



# Proposed Agenda

April 28, 2026

Regular Meeting

**Meeting Day In-person:** Room 172, First Floor, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street, S.E., 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\\_Nooj9JgpRw-3\\_zfwQbS66A](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Nooj9JgpRw-3_zfwQbS66A)

**Telephone Option:** 669-900-6833 **Webinar ID:** 860 0694 5466

**Order of Presentation:** In general, each agenda item will include a short staff presentation, followed by board discussion. The board only makes decisions after the public comment portion of the agenda decision item.

**Public Comment:** General public comments are encouraged to be submitted in writing before the meeting. Public comment on agenda items also is permitted. If you wish to comment, you may email your request or written comments to [Julia.McNamara@rco.wa.gov](mailto:Julia.McNamara@rco.wa.gov), board liaison.

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

**Special Accommodations:** A person with disability needing an accommodation to participate in this public meeting should email Megan Montgomery at [megan.montgomery@rco.wa.gov](mailto:megan.montgomery@rco.wa.gov) or call her at (360) 902-3079.

# TUESDAY April 28, 2026

## 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

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

- A. Board Meeting Minutes for January 27, 2026
- B. Time Extensions
  - City of Mountlake Terrace, Ballinger Park Viewing Platform and Nature Trails, 20-1672
  - City of Mountlake Terrace, Evergreen Tennis Courts Restoration, 20-1773
  - Department of Natural Resources, Mclane Creek Board Walk Replacement Phase 2, 20-1504
- C. Cost Increase Request
  - Port of Grays Harbor, Friends Landing Boat Launch Area Renovation, 22-2196

### **Resolution 2026-04**

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**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 (written) Kyle Guzlas
- E. Performance Report (written) Bart Lynch
- F. Fiscal Report (written) Mark Jarasitis

## Briefing

**9:40 a.m. General Public Comment (limit 3 minutes please) for issues not identified on the agenda.**

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**9:45 a.m. 3. Planning for Recreation Access Update** Leah Dobey

**10:15 Break**

## Decision

**10:30 a.m. 4. Cost Increase and Time Extension Request:** Jesse Sims  
**State Parks, Stuart Island Reid Harbor Moorage Replacement, 20-2189**

**Resolution 2026-05**

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

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**10:50 a.m. 5. Boating Facilities Program Policy Changes** Nick Norton

**Resolution 2026-06**

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

## Briefing

**11:35 a.m. 6. Featured Projects**

- State Parks, Klickitat Trail, 14-1634 Russell Malburg
- City of Bellingham, Sunset Pond Trail, 22-1417 Rachelle Lim
- Leavenworth Winter Sports Club, Ski Hill Restrooms and Lighting, 22-1735 Aaron Johnson

**12:05 p.m. Lunch**

## Request for Direction

1:05 p.m.    **7. Acquisition Policy Changes**    Nick Norton

## Decision

1:35 p.m.    **8. Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Policy Changes**    Ben Donatelle

### Resolution 2026-07

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

## Briefing

3:05 p.m.    **9. State Agency Partner Reports**

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|--|----------------------|
| A. Department of Natural Resources       | Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn |
| B. State Parks and Recreation Commission | Heather Saunders     |
| C. Department of Fish and Wildlife       | Amy Windrope         |
| D. Governor's Office                     | Joe Impehoven        |

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3:35 p.m.    **Adjourn**

**Next Meeting:** Regular meeting on July 28-29, 2026, Room 172, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street S.E., Olympia, Washington, 98501

# Summary Meeting Minutes

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

**Date:** January 27, 2026

**Place:** Room 172, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street S.E., Olympia WA  
and online via Zoom

### Board Members:

- Michael Shiosaki, Chair, Seattle
- Bob Bugert, Leavenworth
- Shiloh Burgess, Wenatchee
- Kitty Craig, Seattle
- Trang Lam, Camas
- Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn, Designee, Department of Natural Resources
- Heather Saunders, Designee, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
- Amy Windrope, Designee, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

This summary is to be used with the materials provided in advance of the meeting. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) keeps a recording as the formal record of the meeting. Timestamps have been provided that correspond with a video of this recorded session, available at [www.youtube.com/@WashingtonRCO](http://www.youtube.com/@WashingtonRCO). Each hyperlink will open a new video tab. Timestamps can also be found in the video description.

### Call to Order

**(0:21)**

**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, called roll and determined quorum. Member Amy Windrope was absent.

**Motion:** Move to Approve **Agenda**  
**Moved By:** Member **Trang Lam**  
**Seconded by:** Member **Bob Bugert**  
**Decision:** Approved

## Item 1: Consent Agenda

### DECISION (2:28)

**Chair Shiosaki** noted the consent agenda includes the October 28, 2025, meeting minutes, three time extensions, two grant reinstatements, one cost-increase request, and forty-six advisor recognitions.

**Motion:** Move to Approve **Resolution 2026-01**

**Moved By:** Member **Bob Bugert**

**Seconded by:** Member **Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn**

**Decision:** Approved

## Item 2: Directors Report

### BRIEFING (4:32)

#### Director's Report

**Director Megan Duffy** highlighted that the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund received \$65 million in the President's budget, which funds RCO's salmon recovery work. The notice of funding opportunities for the year is in process at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Governor's Budget includes \$11.1 million in the budget for salmon.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund – Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program was confirmed, and the notice of funding opportunity is being reviewed.

At the state level, the Governor's budget includes a 2 percent reduction across all agencies for Washington Management Service employees and exempt staff. RCO has a vacant position that will meet the reduction need and remain vacant for now.

RCO is recruiting two salmon outdoor grants managers and recently hired Jan Fore as the new Washington Invasive Species Council Coordinator.

#### Legislative Update

##### (8:49)

**Brock Milliern**, Policy and Legislative director, provided a legislative session update on the budget timeline and bill review. The first cutoff date is February 4. RCO submitted one budget request for salmon recovery. The revenue projection is expected around February 20, followed by the budget proposals from the house and senate a week later.

RCO staff have met with legislators to provide an overview of the work RCO does across the state and in all legislative districts.

Bills with potential impacts to RCO and the board include [House Bill 2484](#) to create the youth development fund account; [House Bill 6075](#), which would require fairness in mitigation requirements; and [House Bill 6104](#) related to protecting agriculture.

## **Grant Management Section**

**(16:43)**

**Marguerite Austin**, Recreation and Conservation Grants section manager, highlighted the upcoming spring grant cycle application webinars on February 11 for parks, habitat, and working lands programs. Several hundred people have already registered for these webinars. On August 4, staff will host application webinars for backcountry trails, motorized boating, and shooting ranges ahead of the fall grant cycle.

Ms. Austin noted the panel from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service was evaluating tier two projects in the Boating Infrastructure Grant program and will tour four previously funded sites. The National Park Service will likely announce a Land and Water Conservation Fund – Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership competition this year. There were four projects submitted to the program last year, but a competition was not offered. In April, the National Park Service will be in Olympia for a program review. The Federal Highway Administration has approved \$1.8 million for Washington’s Recreational Trails Program for project applications submitted in 2024. Staff will provide the board with a full list of funded projects in April.

## **Grant Services Section**

**(23:04)**

**Kyle Guzlas**, Grant Services section manager, updated the board on the recruitment process for RCO’s eighteen advisory committees. The process occurs in the fall and winter of odd numbered years. This year, RCO received seventy-four applications to fill fifty-five vacant seats. In December, Director Duffy appointed fifty-nine new advisors, whose four-year terms began January 1. New members will receive orientation training ahead of the technical review meetings in May.

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## **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT (27:55)**

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None.

### Item 3: Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Update

#### BRIEFING (28:24)

**Ben Donatelle**, policy specialist, provided a brief overview of the [Statewide Recreation and Conservation Plan](#) (also referred to as the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan or SCORP) and explained the proposed update path forward based on National Park Service's new guidance. Mr. Donatelle explained the purpose and content of the SCORP and what is included in Washington's plan. The National Park Service requires states that seek funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to develop and maintain a SCORP. The update process is outlined in the [meeting materials](#) and includes transitioning from a five-year to a ten-year plan based on the updated National Park Service planning regulations. If RCO receives planning assistance from the National Park Service, staff will work with Eastern Washington University to begin analyses to support extending the Washington State SCORP another five years to transition to a ten-year schedule and Mr. Donatelle will provide briefings to the board throughout the process.

Members asked clarifying questions and confirmed that Eastern Washington University's participation is limited to a demand assessment. The National Park Service expects the state to provide supporting analyses throughout the transition from the five- to ten-year plan cycle. Mr. Donatelle noted the update will likely be less formal but will include opportunities for the board and public to be included. Staff will look at projects that have been funded since 2023 to determine whether service needs identified in the 2023 plan are being met.

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#### BREAK 9:55 – 10:10 A.M. (55:15)

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### Item 4: Economic Impacts of Recreation

#### BRIEFING (55:35)

**Leah Dobey**, policy specialist, presented the key takeaways from the Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington report, including the most popular outdoor activities, visitation estimates, how outdoor recreation boosts Washington's economy, and the community benefits and impacts of outdoor recreation. For a brief overview of the report, see the [meeting materials](#) or read the full report on [RCO's website](#).

Ms. Dobey highlighted the updated methods used for this report compared to previous reports, which included differences in SCORP surveys, use of anonymized mobile device

data, and minimizing overlap for more accurate visitation estimates. Additionally, while outdoor recreation has a positive impact on Washington's economy, there are costs to governments, residents, and environments. The 2025 report includes a new section that looks at barriers and opportunities in underserved communities.

**Member Ohlson-Kiehn** commented on the difficulty state agencies have with tracking visitation, noting that some land managing agencies have infinite points of entry to their lands.

**Member Bugert** emphasized the importance of tracking and reporting on ecosystem services, noting it is critical for messaging to the Legislature and others.

## Item 5: Annual Compliance Report

### BRIEFING ([1:25:22](#))

**Kyle Guzlas** provided an overview of the compliance portfolio and the breakdown of worksites across sponsor and funding types. Mr. Guzlas highlighted the common types of compliance issues that staff are seeing, many of which are attributed to development pressure. Staff use several policy tools to address compliance issues, including conversion, exceptions to conversion, allowable use, and corrective action policies. The annual compliance report is included in the [meeting materials](#).

**Chris Poppek**, compliance grants manager, outlined the compliance inspection process, which consists of a thorough review of the project file and documentation, an inspection, and a report. Staff then work with sponsors to find a solution to compliance issues.

**Member Ohlson-Kiehn** asked if there was a compliance layer in the PRISM database.

**Mr. Poppek** is part of a team within RCO that is working with the Timmons Group to develop a more robust mapping system, specifically for development and some restoration projects. **Mr. Guzlas** added that acquisition projects are required to be mapped in PRISM since 2015; however, historical sites do not currently have existing maps in the database, but staff are working to include them.

**Mr. Poppek** provided an example compliance issue at Seacrest Park ([RCO #68-085A](#) and [RCO #88-029D](#)), sponsored by the City of Seattle, that resulted in an allowable use request for a counter-top food service area.

**Ashly Arambul**, Land and Water Conservation Fund compliance grants manager, explained how staff can use different pathways to resolve compliance issues when state and federal compliance requirements overlap at a site. Ms. Arambul highlighted South Lake Union Park Development ([RCO #06-1620](#)), Bridle Trails State Park ([RCO #05-1135](#)), and Wilson Playfields ([RCO #99-1482A](#)) as examples.

Members asked when the compliance funding from the National Park Service began and will end; if there was a trend of compliance issues across sponsor types; and how communities handle compliance issues like closed parks due to lack of maintenance and operations funding. **Mr. Guzlas** answered that the funding started on October 1, 2025, and is available for a five-year term. Staff committed to inspecting approximately 750 Land and Water Conservation Fund sites within the five years, including 125 sites in 2026. **Mr. Guzlas** will find and provide members with information about compliance issues by sponsor types. Regarding closed parks, the compliance issue must be documented and options to reopen vary by community. **Member Bugert** noted the credibility of the board is highly dependent on this type of work and thanked the compliance staff for their efforts.

**Mr. Guzlas** finished by sharing that compliance staff recently implemented sponsor notifications that sends an email to a sponsor with a complete list of projects, so the sponsor is aware of their obligations.

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**LUNCH 11:46 A.M. – 12:46 P.M. ([2:31:53](#))**

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## **Item 6: Critical Habitat and Natural Areas Policy Changes**

### **DECISION ([2:32:19](#))**

**Nick Norton**, planning and policy specialist, provided a brief review of the proposed changes to intent language and evaluation criteria in the Critical Habitat and Natural Areas categories of the [Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program](#) as included in the [meeting materials](#). The changes primarily focus on clarifying eligible elements and uses, and giving project examples under funding intent and reducing, aligning, and differentiating evaluation criteria.

Mr. Norton explained the feedback process that included listening sessions to define the scope of changes, two drafts to condense and refine language to differentiate the categories in the evaluation process, and a public comment period.

**Member Bugert** asked the logic behind allowing consumptive use in the Critical Habitat category but not in Natural Areas. **Mr. Norton** answered that consumptive use does not align with the intent of the Natural Areas category, so it is limited to only Critical Habitat. An example of allowed consumptive use is livestock grazing.

Staff recommend approving the policy changes as proposed in Resolution 2026-02.

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#### **PUBLIC COMMENT (2:44:31)**

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None.

**Motion:** Move to Approve **Resolution 2026-02 (2:44:48)**  
**Moved By:** Member **Shiloh Burgess**  
**Seconded by:** Member **Trang Lam**  
**Decision:** Approved

#### **Item 7: Evergreen Community Preference Integration**

##### **DECISION (2:45:30)**

**Julia McNamara**, board liaison, provided an overview of integrating the Evergreen Community Recognition, a Department of Natural Resources program, which impacts the [Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Habitat Conservation](#) programs and the [Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account](#) program.

Staff recommend approving the approach detailed in the [meeting materials](#), which gives preference to the applicant enrolled in or holding the highest Evergreen Community tier if two or more projects are ranked equally through the evaluation process and each are eligible to be an Evergreen Community found in Resolution 2026-03.

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#### **PUBLIC COMMENT (2:52:50)**

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None.

**Motion:** Move to Approve **Resolution 2026-03 (2:53:04)**  
**Moved By:** Member **Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn**  
**Seconded by:** Member **Bob Bugert**  
**Decision:** Approved

#### **Item 8: Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Policy Changes**

##### **REQUEST FOR DIRECTION (2:53:48)**

**Adam Cole**, policy specialist, provided a brief reminder of the [Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities](#) program and shared the draft policies staff are considering to improve funding efficiency and impact. After initial outreach to applicants, staff have identified the following as possible revisions to the program: raising grant limits, longer-term agreements, and criteria changes in the Nonmotorized, Nonhighway Road, and Off-road Vehicle categories. Detailed information on the proposed funding changes, criteria changes, longer-term grants, and nexus to SCORP are outlined in the [meeting materials](#). Long-term grants would fund the top three ranked projects in each program category for two biennia without the need for applicants to reapply for funding.

**Member Ohlson-Kiehn** asked if staff planned to continue pursuing combination grants. **Mr. Cole** explained that the use of combination grants would be an administrative change, not a policy change, and that staff favor long-term grants.

Staff plan to hold a public comment period to gather feedback on the proposed options. Originally, Mr. Cole planned to propose either raising the grant limits or longer-term grants, but after board discussion, will request feedback on longer-term grants and raising the grant limits in only the Off-road Vehicle category.

Members were supportive of the intent of adding a “counties in need” type-criterion to improve equity but suggested using a different tool to determine need, like free and reduced lunches in school districts. Additionally, there was interest in knowing where the most use occurs to avoid an overcorrection of where funds go geographically and suggested staff look at previous grant rounds to see how these changes would impact rankings.

## **Item 9: Boating Facilities Program Policy Changes**

### **REQUEST FOR DIRECTION (3:58:29)**

**Nick Norton** provided an overview of potential changes to [Boating Facilities Program](#), which has not been reviewed or changed in over twenty years. Following a program review, outreach to stakeholders, and board engagement, staff identified potential administrative and policy changes to be made ahead of the 2026 grant round. The proposed changes are outlined in the [meeting materials](#).

Additionally, staff sought board direction on a proposal to add feasibility studies and permit ready design as eligible planning project types. This could impact the approach

to evaluation and criteria. As such, Mr. Norton suggested phasing this change ahead of the 2028 grant round.

Members supported putting the policy and administrative changes out for public comment. Regarding feasibility studies, **Member Lam** would like them to cover both replacement and new facilities and expressed concern over how much funding is available for planning and construction. **Member Bugert** wanted to ensure that the potential changes safeguarded funds for construction projects. **Member Saunders** suggested using a percentage cap for feasibility studies noting the cost is constantly increasing.

**Member Burgess** emphasized the importance of entities having investment and favored a maximum cap or match amount. The current match requirement is 25 percent for local agencies and none for state agencies Members can expect to discuss mitigation as a separate agenda item at a future meeting.

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**BREAK 2:48 P.M. – 3:05 P.M. ([4:34:32](#))**

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## **Item 10: Featured Projects**

### **BRIEFING ([4:35:10](#))**

**Dan Haws**, outdoor grants manager, highlighted the Sekiu Boating Access ([RCO #18-2259](#)) sponsored by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, which was awarded funds from the [Boating Facilities Program](#). **Travis Weller**, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife outdoor grants manager, emphasized the time and process required to make this acquisition a success.

**Andrea Hood**, outdoor grants manager, provided a brief overview of the [Community Forests Program](#) and highlighted the North Kitsap Divide Block Community Forest project ([RCO #20-2035](#)) sponsored by the Great Peninsula Conservancy to acquire 467 acres of forestland.

## Item 11: State Agency Partner Reports

### BRIEFING ([4:54:00](#))

#### Department of Natural Resources

([4:54:05](#))

**Member Kristen Ohlson-Kiehn** highlighted requests submitted to the Legislature that include \$4.2 million to restore the Conservation Corps funding and \$1.16 million to restore law enforcement funding. These requests were not included in the Governor's Budget. Additionally, there is a lack of funding for the work the Department of Natural Resources does with Tribes to address recreational impacts and an ongoing reduction from recreational lands maintenance. To maintain staff, the department is reducing management of recreation sites and services and may close locations where possible.

Member Ohlson-Kiehn highlighted the efforts underway in the department's Youth Education and Outdoor Program, which developed a pathway for high school students to receive academic credit for receiving a Global Information Systems certification and initiated a community of practice to provide teachers with the skills to help students.

