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**STATE OF WASHINGTON**

**RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE**

September 2008

**Item #8c:** **Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program**  
Natural Areas Ranked List for Fiscal Year 2010

**Prepared By:** Scott T. Robinson, Conservation and Grant Services  
Section Manager

**Presented By:** Scott T. Robinson, Conservation and Grant Services  
Section Manager

**Approved by the  
Director:**

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**Proposed Action: Decision**

**Description of Category**

“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.”<sup>1</sup>

**Summary**

Eight Natural Area category projects, requesting \$16.5 million, were evaluated on July 28, 2008, in an open public meeting. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (Board) is being asked to approve Table 1, which shows the ranked list of projects and staff recommendation for projects to be forwarded to the Governor.

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



### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of Table 1, which shows the ranked list of projects. If approved by the Board, staff will forward the list to the Governor. In keeping with Board guidelines, Table 1 includes enough projects to use the statutory amount set aside for this category and alternates.

Resolution #2008-037 is provided for Board consideration.

### Program Policies

Projects in the Natural Areas category protect high quality, representative native ecosystems, or unique plant or animal communities. Species protected on these habitats often are classified as endangered, threatened, or sensitive at the federal or state level. Rare geological features or features of scientific or educational value also are considered.

Other factors related to this program are:

<b>Eligible Applicants</b>	State agency applicants only
<b>Eligible Project Types</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acquisition of fee simple title or lesser interests in sites that have retained their natural characteristics</li><li>• Where appropriate, limited development of public use facilities is allowed</li></ul>
<b>Funding Limits</b>	No minimum or maximum grant request limit per project
<b>Match Requirements</b>	None
<b>Public Access</b>	Public use may be excluded if needed to protect the natural characteristics of these sites
<b>Other Program Characteristics</b>	Must be managed primarily for resource preservation, protection and study

The Natural Areas category of the Habitat Conservation Account is eligible to receive 30 percent of the WWRP funds in the account.<sup>2</sup>

### Evaluation Summary

Eight Natural Areas category projects requesting \$16.5 million were evaluated on July 28, 2008, in an open public meeting. A team of seven evaluators used criteria adopted by the Board to review and rank the projects. The evaluation team, composed of individuals recognized for their expertise, experience, and knowledge related to habitat protection, included:

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<sup>2</sup> Chapter 79A.15.040(1)(b) RCW

<b>Evaluator</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Phil Bloch	WA Department of Transportation
Jason Detamore	Chelan County Public Works
Deb Petersen	State Parks
Bill Robinson	The Nature Conservancy
Elizabeth Rodrick	WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
Carey Smith	Pacific Coast Joint Venture
Pene Speaks	WA Department of Natural Resources

The results of the evaluations, provided for Board consideration, are found in *Table 1 – WWRP, Natural Areas Ranked List of Projects, Fiscal Year 2010*.

### **Attachments**

Resolution #2008-037

Table 1 – WWRP, Natural Areas Ranked List of Projects, FY 2010

- A. State Map for Natural Areas Category projects
- B. Natural Areas Evaluation Criteria Summary
- C. Natural Areas Project Evaluation Scoring Summary
- D. Natural Areas Project Summaries

**RESOLUTION #2008-037**

**Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program  
Natural Areas Category - Fiscal Year 2010  
Ranked List of Projects**

**WHEREAS**, for fiscal year 2010 of the 2009-2011 biennium, eight Natural Areas category projects are eligible for funding from the Habitat Conservation Account of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, and

**WHEREAS**, these Natural Areas category projects were evaluated using criteria approved by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (Board) members, and

**WHEREAS**, these evaluations occurred in an open public meeting, thereby supporting the Board's strategy to ensure that its work is conducted with integrity and in a fair and open manner, and

**WHEREAS**, the eight 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*, including criteria regarding public support and linkages to established plans, and

**WHEREAS**, the projects protect areas that have retained their natural character and are important in preserving rare or vanishing species, geological, natural historical, or similar features of value, thereby supporting the Board's strategy to provide partners with funding for projects that help protect "listed" species and/or nature and natural settings,

