WASHINGTON STATE
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

Proposed Agenda
October 28, 2025

Regular Meeting

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

These public meeting locations allow the public to provide comments and listen to the meeting as required by the Open Public Meeting Act. This requirement can be waived via House Bill 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_P6gWt1kGR4C8bj1TlpxhUQ

Phone Option: (669) 900-6833 **- Webinar ID:** 861 7934 7928

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.

Wellness Precautions: Masks and hand sanitizer will be made available. If you are feeling ill, the zoom format is reliable resource for home viewing and participation.

Special Accommodations: People with disabilities needing an accommodation to participate in Recreation and Conservation Office public meetings are invited to contact Megan Montgomery via email at megan.montgomery@rco.wa.gov.

TUESDAY October 28, 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
- June 24-25, 2025

B. Time Extensions
- U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Snoqualmie Ranger District Trails Alliance, 20-2320
- State Parks, Klickitat Trail-Bridging the Final Gap, 16-1887
- Port of Kingston, Guest Restroom Facility Replacement, 20-1420

C. Cost Increase Request
- Renton, Talbot Hill Reservoir Park Sports Courts, 22-1696

D. Advisor Recognition (1)

Resolution 2025-22

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

A. Director's Report	*Megan Duffy*
B. Legislative and Policy Update	*Brock Milliern*
C. Grant Management Report	*Marguerite Austin*
D. Grant Services Report	*Kyle Guzlas*
E. Performance Report (*written only*)	*Bart Lynch*
F. Fiscal Report (*written only*)	*Mark Jarasitis*

BOARD BUSINESS: BRIEFING

9:45 a.m. **General Public Comment (limit 3 minutes please)** for issues not identified on the agenda.

9:50 a.m. **Break**

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BOARD BUSINESS: REQUEST FOR DIRECTION		
10:05 a.m.	**3. Habitat Programs Policy Changes**	*Leah Dobey* *Nick Norton*
10:50 a.m.	**4. Boating Facilities Program Policy Changes**	*Nick Norton*
11:35 a.m.	**5. Evergreen Communities Recognition - Impacts to Grant Programs**	*Julia McNamara* *Ben Donatelle*
12:05 p.m.	**Lunch**	
BOARD BUSINESS: DECISION		
1:05 p.m.	**6. Farm and Forest Account Policy Changes** • Cost Increases • Non-state, Non-federal Match Resolution 2025-23 **Public comment** will occur prior to adopting the resolution. Please limit comments to three minutes	*Nick Norton*
1:50 p.m.	**7. Farmland Preservation Policy Changes** Resolution 2025-24 **Public comment** will occur prior to adopting the resolution. Please limit comments to three minutes	*Nick Norton*
BOARD BUSINESS: REQUEST FOR DIRECTION		
2:05 p.m.	**8. Emphasizing Accessibility in Recreation Grants**	*Leah Dobey*
BOARD BUSINESS: BRIEFING		
2:50 p.m.	**9. Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Policy Changes**	*Adam Cole*
3:35 p.m.	**Break**	
3:50 p.m.	**10. Featured Projects** • City of Zillah, Zillah Splash Park, 20-1305 • City of University Place, Cirque Park Renovation, 20-1618	Aaron Johnson Hannah Pauly

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4:10 p.m.	**11. State Agency Partner Reports** • Department of Natural Resources • State Parks and Recreation Commission • Department of Fish and Wildlife • Governor's Office	*Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn* *Heather Saunders* *Amy Windrope* *Joe Impecoven*
4:40 p.m.	**Adjourn**	

Next Meeting: Regular Meeting- January 27-28, 2026, Room 172, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street, Olympia, Washington, 98501

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RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARY MINUTES

Date: June 24, 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 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 9:00 a.m. **Julia McNamara**, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) board liaison, performed roll call, determining quorum. Member Kitty Craig was absent from the meeting. Member Shiloh Burgess joined online. Member Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn was absent until lunch.

Motion: Move to Approve **June 24-25, 2025**, Agenda
Moved By: Member **Trang Lam**
Seconded by: Member **Peter Herzog**
Decision: Approved

Item 1: Consent Agenda

Chair Shiosaki noted the consent agenda included the April 22, 2025, meeting minutes twenty-four time extensions, and a policy update.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2025-11**
Moved By: Member **Peter Herzog**
Seconded by: Member **Bob Bugert**

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Decision: Approved

Item 2: Director's Report

Director Megan Duffy shared recent staff changes: Henry Smith, outdoor grants manager, took a job at Tacoma Parks; Monica Handwork, administrative assistant, moved to North Carolina and Anna Krumpos filled that position; Kathleen Barkis, who was with RCO for twenty years, and DeAnn Beck, who worked forty years with the state, will retire at the end of the week; Anita Macpherson was hired as the new administrative services manager; and Stephanie Jolivette is the new cultural resources manager. There are two internal recruitments open to fill senior outdoor grants manager positions, one on the recreation and conservation side and one on the salmon recovery side.

The federal budget remains uncertain; RCO recently learned the United States Fish and Wildlife service will not fund the Salmon Recovery Portal and the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund was zeroed out in the President's Budget.

The 2020 passing of the Great American Outdoors Act provided $900 million annually for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The President's Budget shifts some of this funding in the federal fiscal year 2026 to deferred maintenance at the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and United States Fish and Wildlife Service lands, which will impact the federal government's ability to purchase additional park land. Currently, it is difficult to tell how this will impact the Land and Water Conservation Fund at RCO. Staff continue to meet with the United States Forest Service to discuss the execution of grant agreements for projects on the ranked lists.

RCO received a proviso from the State Legislature to enter into a cost share agreement with the United States Army Corps of Engineers to complete a recreation replacement study in the Columbia Basin. RCO has completed their work and is waiting to hear from the Army Corps as to whether it will be able to complete its portion of the study, per the scope of work.

Director Duffy attended various ribbon cuttings at parks in College Place, Kitsap Peninsula, and Olympia. Director Duffy emphasized the benefit to communities of projects like these and encouraged the board and meeting attendees to utilize the parks or attend a grant opening.

Legislative and Policy Update

Brock Milliern, Legislative and Policy director, provided a legislative update, highlighting the challenging nature of the Legislative session. No Child Left Inside funding was reduced from $7 million to $1.11 million and the Outdoor Learning Grant

was zeroed out, reducing outdoor education and experiences for youth in Washington State. RCO is glad to have some funding left in No Child Left Inside for program engagement. A proposed $30 million reduction in salmon funding would have impacted active projects; staff and stakeholders worked diligently to successfully emphasize the importance of this funding to the Legislature and the $30m was retained in RCO's budget.

There were four vetoes on small line items in RCO's budget consistent with the governor's goals of reducing the number of studies in the state budget. The vetoes included a recreation funding study facilitated by RCO between land management agencies; pass through funding for boating and sea plane safety on Lake Union; $100,000 for the Outdoor Equity Coalition; and the Habitat Restoration Pilot Program, a program that expired but had funding remain as a line item in RCO's budget.

In the budget, the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program received $120 million; Youth Athletics received $19.7 million – notably, the Legislature chose to combine the Community Outdoor Athletic Fund projects with the Youth Athletic Facilities program projects, resulting in one list for the two programs; Planning for Recreation Access received $1 million plus money for a new position within RCO; Community Forest Account received $6.2 million; Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account received $4.3 million; and Nonhighway Off-Road Vehicle Activities had a reduction of $750,000, which was transferred to the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

Mr. Milliern noted the Mount Rainier Futbol Club's Athletic Complex Pickleball Courts (RCO #24-2005), ranked thirty-fifth on the Youth Athletic Facilities ranked list was fully funded ahead of about twenty other higher ranked projects. Staff work hard to ensure the ranked lists are adhered to and work with the Legislature to correct inadvertent changes and navigate any concerns about a project. In this instance, there is a program at the Department of Commerce that funds community grants, and it was Mr. Milliern's impression that this project was going to be funded through the Department of Commerce but was put onto the Youth Athletic Facilities list by Legislature because the project sponsor had also applied to RCO's program. Mr. Milliern recognized how frustrating this can be for other applicants who are ranked higher and may not receive funding.

Mr. Milliern highlighted bills that passed in session and impact work at RCO.

- Senate Bill 5281 – Raises permit fees for non-resident vessels and establishes a new program at RCO for swimming lessons in underserved communities.
- Senate Bill 5300 – Increases the leasing authority for State Parks at Saint Edwards.

- Senate Bill 2003 – Establishes a salmon and steelhead endorsement on the Columbia River.
- Senate Bill 5390 – Raises the cost of a Discover Pass from $30 to $45. This is the first cost increase since the inception of the Discover Pass in 2011.
- Senate Bill 5583 – Raises the cost of fishing and hunting licenses.

Mr. Milliern noted that the three bills increasing fees will cost recreators more to access state public lands, while state agencies will be providing the same or reduced services due to cuts to their operating budgets.

Mr. Milliern provided a briefing on the Evergreen Communities recognition program. The program was established in the Evergreen Communities Law, passed by the Legislature in 2021. The Department of Natural Resources completed creating the program late last year. The law says that upon program completion, RCO has one year to incorporate the program, which impacts the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Programs (WWRP) and the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account scoring criteria as it requires a benefit for projects that qualify as an Evergreen Community over projects that do not. Some primary sponsors to RCO programs are not eligible to be an Evergreen Community, such as ports and land trusts, and the program's requirement could mean they will not receive those points in some RCO programs. The criteria are under review and staff will provide a more thorough briefing at the October meeting, with a decision by the board in January 2026.

Grant Management Update

Marguerite Austin, Recreation and Conservation Grants Section manager, congratulated DeAnn Beck on her upcoming retirement and emphasized her forty-year career in state service. Ms. Austin highlighted Kathleen Barkis' retirement after twenty years at RCO and noted her wonderful spirit will be missed.

Ms. Austin summarized the grant process and what staff did to prepare for the grant awards, which included certifying match and securing all pre-agreement materials. Staff also reviewed active projects to ensure projects are completed in a timely manner or need a project extension or agreement termination. Following the board's approval of grant awards today, staff will meet with the director in July to consider funding alternate projects in programs and categories that are undersubscribed and assess progress on projects.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund: Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership, a federal program through the National Park Service, is currently on hold with four

pending applications. The federal Boating Infrastructure Grant, through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, also has four applications pending.

Included in the meeting materials are ranked lists for the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities program and the Recreational Trails Program. This year, there were fifty-nine applications from federal entities (United States Forest Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management), which have certified match on all their 2024 applications. RCO staff have been meeting with the United States Forest Service to help determine project viability and the best options for existing agreements. The federal agencies are assessing their workload and considering partnerships with other eligible applicants and volunteer organizations. Many of the existing agreements expire in October and the new agreements typically start November 1. RCO is planning to issue agreements with federal project sponsors in August so that projects can be fully executed by the end of the year. Agreements will only be issued to projects that are considered viable. If a project is not viable and cannot move forward, then staff would recommend that the director approve alternates on the ranked list. Staff will provide an update on federal partners at the October meeting.

Ms. Austin highlighted the successful opening of the City of Yakima's newly constructed aquatic center in the Martin Luther King Junior Park (RCO #22-1453). The city hosted a ribbon cutting attended by RCO staff Jesse Sims.

BREAK: 9:44 A.M. – 9:59 A.M.

General Public Comment

None.

Item 3: Habitat Programs

Leah Dobey, policy specialist, shared an update of the review underway of the Critical Habitat and Natural Areas categories of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) – Habitat Conservation Account. In the Habitat Conservation Account, Critical Habitat receives 35 percent of the total funding and Natural Areas receives 25 percent.

Critical Habitat has the goal of acquiring land important for the protection, management, or public enjoyment of wildlife, including game or non-game species, shellfish, food fish, and habitat for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species. Natural Areas has the goal of protecting high-quality native ecosystems that have retained most of their natural character and typically have unique plant or animal communities, and can serve as habitat for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species. Natural Areas also

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includes language for rare geological features or significant features for scientific or educational value. Projects in these categories are typically acquisitions, although some light development can occur in combination projects.

Since April, staff solicited feedback from the advisory committee, Tribes, state agencies, nonprofits, and internal staff on the program's intent and policies. Dawn Pullin, Tribal Affairs director, is sharing information about the Critical Habitat category, which Tribes are eligible for, and soliciting input as she meets with Tribes throughout the year, though no comments had been reported as of the date of the meeting. Feedback that had been received on the program intent falls into three categories that are detailed in the meeting materials:

- Mirrored Evaluation – the categories have different goals; however, the evaluation criteria are the same. Sometimes applicants are unsure of the difference between the categories and which a project fits into. Staff feel there is an opportunity to highlight the different category goals through updating or reweighting the criteria.
- Project Size – projects of different sizes perform differently in the Critical Habitat category with higher percentages of extra small to small projects ranking lower than medium and large projects. Staff would like to consider the conservation value of smaller acquisitions and whether the evaluation criteria need to be updated.
- Statewide System of Natural Areas – how the Natural Areas category interacts with the Washington Register of Natural Areas, established by the Legislature in 1972 with the goal of protecting native plants and animals in Washington. To qualify for the Register of Natural Areas, a property must align with the State of Washington Natural Heritage Plan. Staff would like to address the perception that the Natural Areas category is primarily for the Department of Natural Resources. While the Revised Codes of Washington for the WWRP (79A.15.010(9)) and the Natural Areas Preservation Act (79.70.020(2)) define natural areas similarly, they are not required to work together. A 2015 review of the WWRP also revealed the programs are not required to work together and, it could be beneficial to nonprofits and other eligible entities for RCO to provide clarity.

Member Windrope asked how evaluators differentiate between the Critical Habitat and Natural Areas categories, since the evaluation criteria are so similar. Ms. Dobey answered that evaluators tend to understand what qualities each category is looking for and use their experience to help guide them on how to score a project.

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Member Herzog asked what the reaction has been to the eligibility of state agencies in both categories and if there is a sense to move towards retaining Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Department of Natural Resources as the principal applicants. Ms. Dobey answered the discussion has been broader and agencies would like more options to apply for the category that best fits a project. **Member Herzog** advocated for a state land classification system and noted the land usage or purpose should not rely on the agency that is managing it to determine which category the agency can apply to.

Member Bugert asked if there was a connectivity criterion in the evaluation process and if there was a similar number of projects and competition between the categories. Ms. Dobey answered there is an opportunity to increase competition in both categories. **Marguerite Austin** added that both categories have a connectivity criterion, and several factors address an overall landscape approach. Regarding competition, the Critical Habitat category was oversubscribed this year with more projects requesting higher dollar amounts and typically experiences more competition. The Natural Areas category was undersubscribed in the last three to four biennia, in part because the Department of Natural Resources has purchased a large amount of land and is focusing more on buffers. Ms. Austin noted the Urban Wildlife Habitat category was also oversubscribed this year. **Member Herzog** said subscription to categories is a poor proxy for need, as the need is far greater than agencies can apply to due to capacity.

Member Bugert asked if, following the 2015 recommendation to make nonprofits eligible, there was an uptick in nonprofits applying. Ms. Dobey answered there have only been a couple. In discussions with nonprofits, there is confusion about whether they need to go through the Natural Areas registry process to enter a WWRP category and this is where clarification that registration is not necessary might encourage more participation.

Member Windrope asked if there was any state interest in encouraging or incentivizing people to enroll in the Department of Natural Resources' Natural Areas process, or if it is too difficult to get into. Ms. Dobey answered that some nonprofits have capacity constraints, as does the Department of Natural Resources' Natural Heritage Program, causing difficulty.

Following a robust discussion about the Department of Natural Resources Natural Areas process and WWRP Natural Areas category, **Chair Shiosaki** summarized that members agreed there is a need to differentiate between the Department of Resources' Natural Areas process and WWRP Natural Areas category, possibly through training

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opportunities, and the need for more people to know about the WWRP Natural Area category.

Staff will further develop these proposed changes and hold a public comment period later in the summer for a board decision in October. Staff are also examining evaluation criteria, geographic envelopes, grazing, and limited revegetation policies. For more details see the meeting materials.

Member Herzog asked if restoration is not allowed in statute or policy. Ms. Dobey answered it is in statute in the Critical Habitat category, and added restoration is allowed in the WWRP State Lands Restoration category; however, nonprofits are not eligible.

Item 4: Emphasizing Accessibility

Leah Dobey explained that RCO is looking at ways to increase accessibility across recreation grant programs. At the April meeting, the board heard a brief background of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), historical reference to how RCO's grant programs considered accessibility over time, recent work on accessibility in the State Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Plan, need shown from recreation providers to provide more recreation opportunities to people with disabilities, and a recommendation in RCO's 2022 equity review to increase opportunities.

This spring, staff began engaging with nineteen government entities and fifteen non-government organizations representing geographic diversity across rural and urban areas and a range of organizations and community sizes to discuss specific needs surrounding accessibility. Four key themes emerged from these discussions:

- Range of Project Needs: ADA upgrades, inclusive elements, and universal design, while keeping in mind that inclusion is the goal; different communities have different needs, and people want to upgrade existing parks.
- Preference or Prioritization: consideration for eligibility and applications, extra points in the evaluation process to projects that prioritize accessibility, and a new program.
- Representation: representation is important and should include creative partnerships and presence in decision-making spaces, like engagement, design review, and advisory committees.
- Information and Education: ADA requirements, terminology, and technical assistance.

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Some of these key themes can be addressed operationally and through policy. Ms. Dobey explained the policy options being considered and provided examples of each.

- New grant program – Example: request funding for a new grant program for ADA upgrades. Similar to RCO's 2023 Local Parks Maintenance program that allowed the state to tackle a defined need across many communities.
- Reduce Match – Example: for Youth Athletic Facilities applications with accessibility as the primary purpose, reduce the required match from 50-25 percent.
- Increase Grant Limit – Example: For Boating Facilities Program applications that have accessibility as the primary purpose, increase the grant limit from $1 million to $1.25 million.
- Evaluation Points – Example: Add an evaluation criterion to reward projects with designs exceeding accessibility minimums. Many other states consider accessibility using criteria, especially in Land and Water Conservation Fund grants.
- Multi-site Projects – Example: allow applicants to bundle accessibility improvements at multiple sites into one project. RCO's Boating Facilities Program allows multi-site projects with stipulations.

Member Herzog thought it would be wise to request funds from Legislature for a new program and let them decide whether to fund the request. Additionally, projects can fall out of compliance rapidly and multi-site projects are helpful in making projects accessible again.

Member Lam asked if public works departments were included in the outreach, noting ADA typically falls under public works in smaller communities. Ms. Dobey answered yes, but only two entities who responded to our outreach were public works related.

Member Bugert asked which changes would have the greatest impact. Ms. Dobey answered a new grant program would have the greatest impact but recognized that as a heavy lift. Reduced match or increased grant limits would encourage projects to come forward; however, they would be in existing programs and competitive against all applications. Evaluation points could also help boost projects.

Member Burgess liked the idea of incentivizing accessibility through reduced match or increased grant limits and agreed with Member Herzog on asking the Legislature for a new grant program. **Member Burgess** asked if there were certain programs that will be considered for accessibility changes and if there was any accessibility work included in the State Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Plan. Ms. Dobey answered no decisions

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had been made to prioritize any of the programs and more feedback would be needed from applicants to determine where the priority is. A survey of recreation applicants was done as part of the State Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Plan and 85 percent of respondents said accessibility was a priority in the next three to five years.

Chair Shiosaki noted accessibility is something he has worked on for years and some large cities have completed accessibility studies, noting ADA compliance varies and can be extremely expensive. While he could understand having a new program that emphasizes accessibility, **Chair Shiosaki** felt that accessibility should be built into design and design teams should look more comprehensively at how things function for everyone. **Chair Shiosaki** suggested a pilot program to see if accessibility improvements can be incentivized. Ms. Dobey noted that projects funded by RCO are required to meet accessibility standards and are encouraged to go beyond the standards.

Member Herzog noted that sometimes it is about going beyond compliance to make things more accessible. Ms. Dobey noted ADA is focused on mobility disabilities and feedback indicates that people like seeing other features like a sensory hood or communication boards. Ms. Dobey often heard "ADA is the floor not the ceiling."

Member Lam noted that it can be difficult for some communities to go beyond the standard and suggested providing technical assistance on how to reach out to design firms or individuals to energize communities to go beyond.

LUNCH 11:41 A.M. – 12:40 P.M.

Member Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn joined the meeting during lunch hour.

Item 5: Cost Increase Request: City of Seattle, Stan Sayres Memorial Boat Launch, 22-2051

Karen Edwards, Recreation and Conservation Grants assistant section manager, provided an overview of the Stan Sayres Memorial Boat Launch (RCO #22-2051), located on the western shoreline of Lake Washington in King County, where there are over 120,000 registered boats. Construction at the boat launch began Apil 18, 2025, and the project has all necessary permits (including the Army Corps and Section 106), design documents are secured, and a notice to proceed has been issued. Development was slowed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, permitting, schedule changes, and a 42 percent cost escalation. The Seattle Parks and Recreation Department requested an additional $780,000, a 43 percent cost increase, and will be contributing an additional $589,424 to complete work at the boat launch. Details on the request and RCO policy are included in the meeting materials.

Chair Shiosaki asked what would happen if additional funding was not approved since the project had already gone out to bid and was awarded. **Mo Hecht**, Seattle Parks and Recreation, clarified that the project had not gone out to bid yet. The Army Corps permit is good for two years with the possibility of a one-year extension. To secure the extension, work was started to make ADA upgrades to demonstrate that work is underway and to secure the extension. Without additional funding, the Army Corps permit could expire and need to be reapplied for, which could take an additional five to ten years. The project is difficult to phase or scope down and needs to be completed all at once. Mr. Hecht added that Seattle Parks and Recreation has other projects requiring Army Corps permits with similar cost escalations that are extremely burdensome. Seattle Parks and Recreation can only absorb some of the cost increases.

Public Comment

None.

Motion:	Move to Approve **Resolution 2025-12**
Moved By:	Member **Bob Bugert**
Seconded by:	Member **Peter Herzog**
Decision:	Approved

Item 6: Cost Increase Request: State Parks, Stuart Island-Reid Harbor Moorage Replacement, 20-2189

Jesse Sims, outdoor grants manager, provided an overview of the Stuart Island-Reid Harbor Moorage Placement (RCO #20-2189), located within Stuart Island Marine State Park in San Juan County. The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission requested $1,692,500, a 90 percent cost increase. The increase is primarily necessary due to unexpected inflation and tariffs. Details on the request and RCO policy are included in the meeting materials.