#### State Parks and Recreation Commission

([5:02:28](#))

**Member Heather Saunders** noted that while the State Parks and Recreation Commission is 71 percent self-funded and with the downward trend of revenue forecasts, there is more pressure on their earned revenue account. Notably, the Governor's Budget provided funding for facilitating the State Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative and ongoing support for campus operations at Fort Worden. In the capital budget, State Parks received supplemental funding for Americans with Disabilities Act improvements following a federal settlement agreement but did not receive money for the campground at the new Nisqually State Park.

The agency is sponsoring two pieces of request legislation: one regarding snow mobile registration fees and another updating technical language related to ski lift inspections across the state.

The 2027-2029 biennium and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program grant lists will be presented to the Commission for approval on January 28. Work is underway in cooperation with Tribes at Cama Beach State Park. Work continues on the development

of the newest state park, Nisqually State Park, in partnership with the Nisqually Tribe. This will be the first state park that is fully developed and co-managed with a Tribe.

## **Governor's Office**

**(5:08:55)**

**Joe Impehoven** highlighted the challenges all state agencies are dealing with, noting the recent historic flooding and difficult legislative session. Governor Ferguson is interested in creative solutions to balance the budget.

The United States Forest Service recently held an event in Portland, Oregon with state agencies from California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho present to hear about the Forest Service's stewardship plan and request feedback on implementation.

Mr. Impehoven is facilitating a workgroup to address the distribution amounts from the Discover Pass and identify common funding challenges. RCO's involvement has been instrumental to the process as there are new legislative directors at all three land management agencies.

**Member Bob Bugert** asked what type of legislative support there is for No Child Left Inside and Outdoor Learning Grants. **Mr. Impehoven** answered there are currently not enough legislators doing this work but was hopeful that more convening around the topic will help inform a unified approach for the success of the programs.

Lastly, Mr. Impehoven highlighted the [Big Tent Outdoor Recreation Coalition](#), which could be critical to addressing outdoor recreation topics and issues.

## **Department of Fish and Wildlife**

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

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**ADJOURN 3:51 P.M. (5:21:01)**

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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
- 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

### City of Mountlake Terrace

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

- Grant Program: Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
- Grant Remaining: \$50,000 (10 percent)
- Current End Date: 06/30/2026
- Proposed End Date: 12/31/2026

#### Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

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

Construction was initially delayed by the slow issuance of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit. Despite this delay, significant progress has been made since the notice to proceed was issued in April 2025. The piles for the viewing platform were installed during the fish window from July to August 2025, and construction of the paved and soft-surface nature trails has reached substantial completion. However, mild, drier weather conditions are needed to construct the boardwalk and install the viewing platform.

The requested six-month time extension will give Mountlake Terrace the time needed to accommodate unforeseen weather challenges, install the boardwalk and viewing platform, complete any punch list items, conduct a final inspection, and administratively close out the project.

## **City of Mountlake Terrace** **Evergreen Tennis Courts Restoration ([20-1773](#) Development)**

- Grant Program: Youth Athletic Facilities: Large
- Grant Remaining: \$346,891 (99 percent)
- Current End Date: 06/30/2026
- Proposed End Date: 12/31/2026

### Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

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

The project was initially delayed because Mountlake Terrace intended to bid and construct concurrently with another project at Evergreen Playfield Complex, the Evergreen Playfield Infield Turf and Lights Phase 2 (20-1643), which is receiving funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Youth Athletic Facilities: Large Grant Category. However, bids for the combined project were higher than expected, requiring the two projects to be separated and additional value engineering to be conducted on each.

Despite delays, the contract for lighting installation was scheduled for city council approval in March 2026, and the lighting renovation work will begin shortly thereafter. However, the court resurfacing and relining requires dry summer weather for completion. Due to the additional value engineering work last year, Mountlake Terrace missed the 2025 summer season for the court's renovations.

The requested six-month time extension will give Mountlake Terrace the summer construction window needed to renovate the courts, as well as additional time to accommodate unforeseen weather challenges, complete any punch list items, conduct a final inspection, and administratively close out the project.

## Department of Natural Resources

### McLane Creek Boardwalk Replacement Phase 2 ([20-1504 Development](#))

- Grant Program: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – State Lands Development
- Grant Remaining: \$140,960 (58.9 percent)
- Current End Date: 06/30/2026
- Proposed End Date: 06/30/2027

### Reasons for Delay and Justification Request

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received this grant to replace the boardwalk along the McLane Creek Nature Trail located in Capitol State Forest in Thurston County. The goal is to improve the safety of the trails and enhance the community trail experience near and over the perennial ponds and streams.

Construction was initially delayed due to staff turnover and urgent maintenance priorities post-pandemic. Project design and permitting resumed in 2023, but the county permitting process was slower than expected due to county staff turnover. Additionally, the environmentally sensitive location of the boardwalk resulted in extensive changes required to the initial design for the project to be permitted, with changes from a wood-based scaffolding to a steel pin pile construction.

To date, design is complete and permits have been obtained. The bridge structure and associated decking and railing have been purchased and are in storage awaiting construction. DNR has gone to bid for construction with project completion anticipated during the summer of 2026. Due to the complexity of this project and environmental sensitivities at the project's location, DNR is requesting a one-year time extension to account for any additional unforeseen weather or site condition challenges.

# Item 1C: Cost Increase Request for Friends Landing

**Action Requested: Decision**

## Summary

The Port of Grays Harbor is asking the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to approve a cost increase for their Friends Landing Boat Launch Area Renovation ([22-2196](#)) planning project. This increase will help offset the unanticipated rise in costs for preconstruction activities.

This cost increase request exceeds 10 percent of the total project cost; therefore, policy requires board consideration. Funds are available for the \$47,000 cost increase, if approved.

## Background

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board awarded the Port of Grays Harbor a \$117,500 Boating Facilities Program grant to complete the design, engineering, cultural resources assessment, and to secure permits for accessibility improvements at the Friends Landing boat launch. The planned upgrades will include paving and striping the parking lot and crosswalk; installing pathways, lighting, utility hookups, and an accessible boarding ramp; and adding a paved area for an accessible porta potty.

Friends Landing, as shown in Attachment A, is a 152-acre multi-use park on the Chehalis River and Lake Quigg that offers boating, fishing, camping, hiking, and picnicking opportunities. The motorized boating access is on the Chehalis River side of the park and includes a single-lane boat launch and parking lot. The port has always emphasized accessibility for this park, but barrier-free amenities at the boat launch are lacking.

## Project Status

The planning or preconstruction project is now complete. The port has secured all required permits, plans, specifications, and cultural resources clearance that includes a fully executed Inadvertent Discovery Plan. Unfortunately, the costs for the planning

phase exceeded the budgeted amount by \$72,000. After assessing the options, the port decided they would try to cover the cost overruns.

Last summer, the board awarded a \$650,000 Boating Facilities Program grant for the construction phase of the project (24-2648). Because the preconstruction work is complete, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff issued the RCO notice to proceed. The port solicited bids, selected a contractor in February, and is now poised to move forward with the construction phase after the Grays Harbor Public Utility District finishes relocating its utility infrastructure.

While working to hire a construction contractor, the port realized their plan to absorb the additional costs for the planning project was not realistic. They alerted RCO and learned they could ask the board for a cost increase. If the board approves the increase the port will expedite closing the planning project and allow construction to begin.

## Discussion and Analysis

### Project Budget and Funds Requested

As shown in the table below, the original grant combined with sponsor match provided a budget of \$180,000 for the Friends Landing planning project funded in 2023. The port is committed to completing the project as proposed. To help offset the cost overrun, the port is requesting an additional \$47,000 in grant funds. This combined amount with additional match will cover the actual cost of the planning project, which now totals \$252,000. Although the minimum match required is 25 percent, the port is committed to retaining the 65 percent grant to 35 percent match ratio.

**Table Title: Cost Increase Budget for Friends Landing**

Fund Source	Original Grant Agreement	Cost Increase Request	Proposed Grant Agreement
RCO Grant (65%)	\$117,500	\$47,000	\$164,500
Sponsor Match (35%)	\$62,500	\$25,000	\$87,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$180,000</b>	<b>\$72,000</b>	<b>\$252,000</b>

The \$117,500 grant combined with \$62,500 in sponsor match provided a budget of \$180,000 for the Friends Landing planning project, which was funded in 2023. The port is committed to completing the project as proposed. To help offset the cost overrun, the port is requesting an additional \$47,000 in grant funds. This amount combined with another \$25,000 in match will cover the actual costs of the planning project, which now

totals \$252,000. Although the minimum match required is 25 percent, the port is committed to retaining the 65 percent grant to 35 percent match ratio.

## Cost Increase Policy

The board's policy on cost increases is outlined in *Manual 4: Development Projects*. 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 sponsor submits a written request. The director may approve requests for increases up to 10 percent of the total project cost and the board may approve increases above 10 percent.*

*To request an increase the project sponsor must submit a written request to the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) addressing the following:*

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

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

Although cost increases are not allowed for some grant programs, *Manual 9: Boating Facilities Program* states that "If unused funds are available, RCO may consider a cost increase."

## Analysis

### Alternatives Considered

The Port of Grays Harbor evaluated several alternatives to address the cost overrun:

- **Scope reduction.** The scope could not be reduced. Board policy requires a sponsor to complete a construction-ready planning project. Any reduction in the scope of work would have resulted in a partially complete planning project and would have forced a scope change to the associated development grant.

- **Reduce costs.** Permit fees are fixed and nonnegotiable, making these costs unavoidable. Also, the port's selection of contractors for cultural resources, design, and engineering followed established procurement procedures per the terms of the grant agreement.
- **Phase the project.** Phasing the preconstruction activities was not considered a feasible or cost effective option because secured permits carry expiration dates.

With no practical alternatives, the Port elected to ask the board for a cost increase. Without this adjustment, the overrun will place an unanticipated strain on their budget and could adversely affect the associated development project.

### Conditions Causing the Overrun

The primary reason for the overrun is that the costs for permits exceeded the originally budgeted amount, primarily due to the unanticipated complexity of obtaining permits.

### Elements in the Agreement

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

### Funds Available

There are Boating Facilities Program: Local Agency Category funds available to support the amount requested. This request exceeds ten percent of the project's initial approved grant amount, and therefore the request is presented for the board's consideration.

### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend approval of this cost increase, as requested.

### 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.

## Next Steps

If approved, RCO staff will execute the cost change amendment to the grant agreement. The port will then submit the final report and final bill for reimbursement of costs associated with scope elements in the current grant agreement.

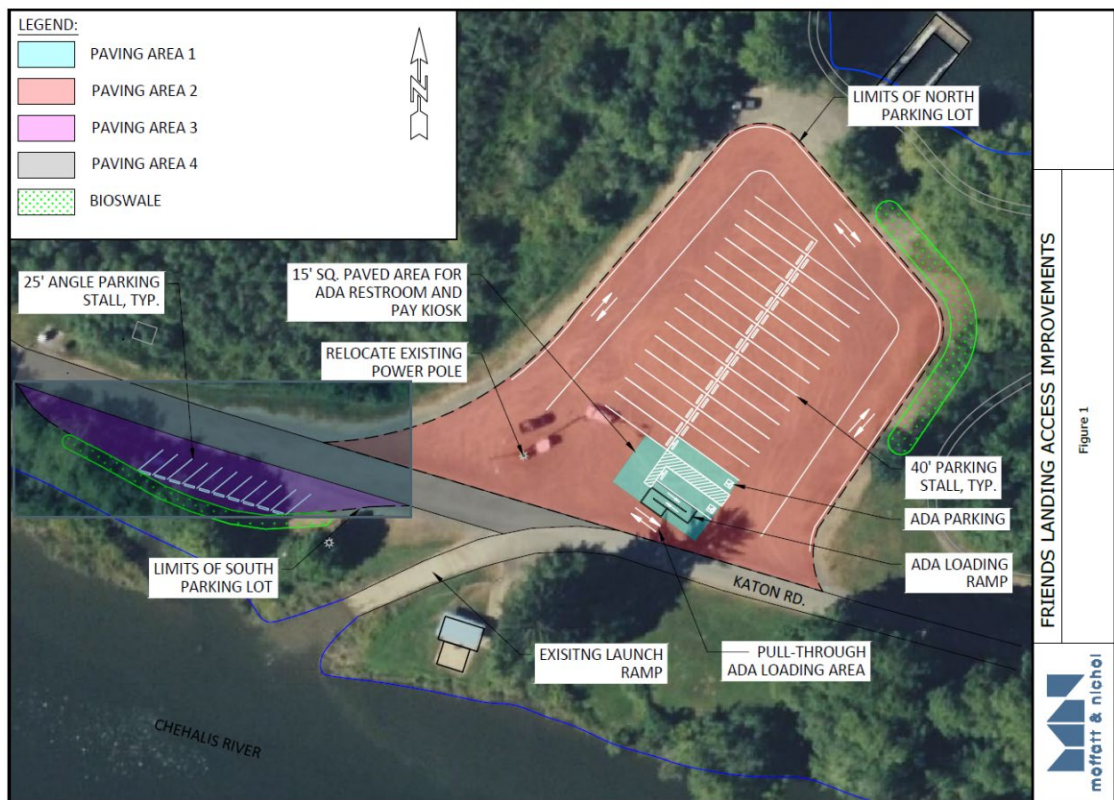
## Attachments

A. Friends Landing Boat Launch Area Images

**Attachment A: Friends Landing Boat Launch Area Images**



Aerial view of Friends Landing Park with the boat launch area in the foreground. The Chehalis River and motorized boating access is on the left. Lake Quigg is on the right.



Proposed development site plan for the Friends Landing boat launch. Plan shows the parking areas, boat launch, accessible loading area, site for porta potty and pay kiosk.

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board**

**Consent Agenda**

**Resolution 2026-04**

**April 28, 2026**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the following April 28, 2026, Consent Agenda items are approved:

A. Board Meeting Minutes for January 27, 2026

B. Time Extensions □ City of Mountlake Terrace, Ballinger Park Viewing Platform and Nature Trails, 20-1672

- City of Mountlake Terrace, Evergreen Tennis Courts Restoration, 20-1773
- Department of Natural Resources, Mclane Creek Board Walk Replacement Phase 2, 20-1504

C. Cost Increase Request

- Port of Grays Harbor, Friends Landing Boat Launch Area Renovation, 22-2196

Resolution moved by:

Resolution seconded by:

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date:

# Item 2: Director's Report

**Action Requested: Briefing**

## Summary

This memo provides an overview of key agency activities.

## Agency Updates

### Recreation and Conservation Office Staff Observe Federal Ranking of Boating Projects

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for its Boating Infrastructure Grant Tier Two ranking meeting in Lacey to learn how the federal government ranks large boating projects, with the hope of better advising state applicants in future grant rounds.



The Boating Infrastructure Grant is split into two tiers based on the grant amount requested. Applicants requesting up to \$288,046 are categorized as Tier 1 and evaluated and ranked by RCO's Boating Programs Advisory Committee. Applicants requesting more than \$300,000 are in Tier 2 and evaluated and ranked by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

For the final meeting day, staff visited projects funded with Boating Infrastructure Grants, including [Narrows Marina](#), [Des Moines Marina](#), [Luther Burbank Park](#), and [Harbour Village Marina](#). RCO is accepting applications for Boating Infrastructure Grant funds and other [outdoor recreation and conservation projects](#) until April 30.

## Outreach and Education Prove Key to Stopping Invasive Species

The Washington Invasive Species Council celebrated Invasive Species Awareness Week, February 23-27, by coordinating a full week of public events, including online webinars and hosting a table at the capitol building.

Invasive Species Awareness Week is an annual event meant to increase public and policy-maker knowledge about species of concern, the pathways for their introduction, and actions that anyone can take to observe, report, prevent, and remove invasives in the state.



The webinars included topics such as noxious weed knowledge, invasive pest identification, and protecting Washington's waters from aquatic species, and emphasized what actions individuals can take to prevent the spread of invasive species.

Another major topic of discussion was the "Buy It Where You Burn It" campaign, which educates people about hidden pests that may lurk undetected in firewood and pose a serious threat to Washington's forests, agriculture, and environment. The campaign coincides with [Washington State Department of Agriculture's recent decision](#) to implement a new rule that quarantines untreated firewood from coming into the state in an effort to keep invasive pests out.

## Employee News



Bonnie Irving joined RCO in March as an outdoor grants manager for the Salmon Recovery Grants Section. She has more than twenty years of expertise in wetland systems, regulatory compliance, and habitat restoration for federal, state, and local governments. Most recently, she led the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's everglades restoration program, which advanced habitat restoration within Florida's everglades

ecosystem.



Lisa Nelson joined RCO in March as an outdoor grants manager for the Salmon Recovery Grants Section. Her career path in outdoor conservation includes positions ranging from fish technician and horticulturalist to forestry technician, and most recently, floodplains planner and grants manager at the Washington State Department of Ecology.



Andrea Hood announced her retirement effective July 15. Andrea joined RCO in 2022 as an outdoor grants manager in the Recreation and Conservation Grants Section. Previously, she was an environmental planner with the Department of Fish and Wildlife where she managed contracts for the Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead team.

## News from the Boards

The **Invasive Species Council** met March 19 and discussed minimizing the transport of firewood and hitchhiking invasive species, spartina control, work with the commercial seed industry, and advancing cross-sector collaboration with positive, actionable messages. The council also heard a briefing on the legislative session and planned topics for future meetings.

The **Salmon Recovery Funding Board** met March 10 and discussed climate change's impacts on the water supply, forecasts of future water levels, and local planning efforts to improve the water supply. The board also provided guidance on a staff briefing on water right acquisition.

## Policy and Legislative Updates

Staff will provide an update on the outcomes related to the 2026 legislative session, including budget and bills. Staff will also outline the process for future board budget conversations for the 2027-2029 biennial budget.

### Record Number of Attendees at Application Webinars

A record number of 830 participants logged in to the 2026 application webinars! The Recreation and Conservation Grants Section hosted a series of three webinars in February to kick off the biennial grants cycle. Staff gave an overview of the grant programs offered this spring, provided tips on developing and submitting grant applications, discussed long-term obligations, meeting cultural resource requirements, and highlighted key changes to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's programs including updated acquisition policies and new evaluation criteria for critical habitat, farmland, and natural area projects.



