

Manual 21

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account Grant Program

March 2016

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At a Glance

Purpose	The program provides funding to acquire, restore, or improve aquatic lands for public purposes. Grants may be used to provide or improve public access to those lands and associated waters.
Who may Apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities and towns • Counties • Native American tribes • Special purpose districts • State agencies
Is a Plan Required?	Yes, an outdoor recreation comprehensive plan is needed to apply.
What are Navigable Waters?	All projects must be associated with <u>navigable waters of the state</u> . Contact the Washington Department of Natural Resources aquatic land manager for your area to see if your project is on navigable waters. Contact information is online at www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/aqr_land_manager_map.pdf .
What Types of Projects are Eligible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development or renovation • Land acquisition • Restoration
What are the Grant Limits?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition: \$1 million • Development, renovation, and restoration: \$500,000 • Combination of acquisition and development or restoration: \$1 million, of which not more than \$500,000 may be for development or restoration costs.
What Must I Contribute?	50 percent (at least 10% of the total project cost must be from a non-state, non-federal contribution, except for tribes)
How is my Project Evaluated?	An advisory committee hears your in-person presentation and scores your project.
When are Applications Due	May 2, 2016
When are Grants Awarded?	June 2017
What's new this year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised scoring for combination projects. • Multi-site trail development now allowed

Section 1: Introduction

In this section, you'll learn about:

- ✓ ALEA program
- ✓ About the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
- ✓ Where to get information
- ✓ Grant process and timeline

Overview

The Legislature created the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account¹ (ALEA) in 1984 as a way to invest revenue raised from Washington's shorelines into projects meant to preserve and restore these valuable lands.

Aquatic lands mean all tidelands, shore lands, harbor areas, and the beds of navigable waters. These lands were dedicated at statehood for maritime trade, transportation, agriculture, and commerce, and are vital to the state's economy.

ALEA grants are funded entirely by money raised by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources from activities on those lands, such as leases to marinas on state-owned waterfront sites and the sale of harvest rights for geoduck clams.

ALEA grants may be used to buy, improve, or protect aquatic lands for public purposes. Grants also may be used to provide or improve public access to aquatic lands. The ALEA program is guided by the multiple goals of re-establishing naturally, self-sustaining ecological functions; providing people with access to the water; and increasing public awareness of aquatic lands as a finite natural resource and irreplaceable public heritage.

¹Enabling legislation is Revised Code of Washington 79.105.

About the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

A portion of ALEA is administered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, which is 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) supports 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.

Manual Authority

This manual provides policies and guidelines for the ALEA grant program. It is created under the board's authority in Chapter 42.56 of the Revised Code of Washington and reflects the specific statutory requirements of Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150, Washington Administrative Code 286, and the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policies.

Who Makes Decisions

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board makes the final decisions although some decisions it has delegated to the agency director.

Board Decisions

The following list summarizes many project decisions that are made by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in a public meeting or by a subcommittee of the board. Each is in accord with statutes, rules, and board policies.

- Initial grant approval.
- A project cost increase of more than 10 percent of the project total in the project agreement for board-funded projects. Cost increases are allowed only in certain grant programs. Review the cost increase information in this manual for more details.
- A "conversion" that changes the project site or how the site is used from that described in the project agreement and Deed of Right or Assignment of Rights. See RCO's *Manual 7, Long-Term Obligations*.
- A significant reduction in the project's scope after receiving a grant. Typically, the board will make decisions about scope reductions if the RCO director thinks the

project's evaluation score would have been different with the reduced scope. Not included are changes that do not modify significantly the way the public uses a facility, the intended opportunity, or restoration objective funded.

- Changes in policy; for example, establishing new grant limits or eligible expenditures.
- Time extensions beyond 4 years of the initial grant award.

Director Decisions

The RCO director, or designee, makes many project decisions based on rules and board policies. The range of decisions includes authorizing payments to approving cost increases to terminating projects.

A project sponsor may request that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board reconsider a decision made by the director. To request reconsideration, the project sponsor must send a letter to the board chair at least 60 calendar days before a board meeting. The request is added to the board's meeting agenda and the project sponsor then may address the board at the meeting. The board's decision is final.

Where to Get Information

Recreation and Conservation Office
Natural Resources Building
1111 Washington Street
Olympia, WA 98501
E-mail: info@rco.wa.gov

Telephone: (360) 902-3000
FAX: (360) 902-3026
TTY: (360) 902-1996
Web site: www.rco.wa.gov

Mailing Address

PO Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

RCO grant managers are available to answer questions about this manual and grant program. Please feel free to call.

Other Grant Manuals You Will Need

The manuals below provide additional information for grants and are available on the RCO Web site. Each can be made available in an alternative format.

- *Manual 3, Acquisition Projects* at www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_3_acq.pdf

- *Manual 4, Development Projects* at www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_4.pdf
- *Manual 5, Restoration Projects* at www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_5.pdf
- *Manual 7, Long-term Obligations* at www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_7.pdf
- *Manual 8, Reimbursements* at www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_8-reimbursement.pdf

Grant Process and Timeline

RCO offers grants in even-numbered years, in conjunction with the state budget. The grant process, from application to grant award, spans 18 months, and is outlined below. While the order of the steps in this process remains consistent, for precise dates, visit the RCO Web site.

Even-numbered Years

Webinars. RCO conducts workshop Webinars (an online meeting) in the winter or early spring to provide information about the grant programs offered that year.

Entering Applications. RCO strongly encourages applicants to start the online application early. PRISM Online (www.rco.wa.gov/prism_app/about_prism.shtml) is usually open by March 1st. Applicants log into PRISM Online and select the "Get Started/Start a New Application" button to enter grant application information. RCO uses this information to assign an outdoor grants manager. This manager guides applicants through the process, reviews application materials, helps determine whether proposals are eligible, and may visit the project site to discuss site-specific details.

Applications Due. Applications are due in early May of even-numbered years. The application includes the data entered into PRISM and all required attachments. Applicants should "submit" the application before the deadline. The "Check Application for Errors" button on the "Submit Application" screen will indicate which pages are incomplete. Incomplete applications and applications received after the deadline will be returned unless RCO's director has approved a late submission in advance.

Technical Reviews. Applicants may attend a technical review meeting, where they present their projects to an ALEA advisory committee and RCO staff, who review projects to ensure they are eligible, identify any issues of concern, and provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. Applicants make an oral presentation, illustrated with maps, graphics, and photographs using PowerPoint.® Grants managers

will review the applications also and send comments to applicants. Applicants then can make changes to improve the projects, if needed. Applicants must complete all changes by the technical completion deadline.

Technical Completion Deadline. RCO will establish a technical completion deadline by which applicants must make all changes to their applications. After this date, applicants will not be able to make any further changes. RCO will score applicable evaluation criteria as of this date.

Board Submits Biennial Budget Request. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board submits to the Governor a recommended funding amount for the next biennium for the grant program.

Project Evaluation. Applicants make an oral presentation, illustrated with maps, graphics, and photographs in PowerPoint® to the advisory committee, which scores each proposal against a set of criteria approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

Post-Evaluation Conference. After project evaluations, RCO staff tabulates the scores and shares the results with the advisory committee. The committee discusses the preliminary ranked lists and the application and evaluation processes. The public may join the advisory committee conference call; however, to ensure a fair and equitable process, guests may not testify. Shortly after the conference call, staff posts the preliminary ranked list on RCO's Web site at www.rco.wa.gov/grants/eval_results.shtml. The resulting ranked list of projects is the basis for the funding recommendation to the board.

Board Approves Project List. In an open public meeting, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers the recommendations of the advisory committee, written public comments submitted before the meeting, and public testimony at the meeting. The board then approves the list of projects for submittal to the Governor for inclusion in the state capital budget.

When considering a list of projects for submittal, the board will use both anticipated available funding and project evaluation results to determine the length of the list. This list normally will exceed anticipated funding and will include alternate projects. Applicants are cautioned that the board's recommendation of project lists to the Governor is not the same as funding approval.

