



Meeting Day In-person: Room 172, First Floor, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street, SE, Olympia, WA.

These public meeting locations allows 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:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_JwthEXLTSpKHhi5_MygQEw

Phone Option: (669) 900-6833 - **Webinar ID:** 838 1531 2878

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 Julia McNamara via email at Julia.McNamara@rco.wa.gov

TUESDAY APRIL 22, 2025

OPENING AND MANAGEMENT REPORTS

9:00 a.m.

Call to Order

Chair Shiosaki

- Roll Call and Determination of Quorum
- Approval of Agenda **(Decision)**
- Chair remarks

9:05 a.m.

1. Consent Agenda **(Decision)**

Chair Shiosaki

- A. Board Meeting Minutes
 - January 28-29, 2025
- B. Time Extensions
 - Blaine-Birch Bay Park and Recreation District, California Creek Estuary Park Phase 2, 20-1841
 - Blue Mountain Land Trust, Peyton Ranch Conservation Easement, 20-1435
 - Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, Chafey Mountain, 20-1487
 - Clallam County, Olympic Discovery Trail Forks to La Push, 20-1494
 - Everett, Edgewater Park Sports Court, 20-1579
 - Fircrest, Fircrest Park Athletic Field Improvements, 20-1232.
 - Jefferson County, Olympic Discovery Trails Anderson Lake Connection, 20-1745
 - King County, Camp Sealth Conservation Easement, Vashon Island, 20-1676
 - King County, Dockton Moorage Renovation Phase 2, 20-2080
 - King County, Marymoor Park Dock Replacement, 20-1530
 - Kittitas Conservation Trust, Cle Elum Ridge Community Forest Phase 1, 20-2044
 - Lakewood, American Lake Park Waterfront Access Upgrades, 20-1349
 - Makah Tribe, Hoko River Watershed Conservation Phase 1, 20-1145
 - Manson Parks and Recreation District, Manson Bay Old Swim Hole Waterfront Park,
 - Methow Conservancy, Wolf Creek Agricultural Conservation Easement, Phase 1, 20-1573

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- Mountlake Terrace, Ballinger Park Viewing Platform and Nature Trails, 20-1672
 - Mountlake Terrace, Evergreen Tennis Courts Restoration, 20-1773
 - Port of Bellingham, Fairhaven Small Watercraft Launch and Dock, 20-1709
 - Port of Illahee, Transient Moorage Improvements, 20-2059
 - Port of Illahee, Waterfront Access Improvements, 20-1711
 - Puyallup, Van Lierop Park Playground, 20-1645.
 - Seattle, South Park Playground, Spray Park, and Playfield, 18-2169
 - Snohomish County, Whitehorse Trail Redevelopment, 20-1656
 - State Parks, Haley Property-Initial Park Development, 18-1892
 - State Parks, Marine Moorage Buoy Planning, 20-2191
 - State Parks, Nisqually State Park Water Access, 20-1557
 - State Parks, Sacajawea Moorage and Parking Improvements, 20-2340
 - State Parks, Stuart Island-Reid Harbor Moorage Replacement, 20-2189
 - State Parks, Twenty-Five Mile Creek Boat Ramp and Moorage Floats, 20-2302
 - State Parks, Willapa Hills Trail-Pacific County Bridges, 20-1312
 - State Parks, Willapa Hills Trail-Raymond to Menlo, 18-176
 - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Golden Doe, 20-1217
 - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Lower Crab Creek Restoration and Enhancement, 20-1304
 - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Pygmy Rabbit Habitat Enhancement, 20-1640
 - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Simcoe 2020, 20-1225
 - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Twins Nearshore and West Twin River Acquisitions, 20-1143
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- Department of Fish and Wildlife, Wenas-Cleman Mountain, 20-1227

Resolution 2025-04

9:10 a.m.

2. Director's Report

- A. Director's Report
- B. Legislative and Policy Update
- C. Grant Management Report
- D. Grant Services Report
- E. Performance Report (*written only*)
- F. Fiscal Report (*written only*)

Megan Duffy
Brock Milliern
Marguerite Austin
Kyle Guzlas
Bart Lynch
Mark Jarasitis

BOARD BUSINESS: BRIEFING

9:50 a.m.

BREAK

10:05 a.m.

General Public Comment (limit 3 minutes please) for issues not identified on the agenda.

BOARD BUSINESS: REQUEST FOR DIRECTION

10:15 a.m.

3. Farm and Forest Account Match

Nick Norton

10:35 a.m.

4. Farmland Policy Changes

Nick Norton

- A. Criteria
- B. Other

BOARD BUSINESS: DECISION

11:20 a.m.

5. Acquisition Policy Changes

Nick Norton

- A. Existing Public Property
- B. Combination Timeline
- C. Earnest Payment Eligibility

Resolution 2025-05

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

11:40 a.m.

Lunch

BOARD BUSINESS: DECISION

12:40 p.m.

6. Boating Facilities Program: Approval of Preliminary Ranked Lists

Karen Edwards

- A. Local Agency Category
- B. State Agency Category

Resolution 2025-06

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

1:10 p.m.

7. Firearms and Archery Range Recreation: Approval of Preliminary Ranked List

Dan Haws

Resolution 2025-07

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

1:25 p.m.

8. Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Program: Approval of Preliminary Ranked Lists

Brian Carpenter

- A. Education and Enforcement Category
- B. Nonhighway Road Category
- C. Nonmotorized Category
- D. Off-road Vehicle Category

Resolution 2025-08

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

1:50 p.m.

9. Recreational Trails Program: Approval of Preliminary Ranked Lists

Jesse Sims

- A. Education Category
- B. General Category

Resolution 2025-09

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

BOARD BUSINESS: BRIEFING

2:10 p.m.	10.Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program	DeAnn Beck
2:35 p.m.	11.Washington State Trails Data Base	Nick Reinhart
3:05	Break	
BOARD BUSINESS: DECISION		
3:15 p.m.	12.Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Urban Wildlife Habitat Location Criteria Update	Julia McNamara Ben Donatelle
	<u>Resolution 2025-10</u> Public comment will occur prior to adopting the resolution. Please limit comments to three minutes.	
BOARD BUSINESS: BRIEFING		
3:35 p.m.	13.Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Review of Natural Areas and Critical Habitat Categories	Leah Dobey Nick Norton
4:05 p.m.	14.Emphasizing Accessibility	Leah Dobey
4:35 p.m.	15.State Agency Partner Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Department of Natural Resources• State Parks and Recreation Commission• Department of Fish and Wildlife• Governor’s Office	Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn Peter Herzog Amy Windrope Joe Impecoven
5:00 p.m.	Adjourn	

Next Meeting: Regular Meeting- June 24-25, 2024. Room 172, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street, Olympia, Washington, 98501

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARY MINUTES

Date: January 28, 2025

Place: Retreat – Conference Room, 415 Capitol Way North, Olympia, Washington, 98501

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 retains a recording as the formal record of the meeting.

Call to Order:

Chair Michael Shiosaki called the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. **Julia McNamara**, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) board liaison, performed roll call, determining quorum.

Members Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn and Shiloh Burgess were absent at the time of the roll call but joined later.

Motion: Move to Approve **January 28 and 29, 2025**, Agenda

Moved By: Member **Kitty Craig**

Seconded by: Member **Peter Herzog**

Decision: **Approved**

Items 1 – 4: Equity Training

Dr. Christine Moses and **Liberty Gonzalez** from Buffalo Cloud Consulting presented the board with the objectives of the equity training which included building an understanding of historic and present-day injustices in outdoor equity and greenspace access; exploring examples of emerging funding and design models that promote equitable community engagement and resource allocation; analyzing case studies and

discussing equitable decision making processes; and identifying potential strategies to further advance equity within the board's role and organizational mission.

Director Megan Duffy summarized the internal and external guidance that informs RCO's equity efforts as provided in executive orders; Revised Codes of Washington; the State Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Plan; the board's strategic plan; state human resource directives; the operating budget; board resolutions; and the Prevention Institute Report's key findings and high-level recommendations.

Brock Milliern, policy and legislative director, shared equity driven efforts and actions that are underway at RCO, including updating relevant internal policies; contracting efforts and training; Department of Enterprise Services training; hiring a tribal liaison; hiring an equity coordinator; RCO's Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committee; and Office of Equity work including Pro-Equity Anti-Racism efforts and use of their equity report. Externally, RCO has focused on equitable grant making through evaluation criteria changes, providing training and technical support, changes to administrative processes, providing better outreach and communication, addressing conflict of interest with advisory committees, and the Planning for Recreation Access grant program.

Member Ohlson-Kiehn joined at 10:21 a.m.

Members of the board suggested sharing this equity work externally and noted that progress monitoring should be considered long-term and generationally.

BREAK: 10:28 A.M. – 10:40 A.M.

Members were led by Buffalo Cloud in a discussion about what equity means to the board and explored the differences in how equity is represented between National Recreation and Park Association and the Prevention Institute's frameworks.

Member Windrope left the meeting at 11:53 a.m. Member Burgess joined the meeting at 12:01 p.m.

LUNCH: 12:09 P.M. – 1:02 P.M.

Members participated in a breakout group exercise, analyzing case studies focused on addressing heat inequities through small-scale investments by providing shade sheds in low-income neighborhoods, creating spaces that accommodate children of all abilities with inclusive playgrounds, and models for engaging marginalized communities in project planning through equitable community engagement. Members worked in small groups to answer questions about one of the case studies and presented their conclusions to the full group for discussion.

Members shared what resonated for them from the training. This included appreciating the functionality of the board and staff; the case study exercise; sentiments of equity work being a long-term, incremental process and the importance of celebrating small victories; seeing how far the agency has come and continues work toward progress; and the importance of staff and the board maintaining a growth mindset.

Member Windrope returned to the meeting at 1:51 p.m.

The board would like to review an ongoing table of progress and spend half a day on equity work each year and suggested visiting projects focused on equity during the board tour, looking at projects that showcase climate resilience, and highlighting how projects make a difference in communities.

BREAK: 2:08 P.M. – 2:22 P.M.

Item 5: Assessment of Recent Changes

Member Herzog was absent after the break and returned at 2:56 p.m.

Policy specialists **Leah Dobey** and **Ben Donatelle** discussed recent changes to further equitable grant making related to evaluation criteria, advisory committees, administrative processes, outreach and communications, Planning for Recreation Access grants, and training and technical support with a focus on the evaluation criteria and planning grants.

Criteria changes were made to six programs/subgrants: [Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account](#), [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#), [Youth Athletic Facilities](#), and [Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Local Parks, Trails, and Water Access](#) categories. The changes were made to project introduction, need, scope, design, and project engagement, and helped reduce overlap and duplicity, making it easier for applicants to follow the criteria. The board approved these changes at the December 2023 meeting, allowing the changes to be applied in the 2024 grant round.

Since adopting these changes, staff provided outreach and education using support materials, webinars, and public presentations. Once applications were submitted, staff looked at the location of all projects to ensure the data projects were evaluated against was correct, checked in with applicants, and verified correct scores.

Member Windrope left the meeting at 2:37 p.m.

Ms. Dobey explained the criteria change impacts after one grant cycle. Staff sent surveys to applicants and evaluators. The applicant survey had a 36 percent response rate, up

from 25 percent in 2022, while the evaluator survey had a response rate of 46 percent, down from 63 percent in 2022.

In the Project Need criterion, some applicants provided feedback that indicated the method of using greenspace, social vulnerability, and health outcomes does not account for regional importance or proximity to vulnerable census tracts, nor do these measures always reflect the community; however, 30 percent of applicants felt that RCO used the right data for those data scored-criteria and 31 percent felt that the criteria were weighted appropriately. Additional feedback suggests the evaluation questions are asking for the right information; evaluators know how to fairly and effectively score responses; new evaluators liked the split criteria, although experienced evaluators were less keen; more guidance would be helpful for some applicants and evaluators, especially for high-point value criteria; some overlap remains between Scope and Design; for some projects in earlier stages, responding to and using certain criteria was somewhat difficult; and there are too many criteria.

Staff are early in this process and looking at where more guidance can be provided to applicants and evaluators.

Mr. Donatelle gave an overview of the [Planning for Recreation Access](#) grants, which provided funding for planning and technical assistance to communities that lacked access to the outdoors and provided assistance to less experienced applicants.

Member Ohlson-Kiehn left the meeting at 3:18 p.m.

The grant program funded seventeen comprehensive plans and thirty-seven master, feasibility or site plans for a total of fifty-four projects. To date, eighteen projects have been completed. Seven of the funded Planning for Recreation Access projects resulted in eleven applications in the spring grant round. One Planning for Recreation Access project ranked number one in both the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Local Parks category and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seven Planning for Recreation Access projects ranked in the bottom 50 percent of the programs they applied to.

Staff will look at new applicants and compare rate-of-success to other applicants, continue to listen to feedback from evaluators and applicants to adapt approach, and continue looking at these criteria over the next year as part of the Policy Work Plan. Staff plan to look at technical assistance and what can be done with the existing capacity and will reflect on Planning for Recreation Access and implementing the Community Engagement Plan, which should be completed in June. There was a recommendation in

the equity review to look at Americans with Disabilities Act projects and making a standalone grant program for upgrades.

Item 6: 2025-2027 Policy Work Plan

This item was presented on day two of the meeting following Item 15: Annual Compliance Report.

Brock Milliern provided an update on the policy work plan that has been underway since December 2023.

The policy team has been working on:

- Developing a Community Outreach Plan
- Addressing urban clusters as presented in Item 11: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Urban Wildlife Category
- Updating [Manual 3: Acquisition Projects](#) as presented in Item 14: Acquisition
- A farmland review as presented in Item 9: Farm and Forest Account Policy Changes
- Lower Snake River Dam Recreation Study – RCO’s participation should end in June and the United States Army Corps of Engineers should complete the study by the end of 2025
- An Economic Study update as presented in Item 8: Director’s Report – Economic Update
- Objective criteria assessment as part of the equity review as presented in Item 5: Assessment of Recent Changes
- Updating the trails database – with the first policy intern, Nick Reinhart
- Modernizing the board minutes
- Electric vehicle charging stations – assessing whether sponsors can install charging stations on project sites or use funds to do so

Member Windrope noted the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife uses a time stamped recording of the meeting paired with the written minutes, so the written minutes are shorter. Mr. Milliern noted this is part of RCO’s modernized minutes concept.

Member Ohlson-Kiehn asked if the road usage charge is included in the work plan. Mr. Milliern answered it will be a large part of the work done over the next year but was not included in the work plan.

Member Bugert noted the use of artificial intelligence for note taking has evolved to a point it could be useful. Mr. Milliern noted that RCO may use artificial intelligence to catalogue policy topics.

Although staff are wrapping up 2023-2025 biennium projects, a non-comprehensive plan has been created for the 2025-2027 biennium. Projects can be added through conversations with the board, staff, Legislative direction, and conversations with sponsors. Additionally, the projects Mr. Milliern presented could be bumped if a higher priority arises. The 2027-2027 workplan includes:

- Review [Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Habitat Account](#) and [Aquatic Land Enhancement Account](#) for program compliance with the [Evergreen Communities Act](#)
- Updates to [Planning for Recreation Access](#)
- Look into increasing the limit on multi-site eligibility
- Review criteria in natural areas and critical habitat programs that were not included in the 2023 criteria changes
- Reviewing appraisal requirements
- Accessibility projects with the possibility of a standalone accessibility program
- Updates to the [Boating Facilities Program](#)
- The next phase of Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities program updates
- Review manuals
- Implement providing technical assistance as part of the equity review

Member Ohlson-Kiehn asked how the changes to the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities program worked out and how they are evaluated. Mr. Milliern noted there has only been one grant round done since the changes, so the impact may not be clear yet. This topic will be brought back to the board.

Ongoing efforts for the policy team include continued participation in the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative, reviewing entity's comprehensive plan eligibility, participating in the Outdoor Recreation Caucus, developing the budget, and continued Legislative engagement.

RECESS: 3:44 P.M.

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARY MINUTES

Date: January 29, 2025

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 meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. **Julia McNamara**, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) board liaison, performed roll call, determining quorum. Members Shiloh Burgess and Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn were absent.

Chair Shiosaki recognized Myra Barker who will retire on January 31, after twenty-five years of service at RCO.

Member Burgess joined the meeting at 9:07 a.m.

Item 7: Consent Agenda

Chair Shiosaki noted the consent agenda includes the October 29-30 meeting minutes, three time-extensions, one waiver request, and recognizes four advisory committee members.

Motion: Move to Approve Resolution 2025-01

Moved By: Member **Peter Herzog**

Seconded by: Member **Bob Bugert**

Decision: **Approved**

Item 8: Director's Report

Director Megan Duffy emphasized Myra Barker's retirement and noted RCO is hiring a salmon grants section manager. Director Duffy and Brock Milliern met with the new recreation special assistant for Governor Ferguson, Joe Impeccoven. Mr. Milliern and Adam Cole will present to the Washington State Transportation Committee on February 19 regarding the gas tax and the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities program and how the gas tax impacts RCO.

RCO received direction from the Office of Financial Management to reduce the agency's operating budget by 6 percent. Additionally, federal direction from the Office of Management and Budget temporarily pauses some grants, loans, and other financial assistance programs. At this time there are not impacts to the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Recreational Trails Program, but there may be in the future.

Policy Update

Brock Milliern, policy and legislative director, noted that while Governor Inslee's budget and Governor Ferguson's priorities are both available, budget changes could happen until April when the House and Senate budgets are released. An updated revenue forecast is expected in mid to late March, with budget proposals from the House and Senate shortly after.

Mr. Milliern and Director Duffy meet regularly with legislators to discuss RCO programs and priorities and their impact on legislators' districts and state priorities.

The Outdoor Recreation Caucus, chaired by Senator Ron Muzzall and Representative Andrew Barkis, brings together state agencies, nonprofits, and legislators to discuss outdoor recreation related legislative issues during the legislative session. The caucus meets weekly throughout the session and looks at a variety of topics, for example the No Child Left Inside and Outdoor Learning Grants programs and the impact these programs have on the communities that received funding from them.

The Outdoor Recreation Caucus and RCO staff are following several bills through the legislative session. [House Bill 1148](#) exempts sales tax on goods and services purchased at youth athletic facilities run by nonprofits; [House Bill 1537](#) provides funding for the [Green Dot Road](#) system from the [Multi-use Roadway Safety Account](#); [Senate Bill 5234](#) increases the snowmobile registration fee from fifty dollars to seventy-five dollars; and [Senate Bill 5390](#) increases the cost of a Discover pass from thirty dollars to forty-five dollars. Mr. Milliern will provide the board with email updates every other week throughout the legislative session.

Member Burgess asked if RCO had any request legislation related to the board. Mr. Milliern answered no.

Economic Update

Leah Dobey, policy specialist, provided a brief update on the Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State. RCO received 2024 budget funds to update the report. Earth Economics, which did the other two iterations of the report, was hired. Earth Economics is using a new methodology, incorporating models that use mobile device data to estimate recreation visitation.

The 2025 update will include the total economic impact, economic impact of public and private land recreation use, out of state visitors, and ecosystem services.

Work began in the fall of 2024 and is scheduled to be completed in June.

Member Bugert asked if a COVID-19 pandemic analysis will be included in this update. Ms. Dobey noted the 2020 update provided brief commentary on the pandemic and this update will focus on 2024 data and compare it to 2020.

Member Lam asked how the cell phone data works with out-of-state numbers who are new residents to Washington State. Ms. Dobey explained the data works off pings to towers, not individual phone numbers. **Member Craig** asked if there was a dramatic increase in cell phone data compared to what was previously recorded. Ms. Dobey answered that Earth Economics has not shared information on cell phone data to date, but it is important to compare like-data when using a new methodology.

Recreation and Conservation Report

Marguerite Austin, Recreation and Conservation grants section manager, noted the addition of two new RCO staff, Hailee Taylor, grant services administrative assistant, and Mollie Lavelle, salmon grants section administrative assistant.

Ms. Austin highlighted the fall grant cycle which accepted applications from the [Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities](#), [Recreational Trails Program](#), [Firearms and Archery Range Recreation](#) program, and the [Boating Facilities Program](#). RCO finalized 169 applications, requesting a total of \$41.6 million, and anticipates \$30 million to fund these projects. Ranked lists will be presented to the board at the April meeting, and grants will be awarded in June. Applications for the [Boating Infrastructure Grant](#) program will be accepted beginning February 14.

Staff are soliciting proposals for the [Land and Water Conservation Fund – Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership](#) program and anticipate offering grants over the next four

or five years. This program focuses on underserved communities, primarily in urban areas. The program modified eligibility criteria to include Native American Tribes, which were included in the past; however, in this instance they do not have a population threshold. Applications for this program are due to RCO in March and the federal government in June and are evaluated by a national panel. An update on this program will be provided in June.

Member Bugert asked how much funding is available for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Ms. Austin noted that \$220 million was available nationwide last year; however, the National Park Service has not provided an amount for this year. Staff are moving forward, hoping for a sizeable amount as applicants can request up to \$15 million in this program.

Item 9: Farm and Forest Account Policy Changes

Nick Norton, policy specialist, provided an overview of the temporary local non-state, non-federal match waiver and temporary cost increase in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) – Farm and Forest Account, which includes both the [Farmland Preservation](#) and [Forestland Preservation](#) categories. These temporary policy changes applied only to the 2022 and 2024 grant rounds and can be found detailed in the [meeting materials](#).

Member Ohlson-Kiehn joined the meeting at 9:41 a.m.

Local Non-State, Non-Federal Match Waiver

Mr. Norton noted the 2022 rationale for the temporary non-state, non-federal match waiver partly resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic and a lack of grant round competition. Another rationale is that local public funding for farmland preservation is limited. In addition, nonprofits are the most frequent applicants and often don't have dedicated internal funds available for easement acquisition.

In 2022 and 2024, almost half of applicants took advantage of the temporary non-state, non-federal waiver, and the board recently waived this match requirement on two older projects. There was no obvious difference in the number of applications in either the farmland or forest categories, but the average funding request for farmland nearly doubled. While a permanent waiver of the non-state, non-federal match would still require applicants to bring 50 percent match in total, the waiver would reduce the burden to nonprofit organizations by allowing for state and federal funding to complete the match requirement. The waiver also supports project feasibility where non-state, non-federal match is limited. If the non-state, non-federal match waiver was made

permanent in the WWRP Farm and Forest Account, it would be the only category of WWRP where non-state, non-federal match is not required for nonprofits and local agencies.

Member Bugert asked if counties with a Conservation Futures Program have specifically earmarked funds for farm and forestland protection. Mr. Norton answered that Whatcom and Skagit Counties have specifically earmarked funding and in King County some Conservation Futures funding goes to farm and forestland.

Member Windrope left the meeting at 9:53 a.m.

Member Burgess asked if waiving the non-state, non-federal match could disincentivize communities from creating a Conservation Futures Program. Mr. Norton could not speak to that, noting there are a lot of other considerations that go into Conservation Futures. Member Burgess indicated that she was not comfortable with making the match waiver permanent.

Chair Shiosaki recognized making the match waiver permanent would change the consistency with other accounts, but what exists is not working.

Members Craig and Burgess asked for clarification on what match would be with the waiver. Mr. Norton explained if the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement was eliminated, 50 percent match would still be required, but the source of the match would not matter.

Member Bugert agreed with there being benefits to maintaining the policy and waiving match when necessary and suggested developing policy language that clarified when a waiver would be necessary. Chair Shiosaki asked if there was a way to delegate authority to the director to apply the waiver. Mr. Norton noted that it is an option to consider.

Member Herzog supported delegating the waiver to the director.

Member Burgess suggested reducing the non-state, non-federal match requirement to 5 percent. She later suggested extending the current waiver for one more cycle to allow staff more time to provide a pathway forward.

Member Bugert expressed concern over creating a disincentive to apply, noting this is an undersubscribed account and there is great demand for farmland preservation, but it is challenging for applicants to use. Mr. Norton noted the feedback from applicants is to make the waiver permanent.

Members Lam and Craig commented on this being a different account than the other WWRP accounts, and the board may need to approach it through an equity lens, noting each program may need its own tools to be equitable.

Overall, members expressed a general willingness to look at alternate options rather than having the non-state, non-federal match waiver end.

Cost Increases

Mr. Norton explained the background of cost increases in the WWRP – Farm and Forest Account, which can be found in the [meeting materials](#). The temporary cost increase policy allows the director to approve a 10 percent cost increase, while requests above 10 percent must be approved by the board. This policy was modeled after other RCO acquisition programs and is limited to parcel-by-parcel appraised and reviewed value.

The rationale behind this temporary cost increase is that conservation easement values are difficult to estimate, and there is a history of remaining or unspent funds. The board approved three cost increases in 2020 and in the last two years the director has approved four cost increase requests. To date, there have been no cost increase requests in 2022 with this temporary policy in place.

Making the cost increase policy permanent aligns with other RCO programs and only approves cost increases if sufficient funds are available. Additionally, match is still required for cost increases, and this may reduce scope changes or projects that are withdrawn. Conversely, this could possibly result in fewer projects receiving funding overall. In addition, it would be different than cost increase policies for other WWRP accounts, where cost increases would only be available during exceptional economic times by declaration of the board.

Mr. Norton has received universal positive feedback from land trusts and counties to make the temporary cost increase policy permanent.

Members agreed this change is practical and easily accomplished.

General Public Comment

None.

BREAK: 10:22 A.M. – 10:38 A.M.

Item 10: Featured Projects

Allison Dellwo, senior outdoor grants manager, provided an overview of two featured projects from the City of Snoqualmie and the Port of Anacortes.

The Cap Sante Marina Recreational Vehicle Park ([RCO #20-1671](#)) was funded by the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account and Land and Water Conservation Fund. The project aimed to improve the existing recreational vehicle park by providing Americans with Disabilities Act accessible stalls, accessible paths, utility hookups, landscaping for privacy, and stormwater treatment. The Port of Anacortes applied for \$500,000 from the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account, \$600,000 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and brought \$1,221,971 in sponsor match for a project totaling \$22,311,971.

Public Comment

Brett Greenwood, executive director for Port of Anacortes, emphasized that the Cap Sante Marina Recreational Vehicle Park project created access to local parks, marine terminals, waterfront, and trail system and highlighted how the Americans with Disabilities Act compliant sidewalk allows access down to the esplanade.

Ms. Dellwo provided an overview of the Centennial Fields All-Inclusive Playground ([RCO #20-1739](#)), which was funded by the WWRP – Local Parks category. This community-led project resulted in an inclusive playground facility to serve the Snoqualmie Valley and eastern King County. The City of Snoqualmie applied for \$475,000 in funding and brought \$495,400 in match for a project totaling \$970,400.

Item 11: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Urban Wildlife Category

This item was presented after Item 16: State Agency Partner Reports.

Julia McNamara, board liaison, acting in a policy developmental capacity, provided an overview of urban clusters as used in project eligibility in the WWRP – Urban Wildlife Habitat category, outlined in the [meeting materials](#).

In 2018, the board directed staff, through the [Unifying Strategy](#), to assess whether the Urban Wildlife Habitat category was meeting statutory intent and was interested in how to serve communities interested in nature-based activities, improving equitable funds, and getting youth outside. A policy work group was created and recommended broader eligibility requirements to more effectively preserve habitat in rapidly urbanizing areas. Location eligibility criteria were expanded to include the United States Census Bureau's definition of "urban clusters" or a location that has a population of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000. The board recognized the value of the location eligibility criteria and in 2019 added "within five miles of a designated urban cluster with a population of 5,000 or more" to [Manual 10b: WWRP Habitat Conservation Account](#). The board chose a minimum population of 5,000 to align with other board programs that address urban habitat based on [Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250](#).

In 2020, the Census Bureau simplified “urban areas” under a single category and now defines them by a minimum population threshold of 5,000 or 2,000 housing units, eliminating the term “urban clusters.” The board can update the language in the category and criterion while continuing to include communities that became eligible through the 2019 update. While the Urban Wildlife Habitat category already uses a population threshold of 5,000, the program does not use housing units as a criterion for location eligibility.

Ms. McNamara proposed two solutions:

- Option 1: Update “urban cluster” to “urban areas”, excluding housing units – keeps current parameters the same. (Uses only part of the Census Bureau’s updated language)
- Option 2: Update “urban cluster” to “urban areas,” including housing units – housing units have not been used by the board in the past. By using it, there will be less variability within program eligibility as the number of units does not change as frequently as population levels, such as in areas that are popular for seasonal stays. (Uses Census Bureau’s full updated Urban Area definition)

By expanding the criterion, eligibility will expand to include at least four additional communities: Cle Elum, Long Beach, Union/Tahuya/Belfair, and Friday Harbor.

Ben Donatelle, policy specialist, explained the anomaly of the community of White Salmon, Washington, which qualifies as an urban area according to the US Census Bureau because of its proximity to the Hood River, Oregon metropolitan area. Functionally, these two cities act as a cohesive community, but White Salmon itself would not qualify under the population or housing unit thresholds. This is currently the only anomaly in the state with cross border interaction.

Mr. Donatelle shared an [interactive map](#) that illustrates how the current criteria compare to the updated Census Bureau criteria.

Chair Shiosaki asked who has access to the housing unit information and how difficult is it to access? Ms. McNamara explained the interactive map is available to applicants and includes housing unit buffers.

Member Bugert asked if this was a popular category within WWRP. **Marguerite Austin** answered that it is not more popular than other categories. Mr. Donatelle noted that the 2019 program review noticed a decline in local jurisdictions applying. Implementing this policy expanded eligibility to urbanizing communities that were previously not able to apply.

Member Ohlson-Kiehn shared the Department of Natural Resources is protecting natural areas and urbanization is a real threat and management activities become more complex in areas with urbanization. Adopting a definition that broadens eligibility would help the department protect areas that are at risk of development and natural areas with protected and rare species. Mr. Donatelle added the 2019 policy change encouraged human-nature interaction, and these projects provide a place close to population centers where people can be with nature and interact with heritage sites.

The board agreed that broadening the eligibility would cast a wider net of applicants and get ahead of urbanizing areas. Additionally, the board supported including housing units in the criteria if applicants have tools available to determine eligibility.

Based on board feedback, Ms. McNamara will draft recommended policy language, solicit public comment, and return to the board in April for approval.

LUNCH: 11:45 A.M. – 12:47 P.M.

Item 12: Policy Waiver Request: Pre-agreement Cost for California Creek Estuary Park, 18-1045

Member Windrope rejoined the meeting during the lunch break. Member Craig was absent after lunch.

Rachelle Lim, outdoor grants manager, presented a policy waiver request for a pre-agreement cost for the California Creek Estuary Park ([RCO #18-1945](#)) located in northwest Whatcom County. In 2019, the Blaine-Birch Bay Park and Recreation District was awarded \$458,000 from the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account and \$366,400 from the WWRP – Water Access category to acquire two properties and develop a parking lot. Since then, the parking lot element was moved to phase two, a separate acquisition and development project that has also been funded with Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account and WWRP – Water Access funding. The policy waiver request applies to the property at 4677 Drayton Harbor Road and the details of the request are in the [meeting materials](#).

Member Craig rejoined at 12:52 p.m.

To keep the property from being privately developed, the Whatcom Land Trust secured the property for \$350,000 in December 2018, but did not have funds to keep the property long term. In March 2019, prior to receiving the grant, the district and land trust signed a letter of intent, partnering on the acquisition and the district paid the Land Trust \$50,000 towards the purchase of the land. This was a refundable, earnest payment should the district not be awarded a grant or otherwise raise funding to buy

the entire property. The grant was subsequently awarded, and the district has since purchased the property. The district has been reimbursed all but the \$50,000 initial contribution to the land trust due to a conflict with the existing policy. [Manual 3: Acquisition Projects](#) states that pre-agreement costs are limited to administration costs and limited incidental costs. Land costs are not eligible as pre-agreement costs unless under a Waiver of Retroactivity; however, the property was purchased without this waiver.