Rachelle Lim, Lan Nicolai, and Hannah Pauly hosted 546 participants during the Parks webinar with a focus on submitting applications for the following programs:

- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
- Boating Infrastructure Grant
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Outdoor Recreation Account
- Youth Athletic Facilities

Karen Edwards hosted 188 participants during the Conservation webinar with an emphasis on the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Habitat Conservation Account. Kim Sellers hosted 96 attendees during the Working Lands Webinar where she described the nuances of applying for a Community Forests Program or Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farm and Forest Account project.

During the webinars, Brian Carpenter, Allison Dellwo, and Karl Jacobs addressed a myriad of questions about match, deadlines, application resources, selecting a grant program, and more. Team members were on hand to monitor questions and respond in real time and provided links to resources like the [acquisition toolkit](#), contacting grants managers, [match reduction webpage](#), planning eligibility, and the [PRISM](#) application database. Director Megan Duffy kicked off each webinar by welcoming participants and thanking them for their willingness to protect and preserve areas for outdoor recreation and conservation.

## Applications Are Rolling In

Applicants have started over 290 applications for five grant programs offered this spring. RCO is soliciting applications to build parks and trails, conserve habitat for fish and wildlife, and to preserve working farms and forests. The following grant programs are offered this spring: Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account, Boating Infrastructure Grant, Community Forests Program, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, and Youth Athletic Facilities. April 30 is the application deadline. Following staff and advisory committee review, applicants will finalize their proposals by the technical completion deadline in July. Advisory committees will evaluate and rank projects in August and staff will ask the board to approve final ranked lists later this year.

## Washington State Receives \$1.8 Million in Federal Funds

Washington State is the recipient of \$1.8 million in Recreational Trails Program funds for federal fiscal year 2026. This money provides second year funding for seven board-approved education and eighteen maintenance projects submitted in 2024, as shown in Attachment A. The Federal Highway Administration distributes the funds to the states; however, to qualify, each state must hold an annual advisory committee meeting with representatives from both the motorized and nonmotorized communities. To establish eligibility for federal fiscal year 2027 funding, Washington's [advisory committee](#) will meet on June 8, 2026.

## Washington State Trails Conference

"Stronger Together" is the theme for the [2026 Washington State Trails Conference](#) sponsored by the Washington State Trails Coalition. The biennial conference will be held from October 7-9, at the Wenatchee Convention Center. Ian Mackay, founder of [Ian's Ride](#), will be the keynote speaker. "Ian was an avid cyclist and nature lover before a bicycle crash in 2008 left him paralyzed." Ian's Ride promotes outdoor access for those with mobility challenges. The trails conference brings together individuals and organizations working to build, protect, and maintain a network of rural, urban and backcountry trails for everyone in Washington. RCO partners with the trails coalition and spreads the word out about statewide events. Jesse Sims serves as a coalition board member and helps plan the biennial conference. Conference registration starts in July.



## Skagit County Celebrates Access to Big Rock Park

Skagit County partnered with the Skagit Land Trust, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, and generous private landowners, to permanently protect and provide access to Yudwasta Big Rock Park. RCO's grants manager, Rachele Lim, joined Brian Adams, community partners, and the county commissioners for a ribbon cutting ceremony at the park, which is located just east of Mount Vernon. The original thirteen-acre park, surrounded by private property, lost public access in 2015. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approved a \$1 million Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks Category grant in July to help the county add eighty-two acres to create a ninety-five acre regional park and restore public access. Future trails, interpretive signs, and a trailhead will facilitate public access to a site with unique geological features, wetlands, woodlands, streams, and open space. Yudwasta, which means "of the heart" holds cultural and spiritual significance for the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe. This aerial photo shows the park, big rock, and the surrounding Skagit Valley.



## Using Returned Funds

The director has approved grants for three alternate and twenty-five partially funded projects. These awards consist of unused funds from the 2025-27 biennium, including second year funding for Recreational Trails Program projects. As part of the 2026 Supplemental Capital Budget, the Legislature approved Climate Commitment Act funds for the Community Forests Program project shown in Attachment A.

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).

## Project Administration

Staff administer outdoor recreation, habitat conservation, working lands, education, and maintenance projects as summarized in the table below. Active projects are under agreement and in the implementation phase. Recreation and Conservation Funding 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, Conservation, and Outdoor Education Projects

Program	Active Projects	Board and Director Approved Projects	Total Funded Projects
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)	19	0	19
Boating Facilities Program (BFP)	45	1	46
Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG)	3	0	3
Community Forests Program (CFP)	12	1	13
Community Outdoor Athletic Facilities (COAF)	20	0	20
Firearms and Archery Range Recreation (FARR)	9	0	9
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	37	0	37
No Child Left Inside (NCLI)	21	2	23
Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA)	94	2	96
Outdoor Learning Grant (OLG)	2	0	2
Planning for Recreation Access (PRA)	4	0	4
Recreation and Conservation Office Recreation Grants	2	0	2
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	47	8	55
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)	237	12	249
Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)	29	3	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>610</b>

## Closed Projects

Attachment B lists projects that closed between January 1 and March 31. This quarter the team closed fifty-four projects. The project number in the table links to the project description, grant funds awarded, photos, maps, reports, and more.

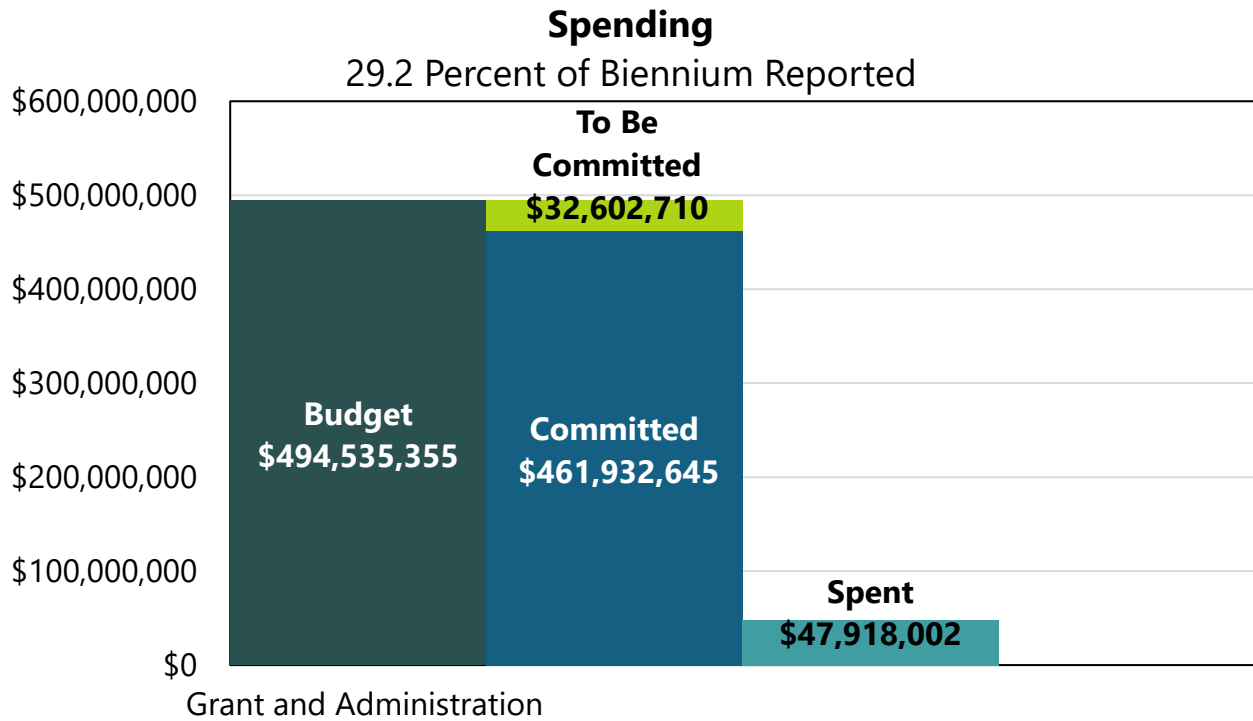
## Grant Services Section Update

### Technical Assistance and Community Engagement

Beginning in the 2025–27 biennium, RCO launched a technical assistance program to provide proactive, equity-centered support for communities seeking recreation and conservation funding. Building on the agency’s commitment to reducing barriers for underserved communities, staff developed a coordinated technical assistance workplan guided by recent plans and reports conducted by the agency, including the *Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*, the *2022 report on Equitable Grantmaking: A Comprehensive Review of Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office Grant Programs by the Prevention Institute*, and the *2025 Community Engagement Plan*. The technical assistance workplan calls for a mix of broad and targeted outreach activities, including low-barrier workshops, [Planning for Recreation Access](#) (PRA) grant outreach and administration, one-on-one and “we go-to-you” meetings, language translation services, and workshops specific for tribal applicants.

Section staff Kyle Guzlas, Beth Auerbach and Edison Velez are spearheading this effort with coordination from the policy team, including Caroline Morin, Leah Dobey and Nick Norton. Dawn Pullin, the agency’s Tribal Affairs Director, is supporting Tribal outreach and engagement efforts in coordination with the team. Recently, staff conducted outreach meetings with communities around the state to collect feedback on past challenges and successes. Staff have met with a wide range of potential applicants including Tribes, local governments, and community-based organizations, particularly those that have not historically engaged with or been successful in Recreation and Conservation Funding Board programs. These outreach efforts directly support the workplan directive to engage first-time applicants and cultivate long-term relationships in both rural and urban communities to increase funding success. Staff are just beginning this effort and will provide a comprehensive briefing at a future meeting.

## 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 March 24, 2026.

### Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Performance Measures

Measure	Target	Fiscal Year-to-Date	Status	Notes
Grant agreements mailed within 120 days of funding	90%	80%	●	200 of 251 agreements have been mailed on time this fiscal year.
Grants under agreement within 180 days of funding	95%	83%	●	210 of 252 projects were under agreement within 180 days.

Measure	Target	Fiscal Year-to-Date	Status	Notes
Progress reports responded to within fifteen days	90%	92%	●	Board staff received 552 progress reports and responded to them in an average of five days.
Projects closed within 150 days of funding end date	85%	76%	●	Fifty-five of seventy-two projects have closed on time.
Projects in Backlog	5	31	●	There are thirty-one board projects in the backlog needing to be closed out.

### Attachments

- A. Funds for Alternate and Partially Funded Projects
- B. Closed Projects

## Attachment A: Funds for Alternates and Partially Funded Projects

**Table A-1: Funds for Alternate Projects**

Project Number and Type <sup>1</sup>	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Grant Award	Program
<a href="#">24-1492 A</a>	Nisqually Indian Tribe	Nisqually Community Forest Phase 4	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	Community Forests Program
<a href="#">24-1962 A</a>	Washington Farmland Trust	French Slough Farm Two	\$1,283,500	1,283,500	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Farmland Preservation
<a href="#">24-1982 D</a>	Port of Grays Harbor	Friends Landing Expansion and Accessibility	\$200,000	\$200,000	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks
<a href="#">24-1683 D</a>	Peninsula Metropolitan Park District	DeMolay Sandspit Accessibility and Park Improvements	\$1,775,240	\$1,078,886	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Water Access

**Table A-2: Funds for Partially Funded Projects**

Project Number and Type <sup>2</sup>	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Previous Grant Award	Current Grant Award	Program
<a href="#">25-2416 E</a>	Backcountry Medical Guides	Galbraith Public Safety Campaign	\$11,600	\$5,800	\$11,600	Recreational Trails Program: Education
<a href="#">25-1417 E</a>	Conservation Northwest	Wildlife Ambassador Project	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$20,000	Recreational Trails Program: Education

<sup>1</sup>Project type: A=Acquisition, D=Development

<sup>2</sup>Project type: E=Education, M=Maintenance

<b>Project Number and Type<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Project Sponsor</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Grant Request</b>	<b>Previous Grant Award</b>	<b>Current Grant Award</b>	<b>Program</b>
<a href="#">25-1420 E</a>	Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance	Volunteer Sawyer Education Program	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$20,000	Recreational Trails Program: Education
<a href="#">25-1419 E</a>	Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance	Volunteer Trail School Program	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$20,000	Recreational Trails Program: Education
<a href="#">25-1414 E</a>	Methow Valley Ranger District	Backcountry and Winter Education and Safety	\$19,830	\$9,915	\$19,830	Recreational Trails Program: Education
<a href="#">25-1415 E</a>	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust	Greenway Trailhead Ambassadors	\$20,000	\$7,058	\$14,116	Recreational Trails Program: Education
<a href="#">25-1418 E</a>	Washington Trails Association	Trail Ambassadors	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$20,000	Recreational Trails Program: Education
<a href="#">24-2261 M</a>	Back Country Horsemen of Washington	Olympic Peninsula Collaborative Trail Maintenance	\$147,551	\$73,776	\$147,551	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2277 M</a>	Back Country Horsemen of Washington	Statewide Collaborative Trail Maintenance	\$149,900	\$74,950	\$149,900	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2276 M</a>	Back Country Horsemen of Washington	Targeted Maintenance of Threatened Trails	\$149,060	\$74,530	\$149,060	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2549 M</a>	Chelan-Douglas Land Trust	Wenatchee Foothills Trail Maintenance	\$121,580	\$60,790	\$121,580	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2353 M</a>	Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance	Eastern Washington Volunteer Trail Maintenance	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$100,000	Recreational Trails Program: General

Project Number and Type <sup>2</sup>	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Grant Request	Previous Grant Award	Current Grant Award	Program
<a href="#">24-2352 M</a>	Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance	Western Washington Volunteer Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2509 M</a>	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2346 M</a>	Nooksack Nordic Ski Club	Salmon Ridge Cross Country Ski and Snowshoe Trail Maintenance	\$25,500	\$12,750	\$25,500	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2478 M</a>	Pacific Northwest Trail Association	Pacific Northwest Trail Statewide Stewardship	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2524 M</a>	Spokane County	Liberty Lake	\$60,000	\$19,879	\$60,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2668 M</a>	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Chelan Ranger District	Lower Lake Chelan Summer and Winter Trails	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2634 M</a>	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Chelan Ranger District	Upper Lake Chelan Basin Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2514 M</a>	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Methow Valley Ranger District	Mixed Use Deferred Trail Maintenance	\$149,945	\$74,972	\$149,945	Recreational Trails Program: General

<b>Project Number and Type<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Project Sponsor</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Grant Request</b>	<b>Previous Grant Award</b>	<b>Current Grant Award</b>	<b>Program</b>
<a href="#">24-2284 M</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Hood Canal District Non-Motorized Maintenance	\$43,645	\$22,727	\$44,550	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2386 M</a>	Washington Trails Association	Statewide Backcountry Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2385 M</a>	Washington Trails Association	Statewide Volunteer Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2384 M</a>	Washington Trails Association	Statewide Youth Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General
<a href="#">24-2357 M</a>	Wenatchee Valley TREAD	Deferred Backcountry Trail Maintenance	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$150,000	Recreational Trails Program: General

## Attachment B

### Board and Office Projects Completed and Closed from January 1, 2026, to March 31, 2026

Project Number	Sponsor	Project Name	Program	Closed On
<a href="#">20-2080</a>	King County	Dockton Moorage Renovation Phase 2	Boating Facilities Program: Local	01/12/2026
<a href="#">18-2396</a>	Mercer Island	Luther Burbank Park Dock Reconfiguration Design	Boating Facilities Program: Local	03/25/2026
<a href="#">16-2602</a>	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Stuart Island Moorage Replacement	Boating Facilities Program: State	03/12/2026
<a href="#">24-2635</a>	Camp Beausite Northwest	Nature for All: Respite Camp for Disabilities	No Child Left Inside Tier 3	03/20/2026
<a href="#">22-2187</a>	Spokane County	Spokane County Education and Enforcement	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement	01/21/2026
<a href="#">22-2286</a>	U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan Wenatchee National Forest, Naches Ranger District	Off Highway Vehicle Education and Enforcement Rangers	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement	03/31/2026
<a href="#">22-2117</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Capitol Forest Education and Enforcement	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement	02/11/2026
<a href="#">22-2209</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Elbe and Tahoma Education and Enforcement	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement	03/02/2026

<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Closed On</b>
<a href="#">22-2104</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Hood Canal District Education and Enforcement	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement	03/10/2026
<a href="#">22-2184</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Northwest Region Education and Enforcement South Zone	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement	03/04/2026
<a href="#">22-2077</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Snoqualmie Corridor and Middle Fork Valley Education and Enforcement	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Education and Enforcement	02/03/2026
<a href="#">22-1946</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Capitol and Yacolt State Forests Facilities Maintenance and Operation	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road	02/27/2026
<a href="#">22-2014</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Samish Overlook, Lily and Lizard Lake Campgrounds	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road	02/11/2026
<a href="#">22-1880</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Southeast Region Maintenance and Operations: North	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonhighway Road	02/26/2026
<a href="#">22-2015</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Blanchard, Harry Osborne Maintenance and Operation	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized	03/13/2026
<a href="#">22-2119</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Capitol Forest Nonmotorized Trail and Facility Maintenance	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized	03/17/2026
<a href="#">22-2211</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Elbe Equestrian System Maintenance	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized	02/10/2026

<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Closed On</b>
<a href="#">22-2076</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Snoqualmie Corridor Facilities and Trails Maintenance and Operation	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Nonmotorized	02/25/2026
<a href="#">22-1878</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Ahtanum Off-Road Vehicle Facilities and Trail Maintenance	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle	02/06/2026
<a href="#">22-2120</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Capitol Forest Off-Road Vehicle Trail and Facility Maintenance	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle	03/02/2026
<a href="#">20-2248</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Elbe Hills Off-Road Vehicle Trail System Expansion Planning	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle	03/25/2026
<a href="#">22-2210</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Elbe Off-Road Vehicle System Maintenance	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle	03/02/2026
<a href="#">22-2251</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Reiter Foothills Forest Maintenance and Operations	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle	02/19/2026
<a href="#">22-2013</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Straits District Motorized Trail Maintenance	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle	02/03/2026
<a href="#">22-2018</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Tahuya 4x4 Trails Maintenance and Operation	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle	02/25/2026
<a href="#">22-2019</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Tahuya-Green Mountain Trails and Facilities Maintenance	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle	02/26/2026
<a href="#">22-2115</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Walker Valley Off-Road Vehicle Trails Maintenance	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities: Off-Road Vehicle	01/30/2026

