

## Item 10

Meeting Date: March 2010  
Title: Incorporating Sustainability into RCO Grant Programs  
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Approved by the Director:

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### Proposed Action: Briefing

### Summary

This memo is a follow-up to an October 2009 staff briefing on the concept of “sustainability” and its relationship to Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) grant programs.

### Strategic Plan Link

The board’s mission states that it will “Provide leadership and funding to help our partners protect and enhance Washington's natural and recreational resources for current and future generations.” Consideration of sustainability is key to implementing the mission for future generations. Further, such consideration supports the board’s strategies to (1) develop and coordinate plans and strategies that look to the future and balance investments across a range of recreational activities, (2) evaluate programs that encourage stewardship, and (3) be accountable for its investments.

### Background

In its previous presentation to the board, staff focused on RCW 39.35.030 (standards for major facility projects) and criteria found in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, better known as LEED.

The board asked staff to research additional concepts including social, economic, and environmental sustainability, a more comprehensive look at LEED, The Natural Step, potential sponsor threshold sustainability requirements, and how to encourage (rather than require ) sustainability from grant recipients.

The result of staff research is the paper called “Approaches to Policies to Promote Sustainability through the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.”

## Analysis

Staff will brief the board on the major issues, policy questions, and potential actions. The attached white paper provides analysis on the possible approaches.

## Next Steps

Staff will seek additional direction from the board.

## Attachments

- A. Summary of ideas from the sustainability white paper
- B. Research paper, "Approaches to Policies to Promote Sustainability through the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board"

## Summary of Ideas from the Sustainability White Paper

### Grant Programs

- Grant programs could be restructured to give more weight, more evaluation points, or more money to projects demonstrating sustainable practices
  - Weight/points for program-relevant elements:
    - Water conservation techniques
    - Use of recycled or on-site materials
    - Use of certified green building products
    - On-site energy independence (solar, wind)
    - Native plantings or low or no mow lawns
    - Reduced use of petroleum products (asphalt, fertilizer, etc.)
    - Green infrastructure (water infiltration, wetlands, pervious surfaces, green roofs)
    - Restoring brown fields to “green” space
    - Use of features that encourage alternative transportation to the site
  - Additional money over grant limits
  - Credit match requirement with “extra” costs of sustainable elements
- Make sustainable practices a requirement for program participation.
- Approach the Sustainable Sites Initiative about making a “sustainable Grant program” part of the case studies SSI is seeking to further develop its criteria.

### Policy

- Declare that RCFB’s current practices address sustainability in a sufficient manner.
- Ensure that any RCFB-funded development be executed with sustainable practices as a specific goal.
- Ask grant applicants to have adopted policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Declare that RCFB’s varied programs act as offsets for one another.
- Find that emissions from recreation-based sources a diminutive part of the state’s overall emission profile, and that this profile will be subject to national or international action such as cap and trade, cap and dividend, or other carbon limits legislation.
- Develop an estimated carbon footprint of the impacts and benefits of funded projects in all grant programs in a given biennium or grant cycle.
- Reduce or mitigate for emissions attributable to motor boating or NOVA activities.

## Planning

- Incorporate sustainability concepts in internal policy and client planning requirements.
- Incorporate sustainability issues into the state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (SCORP); the NOVA plan; or the Boating Programs Policy Plan.
- Require potential applicants to submit an approved plan to establish programmatic eligibility. RCFB could encourage, recommend, or require a sustainability element in those plans.

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# Approaches to Policies to Promote Sustainability through the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board



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## Background

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) has expressed interest in incorporating sustainability concepts into its grant programs. This paper discusses

- How Washington state government has defined sustainability;
- RCFB grant program consistency with these definitions;
- RCFB's authority for addressing sustainability;
- Relevant state law and Governor's Executive Orders;
- Models for implementing and measuring sustainable practices; and
- Potential actions for RCFB consideration.

It is assumed that RCFB will direct Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff to work with the public and grant program stakeholders to identify or recommend appropriate actions.

## Sustainability as Defined by Washington State Government

To *sustain* literally means to support, keep up, lengthen or extend, nourish, or take on. *Sustainability* is the property or characteristic of being able to sustain – being able to support, keep up, lengthen or extend, nourish, or take on.

From its beginnings in 1964, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board has been concerned with a particular form of sustainability: that is, sustaining the state's investment in outdoor recreation and habitat over time. The Board and agency's organic legislation includes the provision

... land with respect to which money has been expended under RCW 79A.25.080 shall not, without the approval of the board, be converted to uses other than those for which such expenditure was originally approved.<sup>1</sup>

This "non-conversion" clause has helped ensure sustained access to and enjoyment of the land and facilities paid for in whole or part with state funds managed by the RCFB.<sup>2</sup>

Since the 1960s, but especially in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries, the term *sustainability* has evolved to take on an environmental and ethical emphasis.

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<sup>1</sup> RCW 79A.25.100

<sup>2</sup> This assumes both the RCFB and its clients have the tools needed to manage portfolios forever. This is not necessarily the case. RCO, for example, is not always able to describe the exact location and boundaries of land paid for in previous decades.

This emphasis may have originated in the 1987 “Brundtland Report,” which defined sustainability as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>3</sup>

Washington State Government has adapted a variation of the Brundtland definition. Both the Office of Financial Management and the Department of Ecology currently define *sustainability* as “... a holistic approach to living and problem solving that addresses social equity, environmental health, and economic prosperity. To be sustainable, the economy must support a high quality of life for all people in a way that protects our health, our limited natural resources, and our environment.”<sup>4</sup>

Washington State Parks defines sustainability as “An ethic that guides individual and organizational decisions resulting in the conservation of environmental, economic and human resources for current and future generations.”<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, the Recreation and Conservation Office’s 2003 internal sustainability plan defines sustainability as “... a way of meeting present needs, without compromising future generations of their ability to meet their own needs, while integrating environmental protection, economic need, and social concerns.”

The common themes to be found in these recent definitions are: the environment, the economy, and people (health, human resources, social concerns). The “environment” has come to include issues related to climate change, including but not limited to protection of natural resources and natural processes and the extent of human-produced “greenhouse gases” such as carbon dioxide. For this reason, much of the discussion to follow will reference carbon emissions and greenhouse gases.

## Consistency with the Definitions

RCFB policy has, since the Board and agency’s beginnings, reflected the themes found in modern definitions of sustainability.

**Environment.** In all RCFB-supervised grant programs, the natural environment is referenced either in program purpose, policy, or evaluation criteria. The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program findings state “That Washington possesses an abundance of natural wealth in the form of forests, mountains, wildlife, waters, and other natural resources, all of which help to provide an unparalleled diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities and a quality of life unmatched in this nation.” (RCW 79A.15.005)

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<sup>3</sup> Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development *Our Common Future*, Gro Harlem Brundtland (Norway) Chairman

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/sustainability/default.asp> and *A Field Guide to Sustainability connecting concepts with action*, Ecology, publication #03-04-005 (Rev. October 2007)

<sup>5</sup> *Agency Policy on Sustainability and “Being Green,”* Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, June 2008

Policy A-2 of the Boating Programs Policy Plan reads "**RCO boating grants shall assist public agencies in providing quality opportunities for the recreational boating public—opportunities that satisfy user needs in an environmentally responsible manner.** RCO does not own or operate facilities. In making funding available to facility providers, however, RCO will recognize its responsibility as a partner in the stewardship of the natural environment."

Sustainability as an element in grant evaluation criteria may use different wording and emphasis, but is consistently present. For example:

- The Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) criterion 4b (Manual 21) asks among many other questions "Will the [restoration] project lead to sustainable ecological functions and processes over time?"
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Local Parks criterion 3 (Manual 10a) asks "Will environmental or other important values be protected by the proposed development?"
- The Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) ORV criterion 3b (Manual 14) asks applicants to "Explain how the design protects and complements the environment."

It could be assumed that conservation grants from programs such as ALEA or WWRP's "Critical Habitat" program are essentially contributions to environmental sustainability. There is a fallacy, however, in assuming that nature does not change. There is no long-term, steady-state in nature. A conservation grant made to support a particular species, for example, cannot assure perpetual existence of that species when so many conditions are beyond human control. Grant compliance policy is beginning to recognize this fact and allows for a certain level of adaptability.<sup>6</sup>

**The Economy.** The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is not recognized as an economic development or "jobs" agency: such tasks are typically assigned to the Department of Commerce or other agencies. Grant criteria do not measure economic development or jobs, though there is mention of consideration of youth crews in Recreational Trails Program (RTP) policy, and a "Jobs for Veterans" effort in grants managed by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). Also, the agency's PRISM data base is being modified to track job creation/retention attributable to grants.

