

Natural Resources Building
1111 Washington St SE
Olympia WA 98501

PO Box 40917
Olympia WA 98504-0917



(360) 902-3000
TTY (360) 902-1996
Fax: (360) 902-3026

E-mail: info@rco.wa.gov
Web site: www.rco.wa.gov

STATE OF WASHINGTON

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

October 16, 2007

TO: RCFB Members and Designees
FROM: Jim Fox, Special Assistant to the Director 
SUBJECT: Agency Report, November 2007

Highlights and issues since the September 2007 meeting include:

POLICY ISSUES

Boating Activities Program

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) has begun work on a legislative assignment to create a new boating activities program. Funded by a \$2,000,000 general fund appropriation, the program provides money to the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission for its boater safety, education, and law enforcement program and to RCO to conduct a boater needs assessment and distribute as grants to improve boating access to water and enhance the boating experience. RCO began work on the boating survey by recruiting a steering committee made up of the following people:

- Recreational Boating Association of Washington - David Kutz
- Boating Issues Study Group - Steve Greaves
- Northwest Marine Trade Association - Michael Campbell
- Washington State Parks - Rita Cooper
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife - Steve Sherlock
- Washington Department of Natural Resources - Blain Reeves
- Washington Sheriffs - Sheriff Bill Cumming (San Juan County)
- Washington Public Ports - Charla Skaggs

With input from the steering committee, RCO hired the firm Responsive Management to conduct a statewide telephone survey of residents, a series of focus groups, and a



survey of service and facility providers. Responsive Management will present its findings and recommendations at a public workshop in the first week of December. RCO will post the report on its Web site for public review and comment. The report will be presented to the RCFB at its January, 2008 meeting.

NOVA Gas Tax and ORV Permit Fee Allocation Methodology

RCO has obtained the services of a retired Department of Revenue auditor to investigate the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) allocation formula and associated methodology. He has consulted with CPAs and financial managers of nonprofit organizations experienced in managing restricted funds. He is will meet with the RCFB subcommittee in November or early December before he finalizes his recommendations for presentation the January RCFB meeting.

Infrastructure Study Committee

In 2007, the Legislature created the Infrastructure Study Committee to make recommendations regarding a "comprehensive funding structure and systematic approach to support the integration, consolidation, and standardization of processes and procedures" for local government infrastructure funding programs. The committee is composed of eight legislators and a representative from the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development and the Office of Financial Management. At the committee's first meeting, members recommended that eight of the nine RCFB grant programs be included (the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account grant program was not included). It is likely that the RCO will be asked to participate in one of the committee's workgroups.

Tax Preference Committee Report

The 2006 Legislature established the Citizen Commission for Performance Measurement of Tax Preferences. Among more than 500 tax preferences (exemptions, exclusions, or deductions from the base of a state tax), the Commission looked at the two RCFB gas tax funded grant programs: the Boating Facilities Program and NOVA. The resulting report recommends that the Legislature review its policy of limiting the amount of fuel taxes that go to these programs. If the limit were to be removed, boating and NOVA could see an estimated 42 percent increase of gas tax funding. Boating could potentially change from \$10.7 million to \$15.2 million and NOVA could increase from \$6.8 million to \$9.7 million.

2007 Youth Athletic Facilities Grants

RCO has received 80 applications requesting \$6.8 million in the Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) program. An advisory committee comprised of local agency, nonprofit organization, and citizen representatives has been appointed to evaluate the applications. These projects will come to the RCFB for funding in March.

Other Planning and Policy Activities

At any given time, the RCO is working on a dozen or more policy and planning projects initiated by the Legislature, one or more of RCO's five boards, other agencies, the

Governor, or stakeholder requests. Attachment 2 provides a summary of current and anticipated activities.