More projects are recommended than requested funding so that alternate projects can be ready if projects higher on the list fail or use less money than requested.

Projects that, because of their relative ranking, are beyond available funding levels are known as "alternate projects."

Governor Approves Projects. Typically, the Governor's capital budget request to the Legislature includes funding for ALEA. list.

Odd-numbered Years

Legislature Approves Projects. 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.

Proof of Matching Funds. All applicants must provide proof of the availability of matching funds by the match certification deadline, which is at least 1 calendar month before board approval of funding.²

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

Pre-agreement Materials. After grant awards, applicants have 2 calendar months³ to submit pre-agreement documents (checklist provided by grants managers.) RCO staff then prepares and issues the grant contracts, called project agreements. Applicant must return the signed agreements within 60 days from the date RCO sends the agreement to the applicants for signature.⁴ Once the agreements are signed, the applicants, now referred to as project sponsors, may begin their projects, per the terms of the project agreements. Each agreement will be written and monitored for compliance by RCO staff. See *Manual 7, Long-term Obligations* for more information.

Successful Applicants' Workshop. After the board approves funding, RCO hosts a workshop for successful grant applicants. This workshop covers:

- Project sponsor responsibility for compliance with the terms of the project agreement.
- Amending the project agreement to address project changes, time extensions, scope modifications, special conditions, and cost increases.
- Land acquisition, including tools developed to assist applicants through the acquisition procedures for state and federal grants.

²Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(1)(c)

³Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(1)(d)

⁴Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(1)(e) reads 3 calendar months, but the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted a 60-day period by policy.

- Development and restoration, including construction plans and specifications, barrier-free design requirements, cultural resources, and bid procedures.
- Planning, including deliverables and reporting requirements.
- Project implementation, including meeting milestones, permitting, progress reports, inspections, valuing donations, using RCO's online resources for understanding billing procedures, project close-out, and long-term compliance.

Ongoing

Project Implementation. Grant recipients must complete projects promptly. To help ensure reasonable and timely project completion, accountability, and the proper use of funds, applicants will:

- Submit only projects that will be completed within 4 years of the grant award.
- Provide assurances that the project can be completed within a reasonable time frame, which does not exceed the implementation period approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.
- Develop milestones for project implementation that do not exceed 4 years.
- Begin project implementation quickly and aggressively to show measurable progress towards meeting project milestones.
- Submit progress reports at intervals as designated by the RCO project agreement.

RCO may terminate projects that do not meet critical milestones established in the project agreement.

Project Completion. When a project is completed, sponsors have 90 days to submit the final bill, final report, and supporting documents needed to close the project. If the bill and documentation are not submitted within 6 months of the end date within the agreement, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may terminate the project without payment.

Section 2: Policies

In this section, you'll learn about:

- ✓ Program goals and objectives
- ✓ Eligible applicants
- ✓ Eligible project types and locations
- ✓ Requirements and other things to know
- ✓ Project area stewardship and ongoing obligations

Program Goals and Objectives

Board Priorities

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages projects that involve both access to aquatic lands and the enhancement, improvement, and protection of aquatic lands.

ALEA Goals

ALEA grants are awarded to projects that support one or more of the following goals:

- Improve the ecological function of aquatic resources through the restoration and enhancement of critical marine, estuarine, and freshwater aquatic land.
- Protect existing, high-quality aquatic land that will contribute to important ecological functions and processes.
- Provide new opportunities for people to get to the water and access aquatic resources for recreation and education.
- Renovate or improve existing public access to aquatic lands for recreation and education.

- Create small boat and pedestrian-oriented access to aquatic lands that is designed to protect the integrity of the environment.
- Increase public awareness of aquatic lands as a finite natural resource with irreplaceable public heritage.

Program Objectives

To accomplish the above goals, the ALEA grant program seeks to fund projects that meet the following objectives:

- Preserve, enhance, or improve naturally self-sustaining aquatic and riparian areas that are priorities in the larger ecological landscape.
- Address deficiencies in public access opportunities or improve existing facilities.
- Provide immediately useable waterfront access.
- Integrate public access in a way that is compatible with the physical features of the site and minimizes impacts to the environment.
- Include interpretive or educational elements.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include:

- Cities, counties, towns
- Federally recognized Native American tribes
- Special purpose district, port district, or other political subdivision of the state if legally authorized to acquire and develop public open space, habitat, or recreation lands.
- State agencies

Federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private entities are not eligible, but are encouraged to seek a partnership with an eligible entity.

Legal Opinion for First-Time Applicants

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board requires all organizations wishing to apply for a grant for the first time to submit a legal opinion that the applicant is eligible

to do all of the activities below. The legal opinion is required only once to establish eligibility.

- Receive and expend public funds including funds from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.
- Contract with the State of Washington and/or the United States of America.
- Meet any statutory definitions required for board grant programs.
- Acquire and manage interests in real property for conservation or outdoor recreation purposes.
- Develop and/or provide stewardship for structures or facilities eligible under board rules or policies.
- Undertake planning activities incidental thereto.
- Commit the applicant to statements made in any grant proposal.

Eligible Project Locations

ALEA projects must be associated with navigable waters of the state as defined by Washington Administrative Code 332-30-106, Revised Code of Washington 79.105, and Article 17 of the State Constitution.

All marine waters are, by definition, navigable, as are portions of rivers influenced by tides. Navigable rivers and lakes are those determined by the judiciary, those bounded by meander lines, or those that could have been used for commerce at the time of statehood. RCO staff can help you determine whether a freshwater body meets the navigability criteria.

Land adjacent to a navigable water body may be purchased with ALEA grants only if the land will contribute to the enhancement, improvement, or protection of aquatic lands or improve public access to aquatic lands.

Projects on State-owned Aquatic Lands

If a project will occur over or in a navigable body of water, an authorization to use state-owned aquatic lands may be needed.

The Department of Natural Resources' aquatic land managers will help the grant applicant determine if the project will fall on state-owned aquatic lands and provide more information on its authorization process. See the land manager coverage map

online at www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/aqr_land_manager_map.pdf for contact information for the Department of Natural Resources aquatic land managers.

If the project is on state-owned aquatic lands, you will need to secure a lease or easement to use those lands from the Washington Department of Natural Resources. The lease or easement may take up to a year to receive. RCO requires the executed lease or easement within 60 days after board funding approval to show control and tenure for the site. The lease or easement is required before the project will be placed under agreement, unless RCO's director approves in advance.

The following online resources may be helpful to review:

- *Grant Projects on State-owned Aquatic Lands* at www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/em_fs11_018.pdf
- *Leasing State-owned Aquatic Lands* at www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/em_fs11_019_leasing_soal.pdf
- *Boundaries of State-owned Aquatic Lands* at www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/aqr_aquatic_land_boundaries.pdf
- *Caring for Washington's Nearshore Environments* at www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/em_fs10_001.pdf

Geographic Distribution

The ALEA grant program strives to fund projects across the state of Washington. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages applications from eastern Washington. Known navigable freshwater bodies in eastern Washington include:

- Calispell Creek
- Calispell Lake
- Lake Chelan
- Cle Elum Lake
- Columbia River
- Curlew Lake
- Deer Lake
- Diamond Lake
- Eloika Lake
- Fishtrap Lake
- Kachess Lake
- Keechelus Lake
- Liberty Lake
- Loon Lake
- Lost Lake
- Medical Lake
- Methow River (lower)
- Moses Lake
- Newman Lake
- Okanogan River
- Osoyoos Lake
- Pacific Lake
- Palmer Lake
- Pend Oreille River

- Rock Lake
- Snake River
- Spirit Lake
- Spokane River
- Sprague Lake
- Waitts Lake
- Wenatchee Lake
- Wenatchee River
- West Medical Lake
- Yakima River (portions)

Puget Sound Projects

The law⁵ prevents the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board from funding any project in this grant program that is in conflict with the Puget Sound Partnership’s *Action Agenda*. A project may be in conflict with the *Action Agenda* if it results in water quality degradation in Puget Sound or the loss of ecosystem processes, structure, or functions, and the impacts are not fully mitigated using state-approved protocols.

