

November 7, 2013  
Natural Resources Building, Room 172, Olympia, WA, 98501

**Time: Opening sessions will begin as shown; all other times are approximate.**

**Order of Presentation:**

In general, each agenda item will include a presentation, followed by board discussion and then public comment. The board makes decisions following the public comment portion of the agenda item.

**Special Accommodations:**

If you need special accommodations, please notify us at 360/902-3013 or TDD 360/902-1996.

**Public Comment:**

- Comments about topics not on the agenda are taken during General Public Comment.
- Comment about agenda topics will be taken with each topic.

If you wish to comment at a meeting, please fill out a comment card and provide it to staff. The chair will call you to the front at the appropriate time. You also may submit written comments to the Board by mailing them to the RCO, attn: Rebecca Connolly, Board Liaison or at [rebecca.connolly@rco.wa.gov](mailto:rebecca.connolly@rco.wa.gov).

## Thursday, November 7

### OPENING AND MANAGEMENT REPORTS

**9:00 a.m. CALL TO ORDER** *Chair*

- Roll Call and Determination of Quorum
- Introduce New Member Joe Stohr, Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Review and Approval of Agenda

**1. Consent Calendar (*Decision*)** *Chair*

A. Approve Board Meeting Minutes – September 11-12, 2013

B. Approve Time Extension Requests

- Washington Department of Natural Resources, Project #08-1180, Lacamas Prairie Natural Area 2008
- Washington Department of Natural Resources, Project #08-1184, Trout Lake NAP 2008
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Project #08-1610, Pogue Mountain Pre-Commercial Thin
- Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Project #08-1356, Dosewallips State Park Riparian Acquisition

Resolution 2013-22

**9:10 a.m. 2. Director's Report**

- Agency updates regarding high-level issues and other matters related to agency business *Kaleen Cottingham*
- Policy update *Nona Snell*
- Grant management report *Marguerite Austin*
  - Status of 520 conversion approved in June
- Fiscal report (*written report only, staff available to answer questions*)
- Performance report (*written report only, staff available to answer questions*)

**9:30 a.m. Presentation of Recently Completed Projects** *Karl Jacobs*

**General Public Comment**

*Chair*

For issues not identified as agenda items. Please limit comments to 3 minutes.

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**9:45 a.m.**

**State Agency Partner Reports**

- Department of Natural Resources
- State Parks
- Department of Fish and Wildlife

*Jed Herman*

*Don Hoch*

*Joe Stohr*

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**BOARD BUSINESS: DECISIONS**

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**10:00 a.m.**

**3. Conversion Request: Clark County, Salmon Creek, Projects 76-023 and 79-037**

*Myra Barker*

Resolution 2013-23

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**10:30 a.m.**

**BREAK**

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**10:45 a.m.**

**4. Major Scope Change Request: Department of Fish and Wildlife, Mid-Columbia 2012, Project 12-1478**

*Sarah Thirtyacre*

*WDFW Staff*

Resolution 2013-24

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**11:05 a.m.**

**5. Request to Waive Policy: Kitsap County, Kitsap Forest and Bay Project (Shoreline Access), Project 12-1143**

*Adam Cole*

*Department of*

*Ecology Staff*

Resolution 2013-25

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**BOARD BUSINESS: BRIEFINGS**

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**11:45 a.m.**

**6. Review Draft Changes to the Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program**

*Leslie Connelly*

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**12:15 p.m.**

**Break for Executive Session and Working Lunch**

Subject of Executive Session: Director's Performance Evaluation

Natural Resources Building, Room 205

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**BOARD BUSINESS: DECISION**

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**1:15 p.m.**

**7. Changes to the Land and Water Conservation Fund Criteria**

*Leslie Connelly*

Resolution 2013-26

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**BOARD BUSINESS: BRIEFINGS**

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**1:30 p.m.**

**8. Review of the Trails Plan**

*Sarah Gage*

- Changes made based on board feedback and public comment
  - Next steps
- 

**2:15 p.m.**

**9. Review of the Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Plan**

*Sarah Gage*

- Changes made based on board feedback and public comment
  - Next steps
- 

**2:45 p.m.**

**BREAK**

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**3:00 p.m. 10. Review Draft Changes to the Grant Programs and Criteria for 2014**

*Leslie Connelly*

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**4:00 p.m. 11. Review Draft Changes to the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program  
State Parks Category Evaluation Process and Criteria**

*Nona Snell  
Marguerite Austin  
State Parks Staff*

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**BOARD BUSINESS: DECISIONS**

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**4:30 p.m. 12. Service Recognition: Bill Chapman**

Resolution 2013-27

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**4:45 p.m. ADJOURN**

Next meeting January 9, Olympia

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September 30, 2013

To: Bill Chapman, President, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Kaleen Cottingham, Director, Recreation and Conservation Office  
Joanna Grist, Executive Director, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition

From: Karen Daubert, Executive Director, Washington Trails Association  
Bob Gish, President, Back Country Horsemen of Washington  
Glenn Glover, Executive Director, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

Re: Suggested changes to WWRP Trails Category Criteria

Dear Mr. Chapman, Ms. Cottingham and Ms. Grist

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP). The undersigned organizations are writing in strong support of a strategy that provides more funding for soft-surface trails in the WWRP Trails category. WWRP is a powerful and responsive program. But with a few administrative adjustments it could serve many more recreation users, address a crying need for more soft-surface trail miles and attract a more diverse constituency of supporters in Olympia and in the general public. The small changes will benefit WWRP by bringing more backcountry hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, youth and diverse populations into the communities served by WWRP. These changes are essential to the long-term stability of WWRP funding.

As we discussed at the 8/20 Recreation Focus Group, the key challenge facing WWRP's advocates is ensuring that the program is relevant to broad constituencies, both legislative and public. As WWRP's public and legislative support grows, we will be able to fend off reductions in funding and challenges to the Advisory Committee's rankings at the legislature. Washingtonians who use soft-surface trails are an energetic, growing and diverse group. They are also a group that feels alienated from WWRP, since the vast majority of Trails Category funding goes to paved or graveled trail opportunities.

The administrative adjustments we describe below will prepare WWRP for the future by benefiting the next generation of trail users, young people who will mature as advocates, not only for outdoor recreation, but for the landscapes and ecosystem services protected by WWRP. Stewarding these important landscapes will also steward WWRP funds by leveraging the trail work of our organizations. We can deliver a mile of new backcountry trail at a significantly lower cost than a contractor. And backcountry trails are less expensive to build and maintain. A glance at the High Point trailhead suffices to prove that there is a crying need for more soft-surface trail opportunities in areas close to population centers. High Point is 20 miles from

Seattle and serves 250,000 people annually. That is true statewide. By funding new trail opportunities in our State Parks, Natural Resource Conservation Areas and State Forests, we will satisfy that need, reduce crowding at trailheads and obviate the impacts that our trails experience from heavy use.

It is in that spirit that we recommend the following changes to the WWRP Trails Category evaluation criteria. These changes can be made administratively:

- Criterion #1, Project Design: We recommend that this criterion be silent on the issues of accessibility. Accessibility is not referenced in the RCW and the inclusion of this element unfairly discourages soft-surface trails. Most importantly, Project Design scores should reflect the design's fidelity to the project's purpose and need. For example, does a trail designed for mountain bikes conform to commonly understood and evolving design standards for mountain bikes and respond to the needs of the mountain bike community?
- Criterion #4, Trail and Community Linkages: We recommend that "community" be construed to include cultural, socio-economic, ethnic and physical community—that applicants in the Trails Category should be allowed to include information about cultural and socio-economic diversity on their trail systems as a way to satisfy the requirements of this question. For instance, trails on DNR and State Parks lands that do not connect residential areas still attract highly diverse trail users, particularly in the I-90 corridor.
- Criterion #5, Water Access, Views and Scenic Values: We recommend that this criterion be edited to allow scenic views of any kind. This criterion excessively favors water access in a way that is unsupported by the RCW, particularly since the Outdoor Recreation Account includes a Water Access Category separate from the other categories. For instance, the Ollalie Mountain Bike Project considered by the Advisory Committee in 2011 is spectacularly scenic from the standpoint of mountain and forest views. However, since it lacked water access or views, it scored poorly in this criterion. One simple approach would be to remove the primary vs. secondary distinction as regards water access and scenic values/views of water.

These changes will not change the Trails Category into an exclusively non-paved-trail funding source. Rather, they will clear some space in the category for less-developed trail proposals to compete with more-developed opportunities. \$1-1.5 million more in WWRP funding annually allocated to less-developed trails will be transformative.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can answer any questions or provide further information about this proposal. You may direct any inquiries to Karen Daubert at 206.965.8555 or by email at [Karen@wta.org](mailto:Karen@wta.org).

Sincerely,

Karen Daubert  
Executive Director  
Washington Trails Association

Bob Gish  
President  
Back Country Horsemen of Washington

Glenn Glover  
Executive Director  
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

cc: Peter Dykstra, President, WWRC Board  
Tom Bugert, WWRC Outreach Director

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution #2013-22  
November 2013 Consent Calendar

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the following November 2013 Consent Calendar items are approved:

- A. Board Meeting Minutes – September 11-12, 2013
- B. Time Extension Requests:
  - Washington Department of Natural Resources, Project #08-1180, Lacomas Prairie Natural Area 2008
  - Washington Department of Natural Resources, Project #08-1184, Trout Lake NAP 2008
  - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Project #08-1610, Pogue Mountain Pre-Commercial Thin
  - Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Project #08-1356, Dosewallips State Park Riparian Acquisition

Resolution moved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution seconded by: \_\_\_\_\_

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Summarized Meeting Agenda and Actions, September 2013

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## Agenda Items without Formal Action

Item	Board Request for Follow-up
Item 2. Director's Report	Staff sent a reminder about 2014 dates to board members following the meeting.  Staff will report back about the transportation mitigation matching study as it progresses.
Item 3. Agency Performance Highlights: 2011-13 Biennium	Staff sent the Results Washington materials to board members following the meeting.
Item 4. Update on Guidance Related to Stormwater Management and Related Facilities on Board-Funded Sites	No follow up action requested
Item 5. Review of the Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Plan	Staff will incorporate the board suggestions into a draft plan that will be released for public comment in September/early October. The draft plan will be presented in November 2013 following public comment.
Item 6. Review of the Trails Plan	Staff will incorporate the board suggestions into a draft plan that will be released for public comment in September/early October. The draft plan will be presented in November 2013 following public comment.
Item 7. Review Draft Changes to the Land and Water Conservation Fund Criteria	Criteria will be presented for adoption in November 2013 following public comment.
Item 9. Overview of Board Tour	No follow up action requested

## Agenda Items with Formal Action

Item	Formal Action	Board Request for Follow-up
Item 1: Consent Calendar	Approved A. Board Meeting Minutes – June 25, 2013 B. Time Extension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Malaga Colockum Community Council, Malaga Community Park, Project #07-1974AD</li> </ul> C. 2014 Meeting Schedule	No follow up action requested
Item 8. Assessment of Evaluation Process for WWRP Habitat Conservation Account Categories	<a href="#">Approved</a> the following beginning with the 2014 grant cycle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revert to the use of volunteer reviews for the Critical Habitat and Urban Wildlife Habitat categories, and the Riparian Protection Account, and</li> <li>Revert to in-person evaluations for WWRP Urban Wildlife Habitat category.</li> </ul>	No follow up action requested
Recognition of Dave Brittell's Service to the Board	<a href="#">Approved</a> a resolution recognizing the service of Dave Brittell.	The resolution was sent to Dave Brittell with letter of appreciation following the meeting.

# Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Summary Minutes

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Date: September 11, 2013

Place: Wenatchee, WA

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board members present:

<b>Bill Chapman</b>	Mercer Island	<b>Ted Willhite</b>	Twisp
<b>Betsy Bloomfield</b>	Yakima	<b>Jed Herman</b>	Designee, Department of Natural Resources
<b>Pete Mayer</b>	Snohomish	<b>Don Hoch</b>	Director, State Parks
<b>Harriet Spanel</b>	Bellingham	<b>Dave Brittell</b>	Designee, Department of Fish and Wildlife

Member Mayer arrived at 1 p.m.

**It is intended that this summary be used with the meeting materials provided in advance of the meeting. A recording is retained by RCO as the formal record of meeting.**

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## Call to Order

Chair Chapman called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Staff called roll, and a quorum was determined.

## Consent Calendar

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) reviewed Resolution #2013-19, Consent Calendar.

**Resolution 2013-19 moved by: Don Hoch and seconded by: Harriett Spanel**  
**Resolution APPROVED**

## General Public Comment

*Judy Terry, Malaga Community Council*, welcomed the board and thanked the board for their work.

*Tom Bugert, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition (Coalition)*, thanked the board and congratulated the board on a successful legislative session. He said that a county commissioner recently stated that he was thankful for the WWRP program because a technology company moved to his county because of the quality of life; WWRP was a part of making it possible.

## Item 2: Management Report

**Director's Report:** Director Cottingham reported that she had submitted her self-assessment to the board chair. She introduced Leslie Connelly as the new policy specialist and Sarah Gage as the new management analyst. She then discussed the effect of those changes on other Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staffing decisions. Cottingham updated the board on the capital projects in other agency budgets that RCO may support or help manage. She reported that staff has participated in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition's roundtable discussions about the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP). Many of the suggestions have been administrative, so they have asked that the Coalition share the suggestions with the board for decision making. She reported that she and

Don Hoch both have been active with Results Washington. She reminded the board to put the newly-approved dates for 2014 on their calendars.

**Policy Update:** Nona Snell, policy director, reported on the legislative assignment to update the Lands Inventory, reviewing the requirements outlined in the statute. She discussed how the RCO will work with other agencies to fulfill the assignment. Snell also noted that the Joint Legislative Audit Review Committee (JLARC) was assigned a similar, three-part study, and discussed the aspects of that study. Member Willhite suggested that the JLARC study use the metrics from the trails plan.

Snell also discussed the assignment to identify transportation mitigation projects that minimize permit delays and optimize salmon habitat restoration. Director Cottingham agreed to update the board on the study to demonstrate what is accomplished. Snell concluded with updates on the remaining policy work highlighted in the staff materials.

**Grant Management Report:** Marguerite Austin provided an update on the agreements issued following board action to award funds in June 2013. Staff is working on closing projects and focusing on compliance issues. Director Cottingham provided an update on the 520 bridge conversion; the National Park Service has recently rejected both appraisals on the basis that neither meets federal standards and the reviewer does not agree with how market values were determined.

### **Item 3. Agency Performance Highlights: 2011-13 Biennium**

Director Cottingham started the presentation by providing an overview of Governor Inslee's Results Washington approach. She explained that the RCO would be involved in the metrics associated with Goals 3 and 5. She noted that the Governor may add strategic initiatives for recreation and salmon. Director Cottingham noted that Puget Sound restoration was a separate initiative under Governor Gregoire; it is now part of a big picture, but the Governor is getting feedback from environmental groups that it needs to stand alone. Director Cottingham committed to distributing the materials from the Governor to the board.

Scott Robinson then presented the draft revisions to the RCO's strategic plan framework, and explained the next steps in adopting the changes. Rebecca Connolly concluded the presentation by highlighting information from the biennial performance measures. She reported that the final figures for the reappropriation were better than initially indicated in the board materials, with a final agency reappropriation of about 45 percent.

### **State Agency Partner Reports**

**State Parks:** Member Hoch shared information about two new partnership programs: one with Subway and another with the Seattle Seahawks. He briefed the board on the funding received in the 2013-15 biennium, noting that they received an increase in the capital budget compared to 2011-13. This is due to interest in having State Parks focus on revenue-generating facilities and clean up existing facilities. They also are bringing back Lions Ferry Park. The next Commission meeting will be September 25, and they will be talking about budget provisos. He also reviewed their actual and projected revenue.

**Department of Natural Resources:** Member Herman reported on the effort to create a community forest trust in the Teanaway. He also discussed staffing changes at DNR, and efforts to implement grants in a more timely manner.

**Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW):** Member Brittell noted that WDFW was partnering on the Teanaway project, the public lands inventory, and the effort to gather more public input on the Okanogan-Similkameen project. They will be implementing some provisos. He then announced that this would be his last board meeting because he would be retiring after 39 years of state service.

### **Recognition of Dave Brittell's Service to the Board**

Chair Chapman asked the board to recognize Brittell's service to the board and read service resolution 2013-21. All members, except Member Brittell, signed the resolution.

## **Board Business: Briefings & Discussion**

### **Item 4. Update on Guidance Related to Stormwater Management and Related Facilities on Board-Funded Sites**

Leslie Connelly reviewed the background of the stormwater issue, reminding the board of the direction they provided to staff in April 2013. She then reviewed the draft guidance for sponsors that staff developed, which was provided in the advance materials, as well as the allowable uses policy. She explained that staff wanted to establish guidelines that could be applied broadly, rather than specific guidelines that would be only for stormwater. Connelly also reviewed the new stormwater manual published by the Department of Ecology. She showed how the allowable uses guidance had been changed to reflect the board direction. No changes were proposed to the allowable uses policy. She then asked for board response to the staff proposal.

Member Mayer asked if the guidelines applied to both above and below ground structures. Connelly responded that the guidelines were generic enough to address all types of facilities because there are many methods, and they are continually evolving. Member Mayer also asked if the guidelines also addressed the expansion of existing facilities. Connelly responded that they do. Chapman asked if major impacts are allowed. Connelly responded that they would not be allowed. Member Bloomfield asked how the decision is made when there is gray area about whether the impact is major or minor. Connelly explained the process, and how it involves the director and the board.

### **Item 5. Review of the Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Plan**

Sarah Gage reviewed the information as provided in the staff memo and asked for board direction on the nine draft recommendations outlined in the materials. Michael Fraidenburg, the Cooperation Company, was available by phone to answer questions.

Member Mayer asked how many off-road vehicle (ORV) permits are issued annually. Marguerite Austin provided the estimated figures for fiscal year 2014, noting that of the 83,390 registered vehicles, 59,060 were ORVs and 24,330 were all-terrain vehicles. Director Cottingham noted that there is a new statute that affects revenues because ORVs can be used on roads. She does not expect it will affect the plan. Member Willhite suggested that more attention needs to be paid to the statute and how the user groups will take ownership of it.

Chair Chapman asked that recommendations #5 (Encourage designs that minimize future maintenance) and #8 (Encourage trail reconstruction that corrects environmental problems) be linked to the board's sustainability policy.

Member Bloomfield asked that the recommendations specify definitive actions and provide more linkage between the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), Trails plan, and NOVA plan. Chair Chapman concurred, but said that perhaps rather than changing the language, the board may need to think about what it wants to do. Director Cottingham reminded the board that the plan has a broad reach; their suggestions are good for next steps for the board.

### **Item 6. Review of the Trails Plan**

Sarah Gage reviewed the information as provided in the staff memo, provided additional detail about the findings, and asked for board direction on the draft recommendations outlined in the materials.

Board members questioned how the Trails plan would be used, and whether it was intended for use by stakeholders, RCO staff, the board, officials, or others. Director Cottingham responded that the recommendations need to be broad, but that the RCO and board should be able to identify specific actions and policy issues within them. She also cautioned that the board does not get funding to implement the broad recommendations. Member Mayer stated that he saw it as a state trails plan, and that the recommendations were not all the obligations of the board. Chair Chapman said that he didn't think that the plan was board or RCO specific, but it would not be useful unless the board gave itself the duties.

The board discussed the recommendations at length, focusing in particular on items 1 (*Develop a clearinghouse (Web page) that includes a trails inventory and information about regional trails*), 2 (*Improve data gathering among land managers to better understand trail use, users, and modes*), and 4 (*Support the development of a Trails Leadership Council*). Members concluded that the recommendations should more explicitly state what the board can accomplish, drawing on staff expertise, and offered specific suggestions to staff. Chair Chapman suggested that there should be a subset of recommendations for the board.

### **Item 7. Review Draft Changes to the Land and Water Conservation Fund Criteria**

Marguerite Austin reviewed the information as provided in the staff memo. She provided additional detail about the criteria to help the board understand the staff proposal, and reviewed next steps. She concluded by asking for board response or suggestions on the proposed changes outlined in the materials. The board had no suggestions.

## **Board Business: Decisions**

### **Item 8. Assessment of Evaluation Process for WWRP Habitat Conservation Account Categories**

Marguerite Austin reviewed the information as provided in the staff memo. She explained that staff was asking the board to revert to the approaches used in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Habitat Conservation Account and Riparian Protection Account before the 2012 grant cycle. She also noted that staff would create standing advisory committees to do the reviews and evaluations.



# Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Summary Minutes

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Date: September 12, 2013

Place: Wenatchee, WA

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board members present:

<b>Bill Chapman</b>	Mercer Island	<b>Ted Willhite</b>	Twisp
<b>Betsy Bloomfield</b>	Yakima	<b>Jed Herman</b>	Designee, Department of Natural Resources
<b>Pete Mayer</b>	Snohomish	<b>Don Hoch</b>	Director, State Parks
<b>Harriet Spanel</b>	Bellingham		

**It is intended that this summary be used with the meeting materials provided in advance of the meeting. A recording is retained by RCO as the formal record of meeting.**

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The board began the tour of projects at 9:00 a.m. and proceeded as indicated on the agenda. The tour concluded at 1:30 p.m.

Approved by:

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Bill Chapman, Chair

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Date

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution #2013-19  
September 2013 Consent Calendar

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the following September 2013 Consent Calendar items are approved:

- A. Approve Board Meeting Minutes – June 25, 2013
- B. Approve Time Extension
  - Malaga Colockum Community Council, Malaga Community Park, Project #07-1974AD
- C. Approve 2014 Meeting Schedule

Resolution moved by: Hoch

Resolution seconded by: Spanel

Adopted

Date: September 11, 2013

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Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution #2013-20

Approving Changes to the Evaluation and Review Process in Washington  
Wildlife and Recreation Program Categories: Critical Habitat, Riparian  
Protection, State Lands Restoration and Urban Wildlife Habitat Categories

**WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) project reviews and evaluations in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Critical Habitat, State Lands Restoration and Enhancement, Urban Wildlife Habitat and Riparian Protection categories are performed effectively with a combined effort from volunteer evaluators and staff; and

**WHEREAS**, a system based on a combination of written and in-person processes is used in several board program categories including others in the WWRP Habitat Conservation Account; and

**WHEREAS**, applicants, evaluators, and Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff assessed processes used in 2012, and

**WHEREAS**, modifying the process would continue to ensure that the board funds the best projects as determined by a fair evaluation process, while also promoting the board's goals to be accountable for and efficient with its resources; and

**WHEREAS**, using an in-person evaluation in other grant programs has shown that the process supports the board's goal to conduct its work in an open manner;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the board does hereby adopt the in-person evaluation process for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Urban Wildlife Habitat category; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that volunteers will conduct the in-person technical review meeting for applications to the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Habitat Conservation and Riparian Protection Accounts; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the board directs RCO staff to implement these revisions beginning with the 2014 grant cycle.

Resolution moved by: Herman

Resolution seconded by: Brittell

Adopted

Date: September 11, 2013

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WASHINGTON STATE

Recreation and Conservation  
Funding Board

A Resolution to Recognize the Service of

*Dave Brittell*

To the Residents of Washington State and the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

**WHEREAS**, from October 2007 through September 2013, Dave Brittell served the residents of the state of Washington and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife as the department's designee on the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Brittell's service assisted the State of Washington in protecting some of its most important wildlife habitat and farmland, and in providing opportunities for a variety of recreational pursuits statewide; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Brittell always displayed gentlemanly qualities, dedication to his work and the needs of the people of Washington, an approachable style, and willingness to work with local communities on controversial issues; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Brittell provided the board with excellent advice and valuable insight that assisted in the development of exemplary policies and funding decisions to award grants to 1,100 projects, creating a state investment of nearly \$360 million in Washington's great outdoors; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Brittell has announced his retirement from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife after 39 years of exemplary service, and thus will be leaving the board; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that on behalf of the residents of Washington and in recognition of Mr. Brittell's dedication and excellence in performing his responsibilities and duties as a member, the board and its staff extend their sincere appreciation and compliments on a job well done.

Approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
in Wenatchee, Washington  
on September 11, 2013

Approved by signature of all members present.

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

**Meeting Date:** November 2013  
**Title:** Approve Time Extension Requests  
**Prepared By:** Recreation and Conservation Section Grant Managers

**APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM**

### Summary

This is a request for the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) to consider the proposed project time extensions shown in Attachment A.

### Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

- Request for Decision
- Request for Direction
- Briefing

Resolution #: 2013-22

Purpose of Resolution: Approve the requested time extensions

## Background

Manual #7, *Funded Projects*, outlines the board's adopted policy for progress on active funded projects. Key elements of this policy are that the sponsor must complete a funded project promptly and meet the project milestones outlined in the project agreement. The director has authority to extend an agreement for up to four years. Extensions beyond four years require board action.

The RCO received a request for a time extension for each of the projects listed in Attachment A. This document summarizes the circumstances for the requested extensions and the expected dates of project completion. Board action is required because the project sponsors are requesting an extension to continue the agreements beyond four years.

General considerations for approving time extension requests include:

- Receipt of a written request for the time extension;
- Reimbursements requested and approved;
- Date the board granted funding approval;

- Conditions surrounding the delay;
- Sponsor’s reasons or justification for requesting the extension;
- Likelihood of sponsor completing the project within the extended period;
- Original dates for project completion;
- Current status of activities within the grant;
- Sponsor’s progress on this and other funded projects;
- Revised milestones or timeline submitted for completion of the project; and
- The effect the extension will have on reappropriation request levels for RCO.

### **Strategic Plan Link**

Consideration of these requests supports the board’s goal of helping its partners protect, restore, and develop habitat and recreation opportunities that benefit people, fish and wildlife, and ecosystems.

### **Summary of Public Comment**

The RCO received no public comment on the requests.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends approval of the time extension requests for projects listed in Attachment A.

### **Attachments**

- A. Time extension requests for board approval

## Department of Natural Resources Time Extension Requests for Board Approval

<b>Project number and type</b>	<b>Project name</b>	<b>Grant program</b>	<b>Grant funds remaining</b>	<b>Current end date</b>	<b>Extension request</b>	<b>Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request</b>
08-1180A	Lacamas Prairie Natural Area 2008	WWRP, Natural Areas	Total Remaining: \$776,136  32% of \$2,390,022 grant.	December 31, 2013	6 Months  June 30, 2014	<p>In June 2013, the board approved a six-month time extension for this project to allow the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to acquire one property.</p> <p>DNR encountered complications during the appraisal process, but expects to complete the work by the end of November. An offer will be made by December 1. A six month time extension would allow DNR time to acquire the property and complete post-acquisition work, including treatment of invasive plant species and fencing.</p> <p>This time extension would be contingent on DNR obtaining a signed Purchase and Sales Agreement (PSA) with the landowners before the end of the year. If DNR is unable to get a signed PSA by year end, then the grant would expire on December 31, 2013.</p>
08-1184A	Trout Lake NAP 2008	WWRP, Natural Areas	Total Remaining: \$626,652  95% of \$657,440 grant.	December 31, 2013	6 Months  June 30, 2014	<p>In June 2013, the board approved a six-month time extension for this project to allow DNR time to acquire two properties. Since June, DNR has made an initial offer to one landowner. The landowner rejected the offer, but has continued to negotiate with DNR.</p> <p>DNR is appraising the second property and expects to have a signed Purchase and Sales Agreement (PSA) by the end of the year. This second acquisition is complicated because it involves relocation of a renter who lives on the property.</p> <p>A six month extension would allow DNR time to complete the acquisition and relocation. This time extension would be contingent on DNR obtaining a signed Purchase and Sales Agreement (PSA) with the landowners of the second property before the end of the year. If DNR is unable to get a signed PSA by year end, then the grant would expire on December 31, 2013.</p>

## Department of Fish and Wildlife Time Extension Request for Board Approval

<b>Project number and type</b>	<b>Project name</b>	<b>Grant program</b>	<b>Grant funds remaining</b>	<b>Current end date</b>	<b>Extension request</b>	<b>Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request</b>
08-1610R	Pogue Mountain Pre-Commercial Thin	WWRP, State Lands Restoration	Total Remaining: \$75,801  23.1% of \$328,800 grant.	December 21, 2013	9 Months  June 30, 2014	<p>This project is 75 percent completed. Pre-commercial thinning has occurred throughout the project site, and the slash has been piled and will be burned this fall.</p> <p>The Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) requests a nine-month extension to allow time to perform spring burning to promote regrowth on two aspen stands. The exceptionally wet weather this fall compromised the effectiveness of a prescribed burn. A dry hot fire is needed to stimulate aspen regrowth.</p> <p>This time extension will allow WDFW to burn the aspen stands in the spring when conditions are more favorable.</p>

## State Parks and Recreation Commission Time Extension Request for Board Approval

<b>Project number and type</b>	<b>Project name</b>	<b>Grant program</b>	<b>Grant funds remaining</b>	<b>Current end date</b>	<b>Extension request</b>	<b>Reasons for Delay and Justification of Request</b>
08-1356A	Dosewallips State Park Riparian Acquisition	WWRP, Riparian Protection	Total Remaining: \$78,551  12.3% of \$636,200 grant.	December 31, 2013	6 Months  June 30, 2014	<p>This project is nearly complete. State Parks is working toward acquiring the Pope, Phase 2 property.</p> <p>The property has been appraised and was being reviewed at the time staff prepared this memo in October. When the review is complete, an offer will be made. State Parks will be using matching funds from Salmon Recovery Funding Board project #10-1545A, Dosewallips Riparian Corridor Acquisition, to complete the purchase.</p> <p>This time extension will allow State Parks to complete negotiations and close on the property.</p>

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

**Meeting Date:** November 2013  
**Title:** Director's Report

**APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM**

### Summary

This memo is the director's report on key agency activities.

### Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Direction
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Briefing

### In this Report

- ▶ Agency updates
- ▶ Policy, budget, and legislative update
- ▶ Grant management
- ▶ Fiscal report

## Agency Updates

### Agency Operations

#### NASORLO Meeting

In early September, I attended the annual meeting of the agencies that administer the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). That group, known as NASORLO (National Association of State Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers), met to strategize our efforts to advocate for the reauthorization of the LWCF in congress in 2014. We also discussed our need to have tools to show the LWCF investments in all 50 states. Scott Chapman has been working with a small group of states to show the benefits of a GIS-based system. The pilot project was demonstrated to the group at the meeting. Those states who have invested in data management systems are miles ahead of other states that still manage LWCF using spreadsheets and file folders.

#### RCO Staff on the Move

As noted in September, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) selected Leslie Ryan-Connelly as our new policy specialist. Leslie had been serving as our compliance specialist.

Myra Barker has been selected as the new compliance specialist. She has been with RCO for 14 years and has a wealth of experience on our grant programs. Prior to coming to RCO, Myra worked for the Department of Ecology managing the statewide licensing program for wastewater operators.

In September, I also reported that we had selected Brian Abbott as the new executive coordinator for the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, creating a vacancy in his role of salmon section manager. Tara Galuska, the senior grants manager in the salmon section, was selected as the new manager. Grant Manager Kat Moore was promoted to replace her as the senior outdoor grants manager.

We recruited for the two grant manager vacancies in October and have just announced that Kyle Guzlas and Alice Rubin will be joining our team of grant managers. Kyle will be with the Recreation and Conservation grant section and Alice will be with the Salmon section. We are also in the final stages of hiring a new administrative assistant for the Recreation and Conservation Section.

In addition, accountability manager/board liaison Rebecca Connolly left the RCO in October for a position at the Joint Legislative Audit Review Committee. We are currently recruiting to fill her position.

## **Meetings with Partners**

### **Seahurst Seawall Project Celebration**

I was happy to join the City of Burien and local, state, and federal officials for a groundbreaking ceremony at Seahurst Park, where restoration of a half-mile of Puget Sound shoreline soon will be underway. The project is the result of a partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to remove more than a quarter-mile of concrete seawall and restore the shoreline, wetlands, and the mouths of three streams. The project was awarded \$3.6 million in salmon funding for construction, and will leverage a \$3.9 million contribution from the Corps of Engineers. The project is slated to be completed in May, welcoming the public to enjoy a more natural Puget Sound shoreline with improved habitat for salmon and other creatures that inhabit the near-shore.

### **Redmond Ridge Field Ground-Breaking Ceremony**

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) Chair Bill Chapman stepped in to help the Redmond North Little League celebrate the ground-breaking ceremony for renovation of the athletic fields at Redmond Ridge Park in King County. Chapman delivered a check for \$700,000. This Youth Athletic Facilities grant will allow the Little League to put synthetic turf on baseball and soccer fields, which are used by more than 8,000 families.

### **Bravo Awards Presented**

As promised in the communications plan, we have updated our Big Check awards to a new, more modern "Bravo" Award. The awards are given to the top ranked projects in our grant programs. The new award is a nicely framed artistic certificate, and it replaces the oversized

check mounted on foam core. In October, I presented the award to Skagit County for its Hedlin farm preservation project and to the City of Bremerton for its inclusive playground project, both of which scored highest in their Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program categories of farmland preservation and local parks, respectively.

## **Update on Sister Boards**

### **Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)**

The most recent SRFB meeting was held on October 16-17 in Dayton. The SRFB reviewed the much-anticipated assessment of its monitoring strategy. The SRFB also approved funding for (1) a strategic communication plan being done by regional recovery organizations, (2) work done by lead entities, and (3) early action Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration projects in the Hood Canal Salmon Recovery Region. On the second day of the meeting, the SRFB toured projects along the Tucannon River that included a mix of fish passage, dike setback, riparian, upland sediment control, and wood placement actions.

### **Washington Invasive Species Council**

The council held its quarterly meeting September 19. Hot topics included discussion of the Bonneville Power Administration's agreement to include invasive species prevention measures in its restoration and mitigation contracts – similar to what was done by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the new finding of New Zealand mud snails on the Chehalis River, the spread of noxious weeds on fire suppression equipment, and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's efforts to inspect boats at border stations. The council heard presentations from King County on its invasive species prevention work and the 10,000 Years Institute on the need for an economic impact study on invasive species in Washington. Additionally, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife presented a draft of its proposed 2014 invasive species bill and fiscal note

### **Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group**

The lands group is preparing for the Fifth Annual State Land Acquisition Coordinating Forum, scheduled for October 30, and the second *State Land Acquisition Performance Monitoring Report*, which is due by the end of the year. The group agreed that the forum and the monitoring report should reflect proposed legislation related to land acquisitions and the general environment of the Legislature related to land acquisitions.

## **Policy, Budget, and Legislative Update**

### **Policy Update**

In January, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board members approved three tiers of policy priorities. The following is an update on items in Tiers 1 and 2.

**Table 1: Tier One, Required by Law or Previous Board Direction – Progress**

Issue	Progress to Date
<b>Finalize the update to the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)</b>	The SCORP was submitted to the National Park Service on July 2, 2013. The National Park Service started the review in early August. RCO staff has finalized the implementation steps for the plan, which has also been submitted to NPS and is attached to this report as Attachment A.
<b>Update the criteria and policies for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to reflect the updated SCORP</b>	The criteria have been reviewed and are proposed for board adoption. Please see Item 7.
<b>Update state trails plan</b>	Work continues on the draft trails plan. The plan is out for public comments, which ends on October 25. The comments will be incorporated into the plans and presented to the board for approval. See Item 8.
<b>Update criteria and policies to reflect the updated trails plan</b>	Staff has started its initial review. In depth work will take place in preparation for approval of criteria changes at the January board meeting. See Item 10.
<b>Update Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) plan</b>	Work continues on the draft NOVA plan. The plan is out for public comments, which ends on October 25. The comments will be incorporated into the plans and presented to the board for approval. See Item 9.
<b>Update criteria and policies as needed to reflect updated NOVA plan</b>	Staff has started its initial review. In depth work will take place in preparation for approval of criteria changes at the January board meeting. See Item 10.
<b>Align program policies for the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program with changes adopted at the federal level</b>	Federal changes have not yet been adopted.

**Table 2: Tier Two: Policy Work to Complete in 2013 – Progress**

Issue	Progress
<b>Assess the Farmland Preservation Program and identify changes that should be made to the program</b>	A meeting to continue to assess whether the program results in projects that attain the program goals was held on October 22. Staff will provide an update at the board meeting.
<b>Create a policy about stormwater ponds on grant funded sites.</b>	Complete. The policy was adopted by the board in September.

Issue	Progress
<b>Support the State Parks transformation strategies</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The City of Issaquah received three proposals for development ideas at Lake Sammamish State Park. State Parks is currently reviewing the proposals and plans to discuss them with the City later this month.</li> <li>2. RCO and the National Park Service provided comments to State Parks on the lease agreement for Fort Worden Life Long Learning Center Public Development Authority, and State Parks is incorporating those comments in the lease.</li> <li>3. State Parks has submitted revisions to the criteria for the WWRP State Parks category for board consideration. The changes incorporate priorities outlined in the transformation strategy. See Item #11.</li> </ol>

## Budget Update

### Supplemental Budget Requests

The guidance from the Office of Financial Management on acceptable supplemental budget requests is very narrow. The RCO submitted one capital budget request to backfill the Boating Facilities Program account because funds were transferred for other uses in 2012. RCO also requested a technical correction in the capital budget related to the Family Forest Fish Passage Program.

### Federal Budget

The recent federal government partially shut down ended in passage of a temporary continuing resolution. Although RCO receives grant funding for several recreation and salmon programs and over 21 percent of our administration funding from the federal government, we saw no impact from the federal shutdown.

## Legislative Update

RCO did not submit agency request legislation for the 2013-15 session.

### Public Lands Inventory

As reported at the September board meeting, the public land inventory update is underway. We are working on interagency agreements with the University of Washington (UW), the Department of Natural Resources, State Parks, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The UW will provide local, state, federal and tribal land ownership data. The state land information will be updated and verified by the various state landowning agencies. The RCO has released a Request for Proposals to select a contractor to build a web-accessible system to geographically view this information. A status report is due to the Legislature by January 1, 2014, and the project must be complete by July 1, 2014.

## Grant Management

### State Route 520 conversion at the Washington on Park Arboretum

Staff submitted the conversion request to the National Park Service (NPS) in mid-October. Staff is revising a memorandum of agreement regarding cultural resource impacts at the Bryant site, which is the replacement property for the conversion. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is concerned that approval of the conversion by NPS will not occur in time for it to acquire the necessary right-of-way for the State Route 520 construction in 2014. RCO will continue to work with all parties to help WSDOT meet its construction schedule.

### SOBA Conference

In early October, Marguerite Austin and Rory Calhoun attended the 2013 National Boating Access Conference sponsored by the States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA) in Portland. SOBA's mission is "to encourage, promote, and support federal and state programs that provide safe, high-quality and environmentally sound public recreational boat access to the waterways of the United States and its territories."

Providing boating facilities that are designed to protect the environment, provide universal access, and incorporate sustainable features was the overarching theme for the conference. Rory Calhoun's session, *Incorporating ADA Elements into Boating Facility Design*, was well attended and turned out to be one of the most popular sessions at the conference. Rory has volunteered to serve on a new SOBA committee that will develop design standards for nonmotorized boating access facilities.

SOBA is currently developing *Best Management Practices for Construction and Integration of Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Areas at Recreational Boater Facilities*. Wendy Brown, Washington's Invasive Species Coordinator, has volunteered to assist with final review and comment on this manual, which is expected to be published early next year. The manual provides (1) guidelines for conducting watercraft inspections and developing decontamination and boat wash areas and (2) effective techniques for signing, messaging, and general public outreach and education.

Representatives from states across the country attended an all-day pre-conference workshop designed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for administrators of federal grant programs such as the Boating Infrastructure Grant program. The workshop, hosted by Oregon State Marine Board, focused on program updates, policies, and compliance.

### LWCF Grants

Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell sent a letter to Governor Inslee announcing congressional approval of \$825,702 for the state of Washington for the LWCF program for federal fiscal year 2013. The amount available represents a 5.23 percent reduction from fiscal year 2012 as a result of the sequestration and the Federal Budget Control Act of 2011.

In June, the board approved the ranked list of LWCF projects. Table 3 shows the top ranked projects and the grant funds approved for each project. The total amount approved for projects is less than the total available to the state because it reflects the amount deducted for RCO administration.

**Table 3: LWCF Projects**

Project Number	Project Name	Sponsor	Grant Request	Funds Approved	Unfunded Balance
12-1553D	Point Defiance Missing Link LWCF	Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma	\$500,000	\$500,000	
12-1308D	Chehalis Pool Renovation LWCF	Chehalis	\$250,000	\$250,000	
12-1230A	North Creek Forest Acquisition, Phase 2	Bothell	\$197,500	\$43,030	\$154,470
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$947,500</b>	<b>\$793,030</b>	<b>\$154,470</b>

The director has authority to approve full funding for Bothell’s North Creek Forest Acquisition when Congress approves funding for federal fiscal year 2014. The two top ranked projects received matching grants through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.

### Using Returned Funds for Alternates and Partially-Funded Projects

The director has recently awarded new grants for 12 alternate projects (Attachment B). The funds are from projects that did not use the full amount of their grant awards.

Also, as unused funds have become available from other projects, the director has approved additional funding for the 13 partially-funded projects. The second table in Attachment B shows each project’s original grant award and the total grant funds now approved.

### Project Administration

Table 4 summarizes the outdoor recreation and habitat conservation projects currently being administered by staff:

- Active projects are under agreement.
- Staff is working with sponsors to place the “Director Approved” projects under agreement.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, staff has several hundred funded projects that they monitor for long-term compliance.

<sup>1</sup> When the board approves ranked lists of projects, it also delegates authority to the director to approve contracts for eligible project alternates as funds become available. These are “Director Approved Projects.” In addition, projects on the ranked lists approved by the board in June 2013 were placed in “Director Approved” status once funds became available.

**Table 4: Projects Currently Being Administered**

Program	Active Projects	Director Approved Projects	Total Funded Projects
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)	13	8	<b>21</b>
Boating Facilities Program (BFP)	30	8	<b>38</b>
Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG)	3	0	<b>3</b>
Firearms and Archery Range Recreation (FARR)	8	6	<b>14</b>
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	9	3	<b>12</b>
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	63	9	<b>72</b>
Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA)	116	21	<b>137</b>
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)	113	62	<b>175</b>
Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)	3	0	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>475</b>

## Performance Report

Data are for recreation and conservation grants only, as of October 1, 2013. Additional detail is in Attachment C.

**Table 5: Performance Data**

Measure	Target	FY 2014	Indicator
1. Percent of recreation/conservation projects closed on time	60-70%	52%	●
2. Percent of project agreements issued within 120 days after the board funding date	85-95%	75% <i>(in progress)</i>	●
3. Percent of projects under agreement within 180 days after the board funding date	95%	52% <i>(in progress)</i>	●
4. Fiscal month expenditures, recreation/conservation target	2.9% <i>(FM 2)</i>	1.1% <i>(FM 2)</i>	●
5. Bills paid within 30 days: recreation/conservation projects	100%	68%	●

## Fiscal Report

The attached financial report (Attachment D) reflects Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) activities as of September 30, 2013. Revenues are shown through July 31, 2013.

- The first page reflects the budget status of board activities by program.
- The second page reflects the budget status of the entire agency by board.
- The third page reflects the revenue collections.

- The last page is a Washington Wildlife Recreation Program (WWRP) summary. Since the beginning of this program, \$614.6 million of the funds appropriated in the WWRP program have been expended.

## **Attachments**

- A. SCORP Implementation Report
- B. Funds for Alternate and Partially-Funded Projects
- C. Performance Report
- D. Fiscal Report

# Implementation Program

## Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

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The 2013 Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) provides a comprehensive review of outdoor recreation in the state. Researchers thoroughly analyzed customer participation, expectations, and needs, and then combined that information with data about funding, supply of land and facilities, and factors such as sustainability, access, and maintenance.

The SCORP document makes dozens of recommendations for maintaining and improving outdoor recreation in the state. Ultimately, the state's implementation program must focus on a few key priorities, as highlighted in the plan. Work discussed in this implementation program will be accomplished by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) and the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). For that reason, the implementation is linked to the strategic plan vision, mission, and goals for the board and RCO.

*Note: Actions marked with an asterisk (\*) are subject to review and approval by the board at an open public meeting, and may require a public comment period before adoption.*

**Strategy: Provide competitive grants so that partners can make strategic investments**

**Priority: Maximize sustainability and environmental stewardship.**

This priority aims to expand the work already underway. For example, the board adopted a sustainability policy and incorporated sustainability criteria into three of its grant programs in 2011. This included the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program. In 2013, the board adopted a program to recognize projects of exceptional quality and long-standing value. Environmental sustainability and stewardship are among the key criteria for receiving the award.

### Action Plan

1. Emphasize the sustainability criterion in the LWCF evaluation instrument.\*
  - Sustainability is a question in the design criteria. Under this action, it would be a separately-scored criterion, which gives it greater importance in evaluation scoring. Sustainability is more broadly defined to capture sustainable design and environmental stewardship. Further, the concept of sustainability would apply to acquisition as well as development projects (it previously applied only to development).

2. Expand the sustainability criteria to all recreation grant programs.\*
  - The sustainability criteria would be added to the criteria for the other board-funded grant programs beginning with the 2014 grant cycle. This may be a phased approach, depending on workload, as well as public and board comment.
3. Update the project metrics to better capture the proposed methods for sustainability and actual results.
  - RCO captures information about how projects incorporate sustainable elements. This action item will replace the current narrative with a metric that requires applicants to select the sustainable elements that they plan to incorporate at a project site. If the project is funded, the project sponsor would be asked to report which elements were completed, using the same metric table. Metrics would be aligned with the evaluation criteria regarding sustainability. For example, the metric may ask what type of stormwater management is used and allow the user to select rain gardens or pervious surfacing as the technique used to achieve sustainability.

**Priority: Continue to offer diverse outdoor recreation activities and opportunities.**

The RCO manages nine distinct grant programs that support outdoor recreation activities. The programs fund parks, athletic fields, boating, water access, shooting sports, trails, open space, and more. The SCORP found that state residents participate in a wide variety of activities; even among the top ten activities there is considerable diversity – from picnicking to biking to swimming to using playgrounds. The RCO strives to ensure that its grant programs, when considered together, provide funding for this broad range of activities.

**Action Plan**

1. Add a new criterion to the LWCF evaluation instrument to consider the extent to which a project adds to the diversity of recreation.\*
  - The LWCF grant program alone may fund a broad range of recreation opportunities. This question addresses how well the project contributes to the overall diversity of outdoor recreation and opportunities provided in the local community. The intent is to ensure that the LWCF program is meeting the needs of otherwise underserved recreation populations. The intent is not to promote multi-use sites per se, but a broad range of recreational assets to meet the needs identified for that service area. The question would be added for the 2014 grant cycle.
2. Determine whether RCO grant programs create equal competitive opportunity for a variety of recreation activities and opportunities.
  - Following the 2014 grant cycle, compare the proposed activities and opportunities in the applications to those in funded projects. Staff will look for patterns (e.g., percent of activities and opportunities proposed versus funded) indicating that the evaluations either benefit or disadvantage certain activities and opportunities.

3. Continue to work closely with agency and board partners that advocate for outdoor recreational opportunities and the associated funding.
  - RCO does not directly advocate, but supports others by providing educational information (e.g., research, studies, trend data) about the importance of these opportunities on the RCO Web site, in e-mails and meetings with partner organizations, and through newsletters, conference exhibits, and speeches at public events.
  - RCO has found that there can be significant turnover among city and county officials. Staff will continue to provide educational exhibits and workshops at conferences for these officials to ensure that they are informed about the need for recreational opportunities and availability of grant funds.

### **Priority: Increase and improve access for recreationists with disabilities in Washington.**

The SCORP found that there is a need to develop and improve opportunities for recreationists with disabilities. This includes providing barrier-free recreation access and facilities and making outdoor recreation accessible so that users with disabilities are included easily and naturally in family and friendship activities.

#### **Action Plan**

1. In the LWCF program, update the project design criterion to add a question asking applicants how they intend to place more emphasis on providing access for people with disabilities.\*
  - The Americans with Disabilities Act and state building codes mandate accessibility standards, but those standards can be insufficient to provide equal access to all recreationists. The revised question would consider how the design provides equal access for all people, and whether it exceeds current barrier-free requirements. While exceeding requirements is not necessary, it is clearly encouraged.
2. After the 2014 grant round, explore opportunities to increase the involvement of recreationists with disabilities on project evaluation and review teams.
  - The evaluation panel for the 2014 grant round has been established. After this cycle, staff will work with appropriate partner agencies to find subject matter experts willing to serve on project evaluation and review teams. Doing so could broaden the perspective of the panels and improve the overall quality of the projects.
3. During inspections, encourage sponsors to submit proposals to update previously-funded sites so that they meet current accessibility standards.
  - Projects must meet the accessibility standards in place at the time they are built. When staff members inspect previously-funded project sites, they will encourage sponsors to conduct reviews to determine whether site features meet current

accessibility standards. If not, they will encourage sponsors to propose new projects that will incorporate updating those features to meet or exceed current standards.