Member Windrope asked if the floats are a part of the project. Mr. Sims answered they are not. Additionally, accessibility issues will need to be addressed by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

Mr. Sims added that, like the project in Item 5, this project has a permitting issue where if a cost increase is not approved, the Washington State Parks Commission would need to reapply for the permits and it could take another five years.

Member Herzog abstained from voting on this item.

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Public Comment

None.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2025-13**
Moved By: Member **Amy Windrope**
Seconded by: Member **Trang Lam**
Decision: Approved

Item 7: Cost Increase Request: Leavenworth Winter Sports Club: Leavenworth Ski Hill Restrooms and Lighting, 22-1735

Lan Nicolai, outdoor grants manager, provided an overview of the Leavenworth Ski Hill Restrooms and Lighting (RCO #22-1735) located near Leavenworth. The Leavenworth Winter Sports Club requested $201,636, a 78 percent cost increase, and will bring an additional match of $134,424. Details on the request and RCO policy are included in the meeting materials. While costs are higher than prefabricated restroom units, the project design maintains the building's historical character and visual continuity. A functional restroom facility is a core part of what makes a public space welcoming and usable.

Chair Shiosaki asked if the project was put out to bid. Ms. Nicolai answered yes, but because the funding gap is so large, it puts the small nonprofit in a difficult position.

Member Herzog asked when the original structure was built. Ms. Nicolai answered sometime in the 1920s. **Member Herzog** noted the importance of maintaining the historical integrity of the existing structure with a new facility that matches.

Member Bugert abstained from voting as he is a member of the Leavenworth Winter Sports Club.

Public Comment

None.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2025-14**
Moved By: Member **Amy Windrope**
Seconded by: Member **Peter Herzog**
Decision: Approved

Item 8: Approval of Grant Awards for 2025-2027

Marguerite Austin explained that staff would request approval of the final ranked lists and grant awards for the board's grant programs. The 2025-2027 biennial budget provides both state and federal funds. These funds will primarily be used to acquire,

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develop, restore, and maintain outdoor recreation sites, habitat conservation areas, and working lands. Ms. Austin described the grant application process, which began in 2023. Of note, the board approved policy changes to the Farm and Forest Account, Nonhighway Off-road Vehicle Activities, and Youth Athletic Facilities, as well as evaluation criteria for park programs.

Details on these programs and their ranked lists are available in the meeting materials.

A. Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account

Karl Jacobs, assistant section manager, provided an overview of the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account program. There were fifteen applications submitted this grant round, requesting a total of $7.8 million in grant funding, and bringing $32 million in match. The significant amount of match for these projects is due to the projects being over water and grant limits. Mr. Jacobs requested approval of the final ranked list and grant awards for this program.

Public Comment

Noting that commenters may want to speak on a project on the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account ranked list and another program, **Chair Shiosaki** allowed six minutes total for public comment on such a project.

Craig McLaughlin, Fox Island resident, spoke in opposition of the DeMolay Sandspit Accessibility and Park Upgrades (RCO#24-1724) on Fox Island that is on the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account and WWRP ranked lists. Mr. McLaughlin's concerns were with the sponsor and project, asserting that Peninsula Metropolitan Park District did not communicate with residents before entering a contract with consultants. Mr. McLaughlin expressed concern over illegal parking, disruptive activities occurring in the park, a right-of-way adjustment, termination of the park host program, and ADA access. Additionally, Mr. McLaughlin did not think the park district held up their end of the agreement in the purchase of the sandspit in the DeMolay Property Acquisition (RCO #10-1271) to protect the sand spit from development. Mr. McLaughlin provided a proposed memorandum that is included in the meeting materials.

Philip Craven, Fox Island resident, commented on the DeMolay Sandspit Accessibility and Park Upgrades (RCO#24-1724) at the existing DeMolay Sandspit Nature Preserve, describing the ecological uniqueness of the property. Mr. Craven expressed concern over the disruption to the environment while making ADA improvements and noted two other parks with ADA access are available in the area. Mr. Craven also noted

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improvements to water access for launching non-motorized watercraft may divert the current and change the shape of the sandspit.

Ally Bujacich, Peninsula Metropolitan Parks District executive director, encouraged the board to adopt Resolutions 2025-15 and 2025-20, which include the DeMolay Sand Spit (RCO#24-1724) and alternate project (RCO#24-1683) and Narrows Park Accessibility Improvements (RCO#24-1766). The parks district stewards public lands for public use and is committed to improving accessibility district wide. The community has identified access to the Puget Sound as one of the highest priorities, which was reinforced as a key finding in the park district's 2023 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. Both accessibility upgrade projects will improve public access to unique Puget Sound shorelines by providing ADA access to water access points and advance the park district's and RCO's mutual goals to provide people with more access to aquatic lands. The DeMolay project enhances the shared vision established at the time the property was acquired for public use using WWRP – Water Access funding (RCO #10-1271).

Steve Nixon, Peninsula Metropolitan Parks District commissioner, commented in support of Resolutions 2025-15 and 2025-20. The DeMolay Sandspit Park Expansion (RCO #24-2025) is an example of the critical partnerships and programs that allow the parks district to preserve properties that provide public access to beaches and aquatic lands and will return a significant portion of shoreline to a more natural state. Mr. Nixon noted that while improving access is just one part of the picture, making shorelines accessible for people with mobility challenges is a priority for the parks district. By approving the resolutions, accessibility challenges with parking, slopes, and access to the beach will be addressed at both DeMolay Sandspit (RCO#24-1724) and the Narrows Park (RCO#24-1766).

Megan Blunk, Gig Harbor resident, expressed gratitude to Peninsula Metropolitan Parks District for considering projects that make parks more accessible to all, not just for those who are currently disabled, but who may become disabled in the future. Ms. Blunk grew up able-bodied in Gig Harbor and enjoyed the parks and outdoors as a child. At eighteen, she was the passenger in a motorcycle accident and became paralyzed from the waist down. Ms. Blunk explained the difficulties she has accessing the outdoors in a wheelchair, noting some places are inaccessible to her now. Other members of the community with disabilities, local to the DeMolay Sandspit, are unable to utilize the park because of mobility needs and adequate access to restroom facilities. Ms. Blunk emphasized the importance of projects like the DeMolay Sandspit (RCO#24-1724) and the Narrows Park (RCO#24-1766) accessibility upgrades for improving mental health and allowing all members of the community to access and enjoy their local parks.

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Chair Shiosaki noted the board is not the ultimate decider on these projects but is a potential funder. While Chair Shiosaki believes in the value of public access, he also believes that park and open space managers need to be good neighbors and encouraged the Peninsula Metropolitan Parks District to be good neighbors to the Fox Island community. Likewise, Chair Shiosaki encouraged the Fox Island community to continue to engage with the parks district and work together.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2025-15**
Moved By: Member **Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn**
Seconded by: Member **Peter Herzog**
Decision: Approved

B. Boating Facilities Program

Karen Edwards provided an overview of the Boating Facilities Program. There were nineteen applications requesting $19 million $4.7 million in match. With the current budget, five projects will be funded, one project will be partially funded, and there are two alternate projects. Ms. Edwards requested approval of the final ranked list and grant awards for this program.

Public Comment

None.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2025-16**
Moved By: Member **Amy Windrope**
Seconded by: Member **Trang Lam**
Decision: Approved

C. Firearms and Archery Range Recreation

Karen Edwards provided an overview of the Firearms and Archery Range Recreation program. There were seven applications requesting just over $400,000 and providing equal match. With the current budget, all projects will be funded. Excess funds will be available for cost increases if necessary. Ms. Edwards requested approval of the final ranked list and grant awards for this program.

Public Comment

None.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2025-17**
Moved By: Member **Bob Bugert**

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Seconded by: Member **Peter Herzog**
Decision: Approved

D. Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities

Karen Edwards provided an overview of the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities program, which includes the Education and Enforcement and Trails categories. There were ninety applications across categories requesting almost $16.4 million, with applicants bringing $13.3 million in match. Ms. Edwards requested approval of the final ranked list and grant awards for this program.

Member Ohlson-Kiehn asked if the 10 percent competitive dollars, part of the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle funding breakdown, are applied in the ranked list. Ms. Edwards answered that the competitive dollars are not included in the ranked lists. In July, staff will meet with the director who will decide where the competitive dollars will go.

Member Herzog abstained from voting on this program.

Public Comment

None.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2025-18**
Moved By: Member **Bob Bugert**
Seconded by: Member **Trang Lam**
Decision: Approved

E. Recreational Trails Program

Karen Edwards provided an overview of the Recreational Trails Program. There were fifty-two applications across categories requesting almost $5.6 million, with applicants providing $6.3 million in match. Two projects are not moving forward for funding, both sponsored by the Stevenson-Carson School District. Ms. Edwards requested approval of the final ranked list and grant awards for this program.

Member Herzog abstained from voting on this program.

Public Comment

None.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2025-19**
Moved By: Member **Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn**

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Seconded by: Member **Bob Bugert**
Decision: Approved

F. Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

Karl Jacobs provided an overview of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, which includes twelve grant categories: Critical Habitat, Natural Areas, Riparian Protection, State Land Restoration and Enhancement, Urban Wildlife Habitat, Farmland Preservation, Forestland Preservation, Local Parks, State Lands Development and Renovation, State Parks, Trails, and Water Access. There were 176 applications across all categories requesting over $173 million, with applicants providing $157.5 million in match. Mr. Jacobs noted some projects are listed as "not funded" and that is because match was not certified, which can happen because the project was low ranking, the applicants did not receive a matching grant, community priorities changed, another funding source was used instead, or the project was removed by the Legislature. Remaining funds from undersubscribed categories will be reallocated to projects in other categories.

Mr. Jacobs requested approval of the final ranked list and grant awards for this program.

Member Bugert asked how the number of applications for acquisitions compared to previous years. **Marguerite Austin** noted there were fewer acquisitions than historically received, primarily in the Local Parks category, possibly due to real estate values and sites available for purchase.

Public Comment

Julia McNamara read a comment from **Yvonne Krause**, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition executive director, extending gratitude to the board and RCO staff for their dedicated work. The coalition looks forward to engaging in future policy discussions and grant review needs and is grateful for the consistent and continued legacy of the WWRP program. Approving the ranked lists means that over 100 new parks, trails, habitat, farmland preservation, and playgrounds will reach communities across the state. The coalition is grateful for the board's continued investment in Washington's natural resources and equitable access to the great outdoors.

Other public comments for this program were captured in Item 8A.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2025-20**
Moved By: Member **Amy Windrope**
Seconded by: Member **Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn**
Decision: Approved

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G. Youth Athletic Facilities

Karl Jacobs provided an overview of the Youth Athletic Facilities program, which has large and small categories. Mr. Jacobs explained changes to the program in this grant round, which included acquisition-only projects being eligible in the large category, increased grant limits, an updated match policy, and updated evaluation criteria.

There were fifty-two applications across both categories requesting almost $43 million, with applicants providing $73.7 million in match.

Mr. Jacobs requested approval of the final ranked list and grant awards for this program.

Member Bugert noted eliminating WWRP as a source of match did not seem to impact the overall match brought by applicants in this program.

Public Comment

None.

Motion: Move to Approve **Resolution 2025-21**
Moved By: Member **Bob Bugert**
Seconded by: Member **Amy Windrope**
Decision: Approved

Mr. Jacobs emphasized that this grant round funded 243 projects with $148,888,622.

BREAK: 2:26 P.M. – 2:47 P.M.

Item 9: Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Program Update and Policy Changes

Adam Cole, Policy specialist, provided a briefing on the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities program. Last year, staff identified improvements and streamlined the evaluation process, and the board approved raising grant limits and agreed to defer larger changes until after the grant round. This year, to prepare for the 2026 grant round, staff and the advisory committee are considering larger changes to the grant process and evaluation criteria.

Mr. Cole shared the federal government typically receives about half of the program's funding, while the state government receives the next largest amount, around 42 percent. Nonprofits and local governments each receive around 5 percent of the funding.

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Staff are considering "omnibus" grants and improving the program's evaluation criteria, so that changes may be implemented in the next 2026 grant cycle. The omnibus grants could improve the program and get more money to applicants in a more efficient way.

Currently, over 100 small grants are submitted to the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Program with many projects submitted per applicant. There are typically multiple projects from the same sponsor per service area and active grants are managed separately, which is an administrative burden on RCO and applicants. Applicants typically make the same requests at each biennium. An omnibus grant could result in reduced administrative burden through larger awards and longer-term projects, improved economies of scale in purchasing and staff retention, and less overhead.

Mr. Cole presented three omnibus concepts:

1. Regional: "landscape level" grants issued per management unit with larger grant limits for a single purpose or category.
2. Combination: multiple category grants across a larger area with larger grant limits.
3. Longer-Term: same grant limits but offer multi-biennial contracts where subsequent biennia are noncompetitive.

Over the next year, staff will meet with the advisory committee to talk about these concepts.

Member Windrope asked how future biennial funding can be committed, like in the third concept. Mr. Cole answered that it cannot be and would need to be done administratively pending Legislative approval so that applicants would have guaranteed funding for at least the next biennium and would not need to apply again in future biennia if funding is available within a feasible timeframe.

The advisory committee provided a lot of feedback on the evaluation criteria after the recent grant round. There was interest in the distribution of the program based on the evaluation criteria which some of the advisory committee members thought led to funding larger projects near population centers over projects in more rural regions of the state or those that are "smaller." Relatedly, although match is not required in the program, it is still scored so that land managers who can bring a lot of match score higher which means larger landscapes have an advantage. The advisory committee will also consider whether predominantly natural, population, matching share, letters of support, and sustainability evaluation criteria fits the priorities of the program.

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Member Herzog noted the difficulty the United States Forest Service has administering the grants they have and asked if an omnibus grant would help. Mr. Cole explained how the federal government can have difficulty in contracting and hiring workers. With larger grants, they can get funding all at one time for a longer period and would not need to repeatedly go through the contracting process. The downside would be a potential loss of accountability and transparency, which would need to be built into the system so that the public benefit of the grant is realized.

Member Bugert asked if multi-biennia projects would be sequenced. Mr. Cole noted the details on how it would work have not yet been fully resolved, but the idea is that the projects would be a sequenced or staggered approach so that emergent projects could be funded. **Member Bugert** asked if this concept saves on administrative or contractual work. Mr. Cole answered that land managers have indicated this would provide security and predictability in their budgets and program funds.

Chair Shiosaki found the regional grants intriguing but worried it could become a "winner takes all" scenario and was interested to hear how the advisory committee and stakeholders feel about it. Mr. Cole noted any large changes would need to be consensus based. Staff are considering a pilot program along the Interstate 90 corridor, where there are fewer land managers, to determine if longer term awards are favorable for everyone.

Member Ohlson-Kiehn thought the intention of reducing the administrative burden made sense but was concerned over an Interstate 90 corridor pilot program, as it may impact other region's opportunities for funding. Mr. Cole shared the advisory committee is concerned with the distribution of funds not benefiting all areas and this consideration will be part of the conversation over the next year and will need to include outreach to current applicants and stakeholders of the program. Mr. Cole will continue to provide updates at future meetings.

Member Herzog expressed concern about syncing this work up with the ongoing road usage charge discussion and thought it would be wise to have an intentional process about the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities program and a potential road usage charge. Mr. Cole explained that while the state passed a gas tax increase last legislative session, the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities program and Boating Facilities Program will not benefit from that increase because of a long-standing statutory per gallon limit of taxes that may be allocated to the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities program and the Boating Facilities Program. . However, that limitation expires in 2031, at which time the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities program and the Boating Facilities Program will each receive the full 1 percent of state

gas taxes collected. Now is the right time to start conversations about potential policy changes in those programs that would maximize the benefits of increased allocations to those programs.

Item 10: Boating Infrastructure Grant Applications

Allison Dellwo, senior outdoor grants manager, provided an overview of the federal Boating Infrastructure Grant program, a federally funded program managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. There are two tiers in this program.

In Tier One, there were four applications requesting a total of $882,082. The Boating Programs Advisory Committee will review and evaluate these projects. The board previously delegated authority to the director to select projects for funding. There were no applications to Tier Two this year.

Ms. Dellwo highlighted the four Tier One projects:

- Longbranch Marina Dock Replacement (RCO #25-1234) – Sponsored by the Longbranch Improvement Club, requesting $241,315 in funding and bringing $81,439 in match for a full dock replacement.
- Electrical Upgrade to Breakwater A (RCO #25-1251) – Sponsored by the Port of Friday Harbor, requesting $168,267 in funding and bringing $58,089 in match to install four new power pedestals.
- Dock Update (RCO #25-1287) – Sponsored by Mason's Resort, requesting $262,500 in funding and bringing $87,500 in match to replace a string of docks.
- South Whidbey Harbor Whalers and Electrical Upgrades (RCO #25-1286) – Sponsored by the Port of South Whidbey, requesting $210,000 in funding and bringing $70,000 in match to replace whalers and update electrical infrastructure.

Item 11: State Agency Partner Reports

Governor's Office

Joe Impecoven, special assistant, was not available to provide a report.

Department of Natural Resources

Member Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn provided an overview of the Legislative session results for the Department of Natural Resources recreation and conservation programs. The Discover Pass increase from thirty to forty-five dollars will go into effect in October and is projected to result in a $1.2 million increase for the department's recreation program. The threshold for the distribution of Discover Pass funds raised from $71 million to $85

million, after which the revenue will be split evenly between State Parks, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources. The current distribution of Discover Pass revenue is 84 percent for State Parks, 8 percent for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and 8 percent for the Department of Natural Resources. The new threshold is not expected to be met for a couple of biennia.

The governor vetoed a portion of the bill that established a work group tasked with engaging Tribal governments and stakeholders to review and assess revenue structures and challenges for state recreation funding and submitting recommendations to the Legislature and Governor's Office. In the veto letter, however, Governor Ferguson tasked Joe Impecoven to collaborate directly with agencies to explore sustainable and equitable funding structures.

The Legislature eliminated all the department's funding for the Protect Public Lands and Tribal Rights package, which removes funding for participating in the State Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative and five law enforcement staff. The Legislature also cut funding for the department's Conservation Corps, a program that pays for a variety of conservation corps in Washington. The department saw a reduction of just under $2.5 million in recreation maintenance funding, which will reduce services provided to recreation users on department managed lands. This reduction does not offset the expected gains from the increase in Discover Pass fees, which could result in users paying increased Discover Pass fees and experiencing fewer services. Lastly, there was a reduction in funding for managing the Teanaway and Klickitat Canyon Community Forests. The department will need to be creative to work with the funding levels they have.

On the capital budget side, the Promoting Safe and Responsible Recreation decision package was funded at $3 million, which is the historical amount. The Natural Areas Facilities, Preservation, and Access request were also funded. The Trust Land Transfer program received $17 million. Interestingly, there were five package requests from Tribes to transfer trust land into their ownership in this grant round. By comparison, there has been one transfer of trust land to Tribal ownership since 1989. The Legislature provided a proviso to determine if the Elwha Watershed is compatible with Natural Resource Conservation Area or Natural Area Preserve.

The department is working to react to changes in their federally funded programs. The Forest Legacy Program, funded by the United States Forest Service, which was paused due to uncertainty in the Inflation Reduction Act, will be funded and projects can move forward. The Endangered Species Act Section Six grants will not receive a future round of funding; however, the current round is moving forward.

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Department of Fish and Wildlife

Member Amy Windrope shared that Cynthia Wilkerson, former Lands Division manager, is the new deputy director of the Wildlife Program. Kevin Conley from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service is the new Lands Division manager.

Member Windrope noted the department will be co-managing a parcel from the Springwood Ranch acquisition with the Yakama Nation.

The department received around $30 million in cuts, 170 positions will remain vacant, and twenty-nine positions were cut. The Forest Health and Fuel Reductions program lost around $5 million and there is no funding for wildlife diseases except chronic wasting disease.

The department receives around one third of their budget from the federal government and is anticipating more state and federal budget constraints.

State Parks and Recreation Commission

Member Peter Herzog provided his final partner report before his retirement at the end of the week. The State Parks and Recreation Commission needed to reduce its budget by $10 million and agreed with the Office of Financial Management to reduce reserve amounts in the carry forward budget to reduce layoffs. Even with this agreement, five staff were laid off and many positions will remain vacant or were abolished. Overall, the capacity of the agency was deeply affected, and one-time budget fixes will need to be dealt with again in the next biennium. State Parks was 65 percent self-funded with 35 percent general fund support; this shifted to 71 percent self-funded and 29 percent general funds. State Parks will continue efforts to bring the self-funded support back to our below 65 percent which is more congruous with the services provided. Unfortunately, the increase in Discover Pass fees will not mean increased services for the public, which will be frustrating to the public and land managing agencies.

State Parks saw a roughly 50 percent reduction in the capital budget. The agency carries a relatively high reappropriation rate, which will be used in the current biennium.

Member Herzog noted the increase in Discover Pass fees goes into effect on October 1. State Parks has seen an increase in people purchasing Discover Passes before the fee increase. As part of the bill, disabled veteran pass holders will be able to use their passes on Department of Natural Resources and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife lands; however, the Legislature removed an exemption in all State Parks for camp site registration fees that was available to disabled veterans. The Saint Edwards lease

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authority was changed from sixty-two to eighty years, allowing the State Parks Commission to consider a longer lease term.

The agency's move to the Department of Ecology building off Pacific Avenue in Lacey is complete, and the old building is housing the Thurston County Sheriff's office.

The State Tribal Recreation Impact Initiative has been working for two years with thirty-one Tribes with protected rights in Washinton and five state agencies to improve management of recreation impacts that protect Tribal treaty rights and other rights on state lands. The initiative has been a unique and significant process that, even with budget cuts, agencies are committed to continuing.

Chair Shiosaki shared a resolution honoring **Member Herzog**, who is retiring at the end of the week after thirty years at the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. The resolution captured his personality, dedicated work to recreation and conservation, and love for the state of Washington.

Member Herzog shared that it was a privilege and honor to work with RCO and the board in his time in state service.

Item 12: Board Tour Overview

Please note, this item was presented after Item 4: Emphasizing Accessibility.

Karl Jacobs, Recreation and Conservation Section assistant manager, provided an overview of the board tour outlined in the agenda, noting that the board will be visiting one site from each partner state agency. Details on tour locations can be found in the meeting materials.

The board will meet in the DoubleTree Hotel lobby in Olympia at 8:45 a.m. to start the tour at 9:00 a.m.