An applicant for a project in the Puget Sound area, which is defined as the geographic areas within Water Resource Inventory Areas 1 through 19, inclusive, must include in the adopted resolution or application authorization a statement certifying that the project is not in conflict with the *Action Agenda*.

The law⁶ requires the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to give funding consideration to projects in this program that are referenced in the *Action Agenda*. Applicants for projects in the Puget Sound area may address a question in the evaluation criteria that addresses whether the project is referenced in the *Action Agenda*. There are no additional points for this question, but the evaluator has the ability within the current point system to give points based on the answer to this question. The *Action Agenda* can be found at www.psp.wa.gov.

Eligible Projects

Acquisition

Grants may be used to buy aquatic lands or adjacent lands or purchase lesser interests such conservation easements or access easements. Acquisition must result in an opportunity for reasonable public access. Additional rules for land acquisition are in *Manual 3, Acquisition Projects*.

⁵Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150

⁶Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150

Restoration (Improvement)

A restoration project brings a site back to its historic function as part of a natural ecosystem or improves the ecological functionality of a site. Restoration projects may include planting native vegetation, altering or removing structures, and other activities that would make the site a self-sustaining, predominantly natural ecosystem that doesn't require continual intervention to function. Restoration projects must allow or provide public access to aquatic lands. Restoration projects with interpretive or educational elements are strongly encouraged. Additional requirements for restoration projects may be found in *Manual 5, Restoration Projects*.

Development

A development project results in the construction of or work resulting in new elements, including but not limited to structures, facilities, and/or materials to enhance outdoor recreation resources. The projects improve, renovate, or provide new facilities that help people get to the waterfront for water-dependent activities. Examples include:

- Equipment and boot decontamination facilities
- Fishing piers and platforms
- Interpretive signs and kiosks
- Launch and moorage facilities for small boats⁷
- Non-motorized paths, trails, ramps, stairs
- Open-water swim areas
- Parking lots and entry roads
- Restrooms, benches, tables
- Viewpoints, platforms, blinds for observing wildlife
- Site restoration

Development projects including interpretive or educational features are strongly encouraged. Additional guidelines for development projects are found in *Manual 4, Development Projects*.

⁷"Small boats" are non-motorized boats that may be launched by hand, or motorboats under 16 feet and with motors of less than 10 horsepower.

Phased Projects

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board recommends that applicants consider the potential problems expensive and large-scale projects usually create and discuss phasing them with RCO staff. Phased projects are subject to the following rules:

- Approval of any single phase is limited to that phase. No approval or endorsement is given or implied toward future phases.
- Each phase must stand on its merits as a viable or complete recreation experience and is not dependent on the completion of future phases or work.
- Each phase must be submitted as a separate application.
- Progress and sponsor performance on other grants may be considered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board when making decisions on project proposals.

If two or more projects are ranked equally through the evaluation process, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will give preference to the project that has had a previous phase funded by the board.

Combination Projects

Combination projects involve two or more of the following project types: acquisition, development, or restoration. To help ensure that combination projects with an acquisition component are finished on time, at least 1 month before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers approval of funding, applicants must secure the property by one of the following methods:

- Acquisition under the "Waiver of Retroactivity" policies and procedures in *Manual 3, Acquisition Projects*.
- Have property in escrow pending board grant approval. Closing must occur within 90 days after the funding meeting.
- Obtain an option on the property that extends past the board's funding meeting. Execution of the option must occur within 90 days after this meeting.
- If the acquisition is for less than fee interest, and if not already acquired via a "Waiver of Retroactivity," applicants also must provide draft copies of all leases or easements to RCO for review. Execution of the leases or easements must occur within 90 days after the funding meeting.

For the acquisitions to remain eligible, sponsors must follow all of the requirements and procedures outlined in *Manual 3, Acquisition Projects*.

Multi-Site Development or Renovation

Trails⁸

Applications for development of trails or water trails may include more than one location under the following conditions:

1. The proposed trail or water trail development at each location is:
 - On the same body of water in the same county for water trail systems,
 - On the same trail in the same county for land-based trail systems, or
 - On the same land or water trail system within two counties of the sponsor's management unit.
2. The proposed development at each location must result in a contiguous trail experience under the control of the sponsor when the project is complete. The contiguous trail experience does not need to be fully developed, but it must be open and maintained for use by the public.
3. Sponsors must maintain the area developed at the locations funded in the grant as well as the area of the contiguous trail experience for the period of ongoing obligations in the project agreement.

Ineligible Project Elements

The following project elements are ineligible for ALEA grants:

- Animal species introduction or propagation, other than biological controls for invasive species, etc.
- Concessionaire buildings or concessionaire space in existing or proposed structures.
- Crop plantings.
- Environmental cleanup of illegal activities (i.e., removal of contaminated materials or derelict vessels, trash pickup, methamphetamine labs, etc.).

⁸Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-24

- Fish or wildlife production facilities such as fish hatcheries for the production of sport fish populations.
- Indoor facilities such as swimming pools, community centers, museums, and interpretive or environmental visitor centers
- Offices, shops, residences, and meeting rooms
- Operating, overhead, or incidental costs
- Operation and maintenance costs
- Legally mandated clean-up or costs of actions required as mitigation not associated with the approved project. Costs associated with mitigation directly related to the funded project are eligible, provided the cost does not exceed 25 percent of the total project cost.
- Monitoring costs related to long-term compliance (i.e., conservation easements).
- Projects identified as mitigation as part of a habitat conservation plan approved by the federal government for incidental take of endangered or threatened species.

Applicants may want to review, *Manual 3, Acquisition Projects* and *Manual 4, Development Projects* for other ineligible costs.

Pre-agreement Costs

RCO will pay only for work performed after project agreements have been signed by both RCO and project sponsors with one exception. Expenses, such as preliminary designs, environmental assessments, construction plans and specifications, cultural resource surveys, and permits; and real property acquired under a "Waiver of Retroactivity" approved by RCO, may be eligible for reimbursement. Construction performed before the execution of a project agreement and compliance with cultural resource laws will not be eligible for payment and may jeopardize funding for the entire project.

Requirements and Other Things to Know

Not a Public Hearings Board

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board is not a public hearings board and does not decide land use issues. To the extent possible, all project proposals should

demonstrate adequate public notification and review and have the support of the public body applying for the grant.

Landowner Acknowledgement of Application

As part of any grant application for acquisition of real property, the project sponsor must demonstrate that the landowner is aware of the project sponsor's interest in purchasing property rights. Applicants may meet this requirement by completing one of four options as detailed in *RCO Manual 3, Acquisition Projects*.

Cultural Resources Review

Governor's Executive Order 05-05, Archaeological and Cultural Resources,⁹ directs state agencies to review all capital construction projects and land acquisition projects carried out for the purpose of capital construction. Such projects must be reviewed for potential impacts to cultural resources¹⁰ to ensure that reasonable action is taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to these resources.

Review Process

- RCO initiates the review process. Using materials submitted as part of the application, including the cultural resource reporting forms, RCO consults with the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and affected Native American tribes for a determination of possible impacts to archaeological and cultural resources.
- The outcome of the consultation may require an applicant to complete a cultural resources survey and/or continuation of the consultation process to determine next steps. The consultation must be completed, and a "Notice to Proceed" issued, before any ground disturbing activities may occur. Construction started without a "Notice to Proceed" will be considered a breach of contract.

See RCO Manuals 3, 4, or 5 for additional details.

Control of the Land

To protect investments made by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and to assure public access to those investments, sponsors must have adequate control of project sites to construct, operate, and maintain the areas for the term required by the

⁹www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/exe_order/eo_05-05.pdf

¹⁰Cultural resources means archeological and historical sites and artifacts, and traditional areas or items of religious, ceremonial, and social uses to affected tribes.

grant program and project agreement. This “control and tenure” may be through land ownership, a lease, use agreement, or easement. See *Manual 4, Development Projects* or *Manual 5, Restoration Projects* for more information.