The district is requesting a policy waiver to allow the district's \$50,000 contribution to be considered an eligible pre-agreement cost so that the district may be fully reimbursed for the cost of the land. Staff recommend approving the waiver request.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2025-02**

Moved By: Member **Shiloh Burgess**

Seconded by: Member **Trang Lam**

Decision: **Approved**

Item 13: Eligibility for Acquisition: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Sol Duc River Access, 22-1734

Marguerite Austin, Recreation and Conservation grants section manager, provided an overview of the Sol Duc River Access on behalf of the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, who requested the policy prohibiting acquisition of land already managed for public outdoor recreation to be waived for this project. In 1966, the board awarded the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife a Boating Facilities Program grant, bond funds, and Land and Water Conservation Funds to purchase an access site on the Sol Duc River. The one-acre Whitcomb-Diimmel Road water access site was purchased for recreationists to launch and retrieve vessels; however, in 2021 and 2022, winter flood and storm damage destroyed access to the boat launch.

Following the storm damage, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife learned the property owners across the river were preparing to sell and the department negotiated a lease to ensure safe water access for the public while they worked to secure funds to buy the property for permanent public water access. In the 2023-2025 biennium, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife was awarded a WWRP - Water Access category grant to purchase the Sol Duc River Access ([RCO #22-1734](#)) just across the river from the Whitcomb-Diimmel Road water access site. The proposed acquisition has more than a half mile of waterfront, a natural boat launch providing water access to the Sol Duc River, and a partially cleared area previously used for camping.

The existing Manual 3: Acquisition Projects states that property already under public ownership or management is not eligible for RCO grant funding unless the following conditions are satisfied:

- 1) State law requires that the agency selling the land must receive compensation, and
- 2) The land was not originally acquired by the selling agency for... recreation use (for outdoor recreation proposals), and
- 3) The land has never been publicly managed for... recreation.

The proposed site does not meet condition three because the property was previously managed for public outdoor recreation.

Staff recommend waiving item three of the policy and approving the purchase of the Sol Duc River Access site as eligible for grant funding.

Travis Weller, grants manager at Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, noted that the department worked in the public's best interest to secure safe water access.

Noting that the historic funding for the Witcomb-Diimmel Road Access was provided through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, **Member Craig** asked if there were any compliance issues. Ms. Austin answered plans for continued use of the site meet eligibility and compliance requirements for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2025-03**

Moved By: Member **Amy Windrope**

Seconded by: Member **Bob Bugert**

Decision: **Approved**

Item 14: Acquisition

Nick Norton gave an overview of three potential policy changes to [Manual 3: Acquisition Projects](#).

Existing Public Property

Current policy prohibits acquiring established outdoor recreation areas developed under ownership or management of a public agency unless: state law requires compensation, the property was not originally acquired for recreation or conservation, and the property has never been managed for recreation or conservation.

The board has waived this policy three times within the last year, most recently during this meeting in Item 13. Mr. Norton presented options for changing this policy:

- Option 1: No change.
- Option 2: Delegate authority to the director.
- Option 3: Remove the management consideration.

Option 3 accommodates projects where there is no immediate threat but establishes site control and allows the managing agency to develop or protect the property more than if they were leasing. This option also allows securing a property during a land transfer for perpetual protection. This change, however, could allow sponsors to propose acquisition of property that is not new at the time of the request and would transition from thinking about quantity to quality.

Member Ohlson-Kiehn noted situations where the Department of Natural Resources is the underlying landowner, and the lessee is a smaller jurisdiction. Member Ohlson-Kiehn asked if there is an equity issue when a larger jurisdiction owns the land and the smaller jurisdiction cannot afford to purchase the land so leases it and then later, when the land becomes available for sale, the smaller jurisdiction is unable to purchase. Mr. Norton noted this is a great example and type of project that Option 3 would make possible.

Members Burgess, Bugert, and Herzog supported Option 3.

Combination Projects

Since 2000, the policy regarding combination projects requires the acquisition component to be closed or executed within ninety days of the board funding meeting. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board allows eighteen months for the acquisition component of a combination project to be closed or executed.

Sponsors tend to struggle to meet the ninety-day requirement and due diligence steps like appraisals are taking longer than previously, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. Compared with salmon-related acquisitions, many recreation projects do not meet the ninety-day window, use waivers more frequently, and close acquisitions quicker. Interestingly, combination projects last similar lengths of time in both salmon and recreation programs. Mr. Norton noted this indicates there is a low risk in extending the timeline for closing or executing projects.

The options for changing this policy include extending the timeline for closing to:

- Option 1: Nine months.
- Option 2: Twelve months.
- Option 3: Twelve months with director-approved extension.
- Option 4: Eighteen months.

Responding to **Member Burgess** on timing, **Marguerite Austin** explained that once the funding has been awarded, sponsors have ninety days to either purchase the property with a waiver of retroactivity or have an option agreement in place that they can execute within ninety days.

Member Lam asked if extending the timeline would reduce jurisdictions' need to request a waiver, and if this helps staff too. Ms. Austin answered yes to both. The original policy intent was to keep applicants from spending two or three years purchasing a property for development. This would only apply to combination projects and could reduce the number of scope changes (sponsors asking to remove the development because the acquisition took too long).

Most board members supported Option 4: eighteen months, Member Burgess supported Option 3: twelve months with director-approved extension.

Earnest Money

Earnest money and option payments are currently listed as ineligible acquisition costs. However, these payments provide surety, help meet RCO requirements and can be applied to the purchase price of the property at closing.

Staff recommend that earnest money and option payments be defined as an eligible pre-agreement incidental cost that only become eligible for reimbursement if they are applied to the reviewed, appraised value of the property at closing during the grant performance period. This recommendation would lower risks for sponsors and support best practices for project development. It also avoids conflicts with existing pre-agreement limitations on land costs and presents no additional risks to RCO, regardless of payment size.

Members of the board supported this staff recommendation.

Item 15: Annual Compliance Report

Myra Barker, compliance unit manager, summarized the annual compliance report. The goal of the compliance program is to ensure funded sites are managed for the intended purpose, use, and function; sites remain open for public access to outdoor recreation; and habitat properties are protected and restored for wildlife consistent with the program policy. The compliance team provides guidance and work with sponsors and staff on changes that impact the project area and identify how compliance issues can be resolved.

The compliance portfolio consists of 6,400 sites across the state, and acquisition, development or renovation, and restoration project types have a long-term obligation beginning when the project is completed. An overview of the report is provided in the [meeting materials](#). Most projects in the portfolio (73 percent) are funded by this board.

In 2024, staff used a grant from the National Park Service to work with the RCO data team and a contractor to design, develop, and implement automated compliance notifications. This is an ongoing effort to inform sponsors of the long-term obligations associated with their grants and will be used to notify sponsors of unresolved compliance issues and unapproved conversions.

Ms. Barker provided an overview and examples of approved 2024 requests of the allowable use policy, corrective action policy, and exception to conversion policy. Requests are reviewed by an internal compliance team who make recommendations to the director. The director approves or denies the request.

Compliance staff started 2024 with 303 compliance issues and eighty-seven were added throughout the year. Staff exceeded their goal and resolved fifty-seven issues, or 15 percent, in 2024. There are 390 compliance issues as of January 2025. Most unresolved issues are for conversions, followed by ineligible structures and no public access. Staff have an established inspection protocol that includes a full file review of all documents, aerial imagery, property records, and PRISM data before onsite inspections. In 2024, staff completed 373 inspections, meeting 93 percent of the goal. Eighty-four percent of inspections were found to be in compliance.

Member Burgess asked what drives lack of public access. Ms. Barker's opinion is that there is a lack of resources or change in the priorities of sponsors. Additionally, there has been a misunderstanding that there is no requirement to move toward development after acquisition.

Chris Popek, compliance specialist, and **Ashly Arambul**, Land and Water Conservation Fund compliance grants manager, highlighted compliance inspections with long-term obligations. These sites included Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Statewide Water Access originally funded in 1966 ([RCO #66-604](#)); Clark County's Salmon Creek Park and Greenway originally funded in 1976 ([RCO #79-023](#)); Washington Department of Natural Resources' Mima Mounds Natural Area Preserve originally funded in 1976 ([RCO #76-704](#)); Washington State Parks' Ebey's Landing originally funded in 1978 ([RCO #78-509](#)); Town of Northport's Boat Launch and Park originally funded in 2008 ([RCO #08-1672](#)); City of Lacey's Rainier Vista Community Park originally

funded in 1991 ([RCO #91-115](#)); Clallam County's Quillayute River Park originally funded in 1999 ([RCO #99-1767](#)); and City of Milton's Triangle Park originally funded in 1967 ([RCO #67-048](#)).

Goals in 2025 include conducting 400 compliance inspections prioritizing acquisitions and Land and Water Conservation Fund projects, resolving 10 percent of compliance issues, completing two conversions, and compliance notifications to long-term obligations, unresolved conversions, and unresolved compliance issues.

Chair Shiosaki presented a resolution of recognition for Myra Barker's service to the citizens of Washington State.

BREAK: 2:15 PM – 2:25 PM

Item 16: State Agency Partner Reports

Members Ohlson-Kiehn and Herzog presented partner reports after Item 10: Featured Projects.

Department of Natural Resources

Member Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn provided an update on agency funding requests and agency programs. The Washington Department of Natural Resources is requesting \$637,000 to continue participating in the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative. This request was not funded in Governor Inslee's budget. The department requested \$8 million for the conservation corps to work on the department's recreational and natural lands; Governor Inslee's budget funds this at \$3 million. The department received lands maintenance backlog funding in Fiscal Year 2022, which carried forward into the 2023-2025 biennium at \$10 million and was reduced by 25 percent, which will reduce the level of service the department can provide for recreation maintenance.

Capital budget requests include \$7.7 million for Safe and Sustainable Recreation, which would fund forty-three projects statewide. Governor Inslee's budget provides \$3 million. This reduction would result in fewer projects being funded. There is also a natural areas and facilities preservation and access request for \$5.7 million. This would fund thirty-nine projects. It was funded at \$2.9 million in Governor Inslee's budget.

The Natural Heritage Program is nearing completion of the 2025 State of Washington Natural Heritage Plan, which includes updated lists of state endangered, threatened, and sensitive species and ecosystems and a list of natural area representation priorities for rare species and ecosystems. The Natural Areas Program is in the final stages of completing management plans for five areas and includes work at Cattle Point, Camas

Meadows, Mima Mounds, Bald Hill, and Klickitat Canyon. The Conservation Acquisitions group has completed several acquisitions thanks to WWRP funding, including Lacamas Prairie, which has been in the works for over twenty years and completed the purchase of 622 acres. The Conservation Acquisition team has been in a staffing transition.

The department has completed several developmental WWRP and Recreational Trails Program projects including Middle Fork Snoqualmie River Access Development Phase One ([RCO #18-1456](#)), Tiger Mountain State Forest View Shelter and Trail Connections ([RCO #18-1733](#)), and Eagles Nest Vista ([RCO #20-2185](#)). Additionally, the department completed the [Statewide Outdoor Access and Recreation Process](#), a strategic plan providing a clear idea of what is possible on state land in the next ten years.

The department is in the process of implementing 2024 supplemental funding to develop a target shooting program on Department of Natural Resource lands and address lead contamination from shooting.

The Youth Education and Outreach Program connected more than 5,600 students through field trips, guest speaking, community events, and career fairs, supporting equitable access to department managed lands and exploration and preparation for natural resource sector jobs.

Member Craig asked about the strategic priorities in the Statewide Outdoor Access and Recreation Process. Member Ohlson-Kiehn shared the strategic plan following the meeting (linked above) and noted the priorities emphasize the need for responsible recreation on Department of Natural Resources managed lands.

Regarding the funding reductions, **Member Burgess** asked about the authority the department was given by Legislature to charge fees. Member Ohlson-Kiehn noted the statutory change gives the department the ability to recover costs for permits and not generate revenue, making it difficult to anticipate how that will provide funding relief.

Member Burgess asked how raising the cost of the Discover Pass could affect sales.

Member Herzog noted the request is to increase the Discover Pass fee from thirty to forty-five dollars for an annual pass and from ten to fifteen dollars for a day pass. There is a threshold above which the proportion changes between how money is distributed between state agencies, and this amount of increase will hasten reaching that threshold, keeping the distribution equal among agencies.

State Parks and Recreation Commission

Member Peter Herzog shared that in the operating budget State Parks requested \$24.7 million in new funding; Governor Inslee's budget included \$7.8 million. Most inflationary

costs increase and carry forward budget were funded in Governor Inslee's budget. Most priorities for new funding were at least partially funded in Governor Inslee's budget. This included funding for Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, Fort Worden campus management, the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative, resource adaptation and climate change funding through the Climate Commitment Act, infrastructure safety compliance, bridge and dam safety, and Cama Beach planning.

Funds earned through camping fees, Discover Pass, and Department of Licensing donations account for over 60 percent of State Parks' budget. Spending these funds requires spending authority from Legislature. Out of concern that earned revenue would not keep pace with spending authority, State Parks requested \$10 million in general funds to cover the potential shortfall. This request was not funded in Governor Inslee's budget.

In the capital budget, State Parks requested \$127 million and received \$74 million in Governor Inslee's budget. This funding is mostly for the preservation of existing facilities. State Parks received some funding for new development including ongoing development of Nisqually State Park and renovations and staff housing at Moran State Park.

[House Bill 1024](#) provides the State Parks and Recreation Commission authority to extend its lease of structures at Saint Edward State Park from 62 to 80 years. [Senate Bill 5234](#) will increase snowmobile registration fees from \$50 to \$75 and has received positive support from the snowmobile community.

State Parks was involved in a complaint to the federal Department of Justice concerning accessibility of facilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The complaint arose from an accident at Paradise Point State Park. State Parks entered into a settlement agreement with the Department of Justice which requires the agency to assess facilities constructed after the 1992 passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, develop policy guidance for constructing and maintaining facilities in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act, train staff in Americans with Disabilities Act, and develop procedures for handling any Americans with Disabilities Act -related grievances by the public. State Parks has developed the policy guidance, and the facilities assessment is due in August 2025.

Member Craig noted several snow parks were closed this season and asked if the increase in snowmobile registration fees will fix the need to close parks. Member Herzog noted the 25 percent budget reduction led to the State Parks closing duplicative motorized snow parks to save money in snow removal. The intention was to keep

groomed trails open, but where there was redundant access to the same network, the motorized access was closed.

Chair Shiosaki asked about the funding for work at Cama Beach. Member Herzog did not have a timeline on planning but noted there will be a significant planning process for the shoreline and upland areas going forward.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Member Windrope provided an update after Item 6: 2025-2027 Policy Work Plan.

Member Amy Windrope highlighted the recently completed purchase on an estuary project funded at Twin Rivers Estuary in the North Olympic Wildlife Area that acquired 2,800 linear feet of Strait of Juan de Fuca shoreline. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife completed the list of [Lands 2020 projects](#), which were approved by their director to move to acquisitions.

Member Windrope highlighted two pieces of request legislation: to increase the fees by ten dollars to fifty-two dollars on personalized license plates, which is the primary source of funding for management of non-game wildlife; and modify fish and wildlife violations to address low-level violations.

The department was reviewed by the Ruckelshaus Center to address the effectiveness of the department and commission and compliance with State Environmental Policy Act laws. The [Organization Review Final Report](#) is available online.

Governor's Office

There was no representative available from the Governor's Office.

ADJOURN: 2:58 P.M.

The next regular meeting will be April 22-23, 2025, in Room 172, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street, Olympia, Washington, 98501.

Item 1B: Time Extension Request

Summary

This is a request for the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to consider the proposed project time extensions listed in Attachment A.

Action Requested: Decision

Background

Each grant [program policy manual](#) outlines the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's 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.

The lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to play a crucial role in most of these extension requests. When the pandemic caused the State of Washington to become a federally approved major disaster area in 2020, no one could have predicted the tremendous effect on governmental jurisdictions and the people of the state. To reduce the impact of the pandemic, Washington engaged a Stay Home, Stay Healthy approach beginning in March 2020. This response resulted in entities throughout the state shifting and adjusting to a virtual work environment. For project sponsors, this delayed their ability to implement board-funded projects.

To encourage RCO grant program participation in 2020, staff extended the application deadlines, and the board reduced the match requirements for several grant program categories and extended the implementation period for previously funded projects because of state budget delays, loss of staff, escalating construction costs, and the lengthy period it was taking for sponsors to receive construction materials and secure permits.

Restrictions began to ease beginning in June 2020 and paved the way for organizations to work on board-funded projects. The delay, however, had a profound impact on project status. During the past four years, sponsors focused on completing projects funded pre-pandemic. Now that most are done, attention is focused on 2020 and 2022 projects. This spring, staff received time extension requests for nearly sixty projects. Staff recognize sponsors are still grappling with the impact of the pandemic and ask the board to give special consideration to the extensions requested. Thirty-seven requests are included in Attachment A and the remaining requests will be presented for consideration in June.

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
- B. Resolution 2025-04

Attachment A: Time Extension Request for Board Approval

Blaine-Birch Bay Park and Recreation District 2 California Creek Estuary Park Phase 2 ([20-1841](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Water Access and Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
- Grant Remaining: \$357,636 (49 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The Blaine-Birch Bay Park and Recreation District 2 received this grant to expand and develop California Creek Estuary Park in Whatcom County. The grant includes acquiring 12.9 acres to enlarge the park and developing facilities, such as a restroom, kayak launch, picnic shelter, viewpoint with seating, parking, and circulation paths.

The project experienced permitting delays. The original design included a septic system for the restroom; however, due to evolving regulations, the park district was informed in 2024 that the approved septic system was no longer permissible, and the community sewer line would need to be used. To connect to sewer, the park district needed an easement on the adjacent landowner's property. After months of back-and-forth discussion, that negotiation was unsuccessful. The park district purchased another property for sewer access and had to switch contractors to better facilitate re-design of the park and associated sewer utilities.

Despite these challenges, the park district has made significant progress. The acquisition is complete, and designs are nearly 60 percent complete, with geotechnical sampling scheduled for the end of March. Cultural resources work is underway on the newly acquired sewer-access property. The district and design contractors have been in close communication with Whatcom County staff about the permitting process and anticipates securing county permits and applying for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permits in 2025. An eighteen-month extension will give the district time to demonstrate progress on securing permits and achieving readiness for construction. If the district is successful, staff may ask the board for another extension so the district can finish construction. If permits are not secured in a timely manner, the project will end and the district will have to re-apply for construction funding.

Blue Mountain Land Trust

Peyton Ranch Conservation Easement ([20-1435](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation
- Grant Remaining: \$734,050 (99 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The Blue Mountain Land Trust received this grant to permanently extinguish forty-seven development rights on 1,947 acres of farmland through an agricultural easement. The property is near Dayton in Columbia County.

Blue Mountain Land Trust secured a federal grant to assist with the easement purchase. They experienced delays in getting an appraiser, eventually securing one to negotiate agricultural easement terms with the landowner. However, after a draft easement was developed and the appraisal was completed, the landowner backed out, as they were no longer interested in selling an agricultural easement and instead wanted to sell the property rights and relocate. However, this fall, the landowner re-engaged with Blue Mountain Land Trust and are now working on the draft easement.

Additional time is needed for Blue Mountain Land Trust to re-secure the federal grant, finish negotiating the language in the agricultural easement, prepare the baseline documentation, purchase property rights, and close the project.

Chelan-Douglas Land Trust

Chafey Mountain ([20-1487](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Critical Habitat
- Grant Remaining: \$573,082 (97 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The Chelan-Douglas Land Trust received this grant to purchase an agricultural conservation easement on about six hundred acres and an additional twenty-one acres in fee in Chelan County.

Appraisals were completed in 2022, but shortly after, the primary landowner passed away without a will. The heirs have since been going through contested probate and are nearing a resolution. At least one of the heirs is still engaged in the process and is a willing seller.

A one-year time extension will allow for completion of the probate process, after which a new appraisal will be prepared, the conservation easement will be finalized, and Chelan-Douglas Land Trust will finish this acquisition project.

Clallam County

Olympic Discovery Trail Forks to La Push ([20-1494](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails
- Grant Remaining: \$842,820 (93 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

Clallam County received this grant to acquire lands needed for the roughly twelve-mile western terminus of the Olympic Discovery Trail, connecting the City of Forks and the Quileute Tribal Nation community of La Push.

In April 2024, after two years of negotiations, the timber company Rayonier announced they would divest themselves of all their landholdings in Clallam County, thus ceasing all negotiations. Rayonier held over 90 percent of the needed right of way for the Forks to La Push route. The new owner, EFM, has previously worked with Clallam County on other sections of the Olympic Discovery Trail, including some of the Forks to La Push route. EFM is a willing partner in the county's vision for the Olympic Discovery Trail and the future route has been included in two recent applications the company made for the Forest Legacy Program.

Though EFM is a willing project partner, the timeline for acquisition makes it unlikely the purchases will be completed by the project's current expiration date. Clallam County is

requesting a one-year extension, which will provide the time needed to complete negotiations, appraisals, and purchase of most of the required right of way for the Forks to La Push trail corridor.

Everett Parks

Edgewater Park Sports Court ([20-1579](#))

- Grant Program: Youth Athletic Facilities: Large
- Grant Remaining: \$224,841 (100 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

Everett Parks and Facilities Department received this grant to construct a multi-use sports court at Edgewater Park for tennis, pickleball, and basketball. Additional recreational amenities will include access pathways and landscaping.

The project experienced permitting delays due to stormwater infiltration concerns. The project had progressed to 60 percent design in July 2023; however, pilot infiltration testing conducted in November 2023 determined that infiltration was infeasible at locations on the east half of the site where the sports court had been proposed. Everett Public Works Department expressed concerns about the suitability of the site soils for infiltration given the site's proximity to steep slopes. The resulting need to re-design the project to account for the change in the stormwater management approach from infiltration to detention has led to significant delays. Re-design has also been needed for value engineering revisions to reduce costs given the significant inflation of construction cost since the project was originally budgeted.

Everett is currently finalizing their revised designs and drainage reports to account for the change from stormwater infiltration to detention and anticipates updated permit submittal within the next one to two months. The state environmental review is done, and Everett has received a determination of non-significance.

An eighteen-month extension will allow for securing permits, completing the construction, and projecting closeout.

City of Fircrest

Fircrest Park Athletic Field Improvements ([20-1232](#))

- Grant Program: Youth Athletic Facilities: Large
- Grant Remaining: \$19,111 (12 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The City of Fircrest received this grant to renovate the lights and natural turf of five multipurpose sports fields at Fircrest Park.

This project has been delayed due to staff inexperience with state requirements related to cultural resources. RCO placed a stop work order on the project in June 2024, when a progress report indicated that construction had began without receiving a notice to proceed from RCO or completing required cultural resources consultation. To lift the stop work order, Fircrest needs to complete a cultural resources survey for the project area and undergo state and tribal consultations in accordance with the grant agreement.

Fircrest is in discussions with a cultural resources firm for development of the required survey. Once complete and consultation is done, RCO can issue a notice to proceed. Remaining work includes renovating the field lights and wrapping up the field renovation. A twelve-month time extension will allow Fircrest to hire a cultural resources firm and complete the required survey and consultation process, finish construction, address punch list items, and RCO staff to complete a final inspection and administratively close out the project.

Jefferson County

Olympic Discovery Trails Anderson Lake Connection ([20-1745](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails
- Grant Remaining: \$3,144,699 (83 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

Jefferson County received this grant to acquire an easement to develop nearly three miles of the Olympic Discovery Trail from an existing Jefferson County trailhead through timber uplands connecting to Anderson Lake State Park.

The county completed acquiring rights-of-way, securing permits, and designing an Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant trail through upland forest with some difficult and steep terrain; the terrain extended the time needed for design. Construction of the trail is scheduled to begin this spring and will be completed by December 2025, but plantings and final punch list items will be finished during the spring of 2026.

Jefferson County is requesting a one-year extension to allow for trail completion, plantings, final punch list, and project close-out.

King County

Camp Sealth Conservation Easement, Vashon Island ([20-1676](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Forestland Preservation
- Grant Remaining: \$500,000 (100 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

King County Parks and Recreation received this grant to purchase a forestland conservation easement on Camp Sealth, a summer camp located on Vashon Island in King County. The easement will permanently extinguish twenty-five development rights on 173 acres of timberland.

King County completed landowner negotiations to identify areas of the camp to include in the easement to avoid impacts to camp activities. Additionally, King County completed appraisal work, executed a purchase and sale agreement with the landowner, and is drafting the conservation easement language.

King County is requesting a one-year extension to negotiate the final easement language, develop the baseline documentation, and close on this acquisition. The full grant amount remains unspent since King County suspects they will need the entirety of the grant funds for the cost of the conservation easement.

King County

Dockton Moorage Renovation Phase 2 ([20-2080](#))

- Grant Program: Boating Facilities Program: Local
- Grant Remaining: \$953,846 (95 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2025

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks was awarded this grant to renovate the dock, moorage slips, and associated elements at Dockton Park, which is located on the shores of Quartermaster Harbor on Vashon-Maury Island in south Puget Sound. The project includes replacing thirty-two pilings and eight finger piers, installing a fire safety system, and replacing the breakwater pier with prefabricated floats.

The project has been delayed by coordination and permitting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and by the construction fish window of August 1 through September 30, which was set for this project by the Army Corps and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Although the federal permit was issued, there was not enough time left to allow for bidding, contractor selection, procurement of materials, and construction during the 2024 fish window.

Due to these factors the project will not be completed by the current expiration date. A construction contract has been executed for construction during the 2025 fish window. King County is requesting a six-month extension to complete the project.

King County

Marymoor Park Dock Replacement ([20-1530](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Water Access
- Grant Remaining: \$442,850 (89 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: February 28, 2027

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

King County received a grant to replace an existing a one-hundred foot dock at the mouth of the Sammamish River at the north end of Lake Sammamish. Project elements include a new dock, pilings, gangway, boat ramp, and pathways.

This project experienced design and permitting delays. The project is at sixty percent design, however, the sponsor must finalize the permitting approach before advancing to ninety percent design. Permitting for this project is complicated because there were conflicts between what the City of Redmond, U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers required. The sponsor resolved permitting issues with the City of Redmond and the U.S. Coast Guard. For the Army Corps permit, the sponsor originally planned to apply under the Lake Sammamish programmatic permit, but that is not possible. Now the sponsor is pursuing an emergency repair permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which should be processed faster than a full permit, which can take three to five years. In addition, construction of this project is constrained by fish windows. This area has both a summer July fish window and a winter November-February fish window.

The sponsor is requesting a twenty-month time extension. That would allow up to one year to receive the emergency repair permit, and then two fish windows to complete construction and project closeout.

Kittitas Conservation Trust

Cle Elum Ridge Community Forest Phase 1 ([20-2044](#))

- Grant Program: Community Forest Program
- Grant Remaining: \$2,919,990 (97 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2025

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The Kittitas Conservation Trust, in partnership with several other entities, will purchase 1,250 acres of forestland to begin establishing a community forest on Cle Elum Ridge. The property is between the cities of Cle Elum and Roslyn near the Department of Natural Resources' Teanaway Community Forest

The Community Forest Program requires development of a community forest management plan prior to completion of a grant project. While most entities purchase

the property and then develop a plan, the Kittitas Conservation Trust decided to work with its partners and determine the goals and priorities of the planned 9,400-acre community forest before purchasing land for this first phase. To date, the partners have started establishing goals and priorities for the future community forest.

Kittitas Conservation Trust will use the six-month extension to engage community stakeholders and finalize the community forest management goals, and to purchase the property and close this project.

City of Lakewood

American Lake Park Waterfront Access Upgrades ([20-1349](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks and Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
- Grant Remaining: \$100,000 (10 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2025

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The City of Lakewood received this grant to make waterfront improvements at the 5.5-acre American Lake Park. Plans are to construct an Americans with Disabilities Act accessible walkway to the beach, picnic areas, and boat launch; install a small shelter; replace a deteriorating stone retaining wall and bulkhead; and construct new restrooms and an entry plaza.

This project was delayed by the slow issuance of a sewer permit from Pierce County, impacting procurement of long-lead materials including sewer manholes and piping. These delays were compounded by weather delays impacting associated concrete installation and rebar layout.

Despite delays, significant progress has been made since the notice to proceed authorized work to begin in September 2024. As of March 2025, the project is more than 40 percent complete. All demolition, tree removal, clearing and grading, and bulkhead construction is complete. The remaining scope elements, pathway, restroom, landscaping, site furnishings, and entry plaza are anticipated to reach substantial completion by the end of June 2025. A six-month time extension will allow ample time for completion of any punch list items, conducting a final inspection, and administratively closing out the project.

Makah Tribe

Hoko River Watershed Conservation Phase 1 ([20-1145](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Riparian Protection and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration
- Grant Remaining: \$2,001,667 (87 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The Makah Tribe hopes to conserve 229 acres of land that provide habitat for salmon and steelhead in Clallam County. The primary habitats protected in the Hoko River Watershed include off-channel wetland habitat, large river mainstem habitat, mature riparian floodplain forest, and some of the highest use Chinook spawning habitat. The primary species supported are Chinook, chum, coho, steelhead, and cutthroat.

This project involved the purchase of three properties. First, the Tribe ordered appraisals and began negotiations for one property that fell through due to a change in the landowner's willingness to sell. Next, the Tribe successfully purchased thirty-nine acres. Finally, probate was cleared for the third property and the Tribe began working with Clallam County to develop and record easements (that were never recorded on title) for the Hoko Ozette Road, which bisects some of the targeted parcels. Also, the Makah Tribe ordered the appraisal, land survey activity has commenced, and they plan to wrap up this purchase and ask to add an adjacent property to the project scope.

A one-year extension will provide enough time for the Makah Tribe to execute the purchase and sale agreement, environmental assessment, acquisition, demolition of structures on the third property, and pursue purchase of the adjacent land.

Manson Parks and Recreation District

Manson Bay Old Swim Hole Waterfront Park ([20-1483](#))

- Grant Program: Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
- Grant Remaining: \$451,909 (90 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

Manson Parks and Recreation District received this grant to construct a new boardwalk and dock at the Old Swim Hole. The boardwalk will feature a viewpoint and connection to the dock, providing water access for swimming and nonmotorized water activities.

This project experienced significant delays due to cultural resources considerations and permitting challenges, which have prevented the required test pit necessary for assessing subsurface conditions and completing the designs.

Despite these delays, cultural resources requirements were met March 1, 2025, and following design reviews, RCO issued the notice to proceed on March 11, 2025. A test pit is scheduled for the last week in March, with permitting finalization expected by the end of summer. Construction will begin in early fall and conclude by late spring 2026. A twelve-month time extension will ensure project completion, final inspection, and administrative closeout.

Methow Conservancy

Wolf Creek Agricultural Conservation Easement, Phase 1 ([20-1573](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation
- Grant Remaining: \$1,134,827 (99.5 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The Methow Conservancy received this grant to extinguish seventy-eight development rights on approximately 390 acres of farmland through an agricultural conservation easement. The project is in the Methow Valley near Winthrop in Okanogan County.

The Methow Conservancy began drafting an easement with the landowner; however, the landowner needed to sell the land sooner than a conservation easement could be finalized. Methow Conservancy stepped in to purchase the property through a buy-protect-sell scenario. They plan to sell the underlying land once an easement is placed on the property. The main project delay is sorting out the complex water rights associated with the property, which must be completed prior to finalizing the easement.

Methow Conservancy retained an attorney to assist them with sorting through the water rights issue and they are making progress.

A one-year time extension will provide the time needed to address the water rights, draft a conservation easement, and complete the associated baseline documentation.