Mr. Jacobs noted the address in the Tour Memo for Mima Mounds is correct but the address in the hyperlink at the top of the agenda goes to Mima Falls and is incorrect.

RECESS: 3:47 P.M.

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RECREATION AND CONSERVATION FUNDING BOARD SUMMARY MINUTES

Date: June 25, 2025

Place: Tour – DoubleTree Hotel, 415 Capitol Way, South Thurston County and Lewis County Area

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 9:00 a.m. **Julia McNamara**, Recreation and Conservation Office board liaison, performed roll call. Members Shiloh Burgess, Kitty Craig, Trang Lam, and Amy Windrope were absent.

Quorum was not met and Chair Shiosaki adjourned the meeting.

ADJOURN: 9:00 A.M.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 28 and 29, 2025, in Room 172, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street, Olympia, Washington, 98501 and online via Zoom.

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Item 1B: Time Extensions

Action Requested: Decision

Summary

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

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 regarding the requested extensions and the expected date of project completion.

General considerations for approving time extension requests include:

- Receipt of a written request for the time extension,
- Reimbursements requested and approved,
- Date the board granted funding approval,
- Conditions surrounding the delay,
- Sponsor's reasons or justification for requesting the extension,
- Likelihood of sponsor completing the project within the extended period,
- Original dates for project completion,

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

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of these requests supports the board's goal of helping its partners protect, restore, and develop habitat, working lands, and recreation opportunities that benefit people, fish and wildlife, and ecosystems.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the time extension requests for the projects listed in Attachment A.

Attachment

A. Time Extension Requests for Board Approval

Attachment A: Time Extension Requests for Board Approval

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
Klickitat Trail – Bridging the Final Gap (16-1887 Development)

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks
- Grant Remaining: $1,246,725 (82 percent)
- Current End Date: 12/31/2025
- Proposed End Date: 12/31/2027

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

Washington State Parks and Recreation received this grant to construct two bridges and develop about a mile of trail on the Klickitat State Park Trail. The main bridge, known as the Suburbia Bridge, will span over the Klickitat River east of the Town of Klickitat and the smaller bridge will span over Snyder Creek.

State Parks is requesting additional time after delays stalled the project on multiple occassions. These delays included addressing tribal concerns through creation of a Memorandum of Understanding, working through the complexities of designing a bridge of this size in such a sensitive area, and responding to a lawsuit from a local resident that has now been resolved. Also, State Parks has secured an additional $4,000,000 in appropriations from the State to address budget concerns for this project. With all of the causes for delays now having been settled, State Parks feels confident that the path forward to a successful completion will be smooth.

With 60 percent designs having been submitted, State Parks will proceed with permit applications and their State Environental Policy Act process within the next month and will present the project to the Klickitat County Planning Commission in the fall. By the end of this calendar year the expectation is to reach 90 percent designs, where the only changes would be minor ones to address anything uncovered through the environmental review and permitting processes. This will put State Parks in good standing to likely complete their cultural resources process in 2026 and begin construction as soon as weather permits.

U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Snoqualmie Ranger District
Snoqualmie Ranger District Trails (20-2320 Development)

- Grant Program: Recreational Trails Program: General
- Grant Remaining: $20,564 (27.42 percent)
- Current End Date: 11/30/2025
- Proposed End Date: 10/31/2027

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The Snoqualmie Ranger District received this grant for heavy maintenance and reconstruction of trails in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Work includes brushing, tread, structure, and drainage repair, and backlog maintenance needs created by high use, storms, and fires on nonmotorized trails used for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and overnight backpacking.

Delays have been due mostly to staffing issues. Starting in 2020, the project was disrupted by the pandemic. Later, the project contact relocated and it took some time to recruit a replacement. The project has also been affected by recent hiring freezes resulting in reduced staffing and other federal policies.

Another related factor is the recent closure of the Fairfax Bridge along State Route 165 in Pierce County, which has impacted access to the worksite. The Governor's office is working with the Washington State Department of Transportation in an attempt to secure funding and expedite repairing and reopening the bridge.

The Snoqualmie Ranger District is requesting just shy of a two-year time extension to ensure they have enough time to complete and close out the project.

Port of Kingston
Guest Restroom Facility Replacement (20-1420 Development)

- Grant Program: Boating Infrastructure Grant: Tier 1, Boating Facilities Program and Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
- Grant Remaining: $272,985 (91 percent)
- Current End Date: 12/31/2025
- Proposed End Date: 6/30/2026

Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The Port of Kingston received a grant to replace a restroom in Mike Wallace Park, located adjacent to the Port of Kingston Marina and Guest Dock facility. Plans include the installation of a restroom facility that meet standards for the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Delays are related to Kitsap County permitting issues, bidding, and design. The Port of Kingston employed a firm for completion of the plan set for plumbing, electrical and heating, ventilation and air conditioning system. The project has gone to bid multiple times resulting in costs that were too high. As of December 2024, the port went to bid for a final time for construction services.

The project is now under construction and is scheduled to be completed by mid-December. The Port of Kingston is requesting another six-month extension to factor in any unforeseen delays and to ensure construction and administrative close out is completed within the grant period.

Item 1C: Cost Increase Request – Talbot Hill Reservoir Park Sport Courts (22-1696)

Action Requested: Decision

Summary

The City of Renton is asking the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to approve a cost increase for the Talbot Hill Reservoir Park Sport Courts (22-1696) project. Approval of additional funds will help offset an unanticipated increase in project costs.

This cost increase request exceeds 10 percent of the total project cost; therefore, policy requires board consideration of this request. There are funds available for the $52,497 cost increase, if approved.

Background

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board awarded a Youth Athletic Facilities Program grant for Talbot Hill Reservoir Park Sport Courts in June 2023, for redevelopment of the sport courts at Talbot Hill Reservoir Park in King County.

The project scope includes resurfacing three existing tennis courts and three existing pickleball courts and adding multi-use striping to the existing tennis courts to create six new pickleball courts. The parking lot and pathway are being renovated to enhance accessibility. Additional improvements include a covered seating area, water fountain, bike rack, benches, garbage containers, and paddle holders. The renovation will provide additional capacity to meet growing demand for pickleball and address aging facility issues such as drainage and slopes.

Project Status

Construction is substantially complete, and the park was reopened for public use on August 29, 2025. A cost increase is being requested later in the timeline than is typical because the City of Renton's staff did not know about the cost increase policy for Youth Athletic Facilities projects. They learned they could request approval of additional funds

for cost overruns when the grant manager was on site for the interim inspection in May 2025.

Discussion and Analysis

Cost Increase Policies

The board's policy on cost increases for community athletic facility projects is on page forty-two of *Manual 17: Youth Athletic Facilities*. The manual states:

> *Cost increases for approved projects may be granted by the board or director if financial resources are available. Each cost increase request will be considered on its merits. A cost increase for the Small Grants Category may not exceed the $350,000 grant maximum. The director's approval of an acquisition project cost increase is limited to a parcel-by-parcel appraised and reviewed value. See "Manual 3: Acquisition Projects" and "Manual 4: Development Projects" for more details on cost increases.*

The details for a development project are outlined in *Manual 4: Development Projects*, beginning at the bottom of page thirty-three. Specifically, the policy states:

> *On occasion, the cost of completing a project exceeds the amount written into the agreement. Such overruns are the responsibility of the project sponsor. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may consider a cost increase in some grant programs if funds are available, and the grant recipient submits a written request. The director may approve requests for increases up to 10 percent of the total project cost and the board may approve increases above 10 percent.*
>
> *To request an increase, the project sponsor must submit a written request to RCO addressing the following:*
>
> - *The sponsor must have fully explored all practical alternatives to completing the intent of the agreement.*
> - *The sponsor must have had little control over the conditions causing the overrun.*
> - *Any increase must only be used for elements in the project agreement.*

Alternative Considered

The City of Renton considered the following alternative approaches to manage the impact of the cost overrun.

- **Phasing the project**. This approach would have prolonged delivery of the park renovation and increased total costs because of inflation and repeated mobilization. It was deemed unacceptable given the financial implications and community need for the use and expansion of the athletic facility.

- **Reducing the scope of work**. This approach would have required reducing or eliminating drainage improvements to the courts, omitting the circulation updates, or removing site furnishings. These changes would compromise court usability and safety, Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, and the overall intent of the grant.

- **Paying for the overrun out of other project budgets.** The City of Renton decided to complete the full scope of work by paying for the cost overrun out of other planned playground and sport court project budgets that do not include RCO funding. This option allowed the Talbot Hill Reservoir Park Sport Courts to move forward but results in Renton delaying or foregoing other priority park renovations that are also important to the community. If the board approves additional funds for the project, Renton will replace the borrowed funds with Youth Athletic Facilities grant funds , leaving the City's project budgets available for other important playground and sport court projects.

Conditions Causing the Overrun

The project experienced inflationary escalation between submitting the grant application budget in summer 2022 and putting the project out for bids in late 2024. Rising material and labor prices resulted in a $114,548 gap between the grant agreement amount and the final project cost.

In addition, the project experienced other cost overruns related to drainage constraints and amending a pedestrian bridge into the scope. Staff are not recommending approval of a cost increase for the drainage because that constraint was known at the time of application, or for the pedestrian bridge because it is part of scope increase that was previously approved under the Director's authority. Renton will cover these overruns.

Project Cost Estimates

This project is requesting an increase of $52,497 in grant funding to help cover inflationary escalation and minimize how much local funding is diverted from other priority projects. There are enough funds in the Youth Athletic Facilities Account to cover the amount requested. Since this request exceeds 10 percent of the project's total cost, the request is presented for the board's consideration. The City of Renton will bring additional match of $62,051 to maintain the current grant to match ratio. This table shows the existing and proposed funding amounts.

Talbot Hill Reservoir Park Sport Courts Funding	Percent	Current Funding	Cost Increase Amounts	Proposed Funding
Grant Amount	45.83%	$350,000	$52,497	$402,497
Sponsor Match	54.17%	$413,732	$62,051	$475,783
Total	**100%**	**$763,732**	**$114,548**	**$878,280**

Funds Available

There are enough funds available to support the amount requested. If approved, the increased budget will only pay for costs associated with scope elements already included in the grant agreement.

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of this request supports the board's goal of helping its partners protect, restore, and develop habitat, working lands, and recreation opportunities that benefit people, fish and wildlife, and ecosystems.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the cost increase as requested.

Next Steps

If the board approves the request, RCO staff will process the necessary amendment to the grant agreement.

Item 1D: Recognition of Advisor Service

Action Requested: Decision

Summary

This memo summarizes the years of service by advisors on advisory committees the Recreation and Conservation Office uses to assist in its grant programs.

Background

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) rely on advisors to help administer its grant programs. Advisors provide a strategic balance and perspective on program issues. Their activities, experience, and knowledge help shape program policies that guide RCO in reviewing and evaluating projects and administering grants. The following individual has completed their service after providing valuable project analysis and excellent program advice. Outdoor recreationists in Washington will enjoy the results of their hard work and vision for years to come. Staff applaud their exceptional service and recommend approval of the attached resolution via Resolution 2025-22 (consent).

Recreation Trails Program:

Name	Position	Years
David Fleischhauer	Mountain Bike	4

Attachment

A. Individual Service Recognition

WASHINGTON STATE
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

A Resolution to Recognize the Service of

David Fleischhauer

To the Residents of Washington State and the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

WHEREAS from 2022 to 2025, David Fleischhauer served the citizens of the state of Washington and the Recreation and Conservation Office by participating on the Recreation Trails Program Advisory Committee; and

WHEREAS the result of this service was providing valuable analysis and excellent advice that assisted in the development of exemplary program policies, program planning, and the evaluation of recreation projects for funding; and

WHEREAS members of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board wish to recognize this support and service;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that in recognition of Mr. Fleischhauer's dedication and excellence in performing these services, the board and its staff extend their sincere appreciation and compliments on a job well done, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent along with a letter of appreciation to Mr. Fleischhauer.

Approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in Olympia, Washington on October 28, 2025

Michael Shiosaki

Chair Michael Shiosaki

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

Resolution 2025-22

October 28, 2025 - Consent Agenda

BE IT RESOLVED that the following October 28, 2025, Consent Agenda items are approved:

A. Board Meeting Minutes
   - June 24-25, 2025

B. Time Extensions
   - U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Snoqualmie Ranger District Trails Alliance, 20-2320
   - State Parks, Klickitat Trail-Bridging the Final Gap, 16-1887
   - Port of Kingston, Guest Restroom Facility Replacement, 20-1420

C. Cost Increase Request
   - Renton, Talbot Hill Reservoir Park Sports Courts, 22-1696

D. Advisor Recognition (1)

Resolution moved by: Member Kitty Craig

Resolution seconded by: Member Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: October 28, 2025

Item 2: Director's Report

Action Requested: Briefing

Summary

This memo provides an overview of key agency activities.

Agency Updates

Recreation and Conservation Office Hosts Webinar for Successful Applicants

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) hosted its Successful Applicant Webinar on September 10. This webinar was designed to help applicants who were awarded grants in 2024 to implement their funded project. Topics covered during the webinar include grant agreement terms, reporting requirements, project changes, ongoing obligations, project closeout, accessibility requirements, and more. The cultural resources team hosted a separate webinar on October 7. This session gave sponsors an opportunity ask questions and learn more about implementing a project without negatively impacting important cultural and historic resources.

Director Approves $44.5 Million in Grants

Woodard Bay Natural Resources Conservation Area: 24-1554

Using unspent funds, RCO's director has approved over $44.5 million in grants for alternate and partially funded projects. Approximately $34 million went to sixty-two alternate projects and $10.5 million provided full funding for twenty-three partially funded projects and increased the grant amount for one partially funded project. While funds were allocated for five of the board's nine grant programs, over $36 million went to Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program projects. The awards are comprised of unused funds from previously funded projects and 2025-27 funds from

undersubscribed program categories. Attachment A, Funds for Alternate and Partially Funded Projects, shows the grant awards for alternate projects (Table A-1) and the additional funding for partially funded projects (Table A-2).

Washington State Receives Over $9 Million in Federal Funds

Washington State is the recipient of $9.32 million in Land and Water Conservation Funds for federal fiscal year 2025. The nationwide apportionment of over $437 million is the largest in the history of the State and Local Assistance Grant Program. Congress approved funds from the stateside program, the Secretary of the Interior's Contingency Reserve Fund, and the Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006. In addition, the City of Kent was awarded $3.15 million in federal funds for an Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program.

Olympia's Yelm Highway Community Park Phase One: 24-1405

When the board approved the 2024 final ranked list of Land and Water Conservation Fund projects at its October 2024 meeting, it delegated authority to RCO's director to award grants using federal fiscal years 2025, 2026, and available funds from previous allocations. The director approved over $11 million in grants for five projects after the National Park Service issued agreements for four stateside program projects and Kent's nationally competitive Uplands Playfield and Spray Park (23-1910) project. The list of projects and grant awards are shown in Attachment B, Funds for Land and Water Conservation Fund Projects. These funds combined with sponsor match represent an investment of $36 million to develop and renovate community parks in Washington.

Grants for Community Forests and Athletic Facilities

RCO's director awarded $14.7 million in grants for fifteen outdoor recreation and conservation projects. Two Community Forests Program projects received $6 million to preserve over twenty-four hundred acres of working forests. The remaining funds were for thirteen alternate and partially funded Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities projects.

White Salmon Valley Pool: 24-2144

Funds will help local agencies and nonprofit organizations develop athletic fields, sport courts, swimming pools, and accessible support amenities. Attachment C, Funds for Recreation and Conservation Office Programs, shows the grant awards for new projects (Table C-1) and the additional funding for partially funded projects (Table C-2).

Employee News

Amee Bahr was promoted to senior outdoor grants manager for the Salmon Section. She joined RCO in 2014 after nearly twenty-three years working in the environmental field conducting wetland delineations and restoration work, identifying Washington native plants, and managing a native plant nursery. She will focus on the office programs, primarily the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board, the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program, the Family Forest Fish Passage Program, the Washington Coast Restoration and Resiliency Initiative, and the Chehalis Basin Strategy.

Lauren Burnes, special assistant to the director, left RCO in June to work for the Office of Insurance Commissioner. RCO is grateful for Lauren's work taking on several projects that benefited staff and partners.

Hayley Dalgetty was promoted to senior outdoor grants manager for the Recreation and Conservation Grants Section. Hayley joined RCO in 2022 as an outdoor grants manager. She has worked in the parks and conservation field for a decade in roles of a park ranger and program and project manager at federal, state, regional, and nonprofit land management organizations.

Stephanie Helms, the executive coordinator of the Washington Invasive Species Council, will leave RCO at the end of October to move back home to the East Coast. Stephanie came to RCO in 2023 from the City of Seattle, where she served as an urban forester. She previously worked in Baltimore, Maryland where she built programs and partnerships focused on invasive species, contributed to emerald ash borer response and white-tailed deer management, and revamped the Weed Warriors volunteer program.

Aaron Johnson joined RCO October 1 as an outdoor grants manager in the Recreation and Conservation Grants Section. He was born in Australia, grew up in New Hampshire, and enlisted in the U.S. Navy. He has made the Northwest his home for the past twenty years. After the Navy, he spent five years managing the daily operations at the Navy's

Jim Creek Recreation Area in Arlington then moved to Whatcom County where he was a park ranger for four years in Point Roberts. In 2019, he moved his family to the Wenatchee Valley and managed a hazardous waste recycling facility for four years before moving to the state Liquor and Cannabis Board.

Anne Parfitt joined RCO October 1 as a cultural resources specialist. She grew up on the Olympic Peninsula. In the past decade, she has worked in cultural resource management across Washington, California, Oregon, and Texas. Most recently, she directed archaeological surveys in central Washington as part of a collaboration between Central Washington University and the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

Hannah Pauly joined RCO October 1 as an outdoor grants manager in the Recreation and Conservation Grants Section. She grew up in Texas and Chicago but has made the Northwest her home for the past several years. She previously worked at the Northwest Youth Corps, where she was the Washington program manager overseeing federal, state, and local grants; working with partners; coordinating logistics; and conducting outreach. Before that, she worked at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge in Florida and three different national parks-Death Valley, Shenandoah, and Yellowstone.

Alice Rubin was promoted to assistant section manager for the Salmon Section. She manages the team that oversees non-Salmon Recovery Funding Board programs, which include the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board, the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program, the Family Forest Fish Passage Program, the Washington Coast Restoration and Resiliency Initiative, and the Chehalis Basin Strategy. Alice joined RCO as an outdoor grants manager in the Salmon Section in 2013. She has dedicated her career to natural resources conservation, restoration, and protection.

News from the Boards

The **Invasive Species Council** met July 17 to discuss its strategic plan. The council also heard a briefing on priority aquatic invasive species and golden mussel prohibition consultation. The council met again on September 25 and heard reports about using ballast water reports to assess the introduction risk of invasive species, invasive freshwater mussel prevention, the addition of English holly to the noxious weed list, and the Washington Department of Natural Resources' new invasive plant ranking system. The council continued to work on its strategic plan and formally adopted the content in

the final draft. Finally, the council held a moment of silence in honor of Karen Ripley and praised Stephanie Helms, who is stepping down as the council's executive coordinator.

The **Salmon Recovery Funding Board** met September 16 and awarded about $40 million in grants for salmon recovery and another $1.4 million for monitoring. The board also approved the grant schedule for 2026. The next meeting will be December 9-10.

Policy and Legislative Updates

Staff will provide updates on the legislative and budget process. This will include an overview of budget timelines, revenue projections, and other information related to the upcoming legislative session.

Grant Management Section Updates

Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Cycle Changes

RCO solicits applications for Land and Water Conservation Fund grants before Congress approves funding. Because applicants are reluctant to complete costly pre-construction activities before they have assurances that the National Park Service will issue an agreement for the project, RCO plans to modify the timeline for offering grants for this program. Instead of accepting grant applications in 2026, RCO will wait for Congressional approval of federal fiscal year 2027 funds and then solicit applications when staff can assure applicants that there are funds in hand for top ranked projects. Twenty-five projects were scored and ranked during the last grant cycle. Some of those applicants will not receive their agreements until 2027, nearly three years after the board approved the final ranked list. Staff is reaching out to potential applicants to solicit their thoughts before making a final decision on this revised schedule. This proposed change is for the stateside Land and Water Conservation Fund Program only. Whenever the National Park Service offers Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grants, RCO will be poised to solicit and accept applications for the national competition.

Boating Access Symposium

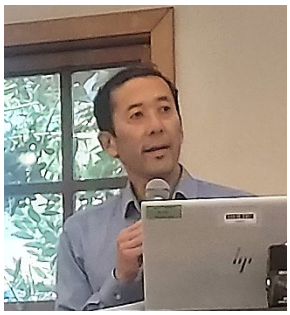
Karen Edwards, Assistant Section Manager, attended the States Organization for Boating Access Education and Training Symposium in Providence, Rhode Island on August 25-28. The symposium, hosted by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, had a cram-packed agenda that included critical federal updates related to Boating Infrastructure Grants managed by RCO, the Clean Vessel Act administered by Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Boating Access Program administered by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Keynote speaker, Aaron Barnett, Washington Sea Grant's boating program specialist, highlighted the work done in Washington State to keep our waters safe for people and wildlife. Attendees and presenters included boating officials, government agencies, ports, consultants, engineering firms, manufacturers, and suppliers, all interested in boating access. The last day was spent touring boating access sites at Colt State Park, Mount Hope, Haines Park, Gano Park, and the Bristol Maritime Welcome Center.

Boating Infrastructure Grants

The Boating Programs Advisory Committee reviewed and evaluated four 2025 Boating Infrastructure Grant: Tier One projects in August. RCO's director has approved submittal of the top two ranked projects to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for funding. The applications for the Port of Friday Harbor's Electrical Upgrade to Breakwater A (25-1251) and the Longbranch Improvement Club's Marina Dock Replacement (25-1234) must be submitted for federal funding by October 24, 2025. The full ranked list and scores are posted on RCO's website.

State Trails Caucus



The Washington State Trails Coalition hosted a one-day gathering on October 2, 2025, in Issaquah. During this event, more than eighty trail colleagues from across the state gathered to celebrate successes, discuss challenges, and learn more about sustaining a network of trails in Washington. Michael Shiosaki, Chair of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board welcomed attendees and highlighted the board's commitment to trails since it has awarded more than $300 million for trail work since 1964. Karen Edwards, Adam Cole, Russell Malburg, and Brian Carpenter heard about some of the challenges federal agencies face as they try to manage trail use on their lands. Jesse Sims, who serves on the Washington State Trails Coalition's board, helped organize this event where attendees are hoping to increase equitable access to outdoor recreation in Washington.

