



July 24th Location In-person: Columbia Pointe Ballroom, Hampton by Hilton, 486 Bradley Boulevard, Richland, WA. This public meeting location will allow the public to provide comments 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 (Meeting Day Only):

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_eK9g2rLuQfizf00oVU28-A

Phone Option: (669) 900-6833 - **Webinar ID:** 874 7780 8074

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. If you are feeling ill, the zoom format is reliable resource for home viewing

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.

WEDNESDAY JULY 24, 2024

OPENING AND MANAGEMENT REPORTS

9:00 a.m. Call to Order *Chair Shiosaki*

- Roll Call and Determination of Quorum
- Approval of Agenda
- Chair remarks

9:05 a.m. 1. Consent Agenda (Decision) *Chair Shiosaki*

A. Board Meeting Minutes

- April 16, 2024

B. Time Extensions

- Seattle Parks and Recreation Department, South Park Playground, Spray Park, and Playfield, [18-2169](#)
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, South Sound Prairies 2018, [18-1333](#)
- Washington Farmland Trust, Reiner Farm, Snohomish County, [16-1358](#)

C. Cost Increase

- City of Mountlake Terrace, Evergreen Playfield Infield Turf and Lights, [20-1642](#)

D. Match Reduction Policy Technical Change

Resolution 2024-06

9:10 a.m. 2. Director's Report

A. Director's Report *Megan Duffy*

B. Grant Management Report *Karl Jacobs*

C. Grant Services Report (*written only*) *Kyle Guzlas*

D. Performance Report (*written only*) *Bart Lynch*

E. Fiscal Report (*written only*) *Mark Jarasitis*

9:30 a.m. General Public Comment (limit 3 minutes please) for issues not identified on the agenda.

BOARD BUSINESS: DECISION

9:35 a.m. 3. Nonhighway Off-road Vehicle Activities Policy *Adam Cole*

Resolution 2024-07

Public comment will occur prior to adopting the resolution.
Please limit comments to three minutes

10:35 a.m. BREAK

**10:50 a.m. 4. Mitigation Costs: Department of Fish and Wildlife,
Point Whitney Access Redevelopment, [16-2308](#)** *Karen Edwards*

Resolution 2024-08

Public comment will occur prior to adopting the resolution.
Please limit comments to three minutes

BOARD BUSINESS: BRIEFING

**11:10 a.m. 5. Land and Water Conservation Fund, Outdoor
Recreation Legacy Partnership Program: Review
Project** *Karl Jacobs*

Public comment: Please limit comments to three minutes

**11:25 a.m. 6. Boating Infrastructure Grant Program: Review
Projects** *Karl Jacobs*

Public comment: Please limit comments to three minutes

11:35 a.m. LUNCH

BOARD BUSINESS: REQUEST FOR DIRECTION

12:35 p.m. 7. 2025-2027 Budget *Brock Milliern*

BOARD BUSINESS: BRIEFING

1:50 p.m. 8. Technical Assistance Program *Leah Dobey
Caroline Morin*

2:20 p.m. BREAK

BOARD BUSINESS: DECISION

**2:35 p.m. 9. Eligibility for Acquisition: City of Kent, Uplands
Extension Property, [24-1776](#)** *Karl Jacobs*

Resolution 2024-09

Public comment will occur prior to adopting the resolution.
Please limit comments to three minutes

**2:50 p.m. 10. Non-State, Non-Federal Match Waiver Request:
Okanogan Land Trust, Teas Ranch, [20-1619](#)**

Karen Edwards

Resolution 2024-10

Public comment will occur prior to adopting the resolution.
Please limit comments to three minutes

BOARD BUSINESS: REQUEST FOR DIRECTION

**3:10 p.m. 11. Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program
Farmland Review: Themes and Issues**

Nick Norton

BOARD BUSINESS: BRIEFING

4:00 p.m. 12. State Agency Partner Reports

- Governor's Office
- Department of Natural Resources
- State Parks and Recreation Commission
- Department of Fish and Wildlife

Jon Snyder
Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn
Peter Herzog
Amy Windrope

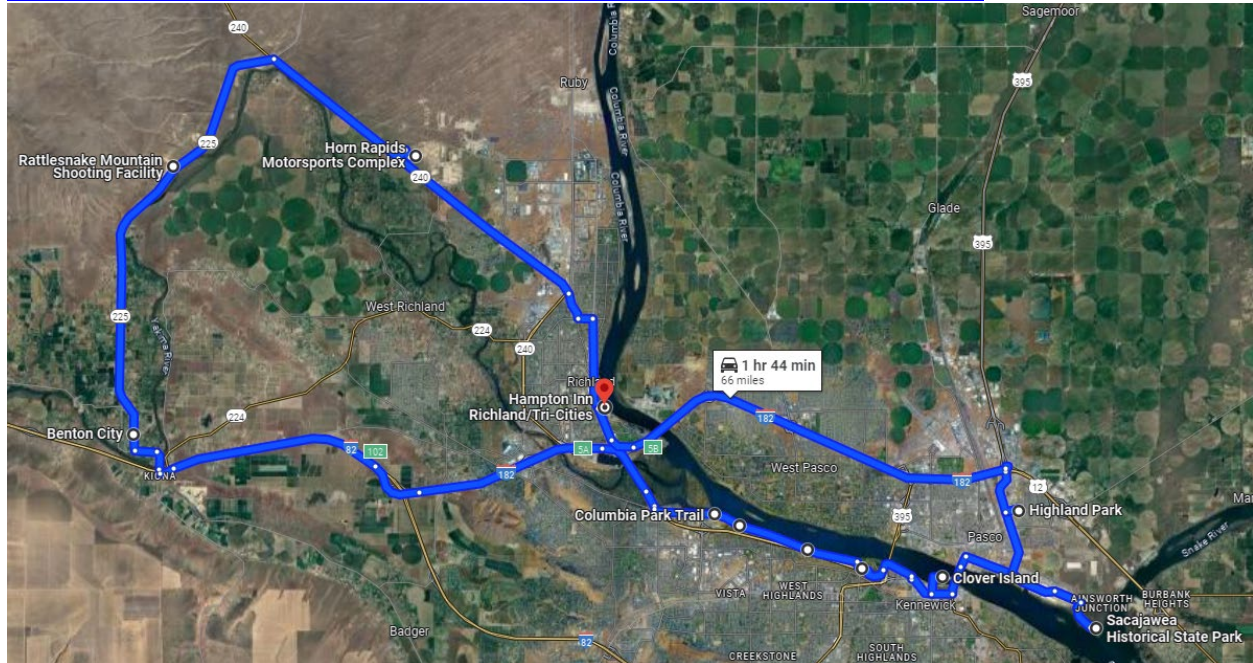
4:30 p.m. RECESS

Next Meeting: Regular Meeting- October 29-30, 2024. In-person at Room 172, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street, SE, Olympia, Wa.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Tour Tri-Cities (Kennewick, Pasco, Richland), Benton and Franklin Counties: July 25, 2025

Tour Route

[Hampton Inn Richland/Tri-Cities to Hampton Inn Richland/Tri-Cities - Google Maps](#)



Recreation and Conservation Office Staff Guides: Jesse Sims and Butch Lovelace,
Outdoor Grants Managers

Schedule

Arrive – Depart, Travel Times	Event or Activity	Location	Notes
Morning			
9:00-9:10	Roll call/determine quorum/load vans	Hampton Inn: 486 Bradley Blvd, Richland	Board members, staff, and guests
9:10-9:30	Travel to Stop 1		

Arrive – Depart, Travel Times	Event or Activity	Location	Notes
9:30-10:05	Stop 1: Presentation of off-road vehicle sports park and activities.	Horn Rapids Motorsports Complex: 3323 Twin Bridges Road, Richland	Richland and Horn Rapids staff
10:05-10:15	Travel to Stop 2		
10:15-10:50	Stop 2: Presentation of shooting ranges and activities.	Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility: 93315 N, WA-225, Benton City	Ron Jorgensen, Tri-Cities Shooting Association
10:50-11:00	Travel to Stop 3		
11:00	Stop 3: Quick view of Archie Bordan Park tennis courts and Riverfront Park land acquisition.	Benton City	Drive-thru
11:00-11:20	Travel to Stop 4		
Afternoon			
11:20-12:30	Stop 4: Lunch	Columbia Park, Lions Club picnic shelter	Drive-thru 4-mile park
12:30-12:45	Travel to Stop 5		
12:45-1:30	Stop 5: Presentation of shoreline restoration, boating access, and moorage projects. Walk to the top of lighthouse.	Clover Island, Port of Kennewick	Tana Bader, Port of Kennewick
1:30-1:45	Travel to Stop 6		
1:45-2:30	Stop 6: Board funded projects, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion community engagement and interpretation efforts, Maya Lin art piece.	Sacajawea Historical State Park: 2503 Sacajawea Park Road, Pasco	Audra Sims, Washington State Parks Area Manager

Arrive – Depart, Travel Times	Event or Activity	Location	Notes
2:30-2:45	Travel to Stop 7		
2:45	Stop 7: Quick look at football fields.	Highland Park; 500 N Wehe Avenue, Pasco	Drive-thru
2:45-3:00	Travel back to Hampton Inn	486 Bradley Blvd, Richland	Board members and staff
3:00	Tour ends		

Projects Funded at Each Tour Stop

Listed below are projects funded at each stop. The project number in each table links to the Recreation and Conservation Offices (RCO) Project Snapshot, which provides more information about the funded project. You may access the grant program pages on [RCO's website](#) to learn more about Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants. Here is a list of the programs and acronyms referenced in the tables.

- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account ([ALEA](#))
- Boating Facilities Program ([BFP](#))
- Firearms and Archery Range Recreation ([FARR](#))
- Land and Water Conservation Fund ([LWCF](#))
- Local Parks Maintenance ([LPM](#))
- Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities ([NOVA](#))
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program ([WWRP](#))
- Youth Athletic Facilities ([YAF](#))

Stop 1: Horn Rapids Motorsports Complex in Richland

Description of Projects: The City of Richland has used over thirty NOVA Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) category grants to plan for, and the subsequent development, renovation, and maintenance and operation (M&O) of the Horn Rapids ORV Park. Recreational facility development includes motocross tracks, all-terrain vehicle, obstacle, drag and relay courses, four-wheel drive areas, campground-pit area, and a group shelter. Support amenities include the entrance road, parking lots, accessible restrooms with showers, spectator facilities, office, maintenance and storage buildings, utilities, and fencing to increase safety, decrease vandalism, and for crowd control. The city has contributed a total of \$1,586,151 in match in the form of cash and donations of materials and labor.

PROJECT NUMBER*	PROJECT NAME	GRANT PROGRAM	GRANT AMOUNT
<u>80-042P</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Development Plan	NOVA-ORV	\$48,561
<u>81-8012M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park M&O 81	NOVA-ORV	\$42,012
<u>81-9012D</u>	Horn Rapids Development Phase 1	NOVA-ORV	\$304,212
<u>82-9013D</u>	Horn Rapids Development Phase 2	NOVA-ORV	\$269,580
<u>83-029M</u>	Horn Rapids 1984 M&O	NOVA-ORV	\$140,937
<u>83-030D</u>	Horn Rapids Development Phase 3	NOVA-ORV	\$161,515
<u>84-020M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park M&O 84	NOVA-ORV	\$103,650
<u>84-9021D</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Development Phase 4	NOVA-ORV	\$89,581
<u>85-026M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park M&O 85	NOVA-ORV	\$223,240
<u>85-027D</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park Development Phase 5	NOVA-ORV	\$69,347
<u>87-010D</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park Development Phase 5	NOVA-ORV	\$52,524
<u>87-022M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park M&O 87	NOVA-ORV	\$265,033
<u>88-012D</u>	Horn Rapids Capital Improvements	NOVA-ORV	\$71,207
<u>91-009M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park M&O 91	NOVA-ORV	\$127,727
<u>92-010M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park M&O 92	NOVA-ORV	\$101,336
<u>92-183D</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park	NOVA-ORV	\$163,959
<u>92-232M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park M&O	NOVA-ORV	\$112,972
<u>92-255D</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park Camp Improvements	NOVA-ORV	\$95,568
<u>93-008M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park 1993 M&O	NOVA-ORV	\$114,121
<u>94-006M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park 1994-95 M&O	NOVA-ORV	\$228,533
<u>95-003D</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park Capital Improvements	NOVA-ORV	\$36,602
<u>97-003M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park M&O 1996-97	NOVA-ORV	\$195,586
<u>97-1069M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park M&O 1998-99	NOVA-ORV	\$193,443
<u>99-1148M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park 2000-2001	NOVA-ORV	\$198,736
<u>00-1589D</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Project	NOVA-ORV	\$197,314
<u>01-1183M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park M&O 02-03	NOVA-ORV	\$239,623
<u>03-1317M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park M&O 03	NOVA-ORV	\$86,639
<u>04-1867M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park M&O	NOVA-ORV	\$159,922
<u>05-1280D</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park ATV Track Update	NOVA-ORV	\$33,664
<u>07-1464D</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Bathroom and Campground	NOVA-ORV	\$462,155

PROJECT NUMBER*	PROJECT NAME	GRANT PROGRAM	GRANT AMOUNT
<u>11-1114D</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park RV Utility Upgrades	NOVA-ORV	\$408,217
<u>14-2124M</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park M&O	NOVA-ORV	\$96,600
<u>14-2136D</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Entry and Building Improvements	NOVA-ORV	\$211,805
<u>18-2523D</u>	Horn Rapids ORV Park Access Road	NOVA-ORV	\$249,164
		TOTAL	\$5,555,085

*Type: A=Acquisition, D=Development, P=Planning, M=Maintenance and Operation

Stop 2: Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility in Benton City

Description of Projects: The Tri-Cities Shooting Association used four FARR grants to develop a multi-purpose shooting facility, including construction of the rifle and pistol ranges; extending and improving the access road; installation of water and power distribution systems; expansion of the range clubhouse; the purchase of new trap machines; and construction of a small building to house a generator. Tri-Cities Shooting Association contributed a total of \$353,573 in match in the form of cash and the donation of labor and materials.

PROJECT NUMBER*	PROJECT NAME	GRANT PROGRAM	GRANT AMOUNT
92-046D	Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility	FARR	\$144,550
97-1184D	Rattlesnake Water and Power	FARR	\$50,000
16-2336D	Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility Improvement	FARR	\$30,969
18-2262D	Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility Access	FARR	\$72,524
		TOTAL	\$298,043

*Type: D=Development

Stop 3: Benton City Parks

Description of Projects: The City of Benton City used one WWRP Local Parks grant to renovate two tennis courts at Archie Borden Park in the early 1990s and has two current LPM grants for maintenance efforts for the courts. The city used a WWRP Water Access category grant to purchase thirteen acres along the Yakima River for canoeing, kayaking, fishing, and wildlife viewing. Benton City contributed a total of \$29,147 in match in the form of cash and donated labor.

PROJECT NUMBER*	PROJECT NAME	GRANT PROGRAM	GRANT AMOUNT
93-147D	Benton City Tennis Court	WWRP Local Parks	\$10,681
18-1278A	Benton City Riverfront Park	WWRP Water Access	\$73,862
23-1633M	Tennis Courts Maintenance	LPM: Tier 2	\$11,000
24-2220M	Tennis Courts Maintenance	LPM: Tier 2	\$89,000
		TOTAL	\$184,543

*Type: A=Acquisition, D=Development, M=Maintenance

Stop 4: Columbia Park in Kennewick and Richland

Description of Projects: The City of Kennewick and the City of Richland used BFP, Bonds, LWCF, and WWRP Local Parks grants to develop facilities at Columbia Park. The improvements include an aquatic spray park, playground, tennis courts, picnic sites and shelters; a bikeway or hiking trail system restrooms, boat ramps, boarding floats, moorage floats; a parking lot for cars and vehicles with trailers; and installation of utilities, landscaping and irrigation. The cities contributed a total of \$1,447,653 in match in the form of cash and donated labor.

PROJECT NUMBER*	PROJECT NAME	GRANT PROGRAM	GRANT AMOUNT
66-001D	Columbia Park 66	LWCF	\$39,679
83-025D	Columbia Park 83	Bonds	\$90,964
88-014D	Columbia Park West	BFP	\$167,368
97-1140D	Columbia Park East Boat Launch	BFP	\$858,158
98-1183D	Columbia Park West Phase II	BFP	\$271,117
00-1438D	Columbia Park Aquatic Playground	WWRP Local Parks	\$265,265
20-2323P	Columbia Park Boat Launch Boarding Float Rehabilitation Plan	BFP	\$135,000
		TOTAL	\$1,827,551

*Type: D=Development, P=Planning, M=Maintenance

Stop 5: Clover Island in Kennewick

Description of Projects: The Port of Kennewick used ALEA, BFP, and LPM grants to provide accessible boating facilities. Grants support the construction of a boat launch, dock, haul-out area, boat yard, boat wash-down area, parking for vehicles with trailers, and restrooms. Shoreline improvements include over two miles of Columbia River riparian habitat restoration, a waterfront trail and pathway, viewpoints, benches, interpretive signs, and the planting of native vegetation. The pathway links Clover Island to the regional Sacajawea Heritage Trail. The Port of Kennewick contributed \$4,927,587 in the form of cash and other state and federal funding.

PROJECT NUMBER*	PROJECT NAME	GRANT PROGRAM	GRANT AMOUNT
06-1885D	Clover Island Marina Replacement	BFP	\$144,339
08-1679D	Clover Island Improvement Project	ALEA	\$500,000

12-1655D	Clover Island Boat Parking and Restroom	BFP	\$238,146
16-1470C	Clover Island Northshore Restoration	ALEA	\$498,602
23-1546M	Clover Island Paint, Stain, Repair, Replace	LPM	\$82,375
		TOTAL	\$1,463,462

*Type: D=Development, C=Development & Restoration, M=Maintenance

Stop 6: Sacajawea Historical State Park in Pasco

Description of Projects: The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission received grants from the BFP and LWCF programs to provide recreational facilities at Sacajawea Historical State Park. Grants are for redeveloping a boat launch, relocating day use docks, and installing a new anchorage system, ramps, piers, and floats. State Parks is currently using a planning grant to design and permit replacing the moorage floats and paving the parking lot to meet current accessibility requirements.

PROJECT NUMBER*	PROJECT NAME	GRANT PROGRAM	GRANT AMOUNT
85-505D	Sacajawea Boat Launch	LWCF	\$132,960
91-504D	Sacajawea-Revise/Modify River Floats	BFP	\$190,755
20-2340P	Sacajawea Moorage and Parking	BFP	\$200,000
20-2417P	Sacajawea Snake River Float Planning	BFP	\$200,000
		TOTAL	\$723,715

*Type: D=Development, P=Planning

Projects Funded at Stop 7: Highland Park in Pasco

Description of Projects: The Pasco Parks and Recreation Department used Bonds, LWCF, and YAF funding for various phases and amenities at this active local park. Renovation of the football field and construction of a restroom is underway. Because this community qualifies for reduced match, the sponsor share totals \$289,916.

PROJECT NUMBER*	PROJECT NAME	GRANT PROGRAM	GRANT AMOUNT
66-029A	Highland Park 66	LWCF	\$3,750
79-006D	Highland Park 79	Bonds	\$73,166
15-1372D	Highland Park Football Field Upgrades	YAF: Renovation	\$133,500
20-1639D	Highland Park Improvements Phase 2	YAF: Large	\$221,870
		TOTAL	\$432,286

*Type: A=Acquisition, D=Development

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARY MINUTES

Date: April 16, 2024

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

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Members:

Michael Shiosaki, Chair	Seattle	Bob Bugert	Leavenworth
Shiloh Burgess	Wenatchee	Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn	Designee, Department of Natural Resources
Trang Lam	Camas	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 Michael Shiosaki called the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) meeting to order at 9:00 AM and **Julia McNamara**, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Board Liaison, performed roll call, determining quorum. Member Windrope was absent from the meeting. Member Burgess was absent at the time of roll call and joined at 9:02 a.m.

Motion: Move to Approve April 16, 2024, Agenda

Moved By: Member **Herzog**

Seconded by: Member **Bugert**

Decision: **Approved**

Members briefly introduced themselves.

Item 1: Consent Agenda

Chair Shiosaki noted that the consent agenda includes the minutes from the January 30, 2024, meeting; thirteen time-extensions; one project cost increase; and five advisor recognitions.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2024-02**, Consent Agenda
Moved By: Member **Ohlson-Kiehn**
Seconded by: Member **Lam**
Decision: **Approved**

Item 2: Director's Report

Director Megan Duffy gave an overview of the updates provided in the meeting [materials](#), highlighting structural changes and staff additions.

The 2024 Grant Cycle is under way for several programs including Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), Aquatic Lands Enhancement Act (ALEA), Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG), Community Forests Program (CFP), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF). The board approved changes to YAF, WWRP, ALEA, and LWCF in 2023, which are being implemented during this grant cycle.

Director Duffy recognized the official Legislative confirmation of Chair Shiosaki as board Chair.

Legislative Update

Brock Milliern, Policy and Legislative Director, provided a brief update from the conclusion of the 2024 Legislative Session, noting the fast pace of the session was likely due to balancing policy bills and fixes along with budgetary items and the upcoming election year that will include a lot of statewide change over.

RCO received \$150,000 to update the [Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State](#) that will be led by Leah Dobey; \$600,000 for a Lower Snake River Dam Recreation Impacts Study in partnership with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to look at the impacts on recreation if the Lower Snake River Dams are removed; and \$5.8 million for the Community Forest Program (CFP), which would be funded on January 1, 2025, pending a citizen's vote on the Climate Commitment Act (CCA) funding in November.

[House Bill \(HB\) 2165](#) passed, which allows DNR to charge for recreation permits and fees on Department of Natural Resources (DNR) lands. [Senate Bill \(SB\) 5785](#) which allows the use of volunteer and nonprofit organizations on Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) lands also passed.

Ahead of the 2025 Legislative session, staff have been working on a draft budget that the board will make decisions on in August. The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition (WWRC) plans to set their budget in July.

Mr. Milliern noted that changes in elected officials from the November election and leadership positions in the Legislature may impact priorities. Additionally, the budget will be based on current CCA funding, which is subject to a public vote, further complicating the uncertainty of predicting funding.

Grant Management Report

Marguerite Austin, Recreation and Conservation Grants Section Manager, highlighted the 2024 Grant Cycle that started with multiple application webinars, noting that at this time there are slightly fewer applications this year compared to last year, specifically the WWRP – Outdoor Recreation Account (ORA), possibly due to the Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities (COAF) program funding opportunity.

RCO received an additional \$1.8 million from the Federal Highway Administration for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). This will fund an additional twenty-four maintenance projects and six education projects in 2024.

Ms. Austin reported that RCO, the Port of Kennewick, and other partners were recognized by Governor Inslee with a Smart Communities Award for multiple RCO funded projects on Clover Island, which will be a stop during the July travel meeting.

Ms. Austin highlighted the structural changes on the board grants team that included hiring two Assistant Section Managers, Karen Edwards and Karl Jacobs.

BREAK: 9:25 A.M. – 9:40 AM

General Public Comment

None.

Item 3: Nonhighway Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Featured Projects

Dan Haws, Outdoor Grants Manager, highlighted the Capital State Forest (CSF), which uses a variety of Nonhighway Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) funds. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) estimates that over half a million users visit the forest annually. Capital Forest spans 110,000 acres and is uniquely divided between motorized and non-motorized trail systems.

Additional nonhighway road activities within CSF include picnicking, camping, sightseeing, foraging, birdwatching, wildlife viewing, and hunting and fishing. To keep

recreationists safe and to protect natural resources, education and enforcement wardens funded through the NOVA - Education and Enforcement program, patrol the forest.

Sam Henshold, DNR Recreation Operations Manager, explained that CSF is a great “big picture” example of DNR NOVA funds uses from all NOVA categories. The \$5.4 million in grant awards for DNR are almost entirely from RCO and account for nearly one-fifth of DNR’s overall recreation budget. Eighty-two percent of DNR’s grant awards in the 2023-2025 biennium are from NOVA. DNR has been using NOVA funds in CSF since 1990 to install signs and drainage features; bridge, culvert, and trail maintenance; facility maintenance and repairs; staff recreation wardens and trail crews; and build additional miles of trails.

Mr. Henshold emphasized how critical partnerships are to CSF operations and other DNR lands. In addition to NOVA funds, volunteers committed over 43,000 hours of labor statewide in Fiscal Year 2023, with nearly one-third of these hours occurring in CSF.

Brian Carpenter, Outdoor Grants Manager, presented the United States Forest Service (USFS) Cle Elum Ranger District’s (district) Off-road Vehicle (ORV) maintenance program, emphasizing that this project has been awarded grants for twenty-seven years. Being centrally located within Washington, the district’s 420,000 acres receives visitors from across Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Canada seeking to explore the hundreds of miles of dirt bike and off-road vehicle trails.

The district’s multi-use trail system is one of the most popular off-road destinations in the state, and the thorough maintenance program keeps the trails and surrounding areas from becoming damaged from use.

There are a variety of other activities that users enjoy throughout the district, such as dispersed camping, foraging, sightseeing, hunting, and fishing. Within NOVA, the district has been awarded grants in the Off-road Vehicle, Nonhighway Roads, Nonmotorized, and Education and Enforcement categories.

Mr. Carpenter noted that as funding has changed over the years, the USFS has changed how they apply for NOVA funds. **Member Craig** asked if USFS has provided any feedback on the process. Mr. Carpenter replied that each district is working on prioritizing projects within their district, but there has not been much coordination between districts.

Item 4: Nonhighway Off-road Vehicle Activities Policy Change Recommendations

Adam Cole, Policy Specialist, provided an overview of the NOVA program and explained programmatic changes that are being considered based on feedback from the NOVA Advisory Committee and staff.

Mr. Cole explained that current grant limits and the evaluation process are being considered for potential changes. This information is included in the [materials](#). The existing low grant limits lead to a high volume of applications, which when combined with the current evaluation process, creates an administrative burden to applicants and evaluation committees. The changes under consideration could increase the value and efficiency of the NOVA program.

Mr. Cole gave a brief summary of his presentation at the [January meeting](#), summarizing the NOVA advisory committee and how funds are distributed within the NOVA program as outlined in [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 46.09](#).

Member Ohlson-Kiehn asked about the status of criteria changes that were discussed at the January meeting. Mr. Cole answered that criteria changes will be addressed as part of potential long-term changes as that requires significant analyses and discussion.

Member Herzog asked if staff and the advisory committee have considered making planning projects a separate category. Mr. Cole answered that it had not been considered, but it could be included.

Member Craig asked if the funding breakdown was in statute and if it changed with the addition of ORV permit funds. Mr. Cole answered that funding is defined by statute.

Brock Milliern added that the allocation was decided after the ORV permit funds occurred. Additionally, the overall state fuel tax funding is decreasing, which impacts RCO and DNR who receive funding from this source. The Washington State Transportation Commission (STC) is looking at replacing the fuel tax with a road usage charge and RCO is active in the conversation to ensure that recreation is included in future solutions. Mr. Milliern plans to discuss the fuel tax issue at the Outdoor Recreation Caucus in June. Mr. Cole added that when NOVA was originally created, all funding went to ORV projects until an update in the early 2000s included other nonmotorized categories. At that time, a fuel use study was conducted, as required by statute. Conducting a new fuel use study was included in the [2023 Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan \(SCORP\)](#) and will happen as part of the long-term goals for NOVA and statewide strategy.

Mr. Cole explained that the last time grant limits were increased was in 2016, and since then inflation has increased by around 30 percent, creating a need to raise limits to meet costs. Mr. Cole noted a partial increase in NOVA funds in 2022 from an increase in ORV fees, and Mr. Milliern added that this increase was also due to a budgetary fix for funds that had previously been misappropriated to DNR.

