiting matching grants between YAF and WWRP Local Parks

Discussions with the board led to proposed options for each of the four policy areas. These options were posted for public comment on the Recreation and Conservation Office's (RCO) website from July 25 through August 20. In addition, RCO sent notification to more than 3,000 email recipients comprised of past project applicants, nonprofit advocacy partners, and other program stakeholders.

This memo provides details on the four policy proposals, a summary of the public comment process, feedback received, and RCO staff's recommendations.

Summary of Policy Proposals

For each policy, a summary of the proposal is followed by the options proposed for public feedback.

Acquisition Only Projects

Only projects for development or acquisition and development combination projects are eligible for funding in the YAF Large category – acquisition only projects are ineligible. In the YAF small category, only development projects are allowed. Communities with inadequate athletic facilities often complete projects in phases because available funding does not cover the increasing costs of property, labor, and construction materials. To enable grantees to phase projects over multiple grant rounds, staff proposed allowing "acquisition only" projects in the YAF Large category. The options proposed for public review were:

- **Option 1A:** Allow acquisition only projects as an eligible project type in the YAF Large category.
- **Option 1B:** No Change. Land acquisition is only allowed when combined with facility development.

Increased Grant Limits

The current maximum grant limit for large YAF projects is \$350,000 and \$75,000 for small projects. Additionally, small category projects have an overall project limit (award and match combined) of \$150,000. Those limits were set by the board in 2017. The cost of installing new facilities has increased significantly. RCO Staff proposed raising the grant limits for both large and small category projects to a range that reflects

contemporary athletic facility construction costs. The options proposed for public review were:

- **Option 2A:** Increase grant limits in the large category to between \$750,000 and \$1,500,000.
- **Option 2B:** Increase grant limits in the small category to between \$150,000 and \$350,000*.
- **Option 2C:** No Change. The grant limits remain the same.

**Note: a typo in the public comment memo listed two different values for the upper limit of the proposed range for the YAF small category (\$300,000 and \$350,000). The upper limit of the range should have been \$350,000, which is equivalent to the current YAF Large category limit.*

Sliding Scale Grant Limits

RCO requires fifty percent matching share for most grant programs. However, in the YAF program, qualifying communities may have their match obligation reduced. At most, a community may have their match reduced to ten percent of the total project cost. In such cases, a funding disparity is created between communities who qualify for a match reduction and those that do not. Currently, qualifying communities that maximize the grant limit and their eligible match reduction have a total available project budget that is less than communities with a fifty-fifty match. In this case, the sponsor is required to make up any difference, mitigating the benefit of the match reduction.

Table 1 below shows the current disparity in funding opportunity.

Match Required	Grant Limit	Match Required	Total project cost	Disparity
50%	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$700,000	\$-
40%	\$350,000	\$233,333	\$583,333	\$116,667
30%	\$350,000	\$150,000	\$500,000	\$200,000
20%	\$350,000	\$87,500	\$437,500	\$262,500
10%	\$350,000	\$38,889	\$388,889	\$311,111

Staff propose a sliding scale approach to grant limits to eliminate this funding disparity for communities that are eligible for a match reduction. The options proposed for public review were:

- **Option 3A:** The maximum grant limit should be variable and tied to the applicant’s required match obligation.
- **Option 3B:** No Change. The maximum grant limit should remain the same for all applicants.

Matching YAF and WWRP

Currently, a YAF project may use multiple funding sources, including WWRP Local Parks, as match contribution for project elements. However, WWRP Local Parks is RCO’s most over-subscribed program, i.e., it has the greatest proportion of applications that remain unfunded each biennium.

With grant limits at \$350,000 and rising costs of athletic field projects or large complexes, it is common for applicants to need more funds than what is available through grants from the YAF program alone. Raising the YAF program grant limits should encourage more athletic facility projects to apply to YAF. However, to further reduce the number of athletic facility projects in WWRP, staff suggest prohibiting matching a YAF grant with a WWRP Local Parks grant in the same grant cycle. The options proposed for public review were:

- **Option 4A:** Matching a WWRP Local Parks grant with a YAF grant for the same project elements is prohibited.
- **Option 4B:** No Change. Applicants can match YAF and WWRP Local Parks grants.