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.

Recreation and Conservation Projects

Program	Active Projects	Board and Director Approved Projects	Total Funded Projects
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)	18	2	20
Boating Facilities Program (BFP)	43	9	52
Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG)	3	0	3
Community Forests Program (CFP)	9	2	11
Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities (COAF)	17	5	22
Firearms and Archery Range Recreation (FARR)	7	3	10
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	34	5	39
Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA)	84	75	159
Planning for Recreation Access (PRA)	11	0	11
Recreation and Conservation Office Recreation Grants	3	0	3
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	36	33	69
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)	224	70	294
Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)	30	12	42
Total	**519**	**216**	**735**

Viewing Closed Projects

Attachment D lists projects that closed between June 1 and September 30, 2025. This quarter the team closed a record-number of 175 projects! Click on the project number to view the project description, grant funds awarded, photos, maps, reports, etc.

Grant Services Section Updates

Advisory Committee Recruitment

RCO is seeking new advisory committee members for the 2026 grant cycle. There are sixteen advisory committees with available positions, including the following:

- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)
- Boating Programs (BFP, BIG)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicles Activities (NOVA)

- Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)

We anticipate filling 55-70 vacancies. Recruitment efforts include social media, targeted emails, and word-of-mouth outreach. Visit the RCO Advisory Committee webpage for more details.

New Cultural Resources and Compliance Trainings

Staff developed two new training courses related to cultural resource protection and grant recipient long-term obligations and compliance.

The Cultural Resources Training describes the importance and process of cultural resource reviews, covering definitions, categories, and legal requirements under both state and federal laws. The training details the RCO review process, which balances project and resource risks through various management approaches including surveys, monitoring, and inadvertent discovery plans (IDPs). The training provides guidance for RCO grant recipients on cultural resource requirements, emphasizing the importance of early planning, consultation, and adherence to special conditions in grant agreements. Staff also hosted a question-and-answer session for all new grant recipients to further assist grant sponsors in the process.

The Long-term Obligations and Compliance training provides an overview of grant recipient responsibilities after their project is completed.

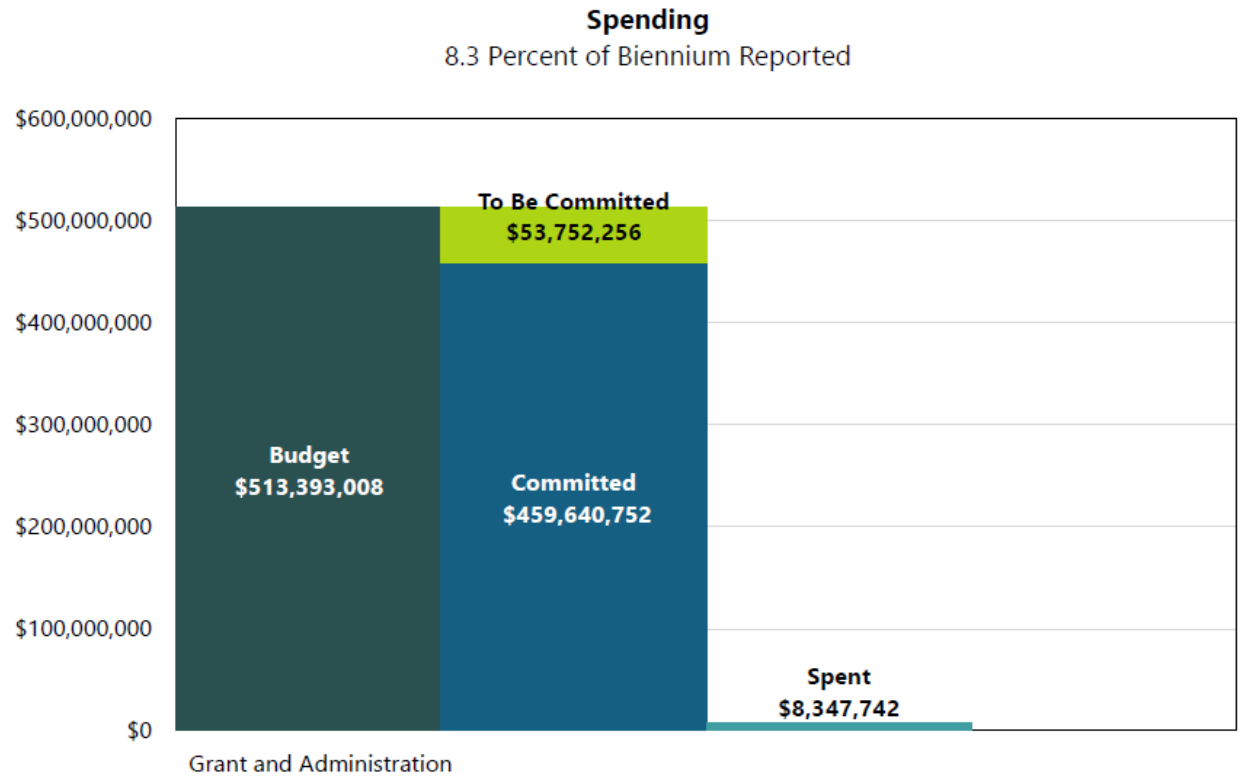
Youth Outdoor Programs

No Child Left Inside grants were awarded to 15 organizations for the 2025-2027 biennium, amounting to over $1 million in funding. This year's grant cycle was unprecedented, with 261 applications requesting $21.4 million, compared to 174 applications requesting $12.4 million in 2023. In that year, $7 million was awarded to 109 projects. The current grants will support over 2,500 youth and provide 140,000 hours of crucial time in nature.

Youth Outdoor programs linked to the state's operating budget experienced substantial budget reductions in the current biennium. This includes a notable decrease in funding for the No Child Left Inside grant program, along with no budgets for the Outdoor Learning Grant program, FieldSTEM, and Climetime programs that support youth outdoor education and experiences. These cuts will have impacts on organizations across the state from environmental education providers, schools, and outdoor recreation programs.

Youth outdoor program team Kyle Guzlas, Beth Auerbach and Edison Velez and Director Megan Duffy participated in the Open Pathways Project convening in Seattle in September. The Open Pathways Project (OPP), initiated by Fresh Tracks and The Aspen Institute, aims to unify leaders across programming, policy, and philanthropy to dismantle sector barriers and promote deeper collaboration. The objective is to elevate the outdoors as a tool for community wellbeing. The event included discussions on creating a sustainable funding model, establishing new coalitions within Washington State youth outdoor program sectors, and developing a shared language for elevating the impacts of these youth programs.

Fiscal Updates



*Committed + To Be Committed = Budget. Spent is paid out of the amount committed.

Performance Measures for Fiscal Year 2025

The following performance data are for recreation and conservation projects in fiscal year 2026 (July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026). Data current as of September 22, 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%		●	No agreements have been mailed on time this fiscal year.
Grants under agreement within 180 days of funding	95%		●	No projects were put under agreement for this metric during the performance period.
Progress reports responded to within fifteen days	90%	97%	●	Board staff received 180 progress reports and responded to them in an average of five days.
Projects closed within 150 days of funding end date	85%	60%	●	Three of five projects have closed on time.
Projects in Backlog	5	24	●	There are twenty-four board projects in the backlog needing to be closed out.

Attachment A: Funds for Alternate and Partially Funded Projects

Table A-1: Funds for Alternate Projects

Project Number and Type[1]	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Grant Award	Program
24-2402 E	Spokane County	Spokane County Parks Education and Enforcement Program Sites	$159,175	$159,175	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education
24-2576 E	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Riverside State Park Education and Enforcement Ranger	$212,733	$140,739	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education
24-2599 E	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Mount Baker Ranger District	Wilderness Rangers	$47,830	$47,830	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education
24-2765 E	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger District	Naches Wilderness Ranger Education and Enforcement	$30,000	$30,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education
24-2414 E	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Elbe and Tahoma Education and Enforcement	$184,154	$184,154	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education
24-2438 D	Thurston County	Burfoot Trail System	$200,000	$200,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road
24-2739 D	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Snoqualmie Ranger District	Talapus Lake Parking Lot and Trailhead Development	$100,000	$100,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road

[1]Project type: A=Acquisition, C=Combination of acquisition and development, D=Development, E=Education, M=Maintenance, R=Restoration

Project Number and Type[1]	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Grant Award	Program
24-2590 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest	Entiat and Chelan Ranger Districts Campgrounds and Dispersed Maintenance and Operation	$175,000	$175,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road
24-2375 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Southeast Region Maintenance and Operations-North	$150,000	$150,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road
24-2711 D	National Park Service, Mount Rainier National Park	Reconnect Trails to Mowich Lake	$200,000	$200,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
24-2747 M	U.S. Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Cowlitz Valley Ranger District	Nonmotorized Trails Maintenance and Operation	$188,920	$188,920	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
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	$63,400	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
24-2597 M	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Mount Baker Ranger District	Shadow of the Sentinels	$39,900	$39,900	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
24-2443 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee River Ranger District	Wilderness and Front Country Maintenance and Operation	$200,000	$200,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
24-2374 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Blanchard and Harry Osborne Maintenance and Operation	$200,000	$200,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
24-2246 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Capitol Forest Nonmotorized Trail and Facility Maintenance	$198,900	$198,900	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized

Project Number and Type[1]	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Grant Award	Program
24-2412 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Elbe Equestrian System Maintenance	$197,475	$197,475	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
24-2318 D	Jefferson Land Trust	Community Forest Accessible Parking and Trails	$113,000	$113,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-2371 M	Leavenworth Winter Sports Club	Maintenance of Winter Trails	$150,000	$75,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-2524 M	Spokane County	Liberty Lake	$60,000	$19,879	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-2702 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger District	Naches Wilderness Trails Deferred Maintenance	$150,000	$75,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-2714 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger District	Naches Wilderness Trails Maintenance and Operation	$150,000	$75,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-2562 M	Washington Water Trails Association	Cascadia Marine Trail Maintenance and Upgrades	$85,000	$42,500	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-2357 M	Wenatchee Valley TREAD	Deferred Backcountry Trail Maintenance Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest and Gifford Pinchot National Forest	$150,000	$75,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-1536 A	Chelan-Douglas Land Trust	Badger Mountain	$870,000	$870,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Critical Habitat

Project Number and Type[1]	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Grant Award	Program
24-1924 A	Skagit Land Trust	Samish River Wetlands Acquisition	$247,500	$247,500	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Critical Habitat
24-1811 A	State Conservation Commission	Hinterlands Agricultural Easement	$4,215,000	$4,215,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation
24-1798 A	State Conservation Commission	Luna Gulch Agricultural Easement	$946,522	$946,522	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation
24-1857 A	State Conservation Commission	Swale Canyon Agricultural Easement	$646,012	$646,012	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation
24-1892 A	State Conservation Commission	Williams Rangeland Protection	$1,048,582	$1,048,582	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation
24-1961 D	Buckley	Miller Community Park	$500,000	$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
24-1995 D	Chewelah	Chewelah Adventure Park	$500,000	$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
24-1613 D	Clark County	Orchards Community Park Renovation	$500,000	$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
24-2026 D	Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation	Inchelium Skatepark Development	$500,000	$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
24-1980 D	Lake Stevens	Eagle Ridge Park Development	$500,000	$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
24-1864 D	McCleary	Beerbower Park Renovation	$500,000	$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
24-1896 D	Peninsula Metropolitan Park District	Peninsula Gardens Park Development	$500,000	$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks

Project Number and Type[1]	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Grant Award	Program
24-1443 D	Port of Bremerton	Port Orchard Waterfront Park Americans with Disabilities Act Improvements	$86,000	$86,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
24-1610 D	Port Townsend	Golf Park Playground	$350,000	$350,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
24-1865 D	Pullman	Pullman Veterans Memorial Park	$500,000	$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
24-1888 C	Tenino	City Park Trail Phase One	$500,000	$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
24-1800 D	Tukwila	Riverton Park Playground Renovation	$500,000	$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
24-1356 D	Washougal	Towncenter Park Development	$500,000	$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
24-1968 D	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Loomis Lake Accessibility Redevelopment	$325,000	$325,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Lands Development and Renovation
24-1899 D	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Wooten Wildlife Area Rainbow Lake Pier	$325,000	$325,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Lands Development and Renovation
24-1345 R	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Sinlahekin Riparian Restoration Phase One	$358,183	$358,183	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Land Restoration and Enhancement
24-2015 R	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Methow Wildlife Area: Cougar Lake Restoration	$427,000	$427,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Land Restoration and Enhancement

Project Number and Type[1]	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Grant Award	Program
24-1764 R	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Cleveland Shrub Steppe Restoration	$157,040	$157,040	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Land Restoration and Enhancement
24-1680 R	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Pinecroft Natural Area Pine Restoration and Grassland Recovery	$80,000	$80,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Land Restoration and Enhancement
24-1470 R	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Woodard Bay Natural Resources Conservation Area Forest Habitat Restoration	$328,250	$328,250	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Land Restoration and Enhancement
24-2022 D	Port Angeles	Race Street Olympic Discovery Trail Extension	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails
24-1685 D	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Spencer Island Boardwalk	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails
24-1946 A	Whatcom County	South Fork Park Carrasco Addition	$884,434	$884,434	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails
24-1868 A	Peninsula Metropolitan Park District	Trail Property Acquisition	$858,125	$858,125	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Urban Wildlife Habitat
24-1909 A	Pierce County	Pacific Lutheran University Prairie Protection Site	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Urban Wildlife Habitat
24-1554 A	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Woodard Bay Natural Resources Conservation Area	$3,637,824	$3,637,824	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Urban Wildlife Habitat
24-1933 D	Lake Forest Park	Lakefront Park Development	$4,153,547	$540,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Water Access

Project Number and Type[1]	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Grant Award	Program
24-1848 D	Port of Columbia	Lyons Ferry Marina Pull-Through Sites and Restroom	$1,300,600	$1,300,600	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Water Access
24-1758 D	Port of Woodland	Austin Point Water Recreation Park	$1,257,418	$1,257,418	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Water Access
24-1748 D	Mountlake Terrace	Evergreen Playfield Number Four Lighting Improvement	$326,500	$326,500	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large
24-1603 D	Poulsbo	Poulsbo Regional Multiuse Athletic Fields	$1,500,000	$291,357	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large
24-1726 D	YMCA Pierce and Kitsap Counties	Gig Harbor Sports Complex Phase One A	$1,500,000	$1,500,000	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large
		Total	**$39,234,024**	**$33,957,219**	

Table A-2: Funds for Partially Funded Projects

Project Number and Type[2]	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Previous Grant Award	Current Grant Award	Program
24-2697 D	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Lake Wenatchee Launch Improvements	$2,120,000	$754,000	$2,120,000	Boating Facilities Program
24-2378 E	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Northwest Region Education and Enforcement North Zone	$205,000	$105,666	$205,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education
24-2396 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	South Puget Sound Region Facilities Cleaning	$198,187	$188,512	$198,187	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road
24-2455 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	Nonmotorized Trail Maintenance and Operation	$150,000	$120,582	$150,000	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized
24-2313 M	Mountain Trails Grooming Association	Methow Valley Snowmobile Trail Grooming and Maintenance	$80,000	$40,000	$80,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-2731 M	Northwest Motorcycle Association	Statewide Trail Maintenance	$150,000	$75,000	$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-2431 M	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Lake Wenatchee	$150,000	$75,000	$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-2430 M	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Mount Baker Area Sno-Parks and Snowmobile Trails	$150,000	$75,000	$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General

[2]Project type: A=Acquisition, C=Combination of acquisition and development, D=Development, E=Education, M=Maintenance, R=Restoration

Project Number and Type[2]	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Previous Grant Award	Current Grant Award	Program
24-2434 M	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Pyramid Creek Sno-Park and Snowmobile Trails	$119,650	$48,055	$119,650	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-2432 M	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Selkirk Mountains	$150,000	$75,000	$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-2433 M	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Stampede Pass Trail System and Sno-Parks	$150,000	$75,000	$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-2706 M	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger District	Naches Motorized Trails Deferred Maintenance and Operation	$150,000	$75,000	$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-2284 M	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Hood Canal District Non-Motorized Maintenance	$43,645	$20,918	$21,823	Recreational Trails Program: General
24-1336 A	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Hoffstadt Hills	$6,500,000	$2,008,890	$6,500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Critical Habitat
24-1885 A	State Conservation Commission	Foothills Farm Agricultural Easement	$4,054,000	$3,951,414	$4,054,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation
24-1980 D	Lake Stevens	Eagle Ridge Park Development	$500,000	$149,155	$500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
24-1998 D	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	White Bridge Boat Ramp Redevelopment	$325,000	$88,300	$325,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Lands Development and Renovation

Project Number and Type[2]	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Previous Grant Award	Current Grant Award	Program
24-1846 R	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Shrub Steppe Restoration at Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park	$777,076	$384,434	$777,076	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Land Restoration and Enhancement
24-1353 C	Covington	Jenkins Creek Trail Phase One	$2,109,400	$1,939,511	$2,109,400	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails
24-1978 A	Bainbridge Island Land Trust	Little Manzanita Four	$1,500,000	$1,299,883	$1,500,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Urban Wildlife Habitat
24-1779 A	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Riverside State Park Glen Tana Acquisition B	$4,512,450	$3,508,677	$4,512,450	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Urban Wildlife Habitat
24-1802 D	Tukwila	Community Center Riverside Trail and Canoe Launch	$1,810,000	$1,071,830	$1,810,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Water Access
24-1893 D	Spokane Valley HUB	HUB Synthetic Fields North	$1,500,000	$810,577	$1,500,000	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large
24-2029 D	Pomeroy	Pomeroy Baseball Field Lighting	$350,000	$202,715	$350,000	Youth Athletic Facilities: Small
		Total	**$27,754,408**	**$17,143,119**	**$27,732,586**	

Attachment B: Funds for Land and Water Conservation Fund Projects

Project Number and Type[3]	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Award	Sponsor Match	Total Project Cost	Program
24-1793 D	Longview	Cloney Park Inclusive Playground	$2,000,000	$2,170,640	$4,170,640	Land and Water Conservation Fund
24-1405 D	Olympia	Yelm Highway Community Park Phase One	$2,000,000	$13,014,000	$15,014,000	Land and Water Conservation Fund
24-1512 D	Seattle	Hutchinson Park Renovation	$2,000,000	$2,770,800	$4,770,800	Land and Water Conservation Fund
24-1898 D	Spokane	Meadowglen Neighborhood Park Development Phase One	$2,000,000	$3,788,000	$5,788,000	Land and Water Conservation Fund
23-1910 D	Kent	Kent's Uplands Playfield and Spray Park	$3,150,000	$3,150,000	$6,300,000	Land and Water Conservation Fund: Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership
		Total	**$11,150,000**	**$24,893,440**	**$36,043,440**	

[1]Project type: D=Development

Attachment C: Funds for Recreation and Conservation Office Programs

Project Number and Type[4]	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Grant Award	Program
24-1993 A	Mount Adams Resource Stewards	Mount Adams Community Forest: Klickitat Rim Phase 2	$3,000,000	$3,000,000	Community Forests Program
24-1522 A	The Nature Conservancy	Cle Elum Ridge Community Forest Phase 2	$3,000,000	$3,000,000	Community Forests Program
24-2046 D	Darrington School District	Field Lighting Development	$834,228	$834,228	Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities: North Sound
24-2133 D	Lake Chelan School District	Mountain Goat Futbol Center	$1,124,827	$1,124,827	Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities: Northeast
24-2106 D	Buckley	Courts at Miller Park	$495,000	$495,000	Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities: South Sound
24-2114 D	Mount Rainier Futbol Club	Bonney Lake Sports Field	$1,200,000	$1,200,000	Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities: South Sound
24-2101 D	Pierce County	Sprinker Multipurpose Sport Fields 2A	$1,200,000	$1,200,000	Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities: South Sound
24-2092 D	Orting	Charter Park Pickleball, Tennis, and Basketball	$910,855	$910,855	Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities: South Sound

[4]Project type: A=Acquisition, D=Development

Project Number and Type[4]	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Grant Award	Program
24-2145 D	Tieton	Americans with Disabilities Act Pathway and Field Lighting at Koempel Park	$369,320	$369,320	Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities: Southeast
24-2068 D	Zillah	Adams Park Kid Zone	$341,000	$341,000	Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities: Southeast
24-2056 D	Elma School District	Community Athletic Fields Development	$1,199,905	$1,199,905	Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities: Western
24-2060 D	Underwood Parks and Recreation District	Underwood Park Court and Field Renovation	$154,000	$154,000	Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities: Western
		Total	**$13,829,135**	**$13,829,135**	

Table C-2: Funds for Partially Funded Office Projects

Project Number and Type[5]	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Previous Grant Award	Current Grant Award	Program
24-2040 D	Nooksack Valley School District	Nooksack Valley High School Turf Field	$1,200,000	$813,945	$1,200,000	Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities: North Sound
24-2144 D	White Salmon Valley Pool Metropolitan Park District	White Salmon Valley Pool	$1,200,000	$932,838	$1,200,000	Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities: Southeast
24-2053 D	Olympic Peninsula YMCA	Quilcene Skate Park	$972,920	$767,263	$972,920	Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities: Western
		Total	**$3,372,920**	**$2,514,046**	**$3,372,920**	

[5]Project type: D=Development

Attachment D: Projects Completed and Closed from June 1, 2025, to September 30, 2025