In general, applicants tend to complete multiple applications for the same project area to get the necessary funding. Increasing grant limits could improve the process for applicants. Mr. Cole shared the options for increasing grant limits:

Category	Option 1 Current M=maintenance C=planning, development, acquisition	Option 2 Inflation Adjustment	Option 3 Peak Inflation	Option 4 Consolidation/ Impact
Education and Enforcement	\$200,000	\$250,000	\$350,000	\$500,000
Off-road Vehicle	\$200,000 (M) None (C)	\$250,000 (M) None (C)	\$350,000 (M) None (C)	\$500,000 (M) None (C)
Nonhighway Road	\$150,000 (M) \$200,000 (C)	\$200,000 (M) \$250,000 (C)	\$250,000 (M) \$300,000 (C)	\$350,000 (M) \$500,000 (C)
Nonmotorized	\$150,000 (M) \$200,000 (C)	\$200,000 (M) \$250,000 (C)	\$250,000 (M) \$300,000 (C)	\$350,000 (M) \$500,000 (C)

The advisory committee was surveyed and preferred Option 2 and Option 3 across categories. Additional trends from the advisory committee survey indicate agreement that current grant limits are too low and that members of the advisory committee wish to maintain a distributive program that focuses on maintenance needs. There was mixed feedback on higher grant limits for development projects and members agreed that each category can be treated differently, and the increase can be treated differently by project type.

Members Ohlson-Kiehn, Craig, and Herzog shared support for Option 2. Member Herzog also shared support for Option 1. Member Ohlson-Kiehn did not support Option 3.

Member Bugert asked if demographics and equity were considered by the advisory committee and staff while drafting these options. Mr. Cole answered that these issues

are part of the longer-term discussion as there is not enough time before August to appropriately address them.

Member Ohlson-Kiehn recommended encouraging people to explain the rationale behind their choices and input when these options go out for public comment. **Member Burgess** noted that funding seems to be distributed statewide and projects are being completed, and wondered if raising grant limits is the best way to make a difference in this program. Mr. Cole explained that most applicants are requesting the maximum grant amount for projects while also providing match, including volunteer hours.

Mr. Cole explained longer-term policy topics that the board may consider but were too challenging to address prior to the upcoming NOVA grant round. These include considering block grants or noncompetitive grants by sponsor; multiple biennium grant awards; combining categories or project types, except for education and enforcement; adding underserved user outreach to the qualifying comprehensive plan; prioritizing underserved populations in the evaluation criteria; and completing a vehicle use study.

Member Bugert asked if these long-term topics would require legislative changes. Mr. Cole answered that most would not require a statutory change, but changes like multiple biennium grant awards may require legislative change or a check to see if this is compliant with current rules.

Mr. Cole plans to present Options 1, 2, and 3 for public comment to gauge what the public's preference on: what is the preferred ed option is and why; if all categories should be treated the same or whether any should be treated uniquely, and what potential unanticipated consequences of raising grant limits might be. The public comment period will take place in May for a period of about three weeks.

Finally, Mr. Cole shared that changes to the evaluation process do not require board approval but wanted to keep the board aware of any changes to the program. The proposed changes to the evaluation process are favored by the advisory committee and would reduce the current twenty-minute presentation to a hybrid process that would include a ten-minute presentation and a written evaluation.

LUNCH: 11:40 AM – 1:15 PM

Item 5: Compliance Corrective Action Policy

This item was presented after Item 9: State Agency Partner Reports.

Myra Barker, Compliance Unit Manager, presented a Corrective Action policy as outlined in the meeting [materials](#). This policy was developed to provide flexibility in

compliance issue resolution; provide an option for sponsors to remove or reverse the action that created the issue and return the project to its intended purpose and function; and could be applied to unresolved compliance issues such as ineligible buildings, no public access, closed sites, encroachments, and ineligible uses. The proposed policy was posted on the RCO website for public comment and directly emailed to forty project sponsors. Four comments were received in support. The proposed policy reads as follows:

A sponsor and RCO mutually may develop a corrective action plan to address a compliance issue on a state-funded site. The plan must identify the required actions the sponsor will take and deadlines for completion. Failure to complete the actions will result in conversion. The director may approve deadline extensions.

Staff recommend approving the proposed corrective action policy to be added to [Manual 7](#).

Regarding the final sentence of the policy that says the director may approve deadline extensions, **Member Burgess** asked if there were circumstances where the board should approve extensions. Ms. Barker explained that the practice has been that the director has the discretion to raise any concerns to the board.

Member Bugert asked if there was potential for this to be accepted by the National Parks Service (NPS) for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Ms. Barker has shared this policy with NPS compliance staff but is unaware of any policy changes at this time.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2024-03**
Moved By: Member **Burgess**
Seconded by: Member **Craig**
Decision: **Approved**

Public Comment:

None.

Item 6: Bellingham Frank Geri Field Four Non-Conforming Use Extension Request

This item was presented after Item 8: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Farmland Program Review.

Myra Barker explained that the City of Bellingham (city) is requesting a six-month extension for a non-conforming use at the Frank Geri Field Four at the city's Civic Athletic Complex. Ms. Barker explained the Exception to Conversion policy for a non-conforming use as it is found in [Manual 7](#). Field Four was originally permitted for temporary housing units in December 2020 with a two-year limit on the non-conforming use. At the [October 2022 meeting](#), the board approved extending the non-conforming use limit until June 30, 2024. The city is requesting an extension through December 31, 2024, due to delays in relocating the temporary housing units. The city has acquired a new piece of property that the temporary housing units will be relocated to but permit delays have caused the need for an extension.

Ms. Barker outlined the options that the board has the authority to approve or deny for extensions:

- 1) Approve the six-month extension through December 31, 2024.
- 2) Approve the six-month extension through December 31, 2024, with the condition that if the city is unable to meet the deadline, a conversion may be declared.
- 3) Deny the extension request.

Ms. Barker was joined by Nicole Oliver, Bellingham Parks and Recreation Director, to help answer questions from the board regarding the extension. Ms. Oliver explained that the villages are expected to be moved to their new location by the fall of 2024. The new property will hold two temporary housing villages and has street frontage, existing services, and is an existing paved lot. Establishing restroom and kitchen facilities is underway. There will be a public process for approving this new site, but community feedback indicates there is support for the new location over the previous one. Ms. Oliver noted that Puget Sound Energy is currently experiencing a backlog of requests adding to the delay but anticipates a resolution by the deadline.

Member Burgess hoped this story and project is shared with the Washington Association of Cities and expressed support for Option 2. **Member Bugert** also supported Option 2.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2024-04**

Moved By: Member **Bugert**

Seconded by: Member **Burgess**

Decision: **Approved**

Public Comment:

None.

Item 7: City of Medical Lake: Approve Eligibility for Acquisition of Waterfront Park

This item was presented after Item 5: Compliance Corrective Action Policy.

Allison Dellwo, Outdoor Grants Manager, explained that the City of Medical Lake (city) intends to apply for Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) funding to purchase Waterfront Park from Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS); however, based on the policy outlined in [Manual 3](#) and included in the meeting [materials](#), the acquisition of Waterfront Park is not eligible for board funding as it does not meet the third condition: *The land has never been publicly managed for... recreation*. The city previously leased Waterfront Park from DSHS until 2023 when the lease was renegotiated, and the new cost was determined to be unsustainable for the city. Purchasing the property would keep it functioning as a park under the city's care. Ms. Dellwo provided examples of past decisions by the board that waived this policy to allow sponsors to secure WWRP funds to acquire and protect properties for public outdoor recreation.

Staff recommend waiving condition three of the cited policy allowing City of Medical Lake to pursue acquisition grant funding.

Member Lam asked what DSHS planned if the city was unable to purchase. Ms. Dellwo answered that DSHS does not run parks and they prefer the city own and manage it.

Member Bugert asked if there was a need to review the policy to decide whether there is utility to the third condition. **Director Duffy** answered that it would make sense to keep this policy in place and track the number of times an exception is approved.

Member Burgess asked if the timing was right for the city for the board to waive the policy. Director Duffy answered that the city needs certainty that they are eligible for RCO funding. Ms. Dellwo echoed Director Duffy, adding that the city is having conversations now about acquiring the property, but need assurance that they would be able to apply for acquisition funding.

Motion: Move to Approve Resolution 2024-05

Moved By: Member **Burgess**

Seconded by: Member **Herzog**

Decision: **Approved**

Public Comment:

None.

BREAK: 1:34 PM – 1:45 PM

Item 8: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Farmland Program Review

Nick Norton, Policy Specialist, provided background information on the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) that staff plan to thoroughly review over the next year to address several ongoing issues identified by staff and partners and outlined in the meeting [materials](#).

There has been no comprehensive review of WWRP – FPP since being established in 2005 and between ongoing issues, a changing landscape, and temporary decisions, now is a good time to conduct a review of the program. Some of the core issues staff plan to review in the next twelve to fourteen months include easement provisions, eligible entities, project development, innovative mechanisms, and evaluation.

Mr. Norton explained that the twelve-to-fourteen-month review timeline includes an analysis, board direction, a public process, and ends with a board decision ahead of the 2026 grant round. Mr. Norton said that changes could have implications for existing statute and need to be addressed separately. The conservation easement tool will be reviewed, but not as a policy item.

Kim Sellers, Outdoor Grants Manager provided a background on the farmland easement template authority. The board previously adopted a recommended farmland easement which created a lack of clarity about staff and director authority to adjust easement terms, which is necessary for most projects.

There have been many changes in farmland funding and technology since 2007, such as removing obsolete Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) funding language; accommodating other funding source requirements; new technologies such as methane separators, carbon credits; and changes in county zoning and requirements.

Staff were seeking feedback from the board on their willingness to clearly delegate authority to the director to make decisions about conservation easement terms and conditions at the project and program level.

Member Bugert and **Member Burgess** agreed that this would be a cumbersome process for the board to deliberate on quarterly.

Member Herzog asked if general board guidance would be helpful in framing an agreement. Ms. Sellers answered that that option would be considered in the review process. **Director Duffy** noted that if something big stood out, she would bring that to the board or staff would present it in a more holistic way.

Chair Shiosaki encouraged staff to proceed with the review.

Item 9: State Agency Partner Reports

This item was presented after Item 4: Non-Highway Off-road Vehicle Activities.

Governor's Office

Jon Snyder shared that Governor Inslee had not yet started to prepare for his final budget this fall. As this will be his last before leaving office, there will not be large policy shift items ahead of the next administration.

Mr. Snyder recently reviewed a Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) request for a proclamation for a bike month that used RCO's 2020 economic impact report and looked forward to the report being updated this year.

Mr. Snyder visited Ferndale's Metalworks Skatepark ([RCO #18-1787](#) and [20-1802](#)) groundbreaking with outdoor grants manger Andrea Hood, and noted this is a great example of where state funds can help small towns to complete long-term projects.

Department of Natural Resources

Member Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn shared DNR has continued work on their Outdoor Access and Responsible Recreation planning process to develop a strategic vision for recreation on DNR managed lands. This work began last year at DNR's Tribal Summit followed by four Tribal forums in September and October, and a follow-up meeting with Tribes to summarize feedback in December, which was later shared with DNR's trust beneficiaries. Work has continued with the trust beneficiaries and recreation partners to further develop the purpose and goals of the strategic vision. DNR expects to have a draft plan by early fall and a final plan by the end of 2024.

The Legislature passed [House Bill 2165](#) which allows DNR the ability to determine recreation use fees for activities on DNR managed public lands, including recovering costs for permitted events. DNR will need to establish a fee schedule through the Board of Natural Resources.

DNR received funding for a recreational target shooting decision package, which gives DNR the ability to proactively address target shooting. This funding will allow DNR to establish two pilot shooting sites in Clallam and Stevens County.

Together with Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) and WDFW, DNR launched a pilot program to reduce financial barriers for accessing public lands in the Everyone Outdoors program, a part of the Discover Pass. The pilot provides

up to \$1,000 per month in Discover Passes to eligible applicants or organizations. DNR's funding for this came from the [Healthy Environment for All \(HEAL\) Act](#) and has already begun to receive applications.

DNR continues to work with other agencies and Tribes to address recreation impacts on state lands.

State Parks and Recreation Commission

Member Peter Herzog shared that State Parks asked for an additional \$12 million in the general fund and CCA funding for operations and received \$7.1 million in the general fund and \$2.1 million in CCA funding. This funding will be used to move from Tumwater to the Washington State Department of Ecology building in Lacey; maintenance and development at Fort Warden State Park; equipment replacement; ecological integrity assessments; and restoration activities at Ginko Petrified Forest State Park. State Parks received additional funding to add a full-time employee to their Tribal Affairs program.

From the capital budget, State Parks received \$5.5 million for a roundabout at the entrance to the new Nisqually State Park; theater restoration at Fort Flagler State Park; planning for a dock at Lake Sammamish State Park; and \$50,000 for a noxious weed study along the Palouse to Cascades Trail.

State Parks had two pieces of request legislation that did not pass. One would have allowed State Parks to keep the accrued interest from funds collected through fees, and the other would have made the agency's Parkland Acquisition Account a non-appropriated account.

Mr. Herzog noted projects that are on the State Parks extension list have moved towards completion, including two projects in the Willapa Hills that are under construction; bridges in Pacific County; and resurfacing a trail section from Raymond to Menlo.

Finally, Mr. Herzog noted that the Interagency Tribal Recreation Impacts process is working on a charter and formalizing the decision-making process, which will be presented at a meeting of state agency and Tribal leadership on May 22.

Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

Member Amy Windrope was absent and did not provide a written report.

ADJOURN: 2:25 PM

Motion: Move to **Adjourn**

Moved By: Member **Bugert**

Seconded by: Member **Lam**

Decision: **Approved**

The next meeting will be a travel meeting in Richland, Washington on July 24 and 25, 2024. One day of this meeting will be a regular board meeting at the Hampton Inn, 486 Bradley Boulevard, Richland, Washington, 99352 and available in-person and 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 under development.

Approved by:



Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Decision Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

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 listed 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: 2024-06 (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 policy elements are the sponsor's responsibility to complete a funded project promptly and meet the 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.

Attachment

A. Time Extension Requests for Board Approval

Time Extension Requests for Board Approval

Seattle Parks and Recreation Department

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request
18-2169 Development	South Park Playground, Spray Park, and Playfield	Land and Water Conservation Fund: Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership	\$1,047,635 (98%)	8/31/2024	8/31/2025

Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request

Seattle Parks and Recreation Department received grant funds to construct a new playground and spray park and renovate the existing playfield to synthetic turf at the South Park Community Center. The project will also add a loop trail and lighting to the park, improving site accessibility for users.

Seattle completed design and permitting and recently began the construction phase. While the project is progressing, delays were caused for two primary reasons:

1. The National Park Service approved project funding in September 2020, during the peak of COVID-19, which significantly impacted staffing availability. When the project was originally scoped, Seattle could not foresee the pandemic's impacts on the availability and cost for staff and outside contractors.
2. This project experienced multiple delays due to design and permitting. The city's stormwater code was updated during the design process, so design changes were needed to meet the new requirements and secure permits. There is a 100-year-old poplar tree on site that may be the largest in the entire city. Due to safety concerns, the site layout was reconfigured to move the playground away from the tree. The project also experienced challenges with permitting for the light poles.

Substantial completion of construction is expected by the end of July 2025. Seattle is requesting a twelve-month extension to finish the project and close out the grant.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request
18-1333 Acquisition	South Sound Prairies 2018	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Critical Habitat	\$3,756,444 (44%)	9/30/2024	6/30/2025

Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) received four Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) grants to acquire about 1,500 acres of prairie and oak woodland habitat in Thurston County.

The first three grants, combined with more than \$7.6 million in federal funds, supported the acquisition of over 1,385 acres in phases one and two. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) approved the remaining funds needed to acquire the final phase of the Violet Prairie property as part of the 2023-25 biennium. Since the purchases involved one landowner, four state grants, and three federal grants, all the phases were merged into one Recreation and Conservation Office grant agreement to help facilitate this multi-million-dollar acquisition.

Since January 2024, WDFW has worked with a neighboring landowner to resolve a boundary line dispute affecting the last piece of property. Resolution and subsequent closing on this purchase is anticipated in July 2024. WDFW is currently fencing the property acquired in preceding phases. WDFW submitted the demolition permit application needed for post-closing work but most likely will not receive the permit in time to demolish the structures by the current end date.

The nine-month time extension requested will give WDFW additional time needed to fence the phase three property and demolish all ineligible structures across the full 1,500-acre property.

Washington Farmland Trust

Project number and type	Project name	Grant program	Grant funds remaining	Current end date	Extension request
<u>16-1358</u> Acquisition	Reiner Farm	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation	\$776,343 (95%)	7/31/2024	1/31/2025

Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request

The Washington Farmland Trust (WFT) received \$814,010 in grant funds from the WWRP Farmland Preservation category as part of the 2017-19 biennial state capital budget. WFT is using this grant to purchase an agricultural conservation easement on approximately 144 acres of farmland in the Tualco Valley near Monroe, one of Snohomish County's core agricultural communities.

This project is part of a larger collaborative effort between the WFT and the Tulalip Tribes to protect farmland, forested riparian, and floodplain habitat along Haskell Slough and the Skykomish River. The Tulalip Tribes successfully purchased their portion of the Reiner farm property under a waiver of retroactivity. That portion protects habitat adjacent to key spawning and rearing areas that benefit several salmon species.

To date, the WFT worked through a series of complex and time-consuming boundary line adjustments, necessary to clearly define the land subject to the farmland grant. That work is now finished.

The additional six months requested allows WFT time to finalize the agricultural conservation easement, complete the required baseline inventory report, and submit all close-out documents.



Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Decision Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

Title: Cost Increase Request: City of Mountlake Terrace, Evergreen Playfield Infield Turf and Lights, 20-1642

Prepared By: Henry Smith, Outdoor Grants Manager

Summary:

The City of Mountlake Terrace is asking the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to approve a cost increase using Youth Athletic Facilities dollars for the Evergreen Playfield Infield Turf and Lights Phase 2, [20-1643](#) project.

The project is a matching grant with the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This cost increase will help offset an unanticipated increase in project costs. The request exceeds 10 percent of the total project cost; therefore, policy requires Recreation and Conservation Funding Board consideration of this request.

Board Action Requested:

This item will be a: ☒ Request for Decision
☐ Request for Direction
☐ Briefing

Resolution: 2024-06 (Consent Agenda)

Purpose of Resolution: Approve the cost increase request.

Background

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) awarded a \$350,000 Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) grant to the City of Mountlake Terrace (City) for the design, permitting, and redevelopment of Evergreen Playfield #3. The redevelopment includes the conversion of dirt infields to synthetic turf, new LED field lights, fencing, backstops, dugouts, and other field amenities along with new seating areas, parking, and landscaping. Also, the city received a matching grant of \$600,000 through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for the same scope of work. The YAF and LWCF funds

were merged into a single grant agreement. The primary recreational activity supported by this project is youth active play.

Project Status

The city has completed ninety percent of the design, including survey work, cultural resources and environmental work, and permit submittal. They anticipate receiving permits, completing the bid process, and beginning construction by August 2024.

Discussion and Analysis

Cost Increase Policy

The board's policy on cost increases is outlined in *Manual 4: Development Projects* on pages thirty-three and thirty-four, which states:

On occasion, the cost of completing a project exceeds the amount written into the agreement. Such overruns are the responsibility of the project sponsor. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may consider a cost increase in some grant programs if funds are available, and the grant recipient submits a written request. The director may approve requests for increase up to 10 percent of the total project cost and the board may approve increases above 10 percent.

To request an increase, the project sponsor must submit a written request to RCO [Recreation and Conservation Office] addressing the following:

- The sponsor must have fully explored all practical alternatives for completing the intent of the agreement.
- The sponsor must have had little control over the conditions causing the overrun.
- Any increase must only be used for elements in the project agreement.

Additionally, *Manual 17: Youth Athletic Facilities* further defines the policy for cost overruns. It states that if unused funds are available, RCO may consider a cost increase.

Available Funds

The city is requesting an increase of \$147,900. There are enough funds available in the Youth Athletic Facilities Account to cover the amount requested. Since this request exceeds ten percent of the project's approved grant, the request is presented for the board's consideration.

Analysis

The city historically completes its parks projects, having closed fourteen past grants. These projects have typically been completed within budget. Further, this request meets the three criteria (outlined in the policy cited above) for a cost increase.

Options Considered

After undergoing several rounds of value engineering and exploring a scope reduction, the city found that it was not possible to remove individual scope items to reduce the cost significantly and decided that it was important to the community to complete the project as originally envisioned. To accommodate increased costs, the city has committed an additional \$800,000 in local appropriations to complete the project.

Conditions Causing the Overrun

The increase in cost is due to two primary factors:

1. This application was submitted to RCO in 2020 using cost estimates derived in 2019. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, shipping costs, and pandemic price surges dramatically increased the total project cost.
2. After applying for both YAF and LWCF funding, the project was delayed for approximately eighteen months pending receipt of the federal LWCF agreement, which was not executed until December 2022. During this time, the project could not begin in earnest and costs increased over twenty-four percent between application submittal and execution of the project's grant agreement.

Elements in the Agreement

If approved, the increased budget will only pay for costs associated with scope elements already included in the grant agreement.

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of this request 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 cost increase as requested.

Next Steps

If the board approves the request, RCO staff will execute the necessary amendment to the grant agreement. The City of Mountlake Terrace will then move forward to complete design, permitting, and construction of the project.



APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

Title: Technical Correction to Match Reduction Policy

Prepared By: Adam Cole, Policy Specialist

Summary:

Changing one word in the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's match reduction policy is needed to reduce ambiguity for how the "Counties in Need" match reduction calculation is considered.

Board Action Requested:

This item will be a: ☒ Request for Decision
☐ Request for Direction
☐ Briefing

Resolution: 2024-06 (Consent Agenda)

Purpose of Resolution: Approve the cost increase request.

Background

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) has a match reduction policy for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Outdoor Recreation Account grants, as well as Youth Athletic Facilities grants. The policy contains multiple ways for an applicant to reduce match from 5 to 40 percent if it meets certain match reduction criteria, such as size of the applicant jurisdiction and median household income.

Here are the four policy "pathways" to reduce match for local governments and nonprofits:

1. Communities in need
2. Underserved populations
3. Counties in need
4. Federal disaster

To see what organizations qualify, visit the [match reduction page](#) on the Recreation and Conservation Office's (RCO) website.

For detailed policy statements on each pathway, see the [WWRP Program Manual](#) (p48-52) and the [Youth Athletic Facilities Manual](#) (p35-40).

Policy Statement Update

The following is the existing "Counties in Need" match reduction pathway with the word "and" replaced with the word "or" to clarify that an applicant may have reduced match if they meet any of the five criteria listed. In other words, these match reduction criteria are "cumulative" and may result in the applicant match reduction between 5 and 40 percent, depending on how many criteria apply to the applicant.

Counties in Need Policy Statement (change in RED)

A county shall have match reduced if its median income is less than \$57,680 (70 percent of the state median income), it is distressed (as defined by Washington Employment Security Department), **and or** 60 percent or more of its land base is in a non-taxable status.

The table below shows the match reductions (from 50 percent) for counties. The reductions are cumulative if the county meets more than one condition.

County Match Reductions

Variables (Any or all may apply)	50% Match Shall be Reduced by the Following: (Cumulative)
County Median Household Income less than 70% of State Median Household Income	10%
County Median Household Income less than 65% of State Median Household Income	10%
County is "Distressed" as defined by Washington Employment Security Department	10%
60% or more of land is non-taxable*	5%
75% or more of land is non-taxable*	5%

**Includes properties where the county receives payments in lieu of taxes from a government entity.*

Staff Recommendation

Staff ask the board to approve this update to the policy to reduce confusion for applicants and staff.

Next Steps

If the board approves the request, RCO staff will update the policy statement in all its grant publications.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution 2024-06
July 24, 2024 - Consent Agenda

BE IT RESOLVED, that the following July 24, 2024 Consent Agenda items are approved:

Resolution 2024-06

1. Consent Agenda (*Decision*)

- A. Board Meeting Minutes
 - April 16, 2024
- B. Time Extensions
 - Seattle Parks and Recreation Department, South Park Playground, Spray Park, and Playfield, [18-2169](#)
 - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, South Sound Prairies 2018, [18-1333](#)
 - Washington Farmland Trust, Reiner Farm, Snohomish County, [16-1358](#)
- C. Cost Increase
 - City of Mountlake Terrace, Evergreen Playfield Infield Turf and Lights, [20-1642](#)
- D. Match Reduction Policy Technical Change

Resolution moved by:

Member Herzog

Resolution seconded by:

Member Lam

Adopted/*Defeated/Deferred (underline one)*

Approved Date:

July 24, 2024



Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

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

Prepared By: Megan Duffy, Marguerite Austin, Kyle Guzlas, Brock Milliern, 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

Tough Competition for This Year's Grants

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) closed applications for five recreation and conservation grant programs May 1 and saw 310 applications, requesting \$308 million. In July and August, advisory committees will be busy reviewing and ranking projects. Here are the numbers:

- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account: fifteen applications requesting \$7.1 million.
- Community Forests Program: fifteen applications requesting \$37 million.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund: twenty-seven applications requesting \$36.9 million.



- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: 194 applications requesting \$182.5 million. Youth Athletic Facilities: fifty-nine applications requesting \$44.5 million.

Applications to be Accepted for Trail Projects and More



In August, RCO begins accepting applications for grant programs focusing on trails, boating, outdoor learning for kids, and firearm and archery ranges. This is the only time applications will be accepted for these programs for two years. RCO will accept applications in two trails programs: the Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities and Recreational Trails Program, which are for backcountry trail maintenance, construction, and education and enforcement programs. RCO will accept applications in the Boating Facilities Program, which funds acquisition, construction, and renovation of boating facilities; No Child Left Inside, which funds outdoor education and recreation programs for underserved, underrepresented, and historically excluded youth; and Firearms and Archery Range Recreation, which funds acquisition, construction, and renovation of firearm ranges and archery training and practice facilities.

RCO Staffer Completes Leadership Program

Allison Dellwo, a senior outdoor grants manager in the Recreation and Conservation Grants Section, recently completed a year-long program to develop community leaders. According to its website, Leadership Thurston County was established to “develop informed, connected, and engaged community leaders.” The program helps participants understand the complex issues facing the south Puget Sound region and build relationships to help resolve challenges and find new opportunities. Leadership Thurston County is a program of the Thurston County Chamber Foundation, an educational nonprofit organization. Since 1994, more than eight hundred people have completed the program. Congrats Allison! See more details about [Leadership Thurston County](#) online.



Employee News

Alissa Ferrell was promoted to senior outdoor grants manager in the Salmon Grants Section. She spent the past five years working as a grants manager and office program lead in the salmon section. Before joining RCO, Alissa managed grants for ten years in the Washington Department of Ecology’s water quality program. Alissa has extensive experience in

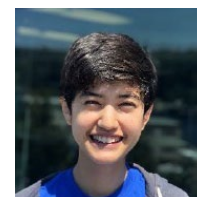


developing program policies, guidelines, and grant materials for the Washington Coast Restoration and Resiliency Initiative, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, water quality, and public participation grant programs. She has trained and mentored several new salmon and Ecology water quality grant staff. Alissa obtained her bachelor of science degree in environmental science from Washington State University. She lives in Tacoma.

Allison Dellwo was promoted to senior outdoor grants manager in the Recreation and Conservation Grants Section. Allison joined RCO in 2018 as an outdoor grants manager. She was born and raised in Washington and considers both Spokane and Olympia her hometowns. She is a graduate of Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, and has her master's degree in public administration from the University of Colorado. Before joining the RCO team, Allison spent ten years in Colorado working at various nonprofit organizations, including the Colorado Rural Health Center running a grant program through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.



Rachelle Lim (pronounced Rachel) joined RCO as an outdoor grants manager for the parks team in the Recreation and Conservation Grants Section. She has a wide range of experience in the biotech and nonprofit sectors and most recently worked as a project manager for a nonprofit urban forest carbon registry, where she supported land trusts, local governments, and nonprofits to leverage carbon crediting to fund tree planting and preservation in urban and peri-urban areas across the country. She holds a bachelor of science degree in biology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a master's degree in oceanography from the University of Washington.