City of Mountlake Terrace

Ballinger Park Viewing Platform and Nature Trails ([20-1672](#))

- Grant Program: Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
- Grant Remaining: \$430,283 (86 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The City of Mountlake Terrace received this grant to construct a viewing platform and nature trails at Ballinger Park in southwest Mountlake Terrace. The project will enable wildlife viewing and expand access to nature for the community.

This project has been delayed primarily due to permitting. The project required a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit and a Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application. Securing those permits took considerable time and effort. In addition, a concurrent \$6 million project in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to divert the creek and install over twenty thousand new trees and plants impacted the hydrology of the park and changed design inputs for the trails and viewing platform.

The city secured all environmental and land use permits and is readying the final designs and bid package. Because the in-water construction window is from July 1 to August 31, a one-year time extension will provide a full in-water construction period, as well as a time for upland construction and project close-out.

City of Mountlake Terrace

Evergreen Tennis Courts Restoration ([20-1773](#))

- Grant Program: Youth Athletic Facilities: Large
- Grant Remaining: \$346,891 (99 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025

- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The City of Mountlake Terrace received this grant to renovate the Evergreen Playfield Complex Tennis Courts, located in central Mountlake Terrace. Three of the four existing courts will be repaired, resurfaced, and lined for tennis, while the fourth court will be converted into three pickleball courts. The lighting system, pathways, landscaping, and parking will also be improved.

This project was delayed due to a concurrent project at Evergreen Playfield Complex, the Evergreen Playfield Infield Turf and Lights Phase 2 (20-1643), which received funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Youth Athletic Facilities: Large. To reduce costs and increase efficiency, the city bid both projects simultaneously. Compliance with federal readiness requirements pushed the federal agreement issuance out to October 2022, which delayed the Evergreen Tennis Courts Restoration project. In addition, the city conducted value engineering and rebid the project due to bids initially coming in significantly higher than expected, extending the project timeline.

Mountlake Terrace has separated the bidding for general contractor work and specialty work, which they anticipate will allow for successful bids and construction of the project this summer. A one-year time extension will provide sufficient time for court re-surfacing work during the dry summer months and final project close-out.

Port of Bellingham

Fairhaven Small Watercraft Launch and Dock ([20-1709](#))

- Grant Program: Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
- Grant Remaining: \$450,580 (90 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The Port of Bellingham received this grant to develop a small watercraft launch and a new pocket beach at Fairhaven Boat Launch. The project will create a universally accessible launch area and increase safety by reducing conflicts between motorized and non-motorized boaters.

The Port is negotiating a settlement agreement with the Lummi Nation. The project reached 60 percent designs in 2022; however, further design and permitting progress was paused pending concurrence from the Lummi Nation. Negotiations proceeded much more slowly than anticipated, as the Port was approaching the negotiations with a tremendous respect and understanding towards the needs of their Tribal partners.

The parties reached an understanding and the Port can proceed with project design and permitting. The Port anticipates reaching 100 percent design and submitting for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application permits by May 2025. The Port expects to have permits in hand, the bid awarded, and a contractor hired by May 2026.

An eighteen-month time extension will allow the Port to demonstrate progress on securing permits and achieving readiness for construction ahead of August 2026 to February 2027 fish window. If the Port cannot demonstrate adequate progress, they may have to re-apply for construction funding.

Port of Illahee

Transient Moorage Improvements ([20-2059](#))

- Grant Program: Boating Facilities: Local
- Grant Remaining: \$724,746 (85 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: March 31, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The Port of Illahee is using this grant to replace two floats and a gangway; expand the moorage for transient vessels; and develop a new parking lot, restroom, pathways, viewing platform, seating, and shoreline access on Port Orchard Bay. This project is being done in conjunction with two projects funded with grants from the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (20-1711) and the Boating Facilities Program: Local (22-2038).

The Port encountered significant delays with federal regulatory approvals on these projects. Rather than beginning their processes concurrently, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers asked the Port to complete their negotiations and cultural resources consultation with the Suquamish Tribe first. The consultation could not be done without approval from the Tribal fish committee. The Port's and Tribe's legal counsels met to initiate government-to-government relations on the topic. While Tribal cultural

resources staff would not normally get involved with the design, the fish committee did, to ensure ongoing access and usability of the site for fishing according to Tribal rights. One key design change negotiated was adjusting the location of the gangway to ensure space for the Tribal fishing boat.

Further, due to certain physical site constraints, additional time was needed to work with Kitsap County, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Ecology, on approvals for shoreline and site development permits.

The Port has received all necessary approvals and permits. A construction contract was awarded in December, and upland construction will be completed this spring. To respect the designated species protection window, the in-water work will start after August 1 and is scheduled to be completed by the end of September 2025.

The nine-month extension will allow for project completion and close out.

Port of Illahee

Waterfront Access Improvements ([20-1711](#))

- Grant Program: Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
- Grant Remaining: \$405,178 (81 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: March 31, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The Port of Illahee received this grant, along with two Boating Facilities Program grants (20-2059 and 22-2038) to make Illahee Dock on Port Orchard Bay improvements, including constructing a new fishing dock, public pier, beach, small craft launch, gangways, floats, as well as parking, paths, and a restroom.

The Port encountered significant delays with federal regulatory approvals on these projects. Rather than beginning their processes concurrently, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers asked the Port to complete their negotiations and cultural resources consultation with the Suquamish Tribe first. The consultation could not be done without approval from the tribal fish committee. The Port's and Tribe's legal counsels met to initiate government-to-government relations on the topic. While tribal cultural resources staff would not normally get involved with the design, the fish committee did, to ensure ongoing access and usability of the site for fishing according to tribal rights. One key

design change negotiated was adjusting the location of the gangway to ensure space for the tribal fishing boat.

Further, due to certain physical site constraints, additional time was needed to work with Kitsap County, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Ecology, on approvals for shoreline and site development permits.

The Port has now received all necessary approvals and permits. A construction contract was awarded in December, and upland construction will be completed this spring. To respect the designated species protection window, the in-water work will start after August 1 and is scheduled to be completed by the end of September 2025.

The nine-month extension will allow for project completion and close out.

City of Puyallup

Van Lierop Park Playground ([20-1645](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
- Grant Remaining: \$215,771 (43 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2025

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The City of Puyallup received this grant to develop an accessible playground at the eighteen acre Van Lierop Park. The playground is designed to feature elements that honor the heritage of farming in the Puyallup Valley.

This project was delayed due to turnover at the Parks and Recreation Director position within the City of Puyallup. That position is now filled. Additionally, no cultural resources work had been completed for this project during preliminary design, which was brought to Puyallup's attention last fall.

Puyallup has now completed a cultural resources survey and the required consultation process under Governor's Executive Order 21-03. They have finalized the 100 percent design drawings and received an RCO notice to proceed with construction. A contractor was selected and work is expected to begin on site in early April 2025. Construction will be completed this summer. A six-month time extension will allow ample time to reach substantial completion, finish punch list items, and for RCO to perform a final inspection prior to administrative closeout.

City of Seattle

South Park Playground, Spray Park, and Playfield ([18-2169](#))

- Grant Program: Land and Water Conservation Fund: Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership
- Grant Remaining: \$634,315 (59 percent)
- Current End Date: August 31, 2025
- Proposed End Date: February 28, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The City of Seattle received a grant to develop a play area, spray park, and synthetic turf playfield in the underserved South Park neighborhood. The project also includes a loop trail, lighting, and improving accessibility for all park users.

The National Park Service issued the federal grant agreement by fall 2020. This project had delays with finishing the design and starting construction due to the pandemic, a stormwater code update during the design process, permitting challenges for the light poles, and having to reconfigure the design to move elements away from an old protected tree that was deemed unsafe. Construction started in summer 2024 and will take about eighteen months to complete.

Construction will finish late fall 2025. The sponsor is requesting a six-month extension to complete construction and grant close-out. RCO is asking the National Park Service for a corresponding federal time extension.

Snohomish County

Whitehorse Trail Redevelopment ([20-1656](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails
- Grant Remaining: \$924,170 (88 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

Snohomish County received this grant to repair and resurface a 2.6-mile trail segment in the Arlington to Trafton section of the Whitehorse Regional Trail, a 28-mile trail that runs from Arlington to Darrington. The project includes the repair of a 1,500-foot section of trail that was damaged from two landslides and a bank wash-out that occurred in 2018.

This project was initially delayed due to the impacts of the pandemic and resulting staff shortages. It was further stalled due to delays in a concurrent project at the Darrington end of the trail. Although the repair work in the Darrington segment is outside of the grant scope, Snohomish County has been working on repair of both the Darrington and Arlington trail segments concurrently for efficiency and cost savings. To mitigate flood risk, the Darrington trail segment required a re-route that necessitated securing an easement on a neighboring landowner's property, which took two years.

The Darrington easement was acquired last fall, allowing work on the grant-funded Arlington trail segment to resume as well. Snohomish County anticipates reaching ninety percent designs this spring. An eighteen-month extension will allow for completion of the design, permitting, and construction. The county has confirmed that a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit will not be required for the project, as the footprint was modified to avoid any potential direct wetland impacts.

State Parks

Haley Property-Initial Park Development ([18-1892](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks
- Grant Remaining: \$1,329,712 (88 percent)
- Current End Date: July 15, 2025
- Proposed End Date: January 31, 2027

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

Washington State Parks is using this grant funding for the initial development of Haley State Park. This property was previously funded with a series of board grants and will now create an access road and a trailhead with parking, vault toilet, picnic shelter, viewpoint, and a trail to the beach for water access.

This project was originally a combination project to acquire and develop the site but ranked as an alternate. State Parks used funding from their Inholdings and Adjacent Properties projects to acquire the land to ensure site securement. In July 2021, the project received unspent grant funds for the development portion of the project.

In addition to the late project funding, State Parks saw extensive delays in both the design phase and during their newly adopted Tribal outreach process for this project. Given that it is a brand-new park and in a culturally sensitive location with intricate terrain to navigate, State Parks used extensive care when designing a project with the least amount of impact on the existing wooded area. State Parks expects permitting to be completed by the end of this year, allowing for all of 2026 to be used for bidding and construction.

State Parks

Marine Moorage Buoy Planning ([20-2191](#))

- Grant Program: Boating Facilities Program: State
- Grant Remaining: \$271.088 (93 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The Washington State Parks was awarded this planning grant to assess the long-term needs associated with marine moorage buoys within San Juan and Island Counties. Work includes inspection verification and advanced assessments of existing moorage buoys with a goal of replacement, relocation, and new buoy installations for select sites to be determined as part of this project; environmental regulatory and cultural resource consultation and coordination, and all required surveys and studies; and regulatory permit submittals and construction specifications to be delivered as final products.

This project was delayed due to environmental regulatory consultation and consultations with affected Tribes. Permits are expected to be submitted in spring or summer of 2025 to begin the regulatory review process. Once submitted, the final plans can be prepared in anticipation of bids for development during the 2026-27 in water work window. Given the federal regulatory nexus, progress through consultation has been delayed and the expected timeline for approval once submitted could be up to one year.

State Parks

Nisqually State Park Water Access ([20-1557](#))

- Grant Program: Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
- Grant Remaining: \$109,652 (22 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2025

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

Washington State Parks is using this grant to develop access to the Nisqually River within Nisqually State Park in Pierce County. The scope of work for this project includes an access road, parking areas including trailer spaces, vault restroom, viewing platforms, and an interpretive trail that will lead to a hand-carry boat launch and beach.

The grant-funded project is part of a much larger project, leading to the initial development of this new state park. Early in the process, this project faced permitting process delays, leading to a late start on the construction phase. After getting back on track, a mudslide altered access to the project site and required work to be put on hold until that could be remedied.

A significant portion of this project has already been completed and only an additional six months are being requested for project completion. This should lead to a completed project in the late fall and a final inspection before the end of the year.

State Parks

Sacajawea Moorage and Parking Improvements ([20-2340](#))

- Grant Program: Boating Facilities Program: State
- Grant Remaining: \$384,240 (97 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

Washington State Parks was awarded a planning grant for replacing the moorage in the Sacajawea State Park boat basin and for paving the parking lot to meet Americans with

Disabilities Act requirements. The moorage floats have outlived their useful life, do not meet accessibility requirements, and do not meet regulatory requirements for fish. This project will plan and design for removal and replacement of the existing floats.

Progress on this project has been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the loss of staff resulted in delays due to recruiting, hiring, and onboarding new staff. A new project manager has been hired and assigned to this project and a consultant is onboard to help with implementation.

The consultant is actively working through preliminary design, site inventory, and analysis. Survey work is complete, and State Parks has initiated the Tribal consultation process. They expect to have 60 percent drawings completed by October, at which point they will begin the permitting process.

The design of the project is progressing steadily, and State Parks anticipates all permitting and design work to be completed by June 30, 2026.

State Parks

Stuart Island-Reid Harbor Moorage Replacement ([20-2189](#))

- Grant Program: Boating Facilities Program: State
- Grant Remaining: \$1,872,500 (100 percent)
- Current End Date: April 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

Washington State Parks was awarded this grant to replace the existing marine moorage facility by installing a new pier, gangway, boarding floats, and pilings on the Reid Harbor side of Stuart Island State Park, located on Stuart Island in the San Juan Islands in San Juan County.

Environmental regulatory processes and design challenges as well as necessary and thoughtful consultation with affected Tribes delayed this project. With a planning grant (16-2602), State Parks is nearing the completion of the final design plans, has secured all necessary permits, cultural resources review and consultation is complete, and they are finalizing a right of entry with the Washington Department of Natural Resources.

State Parks is anticipating going to bid for construction of this project soon. Construction is expected to start after Labor Day and be completed during the 2025-26

in-water work window as regulated by state and federal authorities, all while working to avoid the busy use season of the facility. State Parks is requesting an extension to complete the project.

State Parks

Twenty-Five Mile Creek Boat Ramp and Moorage Floats ([20-2302](#))

- Grant Program: Boating Facilities Program: State
- Grant Remaining: \$27,628 (14 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

Washington State Parks was awarded this grant for survey, design, and permitting for the replacement of sixteen transient moorage floats, a boarding float, and boat ramp decking at Twenty-Five Mile Creek State Park in Chelan County. Built in the 1990s, the facilities have exceeded their useful life.

Progress on this project has been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the loss of staff resulted in delays due to recruiting, hiring, and onboarding new staff. A new project manager has been hired and assigned to this project.

Since the funding of this project, State Parks has implemented significant changes to its Tribal consultation and cultural review processes. Two Tribal relations staff have been hired and a new process for consulting with Tribes on capital projects has been introduced. This process involves proactive and transparent outreach to Tribal contacts, particularly in the early stages of proposed projects. This is especially critical at this location, as it is situated in a culturally sensitive area. These consultations now include cultural reviews for soil borings, which represent one of the initial steps in the project. While these processes are important and beneficial, they were not anticipated when this project was first developed and have caused some delays.

The design is now 60 percent complete, and the consultant is actively working toward final construction drawings. State Parks has spent most of the grant and are using their own capital funds to complete the design process. State Parks anticipates all permitting and design work will be completed by June 30, 2026.

State Parks

Willapa Hills Trail-Pacific County Bridges ([20-1312](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks
- Grant Remaining: \$667,499 (58 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2027

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

Washington State Parks is using this grant to improve key features on a stretch of the Willapa Hills State Park Trail from Lebam to the eastern border of Pacific County. This includes renovating three railroad bridges by replacing rotted wood with concrete decking and safety rails and constructing a new sixty-five-foot bridge (Bridge 38.5) to replace an existing culvert. At the completion of the bridge updates, five short segments of trail will be resurfaced with gravel, resulting in over forty miles of continuous trail.

Significant progress has been made on this project, with the renovation of two of the three bridges. The remaining work includes one bridge repair, the construction of Bridge 38.5, and the surface between the two, which will be bid as one project.

Delays for this project have primarily been related to permitting through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The initial submission was returned with the request for a biological assessment, which was removed after the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife submitted an environmental statement. Given the permitting request complexity, an environmental planner with State Parks and a WDFW biologist have coordinated resubmission of the federal permit application. An extension to June 2027 will allow State Parks to use the remainder of this year for permits, next summer's work window to begin construction, and the following spring to finish any remaining punch list items.

State Parks

Willapa Hills Trail-Raymond to Menlo ([18-1760](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks
- Grant Remaining: \$460,919 (50 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: June 30, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

Washington State Parks is using this grant to improve the Willapa Hills State Park Trail from Raymond to Menlo. This includes renovation of Bridge 50, two miles of trail surfacing, and development of a trailhead near Menlo. Trail surfacing and the bridge work is done, with only the trailhead left to complete.

This project started as partially funded, which caused State Parks to reduce the scope of work to just the bridge and trail. In June 2021, additional funds were added to allow the Menlo trailhead to move forward as part of the project.

The two major factors for delays have been permitting and relocation of the trailhead stemming from a series of public engagement events. After finding significant interest in a new location just outside of the town of Menlo, State Parks redesigned the trailhead to fit on a property northeast of Menlo. This led to additional permits, including a special use permit from Pacific County and an access permit from the Washington Department of Transportation, in addition to the building permit they were already anticipating at the previous location.

Currently, all permits have been submitted and are anticipated to be finalized before the project goes out to bid in July. This will result in substantial completion by the end of this year and final inspection in the early part of 2026.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Golden Doe ([20-1217](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Critical Habitat
- Grant Remaining: \$1,206,915 (64 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2025

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) received this grant to acquire approximately 110 acres of shrub steppe and grassland habitat to add to the Golden Doe Unit of the Methow Wildlife Area in Okanogan County. This land supports large, year-round populations and seasonal concentrations of mule deer as well as black bear, coyote, golden eagle, and numerous sagebrush-obligate species.

In December 2023, WDFW acquired 73.37 acres using these grant funds and an additional ten acres of adjoining property with a federal grant. The planned project acreage was reduced to exclude a home and twenty acres that were sold by the landowner to a private buyer. Although the acquisition is complete, the delays were tied to the need for a boundary line adjustment, tenant relocation, and use of federal funds for part of the acquisition.

An extension is necessary to complete installation of boundary fencing and large-scale demolition of multiple ineligible structures. Demolition is scheduled to begin mid-May and anticipated to take six weeks. Design plans for fencing, the boundary survey, and Tribal consultation are finished; however, cultural resources review requires ground testing that cannot be completed until the snow melts. The six-month time extension will allow adequate time to complete post-acquisition incidental tasks.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Lower Crab Creek Restoration and Enhancement ([20-1304](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Lands Restoration
- Grant Remaining: \$122,474 (63 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: March 31, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

WDFW received this grant to restore monarch butterfly habitat in the Lower Crab Creek Unit of the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area in Grant County. Habitat restoration tasks include removing highly invasive, non-native Russian olive and restoring native plant communities on thirty acres across the Monarch site and the Natural Area Preserve site.

WDFW has removed the Russian olive and completed other noxious weed control at the Monarch site. Lack of WDFW cultural resources staff capacity has delayed the cultural resources clearance needed to begin restoration work at the Natural Area Preserve location. WDFW finished the cultural resources survey work in February 2025 and is preparing the report for consultation.

A nine-month extension is necessary for WDFW to complete Russian olive removal and follow up restoration activities at the Natural Areas Preserve site.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Pygmy Rabbit Habitat Enhancement ([20-1640](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Lands Restoration
- Grant Remaining: \$141,153 (87 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

WDFW received this grant to restore 150 acres of shrub steppe habitat within the Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area in southern Douglas County. The habitat restoration project benefits the federally listed Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit, state listed sage grouse and sharp tailed grouse, through prescribed burning, invasive plant control, and native vegetation seeding.

Lack of WDFW cultural resources staff capacity delayed initial project restoration work. The project received cultural resources clearance in October 2023. Mild 2023/2024 winter conditions prevented mowing and burn preparation field work that requires frozen ground. Early 2025 progress completed pygmy rabbit surveys, mowing, initial weed control, and burn plan preparation.

An eighteen-month extension is necessary for WDFW to complete a prescribed burn, mowing, treating weeds, and seeding.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Simcoe 2020 ([20-1225](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Critical Habitat
- Grant Remaining: \$3,282,225 (82 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

WDFW received this grant to support the final phase of a decade-long acquisition strategy to add critical habitat to the Simcoe Mountains Unit of the Klickitat Wildlife Area in Klickitat County. Four board grants were used to purchase 10,925 acres.

WDFW used this grant to buy 597.5 acres and is working to acquire another 1,000 acres. RCO and WDFW closed prior Simcoe grant agreements and consolidated all post-acquisition activity into this award, including a boundary fence along the west border of the Simcoe Mountains Unit.

Survey work on the western boundary began in the summer of 2024 and is taking longer than expected due to a lack of survey records and section corner markers, along with winter weather delays in remote and rugged terrain. The survey team estimates that survey work will be completed in September 2025. With the survey work and cultural resources completed, boundary fencing can be installed. WDFW plans to hire a contractor to build the boundary fence for property delineation between public and private property.

An extension is necessary to complete survey work on the western boundary, installation of boundary fencing, and potential acquisition of additional property. The eighteen-month time extension is designed to allow adequate time to complete all post-acquisition incidental tasks.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Twins Nearshore and West Twin River Acquisitions ([20-1143](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Riparian Protection
- Grant Remaining: \$345,722 (14 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2025

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

WDFW is buying 216 acres of coastal shoreline, streamside, wetlands, and forested habitat within the Hoko-Lyre River Watershed that flows into the Salish Sea. In addition to providing priority habitat for chum, coho, and Chinook salmon and steelhead trout,

the area supports intact eelgrass and kelp habitat and provides public access for outdoor recreation.

After the initial property appraisal, there were insufficient funds to proceed with acquisition. As a result, there was a delay while applying for and receiving a subsequent grant. This funding was added to the project in December 2023. WDFW successfully acquired the property within one year of receiving the funds necessary to close. Now that WDFW has acquired the property, there are only a few months remaining to finish post-acquisition activities.

Specifically, WDFW plans to complete the stewardship plan and conduct an initial round of noxious weed control in partnership with Clallam County. WDFW will install an entry gate to control public access and limit unauthorized dumping, which would impair the habitat and public recreation value of the property. WDFW is currently assessing whether boundary fencing is needed to keep recreationists from unintentionally accessing the private property of adjoining landowners, or whether that can be controlled through signage with less impact on the habitat. WDFW is requesting six additional months to complete this work

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Wenas-Cleman Mountain ([20-1227](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Critical Habitat
- Grant Remaining: \$388,314 (21 percent)
- Current End Date: June 30, 2025
- Proposed End Date: December 31, 2025

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

WDFW received this grant to acquire 1,100 acres of shrub steppe and riparian habitat. Two sides the property border the Wenas Unit of the Wenas Wildlife Area in Yakima County and functions as a critical habitat connection.

Through this project, WDFW has protected 1,086.42 acres of habitat. Purchases include three fee-title acquisitions (1,069 acres) and one conservation easement (17.42 acres). In April 2024, RCO approved a scope change to add additional acreage to the project scope. The added acreage will be acquired through a combination of funding from this award and a land exchange. The property that WDFW will exchange with the private landowner was acquired with a federal award. Final federal approval of the land

exchange is pending. Expenditures supporting the land exchange are not eligible for RCO funding and are being paid for by WDFW.

A six-month extension is necessary to complete the acquisition and post-closing incidentals for the property added through the scope change.

Item 1: Consent Agenda

Summary

This memo is a request to approve the January 29, 2025 meeting minutes and ?? times extensions. A summary of each project requesting an extension is provided in Item 1B.

Action Requested: Decision- Approve Resolution 2025-04

Attachments

- A. Resolution 2025-04

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

Resolution 2025-04

April 22, 2025 - Consent Agenda

BE IT RESOLVED, that the following April 22, 2025 Consent Agenda items are approved:

A. Board Meeting Minutes

- January 29, 2025

B. Time Extensions

- Blaine-Birch Bay Park and Recreation District, California Creek Estuary Park Phase 2, 20-1841
- Blue Mountain Land Trust, Peyton Ranch Conservation Easement, 20-1435
- Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, Chafey Mountain, 20-1487
- Clallam County, Olympic Discovery Trail Forks to La Push, 20-1494
- Everett, Edgewater Park Sports Court, 20-1579
- Fircrest, Fircrest Park Athletic Field Improvements, 20-1232.
- Jefferson County, Olympic Discovery Trails Anderson Lake Connection, 20-1745
- King County, Camp Sealth Conservation Easement, Vashon Island, 20-1676
- King County, Dockton Moorage Renovation Phase 2, 20-2080
- King County, Marymoor Park Dock Replacement, 20-1530
- Kittitas Conservation Trust, Cle Elum Ridge Community Forest Phase 1, 20-2044
- Lakewood, American Lake Park Waterfront Access Upgrades, 20-1349
- Makah Tribe, Hoko River Watershed Conservation Phase 1, 20-1145
- Manson Parks and Recreation District, Manson Bay Old Swim Hole Waterfront Park,
- Methow Conservancy, Wolf Creek Agricultural Conservation Easement, Phase 1, 20-1573
- Mountlake Terrace, Ballinger Park Viewing Platform and Nature Trails, 20-1672
- Mountlake Terrace, Evergreen Tennis Courts Restoration, 20-1773
- Port of Bellingham, Fairhaven Small Watercraft Launch and Dock, 20-1709

- Port of Illahee, Transient Moorage Improvements, 20-2059
- Port of Illahee, Waterfront Access Improvements, 20-1711
- Puyallup, Van Lierop Park Playground, 20-1645.
- Seattle, South Park Playground, Spray Park, and Playfield, 18-2169
- Snohomish County, Whitehorse Trail Redevelopment, 20-1656
- State Parks, Haley Property-Initial Park Development, 18-1892
- State Parks, Marine Moorage Buoy Planning, 20-2191
- State Parks, Nisqually State Park Water Access, 20-1557
- State Parks, Sacajawea Moorage and Parking Improvements, 20-2340
- State Parks, Stuart Island-Reid Harbor Moorage Replacement, 20-2189
- State Parks, Twenty-Five Mile Creek Boat Ramp and Moorage Floats, 20-2302
- State Parks, Willapa Hills Trail-Pacific County Bridges, 20-1312
- State Parks, Willapa Hills Trail-Raymond to Menlo, 18-176
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Golden Doe, 20-1217
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Lower Crab Creek Restoration and Enhancement, 20-1304
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Pygmy Rabbit Habitat Enhancement, 20-1640
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Simcoe 2020, 20-1225
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Twins Nearshore and West Twin River Acquisitions, 20-1143
- Department of Fish and Wildlife, Wenas-Cleman Mountain, 20-1227

Resolution moved by:

Resolution seconded by:

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date:

Item 2: Director's Report

Summary

This memo summarizes key agency activities.

Action Requested: Briefing

Agency Updates

Governor Declares Invasive Species Awareness Week

Governor Bob Ferguson, in partnership with the Washington Invasive Species Council, [proclaimed](#) February 24-28 as Washington Invasive Species Awareness Week, to coincide with National Invasive Species Awareness Week. Washington State's awareness week included a series of webinars and events aimed at sharing information on priority invasive species, risks to the economy and environment, and ways to become part of the solution.



Employee News



Eli Asher, a policy specialist in the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, left the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) in January to become a senior environmental project manager with Jacobs Solutions, an international technical professional services firm.



Sandy Dotts, an outdoor grants manager in the Salmon Section, retired. She joined RCO in 2021. Previously, she worked for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, where she spent twenty-one years as both a habitat biologist and watershed steward in northeast Washington.



Leslie Frank, manager of Administrative Services, announced she will retire June 1. Leslie joined RCO in June 2012 as the executive assistant to the director. She added the role of human resources liaison in 2014. In addition to her years at RCO, she worked in the Governor's Office for more than twenty-two years, serving four governors.



Sarah Johnson Humphries, manager of the Cultural Resources Unit, left RCO in March for a job with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. She joined RCO in August 2021 as the agency's first archaeologist.



Kat Moore has been promoted to manager of the Salmon Grants Section. She joined RCO in 2010 as an outdoor grants manager in the salmon section and later promoted to assistant section manager. Before joining RCO, Kat worked in private land conservation. She began her new role April 1.

News from the Boards

The **Invasive Species Council** met March 20 to hear an update on an aquatic invasive species of concern, discuss updating its strategic plan, hear a briefing on the Puget Sound Partnership's update to its action agenda, and to update its bylaws.

The **Salmon Recovery Funding Board** met March 11 to discuss the future pathway for its Intensively Monitored Watersheds program, possible funding options for restoration projects in riparian areas (land along waterways), and the funding level for the new lead entity in Spokane. The board also heard a presentation from the Middle Columbia River Salmon Recovery Region and saw a preview of the *State of Salmon in Watersheds* report and website.

Policy and Legislative Updates

Staff will provide a general update on session, including a review of the budget and timeline for concluding the budget process and legislative session. Staff will also cover bills and budget provisos that impact the work of the agency and other natural resource agencies.

Grant Management Section Updates

Grants Awarded for Athletic Facilities

RCO's director approved grants for fifteen Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities projects. After successfully completing the initial cultural resources review and securing pre-agreement materials, staff issued the projects grant agreements in March. Twelve million dollars was allocated to sponsors who plan to develop and renovate athletic facilities in areas with underserved populations. Program funds come from interest accumulated from bonds used for construction of the football stadium in Seattle. The successful applicants and amounts awarded are shown below.



Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities Grant Awards

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Award
24-2039 Development	Whatcom County	East Whatcom Resource Center Covered Sports Court	\$1,199,500
24-2040 Development	Nooksack Valley School District	Nooksack Valley High School Turf Field	\$813,945
24-2043 Development	Republic School District	Tiger Field and Track Renovations	\$1,200,000
24-2085 Development	Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma	Peck Community Sports Park Multiuse Field	\$1,200,000
24-2118 Development	Anderson Island Park District	Russ Cammon Play Field Track Upgrade	\$159,027
24-2086 Development	Eatonville School District	Eatonville Community Field and Track	\$1,200,000
24-2089 Development	Pacific	Clint Steiger Park Multipurpose Court	\$335,500
24-2084 Development	Tenino	Tenino City Park Ball Field Renovation	\$589,761
24-2097 Development	Seattle	Hutchinson Playfield Renovation	\$1,200,000
24-2087 Development	Eatonville	Mill Pond Park Improvements	\$660,550
24-2065	Malden	Pine Creek Community	\$291,000

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Award
Development		Diamond	
24-2066 Development	Oakesdale Park and Recreation District 4	Oakesdale Pool Upgrades	\$154,000
24-2144 Development	White Salmon Valley Pool Metropolitan Park District	White Salmon Valley Pool	\$932,838
24-2054 Development	Quillayute Valley School District	Forks Spartan Ball Fields	\$1,200,000
24-2053 Development	Olympic Peninsula YMCA	Quilcene Skate Park	\$767,263
Total			\$11,903,384

Recreation and Conservation Grant Evaluations Wrap Up

Four advisory committees completed scoring grant proposals submitted for the Boating Facilities Program, Firearms and Archery Range Recreation, Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, and the Recreation Trails Program. These teams evaluated 168 projects, requesting more than \$41 million in grants for motorized boating access, shooting ranges, backcountry trails, and support amenities. The preliminary ranked lists are included in items six through nine of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's briefing materials. Staff is asking for board review and approval of the preliminary ranked lists. The board will award grants at its June meeting following legislative approval of the 2025-27 state capital budget.



Project Administration

Staff administer outdoor recreation, habitat conservation, working lands, and education 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)	25	0	25
Boating Facilities Program (BFP)	44	0	44
Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG)	3	0	3
Community Forests Program (CFP)	7	2	9
Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities (COAF)	1	14	15
Firearms and Archery Range Recreation (FARR)	7	0	7
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	37	0	37
Local Parks Maintenance (LPM)	23	0	23
No Child Left Inside (NCLI)	88	0	88
Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA)	94	0	94
Outdoor Learning Grants (OLG)	26	0	26
Planning for Recreation Access (PRA)	29	0	29
Recreation and Conservation Office Recreation Grants	4	0	4
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	37	0	37
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)	201	1	202
Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)	43	2	45
Total	669	19	688

Viewing Closed Projects

Attachment A lists projects that closed between January 1 and March 31, 2025. This quarter the team closed fifty-one projects! Click on the project number to view the project description, grant funds awarded, photos, maps, reports, etc.