**People.** There is no other reason for RCFB and its grant programs to exist than to satisfy public demand, whether for trails, ball fields, or land preservation for human values from scenic to ecological. Statute, policy, and evaluation criteria all emphasize human and social need, whether the integration of health and recreation in the state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (SCORP), or asking about "need" in evaluation criteria.

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<sup>6</sup> Manual 7 *Funded Projects: Policies and the Project Agreement*, RCO  
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Recreation is recognized as fundamental to human needs. The United Nations has declared "Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay."<sup>7</sup>

Accepting that leisure/recreation is fundamental to human existence, we can make a further generalization: that is, *managed* recreation is sustainable; *unmanaged or undermanaged* recreation may not be sustainable. This is confirmed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and its 2008-09 Sustainable Recreation initiative.

"Recreation occurring on state lands has dramatically changed over the course of the last forty years since the Multiple Use Act was enacted. When DNR began building its recreational facilities and trails in the 1960's most people in the outdoors participated in fishing, hiking, horseback riding, swimming, picnicking and hunting. Now... the most outdoor activities include mountain biking, camping, and motorized trail use (motorcycles, ATVs, 4x4s). Other activities like paragliding, paintball and mountain biking did not occur on the state lands until well after the 1960s. Not only has the type of recreation changed, but the amount of recreation has dramatically increased, as reflected by the fact that the state's population has doubled from 3.3 million people to 6.5 million in the last forty years.

"As DNR faces issues with drastically changing recreation trends on state lands, DNR is forced to keep up with increased demand for outdoor recreational opportunities with the same outdated facilities and trails it built forty years ago. As increased use and demand for recreation continues to grow so does the need for increased maintenance and management abilities to handle these changes. *As the gap between the public's increase demand for outdoor recreation opportunities and DNR's limited supply continues to grow the negative effects of recreation on the environment and public safety will also grow.*"<sup>8</sup> [Emphasis added]

RCFB can assume that investment in the management of recreation through appropriate sites and facilities is in essence a contribution to social or human sustainability. Further, many recreation facility grants are used to protect resources, adding to environmental sustainability.

**In sum**, RCFB grant programs address the major elements of sustainability as defined by state agencies. Whether they do so in a deliberate, systematic, or strategic manner is a different question.

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 24.

<sup>8</sup> Sustainable Recreation Work Group Forum Issue: Access, Background Information 2, Preliminary DRAFT, July 2009

## RCFB's Ability to Promote Sustainability

The RCFB's powers and duties are established in state law. Because the Recreation and Conservation Office, the agency that supports the RCFB, is part of the Executive Branch, both the Board and the agency must ultimately be in accord with the Governor's agenda. There are a number of issues and concepts worthy of RCFB promotion or encouragement, from healthy lifestyles through physical activity to environmental justice. Fortunately, successive Governors have taken a high level of interest in sustainability, as evidenced by Executive Orders supported by legislation. RCFB therefore can be confident that promoting sustainability is within its authority.

### Statutory Context for Sustainability Policy

RCFB has some latitude in taking initiative to add the concept of sustainability to grant program direction and evaluation. However, consistent with any criteria development, it must make sure that new criteria are consistent with applicable state law and Governor's Executive Orders. Also, it must consider the institutional capacity of its clients and avoid placing unreasonable burdens on these clients.

Statutes and Executive Orders specific to sustainability are relatively few. The more important ones are

#### Planning

- **36.70A RCW, Growth Management Act**, in which the legislature finds "... that uncoordinated and unplanned growth, together with a lack of common goals expressing the public's interest in the conservation and the wise use of our lands, pose a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety, and high quality of life enjoyed by residents of this state."

#### Development

- **RCW 39.04.133**, requiring a preference for the purchase and use of recycled content products in State capital improvement or construction projects.
- **RCW 39.35D.030**, establishing that "All major facility projects of public agencies receiving any funding in a state capital budget, or projects financed through a financing contract... must be designed, constructed, and certified to at least the LEED<sup>9</sup> silver standard." The statute applies to buildings of 5,000 square feet and larger.

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<sup>9</sup> "LEED" is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a program managed by the US Green Building Council. It provides third-party verification that a building was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance in energy savings, water efficiency, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.

- **43.21C RCW, State Environmental Policy**, declares a state policy "... which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between humankind and the environment; (2) ... promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere; (3) ... stimulate the health and welfare of human beings; and (4) ... enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the state and nation."

#### **Greenhouse Gases (CO2)**

- **RCW 47.01.440**, adopts statewide goals to reduce annual per capita vehicle miles traveled: 18% reduction by 2020, 30% by 2035, and 50% by 2050.
- **70.235 RCW** directs certain agencies to participate in the design of a regional multi-sector market-based system to help achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions, assessing other market strategies to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, and ensuring the state has a well trained workforce for a clean energy future.
  - RCW 70.235.050 requires all state agencies to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions generated by agency travel.
  - RCW 70.235.070 directs that when distributing capital funds through competitive programs for infrastructure and economic development projects, all state agencies must consider whether the entity receiving the funds has adopted policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

#### **Solid Waste**

- **70.95 RCW** establishes "... a comprehensive statewide program for solid waste handling, and solid waste recovery and/or recycling which will prevent land, air, and water pollution and conserve the natural, economic, and energy resources of this state." Assigns primary responsibility to local government and a supporting role to Ecology. No role for RCFB.

#### **Executive Orders**

- **Executive Order 02-03**, directs state agencies to develop sustainability plans for their own internal operations.
- **Executive Order 05-01**, directs state agencies to incorporate "green" building practices in all new construction projects and in major remodels that cost over 60% of the facility's assessed value (buildings of 5,000 square feet). Orders agencies to reduce petroleum use by 20%, paper use by 30%, and reduce energy purchase by 10%, effective 9-1-09.
- **Executive Order 07-02**, Washington Climate Change Challenge, adopting the 2005 Clean Car Act requiring certain automobiles to meet tougher emissions standards beginning with 2009 models; sets state goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, for increasing "green" energy sector jobs, and for reducing the amount of fuel imported into the State; and adopting high performance green building standards, as well as having one of the most energy efficient building codes in the nation.
- **Executive Order 09-05** Washington's Leadership on Climate Change, instructs Ecology to continue work in the Western Climate Initiative toward reducing greenhouse emissions, establish emissions baselines by certain large facilities, and develop emission benchmarks Ecology believes will be covered by a regional or federal cap and trade program; to work with Department of Natural Resources

on recommendations for forestry offset protocols; instructs Washington State Department of Transportation to develop plans and strategies when implemented will reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Except for 70.95 RCW, which targets action by local agencies, these statutes and Executive Orders are analyzed with RCFB grant programs in mind.

## State Law

### 36.70A RCW: Growth Management Act

According to RCFB Manual 2, *Planning Policies*, the Growth Management Act (GMA) encourages recreation and habitat conservation planning in several ways, including –

- A GMA goal designed to guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans is to – *“Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks.”* RCW 36.70A.020(9)
- *“Each county shall adopt development regulations that protect critical areas.”* RCW 36.70A.060(2)
- *“Each comprehensive plan shall include... a land use element designating the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of land, where appropriate, for... recreation, open spaces....”* RCW 36.70A.070(1)
- *“Comprehensive plans may include... other subjects relating to the physical development within its jurisdiction, including... recreation.”* RCW 36.70A.080(1)(c)
- *“Each county and city that is required or chooses to prepare a comprehensive land use plan under RCW 36.70A.040 shall identify open space corridors within and between urban growth areas. They shall include lands useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails, and connection of critical areas as defined in RCW 36.70A.030.”* RCW 36.70A.160
- *“Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants... to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the... requesting [agency] is a party to a county-wide planning policy under RCW 36.70A.210... and shall accord additional preference to the [agency] if such policy exists.”* RCW 43.17.250

Many of RCFB’s planning requirements parallel those in GMA, including a capital facility element with inventory, forecast of future needs, and the multi-year financing plan. Manual 2 encourages applicants to consider meeting GMA and RCFB requirements in a single plan document.

