

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARY MINUTES

Date: August 7, 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.

All board members participated virtually.

Call to Order:

Chair Michael Shiosaki called the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and **Julia McNamara**, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Board Liaison, performed roll call and determined quorum. Member Windrope was absent at the time of roll call.

Motion: Move to Approve **August 7, 2024**, Agenda

Moved By: Member **Burgess**

Seconded by: Member **Lam**

Decision: **Approved**

Item 1: Operating and Capital Budget Requests for 2025-2027

Brock Milliern, Policy Director, summarized the budget presentation from the July meeting which highlighted the pressures on the budget from the uncertainty of Climate Commitment Act funding; necessary updates to the Western State Hospital; and the Washington Department of Transportation Culvert Injunction. Notably, the current bond capacity projection increased slightly since the July forecast from \$4.6 billion to \$4.61

billion. RCO will submit budget requests to the Office of Financial Management in September.

Member Windrope joined the meeting at 9:08 a.m.

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

In July, Mr. Milliern presented the board with five request options for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. The board decided not to pursue options two and three. The remaining options are:

- Option One – per capita investment: \$128 million. In July, this number was the lowest end of the budget the board was interested in considering.
- Option Four – Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition advocacy number: \$150 million. In July, this amount was the highest end of the budget the board was interested in considering.
- Option Five – 2.99 percent of bond capacity: \$138 million.

All three options would have an administrative rate of 3.74 percent that is set by state statute.

Members discussed how the options address the need for funding and **Member Lam** wanted to ensure the requests for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and Youth Athletic Facilities did not compete too much against each other for funding. Mr. Milliern noted that legislators are interested in programs that are happening in their districts and last session he highlighted for legislators that there would likely be an increased Youth Athletic Facilities request. Although there is always competition between Youth Athletic Facilities and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Programs, they are distinctly separate asks.

Member Burgess expressed hesitation for a large request and preferred Option Five due to unknowns in the capital budget this year.

Member Herzog noted that while Option Four is a large number, it still does not address the existing need that, on top of recreation, includes protecting natural lands and resources.

Member Bugert asked how frequently the board's request aligned with what the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition's advocated for. Mr. Milliern answered they have not always aligned and noted a benefit in having a singular message over aligning on requests.

Christine Mahler, Executive Director of Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition, was available to answer questions on the request amount the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition is advocating. Ms. Mahler explained the rationale behind advocating for \$150 million, highlighting the increase for need in both recreation and conservation. On top of the regular and historical increase in demand, the impacts from the pandemic have dramatically increased the need for a higher request. Ms. Mahler emphasized that with the upcoming changes in the November election, having a unified voice will be more impactful than ever.

Members **Bugert, Craig, Herzog, Lam,** and **Ohlson-Kiehn** felt Option Four was appropriate with a justifiable rationale.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2024-11**

Moved By: Member **Bugert**

Seconded by: Member **Ohlson-Keihn**

Decision: **Approved**

Chair Shiosaki and Members Bugert, Craig, Herzog, Lam, Ohlson-Kiehn, and Windrope all voted to approve Resolution 2024-11. Member Burgess voted "nay".

Public Comment

None.

Youth Athletic Facilities

Mr. Milliern shared that RCO received \$44.5 million in funding requests. In July, he highlighted the Youth Athletic Facilities program changes made in October 2023, responding to growing need. The changes included allowing acquisition-only projects, Youth Athletic Facilities can no longer match athletic components with Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Local Parks, and increased grant limits from \$75,000 to \$350,000 in the small category and from \$350,000 to \$1.5 million in the large category. Additionally, in the spring, RCO launched the Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities program, which received \$160 million in requests. Both programs highlight the need for youth athletic facilities in communities around the state.

Mr. Milliern shared the number of applications for Youth Athletic Facilities Small and Large categories over the past five biennia. Of note, in previous biennia, all or almost all projects were funded.

Year	Youth Athletic Facilities – Large	Youth Athletic Facilities – Small	Total Applications	Funding Requested
2016	19	0	19	\$4.1 million
2018	57	6	63	\$16 million
2020	37	9	46	\$11.4 million
2022	43	2	45	\$12.6 million
2024	49	10	59	\$44.5 million

Mr. Milliern shared two funding request options for Youth Athletic Facilities, based on the \$44.5 million in requests RCO received for the program. Both options represent a significant increase over what was requested in the previous biennium.

- Request 75 percent for \$33.38 million.
- Request 50 percent for \$22.25 million.

Member Herzog asked how much match was included with the requests, and **Director Duffy** answered there was \$74 million in match for YAF this round.

During board discussion, Mr. Milliern clarified the options were intended as a range for the board to consider and they could explore a number between the options, noting that somewhere between 50 and 75 percent would make the program competitive, and that a higher number may be unrealistic. Members felt that a request between the two options was appropriate.

Member Herzog requested the context behind the origins of the program. Mr. Milliern explained that the program was originally created in 1997 when Lumen Field was bonded through a citizen’s initiative with the intention of additional revenues to go to Youth Athletic Facilities. The program went unfunded for several years and in the 2010s there was a request to bring the program back to address the need for facilities. Although the program does not exist in statue, the board has adopted policies for it to operate as a standalone program.

Member Lam motioned to approve **Resolution 2024-12** with a \$27 million request.

- Motion:** Move to Approve Resolution 2024-12
- Moved By:** Member **Lam**
- Seconded by:** Member **Burgess**
- Decision:** **Approved**

Public Comment

None.

As requested by the board, Mr. Milliern will provide more metrics at the next budget meeting in two years.

Dedicated Account Programs

There are four programs with dedicated funding sources for which the board provides support. The numbers are based on projections and the resolution requests authority for the director to adjust the requests if the projections change so that the programs get the funding they need.

- Non-highway and Off-road Vehicle Account - requesting \$13.8 million from a percentage of the state's fuel tax.
- Aquatic Land Enhancement Account - will receive \$7.4 million from geoduck sales.
- Firearm and Archery Range Recreation program - requesting \$682,000 from gun permits.
- Boating Facilities Program - requesting \$18.9 million from a percentage of the state's fuel tax.

Agencies must have authority to spend federal funding and staff requested federal spending authority for three programs:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund - requesting \$20 million.
- Recreational Trails Program - requesting \$5 million.
- Boating Infrastructure Grants - requesting \$5 million.

Mr. Milliern noted that in the materials the resolution was numbered 2024-12 and needed to be corrected to 2024-13.

Member Bugert motioned to approve the resolution as amended to 2024-13.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2024-13**

Moved By: Member **Bugert**

Seconded by: Member **Craig**

Decision: **Approved**

Public Comment

None.

ADJOURN: 10:42 a.m.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for October 29 and 30, 2024, at the Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA 98501.

Approved by



Michael Shiosaki, chair

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