COMMUNICATIONS

Big Checks and Dedications

Several big check and dedications ceremonies have been completed. Board member Bill Chapman awarded a big check to the Bremerton City Council for two grants – Blueberry Park (Land and Water Conservation Fund) and a waterfront boardwalk (Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program-Trails) Mr. Chapman also attended a special event for city leaders and the media in connection with the big check presentation. Director Laura Johnson presented a big check to the city of Auburn for its soccer fields (Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program-Local Parks) and to the city of Everett for a moorage electrical upgrade (Boating Infrastructure Grants). She also spoke at a dedication for the city of Connell's pool slide project.

Media

Communications staff sent out three news releases announcing grant awards under all the board's different grant programs. Media coverage is still occurring so a summary will be reported in the future.

Name Change

Implementation of the name change has gone smoothly. Staff is finalizing logo designs and has a round out for staff comment, with the goal of having a new logo to recommend when the new director comes on board.

BUDGET

See Attachment 1.

PEOPLE

RCO has welcomed several new staff members and made new staff assignments, to be presented at the meeting. They are:

- Sarah Thirtyacre, Adam Cole, and Kim Sellers, all new grant managers.
- Patty Dickason, administrative assistant to the section.

If you have questions, please contact me at (360) 902-3021.

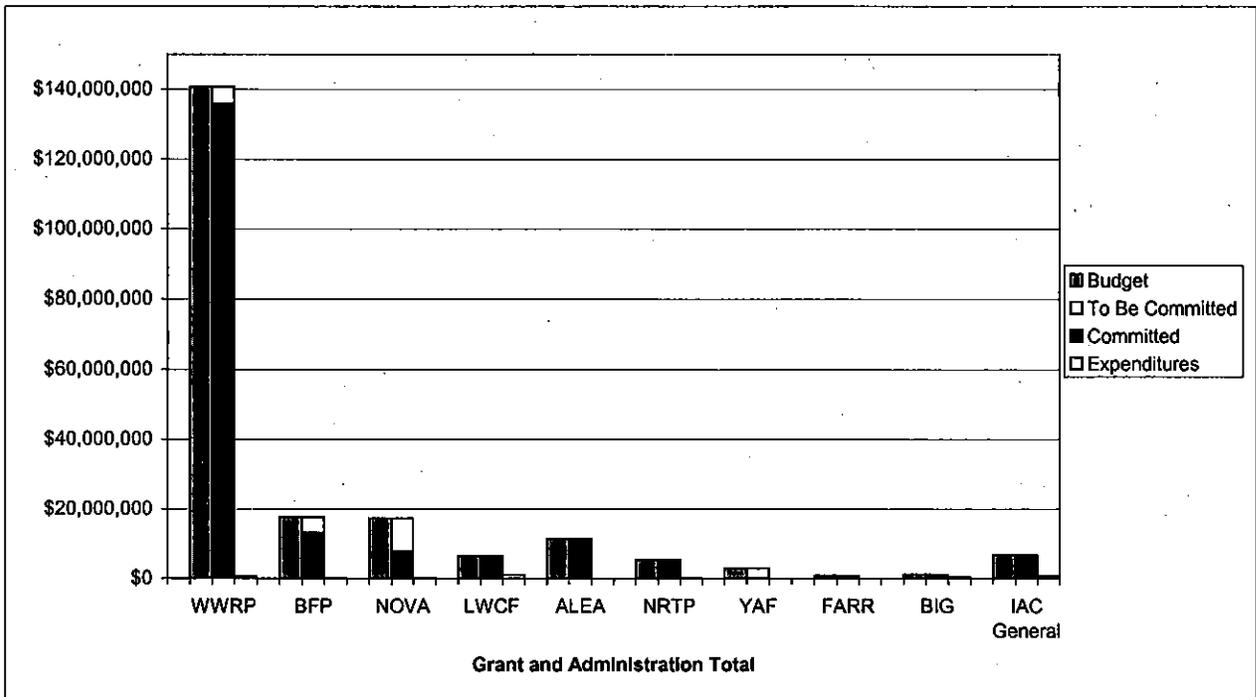
Attachment 1: Budget Status Report

For the Period of July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2009, actuals through 09/30/2007 (10/10/07) (fm03)

