

Evaluation Criteria Changes Policy Briefing Memo

Date: December 7, 2023
Title: Grant Evaluation Criteria Changes
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Summary

This memo summarizes ADOPTED changes to evaluation criteria in 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. The Recreation and Conservation Funding board adopted the final criteria change updates at a special meeting on December 4, 2023 for implementation in the 2024 grant cycle.

Introduction and Background

During the past year, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) policy staff have worked with the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board), external stakeholders, and RCO grants staff to revise four grant evaluation criteria used commonly in six recreation and conservation focused grant programs. The revisions address recommendations in several recently completed studies and reports including the [Physical Activity Task Force \(PATF\) Report; Equitable Grantmaking: A Comprehensive Review of Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office Grant Programs \(equity review\);](#) and the [2023 Washington Recreation and Conservation Plan \(SCORP\)](#).

The criteria under review are Need, Need Satisfaction (including Scope and Design), Project Support, and Expansion/Renovation. These criteria are part of a broader scoring mechanism used to evaluate projects in the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Youth Athletic Facilities, and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's Local Parks, Trails, and Water Access categories.

Additional context and details on the background of these changes can be found in the following Recreation and Conservation Funding Board memos from:

- [April 2023, Item 3](#)
- [June 2023, Item 9](#)
- [October 2023, Item 3](#)
- [December 2023, Item 1](#)

Goals of the proposed criteria

By updating these criteria, RCO aims to achieve the following four goals:

1. **Close gaps in access to greenspace.** The equity review noted that RCO funding skews markedly to places with pre-existing green space and recommends RCO use a data-driven approach to equitably distribute available funding. Similarly, the board's unified strategy directs RCO to, "Identify, incorporate, and weight measures to help address disparate outcomes in outdoor recreation and conservation funding." Finally, the 2023 SCORP establishes a statewide goal to reduce the physical, social, and economic barriers to accessing outdoor recreation opportunities.
2. **Address disparities in access to grant funding.** The equity review discovered that despite similar proposal success rates in many grant programs, fewer proposals from low-income and racially diverse communities is a driving factor of funding disparities. The board's unified strategy directs RCO to reduce barriers to grant funding for under-resourced communities. Past applicants frequently comment that the time and resources required to develop a proposal and complete the application process is overly burdensome, especially for small organizations with few or no staff dedicated to grant writing.
3. **Align criteria consistently across programs.** The equity review also notes that developing grant proposals is time-consuming. It recommends standardizing the presentation format to reduce the time required for developing presentations and level the playing field between communities with significantly varied staff capacity. To that end, using consistent evaluation criteria across programs that are commonly leveraged to support similar project types will also reduce the time needed to develop application materials for applicants that apply for funding from multiple grant sources. Similarly, grant evaluators, especially those who review grants in multiple programs, will see consistently worded and scored evaluation criteria.
4. **Simplify and provide greater direction.** RCO routinely surveys evaluation committee members after each grant cycle to gather input on evaluation criteria and their perception of the evaluation process. Simplifying the criteria and providing clearer guidance in applying and scoring the many overlapping and complex details are frequently cited as areas for improvement. Inexperienced applicants will benefit from simplified questions and clearer guidance on addressing the criteria topics.

ADOPTED Evaluation Criteria Language

At their December 7, 2023 special meeting, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted Resolution 2023-27 approving the following evaluation criteria.

Project Introduction – Unscored

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

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

- Locate the project on statewide, regional, and site maps to help orient the evaluators to the project area and its context in the service area.

NOTE: The service area is the geographic area where most of the anticipated users live, as defined by the applicant.

- Summarize the site’s condition, the project’s acquisition, development, or renovation goals, and the recreation opportunities the project will provide.

Need

Project Need is comprised of two parts: one scored by RCO staff, and another scored by the program’s advisory committee. The staff scored portion reflects statewide priorities as determined by the 2023 Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan and recommendations from the 2022 equity review of grant programs. The advisory committee scored portion is a narrative description of local priorities and an opportunity for applicants to discuss their project in context with local conditions.