As well as providing planning guidance, RCFB policy rewards those governments that meet GMA requirements. Nearly all RCFB-managed grant programs have an evaluation question focused on meeting the requirements of the GMA; the exceptions are the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program that operates with federal evaluation criteria, and the Boating Activities Program which at present has no funding and no evaluation criteria.

## RCW 39.04.133: purchase and use of recycled content products

This statute calls for preferences for the purchase and use of recycled content products as a factor in the design and development of state capital improvement projects. It appears to extend to RCFB development grants made with capital dollars:

*RCW 30.04.133 (2) If a construction project receives state public funding, the product standards, as provided in RCW [43.19A.020](#),<sup>10</sup> shall apply to the materials used in the project, whenever the administering agency and project owner determine that such products would be cost-effective and are readily available.*

RCFB does not currently have a policy or directive in place that specifically references RCW 39.04.133. It could be argued that the small-scale construction typically funded by RCFB was not targeted by this statute. Many grant recipients are already incorporating recycled materials into project elements from park benches to play ground surfaces.

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<sup>10</sup> RCW 43.19A.020 makes federal product standards the standards for the State of Washington.  
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## RCW 39.35D.030: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

This law directs that all major facility projects by public agencies receiving any funding in a state capital budget must be designed, constructed, and certified to at least the LEED silver standard.<sup>11</sup> It applies to buildings over 5,000 square feet.

LEED's measurable standards are arranged into seven categories, of which 5 appear to have relevance to the outdoor orientation of RCFB grant projects. The seven categories have a total of 25 criteria.

Staff analyzed LEED criteria against RCFB grant programs with "typical" projects in mind. The analysis considered the applicability or suitability of the 25 criteria using a scale of low, medium, high, and "not applicable." We found that overall, 15% of the criteria are not applicable (e.g., indoor environmental quality), 49% have low applicability, 23% have medium applicability, and only 12% have high applicability.<sup>12</sup>

The few buildings funded by RCFB tend to be significantly smaller than 5,000 square feet. Typical buildings are restrooms, winter-use warming shelters, and primitive "convenience camping structures" such as yurts. Even the largest of the structures funded by RCFB may be a few hundred square feet in size.

Other RCFB-funded facilities such as ball fields, boat launches, trails and trail heads, and play grounds "fit" the LEED criteria only in the most generic sense. Applying the criteria to these projects requires a level of subjectivity that would be difficult to defend. In short, asking a LEED inspector to use these criteria on a "typical" RCFB project may be somewhat akin to using automobile manufacturing standards to rate a bicycle.

**Refining LEED: A Potential Option.** LEED weaknesses are recognized by entities seeking guidance on sustainable construction for projects other than buildings. The Sustainable Sites Initiative (SSI) is a leading proponent for augmenting LEED to cover more types of construction.

The Sustainable Sites Initiative "... began as separate projects of the Sustainable Design and Development Professional Practice Network of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. In 2005, the two groups joined forces to hold a Sustainable Sites Summit in Austin, Texas.

In 2006, the United States Botanical Garden (USBG) joined as a major partner in the Initiative. A Steering Committee representing 11 stakeholder groups was selected to

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<sup>11</sup> LEED points are awarded on a 100-point scale, and silver standard is 50 points or above.

<sup>12</sup> Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.  
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guide the Initiative. More than 30 experts are now on Technical Subcommittees developing sustainable benchmarks for soils, hydrology, vegetation, human health and well-being and materials selection. These subcommittees are developing the technical foundation for the *Guidelines and Performance Benchmarks*. The first interim report - the "Preliminary Report" - was released in November 2007.

The Initiative's central message is that any landscape, whether the site of a large subdivision, a shopping mall, a park, an abandoned rail yard, or a single home, holds the potential both to improve and to regenerate the natural benefits and services provided by ecosystems in their undeveloped state.<sup>13</sup>

The SSI work could be important, as the U.S. Green Building Council anticipates incorporating these guidelines and performance benchmarks (measurable criteria) into future iterations of the LEED system. The guidelines and benchmarks are in progress: SSI is seeking sponsors to submit planned projects as case studies to further refine the criteria.

At first glance, this set of criteria seems to have more promise for assessing RCFB-funded projects than LEED. SSI presents its criteria in eight prerequisite categories and nine credit categories. A total of 65 criteria may be measured.

To assess relevance of "typical" RCFB projects to SSI, staff conducted the same analysis done for LEED, using a scale of low, medium, high, and "not applicable." We found that virtually all criteria are applicable, but that overall 47% appear to have low applicability, 21% medium, and 31% high.<sup>14</sup>

As mentioned above, SSI is continuing to test and refine its criteria. It is worth tracking this initiative over time, perhaps proposing a future case study associated with an RCFB grant program. For the present, however, the fact that nearly half of the SSI criteria have no or low applicability to RCFB grant projects should be of concern.

**Key finding.** "Sustainability" standards for recreation facilities do not exist. Current efforts by recreation providers borrow somewhat unpredictably from a variety of sources from low impact development to urban forestry to invasive species prevention guidelines. While there is some overlap of facilities (e.g., parking, restrooms) among the huge variety of outdoor recreation activities, different forms of recreation require different facilities which in turn should be treated with different standards: ball fields cannot be compared to trails which cannot be compared to boat ramps.

Also, neither LEED nor SSI criteria are relevant to a substantial portion of the RCFB's portfolio. LEED and SSI standards cannot be used to measure sustainable farm lands, riparian areas, aquatic lands, or habitat of any variety.

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<sup>13</sup> Text quoted from [www.sustainablesites.org](http://www.sustainablesites.org), the web page of the Sustainable Sites Initiative, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## 43.21C RCW, State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)

Any development or major renovation project proposed by local or state agency sponsors is subject to review under SEPA. The SEPA process, managed by the Washington State Department of Ecology, starts with a checklist of environmental and other project impacts. The purpose of the checklist is to help a project proponent decide whether an environmental impact statement (EIS) is needed.

The SEPA checklist asks about potential project impacts to 16 environmental elements from air and water to recreation and transportation. None of the elements are specific to sustainability or sustainable practices. Unlike LEED or SSI criteria, the elements are not evaluated or scored.

SEPA is useful to RCFB grant processes in many respects, for example as an applicant's major step toward securing permits or demonstrating readiness to proceed. However, SEPA as it is now designed is not particularly useful for sustainability purposes. Ecology recognizes this and has acted to improve the connection between SEPA and climate change. It has assembled a Climate Advisory Team, which has segued into an Implementation Working Group responsible for a *Report to the Climate Action Team* at Ecology. The report focused on a directive "to ensure that climate change considerations are fully incorporated into governmental decision-making, resource and development planning, permitting and approval. This addresses the broader recommendation to analyze greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation options early in decision-making, planning processes, and development projects."<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, there does not seem to be a need to further address 43.21C RCW in RCFB criteria.

**Building on the SEPA Foundation: Permits as Sustainability Tools.** An important function of the SEPA checklist is to help a project proponent to determine the extent of permits needed. The Department of Ecology's Environmental Permit Handbook lists 119 permits in thirteen major categories. As the name of the handbook implies, virtually all of these permits are in place to protect natural resources: air quality, water, land resources, and wetlands, among others. The permits may be issued by federal, state, or local government. Native American Tribes must be consulted for other permits, such as an archeological excavation permit.

Development and renovation projects funded by RCFB are subject to permit requirements. A water access project could be subject to a list of permits ranging from hydraulic to on-site sewage, shoreline variance to shoreline substantial development.

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<sup>15</sup> 2008 Climate Action Team, Appendix 6: State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Implementation Working Group, "Report to the Climate Action Team," Ecology.

RCFB does not require applicants to have permits “in hand” at the time of grant application. However, grant criteria do ask about the status of permits, usually in a “readiness to proceed” question.

## RCW 47.01.440: Reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled

Burning gasoline for mobility is a known and significant source of greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).<sup>16</sup> This law adopts statewide goals to reduce annual per capita vehicle miles traveled by 2050. It is intended to support implementation of RCW 47.04.280 and Executive Order 07-02 (Washington Climate Change Challenge), both of which address greenhouse gases from mobile sources. One rationale is related to sustainability: “To enhance Washington’s quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and *protect the environment.*” RCW 47.04.280(1)(d) emphasis added.