Grant Services Section Updates

Compliance Unit

Staff are rolling out the new PRISM generated sponsor notifications for long-term obligations for grant assisted properties. This feature was designed and developed in 2024, partially funded through a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) administrative grant. The notifications provide quick links for sponsors to access

information about their facilities with long-term obligations. Staff will use this tool throughout the year and specifically focus on sponsors with LWCF funded projects.

Cultural Resources

Throughout April and May, staff will prepare the cultural resources grant agreement conditions for board funded projects for the 2025-2027 biennium. These conditions detail the project specific requirements for assessments to ensure that cultural and historic resources are protected in accordance with state and federal laws.

No Child Left Inside Evaluations and Updated Grant Process

Due to the record-breaking number of No Child Left Inside applications – 259 applications requesting over \$21 million – RCO staff, with the approval of Washington State Parks Commission, adjusted the Tier 2 and Tier 3 evaluation process to include a pre-score segment. Originally, all Tier 2 and Tier 3 applicants were slated to participate in a question-and-answer session with the advisory committee as part of the evaluation process. However, nearly 100 more applications were received than anticipated, making the schedule for the question-and-answer sessions unattainable for the volunteer advisory committee members. The pre-score segment involved the committee members scoring all Tier 2 and Tier 3 written applications, which produced a ranked list for each tier. The top 50 percent of applications in each tier moved forward to the question-and-answer sessions.

Applicants that progressed to the question-and-answer session included fifty-five Tier 2 projects and forty-six Tier 3 projects. Over the course of four days, each applicant had a ten-minute timeslot to meet with the advisory committee.

On March 19, RCO staff met with the Advisory Committee to present the [ranked lists](#) for each tier and debrief the evaluation process. Tier 2 and Tier 3 committee members were generally positive about the pre-score process and creation of the preliminary lists to guide question-and-answer session participation. Process suggestions included reducing the pre-score effort for Tier 2 and Tier 3 applicants and creating smaller evaluation groups – Tier 1 members evaluated fifty-nine written applications, Tier 2 evaluated 110 written applications, and Tier 3 evaluated ninety written applications.

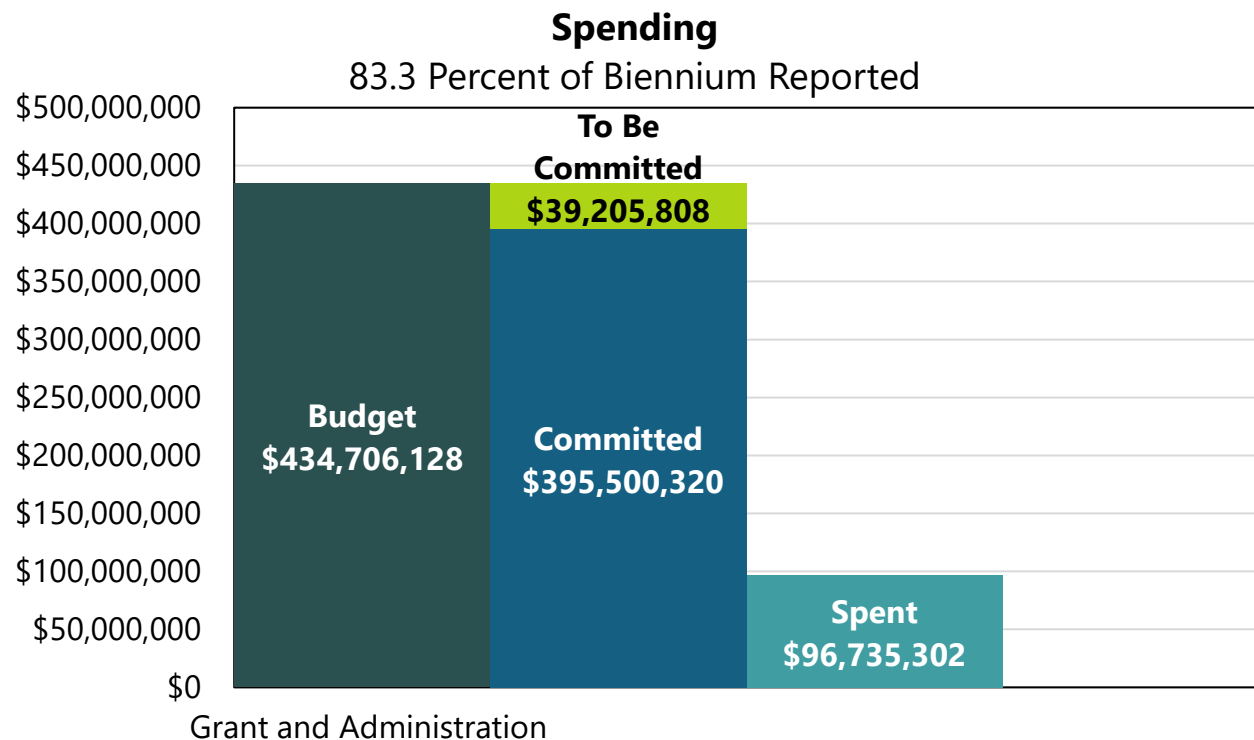


Staff will provide additional details and analysis of the modified evaluation process at the April meeting.

Fiscal Updates

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

	Budget	Committed	To Be Committed	Spent
Revenue Total	\$434,706,128	\$395,500,320	\$39,205,808	\$96,735,302



Performance Measures for Fiscal Year 2025

The following performance data are for recreation and conservation projects in fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025). Data current as of March 19, 2025.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Performance Measures

Measure	Target	Fiscal Year-to- Date	Status	Notes
Grant agreements mailed within 120 days of funding	90%	100%	●	Twenty-two of twenty-two agreements have been mailed on time this fiscal year.
Grants under agreement within 180 days of funding	95%	95%	●	Twenty-one of twenty-two projects were under agreement within 180 days.
Progress reports responded to within fifteen days	90%	94%	●	Board staff received 665 progress reports and responded to them in an average of six days.
Projects closed within 150 days of funding end date	85%	74%	●	Fifty-two of seventy projects have closed on time.
Projects in Backlog	5	35	●	There are thirty-five board projects in the backlog needing to be closed out.

Attachments

Attachment A: Projects Completed and Closed from January 1 to March 31, 2025

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Program ¹	Closed
22-1652	Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma	Dash Point Pier Design	Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account	2/28/2025
16-1730	Skagit County	Pressentin Park Access and Off Channel	Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account	3/25/2025
22-2063	Clallam County	Lake Pleasant Dock Renovation	Boating Facilities Program-Local	3/14/2025
18-2256	Des Moines	Redondo Boarding Float Upgrades	Boating Facilities Program-Local	2/27/2025
20-2425	Department of Natural Resources	Lakebay Marina Acquisition	Boating Facilities Program-State	3/4/2025
18-2555	State Parks	Penrose Point Boating Improvements	Boating Facilities Program-State	3/19/2025
19-1532	Des Moines	Des Moines Marina Guest Moorage Electrical Upgrade	Boating Infrastructure Grant-Tier1	1/16/2025
19-1510	Port of Friday Harbor	Port of Friday Harbor Shower Remodel	Boating Infrastructure Grant-Tier1	1/16/2025
20-2353	KBH Archers Inc.	Storage Building Replacement	Firearms and Archery Range Recreation	1/28/2025
20-2049	Tri-Cities Shooting Association	Smallbore Silhouette Rifle Range	Firearms and Archery Range Recreation	1/28/2025
18-1274	Seattle	Green Lake Community Boathouse	Land and Water Conservation Fund	2/25/2025

¹Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Program¹	Closed
<u>18-1581</u>	Seattle	Kubota Garden Enhancements Phase One	Land and Water Conservation Fund	2/18/2025
<u>16-1621</u>	Shoreline	Shoreview Park Trail and Creek Improvement	Land and Water Conservation Fund	2/26/2025
<u>24-2199</u>	Prosser	Prosser Mower Equipment	Local Parks Maintenance Multi-Site-Tier 1	2/19/2025
<u>22-2247</u>	Braided Seeds	Braided Seeds Reclamation Trips	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	2/19/2025
<u>22-2380</u>	Museum of Northwest Art	Art and Science Camp at Padilla Bay Reserve	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	2/25/2025
<u>22-2248</u>	Stevenson-Carson School District	Forest Youth Success	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	3/4/2025
<u>22-2315</u>	Mountains to Sound Greenway	Greenway Education Program	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	2/26/2025
<u>22-1908</u>	STIX Diabetes Programs	Camp STIX 2023	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	2/25/2025
<u>22-2124</u>	Asia Pacific Cultural Center	Outdoor Cultural Connection for At-Risk Asian American and Pacific Islander Youth	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	3/5/2025
<u>20-2021</u>	U.S. Forest Service, Umatilla National Forest, Pomeroy Ranger District	Pomeroy Ranger District Wilderness and Backcountry Trails Maintenance and Operation	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities-Nonmotorized	3/28/2025
<u>20-2022</u>	U.S. Forest Service, Umatilla National Forest, Pomeroy Ranger District	Pomeroy Ranger District. Off Highway Vehicle Motorized Trails Maintenance and Operation	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities-Off-Road Vehicle	3/28/2025

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Program¹	Closed
<u>22-2437</u>	Elmer City	Elmer City Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan	Planning for Recreation Access	3/4/2025
<u>22-2448</u>	Friends of the Columbia Gorge	Increasing Outdoor Accessibility in the Gorge	Planning for Recreation Access	3/21/2025
<u>22-2458</u>	Monroe	City of Monroe Trail Plan	Planning for Recreation Access	3/14/2025
<u>22-2486</u>	Prosser	Prosser Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan	Planning for Recreation Access	2/5/2025
<u>22-2441</u>	Warden	Warden Comprehensive Parks and Recreation	Planning for Recreation Access	3/18/2025
<u>20-1230</u>	Forterra Northwest	Upper Naneum Creek Farm	WWRP-Farmland Preservation	1/16/2025
<u>22-1524</u>	North Olympic Land Trust	Mid Valley Farm	WWRP-Farmland Preservation	2/27/2025
<u>22-1545</u>	Washington State Conservation Commission	Emerick Rangeland Preservation	WWRP-Farmland Preservation	1/8/2025
<u>20-1802</u>	Ferndale	Metalworks Skate Park	WWRP-Local Parks	3/4/2025
<u>20-1422</u>	Department of Natural Resources	Kennedy Creek Natural Area 2020	WWRP-Natural Areas	2/28/2025
<u>21-1123</u>	Department of Natural Resources	Kennedy Creek Natural Area Preserve Acquisition	WWRP-Natural Areas and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration	3/17/2025
<u>20-1337</u>	Department of Natural Resources	Washougal Oaks Natural Area Riparian 2020	WWRP-Riparian Protection	3/20/2025

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Program¹	Closed
<u>16-1469</u>	Department of Fish and Wildlife	Samish River Unit Parking and Recreation	WWRP-State Lands Development	2/18/2025
<u>18-1893</u>	Department of Natural Resources	San Juan Islands Prairie and Bald Restoration	WWRP-State Lands Restoration	3/14/2025
<u>20-1354</u>	Department of Natural Resources	Selah Cliffs Natural Areas Program Shrub Steppe Restoration	WWRP-State Lands Restoration	2/14/2025
<u>20-1599</u>	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Grayland Beach State Park Residential Acquisition	WWRP-State Parks	1/30/2025
<u>16-1975</u>	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Lake Sammamish Picnic Area-Sunset Beach Phase Seven	WWRP-State Parks	2/3/2025
<u>18-1840</u>	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Palouse to Cascades-Connecting Malden and Rosalia	WWRP-State Parks	3/26/2025
<u>18-1843</u>	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Palouse to Cascade - Tekoa Trestle Deck and Rails	WWRP-State Parks	3/26/2025
<u>20-1452</u>	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Spokane River Centennial Trail Phase One Renovation	WWRP-Trails	1/28/2025
<u>22-1464</u>	Spokane County	Rimrock to Riverside Acquisition	WWRP-Urban Wildlife Habitat	3/5/2025
<u>18-1344</u>	Department of Fish and Wildlife	Nemah Tidelands Access	WWRP-Water Access	1/8/2025
<u>20-1862</u>	Lake Forest Park	Lake Front Property	WWRP-Water Access	2/12/2025
<u>20-1655</u>	Snohomish County	Kayak Point Waterfront Improvements Phase One	WWRP-Water Access	3/19/2025

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Program¹	Closed
<u>22-1636</u>	Fife	Resurfacing Tennis Courts at Dacca Park	Youth Athletic Facilities-Large	1/3/2025
<u>20-1808</u>	Ilwaco	Ilwaco Baseball Field Improvements	Youth Athletic Facilities-Large	1/22/2025

Item 3: Farm and Forest Account Match

Summary

Because of application decreases and financial pressures from the COVID-19 pandemic, the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement for the Farm and Forest Account was waived by the Recreation and Conservation Fundign Board during the 2022 and 2024 grant rounds. This memo describes three options for non-state, non-federal match requirements in the Farm and Forest Account moving forward. Recreation and Conservation Office staff are requesting board direction on these options prior to seeking public comment.

Action Requested: Direction

Background

Existing Statute and Rules

By statute, local agencies and nonprofits must contribute matching resources at least equal to the amount of the grant requested in the Farm and Forest Account (1:1 match).¹ Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policy also requires local agency and nonprofit applicants to contribute at least 10 percent of the total project cost from a non-state, non-federal source (local match). The board may elect to waive this local match requirement on a case-by-case basis.

This 10 percent local match requirement is consistent with the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's Outdoor Recreation and Habitat Conservation account programs. It is also supported by [Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\) 286-13-045\(4\)](#), where "The board may require the applicant to provide a portion of its matching resources in local resources." This policy ensures that grant applicants are committed to the projects and the projects are a priority for the organization.

¹Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(9)

Past Decisions and Discussions

At the [April 2022 board meeting \(Item 6\)](#), Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff proposed permanently eliminating the 10 percent local match requirement in the Farm and Forest Account because of a decrease in applications, external feedback, and financial pressures created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The board waived the 10 percent local match requirement in the Farm and Forest Account for the 2022 and 2024 grant rounds ([Resolution 2022-05](#)).

In spring of 2024, RCO policy staff initiated a Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) review. The scope of review included looking at the temporary policy related to local match in the Farm and Forest Account. At the [January 2025 board meeting \(Item 9\)](#), RCO staff requested direction from the board as to whether the local match waiver should be made permanent. The board provided the following additional local match options for consideration:

- Providing clear criteria for circumstances under which the local match requirement could be waived.
- Allowing the RCO director to waive the local match requirement on a case-by-case basis.
- Reducing the local match requirement to less than 10 percent of the total project cost.
- Temporarily waive local match policy again to inform a future decision.

Proposed Options

After additional discussion and analysis, RCO staff proposes soliciting public comment on the following options:

- Option 1 (Waive): This option would permanently waive the 10 percent local match requirement for the Farm and Forest Account.
- Option 2 (Reduce): This option would reduce the local match requirement to 5 percent in the Farm and Forest Account. The board would also grant the RCO director authority to waive any additional local match that would be required from a cost increase for an active project.

- Option 3 (Revert): This option would return to the 10 percent local match policy. The board could continue to waive this local match requirement on a case-by-case basis.

Pros and cons for each proposed option can be found in Attachment A.

Next Steps

If supported by the board, RCO staff will seek formal public comment on these three options. RCO staff will provide a summary of public comments and a staff recommendation as part of a future board decision on this issue at either the June 2025 or October 2025 board meeting.

Attachments

A. Pros and Cons of Proposed Options

Attachment A: Pros and Cons of Proposed Options

Option 1 (Waive)

Pros	Cons
Local agencies and nonprofits will still need to secure 50 percent match. This helps leverage outside resources and fund more projects on the funding list.	This would make the local match policy different than the Outdoor Recreation and Habitat Conservation Accounts.
Helps make projects viable in places where local match is limited or unavailable.	
Reduces the disparate organizational financial burden experienced by nonprofits if no local match is available.	
Reduces need to ask farmers to donate property value, which can impact project feasibility and success.	
Aligns with the preferred approach expressed by partners and sponsors to date.	

Option 2 (Reduce)

Pros	Cons
Local agencies and nonprofits will still need to secure 50 percent match. This helps leverage outside resources and fund more projects on the funding list.	This change would make the local match policy different than the Outdoor Recreation and Habitat Conservation Accounts.
Makes it more feasible to meet local match requirement using staff time alone.	Could still impact the viability of a project if no local match can be secured.
Makes it easier to ask for a waiver of additional local match due to a cost increase. This is consistent with recent board decisions.	
During waiver period, many applicants brought less than 10 percent local match. This would provide relief in line with current application trends.	

Option 3 (Revert)

Pros	Cons
Policy would remain consistent with the Outdoor Recreation and Habitat Conservation Accounts.	Does not address a known bottleneck to project development and implementation, as indicated by recent trends and application data.
Ensures that local funding continues to be leveraged for farmland protection.	Does not align with feedback received from partners and sponsors to date.
Ensures that any local match waiver decisions are made transparently in a public forum.	Does not reduce the need to ask farmers to donate property value, which could jeopardize project viability.
	Does not address the disparate organizational financial burden experienced by nonprofits if no local match is available.

Item 4: Farmland Policy Changes

Summary

This memo summarizes proposed changes to evaluation criteria and policies relating to scope changes and impervious surfaces in the Farmland Preservation Program. Recreation and Conservation Office staff is requesting Recreation and Conservation Funding Board direction on these proposed and potential changes prior to requesting public comment.

Action Requested: Direction

Evaluation Criteria

Background

In 2024, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff started a review of the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) in the Farm and Forest Account. Current evaluation criteria was examined. To develop a proposed evaluation criteria update, RCO staff :

- Hosted listening sessions with partner organizations, nonprofit nature conservancies, county governments, state agencies, and other funders.
- Hosted a discussion with advisory committee members on evaluation criteria as part of a results meeting for the 2024 FPP grant round.
- Presented issues with evaluation criteria to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board during the [July 2024 board meeting \(Item 11\)](#).
- Created a first draft and requested comments from RCO staff, advisory committee members, partner organizations, nonprofit nature conservancies, county governments, state agencies, and other funders.
- Created a second draft based on feedback and requested additional comments.

RCO staff received many comments on the first draft of the updated evaluation criteria, and fewer comments on the second. There was a broad, positive response that the proposed changes represent an improvement to the current criteria.

Proposed Changes

A detailed summary of the proposed changes compared to the current criteria can be found in Attachment A. In general, proposed changes include the following:

- Eliminating three non-statutory criteria related to the size of the buildable area, stewardship practices, and excess match.
- Re-framing criteria relating to farm viability, threat, and benefits.
- Adding a new question to accommodate eligible combination project types.
- Increasing clarity and adding detail on components associated with each criterion.
- Using multipliers to keep consistent scoring ranges and accommodate different project types.

The current draft of the new proposed evaluation criteria can be found in Attachment B. RCO staff is requesting direction on whether the board is comfortable taking the proposed evaluation criteria to public comment, or whether the board would like to see additional changes or options prior to seeking public comment.

Other Proposed Changes

Scope Changes

During the 2015 FPP update, a new policy requested by the FPP Advisory Committee was added requiring the RCO director to consult with the committee whenever a sponsor requests to add or remove parcels from the project scope. The committee evaluates the request to determine whether it will have similar farmland conservation values to the parcels in the application. This policy is in addition to the existing policies on scope changes for acquisition projects as described in [Manual 3: Acquisition Projects](#).

Since then, RCO staff have observed that this policy can require significant capacity and coordination, which can delay projects. The existing Manual 3 policies allow the RCO director to request an evaluation of a proposed scope change from an ad hoc review panel with experience evaluating projects in the same grant program or category.

RCO staff would like to perform additional analysis and seek public comments on whether to keep this scope change requirement specific to FPP. This would be a potential decision as part of the current policy review.

Impervious Surfaces

During the 2015 FPP update, policy regarding limits on impervious surfaces were updated. An exception was created that when the Natural Resource Conservation Service provides matching funds to a FPP easement, the RCO director may use the definition of impervious surface used by the Natural Resource Conservation Service if it does not exceed the maximum amount defined in the manual. In addition, the RCO director may approve a higher percentage of land as impervious surface on an individual project basis.

Since then, RCO has continued to receive feedback that changing the definition of impervious surfaces and maximum percentages to directly align with those used by the Natural Resources Conservation Service would reduce confusion and support capacity for both sponsors and RCO staff.

RCO staff would like to perform additional analysis and seek public comment on whether to change the current impervious surface policy to align with federal approaches. This would be a potential decision as part of this larger program review.

Attachments

- A. Summary of proposed evaluation criteria changes
- B. Full draft of proposed evaluation criteria

Attachment A: Summary of Proposed Evaluation Criteria Changes

Proposed Evaluation Criteria

Current Criterion	Proposed Changes	Rationale
Viability of the Site (16 points)	Split into two different criteria, one related to the land base and the other related to infrastructure and operations.	Helps to address a lack of scoring spread for viability criterion during past grant rounds.
	Incorporate "Access to Markets" and "On-Site Infrastructure" criterion underneath the viability umbrella.	Provides additional guidance to applicants on how to answer the questions effectively, and for advisory committee members on how to score consistently.
	Use multipliers.	Better aligns with statutory guidance regarding aspects of farm viability.
	Provide supporting bullets that describe key things to address.	
	Adjust point scale to accommodate combination projects with an enhancement/restoration component.	
Threat to the Land (10 points)	Split into two different criteria related to short-term conversion threat and longer-term threat to agricultural use.	Consistent with feedback from sponsors and advisory committee that threat should be considered holistically.
	Provide supporting bullets that describe key things to address.	Provides additional guidance to applicants on how to answer the questions effectively, and for advisory committee members on how to score consistently.
	Adjust point scale to accommodate combination projects with an enhancement/restoration component.	

Access to Markets (4 points)	Remove as a separate criterion and incorporate into criteria related to the viability of the infrastructure and operations.	Addresses feedback from sponsors and RCO staff that this criterion is difficult to interpret across diverse types of projects. Better aligns with statutory guidance regarding aspects of farm viability.
On-site Infrastructure (4 points)	Remove as a separate criterion and incorporate into criteria related to the viability of the infrastructure and operations. Clarify that evaluation is focused on infrastructure that is within the easement area.	Addresses feedback from sponsors and RCO staff. Better aligns with statutory guidance regarding aspects of farm viability. Supports more consistent interpretation for advisory committee members.
Building Envelope (4 points)	Remove criterion.	Addresses feedback from sponsors, RCO staff, and advisory committee.
Farmland Stewardship (6 points)	Reframe into a criterion related to the overall fish and wildlife benefits of the site, along with aspects of the "Benefits to the Community" criterion.	Eliminates potential conflict between conservation values within a single criterion. Addresses feedback from sponsors.
Stewardship Practices (2 points)	Remove criterion.	Aligns with best practices for conservation easement drafting. Reduces chances for bias. Addresses feedback from advisory committee.
Benefits to the Community (6 points)	Split into two different criteria related to the fish and wildlife benefits, as well as community benefits.	Eliminates potential conflict between conservation values within a single criterion.

	Adjust point scale to accommodate combination projects with an enhancement/restoration component.	Addresses feedback from sponsors.
Community Support (2 points)	Reframe to encompass more than just letters of support.	Addresses feedback from sponsors and advisory committee.
		Better aligns with intent of statute.
Enhancement (New Question)	Created a new question specific to combination projects with an enhancement/restoration component.	Better accommodates all eligibility project types as part of the evaluation process.
Match (2 points)	Remove criterion. (Note: This criterion awarded points for bringing additional match beyond the required 50 percent minimum.)	Addresses feedback from RCO staff, sponsors and advisory committee. Aligns with recent recommendations from RCO's equity review regarding the use of bonus points for excess match.
		Addresses scoring issue for projects where match is not required (i.e. Conservation Commission projects).
Easement Duration (0 points)	No change proposed at this time. RCO staff plan for a discussion with the board about the use of non-perpetual instruments later. Staff will address this criterion as needed based on that discussion.	

Attachment B: Full Draft of Proposed Revised Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria Summary

Criteria	Evaluation Element	Project Type	Maximum Points Possible
Scored by the Advisory Committee			
1	Viability - Land Base	Acquisition Projects	20 points
		Combination Projects	15 points
2	Viability - Infrastructure & Operations	Acquisition Projects	20 points
		Combination Projects	15 points
3	Threat - Conversion	All Projects	15 points
4	Threat - Agricultural Use	All Projects	10 points
5	Benefits - Fish & Wildlife	Acquisition Projects	10 points
		Combination Projects	5 points
6	Benefits - Community	All Projects	10 points
7	Partnerships & Support	All Projects	4 points
8	Enhancement	Combination Projects	15 points
Scored by RCO			
9	Easement Duration	All Projects	0 points
Total Possible Points			89

Farmland Preservation Category Detailed Scoring Criteria

1. Viability – Land Base.¹ Describe how the land supports long-term viability for agricultural production. A complete response should address the following:

- Soil suitability, including the presence, type, and percentage of prime soils, prime with conditions, or farmland of statewide significance
- Availability and applicability of water supply, including the source, adequacy, validity, and security of water rights on the property
- Acreage in production, size relative to common production approaches in the region, as well as the property's contribution to the region's agricultural land base

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points, which are multiplied later by two for acquisition projects and by one and a half for combination projects

¹ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(h)(i), Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(h)(v)

2. Viability – Infrastructure & Operations.² Describe how the site’s existing operations and facilities support ongoing agricultural productivity. A complete response should address the following:

- Adequacy, current condition, and adaptability of on-site production facilities and supporting infrastructure in the proposed easement area
- Durable farm-to-market access, as demonstrated by current business model or evidence of past financial viability, as well as the presence of relevant processing and distribution facilities or sales outlets
- Ability to support multiple cropping systems or management approaches, as demonstrated by past practices, current yields and/or carrying capacity

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points, which are multiplied later by two for acquisition projects and by one and a half for combination projects

3. Threat - Conversion.³ To what extent is the property at risk of conversion to a nonagricultural or more highly developed use if it is not protected? How immediate is the risk and how does the proposed project help address or mitigate those risks? A complete response should address the following:

- Non-agricultural potential of the property, as demonstrated by allowable uses under current zoning, minimum parcel size and available development rights, as well as development constraints such as floodways or wetlands
- Evidence of non-agricultural demand for the property, such as prior listing on the open market or recent above market offers on the property or adjacent farmland from non-agricultural buyers
- Location of the property relative to development or other non-agricultural use, as well as proximity to urban growth areas, city limits, or rural zones
- Ownership and management stability, as well as the role of the acquisition within a clear succession plan, pending intergenerational transfer, and/or land access effort

² Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(h)(ii), Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(h)(iv), Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(h)(iii)

³ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(c)

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points, which are multiplied later by one and a half

4. Threat – Agricultural Use. To what extent do surrounding socioeconomic and land use trends threaten to undermine continued agricultural use in the region and on the property? How does the proposed project help address or mitigate those threats? A complete response should address the following:

- Population growth, rural scenic home demand, land value increases, as well as fragmentation or changes in primary uses in the region surrounding the property
- The regional significance of the property's agricultural operation
- The property's proximity to farmland or other protected lands and its importance to the success of additional working lands projects or partnerships in the region

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points

5. Benefits – Fish and Wildlife. How does the site, as well as any current or pending non-regulatory stewardship practices, benefit fish and wildlife, such as salmonids, migratory birds, and endangered, threatened, or sensitive species?⁴ A complete response should address the following:

- Consistency with local, state, or regional planning efforts, such as local shoreline master plans, local comprehensive plans, watershed plans, habitat conservation plans, or limiting factors analyses⁵
- The long term security of stewardship practices, and consistency with recognized funding programs or published guidelines

Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two for acquisition projects

⁴ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(e), Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(f), Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(g), Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(i)(v)

⁵ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(b)

6. Benefits - Community. What community benefits does the property provide when used as agricultural land⁶, such as the following:

- Aquifer recharge or stormwater collection
- Agricultural sector jobs
- Educational opportunities, community events, or agritourism
- Local food security and affordability
- Preservation of scenic, historical or cultural values
- Public recreational access

How are these community benefits consistent with or recommended by local, state or regional planning efforts⁷, such as the following:

- Coordinated regionwide prioritization effort
- Regional or statewide recreational or resource plan
- Local land-use, climate resiliency, or comprehensive plan

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which are multiplied later by two

7. Partnerships and Support. What community partners are providing support for the project and how is that support being demonstrated through letters, funding, in-kind contribution, project delivery, or other means?⁸

▲ Point Range: zero to four points

8. Enhancement (combination projects only). How does the proposed enhancement and/or restoration enhance the viability and further the ecological function of the project area? Why is this work an urgent and necessary component of the overall project?

⁶ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(i)(ii), Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(i)(iii), Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(i)(iv), Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(i)(vi)

⁷ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(d)

⁸ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(a)

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points, which are multiplied later by one and a half

9. Easement Duration (applicant does not answer). What is the duration of the conservation easement?

▲ Point Range: minus ten or zero points

Zero points The duration of the conservation easement is forever.

Minus ten points The duration of the conservation easement is not forever.

Item 5: Acquisition Policy Changes

Summary

This memo summarizes public comment and final staff recommendations for three proposed acquisition policy changes. These changes relate to eligibility of property under existing public ownership or management, combination project timeline requirements, and eligibility of pre-agreement earnest or option payments for reimbursement. Staff is seeking Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approval of the proposed changes.

Action Requested: Decision – Approve Resolution 2025-05

Acquisition Policy 1: Existing Public Property

Background

Currently, [Manual 3: Acquisition Projects](#) provides guidance regarding the acquisition of established outdoor recreation areas developed under ownership or management of a public agency. These types of acquisitions are prohibited unless: 1) state law requires compensation, 2) the land was not originally acquired for recreation or conservation purposes, and 3) the land has not been managed for recreation or conservation purposes. This is an older policy meant to ensure that Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) investments provide new, additional acreage beyond what is already available.

Over the last year, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board waived portions of the policy several times. The board requested RCO staff prepare alternate options for consideration. RCO staff provided the board with background and analysis for three options:

- **Option 1:** Do not change current policy and continue to consider waiver requests on a case-by-case basis at the board level.

- **Option 2:** Delegate authority to the RCO Director to waive specific portions of this policy if the acquisition would secure recreation or conservation benefits at a credible threat of loss.
- **Option 3:** Remove current and past management as an eligibility restriction for acquisition projects.

At the [January 2025 board meeting \(Item 14\)](#), the board directed RCO staff to move forward with public comment for option 3. If approved, this would allow an eligible applicant to propose acquisition of private land even if the property was being leased and managed for recreation and conservation by a public agency. Additionally, an eligible applicant proposing acquisition of public land would only have to demonstrate that compensation is required, and that the land was not originally acquired for recreation or conservation purposes.

Public Comments

RCO received sixteen comments on this policy proposal, including responses from state agencies, cities, counties, land trusts, parks districts, and public utility districts. Fifteen people were supportive of the proposed change, and one was not. Many respondents provided additional written comments. The full public comment survey results can be found in Attachment A.

Acquisition Policy 2: Combination Project Timeline

Background

Policies meant to increase the success and timeliness of combination projects were introduced by the board in 1999. For acquisition components of a combination project, the property must be secured via acquisition, be in escrow, or an option to purchase the property obtained at least one month before the board meeting when funding is approved. In 2000, this policy added a requirement that the acquisition component must be closed or executed within ninety days of the board funding meeting.