Butch Lovelace joined RCO after spending twenty-five years working for King County's Parks and Recreation Division as a project and program manager. While there, he managed the Youth and Amateur Sports Grant program and local parks and open space grants. In addition, he was part of the Business Development and Partnership Team as a special project manager for various capital projects and initiatives including leading the development of Duthie Hill Mountain Bike Park and Trailhead Direct, a recreation shuttle. He grew up in the Pacific Northwest including Bend, Boise, Seaside, and Yakima. Butch graduated from the University of Washington in 1993 studying anthropology and archaeology. He is working remotely (mostly) from Tacoma.



Teresa Miskovic joined RCO in June as a salmon grants manager. She is a life-long Washingtonian who has spent her career in the natural resources field largely in western Washington. Most of her career has been working for the Washington Department of Natural Resources. Most recently, she was a grant manager with the Habitat Strategic Initiative lead program managing federal funds for projects focused on Puget Sound recovery. Before that she was a project manager for the department, managing forestry research projects that evaluated forest practices' rule effectiveness. She also was a forester working on timber sales and logging road layouts, compliance, and wildland firefighting. Other positions she has held outside of the department include working with the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group managing salmon habitat restoration projects mostly in the Nisqually River watershed and with the Thurston Conservation District conducting stream habitat assessment surveys. Teresa earned her bachelor of science degree in environmental science from The Evergreen State College.



Interns

Anthony Ouren, an intern with RCO since January, was promoted to a part-time information technology customer support position, primarily serving the Puget Sound Partnership. Anthony joined us through the Internship Program at South Puget Sound Community College and expects to graduate in June 2025. Previously, Anthony hosted at a restaurant and supported warehouse operations.

Nick Reinhard joined RCO as an intern for the Policy Team in April. Nick is working toward a master's degree in environmental studies at The Evergreen State College and pursuing his graduate certificate in Geographic Information System. His undergraduate studies were in botany and ecology.



News from the Boards

The **Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group** met on April 24 where they heard briefings on the Recreation Economic Impact Study and the Department of Natural Resources Nature Areas Program updates.

The **Washington Invasive Species Council** met June 26. The meeting topics included an update on Urban Forest Pest Readiness efforts from the Department of Natural Resources, presentations on updates to the Prioritization Assessment Tool and creation of the Volunteer Recognition Program, and a call for general state agency updates and fiscal outlooks for 2024.

The **Salmon Recovery Funding Board** met June 13-14 in Forks to discuss the board's monitoring program, Spokane Lead Entity Project Funding, 2025-2027 budget request, Washington Coast Restoration and Resiliency Initiative, and to allocate funding for board programs. The board will meet next on August 7, 2024, to finalize the 2025-2027 budget requests to the Legislature.

Grant Management Section

Grant Applications Undergoing Review

Technical reviews of 220 grant applications submitted this spring are complete. Staff facilitated review sessions in May and June with seven advisory committees that reviewed and commented on Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program projects for habitat conservation, outdoor recreation, and preservation of farms and forests. The Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account and the Land and Water Conservation Fund advisory committees reviewed projects that protect, restore, develop, and enhance aquatic lands and outdoor recreation areas.

In addition, staff conducted reviews of another 193 applications submitted for the Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities, Youth Athletic Facilities, and Community Forests Programs. The Boating Programs Advisory Committee will review five Boating Infrastructure Grant projects in July. Based on the comments provided by advisors and staff, applicants will revise and resubmit their proposals before the projects are evaluated later this summer. The board will approve final ranked lists of projects in October and award grants for these programs in June 2025.



Planning for Trails Conference Underway

Planning is underway for the [2024 Trails Conference](#). Trail advocates, consultants, agency representatives, user groups, and recreation and transportation professionals will gather in Wenatchee on October 3-5 to share insights, celebrate successes, and inspire new or improved trail projects. "Moving Trails Forward" is the theme for this year's conference and the planning committee solicited proposals that focus on the practical aspect of building sustainable trails, envisioning trails for changing demographics,



empowering new trailblazers, and showcasing trails that provide unique values and experiences. Thank you to Jesse Simms for spearheading this conference for the agency.

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)	33	0	33
Boating Facilities Program (BFP)	56	0	56
Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG)	6	0	6
Community Forests Program (CFP)	6	1	7
Firearms and Archery Range Recreation (FARR)	10	0	10
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	26	4	30
Local Parks Maintenance (LPM)	30	33	63
No Child Left Inside (NCLI)	98	0	98
Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA)	103	0	103
Outdoor Learning Grants (OLG)	27	0	27
Planning for Recreation Access (PRA)	47	2	49
Recreation & Conservation Office Recreation Grants (RRG)	4	1	5
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	40	4	44
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)	251	10	261
Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)	43	4	47
Total	780	59	839

Viewing Closed Projects

Attachment A lists projects that closed between April 1 and June 30, 2024. The recreation and conservation grants team closed forty-one projects. Select the project number to view the project description, grant funds awarded, photos, maps, reports, etc.

Grant Services Section

Cultural Resources PRISM Module Updates

Over the past year, the PRISM development team and Cultural Resources staff embarked on extensive upgrades to the grant database related to streamlining the agency's cultural resources consultation process. This custom module provides several new tools simplifying cultural resources consultation and providing additional information and transparency to grant managers, applicants, and project sponsors. Enhancements include:

- Project cultural resources review tracking and status
- Standardized cultural resources agreement conditions
- Automated production and distribution of consultation letters and project lists

No Child Left Inside Grant Program Updates

Washington State Parks and RCO assembled a fourteen-person workgroup comprised of members of the No Child Left Inside [Advisory Committee](#) to review and refine the proposed updates to program policies and evaluation criteria. Program updates aimed to amplify the equity lens of the program and be responsive to applicant and advisory committee feedback from previous grant cycles. The workgroup members reviewed and commented on all aspects of the policy considerations and then met as a group with agency staff in late April to refine the materials in preparation for public comment. Staff prepared a public comment survey that was sent to 3,400 recipients using a newsletter application and through direct email. The survey was open for two and a half weeks from May 17 to June 5. The survey was also shared on RCO's social media platforms. There was a total of seventy-five public comments and the survey results displayed strong support for the modifications to the evaluation criteria, scoring changes, and allowance of indirect as an eligible project cost.

With approval from the State Park's Director, RCO staff is in the process of updating all program materials reflecting the new changes in preparation for the next grant cycle that opens on August 8.

Fiscal Report

For July 1, 2023-June 30, 2025, actuals through May 31, 2024 (Fiscal Month 11). Percentage of biennium reported: 45.8 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	\$18,419,570	\$15,979,325	87%	\$2,440,245	13%	\$3,278,653	21%
BFP	\$38,408,800	\$36,261,961	94%	\$2,146,839	6%	\$5,906,410	16%
BIG	\$7,368,760	\$7,368,760	100%	\$0	0%	\$611,349	8%
FARR	\$1,188,923	\$1,188,923	100%	\$0	0%	\$272,536	23%
LWCF	\$41,238,500	\$41,238,500	100%	\$0	0%	\$4,674,657	11%
NOVA	\$23,161,190	\$20,921,386	90%	\$2,239,804	10%	\$4,024,426	19%
RTP	\$10,692,100	\$8,427,019	79%	\$2,265,081	21%	\$1,369,190	16%
WWRP	\$251,290,070	\$239,211,111	95%	\$12,078,959	5%	\$23,837,381	10%
RRG	\$5,514,230	\$5,216,183	95%	\$298,046	5%	\$1,213,150	23%
YAF	\$35,630,470	\$30,426,495	85%	\$5,203,975	15%	\$3,775,964	12%
Subtotal	\$432,912,613	\$406,239,663	94%	\$26,672,949	6%	\$48,963,716	12%
Administration							
General Operating Funds	\$13,053,797	\$13,053,797	100%	\$0	0%	\$5,121,192	39%
Grand Total	\$445,966,410	\$419,293,460	94%	\$26,672,649	6%	\$54,084,908	13%

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 April 30, 2024 (Fiscal Month 10).
 Percentage of biennium reported: 41.6 percent

Program	Biennial Forecast		Collections
	Estimate	Actual	% of Estimate
Boating Facilities Program (BFP)	\$18,661,000	\$7,553,174	40.5%
Nonhighway, Off-Road Vehicle Program (NOVA)	\$13,635,551	\$5,697,216	41.8%
Firearms and Archery Range Rec Program (FARR)	\$699,092	\$267,894	38.3%
Total	\$32,995,643	\$13,518,284	41.0%

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 November 2023. The next forecast will be in June 2024.

WWRP Expenditure Rate by Organization (1990-Current)

Agency	Committed	Expenditures	% Expended
Local Agencies	\$388,427,437	\$333,586,675	86%
Department of Fish and Wildlife	\$248,847,628	\$218,720,486	88%
Department of Natural Resources	\$219,659,183	\$161,943,731	74%
State Parks and Recreation Commission	\$185,879,709	\$148,905,630	80%
Nonprofits	\$70,299,392	\$49,578,533	71%
Conservation Commission	\$14,839,070	\$4,154,174	28%
Tribes	\$2,307,431	\$1,834,606	80%
Other			
Special Projects	\$735,011	\$735,011	100%
Total	\$1,130,994,861	\$919,458,846	81%

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 June 18, 2024.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Performance Measures

Measure	Target	Fiscal Year-to-Date	Status	Notes
Grant agreements mailed within 120 days of funding	90%	72%	●	194 of 269 agreements have been mailed on time this fiscal year.
Grants under agreement within 180 days of funding	95%	79%	●	220 of 277 projects were under agreement within 180 days.
Progress reports responded to within 15 days	90%	92%	●	RCFB staff received 766 progress reports and responded to them in an average of 5 days.
Projects closed within 150 days of funding end date	85%	65%	●	118 of 182 projects have closed on time.
Projects in Backlog	5	41	●	There are 41 RCFB projects in the backlog needing to be closed out.

Attachments

Attachment A: Table of Closed Projects from April 1 – June 30, 2024

Projects Completed and Closed from April 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
16-1346	Department of Fish and Wildlife	Simcoe 2016	WWRP: Critical Habitat	05/09/2024
16-1363	King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks	Cougar Mountain Precipice Trailhead Development	WWRP: Local Parks	04/11/2024
16-1636	Department of Natural Resources	Camas Meadows Forest and Rare Plant Restoration	WWRP: State Lands Restoration	05/14/2024
16-1863	City of Stanwood	Stanwood Riverfront Parks Hamilton Landing Phase I	Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account	05/16/2024
16-1903	City of Spokane	Southeast Youth Sports Complex Neighborhood Park	WWRP: Local Parks	05/14/2024
16-1936	Ferry County	Ferry County Rail Trail Phase 4	WWRP: Trails	04/23/2024
16-1974	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Inholdings and Adjacent Properties 2016	WWRP: State Parks	05/10/2024
18-1862	Department of Natural Resources	Lacamas Prairie Natural Area Preserve Prairie and Oak Restoration	WWRP: State Lands Restoration	05/16/2024
18-1899	Ducks Unlimited	Saltese Flats Wetland Protection and Restoration	WWRP: Riparian Protection	04/15/2024
18-1962	City of Lake Forest Park	Five Acre Woods	WWRP: - Local Parks	06/10/2024

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
<u>18-1979</u>	Department of Fish and Wildlife	LT Murray Teanaway Valley Unit Restoration	WWRP: State Lands Restoration	04/09/2024
<u>18-2045</u>	Department of Fish and Wildlife	Little Spokane River Access Development	WWRP: State Lands Development	06/07/2024
<u>18-2541</u>	Skookum Archers Club and Range	Skookum Archers Range Improvements	Firearms and Archery Range Recreation	05/31/2024
<u>18-2571</u>	Port of Poulsbo	New Floating Breakwater	Boating Facilities Program: Local	05/08/2024
<u>19-1523</u>	Port of Poulsbo	Transient Moorage Breakwater	Boating Infrastructure Grant: Tier 2	05/08/2024
<u>20-1328</u>	Port of Camas-Washougal	Marina Fuel Dock Renovation	Boating Infrastructure Grant: Tier1	05/17/2024
<u>20-1465</u>	King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks	East Lake Sammamish Trail South Segment B	WWRP: Trails	06/11/2024
<u>20-1493</u>	Okanogan Land Trust	Synarep Rangeland	WWRP: Farmland Preservation	06/04/2024
<u>20-1784</u>	City of Colfax	Colfax Pool Mechanical Room Renovation	Youth Athletic Facilities: Small	04/26/2024
<u>20-1958</u>	Mountain Trails Grooming Association	Snowmobile Trail Grooming Methow Valley	Recreational Trails Program: General	04/16/2024
<u>20-1959</u>	Back Country Horsemen of Washington	Reopening Threatened National Forest Trails	Recreational Trails Program: General	05/01/2024

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
<u>20-1995</u>	Department of Fish and Wildlife	Swakane Canyon Rifle and Pistol Range Phase 2	Firearms and Archery Range Recreation	06/13/2024
<u>20-2000</u>	Port of Camas-Washougal	Parker's Landing Marina Breakwater Access Area	Boating Facilities Program: Local	04/29/2024
<u>20-2057</u>	US Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	Cle Elum Nonmotorized Trail Maintenance and Operation	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized	04/02/2024
<u>20-2058</u>	US Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	North Zone Off-Road Vehicle Maintenance	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle	04/09/2024
<u>20-2060</u>	US Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	South Zone Off-Road Vehicle Maintenance	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle	05/22/2024
<u>20-2064</u>	US Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	Cle Elum Ranger District Frontcountry Maintenance and Operation 2022-2024	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road	04/26/2024
<u>20-2105</u>	US Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee	Cle Elum Ranger District Frontcountry Education and Enforcement 2022-2024	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement	04/09/2024

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
	National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District			
<u>20-2106</u>	US Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	Cle Elum Ranger District Sanitation Rentals 2023-2024	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road	04/02/2024
<u>20-2108</u>	US Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	Cle Elum Ranger District Alpine Lakes Wilderness Education and Enforcement 2022-2024	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement	04/02/2024
<u>20-2124</u>	US Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	Cle Elum Ranger District Off-Road Vehicle Education and Enforcement 2022-23	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement	04/26/2024
<u>20-2137</u>	US Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Methow Valley Ranger District	Methow Valley Ranger District Wilderness and Backcountry Rangers 2022-2023	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement	04/02/2024
<u>20-2245</u>	US Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee River Ranger District	Wenatchee River Ranger District Wilderness Trail Maintenance and Operation 2022-23	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized	05/16/2024

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
<u>20-2250</u>	US Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee River Ranger District	Wenatchee River Ranger District Frontcountry and Multiple Use Trails Maintenance and Operation	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle	05/16/2024
<u>20-2301</u>	US Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee River Ranger District	Wilderness and Backcountry (Enchantments Emphasis)	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement	04/24/2024
<u>20-2308</u>	US Forest Service, Mt Baker- Snoqualmie National Forest, Snoqualmie Ranger District	Alpine Lakes Trail Maintenance 2022-23	Recreational Trails Program: General	04/24/2024
<u>20-2350</u>	US Forest Service, Mt Baker- Snoqualmie National Forest, Snoqualmie Ranger District	Snoqualmie Ranger District Front Country Maintenance	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road	04/09/2024
<u>22-1604</u>	City of Camas	Green Mountain	WWRP: Trails	06/11/2024
<u>22-1622</u>	Forterra	Polson Heritage Forest	WWRP: Forestland Preservation	05/31/2024
<u>22-1662</u>	Whidbey Camano Land Trust	Bell's Farm Expansion	WWRP: Farmland Preservation	06/04/2024
<u>22-2334</u>	Skamania County	Wind River Dock Replacement	Boating Facilities Program: Local	05/31/2024

WWRP = Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program



Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Decision Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

Title: Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Policy

Prepared By: Adam Cole, Natural Resources Policy Specialist

Summary

This memo summarizes proposed grant limit increases to all Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities grant categories, and the Recreation and Conservation Office's decision to change the evaluation process for all grants to a "hybrid" written/Q&A process. These changes follow a public comment period that occurred in May of 2024. If Resolution 2024-07 is approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, it will apply to the next grant application round, which begins in August 2024.

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 Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) grant program is popular with land managers needing additional resources to maintain and develop back-country recreation facilities.¹ NOVA projects must be Off-road vehicle riding areas or facilities accessed by a nonhighway road, which generally means a roadway open to the public for recreation travel but not supported by state gas tax revenues. Examples of nonhighway roads include a United States Forest Service (USFS) road and campground access roads.

Applicants, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff, and Advisory Committee members manage over 100 NOVA grant applications and awards each biennium. Relatively low grant limits and resource intense application and evaluation processes require substantial administrative effort.

¹ Those accessed by or adjacent to a "non-highway road", see [RCW 46.09.500-520](#)

NOVA is funded by a 0.6 percent (approximate) refund of motor vehicle fuel taxes collected annually. Although the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) is considering raising grant limits, the total amount of NOVA funds available is expected to be relatively consistent over the near-term, between \$12-16 million per biennium.

Staff began looking at changes to NOVA in 2023. These included systemic changes, such as transitioning from an exclusively competitive grant program to awarding grants on an allocation basis ("Block Grants"). In addition, staff considered raising grant limits to allow applicants to consolidate multiple requests into a single grant for their jurisdictions. Lastly, staff considered extending the duration of grant agreements from two-year terms to four or six years, creating scale and efficiency for applicants; allocating NOVA funds by region of the state to ensure funded projects statewide; and presetting limits for capital projects in a separate competition to ensure distribution of needed maintenance funds. These and other systemic changes were discussed with the NOVA Advisory Committee members, who agreed with RCO staff that these options should be explored in 2025 to allow ample time for consideration. Staff's current proposal to raise grant limits is a near-term step to ensure the NOVA program maintains its impact in our current inflationary environment.

For a program overview, see Attachment B and RCO's webpages and manuals for [Motorized, Nonmotorized, and Nonhighway Road](#) and [Education and Enforcement](#) grant categories.

For additional background, see [Memo 4](#) from the April board meeting.

Raising Grant Limits: Purpose

Staff recommend increasing grant limits for the following purposes:

1. Aligns grant amounts to reflect inflation since 2016, the last time grant limits were raised. Keeping grant limits in-line with inflation maintains project impact over time.
2. Allows applicants to bundle multiple grant requests into a single application for administrative efficiency ("consolidation"). Bundling also achieves economies of scale in staffing, purchasing, productivity, and project scope ("impact").
3. Allows higher impact and larger scale projects that were previously out of reach in the program due to low grant limits.

Possible Concerns:

1. Because NOVA funding is relatively consistent year to year, raising grant limits will likely result in fewer awards, which could mean the fund may skew towards consolidation by region or by applicant type.
2. The program mostly funds maintenance and operations projects as compared to development or acquisition grants that create new recreation sites. Inviting larger scale development projects via grant limit increase may reduce the number of maintenance grants funded, which our applicants rely on for seasonal work.

Grant Limit Increase Proposals and Public Comments

Staff met with the NOVA Advisory Committee and staff from the Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the United States Forest Service, and statewide recreation and conservation organizations to scope these grant limit options for the 2024 grant round:

Table 1. Grant Limit Options for NOVA

Grant Category	Option 1 No Change (current limits)	Option 2 "Inflation Adjustment"	Option 3 "Peak/Future Inflation Adjustment"
Education and Enforcement	\$200,000	\$250,000	\$350,000
Off-Road Vehicle	\$200,000 (M*) none (C*)	\$250,000 (M) none (C)	\$350,000 (M) none (C)
Nonhighway Road	\$150,000 (M) \$200,000 (C)	\$200,000 (M) \$250,000 (C)	\$250,000 (M) \$300,000 (C)
Nonmotorized	\$150,000 (M) \$200,000 (C)	\$200,000 (M) \$250,000 (C)	\$250,000 (M) \$300,000 (C)

* "M" of Maintenance and Operations is a single project type. "C" or Capital is either a Planning, Acquisition, or Development project type or a combination thereof.

Staff solicited general public comment on these options in May 2024. Forty-four organizations and individuals provided comments.

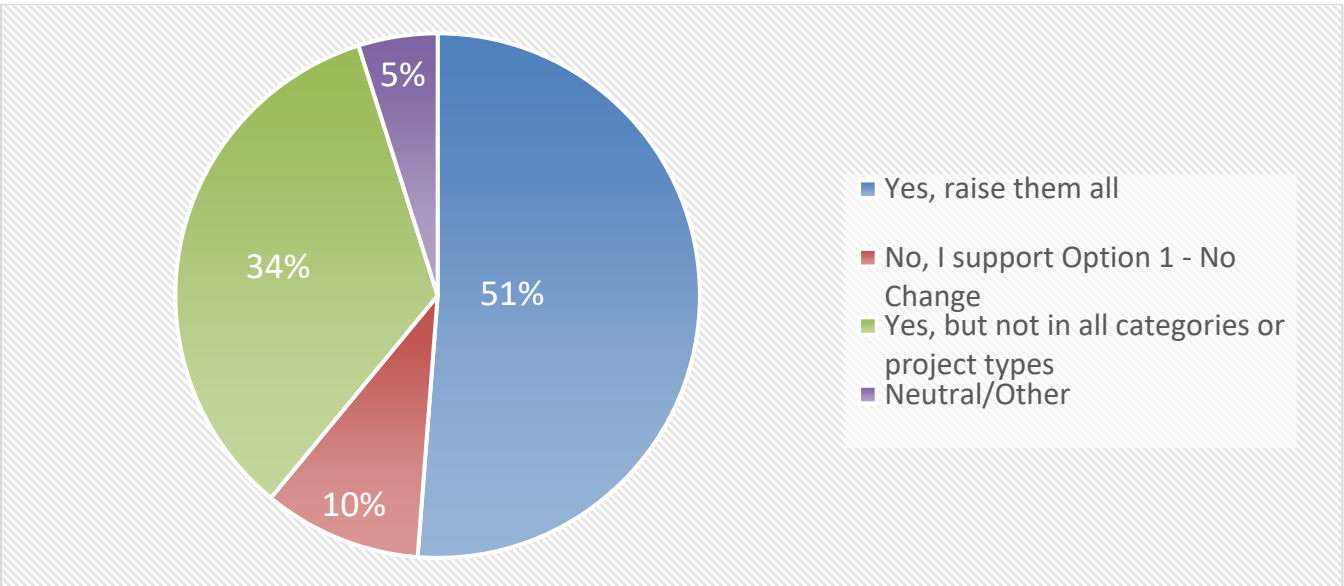
Public Comments Summary

Specific Responses

(See Attachment B for full Public Comment Survey)

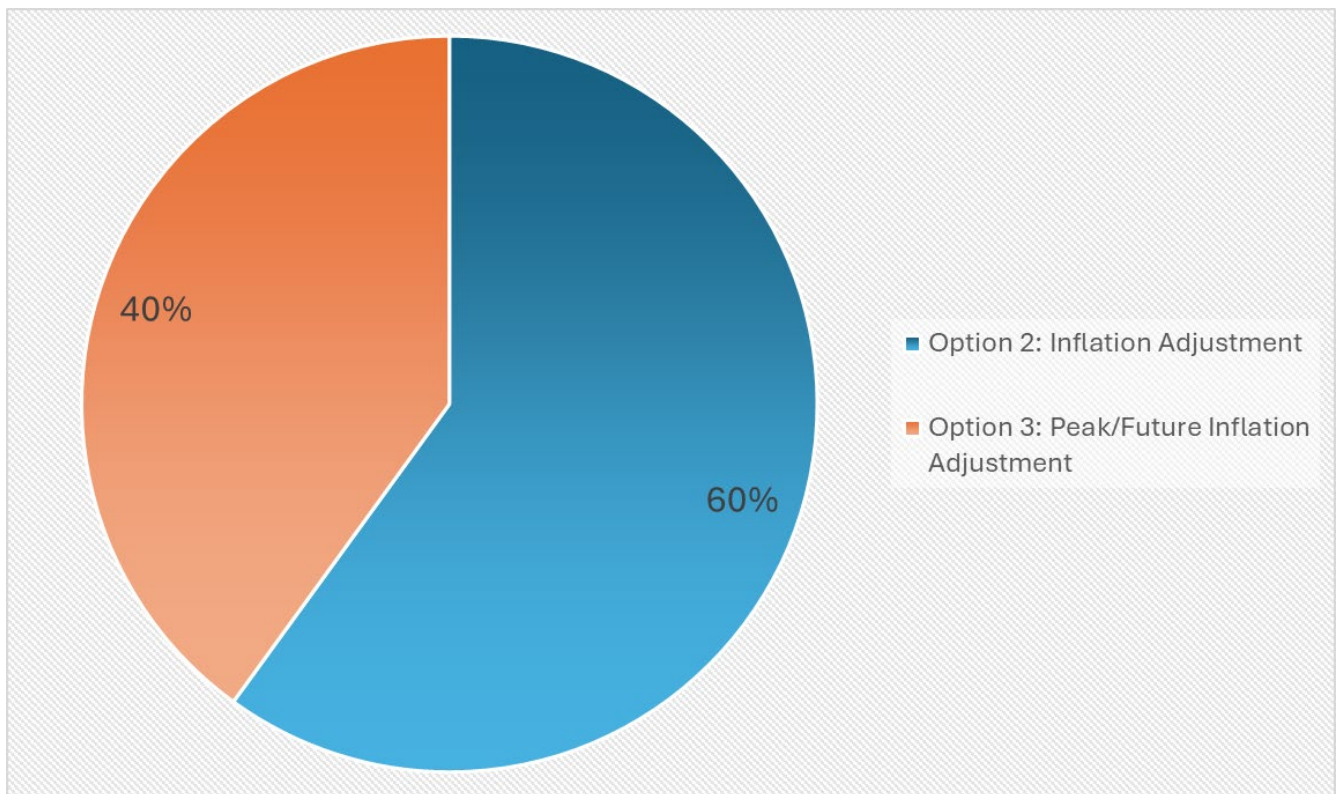
Public commenters were asked if they supported raising grant limits, if they favored raising some grant categories and project types and not others, and the pros and cons of each option. The following is a summary of the responses:

Public Comment Question 1. Should RCO Raise Grant Limits?



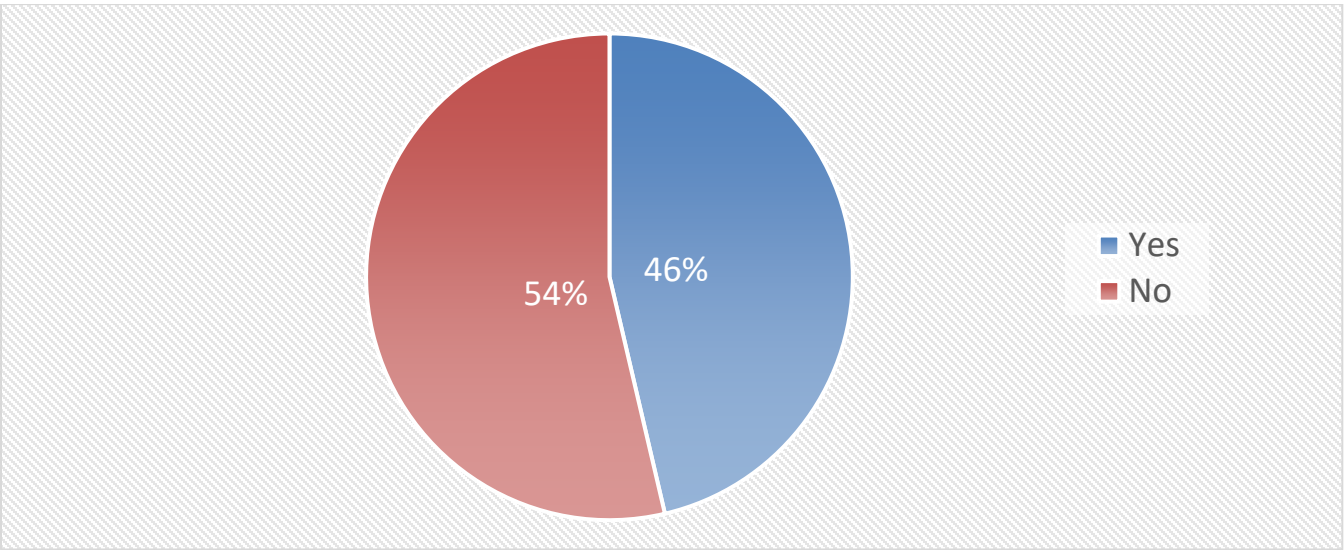
85% of respondents support raising grant limits in some way.