Accessibility

Facilities or elements¹¹ constructed with RCO grants and sponsor match are required by law to be accessible regardless of whether there are specific standards adopted in the State Building Code, Americans with Disabilities Act, or Architectural Barriers Act, as amended. Other federal laws, guidelines, and best practices also may apply to achieve accessibility.

RCO encourages sponsors to exceed the minimum accessibility standards and use a design principle that maximizes universal accessibility for all. See *Manual 4, Development Projects* and the RCO Web site for detailed information about how to make your athletic facility meet accessibility requirements. Plans, project applications, cost estimates, and construction drawings must reflect compliance with facility access and signing requirements.

Sustainability

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages greater use of sustainable design, practices, and elements in grant-funded projects. To the board, “sustainability” means to help fund a recreation or conservation project that minimizes impact to the natural environment while maximizing the project’s service life.

Sponsors are encouraged to incorporate sustainable design, practices, and elements into the scopes of projects. Examples may include use of recycled materials; native plants in landscaping; pervious surfacing material for pathways, trails, and parking areas; energy efficient fixtures; onsite recycling stations; and composting.

Invasive Species

People doing good things, like construction or restoration work, can unknowingly spread invasive species. Here is how it could happen:

- Driving a car or truck to a field site and moving soil embedded with seeds or fragments of invasive plants in the vehicle’s tires to another site. New infestations

¹¹A facility is all or any portion of buildings, structures, site improvements, elements, and pedestrian routes or vehicular ways located on site. An element is an architectural or mechanical component of a building, facility, space, or site (2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, Department of Justice, September 15, 2010).

can begin miles away as the seeds and fragments drop off the tires and the undercarriage of the vehicle.

- Moving water or sediment infested with invasive plants, animals, or pathogens via your boots, nets, sampling equipment, or boats from one stream to another.
- Moving weed-infested hay, gravel or dirt to a new site, carrying the weed seeds along with it, during restoration and construction activities. Before long, the seeds germinate, and infest the new site.

The key to preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species on restoration project is twofold: Use materials that are known to be uninfested with invasive plants or animals in the restoration project and ensure equipment is cleaned both before and after construction and restoration. The Washington Invasive Species Council has developed prevention protocols (www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/council_projects/prevention_protocols.shtml) for this purpose. Equipment to clean should include, but not be limited to, footwear, gloves, angling equipment, sampling equipment, boats and their trailers, and vehicles and tires.

You have to Pay First

RCO grants are not paid up-front, with rare exceptions. A sponsor pays the cost of work completed, and then submits a bill to RCO for reimbursement. Sponsors will not be reimbursed for work begun or completed before the execution of a formal Recreation and Conservation Funding Board project agreement, except for land acquisitions completed under conditions of an RCO-approved "Waiver of Retroactivity." Refer to *Manual 3, Acquisition Projects*.

Public Disclosure Rules

RCO records and files are public records that are subject to the Public Records Act.¹² More information about the RCO's disclosure practices is available on the Web site at www.rco.wa.gov/about/public_records.shtml.

¹²Revised Code of Washington 42.56

Project Area Stewardship and Ongoing Obligations¹³

An RCO grant comes with long-term obligations to maintain and protect the project area¹⁴ after a project is complete. The long-term obligations are in RCO's project agreement standard terms and conditions, the project agreement, and *Manual 7, Long-Term Obligations*. A template of the project agreement can be found on RCO's Web site at www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/SampleProjAgreement.pdf.

RCO recognizes that changes occur over time and that some facilities may become obsolete or the land needed for something else. The law discourages casual discards of land and facilities by ensuring that grant recipients replace the lost value when changes or conversions of use take place.

In general, the project area funded with an RCO grant must remain dedicated to the use as originally funded, such as outdoor recreation, habitat protection, farmland preservation, or salmon recovery purposes, for as long as defined in the project agreement. For development and restoration projects, the period is determined by the type of control and tenure provided for the project.

A conversion occurs when the project area acquired, developed, or restored with RCO grant funding is used for purposes other than what it was funded for originally. See RCO *Manual 7, Long-Term Obligations* for a discussion of conversions and the process required for replacement of the public investment. Non-compliance with the long-term obligations for an RCO grant may jeopardize an organization's ability to obtain future RCO grants.

After a project is complete (that is, after RCO's final reimbursement and acceptance of the project), RCO documents that were signed by the sponsor continue to govern the project area described in the boundary map for which funds have been granted.

Changes may be made only with the prior approval of the board. If a compliance issue arises, RCO staff works with sponsors to resolve the issue. Unresolved, identified issues could result in restrictions on applying for or receiving future grants.

¹³Revised Code of Washington 79A.25, Washington Administrative Code 286, RCO's project agreement standard terms and conditions, and *Manual 7, Funded Projects*.

¹⁴Project area is the defined geographic area where the project occurs and is described in the project's boundary map.

Section 3: Money Matters

In this section, you'll learn about:

- ✓ Matching resources
- ✓ Match requirements
- ✓ Types of match
- ✓ Grant limits
- ✓ Records and reimbursements

Matching Resources

Most Recreation and Conservation Funding Board programs require sponsors to match grants to demonstrate a local commitment to the project and to make funds available to a greater number of projects.

Eligible Match

A sponsor's matching share may include one or a combination of the following:

- Appropriations and cash
- Bonds – council or voter
- Conservation futures
- Corrections labor
- Donations – the value of using cash, equipment use, labor, land, materials, property rights, or services (see note below)
- Force account – the value of using sponsor's equipment, labor, or materials (see note below)

- Grants – federal, state, local and private (see notes below)
- Local impact and mitigation fees (see note below)
- Proceeds of a letter of credit or binding loan commitment
- Other Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants that meet the requirements outlined below.

Not Allowed as Match

- Existing sponsor assets such as real property or developments.
- Costs that are double counted. (A cost incurred by a sponsor in a project that has been reimbursed by RCO shall not be used as a match on another RCO project.)
- Cost that are not eligible for grant assistance.
- Cost that are not an integral part of the project scope.
- Cost associated with meeting a mitigation requirement for another project or action (e.g., permit requirement Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing, Habitat Conservation Plan, legal settlement, etc.),

Match Requirements

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants are intended to be the last source of funding for a project. In other words, before the board awards the grant, the required match must be secured so the project can move forward. Board grants also are intended to supplement the existing capacity of a sponsor, not to replace the existing funding that would have been used for a project without grant funding.

All matching resources must meet all of the following criteria:

- An integral and necessary part of the approved project.
- Part of the work identified in the application and project agreement.
- For eligible work types or elements.
- Committed to the project.

Rules governing projects apply to the grant applicant's match. For example if a grant applicant uses donated land as a match, RCO rules requiring the land to remain in public recreation use forever apply to the donated land as well.

In many grant programs, particularly those where match is not required, the Recreation and Conservation Funding board adopted evaluation criteria to encourage applicants to contribute matching shares. This typically is reflected in the criteria when points are given for non-governmental contributions or for exceeding the minimum match requirements. Applicants should carefully review the evaluation instrument to determine if this applies to your project.

Except for grant applications submitted within the same biennium, matching resources or board grant funds, committed in one board-funded project must not be used as match in another board funded project.

Match Requirements

Applicants must provide a minimum match of 50 percent for each ALEA project.

Except for Native American tribes, at least 10 percent of the total project cost must be provided in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution.

Match Availability and Certification

To help ensure Recreation and Conservation Funding Board projects are ready for implementation upon approval, applicants must have matching funds available for expenditure before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves funding. All applicants are required to sign and submit a certification of match form to ensure their project is included in the funding recommendation. Applicants are advised to plan ahead for projects whose match depends on citizen votes or passage of ballot measure. This certification is due at least 30 days before Recreation and Conservation Funding Board action.¹⁵ The forms and deadlines for certifying match are on the RCO Web site.

RCO may declare projects ineligible if there is no guarantee that matching funds are available and those projects may be passed over in favor of projects with the match in place. Such decisions are based on the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's confidence in the applicant's ability to have the match in place when required.