Sponsor organizations have historically struggled to meet this ninety-day timeline requirement. Important due diligence steps like appraisals and appraisal reviews are also taking longer.

At the [January 2025 board meeting \(Item 14\)](#), the board directed RCO staff to move forward with public comment on two options for extending the ninety-day timeline to complete the acquisition component of a combination project. Option One was twelve

months with director authority to extend an additional six months. Option Two was eighteen months, which would match the current timeline requirements for combination projects funded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board.

Public Comments

RCO received seventeen comments on this policy proposal, including responses from state agencies, cities, counties, land trusts, parks districts, and public utility districts. Two people preferred the option of twelve months with director authority to extend. Fifteen preferred the option of eighteen months. One commenter suggested changing the timeline relative to a fixed date that is easier to plan against. The full public comment survey results can be found in Attachment A.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend allowing eighteen months from the board funding meeting for the completion of the acquisition component of a combination project (option 2).

Acquisition Policy 3: Earnest Money

Background

Currently, “earnest money” and “option payments” are listed as an ineligible cost in [Manual 3: Acquisition Projects](#). These costs were added to the manual in the fall of 2010. Prior to seeking public funding, eligible entities often provide earnest money in a purchase and sale agreement or purchase an option on a property. These approaches provide buyer and seller surety and are an important due diligence step required by RCO policy, which is consistent with [RCW 8.26.180](#). These payments can be structured such that the value of any earnest or option payment is applied toward the purchase price of the property at closing.

At the [January 2025 board meeting \(Item 14\)](#), the board directed staff to move forward with public comment regarding a policy change allowing earnest or option payments as an eligible incidental pre-agreement cost, which would become reimbursable provided they are applied to the reviewed, appraised value of the property at closing during the grant performance period.

Public Comments

RCO received nineteen comments on this policy proposal, including responses from state agencies, cities, counties, land trusts, parks districts, and public utility districts. All

respondents were in favor of the proposed change. Many respondents provided additional written comments to justify their support. The full public comment survey results can be found in Attachment A.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend making earnest or option payments an eligible incidental pre-agreement cost, which would become reimbursable provided they are applied to the reviewed, appraised value of the property at closing during the grant performance period.

Strategic Plan Link

These proposed policy changes support 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.

Attachments

- A. Public Comment Survey Results
- B. Resolution 2025-05

Attachment A: Public Comment Survey Results

Acquisition Policy 1: Existing Public Property

Do you support this policy change?

Yes

No

15

1

Responses in Favor (PRO):

RCO should allow Existing Public Ownership to collaborate with other small agencies to foster growth and support people of Color agencies.

As land becomes more valuable and growth demands increase, recreation facilities could be converted into other uses to accommodate needs for commercial, residential and industrial without a protective covenant or land use restriction in place. If the land isn't already dedicated for recreation or conservation in perpetuity, Washington could see a decrease in public land available for these uses. For these reasons, I am in favor of this policy change to expand the eligibility for applicants. I would support the purchase of public land from a public agency where threat of the underlying use away from recreation or conservation exists.

This change is very important for municipalities that are managing properties but could have a much loved and used park removed out from under them during this time of great development in WA.

Given that private lands managed by a public agency are not actually protected lands, this feels like an appropriate change.

This is a reasonable, fair change.

By allowing private lands (whether being utilized for recreation or not) to be acquired by government for intended recreation use, will help ensure and protect that land from getting repurposed by the private landowner, or future private owner to other use. Save what can be saved for future recreational use for future generations.

The City of Vancouver recently faced an applicable scenario where we wanted to initiate a land exchange or purchase of public-school property adjoining a city park. The current manual language could be interpreted to prohibit the purchase because the school property was perceived as 'available' for public recreation. However, school lands and other underlying public and private ownership can have unique circumstances with limited time commitments for public recreation use, or different if

not conflicting priorities. We strongly support the proposed Option 3 policy amendment, assuming that proof of reasonable threat to public access/benefit would be evaluated in the ranking process.

Leases or other types of use agreements do not ensure a site will remain permanently available to the public for park, open space, and recreation uses. Thank you, RCO, for recognizing this and considering a policy change that would ensure properties of this type are eligible for RCO acquisition funding.

We are concerned by the guidelines regarding allowed/fundable acquisitions of established outdoor recreation areas. We manage some public lands for recreational use, for public access and benefit, but without any guarantee of it being held for recreation. These "parks" are at risk of development for public facilities and by way of sale to the private sector.

Per the guidelines for what is allowable, we support and follow the existing law to provide compensation when public land is proposed for our ownership as part of dedicating it to public recreation. We embrace conservation easements and RCO conditions for such, as a good practice towards a workable result, preserving established public recreation spaces.

At a minimum, we advocate that you not make it prohibitive if:
3) the land has not been managed for recreation or conservation purposes.

Thank you for considering this as part of the best interest of the State RCO, the Bainbridge Island Park District, and the citizens who can elect, with their local funds, to secure recreation uses in perpetuity on public lands.

Responses Against (CON):

I only support policies that protect and make maintaining wild environment.

Acquisition Policy 2: Combination Project Timeline

Which option do you prefer?

Option 1: 12 months with 6-month director extension

2

Option 2: 18 months

15

Responses in Favor of Option 2:

RCO should allow agencies to combine the Project Timeline as long as the agency has a strategic plan in place.

I think the consistency of programs is helpful to applicants. As well as cutting down on administrative costs of staff writing an extension.

I think consistency with SRFB makes the most sense. Acquisitions are not done in a straight line and each step can take a lot of time, depending on what kind of detours that we hit. Having extra time for those detours is appropriate.

18 months is preferred and provides the greatest latitude for the sponsor to manage a project's timeline, which is beneficial given the wide-range of different combination projects that this rule may apply to. That said, 12-months is better than the current rule and would be an improvement as well.

Another note worth mentioning is that these timelines all are based around the board meeting when funding is approved. This has been confusing for sponsors and even confusing for RCO staff providing direction to sponsors, as it is unclear which RCFB meeting this refers to and it is not information that is readily available to sponsors that are planning projects and grant applications months/years in advance of these RCFB meetings. Please consider revising to a hard date as the starting point for the timeline (e.g., July 1 - first day of state biennium) or something similar that is clear and available information for when sponsors are planning these projects months/years in advance.

Option 2, with consistency with SRFB timelines, helps avoid confusion

It just takes time to go through all the steps, and oftentimes at the mercy of the other company's timeliness or lack thereof. It also aligns with the Salmon Recovery Funding Board for consistency.

Acquisitions and the due diligence process can take time, and the 18-month timeline is reasonable, and consistency with Salmon Recovery sets a precedent timeline. The

reduction in staff monitoring and processing of extensions, etc., adds additional support of Option 4.

The supply of vacant land is dwindling and the acquisition component of combination projects has become more complex due to regulatory, market, timing of land use and legislative tasks, as well as other forces. The added time allows for completion of an acquisition project, and it does not conflict with the timeline already established for the projects associated with Salmon Recovery Funding Board process. Thank you, RCO, for recognizing, that even the best of project timelines can be impacted by forces outside the acquiring agency's control, and for arriving at a potential solution that is consistent with other state and federal programs.

Acquisition Policy 3: Earnest Money

Do you support this policy change?

Yes

No

19

0

Responses in Favor (PRO):

Yes -- earnest money deposits and / or option payments are a standard tool of real estate transactions and it would be very helpful to have them as eligible pre-agreement costs.

I support the earnest money policy as long as it is related to the property purchase.

Yes - makes sense, although I do not see it as a policy change but perhaps a clarification. Even as it is currently written, I'm surprised that earnest money that has been applied towards a property's purchase price hasn't been eligible when it is applied towards the appraised value of the property. In my mind, earnest money stops being earnest money when it is applied to the purchase price.

It is important to remove barriers, and further enable local government to acquire property for public recreational use; this is a direct step towards that goal.

My recommendation would be to make the policy language clear and explicit that earnest money or option payment reimbursement would not be eligible for reimbursement in the situation where an acquisition does not successfully close for any reason.

We are supportive of the proposed policy change; however, options can often precede the 3-years before the agreement date requirement.

During a voluntary transaction, option payments or earnest money (applied toward a purchase price) is required by the seller in order for the buyer to conduct due diligence on a property purchase, or for the buyer and seller to establish a time frame for the buyer to seek funding, legislative, or other approvals. Thank you, RCO, for recognizing that some agencies are not in a position to purchase a property outright subject to a waiver of retroactivity pending RCO grant approval/reimbursements, that real estate transactions can be complex, and that earnest money/option payments applied toward a purchase price may be the best tool in the toolbox in some cases - and for initiating the policy change within the established acquisition framework in order for this pre-agreement expense to be reimbursed.

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution 2025-05
Adoption of Policy Changes Regarding Acquisitions (Manual 3)**

WHEREAS all projects funded by the Recreation and Conservation Office that result in the acquisition of land or property rights must comply with policies adopted in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*;

WHEREAS Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff identified three new issues related to eligibility of existing public property, combination project timelines, and eligibility of earnest money that warrant an update to the policies; and

WHEREAS RCO staff developed and circulated these three significant policy proposals for public review and comment, thereby supporting the board's goals to ensure that its work is conducted in a fair and open manner; and

WHEREAS the public responses indicated strong support and clear preferences for all three policy proposals; and

WHEREAS based on board direction and public comments, RCO staff is recommending that the board approve the following three policy changes:

- Existing Public Property Option 3: Remove current and past management as an eligibility restriction for proposed acquisition projects
- Combination Project Timeline Option 2: Allow eighteen months from the board funding meeting for completion of the acquisition component of the combination project
- Earnest Money: Make earnest or option payment an eligible incidental pre-agreement cost, which would become reimbursable provided they are applied to the reviewed, appraised value of the property at closing during the grant performance period; and

WHEREAS adopting these revisions would improve the policies governing acquisitions, thereby advancing the board's goal to help its partners protect, restore, and develop habitat and recreation facilities and lands;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the board does hereby adopt the three proposed policy changes as proposed by RCO staff at the April 22, 2025, board meeting; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the board directs RCO staff to incorporate these policy into Manual 3 with language that reflects the policy intent; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that unless otherwise agreed to between a project sponsor and the RCO director, these policies shall be effective beginning _____, 2025.

Resolution moved by:

Resolution seconded by:

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date:

Item 6: Boating Facilities Program: Approval of Preliminary Ranked Lists

Summary

Applicants submitted nineteen projects for the Boating Facilities Program. This memo describes the program, evaluation process, categories, and the resulting ranked lists. Staff will present additional information about the projects at the April Recreation and Conservation Funding Board meeting. Staff will ask the board to approve the preliminary ranked lists, which becomes the basis for board approval of grants in June, following legislative appropriation of funds.

Action Requested: Decision - Approve Resolution 2025-06

Background

Washington State citizens, through Initiative 215, established the Boating Facilities Program (BFP) in 1964 with passage of the Marine Recreation Land Act. The Act authorizes the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to provide financial assistance for acquisition and development of motorized recreational boating access on both fresh and salt waters.

Eligible state and local agency applicants may:

- Acquire real property for motorized recreational boating,
- Develop new or renovate existing sites and facilities used exclusively or primarily by motorized recreational boaters, and
- Complete the design and engineering, environmental and cultural resources review, and permitting activities required for new construction or renovation.

To participate in the program, an applicant must adopt a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. Projects considered for funding directly support board priorities in the [Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan](#) that shapes the program policies and evaluation criteria that the board adopted into [Manual 9: Boating Facilities Program](#). The legislative authority for this program is in Chapter 79A.25 Revised Code of Washington and Title 286 Washington Administrative Code.

The following table provides a program summary:

	State Agency Category	Local Agency Category
Eligible Applicants	State agencies	Local municipal governments, federally recognized Native American Tribes, park and recreation districts, port district, and public utility districts.
Eligible Project Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition • Development • Planning • Combination acquisition and development or planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition • Development • Planning • Combination acquisition and development or planning
Grant Limits	No limits on the maximum grant request for a project, but the total funds requested by an agency may not exceed twice the estimated funds available for the grants cycle.	The maximum request for a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning project is \$200,000, or twenty percent of the estimated construction cost (whichever is less). • Acquisition, development, or combination project is \$1 million.
Match Requirements	No match required	A minimum twenty-five percent matching share is required.
Public Access	Required	Required
Other Program Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning projects must result in construction ready documents and permits "in hand". • Property acquired, developed, or renovated must be retained for public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity. • Multi-site projects are eligible. • Launch facilities are primarily for public, non-commercial recreational boat launching and retrieval. • Commercial or non-recreational use between October and April may be allowed if the sponsor ensures it will not displace recreational boaters. • Applicants must prorate costs for facilities used for both eligible and ineligible boating activities. For example, since long-term guest moorage is not eligible for funding, an 	

State Agency Category**Local Agency Category**

applicant would prorate costs for a breakwater that protects transient recreational moorage and long-term moorage.

Overview**Evaluation Summary**

Members of the Boating Programs Advisory Committee evaluated eight state agency projects and eleven local agency projects, requesting over \$19 million in grant funds. The committee used board-adopted criteria (Attachment C) to review and rank projects in virtual meetings February 18-19, 2025. Advisory committee members included the following representatives, all of whom are recognized for their expertise, experience, and knowledge about recreational boating issues:

Name	Representing	Location
Chris Cole	Citizen	Poulsbo
Karl Harris	Citizen	Shelton
Linda Henriksen	Citizen	Port Townsend
Antwaine Sterling	Citizen	Seattle
Kate Anderson	Local Agency	Port of Everett
R. Donald Crawford ¹	Local Agency	Clallam County
Timothy Quandt	Citizen	Port of Kingston
Aaron Barnett	State Agency	University of Washington Sea Grant
Shane Belson ¹	State Agency	Department of Fish and Wildlife
Lowell Dickson	State Agency	Department of Natural Resources
Matt Niles ¹	State Agency	State Parks and Recreation Commission

The evaluation results are provided for board consideration in Attachment A – Boating Facilities Program, Preliminary Ranking: Local Category 2025-2027 and Preliminary Ranking: State Category 2025-2027. The evaluation scores and project descriptions for each category are posted on RCO's website on the BFP page under [Grant Award History 2024](#).

¹Evaluated Local Agency Category projects only.

Review of Process and Criteria Modifications

RCO staff hosted a virtual post-evaluation meeting with the Boating Programs Advisory Committee to debrief and assess the evaluation process and scoring results on February 27, 2025. The committee was satisfied with the information provided, the responsiveness of RCO staff to their follow-up questions, and the resulting ranked list.

Committee members discussed the evaluation criteria, noting that the Boats on Trailers criterion is difficult for applicants to answer, resulting in scoring challenges. Committee members discussed the wide range of costs for similar scope elements from one location to another. In preparation for the next grant cycle, RCO staff will encourage applicants to indicate why their costs may be higher and how costs are justified.

Committee members also discussed the ecological and environmental impacts of projects, where renovating existing sites more than likely leads to positive impacts, while the development of new sites would likely have negative impacts and how to quantify this when scoring projects. It appears these elements already exist in the evaluation criteria; however, staff will look at options for helping applicants expand on their responses to better address these for advisory committee members.

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of these projects supports the board's strategy to provide funding to protect, preserve, restore, and enhance recreation opportunities statewide. The grant process supports the board's strategy to conduct its work in a fair and open manner, as well as its goal to deliver successful projects by using broad public participation. The criteria for selecting projects support strategic investments in the protection, restoration, and development of recreation opportunities.

Public Comment

Letters of support or concern are attached to the individual project proposals in Project Snapshot. The letters are accessible by clicking the project numbers on the ranked lists (Attachment A). Any additional public comment will be shared at the April board meeting.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend that the board approve Resolution 2025-06, including Boating Facilities Program, Preliminary Ranking: Local Category, 2025-27 and Boating Facilities Program, Preliminary Ranking: State Category, 2025-27.

Next Steps

If approved by the board, the lists will be available for funding consideration for the 2025-27 biennium. Legislature will set the BFP funding authority in the state capital budget. The board will approve the final lists and make funding decisions at the June 2025 meeting.

Attachments

- A. Resolution 2025-06, including:
 - Boating Facilities Program, Preliminary Ranking: Local Category, 2025-27
 - Boating Facilities Program, Preliminary Ranking: State Category, , 2025-27
- B. State Maps of Local Agency and State Agency Projects
- C. Evaluation Criteria Summary

Attachment A: Resolution 2025-06

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

Resolution 2025-06

Boating Facilities Program

Approval of the Preliminary Ranked List of Projects for the 2025-27 Biennium

WHEREAS for the 2025-27 biennium, nineteen Boating Facilities Program (BFP) projects are being considered for funding; and

WHEREAS all nineteen projects meet program eligibility requirements as stipulated in Manual 9, Boating Facilities Program; and

WHEREAS these BFP projects were evaluated by a team of state and local agency representatives and citizens-at-large using the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approved and adopted evaluation criteria, thereby supporting the board's strategy to fund the best projects as determined by the evaluation process; and

WHEREAS these evaluations occurred in open public meetings as part of the competitive selection process outlined in Washington Administrative Code 286-13-020, thereby supporting the board's strategy to ensure that its work is conducted with integrity and in a fair and open manner; and

WHEREAS the projects provide for acquisition, planning, development, and renovation of motorized recreational boating access areas and facilities, thereby supporting the board's strategy to provide partners with funding to enhance recreation opportunities statewide;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the board hereby approves the ranked list for the projects depicted in Boating Facilities Program, Preliminary Ranking: Local Category, 2025-27 and Boating Facilities Program, Preliminary Ranking: State Category, 2025-27.

Resolution moved by:

Resolution seconded by:

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date:

Item 7: Firearms and Archery Range Recreation: Approval of Preliminary Ranked List

Summary

Applicants submitted seven projects for the Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program. This memo describes the program, evaluation process, and preliminary ranked list. Staff will present additional information about the projects at the April Recreation and Conservation Funding Board meeting. Staff will ask the board to approve the preliminary ranked list, which becomes the basis for board approval of grants in June, following legislative appropriation of funds for the program.

Action Requested: Decision - Approval of Resolution 2025-07

Background

The Firearms and Archery Range Recreation (FARR) program provides funding to support firearm and archery recreation. This includes facilities for handgun, muzzleloader, rifle, shotgun, and archery activities. Established by the Legislature in 1990, the primary goals of the FARR program are to increase general public access to firearm and archery range facilities, provide hunter safety education, and support the needs of law enforcement. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policies that guide this program are outlined in [Manual 11: Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program](#). The legislative authority for this program is in Chapter 79A.25 Revised Code of Washington and Title 286 Washington Administrative Code.

Program Summary

This table provides a program summary:

Program Overview	
Eligible Applicants	State and local agencies, law enforcement agencies, qualified nonprofit shooting organizations, park and recreation districts, and school districts.

Item 6: Boating Facilities Program: Approval of Preliminary Ranked Lists

Summary

Applicants submitted nineteen projects for the Boating Facilities Program. This memo describes the program, evaluation process, categories, and the resulting ranked lists. Staff will present additional information about the projects at the April Recreation and Conservation Funding Board meeting. Staff will ask the board to approve the preliminary ranked lists, which becomes the basis for board approval of grants in June, following legislative appropriation of funds.

Action Requested: Decision - Approve Resolution 2025-06

Background

Washington State citizens, through Initiative 215, established the Boating Facilities Program (BFP) in 1964 with passage of the Marine Recreation Land Act. The Act authorizes the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to provide financial assistance for acquisition and development of motorized recreational boating access on both fresh and salt waters.

Eligible state and local agency applicants may:

- Acquire real property for motorized recreational boating,
- Develop new or renovate existing sites and facilities used exclusively or primarily by motorized recreational boaters, and
- Complete the design and engineering, environmental and cultural resources review, and permitting activities required for new construction or renovation.

To participate in the program, an applicant must adopt a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. Projects considered for funding directly support board priorities in the [Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan](#) that shapes the program policies and evaluation criteria that the board adopted into [Manual 9: Boating Facilities Program](#). The legislative authority for this program is in Chapter 79A.25 Revised Code of Washington and Title 286 Washington Administrative Code.

The following table provides a program summary:

	State Agency Category	Local Agency Category
Eligible Applicants	State agencies	Local municipal governments, federally recognized Native American Tribes, park and recreation districts, port district, and public utility districts.
Eligible Project Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition • Development • Planning • Combination acquisition and development or planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition • Development • Planning • Combination acquisition and development or planning
Grant Limits	No limits on the maximum grant request for a project, but the total funds requested by an agency may not exceed twice the estimated funds available for the grants cycle.	The maximum request for a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning project is \$200,000, or twenty percent of the estimated construction cost (whichever is less). • Acquisition, development, or combination project is \$1 million.
Match Requirements	No match required	A minimum twenty-five percent matching share is required.
Public Access	Required	Required
Other Program Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning projects must result in construction ready documents and permits "in hand". • Property acquired, developed, or renovated must be retained for public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity. • Multi-site projects are eligible. • Launch facilities are primarily for public, non-commercial recreational boat launching and retrieval. • Commercial or non-recreational use between October and April may be allowed if the sponsor ensures it will not displace recreational boaters. • Applicants must prorate costs for facilities used for both eligible and ineligible boating activities. For example, since long-term guest moorage is not eligible for funding, an 	

State Agency Category**Local Agency Category**

applicant would prorate costs for a breakwater that protects transient recreational moorage and long-term moorage.

Overview**Evaluation Summary**

Members of the Boating Programs Advisory Committee evaluated eight state agency projects and eleven local agency projects, requesting over \$19 million in grant funds. The committee used board-adopted criteria (Attachment C) to review and rank projects in virtual meetings February 18-19, 2025. Advisory committee members included the following representatives, all of whom are recognized for their expertise, experience, and knowledge about recreational boating issues:

Name	Representing	Location
Chris Cole	Citizen	Poulsbo
Karl Harris	Citizen	Shelton
Linda Henriksen	Citizen	Port Townsend
Antwaine Sterling	Citizen	Seattle
Kate Anderson	Local Agency	Port of Everett
R. Donald Crawford ¹	Local Agency	Clallam County
Timothy Quandt	Citizen	Port of Kingston
Aaron Barnett	State Agency	University of Washington Sea Grant
Shane Belson ¹	State Agency	Department of Fish and Wildlife
Lowell Dickson	State Agency	Department of Natural Resources
Matt Niles ¹	State Agency	State Parks and Recreation Commission

The evaluation results are provided for board consideration in Attachment A – Boating Facilities Program, Preliminary Ranking: Local Category 2025-2027 and Preliminary Ranking: State Category 2025-2027. The evaluation scores and project descriptions for each category are posted on RCO's website on the BFP page under [Grant Award History 2024](#).

¹Evaluated Local Agency Category projects only.

Review of Process and Criteria Modifications

RCO staff hosted a virtual post-evaluation meeting with the Boating Programs Advisory Committee to debrief and assess the evaluation process and scoring results on February 27, 2025. The committee was satisfied with the information provided, the responsiveness of RCO staff to their follow-up questions, and the resulting ranked list.

Committee members discussed the evaluation criteria, noting that the Boats on Trailers criterion is difficult for applicants to answer, resulting in scoring challenges. Committee members discussed the wide range of costs for similar scope elements from one location to another. In preparation for the next grant cycle, RCO staff will encourage applicants to indicate why their costs may be higher and how costs are justified.

Committee members also discussed the ecological and environmental impacts of projects, where renovating existing sites more than likely leads to positive impacts, while the development of new sites would likely have negative impacts and how to quantify this when scoring projects. It appears these elements already exist in the evaluation criteria; however, staff will look at options for helping applicants expand on their responses to better address these for advisory committee members.

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of these projects supports the board's strategy to provide funding to protect, preserve, restore, and enhance recreation opportunities statewide. The grant process supports the board's strategy to conduct its work in a fair and open manner, as well as its goal to deliver successful projects by using broad public participation. The criteria for selecting projects support strategic investments in the protection, restoration, and development of recreation opportunities.

Public Comment

Letters of support or concern are attached to the individual project proposals in Project Snapshot. The letters are accessible by clicking the project numbers on the ranked lists (Attachment A). Any additional public comment will be shared at the April board meeting.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend that the board approve Resolution 2025-06, including Boating Facilities Program, Preliminary Ranking: Local Category, 2025-27 and Boating Facilities Program, Preliminary Ranking: State Category, 2025-27.

Next Steps

If approved by the board, the lists will be available for funding consideration for the 2025-27 biennium. Legislature will set the BFP funding authority in the state capital budget. The board will approve the final lists and make funding decisions at the June 2025 meeting.

Attachments

- A. Resolution 2025-06, including:
 - Boating Facilities Program, Preliminary Ranking: Local Category, 2025-27
 - Boating Facilities Program, Preliminary Ranking: State Category, , 2025-27
- B. State Maps of Local Agency and State Agency Projects
- C. Evaluation Criteria Summary

Attachment A: Resolution 2025-06

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

Resolution 2025-06

Boating Facilities Program

Approval of the Preliminary Ranked List of Projects for the 2025-27 Biennium

WHEREAS for the 2025-27 biennium, nineteen Boating Facilities Program (BFP) projects are being considered for funding; and

WHEREAS all nineteen projects meet program eligibility requirements as stipulated in Manual 9, Boating Facilities Program; and

WHEREAS these BFP projects were evaluated by a team of state and local agency representatives and citizens-at-large using the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approved and adopted evaluation criteria, thereby supporting the board's strategy to fund the best projects as determined by the evaluation process; and

WHEREAS these evaluations occurred in open public meetings as part of the competitive selection process outlined in Washington Administrative Code 286-13-020, thereby supporting the board's strategy to ensure that its work is conducted with integrity and in a fair and open manner; and

WHEREAS the projects provide for acquisition, planning, development, and renovation of motorized recreational boating access areas and facilities, thereby supporting the board's strategy to provide partners with funding to enhance recreation opportunities statewide;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the board hereby approves the ranked list for the projects depicted in Boating Facilities Program, Preliminary Ranking: Local Category, 2025-27 and Boating Facilities Program, Preliminary Ranking: State Category, 2025-27.

Resolution moved by:

Resolution seconded by:

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date:

**Boating Facilities Program
Preliminary Ranking
Local Category 2025-2027**

Resolution 2025-06

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ²	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
1	69.60	24-2272 D	Port of Everett	10th Street Boat Launch Renovation	\$1,000,000	\$866,976	\$1,866,976
2	66.82	24-2501 D	Des Moines	Redondo Boarding Floats Upgrades Phase Two	\$348,750	\$116,250	\$465,000
3	64.00	24-2625 P	Lake Stevens	North Cove Marina Planning	\$200,000	\$218,200	\$418,200
4	63.36	24-2307 D	Port of South Whidbey	Possession Beach Waterfront Park Boarding Floats	\$262,500	\$87,500	\$350,000
5	63.27	24-2648 D	Port of Grays Harbor	Friends Landing Boat Launch Renovation Phase Two	\$650,000	\$230,000	\$880,000
6	62.09	24-2285 D	Everett	Langus Riverfront Park Boat Launch	\$592,800	\$197,600	\$790,400
7	60.45	24-2256 D	Lakewood	Edgewater Park Boating Improvements	\$1,000,000	\$1,739,306	\$2,739,306

²Project Type: D=Development, P=Planning

**Boating Facilities Program
Preliminary Ranking
Local Category 2025-2027**

Resolution 2025-06

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ²	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
1	69.60	24-2272 D	Port of Everett	10th Street Boat Launch Renovation	\$1,000,000	\$866,976	\$1,866,976
2	66.82	24-2501 D	Des Moines	Redondo Boarding Floats Upgrades Phase Two	\$348,750	\$116,250	\$465,000
3	64.00	24-2625 P	Lake Stevens	North Cove Marina Planning	\$200,000	\$218,200	\$418,200
4	63.36	24-2307 D	Port of South Whidbey	Possession Beach Waterfront Park Boarding Floats	\$262,500	\$87,500	\$350,000
5	63.27	24-2648 D	Port of Grays Harbor	Friends Landing Boat Launch Renovation Phase Two	\$650,000	\$230,000	\$880,000
6	62.09	24-2285 D	Everett	Langus Riverfront Park Boat Launch	\$592,800	\$197,600	\$790,400
7	60.45	24-2256 D	Lakewood	Edgewater Park Boating Improvements	\$1,000,000	\$1,739,306	\$2,739,306

²Project Type: D=Development, P=Planning

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ²	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
8	57.55	24-2254 D	Mukilteo	Mukilteo Lighthouse Park Boat Launch Floats	\$620,021	\$206,674	\$826,695
9	57.00	24-2260 P	Port of Garfield	Engineering and Design Renovation Boat Ramp and Dock	\$61,500	\$20,500	\$82,000
10	56.73	24-2415 D	Electric City	Coulee Playland Architectural Barriers Access and Americans with Disabilities Act Facility Renovations	\$575,456	\$863,184	\$1,438,640
11	50.73	24-2427 D	Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation	Nicholson Beach Boat Launch	\$750,000	\$250,000	\$1,000,000
Total					\$6,061,027	\$4,796,190	\$10,857,217

**Boating Facilities Program
Preliminary Ranking
State Category 2025-2027**

Resolution 2025-06

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ³	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Total
1	64.75	24-2288 D	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Ohop Lake Water Access Area Redevelopment	\$890,000	\$890,000
2	64.50	24-2303 P	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Lake Sammamish Boat Launch Redevelopment	\$880,000	\$880,000
3	64.38	24-2713 D	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Twenty-Five Mile Creek Boat Ramp and Moorage Floats	\$2,640,000	\$2,640,000
4	62.62	24-2523 D	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Americans with Disabilities Act Parking and Restroom Replacement	\$655,000	\$655,000
5	61.12	24-2695 D	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Spencer Lake Accessibility Redevelopment	\$990,000	\$990,000
6	61.00	24-2697 D	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Lake Wenatchee Launch Improvements	\$2,120,000	\$2,120,000
7	57.38	24-2487 D	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Chapman Lake Development	\$2,400,000	\$2,400,000
8	54.25	24-2742 D	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Sacajawea Moorage, Parking and Float Improvements	\$2,530,000	\$2,530,000
Total					\$13,105,000	\$13,105,000

³Project Type: D=Development, P=Planning

Attachment B: State Map for Boating Facilities Program

Local Agency Category Projects



State Agency Category Projects



Attachment C: Evaluation Criteria Summary

Boating Facilities Program Evaluation Criteria Summary

Scored by	Question Number	Criteria	Maximum Points	Project Type*
Advisory Committee	1	Need	15	All
Advisory Committee	2	Site Suitability	20	Acquisition
			15	Combination, Development, Planning
Advisory Committee	3	Urgency	10	Acquisition
			5	Combination
Advisory Committee	4	Project Design	10	Development
			5	Combination of Acquisition and Development
Advisory Committee	5	Planning Success (architectural/engineering only)	10	Planning
			5	Combination of Acquisition and Development
Advisory Committee	6	Sustainability	5	Combination, Development, Planning
Advisory Committee	7	Cost-benefit	10	All
Advisory Committee	8	Boats on Trailers	5	All
Advisory Committee	9	Boating Experience	6	All
Advisory Committee	10	Readiness	5	All
RCO Staff	11	Matching Shares	4 Local 1 State	All
RCO Staff	12	Proximity to People	1	All
RCO Staff	13	Growth Management Act Preference (local agencies)	0	All

Scored by	Question Number	Criteria	Maximum Points	Project Type*
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Total Points Possible for Local Category: 76

Total Points Possible for State Category: 73

**All project types=Acquisition, development or renovation, and planning (architecture-engineering or permit related). Combination projects include both acquisition of real property and either development or planning activities.*

Scoring Criteria for the Boating Facilities Program

Scored by Advisory Committee

1. **Need.** Is the project needed?
2. **Site suitability.** Is the site well-suited for the intended recreational uses?
3. **Urgency** (any project with acquisition as a component). How urgent is the need for funding from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board?
4. **Project design** (development or acquisition and development projects only). Is the proposal appropriately designed for the intended use?
5. **Planning success** (planning or acquisition and planning projects only). What potential does this project have to successfully complete the required documents needed to start a development project?
6. **Sustainability** (development, combination, and planning projects only). Sustainability reflects choices made to balance the desired benefits and potential impacts of a project on the surrounding landscape and community. Please discuss how the project's location or design supports the applicant organization's sustainability plan or how the applicant considered the ecological, economic, and social benefits and impacts in the project plan.
7. **Cost-benefit.** Do the benefits of the project outweigh the costs?
8. **Boats on Trailers.** Does the proposed project predominantly serve boats on trailers?
9. **Boating experience.** How will the project affect the boating experience?
10. **Readiness.** Is the project ready to proceed?

