

Appendix C: WWRP Background and History of Investments

Introduction to Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

In 1990, the Washington State Legislature found that "if current trends continue, some wildlife species and rare ecosystems will be lost in the state forever and public recreational lands will not be adequate to meet public demands" and created the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP). The purpose of the program was "to acquire as soon as possible the most significant lands for wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation purposes before they are converted to other uses, and to develop existing public recreational land and facilities to meet the needs of present and future generations."¹ Today, 25 years later, the WWRP continues to provide funding for a broad range of projects that conserve wildlife habitat and farmland, buy lands for parks and trails, and develop outdoor recreational facilities.

The WWRP is administered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, a governor-appointed board composed of five citizens and the directors or designees of three state agencies – Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) provides administrative support to the board. RCO is a small state agency that manages multiple grant programs to create outdoor recreation opportunities, protect the best of the state's wildlife habitat and farmland, and help return salmon from near extinction.

Eleven WWRP Grant Programs

The WWRP has 11 different programs in which towns, cities, counties, state agencies, special purpose districts, port districts, Native American tribes, and in some cases nonprofit organizations, compete for grants for outdoor recreation, conservation, and farmland protection projects. The 11 programs are contained in 4 accounts that receive funds appropriated by the Legislature in the biennial capital budget:

- Outdoor Recreation Account
 - Local Parks Category
 - State Lands Development and Renovation Category
 - State Parks Category
 - Trails Category
 - Water Access Category

¹Washington Laws 1990 1st Ex. Sess. C 14 § 1

- Habitat Conservation Account
 - Critical Habitat Category
 - Natural Areas Category
 - State Lands Restoration and Enhancement Category
 - Urban Wildlife Habitat Category
- Farmlands Preservation Account
- Riparian Protection Account

The portion of the total WWRP appropriation going to the 4 accounts and the 11 grant categories is set in statute, with the distribution based on the amount of the total appropriation.² With an appropriation of \$40 million or less, only the Habitat Conservation Account and Outdoor Recreation Account receive funding, 50 percent to each. For a total appropriation above \$40 million, a portion goes to the Riparian Protection Account and the Farmland Preservation Account. Table 1 shows the current statutory allocation formula for different appropriation levels.

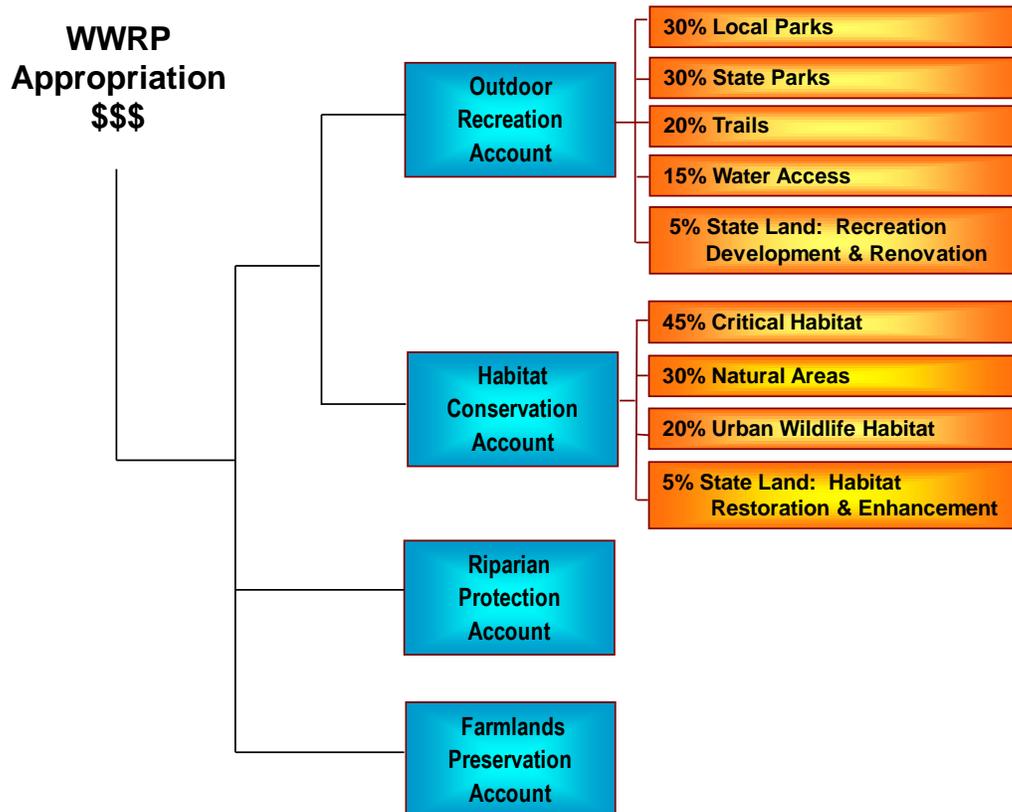
Table 1. Allocation of WWRP Funds

ACCOUNT	WWRP Appropriation		
	Under \$40 Million	\$40-\$50 Million	Over \$50 Million
Habitat Conservation Account	50%	\$20 million plus 10% of the amount over \$40 million	\$21 million plus 30% of the amount over \$50 million
Outdoor Recreation Account	50%	\$20 million plus 10% of the amount over \$40 million	\$21 million plus 30% of the amount over \$50 million
Riparian Protection Account	0%	40% of the amount over \$40 million	\$4 million plus 30% of the amount over \$50 million
Farmland Preservation Account	0%	40% of amount over \$40 million	\$4 million plus 10% of the amount over \$50 million

²Revised Code of Washington 79A.15

Within the Habitat Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Accounts, the allocation of funds to the different grant categories is also set by statute. The distribution of funds within the four accounts is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Allocation of Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Funds



Critical Habitat Category

This category provides grants to acquire, create, enhance, or restore³ habitat for wildlife including game and non-game species; food fish; shellfish; and freshwater, anadromous, and other fish including habitat for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species. It includes habitats such as wetlands, forests, shrub-steppe, deer and elk winter range, and riparian zones, and habitats for saltwater or freshwater fish and shellfish and may include public use for both consumptive and non-consumptive activities. Funds may be used for limited development of public facilities such as roads, trails, parking, restrooms, signs, and fences to allow public use and enjoyment. All lands are open to the public, although in limited cases managers may restrict

³"Enhance" means to improve the ecological functionality of a site. "Restore" means bringing a site back to its original function so that it is self-sustaining and will not require continual intervention to function as a natural ecosystem.

public use if necessary to protect habitat and species, for example during a sensitive timeframe, such as nesting or breeding season. Eligible applicants are cities, towns, counties, Native American tribes, special purpose districts, port districts, and state agencies.