Public Comment Question 2. If you support raising grant limits, which option do you prefer?



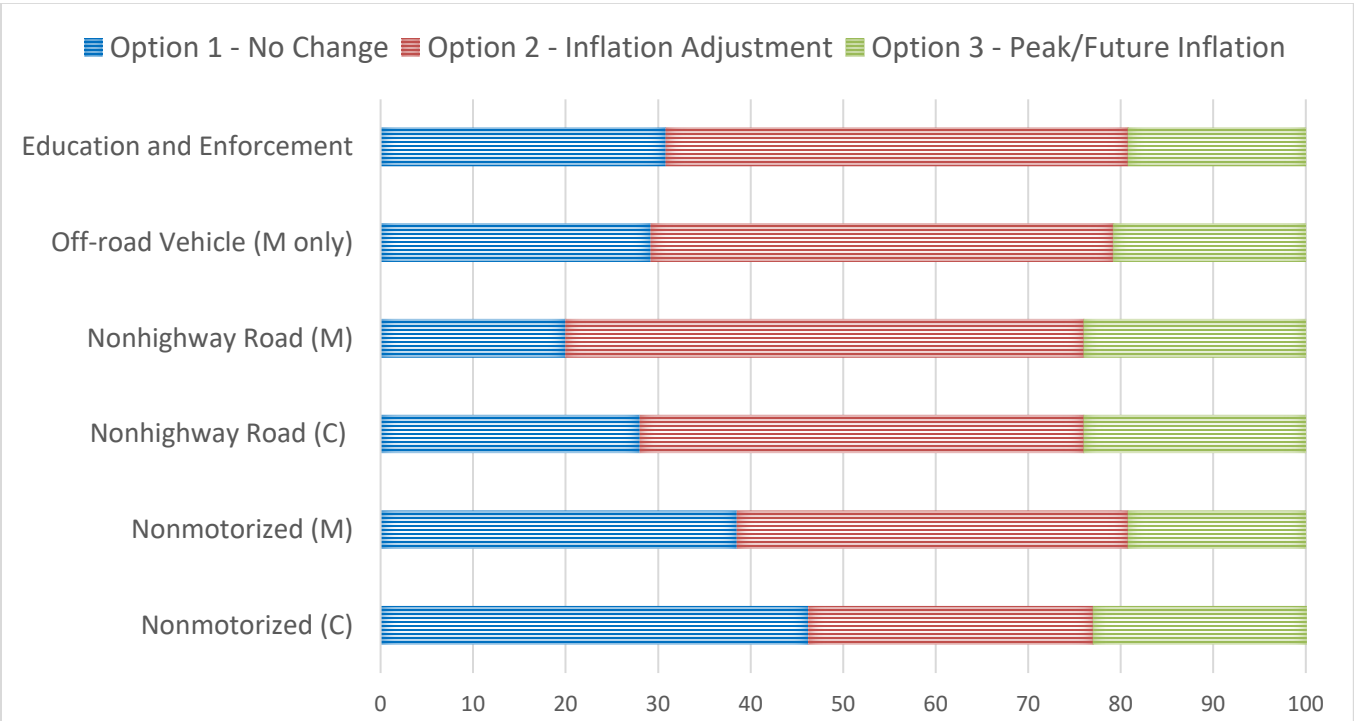
Most respondents support a modest increase in grant limits (Option 2)

Public Comment Question 3. Do you support raising grant limits in only one or more categories and/or project type rather than across the board?



Most respondents support across the board increases in grant limits, meaning in all categories and project types.

Public Comment Question 4. If you prefer raising grant limits differently by grant category and project type, please indicate your preference.*



* "M" of Maintenance and Operations is a single project type. "C" or Capital is either a Planning, Acquisition, or Development project type or a combination thereof.

For the thirty four percent of respondents who indicated they would address grant limits individually by grant category and project type, the greatest percentage of these respondents preferred No Change to grant limits in both Nonmotorized and Nonhighway Road capital project categories.

Open-Ended Responses

In addition to these responses, public commenters provided over 100 written comments on their choices. Below are several themes that emerged:

- 1) Keeping Pace with Inflation. Raising grant limits makes sense based on the inflationary impacts on applicants over the past eight years.
- 2) Ensure Impact. Providing more money per grant enables applicants to more effectively scope and implement projects, maintain the historical impact of receiving a NOVA grant, and scale up work in any single grant.
- 3) Moderate Grant Limit Increases. Fewer awards may mean uneven distribution of funds by agency and geography. As NOVA funding is expected to remain unchanged, raising grant limits likely means fewer projects funded, which could impact less resourced organizations and smaller, less used recreation areas. Therefore, only modest increases are preferred.
- 4) Maintenance vs Capital Projects. Modest grant limit increases likely means a continuation of the program funding mostly maintenance projects rather than developing new sites. This preserves backcountry opportunities through "maintaining what we have" and not "losing ground."
- 5) Maintaining Current Limits Provides Maximum Opportunity. No grant limit increase means the widest distribution of NOVA funds. Although projects may not be fully funded, more areas get some funding to leverage their own resources. In other words, "(t)he risk of not receiving any funding (is) greater than the limitations of receiving (some) funding under the current grant limits."
- 6) Increased Limits May Reduce Administration Costs for Applicants. Some applicants may bundle what used to be two or more grants into a single application, thereby reducing grant management costs for their organization.
- 7) Increase Total Funding. NOVA funding needs to be expanded. Funding for backcountry recreation maintenance and development is below the real cost to maintain and build for current demand.

Grant Limit Increase: Staff Recommendation

Based on public comment, staff recommend the board approve the following grant limit increases by grant category and project type:

Table 2. Grant Limit Increases: Staff Recommendation

Grant Category	Current Grant Limits	Staff Recommendation "Modified" Option 2
Education and Enforcement	\$200,000	\$250,000
Off-Road Vehicle	\$200,000 (Maintenance*) none (Capital*)	\$250,000 (M) none (C)
Nonhighway Road	\$150,000 (M) \$200,000 (C)	\$200,000 (All)
Nonmotorized	\$150,000 (M) \$200,000 (C)	\$200,000 (All)

* "M" of Maintenance and Operations is a single project type. "C" or Capital is either a Planning, Acquisition, or Development project type or a combination thereof.

Staff recommend Option 2, modest grant limit increases for all grant categories and project types, except for capital projects in Nonmotorized and Nonhighway road where no grant limit increase is recommended. Staff choose this option to keep these grants as widely distributed as possible and maintain the focus on maintenance priorities in these two already oversubscribed grant categories.

RCO's Grant Evaluation Process Change

Background

Motorized, Nonmotorized, and Nonhighway Road categories are evaluated during a weeklong intensive (eight-hour days) meeting of the NOVA Advisory Committee (Committee, or evaluators). Committee members score projects during a virtual meeting based on a presentation for each project. This process requires lengthy preparation by each applicant prior to their evaluation time and a commitment from our NOVA Advisory Committee members to be available for an entire week.

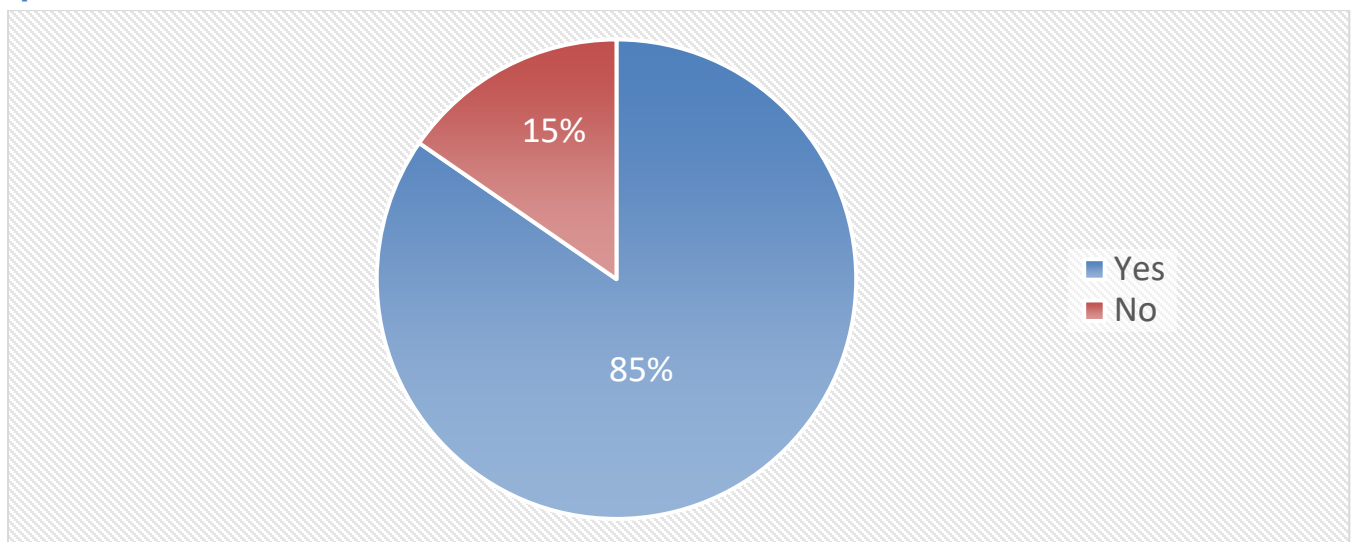
Beginning in 2023, staff met with the NOVA Advisory Committee to discuss alternatives to the current evaluation process to make it more efficient for applicants, committee members, and RCO staff. The following three strategies were considered and the Written/Q&A Meeting was the most favored to improve efficiency:

- 1) Transition to Written Evaluations Only for all Grant Categories. Switching from week-long, virtual presentations to written application evaluation means Advisory Committee members would evaluate projects by written application on their own time. Applicants would not create formal presentations nor give virtual presentations during the evaluation period.
- 2) Written/Q&A Meeting with Advisory Committee. This option consists of a written evaluation and a short full-committee virtual meeting where applicants answer committee members' questions about individual projects. This would reduce meeting time for the Advisory Committee and applicants, and eliminate applicant need to prepare a formal presentation.
- 3) Subcommittees. Rather than a full advisory committee virtual meeting to evaluate applications, RCO would establish Advisory Committee subcommittees, each assigned to one of three grant categories (education and enforcement would still be written), thereby reducing individual members' workload by three-fourths. This option would require additional Advisory Committee members for the evaluation period.

Public Comments Received

In May, RCO requested public comment on our recommendation to move to a "hybrid" written/Q&A evaluation process. Commentors supported the change. Over forty public comments and responses were received and the majority supported moving to a hybrid evaluation process.

Evaluation Process Change Question 1. Do you support changing to a Written/Q&A process for NOVA?



Most public commenters support this change to a hybrid written and Q&A process.

Open-Ended Responses

In addition to this question, public commenters provided over forty written comments on their choices. Here are some themes that emerged:

- 1) Saves Time. Creating and presenting formal presentations takes significant time and effort. Removing this requirement reduces administrative effort for the Applicants, RCO staff, and the NOVA Advisory Committee. A leaner process of written evaluations and focused Q&A will be less fatiguing to evaluators, staff, and applicants, improving project scoring.
- 2) Level Playing Field. Removing virtual presentations for all projects means those organizations with fewer resources or less experience will compete on a level playing field. Smaller scale projects and those in less populated areas may benefit from a written and Q&A process over a “visual” process.
- 3) Supports the NOVA Committee’s Program Priorities. Through a Q&A process, the NOVA committee can focus their attention on the aspects of the project they value most.
- 4) Loss of Details/Context. There will be some loss of project context and details that can only be shared through a lengthy formal presentation.

- 5) Less Information Available to the Public. The public and stakeholder groups do not get to hear the project's goals and details directly from the applicant organization.

Director Approved Evaluation Process

The RCO director has chosen to implement the following Written/Q&A evaluation process for all NOVA grant applications² beginning in August 2024:

- 1) Applicants will submit answers to the existing evaluation criteria in written form through PRISM during the application phase.
- 2) The NOVA Advisory Committee will review and preliminarily score projects on their own.
- 3) RCO will facilitate a Q&A period for each application by the full committee which will be available for live public viewing.
- 4) Evaluators' final project scores will be submitted to RCO after all the Q&A sessions have been completed.
- 5) The NOVA committee will have the opportunity to meet as a group to discuss the process and all projects prior to and after project evaluation.

This change will be included in the update of our NOVA program manuals in August 2024 prior to opening our PRISM database for applications.

Next Steps

Contingent on feedback and a decision by the board, RCO staff will publish new grant policies and procedures in the NOVA grant manuals in preparation for the grant round which begins in August 2024.

Scoping more systemic policy and procedure improvements for NOVA will begin with the NOVA Advisory Committee in 2025. These will be shared with the board at future meetings

Attachment

- A. Resolution 2024-07

² Education and Enforcement, Nonmotorized, Motorized, and Nonhighway Road.

- B. NOVA Program At-A-Glance
- C. Public Comment: Survey Results

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution 2024-07
Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicles Activities Program Policy Change**

WHEREAS the Revised Code of Washington 79A.25 and 46.09 authorizes the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) to adopt policies for the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) grant program in consultation with the state NOVA advisory committee; and

WHEREAS the board delegated approval of grant program evaluation process policies and procedures to the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Director in Resolution 2023-24; and

WHEREAS RCO staff consulted with the NOVA Advisory Committee on program policy changes; and

WHEREAS staff solicited and considered advisory committee and public comments on proposed grant limit changes and changes to the evaluation process as described in memorandum three of the July 2024 meeting materials; and

WHEREAS the grant limit increase policies align with the increasing costs of implementing projects while maintaining the competitive and distributive nature of the program and shall be set as follows:

Grant Category	Grant Limits
Education and Enforcement	\$250,000
Off-Road Vehicle	\$250,000 (Operations and Maintenance) None (All Other Project Types)
Nonhighway Road	\$200,000 (All Project Types)
Nonmotorized	\$200,000 (All Project Types)

AND, WHEREAS changing to a “hybrid” evaluation process for all categories, consisting of a written evaluation process and live question and answer period for all applicants, creates a more efficient and effective method of evaluating projects; and

WHEREAS the Director has authorized the evaluation process changes described in this memo; and

WHEREAS, increasing grant limits and improving the grant evaluation process would further the board's goals of achieving a high level of accountability in managing the resources and responsibilities entrusted to us, ensuring funded projects and programs are managed efficiently, with integrity, in a fair and open manner, and in conformance with existing legal authorities, and ensuring the work of the board and staff is conducted with integrity and in a fair and open manner;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the board approves the grant limit changes as proposed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the board authorizes updates of the NOVA policy manuals for implementation of these changes beginning with the 2024 grant cycle.

Resolution moved by: Member Craig

Resolution seconded by: Member Bugert

Adopted/*Defeated/Deferred (underline one)*

Date: July 24, 2024

NOVA Program At-A-Glance

The [Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities \(NOVA\) program](#) is a motor vehicle fuel-tax refund grant program that provides grants for planning, acquiring land, constructing, and maintaining facilities for a variety of back-country activities.³ These activities include car camping, backpacking, cross-country skiing, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, boating, hunting, fishing, sightseeing, motorcycling, and operating all-terrain and four-wheel drive vehicles. A portion of NOVA funding is set aside for education and enforcement programs. Applicants (government agencies and nonprofit off-road vehicle organizations) must meet eligibility requirements and compete for funding per board adopted policies.⁴

The board approved \$34.5 million in NOVA grants over the last three biennia.

Eligibility

NOVA projects must be facilities accessed by a nonhighway road, which generally means a roadway open to the public for recreation travel but not supported by state gas tax revenues. Examples include US Forest Service roads open to recreation travel and campground access roads.

Allocation

The Legislature approves and the State Treasurer credits one percent of the motor vehicle fuel tax revenues to recreation programs at multiple state agencies, as outlined in statute.⁵ The board receives fifty-eight and a half percent of those funds for NOVA recreation grants.⁶ The statute further splits these funds into four grant categories:

- Education and Enforcement (“E&E”)
- Nonhighway Road recreation
- Nonmotorized recreation⁷
- Off-road Vehicle recreation (this category receives additional funding from ORV permit fees)

³ [RCW 46.09.500-520](#)

⁴ [Manual #14](#), for Nonhighway Road, Non-motorized, and Motorized projects. [Manual #13](#) for Education and Enforcement projects. [2023 State Recreation and Conservation Plan, NOVA Advisory Committee.](#)

⁵ Per [RCW 46.09.520](#) to Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Parks, Department of Natural Resources, and the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

⁶ The Treasurer distributes the remainder of the funds for NOVA-related programs as follows: Department of Natural Resources (36%), the Department of Fish and Wildlife (3.5%), and Washington State Parks (2%)

⁷ Also called the Ira Spring outdoor recreation facilities funds ([RCW 46.09.520\(2\)\(d\)\(ii\)\(B\)](#))

Grant Limits

Nonhighway Road and Nonmotorized project categories have maximum grant limits of \$200,000 for each project, with maintenance and operation projects limited to \$150,000. Off-road Vehicle category maintenance and operation project limits are higher, limited to \$200,000, but there is no limit for other project types in this category. Education and Enforcement grants are limited to a maximum of \$200,000.

Grant Round Example: 2022-23 Biennium

In 2022, applicants submitted ninety-seven NOVA grant applications to RCO, requesting \$16.3 million from the \$12.2 million available. In early 2023, NOVA Advisory Committee members evaluated and ranked these projects during a week-long, virtual evaluation meeting. In addition to that week-long review meeting, Advisory Committee members evaluated Education and Enforcement projects on their own via a written process. At the June 2023 Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) meeting, the board approved the [ranked project list](#) for funding.

The following is the NOVA allocation for the 2022-23 grant round:

Table 1. 2022-23 NOVA Program Allocation by Grant Category

NOVA Category	Percent Allocated	Further Divided	Fuel Tax Dollars	Add ATV Permit Fees
Education and Enforcement	30%	100%	\$2,803,307	
Nonhighway Road	70%	30%	\$1,962,315	
Nonmotorized		30%	\$1,962,315	
Off-road Vehicle*		30%	\$1,962,315	\$2,718,644
"Competitive Dollars" (for any non-E&E Project)		10%	\$654,104	
Total	100%		\$9,344,356	\$2,718,644

*With the addition of ORV permit fees, the total for the ORV category was \$4,680,959.

Table 2. 2022-23 NOVA Applications, and Funded Projects

Category	Grant Applications	Grants Funded	Applications Funded %
Education and Enforcement	25	15.80	63.2%
Nonhighway Road	20	13.96	69.8%
Nonmotorized	25	11.58	46.3%
Off-road Vehicle	26	25.61	98.5%
Total	96	66.95	69.5%

Public Comment Survey Results

1. Select your relationship (role) with the NOVA program. You may take this survey again for additional roles.
2. Where are you from? Where do you live, work, or represent?
3. Where in Washington do you primarily recreate?
4. Do you think RCO should raise grant limits?
5. If you support raising grant limits in all categories, which is your preferred policy option?
6. What are the pros and cons of raising grant limits?
Pros - easier for applicants, evaluators, and RCO staff in handling fewer projects Con - could consolidate \$\$ to larger grantees, potential to affect distribution of \$\$ across state
Pro: Current limits are hard to work with in today's economy. Con: As you stated, fewer grants will be available.
We do not need more off road vehicle traffic in lands that support remaining wildlife habitat, which is already compromised by vehicular traffic and the incredibly loud noise from these vehicles that disrupts wildlife for hours to days after they pass. We already have huge challenges enforcing laws that currently exist to manage off road vehicles on roads, let alone when they go off trails and deeper into sensitive habitat.
The pros would be increased funds towards making our parks and communities a better plants, humans and other animals alike. Cons could be decreased funding elsewhere.
Fewer grants take less time to administer for RCO and the receiving agency making more money available. May be tough for some regions to compete.
The pro is that engineered estimates will match contractor bids allowing for projects to move forward.
wasteful spending. I worry people will apply for things that are not necessary, or apply for multiple grants through all of the avenues
Inflation has hit everyone and even though there is not more money available the size of funds granted needs to increase. So, the Grant will actually get work done.
Pros for our forest would be streamlining our redunant applications (i.e. multiple grants with the same scope, but on different landscapes could be combined). This way

we could have less grant managers as wells o we could have a few people that specialize in greant admin which would help the FS and RCO. A con I can foresee is that smaller projects may rank low because they have less impact.
Adjustment of grant revenue to account for increased, inflationary, costing of projects is appropriate as warranted.
Pro: adjust for inflation. Con: likely fewer awards made.
Ore work gets done but fewer grantees benefit.
More money for fewer projects
Higher rates while make sense, but may eleiminate projects since ther is no gurantee of state funding over the years.
Cleaner areas hopefully clear signs
Pro: Allows for the awards to be more impactful and useful. Lower grant limits result in piecemeal patches rather than addressing the problems holistically. Con: fewer grants allocated.
Pro: maintain project impact based on loss of purchasing power due to inflation. Con: funding source is not increasing, therefore fewer total projects may occur.
Maybe imputing the infrastructure already available before adding for money for new stuff. Everyone wants to expand so they can put their name on new things but no one wants to maintain this because that's boring.
PRO: Keeping up with inflation
CON: Raising grant limits would result in larger grant values being awarded, meaning that smaller grants will not be awarded. Small grants for critical for areas outside of King and Kittitas Counties and must be protected.
CON: There are currently motorized grants being awarded, not completed and then the money is returned to the general fund where it can be awarded to non-motorized use. This is reckless use of motorized funds. If grant limits are raised, then this problem will be amplified, creating even more imbalance in how NOVA funds are distributed across recreational uses.
Bundling makes it harder to rank between the merits of projects themselves and makes it more if a ranking of agencies/sponsors, their geographic focus, and their resources. If higher limits encourages bundling, find other ways to ensure smaller and less resources projects/sponsors are able to compete.
Pros: trails, trailheads and rec facilities are over-crowded in King County, especially near population centers. We need more off-road community connections, trails and facilities to bring recreation closer to where people live. That will take more funding

and bigger grant projects. Cons: if NOVA isn't going to get more overall funding, then this will reduce the number of project
Pros- inflation has affected many of the projects Cons- possible less projects funded
Less grants to give out
NOVA revenue is not inflation driven. It is limited to a set gas tax, which is vulnerable to reduction by the use of electric vehicles. As it is, only 50% of NonMotorized, 69% of NonHighway, and 57% E&E grant applications are funded (2018-2022). ORV is 95%, but that includes tab revenue. It may be okay to raise grant limits for the ORV category, but not being an ORV user, I don't have a recommendation. However, the limits for the other categories should remain as is.
Pro's: consolidate grants from eligible applicants, provide for inflation realities. Cons: fewer grants may be funded.
Washington Trails Association contacted past grant recipients at state and federal agencies to better understand the impacts of the proposed changes to grant limits. We heard opposing views on the increased limits. Some agency staff shared that if they could apply for larger grants, it would reduce the administrative burden of managing multiple grants that fund similar operations at their agencies. A single education and enforcement grant could pay for work in multiple worksites. This was seen as a positive outcome by some partners. However, other agency partners told us that they preferred the current limits. Those who were opposed suggested that because the amount of statewide funding would not increase, raising the grant limits would result in funding going to fewer projects. They worried that they would not receive funding if it went to large grant applications at other agencies.
Allows adaptive decision making by reviewer's, based on proactively assessing requests on a per case basis.
possible reduction in maintenance
Pros: Larger projects with more impact. Needed increase due to inflation and actual costs of projects. You can still give out a lot of smaller grants, but have the opportunity to also review larger ones. Cons: More applicants may seek full amount, may be helpful to ask about scaling projects and granted amount.
Inflation is real and it costs more to get work done so it's essential to raise the limit. While this may cause a decrease in the number of projects funded it should be up to the committee to best determine max bang for the buck in NOVA grants
I always appreciated grant applications that didn't just go for the maximum or had ample matching dollars pledged. Of course, some types of projects may need a higher amount in order to be feasible? But it seems as though higher grant limits will have

the unintended consequence of fewer successful grant applications as the available pool of money is possibly exhausted more quickly.

Cons: Increasing funding for motorized recreation contributes to climate change by supporting fossil fuel use and increasing wildfire risk. Infrastructure for motorized recreation is environmentally damaging (degrades air and water quality, increases wildfire risk, introduces invasive weeds, etc.). Funding this type of "wreckreation" costs society in so many ways, and is irresponsible and immoral.

Pros: Increasing funding for nonmotorized recreation promotes healthy activity and environmental awareness that further benefits ecological systems. It reduces mental and physical healthcare societal costs and benefits local communities with tourism dollars.

Easier for the agency to bundle projects together, reduces administrative burden.

We see the benefit of increasing grant limits to fund actual project costs more fully, as project costs have increased since the last grant limit increase in 2016. The NOVA grants we have received partially fund the actual costs for all project types across categories and individual projects would benefit from higher grant limits.

However, we are concerned that increasing grant limits will lead to fewer awards and uneven distribution of recreation resources statewide, leading to detrimental impacts on recreation opportunities. This is a concern especially for Maintenance projects in the increasingly competitive Nonmotorized and Nonhighway road categories and the Education and Enforcement grant opportunity. If fewer of these projects are funded statewide, it could also lead to increased environmental impacts and decreased user experience.

As stated there may be fewer projects funded.

Inflation - I don't think larger projects are necessarily better projects. Leave room for smaller communities.

7. Additional thoughts.
how to make ORV more competitive or distribute those \$\$ across all categories
Inflation is hitting us (non-profits) hard.
I did not like option 3.
Really in favor of raising the grant limits to option 3!
I don't appreciate all the introductory data collected as it may make these responses identifiable
I prioritize maintenance of existing trail infrastructure - whether motorized or multiple use. NOVA funds should only be used to support access that includes motorized uses, eg dirt bike trails that are open to non motorized users. NOVA should not be used for maintenance of off-highway roads that are not open to the general public for motorized access, eg Tiger mountain or raging river, where the entrance is gated and limited to organizations with keys and non-motorized public users.
It won't make any difference. The DNR doesn't care about OHV. They have locked up all the public land and act like they own it.
There are other funding options for some of the projects such as state parks and non-motorized. It would be great to focus on some of the motorized off-road activities more
May need to weight answers to questions a little differently to insure that there is geographical representation to funded grants.
NOVA grants are essential to the operation of many of our key state and federal partners. We believe that current grant recipients are the best positioned to explain the impact of grant limit changes on their programs of work. We encourage RCO staff to interview applicants from the Forest Service, Department of Natural Resources, and other agencies to fully understand the variety of perspectives that may be collected through this survey process.
the competitive nature of current funding is adequate
I would love to see the terms or heading definitions be more broadly defined, thereby being more representative of the many ways trails can be part of the outdoors and recreational experience. Horses, mountain bikes, ADA pony and off road buggies, even skateboards and battery powered single wheeled rideable devices can be exceptional gateways to the stars resources and trails or rideable access should be developed with increased support for alternative systems. Sustainability is important.
If the goal is efficiently funding quality recreation opportunities for Washington recreators, we feel that raising grant limits across the board is not the best way to achieve this goal. Please see responses to questions 10 and 13 for more detailed responses.

Years ago I was an evaluator and it seemed the same people came back year after year - it was their regular source of funding, which didn't seem appropriate - other less sophisticated groups didn't score as high. So I want to ensure smaller, less sophisticated groups have a chance.