## **Strategy: Support increased use of data to inform decisions**

### **Priority: Consider the implications of changing demographics when making recreation decisions.**

The SCORP found that Washington State is experiencing significant demographic changes, including population growth, increasing urbanization, an aging population, and increased diversity. For the board's grant programs, it is important to translate this statewide finding into local and regional action. That is, the state should give priority to projects that address the changing demographics on a local or regional level.

#### **Action Plan**

1. For the 2014 grant round, incorporate the use of current demographic information into the need criteria for the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant evaluation question.\*
  - Under this action, a question would be added that asks applicants to address the implications of changing demographics within the project's service area, and specifies that applicants should include quantifiable data in their response. The intent is to focus on how changing area demographics support the need for the particular project.
2. Incorporate the use of current demographic information into the need criteria for evaluation tools for other grant programs in future grant cycles.\*
  - If approved by the board, a question would be added to the project need criteria for the remaining board-funded recreation grant programs after the 2014 grant cycle. This may be a phased approach, depending on public and board comment.
3. Distribute SCORP data statewide and encourage its use in local and regional planning and decision making.
  - The SCORP data were collected and analyzed so that they are valid on a statewide and regional level. By December 31, 2013, RCO will update its SCORP Web page to provide data summaries at both levels. The original dataset will be made available upon request for inclusion in local planning and analysis.

### **Priority: Take advantage of current technology by using a map-based information system to provide an inventory of outdoor recreation supply.**

1. In 2013 and 2014, work with partners to implement the legislative directive to update the state lands inventory.
  - This is a major undertaking, and will be an important first step in providing the data that can ultimately generate a map-based inventory. The inventory will include habitat and recreation land owned by federal, state, and local governments, and

Native American tribes. It will culminate in an online, GIS-based interactive map that lets users find information about specific areas. The work will be completed by the end of 2014.

2. In 2013 and 2014, develop a Web page as part of the work to complete the State Trails Plan.
  - The page will include maps, details on the interconnectivity of regional trails, and information about both the management and use of regional trails.
3. Publish a map-based boating app that allows recreationists to find transient moorage facilities in Washington State.
  - In 2014, RCO will launch a new map-based boating app that will allow users of mobile devices, such as telephones and computer notepads, to see details about boating facilities statewide. Updates will be done through technologies such as crowd-sourcing. Future enhancements will publish boat launch data, as funding allows.

### **Strategy: Increase public understanding about the importance of investments in outdoor recreation**

#### **Priority: Promote the economic benefits of outdoor recreation in communication and outreach.**

Washington's economy benefits directly and indirectly from outdoor recreation through consumer spending, tax revenue, and jobs. Research also suggests that outdoor recreationists are more connected to natural resources and tend to have more care and concern for the environment.

Promoting the benefits of outdoor recreation is a key component of the communication plan that has been adopted by the board and RCO.

#### **Action Plan**

1. Use the board's recently-adopted Legacy award to communicate with the public and stakeholders about the long-term benefits of investments in outdoor recreation.
2. Promote the need for investments in outdoor recreation by distributing and sharing the SCORP Executive Summary.
3. Develop key messages about the economic benefit of outdoor recreation and incorporate those messages throughout agency communications venues: Web site, e-mails, presentations, newsletters, facts sheets, conference exhibits, and speeches.
4. Promote economic benefits, along with related outdoor recreation topics, to the media through a combination of news releases, editorial boards, guest editorials, letters to the editor, reporters' tours, and interviews.

- Staff will produce and distribute information for the news media on a variety of subjects, including grant making, published reports, trends, and outstanding projects. The releases will include the key messages. The RCO communication plan calls for news releases that address information produced by SCORP.
- The RCO will share media releases, key messages, and specially written stories with key partners, asking them to use the information on their Web sites and in their constituent newsletters and social media.

## Attachment B: Funds for Alternate and Partially-Funded Projects

**Table A-1: Funds for Alternate Projects**

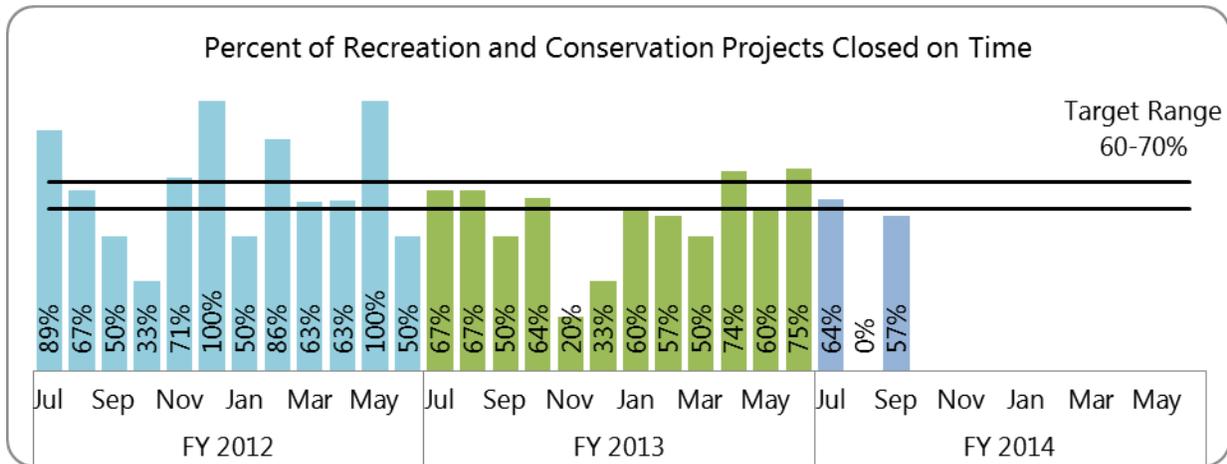
Project Number	Project Name	Sponsor	Program – Category	Grant Request	Funds Approved
12-1682E	Cle Elum Wilderness Education and Enforcement 2013-2014	U.S. Forest Service, Wenatchee National Forest, Cle Elum Ranger District	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, Education and Enforcement	\$29,400	\$29,400
12-1777E	Wilderness/Backcountry Education and Enforcement 2014-15	Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee River Ranger District	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, Education and Enforcement	\$41,350	\$41,350
12-1806E	Straddleline ORV Park Education and Enforcement	Grays Harbor County	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, Education and Enforcement	\$22,840	\$22,840
12-1283P	Yacolt Burn Nonmotorized Trails	Department of Natural Resources	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, Nonmotorized	\$84,750	\$84,412
10-1140A	Big Bend Sharp-tailed Grouse	Department of Fish and Wildlife	WWRP, Critical Habitat Category	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
12-1560R	Kahlotus-Marcellus Natural Area Preserve Shrub Steppe Restoration	Department of Natural Resources	WWRP, State Lands Restoration	\$71,600	\$71,600
12-1534R	Washougal Oaks Natural Area Restoration Phase 3	Department of Natural Resources	WWRP, State Lands Restoration	\$98,000	\$98,000
12-1612R	Lacamas Prairie Restoration	Department of Natural Resources	WWRP, State Lands Restoration	\$135,000	\$135,000
12-1116R	Welch-Anderson Shrub Steppe Restoration	Department of Fish and Wildlife	WWRP, State Lands Restoration	\$30,000	\$30,000
12-1852R	Lower Cottonwood Slough	Department of Fish and Wildlife	WWRP, State Lands Restoration	\$56,274	\$56,274
12-1722D	Wolfe Initial Park Access	State Parks and Recreation	WWRP, State Parks Category	\$245,400	\$245,400
12-1042A	Wenatchee Foothills North Acquisition Phase I	Wenatchee	WWRP, Urban Wildlife Habitat	\$1,050,000	\$1,050,000

**Table A-2: Funds for Partially-Funded Projects**

<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Program and Category</b>	<b>Grant Request</b>	<b>Previous Grant Funding</b>	<b>Current Total Grant Funding</b>
12-1299C	WTIP-Westend Park	City of Port Angeles	Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account	\$468,900	\$373,282	\$375,809
12-1819D	Grant County Education and Enforcement	Grant County	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, Education and Enforcement	\$200,000	\$162,430	\$200,000
12-1820D	Straddleline ORV Park Arena and 4x4 Area Improvement	Grays Harbor County	Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities, Off-road Vehicle (ORV) Projects	\$276,160	\$153,292	\$276,160
12-1137A	Rock Creek	Department of Fish and Wildlife	WWRP, Critical Habitat Category	\$1,000,000	\$986,959	\$1,000,000
12-1225A	Sturgeon Farm Conservation Easement	PCC Farmland Trust	WWRP, Farmland Preservation Account	\$480,000	\$387,971	\$480,000
12-1270D	Pinnacle Peak Trailhead Development	King County	WWRP, Local Parks Category	\$188,000	\$140,938	\$188,000
12-1383D	Mason County Recreation Area Infield Renovation	Mason County	WWRP, Local Parks Category	\$285,000	\$213,656	\$285,000
12-1183A	Washougal Oaks Natural Area	Department of Natural Resources	WWRP, Natural Areas	\$1,590,225	\$896,588	\$1,590,225
12-1606R	Methow Forest Restoration Project Phase 1	Department of Fish and Wildlife	WWRP, State Lands Restoration and Enhancement Projects Category	\$500,000	\$319,532	\$500,000
10-1353R	Woodard Bay Natural Resources Conservation Area Weyer Point Restoration	Department of Natural Resources	WWRP, State Lands Restoration	\$294,678	\$38,700	\$294,678
12-1420D	Beacon Rock Day Use Picnic Shelter	State Parks	WWRP, State Parks Projects Category	\$229,800	\$107,621	\$229,800
12-1185A	Woodard Bay Natural Resources Conservation Area	Department of Natural Resources	WWRP, Urban Wildlife Habitat	\$2,143,785	\$770,550	\$2,143,785
12-1131A	Big Horn-Yakima Access	Department of Fish and Wildlife	WWRP, Water Access Category	\$1,625,000	\$1,357,922	1,625,000

## Attachment C: Performance Report

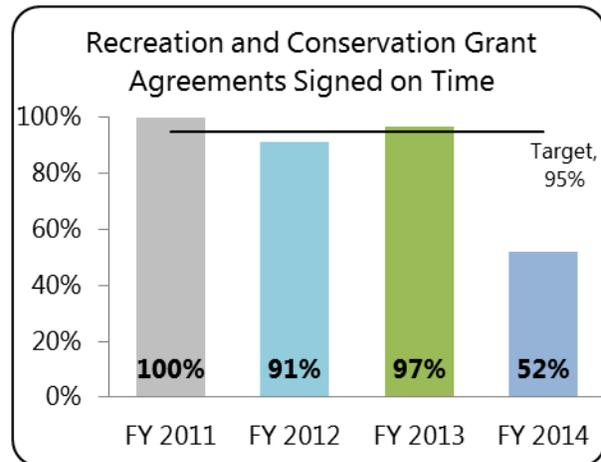
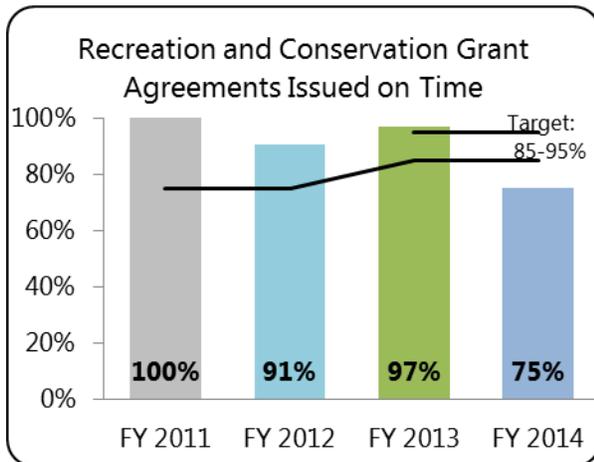
### Projects Closed On Time



The data reflect 21 projects due to close in this fiscal year. Of these, 11 projects (52%) closed on time, which is calculated as within 120 days of the contract end date. As of October 1, 2013, another three projects had closed late and seven remain active.

October will be a challenging month for project closures because there are 58 projects are due to be closed by October 28. As of October 8, staff had closed 24 projects (41%). There are five projects due for closure in November, and only 2 due in December.

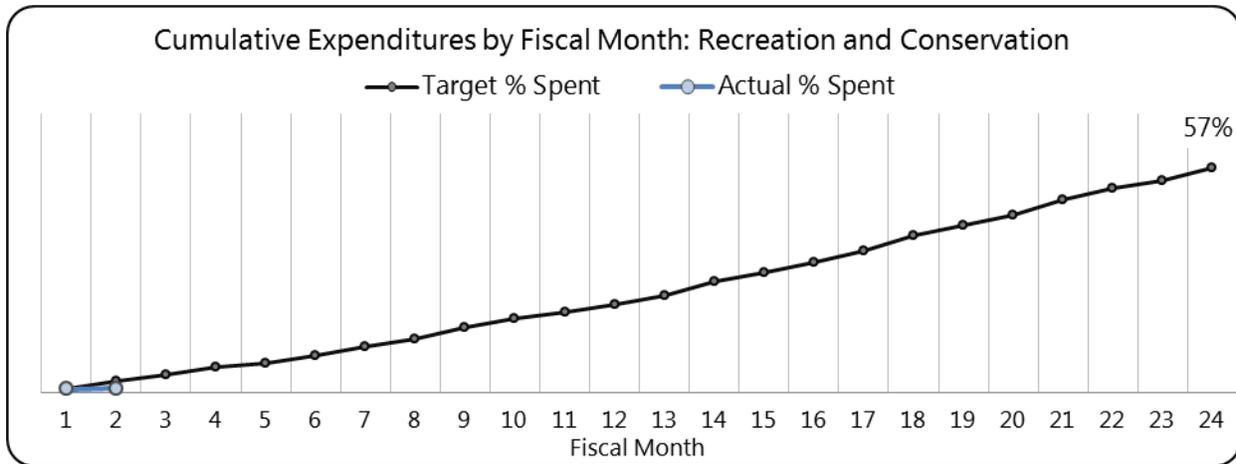
### Project Agreements Issued and Signed on Time



As of October 7, staff had issued agreements for 169 of the 225 projects approved for funding during the summer of 2013. Agreements for projects approved by the board in June should be mailed by the end of October, while those for projects that received director approval in August should be mailed by mid-December. Sponsors are signing and returning the agreements in a timely manner; to date, 117 projects are under agreement. Grant programs include Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Recreational Trails Program, Nonhighway Off-road Vehicle

Activities (NOVA), Boating Facilities Program, Firearms & Archery Range Recreation, and the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account.

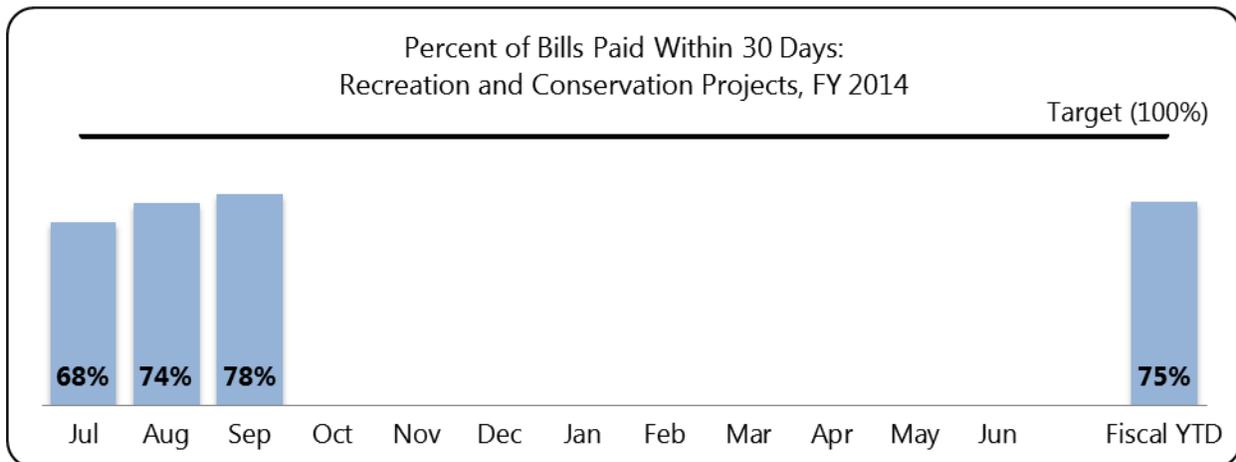
### Fiscal Month Expenditures and Reappropriation Rate



To reach a target agency reappropriation of 45 percent, recreation and conservation projects will need to expend 57 percent of the budgeted funds in 2013-15. That is about \$93 million.

As of the second fiscal month, \$1.7 million had been expended, compared to the budget of \$2.6 million for recreation and conservation projects. This is slightly behind target, but it is still very early in the biennium.

### Bills Paid within 30 days



There were 218 recreation and conservation invoices were due for payment in the first three months of this fiscal year; 75 percent were from state and federal agencies. The RCO paid 164 invoices on time. Another 28 were paid late, and 26 are outstanding. The average number of days to pay a bill was 15, while the median was 10.

Fiscal staff members are processing invoices within 5 days, which indicates that the delays are caused by problems with the bill documentation or project issues. For example, some sponsors do not submit all of the required documentation, or the grant manager may need additional information to confirm that the expenditures conform to board policy. Further, some of the bills are submitted as part of the project closure process, which can take time to complete. In September, some of the bills that were delayed were zero-dollar invoices that the sponsor submitted simply as pro-forma components of a project closure package.

### Time Extensions

The board’s adopted policy for progress on active funded projects requires staff to report all requests for time extensions and subsequent staff actions to the board.

**Director Approved Time Extension Requests:** Since the beginning of the biennium, the RCO has received some requests to extend projects. Staff reviewed each request to ensure compliance with established policies. The following table shows information about the time extensions granted by quarter, as of July 1, 2013.

#### Director Approved Time Extensions

Fiscal Quarter	Extensions Approved	Number of Repeat Extensions	Average Days Extended	Number Closed to Date
Q1	23	7	333	0
Q2	4	1	323	0
Q3				
Q4				
Q5				
Q6				
Q7				
Q8				

## Fiscal Report: Recreation and Conservation Funding Board - Activities by Program

For the Period of July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2015, actuals through 09/30/2013 (10/07/13) fm 03

Percentage of biennium reported: 12.5%

	BUDGET		COMMITTED		TO BE COMMITTED		EXPENDITURES	
	new & reapp. 2013-15	Dollars	% of budget	Dollars	% of budget	Dollars	% of committed	
<b>Grant Programs</b>								
<b>WA Wildlife &amp; Rec. Program (WWRP)</b>								
WWRP Reappropriations	\$43,402,789	\$36,552,785	84.0%	\$6,850,004	16.0%	\$229,987	0.6%	
WWRP New 13-15 Funds	63,050,000	59,255,155	94.0%	3,794,846	6.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Boating Facilities Program (BFP)</b>								
BFP Reappropriations	4,767,400	4,568,043	96.0%	199,357	4.0%	628,569	14.0%	
BFP New 13-15 Funds	6,363,000	6,363,000	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Nonhighway &amp; Off-Road Vehicle (NOVA)</b>								
NOVA Reappropriations	3,951,813	3,920,397	99.0%	31,415	1.0%	198,480	5.0%	
NOVA New 13-15 Funds	8,075,900	7,946,218	98.0%	129,682	2.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Land &amp; Water Conserv. Fund (LWCF)</b>								
LWCF Reappropriations	1,024,757	1,024,757	100.0%	0	0.0%	184,869	18.0%	
LWCF New 13-15 Funds	0	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Aquatic Lands Enhan. Account (ALEA)</b>								
ALEA Reappropriations	3,160,577	3,160,577	100.0%	0	0.0%	492,317	16.0%	
ALEA New 13-15 Funds	6,000,000	5,770,888	96.0%	229,112	4.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Recreational Trails Program (RTP)</b>								
RTP Reappropriations	1,453,434	1,453,434	100.0%	0	0.0%	243,256	17.0%	
RTP New 13-15 Funds	1,754,900	1,754,900	100.0%	0	0.0%	4,548	0.0%	
<b>Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)</b>								
YAF Reappropriations	333,775	187,059	56.0%	146,716	44.0%	53,136	28.0%	
YAF New Funds	3,480,444	671,160	19.0%	2,809,284	81.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Firearms &amp; Archery Range Rec (FARR)</b>								
FARR Reappropriations	299,115	211,401	71.0%	87,714	29.0%	8,366	4.0%	
FARR New 13-15 Funds	800,000	765,000	96.0%	35,000	4.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Boating Infrastructure Grants (BIG)</b>								
BIG Reappropriations	373,225	373,225	100.0%	0	0.0%	45,731	12.0%	
BIG New 13-15 Funds	0	0	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Sub Total Grant Programs</b>	<b>148,291,129</b>	<b>133,977,999</b>	<b>90.3%</b>	<b>14,313,130</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	<b>2,089,258</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	
<b>Administration</b>								
General Operating Funds	6,121,924	6,121,924	100.0%	0	0.0%	421,427	7.0%	
<b>Grant and Administration Total</b>	<b>154,413,053</b>	<b>140,099,923</b>	<b>91.0%</b>	<b>14,313,130</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>2,510,685</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	

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

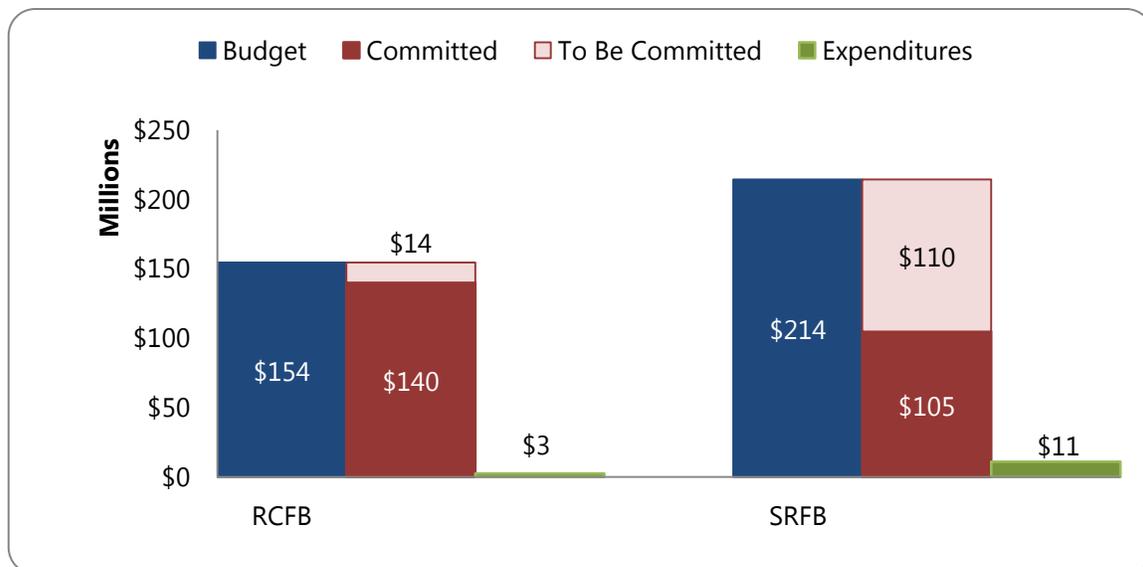
## Fiscal Report: Recreation and Conservation Office – Entire Agency Summary by Board

2013-15 Budget Status Report, Capital + Operating the Agency

For the Period of July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2015, actuals through 09/30/2013 (10/07/13) fm 03

Percentage of biennium reported: 12.5%

	BUDGET			COMMITTED		TO BE COMMITTED		EXPENDITURES	
	New	Reapp.	new and reapp. 2013-15	Dollars	% of budget	Dollars	% of budget	Dollars	% of committed
<b>Board/Program</b>									
RCFB	\$92,365,519	\$62,047,534	\$154,413,053	\$140,099,923	90.7%	\$14,313,130	9.3%	\$2,510,685	2.0%
SRFB	\$91,494,281	\$122,849,525	\$214,343,806	\$104,832,049	48.9%	\$109,511,757	51.1%	\$10,916,033	10.0%
Governor Salmon Rec Office	\$885,380		\$885,380	\$885,380	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$48,005	5.0%
Invasive Species Council	\$200,000		\$200,000	\$200,000	100.0%	\$0	0.0%	\$16,966	8.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$184,945,180</b>	<b>\$184,897,059</b>	<b>\$369,842,239</b>	<b>\$246,017,352</b>	<b>66.5%</b>	<b>\$123,824,887</b>	<b>33.5%</b>	<b>\$13,491,689</b>	<b>5.5%</b>

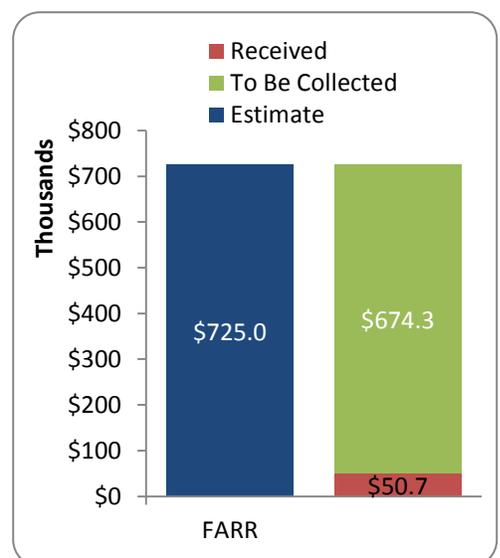
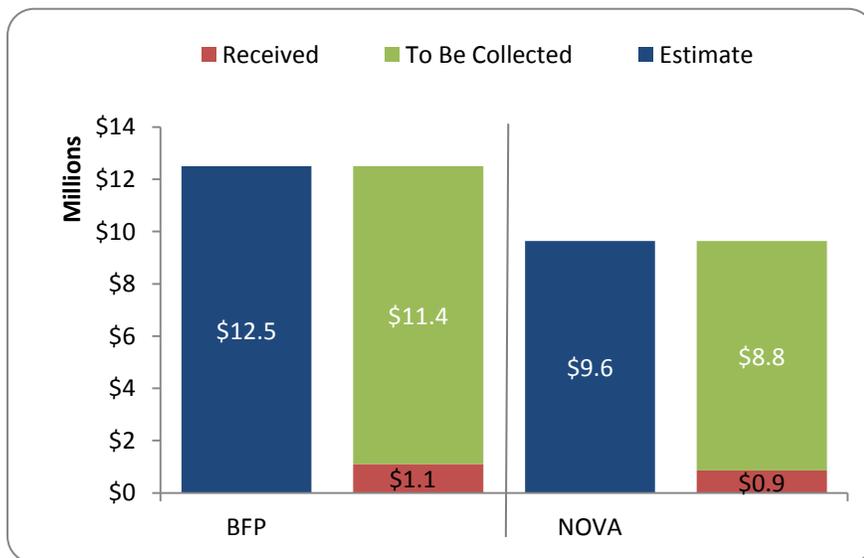


## Fiscal Report: Recreation and Conservation Funding Board – Revenue Report

For the Period of July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2015, actuals through 7/31/2013 (08/15/13) fm01

Percentage of biennium reported: 4.2%

Revenue	Bienial Forecast	Collections	
	Estimate	Actual	% of Estimate
Boating Facilities Program (BFP)	\$12,497,300	\$1,099,769	9.0%
Nonhighway, Off-Road Vehicle Program (NOVA)	9,644,325	856,253	9.0%
Firearms and Archery Range Rec Program (FARR)	725,000	50,742	7.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$22,866,625</b>	<b>\$2,006,764</b>	<b>8.8%</b>



### Revenue Notes:

Boating Facilities Program (BFP) revenue is from the unrefunded marine gasoline taxes.