<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Closed On</b>
<a href="#">22-2475</a>	Black Diamond	Ginder Creek Open Space Design	Planning for Recreation Access	02/19/2026
<a href="#">22-2495</a>	Goldendale	Ekone Park Design	Planning for Recreation Access	01/27/2026
<a href="#">24-2483</a>	Conservation Northwest	Wildlife Ambassador	Recreational Trails Program: Education	02/17/2026
<a href="#">24-2368</a>	Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance	Volunteer Trail School Program	Recreational Trails Program: Education	02/02/2026
<a href="#">23-1798</a>	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust	Mountains to Sound Trailhead Ambassadors	Recreational Trails Program: Education	03/05/2026
<a href="#">24-2461</a>	Washington Trails Association	Trail Ambassadors	Recreational Trails Program: Education	01/16/2026
<a href="#">20-2447</a>	National Park Service: Mount Rainier National Park	Sunrise and White River Area Trails	Recreational Trails Program: General	01/27/2026
<a href="#">20-2019</a>	U.S. Forest Service, Umatilla National Forest, Pomeroy Ranger District	Trail Grooming Maintenance and Operation	Recreational Trails Program: General	03/25/2026
<a href="#">22-1896</a>	Washington Trails Association	Statewide Youth Trail Maintenance	Recreational Trails Program: General	02/26/2026
<a href="#">24-1924</a>	Skagit Land Trust	Samish River Wetlands Acquisition	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Critical Habitat	01/16/2026
<a href="#">18-1333</a>	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	South Sound Prairies	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Critical Habitat	01/29/2026

<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Closed On</b>
<a href="#">20-1217</a>	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Golden Doe	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Critical Habitat	03/27/2026
<a href="#">20-1646</a>	Bellingham	Bakerview Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks	01/21/2026
<a href="#">20-1289</a>	Bremerton	Haddon Neighborhood Park Renovation	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks	02/10/2026
<a href="#">20-1743</a>	College Place	Lions Park Splash Pad and Inclusive Playground	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks	03/25/2026
<a href="#">20-1645</a>	Puyallup	Van Lierop Park Playground	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Local Parks	03/31/2026
<a href="#">22-1290</a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Kennedy Creek Natural Resources Conservation Area	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Natural Areas	03/26/2026
<a href="#">18-1900</a>	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	Back Rock Lake Shrub-Steppe Restoration	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Lands Development	03/26/2026
<a href="#">18-1987</a>	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Ragged Ridge Restoration	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Lands Restoration	02/03/2026
<a href="#">18-1510</a>	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Dosewallips River Campsites Relocation	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks	03/30/2026
<a href="#">22-1529</a>	State Parks and Recreation Commission	Saint Edward State Park-Arrowhead Property	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: State Parks	02/10/2026

<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Closed On</b>
<a href="#"><u>18-1524</u></a>	Washington Department of Natural Resources	Mount Si Natural Resources Conservation Area	Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program: Urban Wildlife Habitat	02/04/2026
<a href="#"><u>22-1735</u></a>	Leavenworth Winter Sports Club	Leavenworth Ski Hill Restrooms and Lighting	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	03/18/2026
<a href="#"><u>22-1566</u></a>	Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma	Stewart Heights Skate Park Phase 2	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	02/10/2026
<a href="#"><u>22-1588</u></a>	Port Orchard	Givens Park Sport Court Remodel	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	03/26/2026
<a href="#"><u>22-1696</u></a>	Renton	Talbot Hill Reservoir Park Sport Courts	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	01/27/2026
<a href="#"><u>22-1426</u></a>	Snohomish County	Willis Tucker Park Ballfield Lighting	Youth Athletic Facilities: Large	02/24/2026

# Item 3: Planning for Recreation Access Update

**Action Requested: Briefing**

## Summary

The Planning for Recreation Access grant was developed in 2022 and took applications that same year. After receiving additional funds for the program in 2025, the Recreation and Conservation Office reviewed and updated the program and will be accepting applications in mid-2026. This memo summarizes changes being made to improve the program, applicant experience and administrative processes.

## Background

In 2021, the Washington State Legislature directed the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to develop a new grant program to help underserved communities with recreation planning. The Planning for Recreation Access (PRA) grant is a low barrier, no-match program under the authority of the RCO director. PRA funds long-range, comprehensive parks planning, as well as various types of site planning activities such as architectural and engineering work, feasibility studies, concept planning, and permitting. The program prioritizes projects in small rural communities and racially diverse urban neighborhoods to help close recreation gaps.

Eligible applicants include local governments, Native American Tribes, special purpose districts, and non-profit organizations.

Between capital dollars allocated by the state legislature in 2021 and 2023, a total of \$7.3 million was provided for the program, which funded fifty-four of the nearly one hundred grant applications that were received.

## 2026 Grant Round

RCO has approximately \$1.9 million available for a 2026 grant round, from a combination of unspent funds and a 2025 legislative appropriation. As a program specifically designed for inexperienced and lower resourced applicants, the initial PRA round included many differences from RCO's other grant programs. Core values of the

program will be retained moving forward, such as a low-barrier application process, not match requirement, direct outreach methods, and using data-based evaluation criteria. However, several changes are being made to improve the program, applicant experience and administrative processes.

## **Contributing Input**

Since the 2022 grant round, RCO has collected program input several times. Applicants and advisory committee members were surveyed to collect information about their experience applying for and evaluating the grants. In addition, RCO outdoor grants managers have three years of experience working with sponsors on implementing their projects and have shared common challenges and successes. In March 2026, the agency held a comment period to get additional feedback, with a specific emphasis on direct outreach. Each of these touch points has helped inform the next iteration of the program.

## **Changes**

Beyond funding for the grants themselves, the 2025 Legislature also provided funding for RCO to provide more technical assistance. In recent months, two outdoor grants managers visited communities to build relationships and share information about PRA and other grant programs. These RCO staff will provide support for applicants from first contact with the agency, through PRA application development, and project implementation. Staff are also developing materials to help guide new applicants and bring attention to programs and information that may be of highest impact.

For 2026, the PRA manual has been expanded to provide more important information upfront to applicants, such as the importance of cultural resources protection and requirements associated with state funding. To apply, communities will submit materials through a simplified PRISM application, rather than via a form and email. This change will reduce the risk of error and improve internal efficiencies. Technical assistance staff can help applicants navigate this change. RCO will also support applicants with the addition of a technical review period, where staff and evaluators will provide an initial review of each project. Applicants can then make application changes based on feedback received before the project is evaluated.

Once projects move to the evaluation process, they will be reviewed and scored in two categories: long-range comprehensive planning and site-specific planning. Separating these two planning types allows more specific criteria to be used and improves applicants' ability to tell the story of their communities' planning needs. Evaluation criteria for long-range planning will elevate applications from communities with

outdated plans or that do not have planners on staff. Criteria for site-specific applications have been simplified so it is easier to understand what projects are being evaluated on.

In the initial grant round, many applicants requested the full grant limit of \$250,000. For some projects, this was an overestimate and resulted in funds returning to RCO to be reallocated. To help guide applicants' budgeting, the grant limit has been changed to \$125,000 for long-range comprehensive parks planning and \$200,000 for site-specific planning. These new limits were selected by comparing the average funds requested in 2022 to the funds eventually spent then adding a buffer.

Looking toward project implementation, staff will incorporate feedback to better support sponsors' administration of their projects. One example of this is by customizing project milestones based on the experience and needs of the grant sponsor.

## **Timeline**

Staff have been notifying communities about the upcoming PRA grant opportunity, and it is being shared by the agency's social media and email platforms. Applications will be accepted from mid-May to mid-July, and awards are expected to be made in November 2026.

# Item 4: Cost Increase and Time Extension Request: Stuart Island

**Action Requested: Decision—Approval of Resolution 2026-05**

## Summary

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission is asking the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to approve a cost increase and a one-year time extension for the Stuart Island-Reid Harbor Moorage Replacement ([20-2189](#)) project. The cost increase will help offset an unanticipated increase in project costs and the time extension will provide ample time for project completion.

This cost increase request exceeds 10 percent of the total project cost and the project extension is beyond four years from the award date; therefore, policy requires board consideration. There are funds available for the \$1 million cost increase, if approved.

## Background

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board awarded the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission a \$1,872,500 Boating Facilities Program (BFP) grant for reconstruction of a moorage facility at Reid Harbor. The moorage dock is at Stuart Island Marine State Park in San Juan County. Reid Harbor is accessible by boat only and offers excellent motor boating opportunities, including fishing and sightseeing. The project scope includes replacement of the marine moorage facility including two island floats, a pier, gangway, and pilings.

At the [April 2025 meeting](#) (Item 1B), the board approved a fourteen-month time extension and at the [June 2025 meeting](#) (Item 6), the board approved a \$1,692,500 cost increase for this project. The current grant award is \$3,565,000 with an expiration date of June 30, 2026.

## Project Status

Using a previously funded BFP planning grant, State Parks secured all permits, completed all cultural resources and environmental requirements, and is at 100 percent design. Since receiving the time extension and cost increase last year, State Parks

finalized bid documents and solicited contractors with hopes of completing the construction during the in-water work window of September 1, 2025, through March 1, 2026 (attachment B). Although they received several bids, all exceeded the funds available and State Parks could not hire a construction contractor. Without a contractor, State Parks has missed the 2025-2026 in-water work window, resulting in the need for another time extension and cost increase.

## Discussion and Analysis

### Board Policies

#### Cost Increase Policy

The board's policy on cost increases is outlined in *Manual 4: Development Projects*. 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 sponsor submits a written request. The director may approve requests for increases up to 10 percent of the total project cost and the board may approve increases above 10 percent.*

*To request an increase the project sponsor must submit a written request to the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) addressing the following:*

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

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

Additionally, *Manual 9: Boating Facilities Program* further defines the policy for cost overruns). It states that "If unused funds are available, RCO may consider a cost increase."

## Time Extension Policy

[Manual 9: Boating Facilities Program](#) outlines the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's adopted policy for progress on active funded projects. It is the sponsor's responsibility to complete a funded project promptly and meet the milestones in the grant agreement. RCO's director may give an applicant up to four years from the award date to complete a project. Extensions beyond four years require board action.

## Analysis

### Alternatives Considered

State Parks considered options to address the cost overrun and time needed to complete the project.

1. **Do nothing.** While there is always the option of not moving forward with a project, State Parks did not consider this a viable option because the recreation area is only accessible by boat and providing safe access is essential.
2. **Phasing the project.** Due to the multiple components of the project and related elements (i.e., floats, pilings, gangway) it is not feasible to phase the project. Additionally, phasing would negatively impact the timeline for already secured permits. Any possible delays would result in additional costs to extend or reapply for permits that would otherwise expire.
3. **Reducing the scope of work.** While this was considered, it was discarded as a viable option because it would not allow State Parks to meet the existing demand or current need to support recreational boating in the region. Also, the individual components are necessary for a usable facility.
4. **Secure additional funds and request more time.** This option was selected as the most viable option. If funds were available and another year was approved, State Parks could move forward to rebid the project with the planned scope of work and take advantage of all the preconstruction work done to move forward with construction.

### Conditions Causing the Cost Overrun and Lack of Time

Once State Parks received the bids for construction, it was apparent that they yet again faced unforeseen cost escalations. Even with highly detailed engineering cost estimates, unpredictable material costs have resulted in another funding shortfall. A cost increase

of \$1 million will give State Parks the funds needed to rebid the project and execute a contract for construction.

Also, without a contractor on board, State Parks missed the 2025-2026 in-water work window and cannot complete the project by the current agreement end date of June 30, 2026. Another year will give State Parks time to rebid the project, execute a contract for construction, and complete the project during the 2026-2027 in-water work window.

## Elements in the Agreement

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

## Cost Estimate and Timeline

This cost increase request is for an additional \$1 million in BFP funds, bringing the total grant to \$4,565,000. There are no match requirements for state agency projects.

The one-year time extension will give State Parks until June 30, 2027, to complete the project.

## Funds Available

There are sufficient BFP: State Agency Category funds to support the amount requested.

## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend approval of this cost increase and time extension as requested.

## 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.

## Next Steps

If approved, RCO staff will execute the necessary amendments to the grant agreement, and State Parks will rebid the project and move forward to complete all proposed development scope elements within the current grant agreement.

## Attachments

- A. Resolution 2026-05. State Parks, Stuart Island-Reid Harbor Moorage Replacement (20-2189)
- B. State Parks Cost Increase and Time Extension Request

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution 2026-05  
Cost Increase and Time Extension: State Parks, Stuart Island-Reid  
Harbor Moorage Replacement (20-2189)**

**WHEREAS** the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board awarded a Boating Facilities Program: State Agency Category grant to the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission for renovating the Stuart Island-Reid Harbor moorage facility; and

**WHEREAS** the board approved a time extension in April 2025, bringing the current expiration date of the grant agreement to June 30, 2026; and

**WHEREAS** the board approved a \$1,692,500 cost increase in June 2025, bringing the current grant award to \$3,565,000; and

**WHEREAS** the ongoing impacts of escalating material costs and broader inflationary pressures have resulted in significant increases in construction costs; and

**WHEREAS** due to insufficient funds, State Parks could not execute a contract for construction causing critical timelines to be missed; and

**WHEREAS** State Parks needs more funds and time to complete this project; and

**WHEREAS** there are Boating Facilities Program funds available; and

**WHEREAS** consideration of this request supports the board's strategy to provide funding to protect, preserve, restore, and enhance recreation opportunities statewide.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves a cost increase of \$1 million from the Boating Facilities Program: State Agency Category and a one-year time extension for the Reid Harbor project; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the board authorizes the Recreation and Conservation Office's director to execute the amendments necessary to facilitate implementation.

Resolution moved by:

Resolution seconded by:

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date:

**Attachment B: State Parks Cost Increase and Time Extension Request**

Diana Dupuis

Director



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

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February 2, 2026

Jesse Sims, Grant Manager  
Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), Grants  
Section PO Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: Stuart Island – Reid Harbor Moorage Replacement, RCO #20-2189 Construction Time Extension and Cost Increase Request

Dear Jesse Sims,

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) is requesting a time extension and additional funds for the construction of the Stuart Island – Reid Harbor Moorage Replacement project, RCO grant #20-2189. After RCO approved a time extension and grant increase in July 2025 (Amendment #4), State Parks finalized the bid documents and solicited contractors in August 2025, but was unable to award the contract due to insufficient funds. State Parks is preparing to rebid this project for construction within the 2026 to 2027 in-water work window, which will require a grant timeline extension. While taking steps to minimize construction costs, State Parks is also taking the extra precaution of seeking supplemental grant funding as a not-to-exceed amount.

State Parks is requesting a one-year time extension through June 30, 2027, and approval for up to \$1,000,000 in additional grant funding for construction costs.

**Time Extension:**

After a time extension was approved in July 2025, State Parks advertised the bidding documents for potential contractors on August 13, 2025 with the final bids due on September

11, 2025. State Parks received three bid responses, but they all exceeded the available budget, so the contract could not be awarded. Unfortunately, that prevented the project from being completed during the 2025-26 in-water work window, necessitating the requested extension to the grant deadline.

**Cost Increase:**

Based on the September 2025 bid results, State Parks is asking RCO to approve up to \$1,000,000 in additional grant funding to support construction costs. We recognize this request follows RCO's July 2025 approval of a \$1,692,500 grant increase for a total grant amount of \$3,565,000.

State Park developed the 2025 request considering the fluctuating market and tariffs in the spring of 2025. However, the volatility of the marine construction market, material costs, and tariff impacts exceeded informed engineers' estimates. As examples of the unpredictability of this market, the total bid prices for this project varied by \$1.4 million (or about 42%); bids for galvanized steel pile procurement and installation varied by \$0.5 million (or about 53%); and bids for protected species monitoring varied by \$0.8 million (or about 690%). State Parks is requesting approval for up to \$1,000,000 in case the next round of bidding again exceeds the amount provided by the 2025 grant amendment. Any money that is not required for the contract or construction of the project will be returned to RCO.

While State Parks would prefer to complete the 2026 bidding process before requesting this grant increase from RCO, we understand that is not possible due to the timelines involved in the bidding process and RCO's grant amendment process. State Parks is prohibited from executing a contract without sufficient funding, and the contract must be awarded within 60 days of the bid deadline. If State Parks receives bids that exceed the available budget, 60 days is not long enough for a grant increase request to be added to the RCO Commission Board meeting agenda, and, if approved, executed as a grant amendment. For Amendment #4, this process took 79 days, which seems reasonable given the steps involved. (State Parks submitted its request on May 6, 2025, it was approved by the RCO Funding Board during their June 24, 2025 meeting, resulting in final execution of the Grant Agreement Amendment on July 24, 2025.)

Even if this process could be sped up by three weeks to fit within the 60-day limit, that might introduce risks to the project. It would delay the Contractor from beginning the lengthy material procurement process or committing equipment and personnel to the project schedule. An unforeseen delay in the amendment consideration and execution process could trigger the 60-day expiration, requiring re-bidding and further project delays. Since bidding is a resource-intensive process for contractors, they may opt not to rebid again within the same year. Also, the low bidder might increase its pricing on the next round after seeing the competition's numbers.

In addition to this request to RCO, State Parks has completed and is planning the following activities to ensure the project is implemented during the in-water construction window, from September 1, 2026 through March 1, 2027;

- Received necessary permit extensions from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

- Prepared updated bidding documentation and forms for solicitation.
- Engaged with RCO Grant Manager about proactively planning and developing for contingencies during the next contractor bidding process.
- Restructured the bid form to allow greater flexibility in which elements of project are included in the final contract.
- Plans to release bidding in Spring of 2026 to provide advance time and consideration for contractors to schedule and procure necessary materials and take advantage of the full in-water work window.

Please know we are doing our absolute best to see this project to fruition in the uncertain climate and unstable markets. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions, or if a conversation would be helpful. I appreciate RCO's efforts and support of State Parks' boating facilities through the Boating Facilities Program.

Sincerely,



Jolene Boyd

Northwest Region Parks Planner

CC: Derek Gustafson, Northwest Capital Region  
Manager Jonathan Gibson, Environmental  
Engineer 3

# Item 5: Boating Facilities Policy Changes

**Action Requested: Decision- Resolution 2026-06**

## Summary

Staff received Recreation and Conservation Funding Board direction on potential policy changes to the Boating Facilities Program during the October 2025 and January 2026 meetings. This memo introduces final proposals, including increases to local agency grant limits, multisite project funding caps, and length of exclusive use or moorage. Staff are requesting board decision on these items in preparation for the 2026 grant round.