When another Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant is used as match, the "Certification of Match" will be tentative, conditioned on receipt of the other grant or on the sponsor providing the match from other resources. The applicant will have 6 months from the time of the first grant award to certify the match requirements of that grant. To prevent a backlog of unspent grants, the sponsor must finish the project by the earliest completion date of the two grants.

¹⁵Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

Types of Match

Donations and Force Account

Donations are eligible only as matching funds and are not reimbursable. This means RCO will not pay more than the sponsor's out of pocket expenses. Valuing donations of equipment, labor (including inmate or community service labor), and material is discussed in *Manual 8, Reimbursements*. RCO strongly encourages applicants to secure written confirmation of all donations you plan to use as match and attach the donation letters to your PRISM Online application.

Donated land must expand existing habitat lands or stand on its own as a viable recreation or conservation area. Review *Manual 3, Acquisition Projects* before taking title to property that will be donated and used as match. Manual 3 outlines the requirements for valuing the property and for securing a donation statement from the seller.

Force account refers to use of a sponsor's staff (labor), equipment, or materials. These contributions are treated as expenditures.

Other Grants

In some cases, a sponsor may use funds awarded from a separate grant program as its match. Other grants are eligible as long as the purposes are similar and grant sources do not restrict or diminish the use, availability, or value of the project area.

The eligibility of federal funds to be used as a match may be governed by federal requirements and thus will vary with individual program policies.

Applicants must clearly identify in the grant application all grants to be used as match. RCO will help you determine if the source is compatible with Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants.

RCO Grants as Match¹⁶

Another Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant may be used to help meet the match requirements if the following criteria are met:

- The grants are not from the same Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant program.
- Only elements eligible in both grant programs are counted as the match.

¹⁶Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2005-24

- Each grant is evaluated independently and on its own merits, as if the match were coming from elsewhere.
- Except for state agencies and Native American tribes, at least 10 percent of the total cost of the eligible elements being matched is provided in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution.

For evaluation scoring purpose, an RCO grant used as match will not count toward the award of matching share points.

Mitigation Funds as Match

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board allows use of impact fees and mitigation cash payments, such as money from a fund established as a mitigation requirement, as match if the money has been passed from the mitigating entity to an eligible applicant, and the board’s grant does not replace mitigation money, repay the mitigation fund, or in any way supplant the obligation of the mitigating entity.

Grant Limits

The grant limits for each project type is shown in the table below. ALEA funds may not exceed 50 percent of a project’s total cost.

Category	Maximum Grant for Each Project
Acquisition	\$1 million
Development	\$500,000
Restoration	\$500,000
Combination project (acquisition with either development or restoration)	\$1 million, not more than \$500,000 may be for development or restoration costs.
Combination project (development and restoration)	\$500,000

Cost increases are not allowed. This means the requested grant amount may not be increased once the project has been evaluated. Project cost overruns become the responsibility of the sponsor. Also, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will not reimburse more than the sponsor’s actual out-of-pocket expenditures.

All Projects: Administration, Architecture, Engineering

Direct administrative costs for acquisition of real property are limited to no more than 5 percent of the total acquisition cost.

Architecture and engineering costs for development, renovation, and restoration projects are limited to 20 percent of the total development, renovation, and restoration project cost.

Additional information about eligibility and reimbursement maximums for these elements is contained in *Manual 3, Acquisition Projects* (administration costs), *Manual 4, Development Projects* (architectural and engineering costs) and *Manual 5, Restoration Projects*, (architectural and engineering costs).

Records and Reimbursements

Applicants must keep detailed records of all funded project costs including force account values and donated contributions. Refer to *Manual 8, Reimbursements* for details and instructions regarding audits, record retention, and documents required for reimbursement.

Section 4: Project Evaluations

In this section, you'll learn about:

- ✓ How projects are selected for funding
- ✓ Evaluation criteria

How Projects are Selected for Funding

Each project is evaluated and scored to determine which will be submitted to the Governor's Office for funding consideration. Applicants are required to make an in-person presentation structured around a set of questions adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. The questions are created from statutory and other criteria developed through a public process. There are two types of questions: team scored and staff scored.

In the first section, the ALEA advisory committee uses subjective criteria to score each project. Scores are based on each applicant's response to evaluation questions, graphics presented during the evaluation meeting, and summary application material made available in advance of the presentation.

In the second section, RCO staff scores the projects using objective measures, such as matching share, population, and conformance to growth management planning. Scores are based on material submitted by applicants and information obtained from the state Office of Financial Management and the Department of Commerce.

Scores from sections one and two are combined for a project's total evaluation score. The resulting ranked list is the basis for funding recommendations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, which makes the final funding decisions in an open public meeting.

Advisory Committee

RCO manages the ALEA grant program with the assistance of a standing advisory committee. The advisory committee's role is to recommend policies and procedures to RCO for administering grant funds and to review, evaluate, and score grant applications.

In recruiting members for the committee, RCO seeks to appoint people who possess a statewide perspective and are recognized for their experience and knowledge relative to aquatic lands, habitat, ecosystem functions, recreation, and public access issues.

RCO's director may appoint *ex officio* members to the committee to provide additional representation and expertise.

Check RCO's Web site for membership and other details at www.rco.wa.gov/grants/advisory_cmte.shtml.

Do Not Fund Recommendation

Occasionally during evaluations, the advisory committee may express significant concerns about a project, such that it would like to discuss a "Do Not Fund" recommendation. If this occurs, the advisory committee may discuss its concerns at the post-evaluation meeting, which takes place after application scores are tabulated.

If a "Do Not Fund" recommendation is scheduled to be considered, RCO will notify the applicant in writing, identify the significant concerns expressed by the evaluators, and invite the applicant to attend the post-evaluation meeting to respond to questions. The applicant also may submit a written response to the evaluators' concerns. To ensure all projects are treated equally, no additional testimony from applicants or visitors is taken at the post-evaluation meeting. The advisory committee determines a "Do Not Fund" recommendation by a simple majority vote of the committee members that participated in application evaluations.

RCO staff will forward to the board a summary of the "Do Not Fund" recommendation and any committee member comments. The board will consider the advisory committee's recommendation at a regularly scheduled public meeting, before the ranked list is adopted (consideration may take place at the same meeting, but the "Do Not Fund" recommendation will be discussed before the ranked list is adopted). The board retains discretion in awarding all grant funds.

General Evaluation Policies

While evaluation meetings are open to anyone, they are not public hearings. As such, only authorized applicant representatives may address the evaluation team. At these meetings, an RCO staff member serves as moderator. Scoring is confidential. Scoring instructions are contained in the individual evaluation instruments. Following the meeting, *all* scores are tabulated and compiled to establish a ranked list of projects.

Evaluation Criteria

Projects Meeting the Single Purpose of Protection and Enhancement

Evaluation Question Summary

The ALEA program strives to fund projects focused on two main program purposes: improve or protect aquatic lands for public purposes (protection and enhancement), or provide and improve public access to aquatic lands.¹⁷

The following evaluation questions contain elements that are specific to projects meeting the single program purpose of protecting or enhancing aquatic lands. Depending on project type (acquisition or restoration) applicants will answer either Question 4 (acquisition projects) or Question 5 (restoration projects). Projects combining acquisition and restoration will answer Questions 4 and 5.

Scored By	#	Question	Evaluators	Score	Maximum Points
Advisory Committee	1	Fit with ALEA Program Goals	All projects	0-5	15
Advisory Committee	2	Project Need	All projects	0-5	20
Advisory Committee	3	Site Suitability	All projects	0-5	10
Advisory Committee	4	Urgency and Viability	Acquisition	0-5	10
			Combination		5
Advisory Committee	5	Project Design and Viability	Restoration	0-5	10
			Combination		5
Advisory Committee	6	Community Involvement and Support	All projects	0-5	10
RCO Staff	7	Growth Management Act Preference	All projects	0	0
RCO Staff	8	Proximity to People	All projects	0-1	1
Total Possible Points					66

¹⁷Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(1)

Evaluation Questions

- 1. Fit with ALEA Program Goals.** How well does this project fit the ALEA program goals to enhance, improve, or protect aquatic lands and provide public access to aquatic lands?¹⁸

Additional guidance on ALEA program goals and objectives are in Section 1 of this manual.