Nonhighway, Off-Road Vehicle Program (NOVA) revenue is from the motor vehicle gasoline tax paid by users of ORVs and nonhighway roads and from the amount paid for by ORV use permits.

Firearms and Archery Range Rec Program (FARR) revenue is from \$3 each concealed pistol license fee.

This reflects the most recent revenue forecast of June 2013. The next forecast is due in September 2013.

## Fiscal Report: RCFB – Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Summary

1990 through August 13, 2013

### History of Biennial Appropriations

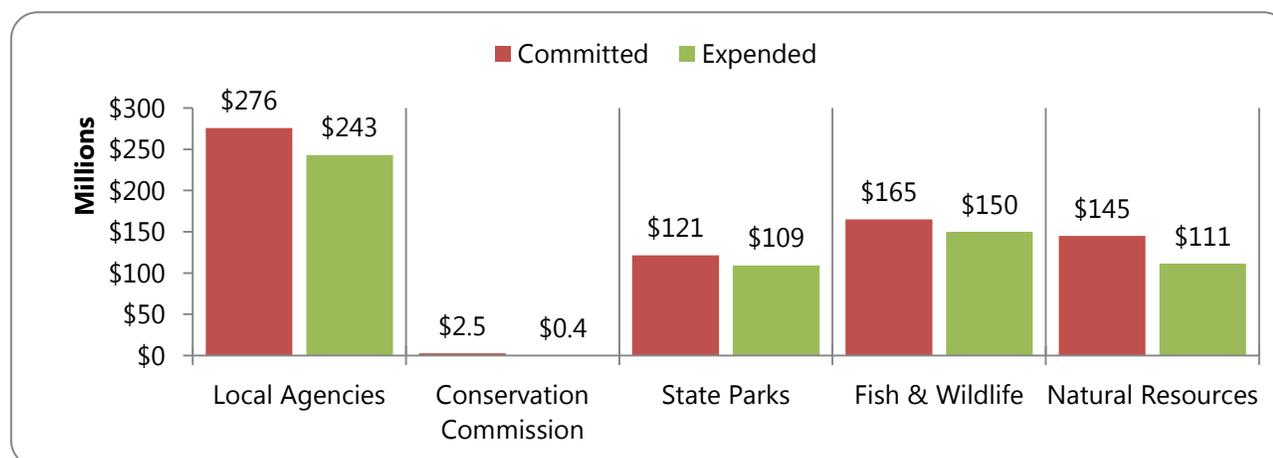
Biennium	Appropriation
89-91 Biennium	\$53,000,000
91-93 Biennium	61,150,000
93-95 Biennium	65,000,000
95-97 Biennium <sup>1</sup>	43,760,000
97-99 Biennium	45,000,000
99-01 Biennium	48,000,000
01-03 Biennium	45,000,000
03-05 Biennium	45,000,000
05-07 Biennium <sup>2</sup>	48,500,000
07-09 Biennium <sup>3</sup>	95,491,955
09-11 Biennium <sup>4</sup>	67,344,750
11-13 Biennium <sup>5</sup>	40,740,000
13-15 Biennium <sup>6</sup>	63,050,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$721,036,705</b>

#### Notes to History of Biennial Appropriations:

1. Original appropriation was \$45 million.
2. Entire appropriation was \$50 million. 3% (\$1,500,000) went to administration.
3. Entire appropriation was \$100 million. 3% (\$3,000,000) went to administration. Removed \$981,000 with FY 10 supplemental, removed \$527,045 with FY 2011 supplemental.
4. Entire appropriation was \$70 million. 3% (\$2,100,000) went to administration. Removed \$555,250 with FY 2011 supplemental.
5. Entire appropriation was \$42 million. 3% (\$1,260,000) went to administration.
6. Entire appropriation was \$65 million. 3% (\$1,950,000) went to administration.

### History of Committed and Expenditures, Since 1990

Agency	Committed	Expenditures	% Expended
Local Agencies	\$275,777,318	\$242,919,183	88%
Conservation Commission	\$2,549,463	\$356,783	14%
State Parks	\$121,370,960	\$109,233,732	90%
Fish & Wildlife	\$164,995,387	\$149,997,837	91%
Natural Resources	\$144,963,716	\$111,362,774	77%
Riparian Habitat Admin	\$185,046	\$185,046	100%
Land Inventory	\$549,965	\$549,965	100%
<b>Sub Total Committed</b>	<b>\$710,391,855</b>	<b>\$614,605,320</b>	<b>87%</b>



## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

**Meeting Date:** November 2013  
**Title:** Conversion Request: Clark County, Salmon Creek, Projects 76-023 and 79-037  
**Prepared By:** Myra Barker, Compliance Specialist

**APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM**

### Summary

Clark County is asking the board to approve a conversion of 1.126 acres at Salmon Creek Park. The conversion is due to a land exchange with an adjacent property owner and construction of a sewer pump station. The National Park Service has asked that the conversion be completed by the end of 2013.

### Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

- Request for Decision
- Request for Direction
- Briefing

Resolution #: 2013-23

Purpose of Resolution: Approve the conversion and replacement property for a portion of the properties at projects 76-023 and 79-037.

## Conversion Policy and Board's Role

The project that is the subject of this memo has funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Washington state bond funds. As a result, both the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act<sup>1</sup> and Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) rules and policies for addressing the proposed conversion must be met.

- Use of LWCF grant funds creates a condition under which property and structures acquired become part of the public domain in perpetuity.
- Board policy states that interests in real property, structures, and facilities that were acquired, developed, enhanced, or restored with board funds, including state bond funds,

<sup>1</sup> Title 36, Chapter 1, Part 59 - Land and Water Conservation Fund Program of Assistance to States; Post-Completion Compliance Responsibilities

must not be changed (either in part or in whole) or converted to uses other than those for which the funds were originally approved without the approval of the board.<sup>2</sup>

- The RCO project contract provides additional protections from conversion.

However, because needs and values often change over time, federal law and board policy allow conversions of grant funded property under carefully scrutinized conditions. If an LWCF or state-funded project is converted, the project sponsor must replace the converted interests in real property, structures, or facilities. The replacement must have at least equal market value and have reasonably equivalent recreation utility and location.

### The Role of the Board

Because the project was partially funded by LWCF, the role of the board is to decide whether to recommend approval of the conversion to the National Park Service (NPS). To do so, the board evaluates the list of practical alternatives that were considered for the conversion and replacement, including avoidance, and considers if the replacement property has reasonably equivalent recreation utility and location. The NPS has the legal responsibility to make the final decision of whether or not to approve this conversion related to the LWCF project.

Under current policy, the board does not have the ability to accept other types of mitigation, levy additional penalties, or dictate the future use of the property being converted.

### Background

The projects in question are 76-023 and 79-037.

<b>Project Name:</b>	Salmon Creek 76	<b>Project #:</b>	76-023AD
<b>Grant Program:</b>	Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Bonds	<b>Board funded date:</b>	June 1976
<b>LWCF Amount:</b>	\$417,746	<b>Original Purpose:</b>	This project acquired 183 acres and funded the first phase of development, which included reclaiming a gravel mine and converting it to a swim beach, bathhouse, parking, and paths.
<b>Bonds Amount:</b>	\$100,000		
<b>Project Sponsor Match:</b>	\$317,746		
<b>Total Amount:</b>	<b>\$835,492</b>		

<b>Project Name:</b>	Salmon Creek 79	<b>Project #:</b>	79-037A
<b>Grant Program:</b>	Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	<b>Board funded date:</b>	January 1979
<b>LWCF Amount:</b>	\$65,060	<b>Original Purpose:</b>	This project acquired 38 acres to expand the park.
<b>Project Sponsor Match:</b>	\$65,060		
<b>Total Amount:</b>	<b>\$130,120</b>		

<sup>2</sup> Policy is consistent with state law. See RCW 79A.25.100 and RCW 43.99A (Referendum 18 bond funds).

Clark County used the grants to acquire a total of 221 acres and complete the first phase of development for a community/regional park within the Salmon Creek Greenway. Development included a swim beach at Klineline Pond, bathhouse, picnic area, paths, and parking.

The Salmon Creek Community/Regional Park is located within the Salmon Creek Greenway, about five miles north of downtown Vancouver and just east of I-5 (Attachment A). The greenway contains over 600 acres of bottomlands, wetlands, and forested hillsides on both sides of Salmon Creek. The park is at the eastern edge of the greenway.

Since the original grant to acquire the property, RCO has made additional investments at the park and greenway that are unaffected by the conversion.

- 83-053A: This grant was used to acquire 107 acres to expand the park and greenway.
- 90-060A: This grant was used to acquire 63 acres to expand the park and greenway.
- 93-058D: This grant was used to develop a 3 mile paved trail, 2 miles of equestrian trail, a restroom, and parking.
- 02-1213D: This grant was used to construct additional trails and a picnic area.

Today, Salmon Creek Community/Regional Park<sup>3</sup> provides opportunities for swimming, fishing, and picnicking. It includes picnic shelters, a playground, and the eastern trailhead for the Salmon Creek Greenway Trail. The park has about 35 acres of developed recreation and 368 acres of undeveloped greenspace. Also located within the park and greenway are the Salmon Creek Sports Complex, with five ball fields and warm-up areas, and the Salmon Creek Trail, a three-mile multi-use trail that extends through a portion of the park and terminates at the Felida Bridge, near the western end of the greenway.

## The Conversion

The conversion at Salmon Creek Community/Regional Park is caused by (1) a land exchange with an adjacent property owner and (2) the construction of a sewer pump station to increase the capacity of the Salmon Creek Regional Wastewater Management System to allow for future growth in the area.

The conversion area for the land exchange is 0.11 acres and the conversion area for the sewer pump station is 1.016 acres. The total acreage proposed for conversion is 1.126 acres. Both conversion areas are in undeveloped portions of the park (Attachment B).

**Land Exchange Property:** This property (marked "B" on the map) is a small triangular parcel located north of NE Bassel Road, about 3,000 feet west of I-5. In exchange for this tenth of an acre, the county acquired a 1-acre property that is located within the greenway adjacent to the Salmon Creek Sports Complex. Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation staff notified RCO in 1998 regarding the land exchange, and received RCO approval based on the state funding<sup>4</sup>. RCO did

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<sup>3</sup> The community and regional parks are depicted as separate on the map, but function as a single park.

<sup>4</sup> The conversion met the conditions for an administrative conversion and director level approval.

not consult with the National Park Service at that time. It was later determined the land exchange conversion area was within NPS jurisdiction, so the land exchange is part of the conversion package now before the board.

**Sewer Pump Station:** The sewer pump station property (marked "A" on the map) is located to the south of the Kline Pond parking area and within a fenced area, near the park entrance, north of 117<sup>th</sup> Street and approximately 1,000 feet west of I-5. In 2004, Vancouver-Clarks Parks and Recreation staff contacted RCO regarding the county's plan to construct a sewer pump station at the park. The conversion approval process was delayed due to staffing and workload issues for both the county and RCO, and as a result of efforts to combine this conversion with the land exchange. The County ultimately decided to proceed with the sewer pump station construction ahead of the conversion approval.

If the conversion is approved, these areas of the park would be removed from the LWCF 6(f) boundary.

## Details of Proposed Replacement Property

### Location

The proposed replacement property is 4.4 acres and is located at 12019 NW 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Vancouver. It is approximately 1.5 miles from the conversion area (Attachment C).

### Property Characteristics

The proposed replacement property has been owned by the same family for almost 50 years. The owners will sell 4.4 acres of the 10-acre property to the county for a park. The site is relatively flat and has a mix of open grassy areas, a fruit orchard, and a forested area. It offers views of Mount St. Helens and the southern Washington Cascade Range.

## Analysis

When reviewing conversion requests, the board considers the following factors, in addition to the scope of the original grant and the proposed substitution of land or facilities<sup>5</sup>.

- All practical alternatives to the conversion have been evaluated and rejected on a sound basis.
- The fair market value of the converted property has been established and the proposed replacement property is of at least equal fair market value.
- Justification exists to show that the replacement property has at least reasonably equivalent utility and location.
- The public has opportunities for participation in the process.

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<sup>5</sup> Manual #7: *Funded Projects: Policies and the Project Agreement*

## **Evaluation of Practical Alternatives**

A “no action alternative” or avoidance cannot be considered because both conversions – the land exchange and installation of the sewer pump – have already taken place.

However, before selecting the location of the sewer pump station and its construction, Clark County considered the following:

- the need to locate the sewer pump station in very close proximity to the existing sewer easement and existing sewer transmission line,
- the need for a significant flat area for the pump station,
- existing development in the area, and
- environmental constraints (shoreline, floodplain and wetlands).

Based on those considerations, the county determined that no reasonable alternative sites could be secured for the sewer pump station.

An alternative to the conversion is to remove the sewer pump station and reverse the land exchange (i.e., buy back the property exchanged) to re-establish public park uses of the conversion areas. This alternative was not considered feasible because the sewer pump station would have to be removed and reconstructed in another location. In addition, the land that was exchanged is now part of a residential home site, and would likely require condemnation to make reacquisition possible.

The proposed replacement property was selected by the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department based on the following factors:

- It is the opportunity in closest proximity to Salmon Creek Community/Regional Park.
- It provides a new park property in a service area that is currently unserved in a rapidly growing residential area.
- It is suitable for development as a neighborhood park, and would provide recreational opportunities similar to those offered at Salmon Creek Community/Regional Park, with land characteristics favorable to both active and passive recreation including walking, picnicking, and playground activities.
- The replacement property is consistent with state and local plans.

## **Evaluation of Fair Market Value**

The converted and replacement properties have been appraised for fee title interests with market value dates that meet board policies. The land exchange conversion was valued in 1998 and approved by RCO at that time. The sewer pump station conversion area was appraised in May 2006 and the replacement property for both conversion areas was appraised in July 2006. The replacement property meets the market value criterion because it provides at least equal market value. In this case, there is an additional \$1.6 million in market value beyond the equivalency threshold.

	Conversion Property	Replacement Property	Difference
<b>Market Value</b>	\$20,250	\$1,579,000	+\$1,558,750
<b>Value Date</b>	April 1998, May 2006	July 2006	

### Evaluation of Reasonably Equivalent Location

There is no available property adjacent to Salmon Creek Community/Regional Park that could have been used as replacement.

The replacement property provides a new park for local residents and is located 1.5 miles from the conversion areas.

### Evaluation of Reasonably Equivalent Utility

The replacement property will serve as a neighborhood park. The proposed development may include open space, pathways, picnic areas, and a play structure. These are recreational opportunities similar to those offered at Salmon Creek Community/Regional Park.

This new neighborhood park will serve the neighborhoods within a half-mile radius, consistent with adopted park standards.

### Evaluation of Public Participation

Clark County has conducted public participation as part of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) during the planning stages for the sewer pump station, including public meetings. The SEPA process for the sewer pump station was completed in 2005.

The county published a public notice on the conversion and proposed replacement property, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Park Service, and by board policies for the Draft Environmental Assessment for the conversion. Any significant comments received will be shared with the board at the November meeting.

### Other Basic Requirements Met

#### Same Project Sponsor

The replacement property will be administered by the same project sponsor (Clark County).

#### Satisfy Needs in Adopted Plan

The replacement property satisfies the needs as described in the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan by helping to meet the goal of providing parks within half mile of residents in this area of the county.

The proposed neighborhood park also would assist Clark County in continuing to fulfill the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Level of Service criteria for local jurisdictions by providing parks close to residential neighborhoods and facilities that encourage physical activity to promote public health through shared-use trails and paths.

### Eligible in the Funding Program

The replacement property meets eligibility requirements and was acquired under a state and federal waiver of retroactivity solely for the purpose of satisfying the conversion.

### Next Steps

If the board chooses to recommend approval of the conversion, RCO staff will prepare the required federal documentation and transmit that recommendation to the National Park Service. Pending NPS approval, staff will execute all necessary amendments to the project agreement, as directed.

### Attachments

- A. Location maps
- B. Maps of the conversion properties
- C. Map of original grant and proposed replacement property

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution 2013-23  
Approving Conversion for Salmon Creek Community/Regional Park  
(RCO Projects #76-023 and 79-037)

**WHEREAS**, the Clark County (County) used state bond funds and a grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to acquire land and develop park facilities at Salmon Creek Community/Regional Park; and

**WHEREAS**, the county permitted conversion of a portion of the property through a land exchange and for the installation of a sewer pump station; and

**WHEREAS**, as a result of this conversion, a portion of the property no longer satisfies the conditions of the RCO grant; and

**WHEREAS**, the county is asking for Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) approval to replace the converted property with property purchased under a waiver of retroactivity; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed replacement property is in close proximity to the conversion site, has an appraised value that is greater than the conversion site, and has greater acreage than the conversion site; and

**WHEREAS**, the site will provide opportunities that closely match those displaced by the conversion and will expand the city's park system in an area that had been identified in its comprehensive plan as needing additional recreation opportunities, thereby supporting the board's goals to provide funding for projects that result in public outdoor recreation purposes; and

**WHEREAS**, the sponsor sought public comment on the conversion and discussed it during open public meetings, thereby supporting the board's strategy to regularly seek public feedback in policy and funding decisions;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves the conversion request and the proposed replacement site for RCO Projects #76-023 and 79-037 as presented to the board in November 2013 and set forth in the board memo prepared for that meeting; and

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the board hereby authorizes the RCO director to give interim approval for the properties acquired with LWCF funds and forward the conversion to the National Park Service (NPS) for final approval.