Statewide Priorities – *Scored by RCO Staff -Applicants Do Not Answer*

Points will be awarded based on **social vulnerability, health outcomes, and greenspace availability.**

Social vulnerability and health scores are based on information from the [Washington Tracking Network’s Information by Location](#) (IBL) mapping tool. Social vulnerability scores use a combination of 16 social and economic conditions such as limited English, crowded housing, or population living in poverty. Health scores are from the IBL’s Poor Health Outcomes ranking. Greenspace availability scores are determined using spatial data analysis from RCO’s equity review of grant programs. For that review, census tracts were classified as having High (more than 8 acres per 1,000 residents), Medium (3-8 acres per 1,000 residents), and Low (less than 3 acres per 1,000 residents) greenspace per capita.

- Social Vulnerability Index - *Maximum weight of 3% of total score.*
 - 3 points for vulnerability rating 8-10
 - 2 points for vulnerability rating 6-7
 - 1 points for vulnerability rating 3-5
 - 0 points for vulnerability rating 1-2

- Health Disparity Index - Poor Health Outcomes - *Maximum weight of 3% of total score.*
 - 3 points for health outcome rating 8-10
 - 2 points for health outcome rating 6-7
 - 1 points for health outcome rating 3-5
 - 0 points for health outcome rating 1-2

- Greenspace Availability - *Maximum weight of 3% of total score.*
 - 3 points for low greenspace
 - 2 points for medium greenspace
 - 1 points for high greenspace

Local Priorities – *Scored by Evaluation Committee - Applicants address in evaluation presentations or written materials.*

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

- A simple inventory and condition of relevant outdoor recreation opportunities in the service area.
- Description of 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, including whether it is linked to local recreation or open space plans.

Point range: 0-X points

Project Scope

Describe the site's existing natural and built features. Describe what is being proposed in the project, including land acquisition and/or elements to be built or renovated, and for what purpose.

- What recreation opportunities will this project provide?

Point range: 0-X points

Project Design

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

Point range: 0-X points

- Provide an overview of the project budget and how the cost estimate was determined. If the proposal includes additional site design and permitting, what is the process and anticipated schedule to be construction-ready?

Point range: 0-X points

Project Engagement

RCO encourages applicants to use a variety of methods to gather input on the project. How were the people who will be most impacted by the project engaged?

- Describe what methods were used and the populations engaged, including underserved populations and/or Native American tribes. Describe the relevance of that participation for the population size, demographic or socioeconomic conditions of the community or service area.

Point range: 0-X points

- How has community input influenced the project design?

Point range: 0-X points

Project Engagement (continued)

- Describe any community partnerships that are providing support for the project whether through financial, in-kind, project delivery, or other means. Partnerships may be formal or informal. Describe the significance of the partnership(s) within the community or service area.

Point range: 0-X points

Expansion or Renovation

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

Discussion of Evaluation Criteria Updates

Project Introduction prompts applicants to orient the evaluation committee to their project's location and overarching goals. This concept is used in the WWRP Habitat program and was specifically requested as an unscored criterion by the technical work group. Work group participants noted that during project presentations, inexperienced applicants often launch immediately into addressing the first evaluation criteria without setting the stage for the review team. In conversation, several work group members commented that sometimes they do not even know what the project is proposing to accomplish until halfway through the presentation.

Successful applicants often take a minute or two to orient the evaluation committee to the project's location within the state and provide a brief proposal overview. Adding an unscored project introduction both guides inexperienced applicants and suggests consistent approach for all applicants to orient the evaluation committee to their project.

Project Need is comprised of two parts; one scored by RCO staff, and a second scored by the advisory committee. The staff scored portion reflects statewide priorities in the 2023 Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan and recommendations from the 2022 equity review of grant programs. The committee's score is based on the applicants' description of local needs, priorities, and how the project addresses comprehensive planning goals. It also provides an opportunity for the applicant to discuss any discrepancies or add context to the data driven assessment of need.

The staff scored assessment of need builds upon the data-driven approach used by RCO's Application Data Tool, which was implemented as a product of the 2018 SCORP. For 2024, however, RCO will eliminate the data assessment from the evaluation presentation and instead score projects using pre-determined rankings that reflect the 2023 SCORP's statewide priorities

and recommendations in the equity review. By doing so, applicants gain additional time to respond to the narrative criteria and RCO can consistently and transparently apply pre-defined scores from the data-driven determinants of need.