- How will this project:
 - Protect existing, high value aquatic land that will contribute to important ecological functions and processes?
 - Improve the ecological function of aquatic resources through the restoration and enhancement of critical marine, estuarine, and freshwater aquatic land?
 - Preserve or establish naturally, self-sustaining aquatic and riparian areas that are a high priority in the larger ecological landscape?
- What are the environmental benefits of the proposed project?¹⁹

▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are multiplied later by 3.

- 2. Project Need.** What is the need for this project?

- How does the project address priorities contained in an approved watershed plan, shoreline master plan, species recovery plan, or other state or local plan? Is the project mentioned specifically in the plan?
- How does the project enhance or complement other nearby protection and enhancement efforts in the watershed or on the shoreline?
- How is the need for this project supported in studies, surveys, and other analyses?
- Will the project benefit sensitive, threatened, or endangered species or critical plant and animal communities? If so, how?
- For Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19, how is the project referenced in the *Action Agenda* developed by the Puget Sound Partnership? The *Action Agenda*

¹⁸Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150

¹⁹Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(2)

can be found at www.psp.wa.gov. Evaluators should ignore this question for projects outside Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19.

▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are multiplied later by 4.

3. Site Suitability. Is the site well suited for the intended uses?

- Are the location and natural features of the site, for example the size, topography, soil conditions, and natural amenities, well suited for the intended uses?
- What are the historic and current human uses of the site?
- What are the historic and current ecological functions of the site?
- What steps will be taken to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to the site once it has been acquired, restored, enhanced, or developed? Possible impacts to address could include flooding, extreme tides, storms, sources of contamination, and long-term impacts due to development and climate change.
- Are there similar sites available near the area that provide a similar opportunity or is this property a one-of-a-kind opportunity to address an ecological need?
- Is the site size and configuration sufficient to meet the specified ecological goals on its own? Possible things to address include water quantity and flow patterns at the site, patch size and shape, edge and interior habitat, and habitat corridors.
- Is the site contiguous with other conservation areas or actions that address similar ecological functions and processes?

▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are multiplied later by 2.

4. Urgency and Viability. Only acquisition or combination (acquisition and restoration) projects answer this question.

- Why purchase this particular property at this time? How viable are the anticipated future uses and benefits of the site?
- If ALEA funding is not made available, will high priority aquatic land habitat and/or public access be lost?
- What are the alternatives to acquiring the property?
- Is there an immediate threat or will the property be available for acquisition or enhancement at a later time?

- What is the likelihood that the property will be converted to a non-recreational use or that aquatic habitat resources will be impacted or lost if the property is not acquired now?
 - Is there a threat to the public availability of the resources at the site?
 - Will the site be available immediately for public use or will the site require some improvement to make it available for public use? If improvements are necessary, when will for the improvements be made?
 - What is the nature and condition of existing surrounding land use as well as future factors such as shoreline designation, zoning, or comprehensive or project-specific planning that may impact the viability of the site?
 - Describe land management practices in the area that may affect the viability of the site?
 - Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available for that maintenance?
- ▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points. The points for acquisition projects are multiplied later by 2.

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5. Project Design and Viability. Only restoration and enhancement or combination (acquisition and restoration or enhancement) projects answer this question.

- How does the project address the stated restoration or enhancement need? Is the project well designed? Will the project lead to sustainable ecological functions and processes over time?
- How will the site be treated to re-establish the desired ecological processes and functions?
- What habitat functions will be enhanced or restored?
- How well does the proposed restoration or enhancement design or actions address desired long-term results?
- What is the certainty that the restoration or enhancement actions will be successful?
- Will the project require decreasing involvement over time?

- What is the habitat quality and land management practices in the area that may affect the viability of the site?
 - What is the nature and condition of existing surrounding land use as well as future concerns such as shoreline designation, zoning, or comprehensive or project-specific planning?
 - How will the site be managed over time to maintain the desired ecological processes and functions?
 - Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available to do it?
- ▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points. The points for restoration projects are multiplied later by 2.

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6. Community Involvement and Support

- To what extent has the community been provided with an adequate opportunity to become informed about the project and provide input? What is the level of community support for the project?

Examples of community involvement may include public meetings, notices in local papers, newsletters, media coverage, and involvement in a local planning process that includes the specific project.

Examples of community support may include voter-approved initiatives, bond issues, or referenda; endorsements or other support from advisory boards and user or "friends" groups; letters; letters to the editor; or private contributions to the project.

- ▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are multiplied later by 2.

RCO Staff Scores

- 7. Growth Management Act Preference.** Has the applicant²⁰ made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?²¹

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.
- 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:
 - Adopts or has adopted within the time periods specified in state law;
 - Adopts or has adopted by the time it requests a grant or loan; or
 - Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than 6 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 this question are based on information from the state Department of Commerce, Growth Management Division. If an agency's comprehensive plan, development regulations, or amendments have been appealed to a Growth Management Act Hearings Board, they cannot be penalized during the period of appeal. Scoring occurs after RCO's technical completion deadline.

- ▲ Staff scores 0 to -1 point. RCO staff subtracts a maximum of 1 point; there is no multiplier.

²⁰Applicant in this question means counties, cities, and towns only. This segment of the question does not apply to state agencies, tribes, nonprofits, or lead entities.

²¹Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250

- 1 point The applicant does not meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.
- 0 points The applicant meets the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.
- 0 points The applicant is a state, tribal, or federal agency.

8. Proximity to People. RCO is required by law to give funding preference to projects in populated areas. Populated areas are defined as a town or city with a population of 5,000 or more, or a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile.²²

- Is the project in an area meeting this definition?

▲ RCO staff scores 0-1 point. There is no multiplier.

- 0 points No
- 1 point Yes

²²Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

Projects Meeting the Single Purpose of Public Access

Evaluation Question Summary

The ALEA program strives to fund projects focused on two main program purposes: improve or protect aquatic lands for public purposes (protection and enhancement), or provide and improve public access to aquatic lands²³.

The following evaluation questions contain elements that are specific to projects meeting the single program purpose of providing or improving public access to aquatic lands. Depending on project type (acquisition or development) applicants will answer either Question 4 (acquisition projects) or Question 5 (development projects). Projects combining acquisition and development will answer both Questions 4 and 5.

Scored By	#	Question		Evaluators Score	Maximum Points
Advisory Committee	1	Fit with ALEA Program Goals	All projects	0-5	15
Advisory Committee	2	Project Need	All projects	0-5	20
Advisory Committee	3	Site Suitability	All projects	0-5	10
Advisory Committee	4	Urgency and Viability	Acquisition	0-5	10
			Combination	0-5	5
Advisory Committee	5	Project Design and Viability	Development	0-5	10
			Combination	0-5	5
Advisory Committee	6	Community Involvement and Support	All projects	0-5	10
RCO Staff	7	Growth Management Act Preference	All projects	0	0
RCO Staff	8	Proximity to People	All projects	0-1	1
Total Possible Points					66

²³Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(1)

Evaluation Questions

- 1. Fit with ALEA Program Goals.** How well does this project fit the ALEA program goals to enhance, improve, or protect aquatic lands and provide public access to aquatic lands?²⁴

Additional guidance on ALEA program goals and objectives are in Section 1 of this manual.

- How will this project:
 - Provide new opportunities for people to get to the water and access aquatic resources for recreational and educational purposes?
 - Renovate or improve existing public access to aquatic lands for recreational and educational use?
 - Create non-motorized boating or small boat and pedestrian-oriented access to aquatic lands that is designed to protect the integrity of the environment?
 - Integrate public access in a way that is compatible with the physical features of the site?
 - Increase public awareness of aquatic lands as a finite natural resource with irreplaceable public heritage?
- What are the environmental benefits of the proposed project?²⁵

▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are multiplied later by 3.

- 2. Project Need.** What is the need for this project?

- Does the project address the priorities contained in an approved public access recreational plan or other state or local plan? Is it mentioned specifically in the plan?
- How is the need for this project supported in studies, surveys, and other analysis?
- How does this project provide opportunities for unserved or underserved recreational need, especially for water dependent uses?
- Does the project include interpretive or educational elements?