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that Board hereby approves the ranked list of projects depicted in Table 1 – *WWRP, Natural Areas Ranked List of Projects*, FY 2010, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board 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:* \_\_\_\_\_

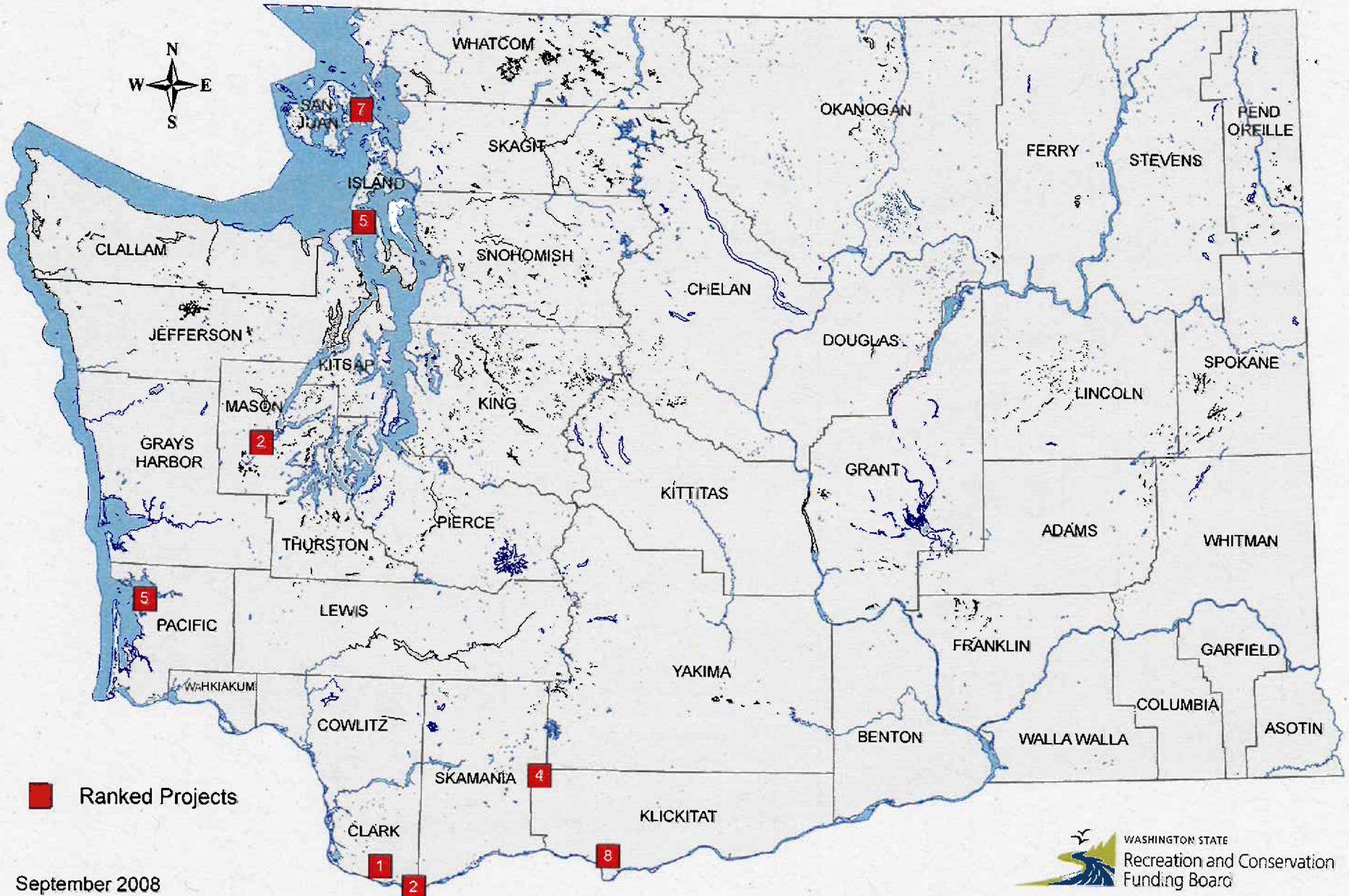
**Table 1**  
**Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program - Natural Area**  
**State Fiscal Year 2010**