The focus of Executive Order 07-02 is the State’s response to evidence that “...greenhouse gas emissions are causing global temperatures to rise at rates that have the potential to cause economic disruption, environmental damage, and a public health crisis.”<sup>17</sup>

The intent of RCW 47.01.440 is partially addressed by RCW 79A.25.250, which requires RCFB grants to give priority to parks located in or near urban areas. The statute’s rationale includes “... the fact that the demand for park services is greatest in our urban areas, that parks should be accessible to all Washington citizens, that the urban poor cannot afford to travel to remotely located parks... [and] *that a need exists to conserve energy...*” *Emphasis added.* Nearby parks and trails should mean less driving. RCFB has implemented RCW 47.01 by use of an evaluation question.

**Grant programs that support the goals of RCW 47.01.440.** RCFB grant programs that help pay for urban bicycle and pedestrian facilities can support the goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled. The Burke-Gilman Trail in King County, for example, receives 2 million or more uses annually; about 1/3 of these uses are for commuting.<sup>18</sup> The RCFB-managed Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) recognizes this in its priorities for LWCF investment:

RCO recommends... the provision of active connections between communities and recreation sites and facilities. “Active connections” means shared use trails and paths, greenways, and other facilities and features that encourage walking, jogging, running, and bicycling for more than recreation.

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<sup>16</sup> “Motor vehicles account for at least half the carbon monoxide pollution in Washington,” Focus: Major Air Pollutants, Washington State Department of Ecology, FA-92-132 (Revised 4/98).

<sup>17</sup> Governor’s Executive Order 07-02, February 7, 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Puget Sound “Trends” Newsletter, Puget Sound Regional Council, November, 2000.

*Reason:* Leverage funding to address multiple priorities of government, including recreation, health through physical activity, and personal mobility.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to LWCF, the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and the Recreational Trails Program (by law) can support these facilities.<sup>20</sup>

RCFB has been among the leaders in encouraging use of trails and paths for transportation as well as recreation. RCFB has adopted policy statements including "Trails need to be incorporated into transportation plans at state and local levels," and "plan for access [to parks] via trail modes: foot, bicycle, horse."<sup>21</sup> These policies have been incorporated into grant criteria only for LWCF.

**Uncertain grant programs.** In contrast, RCFB manages and in fact depends on (for grant project and RCO administrative funding) a number of programs that at first glance appear to be inconsistent with this statute. The Boating Facilities Program, Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program, the Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Program, and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) are all based on funding derived from the consumption of gasoline.

One point of view could argue that these programs encourage gasoline consumption by rewarding vehicle miles traveled, whether motor vehicle travel to a recreation site or by recreational use of a motor vehicle or gasoline-powered boat.

A counterpoint is that the programs mitigate for minor CO<sub>2</sub> impacts by helping managers provide programs and facilities that minimize the environmental impacts of vehicle and boat use. The Department of Natural Resources, for example, has learned that virtually all types of recreation on its lands is essentially sustainable if the agency has the money and other resources it needs to actively manage for recreation. DNR has stated that "Human activity in nature that may appear benign can still cause significant harm to the environment if not managed properly."<sup>22</sup>

In addition, NOVA activities often take place in a forested setting: forests are known to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>23</sup> If NOVA funds are being used to protect the environment by placing and maintaining suitable facilities that prevent resource damage, NOVA in a sense could be "off-setting" itself. The same concept could not necessarily be claimed for boating; water

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<sup>19</sup> *Defining and Measuring Success: the Role of State Government in Outdoor Recreation*, RCO, June 2008.

<sup>20</sup> RTP has flexibility under Federal law to fund urban bicycle and pedestrian facilities; RCFB policy directs RTP funds to "backcountry" trails that do not contribute to reducing vehicle miles traveled.

<sup>21</sup> *Washington State Trails Plan Policy and Action Document*, RCO, June, 1991.

<sup>22</sup> "Environmental Impacts Paper" developed by the Department of Natural Resources for the Sustainable Recreation Work Group, 2008-09.

<sup>23</sup> The Department of Natural Resources recently estimated that state trust forests have the potential to absorb 200 million tons of carbon, *2008 Climate Action Team, Forest Sector Workshop, Forest Sector Workgroup on Climate Change Mitigation, Final Report*, Ecology and DNR.

does absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, but in doing so it becomes more acidic, potentially harming the marine environment.

Whether these perspectives balance or even should balance is a challenging question. To put the conversation into perspective, it is helpful to understand the potential "carbon" (CO<sub>2</sub>) contribution of gasoline-powered recreation. We have data available with which to make an estimate of CO<sub>2</sub> contributed by two major recreational gasoline uses.

- RCO's 2003 fuel study found that "NOVA activities" from driving family vehicles or pickups on nonhighway roads to motorcycle and ATV riding off of roads burned 25,600,000 gallons of gas in the study period.
- According to the Washington State Department of Licensing, the motor boating community, over time, averages 1% of annual gasoline sales. WSDOT estimates 2010 gas sales at 2,772 million gallons. Boating's share of the estimate would be 1% or 27,200,000 gallons.
- Burning a gallon of gasoline creates 20 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>24</sup>
- With these data, we can calculate the following:

Estimated Annual CO <sub>2</sub> Contribution of Boating and NOVA Activities				
Program	Gallons of gas consumed	Pounds of carbon per gallon	Pounds of carbon	Pounds converted to US tons
NOVA	25,600,000	20	512,000,000	256,000
Boating	27,200,000	20	554,000,000	277,000

As recently as 2005, Washington State's total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have been estimated at about 95 million tons.<sup>25</sup> The total estimated CO<sub>2</sub> from boating and NOVA activities of 533,000 tons is an insignificant part of that total.

It must be noted that boat and vehicle manufacturers are increasingly aware of their responsibilities with regard to fuel efficiency (responding to consumer concerns about the price of gas) and carbon emissions. The BMW Group, owners of the Husqvarna motorcycle line, for example, promises that its products will offer "Less fuel consumption, lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, practical environmental protection..."<sup>26</sup> Honda is working to reduce emissions from its motorcycles 20% over 2001 levels by the year 2012; between 1996 and 2006 Honda claims to have increased its motorcycle fuel efficiency by 33.1%.<sup>27</sup>

In the broadest terms, it could be argued that these emissions are a small part of the national "carbon" total that is subject to current and on-going national and international debate and negotiation. Certainly, it is worth noting that Ecology's SEPA Implementation Working Group found that "...only part of the future greenhouse gas reductions

<sup>24</sup> [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov) web site of the United States Environmental Protection Agency

<sup>25</sup> Washington State Department of Natural Resources

<sup>26</sup> "Sustainability by Design. Taking Responsible Action." BMW Group brochure, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Publication "Setting High Standards: Striving for Sustainability," Honda, 2006.

mandated by Washington State law is likely to be implemented through SEPA-related mitigation. Much of the eventual future reductions will likely result from multi-state, national or international “cap and trade” provisions, carbon taxes, or other Washington State laws that may not be tied directly to the SEPA process.”<sup>28</sup>

**The Future of Gasoline and the Sustainability of the RCFB.** Because RCFB and its RCO administrators depend on gasoline taxes to pay for administrative costs, it needs to be concerned about larger issues of gasoline use and supply. In the short run, per capita gasoline sales are falling, and with it gasoline tax revenue.<sup>29</sup>

As total revenue declines, the share credited to NOVA and Boating Facilities will likewise decline: each is a percentage of total gas used and taxes paid, and as the total declines, the shares will decline. Note that gas taxes attributable to boating and credited to the recreation resource account have not yet declined because of a graduated rate that has not yet reached its maximum (see chart, below).