Percentage of biennium reported: 12.5%

	BUDGET	COMMITTED		TO BE COMMITTED		EXPENDITURES	
	Flow and ERP 2007-2009	Dollars	% of Budget	Dollars	% of Budget	Dollars	% Expended of committed
Grant Programs							
WA Wildlife & Rec. Program (WWRP)	\$140,669,505	\$135,815,166	97%	\$4,854,339	3.5%	\$528,830	0.4%
Boating Facilities Program (BFP)	17,628,779	13,025,081	74%	4,603,698	26.1%	90,830	0.7%
Nonhighway & Off-Road Vehicle (NOVA)	17,220,383	7,726,586	45%	9,493,797	55.1%	124,284	2%
Land & Water Conserv. Fund (LWCF)	6,430,519	6,430,519	100%	0	0%	1,031,973	16%
Aquatic Lands Enhan. Account (ALEA)	11,414,804	11,413,956	100%	848	0.01%	5,690	0.05%
National Recreational Trails (NRTP)	5,259,545	5,259,545	100%	0	0%	109,787	2%
Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)	2,881,893	107,875	4%	2,774,018	96%	0	0%
Firearms & Archery Range Rec (FARR)	806,193	144,991	18%	661,202	82%	0	0%
Boating Infrastructure Grants (BIG)	1,045,904	1,045,904	100%	0	0.0%	408,555	39%
Sub Total Grant Programs	203,357,526	180,969,623	89%	22,387,903	11%	2,299,949	1.3%
Administration							
General Operating Funds	6,705,000	6,705,000	100%	0	0%	623,012	9%
Grant and Administration Total	\$210,062,526	\$187,674,623	89%	\$22,387,903	11%	\$2,922,961	2%

Note: The budget column shows the state appropriations and any received federal awards.



Attachment 2

Major RCO Policy and Planning Projects and Related Board(s)

Updated October 15, 2007

Project	Description	RCFB	SRFB	Biodiv. Cncl.	Inv. Sp. Cncl	Mon. Forum
ALEA	Navigability (WDFW issue); geographic balance (fairness w/ Eastern WA); balance between conservation and access; RCWs.	✓				
Allowable Activities on RCO Acquisitions.	Review policy on allowed activities on habitat land acquisitions, including grazing, trails, etc.	✓	✓			
APP (SCORP)	Will include new survey data; Level of Service (LOS)	✓				
Biodiversity Strategy	Develop state biodiversity strategy, due December '07. Implementation planning beyond December.			✓		
Boating activities program, SHB1651	Expand and activate standing advisory committee; conduct needs assessment; develop new grant program.	✓				
Buildings and Structures	Review policy on interpretive centers, cabins, historic structures; removing buildings; funding buildings.	✓	✓			
Conversion Policy	Develop policy on 6F-like maps (delineation); implement deed-of-right formats.	✓	✓			
Coordination of RCO Programs	How do we provide better coordination between programs and make them more responsive to addressing ecosystems, ecosystem functions, resilience, and adaptability to long-term trends such as climate change?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Data Coordination	Coordinate with state, federal, and NGO efforts at making environmental data and project-related information accessible the public and entities that need it.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deed of Right replacement	Is there a better legal instrument to ensure perpetuity? Develop instruments for parks, habitat.	✓	✓			
Design-only projects	Investigate having the design-only (no match) project as a permanent addition to SRFB grants.		✓			
EO 05-05 Cultural Resources	Coordinate with other agencies; develop materials; policies; tracking. Tribal liaison.	✓	✓			
Farmland Preservation Assistance Grants	Develop a new grant program to assist counties with development of a farmland preservation strategy. With Conservation Commission.	✓				
Farmland Preservation Policies - statewide	Coordinate with Dept. of Ag, Conservation Commission, American Farmland Trust, Office of Farmland Preservation, etc, on farmland preservation issues.	✓	✓	✓		
Funding Coordination - Salmon	Meet with NOAA, NWPC, NFWF, USFS, GSRO on coordination of salmon funding, prioritization methods.		✓			