Rank	Score	Number	Project Name	Project Sponsor	RCO	Total Amount	Cumulative Amount
1 of 8	42.429	08-1180A	Lacamas Prairie Natural Area 2008	Dept of Natural Resources	\$3,540,022	\$3,540,022	\$3,540,022
2 of 8	40.286	08-1186A	Washougal Oaks NAP/NRCA 2008	Dept of Natural Resources	\$1,709,977	\$1,709,977	\$5,249,999
2 of 8	40.286	08-1179A	Ink Blot and Shumocher Creek NAPs 2008	Dept of Natural Resources	\$1,747,200	\$1,747,200	\$6,997,199
4 of 8	39.857	08-1184A	Trout Lake NAP 2008	Dept of Natural Resources	\$1,672,440	\$1,672,440	\$8,669,639
5 of 8	36.571	08-1826A	Admiralty Inlet Heritage Forest Acquisition	State Parks	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$12,669,639
5 of 8	36.571	08-1175A	Bone River and Niawiakum River NAPs 2008	Dept of Natural Resources	\$883,312	\$883,312	\$13,552,951
7 of 8	32.571	08-1177A	Cypress Island Natural Area 2008	Dept of Natural Resources	\$2,820,825	\$2,820,825	\$16,373,776
8 of 8	30.286	08-1176A	Columbia Hills NAP 2008	Dept of Natural Resources	\$91,927	\$91,927	\$16,465,703
					<b>\$16,465,703</b>	<b>\$16,465,703</b>	

NOTE: Funds available, to be determined.

Prepared: 08/27/2008

# Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program - Natural Areas (WWRP - NA) FY 2010 Ranked Projects



September 2008

**Attachment B: Natural Areas, Evaluation Criteria Summary**

“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

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

**Attachment C: Evaluation Summary**  
**Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program - Natural Areas**  
**State Fiscal Year 2010**

Rank	Project Name/Sponsor	Question # 1 Ecological Biological Characteristics	2 Species with Special Status	3 Manageability and Viability	4 Public Benefit	Total
1	Lacamas Prairie/Natural Resources	17.714	9.143	11.286	4.286	42.429
2	Washougal Oaks /Natural Resources	17.286	8.000	11.429	3.571	40.286
2	Ink Blot and Sh/Natural Resources	16.429	8.000	12.571	3.286	40.286
4	Trout Lake NAP /Natural Resources	16.000	8.143	11.857	3.857	39.857
5	Admiralty Inlet/State Parks	14.714	7.143	11.143	3.571	36.571
5	Bone River and /Natural Resources	15.143	7.714	10.714	3.000	36.571
7	Cypress Island /Natural Resources	14.429	5.857	8.714	3.571	32.571
8	Columbia Hills /Natural Resources	12.143	6.143	9.286	2.714	30.286

### Evaluation Scoring Criteria

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)

**Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program,  
Natural Areas Category**

**Fiscal Year 2010**

**Project Synopses**

	<u>Grant Request</u>	<u>Match</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Dept of Natural Resources</b>	<b>\$3,540,022</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$3,540,022</b>

**08-1180A Lacamas Prairie Natural Area 2008**

Located northeast of Vancouver, in the Puget Trough/Willamette Valley ecoregion, this Willamette Valley wet prairie represents the only example of its size and quality in Washington. These ecosystems, which are considered priority 1 plant communities, are seriously threatened by habitat destruction and degradation in one of the most rapidly urbanizing counties in the state. These priority parcels support the second largest of 20 known populations of Bradshaw's Lomatium, a globally critically imperiled, federally-listed endangered plant species. It also contains habitat for five state sensitive plant species and one rare animal species, the Slender-billed White Breasted Nuthatch. These proposed acquisitions would constitute the second phase of a multi-phased and multi-agency effort to protect a larger area of wet prairie and oak woodland. Other partners in the effort to protect these rare communities and species include the Columbia Land Trust, Washington Nature Conservancy, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Clark County.