*Resolution moved by:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Resolution seconded by:* \_\_\_\_\_

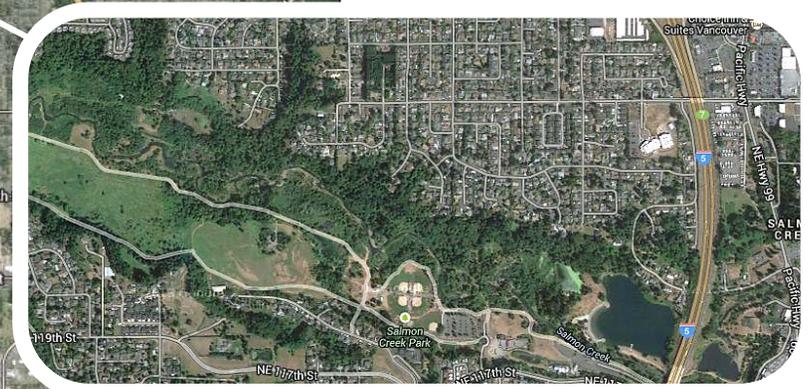
*Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)*

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

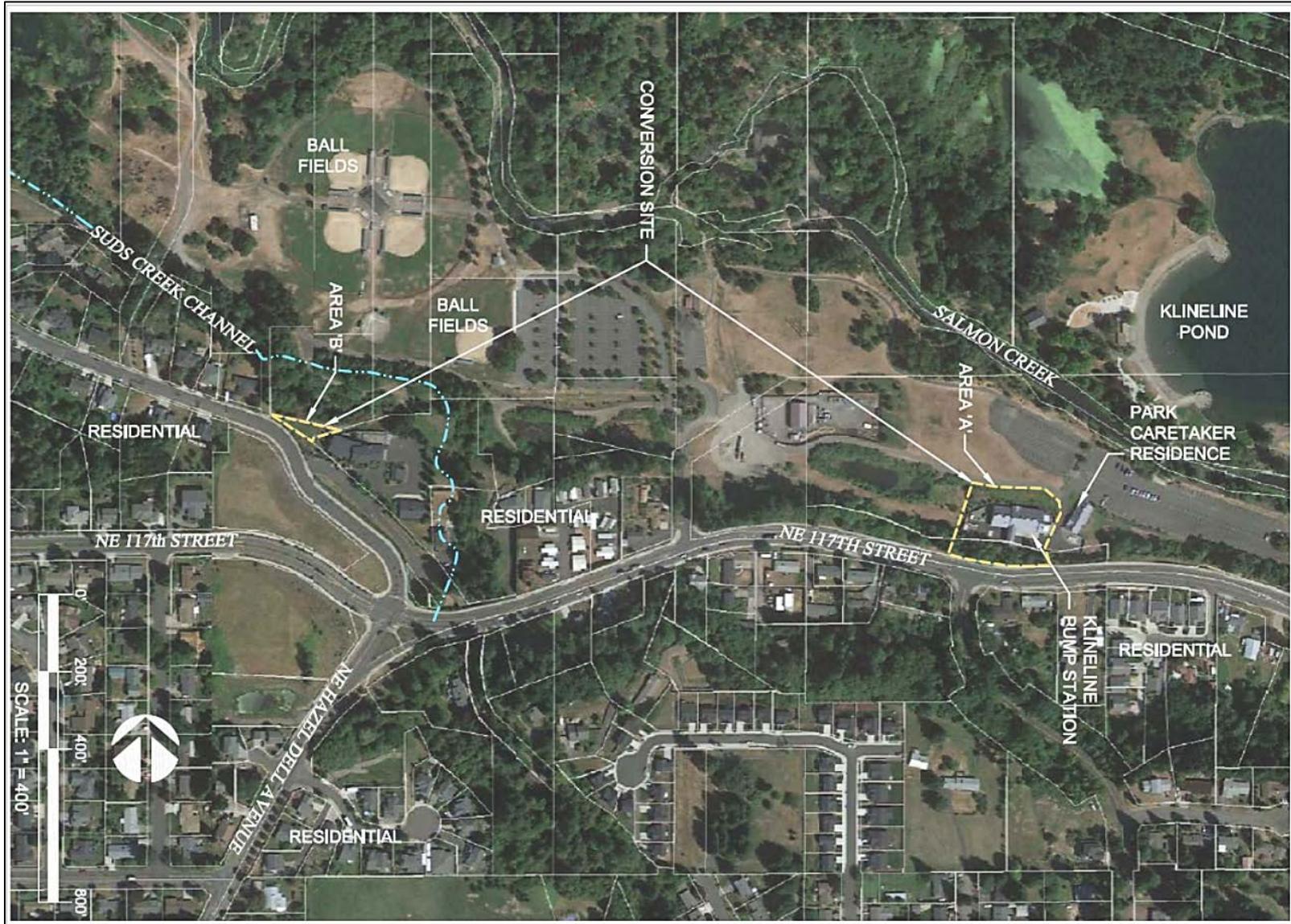
# Attachment A: Location map



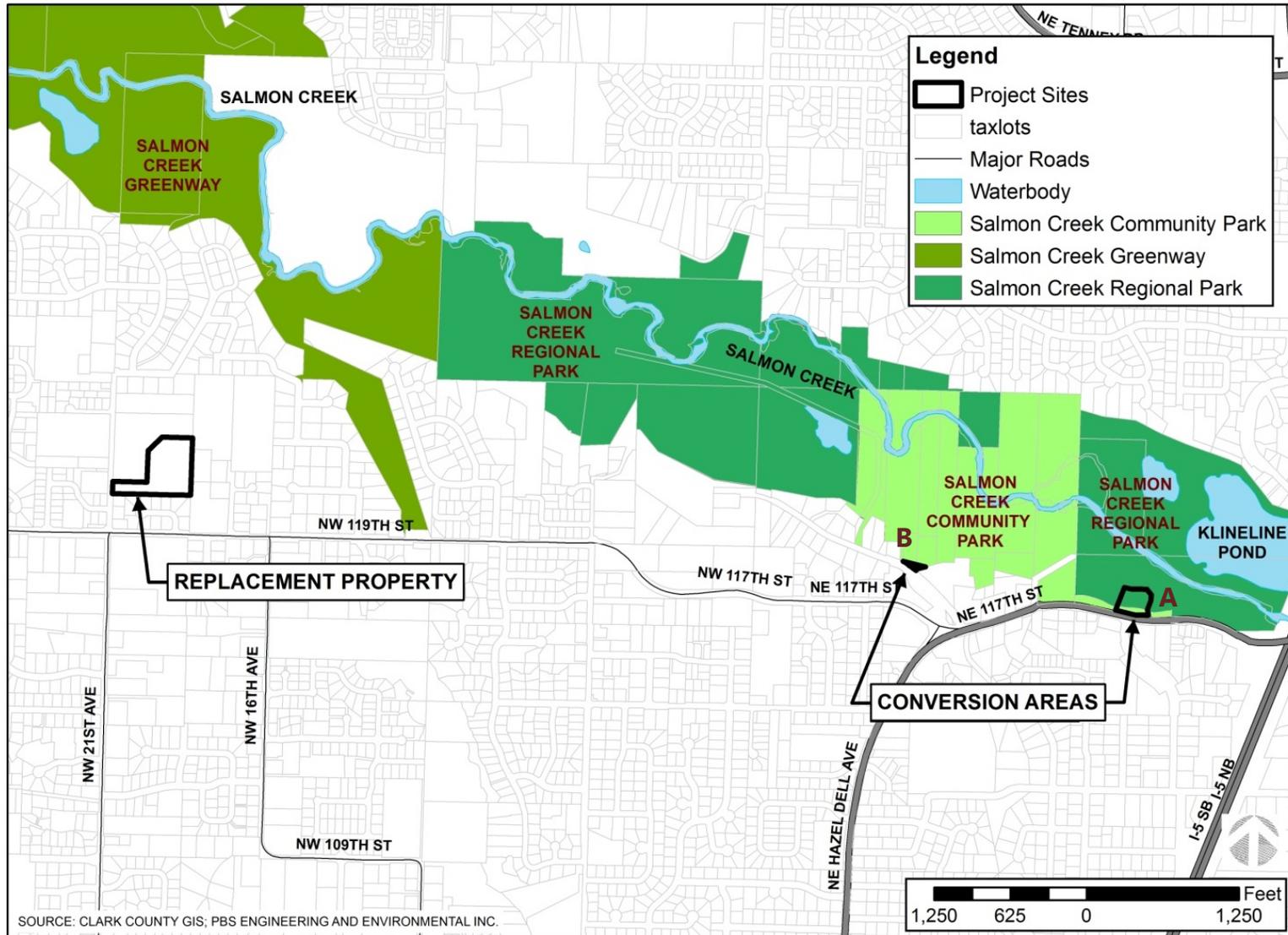
Salmon Creek Community/Regional Park is at the east end of the greenway.  
*Photo is approximate.*



### Attachment B: Map of the conversion areas



### Attachment C: Map of original grant and proposed replacement property





The area outlined in yellow is the 4.4 acres proposed as replacement property.

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

**Meeting Date:** November 2013  
**Title:** Major Scope Change Request: Department of Fish and Wildlife, Mid-Columbia 2012, Project 12-1478A  
**Prepared By:** Sarah Thirtyacre, Senior Outdoor Grants Manager

**APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM**

### Summary

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is requesting approval to change the scope of a project funded through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Critical Habitat category.

### Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

- Request for Decision
- Request for Direction
- Briefing

Resolution #: 2013-24

Purpose of Resolution: Approve the scope change request for project 12-1478.

### Background

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) received a \$950,000 Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Critical Habitat category grant for the Mid-Columbia 2012 project (RCO # [12-1478A](#)). The project was funded in July 2013. WDFW's plans were to buy the Baltz property, which consists of 3,405 acres of shrub-steppe habitat in Douglas County (Attachment A). The property contains historic courtship areas, called lek sites, for sage grouse and sharp-tailed grouse. One of the most active sage grouse leks is a quarter-mile from the site, and an active sharp-tailed grouse lek is three miles away. This acquisition site was intended to maintain a critical pathway connecting the two populations.

The owner of the original property has decided not to sell, so WDFW is now proposing to purchase a portion of the Grand Coulee Ranch instead of the Baltz property. The 20,500-acre ranch is located north of Bridgeport in Douglas County. WDFW has identified a three-phase approach to acquiring the entire Grand Coulee Ranch property. These grant funds would allow WDFW to purchase approximately 2,600 acres of shrub-steppe habitat located within the 6,800

acre Phase 1 boundary (Attachment C). After completing the appraisal work, WDFW will be able to identify the exact parcels they intend to acquire.

This action is considered a major scope change that requires board approval because the Grand Coulee Ranch was not identified as part of the original project proposal, was not included in the acquisition envelope, and is not contiguous to the property originally identified.

## **Board Decision Requested**

WDFW is requesting approval of a major scope change for the Mid-Columbia 2012 project, which would allow it to purchase a portion of the Grand Coulee Ranch instead of the Baltz property.

## **Analysis**

### **Board Policy**

Sponsors are expected to complete the scope of work that is described in the grant application and approved by the board. Critical habitat category applicants may submit a proposal to purchase property within a reasonable geographic envelope, which allows them to pursue acquisition of another property if they are not successful with the priority property. Changing the scope of an acquisition project to allow purchase of property outside the project's original geographic envelope is considered a major scope change and requires board approval. In deciding whether to approve a major scope change, the board considers the following factors:

- Is the amended project eligible in the same grant program category?
- What is the reaction and/or position, if any, of the local government with regard to the requested amendment?
- How does the amended project fit with priorities identified in state approved strategies?
- Will federal or other matching resources be lost if a scope change is not approved?
- What opportunity will be lost if the request is not granted?
- What other project or projects could the money go to if this request is denied?
- How does the amended project compare with the original project and with the alternate projects on the funding priority list?

The following analysis addresses these policy factors:

### **Is the amended project eligible in the same grant program category?**

Yes. The Grand Coulee Ranch property is eligible within the WWRP Critical Habitat category.

What is the reaction and/or position, if any, of the local government with regard to the requested amendment?

WDFW Regional Director Jim Brown met with Douglas County Commissioners in early 2013 to discuss the acquisition of Grand Coulee Ranch. WDFW provided a letter from the commissioners stating their support for the project (Attachment B). The commissioners expressed some concerns regarding the acquisition of the existing irrigated farmland. In response to these concerns, WDFW revised their targeted parcels to exclude purchase of the parcel that is currently farmed (indicated on Attachment C) with WWRP critical habitat funding.

How does the amended project fit with priorities identified in state approved strategies including, but not limited to, the Natural Heritage Plan, State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Lands 20/20, Biodiversity Strategy, a regional recovery plan, or a three-year work plan for salmon recovery?

Review and approval of the Grand Coulee Ranch acquisition was completed via WDFW's Lands 20/20 initiative on December 2, 2009, as part of the review conducted for the Big Bend Sharp-tailed grouse project.

The Grand Coulee Ranch property includes approximately 20,500 acres of largely contiguous shrub-steppe habitat occupied by Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. Currently, there is one lek located on the ranch, three leks located within a half mile of the ranch, and three more leks within two miles of the ranch. This project site provides important connectivity between and through sharp-tailed grouse populations in Douglas, Okanogan, and Lincoln counties. As a consequence, it is a strategic component in WDFW's ongoing efforts to maintain and recover sharp-tailed grouse within these counties. Many of the other species inhabiting this project area are also at risk and can be viewed as "keystone" species that depend on the same habitats. However, the Douglas County population of sharp-tailed grouse best depicts the current ecological crisis and pending conservation opportunity of this project.

Defined by the *Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Recovery Plan*, the envelope of this project lies at the heart of Washington's sharp-tailed grouse population, serving as the connectivity bridge between struggling concentrations to the north and east. If sharp-tailed grouse are to recover in Washington, the populations in the vicinity of the project site will be driving that recovery. With signed letters of intent in hand, WDFW is confident that it can forge a conservation partnership with local landowners, expand shrub-steppe protection, and fuel species recovery.

The Grand Coulee Ranch property includes acres that are dominated by shrub-steppe habitat, which is critical for sharp-tailed grouse recovery and provides habitat for many other species. As such, it directly addresses the objectives of many regional planning efforts including WDFW's Strategic Plan.

Will federal or other matching resources be lost if a scope change is not approved?

No, but this grant will be used in concert with another WWRP grant, Big Bend Sharp-tailed Grouse (RCO#10-1140A). Using funds from both grants creates efficiencies in acquisition related expenses such as appraisals and closing costs.

What opportunity will be lost if the request is not granted? (Consider, for example, consequences to the public, the resources, and the grant program.)

If this request is not granted, the opportunity to acquire this important property will be delayed and additional grants or other funds will be needed to secure the property. The property owners are in the market to sell to WDFW or commercial developers. If sold to developers, the property will most likely be subdivided and developed for residential or commercial use. The river frontage makes this an attractive site for commercial development.

What other project or projects could the money go to if this request is denied?

If this scope change is denied, RCO could provide full funding to the next project on the 2012 Critical Habitat list, which is WDFW's partially funded Rock Creek project ([#12-1137A](#)). The remaining funds could then be used for project alternates within the Habitat Conservation Account because there are no other remaining alternates on the [2012 Critical Habitat list](#).

How does the amended project compare with the original project and with the alternate projects on the funding priority list?

The amended project meets the same conservation goals and species benefits of the original project: Specifically, this project will:

- **Assemble a functional wildlife corridor.** Acquisition of this property provides the long-term protection of the quality habitats necessary for maintaining shrub-steppe obligates. The project also will provide an important link between significant wildlife habitats.
- **Connect existing public lands.** This property serves as a strategic link between habitats occupied by sharp-tailed grouse and complements nine local WWRP projects that have been funded within the last decade. This property will extend the long-term protection of existing WDFW lands.
- **Conserve critical breeding habitat.** This property addresses limiting factors such as winter habitat, breeding habitat, habitat quantity, and habitat connectivity. It protects one of the largest active sharp-tailed grouse lek sites in the state.
- **Conserve shrub-steppe.** This property provides an opportunity to protect sensitive shrub-steppe habitat in eastern Washington, which has been reduced by more than 60 percent. Much of what remains is degraded by cattle grazing, weed encroachment, and fragmentation. Remaining shrub-steppe habitat is highly fragmented, which is the primary cause for the decline of the focal species of this project. The very qualities that make the project area so unique – spectacular views of the Cascade Mountains, diverse habitat, and deep soil – make the site vulnerable to development.

Further, the acreage to be purchased is similar. Regardless of whether WDFW pursued the original Baltz property (3,405 acres) or the 2,600-acre portion of the Grand Coulee property, current market conditions and grant funding would allow them to purchase only about 2,600 acres. The reduced acreage still provides substantial benefit for the targeted species.

### **Strategic Plan Link**

Consideration of this request supports the board's goal of helping its partners protect, restore, and develop habitat opportunities that benefit people, fish and wildlife, and ecosystems.

### **Public Comment**

There has been no public comment on this proposal.

### **Staff Recommendation**

RCO staff reviewed the materials provided by WDFW and recommends the major scope change be approved for the following reasons:

- The Grand Coulee ranch property meets the eligibility requirements for WWRP Critical Habitat category projects and achieves many of the goals of the original project,
- Acquisition of the Grand Coulee ranch property will add high-quality sharp-tailed grouse habitat and prevent fragmentation of the migration routes for a variety of shrub steppe obligate species,
- Acquisition of the Grand Coulee ranch property would remove the threat of development on property strategically located between existing public ownership, and
- This change would allow WDFW to maximize acquisition efficiencies and purchase more acreage under a single transaction by pairing this purchase with the acquisition efforts already underway via the Big Bend Sharp-tailed Grouse (#10-1140A) project.

Staff recommends that the board approve this scope change via Resolution #2013-24.

### **Next Steps**

If the board approves the scope change, RCO staff will modify the proposed scope of work and execute the project agreement as directed.

### **Attachments**

Resolution 2013-24

- A. Regional Location Maps
- B. Douglas County Commissioner's Letter
- C. Grand Coulee Ranch Properties

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution #2013-24  
Approving a Major Scope Change for Mid-Columbia 2012  
(RCO #12-1478)

**WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) approved a Washington and Wildlife Recreation Program (WWRP) Critical Habitat Category grant for the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to acquire 3,045 acres for conservation purposes in Douglas County; and

**WHEREAS**, the acquisition is part of a WDFW's ongoing efforts to acquire land to support maintaining and recovering sharp-tailed grouse within Douglas, Okanogan and Lincoln Counties as outlined in the *Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Recovery Plan*; and

**WHEREAS**, the owner of the targeted property has decided not to sell it at this time; and

**WHEREAS**, WDFW has identified an alternate property within Douglas County that is available for purchase and provides equivalent high-quality sharp-tailed grouse habitat; and

**WHEREAS**, acquisition of the alternate property would prevent fragmentation of the migration route for a variety of shrub steppe obligate species; and

**WHEREAS**, the acquisition of the alternate property and has been identified in WDFW's long term strategic plan and has been approved through their Lands 20/20 process; and

**WHEREAS**, the replacement property meets the eligibility criteria for the WWRP Critical Habitat category; and

**WHEREAS**, adoption of this scope change supports the board's strategic goal to provide partners with funding to protect, preserve, restore, and enhance habitats;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves the scope change request; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the director is authorized to execute the project agreement.

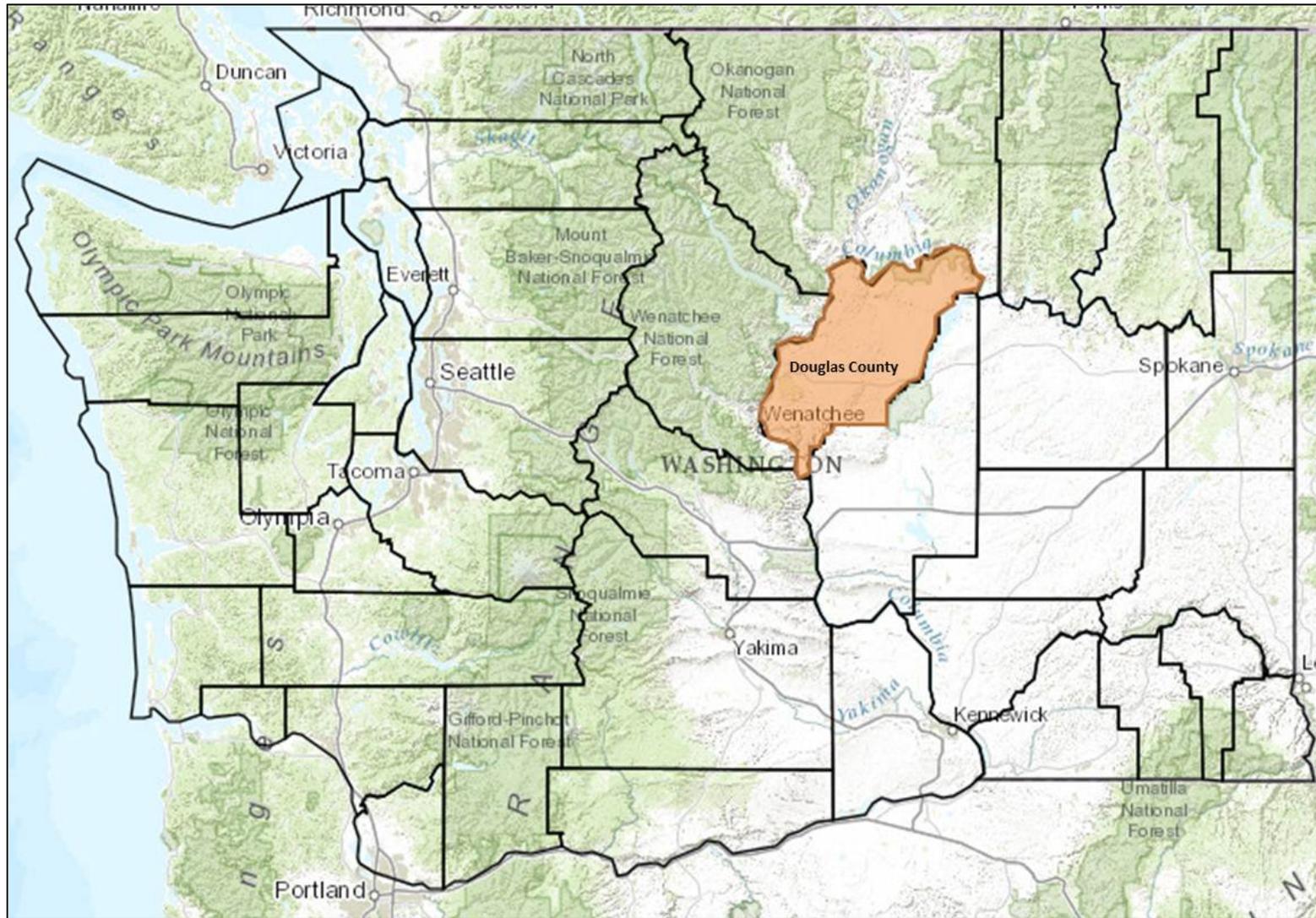
Resolution moved by: \_\_\_\_\_

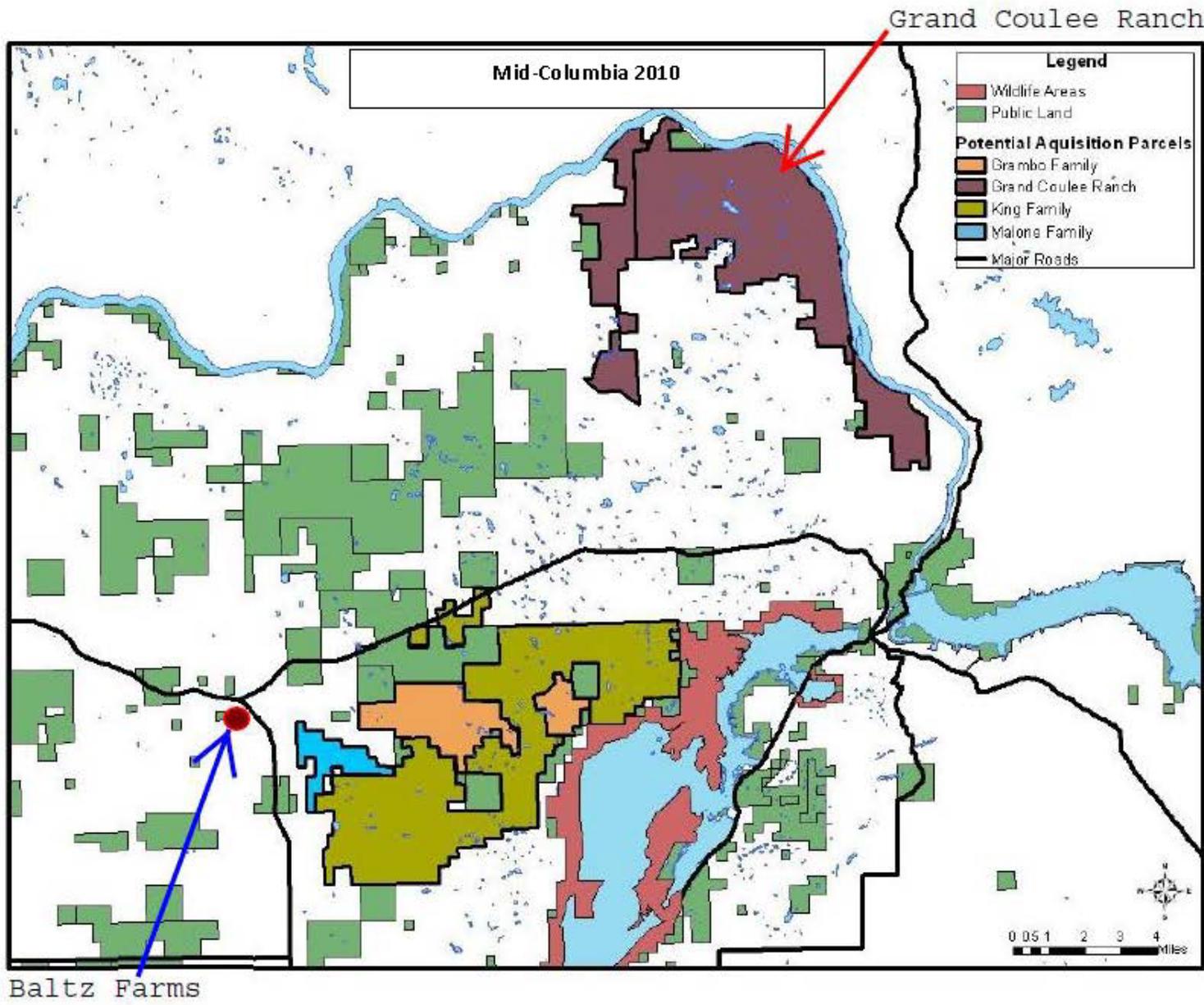
Resolution seconded by: \_\_\_\_\_

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Attachment A: Regional location maps





## Attachment B: Douglas County Commissioner's Letter

KEN STANTON  
1ST DISTRICT  
DALE SNYDER  
2ND DISTRICT  
STEVEN D. JENKINS  
3RD DISTRICT

## DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

September 17, 2013

Mr. Jim Brown  
Regional Director  
WDFW North Central Region  
1550 Alder St. NW  
Ephrata, Wa 98823

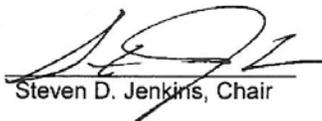
RE: Acquisition of Coulee Ranch LLC

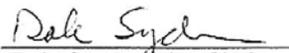
Dear Jim;

Earlier this year we meet on site with WDFW to discuss the acquisition of Coulee Ranch LLC. We are in agreement with the purchase under the proposal that the area 1). continues to be farmed; 2). is open for public use (hunting ect.); and 3). at some point will provide additional access to the river for public use.