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
18-1437	Kenmore	Log Boom Park Waterfront Access and Nature Viewing	Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account	06/26/2025
18-2033	Tukwila	Chinook Wind Public Access	Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account	08/01/2025
22-1865	Des Moines	Redondo Boat Launch Restroom Facility	Boating Facilities Program: Local	06/11/2025
20-2230	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Million Dollar Mile North Access Redevelopment	Boating Facilities Program: State	08/04/2025
22-2252	Cowlitz County	Cowlitz Public Shooting Range Phase 4	Firearms and Archery Range Recreation	08/12/2025
20-1671	Port of Anacortes	Cap Sante Marina RV Park	Land and Water Conservation Fund	07/11/2025
24-2189	Chehalis	Chehalis Parks Field Equipment and Restroom Retrofit	Local Parks Maintenance: Multisite-Tier 1	06/11/2025
24-2190	Clallam County	Trail Equipment and Salt Creek Restroom Repair	Local Parks Maintenance: Multisite-Tier 1	07/07/2025
24-2192	Friday Harbor	Sunken Park Deferred Maintenance	Local Parks Maintenance: Multisite-Tier 1	08/13/2025
24-2206	Jefferson County	Americans with Disabilities Act Camp Tables, Clean Five Roofs	Local Parks Maintenance: Multisite-Tier 1	06/18/2025
24-2200	Republic	Republic City Parks Maintenance	Local Parks Maintenance: Multisite-Tier 1	08/20/2025
24-2201	South Bend	Cheney Ball Field Sports Court Maintenance	Local Parks Maintenance: Multisite-Tier 1	08/13/2025
24-2203	Union Gap	Outdoor Sports Court and Picnic Table Rehab	Local Parks Maintenance: Multisite-Tier 1	06/17/2025
24-2208	Auburn	Les Gove Spray Park Deferred Maintenance	Local Parks Maintenance: Single Site-Tier 2	07/07/2025
24-2220	Benton City	Tennis Courts Maintenance	Local Parks Maintenance: Single Site-Tier 2	08/14/2025
24-2209	Centralia	Borst Park Uplift	Local Parks Maintenance: Single Site-Tier 2	07/22/2025
24-2218	Chewelah	Restore Entrance Surface and Fall Protection	Local Parks Maintenance: Single Site-Tier 2	06/24/2025
24-2213	Cosmopolis	Mill Creek Park Maintenance	Local Parks Maintenance: Single Site-Tier 2	07/21/2025

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
24-2210	Eastmont Metropolitan Parts and Recreation District	Eastmont Community Park Pathway Maintenance	Local Parks Maintenance: Single Site-Tier 2	07/03/2025
24-2211	Grandview	Dykstra Park Restroom Restoration	Local Parks Maintenance: Single Site-Tier 2	06/18/2025
24-2207	Lakewood	Harry Todd Park Maintenance	Local Parks Maintenance: Single Site-Tier 2	07/01/2025
24-2212	Manson Parks and Recreation District	Singleton Parking Areas Maintenance	Local Parks Maintenance: Single Site-Tier 2	07/10/2025
24-2214	Toppenish	Toppenish Public Pool Maintenance	Local Parks Maintenance: Single Site-Tier 2	07/10/2025
24-2215	Tukwila	Crystal Springs Park Lighting Replacement	Local Parks Maintenance: Single Site-Tier 2	08/05/2025
22-2303	Adult and Youth Learning Center	Summer Youth Outdoor Learning Program	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/14/2025
22-2361	Anacortes Waterfront Alliance	Introduction to Water Activities	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/16/2025
22-2231	Boys and Girls Clubs of Snohomish County	Wellpinit Native Traditions Outdoor Education Project	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	06/18/2025
22-2031	Cowlitz Indian Tribe	Cowlitz Youth Horse Camp	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/28/2025
22-2376	Explorations Academy	Environmental Education for Middle and High Schoolers	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	06/18/2025
22-2259	Foster Creek Conservation District	Foster Creek's Camp Sagebrush	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	08/19/2025
22-1895	Friends of Lake Spokane Parks	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Research in the Park	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	08/28/2025
22-2374	Friends of Stonerose Fossils	Fossils Then and Now	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/14/2025
22-2382	Great Peninsula Conservancy	Land Labs Program	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/08/2025
22-2373	Highline School District	Highline Big Picture Outside!	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	08/11/2025
22-2205	Iglesia Del Valle	Royal Rangers Toppenish Outpost	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/03/2025
22-2258	Interim Community Development Association	Wilderness Inner-City Leadership Development Program	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/17/2025
22-2411	Journeymen Institute	One Village Initiative	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	08/01/2025

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
22-2263	Olympia	Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation Outdoor Program	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/02/2025
22-2012	Orondo School District	Orondo After School Outdoor Education Camp	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	06/18/2025
22-2138	Pacific Coast Salmon Coalition	Salmon Camp	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	08/05/2025
22-2213	Pasco	Outdoor Adventure Series	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	08/05/2025
22-2410	Rainier Prep	Pathfinders Outdoors Experiences and Enrichments	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/29/2025
22-2343	Readiness To Learn	Wilderness Wisdom on Whidbey	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	09/18/2025
22-2296	Sound Salmon Solutions	Salish Scientists Summer Camp	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/16/2025
22-2328	Spokane Valley	Together Engaging and Exploring Nature Camp	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/15/2025
22-2086	The ReCyclery of Jefferson County	ReCyclery of Jefferson County Bike Safety and Education	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	08/29/2025
22-2250	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Wild Washington Outdoor Classrooms	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/30/2025
22-2174	Washington Student Cycling League	Urban Girls on Mountain Bikes	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/30/2025
22-2214	Win With Warriors	Win With Warriors Environmental Leadership Camp	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/07/2025
22-2143	YWCA Clark County	Nature as a Source of Healing: Y's Care Program	No Child Left Inside Tier 1	07/25/2025
22-1873	9th and 10th Horse Cavalry Buffalo Soldiers Museum	Summer, Excitement, Exploring and Discovery	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	06/24/2025
22-2297	Bellevue Boys and Girls Club	Eastside Outdoor Teen Explores Camp Washington Wildlands	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	08/25/2025
22-2188	Camp Fire Inland Northwest Council	Year-Round Outdoor Learning Expansion	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	08/11/2025
22-2415	Camp Fire USA North Central Washington Council	Expansion for Low-Income and At-Risk Youth	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	09/02/2025
22-2000	Cascadia Conservation District	Creating Connections to Conservation	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	07/15/2025

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
22-2312	Chief Leschi Schools	Traditional Canoe Journey	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	09/18/2025
22-2260	Environmental Science Center	Beach Heroes of south King County	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	06/25/2025
22-2102	Foss Waterway Seaport	Eco-Kayaking on the Foss Waterway	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	07/15/2025
22-2123	Jefferson Land Trust	Learn2Steward	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	07/31/2025
22-2354	Lifeline Connections	Camp Mariposa Blazing Trails	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	08/08/2025
22-2387	Lopez Island Family Resource Center	Lopez Island Youth Outdoor Education Program	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	07/29/2025
22-2069	Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership	Cowlitz Education Outdoors	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	07/01/2025
22-2110	Mount Saint Helens Institute	Mount Saint Helens Volcano Outdoor School for All	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	08/19/2025
22-2364	Multicultural Child and Family Hope Center	Tacoma Outdoor Learning Opportunities	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	07/01/2025
22-2089	Naturebridge	Olympic Youth Environmental Education	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	07/01/2025
22-2336	Nisqually River Foundation	Nisqually Tribal Youth: Explore and Connect 3	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	08/26/2025
22-2391	Northwest Watershed Institute	Headwater to Bay Youth Environmental Education	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	07/29/2025
22-1993	Post 84	Scholarships for Student-Led Outdoor Education	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	08/05/2025
22-2253	Puget Sound Estuarium	K-12 Environmental Education Experiences	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	08/21/2025
22-2151	SheJumps	Wild Skills Outdoor Activities for Girls	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	07/01/2025
22-2359	Sound Experience	Everett at Sea San Juan Islands Discovery	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	08/14/2025
22-1917	Spokane County	Doris Morrison Learning Center Outdoor Education	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	8/5/2025
22-2365	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Youth Paddle Program	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	07/15/2025
22-2388	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Nature Discovery School and Rainshadow Outdoor Adventure	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	07/15/2025
22-2167	The Salish Sea School	Outdoor Marine Conservation Leadership Programs	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	06/20/2025

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
22-2349	Tumwater School District	Farm-Rooted Education for Sustainability and Health: Outdoor Learning and Growing	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	08/22/2025
22-2295	Unbridled Spirit 7	Youth Empowered by Animals and Nature	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	07/31/2025
22-1839	Wild Grief	Wild Grief Youth and Families Healing in Nature	No Child Left Inside Tier 2	07/23/2025
22-2158	African Community Housing and Development	African Diaspora Outdoor Explorers	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	07/15/2025
22-2257	Bike Works	Cycling, Mechanics and Leadership Pipeline	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	08/05/2025
22-2266	Blue Mountain Community Foundation	Big Balooza Experience	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	08/28/2025
22-2163	Camp Korey	Recreational Camp Programs for Children	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	07/17/2025
22-2273	Communities for a Healthy Bay	Environmental Justice Camps in Tacoma	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	08/11/2025
22-1857	Compass Health	Camp Mariposa	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	07/30/2025
22-1869	Dylan Jude Harrell Community Center	Get Outside! Nature-Based Programs for Long Beach Peninsula Youth	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	07/17/2025
22-2058	Girl Scouts of Western Washington	Girl Scouts Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Others Affinity Camp	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	07/29/2025
22-2171	Hood Canal School District	Hood Canal School Boots and Riparian Enhancement	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	08/05/2025
22-2010	Lummi Nation	Lummi Youth Living and Protecting Shelangen 23-25	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	08/05/2025
22-2155	Mentoring Urban Students and Teens	Mentoring Urban Students and Teens Outdoor Experiences for Youth	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	07/11/2025
22-1858	Oasis Youth Center	Outdoor Inspiration and Recreation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	08/05/2025
22-2212	Pacific Education Institute	Youth Engaged in Sustainable Education Crew	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	08/07/2025
22-2265	Pierce County	Pierce Outdoor Leadership Instruction and Field Experiences Youth Outdoor Recreation and Education	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	08/05/2025

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
22-2198	Squaxin Island Tribe	Stepping Stones Outdoor Education	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	08/06/2025
22-2342	Summer Search	Wilderness Exploration Program	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	08/05/2025
22-2406	Swinomish Indian Tribal Community	Swinomish Between Two Worlds Indigenous Science	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	07/16/2025
22-2414	Unleash the Brilliance	Unleash the Brilliance Youth Outside Experience	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	08/07/2025
22-2036	Wenatchee Valley Young Men's Christian Association	Outdoor Experiences Program at Lake Wenatchee	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	07/22/2025
22-2057	Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic	Outdoor Adventure Program	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	09/18/2025
22-1973	YMCA of Greater Seattle	Boys and Girls Outdoor Leadership Development: Pathways to Parks	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	08/19/2025
22-2379	Young Women Empowered	Nature Connections	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	08/13/2025
22-2383	Youth Experiential Training Institute	South King County All Youth in Nature Project	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	07/16/2025
20-2030	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Chelan Ranger District	Lake Chelan South Shore Access Trail Development	Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program: Nonmotorized	07/02/2025
20-2355	U.S. Forest Service, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Snoqualmie Ranger District	Denny Creek and Franklin Falls Parking Lot Expansion	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road	07/23/2025
18-2434	King County	Taylor Mountain Trail Bridge Construction Phase I	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized	07/23/2025
20-2306	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Capitol Forest Off-Road Vehicle Bridge Replacement	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle	09/29/2025
23-1402	Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park and Recreation District	Neurodiverse Student Conservation Corps	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 1	8/4/2025

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
23-1337	Blue Mountain Community Foundation	Farm Experience for 3rd and 4th Graders	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 1	6/2/2025
23-1340	Foster Creek Conservation District	North Central Washington Environmental Outdoor Learning Program	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 1	8/11/2025
23-1321	Methow Conservancy	Schoolyard Science with the Methow Conservancy	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 1	8/8/2025
23-1437	South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group	Salmon in the Schools Equity Expansion	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 1	8/26/2025
23-1409	Youth Experiential Training Institute	Experiencing Nature South King County Youth Outdoor Education Project	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 1	9/2/2025
23-1419	Washington Native Plant Society	Youth Ecology Education Through Restoration	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 1	7/2/2025
23-1422	Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group	Project WOW (Watching Over the Watershed)	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 2	08/25/2025
23-1465	Coastal Interpretive Center	Pacific Ocean Outdoor Learning	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 2	08/01/2025
23-1370	Foss Waterway Seaport	Salmon in the Classroom Swan Creek	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 2	06/25/2025
23-1316	IslandWood	Urban Outdoor Learning Programs	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 2	06/12/2025
23-1376	Lopez Island Family Resource Center	Coast Salish - Sea, Land and Place	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 2	07/29/2025
23-1377	Lummi Indian Business Council	Waters of the Lhaq'temish	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 2	08/04/2025
23-1417	Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group	Careers in Conservation Summer Program	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 2	08/11/2025
23-1428	Nisqually River Foundation	Waters that Connect Us: South Sound Watersheds	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 2	08/27/2025
23-1328	Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association	The Students for Salmon Program	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 2	08/06/2025
23-1361	North Olympic Salmon Coalition	Real Learning Real Work - Restoration Engineering	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 2	08/26/2025
23-1375	Post 84	Expansion of Student-led Outdoor Education Program	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 2	07/18/2025

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
23-1331	University of Washington Mount Rainier Institute	Climate Science Program	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 2	09/03/2025
23-1427	Educational Service District 123	Outdoor Art Expression to Build Resilience	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 3	07/31/2025
23-1442	Institute for Community Leadership	Changing Ourselves through Outdoor Connections	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 3	07/28/2025
23-1339	Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership	Explore Local Encounters and Connections	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 3	07/15/2025
23-1347	Methow Field Institute	The Nature Immersion Program	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 3	07/07/2025
23-1325	Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe	S'Klallam Sense of Place: From Nature to Nurture	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 3	08/12/2025
23-1425	Wenatchee River Institute	Adding Native Voices to Outdoor Learning in Eastern Washington	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 3	08/05/2025
23-1314	Wild Whatcom	Including Special Needs Youth in Outdoor Learning	Outdoor Learning Grants Tier 3	07/29/2025
22-2528	Cascade Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group	Salmon Life Cycle Interpretive Trail Plan	Planning for Recreation Access	06/12/2025
22-2482	Covington	Jenkins Creek Trail Planning and Design	Planning for Recreation Access	06/12/2025
22-2485	Kittitas	Kittitas Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan	Planning for Recreation Access	08/18/2025
22-2443	Morton	Morton Comprehensive Parks and Rec Plan	Planning for Recreation Access	07/08/2025
22-2449	Mount Saint Helens Institute	Campground and Trail Design Plan	Planning for Recreation Access	07/01/2025
22-2512	Reardan-Edwall School District	Town of Reardan and Reardan-Edwall School District Partnership	Planning for Recreation Access	08/05/2025
22-2454	Seattle Parks Foundation	Concord International School Puma Playfield Design	Planning for Recreation Access	08/21/2025
22-2465	Snohomish	Homestead Park Master Planning	Planning for Recreation Access	09/23/2025
22-2479	Tenino	Tenino City Park Design Plan	Planning for Recreation Access	06/25/2025
22-2508	Spokane Tribe of Indians	Snxw mene (Salmon People) Island Design	Planning for Recreation Access	08/05/2025
22-2519	Tenino School District	Athletic and Recreational Fields Design Plan	Planning for Recreation Access	06/16/2025
22-2428	Zillah	Zillah Splash Park Design and Construction Plans	Planning for Recreation Access	06/03/2025

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
20-1720	Stanwood	Stanwood Port Susan Trail	Recreation and Conservation Office Recreation Grants: Trails Category	06/02/2025
23-1952	Pacific Northwest 4-Wheel Drive Association	Protect and Educate Trail Users 2	Recreational Trails Program: Education	09/11/2025
20-1219	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Hunter Mountain	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Critical Habitat Category	09/25/2025
20-1222	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Rendezvous Additions	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Critical Habitat Category	09/25/2025
20-1619	Okanogan Land Trust	Teas Ranch	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation Category	06/13/2025
22-1563	Bridgeport	Berryman Park Renovation Phase 1	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks Category	09/25/2025
22-1628	Covington	Founders Park Expansion	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks Category	07/01/2025
22-1453	Yakima	Martin Luther King Jr. Park Community Pool	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks Category	08/26/2025
18-1523	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Mima Mounds Natural Area Preserve 2018	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Natural Areas Category	09/11/2025
20-1256	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Blanchard State Forest Sustainable Toilets	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Lands Development Category	09/18/2025
20-1590	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Bald Restoration at Beacon Rock State Park	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Lands Restoration Category	08/25/2025
18-1937	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Sherman Creek Forest Restoration Rx Burning	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Lands Restoration Category	07/15/2025
20-1638	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	West Foster Creek Riparian Restoration	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Lands Restoration Category	09/25/2025

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
22-1569	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Green River Gorge: Icy Creek Ridge Phase 2	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks Category	09/09/2025
20-1293	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Inholdings and Adjacent Properties 2020	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks Category	09/23/2025
20-1593	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Mount Spokane Bear Creek	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks Category	09/09/2025
22-1605	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Willapa Hills State Park Trail: South Bend Trailhead	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks Category	09/04/2025
16-1926	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Willapa Hills Trail: Marwood Farms Acquisition	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks Category	07/02/2025
16-1362	King County	Foothills Trail Development 252nd Ave-Mud Mountain Road	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails Category	07/01/2025
18-1691	King County	Lake to Sound Trail, Segment C Gap Development	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails Category	06/24/2025
18-1243	Olympia	Grass Lake Nature Park Trail Construction	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails Category	08/01/2025
18-1267	Pierce County	Chambers Creek Canyon Trail Development	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails Category	09/03/2025
22-1311	Pierce County	Pipeline Trail Phase 1 Development	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Trails Category	08/05/2025
22-1753	Black Diamond	Black Diamond Skatepark	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	09/29/2025
22-1637	Forks	Spartan Field Upgrades	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	07/07/2025
20-1639	Pasco	Highland Park Improvements Phase 2	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	07/10/2025
22-1537	Spokane	Underhill Park Sport Court Rehabilitation	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	09/09/2025

Item 3: Habitat Program Policy Changes

Action Requested: Direction

Summary

Recreation and Conservation Office staff are reviewing the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's Critical Habitat and Natural Areas categories for policy changes before the next grand round. This memo describes draft changes to intent language and evaluation criteria under consideration for both categories. Staff is requesting board direction on these potential changes.

Background

At the June 2025 meeting (Item 3), staff introduced a review of the Critical Habitat and Natural Areas categories and provided core concepts based on initial listening sessions. As part of this meeting, the board expressed comfort with staff examining intent language and evaluation criteria to help support conciseness, clarity and differentiation between Critical Habitat and Natural Areas.

Since the June meeting, staff created an initial draft of updated evaluation criteria and solicited feedback from Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife staff, Department of Natural Resources staff, nonprofit land conservancies, and members of the advisory committee. Staff received significant feedback both through written comments and small group meetings.

Staff is requesting board direction on proposed changes prior to finalizing a second draft of the criteria and soliciting additional input.

Intent

A red-lined draft of intent language for the Critical Habitat and Natural Areas categories can be found in Attachment A. Specifically, staff propose providing multiple examples of projects that would be eligible for Critical Habitat and Natural Areas categories, respectively. The goal of adding these examples is to help prospective applicants

understand the breadth of what is fundable, and support strategic decision-making based on a project's core objectives.

Evaluation Criteria

A comparison of current and proposed evaluation summary tables for Critical Habitat and Natural Areas can be found in Attachment B and Attachment C. Generally, the proposed changes to evaluation criteria fall into three different categories:

- **Streamlining -** Reducing the length of individual evaluation elements and number of prompts for each element, while retaining key technical detail needed to support science-based evaluation. In addition, staff are seeking to eliminate redundant questions or those areas that provide limited differentiation between projects based on advisory committee feedback. As it stands, the length of the new draft evaluation criteria is less than half the length of the existing evaluation criteria. This change will improve usability for applicants and advisory committee members to support effective presentations and evaluation consistency.

- **General Updates -** Update criteria to align with best practices and more recent changes in other programs. For example, better identify how community engagement impacted project development and the role of non-financial partnerships in bringing a project to fruition. In addition, provide a wider list of ways that a project can provide public benefits, such as through ecosystem services, or protection of geological or other landscape features of public interest.

- **Category Specific Criteria -** Develop "category-specific" criteria that use statute and funding intent language to provide clear differentiation between the two categories. In addition, specifically reference the State Wildlife Action Plan or the Natural Heritage Plan as ways of demonstrating the need for the project in Critical Habitat and Natural Areas categories, respectively. These will be in addition to "base" criteria that will remain largely the same across the categories apart from minor differences in emphasis (i.e., Manageability and Viability, Public Benefit and Community Support, and Multiple Benefits). Proposed changes for "category-specific" criteria are described in more detail below.

Critical Habitat

Proposed changes to Critical Habitat evaluation criteria include:

- Transition from an "Ecological and Biological Characteristics" criterion to a "Habitat Impact" criterion. The goal of this change is to focus more closely on

how the site and its habitat features will directly benefit target wildlife species, rather than a general overview of the features of the proposed property.

- Transition from a "Species and Communities with Special Status" criterion to a "Species Significance" criterion. The goal of this change is to focus more broadly on the diversity of wildlife species that will be positively impacted, rather than just special status species.

- Allow for consideration of either smaller parcels with important benefits, or properties with opportunity for restoration to support habitat benefits.

Overall, the goal of these changes is to more clearly delineate Critical Habitat as a category for projects where the primary objectives relate to wildlife species or groups of species. Secondary objectives would be native ecosystems, at-risk plant species or communities, or geological/historical landscape features.

Natural Areas

Proposed changes to Natural Areas evaluation criteria include:

- Removing both "Ecological and Biological Characteristics" and "Species and Communities with Species Status" criteria and replacing them with a "Program Priority" question. The "Program Priority" question would ask applicants to describe the different natural features that make the proposed project a priority for the Natural Areas category. Examples of features include native ecosystems, at-risk plant species or communities, or geological/historical landscape features. For each, applicants would need to illustrate how the need is demonstrated and how the feature provides scientific or educational value.

Overall, the goals of this change is twofold. One, it more clearly delineates Natural Areas as a category for projects where the primary objectives relate to ecosystems, at-risk plant species or communities, and/or geological or historical features, while wildlife habitat would be a secondary objective. Two, it emphasizes geological or other historical landscape features as consistent with statute. These aspects are currently de-emphasized in the evaluation criteria.

Non-policy Considerations

Species and Communities Status Table

Critical Habitat and Natural Areas applications must submit a Species or Communities with Special Status Table. Despite efforts by staff and advisory committee members,

there continues to be variation in approach to completing the table, a lack of clarity about the source of species references, and a lack of detail whether the noted species have been found on the property versus in the general area. Staff and advisory committee members are continuing to discuss how they can better clarify expectations and provide technical support to applicants in completing the required table.

Natural Areas Presentation

The Natural Areas category currently has a written evaluation process. Moving to a presentation-based process, like the process in the Critical Habitat Category, for this category was supported by multiple people during initial listening sessions and criteria feedback meetings. Staff is currently assessing whether to make this change in advance of the 2026 grant round.

