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STATE OF WASHINGTON

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

August 24, 2007

TOPIC #5: Proposed Changes in RCFB Grant Program Policies

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Approved by the Director: 

Proposed Action: Briefing

Summary:

Changes in Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) grant program policies have been suggested by Board members, staff, the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition, the Washington Recreation and Parks Association, and other stakeholders. Staff has developed a series of memos explaining the changes being considered and made the memos available for public review and comment on August 27.

After reviewing comments received on each issue, RCO staff will develop a set of options and staff recommendations for consideration and possible adoption by the Board at its November 1-2, 2007, meeting. The options and staff recommendations will be circulated for additional public review and comment prior to that meeting. Any changes adopted by the RCFB will affect grant requests beginning with the 2008 grant cycle.

Attachments:

- I. List of changes under consideration
- II. Timeline
- III. Memos requesting public comment



Attachment I

Grant Program Changes Under Review

WWRP

Local Parks category. Should the current maximum grant awards ("caps") of \$500,000 for acquisition projects and \$300,000 for development projects, and \$500,000 for combination projects be increased? If so, to what amounts?

Preference for match. Local agencies applying for WWRP grants are required to provide at least a 50% match. There is no matching requirement for state agencies. Should state agency projects that do include a match receive points through the evaluation criteria?

Mitigation banking projects. These projects are eligible in the Urban Wildlife Habitat category, Critical Habitat category and the Riparian Protection Account of WWRP. What changes in eligibility criteria and the evaluation process should be made based on what was learned from the 2006 pilot program?

Phased projects. If a sponsor receives a grant for the first phase of a phased project, should applications for grants for subsequent phases receive special consideration in the evaluation process?

Population points. Applications receive extra points for proximity to higher human populations in five WWRP Outdoor Recreation Account categories: *Local Parks, State Parks, State Lands Development, Water Access, and Trails*. Should the way that population proximity is evaluated and scored be changed?

Riparian Protection Account. Should the current maximum grant award ("cap") of \$1,000,000 be increased or should the cap be abolished?

Urban Wildlife Habitat (UWH) category. The history of funding in the UWH category shows that state agencies are more likely than local agencies to receive grants. Several approaches for making local agencies more competitive are presented.

Project ranking in the State Parks category. The State Parks and Recreation Commission and RCO's evaluation team separately evaluate and rank projects applying for funds in this WWRP category. How should the Commission's ranking be taken into consideration in the evaluation process? Since only State Parks can compete in this category, should the Commission's ranking carry higher weight or replace RCO's?

Project ranking by state agencies competing in Habitat Conservation Account categories. DNR and WDFW each typically submit a number of projects in the Critical Habitat, Urban Wildlife Habitat, and Natural Areas categories. Each agency has internal plans and strategies that allow its staff to prioritize the projects being submitted. How

should agency priorities and ranking of their projects be taken into consideration, if at all, in RCO's evaluation process?

Farmland Preservation Program. Should the current maximum grant award ("cap") of \$750,000 be increased? Should the evaluation criterion that awards points for conservation easement and lease terms beyond 25 years require a specific number of points for a specific length of term (for example, 0 points for 25 years, 4 points for 40 years, 7 points for 60 years, 10 points for perpetual), or should the score be left to the discretion of the evaluators? [LINK](#)

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account

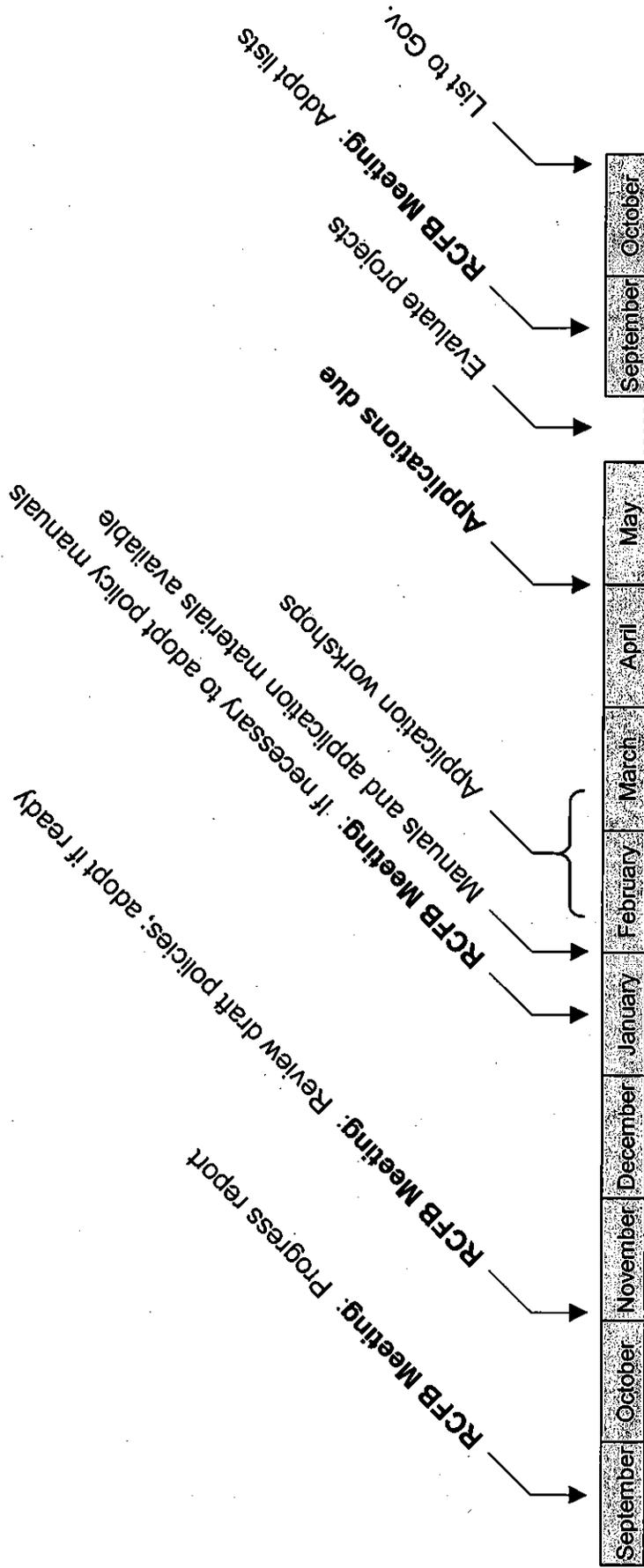
Program intent. The changes under consideration address the relative emphasis between the two goals of the program: providing public access to aquatic lands and providing environmental benefits through restoration and preservation of these lands.

General RCFB Acquisition Policy Under Review

Noxious weed eradication. Current RCFB policy allows up to \$75 in grant funds per acre for noxious weed eradication on land just acquired with grant funds. Should this maximum amount be increased?

Attachment II

WWRP Policy Development For the 2008 Grant Cycle



2007

2008