State Fuel Tax Allocations (per gallon of gasoline)			
Year	Total State Fuel Tax Rate RCW 82.36.025	Fuel Tax Rate Used to Calculate Transfer to the Recreation Resource Account RCW 79A.25.070	Fuel Tax Paid by Boaters Directed to Highways
2002	\$0.23	\$0.18	\$0.05
2003	\$0.28*	\$0.19	\$0.09
2004	\$0.28	\$0.19	\$0.09
2005	\$0.31	\$0.20	\$0.11
2006	\$0.34	\$0.20	\$0.14
2007	\$0.36	\$0.21	\$0.15
2008	\$0.375	\$0.21	\$0.165
2009	\$0.375	\$0.22	\$0.155
2010	\$0.375	\$0.22	\$0.155
2011	\$0.375	\$0.23	\$0.145

\*RCW 82.36.025(2) allows this \$0.05 to expire “when the bonds issued for transportation projects 2003 are retired.” Bond information is available from the Washington State Treasurer.

After 2011, RCFB can expect the recreation resource account to erode as gasoline sales continue to decline at least through 2018.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> 2008 Climate Action Team, Appendix 6: State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Implementation Working Group, “Report to the Climate Action Team,” Ecology.

<sup>29</sup> Transportation Revenue Forecast Council, June 2009 *Transportation Economic and Revenue Forecasts*, Volume 1, Summary Document, Washington State Department of Transportation.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

The big picture of gasoline supply is uncertain. How long petroleum will be available for cost-effective recovery is simply not known. The amount of recoverable petroleum is sometimes a state secret in those countries with known deposits. A recent opinion on the extent of supply comes from the International Energy Agency (IEA): it reported that "the output of conventional oil will peak in 2020 if oil demand grows on a business-as-usual basis."<sup>31</sup>

In the long run, there seems to be no question that the cost of petroleum and gasoline will continue to rise.<sup>32</sup> As the cost goes up, perhaps including future "carbon taxes," society will turn to alternatives. People will continue to recreate with boats and trail machines; however, they may not be using gasoline to power them. "Hybrid" passenger vehicles are becoming commonplace. Electric vehicles are promised for the near future. Biofuels could become commonplace in recreational uses.<sup>33</sup> These and other, potentially cheaper, energy technologies no doubt will be adapted for recreation.

Obviously, if people buy less gasoline over time, RCFB would receive less revenue over time for its programs – and for the agency that supports it. The question could then become how long the funding sources, grant programs, the Board, and the agency will be sustainable. Losing this structure could compromise or endanger the past investments made in land and infrastructure statewide.

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<sup>31</sup> Reported in *The Economist*, The Peak Oil Debate 2020 Vision, December 10, 2009.

<sup>32</sup> "...oil prices will recover as the world economy emerges from recession; North Sea Brent, the European benchmark, will average \$74 a barrel, up from \$62 in 2009." *The World in 2010*, The World in Figures, The Economist, December 2009.

<sup>33</sup> For discussion of alternate fuels for motor boating, see *Ecoboat – Boats for a Sustainable Future on the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads*, School of Marine Science and Technology, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, May 2005.

## 70.235 RCW Limiting greenhouse gas emissions

This law focuses on state participation in the design of a regional multi-sector market-based system to help achieve those emission reductions. Responsibility is assigned to the Department of Ecology and the Department of Commerce.

A "market-based" system implies the buying and selling of carbon units of some kind, with the potential to find market values for carbon sequestration services provided by forests.

RCFB would have no direct role in implementation of this law. However, it is of interest to speculate on "market value" value of the carbon emissions that could be attributed to recreation.

For example, cap-and-trade proponents debate the value of carbon units. Value is usually expressed in dollars per ton. *The Economist* magazine suggests carbon should be priced at US \$18 per ton. *Forbes* magazine suggested that the recent Copenhagen debate might settle on US \$10 per ton (and did not).

Using a "for instance" price of \$10 US per ton of CO<sub>2</sub>, calculated against the values for NOVA and Boating gasoline consumption discussed above, we can estimate the market value of the carbon attributable to gasoline-supported grant programs this way:

Program	Gallons of gas consumed	Pounds of carbon per gallon	Pounds of carbon	Pounds converted to US tons	Price per ton	Potential annual price
NOVA	25,600,000	20	512,000,000	256,000	\$10	\$2,560,000
Boating	27,200,000	20	554,000,000	277,000	\$10	\$2,770,000

Whether these estimates have any relevance to a multi-sector market-based system is unknown at this time. NOVA and boating, not to mention recreation generally, is probably not a major source sector: the figures above represent only 2% of CO<sub>2</sub> from gasoline consumption. However, these figures could find their way into Washington State's unique emissions portfolio at some point in the future.

**Recent changes to 70.235 RCW.** In the 2008-09 session, the Legislature approved ESSB 5560, now codified as RCW 70.235.070. The section reads

Beginning in 2010, when distributing capital funds through competitive programs for infrastructure and economic development projects, all state agencies must consider whether the entity receiving the funds has adopted policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Agencies also must consider whether the project is consistent with: (1) The state's limits on the emissions of greenhouse gases established in RCW 70.235.020; (2) Statewide goals to reduce annual per capita vehicle miles traveled by 2050, in accordance with RCW 47.01.440, except that the agency shall consider whether project locations in rural counties, as defined in

RCW 43.160.020, will maximize the reduction of vehicle miles traveled; (3) Applicable federal emissions reduction requirements.

The Office of Financial Management (OFM) has determined that this section is not applicable to the RCFB's grant programs: parks, boat launches, trails and other sites and facilities paid for by RCFB grants do not meet the intended definition of "infrastructure."<sup>34</sup> OFM does encourage RCO to implement the provisions of this statute when feasible.

## Executive Orders

### 02-03 Sustainable practices by state agencies

Directs state agencies to prepare and implement sustainability plans for their business practices. RCO has maintained a sustainability plan since 2003. In annual reports to the Office of Financial Management, the agency has shown real results toward the goals of this executive order. For example, the agency reported in 2003 it used 3,965 reams of paper; in 2007, 972 reams; the agency reduced gasoline purchase by over 1,000 gallons between 2008 and 2009.

The agency sustainability plan has no real applicability to RCFB policy to promote sustainability other than as a "good example."

### 05-01: Establishing sustainability and efficiency goals for state operations

Again, RCO has met its goals to reduce gasoline and paper use, but this executive order does not apply to policy promoting sustainability.

### 07-02 Washington Climate Change Challenge

See discussion under RCW 47.01.440, page 15.

### 09-05 Washington's Leadership on Climate Change

See discussion under 70.235 RCW, page 19. In addition to Ecology and Commerce leading on establishing emission baselines and investigating a market-based system, the Order gives the Department of Natural Resources a key role in making recommendations for making forestry offset protocols, and also gives the Department of Transportation a role in giving the public additional transportation alternatives and choices.

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<sup>34</sup> IMPLEMENTATION OF RCW 70.235.070, memo from Office of Financial Management, February 8, 2010

## Summary of State Laws and Executive Orders

Applicability of different state laws and Executive Orders to RCFB grant programs appears to be problematic. Not all statutes are evenly applicable to all programs, and some executive orders are aimed at the agency and are not necessarily applicable to sustainability policy affecting grant programs.

<b>Statute or Executive Order</b>	<b>Applicability to RCFB Grant Programs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
36.70A RCW, Growth Management Act	High	RCFB policy encourages planning and rewards compliance with GMA
RCW 39.04.133 preference for recycled materials	Mixed – uncertain connection to acquisition projects	No policy in place
RCW 39.35D.030 buildings to LEED standards	Low, funded structures do not meet minimum size	Sustainable Sites Initiative may be more relevant
43.21C state environmental policy	Low in programs funding federal projects, high in all others	SEPA check lists may be evidence of applicant's "readiness to proceed"
RCW 47.01.440 reduce vehicle miles traveled	Mixed	Boating, NOVA, and RTP may be problematic
70.95 RCW solid waste management	Not applicable	
Executive Order 02-03 sustainable practices by state agencies	Low	Agency specific, not applicable to grant clients
Executive Order 05-01 sustainability goals for state agencies	Low	Agency specific, not applicable to grant clients
Executive Order 07-02 Washington Climate Challenge	Mixed	Boating, NOVA, and RTP may be problematic
Executive Order 09-05 Washington's leadership on climate change	Mixed	Uncertain relationship

Unfortunately, this mixed or uneven applicability does not help RCFB to craft policy that is deliberate, systematic, or strategic. Especially confounding is the apparent problematic relationship between some grant programs and state law and Executive Order.

## Other Guidance for Developing Sustainability Policy

Looking beyond state law and Executive Order, RCFB may consider sustainability models from other agencies, institutions, or organizations.