While statewide data is valuable, 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 project's user base. As such, the Need criterion includes a revised narrative section, scored by the evaluation committee, that prompts applicants to provide specific information to describe the locally determined need for the project. The narrative portion of Need ranges between 20 and 30 percent of the overall score, depending on the program, where the data-driven scores make up about 9 percent.

Project Scope and Project Design are two criteria to replace the several variations of the Need Satisfaction criterion that existed across the six grant programs. Together, Project Scope and Project Design seek to gain an understanding of how the project will address the need as it is described by the applicant. The criteria ask about existing site conditions, the recreational opportunities the project will provide upon completion, designs and constraints, and how the cost estimates were determined.

These updated criteria begin with the goals and intent of the project and then focus on the design details of the specific elements proposed for funding. Project Scope reduces the number of elements the applicant is asked to address and guides them through a standard scope description. The Project Design criterion also guides the applicant in describing how the site features align with the described need and how they fit with or complement the existing site conditions. 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.

The score for the project design criterion is split into two sub-sections – the first focuses on the design elements and the second focuses on the budget. Splitting and setting a specific point range for each sub-section indicates to the evaluation committee and the applicants how much to consider each of the questions within the overall criterion. By splitting criterion scores into sub-parts, RCO can provide more consistent direction to applicants and evaluators on how much each "consideration" should influence the overall score.

Project Engagement renames and expands the range of factors considered by the current Public Support criterion. Previously, this question asked the applicant to describe how they informed the community about the project, what level of support has been demonstrated, and the extent of public involvement in comprehensive planning that names the project. Applicants were asked to describe their methods using quantifiable terms such as attendance at public meetings, letters of support, or media coverage.

For 2024, RCO is renaming Project Support to Project Engagement and broadening the questions to account for the many ways and times public engagement occurs during project development. The updated criterion asks the applicant to describe their methods of engagement, the community's response, and why that response is meaningful for the applicant's

local community. It also specifically asks how the community's input influenced the project's design. Finally, the criterion asks about partnerships that are emerging or being leveraged for the project. Like Project Design, each of these elements will be scored separately.

The questions are clear to suggest that engagement can happen in a variety of ways and at various times leading up to the project – comprehensive planning, park master planning, or designing this specific project. The concept of partnerships is similarly broad, as described in the criteria, and can be formal or informal, longstanding or just emerging. Partners may contribute to the project in a variety of creative ways by providing financial or in-kind support, knowledge sharing, participation in events, or however the partners identify meaningful collaboration.

Expansion or Renovation is a criterion that was used exclusively in the WWRP Local Parks and Water Access categories. This criterion was developed to address a priority of the 2008 SCORP and gave preferential treatment to projects that, “provide continued improvement of existing sites and facilities previously funded...”¹ At the time this criterion was developed, just after the 2008 economic recession, incentivizing projects that leveraged existing sites and applicant resources made financial sense for the state. However, in the intervening years, this criterion has contributed to the skewed funding distribution identified in the equity review.

RCO is eliminating the Expansion or Renovation criterion for 2024. Projects to renovate facilities or expand existing sites continue to have value for communities, and the need for such projects can be adequately described in responses to the narrative portion of the Need criterion.

Criteria Weight – Relative Value

The 20203 SCORP and the equity review both recommended adjusting the point values, or re-weighting, certain criteria in each program to address disparate funding outcomes.

In reweighting the criteria, staff tried to maintain consistent values for the new criteria across the programs. For example, the equity review recommends that project need account for approximately thirty percent of the overall score. Additionally, both the equity review and SCORP recommend that criteria assessing applicants' engagement with their communities be assessed and elevated.

Staff also tried to maintain the relative value of the existing criteria within each program to the extent possible. However, each program has individual complexities that staff worked to address. For example, some programs have criteria that are named in state law. For example,

¹ *Defining and Measuring Success: The Role of State Government in Outdoor Recreation. A State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning Document.* Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office. Olympia, WA. June 2008.

WWRP Local Parks and WWRP Trails have different legally required criteria, which resulted in different values for both the Need and Project Engagement criteria.