## 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.

Apart from evaluation criteria changes, many key BFP policies have not been reviewed or changed in over twenty years. Staff 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 with grant management staff to identify policy issues and scope the outreach process.
- Review of past funding lists to identify patterns or context to support policy decision-making.
- Analysis of past project scores to identify any patterns suggesting 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, and written feedback from the Department of Natural Resources.
- Briefings with the Washington Recreation and Parks Association and boating stakeholder groups as part of standing quarterly meetings with the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO).
- Roundtable discussions with members of the Washington Public Ports Association as part of their annual conference.
- Collection of public comments through a formal survey. The full public comments can be found in Attachment B.

## Board Engagement

At the [October 2025 meeting \(Item 4\)](#), RCO staff provided overall context for this BFP program review and received direction from the board on potential policy changes related to local agency grant limits for acquisition, development, combination, and planning projects, as well as funding caps on multisite projects.

At the [January 2026 meeting \(Item 9\)](#), RCO staff requested direction from the board on a number of smaller potential policy changes to improve clarity, align with other programs, and remove out-of-date requirements.

## Proposed Policy Changes

Based on a combination of external feedback, board direction, and internal assessment, RCO policy staff recommend the following policy changes to BFP:

- Increase the local agency grant limits for development, acquisition or combination projects from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000
- Increase the local agency grant limits for planning projects from \$200,000 to \$250,000
- Remove the 20 percent of estimated construction costs as a cap on local agency planning projects
- Increase the funding cap for multisite projects from \$50,000 to \$250,000

- Remove overall request limits for a single state agency for a grant cycle
- Increase the cap on exclusive use or moorage from fourteen days to fifteen days

### 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.3 – Provide funding to protect, preserve, restore, and enhance recreation opportunities statewide, as well as Strategy 3.A.6 – 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 9: Boating Facilities Program](#) in advance of the next grant round.

The board has also directed RCO staff to continue examining policy changes related to the expansion of eligible planning project types and updates to evaluation criteria. Any policy changes for these topic areas would come back for board direction during the summer of 2027 with a potential decision in January 2028.

### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend the board approve the policy changes as proposed.

### Attachments

- A. Resolution 2026-06. Boating Facilities Program Policy Changes
- B. Public Comments

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution 2026-06  
Boating Facilities 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 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 Boating Facilities 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 local agency grant limits, request limits for multisite projects, total state agency request limits, as well as exclusive use and moorage limits; 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 5 of the April 2026 meeting for the Boating Facilities 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:

Resolution seconded by:

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date:

## Attachment B. Public Comments

**Local Acquisition, Development, or Combination Grant Limits.** Currently, local agencies and Native American Tribes can request up to \$1 million for a development, acquisition, or combination project. What would be your preferred grant limit moving forward?

- No Change (\$1M) – 1
- \$1.5M – 1
- \$2M – 2
- \$2.5M – 1
- \$3M – 4
- Other - 0

**Local Planning Grant Limits.** Currently, local agencies and Native American Tribes can request the lesser of \$200,000 or 20 percent of the estimated construction costs. What would be your preferred planning grant limit moving forward?

- No Change (\$200,000) - 1
- \$250,000 – 1
- \$300,000 – 2
- Other - 1

**Local Planning Grant Limits.** Currently, local agencies and Native American Tribes can request the lesser of \$200,000 or 20 percent of the estimated construction costs. What would be your preferred planning grant limit relative to estimated construction costs?

- No Change (keep at 20%) – 1
- Remove the 20% cap – 8
- Other - 0

**Multisite Projects.** Currently, funding for each worksite in a multisite project is limited to no more than \$50,000. What would be your preferred worksite cap for multisite projects?

- No change (keep at \$50,000)
- \$250,000 – 4
- Remove worksite funding cap and limit total worksite number – 3
- Other – 2

**State Agency Total Request.** Currently, the total Boating Facilities Program 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. What would be your preferred option moving forward?

- Keep as written – 4
- Remove limits on total state agency requests – 5
- Other – 0

**Transient Moorage.** Currently, the Boating Facilities Program caps exclusive use or moorage at fourteen days without an approved Use Certification from RCO. What would be your preferred option moving forward?

- No change (keep at 14 days) – 2
- Increase to 15 to match Boating Infrastructure Grant – 6
- Other – 1

**Do you have any additional feedback relative to these proposed policies?**

- We appreciate opportunities for smaller agencies.
- WA has the most licensed watercraft, and the least on-water facilities and launches. Use Bremerton Boardwalk and Marina as a template! Morage, Fishing off the outer pier in deep water, all I'd add is a public boat launch & parking next to it. We need a half dozen more just like that throughout the Puget Sound!!!
- I would recommend that seasonal extended use be automatically built into the program. Washington State Boating is really only active from May to October, due to the state's climate. Outlining that monthly moorage is allowed during the off-season would help with the decision-making on whether to apply for a grant or not. I don't believe anyone wants to see docks installed that are empty and unused for over half the year due to regulatory requirements.

- Make sure this benefits private boaters. Do not allow reduction of mooring facilities.
- Multisite projects - has there ever been a funding request for a multisite project, other than multisite restroom replacements? If not, maybe include wording specific to restroom replacement. Can a restroom replacement be put in a new footprint to benefit ADA parking options at some sites? It's not clear if the new has to be put in the old footprint, at all sites, with no changes, to qualify as a multisite project.

**RCO plans to continue working on other Boating Facilities Program policy changes related to eligible planning project types and evaluation criteria over a longer time frame. As we continue this work, are there other policy areas that you feel we should be examining?**

- Continue reviewing Grant allocations, limits, duration, and matching funds amounts. Construction costs continue to rise, and permitting can be a major hurdle, delaying projects for multiple years as project budgets increase exponentially. Many of the locations that could benefit the most from these funds may not have the reserves needed to provide matching funds or may struggle to complete projects due to delays and cost increases beyond what was anticipated.
- BFP/BIG grants - how do multiple BFP/BIG grants for the same location/marina over the years, limit the boat size allowed in that location/marina. For example, if multiple grants for dock replacements over the years are all via BIG grants, will it eventually exclude under 25' boats from using the facilities and vice versa, will multiple grants of BFP limit larger than 25' using the facilities. Should there be limits to avoid exclusion? -What is the follow up for projects that don't make the cut for funding, you see some good projects reappear in future grant sessions, but very few, if at all. - The results of public involvement in a project. Require support and opposition documented for a proposed project. You don't ever see the opposition comments for a proposal being reviewed and scored.

# Item 7: Acquisition Policy Changes

**Action Requested: Direction**

## Summary

This memo summarizes two proposed acquisition policy changes: increasing the value under which an appraisal waiver can occur and removing per acre noxious weed cost limits. Staff are seeking Recreation and Conservation Funding Board direction on the proposed changes.

## Acquisition Policy 1: Appraisal Waivers

### Current Policy

When the estimated value of a property does not exceed \$10,000 and the acquisition is not complex, project sponsors may be exempt from having to meet typical appraisal and appraisal review standards. Instead, a sponsor may request the ability to submit an abbreviated analysis used to substantiate a purchase price. The existing policy language can be found on [Manual 3: Acquisition Projects, page 56](#).

This policy was designed to mirror the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) to support the strategic use of public funds.

### Reasons for Change

In June 2024, the [Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) 24.102](#) received a significant update, including changes to sections regarding waiver of appraisal requirements. In short, the federal government now has three tiers of acquisitions where a "Waiver Valuation" can be used:

- **Tier 1:** The estimated value is \$15,000 or less.
- **Tier 2:** The estimated value is between \$15,000 and \$35,000, provided the landowner is offered the option of an appraisal.

- **Tier 3:** The estimated value is between \$35,000 and \$50,000, provided the landowner is offered the option of an appraisal. This tier requires approval on a case-by-case basis and comes with post-closing reporting requirements.

The intent of these changes is to respond to increasing land values, while continuing to avoid the costs and time delays associated with appraisal requirements for low value, uncomplicated transactions.

## Proposed Changes

The current and new draft policy on appraisal waivers can be found in Attachment A. Proposed changes include the following:

- Adoption of Tier 1 (less than \$15,000) and Tier 2 (\$15,000 to \$35,000) limits.
- Inclusion of clear definitions of “waiver valuation” and “uncomplicated” that align with federal definitions.
- Additional guidance on minimal standards for waiver valuations.

## Staff Due Diligence

Prior to bringing this policy update to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff engaged in the following due diligence:

- Engaged the agency’s Acquisition Team to determine which tiers should be included and whether to include different limits for state versus federally funded projects.
- Connected with federal funding partners National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Department of Interior to confirm their support for this approach with any pass-through funding.
- Partnered with an appraiser at the Washington Department of Transportation to host a two-part training for key RCO staff members. This training was designed to provide guidance on how to evaluate if an appraisal problem is uncomplicated and expectations for waiver valuation submissions.

## Acquisition Policy 2: Noxious Weed Cost Limits

### Current Policy

Currently, RCO allows for initial noxious weed control as part of an acquisition project but caps the costs at \$175 per acre or \$3,500 per property for properties less than 20 acres. This was increased from \$125 per acre or \$2,500 per property in 2018 (see [January 2018 - Item 11](#)).

### Reasons for Change

Since this policy has been passed, the costs of materials and staff have risen continuously resulting in multiple projects where sponsors have requested the ability to go above the original cap.

### Proposed Changes

RCO staff considered multiple options, including increasing the standing per acre and property minimums, allowing the per acre costs to adjust with inflation over time, or removing cost caps altogether.

Currently, staff recommend the removal of per acre or property caps and inclusion of additional language to better define the scope of eligible weed control activities. This would eliminate the need for regular updates, promote consistency in RCO's approach to incidental costs, and accommodate natural variation in property condition.

The current and new draft policy on noxious weed control can be found in Attachment B.

### Next Steps

If the board supports the proposed policy changes, RCO staff will solicit public comment prior to a potential decision at the July 28-29, 2026, meeting.

### Attachments

- A. Appraisal Waivers – Current & Draft New Policy
- B. Noxious Weed Cost – Current & Draft New Policy

## Attachment A: Appraisal Waivers – Current & Draft New Policy

### Current Policy

When the estimated value of the property does not exceed \$10,000, and the acquisition is not complex, project sponsors may be exempt from having to meet appraisal and appraisal review standards. Such exemptions must be requested in writing before closing on the property. In lieu of the appraisal standards, a project sponsor may submit a written "Finding of Value" that includes:

- The preparer's name, experience, and qualifications. The preparer must have sufficient understanding of the real estate market and shall not have any interest, direct or indirect, in the real property to be valued for compensation. Project sponsor staff may not prepare the "Finding of Value."
- A description of the methods and factors used to reach the value for compensation. This description must have enough detail to allow RCO to understand how the preparer used market information to decide the market value.

Examples of "Findings of Value" may include an "Administrative Offer" prepared by a certified right-of-way agent, a "Broker Price Opinion" prepared by a qualified real estate broker or other individual, or other narrative summary of recent market information and the analysis used to decide the market value of the property.

### Draft New Policy

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) established criteria to determine when a waiver valuation<sup>1</sup> can be used instead of an appraisal to estimate fair market value. RCO can decide an appraisal and an appraisal review are unnecessary if the valuation problem is uncomplicated<sup>2</sup> and the just compensation estimate is \$35,000 or less based on a review of available data, including cost-to-cure items.

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<sup>1</sup>A "waiver valuation" is the process used to establish fair market value as a basis for offers on low-value, uncomplicated acquisitions. A waiver valuation is not an appraisal as defined by 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 24 and is precluded from complying with Standards Rules 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP). Examples of waiver valuations may include an "Administrative Offer" prepared by a certified right-of-way agent, a "Broker Price Opinion" prepared by a qualified real estate broker or other individual, or other narrative summaries of recent market information and the analysis used to decide the market value of the property.

<sup>2</sup>An "uncomplicated" valuation problem means that: (1) there is no change in the property's highest and best use, (2) there are only minor damages, (3) there are no improvements, (4) the cost or income approaches to value are not

The project sponsor must request, in writing, the waiver of appraisal requirements and provide justification for why the proposed acquisition is uncomplicated and within the low fair market value limits. If the just compensation is estimated to be between \$15,001 and \$35,000, a waiver valuation may be used only if the project sponsor offers the landowner the option of preparing a full appraisal and is released from this obligation in writing.

The person preparing the waiver valuation must have sufficient understanding of the local real estate market and basic valuation principles to be qualified to prepare the waiver valuation, and must not have any interest, direct or indirect, in the real property to be valued for compensation. The project sponsor or staff may not prepare the waiver valuation.

At a minimum, a waiver valuation must do the following:

- Provide the preparer's name, qualifications, and certifications.
- Accurately identify the subject property.
- Ensure that all impacts to the property are addressed and that all calculations are correct.
- Use consistent unit values for similar properties used as comparable sales.
- Provide a description of the methods and factors used to support the value conclusion
- Include a recommendation of fair market value and effective date of valuation.

RCO determines just compensation based on the waiver valuation, which cannot be less than fair market value of the land including any damages or costs to cure.

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necessary, and (5) an appraiser's expertise and analysis are not needed to credibly estimate fair market value. See Washington State Department of Transportation Right of Way Manual Section 3.4–Waiver Valuation and 49 Code of Federal Regulation 24.102(c)(2)(ii).

## Attachment B. Noxious Weed Costs – Current & Draft New Policy

### Current Policy

The following are eligible incidental costs in an acquisition project:

- Noxious weed control (initial control, up to \$175 per acre or \$3,500 per property for properties less than 20 acres).

### Draft New Policy

The following are eligible incidental costs in an acquisition project:

- Initial noxious weed control efforts in the project area during the grant agreement period in accordance with state and local classifications. This includes actions such as mowing, spraying, and reseeding of treated areas in accordance with best practices. Management activities targeting species not listed as noxious or other habitat restoration goals are not an eligible acquisition expense. However, such activities may be an eligible restoration expense depending on the specific program.

# Item 8: Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Policy Changes

**Action Requested: Decision- Resolution 2026-07**

## Summary

The Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) grant program provides funding to support acquisition, planning, development and maintenance of back-country recreation facilities including trails, campgrounds, day-use facilities, and off-road vehicle trails and riding areas.<sup>1</sup> This memo presents final policy change recommendations for the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle program for Recreation and Conservation Funding Board consideration.

The proposed policies recommend three significant changes to the program:

1. Creating a system for awarding long-term grants,
2. Increasing grant limits in the Off-Road Vehicle grant category, and
3. Updating the project evaluation criteria.

The policy change proposals went through a public comment period ending March 19, 2026 and final discussion with the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Advisory Committee March 23, 2026. Any changes to the program adopted by the board will be implemented for the 2026 grant round.

## Background

At the [January 2026](#) meeting, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considered draft proposals to award long-term grants for *Maintenance and Operation* and *Education and Enforcement* projects, increase grant award limits, and revise the project evaluation criteria. The board directed staff to seek feedback from the public to

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<sup>1</sup> Those accessed by or adjacent to a “non-highway road”, see [RCW 46.09.500-520](#)

help refine the final policy recommendations. The final recommendations are detailed in this memo.

[The draft policy proposals were included in a public comment package](#), and feedback was collected through a web-based submission form between March 8 and March 19, 2026. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) posted a notice of public comment on RCO’s website and sent email notifications to 2,200 recipients. Nineteen commenters provided feedback, but not all commentors responded to every question.

A brief review of the public’s feedback is included with each final policy proposal below and the full compiled public feedback results are included in Attachment D.

RCO’s final recommendations are summarized in the following table.

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Long-Term Grant Awards	Identifies three funded grants in each category to receive priority funding in the succeeding biennium (limited to Maintenance and Operations and Education and Enforcement projects).
Increase grant limits in Off-Road Vehicle category	Raise grant limits for Maintenance and Operations Projects from \$250,000 to \$350,000.
Evaluation Criteria Updates	Question revisions and point value adjustments to Project Support, Match and Population Proximity Criteria. Eliminate the Predominately Natural criteria.

Previously, the board approved grant limit increases for Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) grants (Item 9, October 2025), creating greater project impact through economies of scale for project sponsors. This second phase of proposed policy changes are intended to:

1. Further reduce administrative effort in applying for and evaluating grants, improving fund impact, creating funding certainty for sponsors.
2. Create more balance in project competition/selection by reducing the weight of criteria that benefit well-resourced applicants and projects near population centers over projects in rural areas.

### Long Term Grants

**Staff Recommendation:** Approve establishing long-term grant awards.

This policy provides the opportunity for up to three funded grants in each grant category to receive priority funding in the following biennium. This opportunity is limited to *Maintenance and Operations* and *Education and Enforcement* projects only.<sup>2</sup> Any individual applicant organization may receive no more than two long-term grants in each grant category. This limitation enables multiple organizations to realize this funding opportunity in each funding category. The complete policy appears in *Attachment B: Long-Term Grants Policy*.

Long-term grants are intended to provide a more stable funding source for high priority projects/areas with recurring maintenance and operations and education and enforcement needs. They may reduce the number of new NOVA grant applications and project agreements being submitted, evaluated, and managed each biennium.

### Public Comments

Respondents to the public comment survey generally suggested that long-term grants can provide stability, encourage volunteer involvement, and support larger, more technical projects. While some contributors believe these grants increase efficiency and funding stability, others feel the improvements are minor and suggest continued exploration of better funding options. There is also debate about the need for multi-year education and enforcement projects, with a consensus that limiting grants to one organization could help maximize long-term impact.

When asked directly if they supported the long-term grants policy as proposed, 78 percent of respondents selected "yes" and 22 percent responded, "no".

### Increase Grant Limits for Off-road Vehicle Category

**Staff Recommendation:** Increase the Off-road Vehicle category grant limit for Maintenance and Operations projects from \$250,000 to \$350,000, raising it \$100,000.

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<sup>2</sup> *Maintenance and Operations* and *Education and Enforcement* projects fund routine activities that typically occur on an annual basis within the same project area. Examples include clearing fallen trees and opening trails after the winter season, routine cleaning of campgrounds and trailhead facilities, and providing educational resources to visitors at day-use sites and trailheads.

Staff recommend increasing the grant limit for Maintenance and Operations projects in the Off-road Vehicle category for three reasons:

1. **ORV Funding Level.** The higher level of available funding for Off-road Vehicle category compared to other categories (a “refund” allocation on par with other categories, and the addition of a large off-road Vehicle/all-terrain vehicle/dirtbike tab fee allocation), the current trend is funding all or nearly all the project applications. Raising grant limits would make the category more competitive.
2. **Need.** The per-mile cost to maintain off-road vehicle trails is generally higher than nonmotorized trails.
3. **Impact.** Higher grant amounts allow applicants to invest in larger work crews and contracts, and scale up purchasing.