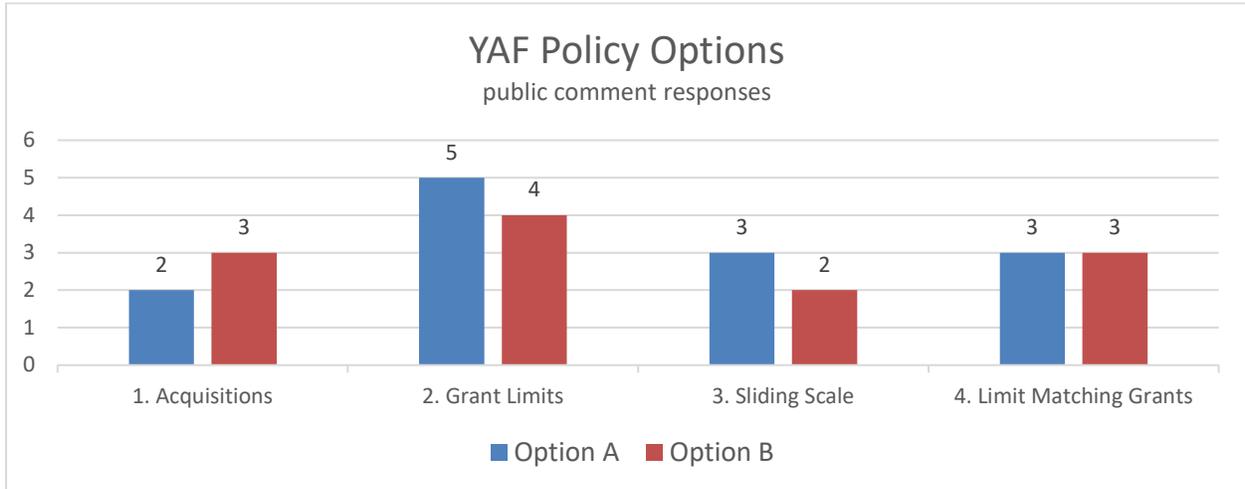
Public Comment Summary

RCO staff posted a memo detailing the proposed policy options on RCO’s website and requested the public review and provide feedback on the proposals. RCO sent notification to more than 3,000 email recipients comprised of past project applicants, nonprofit advocacy partners, and other program stakeholders. The comment period was open from July 25 through August 20, 2023. RCO received comments from six individuals. Two commentors represented the Washington Recreation and Parks Association and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition.

In review, the policy options were as follows:

	Option A	Option B	Option C
Policy 1	Allow acquisition only	No change	N/A
Policy 2	Increase LARGE category grant max	Increase SMALL category grant max	No change
Policy 3	Implement sliding scale grant limit	No change	N/A
Policy 4	Limit WWRP Local Parks match	No change	N/A

The chart below displays a summary of the respondents' preferred policy options:



Note: No commenters expressed support for policy option 2C – the no change option.

A list of commentors and a summary of their comments is included as Attachment A.

Discussion and Staff Recommendations

Acquisition Only Projects

Public comment summary

Public comments slightly favored opposing an acquisition only policy in the YAF program. Of the comments submitted, a primary concern focused on the risk of sponsors not completing the developments after acquiring the property. One commenter highlighted that WWRP Local Parks had funding reserved for land acquisition projects and suggested applicants seeking to acquire property should be directed through that program.

Supporting comments favored aligning the YAF program with other board programs and enabling athletic projects to be phased through the YAF program. Phasing projects can relieve a financial burden on under-resourced communities to come up with land acquisition and development funds in a single grant year. One commenter pointed out that creating more opportunity through YAF will help alleviate some burden in the WWRP Local Parks program.

Staff recommendation

Option 1A: Allow acquisition only projects as an eligible project type in the YAF large category.