Farmlands Preservation Account

The primary focus of the farmland program is to acquire development rights on farmlands in Washington to help ensure the lands remain available for agricultural practices.⁴ Grants must be used to buy development rights on farmland, typically through purchase of an agricultural conservation easement. Funding also can be used to obtain leases that limit development for a fixed period of time. A secondary program goal is to enhance or restore ecological functions on farmland preserved with farmland preservation grants. However, a project does not have to include an enhancement or restoration element to be eligible; restoration-only projects are not eligible.

Cities, counties, nonprofit nature conservancy corporations or associations, and the Washington State Conservation Commission are eligible for grants from the Farmland Preservation Account. Nonprofit nature conservancy corporations or associations must demonstrate at least 3 years of experience actively managing on-the-ground projects similar to the one seeking funding, such as negotiating for acquisition of property rights, closing on an acquisition, developing and implementing management plans, designing and implementing projects, securing and managing the necessary funds regardless of fund source, and other tasks.

Most grants in the Farmland Preservation Account have been used for acquiring agricultural conservation easements. By Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policy, proposals that include acquisition of development rights in perpetuity receive preference during evaluation. Less than perpetual acquisitions (term easements) must be for at least 25 years. Long-term leases are also eligible, providing a way for a sponsor to buy a possessory interest in a parcel's development rights. To be eligible, leases must be for at least 25 years and be recorded at the county auditor's office where the land is located. Leases may not be revocable at will.

Local Parks Category

Grants in this category provide for active (high impact) and passive (low impact) parks. Grants may be used to buy land or develop or renovate⁵ park land and facilities. Local agency projects may contain both upland and water-oriented elements. Eligible applicants are cities, towns, counties, Native American tribes, special purpose districts, and port districts. A minimum of 50 percent of the funds allocated to this category must be used for acquisition.⁶

⁴Farmland is defined as "farm and agricultural land" in Revised Code of Washington 84.34.020

⁵Renovation means renovation of land and facilities.

⁶Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.050

Natural Areas Category

These grants provide funding to state agencies to acquire areas to protect high quality, representative, native ecosystems; unique plant or animal communities; habitat for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species; rare geological features; or features of significant scientific or educational value. As established by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policy, lands must be managed primarily for resource preservation, protection, and study but may provide limited public use and may include limited development of public facilities, such as trails, roads associated with trail heads, parking, restrooms, signs, and fences.

Riparian Protection Account

This program provides grants to acquire riparian habitat adjacent to any water body or its submerged lands. Riparian habitat may include shorelines, near-shore marine habitat, estuaries, lakes, wetlands, streams, or rivers. Grants also may include restoration or development components. All grants must include acquisition of real property (fee title, easement, or lease). By Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policy, projects may include limited development for low impact, public access, such as trails, roads to trailheads, parking, restrooms, signs, and fences. However, in limited situations managers may limit public access if needed to protect habitat and species. Riparian protection grant applications are, among other factors, evaluated on "whether the site has passive recreational value for wildlife viewing or the observation of natural settings."⁷

Eligible applicants are cities, towns, counties, nonprofit nature conservancy corporations or associations, Native American tribes, and lead entities⁸. Nonprofit nature conservancy corporations or associations must demonstrate at least 3 years of experience actively managing on-the-ground riparian projects, such as negotiating for acquisition of property rights, closing on an acquisition, developing and implementing management plans, designing and implementing projects, securing and managing the necessary funds regardless of fund source, and other tasks.

State Lands Development and Renovation Category

Grants in this category are available only to the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources for development and renovation of outdoor recreation facilities on their existing recreation lands.

⁷Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.120

⁸Lead entities are responsible for designating salmon recovery projects, as defined in Revised Code of Washington 77.85.050.

State Lands Restoration and Enhancement Category

These grants provide funding to restore or enhance land owned by the State of Washington or held in trust by the State. As established by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policy, projects should be managed primarily for resource preservation and protection; managers may exclude public use if needed to protect habitat and species. Eligible applicants are Washington State Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Natural Resources.

State Parks Category

Grants in this category are available only to the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission for acquisition and/or development of state parks. Projects involving renovation of existing facilities are ineligible. A minimum of 50 percent of the funds allocated to this category must be used for acquisition.⁹

Trails Category

Grants in this category provide for projects whose primary intent is to acquire, develop, or renovate pedestrian, equestrian, bicycle, or cross-country ski trails. Trails must be for non-motorized use and cannot be part of a street or roadway such as a sidewalk or unprotected road shoulder. Trails funded through this program may have either hard or natural surfaces. Projects may include land and facilities, such as trailheads; parking; rest, picnic, or view areas; and restrooms that directly support an existing or proposed public trail. Eligible applicants are cities, towns, counties, Native American tribes, special purpose districts, port districts, and state agencies.¹⁰

Urban Wildlife Habitat Category

These grants are for the acquisition, development, and restoration of urban wildlife habitat. To be eligible in this category, the land must lie within the corporate limits of a city or town with a population of at least 5,000 or within 5 miles of such a city or town (or its adopted Urban Growth Area boundary) or within 5 miles of an adopted Urban Growth Area in a county that has a population density of at least 250 people per square mile. Projects provide habitat for wildlife, food fish, shellfish, or freshwater or marine fish, and may serve as a corridor for wildlife movement in existing populated areas. Projects may include public use for wildlife interpretation and observation and development of limited facilities, such as fences, interpretive or observation trails, interpretive signs or kiosks, restrooms, and parking. Urban Wildlife Habitat grant applications are, among other factors, evaluated for "educational and scientific value of the site"

⁹Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.050

¹⁰"State agencies" means Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and the Washington State Departments of Enterprise Services, Fish and Wildlife, and Natural Resources as defined by Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.010.

and "potential for public use."¹¹ Eligible applicants are cities, towns, counties, Native American tribes, special purpose districts, port districts, and state agencies.

Water Access Category

Grants in this category are for projects that predominately provide physical access to shorelines for non-motorized, water-related recreation activities such as, but not limited to, boating, fishing, swimming, and beachcombing. Grants may be used to buy land or develop or renovate land and facilities, including facilities that support water-dependent recreation such as parking, restrooms, picnic areas, access trails, fishing piers, platforms, swim beaches, boat access facilities, and water trails for non-motorized watercraft such as canoes and kayaks. Eligible applicants are cities, towns, counties, Native American tribes, special purpose districts, port districts, and state agencies. A minimum of 75 percent of the funds allocated to this category must be used for acquisition.¹²

Grant Application and Evaluation Process

RCO offers WWRP grants biennially, in conjunction with development of the state budget. Because of the need to present fully vetted, ranked project lists to the Legislature in advance of the legislative session, the grant process, from application to grant award, spans 18 months. Applications are due in early May of even-numbered years, and are submitted electronically on RCO's online grant management system, PRISM.