Infrastructure Study Committee	Provide information to, work with, and track the work of this new joint legislative committee looking at coordination of state infrastructure funding programs.	✓				
Invasive Species Strategy	Develop state invasive species strategy, to be included in the biodiversity strategy due in 2007.				✓	
Manual 3 Updates	For federal and state funded projects. Appraisal standards, uniform acquisition procedures, appraising conversions and conservation easements.	✓	✓			
Mitigation Banking Policies	Work with Camas as bank development proceeds. Stay involved in state issues regarding mitigation and conservation banking.	✓	✓	✓		
Mitigation on RCFB/SRFB acquisitions	Develop policy on later use for acquisitions as mitigation banks.	✓	✓			
Monitoring Budgets Review	Review monitoring budget requests from state natural resource agencies and make recommendations to OFM.		✓			✓
Regional monitoring funding.	Investigate supporting recovery monitoring at the regional level.		✓			
NOVA fund allocation	Review policy on allocation of excess funds in the four NOVA categories. Work with consultant(s), RCFB subcommittee, stakeholders.	✓				
NOVA Noise Enforcement Grants	Implement the budget proviso requiring \$450,000 of NOVA funds go to grants for noise enforcement activities.	✓				
Performance Measures	Ongoing. Measures for WWRP, SRFB, ALEA will also be needed for the P.S. Partnership; GMAP	✓	✓			
Permanent SRFB Review Panel	Investigate the possibility of a permanently seated RP with ongoing review of proposed projects.		✓			
Puget Sound Partnership	Coordinate on grant programs benefiting Puget Sound health, GMAP, performance measures.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recreation Congress	Planning for a possible recreation congress in 2009.	✓				
Regional allocation of SRFB funds	Revisit the formula distributing the SRFB grant round funding among the seven regions.		✓			
Scope change policies	How to assess when a scope change would have changed the evaluation score and what to do about it.	✓	✓			
SRFB Roles Document	Revise after 2007 SRFB grant round policies are finalized.		✓			
SRFB programmatic grants	Develop a process for considering programmatic requests.		✓			
State Land Coordination: SSB5236,	Develop, chair the Habitat and Recreation Land Coordinating Group; facilitate addressing tasks in bill.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Sustainable Construction Practices	Should RCO be providing incentives or assistance for sponsors to use sustainable construction and landscaping practices in their projects?	✓	✓			
Water	Develop policies on acquiring and preserving water rights.	✓	✓			

WWRP Issues					
WWRP CH Agency Priorities	How should agency priorities for HCA projects be taken into consideration? Ex. WDFW's ranking of projects.	✓			
WWRP Farmland Preservation	Should the caps on FPP grants be raised or abolished? How should the length of term of an easement be evaluated and scored?	✓			
WWRP Local Parks Caps	Is it time to increase the caps on LP grants? To what?	✓			
WWRP Matching Points	Do we provide preference for state agency projects that have a match? If so, how?	✓			
WWRP Mitigation Banking Policies for Next Grant Cycle.	Review evaluation criteria and process for next WWRP grant round.	✓			
WWRP: Noxious weeds	Evaluate our allowed costs (\$75/acre) for control or eradication of noxious weeds on acquisitions.	✓			
WWRP Phasing Projects	How to evaluate and prioritize later phases of a project.	✓			
WWRP Population Points	Is the weight for proximity to population too high?	✓			
WWRP Riparian Category	Evaluate caps on grant size.	✓			
WWRP State Lands Categories	Streamline process; modify evaluation criteria	✓			
WWRP State Parks Category Evaluation	Should State Parks do their own ranking?	✓			
WWRP UWH policy	How to make local agencies more competitive in this category.	✓			
WWRP: Review of "Competitive Process"	Report due 6/30/08. Could include parts of SSB5236, biodiversity on strategic investment.	✓			
WWRP Visioning Process	Participate in the WWRP's process to define a vision for the future of WWRP	✓			