### Living Building Challenge

The International Living Building Institute (ILBI) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) "dedicated to the creation of a truly sustainable built environment in all countries around the world." It was "...initially launched and continues to be operated by the Cascadia Region Green Building Council [www.cascadiagbc.org](http://www.cascadiagbc.org) (a chapter of both the US Green Building Council and Canada Green Building Council)...."<sup>35</sup>

The Living Building Challenge offers a set of 20 criteria in seven categories for assessing development in four settings: neighborhood, building, landscape+infrastructure, renovation. A cursory examination shows that, like LEED, the LBC has low applicability to many of the projects funded by RCFB.

### The Natural Step

Ecology refers to the concept called The Natural Step as a framework for decision making. "The Natural Step was developed beginning in the late 1980s by Dr. Karl-Henrik Robèrt, a Swedish oncologist, who later collaborated with physicist, Dr John Holmberg to create a framework for the conditions that are considered essential for life. The Natural Step framework strives to move beyond ongoing debate over appropriate levels of risk or potential long-term effects of a product or process. If an activity continually violates the system conditions, it cannot be sustained over the long term."<sup>36</sup>

The Natural Step System Guidelines have four goals.

- Goal 1: Fossil fuels, metals, and other minerals should not be extracted from the earth and accumulate on the surface at a faster rate than their slow redeposit into the Earth's crust.
- Goal 2: Synthetic substances should not be produced faster than they can be safely used or broken down in nature.
- Goal 3: The productivity and diversity of nature should not deteriorate. We must not harvest more from nature than can be recreated or renewed. Also, we cannot change the climate such that major imbalances in global systems arise. We cannot destabilize the dynamic equilibrium necessary

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted from [www.ilbi.org](http://www.ilbi.org) web site 2009

<sup>36</sup> Quoted from [www.naturalstep.org](http://www.naturalstep.org) web site 2009

for life as we and all other creatures know it, such as the balance between oxygen and carbon dioxide in the oceans and atmosphere.

Goal 4: There must be fair and efficient use of resources. Basic human needs<sup>37</sup> should be met with the most resource-efficient methods possible, including equitable resource distribution. Economic development should be sustainable for all the economies of the world.

The Washington State Department of Ecology assessed The Natural Step (TNS) as a foundation for its own agency sustainability plan and found important weaknesses. For example, a criterion of "measurability" was rated "poor." Ecology writes, "TNS was designed to define societal sustainability and requires estimates of substance flows compared to the earth's ability to process those flows and to handle wastes. These measurements are very difficult and in some cases, probably beyond humankind's current knowledge. Organizations must use measurable surrogates that may not be systematic or comprehensive as indicators."<sup>38</sup>

Another weakness of The Natural Step is its model of "backcasting" – that is, identifying a desired outcome and looking back in space and time at the steps needed to achieve the outcome. Other than the *Washington State Trails Plan* (RCO, 1991), no RCFB-approved document has established measurable goals for grant or other RCO programs from which to "backcast."

The Natural Step is not a satisfactory model for RCFB policy on sustainability.

## Salmon Safe

Salmon Safe is a nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring urban and agricultural watersheds for salmon. It has developed salmon-safe certification standards for parks and natural areas, focusing on avoiding harm to stream ecosystems. As such, it is perhaps too narrowly focused to be considered a sustainability model, though its application would be consistent with sustainability. It is of interest as it could make a connection between RCFB and the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB).

## Washington State Department of Ecology

Ecology offers a major document intended to assist organizations in assessing their "ecological footprint," *Pathways to Sustainability*. *Pathways* focuses on "business practices" such as building design and facility operations. Ecology also offers a minor document intended as a general interest or promotional piece, *A Field Guide to Sustainability*. The *Field Guide* somewhat contradicts *Pathways* by focusing on The

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<sup>37</sup> "Basic human needs" defined to include leisure, Natural Step Internet site <http://www.naturalstep.org/the-system-conditions> October 2009, emphasis added.

<sup>38</sup> *Pathways to Sustainability, A Comprehensive Strategic Planning Model for Achieving Environmental Sustainability*, Washington State Department of Ecology, Publication No. 02-01-008.

Natural Step. The *Field Guide* deals in generalities. Its advice to government is to engage in: environmentally preferable purchasing, green building, and green energy.

Neither Pathways nor the Field Guide offers substantial guidance for developing sustainability policy related to RCFB grant programs.

## Local Washington Communities

Many local communities refer to sustainability in parks and recreation programs and services. These tend to a grab-bag of initiatives such as tree planting, volunteerism, recycling, and "green" design such as use of artificial turf with no underlying strategy or standards.

## Other States

Staff queried planners through the National Association of Recreation Resource Planners (NARRP).

**California.** Its sustainability web site focuses on retention and adaptive use of older and historic buildings.

**Nebraska.** State Parks was developing a "green cabin" project. In searching for applicable standards or criteria, it borrowed a checklist from San Mateo (CA) County. The check list includes consideration of site, water, recycled materials, sustainable products such as wood from sustainable forests, and saving energy through design.

**Pennsylvania.** Pennsylvania State Parks offers Community Recreation and Conservation grants. It has decided to "Go Green," and scores applications accordingly: 30 out of 100 possible points are linked to sustainable practices. Points are based on the Sustainable Sites Initiative guidelines. The points are allocated in four major sections: water, natural landscaping and trees, green design and construction (including LEED criteria for buildings), and connecting people to nature. To assist applicants, the agency offers an Internet site on "Greening Parks and Sustainable Practices" <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants/indexgreen.aspx> This site features Parks' "Green/Sustainable Project Scorecard for Grant Applicants."

**Texas.** Encourages but does not require grant applicants to use "environmentally responsible activities" with a grant evaluation question specific to these activities. Examples range from use of native plants to water catchment systems. It also offers a publication to grant applicants called *Environmentally Responsible Activities: Recommendations*.

**Wisconsin.** Generally recommends different sustainability standards for different recreation types. Detail is not currently available.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may approach sustainability policy in three broad and interrelated areas: agency policy, agency planning, and grant programs. Because accepted standards for sustainability specific to recreation sites and facilities are simply not available, work in this area could be ground-breaking. As such, a proposal to develop such standards could be worthy of agency-request legislation or other means to seek research and development funds.

To avoid unintended consequences, stakeholder resistance, and poor precedence, a high level of due diligence is essential. As the Department of Ecology's SEPA Implementation Work Group found,

In other states and on a federal level, we have witnessed climate change policy under SEPA-like statutes being made on an ad hoc basis through piecemeal litigation or through piecemeal precedent set by individual environmental reviews negotiated between individual applicants and individual lead agencies. In neither case has there been consistency or predictability. Our aim is to diminish the potential for litigation (and to provide consistency and predictability) by giving state and local agencies the tools and framework they need to fully incorporate climate change considerations into their decision-making.<sup>39</sup>

## Policy

RCFB could consider crafting any number of general Board and agency policies regarding sustainability. It appears that RCFB could be well served by ensuring that existing policies are aligned before making new demands of its clients.

At the simplest level, RCFB could on the evidence available to it simply declare that its current practices address sustainability in a sufficient manner. The agency sustainability plan is in place, and its goals are being met. RCFB grants routinely pay for projects that contribute to sustainability, whether the acquisition of wetlands or forest habitat, or a development project that protects natural resources by directing and focusing use. RCFB does not fund capital projects subject to LEED requirements.

However, it may be desirable to ensure that any RCFB-funded development be executed with sustainable practices as a specific goal. Trails, ball fields, parks, and boat launches could be built with recyclable materials, use native vegetation, conserve water, and minimize energy use.

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<sup>39</sup> 2008 Climate Action Team, Appendix 6: State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Implementation Working Group, "Report to the Climate Action Team," Ecology.

RCFB could assist with implementation of RCW 70.235.070, considering whether grant applicants have adopted policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This action would require sensitivity to the variety of applicants we serve. For example, it may be unreasonable to ask a small nonprofit seeking a trail maintenance grant to submit its greenhouse gas policies; on the other hand, a large city such as Seattle may have already adopted and implemented its policies and considers a park project to be directly related to greenhouse gas reduction.