Staff considered several other factors when adjusting the criteria point values. First, the total available points for criteria that evaluate different project types must be equal (acquisition, development, and combination projects are not always evaluated by the same set of criteria). Another important consideration was aligning previous board priorities. For example, in 2020 the board adopted revisions to the Sustainability criterion and asked that it be weighted between five and ten percent of the total score. Finally, staff also considered how to maintain a scoring rubric for evaluators that is functional and easy to navigate.

On average, across all the programs, the highest weighted criteria are Project Need at thirty percent, followed by Immediacy of Threat, Project Engagement, Project Design, Project Scope, and Site Suitability, which are each between fourteen to seventeen percent of the overall total. The location-based portion of need accounts for nine percent of the total score, while the narrative portion accounts for an average of twenty one percent.

Detailed tables depicting the criteria values in each of the six programs are found below.

ADOPTED Evaluation Criteria Values

WWRP – Local Parks					
No.	Title	Scored By	Project Type	Weight	Point Value
0	Project Introduction	Unscored	All	0%	0
1	Need: Local Priorities	Advisory Committee	All	25%	25
2	Project Scope	Advisory Committee	All	20%	20
3	Project Design	Advisory Committee	Development	20%	20
			Combination	10%	10
4	Project Engagement	Advisory Committee	All	15%	15
5	Site Suitability	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	15%	15
			Combination	5%	5
6	Immediacy of Threat	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	10%	10
			Combination	5%	5
7	Sustainability	Advisory Committee	Development	5%	5
			Combination	5%	5
8	Cost Efficiencies	Advisory Committee	All	5%	5
9	Need: Greenspace Availability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
10	Need: Social Vulnerability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
11	Need: Poor Health Outcomes	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
12	Proximity to People	RCO Staff	All	0.5%	0.5
13	County Population Density	RCO Staff	All	0.5%	0.5
14	Growth Management Act Preference	RCO Staff	All	0%	-1
Total					100

WWRP - Trails					
No.	Title	Scored By	Project Type	Weight	Point Value
0	Project Introduction	Unscored	All	0%	0
1	Need: Local Priorities	Advisory Committee	All	15%	15
2	Project Scope	Advisory Committee	All	10%	10
3	Project Design	Advisory Committee	Development	10%	10
			Combination	5%	5
4	Project Engagement	Advisory Committee	All	10%	10
5	Immediacy of Threat	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	15%	15
			Combination	5%	5
6	Sustainability	Advisory Committee	Development	5%	5
			Combination	5%	5
7	Enhancement of Wildlife Habitat	Advisory Committee	All	10%	10
8	Linkages Between Trails	Advisory Committee	All	8%	8
9	Linkages Between Communities	Advisory Committee	All	8%	8
10	Water Access or Views	Advisory Committee	All	5%	5
11	Scenic Values	Advisory Committee	All	5%	5
12	Cost Efficiencies	Advisory Committee	All	3%	3
13	Need: Greenspace Availability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
17	Need: Social Vulnerability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
18	Need: Poor Health Outcomes	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
19	Proximity to People	RCO Staff	All	1%	1
20	County Population Density	RCO Staff	All	1%	1
21	Growth Management Act Preference	RCO Staff	All	0%	-1
Total					100

WWRP – Water Access					
No.	Title	Scored By	Project Type	Weight	Point Value
0	Project Introduction	Unscored	All	0%	0
1	Need: Local Priorities	Advisory Committee	All	20%	20
2	Project Scope	Advisory Committee	All	15%	15
3	Project Design	Advisory Committee	Development	15%	15
			Combination	7.5%	7.5
4	Project Engagement	Advisory Committee	All	15%	15
5	Immediacy of Threat	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	20%	20
			Combination	10%	10
6	Site Suitability	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	15%	15
			Combination	10%	10
			Development	5%	5
7	Sustainability	Advisory Committee	Development	10%	10
			Combination	5%	5
8	Diversity of Recreational Uses	Advisory Committee	Development	5%	5
			Combination	2.5%	2.5
9	Cost Efficiencies	Advisory Committee	All	5%	5
10	Need: Greenspace Availability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
11	Need: Social Vulnerability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
12	Need: Poor Health Outcomes	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
13	Proximity to People	RCO Staff	All	0.5%	0.5
14	County Population Density	RCO Staff	All	0.5%	0.5
15	Growth Management Act Preference	RCO Staff	All	0%	-1
Total					100