## Public Comments

Generally, public comments agreed with raising the grant limits for the Off-road Vehicle category maintenance and operations projects. 94 percent of respondents selected positive (67 percent) or neutral (27 percent) response when asked if they approved of raising grant limits. Respondents who provided additional comments suggested increasing limits will support and enhance organizational capacity by providing additional funding.

Respondents were split on the amount of the increase. 45 percent agreed with a \$400,000 limit while 33 percent agreed with a \$300,000 limit. 22 percent of respondents did not express a preference.

Because respondents supported raising grant limits but maintained a split preference for funding levels, staff recommend raising grant limits in the middle range of options, to \$350,000.

## Evaluation Criteria Changes

The following proposed evaluation criteria changes aim to address advisory committee and stakeholder feedback that the current NOVA criteria put a high priority on large forested recreational landscapes that get relatively high use and are near population centers (such as the I-90 corridor in the central Cascade mountains). The criteria also prioritize highly resourced applicants (through the Match and Project Support criteria for example), creating a perceived disadvantage for smaller recreation areas, land managers with fewer resources, and projects in

rural parts of the state. In response, staff recommend criteria changes to balance fund priorities across geographies and applicants from different organizational types and sizes. Together, the proposed changes to evaluation criteria questions and point values aim to promote greater distribution of investments regardless of ability to raise additional matching resources (not required by the program) and attract large groups of volunteers from population centers.

See Attachment C: Evaluation Criteria Changes for full details of proposed changes.

## Summary of recommended changes

### Criteria Question Updates

Updates are proposed to the evaluation questions in the *Need*, *Need Fulfillment*, and *Planning* criteria. These revisions reduce or eliminate language that lean toward projects serving large numbers of users. Instead, criteria are revised to focus on the quality of and degradation to recreational resources (trails, campgrounds, etc.). Applicants are asked to provide explanations for how their projects will address the stated quality or resource degradation issues. Public comments were largely in favor (67 percent positive) of the proposed edits.

**Staff Recommendation:** Adopt edits to the evaluation criteria questions as presented in Attachment C.

### Eliminate Predominately Natural criterion

In addition to the edits described above, staff propose eliminating the *Predominately Natural* criterion. This criterion asks evaluators to consider the setting in which the project will occur. In practice, points are typically awarded to projects that take place in pristine, forested landscapes, leading to an unintended bias towards a particular landscape type. Public comment respondents generally supported (62 percent positive) eliminating this evaluation criterion.

**Staff Recommendation:** Eliminate the *Predominantly Natural* criterion as shown in Attachment C.

### Reduce Point Values in Select Criteria

Staff also recommend reducing point values for *Project Support*, *Matching Resources*, *Population Proximity*, and *County Density* evaluation criteria. Collectively, these criteria prioritize projects that occur near large population

centers and that can organize large groups of volunteers. These criteria don't account for the needs of many popular destinations in rural parts of the state that experience high visitation from non-locals or seasonal fluctuations in use patterns. Reducing points for these criteria intends to create more equitable funding distribution by not over-valuing proximity to densely populated urban areas. Also, in reviewing the criteria, staff discovered a disparity in the maximum points possible for acquisition only projects. The points for the *Site Suitability* criterion for acquisition-only projects are reduced to create scoring parity for all project types.

Overall, public comment respondents supported the proposed changes to these criteria (Project Support 56 percent positive; Matching Shares 72 percent positive; Population Proximity 56 percent positive).

**Staff Recommendation:** As presented in Attachment C, Staff recommend the board adopt the following changes:

- Reduce the point value *Project Support* criterion from 0-10 points to 0-6 points
- Reduce the point value of *Matching Resources* criterion from 1-5 points to 1-3 points
- Reduce the point values of the *Population Proximity* and *County Density* criterion from 1 point to .5 point for each criterion.
- Reduce the point value of the *Site Suitability* criterion from 15 to 10 points for acquisition only projects

### **Under-resourced Areas Criterion**

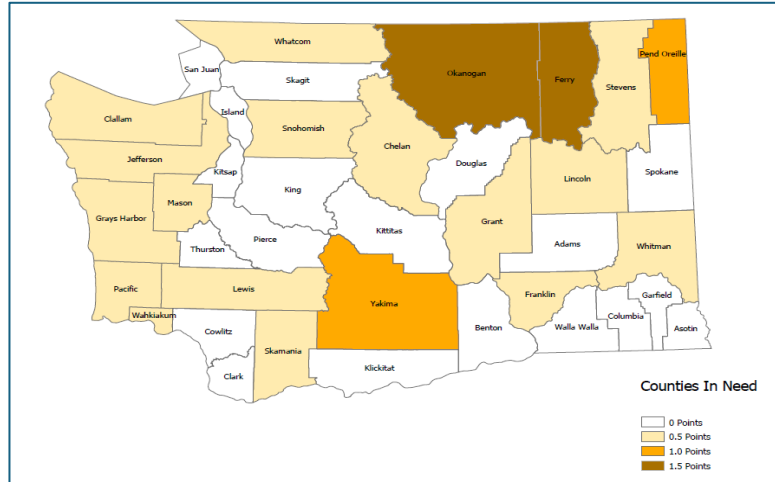
Finally, staff explored adding a new criterion to target "Under-resourced Areas" based on board comments and direction at the January meeting. The public comment notice included a proposal to add a new criterion awarding points to projects in counties (option 1) or in watersheds (option 2) based on economic conditions therein. The goal was to create a counterweight to projects in well-resourced areas (higher income areas near urban areas that benefit from higher resources and volunteerism, for example). For either option, points would be awarded based on the project's location as follows:

**Option 1:** Projects located in "counties in need" could receive up to three points based on the following factors (cumulative score, one point for each factor):

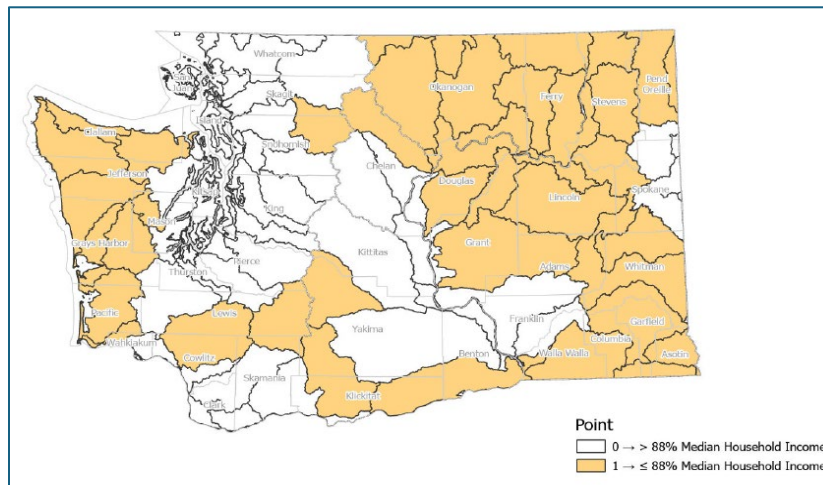
- A median household income less than 65 percent of the state median

household income (1 point)

- A "distressed" designation as defined by Washington Employment Security Department (1 point)
- 60 percent or more of land is non-taxable (1 point)



**Option 2:** Project sites (Scope of work) located within, or partially within, a watershed with 88% or lower State Median Household Income could receive one point.



While public comment respondents generally supported the idea of distributing grant awards more equitably, there was not a clear preference for either proposed option. RCO staff also believe that waiting to see how the proposed changes to the Project Support, Population Proximity, and Matching Share criteria described above will inform whether more work is needed to advance the board’s distributional equity goals.

**Staff Recommendation:** No Change. RCO staff does not recommend adding a

new 'under-resourced areas' criterion currently.

## **State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Nexus**

The board-approved [State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#) (SCORP, 2023) contains priorities and strategies that support the policy recommendations in this memo. These include:

- Priority 1, Provide meaningful access to outdoor recreation for all.
  - Goal 1.3 (Fund) a broad spectrum of parks, trails, public lands, and water access opportunities available for a diversity of outdoor recreation activities and users.
  - Goal 1.4 Recreation users maintain high levels of satisfaction across the spectrum of outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Priority 4, Support Healthy, adaptable, and connected communities.
  - Goal 4.4 Existing outdoor recreation facilities meet the needs of current and future recreation users.
  - Goal 4.5 Access to outdoor recreation and conservation funding is inclusive and funding outcome(s) are equitable.
- Strategy 1. Update grant evaluation criteria to reflect statewide priorities and goals.
  - Action 1.2 Identify, incorporate and weigh measures to help address disparate outcomes in outdoor recreation and conservation funding.
- Strategy 2. Review and revise grant program policies to adapt to emerging community needs and challenges.
- Strategy 3. Support, collaborate, and coordinate with (applicants) to adaptively manage the state's portfolio of public lands and outdoor recreation facilities.
  - Action 3.3 Work with (applicants) to align management intensity where significant resources and recreation use intersects to optimize recreation capacity and resource protection.

## **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**

Staff will implement any approved changes to the NOVA program prior to August 4, 2026, the first day we begin taking grant applications.

## **Attachments**

- A. Resolution 2026-07
- B. Long-Term Grants Policy Statement
- C. Evaluation Criteria Changes
- D. Public Comments Survey and Narrative Responses

**Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution 2026-07: Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Policy  
and Grant Criteria Changes**

**WHEREAS** the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 79A.25.005(d) authorizes the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to administer recreational grant-in-aid programs and provide technical assistance; and

**WHEREAS** the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 46.09.520(d) authorizes the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to administer the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities program for planning, acquisition, development, maintenance, and management of ORV, nonmotorized, and nonhighway road recreation facilities; and

**WHEREAS** the 2023 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Advisory Committee recommend updating grant program policies and project evaluation criteria; and

**WHEREAS**, Recreation and Conservation Office staff worked with program stakeholders, advisory committee members, the board and others to revise program policies and evaluation criteria; and

**WHEREAS** the proposed long-term grant award policy described in Attachment B adapts to stakeholders' need for stable and secure funding; and

**WHEREAS** the proposed grant limit increases in the Off-road Vehicle category described in the Item 8 memo reflects the need for greater funding availability to support maintenance of motorized recreation facilities; and

**WHEREAS** the proposed evaluation criteria changes described in Attachment C aim to create more competitive and distributed funding awards; and

**WHEREAS** the policies and evaluation criteria changes were posted for public review and Recreation and Conservation Office staff considered the public's comments in the final proposals and recommendations; and

**WHEREAS** the proposed changes align with recommendations and implementation actions in the 2023 Washington State Recreation and Conservation plan and the board's strategic plan;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board has reviewed the proposed revisions to policies and evaluation criteria and adopts the changes as described in Item 8, and Attachments B and C.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the board directs Recreation and Conservation Office staff to incorporate these changes into the appropriate grant program manuals, and that the changes shall be effective beginning with the 2026 grant cycle.

Resolution moved by:

Resolution seconded by:

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date:

## Attachment B: Long-Term Grants Policy

This policy statement will be added to NOVA Manuals 13 and 14:

- The top three ranked education and enforcement projects, and maintenance and operations projects in the Nonmotorized, Nonhighway Road, and Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) categories in any single biennium shall be designated as long-term grants.<sup>3</sup>
- Long-term grants will receive priority funding (funded in the original ranked order) in the following biennium and receive up to the same amount as originally funded, if available from the legislature, without reapplying and competing for funding. The remaining NOVA funds in the subsequent biennium will be available to projects in that biennium and awarded per board policy.
- In each category, no single organization (U. S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Department of Natural Resources, State Parks, Department of Fish and Wildlife, a city, a nonprofit organization, Tribe, etc.) will be awarded more than two long-term funded projects per funding category in a single biennium.
- To ensure three long-term grants are identified in each biennium and that no more than two long-term grants are received by any one organization, projects may be skipped in rank order (highest to lowest) to ensure more than one organization receives a long-term grant per grant round.
- Long-term projects will be limited to those that rank above the funding line in any single biennium at the time the board approves the funding for the biennial ranked list.
- At no time shall a single organization receive three long-term grants in any single category.
- If a sponsor forgoes accepting a long-term grant, another will not be chosen from the previous list.
- Second biennium NOVA funding for a long-term grant shall not exceed the original grant amount.

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<sup>3</sup> *Maintenance and Operations* and *Education and Enforcement* projects fund routine activities that typically occur on an annual basis within the same project area. Examples include clearing fallen trees and opening trails after the winter season, routine cleaning of campgrounds and trailhead facilities, and providing educational resources to visitors at day-use sites and trailheads.

- The second biennium scope of work, project area, and grant amount shall be the same as the original grant. However, a scope change for the grant for the second biennium of funding may be submitted for RCO consideration and approval.
- The initial biennial scope of work must be completed for the sponsor/applicant to receive the second biennium of funding. Sponsor must submit a report on the first biennium work accomplished to receive the second biennium funding.
- Sponsors may not submit additional grant requests for the same facility (project area) and scope of work in the same NOVA category in the same biennium as an active long-term grant (no double-dipping).
- The second biennium of funding will need to be approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board conditioned on staff recommendation, and sponsor performance in the initial biennium.

## Attachment C: Evaluation Criteria Changes

### Summary of Proposed Criteria (with proposed changes **in red**)

Criteria	Title	Questions by Category and Project Type	Maximum Points
<b>Scored by Advisory Committee</b>			
1. <b>Need</b>		All	15 Points
		Maintenance and Operation	25 Points
2. <b>Need fulfillment</b>		All	15 Points
		Maintenance and Operation	25 Points
3. <b>Site suitability</b>		Acquisition	<del>15 Points</del> 10 Points
		Combination Acquisition and Development	5 Points
4. Project design		Development	10 Points
		Combination Acquisition and Development	5 Points
5. <b>Planning</b>		Planning	10 Points
6. Sustainability		All projects, except Maintenance	5 Points
7. Readiness to proceed		All projects, except Maintenance	5 Points
8. <del>Predominantly natural</del>		<del>Nonmotorized and Nonhighway Road Categories only</del>	5 Points
9. Project support		All	<del>10</del> 6 Points
10. Cost-benefit		All	5 Points
<b>Scored by RCO</b>			
11. <b>Matching shares</b>		All	<del>5</del> 3 Points
12. <b>County population density</b>		All	<del>4</del> 5 Points
13. <b>Proximity to people</b>		All	<del>4</del> 5 Points
14. Growth Management Act preference		All	0 Point
<b>Total Points Possible</b>			<b>65</b>

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

1. **Need.** What is the need for new, improved, or maintained facilities, or planning projects? (Applicants respond only to bullet items clearly relevant to their projects.)

A) State, Regional, Land Manager, or Community Needs

- Cite any publicly reviewed and adopted plan that supports the need for the project by name, location, or type.
- Describe why NOVA funds are critical to the completion needs and goals of this project (current physical condition, need for additional, renovated, or well-maintained facilities, safety, environmental issues, imminent threat of loss of recreation, value of planning effort in serving recreationists, etc.)

~~B) Inventory Issues~~

- ~~• Describe similar opportunities now available in the local area.~~
- ~~• Describe the need for new and/or improved facilities in the service area. For example, are there overcrowding issues? Is this a unique recreational experience?~~
- ~~• Describe any significant maintenance backlog in the project area.~~

B) Use

- Describe how accessible (including to people with disabilities) the finished project will be to intended users.
- Describe how the facility identified in the scope of work is/will benefit a wide array of recreationists
- How will the project reduce future maintenance costs.
- ~~• Describe how heavily trails and support facilities in~~

~~the area are used.~~

- Describe any unserved or underserved user groups the project will support.

**Point Range:** zero to five points, which staff later multiply by three for all projects except maintenance and operation projects, which are multiplied by five.

Zero points: No or very weak need established.

One to two points: Fair to moderate need established.

Three points: Strong need established.

Four to five points: Very high to exceptional need.

**2. Need fulfillment.** How well will this project fulfill the ~~service area's~~ needs identified in Question 1? (Applicants respond only to bulleted items clearly relevant to the project.)

- How does the project meet the applicant's stated goals and objectives?
- ~~How does the project meet the needs identified in the service area?~~
- How will the project meet the needs of any underserved user groups?
- How have intended users been included in the planning process and how has their feedback been addressed?

- Point Range: zero to five points, which staff later multiplies by three, for all projects except maintenance and operation projects, which are multiplied by five.

Zero points                      No or weak evidence of need satisfaction.

One to two points              Fair to moderate evidence. Project fills only a small portion of the apparent or expressed need.

Three points                      Strong evidence. An important need will be addressed by the project, although that need will not be filled completely by the project as proposed.

Four to five points      Very high to exceptional evidence. The project fulfills a critical need.

**3. Site suitability** (acquisition or combination acquisition and development projects). To what extent is the site to be acquired well suited for the intended recreational activity?<sup>65</sup> (Applicants respond only to bulleted items clearly relevant to the project.)

Describe the suitability of the site's physical features for the proposed uses. Generally, sites most compatible with the proposed uses will score higher. Consider such factors as the following:

- Size
- Topography
- Soils
- Natural amenities
- Location

Other considerations include the following:

- How is the proposed acquisition compatible with the adjacent land uses?
- Does this acquisition provide a buffer to the existing use area? Explain.
- Will the proposed acquisition link to an existing facility?<sup>66</sup> Explain.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which staff later multiplies by ~~three~~ **two**, for acquisition only projects.

Zero points      No evidence presented, or the site is inappropriate for the intended recreation uses.

One to two points      Below average to moderate. The site appears fair for the intended uses, though there may be concern over its appropriateness.

Three points      Good. Site is adequate or reasonable for intended

uses.

Four to five points      Very good to excellent. Site is outstanding

- 4. Project design** (development or combination acquisition and development projects). Is the proposal appropriately designed for intended uses and users? (Applicants respond only to bulleted items clearly relevant to the project.)

If the facility has a Primary Management Objective,<sup>67</sup> describe how the project design is compatible with the objective.

Explain how the project uses proven design criteria including the following:

- User-friendly and universally accessible elements.
- Adequate spatial relationships, surfacing, width, and grades (are there switchbacks, how is multiple use facilitated, how tight are curves for off-road vehicles, bicycles, and motorcycles?)
- Trails: Were "loop" designs considered and if present, do the loops lead to a primary destination?