8. Do you support raising grant limits in only one or more categories and/or project type rather than across the board?

9. If you answered yes, please indicate your preferred grant limit amount(s) by category and project type. Refer to page 7 of the Companion Narrative for this question. M = Maintenance and Operations Grants, C = Capital Projects (planning, development, acquisition grants)

10. Please explain your choice. Why do you prefer one amount or option over another?

inflation adjustment covers today's higher cost without making a drastic cut to the number of grant money available.

We have to maintain what we got without buying more as funds decline.

We have one offroad vehicle use area in the Forest and the \$200k grant limit is sufficient.

It is a more fiscally conservative option while providing more funds overall.

NOVA funding for non-motorized projects should be limited as other options are available to them.

I'm an off-road enthusiast

Motorized grants have additional funding and nearly all projects are funded. Not the same for non-motorized.

Motorized off road recreation is indefensible given the negative impacts on climate change and damage/destruction of natural resources. If I could, I would zero out the motorized categories.

NOVA funds should prioritize off-road vehicle projects, preferably trails not roads. Non-motorized uses are an inappropriate use of the funds, even though my primary forms of recreation are non-motorized.

Fix the stuff we got to a decent level before reaching into pockets asking for more.

Adjusting for inflation is the commonsense approach

The overcrowding is primarily on non-motorized trails so they need the most funding. Then nonhighway roads getting to trails and sites to escape civilization need

maintenance. We don't need new nonhighway roads and I don't see evidence of needing more education/enforcement.
Cost of maintaining different sports
Non-motor is a lot of field/volunteer time, grants normally used for material
I answered this. Competitive grant categories leave too much unfunded in non-ORV categories.
Fewer variables to E&E grants and inflation adjustment should address rising personal costs.
WTA does not have a position on the specific alternatives under consideration. We believe legislators need to allocate more funding to these types of projects, but don't have a position on the ideal NOVA grant limits.
Nova funding affected by newer vehicular modes
I believe motorized and no motorized does not capture the essential nature of this grants goals as it intended. The future will be much more diversely represented, I would hope.
Motorized recreation is underfunded
See answer to #6
Cost of doing business across all categories would be addressed by increasing limits holistically.
<p>The choices detailed above were determined after considering the potential benefits and risks to applicants in each category and project type, as well as how potential outcomes will impact user experience and recreation resources statewide. The primary concern we have is that increasing grant limits without a funding source increase will result in fewer projects being funded, leading to uneven distribution of funds across recreation areas statewide and an overall decrease in the quality of recreation opportunities. We recognize that Development, Planning, and Acquisition projects may not be undertaken if sufficient funding is not received and that project costs have increased significantly since 2016. We support a moderate increase (Option 2) in grant award amounts for those project types to keep up with inflation without exacerbating unequal fund distribution. For Maintenance and Education and Enforcement projects, the risk of not receiving any funding if grant limits are increased is greater than the limitations of receiving funding that doesn't cover total project costs under the current grant limits. These types of projects allow recreation areas to remain at established standards to provide safe and sustainable recreation opportunities and prevent environmental degradation. If an area previously supported by grant funding is not awarded, the lack of funding significantly impacts the ability to keep recreation areas at those standards, negatively impacting users as well as the landscape. For that reason, we do not currently support increases for Maintenance</p>

projects in the Nonhighway Road and Nonmotorized categories and Education and Enforcement projects until the overall funding source shortfall is addressed.
Inflation adjustment is reasonable. Not sure what to do about increase of recreation use in WA - it does need \$ support.
11. How useful is raising grant limits for applicants? Rank these items by relevance to your experience in NOVA.
12. What are some unanticipated consequences of raising grant limits?
less individual organizations will get help if larger sums go to less total organization.
Raising grant limits does correlate with reduced number of grants / projects funded.
None. Costs are going up and Grants need to be going up as well.
fewer grantees could reduce the impact geographically. Also, larger grants would benefit larger grantee organizations with commensurate capacity and drive out smaller grantees.
Highly don't know
Less grants funded
None that I can think of
Increases the need to identify more matching funds. Makes smaller, less visible projects more difficult to secure owing to fewer grants, and more visible large projects.
Reduced number of total projects - a few highly localized projects may absorb most of the funds, likely closest to the largest population centers.
As the last options lays bare, people asking for more then they need, or the maximum just because they can. Frugality drives innovation. "I will ask for the max on every project" doesn't look like money is being well spent.
There are currently motorized grants being awarded, not completed and then the money is returned to the general fund where it can be awarded to non-motorized use. This is reckless use of motorized funds. If grant limits are raised, then this problem will be amplified, creating even more imbalance in how NOVA funds are distributed across recreational uses.
I'm with a non-profit so can't apply for NOVA grants. But our agency partners will benefit from the higher limits. As I mentioned earlier, it could help increase development of new trails (especially community connections) and improve maintenance on existing trails and nonhighway roads that take people to trails and other rec sites like lakes, rivers, campgrounds.
Closure of some areas

DNR has several different regions that need funding to complete work, if we have less grants available, means some state areas won't get funding, losing jobs, trail closures, and much more around the state
Less projects are funded. Non-motorized grant ratings do not favor equestrians so having lower limits gives us more of a chance of there being funded grants for equestrian trails and facilities.
It is already extremely competitive for grants, and this may make it even more so as few grants will be funded based on flat future funding projections.
Larger grant amounts may impact the number of applications. Increasing the value of grants may cause more applicants to seek funding. Conversely, if fewer grants are awarded more agencies may determine that it is not worth applying for grants.
In recent grant cycles, some public agencies have shifted away from applying for RTP grants due to the perception that it is too competitive and become more reliant on NOVA grants. If NOVA funding becomes more competitive it may most significantly burden applicants with less staff time available for grant writing.
It certainly has the potential for overvaluation and awarding. However the benefits can also be analyzed by the adaptive potential that such instances would allow for. This could have exceptionally positive results!
More applicants apply for maximum amount.
Fewer awards but, again, the NOVA Committee should carefully monitor this and provide reduced funding to certain projects if necessary in order to fund the best out of all applications.
It seems likely that the available pool of money will be exhausted earlier, resulting in some projects remaining completely unfunded even though they rank relatively high.
Less overall projects awarded and tough decisions on priorities across the State.
Recreation users in Washington state may experience an overall decrease in the quality of recreation opportunities statewide if some areas receive large Maintenance and Education and Enforcement grants and other areas receive no funding. Recreation sites that are not awarded funding may be insufficiently maintained leading to resource damage and possible access closure until funding is secured. Delaying routine maintenance and lacking resources for education and enforcement could result in damage to recreation infrastructure and the surrounding environment that requires significant resources to repair.
It could create a situation where there will be fewer grant winners and more losers.
Bigger projects

13. Do you have any other recommendations for RCO regarding grant limits?
Set an upper limit for amount per mile cost for trails.
More, More, More Money! Recreational opportunities continue to decline as the public recreates outdoors more. We need more resources, and more projects!
Look closely at those who volunteer and take care of their areas of recreation
RTP grant limits should also be evaluated.
Option 3 "Peak/Future Inflation" is designed to account for "anticipated future inflation over the next few biennia." Has RCO considered an option with a gradual implementation schedule? It might be advantageous to have limits increase over time. This might allow applicants and RCO staff to adjust to this policy change more gradually and notice if the change has unintended consequences.
non motorized trail systems are widely used
I think grant limits should retain, in fact accentuate the ability of these grant awards to support projects as per not only the community needs, which are a vital part, but the supportiveness they provide being assigned and proportionate to the evaluated benefits that any project proposes, it's also very important that successful programs are acknowledged and further awarded, if they can continue to provide rewarding services to the community.
If grant limits are raised, I would hope that matching funds would also be given additional weight to help stretch the funding.
Future grant limit increases without a stable/increasing funding source could lead to large disparities in funding for land managers across the state. We continue to support looking at long-term solutions to ensure a stable funding source for NOVA with decreasing gas tax revenue. The current grant process results in a high degree of uncertainty for applicants from cycle to cycle. We support the development of future opportunities to maximize efficiency, such as longer grant periods or block grants, particularly for Maintenance and Education and Enforcement project types. These potential changes would further increase the efficiency for applicants and result in more flexible funding sources to provide high-quality recreation opportunities for users.
14. RCO is proposing changing the NOVA evaluation process from a 20-minute Zoom "live" presentation for every application (not required for Education and Enforcement grants) to a "hybrid" written evaluation and short question and answer period by applicant. Do you support these changes to the NOVA evaluation process?
15. What do you see as the pros and cons of the proposed "hybrid" evaluation system over the current "live" evaluation process?

Less of a time commitment for all, many applications present duplicated information
Pro: Streamlines the process. Con: Could be that you don't add time when it's necessary and bypass good projects because of time constraints.
Saving time and public funding
A pro would be more flexible scheduling, as the hybrid would have a less \specific time requirement to attend to the grant. A con would be, it would probably be harder to gage intent and if the organization has done adequate research and preparation for the grant with the hybrid method.
Saves time, gets to the actual questions that the evaluators have, saves time for staff preparing and presenting grant proposals.
I will not have to travel causing more cars on the road.
The applicants need to explain to a large audience of user groups what they are doing and be accountable for that. The interaction time is valuable.
I think the proposal relieves a lot of undue stress and time on applicants and likely committee members. I've seen a lot of good projects suffer because the project proponent is uncomfortable in a presentation format.
Pros: reduced time in long zoom meetings for review panel. These meetings are exhausting and it's difficult to maintain focus even with good planning and breaks. Cons: there may not be many questions asked of presenters during appointed meeting timeslot; reviewers will need to do their work and prepare in advance.
It could create greater access or less inclusion, depending on the applicant's background and experience.
focus reviewer time with grantee and most valuable information
I think as a member of the public the hybrid provides me more information of what's going on, plus there are better records of it than having to listen to a presentation
Live presentation is dependent upon comfort of presenter, and not necessarily reflective on value of project.
Small things that just need to get fixed will get fixed
I do not see any advantage
More time efficient for everyone. More fair - less likely to be biased based upon the skill or other attributes of the presenter. Written formats are superior to presentations for communicating technical or detailed information.
I think anyone asking for a quarter of a million dollars should have to show up to a meeting and have a conversation. This could also lower fraud.

The cons are that a live presentation is a much more effective way to communicate plans, asks, etc. It involves reading (visual) and listening vs just reading. Also it wouldn't surprise me if applicants started using ChatGPT/AI if everything is just written.
Gives time to review answers
We try to fit so much information into a 12 min PowerPoint and struggle to get the info out sometimes, by moving to a Q and A the Nova group can target questions about the application for clarification
Cons: potentially less information available to evaluators. Pros: much more efficient use of time in presenting grants for evaluation.
WTA supports the change to a "hybrid" evaluation system. The current system requires the grant evaluators to participate in a rather arduous evaluation process. We believe the proposed change would reduce fatigue and improve evaluators ability to objectively score all of the applications. We also think that applicants would benefit from the change. Some grant applicants are more skilled at giving live presentations than others. This change would retain some of the best qualities of having a live presentation while also creating a level playing field for all applications.
more citizen involvement
I would think it would be more efficient and not require as much coordinated efforts from both sides to effectively present and determine the qualities of these proposals.
Missing group real time discussion that could add clarity for the evaluators is a negative.
Better use of evaluators time and possible expansion of people able to participate with a more flexible review process is a plus.
Pros: Applicants must provide more information in the original grant application. Less time for all reviewers and applicants. More efficient process. Cons: Applicant will be limited to sharing additional information they may feel is important. Review committee may not get all information they desire and will have to spend more time ensuring they understand the projects on paper. They will need to prepare in advanced for Q&A vs going through application during presentation and generating last minute questions.
Having been the Hiker Rep to the NOVA committee for many years, I strongly DON'T agree with the idea that each NOVA committee member would, on their own and without any presentation by the applicant, score each grant application. When I was on the committee it was essential that each applicant made a presentation, provided full details, and would answer probing questions that uncovered many aspects of projects that could not be gleaned simply by reading the written application.

Further, while RCO and NOVA committee members may be trying to make it easier on themselves, it does so at the expense of the public good in enabling the committee to fully vet each project and to force the applicant to address all questions, during a full presentation.

I know there is a 10-minute Q&A session for each project but that is far different from making a presentation to the committee while having to field real-time questions about what the funds are really for, how they'll be used, past performance on grants, etc.

Using Zoom is fine nowadays but I urge RCO to keep a presentation being required from every applicant with real-time questioning from committee members.

Pro = I suppose this would save time during review week. Con = I believe this would require a good deal of pre-evaluation application review by members of the committee, and evaluators would have overall less sense of the true goals/benefits of the projects through the applicant highlighting their project. Reviewing the E&E grants on paper is very time consuming, so I can only imagine that it would greatly increase the evaluation workload if everything covered in the live presentations was converted to a narrative & needed to be reviewed in advance in Prism as evaluator preparation for scoring. I can see where the applicants might like to have their preparation time reduced, but this idea seems to merely shift the burden from the applicants to the reviewers.

Increased capacity for staff to complete process, less "cost" as far as time is concerned to apply.

We believe a hybrid evaluation process will be more efficient for applicants and evaluators. Currently, our applicants spend a significant portion of the application time preparing and practicing the presentation. Our estimate is that we spend the equivalent of \$300,000 in staff time applying for and managing RCO grants, with the majority of this cost coming from the evaluation process. Switching to a written evaluation would reduce the amount of resources spent on application preparation. Written evaluations have been proven as successful evaluations methods for the NOVA E&E category as well as other RCO grants.

One concern we have is the limitations of PRISM to incorporate project visuals into the application. We recommend RCO give clear directions for applicants on what to include in the visual attachments and for evaluators on when to refer to visuals (alongside the narrative evaluation criteria).

Less personal touch, less interaction with the project proponent.

Not everyone presents well in either format so having both options can be more fair.

16. Other thoughts?

It should work well as long as you are willing to add some time flexibility, when needed.

Figure out a way to make sure all of the agencies are using the same metrics. I know of at least one agency that counts road miles as trail miles. Hint, this is not a state agency.

Please consider moving to a "block grant" style of funding to further streamline the process and save everyone time by not having to participate in the current 2-year cycle. This change would greatly improve efficiency in so many ways and provide greater financial stability and reliability so they can better plan and manage recreation opportunities. I know this type of change would have a large administrative burden to make the change and probably require legislature approval but go for it anyway. It'll be worth it. Thank you.

You can always reverse this approach if it doesn't work well ...

Thank you to RCO staff for your thoughtful work and efforts to improve the NOVA process.

I think that there could be a benefit by being able to request a quick show option for additional video presentations of supplemental information. Doesn't even have to be live, right? , just limited to maybe 1 min, easily submitted, for say, situations where one realizes, " oh crap, I totally forgot to mention/ explain/ relate...etcetra, that! For correcting, very easily , any critical omissions. It could really produce better collaboration and foster more interactive process.



APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

Title: Mitigation Costs: Department of Fish and Wildlife, Point Whitney
Access Redevelopment, 16-2308

Prepared By: Marguerite Austin, Section Manager

Summary

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is requesting Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approval of a cost increase, payment of mitigation costs that exceed the board limit, payment of mitigation costs in advance of the construction phase, and a time extension. This request is for the Point Whitney Access Redevelopment ([16-2308](#)) project.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a: ☒ Request for Decision
☐ Request for Direction
☐ Briefing

Purpose of Resolution: Approval of the cost increase, payment of mitigation costs, and a time extension for the Point Whitney Access project.

Background

The Legislature did not approve a state capital budget by the end of the 2017 legislative session; as such, at its July 2017 meeting, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) adopted final ranked lists and delegated to the Recreation and Conservation Office director authority to award grants following legislative approval of a budget. The Legislature approved the 2017-19 State Capital Budget on January 18, 2018. RCO's director awarded grants for the Boating Facilities Program: State Category, which included a grant to the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) of \$540,000 for the Point Whitney Access Redevelopment, [16-2308](#).

WDFW had requested funds to complete the preconstruction work and renovate the Point Whitney boating access site on Hood Canal in Jefferson County. Plans were to

install a new boat ramp, relocate some fencing, level and expand the parking area, and update the restrooms and informational kiosk.

Project Status

WDFW completed the plans and specifications, renovated the restrooms and parking, and prefabricated planks for the boat ramp, while working to secure permits for installing the ramp. Securing the permits has taken a considerable amount of time. Once the boat ramp design was submitted for final permit approval, WDFW learned more about the mitigation requirements. They received confirmation from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) that the mitigation costs would be \$250,000. WDFW did not anticipate that amount, did not budget for that amount, and has determined that they do not have a secondary source of funding for that amount. WDFW contacted RCO staff to discuss options.

Options Considered

After reviewing board policies, the options discussed included the following:

Option 1. Ask the board for approval to: a) pay mitigation costs that exceed the board adopted limit, b) pay mitigation costs in advance with no guarantee that the permitting agencies would issue the construction permits, c) increase the grant limit to cover mitigation and escalating construction costs, and d) extend the agreement for one year to allow adequate time for securing the permits and constructing the boat ramp.

Option 2. Ask the board for approval to: a) pay mitigation costs that exceed the board adopted limit, b) pay mitigation costs in advance with no guarantee that the permitting agencies would issue the construction permits, c) remove the boat ramp from the scope of work, and d) extend the agreement for six months to allow adequate time for securing the permits. WDFW could submit a grant application later this year and request funds to construct the boat ramp.

Option 3. Ask for approval to downscope the project to include renovation of the restrooms and parking only. WDFW could submit a grant application later this year and request funds for mitigation and construction of the boat ramp.

Board Policies

These policies are included in [Manual 4, Development Projects](#) and [Manual 9, Boating Facilities Program](#):

Cost Increases

On occasion, the cost of completing a project exceeds the amount written into the agreement. Such overruns are the responsibility of the project sponsor. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may consider a cost increase in some grant programs if funds are available and the grant sponsor submits a written request. The director may approve requests for increases up to 10 percent of the total project cost and the board may approve increases above 10 percent.

To request an increase, the project sponsor must submit a written request to RCO addressing the following:

- The sponsor must have fully explored all practical alternatives to completing the intent of the agreement.
- The sponsor must have had little control over the conditions causing the overrun.
- Any increase must be used only for elements in the grant agreement.

A sponsor must obtain director or board approval for any significant change in project scope or design that results in a cost increase request. This approval must be granted before or simultaneously to the cost increase.

Project Mitigation

Project mitigation is limited to mitigation required as a result of the approved RCO project.

Mitigation Costs

Mitigation costs may be eligible if the mitigation is required as a result of the grant funded project's development impacts. Whenever possible, project sponsors are urged to mitigate in a manner that results in, or enhances, public outdoor recreation opportunities.

The maximum amount eligible for mitigation is 25 percent of the cost of the project for which mitigation is required.

Such mitigation may do the following:

- Occur on a site separate from the assisted project.
- Involve habitat enhancement with no public recreation or access component.
- Involve the creation, enhancement, renovation, or replacement of wetlands, either on or off site.
- Involve transportation or right-of-way improvements.

- Involve landscape buffers.
- Involve the creation or inclusion of a work of art, if required by adopted policy, local ordinance, or law. The amount is limited to no more than one percent of the total construction cost.

Scope Changes

Amendments for minor changes in scope and extensions to the project period may be authorized by RCO. Major changes in scope for acquisition, development, restoration, and non-capital projects may be authorized only by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

Time Limits and Extensions

The sponsor must complete the funded project promptly. For this reason, RCO staff, with sponsor assistance, establishes a timetable for project completion, including enforceable milestones and a project completion date. The director may approve a project for up to four years. Requests for extensions that would exceed four years may be referred to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for action.

Discussion and Analysis

Point Whitney is a popular water access site that is primarily used for motorized boating, fishing, and shellfish harvesting. WDFW purchased the site in 1925 and recreationists have launched boats from this area for nearly 50 years.

Alternatives Considered

After monitoring use in 2016, WDFW counted access by more than thirty-three vehicles a day during the peak use season and realized it was time to redevelop the site to meet current and future demands. When considering alternatives, WDFW recognized that there were already improvements at this site and developing another site would be drastically more expensive and would most likely have significant impacts on environmental and cultural resources.

WDFW decided against a “do nothing” option because the ramp was being buried by beach substrate and rapidly deteriorating. They also considered delaying the development; however, with escalating construction costs, the realization that they might have to restart the permitting process and would still have to pay for mitigation, WDFW staff decided the best choice was the first option outlined above.

Mitigation

While renovating the upland portion of the site, WDFW regraded a small section of the graveled parking lot to allow for sediment removal and increased plant growth. Under the Endangered Species Act, WDFW had to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS). NMFS uses the Salish Sea Nearshore Programmatic Conservation Calculator and requires mitigation credits to offset the impact of an increased high tide line. Aside from the nine-hundred square foot portion of the parking area, there were no other areas on-site and no off-site options available nearby that were suitable for mitigation. The In-lieu fee program is the only viable option.

Fees paid will go to the Hood Canal Coordinating Council's (HCCC) In-Lieu Fee program. A one-time payment is made to the program and the funds are used by HCCC to implement appropriate mitigation projects. The purchase of credits through this In-lieu fee program will satisfy the compensatory mitigation requirement. The program takes over planning, implementing, monitoring, and maintaining the mitigation project. The USACE is requiring payment of mitigation costs in advance of construction with no guarantee that the project will receive the permits required for development. WDFW has coordinated with the regulatory agencies and expects permit approvals upon payment of the mitigation fees. If for some unexpected reason permits are not issued, the mitigation would still be completed through the In-lieu fee program but would not be used towards this project.

Mitigation Fees

For In-lieu fee programs, the cost per unit of credit includes the expected costs associated with the restoration, establishment, enhancement, or preservation of aquatic resources in the service area. These costs are based on full cost accounting and may include expenses for project planning and design, construction, monitoring, remediation or adaptive management activities, as well as program administration. The calculation also may include contingency costs appropriate to the stage of project planning, including uncertainties in construction and real estate expenses and resources necessary for the long-term management and protection of the In-lieu fee project. In addition, the cost per unit credit must include the finances needed to ensure successful completion of In-lieu fee projects.

The total cost of the Point Whitney project is \$540,000. The mitigation fee for the project is \$250,000 or forty-six percent of the total. Board policy limits mitigation costs to twenty-five percent of the total. WDFW is asking the board for approval to pay the amount required and for approval to pay these costs in advance of construction because satisfying the mitigation requirement is a condition of permit consideration. In addition to securing the USACE permit, WDFW must provide Jefferson County with

proof of the purchase of a mitigation agreement before the county will issue the shoreline permit.

Cost Increase or Scope Change

WDFW has relocated the fencing, improved the parking area, renovated the restroom facility, and prefabricated the boat ramp. They estimate an additional \$345,000 is needed for construction, permit monitoring, project management and inspections. They do not have enough funds in the grant agreement to cover these remaining costs and as a result WDFW submitted a request asking for consideration of a cost increase. RCO staff reviewed the request and the justification, but at that time, there were not enough unspent funds to cover the amount needed. Recently, WDFW withdrew a Boating Facilities Program acquisition project after successful negotiations with the Department of Natural Resources for a trust land transfer. The unspent amount from that transaction is \$413,070, which means there are now enough funds for the cost increase.

WDFW considered asking for board approval to remove the boat ramp from the project scope. RCO staff deemed this as a major scope change because it was the most significant recreational element in the project. While removing the ramp is a viable option to address the issues at the site, WDFW would need to submit a grant application and compete for funding this fall to secure the funds needed for constructing the boat ramp.

Time Extension

The Department of Ecology issued a determination of non-significance following the State Environmental Policy Act review. WDFW has since completed cultural resources for the project and the design, engineering and construction work on the uplands. To implement the in-water work, WDFW needs a hydraulic project approval, an aquatic lease from the Department of Natural Resources, a USACE permit, and county permits that include shoreline substantial development and critical areas. The permit work is well underway and is expected to wrap up quickly upon payment of the mitigation fees.

The grant agreement expires at the end of this year. Along with the cost increase, WDFW is requesting a one-year time extension. This extension, through December 31, 2025, would provide the time needed to secure the final permits and would give two work windows for construction of the boat ramp.

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of this request 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 WDFW's request to pay the mitigation fees required, approval of the cost increase, and approval of a one-year time extension.

Next Steps

If the board approves the request, RCO staff will execute the amendments to the grant agreement and WDFW will then move forward with completing the project.