²⁴Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150

²⁵Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(2)

- For Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19, how is the project referenced in the *Action Agenda* developed by the Puget Sound Partnership? The *Action Agenda* can be found at www.psp.wa.gov. Evaluators should ignore this question for projects outside Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19.

▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are multiplied later by 2.

3. Site Suitability. Is the site well suited for the intended uses?

- Are the location and natural features of the site, for example the size, topography, soil conditions, and natural amenities, well suited for the intended uses?
- What are the historic and current human uses of the site?
- What are the historic and current ecological functions of the site?
- What steps will be taken to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to the site once it has been acquired, or developed? Possible impacts to address could include flooding, extreme tides, storms, sources of contamination, and long-term impacts due to development and climate change.
- Are there similar sites available near the area that provide similar access opportunities or is this property a unique opportunity to address a specific access need?
- Can the site support facilities necessary for the intended type and quantity of use?
- Is the site of adequate size to accommodate the facilities proposed?

▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are multiplied later by 2.

4. Urgency and Viability. Only acquisition or combination (acquisition and development) projects answer this question.

- Why purchase this particular property at this time? How viable are the anticipated future uses and benefits of the site?
- If ALEA funding is not made available, will high priority aquatic land habitat and/or public access be lost?
- What are the alternatives to acquiring the property?

- Is there an immediate threat or will the property be available for acquisition or enhancement at a later time?
- What is the likelihood that the property will be converted to a non-recreational use or that aquatic habitat resources will be impacted or lost if the property is not acquired now?
- Is there a threat to the public availability of the resources at the site?
- Will the site be available immediately for public use or will the site require some improvement to make it available for public use? If improvements are necessary, when will for the improvements be made?
- What is the nature and condition of existing surrounding land use as well as future factors such as shoreline designation, zoning, or comprehensive or project-specific planning that may impact the viability of the site?
- Describe land management practices in the area that may affect the viability of the site?
- Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available for that maintenance?

▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points. The points for acquisition projects are multiplied later by 2.

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5. Project Design and Viability. Only development or combination (acquisition and development) projects answer this question.

- How well does the project address the stated public access need? Is the project well designed? Will the project result in public access to aquatic lands that protect the integrity of the environment?

Some design elements that may be considered include accuracy of cost estimate, aesthetics, maintenance requirements, materials, phasing, risk management, recreational experience, spatial relationships, universal accessibility, and user friendly design.

- Does the project demonstrate good design criteria; does it make the best use of the site?
- Does the design provide equal access for all people, including those with disabilities?

- o Does the proposed development protect the natural resources on site? For example, does the project include low impact development techniques, green infrastructure, or environmentally preferred building products?
 - o Is the site design visually integrated into the landscape features?
 - o How will the site be designed to handle projected use?
 - What is the nature and condition of existing surrounding land use as well as future concerns such as shoreline designation, zoning, or comprehensive or project-specific planning?
 - How likely are the proposed public use facilities given the required regulatory and proprietary approvals, funding, etc.?
 - Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available to do it?
 - What outdoor environmental education elements are included in the project?
 - o How much effort is dedicated to interpreting the value of the aquatic lands?
 - o Are the themes or concepts appropriate to the specific site?
 - o Does the content in the display match the intended audience?
 - o Is the interpretive display accessible to wide variety of users?
- ▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points. The points for development projects are multiplied later by 2.

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6. Community Involvement and Support.

- To what extent has the community been provided with an adequate opportunity to become informed about the project and provide input? What is the level of community support for the project?

Examples of community involvement may include public meetings, notices in local papers, newsletters, media coverage, and involvement in a local planning process that includes the specific project.

Examples of community support may include voter-approved initiatives, bond issues, or referenda; endorsements or other support from advisory boards and user or “friends” groups; letters; letters to the editor; or private contributions to the project.

- ▲ Evaluators score 0-5 points that are multiplied later by 2.

RCO Staff Scores

- 7. Growth Management Act Preference.** Has the applicant²⁶ made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?²⁷

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.
- 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:
 - Adopts or has adopted within the time periods specified in state law;
 - Adopts or has adopted by the time it requests a grant or loan; or
 - Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than 6 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 this question are based on information from the state Department of Commerce, Growth Management Division. If an agency’s comprehensive plan,

²⁶Applicant in this question means counties, cities, and towns only. This segment of the question does not apply to state agencies, tribes, nonprofits, or lead entities.

²⁷Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250

development regulations, or amendments have been appealed to a Growth Management Act Hearings Board, they cannot be penalized during the period of appeal. Scoring occurs after RCO's technical completion deadline.

▲ Staff scores 0 to -1 point. RCO staff subtracts a maximum of 1 point; there is no multiplier.

-1 point The applicant does not meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250).

0 points The applicant meets the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.

0 points The applicant is a state, tribal, or federal agency.

8. Proximity to People. RCO is required by law to give funding preference to projects in populated areas. Populated areas are defined as a town or city with a population of 5,000 or more, or a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile.²⁸

- Is the project in an area meeting this definition?

▲ RCO staff scores 0-1 point. There is no multiplier.

0 points No

1 point Yes

²⁸Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

Projects Meeting Both Program Purposes: Protection and Enhancement AND Public Access Projects

Evaluation Question Summary

The ALEA program strives to fund projects focused on two main program purposes: improve or protect aquatic lands for public purposes (protection and enhancement), or provide and improve public access to aquatic lands.²⁹

Projects that meet both purposes (protecting or enhancing aquatic lands and providing or improving public access) may receive up to five additional points by receiving a higher weighted score under Question 1. Applicants address all elements under all questions except for Questions 4 and 5. Applicants answer Question 4 for acquisition projects. Applicants answer Question 5 for development or restoration projects. Projects combining acquisition and development or restoration will address Question 4 and the appropriate elements in Question 5 based on which elements represent the majority in the total project cost.

Scored By	#	Question	Elements	Project Type	Score	Maximum	
						Points	Total
Advisory Committee	1	Fit with ALEA Program Goals	Protection and Enhancement	All projects	0-5	10	20
			Public Access		0-5	10	
Advisory Committee	2	Project Need	Protection and Enhancement	All projects	0-5	10	20
			Public Access		0-5	10	
Advisory Committee	3	Site Suitability	Protection and Enhancement	All projects	0-5	5	10
			Public Access		0-5	5	
Advisory Committee	4	Urgency and Viability (acquisition projects only)	All Elements	Acquisition	0-5	10	10
				Combination	0-5	5	5
Advisory Committee	5	Project Design and Viability (restoration and development projects only)	Protection and Enhancement	Restoration	0-5	5	10
			Public Access	Development	0-5	5	
			Protection and Enhancement	Combination	0-5	2.5	5

²⁹Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(1)

Scored By	#	Question	Elements	Project Type	Score	Maximum	
						Points	Total
			Public Access	Combination	0-5	2.5	
Advisory Committee	6	Community Involvement and Support	All Elements	All projects	0-5	10	10
RCO Staff	7	Growth Management Act Preference	All Elements	All projects	0	0	0
RCO Staff	8	Proximity to People	All Elements	All projects	0-1	1	1
Total Possible Points						71	71

Evaluation Questions

- 1. Fit with ALEA Program Goals.** How well does this project fit the ALEA program goals to enhance, improve, or protect aquatic lands and provide public access to aquatic lands?³⁰

Additional guidance on ALEA program goals and objectives are in Section 1 of this manual.