This property would greatly enhance WDFW public lands for the people.

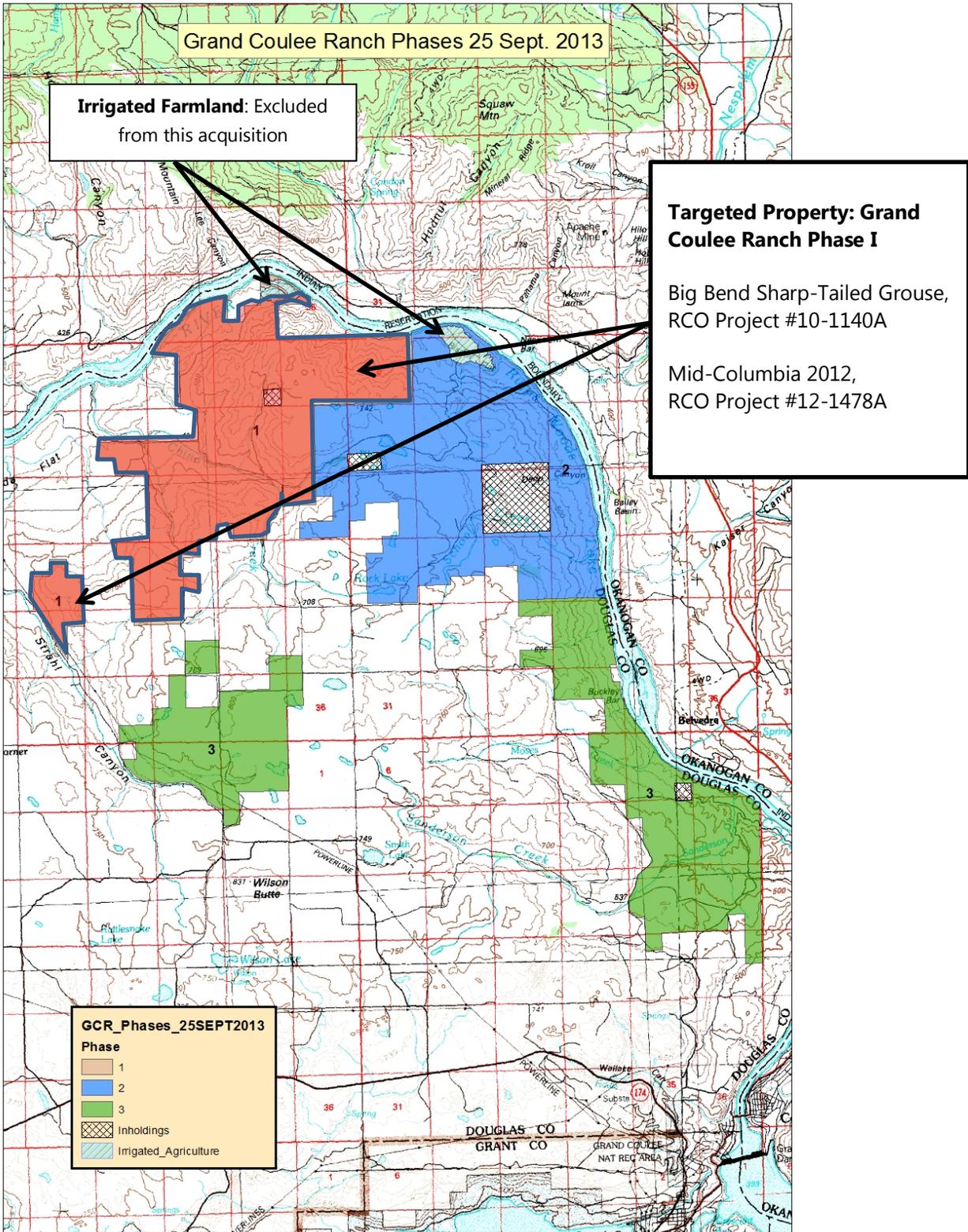
DOUGLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

  
Steven D. Jenkins, Chair

  
Dale Snyder, Vice Chair

  
Ken Stanton, Member

# Attachment C: Grand Coulee Ranch Properties



## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

**Meeting Date:** November 2013

**Title:** Request to Waive Acquisition Policy Regarding Contaminated Properties and Hazardous Substance Certification: Kitsap County, Kitsap Forest and Bay Project - Shoreline Access, Project 12-1143A

**Prepared By:** Adam Cole, Outdoor Grant Manager

**APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM**

### Summary

Kitsap County is asking the board to waive its policy and procedures regarding the purchase of contaminated properties so the Kitsap Forest and Bay Project – Shoreline Access, can proceed. The project is funded through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Water Access category and the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA).

### Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

Request for Decision

Request for Direction

Briefing

Resolution #: 2013-25

Purpose of Resolution: Approve the policy waiver for project 12-1143A.

## Background

In July 2013, Kitsap County received two grants for the Kitsap Forest and Bay Project – Shoreline Access. Following standard practice, these two grants were combined into a single project for ease of administration (RCO #12-1143). The county proposes to use these funds to assist with the purchase of 461 acres of uplands and 74 acres of adjacent tidelands along the west bank of Port Gamble Bay in north Kitsap County (Attachment A). The property, also known as the Shoreline Block, is within Kitsap County's *Forest to Bay* acquisition strategy, which aims to bring nearly 7,000 acres into public ownership for open space, trails, and wildlife habitat.

**Table 1: Project Funding**

Fund Source	Amount
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Water Access category	\$1,250,000
Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)	\$1,000,000
Sponsor Match	\$250,000
<b>RCO Project Total</b>	<b>\$2,500,000</b>

The appraised value of the property is \$4.6 million. Kitsap County is leveraging funds from multiple sources, including the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and local organizations, to complete the purchase.

Currently, Port Gamble Bay has no public shoreline access. The majority of the bay's shoreline is dominated by private or Tribal lands that are either already developed or have a strong likelihood of future development. The land along the western shoreline is particularly vulnerable for future development because it has been subdivided into 20-acre parcels. If even a small number of these properties are developed, the opportunities for trails, public access and wildlife habitat connectivity will be lost.

### **Contamination of the Tideland Portion of the Acquisition Site**

Environmental reports document contamination in the tideland portion of the project site and identify needed remedial actions. The upland portion of the site is not contaminated.

Pope & Talbot (Pope) operated a sawmill on the northern and western most point of the bay from 1853 to 1995. Since 1999, Pope has worked with the Departments of Ecology and Natural Resources to identify chemical and wood waste impacts on the bay from sawmill and log rafting operations. These organizations now are working together to accomplish a hazardous substance cleanup and restoration of Port Gamble Bay.

With regard to the tidelands proposed for acquisition, one small area is affected by relatively low level detection of benthic toxicity (the presence of multiple hazardous substances). All of the tideland areas have low exceedances of carcinogenic polyaromatic hydrocarbons (cPAHs), which is likely due to creosote pilings. The remedy selected for the area of benthic toxicity is placement of a 6-inch layer of sand to enhance the rate of natural recovery. The remedy selected for cleanup of cPAHs in the tidelands is source control (removal of all creosote pilings in the bay) and monitored natural recovery.

By the end of this year, Pope and Ecology are expected to sign a consent decree to fund an agreed upon Cleanup Action Plan (CAP) for the bay, including the area proposed for acquisition in this project. The CAP provides a specific description of the cleanup needed and how it will satisfy the requirements for cleanups conducted under the state's Model Toxics Control Act and the Sediment Management Standards (SMS) administered by Ecology. A full discussion of the history, type of contamination, and remediation is in Attachment B.

### **Board Policy Regarding the Purchase of Contaminated Properties**

*Manual 3, Acquisition Projects*, requires project sponsors to provide an environmental audit and certify that:

1. No hazardous substances were found on the site, or
2. Any hazardous substances found have been treated and/or disposed of in compliance with applicable state and federal laws, and the site deemed "clean."

Further, Manual 3 includes the policies that address the purchase of contaminated properties. The policies state, in part that:

“Purchase of property contaminated with any hazardous substances not meeting standards as determined by the Department of Ecology’s Model Toxics Control Act or the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act is ineligible for RCO grant funding except under the following circumstances:

- The intended future use of the property as proposed in the grant application can proceed and the Department of Ecology or U. S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined that cleanup is complete or no further cleanup action is needed; or
- The intended future use of the property as proposed in the grant application can proceed while cleanup monitoring is ongoing; or
- The property contains contaminated pilings which the project sponsor plans to remove in a future action or in combination with a funded RCO grant.

### Application of Board Policy

The tidelands are part of the Port Gamble Bay and Mill Site, which is currently listed as a known contaminated site on Ecology’s Hazardous Site List. Therefore, Kitsap County cannot certify the project area as “clean.”

Board policy states that properties can be purchased if monitoring, which occurs after cleanup, is ongoing and does not restrict access. In the case of the tidelands, contamination exceeds Ecology’s cleanup standards and cleanup has not been completed. The tideland portion of the project area is ineligible for grant funding, so the greater upland areas are also ineligible in the WWRP – Water Access category because there would be no water access (RCW 79A.15.010).

## Board Decision Requested

Kitsap County is asking the board to waive (1) the policy making the property ineligible and (2) the requirement that it certify that the site is free of hazardous substances. RCO staff has delayed issuing a project agreement pending the board’s decision on this request.

## Analysis

Board policy does not provide guidance on factors to consider for waiving the policies in question, so staff recommends that the board consider the following.

### The scope of the contamination is known

The nature of the contamination is known and cleanup alternatives have been fully evaluated by the sponsor and appropriate state agencies. Port Gamble Bay has undergone an extensive remedial investigation and feasibility study that characterizes the nature and extent of contaminants and their effects on human health and the environment. The feasibility study has

also identified the most appropriate cleanup methods. Ecology is confident in its understanding of the concentration trends seen in sediments in the bay and the low levels present along the western shore. The levels along the western shore pose the least risk within the bay. The primary source believed to be responsible for the low levels of cPAHs on the intertidal area is creosoted pilings. Pilings throughout Port Gamble Bay will be removed as source control efforts, implemented as the first step in the cleanup. The log rafting and related sources of wood waste from sawmill operations (such as burning of wood and bark in the mill's boiler) have been eliminated since 1995. Both cPAHs and benthic toxicity levels are expected to continue to decline.

### **Cleanup methods have been chosen, funded, and a cleanup timeline exists**

Ecology is completing the final steps in requiring the cleanup to be carried out by the responsible party through a signed consent decree. In addition, Ecology's Puget Sound Initiative has funded cleanup and restoration activities in the bay and at the community of Port Gamble. Ecology has detailed the cleanup to be performed in a Cleanup Action Plan and is preparing a final public review before implementing the cleanup plan. The schedule includes final engineering design through 2014 and initiation of a two to three year cleanup period in the summer of 2015, with post-cleanup monitoring to continue for another 5 to 15 years.

### **Public health risk is minimal**

Although the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) in 2002 issued a closure for commercial shellfish harvest for the mill and western shore based on contamination, DOH has since been actively engaged in the ongoing work at Port Gamble Bay and has written a public health assessment that is currently under review by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). Ecology and Kitsap County are optimistic this not-yet-released report will recommend the opening of shellfish harvesting along the western shoreline based on current data. No other prohibitions on public use of the area related to the contamination have been issued by DOH or the Kitsap County Health Department.

### **Strategic Plan Link**

Consideration of this request supports the board's strategies to (1) provide partners with funding to protect, preserve, restore, and enhance habitats; and (2) provide funding to protect, preserve, restore, and enhance recreation opportunities statewide.

## **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the board waive its acquisition policy regarding contaminated properties and the hazardous substances certification policy to allow the acquisition of all proposed parcels currently identified in the project because:

- 1) Extensive environmental investigations and actions have been taken by the responsible parties and authorities,
- 2) A Consent Decree and Cleanup Action Plan are currently out for public comment,

- 3) Cleanup is expected to begin within 18 months, and
- 4) The sponsor expects no interruption of public access throughout the cleanup and monitoring period.

In addition, RCO staff will include the following special condition in the project agreement:

Sponsor has until December 31, 2030 to meet the terms of Section 10, Hazardous Substances of the Standard Terms and Conditions. To be in compliance with Section 10, Kitsap County must provide the RCO with documentation that the cleanup of hazardous substances in the tidelands is complete and that the cleanup achieved a reduction in contamination to meet the Sediment Quality Standard set by the Washington State Department of Ecology.

If this Special Condition is not met, RCO will retroactively deem the whole project property ineligible and the County will need to provide a replacement property consistent with RCO's requirements for remediation of a conversion as stated in Manual #7, Funded Projects.

## **Next Steps**

If approved, RCO staff will issue a project agreement to Kitsap County for the Kitsap Forest and Bay Project – Shoreline Access with special conditions as described above.

## **Attachments**

Resolution 2013-25

- A. Project Property Map
- B. History of Project Site and Contamination
- C. Sediment Management Areas Cleanup Map

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

Resolution #2013-25

Allowing Purchase of Contaminated Properties for Kitsap Forest and Bay Project, Shoreline Access, RCO #12-1143A

**WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) approved a Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Water Access category grant and an Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) grant for Kitsap County to acquire 535 acres for public access and conservation purposes; and

**WHEREAS**, environmental reports document contamination in the tideland portion of the project site that is part of the Port Gamble Bay and Mill Site, which is currently listed as a known contaminated site on Ecology's Hazardous Site List; and

**WHEREAS**, the tidelands are an integral part of the proposed acquisition and establish eligibility for funding through the WWRP Water Access category; and

**WHEREAS**, board policy restricts acquisition of property contaminated with hazardous substances; and

**WHEREAS**, Kitsap County wishes to pursue this property even though it cannot certify that the properties are clean; and

**WHEREAS**, the levels and type of pollution do not disproportionately limit public use and enjoyment of the properties; and

**WHEREAS**, the Washington State Department of Ecology is coordinating a plan for cleanup and for monitoring the recovery efforts; and

**WHEREAS**, Kitsap County is asking the board to waive the policy making the property ineligible and the requirement that it certify that the site is free of hazardous substances; and

**WHEREAS**, approving this request supports the board's strategic goal to provide funding to protect, preserve, restore, and enhance recreation and conservation opportunities statewide,

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the board waives the acquisition policy regarding contaminated properties and the hazardous substances certification policy for the Kitsap Forest and Bay Project - Shoreline Access (RCO #12-1143A); and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the director is authorized to execute the project agreement for implementation of the funded project with the protection of WWRP Water Access and ALEA funds in the form of the special condition referenced in this memorandum.

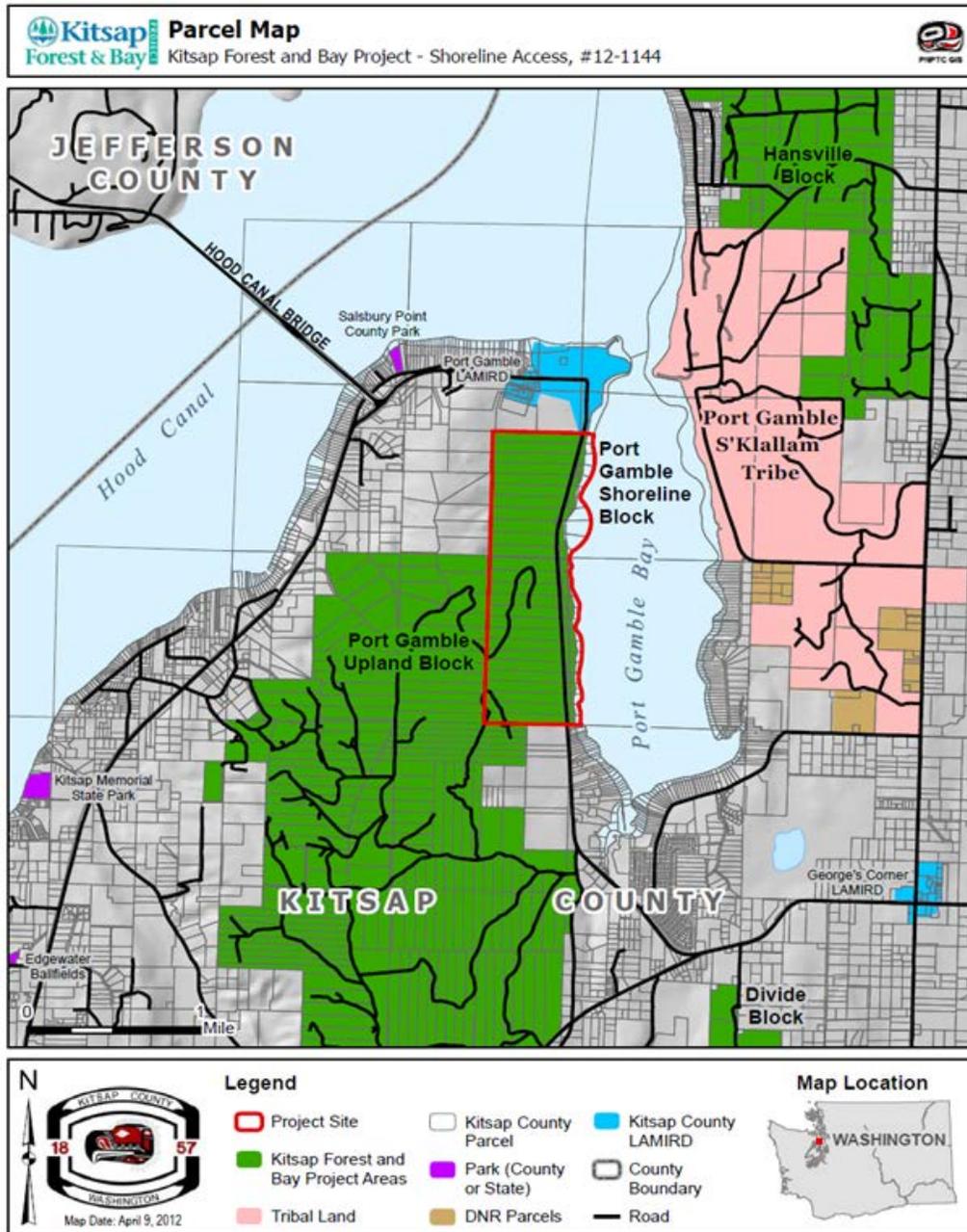
Resolution moved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution seconded by: \_\_\_\_\_

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Attachment A: Project Property Map



**Map Note:** The northern 4 parcels in the Project Site are now excluded from the project scope and will be retained by Pope to support its operations in the Port Gamble LAMIRD (Limited Area of More Intense Rural Development).

## Attachment B: History of Project Site and Contamination

### History of Port Gamble Bay and the Shoreline Block Properties

Port Gamble Bay is located in north Kitsap County and encompasses more than 2 square miles of subtidal and shallow intertidal habitat. Pope & Talbot (Pope) operated a sawmill on the northern and western most point of the bay from 1853 to 1995, with log transfer and rafting activities occurring at various locations around the bay including the tidelands proposed for purchase by Kitsap County.

Today, the uplands along the western shore of the bay are a working forest. Pope allows low impact public recreation, such as hiking, biking, and boating, in the forest and along the shoreline. Recently, Pope subdivided the upland forest and tidelands into 20-acre parcels in anticipation of selling these to private parties.

The bay and surrounding areas support diverse aquatic and upland habitats, as well as resources for fishing, shellfish harvesting, and many other aquatic uses. The area surrounding the bay remains rural in nature. The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribal Reservation is located east of the bay, with extensive use of the bay by the tribe for shellfish harvesting, fishing, and other resources.

Pope (and subsequent subsidiaries), Ecology, and the Department of Natural Resources have conducted environmental investigations in Port Gamble Bay since 1999 to identify chemical and wood waste impacts on the bay from sawmill and log rafting operations. These organizations are now working together, with the help of Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program - Puget Sound Initiative, to accomplish a hazardous substance cleanup and restoration of Port Gamble Bay. By the end of this year, Pope and Ecology are expected to sign a consent decree to fund an agreed upon Cleanup Action Plan (CAP) for the bay. The CAP provides a specific description of the cleanup needed and sets forth functional requirements that the cleanup must meet to satisfy the requirements for cleanups conducted under the Model Toxics Control Act and the Sediment Management Standards (SMS) administered by Ecology.

### Contamination Present In the Bay

The original focus of previous studies was wood waste and toxic effects to bottom dwelling organisms from its breakdown byproducts. Recently, during Ecology's Remedial Investigation, other chemicals of concern to human health were identified. With regard to the tidelands proposed for acquisition, one small area is affected by relatively low level detection of benthic toxicity (the presence of multiple hazardous substances), while all of the tideland areas have low exceedances of carcinogenic polyaromatic hydrocarbons (cPAHs).

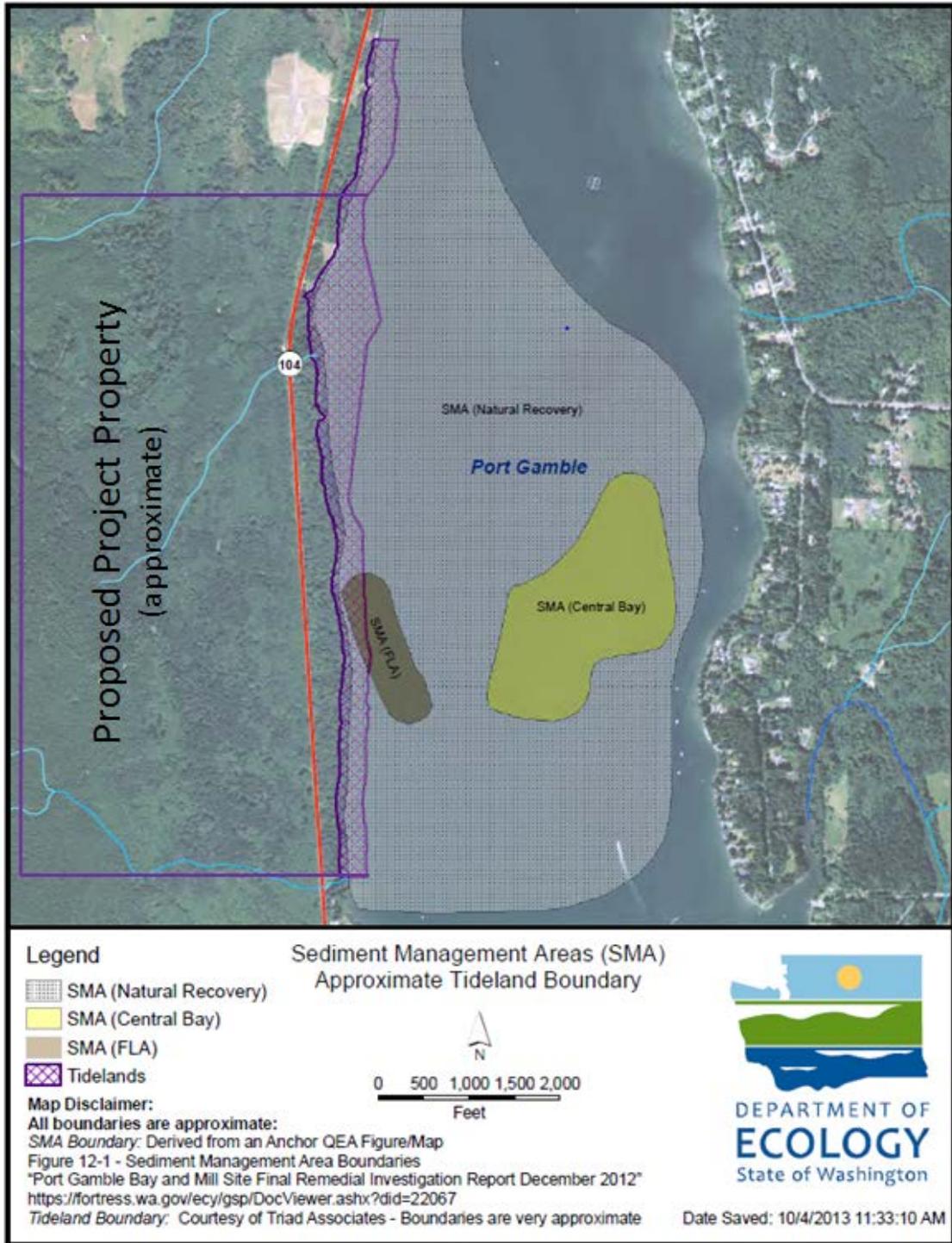
The remedy selected for cleanup of cPAHs in the tidelands is source control (removal of all creosote pilings in the bay) and monitored natural recovery within a Sediment Management Area (SMA) that makes up the majority of Port Gamble Bay (see Attachment B, SMA Natural Recovery). Source control and monitored natural recovery was chosen based on Ecology's

confidence in successful recovery given the physical conditions present throughout the bay and the tidelands in particular.