Regarding those programs with uncertain alignment with state law or Executive Order, the RCFB could find that its varied programs act as offsets for one another. Or it could find that emissions from recreation-based sources a diminutive part of the state's overall emission profile, and that this profile will be subject to national or international action such as cap and trade, cap and dividend, or other carbon limits legislation.

**Defending offsets.** To support an assertion that varied programs offset one another, it may be desirable to defend the assertion with metrics. It is possible to develop an estimated carbon footprint of the impacts and benefits of funded projects in all grant programs in a given biennium or grant cycle. The carbon footprint estimate, perhaps an initial baseline followed by regular updates, would be made up of estimates of a number of elements related to the themes identified in the State's definition of sustainability.

Potential Metrics to Estimate Biennial Carbon Footprint				
Element	Measure	Impact	Benefit	Comments
<b>Environmental</b>	Use of petroleum products	✓		Pavement, artificial turf, fuel used in construction
	Use of timber		✓	If certified "green" products, though different certifications are controversial
	Percent of pervious surface	✓		Farm land program has set precedent with "envelope" concept
	Estimated vehicle traffic	✓		Difficult to determine service area, could be offset with bicycle access, transit stop
	Use of native plants		✓	The public has been known to object to replacement of grass with native plantings
	Energy used on site	✓		Lighting for ball fields, parking lots, restrooms, etc.
	Energy generated on site		✓	Potential for solar, wave-energy, other generation if it does not interfere with the purpose of the grant
	Preservation of natural processes		✓	So-called green infrastructure benefits, such as carbon sequestration, water filtration, storm water control
<b>Social</b>	Public satisfaction		✓	Requires survey potentially limited to projects: high cost
	Promote physical activity		✓	Would tend to reward trails, ball fields, sports courts, playgrounds
	Meet "demand"		✓	"Demand" needs better definition, potential link to level of service
<b>Economic</b>	Jobs created or preserved		✓	PRISM report in progress
	User spending		✓	Economics of recreation poorly understood and often overstated

The challenge would be to gather the required data and make sense of it. Assigning points to criteria makes sense, though determining how many points to assign to estimate vehicle traffic versus public satisfaction would require a consensus among key clients and stakeholders. If metrics were to be developed and data collected, it would only make sense to collect data consistently over time to monitor trends from the baseline. Currently, RCO lacks the resources necessary to fully develop these metrics, in terms of expertise and available staff. At minimum, staff training would be needed, but which staff in an agency working beyond capacity would be a difficult decision.

Moving into more complex policy areas, RCFB could decide that it needs to assume it has responsibility to reduce or mitigate for emissions attributable to motor boating or NOVA activities.

**Reducing:** While the RCFB has virtually no influence over consumer choice in terms of recreation activities, it could for example work with user groups to publicize alternates to fossil fuel: hybrid technology, biofuels, solar, or others. This kind of activity would require additional work to address a likely decline in program revenue. In the realm of speculation, it may be possible to develop agency legislation that results in replacement of fuel taxes foregone with revenue from another source, perhaps the boating excise tax or sales tax related to the equipment needed for NOVA activities.

**Mitigating:** In a creative action perhaps needing new agency authority, RCFB could pay a forest landowner, such as DNR, to defer or delay timber harvest of sufficient volume to account for CO2 attributable to motorized recreation. Optionally, grant sponsors could be asked to set aside a portion of grant funds for some kind of mitigation payment.

The challenges here would include, at minimum, weighing the political risk against potential return.

## Planning

RCFB could direct RCO staff to incorporate sustainability concepts in internal policy and client planning requirements.

**Internal planning.** Examples of internal plans that could readily incorporate sustainability issues include the state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (SCORP); the NOVA plan; or the Boating Programs Policy Plan. The work here could be a “next step” in going from no applicable sustainability guidelines or standards to exploring activity-specific guidelines or standards.

**Client planning.** RCFB grant programs such as Boating Facilities, NOVA, and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) require potential applicants to submit an approved plan to establish programmatic eligibility. RCFB could encourage, recommend, or require a sustainability element in those plans. Implementation would

include amending the Washington Administrative Code and program Manual 2. Amendments could include case studies, checklists, references, and other material.

## Grant Programs

Of all the activities that RCFB oversees, there is no doubt that the grant programs have the most influence outside of the agency. The RCFB could adjust grant program policies and rules to promote sustainability agenda in at least three ways.

**1. Recommend.** Similar to the Pennsylvania State Parks approach, RCFB could direct that programs provide clients with general guidance, checklists, and resources. Clients could self-assess the extent to which they are doing or are willing to do “the right thing.”

**2. Reward.** Grant programs could be restructured to give more weight, more evaluation points, or more money to projects demonstrating sustainable practices. The first order of business, of course, would be to determine what those practices are on a program-by-program basis.

As of this date, the word “sustainability” is found in one RCFB evaluation criteria in the WWRP State Parks category. The word “sustainable” is found only in the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) criteria. However, virtually all program evaluation criteria reference protection of the environment or natural resources.

- **Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account.** Question 4b. Project design and viability (Access Projects Only): *Does the proposed development protect the natural resources on site? For example, does the project include low impact development techniques, green infrastructure, or environmentally preferred building products?*
- **Boating Activities Program.** No criteria are in place at this time.
- **Boating Facilities Program.** Question 3b. Project Design. *Is the proposal appropriately designed for the intended use? Development only. RCFB policy rewards design standards and construction techniques intended to maximize service life, minimize routine maintenance, and avoid environmental impacts.*
- **Boating Infrastructure.** No reference in existing federal criteria.
- **Firearms Archery Range.** Question 3. Project Design. *Has this project been designed in a high quality manner? Development projects. Environment - How are aesthetic, accessibility, and environmental issues addressed? If applicable, how are lead recovery, soil, and water conditions addressed?*
- **Land and Water.** Question 5. Cost Efficiencies. *The extent that this project demonstrates efficiencies and/or reduces government costs through documented use of: Innovative or **sustainable** design or construction resulting in long-term cost savings. Examples: Use of solar energy, integration of wetlands as “green infrastructure,” new materials or construction techniques with outstanding potential for long service life. [emphasis added]*
- **Nonhighway and ORV.** All categories use Question 3b. Project Design. *Is the proposal appropriately designed for intended uses and users? Explain how the*

*design: Protects and complements the environment. Question 3c. Maintenance. Are the project's maintenance goals and objectives appropriate? Is the project needed to ensure protection of an environmentally sensitive site?*

- **Recreational Trails.** Question 3. Project Design. *Is the proposal appropriately designed for intended uses and users? How does the design protect and complement the environment?*
- **WWRP.** From Manual 10a WWRP – ORA, all categories, Question 3. Project Design. *Does the project demonstrate good design criteria? Does it make the best use of the site? Will environmental or other important values be protected by the proposed development? Manual 10a, State Parks category, question 8, **Application of Sustainability.** Does the proposed design or acquisition meet accepted sustainability standards, best management practices, and/or stewardship of natural or cultural resources? From Manual 10b WWRP – HCA. 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? [Describe] Ongoing stewardship.**
- **Youth Athletic Facilities.** No reference in existing criteria.

To give more weight to “sustainability,” the RCFB could direct staff to simply insert the word “sustainable” in existing evaluation questions, accompanied by a definition and examples. Where questions are lacking, new questions could be written, as the State of Texas has done. The problem with adding points or a question is that the element assigned the points becomes a new requirement: in a process in which some projects are separated by tenths of a point, all points are important. Regardless, RCFB would need to develop program-specific definitions, checklists, case studies, or guidelines to help clients respond to the “sustainability” element.

Beyond points, RCFB may wish to encourage action by offering more money to grants demonstrating sustainability. For example, where policy calls for a sponsor to bring its own matching resources to bear on at least 10% of a project cost, the amount could be lowered to 5%. Another approach would be to raise grant limits; boating for example could provide 90% funding instead of the current 75%.

**3. Require.** The RCFB could make sustainable practices a requirement for program participation. One suggestion is to establish a sustainability threshold of some kind. A threshold would be difficult to determine. One way would be to require applicants to have permits in hand at the time of application or evaluation.

There is no doubt that an option to *require* clients to address sustainability would be the most difficult to implement. Here again, no clear standards or guidelines exist. RCFB would have to direct RCO staff to work with the public to develop acceptable guidelines based on available examples.