Discussion

RCO has a positive history working with applicants to put together projects that are implemented as intended. When projects change or are unable to move forward as proposed in the grant application, RCO works with applicants to resolve the issues. While some risk is inherent in any program that allows acquisition only projects, applicants have a strong track record of developing their proposed facilities. In fact, current RCO policy requires that intended recreation development occur within five years of the property acquisition, which serves as a deterrent to speculative property acquisition.

While it is true that WWRP Local Parks has a dedicated funding allocation for property acquisition, not all applicants who are eligible in YAF are also eligible in WWRP. WWRP maintains a planning eligibility requirement which is a perceived barrier to under-resourced communities. Furthermore, nonprofit organizations, such as sport clubs, that are eligible applicants in YAF are not eligible in WWRP.

RCO believes enabling acquisition only projects in YAF will create consistency with other board programs and benefit under-resourced communities. It also provides a source of land acquisition funding for applicants that are not eligible in other RCO programs.

Grant limits

Public comment summary

Comments unanimously supported increasing grant limits in both large and small YAF program categories. One commenter specifically supported an increase to the large category to at least \$1,000,000, especially if the board adopts a policy to limit matching YAF and WWRP grants. Another commentator recommended a grant limit escalation policy that would automatically increase grant limits to match inflation and keep up with rising construction costs.

Staff recommendation

Option 2A: Increase grant limits in the large category to between \$750,000 and \$1,500,000.

Option 2B: Increase grant limits in the small category to between \$150,000 and \$350,000.

Further, staff recommend setting the maximum grant limits at \$1.5 million for large category projects and \$350,000 for small category projects.

Discussion

The average minimum [cost to construct of](#) one synthetic turf multi-sport field can be between \$700,000 to \$1,500,000 and has increased significantly since the grant limits were set in 2017. Grant limits have not kept pace with the costs of developing needed athletic facilities, which leads to applicants to seek funds from multiple fund sources. This increases the burden on grantees and RCO staff to manage multiple grants for a single project.

One commenter pointed out that current policy allows applicants to match a YAF grant with a WWRP Local Parks grant for a total award (if successful with both applications) of \$850,000 (\$350,000 YAF and 500,000 WWRP). Setting the grant limit lower than \$850,000 would reduce an applicant's current funding potential if projects are not allowed to match WWRP Local Parks and YAF grants. Further, with construction costs escalating year after year and upward inflationary pressure on material and labor costs projected to continue into 2024, projects scoped today are only going to be more expensive when the next round of grant funding becomes available in July 2025. In anticipation of this, RCO recommends setting the grant limits at the upper end of the proposed range.

While increasing the grant limits may result in a more competitive YAF program, it is also likely to alleviate pressure in WWRP Local Parks category. From 2018 to 2022, WWRP Local Parks projects with an athletic facility component comprised between twenty-eight and thirty-seven percent of the total project applications and between thirty-five and forty percent of funded projects. By providing sufficient funding to develop an athletic facility through the YAF program, RCO hopes to encourage projects with an athletics focus to use YAF rather than WWRP Local Parks.

Sliding Scale Grant Limit

[Public comment summary](#)

Public comments slightly favored adopting a sliding scale grant limit. Comments supporting the proposal suggested that finding matching funds is one of the greatest barriers to communities securing a grant award. Others expressed support for gradually implementing this equity review recommendation in a discrete program, such as YAF, before applying it more generally, such as in WWRP. This incremental approach will allow RCO to assess the policy's effectiveness and make adjustments as necessary before adopting it elsewhere.

Comments opposing this proposal indicated that the grant limits should remain the same for all applicants regardless of size or income, and applicants should scope their projects within available budgets.

Staff recommendation

Option 3A: The maximum grant limit should be variable and tied to the applicant's required match obligation.

Discussion

Staff propose a sliding scale approach to grant limits. Athletic facility construction costs are relatively similar regardless of a community's size or available resources. Yet, communities with fewer local resources often experience greater difficulties fully funding planning, acquisition, and construction costs to build facilities. The 2022 equity review of RCO grant programs specifically recommended implementing a sliding scale grant limit to address this funding disparity.