Attachments

- A. Resolution 2024-08, *Approval of the Mitigation Costs, Cost Increase, and Time Extension for Point Whitney Access Redevelopment, 16-2308*
- B. Point Whitney Maps, Aerial View, and Plan

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution 2024-08
Approval of the Mitigation Costs, Cost Increase, and Time Extension for
Point Whitney Access Redevelopment, 16-2308**

WHEREAS the Recreation and Conservation Office director used Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) delegated authority to award a Boating Facilities Program grant to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for the Point Whitney Access Redevelopment ([16-2308](#)) project in Jefferson County; and

WHEREAS the costs for mitigating reconstruction of the access site and completing the scope of work far exceeds the amount anticipated and included in the agreement; and

WHEREAS the mitigation costs for the Point Whitney project is forty-six percent of the current project total, thus exceeding the board-approved limit of no more than twenty-five percent of the total cost of the project; and

WHEREAS WDFW is asking the board to waive the twenty-five percent mitigation cost limit and allow payment in advance of construction to secure required permits; and

WHEREAS with escalating costs for construction and the unexpectedly high costs for mitigation, additional funds are needed to implement the full scope of work; and

WHEREAS additional time is needed to secure the permits and construct the boat ramp; and

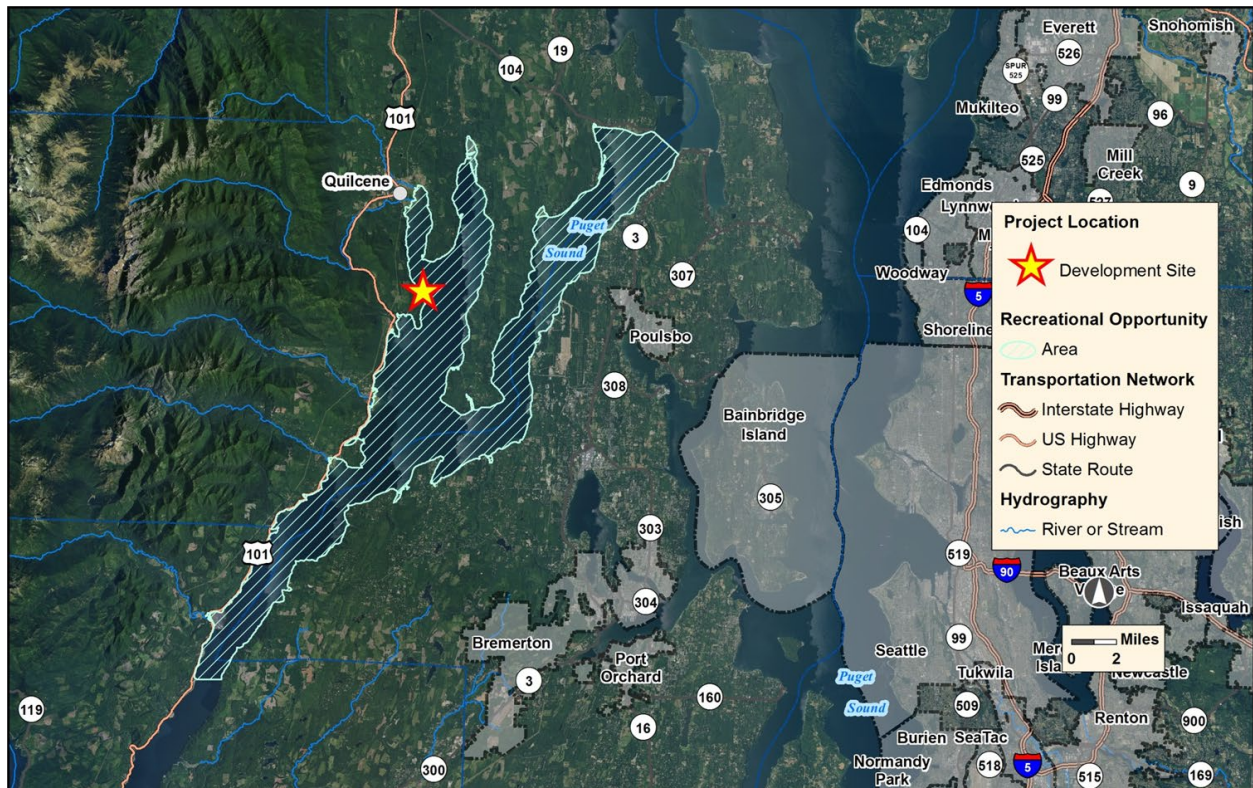
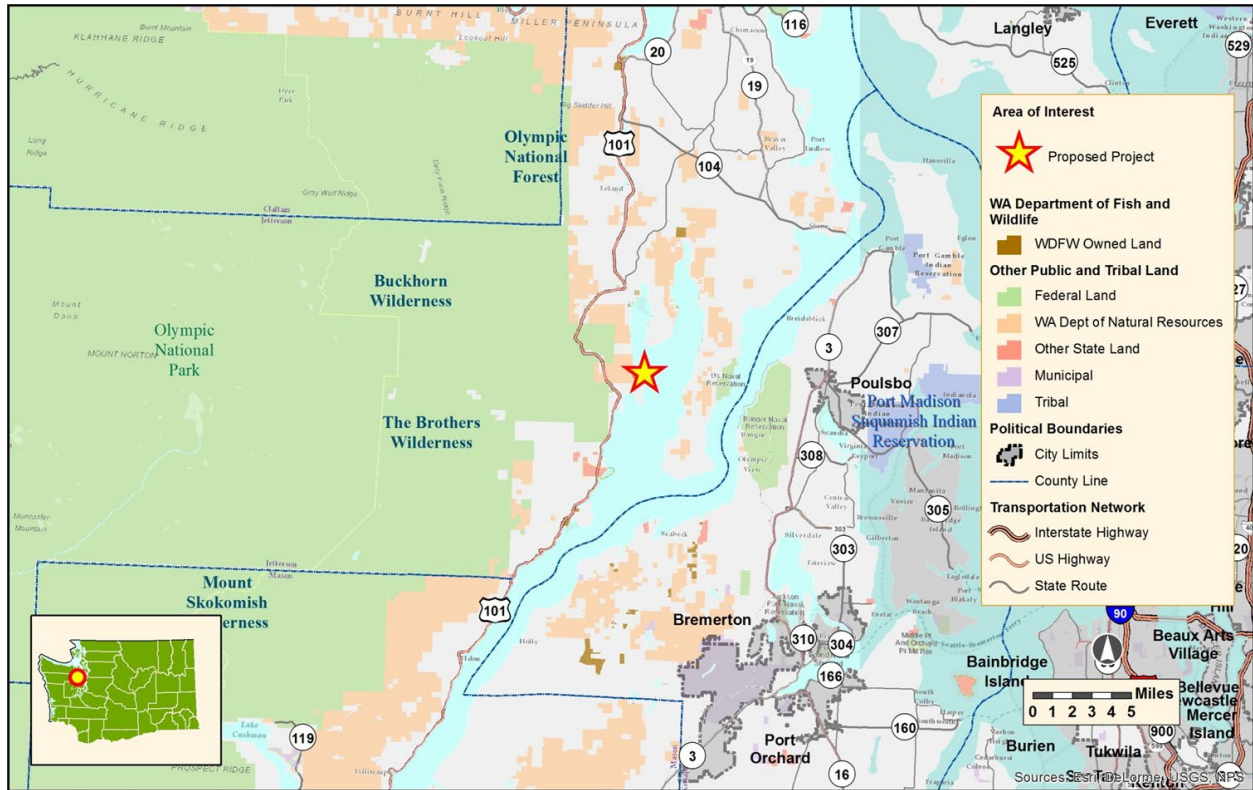
WHEREAS consideration of this request supports the board's objectives to provide funding to help partners protect, preserve, restore, and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities and to ensure funded projects and programs are managed efficiently;

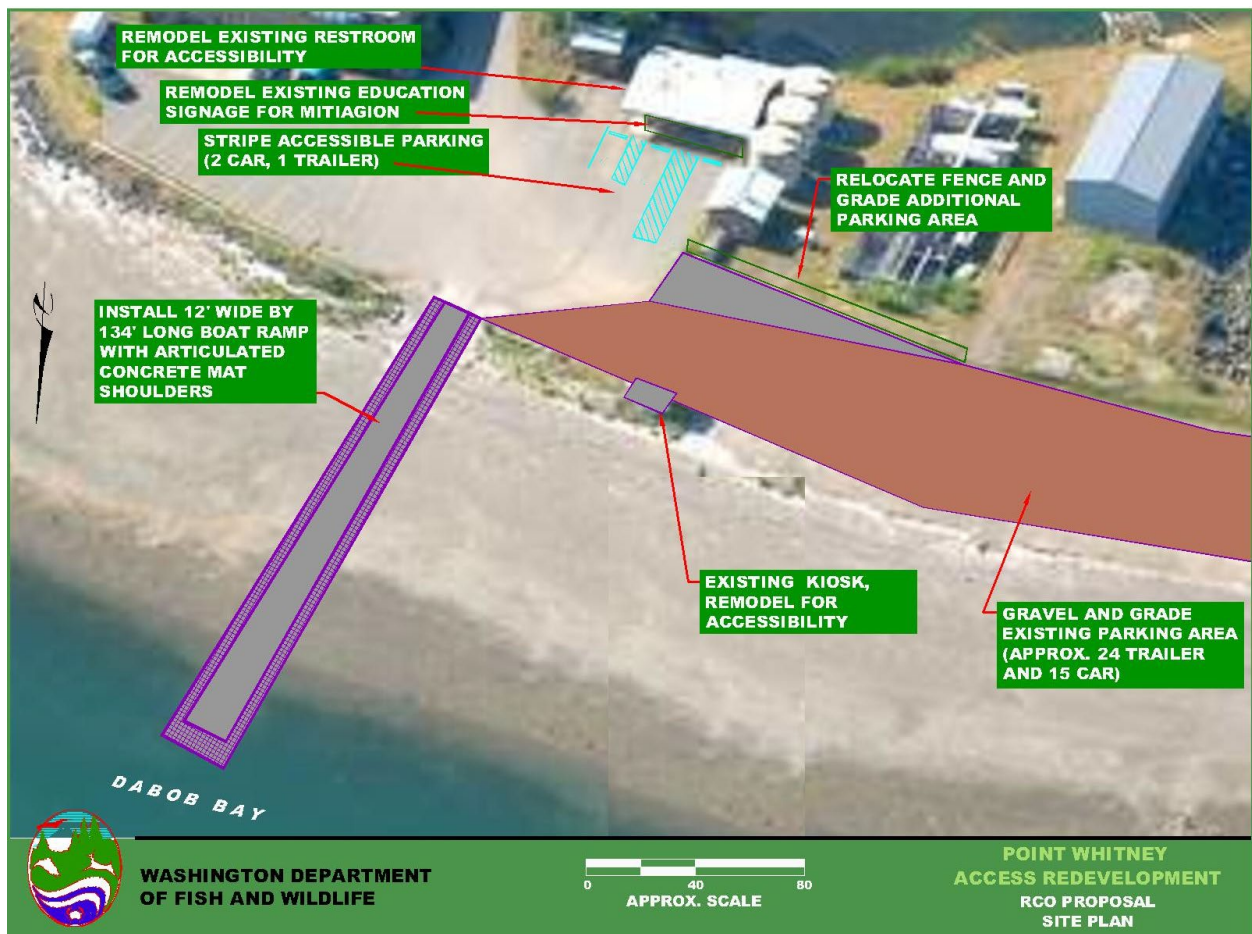
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board hereby approves a cost increase of \$345,000, which includes a request for a mitigation payment of \$250,000, and a one-year time extension to December 31, 2025, for the project referenced above and delegates authority to RCO's director to process the amendments needed for prompt implementation. If the permits are not approved, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will reduce their requests for future mitigation payments from the Boating Facilities Program grant applications until they have repaid the program the \$250,000.

<i>Resolution moved by:</i>	Bugert
<i>Resolution seconded by:</i>	Lam

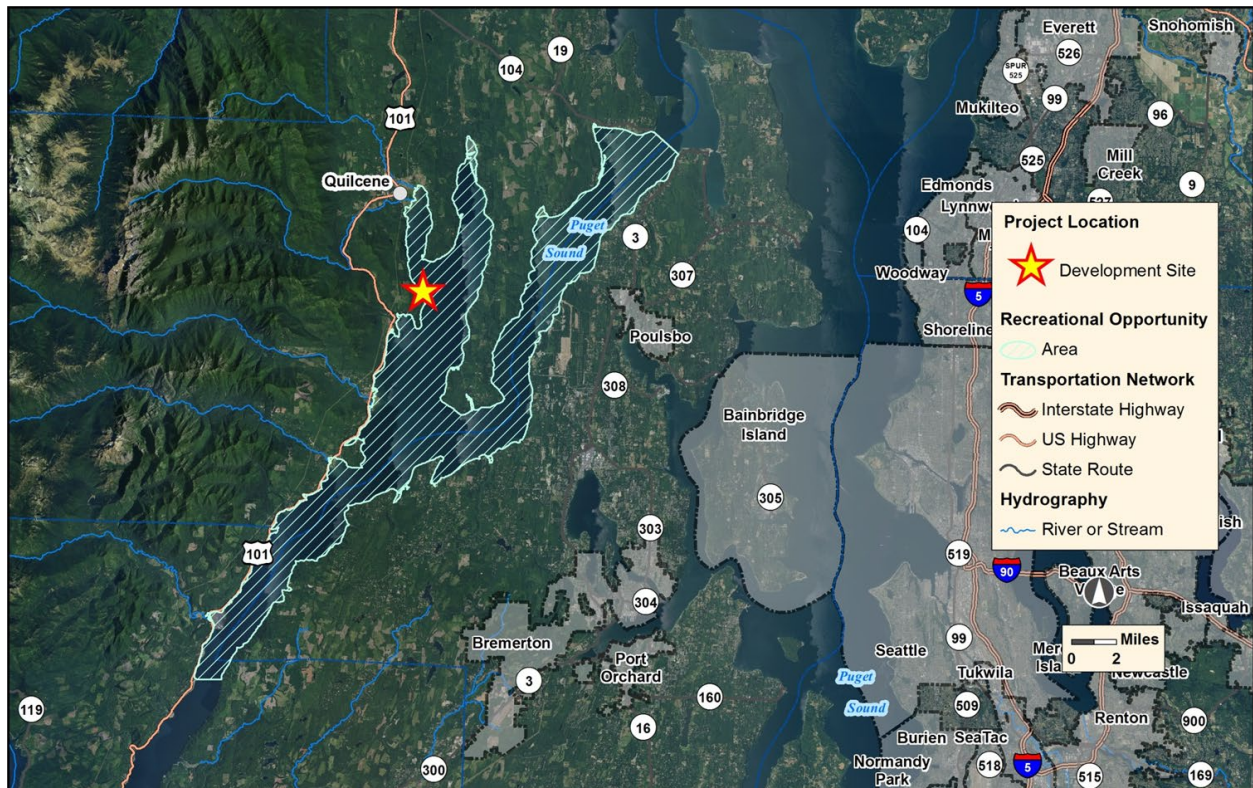
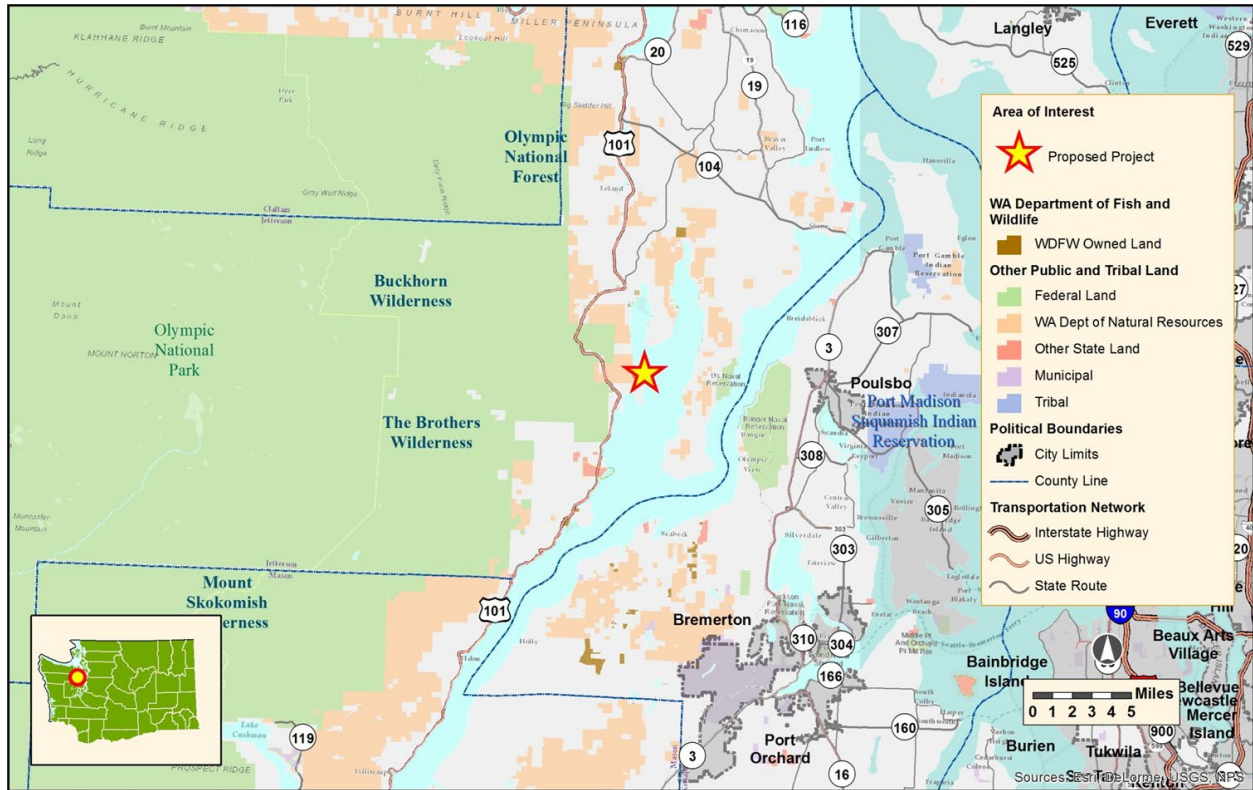
<u>Adopted</u> / <i>Defeated/Deferred (underline one)</i>	
<i>Date:</i>	July 24, 2024

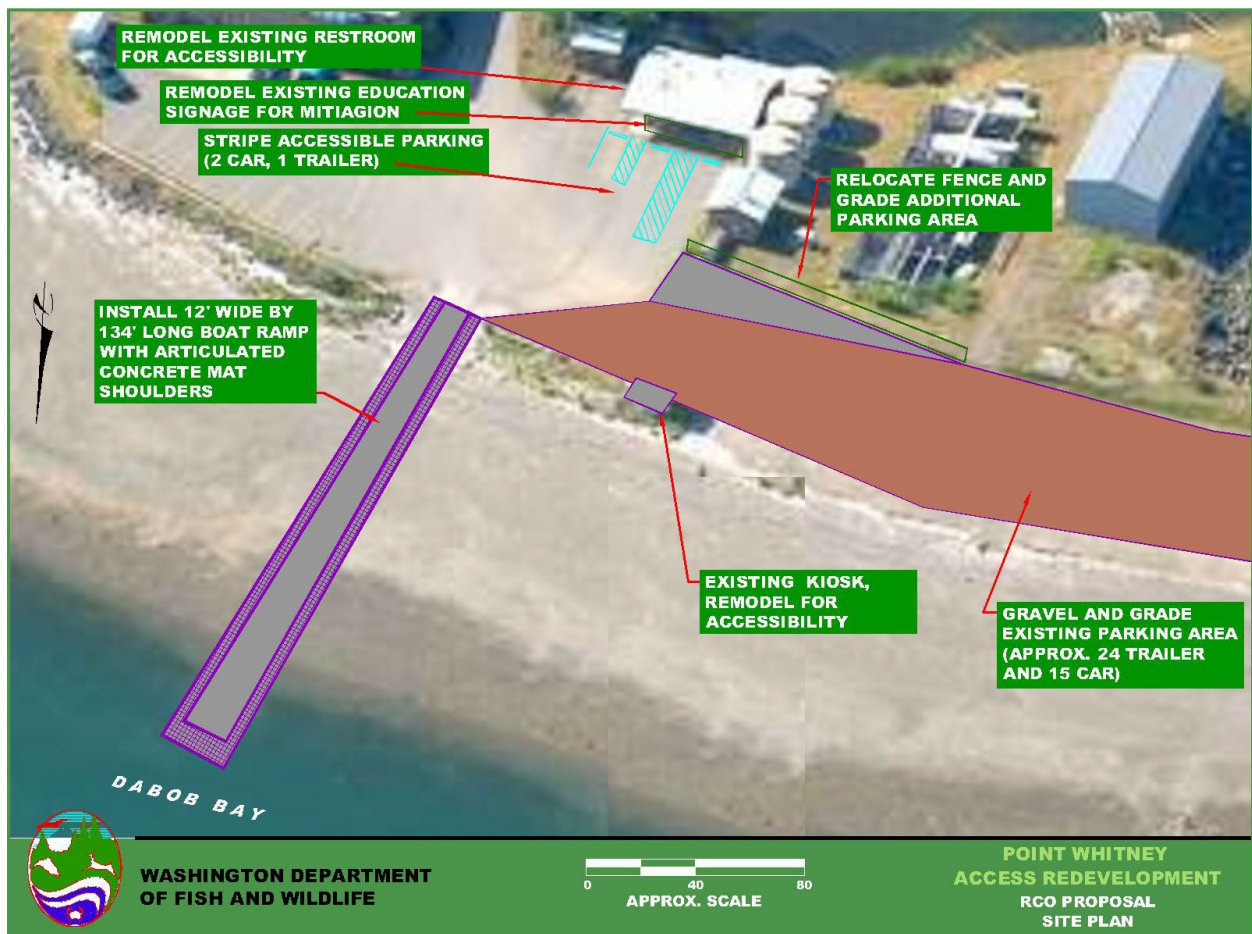
Point Whitney Location Maps, Aerial View, and Site Plan





Point Whitney Location Maps, Aerial View, and Site Plan







Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

Title: Land and Water Conservation Fund: Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program Project

Prepared By: DeAnn Beck, Senior Outdoor Grants Manager

Summary

This memo summarizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund: Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program, provides an overview of an application submitted to National Park Service for their Round 7 grant cycle, and provides an opportunity for review of the project proposal in an open public meeting. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board permanently delegated authority to the Recreation and Conservation Office director to approve projects for submittal to the national competition, following review by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Advisory Committee and an opportunity for public comment in an open public meeting.

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

The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides matching grants to states to preserve and develop quality outdoor recreation resources. The National Park Service (NPS) distributes funding to the states by a formula based on population and land area. Congress has also set aside an appropriation for its nationally competitive Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Program and each state has an opportunity to submit projects for consideration.

The ORLP Program's purpose is to provide new or significantly improved recreation opportunities (through acquisition and/or development) in urban disadvantaged communities consistent with the purposes and requirements of the [LWCF Act](#). To meet ORLP objectives and goals, projects must be located within an incorporated city (or

town) or an unincorporated area having a population of 30,000 or more (as of the 2020 Census) and located within a community that is also determined to be disadvantaged per the [Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST). The goal is to fund projects that serve and are directly accessible to economically disadvantaged communities that are underserved in terms of parks and recreation resources. When evaluating grant proposals, a national panel will prioritize projects that directly connect people to outdoor places and:

- provide new recreational opportunities, particularly those that increase access to nature's benefits, such as green spaces, shady areas (via tree cover), and natural landscapes that help cool the air and reduce urban heat island effects, reduce pollution, and have positive effects on mental and physical health;
- include nature-based projects where nature is a major element of or strongly supports the proposed recreational activity – these projects will earn a five-point bonus;
- empower and engage members of the target community in the project development and design of the plans for the park;
- create or expand public-private partnerships that leverage matching share resources (e.g., money or donations of land, supplies, or services, etc.);
- provide economic benefits to the local community (e.g., short or long-term jobs or stimulation to local business near the park);
- use sustainable design/materials;
- include site features that consider the needs of all demographics;
- involve the redevelopment of a blighted or distressed property;
- benefit from a high degree of coordination among the public, multiple levels of government, and the private sector; and
- advance goals of, or meet, priority recreation needs identified in numerous local, regional, state plans and/or initiatives.

In addition to the objectives listed above, projects must meet the goals identified in and in alignment with at least one priority of their state's comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (SCORP).

In April 2024, RCO submitted one ORLP application to NPS for Washington state and is currently waiting on national selection results.

Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Program Policies

Rules governing the LWCF program are in the [Land and Water Conservation Fund Federal Financial Assistance Manual](#). Additional guidelines for Washington's LWCF program are in [Manual 15, Land and Water Conservation Fund Program](#). The ORLP Program follows the same policies as those for LWCF, while also placing emphasis on funding projects for urban underserved populations. The table below provides a summary of the requirements for this grant cycle:

Eligible Applicants	State and local governments (cities, counties, park districts, port districts, special purpose districts) and federally recognized Native American tribes.
Eligibility Requirements	Applicants must: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish planning eligibility,• Represent a jurisdiction (incorporated or unincorporated area) of at least 30,000 people (2020 Census tract), and• The project site must be located within a community that is determined to be disadvantaged per the Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool (CEJST).
Eligible Project Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquisition• Development and renovation• Combination of acquisition and development
Match Requirements	At a minimum, grant recipients must provide a one-to-one match from state, local or private sources.
Funds Available	\$224 million
Fund Limits¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum grant request: \$300,000• Maximum grant request: \$15,000,000
Public Access	Required for the whole project area (e.g., entire park).
Other Program Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Property acquired must be developed within three years.• Project sponsors must record language against the title of the assisted property stating that it must be preserved for public outdoor recreation uses in perpetuity.

¹ The federal limits exceed the board-approved grant limits for the stateside LWCF program.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The conversion rules found in the Land and Water Conservation Act applies.
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Round 7 Grants Cycle

The NPS is processing grant applications for the ORLP Program. To ensure applicants from Washington state had an opportunity to participate in this competition, RCO staff began soliciting grant proposals in December 2023. The city of Kent submitted an application to RCO requesting \$3.15 million in grant funding. A summary of the proposal is included in Attachment A.

Typically, Washington’s LWCF advisory committee uses the federal evaluation criteria to review, rank, and recommend projects for consideration. The director would then consider submitting the highest ranked projects to the NPS for the national competition. However, there is no limit on the number of applications each state may submit to NPS for ORLP, so ranking is unnecessary and, in this case, only one proposal was submitted. The advisory committee reviewed the grant proposal using the federal evaluation criteria and provided feedback to give the applicant an opportunity to improve the project. Advisory committee members recommended forwarding the project to the NPS for the national competition. RCO submitted this proposal to NPS in April 2024.

Delegated Authority

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) delegated authority to the RCO director to submit ORLP applications to the NPS following a presentation to the board to ensure an opportunity for review in an open public meeting.² As specified in the resolution, staff typically submits the applications to the board before sending them to NPS. This year, NPS moved the deadline up to April 30 instead of the anticipated September deadline. Staff were unable to bring the latest application forward until now. This memo includes a summary of the grant application submitted to NPS for review and funding consideration.

Strategic Plan Link

Submitting projects for this federal funding opportunity supports the board’s strategy to provide funding to protect, preserve, restore, and enhance recreation opportunities statewide. The grant process supports the board’s goal to achieve a high level of accountability in managing the resources and responsibilities entrusted to it.

² Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2018-10

Projects considered for the ORLP Program support board adopted priorities in the *Washington State 2023 Recreation and Conservation Plan*.

Next Steps

If this project is selected to move forward in the national competition, RCO will be responsive to federal deadlines for submitting final application materials to NPS for this ORLP grant round. If there is applicable public comment at the board meeting, staff will incorporate those comments into the final application materials.

Attachment

- A. Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program: Project Proposal for Federal Fiscal Year 2025

Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program: Project Proposal for Federal Fiscal Year 2025

Number	Name	Sponsor	Grant Request	Match	Total Cost
23-1910 Development	Uplands Playfield and Spray Park	City of Kent	\$3,150,000	\$3,150,000	\$6,300,000
<p>Description: The City of Kent will use this grant to redevelop an underutilized 2.3-acre park space located downtown near multifamily residential housing. Presently, Uplands Park consists of open lawn and two ballfields that have not been actively programmed for several years. Through community engagement and the city's planning process (2022 Parks and Open Space Plan), the need for a spray park in this community is well-documented. Grant funds will be used to remove the underutilized ballfields and redevelop this park space with Kent's first spray park and support elements including a new restroom, play area, picnic shelter, entry plaza, and pathways. The park is located in and will serve a community that is underserved in terms of park resources.</p>					



Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

Title: Boating Infrastructure Grants (BIG)

Prepared By: Allison Dellwo, Senior Outdoor Grants Manager

Summary

The Recreation and Conservation Office solicited grant applications for federal Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program funding. This memo provides an overview of the program and outlines the evaluation and selection process. The July 2024 meeting provides an opportunity for review of the program and any applications received in an open public meeting of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

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

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is soliciting proposals for the federal Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program. Given the timing of the federal process, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) has delegated the following authority to the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) director for the BIG program:

- The director may approve funding for Tier 1 projects after the Boating Programs Advisory Committee reviews the grant applications. If there are multiple applications, the committee evaluates and ranks the projects.
- The director may submit Tier 2 projects to the USFWS for the national competition following review of the projects by the Boating Programs Advisory Committee and presentation of the applications at a regular meeting of the board.

At the July board meeting, staff will present any grant applications submitted for funding consideration and fulfill the open public meeting requirement.

Boating Infrastructure Grant Program Policies

The U.S. Congress created the BIG Program under the Sportfishing and Recreational Boating Safety Act of 1998. The program is managed by the USFWS and provides funds to develop, renovate, and maintain boating facilities for recreational boats twenty-six feet and larger. Sponsors may also use funds to provide directional information and enhance boater education. Facilities eligible for funding include transient moorage docks, breakwaters, buoys, and upland support amenities.

The USFWS has established two tiers of grants:

- Tier 1 is for projects requesting \$287,907 or less. Each year the state of Washington may submit an unlimited number of projects requesting funds on behalf of the state or eligible sub-sponsors. However, the total may not exceed \$300,000. Tier 1 applications are not guaranteed but have a high probability of funding approval.
- Tier 2 is for projects requesting between \$300,001 and \$1.5 million. States may submit applications for any number of Tier 2 grants on behalf of the state or an eligible sub-sponsor. These projects are submitted for national competition with no assurances of success.

Program Policies

Rules governing Washington's program are in [Manual 12, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program](#).

Eligible Applicants	Local agencies, state agencies, port districts, tribal governments, and private marinas and nonprofit organizations with facilities open to the general public.
Eligible Project Types	Development, renovation, maintenance, and education and information.
Match Requirements	Grant recipients must provide at least 25 percent in matching resources.
Funding Limits	Tier 1: The minimum fund request is \$5,000 with a maximum request of \$ 287,907. ¹ Tier 2: The minimum fund request is \$300,001 with a maximum request of \$1,440,645. ¹
Public Access	Required for the longest useful life period identified for one or more capital improvements.

¹ The board's adopted policy is to set aside 4.12 percent for program administration per our approved federal indirect rate.

Other	• Projects must be located on navigable waters.
Program	• Transient moorage is limited to a fifteen day stay.
Characteristics	• Key priorities in the evaluative process include meeting documented needs, improving boater access, and demonstrating efficiencies, partnerships, innovation, and environmental stewardship.