**Additional action.** Whatever the decision, RCFB could consider approaching the Sustainable Sites Initiative about making a “sustainable Grant program” part of the case studies SSI is seeking to further develop its criteria.

## Public Process

To achieve any policy initiative, RCFB understands that a public process is essential. Addressing sustainability as an agency priority or requirement in the public arena would not be a simple undertaking.

At minimum, staff recommends a "sustainability steering committee." A committee could include experts and experienced people associated with each of the grant programs potentially involved. It could be charged with taking RCFB direction and providing advice to RCO staff.

Additional public involvement could include personal interviews with experts and important stakeholders, workshops, focus groups, public meetings, web polls, and other approaches.

## Next Steps

Assuming the RCFB wishes to make sustainability a priority, the RCO currently has sufficient resources available for developing and implementing a public process. A caution is that the more complex the direction, the more time it will take to develop recommendations that have client and public support.

A public process should result in consensus recommendations to the Board, including an assessment of the agency's capacity to achieve the recommendations.

Appendix: Summary of Grant Programs and Estimated Applicability of State Laws and Executive Orders

36.70A RCW, Growth Management Act

<b>RCFB Grant Program</b>	<i>Potential Applicability of 36.70A RCW</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>Aquatic Lands</b>	High	No RCFB planning requirement
<b>Boating Activities</b>	High	No RCFB planning requirement
<b>Boating Facilities</b>	High	
<b>Boating Infrastructure</b>	High	No RCFB planning requirement
<b>Firearms Archery Range</b>	High	No RCFB planning requirement
<b>Land and Water</b>	High	
<b>Nonhighway and ORV</b>	Low	Significant number of projects take place on federal lands subject to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
<b>Recreational Trails</b>	Low	Significant number of projects take place on federal lands subject to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); no planning requirement
<b>WWRP</b>	High	Not all categories have a planning requirement
<b>Youth Athletic Facilities</b>	High	No RCFB planning requirement

RCW 30.04.133, use of recycled content products

<b>Grant Program</b>	<i>Potential Applicability of RCW 30.04.133</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>Aquatic Lands</b>	Low	Development projects
<b>Boating Activities</b>	High	Development projects
<b>Boating Facilities</b>	High	Development projects
<b>Boating Infrastructure</b>	High	Development projects
<b>Firearms Archery Range</b>	High	Development projects
<b>Land and Water</b>	High	Development projects
<b>Nonhighway and ORV</b>	Low	On site materials may be recycled
<b>Recreational Trails</b>	Low	On site materials may be recycled
<b>WWRP</b>	High	Development projects
<b>Youth Athletic Facilities</b>	High	All categories

## LEED Criteria

<b>Grant Program</b>	<b>Potential Applicability: LEED Criteria</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Aquatic Lands</b>	Low 4 (15.4%) Medium 6 (23.1%) High 15 (57.7%) N/A 1 (3.8%)	Parking, restrooms
<b>Boating Activities</b>	Low 3 (11.5%) Medium 4 (15.4%) High 15 (57.7%) N/A 4 (15.4%)	Parking, docks, restrooms
<b>Boating Facilities</b>	Low 3 (11.5%) Medium 4 (15.4%) High 15 (57.7%) N/A 4 (15.4%)	Parking, docks, restrooms
<b>Boating Infrastructure</b>	Low 2 (7.7%) Medium 4 (15.4%) High 12 (46.1%) N/A 8 (30.8%)	Docks, piers, floats, restrooms
<b>Firearms Archery Range</b>	Low 0 (0%) Medium 8 (30.8%) High 13 (50%) N/A 5 (19.2%)	Shelters, restrooms, water use, energy use
<b>Land and Water</b>	Low 7 (26.9%) Medium 10 (38.5%) High 8 (30.8%) N/A 1 (3.8%)	Development: water use, energy use, restrooms, parking, "hard" trail surfaces
<b>Nonhighway and ORV</b>	Low 1 (3.8%) Medium 2 (7.7%) High 10 (38.5%) N/A 13 (50%)	ORV sport parks may have modest buildings, parking, restrooms
<b>Recreational Trails</b>	Low 1 (3.8%) Medium 2 (7.7%) High 14 (53.8%) N/A 9 (34.6%)	Use of native elements, recycled materials on site
<b>WWRP</b>	Low 8 (30.8%) Medium 9 (34.6%) High 9 (34.6%) N/A 0 (0%)	Affects development projects: parking, restrooms, lights, water use
<b>Youth Athletic Facilities</b>	Low 2 (7.7%) Medium 9 (34.6%) High 14 (53.8%) N/A 1 (3.8%)	Water use, lighting, on-site energy

## Sustainable Sites Initiative

<b>Grant Program</b>	<i>Potential Overall Applicability: SSI</i>		<i>Comments</i>
<b>Aquatic Lands</b>	Low- Medium High N/A	19 (29.2%) 15 (23.1%) 31 (47.7%) 0 (0%)	Aligns well with natural systems preservation and social values
<b>Boating Activities</b>	Low Medium High N/A	38 (58.5%) 8 (12.3%) 17 (26.2%) 2 (3.1%)	Potential conflict with floodplain criteria
<b>Boating Facilities</b>	Low Medium High N/A	32 (49.2%) 13 (20.0%) 18 (27.7%) 2 (3.1%)	Potential conflict with floodplain criteria
<b>Boating Infrastructure</b>	Low Medium High N/A	33 (50.7%) 12 (18.5%) 18 (27.7%) 2 (3.1%)	Potential conflict with floodplain criteria
<b>Firearms Archery Range</b>	Low Medium High N/A	41 (63.1%) 11 (16.9%) 13 (20.0%) 0 (0%)	Water use, energy, recycled materials
<b>Land and Water</b>	Low Medium High N/A	16 (24.6%) 22 (33.8%) 27 (41.5%) 0 (0%)	Aligns well with social values
<b>Nonhighway and ORV</b>	Low Medium High N/A	42 (64.6%) 7 (10.8%) 15 (23.1%) 1 (1.5%)	On site elements, recycled materials (on site), parking, restrooms
<b>Recreational Trails</b>	Low Medium High N/A	42 (64.6%) 7 (10.8%) 15 (23.1%) 1 (1.5%)	On site elements, recycled materials (on site)
<b>WWRP</b>	Low Medium High N/A	13 (20%) 27 (41.5%) 25 (38.5%) 0 (0%)	Development projects are applicable, water use, on-site energy, site selection
<b>Youth Athletic Facilities</b>	Low Medium High N/A	31 (47.7%) 13 (20%) 21 (32.3%) 0 (0%)	Water use, site selection, recycled materials

### 43.21 RCW, state environmental policy (SEPA)

<b>Grant Program</b>	<i>Potential Applicability of 43.21 RCW</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>Aquatic Lands</b>	High	Development projects only
<b>Boating Activities</b>	High	Development projects only
<b>Boating Facilities</b>	High	Development projects only
<b>Boating Infrastructure</b>	High	Development projects only
<b>Firearms Archery Range</b>	High	Development projects only
<b>Land and Water</b>	High	Development projects only
<b>Nonhighway and ORV</b>	Low	Funds many federal projects not subject to SEPA
<b>Recreational Trails</b>	Low	Funds many federal projects not subject to SEPA
<b>WWRP</b>	High	Development projects, but 80% of WWRP goes for acquisition <sup>40</sup>
<b>Youth Athletic Facilities</b>	High	New or improvement projects

### RCW 47.01.440, reduce vehicle miles traveled

<b>Grant Program</b>	<i>Potential Applicability of RCW 47.01.440</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>Aquatic Lands</b>	Potentially low	Neutral?
<b>Boating Activities</b>	Potentially high	Inconsistent?
<b>Boating Facilities</b>	Potentially high	Inconsistent
<b>Boating Infrastructure</b>	Potentially high	Inconsistent?
<b>Firearms Archery Range</b>	Potentially low	Neutral?
<b>Land and Water</b>	Potentially medium to high	Potential for offsets?
<b>Nonhighway and ORV</b>	Potentially high	Inconsistent?
<b>Recreational Trails</b>	Potentially high	Inconsistent?
<b>WWRP</b>	Potentially low	Potential for offsets?
<b>Youth Athletic Facilities</b>	Potentially low	Neutral?

<sup>40</sup> Determined by staff analysis for OFM in response to RCW 70.235.070 , December 2009.