Scored by RCO Staff

11. **Matching Shares.** To what extent will the applicant match BFP funds with contributions from its own resources?
12. **Proximity to people.** Is the project site in a populated area?

13. **Growth Management Act Preference.** Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?⁴

⁴Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250 (Growth Management Act preference required.)

Item 7: Firearms and Archery Range Recreation: Approval of Preliminary Ranked List

Summary

Applicants submitted seven projects for the Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program. This memo describes the program, evaluation process, and preliminary ranked list. Staff will present additional information about the projects at the April Recreation and Conservation Funding Board meeting. Staff will ask the board to approve the preliminary ranked list, which becomes the basis for board approval of grants in June, following legislative appropriation of funds for the program.

Action Requested: Decision - Approval of Resolution 2025-07

Background

The Firearms and Archery Range Recreation (FARR) program provides funding to support firearm and archery recreation. This includes facilities for handgun, muzzleloader, rifle, shotgun, and archery activities. Established by the Legislature in 1990, the primary goals of the FARR program are to increase general public access to firearm and archery range facilities, provide hunter safety education, and support the needs of law enforcement. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policies that guide this program are outlined in [Manual 11: Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program](#). The legislative authority for this program is in Chapter 79A.25 Revised Code of Washington and Title 286 Washington Administrative Code.

Program Summary

This table provides a program summary:

Program Overview	
Eligible Applicants	State and local agencies, law enforcement agencies, qualified nonprofit shooting organizations, park and recreation districts, and school districts.

Program Overview	
Eligible Project Types	Acquisition, development and renovation, or combination of acquisition and development or renovation.
Grant Limits	Grant requests are limited to \$150,000 per project.
Match Requirements	Applicant matching shares are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 percent for safety or noise abatement elements in range renovation projects. • 50 percent for all other project costs.
Public Access	Facilities must be open to the general public for a minimum of eight hours per month, with special emphasis on access for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunter and safety education classes • Law enforcement personnel • Members of the public with concealed pistol licenses
Other Program Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor and outdoor ranges are eligible. • Liability insurance is the only operational expense eligible for funding. • A public hearing or meeting is required for projects that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acquire or develop a range facility where one does not currently exist. ○ Result in substantial new external impact on the surrounding area of an existing range.

Overview

Evaluation Summary

The FARR Advisory Committee evaluated seven FARR projects requesting \$400,083, on February 20, 2025. The committee used board-adopted evaluation criteria to review and rank projects in a virtual meeting. The advisory committee includes the following representatives, all of whom are recognized for their expertise, experience, and knowledge about recreational shooting sports and hunter education:

Name	Representing	Location
Rachel Bouchillon	Community Member	Olympia
Jay Cochran	Community Member	Oak Harbor
John Glenewinkel	Community Member	Republic
Richard Hayward	Community Member	Clarkston
Rudy Rudolph	Community Member	Olympia
Brian Schilt	Community Member	Tenino
Rex Sherburn	Community Member	Benton City
Brian Skeels	Community Member	Kennewick
Chris Maurer	State Agency Member	Department of Ecology
David Whipple	State Agency Member	Department of Fish and Wildlife

The evaluation results are provided for board consideration in *Attachment A – Firearms and Archery Range Recreation, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-27*. The evaluation scores and project descriptions are posted on RCO's website on the FARR page under [Grant Award History 2024](#).

Review of the Process and Evaluation Criteria

Staff held a virtual post-evaluation meeting on February 27, 2025, with the advisory committee to share the preliminary ranked lists, debrief and assess the application process, the technical review and evaluation meetings, and the evaluation criteria. Outlined below is a summary of committee member discussion. Staff will share additional thoughts and comments at the April board meeting.

Evaluation Process

The advisory committee felt the process was organized and efficient. They understood the expectations, received the application materials early enough to conduct preliminary reviews, and enjoyed participating in the process. Committee members discussed the PRISM Review and Evaluation Module, said it was very intuitive and that between the technology and help from staff, the review process went incredibly well. One committee member stated that grant evaluation process appears to work based off the ranked list as the stronger projects are at the top.

Evaluation Criteria

The advisory committee briefly discussed the evaluation criteria and generally felt they are very solid.

The committee discussed the *Public Access* criterion and access requirements. While board policy only requires public access for eight hours a month, one nonprofit organization pulled its grant proposal before evaluation because the club was not comfortable opening its facilities to the public. Advisory committee members think revising the annotated explanation for the question prompting applicants to provide additional details about how the facility will be accessible to the public would help with scoring. Like last grant cycle, one member recommended the board convert the criterion to a staff-scored question and give points based on the number of hours over the minimum required.

Some members feel the *Budget Development* criterion is difficult to score. Without direct knowledge and expertise, it does not seem appropriate to second guess or be too critical of the cost included in the proposals. Evaluators tended to trust the applicants and scored the projects the same.

Staff added the FARR Advisory Committee's suggested changes to the *Public Access* criterion to the policy list for prioritization and further assessment.

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of these projects supports the board's strategy to provide funding to protect, preserve, restore, and enhance recreation opportunities statewide. The grant process supports the board's strategy to conduct its work in a fair and open manner, as well as its goal to deliver successful projects by using broad public participation. The criteria for selecting projects support strategic investments in the protection, restoration, and development of recreation opportunities.

Projects considered for funding in the FARR program directly support board-adopted priorities in [2023 Recreation and Conservation Plan](#).

Public Comment

Letters of support or concern are attached to the individual project proposals in Project Snapshot. The letters are accessible by clicking the project numbers on the ranked lists (Attachment A). Any additional public comment will be shared at the April board meeting.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend the board approve Resolution 2025-07, including *Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-2027*.

Next Steps

If approved by the board, the preliminary ranked list will be available for funding consideration for the 2025-2027 biennium. The Legislature will set the FARR funding authority in the state capital budget. The board will approve the final list and make its funding decision at its June 2025 meeting.

Attachments

- A. Resolution 2025-07, including:
 - Firearms and Archery Range Recreation, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-2027
- B. State Map of Projects
- C. Evaluation Criteria Summary

Attachment A

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution 2025-07
Firearms and Archery Range Recreation
Approval of the Preliminary Ranked List of Projects for the 2025-27 Biennium**

WHEREAS for the 2025-27 biennium, seven Firearms and Archery Range Recreation (FARR) projects are being considered for funding; and

WHEREAS all seven projects meet program eligibility requirements as stipulated in *Manual 11, Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program*; and

WHEREAS these FARR projects were evaluated by a team of state agency representatives and citizens-at-large using evaluation criteria approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, thereby supporting the board's goal to fund the best projects as determined by the evaluation process; and

WHEREAS these evaluations occurred in a virtual meeting that was broadcasted live as part of the competitive selection process outlined in Washington Administrative Code 286-13-020, thereby supporting the board's strategy to ensure that its work is conducted with integrity and in a fair and open manner; and

WHEREAS the projects develop and renovate public outdoor recreation facilities, thereby supporting the board's strategy to provide partners with funding to enhance recreation opportunities statewide;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the board hereby approves the ranked list for the projects depicted in *Firearms and Archery Range Recreation, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-27*.

Resolution moved by:

Resolution seconded by:

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date:

Attachment A

Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-2027

Resolution 2025-07

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ¹	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
1	70.00	24-2699 D	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	North Potholes Shooting Range Development	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$300,000
2	66.20	24-2579 D	Issaquah Sportsmen's Club	Lighting and Steel Target Improvements	\$28,037	\$28,037	\$56,074
3	63.60	24-2278 D	Lynden Shotgun Club	Lynden Shotgun Club Renovations	\$21,110	\$21,110	\$42,220
4	62.60	24-2448 D	Tri-Cities Shooting Association	Overhead Cover for Smallbore Shooting Line	\$76,000	\$76,117	\$152,117
5	59.40	24-2279 D	Gig Harbor Sportsman's Club	Storage Facility Renovation and Development	\$27,500	\$27,500	\$55,000
6	55.40	24-2350 D	Granite Falls Sportsmen's Club	Sporting Clays Course Development	\$62,405	\$62,405	\$124,810
7	52.40	24-2617 D	Bainbridge Island Sportsmen's Club	Clubhouse Kitchen Remodel	\$35,031	\$35,032	\$70,063
Total					\$400,083	\$400,201	\$800,284

¹Project Type: D=Development

Attachment B

Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program State Map of Projects



Attachment C

FARR Evaluation Criteria Summary

Scored by	Question Number	Criteria	Maximum Points	Project Type
Advisory Committee	1	Need	15	All
Advisory Committee	2	Immediacy of threat	10	Acquisition
			5	Combination
Advisory Committee	3	Project design	10	Development
			5	Combination
Advisory Committee	4	Impact on surrounding property*	5	All
Advisory Committee	5	Expansion or renovation	5	All
Advisory Committee	6	Health and safety	15	All
Advisory Committee	7	Budget development	5	All
Advisory Committee	8	Mandated uses	10	All
Advisory Committee	9	Public access	15	All
Advisory Committee	10	Need satisfaction	10	All
RCO Staff	11	Applicant match	5	All
RCO Staff	12	Growth Management Act compliance	0	All
Total Points Possible for Existing Sites:			95	
Total Points Possible for New Sites:			90	

**Applies only to existing sites and projects certified as qualifying for a higher funding level.*

FARR Detailed Scoring Criteria

Scored by the Advisory Committee

1. **Need.** To what extent is this type of FARR project needed in the service area?
2. **Threat Immediacy (acquisition and combination projects only).** To what degree will implementation of this proposal reduce the impact of a threat to the future availability of this opportunity?
3. **Project Design (development and combination projects only).** Has this project been designed in a high quality manner?
4. **Impact on Surrounding Property.** How much will this project protect surrounding properties from noise impacts and/or projectile hazards originating from the range?
5. **Expansion and renovation.** Will the project effectively expand or renovate an existing facility?
6. **Health and Safety.** How much will this project improve the health and safety qualities of the range property?² How does the project address the safety guidelines required in the FARR program?
7. **Budget Development.** Is the budget appropriately developed with enough detail to ensure a successful, cost-effective project?
8. **Mandated Uses.** To what extent will the applicant make the facility available for range purposes to license holders, hunter or firearm education, or law enforcement?³
9. **Public Access.** To what extent will the FARR facility be available for access by the public?⁴
10. **Need Satisfaction.** How well does this project satisfy the need identified in question 1?

Scored by RCO Staff

11. **Applicant Match.** What is the value of applicant contributions to this project?
12. **Growth Management Act Compliance.** Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA)?⁵

²Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.720

³Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.720, paragraph 3.

⁴Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.210 and Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Policy

⁵Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250 (Growth Management Act-preference required.)

Item 8: Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Program

Approval of Preliminary Ranked Lists

Summary

Applicants submitted ninety projects for the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Program. This memo describes the program, categories, evaluation process, and the resulting ranked lists. Staff will present additional project information at the April Recreation and Conservation Funding Board meeting and ask the board to approve the preliminary ranked lists, which becomes the basis for board-approval of grants in June, following legislative appropriation of funds for the program.

Action Requested: Decision - Approval of Resolution 2025-08

Background

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 backcountry recreational activities. These activities include cross-country skiing, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, hunting, fishing, sightseeing, motorcycling, and riding all-terrain and four-wheel drive vehicles. Some NOVA funding is dedicated for grants used for education and enforcement programs serving these recreationists, to preserve and protect NOVA recreation opportunities. In addition to fuel taxes, funds come from off-road vehicle use permits.

The legislative authority for the NOVA program is in Chapter 46.09 Revised Code of Washington and Chapter 286-13 Washington Administrative Code. Projects considered for funding directly support board-adopted priorities in the [Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan](#), which shapes the program policies and evaluation criteria that the board adopted into [Manual 13](#) NOVA Education and Enforcement and [Manual 14](#) NOVA Nonhighway Road, Nonmotorized, and Off-road Vehicle.

Program Summary

Projects in the Nonhighway Road and Nonmotorized categories must be adjacent to, or accessed by, a nonhighway road. A nonhighway road is any road owned or managed by a public agency, a primitive road, or any private road for which the owner has granted an easement for public use. In addition, appropriations from the motor vehicle fund cannot be used for (a) original construction or reconstruction in the last twenty-five years; or (b) maintenance in the last four years of the nonhighway road.¹

The table on the following pages provides a summary of current program policies for each NOVA Program category.

¹Revised Code of Washington 46.09.310(7)

NOVA Categories

The NOVA program has four grant categories: 1) Education and Enforcement, 2) Nonhighway Road, 3) Nonmotorized, and 4) Off-Road Vehicle. The primary NOVA changes for this grant cycle are the board-approved increase in grant limits and the director-authorized move to a written evaluation process for all categories with a question-and-answer period before advisory committee members submitted their scores.

The program categories share some common and distinct characteristics as shown in this table.

	Education and Enforcement	Nonhighway Road	Nonmotorized	Off-Road Vehicle
Recreation Activities Targeted	Information, education, and outreach programs for trail and back-road related outdoor recreation; encourages responsible recreational behavior; and may provide law enforcement for the benefit of outdoor recreationists.	Nonmotorized boating, camping, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, fishing, gathering, hunting, and picnicking.	Nonmotorized trail activities, such as horseback riding, hiking, climbing, mountain biking, and cross-country skiing.	Motorized off-road activities, including motorcycling and riding all-terrain and four-wheel drive vehicles on trails and in sport parks.
Eligible Applicants	Native American tribes, and federal,	Native American tribes, and federal, state, and local governments.	Native American tribes, and federal, state, and local governments.	Native American tribes, federal, state, and local governments, and

	Education and Enforcement	Nonhighway Road	Nonmotorized	Off-Road Vehicle
	state, and local governments.			nonprofit off-road vehicle organizations.
Legal Opinion	To participate in the program, an applicant must submit a legal opinion. ²			
Plan Required	None	Applicants must have an adopted comprehensive outdoor recreation plan on file with the Recreation and Conservation Office if the grant proposal involves planning, acquisition, or development of facilities.		
Eligible Project Types	Education and law enforcement activities that target NOVA-eligible uses and recreationists.	Land acquisition ³ , development or renovation projects, maintenance and operation of facilities, and planning activities.		
Fund Limits	Up to \$250,000 per project.	Up to \$200,000 per project.	Up to \$200,000 per project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No limits for land acquisition, development, and planning projects. • Maintenance and operations projects are limited to a maximum of \$250,000 for two-year projects.

²First time applicants only.

³Federal agencies are not permitted to purchase real property using NOVA funding.

	Education and Enforcement	Nonhighway Road	Nonmotorized	Off-Road Vehicle
Match	By law, no matching share is required, but an evaluation criterion encourages non-Recreation and Conservation Office match contributions by awarding additional points.			
Typical Project Elements	Salaries, operating expenses, and capital equipment including vehicles.	Interpretive trails and related trailheads, picnic areas, day-use areas, viewpoints, campgrounds, and support structures including sanitary facilities and utilities.	Trails, trailheads, and structures including sanitary facilities and utilities that support nonmotorized trail recreation.	Trails, trailheads, day-use areas, sports parks, campgrounds, intensive use areas, and support structures including sanitary facilities and utilities.

Analysis

Evaluation Summary

The NOVA Advisory Committee evaluated ninety grant proposals, between February 3 and March 12, 2025, requesting over \$16 million in grant funds. The advisory committee has government representatives that manage land where NOVA activities occur, and a proportional representation of trail users with recreational experiences in areas identified in the most recent fuel use study.⁴ The RCO director selects and appoints advisory committee members who have experience, expertise, and technical knowledge of NOVA-related recreation. Advisory committee members participating in the evaluation process this year include the following:

Advisory Committee Members

Name	Representing	Location
Kathy Doubt	Equestrian	Kent
Denise Garcia	Nonhighway road	Camano Island
Lance Hansen	All-terrain vehicle	Lynden
Richard Johnson	Nonhighway road	Sammamish
Brandon Lester	Mountain bicycling	Everett
Nichol Phillips	Four-wheel drive	Lake Tapps
John Spring	Nonhighway road	Mercer Island
Alex Walberg	Motorcycle	Sequim
Tripp Williams	Hiking	Seattle
Larissa Zens	Hiking	Spokane
Sam Jarrett	Local Agency, King County	Seattle
Rosemary Seifried ⁵	Federal Agency, U.S. Forest Service	Winthrop
Holly English	State Agency Department of Fish and Wildlife	Ellensburg
Sam Hensold ⁵	State Agency Department of Natural Resources	Olympia

The advisory committee evaluated all project proposals using a hybrid evaluation process. Committee members began scoring each project using the applicant's written responses to the evaluation criteria. Applicants then participated in a ten-minute

⁴ Revised Code of Washington 46.09.340(1)

⁵ Participated in advisory committee meetings only. Did not score projects.

mandatory question-and-answer session scheduled March 10-12. Advisory committee members asked clarifying questions to help them complete scoring each project. The virtual question and answer sessions were broadcast live for members of the public. The committee used the board-adopted criteria shown in Attachments C to score all projects. The resulting ranked lists for each category are in Attachment A. The evaluation scores and project descriptions for the Education and Enforcement category are posted on RCO's Web site on the NOVA Education page under [Grant Award History 2024](#). The scores and project descriptions for the Nonhighway Road, Nonmotorized, and Off-Road Vehicle categories are posted on the NOVA Trails page under [Grant Award History 2024](#).

Review of Process and Criteria

RCO staff hosted a virtual post-evaluation meeting with the NOVA Advisory Committee on March 24, 2025, to debrief and assess the evaluation process and scoring results. The committee noted that the written process with the question-and-answer sessions for all projects worked well, although some projects were so well written that there were no follow-up questions for applicants. This resulted in the virtual meeting running early, sometimes by more than an hour, since each project was scheduled for a ten-minute session. RCO staff asked applicants to join early, which helped to fill in the gaps. Outlined below is a summary of the discussion with committee members immediately after the evaluation sessions or during the post evaluation meeting.

Evaluation Criteria

The Education and Enforcement criterion "Targeting Current Users" left some evaluators wanting more information about the users. While reviewing the "County Population Density and the Proximity to People" criteria for all other NOVA categories, committee members again wanted to know more about the users. For example, are the recreationists local area residents or people traveling from other areas of the state or country to use these funded facilities? One committee member acknowledged that projects that are close to population centers seem to have an advantage over projects that are farther away. The member went on to ask whether the board should give more points to remote sites because recreationists accessing those sites contribute more gas tax dollars when driving greater distances. Another member commented that the people living in some of those remote areas desperately need improved access to recreation facilities.

Two similar criteria in both the Education and Enforcement category and the Trails category are "Need" and "Need Satisfaction/Fulfillment". These criteria presented a challenge for some advisory committee members. The primary reason is that applicants do a great job describing the high overall need; however, the proposed project may not

have a significant impact on that need. One suggestion for the next grant cycle is to ask applicants to specifically describe the beneficial impact the proposed project has on satisfying the needs of recreational users. If the applicant quantifies the impact, committee members may have more reliable data to help them with scoring.

Although there is no match requirement for NOVA, the “Matching Shares” criterion rewards an applicant for contributing match. Some committee members felt this might not be equitable because some entities have the resources to secure match from various sources while others may not. For Education and Enforcement projects, applicants are scored on two match-related criteria – “Non-Governmental Contributions and Matching Shares”. The advisory committee scores the “Non-Governmental Contributions” criterion, which rewards an applicant for reducing government costs through documented use of donations or similar cost savings. Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff scores the objective criterion, “Matching Shares”. It appears that sponsor match is rewarded twice. Applicants receive points for providing a certain amount of match and then they sometimes also get points for the match source.

Advisory committee members were frustrated by how applicants addressed the “Project Support” criterion. They consider whether the applicant had letters of support, how many were provided, and whether the letters included endorsements from the primary users. One commented that it feels like applicants are scored on how many letters they submit, not necessarily on the quality of the letters. For some of the more heavily used recreation areas, the applicants created “form” letters that were used for multiple projects. Some of the letters had a list of projects that the sender supports; however, there was no information about why a specific project is supported.

For NOVA recreation category projects, there are several questions applying only to projects eligible for competitive funds. Using a separate score sheet, the advisory committee scores one of the supplemental questions, “Confidence in Estimated NOVA Recreationist Served”, and RCO staff score the rest. The committee asked if RCO could add that supplemental question to the PRISM Online Review and Evaluation Module to make scoring that criterion easier. Staff will look at integration options for this criterion into the evaluation module.

Evaluation Process

The advisory committee felt the evaluation process was organized, well-run, and fair, and that the PRISM Review and Evaluation module used to score projects was intuitive and user friendly. One advisory committee member said that this year’s project proposals were the best seen thus far. There was immediate validation and agreement

about the question-and-answer sessions, evaluation process, and the strong proposals by the other advisory committee members.

While they support the continuation of a written evaluation process and question-and-answer sessions, several members asked if they could once again meet in-person as they feel they are missing out on the advisor collaboration. Applicants should continue to participate virtually, but committee members want to meet in-person to help facilitate the learning that happens when they are physically in the same room. Most advisory committee members represent specific recreational users. They found it challenging to discuss and learn about other uses and how to assess those project proposals in the virtual environment. One suggestion was for RCO to offer a hybrid process to meet all members' needs.

The advisory committee was comfortable with the resulting ranked lists. It was clear that advisory committee members dedicated themselves to preparing for and participating fully in the new written and question-and-answer process.

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of these grant proposals supports the board's strategy to provide funding to enhance recreation opportunities statewide. The grant process supports the board's strategy to conduct its work in a fair and open manner, as well as its goal to deliver successful projects by using broad public participation. The criteria for selecting projects support strategic investments in the protection, restoration, and development of recreation opportunities.

Projects considered for NOVA funding directly support board adopted priorities in the [Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan](#).

Public Comment

Letters of support or concern are attached to the individual project proposals in Project Snapshot. The letters are accessible by clicking the project numbers on the ranked lists (Attachment A). Any additional public comment will be shared at the April board meeting.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend that the board approval of Resolution 2025-08, which include all four Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities categories.

Next Steps

If the board approves the preliminary ranked lists, staff will prepare the projects for funding consideration following legislative approval of a capital budget for the 2025-27 biennium. The board will approve the final list and make funding decisions at its June 2025 meeting.

Attachments

A. Resolution 2025-08, including:

- Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, Education and Enforcement Category, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-27
- Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, Nonhighway Road Category, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-27
- Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, Nonmotorized Category, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-27
- Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, Off-Road Vehicle Category, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-27

B. State Maps of Projects for each NOVA Category

C. Evaluation Criteria Summary:

- Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, Education and Enforcement Category
- Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, Nonhighway Road, Nonmotorized, and Off-road Vehicle Categories

Attachment A: Resolution 2025-08

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2025-08 Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Approval of the Preliminary Ranked Lists of Projects for the 2025-27 Biennium

WHEREAS for the 2025-27 biennium, ninety Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Program projects are being considered for funding; and

WHEREAS all ninety projects have met program eligibility requirements as stipulated in *Manual 13 NOVA: Education and Enforcement Category* and *Manual 14 NOVA: Nonhighway Road, Nonmotorized, Off-Road Vehicle Categories*; and

WHEREAS these NOVA projects were evaluated by NOVA Advisory Committee members using Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approved evaluation criteria, thereby supporting the board's strategy to fund the best projects as determined by the evaluation process; and

WHEREAS evaluation of all categories occurred through a written evaluation process combined with a virtual question-and-answer session in compliance with Washington Administrative Code 286-04-065 as part of the competitive selection process, supporting the board's strategy to ensure that its work is conducted with integrity and in a fair and open manner to deliver successful projects by using broad public participation; and

WHEREAS the twenty-six Education and Enforcement Category projects focus on protecting user needs and minimizing environmental impacts and conflict between user groups; and

WHEREAS the eighteen Nonhighway Road Category projects provide opportunities for recreationists who enjoy activities such as nonmotorized boating, camping, driving for pleasure, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, fishing, gathering, hunting, and picnicking; and

WHEREAS the twenty-three Nonmotorized Category projects provide opportunities for recreationists who enjoy nonmotorized trail activities such as horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking and cross-country skiing; and

WHEREAS the twenty-three Off-Road Vehicle Category projects provide opportunities for recreationists who enjoy motorized off-road activities, including motorcycling and

riding all-terrain and four-wheel drive vehicles on trails and in competition sport parks;
and

WHEREAS all ninety projects plan, develop, maintain, or provide education and enforcement activities, thereby supporting the board's strategy to provide partners with funding to enhance recreation opportunities statewide;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the board hereby approves the preliminary ranked lists of projects depicted in Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-27.

Resolution moved by:

Resolution seconded by:

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date:

**Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities
Education and Enforcement Category
Preliminary Ranked List of Projects 2025-2027**

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁶	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
1	62.7	24-2517 E	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Snoqualmie Ranger District	Alpine Lakes Wilderness Backcountry Patrol	\$250,000	\$251,000	\$501,000
2	61.55	24-2447 E	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee River Ranger District	Wilderness and Enchantment Areas Education and Enforcement	\$198,707	\$198,843	\$397,550
3	61	24-2518 E	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Methow Valley Ranger District	Wilderness and Backcountry Rangers	\$250,000	\$251,930	\$501,930
4	60.64	24-2721 E	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest	Entiat and Chelan Ranger Districts Education and Enforcement	\$60,000	\$41,000	\$101,000
5	60.36	24-2529 E	U.S. Forest Service, Olympic National Forest	Education and Enforcement	\$203,000	\$203,760	\$406,760

⁶Project Type: E=Education and Enforcement

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁶	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
6	59.67	24-2671 E	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Darrington Ranger District	Field Education and Wilderness Patrols	\$188,500	\$193,238	\$381,738
7	59.1	24-2758 E	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Snoqualmie Ranger District	Front Country Patrol	\$250,000	\$250,500	\$500,500
8	58.83	24-2451 E	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	Alpine Lakes Wilderness Education and Enforcement	\$150,000	\$65,000	\$215,000
9	58.58	24-2456 E	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	Front Country Education and Enforcement	\$90,000	\$60,050	\$150,050
10	58.5	24-2452 E	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	Off-road Vehicle Education and Enforcement	\$100,000	\$26,000	\$126,000
11	58.42	24-2737 E	Northwest Motorcycle Association	Education Program	\$139,150	\$972,000	\$1,111,150

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁶	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
12	58.08	24-2283 E	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Hood Canal District Education and Enforcement	\$213,666	\$214,058	\$427,724
13	57.83	24-2504 E	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Cascade District Education and Enforcement Steward	\$200,000	\$205,032	\$405,032
14	57.73	24-2395 E	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Snoqualmie Corridor and Middle Fork Valley Education and Enforcement	\$200,000	\$200,100	\$400,100
15	56.83	24-2378 E	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Northwest Region Education and Enforcement North Zone	\$205,000	\$206,000	\$411,000
16	56.67	24-2765 E	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger District	Naches Wilderness Ranger Education and Enforcement	\$30,000	\$6,000	\$36,000
17	56.5	24-2414 E	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Elbe and Tahoma Education and Enforcement	\$184,154	\$185,008	\$369,162

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁶	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
18	56.27	24-2402 E	Spokane County	Spokane County Parks Education and Enforcement Program Sites	\$159,175	\$185,412	\$344,587
19	55.92	24-2599 E	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Mount Baker Ranger District	Wilderness Rangers	\$47,830	\$48,200	\$96,030
20	55.27	24-2576 E	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Riverside State Park Education and Enforcement Ranger	\$212,733	\$173,576	\$386,309
21	54.91	24-2705 E	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger District	Off-Highway Vehicle Education and Enforcement Rangers	\$125,000	\$38,500	\$163,500
22	54.17	24-2611 E	Chelan County Sheriff's Office	Chelan County Off-Road Vehicle Education and Enforcement	\$250,000	\$226,700	\$476,700
23	53.5	24-2245 E	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Capitol Forest Education and Enforcement	\$248,000	\$147,830	\$395,830

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁶	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
24	52.75	24-2248 E	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Pacific Cascade Region Education and Enforcement	\$223,168	\$90,200	\$313,368
25	52.25	24-2670 E	U.S. Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot National Forest	Gifford Pinchot Backcountry and Wilderness Education	\$249,794	\$112,439	\$362,233
26	46.5	24-2407 E	National Park Service, Mount Rainier National Park	Seasonal Law Enforcement Officer	\$237,794		\$237,794
Total					\$4,665,671	\$4,552,376	\$9,218,047

Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities
Nonhighway Road Category
Preliminary Ranked List of Projects 2025-2027

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁷	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
1	68.25	24-2393 M	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Darrington Ranger District	Mountain Loop Scenic Byway Recreation	\$200,000	\$200,500	\$400,500
2	67.27	24-2533 M	U.S. Forest Service, Olympic National Forest	Forest-wide Front Country Maintenance	\$186,000	\$190,000	\$376,000
3	66	24-2457 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	Front Country Maintenance and Operation	\$145,000	\$97,000	\$242,000
3	66	24-2581 M	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Snoqualmie Ranger District	Front Country Maintenance	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$300,000
5	65.5	24-2555 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Methow Valley Ranger District	Developed Recreation Campground Maintenance	\$199,020	\$309,380	\$508,400

⁷Project Type: D=Development, M=Maintenance

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁷	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
6	65.36	24-2536 M	U.S Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee River Ranger District	Developed and Dispersed	\$124,000	\$86,500	\$210,500
7	65.17	24-2681 M	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Skykomish Ranger District	Highway Recreation Corridor Maintenance	\$200,000	\$200,500	\$400,500
8	62.83	24-2458 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	Sanitation Rentals	\$33,400	\$4,000	\$37,400
9	62.42	24-2586 M	U.S Forest Service, Colville National Forest	Facilities Maintenance and Operation	\$150,000	\$152,857	\$302,857
10	62.08	24-2244 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Capitol and Yacolt State Forests Facilities Maintenance and Operation	\$193,150	\$100,000	\$293,150
11	61.92	24-2396 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	South Puget Sound Region Facilities Cleaning	\$198,187	\$200,000	\$398,187

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁷	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
12	61.27	24-2739 D	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Snoqualmie Ranger District	Talapus Lake Parking Lot and Trailhead Development	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$150,000
13	59.4	24-2375 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Southeast Region Maintenance and Operations-North Entiat and Chelan Ranger Districts	\$150,000	\$124,000	\$274,000
14	58.18	24-2590 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest	Campgrounds and Dispersed Maintenance and Operation	\$175,000	\$134,650	\$309,650
15	58	24-2438 D	Thurston County Public Works	Burfoot Trail System	\$200,000	\$508,864	\$708,864
16	55.36	24-2704 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger District	Naches Developed Dispersed Campground Maintenance and Operation	\$200,000	\$50,000	\$250,000
17	53.25	24-2556 D	U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Wenatchee Field Office	North End Douglas Creek Revitalization	\$200,000	\$10,000	\$210,000

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁷	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
18	48.58	24-2649 D	Port of Grays Harbor	Sterling Landing Trailhead Improvements	\$200,000	\$23,000	\$223,000
Total					\$3,053,757	\$2,541,251	\$5,595,008

**Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities
Nonmotorized Category
Preliminary Ranked List of Projects 2025-2027**