RCO typically accepts grant applications for Tier 1 projects only during even-numbered years as part of our biennial grants cycle. If not enough applications are received, RCO will also accept applications in an odd-numbered year. Applicants may submit Tier 2 projects each year for the annual national competition.

Currently Active BIG Projects

RCO is currently managing seven active BIG projects. Three projects are Tier 1 totaling \$392,794 in federal grant funding and \$191,787 in local match. Four projects are Tier 2 totaling \$3,510,980 in federal grant funding and \$5,392,162 in match. These projects include breakwater renovations, restroom, shower, and fuel dock replacements, utility upgrades, and new transient moorage.

Federal Fiscal Year 2025 Grant Cycle

At the time this memo was prepared, RCO received two pre-applications for BIG funding consideration during this grant cycle for Tier 1 projects and two pre-applications received for Tier 2. The proposals are described in Attachments A and B.

Technical Review

The Boating Programs Advisory Committee is comprised of representatives from state and local agencies and citizens with expertise in boating access facilities. The committee is charged with reviewing the project proposals. This technical review will occur in July for any applications received. The applicants will have approximately three weeks to update their proposals and submit changes following advisory committee review.

Project Evaluation

After considering the recommendations of the Boating Programs Advisory Committee for any BIG projects, the director will submit the project applications to the USFWS in September. Tier 2 projects go through a six-step national review and selection process: application acceptance, pre-ranking review, application ranking, application selection, risk assessment, and finally award notification. The National Review Panel scores and ranks projects and recommends a ranked list to the USFWS Director who makes the final decision.

Program Funding

BIG receives a percentage of the annual revenues to the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. The revenue comes from excise taxes on sport fishing equipment, fuel taxes attributable to motorboats, and import duties on fishing tackle, yachts, and pleasure craft.

RCO has \$5 million in spending authority in the state capital budget for the 2023-25 biennium for any application received.

Public Comment

No public comment has been received to date.

Next Steps

The director will submit any eligible BIG projects to the USFWS for federal fiscal year 2025 fund consideration following final review by the advisory committee.

Attachments

- A. Boating Infrastructure Grants: Tier 1 Project Proposals for Federal Fiscal Year 2025
- B. Boating Infrastructure Grants: Tier 2 Project Proposals for Federal Fiscal Year 2025

Attachments

A. Boating Infrastructure Grants: Tier 1 Project Proposals for Federal Fiscal Year 2025

Number	Name	Sponsor	Grant Request	Match	Total Cost
24-1984 Development	Guest Dock Fire Suppression	Port of Kingston	\$192,000	\$64,000	\$256,000
	Description: Port of Kingston will use this grant to install a new Fire Suppression (standpipe) system at the existing Port of Kingston Marina located off State Route 104, near the Kingston Ferry Terminal. The Port operates the Kingston Marina consisting of just over 300 slips and six docks (A,B,C,D,E, and G). The G dock is dedicated to transient moorage and has mostly slips of twenty-six feet or larger. There are two hydrants serving the marina. The project will be pro-rated for BIG-eligible vessels.				
Number	Name	Sponsor	Grant Request	Match	Total Cost
24-2182 Development	Port Ludlow Piling Replacement	Port Ludlow Marina	\$116,250	\$38,750	\$155,000
	Description: Port Ludlow Marina will use this grant to remove fourteen creosote pilings, each seventy-five feet in length, and replace them with fourteen steel pilings, each eighty-five feet in length. This upgrade will ensure the stability and safety of the 680-foot linear dock, preventing future damage from high tides and providing a secure docking environment for visiting vessels. The new pilings will be installed to withstand current and projected sea level changes, safeguarding the infrastructure and enhancing the overall marina experience for transient guests. With sixty-five transient slips and the capacity to accommodate vessels up to 200 feet, the marina is ideal for yacht club cruises, rendezvous, and family getaways. Annually, over 2000 guests utilize our guest dock, experiencing the marina and local community.				

B. Boating Infrastructure Grants: Tier 2 Project Proposals for Federal Fiscal Year 2025

Number	Name	Sponsor	Grant Request	Match	Total Cost
<u>24-2177</u> Development	Port of Chinook Dock Renovations	Port of Chinook	\$945,000	\$315,000	\$1,260,000
	Description: The Port of Chinook will use this grant to restore and renovate the C dock at the Port of Chinook. This would increase access, use, and sustainability for the Port of Chinook. Renovation of the C dock is necessary to keep the Port of Chinook thriving with recreational fishermen, local fishing industry boats, day use boating, and ensure the marine area in the Port is not affected by the aging dock. C Dock has approximately ninety slips. C Dock is the highest priority for replacement and renovation at the Port of Chinook.				
Number	Name	Sponsor	Grant Request	Match	Total Cost
<u>24-2120</u> Development	Des Moines Marina Charging Floats	City of Des Moines	\$1,400,000	\$725,000	\$2,125,000
	Description: City of Des Moines will use this grant to fund a dual-purpose floating dock and charging station public amenity that serves recreational electric boaters. The project will design and build a new floating dock that replaces diesel/gasoline slips with slips specifically designed to accommodate and charge electric vessels. The new dock will also contain batteries that store electricity for electric charging stations. The float as battery storage concept is in use in Northern European saltwater marinas and is the concept planned for use in San Francisco Bay. To the City's knowledge, the Des Moines Charging Floats would be the first in Washington State.				

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

Title: 2025-27 Budget Concepts

Prepared By: Brock Milliern, Policy Director

Summary

The Recreation and Conservation Office will submit budget requests for the 2025-27 biennium to the Office of Financial Management in mid-September. This memo provides background information to assist the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in making decisions on the final budget requests for the agency to include in its budget proposals for the following grant programs: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and Youth Athletics Facilities Program. The board will also be asked to approve budget requests and/or authority for federal programs and programs with dedicated revenue sources. Tables 1 and 2 (below) summarize those programs.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

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

Operating Budget

Operational funding support for the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) comes primarily from the administrative fee that is taken off the top of the capital appropriation and dedicated accounts. However, RCO typically receives some general funds in the operating budget for the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO), Washington Invasives Species Council, and small portions of other staff costs.

The 2025-27 operating budget outlook is predicted to have the usual pressures and an updated revenue forecast is expected at the end of June. That update will be provided to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) during the July board meeting.

Bond Funding Capacity

The capital budget outlook is currently stable. Estimates of bond capacity in the 2025-27 biennium is \$4.6 billion. This number will be updated by the board's July meeting.

Last biennium, the most significant pressure on the capital budget was funding for the new Western State Hospital. This biennium, need for additional school construction and Washington Department of Transportation culvert replacements may pose pressure on the capital budget.

Dedicated Funds

Many of RCO's programs depend on dedicated funds collected and committed to specific costs. The budget requests for these programs are based on the amount of expected collections for the 2025-27 biennium. The board will be asked for approval of these funding amounts at their August meeting. These recreation and conservation programs are found in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Dedicated Fund Sources for RCO Programs

Program	Revenue Source
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account	Revenue from Department of Natural Resources managed aquatic lands, including sale of geoduck harvests
Boating Facilities Program	Motor vehicle fuel tax attributed to boating
Firearm and Archery Range Recreation (FARR)	Concealed weapons permits
Nonhighway Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA)	Motor vehicle fuel tax attributed to off highway usage and off-road vehicle permits

Federal Funds

The following RCO programs receive federal funds. The budget requests for these programs will be based on the amount of expected federal appropriations for the state 2025-2027 biennium. These recreation and conservation programs are found in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Federal Fund Sources for RCO Programs

Program	Revenue Source
Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Department of Interior
Land and Water Conservation Fund	National Park Service/Department of Interior
Recreational Trails Program	Federal transportation funds dedicated to trails
Salmon Recovery – Federal	Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Budget Requests

At the July meeting, the board will be briefed and provide direction to staff on the options for the amount of 2025-27 funds to include in RCO's budget request for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) and Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF). The board will make a final decision at the August meeting. No August memo will be provided due to limited time between meetings.

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

Background and History of WWRP Funding Levels

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) is funded in the capital budget with general obligation bonds. Table 3 shows the bonds requested by the board and the amount appropriated by biennia. On average since 1995, the program has received 69 percent of the amount requested by RCO. Table 3 below is a frame of reference to display how request amounts have been funded over time.

Table 3: WWRP Requests, Appropriations, and Percent Difference

Biennium	WWRP Request	WWRP Appropriation	Difference
--- Dollars in Millions ---			
91-93	N/A	\$61	N/A
93-95	N/A	\$65	N/A
95-97	\$90	\$45	50%
97-99	\$113	\$45	40%
99-01	\$70	\$48	69%
01-03	\$90	\$45	50%
03-05	\$55	\$45	82%

05-07	\$50	\$50	100%
07-09	\$100	\$100	100%
09-11	\$100	\$70	70%
11-13	\$100	\$42	42%
13-15	\$90	\$65	72%
15-17	\$97	\$89*	92%*
17-19	\$120	\$80	67%
19-21	\$130	\$85	65%
21-23	\$140	\$100	71%
23-25	\$135	\$120	89%

**Figure includes money for RCO Recreation Grants funded in 2015-2017*

Options for selecting WWRP Funding Level

Options for the WWRP funding request are based on: 1) per capita investment; 2) the percent of applications received over time that were funded; 3) the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition (WWRC) advocacy number; 4) percentage of bond capacity; and 5) the funding level at which one category would have unspent funds.

Option 1: Set the funding level on a per capita basis

A budget request for WWRP could be based upon the amount appropriated per capita. Since 1992, the average per capita appropriation (adjusted for inflation) for WWRP is \$16.11.

In the 2020 census, Washington's population was estimated at 7.66 million—an increase of 930,000 since 2010. The increasing population puts additional pressure on park, recreation, and conservation areas. Investing at a level consistent with population growth can help ensure pacing with the state's need.

Table 4: WWRP appropriations per capita, adjusted for 2024 dollars.

Biennium	WWRP Appropriation (Adjusted to 2024 dollars, in millions)	State Population, in millions	WWRP per Capita
91-93	\$142	5.14	\$27.63
93-95	\$140	5.36	\$26.12
95-97	\$92	5.57	\$16.5
97-99	\$87	5.75	\$15.13
99-01	\$90	5.89	\$15.28
01-03	\$79	6.06	\$13.04
03-05	\$76	6.21	\$12.24
05-07	\$81	6.42	\$12.62
07-09	\$152	6.61	\$23.00

09-11	\$102	6.72	\$15.17
11-13	\$73	6.82	\$10.70
13-15	\$87	6.97	\$12.48
15-17	\$117	7.18	\$16.30
17-19	\$101	7.43	\$13.59
19-21	\$104	7.66	\$13.58
21-23	\$118	7.86	\$15.01
23-25	\$124	7.95(est)	\$15.60

Table 4 uses Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index calculator to adjust to 2024 nominal dollars. The calculator uses the average Consumer Price Index for a given calendar year. The data represents changes in prices of all goods and services purchased for consumption by urban households.

Estimated population for 2025, based on current Office of Financial Management (OFM) population growth data, is approximately 7.95 million. If the WWRP budget request is based on the average per capita since 1991 of \$16.11, the request amount would be **\$128 million**.

Option 2: Applications received and funded

Table 5 below displays the amount needed to fund all applications received each biennium since 1999 and the actual WWRP appropriation. Historically, the appropriation has met an average of 52 percent of the funding requested.

Table 5. Percentage of Applications Funded Through Appropriation

Biennium	Total Applications (\$)	WWRP Appropriation	Percent of Applications (\$) Funded
----- Dollars in Millions -----			
99-01	\$78.9	\$48	61%
01-03	\$62.6	\$45	72%
03-05	\$116.7	\$45	39%
05-07	\$85.1	\$50	59%
07-09	\$161.1	\$100	62%
09-11	\$272.2	\$70	26%
11-13	\$192.3	\$42	22%
13-15	\$129.8	\$65	50%
15-17	\$157.7	\$89	56%
17-19	\$163.4	\$80	49%
19-21	\$196.9	\$85	43%
21-23	\$174.6	\$100	57%
23-25	\$156.6	\$120	77%

The amount needed in 2025-27 to fund 52 percent of the amount requested in 2024, which is currently \$181.53 million (subject to change following completion of the technical review period), is **\$94.4 million**.

Option 3: Fund at the level of where a main account would fund all projects

WWRP funds are broken into three main accounts (Farm and Forest, Habitat Conservation, and Outdoor Recreation), and twelve subcategories—each with a predetermined percentage of the total funding. Funding can be moved within an account to different subcategories but may not be moved to a different account. The accounts and subcategories are broken down in Table 6 below.

Table 6. WWRP Funding Breakdown

Money Distributed as Follows Below:
Farm and Forest Account - 10%
Farmland Preservation - 90%
Forestland Preservation- 10%
Habitat Conservation Account - 45%
Critical Habitat - 35%
Natural Area - 25%
Riparian Protection - 15%
State Lands Restoration and Enhancement - 10%
Urban Wildlife Habitat - 15%
Outdoor Recreation Account - 45%
Local Parks - 30%
State Lands Development and Renovation - 10%
State Parks - 30%
Trails - 20%
Water Access - 10%

In 2022, the board inquired about the highest funding level where an account would run out of projects, resulting in unspent funds.

For 2024, the habitat recreation account has about \$73 million in projects. After accounting for administrative fees, a request of **\$170 million** for WWRP would fund all

the projects in the habitat recreation account, and anything above \$170 million would result in unspent funds.

A \$170m appropriation would result in approximately \$15 million unfunded projects in the Outdoor Recreation Account and \$5.2 million unfunded in the Farm and Forest Account.

Option 4: WWRC Board recommendation

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition (WWRC) Board has not selected their advocacy number; however, the WWRC state policy committee is recommending **\$150 million** to the WWRC board. The WWRC board will adopt their official number in early July.

Option 5: Average of last ten years of bond capacity

In the last ten budget cycles, WWRP has received 2.99 percent of the available bond funds. The current best estimate for bond capacity is \$4.6 billion. At 2.9 percent, this would equal a **\$138 million request**.

Summary

Using the metrics outlined above, the range of WWRP funding request presented in this memo is between \$94.4 million and \$170 million. Here is the summation of funding request options based on the different approaches described:

- 1) Average per capita spending for the current population = \$128 million.
- 2) Fund the historical average of funding received of 52 percent of the applications received in 2024 = \$94.4 million. Funding 75 percent of the applications received in 2024 = \$136.1 million.
- 3) Fund at the level where one account would have all projects funded but there would not be left over funding = \$170 million
- 4) WWRC's advocacy recommendation = to be determined.
- 5) 5 Average of last ten years of bond funding = \$138 million

Other recommendations may come from RCO's stakeholder groups and use different metrics than those proposed above.

WWRP Administrative Rate

In 2015, the Washington Legislature passed a bill that changed how RCO calculates the administrative rate of WWRP. The new language changed the rate from a constant 3 percent to a rate that is calculated as an average of actual administrative costs. Per RCW 79A.15.030, *"The portion of the funds retained for administration may not exceed: (a) The actual administration costs averaged over the previous five biennia as a percentage of the legislature's new appropriation for this chapter; or (b) the amount specified in the appropriation, if any. Each biennium the percentage specified under (a) of this subsection*

must be approved by the office of financial management and submitted along with the prioritized lists of projects to be funded in RCW 79A.15.060(6), 79A.15.070(7), 79A.15.120(10), and 79A.15.130(11)."

Using option (a) in the statute, RCO calculated the administrative rate for 2023-2025 to be 4.08 percent, which was a decrease in administrative rate of 0.09 percent as compared to the 2021-2023 biennium administrative rate of 4.17. Over the last seven biennia, the administrative rate has landed between 3.35-5.11 percent. RCO is calculating the updated number and will present it to the board in July or August.

Youth Athletic Facilities Program

The Youth Athletic Facilities Program (YAF) was originally funded by referendum 48 in 1997. Over time, the legislature has chosen to fund it instead through bonds.

In 2022, RCO received \$12.4 million in applications for YAF grants.

The board then made several policy changes before the 2024 grant round which included increasing grant limits and allowing for acquisition only grants. For 2024, RCO received \$44.5 million in applications.

Two options for the board to consider in a YAF request level for the 2025-27 biennium:

- **Option 1.** Request an appropriation to fund 75 percent of the 2024 applications, for a total of \$33.38 million.
- **Option 2.** Request an appropriation to fund 50 percent of the project list, for a total of \$22.25 million.

Next Steps

At its August 7 meeting, the board will decide on the amount of 2025-27 funds to request for all the recreation and conservation grant programs. Staff will prepare and submit final budget requests to the Office of Financial Management by early September 2024.



Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

Title: Technical Assistance Program

Prepared By: Leah Dobey, Policy Specialist and Caroline Morin, Equity Coordinator

Summary

In 2021, the state legislature directed the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to conduct an equity review of the agency's grant programs to identify opportunities toward improving equitable distribution of recreation grants and reducing barriers that might prevent underserved communities' success in RCO programs. This review was completed in August 2022 and included six broad recommendations, with 45 specific recommendations.

Included in the equity review report were recommendations related to technical assistance. At a high level, the report recommended that RCO invest in a proactive technical assistance program to grow and diversify its base of applicants. As part of the RCO's ongoing equity efforts, the agency is examining what a technical assistance program might look like.

Technical assistance might include a range of activities that aid grant applicants in applying for funding, performing outreach, and developing, and implementing projects.

This memo summarizes the benefits of technical assistance and examples of assistance provided by other government programs. It also summarizes support currently provided by Recreation and Conservation Office staff and potential future assistance activities that could be included in a formal technical assistance program within the agency.

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 November 2020, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) adopted a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement by passing Resolution 2020-35. This resolution recognized the board's obligation to ensure equitable and inclusive programs and policies. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) also has completed several studies and reports that identify actions the 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. The 2023 SCORP update satisfies planning required by state Law and is a requirement to receive federal funds through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

More specifically, these reports included recommendations highlighting the need for additional assistance for grant applicants. The [2022 equity review](#) makes several [recommendations](#) regarding technical assistance (TA) to "proactively build applicant capacities to attract and support equity-driven sponsors and projects." Similarly, the [2023 SCORP](#) includes in its Unified Strategy the need to maintain and improve "technical assistance resources to address statewide priorities and goals," such as providing meaningful access to outdoor recreation for all.

The mission of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board), as stated in [RCW 79A.25.005](#), specifically mentions technical assistance (see RCW section 1d). Staff do this through a range of efforts; however, recommendations identify more robust actions to support Washington's most under-resourced communities to benefit from critical greenspace investments, improving equity outcomes throughout the state. A well-designed TA program would include goals such as identifying more projects in communities that have not historically received similar funding; achieving more equitable and/or geographic distribution of funding; engaging under-represented populations within project development; developing stronger, more community-engaged projects; and building relationships and trust between the State and local entities.

What is Technical Assistance?

The term “technical assistance” encompasses a wide variety of support that is generally divided into three categories:

Capacity Building – education and awareness, trainings, skill-building, community engagement, partnership development, assistance developing operational policies and internal controls, mentorship

Application Assistance – project scoping, grant writing, budget support, other assistance as needed

Implementation Assistance – project management support, reporting assistance, post-award support, peer-learning

Technical assistance at other agencies

Numerous other state and federal agencies provide TA services for varying purposes and serve as helpful examples of the kinds of TA that communities may need. A few model programs include:

1. The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, U.S. National Park Service: program staff support locally led projects that develop or restore parks, conservation areas, rivers, and wildlife habitats, as well as create outdoor recreation opportunities.
2. Small Business Resiliency Network, Washington Department of Commerce: staff provide culturally and linguistically relevant assistance and other business support services at no cost to entrepreneurs, small businesses and nonprofits, with an emphasis on those owned by historically marginalized and underserved persons.
3. Cannabis Social Equity Technical Assistance Grant Program, Washington Department of Commerce: a pool of 2,400 virtual, one-to-one mentorship, consulting, and technical assistance hours covering purchasing, inventory management, marketing, human resources, real estate, legal, security management, and general management is available to equity grant recipients.
4. Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council (IACC), Washington Department of Commerce: TA assistance is coordinated through staff from state and federal agencies, local government associations, and nonprofit technical assistance

organizations to bring together the right mix of regulatory and financial program staff to move infrastructure projects forward. RCO is part of this effort.

Technical Assistance at RCO

Current offerings

Outdoor grants managers (grants managers) are RCO's frontline staff responsible for connecting with prospective and active applicants and project sponsors. These staff perform a range of technical assistance, typically in one-on-one settings with project proponents. Agency staff including assistant section managers, the section manager, and grants managers also engage with potential applicants through large group platforms. The following are technical assistance activities that are presently performed by RCO staff:

Application Webinars- Prior to the application period, grants staff introduce the RCO application process, provide tutorials on PRISM, and conduct an overview of scoring priorities used by evaluators.

Potential Client Advising – Prior to application submission, grants managers answer questions from potential applicants about project and entity eligibility and requirements.

Technical Review – During the optional technical review process offered in some grant categories, grants managers and advisory committee members engage with applicants to improve projects and refine scopes and budgets.

Successful Applicant Workshops – Upon notification of a grant award, successful applicants are invited to an in-depth webinar about RCO policies and managing a grant award.

Current Applicant Advising – During the grant period and through completion of the project, grants managers advise grantees on RCO policies and procedures as well as address challenges throughout the RCO contract lifecycle.

Conference Presentations/Sessions – Grants managers, policy staff, and other staff present detailed analysis of specific topics at conferences and to session audiences.

Conference Attendance/Tabling – Outdoor grants managers and policy staff are present for community engagement opportunities and selected advising at tabling and outreach events.

Potential future offerings

To build on the assistance that RCO provides and support a wider range of communities that may seek funding through board grant programs, staff are exploring activities that could become part of a formal technical assistance program. The range of activities includes the following:

[Application-writing support](#) – Direct support for applicants to complete an RCO application for funding, including advising on issues like budgeting, scoping, project selection, and problem-solving.

[Direct project consultation](#) – Guidance and referrals to professional planning and engineering-level support for applicants as they design their projects.

[Passive Assistance Resources](#) – New informational resources such as handouts and videos.

[RCO Convening](#) – Gather potential applicants and funders for one-on-one meetings, larger presentations, and case studies.

[Expand RCO Community Outreach](#) – Leverage RCO relationships to identify communities that need more targeted TA and long-term capacity building.

Next Steps

Staff have begun initial partner organization discussions on creating a technical assistance program and will continue this work, along with community outreach, budget and fund scoping, and continued program refinement through the summer and fall months.

Many components of a technical assistance program are still under review, including eligibility requirements, the structure of the services to be provided, the application process, and applicant selection.



Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

Title: Eligibility for Acquisition: City of Kent, Uplands Extension Property, 24-1776

Prepared By: Hayley Dalgetty, Outdoor Grants Manager

Summary

The City of Kent is asking the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to waive a policy that prohibits acquisition of land already managed for public outdoor recreation. With approval of the policy waiver request, the city could apply for board grants to assist with the acquisition of the Uplands Extension Property.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a: ☒ Request for Decision
☐ Request for Direction
☐ Briefing

Resolution: 2024-09

Purpose of Resolution: Approve the City of Kent's Uplands Extension Property as eligible for acquisition grant funding.

Background

The City of Kent (city) is applying for funding through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) in the 2024 grant round. The city hopes to use grant funds to purchase 1.33 acres of land, known as Uplands Extension, [24-1776](#). The property is in downtown Kent near a significant concentration of multifamily residential housing. Location maps and aerial views of the property, which is owned by Union Pacific Railroad, are shown in Attachment B.

The city currently leases the property from Union Pacific Railroad and manages the site for public recreation. Existing park elements are a modest skate park and open lawn. The city developed the skate park and covers all maintenance costs. There are no previous Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) grants at this site.

The city has leased and operated Uplands Extension since the 1990s. The lease does not allow additional recreational development on the property. It is a year-to-year lease with a 3% annual increase, and every three years the railroad can reassess the lease rate. The cost for the current lease is \$3,000 per year. Recently, Union Pacific Railroad indicated that the rate would go up significantly, to as much as \$100,000 per year. A similarly sharp increase happened at the park across the street when the railroad increased the lease for a small strip of land from \$1,500 per year to \$25,000 per year. The city terminated their lease and removed that strip of land from the park system. If the city is unable to buy the Uplands Extension property and the rate increases to \$100,000 per year, the city would likely remove the skate park and the property would no longer be used for outdoor recreation.

The city is engaged in discussions with Union Pacific Railroad regarding the potential property purchase. If successful, the city hopes to secure funds to purchase and protect the Uplands Extension property for public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity.

In addition to preventing the loss of an existing park, purchasing the property would allow the city to develop additional recreational facilities on the site that better meet community needs. Adjacent to the Uplands Extension property is a Puget Sound Energy property that the city also manages for outdoor recreation under a “permit for limited use of operating property”, which is valid through February 2030. A portion of the skate park is on the Union Pacific Railroad property and a portion is on the Puget Sound Energy property. If the city is successful in acquiring the Uplands Extension property, they would develop new recreational amenities spanning both properties. Future development design would be vetted through additional community outreach. The current concept, based on robust engagement for the *2022 Parks and Open Space Plan*, is to expand the skate park and build two bicycle pump tracks, circulation paths, and a park entrance.

Conflict with Existing Policy

Acquisition of the Uplands Extension property is not eligible for board funding assistance based on the policy outlined in [Manual 3, Acquisition Policies](#), which states that ineligible projects include: “Established outdoor recreation areas developed under ownership or management of a public agency.”

Request for Decision

The City of Kent is asking the board to waive the policy cited above so it can seek grant funding to assist with the purchase of the property. A policy waiver would not guarantee funding. Rather, it would allow the city to compete for funds through the established application review and evaluation process.

Similar Decisions by the Board

In April 2024, the board waived this policy to allow the City of Medical Lake to pursue grant funds to purchase Waterfront Park from the Department of Social and Health Services. The city had leased and managed the property as a park since 1967.

In 2014, the board waived this policy to allow the City of Edmonds to pursue grant funds to purchase Civic Center Field from the Edmonds School District. The city had leased and managed the property as a park since 1977.

In 2012, the board waived this policy to allow the City of Vancouver to acquire John Ball Park when the Vancouver School District announced its intention to sell the property for development. The city began leasing the property for outdoor recreational purposes in 1959.

In 2000, the board waived this policy to allow the City of Edmonds to acquire Marina Beach when the private landowner announced their intention to sell the property for development. The city had leased and managed the extremely popular Marina Beach Park for many years.

In the three latter instances, the cities successfully secured WWRP grants to acquire and protect these properties for public outdoor recreation. The City of Medical Lake's grant application is included in the current 2024 grant round.

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of this request 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 this policy waiver to allow the Uplands Extension property in the City of Kent to be eligible. This action would permit a grant application to proceed through the board approved evaluation process.

