



STATE OF WASHINGTON
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

June 3, 2009

TO: Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Members
FROM: Kaleen Cottingham, Director
SUBJECT: Director and Agency Management Report, July 2009

Preparing for Grant Evaluations and Contacts

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grants staff are in the middle of grant cycles. Recreation grant managers have reviewed most of the 148 applications in three grant programs open this year – Land and Water Conservation Fund, Firearm and Archery Range Recreation, and Recreational Trails Program. Grant managers are doing field visits to many of these project sites to review eligibility issues and project competitiveness, and offer technical assistance to help applicants prepare for grant evaluations. Conservation section staff are working with sponsors to prepare agreements for the 50 projects the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) will consider for final funding in July. Grant managers from both sections also are closing out completed projects, performing routine site inspections for funded projects, and working on more than 140 compliance or conversion issues.

Participating in Big Check Ceremonies

With the warmer months upon us, RCO staff will be scheduling the Big Check ceremonies, which offer the board an opportunity to honor grant recipients for the great projects they are creating, and generate some media coverage of the board's work. Below is a list of locations for ceremonies that we will begin to set up. I ask that each of you pick one or two ceremonies and let me know so that staff can work with you on scheduling.

Location	Grant Program	Project
Bremerton	WWRP – Local Parks	Evergreen Park Expansion/Shoreline
Camas	Land and Water Conservation Fund	Fallen Leaf Lake Park
Clallam County (Port Angeles)	WWRP – Trails	Spruce Railroad Trail Tunnel Restoration
Northport (North of Colville, near Canadian border)	Boating Facilities Program	Northport Boat Launch and Facilities Improvements
Tacoma	Boating Infrastructure Grant	Foss Waterway North Moorage Float
Tacoma Park District	WWRP – Water Access	Wapato Parks Miranda Property
Seattle Washington Trails Association	Recreational Trails Program	Volunteer Trail Maintenance
Skagit County (Mount Vernon)	WWRP – Farmland	Smith Farm
Spokane	WWRP – Urban Wildlife Habitat	Antoine Peak Acquisition Phase 2



New Service Offered for Boaters

Just in time for the unofficial start of the boating season on Memorial Day weekend, RCO launched a new web site for boaters that consolidates and simplifies access to a variety of information on boating services, rules and regulations, places to boat, fishing licenses, and boating news. The new site (www.boat.wa.gov) provides a portal to boating information offered by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; Department of Natural Resources; Department of Licensing; Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development; and the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, as well as federal government, non-profit, and private organizations.

The site was developed as a result of a 2007 survey of boaters' needs authorized by the legislature. The survey showed that boaters wanted a centralized web site that would provide a one-stop shop for boating information instead of requiring boaters to search the web sites of multiple state agencies.

New RCO Web Page Coming Soon

After a series of conversations with key stakeholders and customers, we have settled on a new design for our agency Web site. The design makes it easier for web visitors to find what they are looking for and presents a less cluttered home page, two of the key issues our customers asked us to fix. We are aiming for a launch of the revamped site in the fall. Below you will see the design for the new agency home page.



Employees on the Move

RCO said goodbye to two veteran managers in May, and will be welcoming a handful of new employees throughout the summer. Jim Fox, who served as special assistant to the director, leading the policy team and RCO's legislative efforts, retired in May after 15 years with the agency. He will be a hard act to follow and we all will miss him. Another hard act to follow is Clover Lockard, who retired from RCO after nearly three years as coordinator of the Washington Invasive Species Council and after 30 years of state and federal service. Clover guided the council through its formative stages and the development of its strategic plan. She will be sorely missed.

In anticipation of the new biennium, we have started the recruiting process to fill those and other vacant positions. In the Recreation Section, we recently filled one vacant position, and will fill the second vacancy effective July 1.

- Karl Jacobs, who previously worked at the Department of General Administration and the State Parks and Recreation Commission, started May 16. He will cover all Recreation Section program projects in Pierce, Snohomish, Chelan, and Okanogan Counties, the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest, North Cascades National Park, and Mount Rainier National Park.
- Rob Sterling will start July 1. Rob also comes to the RCO from the State Parks and Recreation Commission. He will cover all Recreation Section program projects in Spokane, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Whitman, Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield, Asotin, Grays Harbor, and Pacific Counties, and Gifford Pinchot, Umatilla, Okanogan, and parts of the Wenatchee National Forests.

The other vacancies include a financial analyst, summer interns, and a coordinator for the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, which the legislature transferred to the RCO. Most positions will be filled by July 1, and all should be filled by September 1.

Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program Coming to RCO

The Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP), formerly administered by the Department of Fish and Wildlife, will be added to the suite of RCO grants starting July 1. The legislature transferred the grant management portion of the program to RCO along with \$7 million in grant funds. This program, like the Family Forest Fish Passage Program, will be a jointly managed by three agencies, with RCO managing the grants. In this case, the joint management will be with RCO, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Puget Sound Partnership.

What Does the Sustainable Recreation Work Group Do?

Last year, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was tasked with making recommendations to the Washington State legislature on a long-term vision for recreation on lands it manages. As part of that effort, DNR created the Sustainable Recreation Work Group to advise their leadership on key issues surrounding public recreation on department-managed lands. RCO planner, Jim Eychaner, has been assisting DNR with staffing the work group and I was appointed a member of the work group. The group is holding forums through the summer to collect information from the public. Forums also are conducted electronically, with space available at the Natural Resources Building. For more information, visit DNR's Web site at:

http://www.dnr.wa.gov/RecreationEducation/Topics/RecreationPlanning/Pages/amp_rec_sustainable_recreation.aspx. The work group will provide recommendations on key issues including access, environmental considerations, and funding to the legislature in December.

Following RCO's Work Plan and Measures of Success

RCO Board Liaison Rebecca Connolly has developed a new tool that combines multiple reports and presentations together to draw the links between the strategic plan, work plan, and measures of success. The information was sent to all staff starting in June via e-mail so that they have an opportunity to see the information that is discussed by the management team at the monthly GMAP sessions. A shortened version of the new GMAP report is included as item #3d in this notebook.

News from Our Sister Boards

Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) – The SRFB is preparing for its next grant round, with applications due in September. At its May meeting, the SRFB made many decisions in preparation for the grant cycle, such as approving the guidance manual, setting a target funding level of \$18 million, and setting funding levels for regional organizations and lead entities. The SRFB also this summer will consider moving from an annual grant cycle to a biennial one.

Washington Biodiversity Council –The council recently completed two important outreach tools – a tabletop display for use at events and a fact sheet on a conservation planning tool that enables local jurisdictions to map areas with the highest biodiversity and level of threat. The council also is working on indicators for its “biodiversity scorecard,” which will be used to describe the status of Washington’s biodiversity.

Washington Invasive Species Council – At its May meeting, the Invasive Species Council approved an impact assessment tool, which is used to identify high threat species for council action and gaps in authority and management. Staff also is working with the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission to create posters that will educate visitors about the harm caused by invasive species and describe the public’s role in prevention and reporting. The posters will be hung in each state park by the end of June.

Monitoring Forum on Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health – At its May meeting, the monitoring forum agreed to an approach for reviewing the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's recently issued draft monitoring guidance. The forum also sent a letter to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, commenting on its proposed list of high-level indicators and recommending that the indicators be aligned with the forum's indicators. The forum's SRFB monitoring review work group will be meeting through the summer in preparation for more complete program recommendations this fall.