Protection and Enhancement Projects

- How will this project:
 - Protect existing, high value aquatic land that will contribute to important ecological functions and processes?
 - Improve the ecological function of aquatic resources through the restoration and enhancement of critical marine, estuarine, and freshwater aquatic land?
 - Preserve or establish naturally, self-sustaining aquatic and riparian areas that are a high priority in the larger ecological landscape?
- What are the environmental benefits of the proposed project?³¹

³⁰Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150

³¹Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(2)

Public Access Projects

- How will this project:
 - Provide new opportunities for people to get to the water and access aquatic resources for recreational and educational purposes?
 - Renovate or improve existing public access to aquatic lands for recreational and educational use?
 - Create non-motorized boating or small boat and pedestrian-oriented access to aquatic lands that is designed to protect the integrity of the environment?
 - Integrate public access in a way that is compatible with the physical features of the site?
 - Increase public awareness of aquatic lands as a finite natural resource with irreplaceable public heritage?
- What are the environmental benefits of the proposed project?³²

▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points for protection and enhancement questions and a maximum of 5 points for public access questions. The total score is multiplied by 2.

2. **Project Need.** What is the need for this project?

Protection and Enhancement Projects

- How does the project address priorities contained in an approved watershed plan, shoreline master plan, species recovery plan, or other state or local plan? Is the project mentioned specifically in the plan?
- How does the project enhance or complement other nearby protection and enhancement efforts in the watershed or on the shoreline?
- How is the need for this project supported in studies, surveys, and other analyses?
- Will the project benefit sensitive, threatened, or endangered species or critical plant and animal communities? If so, how?

³²Revised Code of Washington 79.105.150(2)

- For Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19, how is the project referenced in the *Action Agenda* developed by the Puget Sound Partnership? The *Action Agenda* can be found at www.psp.wa.gov. Evaluators should ignore this question for projects outside Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19.

Public Access Projects

- Does the project address the priorities contained in an approved public access recreational plan or other state or local plan? Is it mentioned specifically in the plan?
 - How is the need for this project supported in studies, surveys, and other analysis?
 - How does this project provide opportunities for unserved or underserved recreational need, especially for water dependent uses?
 - Does the project include interpretive or educational elements?
 - For Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19, how is the project referenced in the *Action Agenda* developed by the Puget Sound Partnership? The *Action Agenda* can be found at www.psp.wa.gov. Evaluators should ignore this question for projects outside Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19.
- ▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points for protection and enhancement questions and a maximum of 5 points for public access questions. The total score is multiplied by 2.

3. **Site Suitability.** Is the site well suited for the intended uses?

Protection and Enhancement Projects

- Are the location and natural features of the site, for example the size, topography, soil conditions, and natural amenities, well suited for the intended uses?
- What are the historic and current human uses of the site?
- What are the historic and current ecological functions of the site?
- What steps will be taken to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to the site once it has been acquired, restored, enhanced, or developed? Possible impacts to address could include flooding, extreme tides, storms, sources of contamination, and long-term impacts due to development and climate change.
- Are there similar sites available near the area that provide a similar opportunity or is this property a one-of-a-kind opportunity to address an ecological need?

- Is the site size and configuration sufficient to meet the specified ecological goals on its own? Possible things to address include water quantity and flow patterns at the site, patch size and shape, edge and interior habitat, and habitat corridors.
- Is the site contiguous with other conservation areas or actions that address similar ecological functions and processes?

Public Access Projects

- Are the location and natural features of the site, for example the size, topography, soil conditions, and natural amenities, well suited for the intended uses?
- What are the historic and current human uses of the site?
- What are the historic and current ecological functions of the site?
- What steps will be taken to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to the site once it has been acquired, or developed? Possible impacts to address could include flooding, extreme tides, storms, sources of contamination, and long-term impacts due to development and climate change.
- Are there similar sites available near the area that provide similar access opportunities or is this property a unique opportunity to address a specific access need?
- Can the site support facilities necessary for the intended type and quantity of use?
- Is the site of adequate size to accommodate the facilities proposed?

▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points for protection and enhancement questions and a maximum of 5 points for public access questions. There is no multiplier.

4. **Urgency and Viability.** Only acquisition projects answer this question.

- Why purchase this particular property at this time? How viable are the anticipated future uses and benefits of the site?
- If ALEA funding is not made available, will high priority aquatic land habitat and/or public access be lost?
- What are the alternatives to acquiring the property?
- Is there an immediate threat or will the property be available for acquisition or enhancement at a later time?

- What is the likelihood that the property will be converted to a non-recreational use or that aquatic habitat resources will be impacted or lost if the property is not acquired now?
 - Is there a threat to the public availability of the resources at the site?
 - Will the site be available immediately for public use or will the site require some improvement to make it available for public use? If improvements are necessary, when will the improvements be made?
 - What is the nature and condition of existing surrounding land use as well as future factors such as shoreline designation, zoning, or comprehensive or project-specific planning that may impact the viability of the site?
 - Describe land management practices in the area that may affect the viability of the site?
 - Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available for that maintenance?
- ▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points. The points for acquisition projects are multiplied later by 2.

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- 5. Project Design and Viability.** Only restoration and enhancement projects, public access development projects, or combination (restoration and enhancement, and public access development) projects answer this question.

Restoration and Enhancement Projects

- How does the project address the stated restoration or enhancement need? Is the project well designed? Will the project lead to sustainable ecological functions and processes over time?
- How will the site be treated to re-establish the desired ecological processes and functions?
- What habitat functions will be enhanced or restored?
- How well does the proposed restoration or enhancement design or actions address desired long-term results?
- What is the certainty that the restoration or enhancement actions will be successful?

- Will the project require decreasing involvement over time?
- What is the habitat quality and land management practices in the area that may affect the viability of the site?
- What is the nature and condition of existing surrounding land use as well as future concerns such as shoreline designation, zoning, or comprehensive or project-specific planning?
- How will the site be managed over time to maintain the desired ecological processes and functions?
- Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available to do it?

Public Access Projects

- How well does the project address the stated public access need? Is the project well designed? Will the project result in public access to aquatic lands that protect the integrity of the environment?

Some design elements that may be considered include accuracy of cost estimate, aesthetics, maintenance requirements, materials, phasing, risk management, recreational experience, spatial relationships, universal accessibility, and user friendly design.

- Does the project demonstrate good design criteria; does it make the best use of the site?
- Does the design provide equal access for all people, including those with disabilities?
- Does the proposed development protect the natural resources on site? For example, does the project include low impact development techniques, green infrastructure, or environmentally preferred building products?
- Is the site design visually integrated into the landscape features?
- How will the site be designed to handle projected use?
- What is the nature and condition of existing surrounding land use as well as future concerns such as shoreline designation, zoning, or comprehensive or project-specific planning?

- How likely are the proposed public use facilities given the required regulatory and proprietary approvals, funding, etc.?
 - Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available to do it?
 - What outdoor environmental education elements are included in the project?
 - How much effort is dedicated to interpreting the value of the aquatic lands?
 - Are the themes or concepts appropriate to the specific site?
 - Does the content in the display match the intended audience?
 - Is the interpretive display accessible to wide variety of users?
- ▲ Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points for protection and enhancement questions and a maximum of 5 points for public access questions. The points for combination projects are multiplied later by 5.

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6. Community Involvement and Support.

- To what extent has the community been provided with an adequate opportunity to become informed about the project and provide input? What is the level of community support for the project?

Examples of community involvement may include public meetings, notices in local papers, newsletters, media coverage, and involvement in a local planning process that includes the specific project.

Examples of community support may include voter-approved initiatives, bond issues, or referenda; endorsements or other support from advisory boards and user or "friends" groups; letters; letters to the editor; or private contributions to the project.

- ▲ Evaluators score 0-5 points for all projects. The score is multiplied by 2.

RCO Staff Scores

- 7. Growth Management Act Preference.** Has the applicant³³ made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?³⁴

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.
- 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:
 - Adopts or has adopted within the time periods specified in state law;
 - Adopts or has adopted by the time it requests a grant or loan; or
 - Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than 6 months out of compliance with the time periods has not demonstrated substantial progress.
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³⁴Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250

- 1 point The applicant does not meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250).
- 0 points The applicant meets the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.
- 0 points The applicant is a state, tribal, or federal agency.

8. Proximity to People. RCO is required by law to give funding preference to projects in populated areas. Populated areas are defined as a town or city with a population of 5,000 or more, or a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile.³⁵

- Is the project in an area meeting this definition?

▲ RCO staff scores 0-1 point. There is no multiplier.

- 0 points No
- 1 point Yes

³⁵Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250.