Attachments

- A. Resolution 2024-09, *Approve the Eligibility of Acquisition of Kent's Uplands Extension Property*
- B. Maps of the Uplands Extension Property and Vicinity in Kent, Washington

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board**Resolution 2024-09****Approve the Eligibility of Acquisition of Kent's Uplands Extension Property**

WHEREAS for the last thirty years, the City of Kent (city) has leased the Uplands Extension Property from Union Pacific Railroad for a community park; and

WHEREAS the city has developed the property and has managed and maintained it for public outdoor recreation use; and

WHEREAS the Union Pacific Railroad's plan to increase the lease fees for this property will be cost-prohibitive; and

WHEREAS the city wishes to retain this valuable recreation area for public use by purchasing and protecting it in perpetuity; and

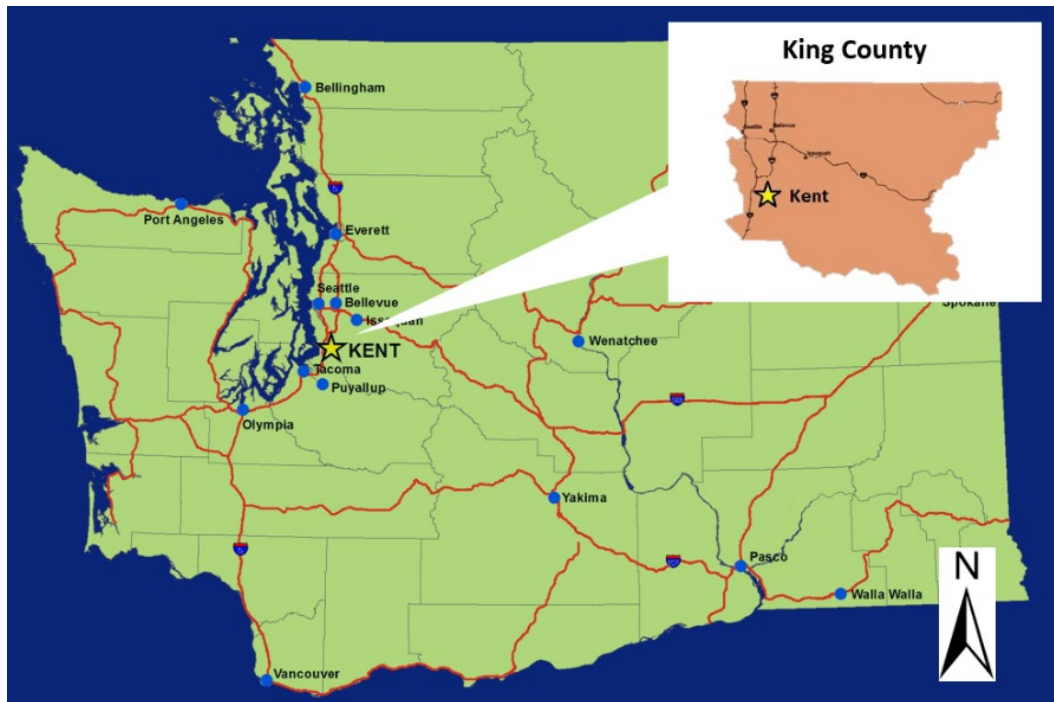
WHEREAS the city is asking the board to waive the policy that limits the eligibility of existing public property by allowing it to pursue grants to purchase the Uplands Extension Property even though it has been publicly managed for outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS approval of this waiver request supports the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's goal to help partners protect, restore, and develop habitat and recreation opportunities that benefit people, wildlife, and ecosystems;

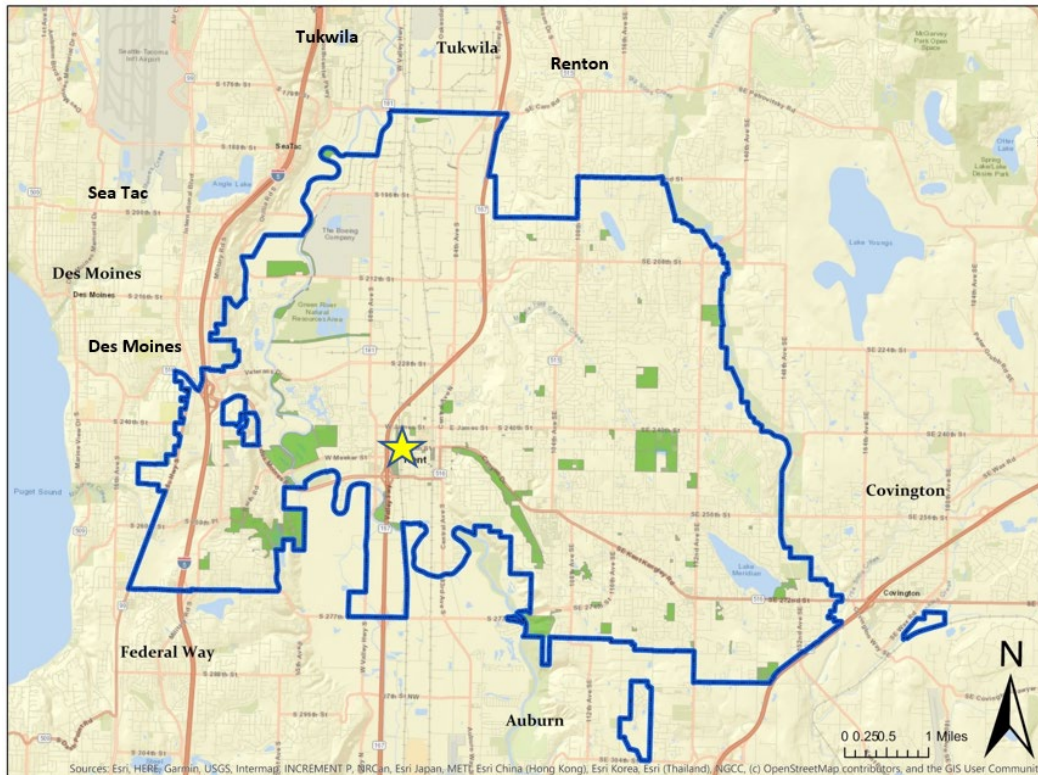
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the board hereby approves the eligibility of the Kent Uplands Extension Property for acquisition assistance.

<i>Resolution moved by:</i>	Member Herzog
<i>Resolution seconded by:</i>	Member Craig
<u>Adopted</u> / <i>Defeated/Deferred (underline one)</i>	
<i>Date:</i>	July 24, 2024

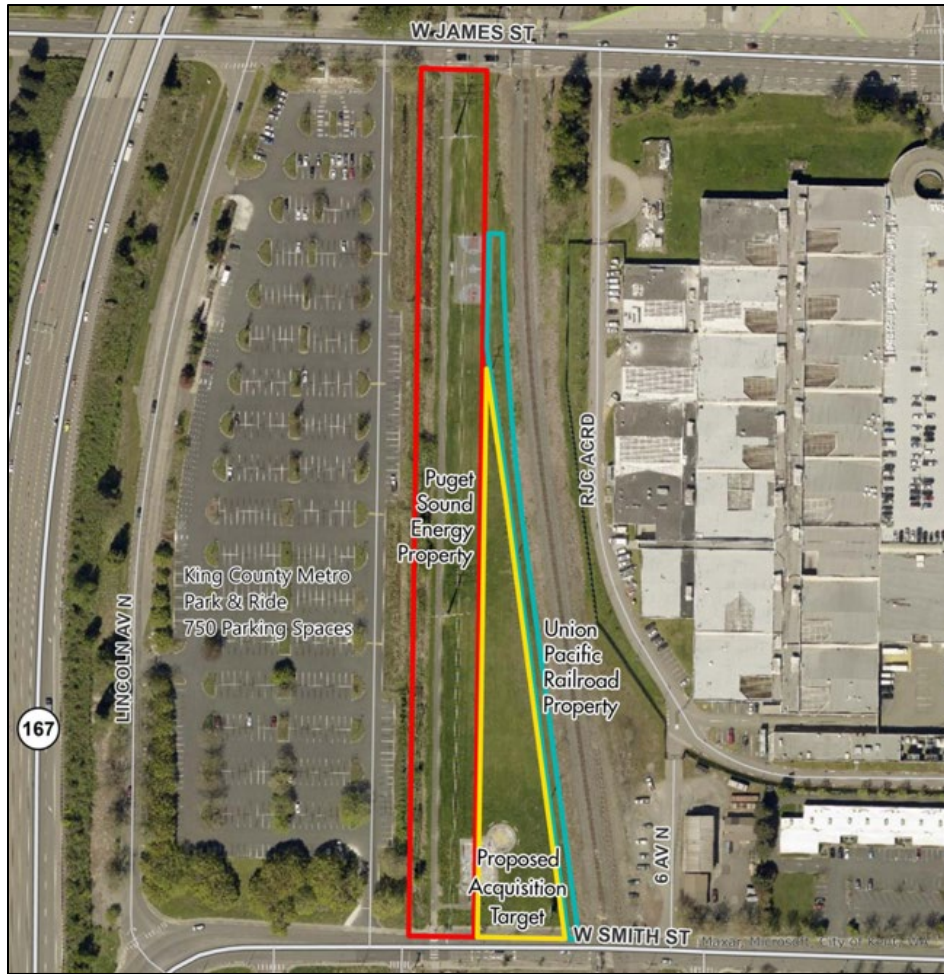
Maps of Uplands Extension Property and Vicinity in Kent



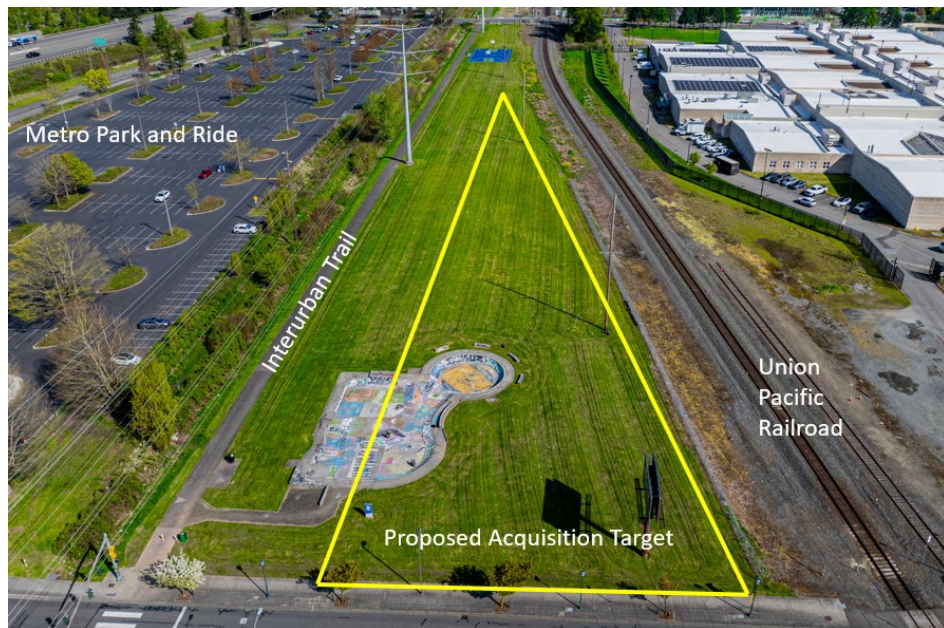
Regional Location Map



Site Location Map



Parcel Map



Aerial View

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing
Memo

Item **10**

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

Title: Non-State, Non-Federal Match Waiver Request: Okanogan Land Trust, Teas Ranch, 20-1619

Prepared By: Karen Edwards, Assistant Section Manager

Summary

The Okanogan Land Trust seeks Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approval to waive a portion of the required 10 percent non-state, non-federal match for their Teas Ranch project [20-1619](#), funded with a Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Farmland Preservation Category grant.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a: ☒ Request for Decision
☐ Request for Direction
☐ Briefing

Resolution: 2024-10

Purpose of Resolution: Approve non-state, non-federal match reduction for Farmland Preservation project.

Background

During the 2020 grant round, the Okanogan Land Trust (OLT) applied for a Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Farmland Preservation Category grant. Funds were for the purchase of twenty development rights via an agricultural conservation easement to permanently protect about 445 acres of prime farmland in Okanogan County. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) approved the final ranked list and grant award for this project at its June 2021 meeting. The funding is from the WWRP Farm and Forest Account as part of the 2021-23 biennial state capital budget.

The total project cost is \$242,812, with \$109,265 coming from WWRP Farmland Preservation Category (forty-five percent) and \$133,547 in sponsor match (fifty-five percent). A portion of the sponsor match is a federal grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE) Program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture. Per board policy, Farmland Preservation Category funding requires applicants to provide a minimum of 10 percent of the total project agreement costs in the form of a local contribution, which equals \$24,281 for this project. This board policy supports the rule in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 286-13-045(4), where the board indicates it may require an applicant to provide a portion of its match in local resources. Since this is a board policy and not a rule or statute, the board may waive this requirement for Farmland Preservation Category projects.

When preparing budgets for the application in 2020, the cost for the conservation easement was estimated at \$200,250. Due to unprecedented increases in land prices at the time the conservation easement was appraised, the actual value determined in 2023 increased to \$374,000, almost \$173,750 higher than the estimate. The NRCS determined that this project protects grasslands of special significance, qualifying it for an NRCS contribution of 75 percent instead of the expected 50 percent. This unexpected increase covers the \$173,750 deficit needed for this purchase.

To date, the OLT has secured \$10,228 of their local (non-state, non-federal) match for this project, equating to 4 percent of the total agreement amount. Due to the significant increase in NRCS funding available for this project and no other viable source to meet this match requirement, the OLT is requesting a reduction of the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement to 4 percent.

Project Status

The landowner is committed to selling this agricultural conservation easement and is under an executed purchase agreement with the OLT. Documents and funding are in escrow and final closing is pending NRCS final review and approval of the easement documents. Closing is anticipated in the next few weeks.

The OLT has secured the additional NRCS funding necessary to honor the match-to-grant fund ratio included in their grant agreement but lacks the currently required non-state, non-federal match. If the board approves this request, the 10 percent non-state, non-federal amount will be reduced to 4 percent, which has already been provided by the OLT.

10 Percent Non-State/Non-Federal Match Policy

Analysis

The primary focus of the WWRP Farmland Preservation Category is to acquire a conservation easement on farmland in Washington and ensure the land remains available for agricultural practices. A secondary goal is to enhance or restore ecological functions on farmland.

The Farmland Preservation Category receives 90 percent of the funds allocated to the WWRP Farm and Forest Account. The remaining 10 percent funds projects in the Forestland Preservation Category.

In [April 2022 board meeting](#) (Item 6), the board eliminated the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement for Farmland Preservation Category projects in the 2022 and 2024 grant cycles¹. This change was considered a high priority by respondents as a response to outreach efforts conducted by staff in preparation for the 2022 grant round. These efforts help eliminate barriers to applicants considering unprecedented increases in land prices since the COVID-19 pandemic, which has made it increasingly difficult for applicants to secure match.

Alternatives Considered

- Ask the landowner to donate some of the conservation easement value to satisfy the match requirement.
- Work to secure donations or other private funds to satisfy the requirement.
- Request board approval of a waiver to take advantage of the additional funds approved by the NRCS.

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of this request supports goals and objectives in the [board's strategic plan](#). Specifically, to "Provide partners with funding to protect and enhance working farm and forest lands." with a goal to "deliver successful projects by inviting competition and by using broad public participation and feedback, monitoring, assessment, and adaptive management."

¹ Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2022-05

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of this non-state, non-federal match waiver request as requested.

Next Steps

If the board approves, RCO staff will process the reimbursement requests when submitted.

Attachment

- A. *Resolution 2024-10, Approval of Non-State, Non-Federal Match Waiver Request for Okanogan Land Trust, Teas Ranch, 20-1619*

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution #2024-10
Approval of Non-State, Non-Federal Match Waiver Request for Okanogan Land Trust, Teas Ranch, 20-1619

WHEREAS the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) awarded a Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), Farmland Preservation Category grant to Okanogan Land Trust (OLT) for the protection of approximately 445 acres of prime farmland in Okanogan County; and

WHEREAS property values for this agricultural conservation easement unexpectedly escalated from its estimate in 2020 to its appraised value in 2023; and

WHEREAS cities, counties, and nonprofit nature conservancies that receive a grant provide a minimum of 50 percent or one-to-one match as specified in statute; and

WHEREAS board policy requires non-state applicants to provide a minimum of 10 percent of the total cost of the project in the form of a local contribution, meaning not from a state or federal source; and

WHEREAS the United States Department of Agriculture increased its federal grant award from 50 percent to 75 percent for the acquisition of the Teas Ranch conservation easement, thus providing more grant funds than originally expected, and

WHEREAS these funds may be used for the purchase of the agricultural conservation easement; and

WHEREAS these funds combined with 4 percent of local match provided by the OLT, covers the full local matching share for the project; and

WHEREAS the OLT is asking the board to waive the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement and allow them to provide their secured 4 percent match and federal grant for the local share; and

WHEREAS consideration of this request supports the board's strategy to provide funding to protect, preserve, restore, and enhance agricultural farmland opportunities statewide;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board hereby approves the local match waiver request for the project referenced above and delegates authority to RCO's Director to process the reimbursement request per the terms of the grant agreement.

<i>Resolution moved by:</i>	Member Bugert
<i>Resolution seconded by:</i>	Member Lam
<u>Adopted</u> / <i>Defeated/Deferred (underline one)</i>	
<i>Date:</i>	July 24, 2024



Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Direction Memo

Item

11

APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR MEGAN DUFFY

Meeting Date: July 24, 2024

Title: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Themes and Issues

Prepared By: Nicholas Norton, Policy and Planning Specialist

Summary

This memo summarizes major themes and issues noted during the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's Farmland Preservation Program staff review discovery process. This process involved internal research and a series of meetings and listening sessions with staff, agency partners, external interest groups, and program practitioners.

Staff are requesting Recreation and Conservation Funding Board direction regarding priority themes, as well as feedback on specific issues related to project evaluation and criteria. This direction will be used to inform additional policy development and subsequent staff recommendations for board consideration at future meetings.

Board Action Requested

This item will be a: ☐ Request for Decision
☒ Request for Direction
☐ Briefing

Background

The Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) was established in 2005 as part of an update to RCW 79A.15 that created a Farm and Forest account ([RCW 79A.15.130](#)) within the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP). During the April 2024 Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) meeting, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff introduced a proposed review of FPP. The review is a year-long process, which includes a comprehensive look at program policies, evaluation criteria, and conservation easement requirements.

The discovery process involved reviewing reports, resources, and internal notes related to FPP over the past four to five years, as well as outreach with project practitioners, partner agencies, and other interest groups. This outreach involved a combination of one-on-one conversations and/or group listening sessions with the following organizations:

- **Nonprofit nature conservancies** with active farmland protection programs, such as Jefferson Land Trust, Whatcom Land Trust, Washington Farmland Trust, Chelan Douglas Land Trust, Methow Conservancy, Whidbey Camano Land Trust, Great Peninsula Conservancy, and Capitol Land Trust.
- **County governments** with existing farmland protection programs, including Skagit County, Whatcom County, and King County.
- **State agencies**, including the Office of Farmland Preservation at the Washington State Conservation Commission.
- **Other funders** with farmland specific programs, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the New York Department of Agriculture.
- **Partner organizations** that focus on farmland protection or related Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) programs, including the American Farmland Trust, the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition, and the Washington Association of Land Trusts.

This discovery process was used to identify themes and develop a comprehensive list of issues across different policy areas for consideration.

Themes

Land Access & Affordability

One of the most prominent listening session themes was the extent to which FPP can or should focus on issues of land access and affordability to help meet the program's core intent. Specifically, the discovery process revealed an increased interest in actively helping a younger, more diverse cohort of aspiring farmers access affordable farmland as a mechanism to support ongoing agricultural use and viability. Conservation easements and leases represent critical tools for access and affordability efforts, so there may be an opportunity for FPP to better align with this more contemporary focus.

The following are examples of issues noted during the discovery process that intersect with the access to farmland issue:

- The current program eligibility is closely linked to the Open Space Tax Act farmlands definition, which can be rigid relative to dwelling units, occupancy requirements, and what can qualify as compatible uses. This lack of flexibility can limit the ability of producers to support multiple income streams or support multiple benefits across a larger, contiguously protected property.
- Supporting farmland access can involve multi-step transactions such as buy-protect-sell, or the use of more innovative mechanisms such as lease to own models. The lack of policy clarity and guidance around buy-protect-sell transactions and use of leases make it more difficult to partner with RCO for this type of work.
- Other farmland funders in Washington State are focusing on ownership opportunities for new and beginning farmers or historically underserved producers. The current FPP criteria are focused more on the nature of the land base, rather than specifically elevating projects that support a younger, diverse cohort of farmland owners and operators.

Farmland and WWRP

Another discovery process theme was the extent to which the farmland program should be considered separate relative to other WWRP categories or RCO funding programs when it comes to policy development. With a focus on working lands, limited funding sources, and the use of a unique transaction (i.e. a conservation easement), certain policies used across different WWRP categories or RCO funding programs may be less appropriate to the work of farmland protection. Alternately, there may be innovative policy approaches that have been discounted or avoided for recreation or wildlife projects, which could make sense in the farmland space.

The following are examples of issues noted during the discovery process that relate to the unique nature of farmland protection relative to other WWRP funding programs or cross-agency policies:

- Unlike parks and recreation, there is very limited local funding for farmland protection across the state. In addition, federal funding can be difficult to use. As a result, policies such as the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement and the excess match criterion can have an outsized impact on project funding requests and the financial burden on sponsors and landowners.
- Farmland conservation easements cost less per-acre than fee-title acquisitions, but require more capacity, costlier due-diligence, and annual stewardship. The 5

percent administrative cap on all acquisitions and a lack of easement stewardship as an eligible cost makes this program more difficult to effectively use.

Current Operating Environment

A final theme that emerged was the extent to which the operating environment has shifted since the farmland program was meaningfully reviewed in 2015, and the implications for policy development. For one, the capacity, legal tools, and funding opportunities used by conservation practitioners have changed significantly since the outset of the program in 2006. In addition, the underlying development pressure, costs of farmland, and market dynamics have shifted in unpredictable ways. Lastly, RCO has evolved in terms of its capacity, operations, and best practices over the years.

The following are examples of issues noted during the discovery process that related to foundational changes in the operating environment or best practices since the program was last updated:

- Some of the existing criterion, such as the community support and excess match criterion, can disproportionately impact smaller organizations or areas without local funding sources in ways that don't relate to the public benefits of the project. In addition, live project presentations provide the opportunity to clarify important aspects of the project but can also expose or reinforce bias unrelated to criteria (for example, a preference for certain ownership structures or crop choices). There are recent reports, criteria changes, and new processes within RCO that could help to inform potential updates to evaluation.
- Since the RCO easement template was created, there have been significant strides in easement drafting, whether to support land access through affordability provisions or accommodate the future impacts from climate change. There is a lack of clarity about if, when, and how these types of newer practices can be used as part of an RCO-funded project.

Staff are seeking board direction on thematic areas and/or issue areas that should be prioritized (or deprioritized) as part of this process.

Issue Summary – Evaluation and Criteria

Given the expansive list of specific issues identified in the discovery process, staff broke them out into more manageable groups for board consideration and direction. Below is a full issue summary of the policies related to the evaluation process and evaluation criteria.

Issue Area	Description of Issue
Oral versus Written Process	<p>Current approach: The farmland program evaluation used a written-only approach for the 2022 and 2024 grant round but has previously used live presentations.</p> <p>Issue statement: Live presentations provide the opportunity to clarify important aspects of the project but can also expose or reinforce bias that is unrelated to the evaluation criteria.</p> <p>Issue level: This is a staff level issue.</p>
Site Viability Criterion	<p>Current approach: The Site Viability Criterion is worth sixteen points based on soil types, crop suitability, and water availability.</p> <p>Issue statement: Site Viability is worth many points, but it leaves out some important considerations and does not provide strong guidance for what conditions need to be met to earn a certain score.</p> <p>Issue level: RCW 79A.15.130(10)(h) lists “viability of the site” as a required criterion, and lists three aspects of site viability. However, specific considerations, framing of the question, and point values can be changed within the policy manual as consistent with statute.</p>
Threat to the Land Criterion	<p>Current approach: Threat to the Land Criterion is worth ten points based on likelihood of conversion within the next five years.</p> <p>Issue statement: Near term threat can be important, but it discounts larger trends and can run counter to projects that prioritize affordability and access.</p> <p>Issue level: RCW 79A.15.130(10)(c) states likelihood of conversion as a required criterion. However, specific considerations, framing of the question, and point values can be changed in the policy manual as consistent with statute.</p>

Access to Markets Criterion	<p>Current approach: Access to Markets Criterion is worth four points based on how agricultural productivity is supported by access to markets.</p> <p>Issue statement: With the internet and established global supply chains, the barriers to accessing a viable market are lower and this question is more difficult to interpret.</p> <p>Issue level: RCW 79A.15.130(10)(h)(iv) states farm to market access as an aspect of viability. However, specific considerations, framing of the question, and point values can be changed in the policy manual as consistent with statute.</p>
On-site Infrastructure Criterion	<p>Current approach: On-site Infrastructure Criterion is worth four points based on how well agricultural productivity is supported by on-site facilities.</p> <p>Issue statement: For projects with larger acreage and minimal infrastructure (i.e. rangeland), this can potentially count against projects unless evaluators understand the context or have experience.</p> <p>Issue level: RCW 79A.15.130(10)(h)(ii) states on-site facilities as an aspect of viability. However, specific considerations, framing of the question, and point values can be changed in the policy manual as consistent with statute.</p>
Building Envelope Criterion	<p>Current approach: Building Envelope Criterion is worth four points based on how much of the property is included in the building envelope.</p> <p>Issue statement: The size of the building envelope is highly context specific and can change as part of project development. This is more of a policy issue related to project administration and site planning, rather than evaluation.</p> <p>Issue level: This is a policy manual issue.</p>

Benefits to the Community Criterion	<p>Current approach: Benefits to the Community Criterion is worth six points based on a variety of considerations, such as consistency with existing plans/recommendations, ecosystem services, as well as educational and job benefits.</p> <p>Issue statement: This criterion includes ecological and community factors, which can run counter to each other depending on the context.</p> <p>Issue level: RCW 79A.15.130(10)(i) lists other community values to be considered. RCW 79A.15.130(e) through (g) list fish and wildlife criteria. However, specific considerations, framing of the question, and point values can be changed in the policy manual as consistent with statute.</p>
Community Support Criterion	<p>Current approach: Community Support Criterion is worth two points based on whether there are one or more letters of support in the application.</p> <p>Issue statement: Letters of support represent only one way for a project to demonstrate community support for a project, but they are the sole focus of this criterion.</p> <p>Issue level: RCW 79A.15.130(a) lists community support as required criteria. However, specific considerations, framing of the question, and point values can be changed in the policy manual as consistent with statute.</p>
Match Criterion	<p>Current approach: Match Criterion is worth two points if the applicant provides additional match beyond the minimum.</p> <p>Issue statement: The excess match criterion puts people at a disadvantage when there is limited local match available. It is inequitable as availability of excess match varies widely across the state.</p> <p>Issue level: This is a policy manual issue.</p>

Staff seeks board direction on which issues related to FPP evaluation criteria should be addressed through subsequent policy recommendations, and which should be set aside for later consideration.

Next Steps

Staff will use board direction to inform additional research, policy development, and subsequent staff recommendations for board consideration at future meetings. Staff plan to bring policy recommendations to the board across multiple meetings, with each meeting being focused on a subset of related issues.

Depending on timing and capacity, larger or more complex issues may be approached as part of a second phase after the 2026 grant round. An updated timeline and status of the program review can be found in Attachment A.

Attachments

- A. Farmland Program Review Timeline and Status

Activity	Description	Status
Executive Direction	Understand issues identified by staff, agree on approach and timeline.	Completed
Initial Board Briefing	Share scope, core issues, process, and timeline with the board. Receive direction on delegation of authority regarding easement terms.	Completed
Internal Policy Research	Detailed review of current policies and past application trends, implementation issues, etc.	Completed
Stakeholder Engagement	Listening sessions and interviews with key groups to daylight and prioritize key policy, criteria, and easement issues.	Completed
Board Direction	Board direction on themes of interest and priority issues.	July 2024
Easement Working Group	Work with team of internal staff, external practitioners, and legal experts to examine current easement model, update minimum deed terms and easement template, etc.	July 2024 to July 2025
Policy Recommendation #1	Staff provides recommendations on evaluation and criteria changes to the board.	October 2024
Policy Recommendation #2	Staff provides recommendations on easement updates to the board. Board authorizes the RCO director to approve required conservation easement language and exceptions.	January 2025
Policy Recommendation #3	Staff provides recommendations on general policy changes to the board.	April 2025
Public Comment	Staff requests public comment on a combined suite of policy recommendations based on board direction.	May 2025 to July 2025

Board Decision	Board approves changes to policy manual in advance of 2026 grant round.	July 2025 to October 2025
Ongoing	Staff continues to work on more complex or long-term policy items based on board direction.	To Be Determined