



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE
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August 31, 2006

TO: IAC Members & Designees
FROM: Laura Eckert Johnson, Director *LEJ*
PREPARED BY: Marguerite Austin, Manager *MA*
Recreation & Habitat Section, Project Services Division
SUBJECT: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program
Natural Areas Ranked List for Fiscal Year 2008
Notebook Item #7a

*"Natural Areas means areas that have, to a significant degree, retained their natural character and are important in preserving rare or vanishing flora, fauna, geological, natural historical, or similar features of scientific or educational value."*¹

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Nine Natural Areas (NA) category projects requesting \$14.3 million were evaluated on August 7, 2006 in an open public meeting. Utilizing criteria adopted by IAC, a team of eight evaluators reviewed and ranked the NA projects. The team, comprised of individuals recognized for their expertise, experience, and knowledge related to habitat protection, included:

EVALUATOR	DISCIPLINE
Carey Smith, Pacific Coast Joint Venture, Vancouver	Natural Resource Mgmt
David Giblin, University of Washington, Seattle	Herbarium Collections Mgr
Deb Petersen, State Parks and Recreation, Olympia	Environmental Specialist
Elizabeth Rodrick, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia	Wildlife Biologist
George Boggs, Whatcom Conservation District, Lynden	Natural Resource Mgmt
John Floberg, The Nature Conservancy, Seattle	Ecologist
Kathy O'Halloran, USFS Olympic National Forest, Olympia	Natural Resources Specialist
Pene Speaks, Department of Natural Resources, Olympia	Botanical/Wetland Scientist

¹ Chapter 79A.15.010(6), Acquisition of Habitat Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Lands



The results of the evaluations, provided for IAC Board consideration, are found in *Table 1 – WWRP, Natural Areas Ranked List of Projects, Fiscal Year 2008*.

NATURAL AREAS CATEGORY

NA category projects protect high quality, representative native ecosystems, or unique plant or animal communities. Species protected on these habitats are often classified as federal and state endangered, threatened, or sensitive. Rare geological features or features of scientific or education values are also considered.

Other factors related to this category are:

- Acquisition of fee simple title or lesser interests in sites that have retained their natural characteristics.
- These habitats must be managed primarily for resource preservation.
- Public use may be excluded if needed to protect the natural characteristics of these sites.
- Where appropriate, limited development of public use facilities is allowed.
- This category is open to state² agency applicants only.

The NA category of the Habitat Conservation Account is eligible to receive 30% of the WWRP funds in the account.³

RECOMMENDATION

After reviewing the results of the scoring and ranking of projects, and considering comments from evaluators and applicants, staff recommends approval of the ranked list of projects as shown in Table 1. Table 1 also shows staff's recommendation for the list of projects to be forwarded to the Governor and Legislature. In keeping with IAC guidelines, this list includes enough projects to use the statutory amount set aside for this category and alternates. Resolution #2006-27 is provided for Board consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

- Resolution #2006-27
- Table 1 – *WWRP, Natural Areas Ranked List of Projects, FY2008*
- State Map for Natural Areas Category projects
- NA Evaluation Criteria Summary
- NA Project Evaluation Scoring Summary
- NA Project Summaries

These attachments include a map that shows the location of each project, a summary of the composite scores for each project, and a synopsis of each project proposal.

² State agencies mean the State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of General Administration, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

³ Chapter 79A.15.040(1)(b) RCW

RESOLUTION #2006-27
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program
Natural Areas Category - Fiscal Year 2008
Ranked List of Projects

WHEREAS, for fiscal year 2008 of the 2007-2009 biennium, nine Natural Areas category projects are eligible for funding from the Habitat Conservation Account of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, and

WHEREAS, these nine Natural Areas category projects were evaluated using evaluation criteria approved by IAC Board Members, and

WHEREAS, these evaluations occurred in an open public meeting, and

WHEREAS, all nine Natural Areas category projects meet program requirements as stipulated in IAC Manual #10b, *Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Habitat Conservation and Riparian Protection Accounts: Policies and Project Selection*,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that IAC hereby approves the ranked list of projects depicted in Table 1 – *WWRP, Natural Areas Ranked List of Projects, FY2008 (2006-27)*, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that IAC hereby recommends to the Governor the ranked list of Natural Areas category projects for further consideration.