Land and Water Conservation Fund					
No.	Title	Scored By	Project Type	Weight	Point Value
0	Project Introduction	Unscored	All	0%	0
1	Need: Local Priorities	Advisory Committee	All	25%	25
2	Project Scope	Advisory Committee	All	20%	20
3	Project Design	Advisory Committee	Development	15%	15
			Combination	10%	10
4	Project Engagement	Advisory Committee	All	20%	20
5	Immediacy of Threat	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	20%	20
			Combination	5%	5
6	Sustainability	Advisory Committee	Development	5%	5
			Combination	5%	5
7	Cost Efficiencies	Advisory Committee	All	5%	5
8	Need: Greenspace Availability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
9	Need: Social Vulnerability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
10	Need: Poor Health Outcomes	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
11	Proximity to People	RCO Staff	All	0.5%	0.5
12	County Population Density	RCO Staff	All	0.5%	0.5
13	Applicant Compliance	RCO Staff	All	0%	-1
Total					100

Youth Athletic Facilities					
No.	Title	Scored By	Project Type	Weight	Point Value
0	Project Introduction	Unscored	All	0%	0
1	Need: Local Priorities	Advisory Committee	All	20%	20
2	Project Scope	Advisory Committee	All	15%	15
3	Project Design	Advisory Committee	All	15%	15
4	Project Engagement	Advisory Committee	All	20%	20
5	Sustainability	Advisory Committee	All	5%	5
6	Facility Management	Advisory Committee	All	5%	5
7	Availability	Advisory Committee	All	5%	5
8	Readiness to Proceed	Advisory Committee	All	5%	5
9	Need: Greenspace Availability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
10	Need: Social Vulnerability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
11	Need: Poor Health Outcomes	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
12	Matching Shares	RCO Staff	All	0.5%	0.5
13	Proximity to People	RCO Staff	All	0.5%	0.5
14	Growth Management Act Preference	RCO Staff	All	0%	-1
Total					100

ALEA – Protection and Enhancement AND Public Access*					
No.	Title	Scored By	Project Type	Weight	Point Value
0	Project Introduction	Unscored	All	0%	0
1	Fit with Public Access Goals	Advisory Committee	All	7.5%	7.5
2	Fit with Protection Goals	Advisory Committee	All	7.5%	7.5
3	Need for Public Access (Local Priorities)	Advisory Committee	All	12.5%	12.5
4	Need for Protection	Advisory Committee	All	12.5%	12.5
5	Project Scope	Advisory Committee	All	7.5%	7.5
6	Development Design (Public Access)	Advisory Committee	Development and Restoration	7.5%	7.5
			Acquisition, Development and Restoration	5%	5
7	Restoration Design and Viability (Enhancement)	Advisory Committee	Development and Restoration	7.5%	7.5
			Acquisition, Development, and Restoration	5%	5
8	Project Engagement	Advisory Committee	All	20%	20
9	Urgency and Viability	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	15%	15
			Acquisition, Development, and Restoration	5%	5
10	Suitability for Protection	Advisory Committee	All	7.5%	7.5
11	Need: Greenspace Availability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
12	Need: Social Vulnerability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
13	Need: Poor Health Outcomes	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
14	Proximity to People	RCO Staff	All	1%	1
15	Growth Management Act Preference	RCO Staff	All	0%	-1
Total					100

* Eligible project types: Acquisition; Development and Restoration; or Acquisition, Development and Restoration

ALEA – Public Access*					
No.	Title	Scored By	Project Type	Weight	Point Value
0	Project Introduction	Unscored	All	0%	0
1	Fit with Public Access Goals	Advisory Committee	All	15%	15
2	Need for Public Access (Local Priorities)	Advisory Committee	All	20%	20
3	Project Scope	Advisory Committee	All	15%	15
4	Development Design	Advisory Committee	Development	20%	20
			Acquisition and Development	10%	10
5	Project Engagement	Advisory Committee	All	20%	20
6	Urgency and Viability	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	20%	20
			Acquisition and Development	10%	10
7	Need: Greenspace Availability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
8	Need: Social Vulnerability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
9	Need: Poor Health Outcomes	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
10	Proximity to People	RCO Staff	All	1%	1
11	Growth Management Act Preference	RCO Staff	All	0%	-1
Total					100