With regard to the area of benthic toxicity, low levels of these contaminants were found in one area near the tidelands, referred to as the Former Leased Area (FLA), and appears to be driven by the presence of wood waste and its breakdown products (see SMA FLA in Attachment C). The boundary for this cleanup area was established as a 500-foot radius from the "station" where the contamination was discovered, which resulted in an overlap of the SMA FLA into the tidelands Kitsap County plans to acquire. The tidelands itself is unlikely to show the same level of wood waste effects since the higher wave and current energy in the intertidal area tends to scour away fine grained and organic material like wood waste. The remedy selected for the SMA FLA area is placement of a 6-inch layer of sand to enhance the rate of natural recovery. However, this may not be necessary on the tidelands portion of SMA FLA, which may be the focus of additional sampling to fine tune the boundary of this SMA.

The CAP for the entire bay calls for aggressive measures (such as dredging) in the vicinity of the former sawmill site and in the central part of the bay where the highest levels of contamination exist. These areas are not within the tidelands Kitsap County plans to purchase.

# Attachment C: Sediment Management Area Cleanup Map





## Washington State Senate

**Olympia Office:**  
PO Box 40423  
Olympia, WA 98504-0423

**Senator Christine Rolfes**  
23rd Legislative District

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21 October 2013

Recreation and Conservation Office  
Attn: Rebecca Connolly, Board Liaison  
P.O. Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

To the RCO Board:

Kitsap County is asking the board to waive the policy that restricts purchase of contaminated property. The agenda item is titled: Request to Waive Policy: Kitsap County, Kitsap Forest and Bay Project (Shoreline Access), Project 12-1143.

I am writing to support this request for the waiver. This land purchase is overwhelmingly supported by many stakeholders in our community and is a strategically significant conservation project for Kitsap County that will benefit our community for generations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christine Rolfes  
State Senator  
23<sup>rd</sup> Legislative District



RECEIVED

OCT 21 2013

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

October 18, 2013

Bill Chapman, Chair  
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
P.O. Box 40197  
Olympia, WA 98504

Re: Port Gamble Bay Shoreline Acquisition: Proposed waiver of the prohibition against purchasing contaminated lands

Dear Mr. Chapman:

The Kitsap Forest & Bay Coalition is a coalition of over 30 community partners who have united around a once in forever opportunity to conserve Port Gamble Bay and its forested watershed through land acquisition. The Coalition is a collaboration of conservation organizations, recreational groups, local businesses, and economic development institutions that coordinates with local, state, and tribal governments.

In 2012, Coalition members submitted letters to the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) in support of two grants to purchase 535 acres of Port Gamble Bay shoreline. These two grants are the WWRP – Water Access (# 12-1144-KFBP Shoreline Access) and Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (# 12-1143 – KFBP Shoreline). We strongly support the proposed waiver of the RCO prohibition against purchasing contaminated lands in the case of the Port Gamble Bay shoreline. These tidelands will soon be cleaned up under terms of a consent decree between the landowner, Pope Resources, and Washington Department of Ecology. It is critical that the lands be purchased now to ensure the restored shoreline is protected in perpetuity.

Port Gamble Bay is part of an important ecological system that supports species in Hood Canal and Central Puget Sound. The bay serves as a rich and productive nursery for endangered and threatened salmon and critical stocks of forage fish, sustains commercial fisheries, provides significant wintering habitat for ducks and other water birds, and supports the food chain for marine mammals. The forested watershed protects a substantial aquifer recharge area that provides freshwater inputs to the bay.

The lands and waters of Port Gamble Bay provide irreplaceable cultural and subsistence resources vital to the Port Gamble S'Klallam and Suquamish tribes. This spectacular area also is popular with kayakers, birdwatchers, walkers and cyclists of all ages. Preservation of the Port Gamble Bay shoreline and watershed will serve as the backbone of a regional land and water trail system creating recreation opportunities for residents and visitors, and supporting an emerging eco-recreation industry.

Port Gamble Bay Shoreline – Kitsap Forest & Bay Coalition  
October 18, 2013

The Kitsap Forest & Bay Coalition strongly supports the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's approval of the contamination waiver, in light of the pending clean up, to enable protection of the Port Gamble Bay shoreline in perpetuity.

On behalf of the Kitsap Forest & Bay Coalition,



Sandra Staples-Bortner  
Chair, Kitsap Forest & Bay Coalition  
Executive Director, Great Peninsula Conservancy  
3721 Kitsap Way, Suite 5  
Bremerton, WA 98312  
Work #: 360-373-3500  
E-mail: [sandra@greatpeninsula.org](mailto:sandra@greatpeninsula.org)

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

**Meeting Date:** November 2013  
**Title:** Review Draft Policy Changes to the Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program  
**Prepared By:** Leslie Connelly, Policy Specialist

**APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM**

### Summary

This memo presents the draft policy changes to the Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program.

### Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

- Request for Decision
- Request for Direction
- Briefing

### Background

The Firearms Range and Archery Range Recreation (FARR) program provides grants to purchase and develop land, construct or improve shooting range facilities, purchase equipment, address safety or environmental needs, abate noise, and provide liability protection.

### Proposed Changes

The last significant revisions to the FARR program policies were in 1997. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff is proposing six revisions to the FARR program for the 2014 grant applications as identified in Table 1. The proposed changes are presented in detail in Attachment A.

**Table 1**

Policy Topic	Current Policy	Proposed Change(s)	Reason
<b>#1: Implement the board's sustainability policy.</b>	The board's sustainability policy is in the FARR manual, but not reflected in the criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add a question to the project design criteria to address the sustainability policy.</li> <li>• Provide references for sustainability and best management practices at shooting ranges.</li> </ul>	Incorporates existing policy into the evaluation criteria.

Policy Topic	Current Policy	Proposed Change(s)	Reason
<b>#2: New range and course safety policy.</b>	Range and course safety is a priority in the state law <sup>1</sup> , but there is no current standard or guidance for range and course safety in the FARR program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require projects be built to the safety guidelines recommended by the National Rifle Association or other qualified professional.</li> <li>• Require an independent review of the completed project to verify safety guidelines were met.</li> <li>• Make safety evaluation costs eligible for funding.</li> <li>• Include a question on range safety review in the health and safety evaluation criteria.</li> </ul>	Requiring ranges and courses to meet industry standards lowers the risk of potential safety issues at the range or on adjacent properties.
<b>#3: Increase the grant maximum request amount.</b>	The current maximum is \$100,000.	Increase the maximum to \$150,000.	Concentrates funding to the highest ranked projects and acknowledges the higher cost of implementing projects that must comply with proposed additional safety and sustainability policies.
<b>#4: Allow a Do Not Fund Recommendation</b>	There is no policy currently in place.	Provide an option for the advisory committee to recommend not funding a specific project. The board retains its authority to fund or not fund any project.	Allows the advisory committee to raise concerns about projects that it does not believe should receive funding.
<b>#5: Public Notice Requirement</b>	Applicants must conduct a public meeting for any acquisition or significant development project.	In addition to the current policy, project sponsors would notify interested individuals who attended the public meeting about the final project design.	Provides an additional notification opportunity for with parties interested in the design of the proposed facility.
<b>#6: Acquisition Project Compliance</b>	Projects must be used for public outdoor recreation for ten years.	Initiate a WAC change to require acquisition projects to continue to be used for public outdoor recreation for the length or term of the rights acquired.	Perpetual ownership should come with perpetual obligations consistent with other RCO program policies.

<sup>1</sup> RCW 79A.25.130

## Analysis

The proposed changes reflect the opportunity to make a number of policy improvements that support the board's goals to:

- Achieve a high level of accountability in managing the resources and responsibilities entrusted to the board, and
- Deliver successful projects by inviting competition and by using broad public participation and feedback, monitoring, assessment, and adaptive management.

More specifically, the proposed changes will:

- Implement the priority, in state law, to address safety improvements at shooting ranges,
- Implement the board's commitment to sustainability,
- Award more grant funds to the highest-ranked projects,
- Provide transparency to the public on funded projects, and
- Ensure funded fee simple acquisition projects remain dedicated to public outdoor recreation in perpetuity.

## Next Steps

Pending board direction, RCO staff will post the proposed FARR policy changes on its Web site for public review and comment during November and December. Staff will review public comments received, respond to comments, and summarize them for the board's consideration. Staff will prepare final recommendations on policy changes to the FARR program and present them for board consideration in January. Any policy changes approved in January would apply to grants starting in 2014.

## Attachments

- A. Draft FARR policy statements for public review

## Attachment A: Draft FARR Policy Statements for Public Review

### #1 – Implement the Sustainability Policy

The board's sustainability policy is currently referenced in the FARR program manual. The sustainability policy is:

#### Sustainability

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages greater use of sustainable design, practices, and elements in grant-funded projects. To the board, "sustainability" means to help fund a recreation project that minimizes impact to the natural environment while maximizing the project's service life.

Sponsors are encouraged to incorporate sustainable design, practices, and elements into the scope of a project. Examples may include use of recycled materials; native plants in landscaping; pervious surfacing material for pathways, trails, and parking areas; energy efficient fixtures; onsite recycling stations; and composting.

The proposed change is to require applicants to address the sustainability policy in the evaluation criteria. A question would be added to the current evaluation criteria under project design. The proposed change is identified in red below:

#### **Evaluation Criteria #3 - Project Design (development and combination projects only).**

Has this project been designed in a high quality manner?

Does the design agree with generally accepted practices? For example:

- Environment. How are aesthetic, accessibility, and environmental issues addressed? If applicable, how are lead recovery, soil, and water conditions addressed? Does the project design include sustainability features or shooting range best management practices? Sources of information on sustainability related to shooting ranges are:
  - Best Management Practices for Lead at Outdoor Shooting Ranges published by the Environmental Protection Agency, and
  - Environmental Management at Operating Outdoor Small Arms Firing Ranges published by the Interstate Technology and Regulatory Council
- General. If this is a new facility project, is it designed for ease of maintenance and traffic flow, operation of several types of shooting experiences simultaneously, etc.? Are the site's size, location, and topography appropriate?
- Small works. The above considerations may not fully apply to projects composed of one or two small items, such as toilets, fencing, or lighting. In such cases, consider how the items may contribute to the entire facility's general design features.

## #2 - Range and Course Safety

A new policy is proposed to increase accountability regarding range and course safety. The new policy would adopt safety requirements for all projects that develop or improve shooting activities or address noise and safety issues. These types of projects would be required to meet the safety guidance developed by the National Rifle Association. Project sponsors would need to design and build projects to these guidelines and have the project inspected by a third party to verify the guidelines are met. In addition, applicants would address this requirement under the current health and safety evaluation criteria.

The proposed new policy is as follows:

The RCO does not certify ranges or courses as being safe. However, RCO does require range and course facilities funded by the FARR program to be acquired, planned, designed, operated and maintained to contain bullets, shot, arrows or other projectiles within the facility property and to minimize noise impacts to adjacent and nearby properties. Therefore, all funded projects that directly benefit shooting activities or noise and safety abatement projects must be constructed to the current guidance published by the National Rifle Association (NRA)<sup>2</sup>.

To determine whether a project meets the NRA guidance, each project that directly benefits shooting activities or noise and safety abatement projects must be evaluated by a certified NRA advisor, professional engineer or other qualified professional consultant with experience and expertise in the evaluation and design of ranges and courses. Applicants must provide documentation of the project's evaluation by one of the above reviewers prior to receiving reimbursement from RCO. Costs associated with meeting this requirement are eligible administration expenses in the grant.

The proposed changes to the health and safety criteria are identified below in underlined red text.

**Evaluation Criteria #6 - Health and Safety.** How much will this project improve the health and safety qualities of the range property? How does your project address the safety guidelines required in the FARR program?

Neither RCO nor its advisory committee will evaluate the degree to which a range is safe or not. Responses to this question are meant solely to suggest, for discussion purposes, the role of this specific project in improving the health and safety of the facility. That is, does the project add:

- Fencing for buffer or safety purposes?
- Projectile containment structures (walls, roofs, berms)?
- Sound limiting elements?

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<sup>2</sup> The current guide is called The Range Source Book (2012).

- Improved range firing line separations, the communication of cease-fire orders (especially to the visually and hearing impaired), or similar elements?
- Improved safety related health conditions, such as the provision of sanitary facilities or lead containment and abatement?
- Has the project design been reviewed by an independent range safety specialist?  
Are costs associated with an independent range safety evaluation included in the application cost estimate?

### #3 - Grant Limits

The grant limit is proposed to be increased from \$100,000 to \$150,000. This is in response to the increasing cost of projects and the new requirement to comply with the range safety policy and to concentrate funding to the highest ranked projects. .

The proposed change to the grant limit is identified below in underlined red text.

While an applicant may submit more than one application, RCO's contribution to any single project will not exceed ~~\$100,000~~ \$150,000. Each project is limited to a single site.

### #4 - Do Not Fund Recommendation

A new policy is proposed to provide an avenue for the FARR advisory committee to recommend an application not receive grant funds even though it may meet all of the program eligibility requirements. This policy is similar to one already included in the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities grant program. The new proposed policy would allow the advisory committee to make a recommendation to the funding board to not fund a project based upon significant concerns. Applicants would have an opportunity to respond to questions about their proposal prior to the advisory committee making their decision.

The new proposed policy is as follows:

Occasionally during evaluations, the advisory committee may express significant concerns about a project, such that it would like to discuss a "do not fund" recommendation for one or more projects. If this occurs, the advisory committee may discuss their concerns at the post-evaluation meeting that takes place after application scores are tabulated.

If there is a "do not fund recommendation" being considered, RCO will invite the applicant to attend the post-evaluation meeting to respond to questions. To ensure all projects are treated equally, no testimony from applicants or visitors will be taken at the

post-evaluation meeting. The advisory committee will determine a "do not fund recommendation" by a simple majority vote of the committee members present at the post-evaluation meeting.

RCO staff will forward to the board a summary of the "do not fund recommendation" and any committee member comments. The board will consider the advisory committee's recommendation at one of its regularly scheduled public meetings. The board retains discretion in awarding all grant funds.

## **#5 – Public Hearing and Meeting Requirements**

Currently, all applicants that propose an acquisition project or significant development project are required to conduct a public meeting to inform the community of the proposed project. RCO receives a copy of the public meeting announcement, agenda, list of attendees, and summary of the proceedings.

An additional provision is proposed in the public meeting policy that requires applicants that receive a FARR grant to provide a follow-up notice to those persons that attended the public meeting. The notice informs those interested persons that the project is moving forward and shares with them the final project design.

The proposed additional public notice requirement is as follows:

If an applicant's project is selected for funding, the applicant must provide a follow-up public notice to those persons that attended the public meeting to inform them of the project's final design. The follow-up public notice may be sent via regular postal mail or email. A copy of the follow-up public notice must be provided to RCO.

## **#6 – Compliance Period for Land Acquisition Projects**

Currently, all completed FARR projects must remain in place as originally funded for ten years. This proposed revision would require property acquired to remain in public outdoor recreation for the length or term of the rights acquired. For example, fee simple acquisitions acquired in perpetuity would remain in public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity, or a 50-year easement would remain in public outdoor recreation for 50 years until the easement term ends. The proposed change to the compliance period for acquisition projects aligns with other RCO programs. No change is proposed for the compliance period for development projects or lease acquisitions.

The proposed revision requires a change to Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 286-30-030. RCO would pursue this change in 2014. The proposed revisions would amend the WAC as follows:

**WAC 286-30-030**

**Acquisition projects—Deed of right, conversions, leases and easements.**

For acquisition projects, sponsors must execute an instrument or instruments that contain:

- 1) For fee, less-than-fee, and easement acquisition projects:
  - a) A legal description of the property acquired;
  - b) A conveyance to the state of Washington of the right to use the described real property ~~for at least ten years from the date of the committee's final reimbursement~~ for outdoor recreation purposes; and
  - c) A restriction on conversion of use of the land ~~for at least ten years from the date of the committee's final reimbursement~~, with the proviso that should use be discontinued or a noncommittee approved conversion occur, the sponsor shall pay back to the committee the entire grant amount. That is, without prior approval of the committee, a facility acquired with money granted by the committee shall not, ~~within ten years~~, be converted to a use other than that for which funds were originally approved. The committee shall only approve such a conversion under conditions which assure the substitution of other land of at least equal fair market value at the time of conversion, and of as nearly as feasible equivalent usefulness and location.
- 2) For lease acquisition projects, a binding agreement which contains a legal description of the property and rights acquired and which meets the following criteria. The interest:
  - a) Must be for at least ten years from the date of the committee's final reimbursement unless precluded by state law;
  - b) May not be revocable at will;
  - c) Must have a value supported through standard appraisal techniques;
  - d) Must be paid for in lump sum at initiation;
  - e) May not be converted during the lease period, to a use other than that for which funds were originally approved, without prior approval of the committee.

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

**Meeting Date:** November 2013  
**Title:** Changes to the Land and Water Conservation Fund Evaluation Criteria  
**Prepared By:** Leslie Connelly, Policy Specialist

**APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM**

### Summary

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) reviewed draft changes to the Land and Water Conservation Fund program evaluation criteria at its September meeting. In November, staff will review the public comment and ask the board to adopt the criteria for the 2014 grant cycle.

### Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

- Request for Decision
- Request for Direction
- Briefing

Resolution #: 2013-26

Purpose of Resolution: Approve the revised Land and Water Conservation Fund program evaluation criteria.

### Background

The National Park Service (NPS) provides federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant assistance to the states to preserve, develop, and ensure continuous public access to outdoor recreation resources. As part of the process to maintain eligibility, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff proposed changes, based in part on the updated State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, to the criteria used to evaluate applications to the program. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) reviewed the changes at its September meeting and made no changes.

Staff posted the draft criteria (Attachment A) on the Recreation and Conservation Office Web site and notified an interested party list of about 1,250 individuals on October 4, 2013 that there would be a 21-day public comment period ending October 25, 2013.

## **Board Decision Requested**

The board is asked to approve the final Land and Water Conservation Fund program evaluation criteria, beginning with the 2014 grant cycle.

## **Analysis**

### **Public Comment Received**

One comment was submitted from the public. This comment addressed the makeup of the advisory committee. A table of the comment and RCO staff response is in Attachment B.

### **Final Criteria**

Attachment C is the final LWCF evaluation criteria for board consideration. No significant changes were made to the final criteria. Clarifications were made to make the document more understandable based upon feedback from the National Park Service and RCO staff.

### **Strategic Plan Link**

Adopting this revision would continue to ensure that the board awards grants to the best projects as determined by a fair evaluation process, while also promoting the board's goals to be accountable for and efficient with its resources.

## **Next Steps**

If the board adopts the criteria, staff will share the criteria with the National Park Service and publish it for use in the 2014 grant round.

## **Attachments**

Resolution 2013-26

- A. LWCF criteria published for public comment
- B. Comments received and responses
- C. Final LWCF criteria for consideration

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
Resolution #2013-26  
Adopting Evaluation Criteria in the Land and Water Conservation Fund  
Grant Program

**WHEREAS**, National Park Service (NPS) provides federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant assistance to the states to preserve, develop, and ensure continuous public access to outdoor recreation resources; and

**WHEREAS**, as part of the process to maintain eligibility, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff proposed changes to the criteria used to evaluate applications to the program; and

**WHEREAS**, the changes proposed by staff are consistent with the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, which was adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) in June 2013; and

**WHEREAS**, the board reviewed the proposed criteria changes in September 2013 at an open public meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, the RCO published the proposed changes for public comment, thereby supporting the board's goal to ensure programs are managed in a fair and open manner; and

**WHEREAS**, public comment supported the changes to the evaluation instrument; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the board does hereby adopt the revised evaluation criteria for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program as presented at the November 2013 board meeting; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the board directs RCO staff to implement this revision beginning with the 2014 grant cycle.

Resolution moved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution seconded by: \_\_\_\_\_

Adopted/Defeated/Deferred (underline one)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Attachment A: **Proposed** LWCF Evaluation Criteria for Public Comment

*Manual 15, Section 3*

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) establishes priorities for funding outdoor recreation in Washington State. This evaluation instrument incorporates SCORP priorities identified specifically for the Land and Water Conservation Fund program that preserves and develops public outdoor recreation lands for the benefit of all citizens. This priority rating system is part of the LWCF Open Project Selection Process.

<b>LWCF Evaluation Criteria Summary</b>					
<b>Scored by</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Project Type Questions</b>	<b>Maximum Points</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Advisory Committee	1	Need	All projects	15	SCORP
Advisory Committee	2	Need satisfaction and diversity of recreation	All projects	10	SCORP
Advisory Committee	3	Immediacy of threat and viability	Acquisition	10	Board
			Combination	5	
Advisory Committee	4	Project design	Development	10	SCORP
			Combination	5	
Advisory Committee	5	Sustainability and environmental stewardship	All projects	10	SCORP
Advisory Committee	6	Federal grant program goals	All projects	10	National Park Service
Advisory Committee	7	Readiness	All projects	5	Board
Advisory Committee	8	Community support	All projects	5	Board
Advisory Committee	9	Cost efficiencies	All projects	6	Board
RCO Staff	10	Population proximity	All projects	3	State law
RCO Staff	11	Applicant compliance	All projects	0	National Park Service
<b>Total Points Possible</b>				<b>74</b>	

## Evaluation Criteria

### Scored by the Advisory Committee

- 1. Need.** Considering the availability of existing outdoor recreation facilities within the service area, what is the need for new or improved facilities?

Describe your service area, the need for the project and how it relates to the service area, with quantifiable data that supports the following:

- Inventory of existing sites and facilities within the service area
- Amount of use of existing sites and their condition
- Populations or user groups in your service area that have unmet needs
- Changing demographics
- Whether the project is named by location or type as a priority in an adopted plan such as a community's comprehensive plan (level of service), a state agency capital improvement plan, a park or open space plan

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points, which are later multiplied by 3.

- 2. Need Satisfaction and Diversity of Recreation.** To what extent does this project fill the need described in question 1 and provide or contribute to the diversity of outdoor recreation assets within the service area?

Consider the following:

- What will this site provide, in terms of areas, or facilities that are missing from your inventory of assets?
- How will this site serve populations that are not served or are underserved?
- How does this site support activities that are not served or are underserved?
- How does this project help you provide a range of recreational opportunities for a variety of recreational interests?
- How does this project meet the need?

▲ Point Range: 0-5. Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 2.

**3. Immediacy of Threat and Viability (acquisition and combination projects only).**

Why purchase this particular property at this time? How viable are the anticipated future uses and benefits of the site?

Consider the following:

*Threat*

- What is the immediate threat or will the property be available for acquisition at a later time?
- What is the significance of the threat? Is it imminent?
- Why was this property selected over other properties considered?
- Is this a high priority outdoor recreation property that will be lost if funding is not made available?
- What proactive steps have you taken to preserve the opportunity for securing this property until funds become available? Why?

*Viability*

- How does existing or planned land use in the surrounding area affect the viability of the site and the proposed outdoor recreation use?
- How many acres will be added to the outdoor recreation inventory? Is this a new site or expansion of an existing area?
- How suitable is the site for the intended use? Describe the attributes: size, topography, soil conditions, natural amenities, location, utility service, wetlands, legal access, etc.
- Will the site be available immediately for public use or will the site require some improvement to make it available for public use? If improvements are necessary, what is the timeframe for implementing future site improvements?
- Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available for maintenance of the site?

- ▲ Point Range: Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 2 for acquisition projects and 1 for combination projects.

**4. Project Design (development and combination projects only).** Is the project well designed?

Consider the following:

- Does this property support the type of development proposed? Describe the attributes: size, topography, soil conditions, natural amenities, location and access, utility service, wetlands, etc.
- How does the project design make the best use of the site?
- How well does the design provide equal access for all people, including those with disabilities? How does this project exceed current barrier-free requirements?
- Does the nature and condition of existing or planned land use in the surrounding area support the type of development proposed?
- How does the design conform to current permitting requirements, building codes, safety standards, best management practices, etc.? What, if any, are the mitigation requirements for this project?
- Does the design align with the described need?
- Are the access routes (paths, walkways, sidewalks) designed appropriately (width, surfacing) for the use and do they provide connectivity to all site elements?
- For trails, does the design provide adequate separation from roadways, surfacing, width, spatial relationships, grades, curves, switchbacks, road crossings, and trailhead locations?
- Is the cost estimate realistic?