Similarly, even though board policy allows for a reduction in match for under-resourced communities, the grant award limit remains the same. Consequently, the total project funding available for communities that maximize both the award limit and the match reduction policy has significantly less purchasing power than wealthier communities. Communities eligible for a reduced match need a larger grant limit to have an equal opportunity to afford the facilities they need. The sliding scale grant limit concept builds on the existing match reduction policy, increasing its impact for eligible communities.

With a sliding scale grant limit, the maximum amount an applicant can request from RCO would fluctuate based on their eligibility for a match reduction. The goal of this proposal is to help eliminate any disparity in funding opportunity regardless of community size, financial standing, or socioeconomic condition. The graduated grant limit tiers would begin at the level approved by the board in Policy 2, considered the default grant limit. Applicants would be eligible for an increased award limit as their level of match requirement decreased.

As proposed, grant limits would be tiered and based on an applicant's eligibility for match reduction as shown in Table 2 below. Column 1 shows the sliding scale scenario while Column 2 illustrates the amplified disparity if grant limits are increased but the sliding scale proposal is not adopted.

Table 2: Comparison of funding opportunity with sliding scale or no sliding scale grant limits

	Column 1: Proposed Sliding Scale				Column 2: No Sliding Scale			
Match Required	Grant Limit	Match Required	Total project cost	Disparity	Grant Limit	Match Required	Total Project Cost	Disparity
50%	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$3,000,000	\$-
40%	\$1,800,000	\$1,200,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$1,500,000	\$1,000,000	\$2,500,000	\$500,000
30%	\$2,100,000	\$900,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$1,500,000	\$642,857	\$2,142,857	\$857,143
20%	\$2,400,000	\$600,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$1,500,000	\$375,000	\$1,875,000	\$1,125,000
10%	\$2,700,000	\$300,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$1,500,000	\$166,667	\$1,666,667	\$1,333,333

The legislature has maintained strong support for the YAF program historically, funding ninety-four percent of all project applications over the past ten years. RCO recognizes that the total percentage of projects funded may decrease with larger projects on the funding list. Funding larger grant requests (up to \$2,700,000) will likely result in a more competitive program and fewer project applications receiving awards. However, if alleviating pressure from WWRP Local Parks is an outcome of this shift, the trade-off creates a more balanced grant program portfolio overall.

Limiting matching grants

Public Comment Summary

Comments supporting and opposing this proposal were evenly split. On one hand, commentators pointed out that financing a development project can be incredibly challenging and resource-limited communities need all the funding assistance they can pull together to successfully complete projects.

On the other hand, prohibiting matching grants and encouraging athletic facility projects to apply in YAF will help to reduce the pressure on WWRP Local Parks – RCO’s most over-subscribed grant program.

One commenter qualified their support for this proposal on the condition that the grant limits adopted were in the \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000 range, or sufficient to maintain the equal funding opportunity applicants are currently afforded by successful matching grants.

Staff recommendation

Option 4A: Matching a WWRP Local Parks grant with a YAF grant for the same project elements is prohibited. However, if the default grant limit adopted in policy 2 is not a sufficient value to maintain current funding opportunities or higher, RCO staff recommends Option 4B, no change.

Discussion

Currently if an applicant is successful in securing both a YAF and WWRP Local Parks grant to fund their project, the maximum award available is \$850,000 (\$350,000 YAF and \$500,000 WWRP-Local Parks). Staff recommends setting the grant limits and matching restrictions in a manner that increases purchasing capacity.

Limiting matching grants and encouraging projects focused on athletic facilities to apply through YAF will relieve pressure on WWRP Local Parks category.

Even with substantially elevated grant limits, some applicants might still struggle to secure adequate funding to complete their projects. In such cases, RCO should work with applicants to rescope their projects to better fit program limits or find additional funding sources.

Applicants may still apply for WWRP funds for other elements within the park site. For example, WWRP could be used to develop playgrounds, pavilions and shelters, circulation pathways, parking, and other non-athletic elements at the project site. In addition, applicants could still leverage funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to support their athletic facility project.