Resolution moved by: _____

Resolution seconded by: _____

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: September 21, 2006



Table 1
Washington Wildlife Recreation Program - Natural Areas
State Fiscal Year 2008

Rank	Score	Number	Project Name	Project Sponsor	IAC Amt	Total Amt	Cum Amt
1 of 9	42.125	06-1831A	Lacamas Prairie Natural Area 2006	Natural Resources Dept of	1,315,755	1,315,755	1,315,755
2 of 9	41.125	06-1841A	Klickitat Canyon NRCA 2006	Natural Resources Dept of	1,811,040	1,811,040	3,126,795
3 of 9	37.625	06-1829A	Methow Rapids NAP 2006	Natural Resources Dept of	1,257,952	1,257,952	4,384,747
3 of 9	37.625	06-1812A	Washougal Oaks NAP/NRCA 2006	Natural Resources Dept of	1,878,187	1,878,187	6,262,934
5 of 9	35.250	06-1827A	Selah Cliffs NAP 2006	Natural Resources Dept of	715,785	715,785	6,978,719
6 of 9	33.625	06-1824A	Eik River NRCA 2006	Natural Resources Dept of	896,070	896,070	7,874,789
7 of 9	31.875	06-1842A	Bald Hill NRCA 2006	Natural Resources Dept of	4,030,600	4,030,600	11,905,389
8 of 9	30.750	06-1737A	Chehalis River Surge Plain NAP 2006	Natural Resources Dept of	713,895	713,895	12,619,284
9 of 9	27.875	06-1820A	Cypress Island Natural Area 2006	Natural Resources Dept of	1,715,857	1,715,857	14,335,141
					14,335,141	14,335,141	

Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program

Evaluation Criteria

Natural Areas Category
(State Agencies)

“Natural Areas means areas that have, to a significant degree, retained their natural character and are important in preserving rare or vanishing flora, fauna, geological, natural historical, or similar features of scientific or educational value.” RCW 79A.15.010

WWRP - Natural Areas Evaluation Summary		
Criteria	Evaluation Elements	Possible Points
Project Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate the project on statewide, vicinity, and site maps • Brief summary of the project (goals and objective(s) statement) 	Not scored
Ecological and Biological Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bigger picture • Uniqueness/significance of the site • Species and/or communities • Quality of Habitat / Natural Features 	20
Species and Communities with Special Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat to species/communities • Importance of acquisitions • Ecological roles • Taxonomic distinctness 	10
Manageability and Viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediacy of threat to the site • Long-term viability • Enhancement of existing protected land • On-going stewardship 	15
Public Benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project support • Educational and/or scientific value 	5
Total Points Possible		50

WWRP Scoring Criteria

Natural Areas Category

- 1. Ecological/Biological Characteristics. Why is the site worthy of long-term conservation?**
RCW 79A.15.060 (6)(a)(iii, v - vii, xi, xiv); (6)(b)(ii)
- 2. Species and/or Communities with Special Status. What is the significance of each species or community listed on your species and communities status table?**
RCW 79A.15.060 (6)(a)(iv, ix, xiii,)
- 3. Manageability and Viability. What is the likelihood of the site remaining viable over the long term and why is it important to secure it now?**
RCW 79A.15.060 (6)(a)(ii, iv, viii, x)
- 4. Public Benefit. To what degree do communities, governments, landowners, constituent groups, or academia benefit from or support the project?**
RCW 79A.15.060 (6)(a)(i, xii)