*Eligible project types: Acquisition; or Acquisition and Development

ALEA – Protection and Enhancement*					
No.	Title	Scored By	Project Type	Weight	Point Value
0	Project Introduction	Unscored	All	0%	0
1	Fit with Protection Goals	Advisory Committee	All	15%	15
2	Need for Protection	Advisory Committee	All	20%	20
3	Restoration Design and Viability	Advisory Committee	Restoration	20%	20
			Acquisition and Renovation	10%	10
4	Project Engagement	Advisory Committee	All	20%	20
6	Urgency and Viability	Advisory Committee	Acquisition	20%	20
			Acquisition and Restoration	10%	10
5	Suitability for Protection	Advisory Committee	All	15%	15
7	Need: Greenspace Availability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
8	Need: Social Vulnerability	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
9	Need: Poor Health Outcomes	RCO Staff	All	3%	3
10	Proximity to People	RCO Staff	All	1%	1
11	Growth Management Act Preference	RCO Staff	All	0%	-1
Total					100

* Eligible project types: Acquisition; or Acquisition and Restoration

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution 2023-27: Grant Criteria Changes**

WHEREAS, the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 79A.15 authorizes the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to adopt evaluation criteria for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Local Parks, Trails, and Water Access categories; and

WHEREAS, Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 79A.25 authorizes the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to administer other state and federal grant-in-aid programs; and

WHEREAS the National Park Service requires the Recreation and Conservation Office update the grant selection criteria for the Land and Water Conservation Fund to align with the priorities of the 2023 Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan (SCORP); and

WHEREAS, the 2023 SCORP, 2022 equity review, and other recent reports recommend updating the grant selection criteria in advance of the 2024 grant round; and

WHEREAS, Recreation and Conservation Office staff worked with program stakeholders, evaluation committee members, the board and others to revise Project Need, Need Satisfaction, Project Support, and Expansion or Renovation evaluation criteria in the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Youth Athletic Facilities programs and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's Local Parks, Trails, and Water Access categories; and

WHEREAS, the proposed criteria changes were posted for public review and Recreation and Conservation Office staff considered the public's comments in the final criteria change proposals and recommendations; and

WHEREAS, the proposed changes align with recommendations and implementation actions in the 2022 Equity Review of grant programs and the 2023 Washington State Recreation and Conservation plan;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board has reviewed the proposed revisions to evaluation criteria and adopts the changes as described in Item 1, Attachment A.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the board directs Recreation and Conservation Office staff to incorporate these changes into the appropriate grant program manuals, and that the changes shall be effective beginning with the 2024 grant cycle.

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution 2023-28
Grant Criteria Relative Weight Changes**

WHEREAS, the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 79A.15 authorizes the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to adopt evaluation criteria for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Local Parks, Trails, and Water Access categories; and

WHEREAS, Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 79A.25 authorizes the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to administer other state and federal grant-in-aid programs; and

WHEREAS the National Park Service requires the Recreation and Conservation Office update the grant selection criteria for the Land and Water Conservation Fund to align with the priorities of the 2023 Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan (SCORP); and

WHEREAS, the 2023 SCORP, 2022 equity review, and other recent reports recommend updating the grant selection criteria in advance of the 2024 grant round; and

WHEREAS, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board previously adopted proposed evaluation criteria changes detailed in Item 1 Attachment A; and

WHEREAS, the changes align with recommendations and implementation actions in the 2022 Equity Review of grant programs and the 2023 Washington State Recreation and Conservation plan;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board has reviewed the proposed relative scoring value of the proposed changes to evaluation criteria for the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Youth Athletic Facilities, and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's Local Parks, Trails, and Water Access categories, approves values as incorporated in Item 1, Attachment B and extends authority to the RCO Director to make minor amendments to those scoring values if necessary in the course of implementing this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the board directs Recreation and Conservation Office staff to incorporate these changes into the appropriate grant program manuals, and that the changes shall be effective beginning with the 2024 grant cycle.