Explain how the design accomplishes the following:

- Protects and complements the environment.
- Makes the best use of the site.
- Minimizes the need for ongoing maintenance.
- Satisfies users' desired level of difficulty (for off-road vehicles only)
- For existing trails: Does not over build (retains the difficulty level) and minimizes user displacement.

Point Range: zero to five points, which staff later multiplies by two for development projects.

Zero points      Poor evidence presented or inappropriate design. For example: environmental issues not addressed, trail difficulty level or user experience not addressed or can be expected to

	change substantially, or high probability of user displacement.
One to two points	Below average to moderate. For example: design does fair job of addressing environmental issues, use difficulty level and user experience will change somewhat, there appears to be some user displacement.
Three points	Good. For example: design is adequate or reasonable to address environmental problems, retains similar difficulty level and user experience, or may be low levels of user displacement.
Four to five points	Very good to excellent. design is outstanding. If a trail, it retains difficulty level and user experience with minimal or no user displacement.

5. **Planning** (planning projects). To what extent will the proposed plan or study help provide opportunities and address sustainability of the natural environment? (Applicants respond only to bulleted items clearly relevant to the project.)

#### Recreation Benefit and Public Involvement Factors

- Will this project directly benefit the intended recreation or improve applicants' ability to manage their facilities and serve recreationists? Explain. (For example, will it result in improved service delivery.)
- Will additional planning be required?
- What are the results of any initial public involvement in the planning proposal?

#### Proposed Plan Scope and Outcomes Factors

- Are the project's planning goals and objectives appropriate? Explain.
- Is the proposed plan or study cost-effective?
- Does the plan or study reflect current planning or design

standards or is the approach untested?

- Are there any conditions on site or in the study area that might require extraordinary or unique planning or design efforts?
- What is the complexity or feasibility of environmental mitigation that could be required?
- Does the plan or study address **management**, maintenance and stewardship of the planning area?
- What are the qualifications and experience of the personnel, including consultants?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which staff later multiplies by two.

Zero points	Evidence is vague, or it appears that the project will not lead to new opportunities for the intended type of recreation.
One to two points	Fair to moderate evidence. Proposal likely will lead to weak or below average new recreation opportunities.
Three points	Good. Proposal likely will lead to an above average or several solid recreation opportunities.
Four to five points	Very good to excellent. Proposal likely will lead to an outstanding opportunity in the intended recreation type.

**6. Sustainability** (combination acquisition and development, development, or planning projects). Sustainability reflects choices made to balance the desired benefits and potential impacts of a project on the surrounding landscape and community. Please discuss how your project’s location or design supports your organization’s sustainability plan or how you considered the ecological, economic, and social benefits and impacts in the project plan.

Examples of sustainability factors that could be part of a project or maintenance plan are provided below for consideration but are not all-

inclusive. Applicants and evaluators should treat this list as a guide, not a checklist. Applicants are encouraged to be creative in expressing the sustainability factors of their projects, and evaluators should score projects based on the extent to which applicants have considered and addressed the benefits and impacts of their projects whether they discuss one of the factors below or many.

#### **Ecological Factors**

- Minimizes impacts to, or improves ecological function of, surrounding lands
- Includes low-impact design or other green building techniques that reduce water, energy, resource consumption, or greenhouse gas footprint
- Provides a buffer to future natural disasters or anticipated climate impacts
- Includes landscaping that supports native species and/or pollinator habitat

#### **Social Factors**

- Addresses an identified disparity in social or environmental services
- Encourages access via multi-modal and active transportation choices
- Promotes opportunities for physical activity, social and cultural connections, or community education

#### **Economic Factors**

- Uses materials that support local producers, are recycled or recyclable, increase the project's anticipated lifespan, or reduce future maintenance costs
- Creates efficiency in the provision of public services (i.e., stormwater infiltration, increased tree canopy, carbon sequestration, etc.)
- Maximizes lifespan, or reduces future operational costs

- Supports a local economic development initiative

▲ Point Range: zero to five points.

**7. Readiness to proceed** (maintenance projects do not answer). How soon after the grant is approved can the project begin? (Applicants respond only to bulleted items clearly relevant to the project.)

There are often good reasons why managers are unable to initiate a project immediately. Even so, if other factors are equal, the NOVA program favors projects that move the quickest.

- Start-Finish: When will work on the project begin? When will work be completed and/or the facility be open to use?
- Preliminary Work: Are all elements ready—permits, environmental clearances, engineering, signed agreements, equipment, labor force, etc.? Have any appeals been resolved? (Explain.)
- Acquisitions: Has the landowner been contacted? Is the owner willing to sell? Does the applicant hold an option on the property? (Describe). Are required appraisals and reviews completed? (Describe). Will the land acquired be immediately available for use by users in the intended category? Explain.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points.

Zero points	Very large barriers exist that likely will delay the project a year or more.
One to two points	Substantial to significant barriers exist that likely will be removed in the next twelve months.
Three to four points	Minimal to ordinary barriers exist that likely will be removed by the time a grant is approved.
Five points	No barriers. The project is ready to move forward immediately.

~~**8. Predominantly natural** (off-road vehicle applicants do not answer this question). Is the project site in a predominantly natural setting? (Applicants respond only to bulleted items clearly relevant to the~~

project.)

Consider the project's immediate physical setting, not its distance from structures that affect the setting. Apart from the proposal, to what extent does the user experience the natural environment versus human structures and activities: buildings, radio/cell towers, roads, dams, etc.?

A setting does not need to be pristine or untouched to rate a high score:

- A second-growth forest often is sufficiently natural.
- A remote high camp or ridge-top trail can afford distant views of cities or towns.
- A campground or trailhead can be located adjacent to or at the end of a paved road.
- The number of people using the facility will not detract necessarily from the setting or desired recreational experience.

When evaluators score this question, they will look at the natural setting of the location, not the facility proposed for funding.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points.

Zero points — No evidence presented, or site is not natural.

One to two points — Setting is not very natural: too much noise, too many roads, clear cuts, etc.

Three to four points — Setting is mostly natural. Though it may be adjacent to a clear-cut or touch a road, virtually all views and sounds are natural.

Five points — Setting is natural. Any trees are predominately mature; sights and sounds are all natural.

- 9. Project support.** To what extent do users and the public support the project? (Applicants respond only to bulleted items clearly relevant to the project.)

Support can be demonstrated in both financial and non-financial ways and varies depending upon the project type. In scoring this question, evaluators consider the type of support that is most relevant to the project. Examples of support or endorsement include the following:

- Voter-approved initiatives and bond issues.
- Donations to help complete the project: labor, equipment, money, materials, or land.
- Advisory board approval, completion of a public planning process that endorsed this project.
- Positive letters, oral testimony at public meetings, or support from friends or user groups.
- Positive (or the absence of extensive negative) media coverage.

▲ Point Range: zero to ~~five~~ three points, which staff later multiplies by two.

Zero points                      No or very weak evidence presented.

One ~~to two~~ points      Minimal to fair specific evidence of support.

~~Three~~ Two points      Moderate support.

~~Four to five~~ Three points      Exceptional to overwhelming support.

**10. Cost-benefit.** Do the project’s benefits outweigh its costs?

(Applicants respond only to bulleted items clearly relevant to the project.)

Costs may include fiscal outlays, unacceptable harm to adjoining areas or the environment, and factors that cause unnecessary ill will from users, the public, or others. Benefits may be economic gains for the community, added opportunity for facility users, improvements to the environment, etc.

- What is the cost per mile for trails or other unit of measure for other projects? Explain.
- Describe this project’s impact on the net availability of opportunities?<sup>69</sup>
- What alternatives to the project were considered and why were they rejected in favor of the current proposal?
- Describe the recreation and non-recreational benefits this

project will provide, including health, community economic development, education, and stewardship.

- Describe the project's environmental cost-benefit.
- Explain why reviewers should have confidence in the budget for this project.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points.

Zero points                      No evidence of a net benefit presented.

One to two points              Little to modest evidence of a mild net benefit.

Three to four points          Adequate to strong evidence of a solid net benefit.

Five points                      Substantial evidence of an exceptional net benefit.

**11. Matching shares** (applicant does not answer). What percentage of the total project cost is the applicant contributing?

RCO staff scores this question based on information provided in the application. Only elements considered reimbursable are eligible for use as an applicant's match. For evaluation scoring purposes, an RCO grant used as match will not count toward the award of matching share points. No additional information is required.

▲ Point Range: zero to ~~five~~ three points.

Zero points                      0-10 percent of project's value will be contributed by the applicant.

One point                        10.01-~~20~~ 30 percent of project's value will be contributed by the applicant.

Two points                        ~~20.01-30~~ 30.01 – 50 percent of project's value will be contributed by the applicant.

~~Three points~~ — ~~30.01–40 percent of project's value will be contributed by the applicant.~~

~~Four points~~ — ~~40.01–50 percent of project's value will be contributed by the applicant.~~

Five ~~Three~~ points      More than 50 percent of project's value will be contributed by the applicant.

**12 County population density** (applicant does not answer). Is the project site in a county with a population density greater than 250 people per square mile?

RCO staff will score this question for all project types based on maps provided with the application. The policy is supported by Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250 ~~and NOVA Plan policies in appendix B.~~

Point Range: zero to one point. Multiplier of .5 applied

Zero points              No

One point                Yes

**13 Proximity to people** (applicant does not answer). Is the project site within thirty miles of a city with a population of twenty-five thousand people or more?

RCO staff will score this question for all project types based on maps provided with the application. The policy is supported by Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250 ~~and NOVA Plan policies in appendix B.~~

Point Range: zero to one point. Multiplier of .5 applied

Zero points              No

One point                Yes

**14 Growth Management Act preference** (applicant does not answer). Has the applicant<sup>70</sup> made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?<sup>71</sup>

State law requires that:

- a. Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant has adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations as required by Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.040 ("state law").
- b. When reviewing such requests, the state agency shall accord additional preference to applicants that have adopted the comprehensive plan and development regulations. An applicant is deemed to have satisfied the requirements for adopting a comprehensive plan and development regulations if it meets the following criteria:
  - i. Adopts or has adopted within the time periods specified in state law
  - ii. Adopts or has adopted by the time it requests a grant or loan
  - iii. Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than six months out of compliance with the time periods has not demonstrated substantial progress.
- c. A request from an applicant planning under state law shall be accorded no additional preference based on subsection (B) over a request from an applicant not planning under this state law.

Scores for this question are based on information from the state Department of Commerce, Growth Management Services. If an agency's comprehensive plan, development regulations, or amendments have been appealed to a Growth Management Act hearings board, the agency cannot be penalized during the period of appeal. Scoring occurs after RCO's technical completion deadline.

▲ Point Range: minus one to zero points.

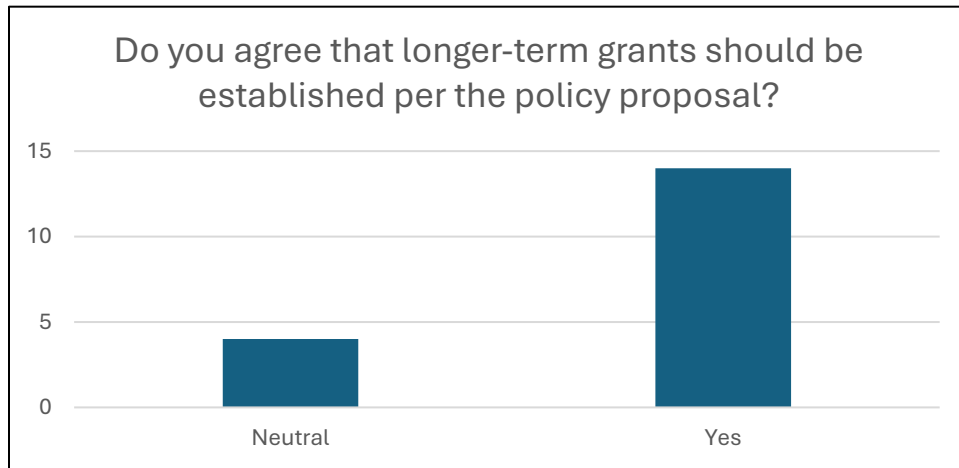
Minus one point	The applicant does not meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.
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Zero points            Applicant meets the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.

Zero points            Applicant is a nonprofit organization, state or federal agency.

**Supplemental Questions for “Competitive Funds (UNCHANGED)”**

### Long-Term Grants

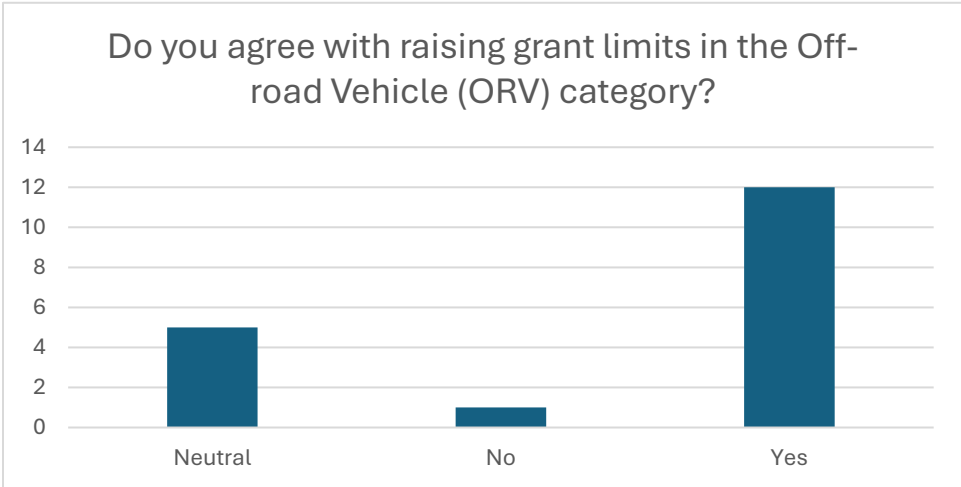


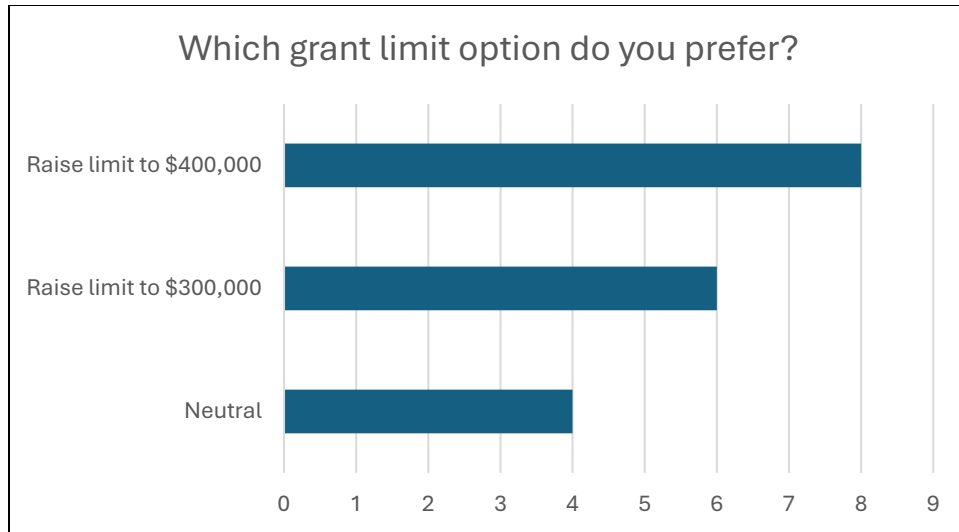
Please share additional feedback on establishing longer-term grants.

4. Having been on the NRTP for 8 years I know how much time it takes just to review grant requests.  
With longer term grants, bigger projects can be completed without multiple grants.
5. Having long-term grants, organized as proposed, should allow sustained M&O projects to continue existing landscapes while balancing the need for emerging new projects or M&O applicants in the future.
6. it would give volunteers more incentive to get more involved for the future instead of working and seeing that work get canceled
7. Provide much needed stability for environmental projects during increasingly uncertain times.
8. Many projects in certain areas may happen in seasonal closure areas, which sometimes may make it difficult to complete in a short amount of time (like 1 year or even 2).
9. This will improve efficiency for projects with a proven track record of success.
10. I started a comment email and then it disappeared, so I'm starting over.
11. Longer-term grants allow for larger and more technical projects.

- 12. We do not oppose long-term grants as they provide minor efficiency benefits, but it is not a change that significantly improves efficiency or funding stability. We encourage RCO to continue exploring options that increase the efficiency and stability of recreation operating funding statewide using the NOVA program.
- 13. I'm not sure that I see a reason for multi-year education and enforcement projects
- 14. Limiting to one organization is a good idea, this seems like a good way for an organization to make a longer-term impact knowing they have funds for a longer time.
- 15. Alleviating administrative burdens, especially for smaller or less-resourced jurisdictions, is important. It maintains a reliable source of funds for four-years and provides opportunity for longer range strategy for fund sourcing
- 16. Reading through the entire proposal has somewhat assuaged my initial concerns, and I do believe that the guidelines presented (in terms of only the top 3 projects, a maximum of 2 grant cycles, limits on the number of grants awarded to any one agency, and no "double dipping") would be good to adopt should this proposal be accepted.