**Evaluation Summary
Washington Wildlife Recreation Program - Natural Areas
State Fiscal Year 2008**

Rank	Name/Sponsor	1	2	3	4	Total
		Ecological & Biological Characteristics				
		Ecological & Biological Characteristics	Species & Communities	Manageability & Viability	Public Benefit	
1	Lacamas Prairie/Natural	17.625	8.875	11.000	4.625	42.125
2	Klickitat Canyo/Natural	16.375	8.500	12.375	3.875	41.125
3	Methow Rapids N/Natural	15.750	7.875	10.125	3.875	37.625
3	Washougal Oaks /Natural	15.250	7.625	10.875	3.875	37.625
5	Selah Cliffs NA/Natural	13.375	7.250	11.125	3.500	35.250
6	Elk River NRCA /Natural	13.500	5.750	11.000	3.375	33.625
7	Bald Hill NRCA /Natural	13.125	6.625	8.500	3.625	31.875
8	Chehalis River /Natural	12.625	5.125	8.875	4.125	30.750
9	Cypress Island /Natural	11.750	4.125	8.625	3.375	27.875

Evaluators Score Questions: 1-4

Prepared: 09/05/2006

WWRP
Habitat Conservation Account

NATURAL AREAS

FISCAL YEAR 2008

Project Synopses

the population that is protected, it will improve DNR's access to the site, and it will enhance DNR's ability to manage the site for its ecological values. The remaining portion of the basalt daisy population is on the adjacent Yakima Training Center, managed by the U.S. Department of Defense, Fort Lewis. The cliffs within the project area are identified as a priority habitat by the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife and are known to be used by Prairie Falcons and Golden Eagles. This grant is from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Natural Areas. (06-1827A-FY08)

Natural Resources Dept of Elk River NRCA 2006 **\$896,070** **\$0** **\$896,070**

Through land acquisitions within the Elk River Natural Resources Conservation Area (NRCA) boundary, the state will protect the critical components of its largest, most diverse and highest quality estuary. The Elk River estuarine system contains seven Wetland and Aquatic Ecosystem Elements: 1) transition zone wetland, 2) silty low salinity, low marsh, 3) mudflat, 4) silty, moderate salinity, low marsh, 5) moderate salinity, high marsh, 6) low salinity, high marsh, 7) muddy channel/slough. These are listed as priority elements in the state's Natural Heritage Plan.

As part of the Pacific Flyway, Elk River also provides an important stopover for shorebirds and waterfowl. The quality of the Elk River estuary is currently threatened by logging, encroaching development and the invasion of exotic species. This acquisition project will help protect the estuary from these incompatible activities, while providing opportunities for more comprehensive management of invasive species already threatening Grays Harbor. This grant is from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Natural Areas. (06-1824A-FY08)

Natural Resources Dept of Bald Hill NRCA 2006 **\$4,030,600** **\$0** **\$4,030,600**

Bald Hill hosts fourteen high priority elements; seven plant associations, three animals, and four plants. This project would purchase 1280 acres for a proposed Bald Hill Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA) to be added to the Bald Hill Natural Area Preserve (NAP).

Bald Hill has the best occurrence in the state of white oak/sedge-camas woodland association, a globally critically imperiled element. The oaks fringe herb dominated balds and grassland communities, forming one of the largest bald complexes in Washington. The communities are in relatively good condition and support a range of plant and animal species. Bald Hill also has important occurrences of low elevation freshwater wetland and Douglas-fir /madrone honeysuckle forest. The population of Taylor's checkerspot is of global importance. It is one of few that appears to be stable. It may be a metapopulation with several semi-independent subpopulations. The site encompasses all known subpopulations, greatly increasing the chance of survival. Peregrine falcon eyries are vulnerable to disturbance, but at current levels of activity, this eyrie is relatively secure. Rare plants include small-flowered trillium, common bluecup, Nutall's quillwort, and one of two known Washington populations of California sword-fern. This project would improve manageability and long term viability of the site. The threat of direct destruction will be removed. Buffers will be improved, and a broader range of management will be available. This grant is from the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Natural Areas. (06-1842A-FY08)



Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program - Natural Areas (WWRP - NA) FY 2008 Ranked Projects