Land Trust Engagement

During initial outreach, the Washington Association of Land Trusts expressed an interest in trying to increase nonprofit land conservancy awareness and engagement with both Critical Habitat and Natural Areas categories. Staff hope to continue this conversation in the future, in hopes of better understanding real or perceived barriers to nonprofit engagement.

Next Steps

Staff will complete a second draft of intent language and evaluation criteria based on board direction and solicit additional informal input from key applicants and partners. This input will be used to develop a third draft of intent and evaluation criteria that will be distributed as part of a formal comment period.

Staff will make adjustment based on feedback received during the public comment period to develop a proposed final draft. Staff plan to bring the proposed final intent and evaluation criteria language for board consideration at the January 2026 meeting.

Attachments

A. Draft intent language

B. Critical Habitat evaluation summary tables

C. Natural Areas evaluation summary tables

Critical Habitat Category

"Critical habitat" means lands important for the protection, management, or public enjoyment of certain wildlife species or groups of species, including, but not limited to, wintering range for deer, elk, and other species; waterfowl and upland bird habitat; fish habitat; and habitat for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species."[1]

Critical Habitat Category

This category provides grants to acquire ~~and develop habitat~~lands specifically for the benefit of wildlife species. This includes ~~including~~ game and non-game species; upland, freshwater, and marine species; and ~~food fish; shellfish; and freshwater, anadromous, and other fish including habitat for~~ endangered, threatened, or sensitive species. Examples of eligible critical habitat projects include, but are not limited to:

- Eastside steppe habitat that provides breeding and nesting grounds for multiple Species of Greatest Conservation Need
- Oak woodland habitat that secures a key migratory corridor for state-threatened mammals
- Wetland complex that provides stop-over habitat for state-endangered waterfowl
- Riparian or nearshore zones that support critical rearing and feeding habitat for federally listed anadromous fish
- Lowland forest habitat that provides winter range for priority ungulates of recreational and/or tribal importance
- ~~Includes habitats such as wetlands, forests, shrub-steppe, deer and elk winter range, and riparian zones, and habitats for saltwater or freshwater fish and shellfish.~~

Critical habitat projects:

- May include public use for both consumptive and non-consumptive activities.
- May include acquisition for species protection or enhancement.

[1]Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.010(3)

- May include limited development of public facilities such as roads, trails, parking, restrooms, signs and kiosks, and fences.
- Must be accessible for public recreation and outdoor education. See the board's public access policy for allowed limitations to public access.
- May include costs for developing stewardship plans.
- Does not allow for habitat creation, enhancement, or restoration.
- Does not allow renovation of facilities.

Natural Areas Category

"Natural Areas" means 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]

Natural Areas Category

These grants provide funding to acquire lands specifically for the preservation of unique natural features with scientific or educational value. This includes ecologically intact native ecosystems, at-risk plant communities, special status plant and animal species, as well as unique geological or other historic landscape features.~~areas set aside to protect high quality, representative, native ecosystems; unique plant or animal communities; habitat for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species; rare geological features; or features of significant scientific or educational value.~~ Examples of eligible natural areas projects include, but are not limited to:

- A rare steptoe with one of the largest remaining tracts of state-endangered grassland to support conservation of biodiversity and proactive management
- Montane forest to protect ecologically intact ecosystems of high priority for representation according to Washington's Natural Heritage Plan
- Lava tubes to support public education and appreciation of Washington's unique geological history
- State-endangered oak woodland habitat to support restoration efforts for multiple species of state-threatened rare plants found on the property

[2]Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.010(6)

- Important fossil sites to secure youth educational opportunities and ongoing paleontological research

Natural Areas projects:

- Must have retained most of its natural character.
- Must be managed primarily for resource preservation, protection, and study.
- Are **not** required to be included in the Washington Register of Natural Areas as a condition of funding.
- May include limited development of public facilities, such as trails, roads, parking, restrooms, signs and kiosks, and fences.
- Must be accessible for public recreation and outdoor education. See the board's public access policy for allowed limitations to public access.
- May include costs for developing stewardship plans.
- Does not allow for habitat creation, enhancement, or restoration.
- Does not allow renovation of facilities.

Attachment B: Critical Habitat Evaluation Summary Tables

Proposed Summary Table

Criteria	Evaluation Elements	Points
Unscored		
Project Introduction	• Project goals and objectives • Location maps	Not scored
Scored by the Advisory Committee		
1. Habitat Impact	• Landscape significance • Ecological role • Adequacy • Distribution and range • Acquisition importance	20 points
2. Species Significance	• Diversity • Special status • Vulnerability • Ecosystem impact	10 points
3. Manageability and Viability	• Threat • Restoration and management • Stewardship • Existing public property • Conservation easement • Regulatory protections • Livestock grazing	10 points
4. Partnerships and Community Support	• Engagement • Partnerships	5 points
5. Public Benefits	• Recreation • Resource uses • Research and education • Landscape features • Ecosystem services	5 points
	Total Points Possible	**50**

Current Summary Table

Criteria	Evaluation Elements	Points
Unscored		

Criteria	Evaluation Elements	Points
Project Introduction	• Project goals and objectives • Location maps	Not scored
Scored by the Advisory Committee		
6. Ecological and Biological Characteristics	• The bigger picture • Uniqueness and significance of the site • Statewide significance • Fish and wildlife species or communities • Quality of habitat	20 points
7. Species and Communities with Special Status	• Threat to species or communities • Importance of acquisitions • Ecological roles • Taxonomic distinctness • Rarity • Pollinator habitat	10 points
8. Manageability and Viability	• Threat to the habitat • Consideration of a conservation easement • Long-term viability • Enhancement of existing protected land • Ongoing stewardship • Livestock grazing uses	15 points
9. Public Benefit and Community Support	• Community support • Educational and/or scientific value	5 points
10. Multiple Benefits	• Recreation uses • Resource uses and management practices	3 points
	Total Points Possible	**53**

Attachment C: Natural Areas

Proposed Summary Table

Criteria	Evaluation Elements	Possible Points
Unscored		
Project Introduction	• Project goals and objectives • Location maps	Not scored
Scored by the Advisory Committee		
1. Program Priority	• Native ecosystems • Special status species • Landscape features	25 points
2. Manageability and Viability	• Threat • Restoration and management • Stewardship • Existing public property • Conservation easement • Regulatory protections	15 points
3. Partnerships and Community Support	• Engagement • Partnerships	5 points
4. Public Benefits	• Recreation • Resource uses • Ecosystem services	5 points
	Total Points Possible	**50**

Current Summary Table

Criteria	Evaluation Elements	Possible Points
Unscored		
Project Introduction	• Project goals and objectives • Location maps	Not scored
Scored by the Advisory Committee		
5. Ecological and Biological Characteristics	• The bigger picture • Uniqueness or significance of the site • Statewide significance • Species or communities • Quality of habitat and natural features	20 points

Criteria	Evaluation Elements	Possible Points
6. Species and Communities with Special Status	• Threat to species or communities • Importance of acquisition • Ecological roles • Taxonomic distinctness • Pollinator habitat	10 points
7. Manageability and Viability	• Immediacy of threat to the site • Consideration of a conservation easement • Long-term viability • Enhancement of existing protected land • Ongoing stewardship	15 points
8. Public Benefit and Community Support	• Community support • Educational and/or scientific value	5 points
9. Multiple Benefits	• Recreation uses • Resource uses and management practices	3 points
	Total Points Possible	**53**

Item 4: Boating Facilities Policy Changes

Action Requested: Direction

Summary

This memo introduces potential policy changes to the Boating Facilities Program based on recent internal review, as well as ongoing outreach and assessment. Staff are requesting board direction on several policy areas, including grant limits, eligible project types and costs, and evaluation criteria.

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 request funding for acquisition, development, or planning projects.

To participate in the program, an applicant must adopt a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. Projects considered for funding must directly support board priorities in the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan, which shapes policies and evaluation criteria that the board adopts 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.

Apart from changes to evaluation criteria, many key BFP policies have not been reviewed or changed in over 20 years. A summary of recent BFP policy changes can be found in Attachment A. Staff has initiated a review of program policies in advance of the planned 2026 grant round.

Review and Outreach

To date, staff have completed the following steps as part of this program review:

- Internal meetings to identify policy issues and scope the outreach process
- Review of past funding lists to identify patterns or context that would support policy decision-making
- Analysis of past project scores to identify any patterns that would suggest the need for criteria updates
- Review and analysis of past feedback from advisory committee members during post-evaluation debriefs
- Listening sessions with staff at Washington State Parks and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Next Steps and Timeline

Over the fall, staff plan to do additional outreach with local governments to continue to identify policy issues and preferred options. Priority groups include the Washington Recreation and Parks Association, the Washington Public Ports Association, Recreational Boaters Association of Washington, and the Department of Natural Resources.

Staff plan to provide a progress update and seek additional direction during the January 2026 board meeting, solicit public comment during early spring 2026, and then seek approval for any proposed policy changes at the April 2026 board meeting. The next BFP grant round will likely begin accepting applications in early August of 2026.

Potential Policy Changes

Funding Limits

Staff have identified two different funding limits related to local grant maximums and multisite projects that have not been updated for a significant period. These policy options can have a strong influence on how applicants identify and develop projects for funding, as well as the competitive dynamics of the program. Staff are seeking board direction on preferred options, as well as which options should be provided as part of public comment.

Current Policy	Issue Statement	Current Options
Local Acquisition, Development, or Combination Grant Limits		
Local agencies and Native American Tribes can request up to $1 million for a development, acquisition, or combination project.	The costs of acquisition and construction have increased significantly since these grant limits were established in 2003.	No change. Increase grant limits to $2 million. Increase grant limits to $3 million.
Local Planning Grant Limits		
Local planning projects are capped at the lesser of $200,000 or 20 percent of the estimated construction costs.	The costs of acquisition and construction have increased significantly since these grant limits were established in 2003.	No change. Increase planning grant limits to $300,000.
Multisite Projects		
Funding for each worksite in a multisite project is limited to no more than $50,000.	The costs of planning and construction have increased significantly since this multisite limit was established. For example, replacing a bathroom can cost over $150,000 today.	No change. Increase multisite worksite cap to $250,000. Remove funding cap and instead limit the number of worksites that can be included in a project.

Eligible Project Types and Costs

Review and initial outreach have revealed several issue areas related to eligible project types, eligible elements, or eligible costs. Any changes to these policies would impact how applicants scope and develop projects, the grant management process, and the degree of connectivity between the program revenue source (gas tax) and uses benefiting from the project. Staff are actively considering alternative policy options that

would help address these issues. Staff are seeking initial board direction on the proposals under consideration prior to further analysis and refinement.

Current Policy	Issue Statement	Proposal Under Consideration
Proration		
If a project will benefit a variety of recreational activities, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) will pay for only the percentage of the project that is used for motorized recreational boating. The sponsor must prorate the costs based on that percentage.	The proration percentage can be difficult to do with existing data and can feel arbitrary relative to the actual use over time. Proration increases the complexity of the billing process and requires additional sponsor capacity. Proration is an approach that is currently used in other grant programs, based on this policy.	Remove the proration policy in the BFP manual. Develop a universal proration policy for development projects that provides more clarity about the conditions under which proration applies to a proposed scope of work.
Planning Eligibility		
Planning projects are required to result in construction-ready bid documents and have all permits "in-hand" necessary to proceed with construction.	Currently, applicants must incur ineligible pre-agreement feasibility costs to submit a proposal. This creates a barrier to project development. Entities often wait to finalize detailed specifications and cost estimates until construction funding is in hand.	Allow for feasibility studies and permit-ready (60 percent) design as stand-alone planning projects, subject to the planning request limits.

General Updates and Alignments

Staff have identified several other policy changes that would help align with other programs or current practices, provide additional clarity for applications and sponsors, or remove requirements that are operationally problematic or no longer needed. Staff plan to move forward with these changes in the absence of any concerns from the board.

Current Policy	Issue Statement	Proposed Policy Change
Local Planning Grant Limits		
Local planning projects are capped at the lesser of $200,000 or 20 percent of the estimated construction costs.	It is very difficult to estimate construction costs prior to planning, and they can change significantly depending on minor scope changes or market conditions.	Remove the 20 percent of estimated construction costs as a cap on planning projects. The $200,000 cap would remain, which may be increased by the board (see above).
State Agency Total Request		
The total BFP request by any single state agency may not exceed twice what is estimated by RCO to be available for state agencies in a grant cycle.	Agencies are scoping applications before RCO knows what to expect in terms of funding levels. This artificially reduces the competitive environment and does not appear to be needed based on recent funding awards.	Remove state agency request limits.
Transient Moorage		
BFP currently caps exclusive use or moorage at 14 days.	The Boating Infrastructure Grant program caps exclusive use and moorage at 15 days. The caps do not align.	Increase BFP exclusive use or moorage to 15 days.

Planning Deliverables		
Planning projects are required to result in all permits "in-hand" necessary to proceed with construction.	This does not align with the reality of phased projects, where certain temporary local permits are not applied for until construction funding is received.	Clarify which permits must be "in-hand" prior to grant closing (i.e., state and federal permits).
State-owned Aquatic Lands		
Applicants are required to secure use authorization within sixty days after board funding approval and prior to agreement.	Use authorizations for state-owned aquatic lands may take longer than the 60-day requirement, as agency staff must deal with highest priority permits first.	Remove timeline requirement relative to board funding meeting. Authorization would still be required prior to signing agreement.

Evaluation Criteria

From review and outreach to date, staff has identified several issues with the current evaluation criteria. A list of these issues is provided in Attachment A. To the extent possible, staff hope to try and address these issues as part of any proposed policy changes. Staff are requesting board direction to see if addressing any of these issues would potentially cause concern.

Non-Motorized Elements

Policy staff received feedback that there are situations where it would be beneficial to allow some minor non-motorized boating elements (hand launches, fishing piers, etc.) to help separate users and reduce conflicts that could improve access and experience for motorized boaters. After internal discussion, staff do not plan to propose policy changes in this area to maintain the fidelity between the program's revenue source (gas tax) and core intent (motorized recreational boating). Staff will explore other options to support these non-motorized elements within the context of a BFP proposal in combination with other, more compatible funding sources.

Mitigation Costs

Staff also received feedback that newer off-site mitigation banking requirements are impacting planned recreational motorboating projects. Specifically, mitigation is now required on more types of projects, and when off-site mitigation banking is the only feasible option, the number and costs of those credits has increased significantly. Currently, RCO limits eligible mitigation costs to 25 percent of the cost of the project for which mitigation is required.

The board has requested additional information on this issue previously in relation to a decision regarding the Point Whitney Access Redevelopment (16-2308) project at the July 2024 board meeting (Item 4). Since this issue relates broadly to development projects in multiple programs, it is not being addressed specifically as part of this program review. Instead, staff plan to provide the board with additional context in a separate agenda item at a future meeting.

Attachments

A. Recent Boating Facilities Program Policy Changes

B. Summary of Evaluation Criteria Issues

Attachment A: Recent Boating Facilities Program Policy Changes

Resolution Number	Description of Changes
2020-13	Temporary match reduction and local match removal due to COVID-19. Increased points for Site Suitability criterion.
2016-10	Added three criteria: Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship, Boats on Trailers, and Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Priorities.
2015-3	Adopted Boating Grants Program Plan Update
2010-35	Changed Need criterion and removed Boats on Trailers criterion.
2009-22	Adopted Boating Grants Program Plan Update
2003-36	Permanently increased local grant maximum from $750,000 to $1,000,000 and permanently reduced match requirements for locals from 33% to 25%.
2003-36	Adopted Boating Grants Program Plan Update
2002-04	Reduction in number of criteria, re-ordering, and modification of the points in Matching Share criterion.
2002-05	Approved temporary reduction in match requirement for locals from 33% to 25% for applications received during 2002 and 2003 calendar years.
1997-10	Series of policy changes and clarifications, including phased projects, commercial and non-recreational uses, and match shares criterion.

Attachment B: Summary of Evaluation Criteria Issues

Criterion	Current Approach	Issue Statement
Planning Projects	Planning projects have seven criteria that are scored by the advisory committee, five of which are shared with other project types.	Several of the current criterion associated with planning projects are not directly relevant. The planning process is where those topic areas would be analyzed in more detail.
Need (0-15 points)	Asks if the project is needed and gives six bullet points to consider (inventory, condition, etc.).	The local community may not be the primary recreational users of the facility, which can complicate how to demonstrate need.
Suitability (0 to 15 points)	Asks if the site is well-suited for the intended recreational use. Gives six things to consider (size, location, topography, etc.)	By nature, existing sites are generally "suitable", so this question provides less differentiation and may be harder to answer for development proposals.
Urgency (Acquisition only) (0-10 points)	Asks how urgent the need for funding is from the board.	It is common that BFP funding is requested to rescue existing sites that are failing, which comes with a degree of urgency even as a development project.
Boats on Trailers (0 to 5 points)	Asks if the project predominantly serves boats on trailers.	This question has no guidance and has historically been difficult for applicants to answer and for the advisory committee to consistently evaluate.

Boating Experience (-2 to 3 points)	Asks how the project will affect the boating experience.	Advisory committee does not use the negative part of the scoring range and has expressed a preference for only positive numbers.
Readiness (0 to 5 points)	Asks if the project is ready to proceed and encourages proposals where applicants are ready to proceed as soon as agreement is signed.	Most projects do not meet the readiness criteria as currently written (i.e., ready to break ground upon agreement signing). This creates an incentive to make unreachable claims and reduces differentiation among projects.

Item 5: Evergreen Communities Recognition: Impacts to Grant Programs

Action Requested: Request for Direction

Summary

The Recreation and Conservation Office is implementing the requirements of the Evergreen Communities Act. Passed in 2021, the legislative act created the Evergreen Community recognition program at the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and requires the Recreation and Conservation Office to provide a funding preference to projects from entities recognized as Evergreen Communities in the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's Habitat Conservation Account categories.

This memo provides a summary of the Evergreen Communities Act, the Washington Department of Natural Resources recognition program, and the impact of the legislation on the Recreation and Conservation Office's grant programs.

Staff offer an approach for implementation and request the board's feedback. Pending the board's direction, staff will return in January 2026 seeking a decision.

Overview

In 2021, the legislature passed the Evergreen Communities Act directing the Department of Natural Resources to create the Evergreen Community recognition program. As part of that legislation, the Recreation and Conservation Office was directed to give a preference to entities enrolled in the Evergreen Communities recognition program when funding projects in the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP).

When making their funding decisions, this law requires the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to:

- Consider, "…whether the entity receiving assistance has been recognized, and what [level] of recognition was received, in the evergreen community [recognition] program.".

- Give preference only to an evergreen community, "…in comparison to other entities that are eligible to receive evergreen community designation. Entities not eligible for designation as an evergreen community shall not be given less preferential treatment than an evergreen community."

Department of Natural Resources's Evergreen Community Recognition Program

The Evergreen Communities recognition program acknowledges Washington's incorporated municipalities, counties, and Tribes for their commitments to urban and community forestry. The program is modeled after the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA program and has two tiers of recognition:

- Tier one requires a community to have a tree board or department, adopt a public tree care ordinance, spend $2 per city resident on urban forestry, adopt a proclamation in observation of Arbor Day, and create a partial tree inventory.

- Tier two requires the community to achieve all tier one standards and adopt an urban forest management plan (or equivalent).

Entities eligible for Evergreen Community recognition include counties, cities, towns, and Tribes. According to the Department of Natural Resources, applicants can apply online at any time, and the applications will be reviewed quarterly in March, June, September, and December. The department launched the program in October 2024. At that time, a pilot group of cities was granted recognition, including Renton, Ellensburg, Lake Forest Park, Pasco, Kirkland, and Burien. The department has committed to provide a complete list of enrolled communities and pending applications to the Recreation and Conservation Office prior to the board's funding decisions each grant cycle.

Impacts to Recreation and Conservation Office Programs

Organizations eligible for WWRP Habitat Conservation Account categories include cities, counties, special purpose districts, Tribes, nonprofit nature conservancies, and state agencies. Organizations eligible for the ALEA program include cities, counties, towns, special purpose districts, state agencies, and Tribes. Nonprofits are not eligible in ALEA.

The law recognizes that Recreation and Conservation Office's programs include a broader suite of organization types than those eligible for Evergreen Communities

recognition. While the Recreation and Conservation Office is required to provide a funding preference to applicants recognized as Evergreen Communities, the law further clarifies, "Entities not eligible for designation as an evergreen community shall not be given less preferential treatment than an evergreen community."

The primary challenge in implementing this requirement within the Recreation and Conservation Office's's project review and ranking process is providing preference to applicants recognized in the Evergreen Communities program without creating a disadvantage to applicants who are not eligible for Evergreen Community recognition.

It is notable that WWRP's Habitat Conservation Account applicants are primarily state agencies, which are not eligible for the Evergreen Community recognition. However, the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Program applicants include mostly cities and counties, meaning the recognition program could have a greater effect on the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account program.

Suggested Approach to Implementation

Recreation and Conservation Office staff suggest using Evergreen Community status as a tie-breaker when the board makes their funding decisions. Under this approach, after the evaluation committees score the projects, the Recreation and Conservation Office would determine whether any projects are tied on the ranked lists. In the event two projects are tied and both applicant organizations are eligible for Evergreen Community recognition, funding would be awarded to the organization enrolled in the recognition program. In the event both communities are recognized, applicants with tier two status would be awarded first, followed by tier one.

Using Evergreen Community status as a tie-breaker after the ranked lists are developed should have no impact on Recreation and Conservation Office applicants that are not eligible for the Evergreen Community recognition program. The tie-breaker would only be deployed if both entities are eligible for Evergreen Community recognition. Otherwise, if one of the tied applicants is not eligible for Evergreen Community recognition, then funding would be awarded based on the board's previously adopted prioritization approach.

Public Notification of Evergreen Community Program

On September 9, 2025, Recreation and Conservation Office staff notified the public about the requirements the Evergreen Community Act places on ALEA and WWRP's Habitat Conservation Account categories. The purpose of this notification was to alert potential applicants of changes to Recreation and Conservation Office's programs while

informing them of the opportunity to become recognized as Evergreen Communities well in advance of the Recreation and Conservation Office's 2026 application cycle. While the agency was not formally seeking comment from this notification, staff received several questions from interested stakeholders. These questions primarily focused on whether this requirement would impact Recreation and Conservation Office's applicants who are not eligible for Evergreen Community recognition.