Rank (1 of 8)

	<u>Grant Request</u>	<u>Match</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Dept of Natural Resources</b>	<b>\$1,747,200</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,747,200</b>

**08-1179A Ink Blot and Shumocher Creek NAPs 2008**

DNR proposes to buy, manage, and protect wetlands and adjacent uplands within two state Natural Area Preserves, Ink Blot and Shumocher Creek. Both preserves are located in Mason County near Hood Canal and the Skokomish Valley. These preserves contain three imperiled wetland and bog ecosystems and seven very rare and/or high quality occurrences of wetland plant communities. One of the plant communities found on Shumocher Creek Preserve, the Sitka alder/skunk cabbage - water parsley community, has a very restricted geographic range; it is only found in the Puget Trough ecoregion and is critically imperiled globally. Inventories by two Natural Heritage scientists at the sites indicate that all of these wetland types and plant communities are in excellent condition. At both sites, the proposal is to buy parcels from willing sellers that contain the rare and high quality wetlands or that border the wetlands.

Rank (2 of 8)

	<u>Grant Request</u>	<u>Match</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Dept of Natural Resources</b>	<b>\$1,709,977</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,709,977</b>
<b>08-1186A Washougal Oaks NAP/NRCA 2008</b>			

This proposal is for acquisition of privately owned properties located east of Washougal at the western edge of the Columbia River Gorge in Clark County. It is part of a larger area that encompasses the largest high-quality native oak woodland remaining in western Washington. This type of ecosystem is of major conservation concern due to historic losses and ongoing degradation. In addition, a fish-bearing stream inside a steep forested ravine runs through the heart of the site. The site supports two state sensitive plant species, and two rare or threatened animal species: Slender-billed Nuthatch, and Lower Columbia Steelhead. The proposed combination of Natural Resource Conservation Area and Natural Area Preserve will complement existing conservation work within the project area by DNR's partners, which include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge), U.S. Forest Service (Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area), and the Columbia Land Trust. These acquisitions are part of a multi-phased project with the long-term objective of protecting the oak woodland and associated species from future residential development, other incompatible uses, and exotic plant species.

Rank (2 of 8)

	<u>Grant Request</u>	<u>Match</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Dept of Natural Resources</b>	<b>\$1,672,440</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,672,440</b>
<b>08-1184A Trout Lake NAP 2008</b>			

This proposed project, in Klickitat County, is for the acquisition of 300 acres of land eligible for inclusion in the Trout Lake Natural Area Preserve (NAP). The NAP encompasses one of the two highest quality freshwater wetland ecosystems left in south-central Washington and provides critical habitat for a variety of endangered, threatened and candidate species. The NAP is comprised of over 70% wetlands and is considered a unique and invaluable area by amphibian experts; it contains one of only six Oregon spotted frog populations in Washington, a State endangered and Federal candidate species. It is a staging area for the sandhill crane (State endangered) and a winter roost site for Bald Eagle (State sensitive). The wetland system is part of the Pacific Flyway, supporting a large number of neotropical migratory birds. The NAP is part of an essential movement corridor for a large elk herd and is used for wintering, spring foraging and calving, and is an important wintering habitat for black-tailed deer. A variety of other wildlife species use the area, including black bear, river otter, coyotes, beaver, small mammals and amphibians; and resident trout use the creek and marsh channels.

The lands proposed for acquisition support one of the two largest populations of the State threatened pale blue-eyed grass (federal candidate species), the largest Washington population of the rare Pulsifers monkey-flower, and the only recently known occurrence of the State threatened Parry's knotweed.