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁸	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
1	69.45	24-2722 M	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker- Snoqualmie National Forest, Snoqualmie Ranger District	Trail Maintenance	\$200,000	\$200,100	\$400,100
2	67.67	24-2392 M	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker- Snoqualmie National Forest, Darrington Ranger District	Trail Crew	\$200,000	\$200,500	\$400,500
2	67.67	24-2482 M	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker- Snoqualmie National Forest, Skykomish Ranger District	Trail Maintenance	\$200,000	\$200,500	\$400,500
4	66.82	24-2513 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Methow Valley Ranger District	Trail Maintenance	\$200,000	\$213,250	\$413,250

⁸Project Type: D=Development, M=Maintenance, P=Planning

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁸	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
5	66.18	24-2472 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Snoqualmie Corridor Facilities and Trails Maintenance and Operation	\$200,000	\$200,100	\$400,100
6	65.58	24-2596 M	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Mount Baker Ranger District	Trail Maintenance	\$200,000	\$220,040	\$420,040
7	65.55	24-2530 M	U.S. Forest Service, Olympic National Forest	Trail Maintenance	\$194,000	\$200,000	\$394,000
8	64.8	24-2366 D	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Teanaway West Fork Trails Development Phase Two	\$104,500	\$105,000	\$209,500
9	63.42	24-2684 M	National Park Service, Mount Rainier National Park	Repair Wonderland Trail Tread	\$200,000	\$80,020	\$280,020
10	63.17	24-2455 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	Nonmotorized Trail Maintenance and Operation	\$150,000	\$39,000	\$189,000
11	61.83	24-2711 D	National Park Service, Mount Rainier National Park	Reconnect Trails to Mowich Lake	\$200,000	\$110,260	\$310,260

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁸	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
12	61.58	24-2374 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Blanchard and Harry Osborne Maintenance and Operation	\$200,000	\$201,000	\$401,000
13	61.33	24-2597 M	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Mount Baker Ranger District	Shadow of the Sentinels	\$39,900	\$40,100	\$80,000
14	59.83	24-2412 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Elbe Equestrian System Maintenance	\$197,475	\$200,240	\$397,715
15	59.45	24-2747 M	U.S Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Cowlitz Valley Ranger District	Nonmotorized Trails Maintenance and Operation	\$188,920	\$185,520	\$374,440
16	58.92	24-2246 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Capitol Forest Nonmotorized Trail and Facility Maintenance	\$198,900	\$134,514	\$333,414
17	58.36	24-2443 M	U.S Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee River Ranger District	Wilderness and Front Country Maintenance and Operation	\$200,000	\$145,000	\$345,000

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁸	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
18	58	24-2598 D	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Mount Baker Ranger District	Horseshoe Cove Americans with Disabilities Act Trail	\$63,400	\$63,600	\$127,000
19	54.75	24-2312 D	Chelan County	Nason Ridge Community Forest Access Improvement	\$165,942	\$30,000	\$195,942
20	54.45	24-2336 P	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Moran State Park Trails Planning	\$88,000	\$62,000	\$150,000
21	53.73	24-2360 P	Entiat	Columbia Breaks Interpretive Center Trail System	\$200,000	\$45,100	\$245,100
22	51.09	24-2612 P	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Quincy Lakes Trails and Recreation Infrastructure	\$200,000		\$200,000
23	44.42	24-2460 D	Pend Oreille County	Pend Oreille County Park Americans with Disabilities Act Trail	\$200,000	\$74,000	\$274,000
Total					\$3,991,037	\$2,949,844	\$6,940,881

Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities
Off-Road Vehicle Category
Preliminary Ranked List of Projects 2025-2027

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁹	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
1	64.67	24-2505 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Cascade District Off-Road Vehicle Maintenance and Operations	\$230,000	\$234,036	\$464,036
2	63.92	24-2282 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Tahuya-Green Mountain Trails and Facilities Maintenance	\$223,403	\$228,473	\$451,876
3	63.5	24-2281 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Tahuya 4x4 Trails Maintenance and Operation	\$199,479	\$205,266	\$404,745
4	62.33	24-2516 M	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Snoqualmie Ranger District	Off-Highway Vehicle	\$244,000	\$176,000	\$420,000
5	62.18	24-2749 M	U.S Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Cowlitz Valley Ranger District	Motorized Trails Maintenance and Operation	\$174,860	\$199,310	\$374,170

⁹Project Type: D=Development, M=Maintenance, P=Planning

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁹	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
6	61.75	24-2316 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	North Olympic Motorized Trail Maintenance	\$193,088	\$193,688	\$386,776
7	61.33	24-2730 M	Northwest Motorcycle Association	Statewide Trail Maintenance	\$250,000	\$555,450	\$805,450
8	61.08	24-2373 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Walker Valley Off-Road Vehicle Trails Maintenance and Operation	\$250,000	\$290,000	\$540,000
9	60.83	24-2413 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Elbe Off-Road Vehicle System Maintenance	\$243,189	\$221,900	\$465,089
10	59.5	24-2301 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Ahtanum Off-Road Vehicle Facilities and Trail Maintenance	\$250,000	\$109,700	\$359,700
11	59.45	24-2515 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Methow Valley Ranger District	Motorized Trail Maintenance	\$93,205	\$62,520	\$155,725
12	59.17	24-2453 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	North Zone Maintenance and Operation	\$191,500	\$21,600	\$213,100
13	58.83	24-2496 M	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Riverside State Off-Road Vehicle	\$164,310	\$159,185	\$323,495

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁹	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
				Maintenance and Operation			
14	57.75	24-2454 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	South Zone Maintenance and Operation	\$188,000	\$21,000	\$209,000
15	57.64	24-2544 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Entiat Ranger District	Entiat and Chelan Multiple Use Trail Maintenance and Operation	\$200,000	\$148,000	\$348,000
16	56.92	24-2247 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Capitol Forest Off-Road Vehicle Trail and Facility Maintenance	\$237,500	\$125,000	\$362,500
17	56.36	24-2712 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger District	Naches Motorized Trails Maintenance and Operation	\$200,000	\$50,000	\$250,000
18	56.33	24-2383 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Pacific Cascade Motorized Maintenance	\$198,100	\$87,000	\$285,100
19	56.09	24-2601 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee River Ranger	Motorized Trail Maintenance	\$200,000	\$150,000	\$350,000

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ⁹	Grant Applicant District	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
20	53.36	24-2264 M	Grant County	Moses Lake Sand Dunes	\$65,000		\$65,000
21	44.08	24-2404 P	Spokane County	Spokane County Trails Off-Road Vehicle Program	\$75,000		\$75,000
22	42.92	24-2661 M	Spokane Motorsports Complex	Spokane Motorsports Complex Track Maintenance	\$239,000	\$20,800	\$259,800
23	39.33	24-2359 D	Ferry County (Republic) District 2	Parks and Recreation Off-Road Vehicle Campground	\$356,670	\$8,330	\$365,000
Total					\$4,666,304	\$3,267,258	\$7,933,562

Attachment B: State Maps of Projects for each NOVA Category

Site Map for NOVA Education and Enforcement Category Projects



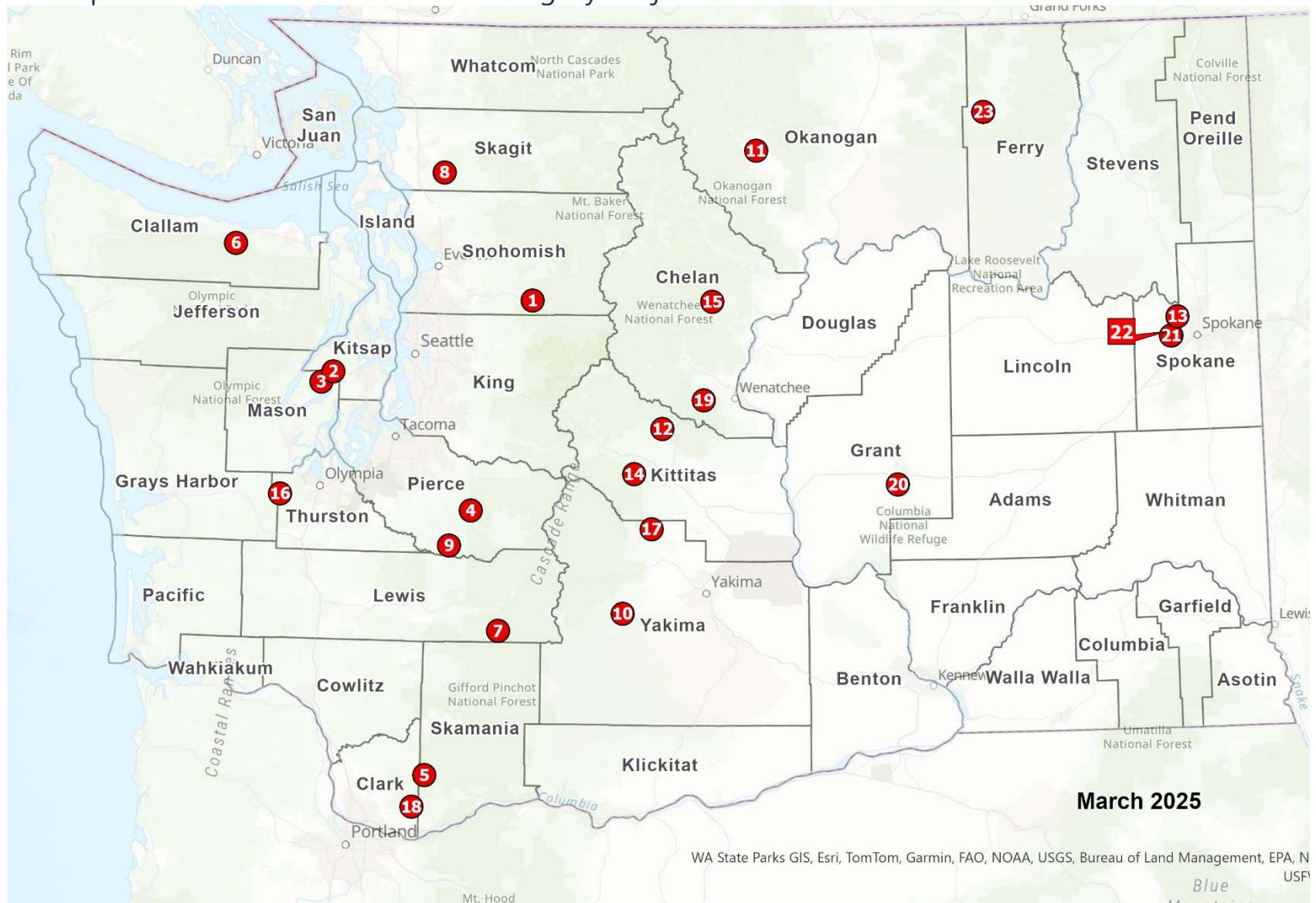
Site Map for NOVA Nonhighway Road Category Projects



Site Map for NOVA Nonmotorized Category Projects



Site Map for NOVA Off-Road Vehicle Category Projects



Attachment C: Evaluation Criteria Summary

Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities

Education and Enforcement Evaluation Criteria Summary

Scored by	Question Number	Criteria	Maximum Points	NOVA Plan Policy ¹⁰
Advisory Committee	1	Need	15	A-1, B-1, B-4
Advisory Committee	2	Need satisfaction	15	A-1, B-1, B-4
Advisory Committee	3	In-field contacts	10	B-2
Advisory Committee	4	Targeting current users	10	B-3
Advisory Committee	5	Project support	10	A-1, B-4
Advisory Committee	6	Non-government contributions	5	C-3
RCO Staff	7	Matching shares	5	A-1, B-4
Total Points Possible:			70	

¹⁰NOVA Plan Policy. Criteria orientation in accordance with the NOVA Plan 2005-2011, which were carried forward to the current plan. The letter and number codes reference corresponding policies in the plan.

Scoring Criteria, NOVA Education and Enforcement Category

Scored by Advisory Committee

1. **Need.** What is the need for an education and enforcement project in the applicant's jurisdiction?
2. **Need Satisfaction.** To what extent will this project meet the service area's education and enforcement needs identified in Question 1, above?
3. **In-Field Contacts.** To what extent will the project address on-the-ground needs, including in-field contact with NOVA users during the high use season?
4. **Targeting Current NOVA Users.** To what extent will the project focus on needs created by current versus potential NOVA recreationists?
5. **Project Support.** To what extent do users and the public (statewide, community, or user groups) support the project?
6. **Non-Government Contributions.** Does this project reduce government costs through documented donations (labor, equipment, materials), signed cooperative agreements, or signed memoranda of understanding (including no cost leases, interagency agreements, donations, or similar cost saving arrangements)?

Scored by RCO Staff

7. **Matching Shares.** What percentage of the total project cost is the applicant contributing?

Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities

Nonhighway Road, Nonmotorized, and Off-road Vehicle Categories Evaluation Criteria Summary

Scoring	Question Number	Criteria	Questions by Category and Project Type	Maximum Points	NOVA Plan Policy ¹¹
Advisory Committee	1	Need	*All	15	A-1, C-7
			Maintenance and Operation	25	
Advisory Committee	2	Need fulfillment	All	15	A-1, C-6, C-7
			Maintenance and Operation	25	
Advisory Committee	3	Site suitability	Acquisition	15	C-15
			Combination Acquisition and Development	5	
Advisory Committee	4	Project design	Acquisition	10	C-1, C-5, C-7, C-8, C-14
			Combination Acquisition and Development	5	
Advisory Committee	5	Planning	Planning	10	C-6, C-15
Advisory Committee	6	Sustainability	All projects, except Maintenance	5	
Advisory Committee	7	Readiness to Proceed	All projects, except Maintenance	5	
Advisory Committee	8	Predominately Natural	Nonmotorized and Nonhighway Road categories only	5	C-13
Advisory Committee	9	Project Support	All	10	C-3, C-4

¹¹ NOVA Plan Policy. Criteria orientation in accordance with the NOVA Plan 2005-2011, which were carried forward to the current plan. The letter and number codes reference corresponding policies in the plan.

Scoring	Question Number	Criteria	Questions by Category and Project Type	Maximum Points	NOVA Plan Policy ¹¹
Advisory Committee	10	Cost Benefit	All	5	A-1, C-3
RCO Staff	11	Matching Shares	All	5	C-4
RCO Staff	12	County Population Density	All	1	C-4
RCO Staff	13	Proximity to People	All	1	C-2
RCO Staff	14	Growth Management Act preference	All	0	
Nonhighway and Nonmotorized Total Points Possible:				77	
Off-Road Vehicle Total Possible Points Possible:				72	

**All = includes acquisition, development, maintenance and operation, and planning project types.*

Scoring Criteria for NOVA Nonhighway Road, Nonmotorized, and Off-Road Vehicle Categories

Scored by Advisory Committee

1. **Need.** What is the need for new, improved, or maintained facilities?
2. **Need fulfillment.** How well will this project fulfill the service area's needs identified in Question 1?
3. **Site suitability.** To what extent is the site to be acquired well suited for the intended recreational activity? (Acquisition projects)
4. **Project design.** Is the proposal appropriately designed for intended uses and users? (Development projects)
5. **Planning.** To what extent will the proposed plan or study help provide opportunities and address sustainability of the natural environment? (Planning projects)?
6. **Sustainability.** Will the project's location or design support the organization's sustainability plan? What ecological, economic, and social benefits and impacts were considered in the project plan?
7. **Readiness to proceed.** How soon after the grant is approved can the project begin?
8. **Predominately natural.** Is the project site in a predominately natural setting? (ORV applicants do not answer this question.)
9. **Project support.** To what extent do users and the public support the project?
10. **Cost-benefit.** Do the project's benefits outweigh its costs?

Scored by RCO Staff

11. **Matching shares.** What percentage of the total project cost is the applicant contributing?
12. **County population density.** Is the project site in a county with a population density greater than 250 people per square mile?
13. **Population proximity.** Is the project site within 30 miles of a city with a population of 25,000 people or more?

14. **Growth Management Act preference.** Has the applicant¹² made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?¹³

12 County, city, town, and special district applicants only. This question does not apply to nonprofit organizations or state and federal agency applicants.

13 Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250 (Growth Management Act-preference required)

Item 9: Recreational Trails Program: Approval of Preliminary Ranked List

Summary

Applicants submitted fifty-two projects for the Recreational Trails Program. This memo describes the program, categories, evaluation process, and the resulting ranked lists. Staff will present additional information about the projects at the April Recreation and Conservation Funding Board meeting and ask the board to approve the preliminary ranked lists, which will become the basis for awarding grants in June, following legislative approval of federal spending authority.

Action Requested: Decision. Approval of Resolution 2025-09

Background

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a federal grant program that assists states in creating and maintaining motorized and nonmotorized recreational trails. The federal program supports several recreational trails uses. These uses include walking, hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and off-road motorized vehicle driving, including off-road motorcycling and all-terrain and four-wheel-drive vehicle riding.

In the federal program, grants may be used to secure trail rights of way; assess trail conditions; construct and maintain recreational trails, trailheads, and trailside facilities; purchase equipment for constructing and maintaining trails; and conduct education programs for safety and environmental protection.

Each state develops procedures to solicit and select projects for funding in response to their recreational trail needs. In 1996, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board chose to use Washington State's allocation of RTP money to reduce the backlog of deferred maintenance on recreational trails that provide a backcountry experience.

Program Summary

RTP has two categories: general and education. The General Category provides grants for rehabilitating and maintaining existing recreational trails and developing short

linking trails, trailside and trailhead facilities. The Education Category funds education programs that convey a safety or environmental protection message.

This table provides a general program summary:

Program Overview	
Eligible Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal agencies • Local agencies • Native American Tribes • Nonprofit trail organizations • State agencies
Eligible Project Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development • Education • Maintenance
Match Requirements	Twenty percent minimum
Grant Limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and maintenance: \$5,000-\$150,000 • Education: \$5,000-\$20,000
Other Program Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects must provide a backcountry experience. • The project setting should be predominantly natural. • Funds are used for both motorized and nonmotorized recreation. • Development is limited to construction of new trailheads or short linking trails; replacement of trail structures; and renovation of existing trails and related facilities.

Rules governing the program are found in the Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program Guidance, 2 Code of Federal Regulations: Part 200, and Chapter 286-13 Washington Administrative Code. The board's program policies and adopted evaluation criteria are in [Manual 16: Recreational Trails Program](#).

The primary change implemented this grant cycle was updating the federal Buy American policy that now waives costs for projects under \$500,000.

Program Eligibility

There are two major requirements for states to be eligible to receive an apportionment of federal RTP funds:

1. The Governor of the state must designate the state agency that will be responsible for administering the grant program and funding; and
2. The state must establish a recreational trail advisory committee that represents both motorized and nonmotorized recreational trail users. The committee must meet at least once per federal fiscal year.

RTP legislation further requires states to have a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan or a recreational trails plan to guide them in administering and setting priorities for distribution of RTP funding. The [Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan](#) helps establish eligibility for our state.

Overview and Analysis

Evaluation Summary

Washington's RTP Advisory Committee evaluated fifty-two projects requesting nearly \$5.6 million in grant funds. Advisory committee members, appointed by the RCO director, are selected for their expertise, experience, and technical knowledge related to recreational trails. Using the board-adopted evaluation criteria shown in Attachment C, committee members reviewed and evaluated grant proposals using a written, score-at-home process. Advisory committee members participating in the evaluation process this year included the following:

Name	Representing	Location
Norris Boyd ¹	Snowmobile	Newport
Robin Buxton	Equestrian	Kent
David Fleischhauer	Mountain bike	North Bend
Andree Hurley	Nonmotorized users	Seattle
Ethan Lockwood	Hiker	Wenatchee
Rusty Milholland	Citizen-at Large	Snoqualmie
James Morin	Off-road motorcycle	Olympia
Pete Teigen	Citizen-at Large	Leavenworth
Ed Tenney	Four-by-four	Snohomish
Nicole Johnston	Local government	Anacortes
Charlotte Claybrooke	State Agency, Department of Transportation	Olympia
John Hansen	State Agency, Department of Fish and Wildlife	Olympia

¹Evaluated General Category projects only.

Name	Representing	Location
Bryanna Osmonson	State Agency, State Parks and Recreation	Olympia

The resulting ranked list, for each category, is provided for board consideration in Attachment A: *Recreational Trails Program, Education Category, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-27*, and *Recreational Trails Program, General Category, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-27*. The evaluation scores and project descriptions for each category are posted on RCO's Web site on the RTP page under [Grant Award History 2024](#).

Review of Process and Criteria

RCO staff hosted a virtual post-evaluation meeting on March 14, 2025. This meeting provided an opportunity for the committee to review the preliminary ranked lists and to debrief and assess the evaluation process and scoring results.

Education Category Projects

Federal program guidelines give states the option of using up to 5 percent of the RTP allocation for education projects. Committee members discussed the projects submitted this year, noting they were strong and beneficial and wished there were more applications for education programs. As in past years, the RTP advisory committee recommends the board continue providing funds for this category.

Evaluation Criteria

During the criteria discussion, it became apparent that the *Need* and *Need Satisfaction* criteria presented a challenge for some advisory committee members. The primary reason is that applicants do a great job describing the high overall need for maintenance or development of trail facilities. However, the proposed project itself will not have a significant impact on that need. One suggestion for the next grant cycle is to ask applicants to specifically describe the beneficial impact the proposed project has on satisfying the needs of recreational users. If the applicant quantifies the impact, committee members may have more reliable data to help them with scoring.

Advisory Committee members talked to staff about how to help applicants improve their responses to the *Cost-Benefit* and *Cost Efficiencies* criteria. While the criteria and the guidance for how to address the questions is adequate, applicants are not making the distinction between the two questions and often provide redundant answers. Staff are exploring ways to highlight the issue, provide direction to applicants, and get them to use the resources currently available that might help them with their responses.

Eligibility

This year applicants submitted a few projects that were not “in” the backcountry but instead provide a backcountry experience near an urban setting. This was confusing for a few committee members. While they support the need and scope of work proposed and felt these projects were as important as backcountry projects, they were initially concerned but were pleased to learn that the projects do meet the board’s eligibility criteria because they provide a backcountry experience.

Committee members asked for clarification about school districts and if they are eligible applicants in RTP. Although RCO does not list school districts in the manual, staff confirmed their eligibility and will clarify this in the next manual update.

Evaluation Process

Overall, the advisory committee felt the process was organized, well run, and fair. They appreciated using the PRISM Online Review and Evaluation Module and many of the built-in features. They were confident in the ranked lists and felt that the process worked well. Staff appreciate the time advisory committee members dedicated to preparing for and participating in the written evaluation process.

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of these projects supports the board’s strategy to provide funding to protect, preserve, restore, and enhance recreation opportunities statewide. The grant process supports the board’s strategy to conduct its work in a fair and open manner, as well as its goal to deliver successful projects by using broad public participation. The criteria for selecting projects support strategic investments in the protection, restoration, and development of recreation opportunities.

Projects considered for RTP funding support board adopted priorities in the [Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan](#).

Public Comment

Letters of support or concern are attached to the individual project proposals in Project Snapshot. The letters are accessible by clicking the project numbers on the ranked lists (Attachment A). Any additional public comment will be shared at the April board meeting.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend that the board approve *Recreational Trails Program, Education Category, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-2027* and *Recreational Trails Program, General Category, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-2027*.

Next Steps

If the board approves the preliminary ranked lists, staff will prepare the projects for funding consideration, following legislative approval of a capital budget for the 2025-27 biennium. Staff will ask the board to approve the final ranked list and make funding decisions at the June 2025 meeting.

Attachments

- A. Resolution 2025-09, including:
 - Recreational Trails Program, Education Category, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-27
 - Recreational Trails Program, General Category, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-27
- B. State Maps of Education Category and General Category Projects
- C. Evaluation Criteria Summary for Education and General Categories

Attachment A

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

Resolution 2025-09

Recreational Trails Program

Approval of the Preliminary Ranked Lists of Projects for the 2025-27 Biennium

WHEREAS for the 2025-27 biennium, fifty-two Recreational Trails Program (RTP) projects are being considered for funding; and

WHEREAS all fifty-two projects have met program eligibility requirements as stipulated in Federal Highways Administration's *Recreational Trails Program Guidance*, Washington Administrative Code, and Manual 16, *Recreational Trails Program*; and

WHEREAS these RTP projects were evaluated by members of the RTP Advisory Committee using Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approved and adopted evaluation process and criteria, thereby supporting the board's strategy to fund the best projects as determined by the evaluation process; and

WHEREAS the evaluations occurred through a board-approved written evaluation process, followed by advisory committee and board discussions in open public meetings as part of the competitive selection process outlined in Washington Administrative Code 286-04-065, thereby supporting the board's strategy to ensure that its work is conducted with integrity and in a fair and open manner; and

WHEREAS the fifty-two projects provide for maintaining recreational trails, developing trailhead facilities, and operating environmental education and trail safety programs, thereby supporting the board's strategy to provide partners with funding to enhance recreation opportunities statewide;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the board hereby approves the preliminary ranked lists of projects as depicted in the *Recreational Trails Program, Education Category, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-2027* and *Recreational Trails Program, General Category, Preliminary Ranked List of Projects, 2025-2027*.

Resolution moved by:

Resolution seconded by:

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date:

Attachment A

Recreational Trails Program

Resolution 2025-09

Education Category

Preliminary Ranked List of Projects 2025-2027

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ²	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
1	21.90	24-2368 E	Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance	Volunteer Trail School Program	\$20,000	\$5,016	\$25,016
2	21.64	24-2367 E	Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance	Volunteer Sawyer Education Program	\$20,000	\$13,700	\$33,700
3	21.33	24-2683 E	Stevenson-Carson School District	Youth Forestry Workforce Training and Development	\$16,000	\$4,000	\$20,000
4	21.08	24-2558 E	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Methow Valley Ranger District	Backcountry and Winter Education and Safety	\$19,830	\$21,114	\$40,944
5	20.33	24-2483 E	Conservation Northwest	Wildlife Ambassador Project	\$20,000	\$27,000	\$47,000
6	20.25	24-2461 E	Washington Trails Association	Trail Ambassadors	\$20,000	\$39,646	\$59,646

²Project Type: E=Education

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ²	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
7	20.00	24-2446 E	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Union River Educational Signage	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$25,000
8	19.17	24-2752 E	Backcountry Medical Guides	Galbraith Public Safety Campaign	\$11,600	\$2,900	\$14,500
9	18.92	24-2793 E	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust	Greenway Trailhead Ambassadors	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$25,000
10	15.36	24-2580 E	Chelan-Douglas Land Trust	Foothills Trail Ambassadors	\$10,000	\$2,688	\$12,688
Total					\$177,430	\$126,064	\$303,494

Attachment A

Recreational Trails Program

General Category

Preliminary Ranked List of Projects 2025-2027

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ³	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
1	73.85	24-2253 D	Methow Valley Sport Trail Association	Cub Creek Trailhead Development	\$150,000	\$213,658	\$363,658
2	72.08	24-2385 M	Washington Trails Association	Statewide Volunteer Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$625,807	\$775,807
3	72.00	24-2478 M	Pacific Northwest Trail Association	Pacific Northwest Trail Statewide Stewardship	\$150,000	\$300,000	\$450,000
4	71.77	24-2386 M	Washington Trails Association	Statewide Backcountry Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$509,316	\$659,316
5	71.08	24-2353 M	Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance	Eastern Washington Volunteer Trail Maintenance	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$300,000
6	70.92	24-2277 M	Back Country Horsemen of Washington	Statewide Collaborative Trail Maintenance	\$149,900	\$151,500	\$301,400
7	70.50	24-2352 M	Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance	Western Washington Volunteer Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$390,000	\$540,000

³Project Type: D=Development, M=Maintenance

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ³	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
8	70.38	24-2261 M	Back Country Horsemen of Washington	Olympic Peninsula Collaborative Trail Maintenance	\$147,551	\$204,375	\$351,926
8	70.38	24-2514 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Methow Valley Ranger District	Mixed Use Deferred Trail Maintenance	\$149,945	\$153,660	\$303,605
10	70.00	24-2509 M	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$300,000
11	69.77	24-2276 M	Back Country Horsemen of Washington	Targeted Maintenance of Threatened Trails	\$149,060	\$143,330	\$292,390
11	69.77	24-2668 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Chelan Ranger District	Lower Lake Chelan Summer and Winter Trails	\$150,000	\$123,000	\$273,000
13	69.62	24-2384 M	Washington Trails Association	Statewide Youth Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$260,340	\$410,340
14	68.15	24-2346 M	Nooksack Nordic Ski Club	Salmon Ridge Cross-Country Ski and Snowshoe Trail Maintenance	\$25,500	\$77,129	\$102,629

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ³	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
15	67.15	24-2634 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Chelan Ranger District	Upper Lake Chelan Basin Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$105,500	\$255,500
16	66.46	24-2629 D	Seattle	Discovery Park South Beach Trail Development	\$150,000	\$270,111	\$420,111
17	65.46	24-2692 D	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Skykomish Ranger District	Deception Falls Trail Bridge Replacement	\$150,000	\$160,000	\$310,000
18	64.58	24-2549 M	Chelan-Douglas Land Trust	Wenatchee Foothills Trail Maintenance	\$121,580	\$115,480	\$237,060
19	64.08	24-2284 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Hood Canal District Nonmotorized Maintenance	\$43,645	\$51,416	\$95,061
20	63.62	24-2417 D	Thurston County Public Works	Burfoot Trail System Footbridges and Stairways	\$150,000	\$555,664	\$705,664
21	63.31	24-2357 M	Wenatchee Valley TREAD	Deferred Backcountry Trail Maintenance Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest and Gifford Pinchot	\$150,000	\$156,680	\$306,680

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ³	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
				National Forest			
22	63.25	24-2731 M	Northwest Motorcycle Association	Statewide Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$233,984	\$383,984
23	61.62	24-2318 D	Jefferson Land Trust	Community Forest Accessible Parking and Trails	\$113,000	\$114,931	\$227,931
24	59.62	24-2715 D	Mount Rainier National Park	Reroute of Wonderland Trail	\$150,000	\$78,036	\$228,036
25	57.46	24-2735 M	Mount Rainier National Park	Maintain Mowich Area Trails	\$150,000	\$60,260	\$210,260
26	57.31	24-2706 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger District	Naches Motorized Trails Deferred Maintenance and Operation	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$250,000
27	57.08	24-2371 M	Leavenworth Winter Sports Club	Maintenance of Winter Trails	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$250,000
28	56.46	24-2787 M	Stevenson-Carson School District	Skamania County Trail Work-Forest Youth Success	\$113,136	\$28,284	\$141,420
29	56.31	24-2702 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger District	Naches Wilderness Trails Deferred Maintenance	\$150,000	\$46,500	\$196,500

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ³	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
30	55.15	24-2714 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger District	Naches Wilderness Trails Maintenance and Operation	\$150,000	\$62,000	\$212,000
31	54.62	24-2432 M	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Selkirk Mountains	\$150,000	\$70,000	\$220,000
32	53.31	24-2520 M	Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group	Union River Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$37,500	\$187,500
33	53.00	24-2430 M	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Mount Baker Area Sno-Parks and Snowmobile Trails	\$150,000	\$60,000	\$210,000
34	51.75	24-2562 M	Washington Water Trails Association	Cascadia Marine Trail Maintenance and Upgrades	\$85,000	\$25,000	\$110,000
35	51.38	24-2313 M	Mountain Trails Grooming Association	Methow Valley Snowmobile Trail Grooming and Maintenance	\$80,000	\$33,500	\$113,500
36	51.08	24-2431 M	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Lake Wenatchee	\$150,000	\$60,000	\$210,000
37	51.00	24-2433 M	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Stampede Pass Trail System and Sno-Parks	\$150,000	\$59,988	\$209,988
38	49.69	24-2462 D	Forterra	Maxine G Morse Conservancy Boardwalk	\$130,507	\$32,627	\$163,134

