



STATE OF WASHINGTON

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

June 19, 2008

To: Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Members and Designees

FROM: Kaleen Cottingham, Director

SUBJECT: Director and Agency Report, June 2008

The Berk Report Follow-up

Staff have been very productive in trying to implement or explore many of the recommendations from Berk and Associates about ways to reduce re-appropriations. Three teams have been working on a variety of the recommendations.

- Organizational Structure Team: The team recommended and I accepted a new organizational structure that divides grant programs into three sections instead of two – a Recreation Section, a Salmon Recovery Section, and a Conservation and Grant Services section. The newly created Conservation and Grant Services Section will include work in support of grants, such as cultural resources, Americans with Disabilities, planning, and compliance functions. In addition, the policy team was strengthened by adding two new staff and moving the board liaison role into that team.
- Business Practices Team: In an effort to increase completion of projects on time, this team created automatic e-mail notices to project sponsors who are 90 days away from the end of their contract and one to grant managers to notify them of federal ending dates. Notices will be sent out in mid-June to project sponsors as they near five other key milestones. Finally, we are recruiting for a consultant to help us map our business practices so that we can find further efficiencies.
- Policy Team: This team is evaluating 12 policy recommendations, starting with the policies that require board action. The team started with two that were identified as “high impact” in the Berk report – agency response to project delay and terminating projects. The team concluded that there are sufficient policies in place for terminating projects and that the primary limiting factor in implementing the policies is staff workload. However, the team also agreed that it is important to have clear criteria and a clear process for project termination to ensure that sponsors are treated fairly and consistently. The process should include ample sponsor notification and the flexibility to address mitigating factors on a project-by-project basis. The team will develop recommendations for refining the current



policies and procedures regarding project termination and delegation of authority and bring those to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for approval in September and to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board at a future meeting.

Budget Preparation for the Next Biennium (2009 -2011)

Staff is preparing the agency's budget request for the next biennium. This is due to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the Governor in early September. To meet the deadlines, we will evaluate our current expenditures and identified need. The revenue forecast for the next biennium is grim; early forecasts predict a \$2.4 billion shortfall. Any proposal for increased spending will need to be evaluated carefully, including evaluating what might be cut to increase capacity within our current budget. OFM will determine the level of "carry forward" budget and will factor in planned cost-of-living increases, rate increases (like for rent, attorney services, etc). In preliminary discussions, here are some budget increases that have been suggested. We will very carefully evaluate and prioritize these (or any other):

- The Washington Biodiversity Council is looking to fund pilot projects to demonstrate the usefulness of conservation opportunity maps, to fund a scorecard rating of the state's biodiversity, to fund a citizen science network, and to start a broker program to match landowners with conservation incentives.
- The Washington Invasive Species Council is looking to fund a statewide assessment to determine the extent of invasive species infestations, a coordinated Web-based information clearinghouse, a targeted outreach campaign, and the addition of technical support to the council.
- The Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health will be prioritizing the requests of all agencies doing monitoring. It is unknown whether any of the proposals will be included in our budget or in the budgets of the sponsoring agency.

In June, the management team will analyze the budget ideas and present the director's draft budget on June 26, 2008. I hope to finalize the budget proposal, after which managers will start drafting final decision packages for OFM.

Staff Changes

I'm happy to welcome the following new employees:

- Jim Anest, new compliance officer. Jim joined us from the Department of Ecology, where he was the primary staff for compliance in the Shorelands Program.
- Moriah Blake, administrative assistant to the salmon recovery team. Moriah came to us from the Seattle University School of Law, where she was the executive assistant to the dean.

- Don Clark and Rollie Geppert joined the office in May to work through the summer inspecting Land and Water Conservation Fund projects, as well as other projects near those sites.
- Gary Cooper, temporary outdoor grants manager, has taken on tasks that will help grant managers close the 200 active projects that are very close to being completed. He also will be reviewing manuals to identify inconsistencies between the programs. This information will help us as we move to consistency in policy and in streamlining our manuals.
- Megan Duffy joined the policy section. She comes to us from Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting and has extensive experience developing policies, programs, and projects for federal, state, and local environmental agencies. She also has extensive experience in group facilitation.
- Ken Dzinbal joins us as the coordinator for the Monitoring Forum on Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health. Ken comes to us from the Department of Ecology, where he was a manager and policy analyst on monitoring strategies for water quality, sediment quality, biological conditions, and stream flow in Puget Sound. He has worked with the Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership (PNAMP) steering committee and other groups involved with interagency environmental monitoring coordination efforts such as the Puget Sound Assessment and Monitoring Program. Ken starts on June 16.
- Heath Packard also joins the policy team. He comes from National Audubon Society's Washington State office where he served as policy director. He was responsible for grant writing, program management, policy analysis, board briefings, government relations, and lobbying. Before working for Audubon, he was a marine biologist with NOAA-Fisheries in Alaska and director of field services for the National Wildlife Refuge Association in Washington DC. Heath also starts June 16.
- Summer Interns. We've hired two summer interns (Jeff Cedarbaum and Tauren Ibarra). Both will map projects in PRISM and do other tasks that help our grant managers keep up on their workload. Jeff is about to graduate from Capital High School with an International Baccalaureate diploma and will be heading off to Western Washington University in September. Tauren is a graduate from St. Martin's University and worked as a Committee Clerk in the House of Representatives last session.
- Current Recruitments. We are currently recruiting for three grant managers, an Administrative Assistant, and a Section Manager.
- In addition to the new staff, Greg Lovelady has taken on the duties of staff liaison for cultural resources. In addition to managing the NOVA and NRTP advisory committees, Greg will help finalize our working agreement with the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, formalize our internal processes, and coordinate training for grant managers and section managers, among other things.

Meeting with Partners

As many of you know, I had numerous meetings and field visits scheduled during May. I traveled to Rhode Island for the annual meeting of the National Association of State Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers (NASORLO). This long-named group is the primary group of state agencies that administer the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. Given the federal administration's proposed cuts to this fund, it was important for these administrators to develop a congressional and administrative strategy. At the conclusion of that meeting, I flew to Washington D.C. to meet with key federal agency representatives, including the National Parks Service, to talk about the grants we receive from them and what to expect for 2009. I also met with key staff in Congressman Norm Dicks' and Senator Maria Cantwell's offices. Again, I was shoring up our support for the federal funds we receive via the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Also during May, I spent some time in the field with the Methow Conservancy and folks from the San Juan Land Bank. I got the opportunity to see conservation easements acquired in the Methow Basin and projects that are proposed for the upcoming grant round.

News from our Sister Boards

- Salmon Recovery Funding Board met in early May to approve the policy manual for the 2008 grant round.
- Washington Biodiversity Council's work groups have been active, moving forward two projects that are specifically called out in the Governor's executive order. The first project relates to the conservation opportunity maps, which designate areas of high biodiversity. The second project relates to the biodiversity scorecard, which will provide a status of the level of biodiversity in Washington.
- Washington Invasive Species Council just finished its statewide strategic plan to strengthen the state's invasive species efforts. Summer activities for the council will include meetings with legislators and other decision-makers to introduce the plan.
- Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health: The Governor has appointed Bill Wilkerson as the new chair of the Monitoring Forum. Bill retired recently as the executive director of the Washington Forest Protection Association. Before that, Bill was the director of the Department of Revenue and the Department of Fisheries. Bill and I have launched a changed role for the Forum, steering it into more of a policy body and less of a technical working group. During the next few months, we will be meeting with state agency directors to seek their commitment to this new direction.