In advance of the formal evaluation of grant proposals, applicants are invited to a technical review meeting where they present their projects to WWRP advisory committees and RCO staff.¹³ This helps ensure projects are eligible, identifies any issues of concern, and provides feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal.

During the formal evaluation, applicants make an oral presentation illustrated with maps, graphics, and photographs to the advisory committees, which score each proposal against a set of criteria adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. In the Natural Areas, State Lands Development and Renovation, and State Lands Restoration and Enhancement grant categories, the evaluation by the advisory committee is based on only the written applications.

In an open public meeting, the board considers the recommendations of the advisory committees, written public comments submitted before the meeting, and public testimony at the meeting. The board then approves the ranked lists of projects, which are then submitted to the Governor by November 1. This list normally will exceed anticipated funding, including alternate projects for each category in the event that approved projects are later not able to be

¹¹Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.060

¹²Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.050

¹³Applicants can attend in person or via teleconference.

accomplished or more funding becomes available. The Governor may remove projects from the list recommended by the board, but may not re-rank or add projects to the list.

When it develops the state capital budget, the Legislature considers the project list submitted by the Governor. The Legislature may remove projects from the list submitted by the Governor, but may not re-rank or add projects to the list.

Project lists approved by the Legislature in any one biennium are to be completed to the fullest extent possible within that biennium. However, project lists are active until all the funding is used or no feasible projects remain. If a biennial list is completed and money remains, it may be awarded to legislatively-approved alternate projects in future years.

After the Legislature and Governor approve the capital budget, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves the final grant awards, again in a public meeting. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to attend.

Matching Requirements

Local agencies (towns, cities, and counties), nonprofits, and Native American tribes must, by statute, provide at least a 50 percent match to the requested grant. By Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policy, the match can be cash or an in-kind contribution such as donation of land or labor.

Planning Requirements

To be eligible for a grant, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board requires that applicants submit a plan that demonstrates the importance of the project or type of project. This requirement applies in all categories except farmland preservation. For recreation grants, applicants must submit a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan that has been adopted by the applicant's organization. Once RCO accepts the plan, the applicant is eligible to apply for grants for up to 6 years from the date the applicant organization adopted the plan.

To be eligible for a conservation grant, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board requires that the applicant submit a comprehensive habitat conservation plan that has been adopted by the applicant's organization. Nonprofit applicants may rely on a plan adopted by another entity, such as a species recovery plan.

Statutes require that projects seeking grants in the trails, water access, urban wildlife habitat, critical habitat, natural areas, riparian protection and farmland preservation categories be evaluated, in part, for consistency with local, regional, or statewide plans.¹⁴

¹⁴Revised Code of Washington 70A.15.060, 1070, .120, .130

Consultation with Counties and Cities

State law¹⁵ requires state and local agencies to review proposed acquisitions with the county or city legislative authority that has jurisdiction over the project area¹⁶. The local legislative body may submit a letter to the board stating its position about the project. These letters must be made available to the Governor and to the Legislature.

Public Input to the Grant making Process

The public has the opportunity to comment on Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policies and procedures at every board meeting. Public input on the list of projects to be submitted to the Governor and Legislature occurs at the October board meeting. Any public correspondence received by RCO in advance of the board meeting will be provided to the board. In addition, citizens and subject matter experts participate in various standing and ad hoc advisory committees and evaluation teams. Grant applications are evaluated, in part, by the level of community support.

Public Access

All WWRP grant applicants are required to answer the question: "Is there, or will there be, any significant public access or use restrictions? If yes, Explain." Projects in the Local Parks, State Lands Development and Renovation, State Parks, Trails, and Water Access Categories are intended to provide public access to outdoor recreation opportunities. Access to recreation lands and facilities for people with disabilities is encouraged in all of these categories and considered in the evaluation process.

In the grant programs intended primarily for habitat conservation—the Critical Habitat, Natural Areas, Riparian Protection, State Lands Restoration and Enhancement, and Urban Wildlife Categories—Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policy allows limited development of facilities for public access if the facilities will not negatively impact the conservation values of the project. In some cases, land managers may limit public access if it's needed to protect habitat and species, for example during a sensitive timeframe, such as nesting or breeding season.

RCO recently reviewed the applicants' response to the access question for a sample of 216 projects funded since 1991 in the Habitat Conservation and Riparian Protection Accounts. Out of 216 grants, 130 (60 percent) of the responses indicated that the project properties did not have

¹⁵Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.110

¹⁶"A state or local agency shall review the proposed project application with the county or city with jurisdiction over the project area prior to applying for funds for the acquisition of property under this chapter. The appropriate county or city legislative authority may, at its discretion, submit a letter to the board identifying the authority's position with regard to the acquisition project. The board shall make the letters received under this section available to the governor and the legislature when the prioritized project list is submitted under RCW 79A.15.120, 79A.15.060, and 79A.15.070."

significant restrictions on recreational use. In these cases, the grant funded properties were identified by the sponsors as open to the public, but with common use restrictions such as no motorized uses, use of existing trails, and seasonal or temporary closures to protect the resources (built and natural). A total of 86 of the 216 funded grants (40 percent) had significant restrictions to public access. In these cases, based on applicant responses, either no recreational uses were allowed, or only a small or peripheral portion of the property was available to recreationists. Examples of this type of access include select viewpoints, or a single or perimeter trail, or access restricted to roadways only. For the Washington Department of Natural Resources, 70 percent of its funded projects had significant restrictions on recreational access, primarily due to the programmatic rules in the Natural Areas Program¹⁷ which prioritize natural resource preservation and scientific study over recreation. For the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, 22 percent of its grant funded projects had significant restrictions on recreational access.

Because the property interest acquired is not fee simple, public access to Farmland Preservation Account projects is generally not allowed unless "explicitly provided for in a conservation easement or other form of deed restriction."¹⁸ With landowner agreement, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policy allows farm stands, demonstration farms, and agricultural education programs.

Stewardship

An RCO grant comes with long-term obligations to maintain and protect the project area after a project is complete. Projects cannot be converted to a use other than that for which funds were originally approved without permission of the board.¹⁹ If permission is granted, the converted property must be replaced by like property with equal or greater value and usage.

Table 2 summarizes the 11 WWRP grant categories, showing eligible participants, eligible activities, and type of public access allowed.

¹⁷Revised Code of Washington 79.70

¹⁸Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.130

¹⁹Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.030

Table 2. WWRP Categories, Eligible Applicants and Activities, and Public Access

Category	Purpose	Eligible Applicants							Eligible Activity				
		Cities and Counties	State Agencies	Special Districts	Tribes	Nonprofits	Lead Entities	Acquisition	Development	Renovation	Restoration, Enhancement	Public Access	
Critical Habitat	Acquire, create, enhance, or restore habitat for wildlife	✓	✓	c	✓	✓			✓			✓	D L
Farmland Preservation	Acquire development rights on farmlands to ensure the lands remain available for agricultural practices; enhance/restore ecological functions on preserved farmlands.	✓	✓	d				✓			✓		
Local Parks	Acquire, develop, or renovate local parks.	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Natural Areas	Acquire areas to protect high quality, representative, native ecosystems; unique plant or animal communities; habitat for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species; rare geological features; or features of significant scientific or educational value.			c					✓	✓			D L
Riparian Protection	Acquire riparian habitat adjacent to any water body or its submerged lands.	✓	✓	e		✓	✓	✓	✓				D L

Category	Purpose	Eligible Applicants						Eligible Activity				
		Cities and Counties	State Agencies	Special Districts	Tribes	Nonprofits	Lead Entities	Acquisition	Development	Renovation	Restoration, Enhancement	Public Access
State Lands Development and Renovation	Development and renovation			a					✓	✓		✓
State Lands Restoration and Enhancement	Restore or enhance land owned by the State of Washington or held in trust by the State			a								L
State Parks	Acquire or develop state parks.			b				✓	✓			✓
Trails	Acquire, develop, or renovate pedestrian, equestrian, bicycle, or cross-country ski trails (nonmotorized).	✓	✓	c	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Urban Wildlife Habitat	Acquire, develop, or restore urban wildlife habitat.	✓	✓	c	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	L
Water Access	Provide physical access to shorelines for non-motorized, water-related recreation activities.	✓	✓	c	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓

a=Washington State Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Natural Resources

b=Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

c=Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and the Washington State Departments of Enterprise Services, Fish and Wildlife, and Natural Resources

d=Washington State Conservation Commission

e=Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and the Washington State Departments of Enterprise Services, Fish and Wildlife, and Natural Resources, and Washington State Conservation Commission

L=May restrict public use in limited situations if needed to protect habitat and species, for example during nesting or migrating seasons.

D=May include limited development of public facilities, such as trails, roads associated with trail heads, parking, restrooms, signs, and fences.

Legislative History of the WWRP

The idea for a state program to provide funding for outdoor recreation and habitat conservation lands came from a diverse group of Washington citizens who believed that the state was not investing enough "to preserve its natural beauty and heritage, fish and wildlife bounty, and remarkably diverse landscapes in the face of rapid population growth and development."²⁰ People from a wide range of recreation and conservation organizations, along with representatives of state and local government, came together to form the nonprofit Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition, which was co-chaired by former Governor Dan Evans and former Congressman Mike Lowry.²¹ The original 48-member board of directors included five active legislators, corporate leaders, sportsman organization representatives, a Native American leader, the Seattle mayor, county commissioners, the King County executive, 15 conservation and environmental non-governmental organizations, and representatives from three industry associations.²² The resulting proposal for the WWRP was developed after the Coalition conducted an intensive needs assessment, including public meetings around the state.

Although the Coalition originally proposed a statewide ballot initiative for a 10-year bond program, the program instead became part of Governor Booth Gardner's Capital Forum and was included in the evaluation of long-term capital needs of the state. In the end, the Legislature adopted the program in the 1990 first special session and appropriated \$53 million for a list of recreation and habitat projects.

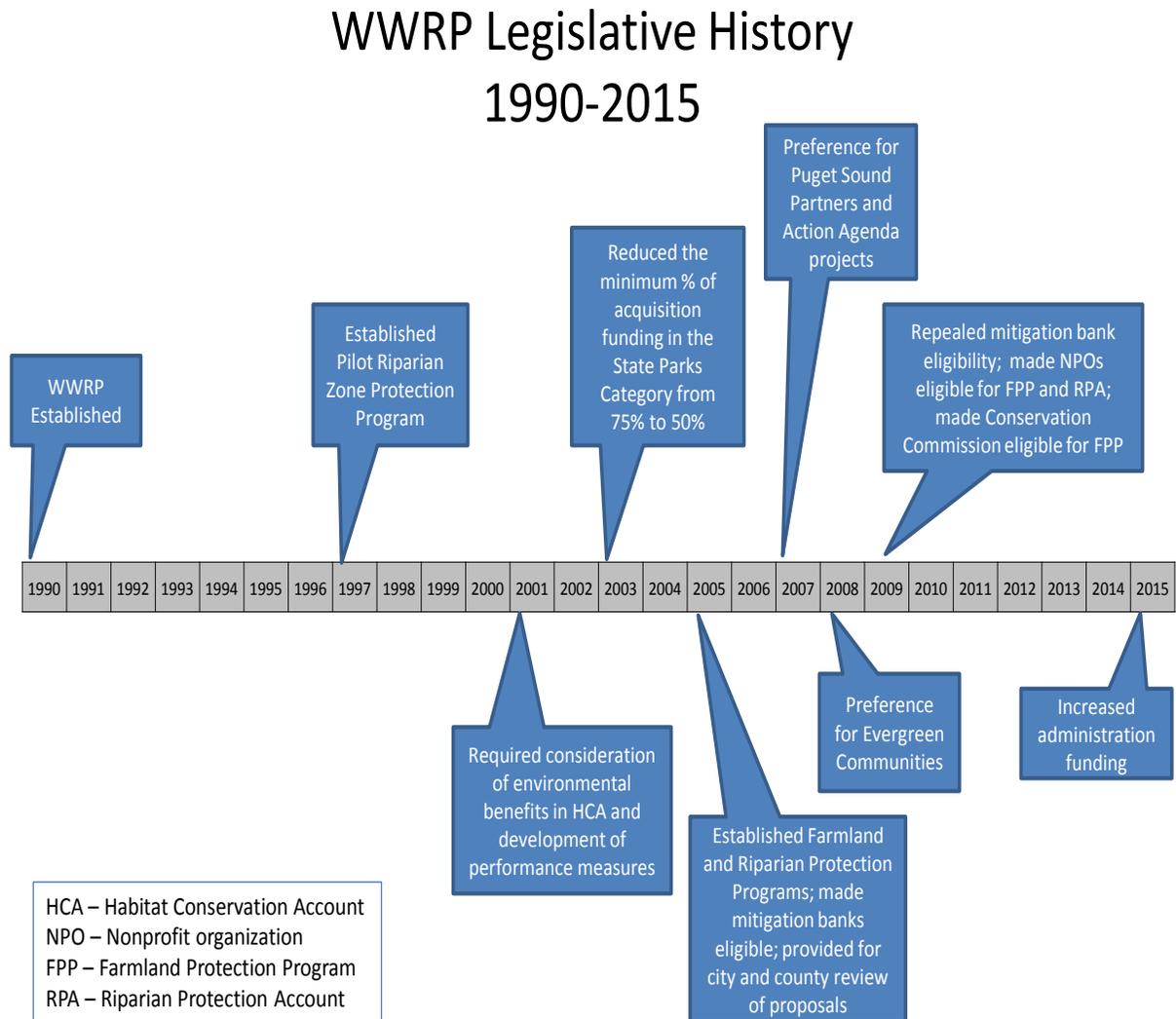
Over the 25-year history of the WWRP, the Legislature has made a number of statutory changes to reflect changing needs and priorities for outdoor recreation and conservation projects. Figure 2 illustrates a timeline of major legislative changes in the program.

²⁰Marks, Elliot. Funding Conservation and Recreation in Washington State: The Remarkable Development and Success of a New Coalition. February, 2015

²¹Former Congressman Mike Lowry went on to serve as Governor from 1993-1997. He and Dan Evans continue to serve as Coalition co-chairs.

²²Marks, Elliot. Funding Conservation and Recreation in Washington State: The Remarkable Development and Success of a New Coalition. February, 2015

Figure 2. WWRP Legislative History

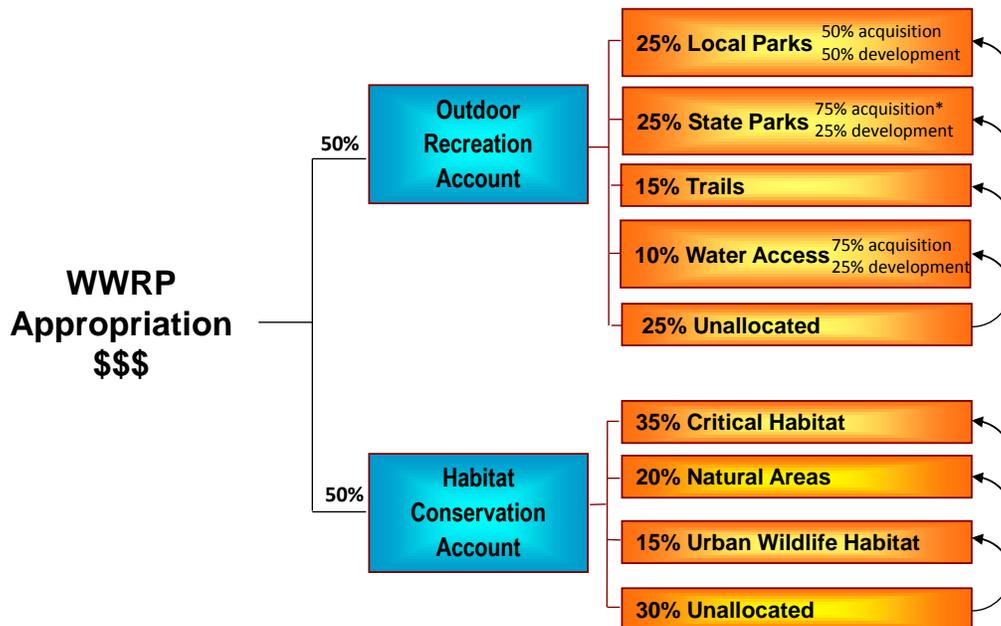


Originally, WWRP had seven funding categories, four receiving legislative appropriations from the Outdoor Recreation Account and three from the Habitat Conservation Account. In addition to providing specific percentages of the capital budget appropriation to the two accounts and the seven funding categories within the accounts, the legislation provided for "unallocated" funding that the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation²³ could apply to high priority

²³In 2007, the Legislature changed the name of the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and named the administering agency the Recreation and Conservation Office. Washington Laws 2007 C 241

projects in the different funding categories at the committee's discretion. The original distribution formulas are summarized in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Allocation of Funds to WWRP 1990 - 2005



*Reduced to 50% in 2003

The first substantive change in the WWRP was in the 1997-1999 Capital Budget, establishing a pilot program to protect riparian zone habitats that implement watershed plans and designating \$4 million from the Habitat Conservation Account for matching grants for acquisition of conservation easements. The pilot program was renewed and funding re-appropriated in the 1999-2001 Capital Budget to allow completion of the ten projects that had been awarded grants.²⁴

In 2001, in response to a Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee report regarding capital budget programs investing in the environment,²⁵ the Legislature passed legislation requiring

²⁴Washington Laws 1997 C 235 § 329 and 1999 C 379 § 917

²⁵Washington Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, 2001. *Investing in the Environment: Environmental Quality Grant & Loan Programs Performance Audit*. Report 01-1.

grant applicants in the Habitat Conservation Account to incorporate the environmental benefits of the project into their grant applications and that these benefits be used in the grant application review process. The legislation also required the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to develop "outcome focused performance measures" to be used to assess the performance of the grant programs.²⁶ The Legislature adopted similar requirements for other natural resource environmental grant programs in other agencies.

In 2003, in response to the recommendations of the State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Funding Task Force to address the State Parks backlog of major capital improvements,²⁷ the Legislature reduced from 75 percent to 50 percent the minimum portion of the State Parks appropriation to be used for acquisition costs (as opposed to development) until June 30, 2009.²⁸ The change was made permanent in 2005.²⁹

The 2005 legislative session³⁰ brought a number of substantive changes in the WWRP, including:

- Adding the Riparian Protection Account and riparian protection grant program.
- Adding the Farmland Preservation Account and farmland preservation grant program.
- Adding a new funding category in the Habitat Conservation Account for state habitat land restoration and enhancement.
- Adding a new funding category in the Outdoor Recreation Account for state recreation land development and renovation.
- Making mitigation banks eligible for funding in the Critical Habitat and Urban Wildlife Categories.
- Removing the unallocated funds in the Habitat Conservation Account and Outdoor Recreation Account.
- Changing formulas allocating funds to the various categories.
- Allowing up to 3 percent of the WWRP appropriation to be used for grant program administration.
- Requiring the Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Natural Resources to pay to counties an amount in lieu of property taxes on acquired land.

²⁶Washington Laws 2001 C 227 § 8

²⁷Washington State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Funding Task Force, 2002. *Final Report: Recommendations to the Washington State Legislature.*

²⁸Washington Laws 2003 C 184 § 1

²⁹Washington Laws 2005 C 303 § 4

³⁰Washington Laws 2005 C 303

- Requiring state and local project applicants to provide local government legislative bodies the opportunity to review and comment on grant applications for projects in their jurisdictions.

The new categories and allocation formulas took effect for funding in the 2007-09 Biennial Budget. Allocation formulas went through an intermediate step, with the formula currently in place taking effect July 1, 2011. The resulting funding categories and allocation formulas are discussed above and illustrated in Figure 1 and Table 1.

In 2005, the Legislature made mitigation banking projects eligible for grants from the Habitat Conservation Account in order to assist public entities in augmenting efforts intended to offset projects negatively impacting the environment and leveraging mitigation funding. To explore the new mitigation banking authority and stimulate creative approaches to establishing mitigation banks, the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation issued a call for grant proposals for a pilot program. Four applications were received and funded, but for a variety of reasons, the projects never were implemented. The authority to fund mitigation banking projects was repealed in 2009 as a result of technical issues around use of tax-exempt bonds to fund projects where income could be generated from sale of mitigation credits and, overall, a poor fit to the intent of the WWRP.³¹

In 2007, the Legislature passed a law requiring preference in the Habitat Conservation Account for sponsors that are Puget Sound partners and projects that are referenced in the Puget Sound *Action Agenda*³² and in 2008 for projects from sponsors designated as Evergreen communities.³³ (Note: These two preferences have not been used because the agencies³⁴ responsible for designating such sponsors and projects have never done so.)

In 2009, in addition to repealing the authority to fund mitigation banking projects, the Legislature passed a law to make "nonprofit nature conservancy corporations or associations" eligible for grants in the riparian habitat and farmland preservation programs and making the Conservation Commission eligible for grants in the farmland preservation program.³⁵ Like other entities eligible for grants in these funding categories, these nonprofit organizations are required to provide at least a 50 percent match and demonstrate projects are a priority in an existing watershed, salmon recovery, or other conservation plan.

In response to a request from RCO, the Legislature in 2015 amended the formula for determining the portion of the WWRP appropriation that could be used for grant program administration.³⁶

³¹Washington Laws 2009 C 16

³²Washington Laws 2007 C 341

³³Washington Laws 2008 C 299

³⁴Puget Sound Partnership and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (now within the Department of Commerce)

³⁵Washington Laws 2009 C 341

³⁶Washington Laws 2015 C 183

Funding History

The Legislature appropriates funding for the WWRP through tax-exempt general obligation bonds authorized in the biennial capital budget. Over the 25-year history of the program, funding has ranged from \$45 million to \$100 million (Table 3) and has, on average, trended upward. Over 14 biennia, the average appropriation is \$56.4 million.

Table 3: Historical WWRP Appropriations

Biennium	Appropriation
1989-91	\$53,000,000
1991-93	\$61,050,000
1993-95	\$65,000,000
1995-97	\$45,000,000
1997-99	\$45,000,000
1999-01	\$48,000,000
2001-03	\$45,000,000
2003-05	\$45,000,000
2005-07	\$50,000,000
2007-09	\$100,000,000
2009-11	\$70,000,000
2011-13	\$42,000,000
2013-15	\$65,000,000
2015-17	\$55,323,000

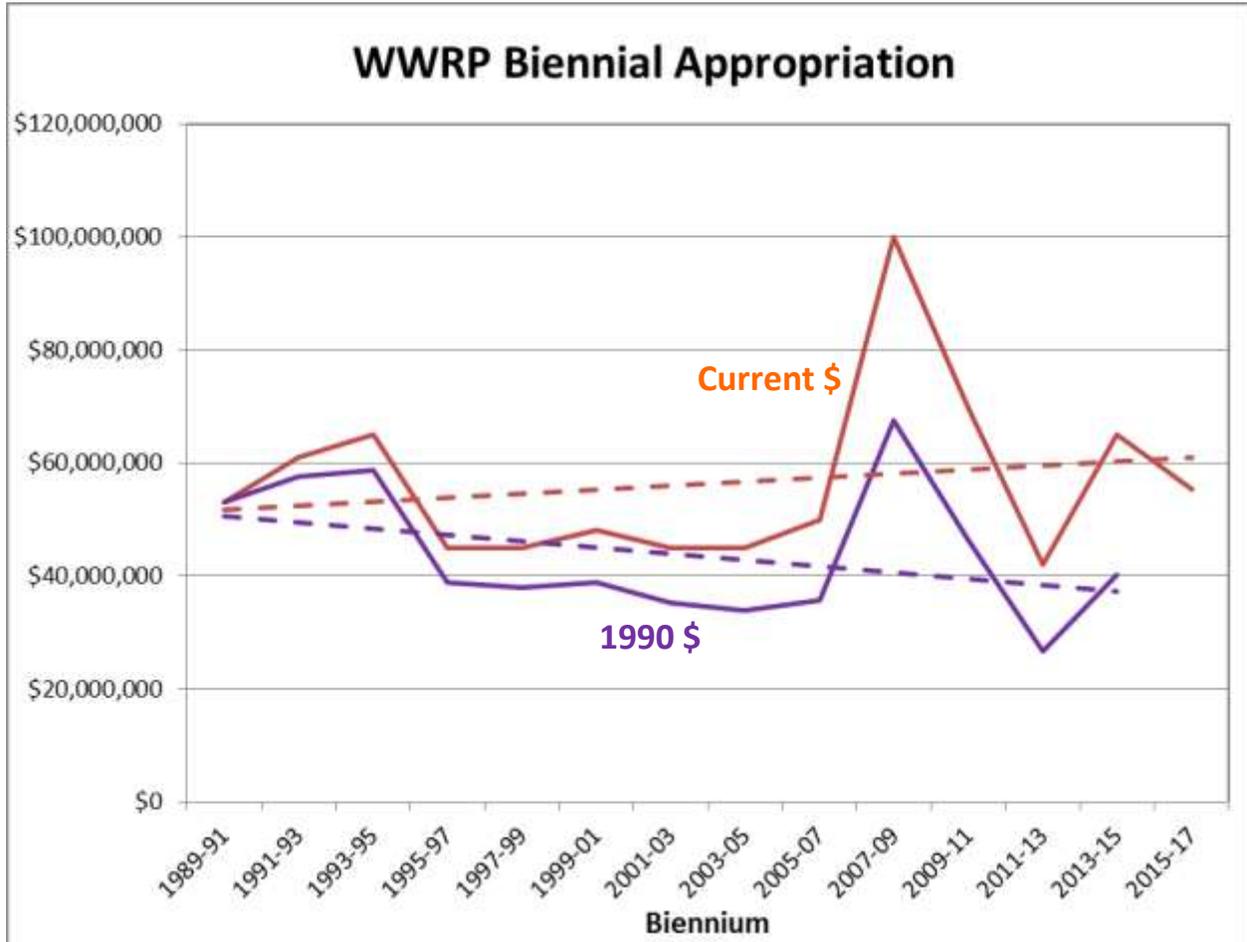
Over the history of the program, inflation, including costs of construction and acquiring real property, has reduced the value of WWRP dollars. Since the inception of the program in 1990, the Implicit Price Deflator for Personal Consumption (IPD) increased 61.3 percent,³⁷ the Producer Price Index for All Commodities (PPI) increased 76.5 percent.³⁸ From 2000 to 2014, the IPD increased 30.8 percent, the PPI 54.7 percent, the Turner Building Cost Index 56 percent,³⁹ and average, statewide real property value 95 percent. Figure 4 shows a graph, including trend lines, of the biennial WWRP appropriation in current dollars and in 1990 dollars adjusted for inflation using the IPD—a conservative inflation measure for a program funding construction and real property acquisition.

³⁷U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

³⁸ibid

³⁹Turner Construction Company, <http://www.turnerconstruction.com/cost-index>

Figure 4. The biennial WWRP appropriation in current and 1990 dollars, corrected for inflation using the Implicit Price Deflator. Dashed lines are linear trend lines.



Application History

The history of WWRP grant applications is shown in Figure 5. There was an increase in the number of applications in the 2007-09 biennium when grants became available in the new Riparian Protection, Farmland Preservation, State Lands Development, and State Lands Restoration categories. The total dollar amount requested and the appropriation are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 5. Total Number of WWRP Grant Applications, 1993-2015.

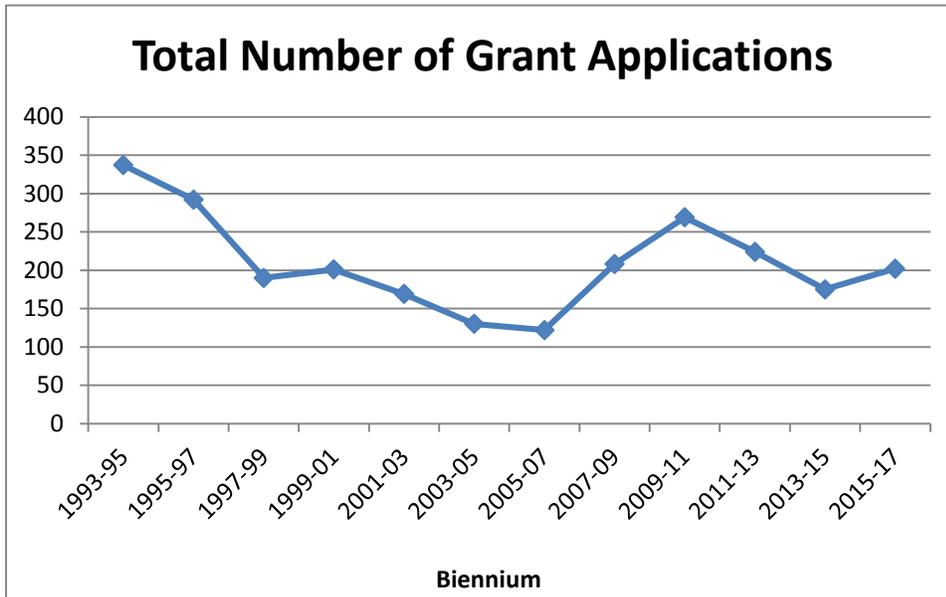
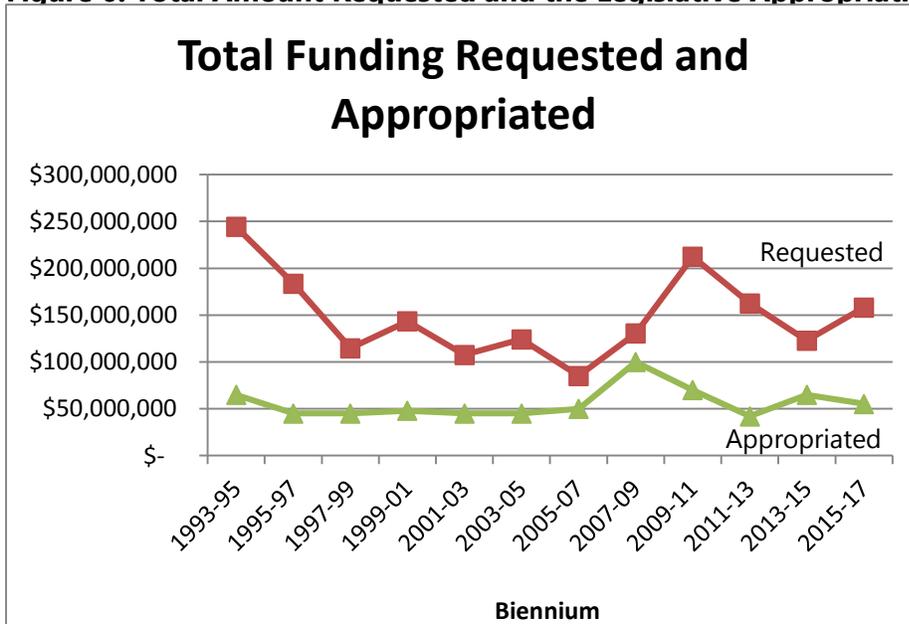
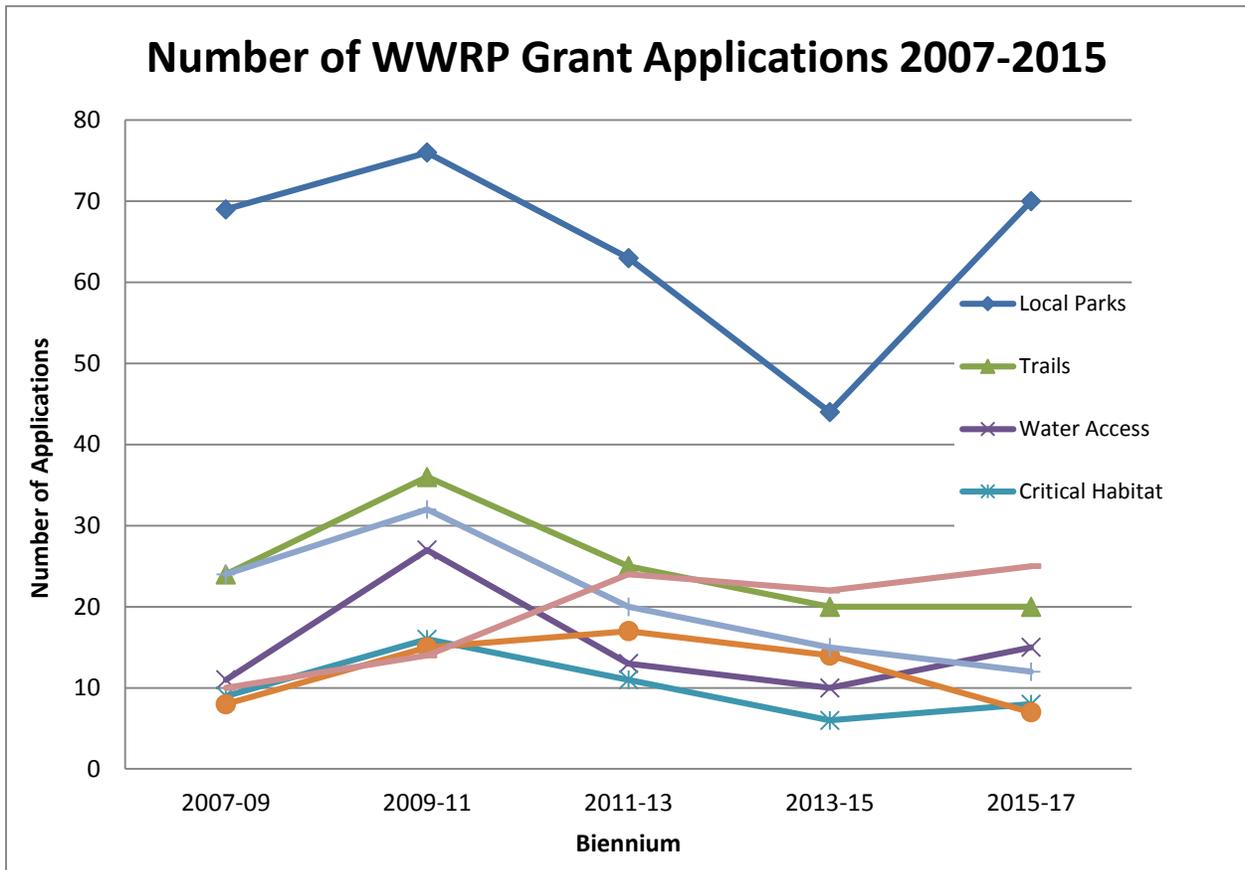


Figure 6. Total Amount Requested and the Legislative Appropriation, 1993-2015.



The number of WWRP grant applications by funding category is shown in Figure 7 for 2007-2017. Categories where only state agencies compete are not shown because these categories essentially are not-competitive and the number of applications has been fairly constant. A complete table of grant requests by category can be found in Appendix D.

Figure 7. Number of WWRP Grant Applications by Grant Category, 2007-15. Categories where only state agencies compete are not shown.



Who Receives WWRP Grants?

State agencies, counties, cities, nonprofit organizations, colleges, ports, and Native American tribes are eligible for grants in some or all of the 11 funding categories. Table 4 shows the distribution of funding from 1990-2014.

Table 4. WWRP Funding Distribution by Grant Recipient Type, 1990-2014.

Grant Awards by Sponsor Type*		
Grant Recipient	\$	%
State Agencies	\$434,357,314	60.81
Cities**	\$158,431,084	22.18
Counties	\$103,978,089	14.56
Nonprofits****	\$15,925,499	2.23
Colleges	\$280,120	0.04
Ports	\$843,381	0.12
Tribes	\$425,382	0.06
Total	\$714,240,868	100

*Does not include grant recipients' match
 **Cities include park and school districts
 ***Counties include conservation districts
 ****Eligible since 2009; includes land trusts and conservancies, fish conservancy groups

Participation by Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit nature conservancy corporations or associations are defined in Revised Code of Washington 84.34.250 as:

"...an organization which qualifies as being tax exempt under 26 U.S.C. section 501(c) (of the Internal Revenue Code) as it exists on June 25, 1976 and one which has as one of its principal purposes the conducting or facilitating of scientific research; the conserving of natural resources, including but not limited to biological resources, for the general public; or the conserving of open spaces, including but not limited to wildlife habitat to be utilized as public access areas, for the use and enjoyment of the general public."

Table 5 shows the nonprofit organizations that have received grants in the farmland preservation and riparian protection programs since being made eligible for WWRP grants in 2009 through the 2013-15 Biennium.

Table 5. Nonprofit Organizations Receiving WWRP Grants by Funding Category and Number of Grants Received

Farmland Preservation Program	Number of Grants	Riparian Protection and Riparian Habitat* Program	Number of Grants
Blue Mountain Land Trust	1	Capitol Land Trust	1
Columbia Land Trust	2	Columbia Land Trust	1
Jefferson Land Trust	1	Great Peninsula Conservancy	1
Okanogan Land Trust	3	Jefferson Land Trust	1
PCC Farmland Trust	1	Methow Conservancy	1
Whidbey Camano Land Trust	3	Nisqually Land Trust	1
		North Olympic Land Trust	1

Farmland Preservation Program	Number of Grants	Riparian Protection and Riparian Habitat* Program	Number of Grants
		The Nature Conservancy	2
		Trout Unlimited Monroe	1
		Whidbey Camano Land Trust	1
		Wild Fish Conservancy	1

*Pilot program 1997-2001

To date, the total number of acres acquired or intended to be acquired by nonprofit organizations in the Farmland Preservation Account is 3,827—all through conservation easements. For the Riparian Protection Account, a total of 8,768 acres were acquired or intended to be acquired, of which 3,866 were through conservation easements and 4,902 were purchased in fee.

Participation by Washington Tribes

Washington's federally recognized Native American tribes are eligible to participate in 6 of the 11 funding categories. Over the history of the program, 15 applications have been received; 5 were funded and the rest remain as alternates or have been withdrawn. Table 6 shows the tribes successful in receiving WWRP grants.

Table 6. Tribes Receiving WWRP Grants by Funding Category and Number of Grants Received

Tribes	WWRP Category
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe	Local Parks
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe (2)	Trails
Squaxin Island Tribe	Riparian Protection
Suquamish Tribe	Local Parks
Swinomish Tribe	Local Parks

To date, tribes have acquired 8.74 acres in the Local Parks Category and 2.02 acres in the Trails Category. The Squaxin Island riparian project is just getting underway.

What Types of Projects Are Funded?

Forty-seven percent (\$337,495,403) of the WWRP funds awarded since the establishment of the program in 1990 was for outdoor recreation projects and 53 percent (\$376,745,465) was for conservation projects.

Slightly over three-quarters of WWRP funds awarded since the establishment of the program have been used for acquisition of real property, either in fee or through purchase of property rights in the form of conservation easements, long-term leases, and other mechanisms. The remaining funding has been used for development of recreation and public access facilities (21.2 percent) and environmental restoration (1.3 percent). See Table 7.

Table 7. Grant Awards by Project Type, 1990-2014

Grant Category	\$	%
Acquisition	\$552,228,553	77.3
Development	\$151,676,751	21.2
Restoration	\$9,402,028	1.3
Administration	\$933,537	0.1
Total	\$714,240,868	100

A total of 293,140 acres have been acquired (or are planned to be acquired) using WWRP grants. The types of real property acquisition are illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Type of Property Rights Acquired, 1990-2014