Rank (4 of 8)

	<u>Grant Request</u>	<u>Match</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Dept of Natural Resources</b>	<b>\$883,312</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$883,312</b>
<b>08-1175A Bone River and Niawiakum River NAPs 2008</b>			

This proposal is for acquisition of high priority properties within two coastal Natural Area Preserves in Pacific County that include the Bone and Niawiakum Rivers. These coastal wetland and estuary ecosystems are among the highest quality examples remaining of native coastal salt marsh communities in Washington. The superb wetlands of the Bone River and Niawiakum River preserves are recognized as national priorities for protection, as evidenced by past and current USFWS grants awarded for coastal wetland acquisition at both sites. It is critical to secure additional funding to pursue acquisition of the remaining undeveloped lands, which are threatened with conversion to incompatible and/or ecologically irreversible uses, such as residential development.

Rank (5 of 8)

	<u>Grant Request</u>	<u>Match</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>State Parks</b>	<b>\$4,000,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$4,000,000</b>
<b>08-1826A Admiralty Inlet Heritage Forest Acquisition</b>			

The proposal is to permanently protect a highly threatened and critical 54-acre property that includes an endangered prairie plant population, imperiled old-growth forest community, a 2,200-foot-long naturally functioning feeder bluff system, and numerous fish and wildlife species dependent on these habitats. The 30-acre forest community is a WA Natural Heritage Plan (WNHP) Priority 2 (Douglas fir-western hemlock oceanspray/ swordfern), one of only 7 known occurrences in WA. The golden paintbrush population is a WNHP Priority 1 and one of only 12 remaining in the world. Priority wildlife nesting on the property includes Bald Eagles, Merlins, Pileated Woodpeckers, Band-tailed Pigeons and Pigeon Guillemots. The feeder bluffs and adjacent kelp and eelgrass beds are designated as Critical Fish and Wildlife Areas by Island County. The shoreline is a primary migration route for salmon and other species, including documented Puget Sound Chinook and Hood Canal summer-run chum, both listed as federally threatened. The site abuts the south boundary of the Admiralty Inlet Natural Area Preserve, containing 33 acres and 2/3 mile of shoreline. Together, the two sites will protect over 80 contiguous acres of upland, over a mile of shoreline, two rare plant communities and a rare natural forest community. The property includes five waterfront lots with outstanding views that are highly threatened with conversion to high-end residential development. This is a one-time protection opportunity.

Rank (5 of 8)

	<u>Grant Request</u>	<u>Match</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Dept of Natural Resources</b>	<b>\$2,820,825</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,820,825</b>
<b>08-1177A Cypress Island Natural Area 2008</b>			

This proposal in Skagit County is for acquisition of privately owned waterfront properties on Cypress Island, which could be converted to incompatible and/or ecologically irreversible uses. Nearly 94% of the island is owned and managed by DNR as the Cypress Island Natural Area Preserve (NAP) and Natural Resources Conservation Area (NRCA). Cypress Island NAP/NRCA is a unique natural area due to its large size, ecological diversity and level of existing protection. Cypress Island has no infrastructure or ferry service, and limited development, all of which help increase protection. The natural area provides opportunities for directed public use and environmental education, while protecting critical habitat and rare plant communities.

Cypress Island remains a phased land acquisition project because of the high values for the remaining private properties. It is necessary to secure additional funding in order to actively pursue acquisition of selected remaining lands. The threat of conversion is high due to continuously rising property values in the San Juan Islands and the attractiveness of Cypress Island for vacation homes and resort facilities.

Rank (7 of 8)

	<u>Grant Request</u>	<u>Match</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>Dept of Natural Resources</b>	<b>\$91,927</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$91,927</b>
<b>08-1176A Columbia Hills NAP 2008</b>			

This proposal is for acquisition of properties for inclusion in the Columbia Hills Natural Area Preserve (NAP). This site is located on the crest of the Columbia Hills at the east end of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. It contains the largest remnant of one of Washington's rarest types of grassland ecosystems, as well as the state's largest populations of three rare plant species: obscure buttercup, Douglas' draba, and hot-rock penstemon. Oak-pine woodlands, basalt cliffs, and a number of natural springs add to the diversity of habitats found on this large site. A rich and well-documented history, as well as exquisite panoramic views contributes to this site's significance. A primitive road that climbs 2 1/2 miles to the ridge-crest is open for pedestrian access.

Rank (8 of 8)