Next Steps

Pending the board's direction, Recreation and Conservation Office staff will refine the preferred approach and issue a formal request for public comment. Staff will return in January of 2026 to provide a summary of the public's feedback and request a decision from the board.

Item 6: Farm and Forest Account Policy Changes

Action Requested: Decision

Summary

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approved two temporary policy changes to the Farm and Forest Account for the 2022 and 2024 grant rounds: eliminating the non-state, non-federal match requirement, and allowing costs increase requests for projects that need additional funds. Recreation and Conservation Office staff recommend making these temporary changes permanent and request a board decision.

Background

At the April 2022 board meeting (Item 6), Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff proposed instituting a dedicated cost increase policy and permanently eliminating the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement in the Farm and Forest Account. The board temporarily approved a cost increase policy and waived the 10 percent non-state, non-federal 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 review of the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP). The scope of review included looking at the temporary policies related to cost increases and non-state, non-federal 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 cost increase policy and removal of non-state, non-federal match be made permanent. The board supported permanent retention of the cost increase policy and provided additional options relative to the permanent status of the non-state, non-federal match requirement.

At the April 2025 board meeting (Item 3), the board requested staff to solicit public comment on the following options relative to non-state, non-federal match:

- 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. If the board does not take action on this policy, the program will automatically revert to this option for the 2026 grant round.

Non-State, Non-Federal Match

By statute, the board may not approve a project where the local agency or nonprofit's share is less than the amount awarded from the Farm and Forest Account (1:1 match).[1] Prior to the temporary waiver, board policy required local agencies and nonprofit applicants to contribute at least 10 percent of the total project cost from a non-state, non-federal source. The board may elect to waive this non-state, non-federal match requirement on a case-by-case basis.

This board policy requirement is consistent with WWRP's Outdoor Recreation and Habitat Conservation account programs and is supported by the rule in 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 board policy has traditionally been pointed to as a mechanism to ensure that grant applicants are committed to the projects and that the projects are a priority for the organization.

Feedback and Public Comment

As part of an online survey sent to Farmland and Forestland applicants from 2016, removing the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement was the top ranked board policy change to help reduce barriers to applications. As part of a memo submitted to RCO by the Washington Association of Land Trusts in March 2022, removing the non-state, non-federal match requirement was noted as a top item that limits program demand.

As part of the farmland program review during the summer of 2024, partner organizations were grateful for the temporary changes and unanimously supported making the non-state, non-federal match waiver permanent given the positive impacts for project development and implementation.

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

RCO received fourteen responses during public comment relative to the permanent status of non-state, non-federal match in the Farm and Forest Account. This included comment from multiple land trusts and the Washington State Conservation Commission, as well as partner organizations such as the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition, the Washington Association of Land Trusts, and American Farmland Trust. Thirteen respondents supported permanent removal of the match requirement (option 1), while one anonymous respondent supported permanently keeping the match requirement (option 3). Written comments on this policy can be found in Attachment B.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend permanent removal of the non-state, non-federal match requirement in the Farm and Forest Account for the following reasons:

- **Funding Availability:** Local public funding dedicated to farmland preservation is not widely available across the state and serves as a primary bottleneck to project viability.
- **Applicant Type:** Applications in the Farm and Forest Account are primarily from non-profit land conservancies. They do not have taxing authority, so the non-state, non-federal match requirement puts direct pressure on either the landowner or their un-restricted capital if there is not another source of local funds. This can impact implementation success.
- **Competitive Environment:** The Farm and Forest Account has previously received more funding than requests. Easement projects are complex and removing non-state, non-federal match would be one way to help support a more robust, competitive project list with less returned funds, as indicated by past data.
- **Resource Concern:** The farmland program is about protecting a finite resource at risk of permanent loss, rather than developing a new opportunity. Ensuring a strong agricultural industry is a high priority of the state in the face of sustained conversion and ongoing external stressors. This puts a unique premium on removing barriers like non-state, non-federal match requirements that impact the pace and scale of this work.

Cost Increases

The temporary cost increase policy in the Farm and Forest Account is modeled after other RCO grant programs for acquisitions. It allows the director to approve a cost

increase of up to 10 percent of the total project costs limited to a parcel-by-parcel appraised and reviewed value. Cost increase requests of over 10 percent would go to the board for consideration on a case-by-case basis.

Prior to this temporary policy change, a sponsor would need to go to the board to request a waiver of the policy preventing cost increases.

External Feedback and Public Comment

A cost increase policy was considered a high priority by respondents during outreach performed prior to the 2022 grant round. As part of the farmland program review during the summer of 2024, partner organizations were grateful for the temporary changes and unanimously supported making the cost increase policy permanent given the impacts for project development and implementation.

RCO received twelve responses during public comment relative to the permanent status of the cost increase policy in the Farm and Forest Account. This included comment from multiple land trusts and the Washington State Conservation Commission, as well as partner organizations such as the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition, the Washington Association of Land Trusts, and American Farmland Trust. Eleven respondents supported permanent retention of a cost increase policy, while one anonymous respondent supported removal of the cost increase policy. Written comments on this policy can be found in Attachment C.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend permanent retention of a dedicated cost increase policy in the Farm and Forest Account for the following reasons:

- **Easement Value:** It can be difficult to predict the cost of a conservation easement at application. Unlike fee title land cost, the easement value is only a portion of the overall property value and is influenced by specific terms and conditions that are typically negotiated as part of project implementation. If a sponsor underestimates the value of a conservation easement and does not request enough grant funds, then it usually results in either withdrawal of the proposal, or reliance on the landowner to voluntarily make up the difference or reduce the number of acres in the project. Collectively, this can impact overall program outcomes, reduce effective use of state funds, or reduce willingness of landowners to participate.
- **Funding Availability:** To varying degrees, both the Farmland and Forestland programs have had recent funding rounds where there is more money available

than overall requests. As such, there may be a limited pool of alternates able to accept any returned funding, so providing cost increases represents a strategic way to support additional project implementation.

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of this request supports the board's goal to help partners protect, restore, and develop habitat and recreation opportunities that benefit people, fish and wildlife, and ecosystems. This request also supports Strategy 1.B.2 – Provide partnerships with funding to protect and enhance working farm and forest lands, as well as Strategy 2.A.1 – Evaluate and develop policies and practices to reduce the number of projects not starting or finishing on time.

Next Steps

If approved, staff will incorporate these changes into *Manual 10f: Farmland Preservation* and *Manual 10c: Forestland Preservation* in advance of the 2026 grant round.

Attachment

A. Resolution 2025-23. Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farm and Forest Account Policy Changes
B. Non-State, Non-Federal Match Public Comments
C. Cost Increase Public Comments

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution 2025-23
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Farm and Forest Account Policy Changes

WHEREAS Chapters 79A.15 and 79A.25 Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 286-13-045 authorize the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) to adopt policies and rules for the grant programs which it administers; and

WHEREAS the board temporarily eliminated the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement and temporarily approved a cost increase policy in the Farm and Forest Account for the 2022 and 2024 grant rounds; and

WHEREAS Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff recently conducted a review of these temporary policies; and

WHEREAS the board acknowledges the challenges applicants face in securing matching resources, navigating the grant application process, and responding to changing easement values; and

WHEREAS RCO solicited public comments regarding this proposal through a survey and direct contact with stakeholders and advisory committee members; and

WHEREAS RCO staff recommend the board adopt changes outlined in memorandum 6 of the October 2025 meeting materials to help Farm and Forest Account applicants; and

WHEREAS approval of the proposed changes supports the board's goal of delivering successful projects by using broad public participation and feedback and adaptive management,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the board hereby eliminates the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement, and allows cost increases for the Farm and Forest Account; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the board directs staff to immediately incorporate these changes into the application materials and applicable grant program manuals.

Resolution moved by: Member Trang Lam

Resolution seconded by: Member Shiloh Burgess

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: October 28, 2025

Attachment B: Non-State, Non-Federal Match Public Comments

Option 1 (Waive)	Option 2 (Reduce)	Option 3 (Revert)
13	0	1

Demand for farmland protection outstrips available resources and capacity. In a constrained funding environment where land trusts struggle to raise unrestricted dollars, the 10% non-state, non-federal match requirement prevents land trusts, particularly smaller land trusts, from pursuing RCO funding for farmland protection. As land prices increase dramatically, and consequently easement values also increase, 10% of the easement value can represent a significant amount of money. Land trusts in communities without conservation futures programs are particularly at a disadvantage and reliant on philanthropic dollars to meet this requirement. Permanently waiving the 10% non-state, non-federal match will remove a barrier to future easement projects. This is an important step toward increasing the pace of farmland protection in Washington State.

Match requirements are an outdated, administratively burdensome approach to showing "skin in the game". Grant funded projects, whether they be straightforward farmland preservation, or broad multi-benefit projects that benefit farms, fish, and floods, are so big and complex that they almost always require multiple sources of funding. Project proponents spend a tremendous amount of time applying for and managing grants, let alone all the work that is required simply executing the proposed work. While it's nice to show "skin in the game" match requirements require documenting expenses associated with those matching funds, which can add 100s of hours of work to capacity strained organizations. In Floodplains by Design, we worked with Ecology to permanently waive match requirements, however, as part of their grant proposal, we still require them to document their leveraged funding. This is a one-time, upfront documentation of other funds they have at the time of application, which allows us to tell the full story of "skin in the game" not merely the 20% match requirement. In truth, FbD proponents, many of whom also apply for RCO funds, leverage other funds at nearly $2 - $1 ratio. By requiring match, you'll not only be continuing an archaic and burdensome process, but you also likely won't be telling the full story of how much additional funding your grant applicants bring to bear to support conservation efforts.

We support Option 1, to permanently waive the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement. Only 14 counties currently have local funding sources that could potentially provide this local match funding, and those sources can be highly

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competitive, challenging to align with the state and federal funding timelines and administrative processes, and do not all prioritize farmland preservation projects for funding. Removing this requirement for local match will greatly level the playing field for projects in Eastern Washington and counties without access to Conservation Futures funding, ensuring that priority farmland projects are able to move forward in communities where federal or other state match is the only option.

I believe the 10% requirement presents a financial challenge to the project and may impede a project, yet it does not accurately reflect the non-state and non-federal commitment to the project. Land trusts and landowners invest significant time, often many years, and their own resources into making a project successful, with much of this effort not reimbursable through the project. And, the requirement likely adversely impacts smaller land trusts more than larger land trusts as well.

Our experience is that many farmers have mortgages on their property and need to pay off the mortgage at closing. This means farmers need to 1.) Pay off the mortgage, 2.) Pay match, and 3.) Pay a stewardship fee, creating a disincentive for them to participate in the WWRP program overall. A waved match would likely reduce barriers for farmer participation in the program.

Another option for consideration is to select Option 2—5% match—and allow projected stewardship costs to be applied to the match as well. This provides the state some continued project funding while recognizing the ongoing financial commitments organizations make when acquiring land.

Many counties in WA do not have local sources of match which means that farmers have to give up income or a project may not happen due to that requirement which is well intended but out of date conceptually.

The specific requirement of 10% non-state non-federal is a burden on land trusts, and the reason for this policy is unclear. For a combination NRCS and Farmland project, we effectively donate 50% of the land trust's time and transaction costs - so we have substantial uncompensated commitment to the project. We ask our landowners for a substantial stewardship donation, so they have a great deal of shin in the game in cash as well as commitment. As an example, in the Breiler Ranch project funded under RCO Farmland, CDLT had to put $63,940.88 in cash into the closing in addition to the uncompensated staff and transactional costs, and received a $60,000 stewardship

donation at the closing. The 10% requirement seems unnecessary and burdensome. To seek a 3rd grant to cover part of this would involve more time.

From an equity lens, match creates barriers for smaller organizations or municipalities with less capacity and may limit their ability to apply for a project, while not being a good proxy for the true level of community support. In order to make most projects work groups will bring together multiple funding sources, but if they are able to bring together state and federal, that can already be a big lift for smaller groups without needing to add another source for this match requirement. It can create additional administrative burden that would be time better used on the project.

A good indication of community support is the funding that many land trusts will obtain from the landowner or private donors to support the stewardship of a property, but since that is not an eligible expense, they end up having to find additional funding to fulfill the match requirement. If the match requirement is maintained, we recommend looking at any avenues to make stewardship funding an eligible match.

Evaluate the conditions the board may consider under its discretion to waive this requirement (case by case exceptions). Seek to uphold farm and forest stewardship (conservation, sustainability, etc.), encouraging emerging landowners and introducing greater balance with timber interests.

Attachment C: Cost Increase Public Comments

Keep Cost Increase Policy	Remove Cost Increase Policy
11	1

Retaining this policy offers needed flexibility to land trusts. Easement projects can have long time horizons, and in a rapidly changing real estate market, costs increases are a regular phenomenon. This policy means that land trusts are not being asked to shoulder 100% of the burden when projects change and costs go up.

There is a lag time of multiple years between when a grant application is submitted, approved, and ultimately funded, let alone the work to get a landowner to agree to an acquisition. In the meantime, land values and other acquisition costs go up on a month-to-month basis and it is tremendously difficult for grant proponents to project what the future value of a property might be. Flexibility in grant programs is key to achieve the goals of these programs, without it, we're hamstringing the organizations doing the on-the-ground work.

We also support permanently retaining the current cost increase policy. As farmland prices continue to escalate and market dynamics are unpredictable, knowing this process flexibility is there will help project sponsors more effectively communicate with landowners about expected easement values and be able to navigate the long process time between development of application and completing the appraisal. This policy enables project sponsors to move forward priority projects where strict budget limitations based on estimates would have previously prevented good projects from being able to move forward.

It is very difficult to ascertain the market value of a conservation easement, and especially in rapidly rising real estate markets, that are the norm today.

Item 7: Farmland Policy Changes

Action Requested: Decision

Summary

This memo summarizes proposed changes to evaluation criteria and other policies in the Farmland Preservation Program based on public comment. Recreation and Conservation Office staff is requesting Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approval of these proposed changes.

Background

In 2024, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff started a review of the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) in the Farm and Forest Account.

Public Engagement

As part of this policy review process, staff engaged in significant public outreach and engagement, including the following:

- Listening sessions with partner organizations, nonprofit nature conservancies, county governments, state agencies, and other funders to identify issues and opportunities
- Discussions with advisory committee members on evaluation criteria as part of the 2024 FPP results meeting
- Solicited feedback on a first and second draft of updated evaluation criteria from RCO staff, advisory committee members, partner organizations, nonprofit nature conservancies, county governments, state agencies, and other funders
- Solicited public comment and incorporated feedback into final proposed policy changes

Board Engagement

As part of this policy review process, staff has engaged the board to seek direction over the course of multiple meetings leading up to this decision:

- Received initial input on the scope and core issues to be addressed during the April 2024 board meeting (Item 8).
- Presented issues with evaluation criteria to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board during the July 2024 board meeting (Item 11).
- Received direction on proposed policy changes and evaluation criteria from the board during the April 2025 board meeting (Item 4).

Proposed Policy Changes

Evaluation Criteria

Proposed change: A detailed summary of the proposed changes compared to the current criteria can be found in Attachment B. 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 final draft of the new proposed evaluation criteria can be found in Attachment C.

Public comment showed support for removal of the Building Envelope, Stewardship Practices, and Match criteria. No respondents opposed any of the proposed new criterion, but identified some opportunities for improvement. Staff used this feedback to complete the final draft included in this memo. More detailed survey data and written responses can be found in Attachment D.

Scope Changes

Proposed change: Remove the requirement to consult the Advisory Committee when a sponsor requests to add or remove parcels from the project scope. Instead, scope changes would be governed by the scope change policies in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects.*

RCO received twelve responses relating to this proposed change. Eleven respondents supported the change, and one anonymous respondent opposed the change. Written comments related to this proposed change can be found in Attachment D.

Impervious Surfaces

Proposed change: Align the RCO definition of impervious surface to match the definition used by the Natural Resource Conservation Surface.

RCO received twelve responses relating to this proposed change. Eleven respondents supported the change, and one anonymous respondent opposed the change. Written comments related to this proposed change can be found in Attachment D.

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of this request supports the board's goal to help partners protect, restore, and develop habitat and recreation opportunities that benefit people, fish and wildlife, and ecosystems. This request also supports Strategy 1.B.2 – Provide partnerships with funding to protect and enhance working farm and forest lands.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend the board approve the policy changes as proposed.

Next Steps

If approved, staff will incorporate these changes into *Manual 10f: Farmland Preservation* in advance of the 2026 grant round.

Additional Policies

Staff are continuing to explore two additional policies areas in FPP related to buy-protect-sell projects and eligibility of project areas that include small areas of designated forestland. These involve additional research and analysis, were not

identified as high priority issues impacting multiple organizations and are unlikely to impact a significant number of projects in the upcoming grant round. As a result, staff has elected to examine these issues on a separate timeline so that other key policy decisions are not held up relative to the 2026 grant round.

Easement Updates

Another component of this larger project is to update the current conservation easement template and consider alternate legal instruments to secure RCO's interest in protected properties. Much of this effort has been delayed due to state budget constraints.

Once significant progress has been made, staff will engage the board to seek direction on proposed changes to the easement instrument. In addition, staff plan to ask the board to clearly delegate authority to the RCO director to make programmatic and project-level decisions regarding conservation easement terms, in consultation with staff, the office of the Attorney General, and outside legal expertise as needed.

Land Access Discussion

A major theme from external outreach was the extent to which FPP can or should focus on issues of land access and affordability to help a younger, more diverse cohort of producers access affordable farmland. Based on board direction, staff plan to engage the board on this topic as a second phase of work as time and capacity allows.

Attachment

A. Resolution 2025-24
B. Description of Proposed Criteria Changes
C. Final Version of Proposed Updated Evaluation Criteria
D. Public Comment Summary Table

Attachment A: Resolution 2025-24

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
Resolution 2025-24
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Farmland Preservation Program
Policy Changes

WHEREAS Chapters 79A.15 and 79A.25 Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 286-13-045 authorize the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) to adopt policies and rules for the grant programs which it administers; and

WHEREAS Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff recently conducted a review of policies in the Farmland Preservation Program; and

WHEREAS RCO solicited public comments regarding this proposal through a survey and direct contact with stakeholders and advisory committee members; and

WHEREAS RCO staff recommend the board adopt changes relating to evaluation criteria, scope changes, and impervious surfaces in the Farmland Preservation Program; and

WHEREAS approval of the proposed changes supports the board's goal of delivering successful projects by using broad public participation and feedback and adaptive management,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the board hereby adopt changes as described in memorandum 7 of the October 2025 meeting for the Farmland Preservation Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the board authorizes staff to make any administrative changes to the final policy language as needed to incorporate the approved changes into the relevant grant manuals.

Resolution moved by: Member Shiloh Burgess

Resolution seconded by: Member Bob Bugert

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: October 28, 2025

Attachment B: Description of Proposed Criteria Changes

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 • Incorporate "Access to Markets" and "On-Site Infrastructure" criteria underneath the viability umbrella • Use multipliers • Provide supporting bullets that describe key things to address • Adjust point scale to accommodate combination projects with an enhancement/restoration component	• Helps to address a lack of scoring spread for viability criterion during past grant rounds • Provides additional guidance to applicants on how to answer the questions effectively, and for advisory committee members on how to score consistently • Better aligns with statutory guidance regarding aspects of farm viability
Threat to the Land (10 points)	• Split into two different criteria related to near-term conversion threat and longer-term socioeconomic and regional pressures on agricultural use • Provide supporting bullets that describe key things to address	• Consistent with feedback from sponsors and advisory committee members that threat should be considered more holistically and long-term • Provides additional guidance to applicants on how to answer the questions effectively, and for advisory committee members on how to score consistently
Access to Markets (4 points)	• Remove as a separate criterion, and incorporate into criterion 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 based only 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 • Helps support 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 & 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 opportunity for bias • Addresses feedback from advisory committee
Benefits to the Community (6 points)	• Split into two different criteria related to the fish & wildlife benefits, as well as the community benefits. • Adjust point scale to accommodate combination projects with an	• Eliminates potential conflict between conservation values within a single criterion • Addresses feedback from sponsors

	enhancement/restoration component	
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	• 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 project where match is not required
Easement Duration (0 points)	• No change proposed at this time. RCO staff intends to engage in a larger discussion with the board about the use of non-perpetual instruments and will address this criterion as needed based on that discussion.	

Attachment C: Final Version of Proposed Updated Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria Summary

Criteria	Evaluation Element	Project Type	Maximum Points Possible
Scored by the Advisory Committee			
1	Viability - Land Base	All Projects	20 points
2	Viability - Infrastructure & Operations	Acquisition Projects	15 points
		Combination Projects	10 points
3	Threat - Conversion	All Projects	10 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	6 points
7	Partnerships & Support	All Projects	4 points
8	Enhancement	Combination Projects	10 points
Scored by RCO			
9	Easement Duration	All Projects	0 points
	Total Possible Points		**75**

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
- 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

[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[3] support ongoing agricultural productivity. A complete response should consider the following:

- Adequacy, current condition, and adaptability of on-site production facilities and supporting infrastructure in the proposed easement area
- Presence of relevant community infrastructure (processing and distribution facilities, sales outlets, etc.) in the area and its contribution to farm-to-market access
- Existing site-specific resources and plans that support productivity and financial viability, such as a current business model, conservation plan, or whole farm plan

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

3. **Threat - Conversion.** [4] If not protected, to what extent is the property at risk of conversion to a more highly developed use incompatible with the opportunity for agriculture? 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, as demonstrated by prior market listings or recent 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

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points

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[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] Examples of facilities include barns, irrigation systems, fencing, processing and storage facilities, wells and pumphouses, greenhouses, housing, livestock sheds, etc.

[4] Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(c)

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

4.

- 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
- If applicable, the role of the acquisition within a clear succession plan, pending farmer to farmer transfer, or long-term land access effort

▲ 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?[5] 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 analyses[6]

The long-term security[7] of stewardship practices, and consistency with recognized funding programs or guidelines

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

[5] 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)

[6] Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(b)

[7] A more secure stewardship practice is one that is protected in some legal or contractual form for a designated period of time, rather than something that could be removed without any consequences to the landowner. For example, a publicly funded riparian forest buffer with contract protections for 20 years would be more secure than a riparian forest buffer without such protections.

Benefits - Community. What community benefits does the property provide when used as agricultural land[8], such as the following:

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

6.

How are these community benefits consistent with or recommended by local, state or regional planning efforts[9], 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 six points

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?[10]

8.