Rank	Score	Project Number and Type ³	Grant Applicant	Project Name	Grant Request	Applicant Match	Total
39	48.08	24-2434 M	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Pyramid Creek Sno-Park and Snowmobile Trails	\$119,650	\$29,913	\$149,563
40	47.31	24-2330 D	Columbia Springs	Columbia Springs Trail Recovery	\$44,000	\$17,396	\$61,396
41	45.92	24-2524 M	Spokane County	Liberty Lake	\$60,000	\$15,000	\$75,000
42	43.69	24-2547 D	Whidbey Watershed Stewards	Freeland Wetlands Preserve Trails Expansion	\$30,400	\$7,788	\$38,188
Total					\$5,412,874	\$6,189,673	\$11,602,547

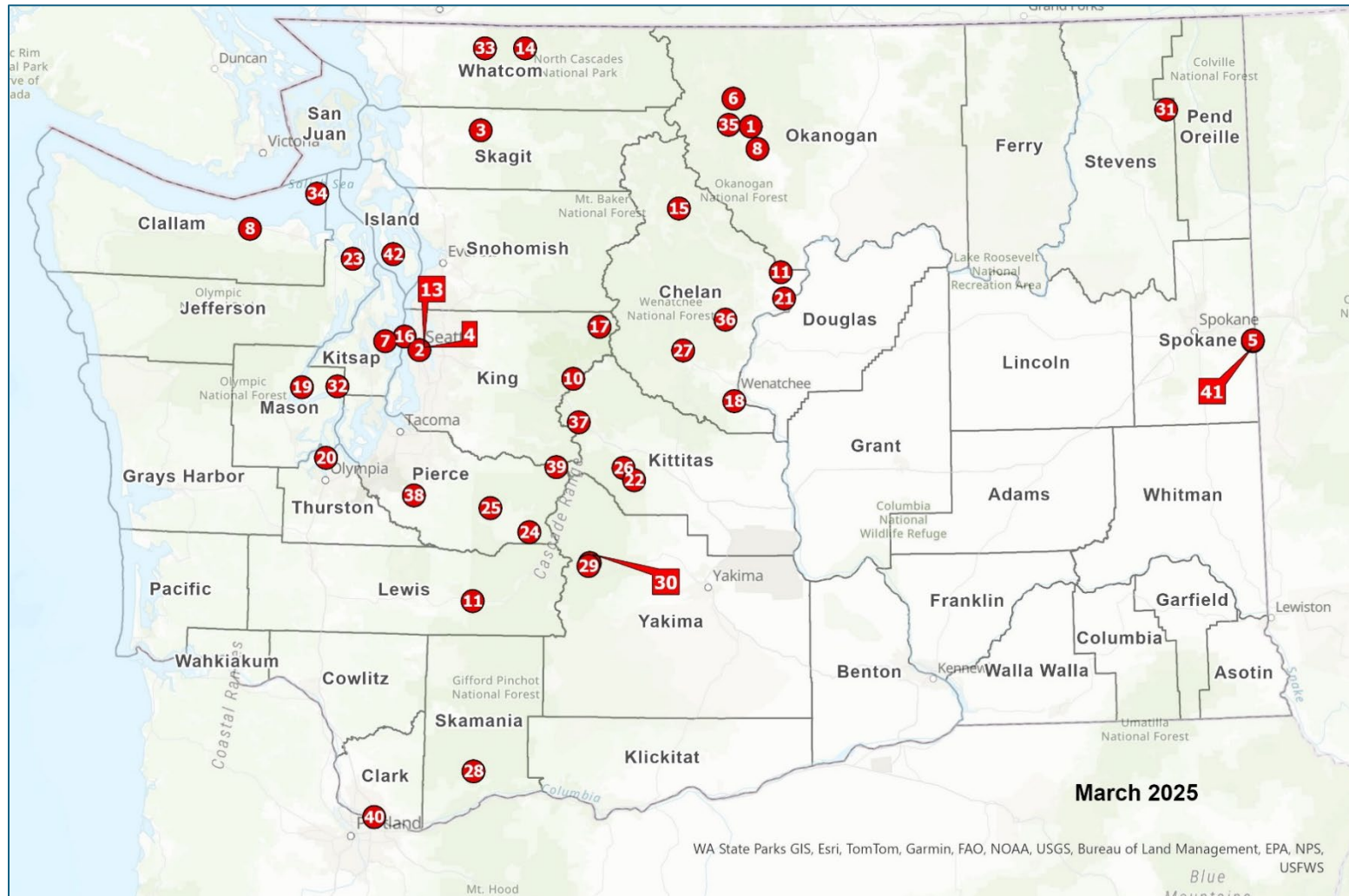
Attachment B

State Map for Recreational Trails Program Education Category Projects



Attachment B

State Map for Recreational Trails Program General Category Projects



Attachment C

Recreational Trails Program

Education Category Evaluation Criteria Summary

Evaluation Criteria Summary Table

Scored By	Question Number	Criteria	Maximum Points
Advisory Committee	1	Need	5
Advisory Committee	2	Need satisfaction	5
Advisory Committee	3	Applicant's ability	5
Advisory Committee	4	Cost-benefit	5
Advisory Committee	5	Support	5
Total Possible Points			25

Scoring Criteria, Education Category

Scored by Advisory Committee

1. **Need.** Describe the need for this project.
2. **Need satisfaction.** Describe the extent to which the project satisfies this need.
3. **Applicant's ability.** Describe the applicant's ability to accomplish the project.
4. **Cost-benefit.** Describe the project's cost-benefit.
5. **Support.** Describe the support for the project.

Attachment C

Recreational Trails Program

General Category Evaluation Criteria Summary

Evaluation Criteria Summary Table

Scored By	Question	Criteria	Project Type Questions	Maximum Points
Advisory Committee	1	Need	All	15
Advisory Committee	2	Need satisfaction	All	15
Advisory Committee	3	Project design	Development	10
Advisory Committee	4	Maintenance	Maintenance	15
Advisory Committee	5	Sustainability	Development	5
Advisory Committee	6	Readiness to Proceed	All	5
Advisory Committee	7	Cost-benefit	All	5
Advisory Committee	8	Cost efficiencies	All	5
Advisory Committee	9	Project support	All	10
RCO Staff	10	Matching shares	All	10
RCO Staff	11	Growth Management Act preference	All	0
Total Possible Points				80

Scoring Criteria: General Category

Scored by Advisory Committee

1. **Need.** How great is the need for improved trail facilities that provide a backcountry experience?
2. **Need satisfaction.** To what extent will the project satisfy the service area needs identified in Question 1, Need?
3. **Project design.** Is the proposal appropriately designed for intended uses and users? (*Development projects*)

4. **Maintenance.** To what degree will the project reduce recreational trail maintenance backlogs and/or recreate a recreational trail opportunity⁴?
(*Maintenance projects*)
5. **Sustainability.** Please discuss how the project's location or design supports the applicant's sustainability plan or how the ecological, economic, and social benefits and impacts were considered in the project plan. (*Development projects*)
6. **Readiness to proceed.** Is the applicant prepared to begin the project?
7. **Cost-benefit.** Do the benefits of the project outweigh costs?
8. **Cost Efficiencies.** To what extent does this project demonstrate efficiencies or a reduction in government costs through documented use of donations or other resources?
9. **Project support.** To what extent do users and the public support the project?

Scored by RCO Staff

10. **Matching shares.** To what extent will the applicant match the RTP grant with contributions from its own resources?
11. **Growth Management Act Preference.** Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?

⁴"Primary Management Objective" means the main type of use for which a trail is managed. Not all trails are managed for a specific use. Primary Management Objectives are adopted by policy and communicated to a trail's users. For example, if an agency carries out a policy to manage a trail specifically for hiking, and communicates this fact to users, the Primary Management Objective is hiking. A hiking Primary Management Objective does not necessarily mean that other trail uses are prohibited. A Primary Management Objective's advantage is that it provides all users with an understanding of the type of trail experience to expect. ⁶⁵Many winter recreation trail opportunities are re-created through snow grooming maintenance activities.

Item 10: Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Projects

Summary

This memo summarizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund: Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program, provides an overview of four applications submitted this year, and provides an opportunity for review of the project proposals in an open public meeting before submission to the National Park Service for consideration.

Action Requested: Briefing

Background

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

This federal program's purpose is to provide new or significantly improved recreation opportunities in urban underserved communities consistent with the purposes and requirements of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. To meet program goals and objectives, projects must be in an underserved community with a population of 25,000 or more (according to the 2020 Census) or be located on Tribal nation or trust lands held by a federally recognized Native American Tribe.

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 prioritizes projects directly connecting people to outdoor places and that do the following:

- Improve parks, recreational opportunities, and conservation areas in urban and underserved communities.

- Are developed in collaboration with the communities they serve, which ensures that planning and land development decisions do not place burdens on underserved groups.
- Support public-private partnerships and leverage project support, including cooperation and partnerships among governments, property owners, developers, financial institutions, and the public to secure equitable results.
- Empower communities through local public greenspace investment, fostering resilience and sustainable landscape development.
- Promote, protect, and incorporate the distinctive character of a community and its unique contexts, including geography, natural features, climate, culture, historical resources, and ecology, which each contribute to the distinctive character of a community's sense of place, comfort, and belonging.

In addition to the objectives listed above, projects must align with the state's comprehensive outdoor recreation plan.

Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program Policies

Rules governing the ORLP are in the Land and Water Conservation Fund Federal Financial Assistance Manual. Additional guidelines for Washington's program are in *Manual 15: Land and Water Conservation Fund*. The ORLP follows these policies, while also placing emphasis on funding projects for urban underserved populations. For each grant round, the National Park Service publishes updates on the application materials required and any program policy or criteria changes. The table below provides a summary of the requirements for this grant cycle, which is referred to as Round 8.

Summary of Grant Program Policies

Eligible Applicants	Federally recognized Native American Tribes, state agencies, and local governments including cities and towns, counties, park districts, port districts, school districts, and special purpose districts.
Eligibility Requirements	Applicants must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish planning eligibility. • Represent a jurisdiction of at least 25,000 people and ensure the project site is in an underserved community, OR • The project site must be located on tribal nation or trust lands held by a federally recognized Native American tribe.
Eligible Project Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition • Development and renovation

Match Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combination of acquisition and development <p>At a minimum, grant recipients must provide a one-to-one match from state, local, or private sources.</p>
Funds Available	Approximately \$450 million, nationwide
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"> 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. Property acquired must be developed within three years. The conversion rules for the Land and Water Conservation Fund apply.

Applications Submitted to Washington State

To ensure Washington state applicants had an opportunity to participate in this year's competition, RCO began soliciting grant proposals in January. During previous grant rounds, states could only submit a specific number of applications; that rule has changed and there is no longer a limit. This year, two applicants submitted four applications requesting just over \$25 million in grant funds. A summary of the four proposals is included in Attachment A.

Washington State's Land and Water Conservation Fund Advisory Committee, using the federal evaluation criteria, reviews the project proposals and provides feedback on the project scope, how well the project meets the intent of the federal program, and helps staff assess if the projects should be submitted for the national competition. Following the advisory committee review, staff work with applicants to address any issues and finalize the applications for submittal to the National Park Service by May 30, 2025, for the national competition. The national panel will score and rank projects. A funding decision is expected by September 2025. States will then have up to one year to submit a complete application package for the selected projects. The National Park Service will review the final application materials, assess project readiness, and then issue the federal agreement for each grant award.

¹These federal fund limits include the state's administrative costs for this program.

Delegated Authority

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board permanently delegated authority to the RCO director to approve projects for submittal to the national competition following review by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Advisory Committee. To ensure an opportunity for public review and comment on the proposals as mandated by the board, staff present the projects to the board in an open public meeting before the applications are submitted to the National Park Service.²

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.

Projects considered for the ORLP support board adopted priorities in the [2023 Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan](#).

Next Steps

If there is applicable public comment at the board meeting, staff will incorporate those comments into the final application materials and submit the project proposals to the National Park Service by May 30, 2025, for the national competition.

Attachment

- A. Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program: Project Proposals for Federal Fiscal Year 2026

²Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2018-10

Attachment A: Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program: Project Proposals for Federal Fiscal Year 2026

City of Seattle

Evans Pool Redevelopment ([25-1044](#))

- Grant Request: \$15,000,000
- Sponsor Match: \$16,790,578
- Total Project Cost: \$31,790,578
- Project Type: Development

Description: The City of Seattle will use this grant to replace the aged Evans Pool facility in Green Lake, transforming it from a local community pool to a destination aquatic facility capable of serving the growing demand for recreational swimming, water safety education, and other water-based activities. Currently, the pool serves about 128,000 people in the Seattle area, including low-income census tracts. The new Evans Pool promises to be an investment in seniors, families, and children, creating a cherished recreation facility that fosters community and personal well-being.

City of Seattle

Judkins Play Area, Spray Park, and Restroom Renovation ([25-1046](#))

- Grant Request: \$3,243,042
- Sponsor Match: \$3,243,042
- Total Project Cost: \$6,486,084
- Project Type: Development

Description: The City of Seattle will use this grant to renovate Judkins Park to bring the playground, spray park, and restroom up to current safety and accessibility standards. The playground and spray park will have inclusive and universally accessible play features, fostering community well-being, social equity, and physical accessibility, and will ensure that children of all abilities can play, learn, and grow together in a safe and welcoming environment. The grant will also fund improved pathway accessibility, site furnishings, and landscaping.

City of Seattle

South Lake Union Canoe Center ([25-1098](#))

- Grant Request: \$2,253,255
- Sponsor Match: \$2,253,255
- Total Project Cost: \$4,506,510
- Project Type: Development

Description: The City of Seattle will use this grant to build the South Lake Union Canoe Center, a distinctive addition to one of Seattle's most visited waterfront parks. The Canoe Center will serve as an open-air interpretive center for tribal canoe carving, educational opportunities, and canoe storage for launching on Lake Union. The building will also provide restrooms and a space for the public to take a break from the elements. This facility will reinforce Seattle's deep connection to its waterfront while fostering broader community engagement in outdoor recreation.

King County

White Center Ponds Park Renovation ([25-1109](#))

- Grant Request: \$4,795,000
- Sponsor Match: \$4,811,650
- Total Project Cost: \$9,606,650
- Project Type: Acquisition and Development

Description: King County will use this grant to expand and renovate White Center Ponds, an underutilized stormwater pond site, into an improved community park. The project will acquire three adjacent parcels to expand the park footprint, restore ponds for wildlife viewing, and construct new recreation amenities, including a half-mile Americans with Disabilities Act-accessible loop trail, lighting, and interpretive signage. The project is located on Southwest Roxbury Street along the border of Seattle and unincorporated King County, in a dense urban community that experiences high poverty and a significant health burden. The renovated park will create a welcoming space that increases access to nature and improves opportunities for physical recreation.

Item 11: Washington State Trails Database

Summary

In 2021, the Recreation and Conservation Office received a legislative budget proviso directing the agency to update the Washington State Trails Database. The proviso directed the Recreation and Conservation Office to work with local, state, and federal agencies to develop the database using existing information and allowed the Recreation and Conservation Office to maintain and update the data in the future. After a lengthy stakeholder engagement process and project development, the agency published an initial version of the trails database in late 2022.

A more detailed history of the database project can be found on the [Trails Database Hub Site](#).

This memo describes the work and outcomes of this effort over the past year.

Action Requested: Briefing

Database Project Background

The Washington State Trails Database project is built on a collaborative platform hosted within the Recreation and Conservation Office's (RCO) geographical information system, ArcGIS. The Trails Database Hub website is a public facing web portal showcasing information about the database project and a trail viewer app of publicly available information on the state's trail system. Members of the public can download a copy of the current data for planning or other informational purposes. In the website's background, a collaborative workspace enables federal, state, local agencies, and other non-governmental partners to upload and edit the trail and trailhead data they have contributed using a common data format.

2025 Data Update

In 2024, RCO hired a policy intern to update the Trails Database. Over the past year, staff have addressed data sharing and editing issues within the Hub platform; conducted extensive outreach to current and potential data contributors; compiled, reviewed, and

edited over 22,000 miles of trails; and published an updated version of the trail and trailhead data. In addition, RCO entered into a data sharing agreement with the Washington State Department of Transportation's Active Transportation Division to use the Trails Database Hub as a platform to collect additional on-street bike infrastructure data (not trails) to aid in regional multi-modal transportation planning.

Stakeholder Outreach

RCO staff contacted existing data contributors in August 2024 to request updated data. Concurrently, staff gathered contact information for county and local agencies that likely had trails data. An emailed introduction to the trails database project and data request was sent to over 250 contacts.

As a result of this outreach, thirty-three new data contributors either established an account and uploaded a data set or sent in data directly to RCO staff.

Data Collection and Quality Assurance

Once the data collection period passed, RCO staff inspected and transferred the newly submitted data to the primary data set. Data quality inspections ensured that the attributes, or information about the trails, were consistent and complete across all the submitted data sets. If information was missing, RCO staff worked with the submitting agency to complete the information to the extent possible.

The data sets contained many duplicate trails with varying segment lengths and limited attribute data. RCO staff manually reviewed each trail segment to visually identify and eliminate duplicates. Staff also worked with data contributors to improve attribute consistency and completeness. As a result, the work to update the data sets will be significantly streamlined in the future.

Publication

The clean, updated data sets are in the final stages of being compiled and merged into the primary Washington State Trails Database and will be made available to the public soon.

Next Steps

While the RCO policy internship is complete, RCO will continue to maintain and update the Washington State Trails Database as time and resources allow. Staff will also

continue to partner with Washington State Department of Transportation staff to maintain the bicycle infrastructure data.

Item 12: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Urban Wildlife Habitat Location Criteria Update

Summary

The Recreation and Conservation Office is updating project location criteria in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Urban Wildlife Habitat Category that determines a project's eligibility. This necessary update is a result of the United States Census Bureau revising its urban areas classification categories and eliminating the urban clusters, which is used in the program location criteria.

In January, board members were interested in replacing the term urban clusters with urban areas and aligning with the Census Bureau's definition, which will include both population density and housing units.

Recreation and Conservation Office staff recommend approval of the proposed update.

Action Requested: Decision – Approve Resolution 2025-10

Background

In 2019, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board changed the project location requirements in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's Urban Wildlife Habitat Category. The change was made to increase the number of eligible communities to support better habitat preservation in rapidly urbanizing areas of the state.

The current policy is as follows:

To be eligible in this category, the land must be in one of the following areas:

- Within five miles of the designated urban growth area of a city or town with a population of five thousand or more. *(No change proposed)*
- Within five miles of a designated urban cluster with a population of five thousand or more. *(Change proposed)*

- Within five miles of an adopted urban growth boundary in a county that has a population density of 250 people per square mile or greater. (*No change proposed*)

Census Bureau's New Urban Areas Definition

In 2020, the Census Bureau changed its definition of urban areas by removing distinct classifications, including urban cluster.

Now, "urban areas" are defined as areas with at least five thousand people or a housing unit density of two thousand.

Urban Wildlife Habitat Location Eligibility Policy

Because of the bureau's changes, the board must update its eligibility requirements. Staff considered the following when developing policy options:

- Aligning with the Census Bureau's new definition.
- Ensuring eligibility is maintained for those communities that met the 2019 board-adopted definition.
- Addressing the goals and priorities of the board, including the following:
 - Maintain focus on protecting functioning native habitat in urbanizing areas by increasing project eligibility.
 - Increase the number of applications and funded projects from local organizations.

Recreation and Conservation Office staff presented this issue and two proposed options to the board on January 29, 2025. After discussion, the board directed staff to recommend a solution to align eligibility with the Census Bureau's new definition and seek public comment.

Proposed Solution

Staff recommend revising the policy to the following:

To be eligible in this category, the land must be in one of the following areas:

- Within five miles of the designated urban growth area of a city or town with a population of five thousand or more. (*Unchanged*)
- Within five miles of a U.S. Census Bureau designated urban area. (*New*)

- Within five miles of an adopted urban growth boundary in a county with 250 people per square mile or greater. (*Unchanged*)

Public Comment Summary

Staff sought the public's opinion on the proposed change by asking the following questions:

1. How supportive are you of the presented option? One star would be least supportive, while five stars would be most supportive.
 - a. We received an average rating of 2.08 stars.
2. Do you have additional feedback? (Open ended question)
 - a. Most feedback came from members of the Pacific Northwest Four-Wheel Drive Association and other off-highway vehicle users. This community expressed concern that the criteria change would hinder recreational use of existing off-highway vehicle and multi-use trail systems use and to ensure OHV use is not displaced by the new criteria.

RCO Response to Public Comments

RCO Staff are grateful for the public's interest and engagement on the proposed changes to the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's Urban Wildlife Habitat category. Grants from this program are used to acquire lands from private landowners to protect wildlife habitat threatened by urban development, provide new public access opportunities, and develop new facilities to support outdoor recreation and wildlife viewing. As such, staff do not foresee existing public OHV and multi-use trails being displaced by projects seeking funding from this program.

Next Steps

If the board chooses to adopt the proposed change, the criteria will be updated in [Manual 10b: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Habitat Conservation Account](#) and RCO outdoor grant managers will communicate changes to stakeholders for use in the 2026 grant round.

Strategic Plan Link

This potential location eligibility update aligns with the board's first goal in their [strategic plans](#), which reads:

"We help out partners protect, restore, and develop habitat and recreation opportunities that benefit people, fish, and ecosystems."

Attachments

- A. Resolution 2025-10
- B. Public Comment Summary

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

Resolution 2025-10

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Urban Wildlife Habitat Category

WHEREAS Chapter 79A.15 of the Revised Code of Washington established the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and authorized the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to adopt policies and rules for the program; and

WHEREAS the location eligibility criteria in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Urban Wildlife Habitat Wildlife category relied on a classification of urban areas established by the United States Census Bureau that after the 2020 census is no longer being used; and

WHEREAS the location eligibility criteria needed to be updated to align with the United States Census Bureau's updates to urban areas designation; and

WHEREAS Recreation and Conservation Office staff reviewed and recommended to the board to adopt the updated urban areas definitions, which aligned with the board's goals to get ahead of rapidly urbanizing areas in Washington state and continues to include the communities that were included due to the 2019 criteria; and

WHEREAS the preferred option was made available to the public for review and comment from March from February 19, 2025, to March 14, 2025, and the Recreation and Conservation Office solicited comments from thirteen members of the public; and

WHEREAS staff reviewed the public comments and provided reasoning for the preferred option;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopts the project location criteria update, which includes the Census Bureau's updated definition of urban area. This is defined as a populations of 5,000 people or 2,000 housing units;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, staff is directed to take the necessary steps to implement these revisions beginning with the 2026 grant cycle so that the location criteria includes the following:

- Within five miles of the designated urban growth area of a city or town with a population of five thousand or more.
- Within five miles of a designated urban cluster with a population of five thousand or more.)

Within five miles of an adopted urban growth boundary in a county that has a population density of 250 people per square mile or greater

Resolution moved by:

Resolution seconded by:

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date:

Attachment B: Public Comment Summary

Question 1: How Supportive are you of the presented option? One star would be least supportive, while five stars would be most supportive.

Response:

1. Seven
2. Three
3. Zero
4. One
5. Three

Question 2: Do you have any additional feedback?

Response:

Nicole Phillips, Pacific Northwest 4-Wheel Drive Association

- Please ensure existing OHV and multi-use trail systems are not displaced due to reclassification under the new urban habitat criteria. Include motorized recreation organizations in future discussions about funding and land use impacts. Washington's diverse outdoor users—including OHV riders, dirt bikers, and ATV enthusiasts—rely on access to public lands. I encourage the board to adopt policies that balance conservation and recreation, ensuring that responsible motorized recreation remains a valued part of the outdoor experience.

William Adelman

- Please recognize motorized recreation as a compatible use in eligible areas. Ensure existing OHV and multi-use trail systems are not displaced due to reclassification under the new urban habitat criteria. Include motorized recreation organizations in future discussions about funding and land use impacts. Washington's diverse outdoor users—including OHV riders, dirt bikers, and ATV enthusiasts—rely on access to public lands. I encourage the board to adopt policies that balance conservation and recreation, ensuring that responsible motorized recreation remains a valued part of the outdoor experience.

Anonymous

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Joseph Barkle

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Gayle Campion, Pacific Northwest 4-Wheel Drive Association

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Mike Campion, Pacific Northwest 4-Wheel Drive Association

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Tim Groves

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Item 13: Review of Natural Areas & Critical Habitat Categories

Summary

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's Critical Habitat and Natural Areas categories have not had significant review and update in at least twenty years. Recreation and Conservation Office staff have begun a review of these categories to assess strengths and challenges. This assessment will identify potential policy changes for the board to consider before the spring 2026 grant round.

Action Requested: Briefing

Background

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) was created in 1990. Since then, there have been many changes to program policies. However, individual grant categories are not reviewed on a set schedule. Rather, issues are addressed as they arise.

In its 2018 State Recreation and Conservation Plan (SCORP), the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board identified a need to review the WWRP Urban Wildlife and Riparian Protection categories to assess whether their policies and evaluation criteria were meeting statutory needs. Staff conducted this review, which also included ideas on addressing climate change and equity within these categories. Changes were adopted by the board in October 2019, with a plan to review other WWRP Habitat categories.

The COVID-19 pandemic and other pressing assignments delayed this work. However, staff have now initiated a review of WWRP Critical Habitat and Natural Areas. These categories have not had significant review or updates in at least twenty years. Initial outreach and research has identified some challenges relating to the evaluation criteria and process for both categories. Stakeholder meetings will occur in April after the publishing of this memo and their input will be incorporated into staff's board presentation.

Category Basics

The WWRP Critical Habitat category provides funding to protect habitat for wildlife including endangered, threatened, or sensitive species. Project sites may include high-quality habitat or degraded habitat that once restored will support a target species.¹

The WWRP Natural Areas category provides funding to protect areas that have, to a significant degree, retained their natural character and are important in preserving rare or vanishing flora, fauna, geological, natural, historical, or similar features of scientific or educational value.²

Comparison of Critical Habitat and Natural Areas Categories

	Critical Habitat	Natural Areas
Portion of WWRP – Habitat Allocation	35%	25%
Eligible Applicants	State agencies, special purpose districts, local governments, tribes, and nonprofit nature conservancies	State agencies and nonprofit nature conservancies
Grant Limit	None	None
Match Requirement	State agencies: 0% Other applicants: 50%	State agencies: 0% Other applicants: 50%
Evaluation Process	Virtual Presentation	Written

Review Method

To identify potential challenges and opportunities within the Critical Habitat and Natural Areas categories, staff are conducting several outreach phases. This process began in February 2025 as policy staff met with RCO's Recreation and Conservation Section staff

¹ Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.010(3)

² Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.010(6)

who work directly with these grant categories. Staff also reviewed applicant and advisory committee survey responses from past grant rounds. Next, staff will seek input from the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, non-profit nature conservancies, tribes, and the WWRP Habitat Acquisition advisory committee.

Some issues may not need action by the board. Staff will present details of the review to the board at its June 2025 meeting, including a summary of feedback received and potential policy changes for consideration. Following direction from the board, staff will conduct public comment on draft changes before making formal recommendations to the board in October 2025. This timeline allows for updates to be incorporated into the program prior to the spring 2026 grant round.

Item 14:

Emphasizing Accessibility

Summary

Recreation and Conservation Office projects are required to meet or exceed accessibility standards; however, people with disabilities continue to face barriers to accessing the outdoors. The 2023 Statewide Recreation and Conservation Plan (SCORP) and the Recreation and Conservation Office's 2022 Equity Review included outreach on this topic. Both works provided goals and recommendations on how the office and the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board can play a greater role in improved accessibility. Throughout 2025, staff will conduct research and seek input from stakeholders, applicants, advocacy groups, and the board to identify grant programs changes to emphasize projects that increase outdoor access for people with disabilities.

Action Requested: Briefing

Background

One in four Washington residents has a disability¹ and most will experience a disability at some point in their life. As a funder of public outdoor spaces, it is important that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) regularly consider how to help communities provide recreation opportunities for all, including those with disabilities.

RCO-funded projects must meet or exceed accessibility standards. Over the years, program policies and evaluation criteria have been updated to address changing standards and encourage universal accessibility. State and federal laws, building codes, and other documents provide sponsors information about these requirements and are referenced in RCO manuals and webpages. Resources include but are not limited to the following:

- Washington State Building Code
- Americans With Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design of 2010

¹ Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Data – BRFSS, 2022

- The U.S. Access Board’s Outdoor Developed Areas Accessibility Guidelines

Recent works of the board and RCO have also highlighted the need for providing better recreational access for people with disabilities.

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Many of RCO’s past Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORP) note barriers to participation for people with disabilities and recommend that the state continue to invest in improved access. Relatedly, Priority One of the [2023 SCORP](#) is to provide meaningful access to outdoor recreation for all. Goals within this priority include ensuring that recreation spaces are inclusive to all, that barriers are reduced, and that parks, trails, and access sites are available for diverse activities and diverse users. To support this and other priorities within the plan, the board’s Unified Strategy calls for updating grant criteria to reflect statewide priorities and goals, and to review and revise grant program policies to adapt to community needs. During the 2023 SCORP planning process, a survey of recreation providers indicated that improving access for people with disabilities is a top issue for 85 percent of respondents.

Equity Review

RCO’s [2022 Equity Review](#) also notes barriers to outdoor spaces for people with disabilities and highlights the value of accessible recreation, including universal design, which specifically considers physical, auditory or visual disabilities, autism, or neuro-cognitive disorders. The report’s authors at Prevention Institute suggested a variety of recommendations related to accessibility projects, such as reducing match for projects with new or upgraded accessibility features or adjusting scoring criteria to specifically reward projects with accessibility features beyond legal minimums.

Accessibility in RCO Grant Programs

RCO requires that development projects meet or exceed accessibility standards. This policy has been updated as new state and federal laws have been enacted. For example, in the 1980s, *Manual 4: Development Projects* referenced the “Architectural Barriers Act of 1968” and cited considerations for people with physical disabilities. These considerations included designated parking areas, ramps, graded paths, and restroom and drinking facilities at heights to accommodate people who use wheelchairs.

In the 1990s, RCO policies directed that all facilities must be constructed to “barrier-free standards” and included references to various state and local laws, including the Americans with Disability Act of 1990. Language in manuals provided guidance on

meeting accessibility requirements and noted factors that affect barrier-free designs. The manual also introduced several exceptions to this policy. Until the mid-1990s, the Boating Facilities Program even included a specific scoring question to reward projects that included accessibility elements beyond those required by law.

By the late 1990s and through today, the main evaluation question addressing accessibility is project design. Evaluators are asked to consider several design factors, including whether projects include accessibility features. In the 2010s, *Manual 4: Development Projects* was updated again to include details from the Americans with Disabilities Standards for Accessible Design of 2010.

Today, RCO's accessibility policies can be found in grant manuals and on the "Grant Requirements" section of the agency website. This webpage provides links to accessibility resources, including those referenced earlier in this memo and others, as well as photos of example project elements that could be helpful for project sponsors. For example, a paved viewing platform at a soccer field, a paved walkway to a beach, or campsite widths for accessible sites.

Beyond written materials, RCO staff provide one-on-one support to applicants regarding creating barrier-free recreation facilities. From the mid-1990s until 2020, RCO employed a full-time accessibility specialist who provided free technical support for grant recipients. RCO grant managers continue to provide guidance, although staff may not have in-depth specialty in this field.

Project methods

Beginning in March 2025, staff started to research RCO's approach to accessibility over time. The next research phase includes meeting with stakeholders, grant applicants, and disability advocacy groups to better understand community needs and how grant programs can play an improved role in funding projects that improve access for people with disabilities. Staff will provide an update at the June board meeting and seek direction on any changes for the 2026 grant cycle or beyond.