**Increase Grant Limits in ORV Category**

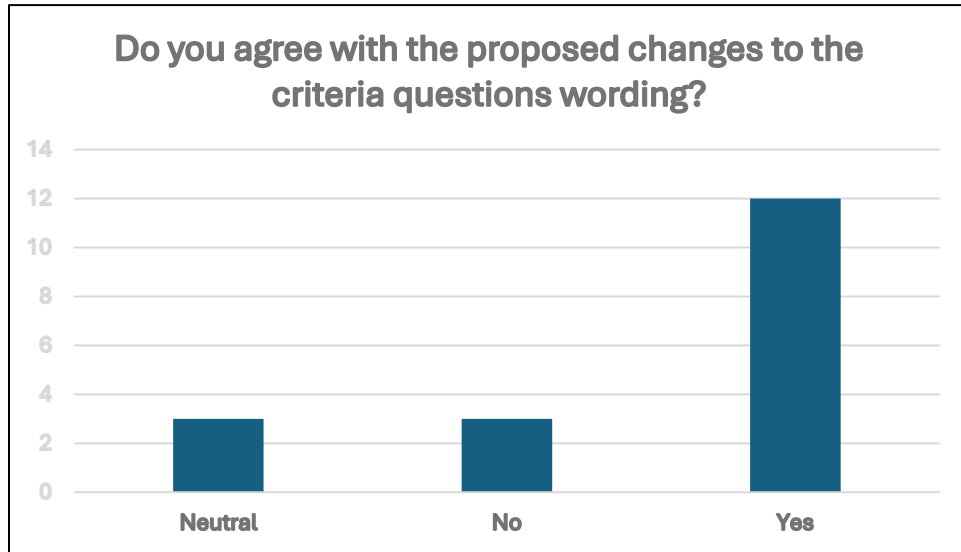




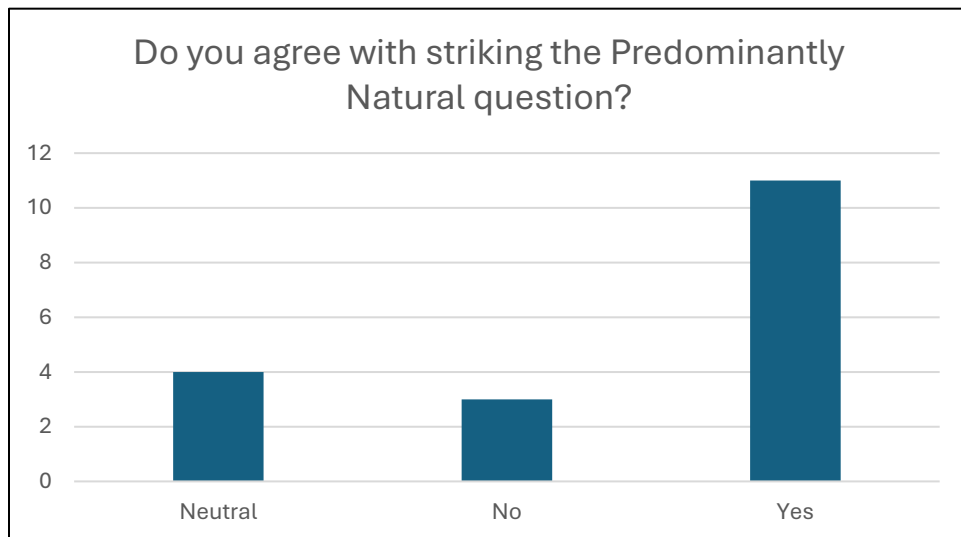
**Please provide additional feedback on raising the grant limit in the ORV category.**

1. With inflation increasing, raising these limits makes sense. However, when there are more applicants than budget in a particular category, it'd be good to balance spreading the need vs giving more money to fewer projects. As long as this can be handled within the grant selection process, we support increasing the limit from a program level.
2. the motorized off road citizens bring a lot of money into both the state and local economies with taxes and services
3. The price of everything has risen to no fault of anyone or anything. Rental for heavy equipment and supplies has increased.
4. Priority should be given to non-motorized projects specifically for equestrian and hiker utilization.
5. We support either proposed increased grant limit.
6. There were three projects on the alternate list in the FY24 round, although this may not be the historical trend it did happen. I agree in raising the limit as some projects need it but worry that people will ask for more than they need. Grant managers need to be working with applicants to make sure they are asking for reasonable amounts.
7. An additional \$150K could equate to 0.25-0.5 FTE with benefits (over the two years), building the capacity and organizational wisdom through (hopefully) consistent employees at these trails/trailheads.

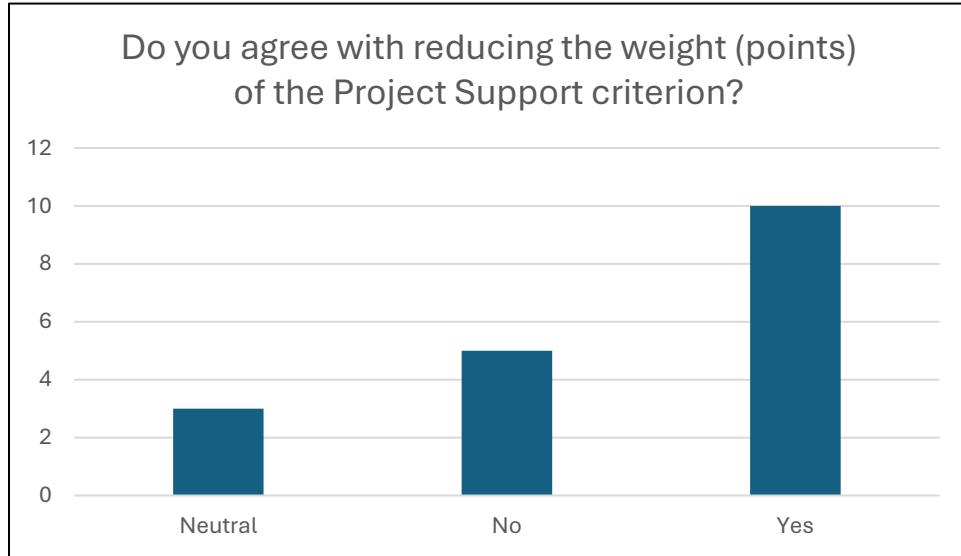
## Criteria Question Changes



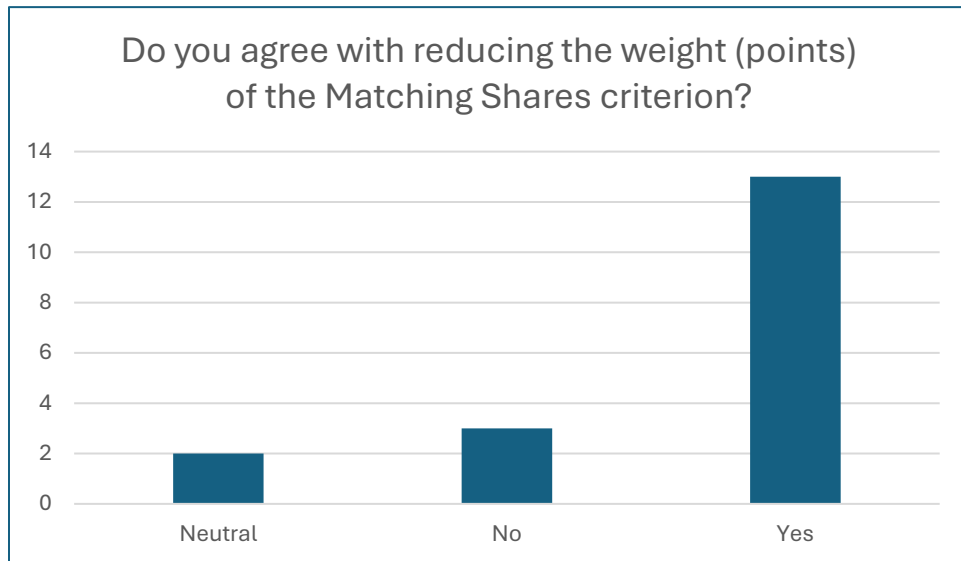
## On eliminating the Predominately Natural criterion.



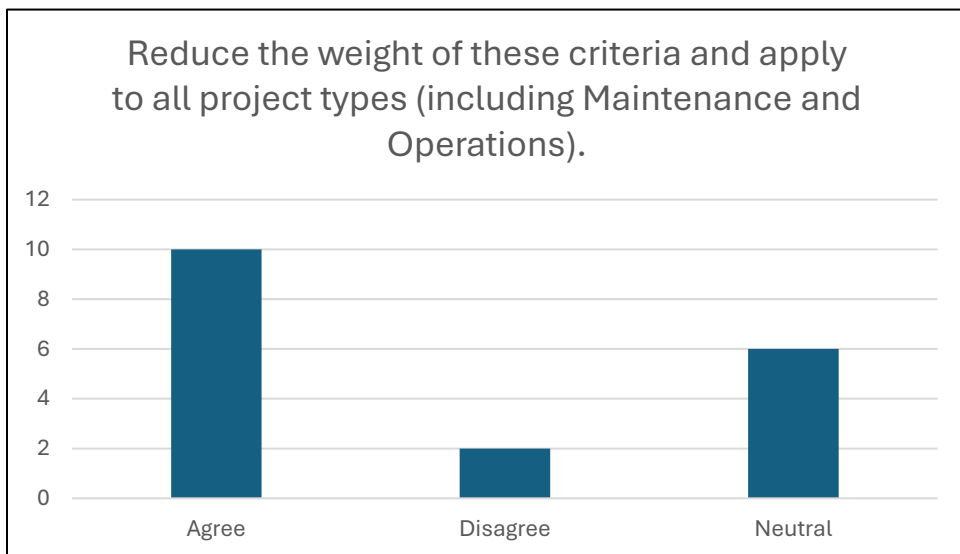
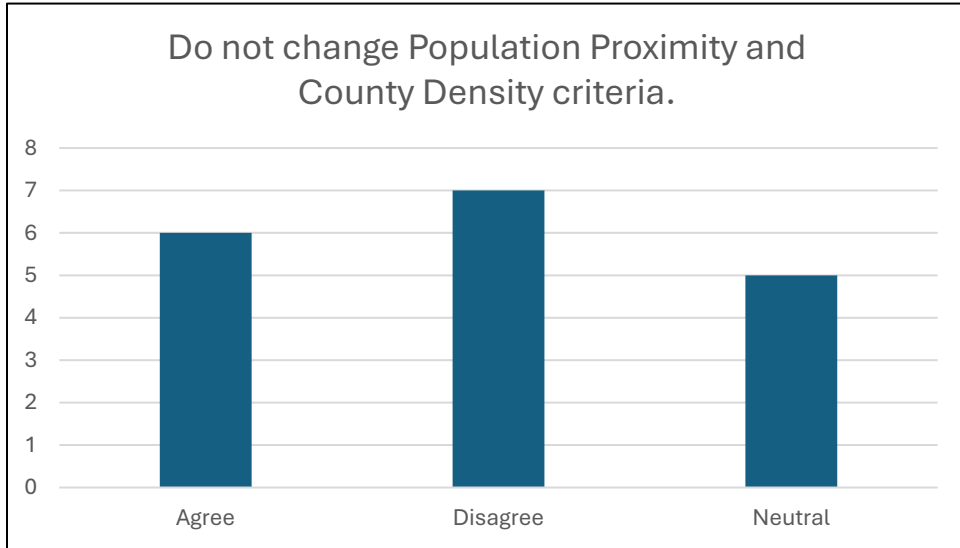
**On reducing the point values for Project Support criterion.**

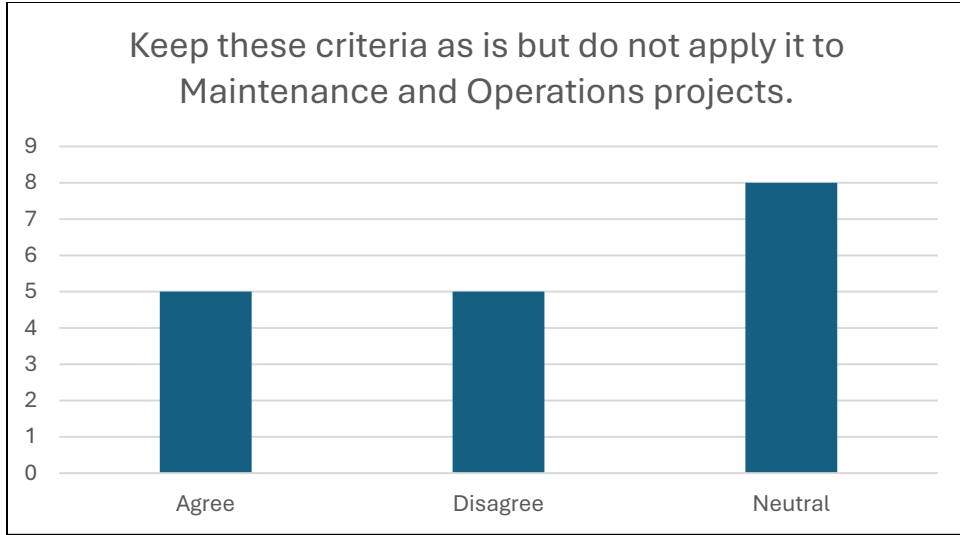


**On reducing the point values for the Matching Shares criterion.**

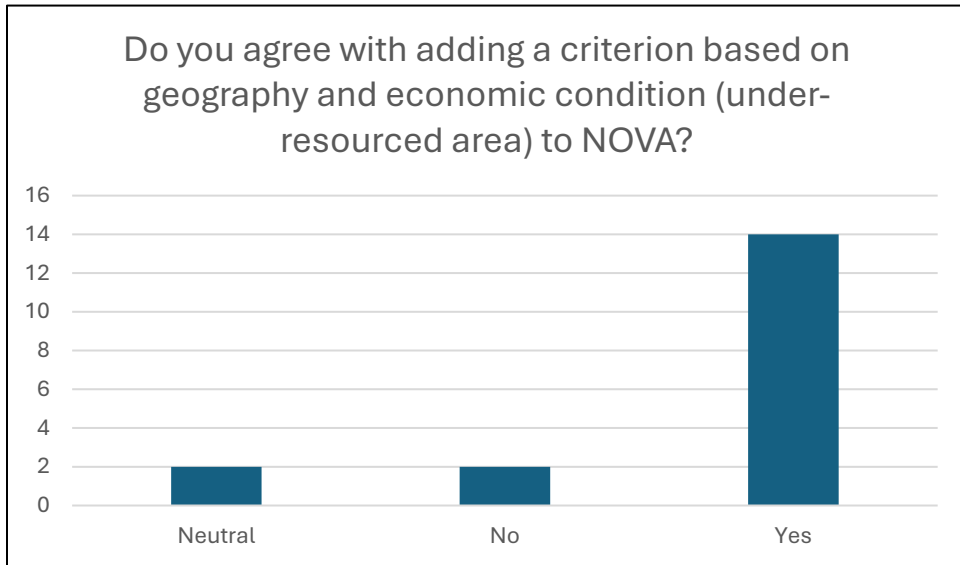


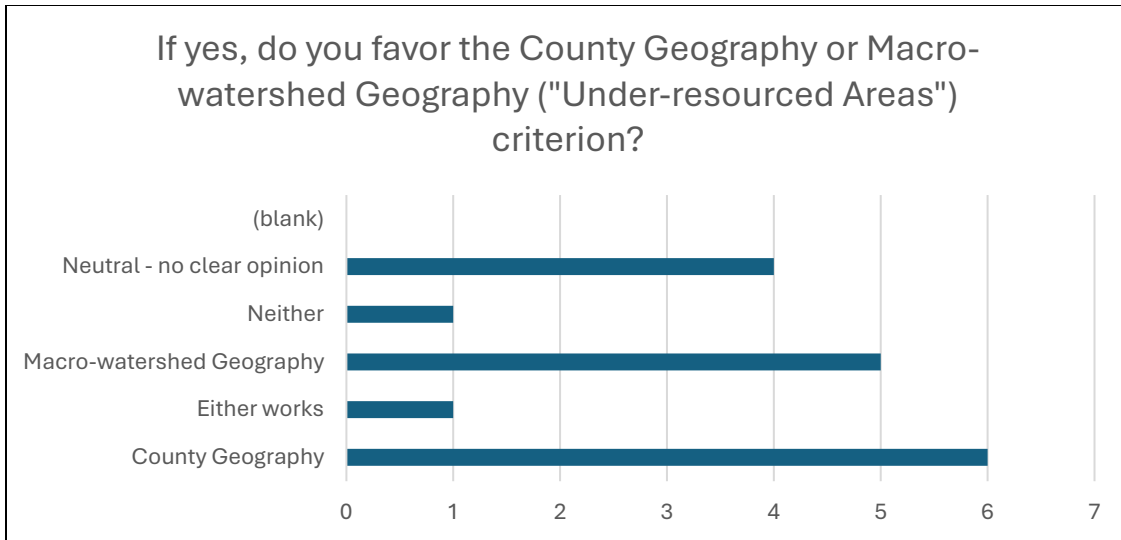
**On changing the Population Proximity and County Density criteria.**





**On adding a new evaluation criterion to support under-resourced areas.**





**Please provide additional feedback on the proposed changes to the criteria questions.**

1. present proposals are very anti motorized even when they bring the money non motorize use the land free with very little expenditures
2. We support proposed changes to the existing criteria. Many of them address issues we've raised in the past, such as the predominantly natural criteria and updating the need criteria.
3. I particularly recommend keeping the current questions on inventory.
4. Making it a little easier for rural communities is a good idea.
5. I agree with the majority of the proposed criteria changes, but do not believe that "predominantly natural" should be removed from the criteria. The way the criteria is currently worded, I do not believe it would rule out "working lands (in eastern Washington for example)."

I would prefer to see the project support criteria dropped, although I am at least happy to see it will receive less weight. From my time serving on the committee, very few projects seemed to have high quality and broad support. Most applicants relied on letters of support for this criteria, many of which referenced multiple projects by the same applicant within the same letter & were then uploaded multiple times to match each project. It seemed to be a hoop to jump through for the applicant, and it was a mess to wade through as a committee member, in order to see if the attached packet of letters rose to the level of a 4 or 5.

I am very much in favor of the addition of criterion #12. For County Population Density and Population Proximity I would prefer to see a reduced scoring weight.

## General Comments

### What else would you like to share about these proposed changes?

1. Consider a more stringent test for nonhighway access for eligibility. Use access via a road should be longer than ¼ mile. A shift to funding more rural projects might be simpler to do with a stronger eligibility criteria that would favor rural areas with large public lands.
2. Regarding criteria 12, we support using macro-watershed geography over using counties. Our concern with using counties as the geographic “filter” is that it would be too coarse/large to have the intended effect, especially in Eastern Washington. We don’t understand the rationale for why different point systems are being proposed if counties are used (1.5 points) or watersheds (1 point). We have concerns that either proposed change will further concentrate grants to USFS lands on the eastern slopes of the Cascades (e.g. Western Okanogan County), while not making historically underfunded areas on the Olympic Peninsula, SE, and NE Washington competitive enough to be funded. How this plays out depends on the impact of the other criteria changes being proposed.
3. Just because a site is not near an urban center does not mean that does not get used by them. Central Washington is overrun with urbanites from all over the state and giving points to those locations closer to the urban centers does not make much sense, can be done better.
4. According to my quick Google search, there are only 40-50 cities statewide that have a population of over 25k, and the majority of those are located on the westside. Projects in places like Ferry County would get a little boost for being an “under resourced area,” but then would lose points here for being far from any major population center, even as Ferry County tries to lean into the potential to draw outdoor recreation users. I would prefer to see it dropped, or if not dropped, then reduce the weight.