Next Steps

Pending the board's decisions on each policy proposal, RCO staff will implement any adopted policies by preparing the grant manuals and informing the public and potential applicants of the changes ahead of the 2024 grant cycle.

Strategic Plan Link

Collectively, these policy changes implement actions 2.1, 2.6, and 2.8 of the board's Unified Strategy #2. The policies also address Strategy 3.A.4. of the Board's strategic plan – Perform regular assessments to determine the public's priorities for outdoor recreation and conservation funding.

Attachment

Attachment A: Summary of Public Comments
Attachment B: Resolution 2023-26

Summary of Public Comments

Name of Commentor	Organization Affiliation	Date Submitted	Commentor's preferred options
Beth Purcell	Seattle Parks Foundation	7/31/2023	Policy 1: Option 1A Policy 2: Option 2A Policy 3: Option 3A Policy 4: Option 4B
Paul Simmons	City of Olympia	8/14/2023	Policy 1: Option 1B Policy 2: Option 2A & 2B Policy 3: Option 3A Policy 4: Option 4B.
Colette Berna	City of Bremerton	8/18/2023	Policy 4: Option 4B
Roxanne Miles	Washington Recreation and Parks Association	8/18/2023	Policy 1: Option 1B Policy 2: Option 2A & 2B Policy 3: Option 3B Policy 4: Option 4A
Jennifer Burbidge	City of Lacey	8/18/2023	Policy 1: Option 1B Policy 2: Option 2A & 2B Policy 3: Option 3B Policy 4: Option 4A
Andres Guerrero-Guzman	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition	8/21/2023	Policy 1: Option 1A Policy 2: Option 2A & 2B Policy 3: Option 3A Policy 4: Option 4A

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: October 24-25, 2023

Title: Equity Grant Program

Prepared By: Brock Milliern, Policy Director

Summary

This memo summarizes options for developing an equity focused grant program in line with the 2022 equity review recommendation.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

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

Background

In the 2021-2023 biennium, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) was provided funding and direction to conduct an equity review of grant programs. That review concluded in 2022 with forty-six recommendations, including creating an equity grant program.

In 2022 RCO created the Planning for Recreation Access program. Many communities who had not received an RCO recreation grant in the last ten years received grants to complete either comprehensive recreation plans for their community, which creates eligibility for RCO grant programs, or site-specific plans to develop projects. The first PRA grants were awarded in mid-2023, and with additional funding in the 2023 session, RCO will award grants to fifty-four of the ninety-nine projects.

As PRA projects conclude, sponsors will look for further funding opportunities to develop projects. Communities that completed comprehensive plans will now be eligible in all RCO recreation grant programs and may use either local funding or additional RCO grant funding to plan specific projects. For sponsors who completed site specific planning, the next step may be to target capital funding through an RCO grant program or other means. To support applicants that are considering project development, RCO is exploring the creation of an equity focused grant program.

Program Development

RCO staff are assessing different pathways for developing an equity focused grant program. As in developing any new grant program, there are several aspects to consider:

- **What is overall program objective?**
- **Who are eligible applicants and what are eligible projects?**
- **What is appropriate program timing?**
- **How would a program be funded?**
- **Should a program be connected to the Planning for Recreation Access projects?**

Next Steps

During this briefing, the board will be asked for feedback on these concepts. Staff will then continue considering funding options for an equity focused grant program, which may include soliciting feedback from the public and stakeholders.

Attachments

Attachment A: Recommendation concerning creating a transitional outdoor equity program

Attachment A

2022 Equity Review - Recommendation concerning creating a transitional outdoor equity grant program:

"Work with State Legislators and outdoor equity advocates to create a transitional Outdoor Equity Grant program that funds high-quality parks and greenspace, recreation facilities, trails and youth sports facilities in underinvested areas. The program should fund planning and pre-development costs and requires zero or minimal matching funds, conditional on community input that is demonstrably incorporated into project scope and design. After a finite number of grant cycles, funding for the Outdoor Equity Grant program should be shifted permanently to set-asides advancing equity in other grant programs."