▲ Point Range: zero to four points

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?

9.

▲ Point Range: zero to ten points

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

[8] 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)

[9] Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130(10)(d)

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

- 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.

Attachment D: Public Comment Summary Table

RCO is proposing to remove the requirement to consult the Advisory Committee when a sponsor requests to add or remove parcels from the project scope. Scope changes would instead be governed by the relevant scope change policies in Manual 3 Acquisition Projects. Do you support this policy change?	
Yes	**No**
11	1
Makes sense to have it governed by Manual 3 like RCO's other grant programs.	
Removing this requirement will streamline the process to bring complex projects to completion.	
RCO has great expertise in their staff and to streamline process, it would be best to defer to their best professional judgement with scope changes, which are to be expected. Again, there are multiple years between when a grant application is first submitted and funding is allocated and working with landowners on acquisitions is a very dynamic process. To achieve our conservation goals, we need to streamline administrative processes as much as possible and allow project proponents to be nimble in deploying these funds.	
We support this approach to increase flexibility and consistency in project administration and to ensure alignment with program criteria.	
The Grant Manager and Director are more familiar with the project details and able to evaluate a proposal under the specific Manual requirements. The Advisory Committee is engaged for a short period of time during initial evaluation, and it would be unreasonable to ask them to re-engage for scope change review.	

RCO is proposing to align the RCO definition of impervious surfaces to match the definition used by the Natural Resource Conservation Surface. Do you support this policy change?	
Yes	**No**
11	1
The public comment package did not name the NRCS impervious surfaces definition, so we looked at the NRCS easement template for comparison. The NRCS appears to have a much smaller percentage of allowable impervious surface and we disagree with this lack of flexibility. Smaller farmland properties may need a higher percentage of impervious surfaces to be productive.	
Aligning policies and definitions across various funding programs always helps streamline processes. This also goes back to the match proposal, as differing definitions, along with grant timelines, makes matching funds across agencies very difficult.	
We support this and appreciate all efforts to align and streamline WWRP and NRCS easement requirements and template language.	

Since we are required to follow the NRCS impervious surfaces definition, this makes good sense.
Consistency here is good.

Do you support the removal of the Building Envelope criterion?	
Yes	**No**
11	1

Do you support the removal of the Stewardship Practices criterion?	
Yes	**No**
8	2

Do you support the removal of the Match criterion?	
Yes	**No**
10	2

The land trust community provided extensive feedback on, and support, these changes.
Comment on stewardship practices: is the criterion proposed for removal of #6 about assessing current stewardship practices by the landowners or #7 about including those stewardship actions in the CE terms? We agree with removing the ranking that includes evaluation of permanent stewardship actions included in the CE, but we agree with the evaluation including assessment of stewardship practices aligned with recognized programs
Long-term stewardship is largely an unfunded expectation of these grants, and it puts undue onus on project proponents to find the capacity to fund the capacity to meet those requirements. Funding programs should not require things that they do not in fact fund.
Overall, we are supportive of all the proposed criteria revisions outlined in the proposed rule and policy change package. These revisions help clarify the program intent and reduce the potential for criteria to preference a certain type of production or geography. In addition, we specifically support the removal of the Match criterion, recognizing the disadvantage this poses for certain geographies of the state where no non-state or non-federal matching funds are available to secure those additional points.
I have been part of the review committee for farmland projects and agree with the removal of the building envelope and the match criteria. I want to clarify that I agree that the Stewardship Practices can be removed but I like the Farmland Stewardship criteria.
As to Building Envelope, the question of its size seems somewhat superfluous. Perhaps the rationale was that the farm should have a place for the farmer, but that it shouldn't be too large. To have it valued seems unnecessary. Applicants should be rewarded for extra stewardship practices to benefit wildlife, so this seems appropriate. For example, in our project on Badger Mountain in Douglas County, the landowners

were implementing practices to benefit sage grouse. Yes, if the land trust provides additional match, a couple points reward is appropriate. The scoring is often very close, and our projects are ranches that are less strong on other criteria.

Viability – Land Base			
Support	**Support, but could be improved**	**Oppose without improvements**	**Strongly oppose**
11	1	0	0

Viability – Infrastructure and Operations			
Support	**Support, but could be improved**	**Oppose without improvements**	**Strongly oppose**
7	5	0	0

So few farms come with necessary infrastructure. And with so many new farmers purchasing/leasing now defunct dairies, they're often inheriting infrastructure that doesn't meet their specific needs. It is unrealistic to expect farms to already have all the necessary infrastructure in place. The point allocation for this has also increased from 4 points to ~6 points which is a substantial. Perhaps consider supporting bullet points like "community infrastructure" which include meat processing nearby or other adjacent agriculture businesses that can support viability rather than only what is onsite at the property.

Few farms come with necessary infrastructure, and with so many new farmers purchasing/leasing now defunct dairies, they're often inheriting infrastructure that doesn't meet their specific needs. It is unrealistic to expect farms to already have all the necessary infrastructure in place. The point allocation for this has also increased from 4 points to ~6 points, which is a substantial. Perhaps consider supporting bullet points like "community infrastructure," which include meat processing nearby or other adjacent agriculture businesses that can support viability, rather than only what is onsite at the property.

I'm probably more in the middle of support or oppose. I support the intent of this policy change and the need for ag viability, but tying it to market access and broader infrastructure could lend itself to important ag lands for conservation being scored low due to broader, systemic challenges to local ag infrastructure that is outside the control of any one farmer, or even a farming community's control. For example, in most of Western WA, there is significant growth in new and young farmers, however, these are often small scale farms and there is a huge need for, though no investment in, cold storage facilities that allow these small farms to aggregate products and achieve the scale required to access grocery stores. Just flagging to avoid potential unintended consequences.

I like the old language that references types of infrastructure so a reviewer doesn't think you need a packing house or a large processing facility to meet the criteria. This

list: barns, irrigation systems, crop processing and storage facilities, wells, houses, livestock sheds, and other farming infrastructure.

Threat – Conversion			
Support	**Support, but could be improved**	**Oppose without improvements**	**Strongly oppose**
10	3	0	0

I don't understand how the reference to constraints such as floodways or wetlands applies here. I also think there is something missing here for rural areas that are under high tourism and second home pressures. Maybe that fits in the AG Use threat below, but there are some rural areas that are very remote and not under much threat, and those that are under a lot of pressure.

I do not feel confident that most applicants will be able to effectively communicate about the distinctions in the threat category. My sense is that the truly near-term threat projects will seek BPS funding. But I don't feel so strongly about this to suggest a different approach in light of broad support for the change from others.

Threat – Agricultural Use			
Support	**Support, but could be improved**	**Oppose without improvements**	**Strongly oppose**
9	3	0	0

I think that this criterion could be more explicitly describing the difference between conversion and non-agricultural use.

Same as my comment above, this could have unintended consequences where a parcel is not prioritized for funding because the underlying viability of the broader ag community has been degraded to a point where it's difficult to make a case that conserving a particular parcel is a priority. It can create a bit of a doom loop - growth and development has degraded ag viability by undermining the sharing economy and so infrastructure has disappeared, therefore we're not going to conserve this parcel, degrading ag viability even further making it less of a priority to conserve future parcels.

Benefits – Fish and Wildlife			
Support	**Support, but could be improved**	**Oppose without improvements**	**Strongly oppose**
10	2	0	0

the meaning of the phrase “the long-term security of stewardship practices” is unclear to us. For example, does "security" mean that certain stewardship practices are written into CE terms? If so, that would be a concern for us because requiring certain stewardship practices in a permanent CE can become irrelevant over the years as Best Management Practices evolve.

This seems to be an alternative for the current language discussed previously. Like the multiplier for acquisition - this does apply to CE's, correct?

Benefits - Community			
Support	**Support, but could be improved**	**Oppose without improvements**	**Strongly oppose**
11	1	0	0
Okay, but may puts a fairly high bar for community benefit apart from the inherent benefits of wildlife habitat, open space and farmland preservation.			

Partnerships and Support			
Support	**Support, but could be improved**	**Oppose without improvements**	**Strongly oppose**
9	3	0	0
Often in-kind contributions, donations, or other funding are encompassed in the letters of support. What is the difference in the proposed changes? How would we demonstrate support without the letter of commitment?			
Yes and no. We should not make this a competition for who gets the most letters of support. As an evaluator, I feel I saw some degree of puffery and this should not outweigh real substantive support from conservation agencies or groups. Not just "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours."			

Enhancement			
Support	**Support, but could be improved**	**Oppose without improvements**	**Strongly oppose**
7	2	0	0
Has RCO created language in CE terms to ensure that if an area of ag land becomes nonviable in the future for agricultural uses that this program will allow that area to be reprioritized for secondary conservation values? Secondly, has RCO figured out a way to allow habitat-focused grants to match certain aspects of the protection of a farmland property? For ex, if there is a salmon-bearing stream that is 20-30% of the property, will WWRP Farmland allow SRFB or NCWG to fund that portion of the project and Farmland fund the agricultural portion? We need to all be working together to understand that many properties have equally-important conservation values and being able to be creative with matching funds is essential for working lands and habitat protection, treaty rights, and restoration.			
Together, these changes will make it possible for advisory committee members to evaluate projects in ways that are consistent, fair, and objective.			
Not sure I understand the rationale for the high amount of points here.			

Item 8: Emphasizing Accessibility in Recreation Grants

Action Requested: Direction

Summary

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) development projects are required to meet or exceed federal, state, and local accessibility requirements; however, people with disabilities continue to face barriers to accessing the outdoors. The 2023 Statewide Recreation and Conservation Plan and RCO's 2022 Equity Review provide insights into how the agency and the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board might play a greater role in improved accessibility. Staff have conducted research and sought input from stakeholders, applicants, advocacy groups, and the board. This memo discusses challenges and opportunities of previously proposed policy changes and shares RCO's vision for a new grant program to increase outdoor access for people with disabilities.

Background

RCO-funded development projects are required to meet or exceed accessibility standards. Over the years, program policies and evaluation criteria have been updated to address changing laws and encourage barrier-free access. In recent years, RCO released its Equity Review (2022) and Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2023). The documents found that recreation providers and RCO stakeholders are interested in improving opportunities for people with disabilities.

In response to this priority, staff met with a variety of stakeholders in spring 2025 to better understand accessibility needs within communities. In June, the board heard and discussed options for how RCO recreation grants could help meet those needs. Options included creating a new grant program, reducing match or increasing grant limits for accessibility-specific projects, providing evaluation points for projects that focus on accessibility, and allowing applicants to bundle accessibility improvements at multiple sites into one project proposal.

The board had a wide range of thoughts on these options, but two main themes emerged. First, several board members expressed a desire to help communities upgrade existing facilities, stating that every community has access deficiencies that could be

improved. Second, board members were interested in encouraging and supporting applicants to incorporate accessibility into their design processes.

Some board members expressed support for a new grant program, while another was more interested in an accessibility pilot within an existing RCO program.

Following the June meeting, staff continued to explore the options that were presented with the board's input in mind. Of the options considered, four of them likely would be less effective at significantly addressing the gap in accessible recreation opportunities. However, the fifth option of a new grant program would provide direct funding to projects that support community needs. Given the need and input from stakeholders, RCO is considering the development of a new grant program and a capital funding request for the 2027-2029 biennium. Such a program would fund upgrades at existing facilities to bring them up to or beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. This memo discusses challenges with other options and describes RCO's vision for this new grant program.

Option Discussion

Below are several challenges with previously discussed options.

Match reduction for accessibility-focused projects – Many communities already qualify for some match reduction and a new policy for accessibility could be additive. However, this would add complexity to RCO's match reduction policy, which is already quite detailed. Reducing the required match would also lower the maximum overall project total for those that used such a policy. Those applicants may then need to have a more conservative project scope to accommodate for the difference.

Increasing grant limits for accessibility-focused projects – Many smaller communities do not request the full grant limit, so it is unclear how many applicants would find this option useful. Additionally, a higher grant request would require applicants to provide more matching funds. This could advantage communities that have larger projects and more resources to provide that higher match.

Evaluation criterion to reward projects that focus on accessibility – Many top scoring projects already go far beyond accessibility minimums. Adding an evaluation criterion that further rewards projects that provide significant opportunities for people of all abilities may reward those projects already at the top.

Multi-site accessibility projects – Allowing applicants to bundle projects could create efficiencies from the application through implementation, though such projects still may not perform well against other types of development.

The above options would encourage applicants to consider accessibility, but projects of a smaller scale would likely still struggle within existing frameworks. Examples of such projects might be upgrading a single element or adding ADA access to restrooms. In developing a new grant program, RCO can better respond to these needs of communities and stakeholders.

New Grant Program

As stated above, large scale projects focusing on accessibility tend to do well in RCO's current grant programs. To meet another need identified through stakeholder outreach and input from the board, RCO is considering a new capital grant program to fund accessibility upgrades and renovations at existing facilities. These projects will help communities better meet the requirements of the ADA and improve opportunities for people of all abilities to enjoy the outdoors.

A new grant program would allow RCO the flexibility to consider a variety of ideas heard during stakeholder outreach and from the board. For example, during the outreach process in the spring, many constituents expressed gratitude for recent simplified application processes that RCO developed for limited run programs. The same could be done for a new accessibility grant. Additionally, policy options discussed in June could be incorporated, such as multi-site projects or differences in match requirements.

To address the variety of needs expressed by stakeholders and to maximize timeline flexibility, staff is proposing that development of a new grant program occur under the authority of the RCO director. There are many similarities between the issues arising under disability access upgrades and those of other agency grant programs, such as the Planning for Recreation Access and Local Parks Maintenance grant programs. Staff hope that these types of office programs will inform a new grant program focused on accessibility. Additionally, a goal would be to develop a new program and solicit projects before the 2027-2029 funding request deadline, requiring a nimble timeline. Given the experience and expertise of Board members', staff would propose presenting regular updates and asking for input at meetings over the coming year. Additionally, board meetings can provide a regular forum for comments, should it be of interest to members of the public.

Staff looks forward to hearing board input on the concept of a new accessibility grant program.

Item 9: Nonhighway and Off-road Activities Policy Changes

Action Requested: Briefing

Summary

This memo summarizes policy change concepts staff are considering for the fall 2026 grant round of Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities grants. Changes include increasing grant limits beyond what the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) approved in 2024, allowing applicants to submit projects that span multiple project categories, and issuing longer-term project grants that span more than a biennium. Staff is also considering changes to the grant evaluation criteria.

Background

The Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) grant program is popular with land managers needing additional resources to maintain and develop back-country recreation facilities.[1] NOVA projects must be Off-road vehicle riding areas or facilities accessed by a nonhighway road, which generally means a roadway open to the public for recreation travel but not supported by state gas tax revenues. Examples of nonhighway roads include United States Forest Service (USFS) roads and campground access roads. The program is administrated at the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) in consultation with the board's NOVA Advisory Committee which also evaluates and ranks project proposals[2]. The program has four funding categories:

1. Education and Enforcement: Funds ranger operations, visitor management, and resource protection education.
2. Nonhighway Road: Funds day-use facilities and campgrounds.
3. Motorized: Funds trails and related facilities for motorized recreation.
4. Non-motorized: Funds non-motorized trails and related facilities.

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

[2] RCW 46.09.340

Previous biennia funding amounts by category are discussed in Item 8D of the June 2025 board meeting materials.

NOVA is funded by a 0.6 percent (approximate) refund of motor vehicle fuel taxes collected annually. In 2024, $11 million dollars was approved for NOVA grants. RCO's NOVA Trails and Education and Enforcement webpages contain program details and lists of funded and alternate projects for the previous three biennia. For a brief program overview, see Attachment A: Program at-a-Glance.

RCO manages about 100 NOVA grant applications and 70 awards each biennium. Application and funding processes require substantial administrative effort for staff, the Advisory Committee members, and applicants.

In 2024 the board approved grant limit increase for NOVA grants to reduce the volume of applications received and create bigger project impact (see below). This memo summarizes the effects of those changes and policy concepts to further the goals of increasing fund impact and reducing administrative effort for grantees and the agency.

Summary of 2024 Grant Limit Increases

Purpose

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

Table 1. Grant Limit Increases

Grant Category	Previous Grant Limits	Approved 2024 Grant Limits
Education and Enforcement	$200,000	$250,000
Off-Road Vehicle	$200,000 (Maintenance*) none (Capital*)	$250,000 (M) none (C)
Nonhighway Road	$150,000 (M) $200,000 (C)	$200,000 (All)

Nonmotorized	$150,000 (M) $200,000 (C)	$200,000 (All)

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

The board approved increasing grant limits for the following reasons:

1. Aligns grant amounts to reflect inflation since 2016, the last time grant limits were raised.

2. Allow applicants to bundle multiple grant requests into a single application for administrative efficiency ("consolidation"). Bundling also achieves economies of scale in staffing, purchasing, and productivity in the field ("impact").

3. Allow larger scale projects that were previously out of reach due to low grant limits.

The modest increases were meant to keep the program as widely distributed as possible, keep the program focus on maintenance activities, and allow applicants to bundle projects into a single proposal.

Outcome of Increased Grant Limits

Grant limit increases were received favorably by applicants, with around half taking advantage of the higher limits. The 2024 increases reduced applications only slightly (96 in 2022 vs 91 in 2024), and staff observed no bundling of projects into single grants.

Based on staff, applicant, and Advisory Committee feedback, staff are considering additional policy changes to create greater project impact and further reduce administrative effort.

Potential Policy Changes for 2026

Allocation and Grant Limits

The following are concepts RCO staff and the NOVA Advisory Committee would like to explore as potential improvements to NOVA. The concepts look at larger or longer-term grant-making to improve project impact and reduce administrative effort. Detailed

proposals based on these concepts would follow stakeholder outreach (see 'Next Steps' below).

Table 2. Allocation Concepts to Explore for 2026 Grant Round

Option	Concept	Pros	Cons
1. No Change	Keep grant limits and project scoping as is.	Balances funding needs while supporting a high number of awards.	Applicants, staff, and Committee members continue to manage multiple grants in each grant funding category for same service area.
2. Raise Grant Limits	Raise grant limits at the scale of rate increase in 2024.	Larger Projects. Applicants may bundle needs into a single grant proposal reducing overall applications received.	Fewer awards. May concentrate the program in certain parts of the state and further reduce grants to smaller recreation areas or those in rural areas.
3. Longer-Term Grant Awards	Create a criterion or allocation that supports multi-biennial awards for projects that demonstrate a high and continuing need.	Reduces number of applications submitted over time. Creates longer-term strategic funding solutions for applicants.	I use areas and lands near population centers.
4. Create "Combination" grant proposals.	Allow applicants to bundle diverse scopes of work into a single grant proposal with a higher grant limit rather than	Larger Projects. Fewer applications.	May further concentrate awards at agencies in high use areas and lands near population centers.

Option	Concept	Pros	Cons
	applying individually in the four grant categories.		

Evaluation Criteria

At the Advisory Committee's grant evaluation debrief meeting in 2024, the committee discussed a need to improve parts of the evaluation criteria to address a variety of concerns.

Table 3. Advisory Committee Evaluation Criteria Feedback

Evaluation Criterion	Prioritizes	Committee Concern	To Do
1. Need 2. Need Fulfillment	Need for funding based on conditions and user demand.	Favors applicants with "larger landscapes" over small recreation areas and those with lower usage.	Examine the criteria to balance need, usage, and support for remote or smaller recreation areas.
8. Predominantly Natural	Landscapes with no or little development, and views of predominantly natural scenery.	Prioritizes forested areas over open landscapes near working lands and urbanized areas.	Strike the criterion or include evaluative elements that prioritize diverse recreational contexts.
9. Project Support	Projects with demonstrated user support often in the form of letters of support.	Benefits areas with high use near urban areas.	Modify criterion in line with new project support criterion in other RCO programs that focus on agency outreach to diverse groups and how input is reflected in the project proposal.

Evaluation Criterion	Prioritizes	Committee Concern	To Do
11. Matching Shares	Prioritizes projects that provide match.	Benefits projects close to urban areas where volunteerism and donations are high.	Strike the criterion or introduce variables that "even the playing field" for outlying recreation areas or lesser used areas.
12. County Population Density 13. Proximity to People (these are statutorily required)	Prioritizes projects near population centers.	Disadvantages projects in less populated areas of the state.	Reduce the weight of the criteria from 2 points to 1.

Strategic Plan Link

Consideration of these improvements supports the board's goal to help partners protect, restore, and develop recreation opportunities that benefit people. RCO delivers successful projects by inviting competition and using broad public participation and feedback, monitoring, assessment, and adaptive management.

Next Steps

Contingent on feedback by the board, staff will survey program stakeholders on the need to consider these concepts and gather additional improvement concepts. Staff will review survey feedback with the Advisory Committee and develop detailed proposals for the board to consider at its January meeting with the goal of implementing changes into the fall 2026 NOVA grant cycle.

Attachment

A. Attachment A. NOVA Program at-a Glance

Attachment A. NOVA Program At-A-Glance

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

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

Eligibility

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

Allocation

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

- Education and Enforcement
- Nonhighway Road recreation

[3] RCW 46.09.500-520

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

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

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

- Nonmotorized recreation[7]
- Off-road Vehicle recreation (this category receives additional funding from ORV permit fees)

Grant Limits

Nonhighway Road, Nonmotorized, Off-road Vehicle, and Education and Enforcement project categories have maximum grant limits of $250,000, with development projects limited to $200,000 (no limit in ORV).

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

Washington Wildlife & Recreation COALITION

Unifying voices for Washington's great outdoors

WildlifeRecreation.org

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Yvonne Kraus

Dear RCO Policy and Planning Team,

On behalf of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition, I am writing to express our support for the proposed policy change to permanently waive the 10% non-state, non-federal match requirement within the Farm and Forest Account of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP).

As you know, this requirement - mandating that applicants contribute at least 10% of total project costs from a local source - was waived for the 2022 and 2024 funding rounds. Maintaining this waiver on a permanent basis will ensure that more communities, particularly those with limited access to local funding, can successfully apply for and benefit from WWRP resources. Importantly, this change would not eliminate the overall 1:1 match requirement, which continues to demonstrate strong local commitment and leverage additional investment.

Permanently removing the 10% local-source directive will help expand access, increase equity across communities, and allow more high-quality conservation and working lands projects to move forward. We urge RCO to adopt this policy change.

Thank you for considering our comments and for your continued leadership in supporting Washington's lands and communities.

With deep appreciation,

Nathaniel Rees
Policy and Communications Manager
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition