

Legislative Direction on the Review of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.  
Section 3163 of 2EHB 1115 (2015)

(2)(a) \$60,000 of the appropriation is provided solely for the Washington state recreation and conservation office to convene and facilitate a stakeholder process to review and make recommendations for statutory revisions to the Washington wildlife and recreation program. The review must be conducted with consideration of the potential impacts to existing and future relationships with local governments, the federal government, and Tribal Nations. The review must include analysis of the program design, including criteria, information and coordination required for projects to proceed through the ranking and selection processes. Existing allocation categories and percentages must be evaluated to determine how well the system balances the many current statewide needs, including effectiveness in assessing and serving the needs of smaller and traditionally underserved populations, as well as communities with lower per-capita income levels. The ability of the general public to access program- funded projects must also be considered, as well as support for projects and landscapes with multiple values. The review must include examination of ways in which lands are acquired by state agencies through the program, such as gifts, mitigation, acquisition through direct negotiation with landowners, acquisition from land trusts and other nongovernmental organizations that are intermediaries or short- term owners for which long-term ownership and management by a public agency was the purpose of the nongovernmental organization's acquisition, easement acquisitions, and other pathways by which habitat lands are either acquired or managed, or both, by the state. Advantages and disadvantages of all approaches used by the program must be considered, including acquisition and stewardship costs, timing of land availability when compared to funding availability by the state, and other conservation alternatives that could be considered instead of state ownership, such as long-term management by a nongovernmental organization, another public agency, or conservation through less-than-fee approaches such as by easement or other landowner agreements.

(b) The recreation and conservation office may convene stakeholders and facilitate activities as needed. The agency must seek input and meaningfully involve a broad base of interested stakeholders that includes Tribal governments and those with specific subject-matter expertise relevant to the project categories of the Washington wildlife and recreation program. They shall seek broad and diverse legislative input and invite interested legislators to provide information and ideas, including, at a minimum, the majority and minority leadership of the capital committees in the senate and house of representatives. They shall coordinate with the appropriate standing committees of the legislature and may consult with other interested parties, as may be appropriate, for technical advice and assistance.

(c) The final report must include recommended statutory and policy changes to the appropriate committees of the legislature on or before December 1, 2015.