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points, which are later multiplied by 2 for development projects and 1 for combination projects.

**5. Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship.** Will the project result in a quality, sustainable, recreational opportunity while protecting the integrity of the environment?

Factors to consider for acquisition and/or development projects are outlined in this table.

Acquisition	Development
a. Does the acquisition and proposed development preserve the natural function of the site?	a. Does the proposed development protect natural resources onsite and integrate sustainable elements such as low impact development techniques, green infrastructure, or environmentally preferred building products?
b. How do the proposed uses protect, enhance or restore the ecosystem functions of the property?	b. Vegetation/Surfaces - Are you replacing invasive plant species with native vegetation? Are you using pervious surfaces for any of the proposed facilities?
c. Are there invasive species on site? If there are, what is your response plan?	c. Education - Are you installing interpretive panels/signs that educate users about sustainability?
d. What is the strategy or plan for maintenance and stewardship of the site?	d. Materials - What sustainable materials are included in the project?
e. How do the natural characteristics of the site support future planned uses?	e. Energy - What energy efficient features are you adding?
f. Is the proposed acquisition located close to the intended users?	f. What modes of transportation provide access to the site?
g. What modes of transportation provide access to the site?	g. Water - Is the on-site storm water managed by rain gardens, porous paving, or other sustainable features? Does the design exceed permit requirements for storm water management?
h. Does this project protect wetlands or wetland functions? Describe the size, quality and classification.	

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>i. How does the proposed acquisition help create connectivity? How many acres are already protected? How critical is this property to the overall plan?</p>                                      | <p>h. If there are wetlands on site, describe the size, quality and classification and explain how the design considers the wetland functions.</p>                            |
| <p>j. What other noteworthy characteristics demonstrate how the natural features of the site contribute to energy efficiency, less maintenance, fewer environmental impacts, or sustainability?</p> | <p>i. What is the strategy or plan for maintenance and stewardship of the site?</p>   |
|   | <p>j. What other developed features will contribute to increasing energy efficiencies, reducing maintenance, minimizing environmental impacts, or being more sustainable?</p> |

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 2.

**6. Federal grant program goals.** How well does the proposed project meet Department of the Interior and National Park Service goals for grant programs?

The National Park Service is a bureau within the Department of Interior. Both the National Park Service and the Department of Interior develop annual goals for their programs. Applicants and evaluators will be provided with the most recent set of federal goals. Evaluators will be asked to determine the extent to which a proposed project addresses those goals.

For example: if the National Park Service has goals to encourage projects that meet the needs of underserved communities, expand the public recreation estate, or strengthen the health and vitality of the American people, applicants should demonstrate how their projects address these goals locally, regionally, or statewide.

Projects providing opportunities that help meet one or more federal goals should receive higher scores than those projects that do not help meet any of the goals.

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points, which are later multiplied by 2.

**7. Readiness.** Is the proposed project ready to proceed?

National Park Service rules and board policy give preference to proposals where the applicant is ready to start work as soon as a project agreement is signed.

Consider the following:

- Is there a project implementation plan in place?
- What is the proposed timeline for acquisition and/or development?
- Is there known opposition that might delay implementation of the project?

*Development projects*

- Is the design in the conceptual phase or has a master plan been developed?
- Has the master plan been adopted by the governing body?
- What percentage of the design is completed to date?
- What permits are in hand for this project? What permits or clearances are still needed?
- Are the bid documents ready?

*Acquisition projects*

- Was the property purchased under a waiver of retroactivity?
- Is there an option or a first-right of refusal to purchase the property?
- Are required appraisals and reviews completed?
- Is there a willing seller?
- How far along are you in securing the property?

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points.

**8. Community support.** To what extent has the community been provided with an adequate opportunity to become informed about the project and provide input? What is the level of community support for the project?

Examples of community involvement may include public meetings, articles in local papers, newsletters, media coverage, and involvement in a local planning process that includes the specific project.

Examples of community support may include voter approved initiatives, bond issues, or referenda; endorsements or other support from advisory boards and user or "friends" groups; letters of support or petitions; or editorials.

▲ Evaluators score 0-5 points for all projects.

- 9. Cost efficiencies.** To what extent does this project demonstrate efficiencies or a reduction in government costs through documented use of donations or other resources?

Donations – cash, real property, volunteer labor, equipment use, or materials

- What are the donations for this project?
- Who is making the donation?
- What is the value of the donation and how was the value determined?
- Is the donation in hand?
- If the donation is not in hand, do you have a letter of commitment from the donor that specifies what is being donated and when?
- Is the donation necessary for implementation of the project? Are donations included in the project proposal?

Private grants awarded by non-governmental organizations

- Is there a private grant that is being used as match for this project?
- Who awarded the grant?
- What is the grant amount?
- What is the purpose of the grant?
- When will grant funds be available?

Are there other efficiencies for this project that will result in cost savings?

- What is the cost efficiency?
- Who is providing it?
- What's the value?
- When was the commitment made and when does it expire?

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points.

▲ Evaluators may add 1 point to the score assigned above, if an applicant demonstrates cost savings through governmental efficiencies. Matching grants from governmental entities are not eligible for consideration under this factor.

Scored by RCO Staff – Applicants Do Not Answer

**10. Population Proximity.** Is the project in a populated area?

▲ This question is scored based on a map provided by the applicant. To receive a score, the map must show the project location and project boundary in relationship to a city's or town's urban growth boundary.

▲ Point Range: RCO staff awards a maximum of 3 points.

A. The project is in the urban growth area boundary of a city or town with a population of 5,000 or more.

Yes: 1.5 points

No: 0 points

AND

B. The project is in a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile.

Yes: 1.5 points

No: 0 points

The result from "A" is added to the result from "B." Projects in cities with more than 5,000 population *and* within high density counties receive points from both "A" and "B."

**11. Applicant compliance.** Is the sponsor in compliance with its RCO grant agreements?

When scoring this question, staff will consider the applicant's record in all RCO-managed grant programs.

▲ Point Range: -2 to 0

0 points Sponsor has no known compliance issues and no unapproved conversions.

-1 point Sponsor has one or more known compliance issues *including at least one unapproved conversion*, but actively is working to correct the issues.

-2 points Sponsor has one or more known compliance issues *including at least one unapproved conversion*, but is not working actively to correct the issues; or the sponsor has been identified as a high-risk sponsor.

## Attachment B: Draft Land and Water Conservation Fund Criteria Comments Received

Draft Land and Water Conservation Fund Criteria October 2013		
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment	RCO Staff Reply
<b>Advisory Committee Membership</b>	<p>As an ongoing applicant with a history of both successful and unsuccessful grant submittals, I would recommend that the panel of evaluators at the Presentation do not include individuals from "competing" agencies. There is an unneeded potential to negatively impact a project's scores and rankings from comments or scores that are biased through either intentional or even unconscious intentions. Please only have panel members from agencies that do not have grant applications in the same program as those that they are rating.</p> <p>Steve Roemer Parks Development and Operations Manager City of Burien</p>	<p>Make-up of the advisory committee was not proposed for change as part of the revisions to the evaluation criteria.</p> <p>RCO strives to recruit a diverse representation of experts in the subject matter. Sometimes members of the committee represent organizations with application being evaluated. This is due to the board's policy to have the state agencies on the Recreation and Conservation Funding presented on each advisory committee. It can also be a challenge to recruit a minimum number of volunteers that do not have a potential conflict of interest. If an advisory committee member's organization submits an application, the organization must have other staff present the project at the evaluation meeting. Also, the advisory committee member is instructed to score projects with an unbiased perspective.</p>

## Attachment C: **Final** LWCF Evaluation Instrument

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) establishes priorities for funding outdoor recreation in Washington State. This evaluation instrument incorporates SCORP priorities identified specifically for the Land and Water Conservation Fund program that preserves and develops public outdoor recreation lands for the benefit of all citizens. This priority rating system is part of the LWCF Open Project Selection Process.

<b>LWCF Evaluation Criteria Summary</b>					
<b>Scored by</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Project Type Questions</b>	<b>Maximum Points</b>	<b>Supporting Reference</b>
Advisory Committee	1	Need	All projects	15	SCORP
Advisory Committee	2	Need satisfaction and diversity of recreation	All projects	10	SCORP
Advisory Committee	3	Immediacy of threat and viability	Acquisition	10	Board
			Combination	5	
Advisory Committee	4	Project design	Development	10	SCORP
			Combination	5	
Advisory Committee	5	Sustainability and environmental stewardship	All projects	10	SCORP
Advisory Committee	6	Federal grant program goals	All projects	10	National Park Service
Advisory Committee	7	Readiness	All projects	5	Board
Advisory Committee	8	Community support	All projects	5	Board
Advisory Committee	9	Cost efficiencies	All projects	6	Board
RCO Staff	10	Population proximity	All projects	3	State law
RCO Staff	11	Applicant compliance	All projects	0	National Park Service
<b>Total Points Possible</b>				<b>74</b>	

## Evaluation Criteria

### Scored by the Advisory Committee

- 1. Need.** Considering the availability of existing outdoor recreation facilities within the service area, what is the need for new or improved facilities?

Describe your service area, the need for the project and how it relates to the service area, with quantifiable data that supports the following:

- Inventory of existing sites and facilities within the service area
- Amount of use of existing sites and their condition
- Populations or user groups in your service area that have unmet needs
- Changing demographics
- Whether the project is named by location or type as a priority in an adopted plan such as a community's comprehensive plan (level of service), a state agency capital improvement plan, a park or open space plan

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points, which are later multiplied by 3.

- 2. Need Satisfaction and Diversity of Recreation.** To what extent does this project fill the need described in question 1 and provide or contribute to the diversity of outdoor recreation assets within the service area?

Consider the following:

- What will this site provide, in terms of areas, or facilities that are missing from your inventory of assets?
- How will this site serve populations that are not served or are underserved?
- How does this site support activities that are not served or are underserved?
- How does this project help you provide a range of recreational opportunities for a variety of recreational interests?
- How does this project meet the need described in question 1?

▲ Point Range: 0-5. Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 2.

### **3. Immediacy of Threat and Viability (acquisition and combination projects only).**

Why purchase this particular property at this time? How viable are the anticipated future uses and benefits of the site?

Consider the following:

#### *Threat*

- Is there an immediate threat of loss of opportunity or will the property be available for acquisition at a later time?
- What is the significance of the threat whether it is imminent or not?
- Why was this property selected over other properties considered?
- Is this a high priority outdoor recreation property that will be lost if funding is not made available?
- What proactive steps have you taken to preserve the opportunity for securing this property until funds become available? Why?

#### *Viability*

- How does existing or planned land use in the surrounding area affect the viability of the site and the proposed outdoor recreation use?
- How many acres will be added to the outdoor recreation inventory? Is this a new site or expansion of an existing area?
- How suitable is the site for the intended use? Describe the attributes: size, topography, soil conditions, natural amenities, location, utility service, wetlands, legal access, etc.
- Will the site be available immediately for public use or will the site require some improvement to make it available for public use? If improvements are necessary, what is the timeframe for implementing future site improvements?
- Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available for maintenance of the site?

- ▲ Point Range: Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 2 for acquisition projects and 1 for combination projects.

**4. Project Design (development and combination projects only).** Is the project well designed?

Consider the following:

- Does this property support the type of development proposed? Describe the attributes: size, topography, soil conditions, natural amenities, location and access, utility service, wetlands, etc.
- How does the project design make the best use of the site?
- How well does the design provide equal access for all people, including those with disabilities including vision, hearing and mental impairments? How does this project exceed current barrier-free requirements?
- Does the nature and condition of existing or planned land use in the surrounding area support the type of development proposed?
- How does the design conform to current permitting requirements, building codes, safety standards, best management practices, etc.? What, if any, are the mitigation requirements for this project?
- Does the design align with the described need?
- Are the access routes (paths, walkways, sidewalks) designed appropriately (width, surfacing) for the use and do they provide connectivity to all site elements?
- For trails, does the design provide adequate separation from roadways, surfacing, width, spatial relationships, grades, curves, switchbacks, road crossings, and trailhead locations?
- Is the cost estimate realistic?

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points, which are later multiplied by 2 for development projects and 1 for combination projects.

**5. Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship.** Will the project result in a quality, sustainable, recreational opportunity while protecting the integrity of the environment?

Factors to consider for acquisition and/or development projects are outlined in this table.

Acquisition	Development
a. Does the acquisition and proposed development preserve the natural function of the site?	a. Does the proposed development protect natural resources onsite and integrate sustainable elements such as low impact development techniques, green infrastructure, or environmentally preferred building products?
b. How do the proposed uses protect, enhance or restore the ecosystem functions of the property?	b. Vegetation/Surfaces - Are you replacing invasive plant species with native vegetation? Are you using pervious surfaces for any of the proposed facilities?
c. Are there invasive species on site? If there are, what is your response plan?	c. Education - Are you installing interpretive panels/signs that educate users about sustainability?
d. What is the strategy or plan for maintenance and stewardship of the site?	d. Materials - What sustainable materials are included in the project?
e. How do the natural characteristics of the site support future planned uses?	e. Energy - What energy efficient features are you adding?
f. Is the proposed acquisition located close to the intended users?	f. What modes of transportation provide access to the site?
g. What modes of transportation provide access to the site?	g. Water - Is the on-site storm water managed by rain gardens, porous paving, or other sustainable features? Does the design exceed permit requirements for storm water management?
h. Does this project protect wetlands or wetland functions? Describe the size, quality and classification.	

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<p>i. How does the proposed acquisition help create connectivity? How many acres are already protected? How critical is this property to the overall plan?</p>	<p>h. If there are wetlands on site, describe the size, quality and classification and explain how the design considers the wetland functions.</p>
<p>j. What other noteworthy characteristics demonstrate how the natural features of the site contribute to energy efficiency, less maintenance, fewer environmental impacts, or sustainability?</p>	<p>i. What is the strategy or plan for long-term maintenance and stewardship of the site?</p>
	<p>j. What other developed features will contribute to increasing energy efficiencies, reducing maintenance, minimizing environmental impacts, or being more sustainable?</p>

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▲ Point Range: Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 2.

**6. Federal grant program goals.** How well does the proposed project meet Department of the Interior and National Park Service goals for grant programs?

The National Park Service is a bureau within the Department of Interior. Both the National Park Service and the Department of Interior develop goals for their programs. Applicants and evaluators will be provided with the most recent set of federal goals. Evaluators will be asked to determine the extent to which a proposed project addresses those goals.

For example: if the National Park Service has goals to encourage projects that meet the needs of underserved communities, expand the public recreation estate, or strengthen the health and vitality of the American people, applicants should demonstrate how their projects address these goals locally, regionally, or statewide.

Projects providing opportunities that help meet one or more federal goals should receive higher scores than those projects that do not help meet any of the goals.

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**7. Readiness.** Is the proposed project ready to proceed?

National Park Service rules and board policy give preference to proposals where the applicant is ready to start work as soon as a project agreement is signed.

Consider the following:

- Is there a project implementation plan in place?
- What is the proposed timeline for acquisition and/or development?
- Is there known opposition that might delay implementation of the project?

*Development projects*

- Is the design in the conceptual phase or has a master plan been developed?
- Has the master plan been adopted by the governing body?
- What percentage of the design is completed to date?
- What permits are in hand for this project? What permits or clearances are still needed?
- Are the bid documents ready?

*Acquisition projects*

- Was the property purchased under a waiver of retroactivity?
- Is there an option or a first-right of refusal to purchase the property?
- Are required appraisals and reviews completed?

- Is there a willing seller?
- How far along are you in securing the property?

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points.

**8. Community support.** To what extent has the community been provided with an adequate opportunity to become informed about the project and provide input? What is the level of community support for the project?

Examples of community involvement may include public meetings, articles in local papers, newsletters, media coverage, and involvement in a local planning process that includes the specific project.

Examples of community support may include voter approved initiatives, bond issues, or referenda; endorsements or other support from advisory boards and user or "friends" groups; letters of support or petitions; or editorials.

▲ Evaluators score 0-5 points for all projects.

**9. Cost efficiencies.** To what extent does this project demonstrate efficiencies or a reduction in government costs through documented use of donations or other resources?

Donations – cash, real property, volunteer labor, equipment use, or materials

- What are the donations for this project?
- Who is making the donation?
- What is the value of the donation and how was the value determined?
- Is the donation in hand?
- If the donation is not in hand, do you have a letter of commitment from the donor that specifies what is being donated and when?
- Is the donation necessary for implementation of the project? Are donations included in the project proposal?

Private grants awarded by non-governmental organizations

- Is there a private grant that is being used as match for this project?
- Who awarded the grant?
- What is the grant amount?
- What is the purpose of the grant?
- When will grant funds be available?

Are there other efficiencies for this project that will result in cost savings?

- What is the cost efficiency?
- Who is providing it?
- What's the value?
- When was the commitment made and when does it expire?

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points.

▲ Evaluators may add 1 point to the score assigned above, if an applicant demonstrates cost savings through donations and private grants. Matching grants from governmental entities are not eligible for consideration under this factor.

### Scored by RCO Staff – Applicants Do Not Answer

**10. Population Proximity.** Is the project in a populated area?

▲ This question is scored based on a map provided by the applicant. To receive a score, the map must show the project location and project boundary in relationship to a city's or town's urban growth boundary.

▲ Point Range: RCO staff awards a maximum of 3 points.

A. The project is in the urban growth area boundary of a city or town with a population of 5,000 or more.

Yes: 1.5 points

No: 0 points

AND

A. The project is in a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile.

Yes: 1.5 points

No: 0 points

The result from "A" is added to the result from "B." Projects in cities with more than 5,000 population *and* within high density counties receive points from both "A" and "B."

**11. Applicant compliance.** Is the sponsor in compliance with its RCO grant agreements?

When scoring this question, staff will consider the applicant's record in all RCO-managed grant programs.

▲ Point Range: -2 to 0

- 0 points      Sponsor has no known compliance issues and no unapproved conversions.
- 1 point      Sponsor has one or more known compliance issues *including at least one unapproved conversion*, but actively is working to correct the issues.
- 2 points      Sponsor has one or more known compliance issues *including at least one unapproved conversion*, but is not working actively to correct the issues; or the sponsor has been identified as a high-risk sponsor.

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

**Meeting Date:** November 2013  
**Title:** Review of the *Washington State Trails Plan*  
**Prepared By:** Sarah Gage, Management Analyst

**APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM**

### Summary

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) has been working with a consultant to complete the *Washington State Trails Plan*. The draft plan was published for comment in September following the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board meeting. This memo provides an update on the comments received, changes made to the plan recommendations, and an overview of the next steps.

### Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Direction
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Briefing

### Background

State law<sup>1</sup> requires the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to prepare a state trails plan as part of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

In January 2013, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) adopted a list of policy priorities for 2013 that included an update to the trails plan. At the September 2013 meeting, staff presented draft recommendations for the board's review.

Board members asked that the recommendations be revised, making them more specific and actionable for the board. Staff revised the statewide recommendations as shown in Table 1 for inclusion in the plan. In addition, the plan now incorporates an implementation program that is specific to the board (Table 2).

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<sup>1</sup> RCW 79A.35.040

**Table 1: Statewide Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation as Presented in September</b>	<b>Proposed Revision: Statewide Recommendations</b>
1. Develop a clearinghouse that includes a trails inventory and information regarding federal, state, and local trails.	Develop a Web site that includes a trails inventory and provides links to other information about federal, state, and local trails.
2. Improve data gathering among land managers to better understand trail use, users, and modes.	Improve data gathering among land managers to better understand trail use, users, and modes.
3. Support stakeholder efforts to find increased and/or sustainable revenue sources.	Support efforts to find increased and/or sustainable revenue sources.
4. Support the development of a Trails Leadership Council.	Support the development of a trails leadership council or other coordinating forum for trails
5. Address trail maintenance by encouraging low-maintenance designs and, where appropriate, providing focused grant funding <sup>2</sup> .	Focus on the maintenance of existing trails as a priority.
6. Encourage and support programs and initiatives focused on user conflict management.	Encourage and support programs and initiatives focused on user conflict management.

These six recommendations are considered statewide priorities for the next five years and are necessary for supporting the other recommendations developed in the plan. Some recommendations apply to a range of trails service providers including state and federal agencies, local jurisdictions, and non-profit organizations.

### **Board Implementation Program**

As a major statewide funding partner for trails, the board and RCO can implement to the statewide trails plan recommendations by implementing the following action items.

**Table 2: Board Implementation Summary**

<b>Proposed Statewide Recommendations</b>	<b>Proposed Board/Agency Action</b>
1. Develop a Web site that includes a trails inventory and provides links to other information about federal, state, and local trails.	Develop a Web page that is a clearinghouse for trails information.
2. Improve data gathering among land managers to better understand trail use, users, and modes.	Provide incentives, within existing resources, for grant applicants to submit consistent trail data.
3. Support efforts to find increased and/or sustainable revenue sources.	This is outside the board's scope as a state funding agency.

<sup>2</sup> The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Trails Category does not include maintenance as an eligible activity, while other programs, such as the Recreational Trails Program and Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Program do fund maintenance activities.

Proposed Statewide Recommendations	Proposed Board/Agency Action
4. Support the development of a trails leadership council or other coordinating forum for trails	Encourage and assist, within existing resources, with the coordination of a statewide trails coordinating organization.
5. Focus on the maintenance of existing trails as a priority.	1. Support funding for maintenance of trails.  2. Prioritize funding for trail uses identified as "in demand" in this trail plan and develop a system of state recreation trails.
6. Encourage and support programs and initiatives focused on user conflict management.	This is outside the board's scope as a state funding agency.

**Board/RCO Action #1: Develop a Web page that is a clearinghouse for trails information.**

RCO will develop a Web page dedicated to sharing information about trails throughout the state.

**Board/RCO Action #2: Provide incentives, within existing resources, for grant applicants to submit trail data in consistent ways.**

RCO will revise its program policies to incentivize a consistent method for reporting trails use and need. The incentives will not be financial and must be within the existing funding resources. The use of this information would be to help prioritize funding investments.

**Board/RCO Action #3: Encourage and assist, within existing resources, with the coordination of a statewide trails coordinating organization.**

RCO will, within existing staff and funding resources, provide staff support to assist with and coordinate a statewide trails organization. While RCO staff resources are limited and the agency cannot take an advocacy role, it may provide limited support to an organization that is working towards implementing this plan's recommendations on a statewide level.

**Board/RCO Action #4: Support funding for maintenance of trails.**

Two of RCO's grant programs allow for maintenance of trails as a grant project (Nonhighway Off-road Vehicle Activities program and Recreational Trails Program). In response to statewide recommendation #5, RCO will review funding patterns to determine whether the agency is adequately supporting maintenance of trails.

As part of this review, RCO is recommending incorporating the board's sustainability policy recommendations into its trails program priorities and adjust the evaluation criteria to incentivize sustainable design and maintenance goals. This is discussed in Item 10.

## **Board/RCO Action #5: Prioritize funding for trail uses identified as “in demand” in this trail plan and evaluate whether to develop and designate a system of state recreation trails as referenced in RCW 79A.35.**

In response to the public survey on supply and demand for trails, RCO will review grant award results to determine whether the agency is adequately supporting the types of trails identified as in demand. These are:

- Hiking, walking, and biking trails
- Urban- and suburban-located trails
- Trail access for traditionally underserved groups, including people with disabilities, people representing a variety of age groups, and minority populations.

In addition, RCO will evaluate whether to develop and designate a system of state recreation trails as referenced in RCW 79A.35 and whether trails so designated should receive preference in grant funding. As part of this evaluation, the RCO will consider the feasibility of developing:

- A method for establishing a system of recreation trails,
- A process to propose trails into the system,
- An inventory of existing trails and potential trail routes for designation as state recreation trails, and
- Adjustments to program funding priorities to increase access to the statewide system of trails.

### **Public Comment Process**

Staff posted the revised plan (Attachment A) on the RCO Web site and notified an interested party list of about 2,400 individuals on October 4, 2013. The three-week public comment period ended on October 25, 2013.

### **Public Comment Received**

The RCO received twelve responses to the request for comment on the draft Washington State Trails Plan (Attachment B).

- Four comments supported the overall plan.
- Four comments addressed how best to balance the need for both maintenance of existing trails and development of new trails.
- Three comments supported increased access to trails, especially to address unmet need or to provide access to public resources through private lands.
- Two comments suggested prioritizing soft-surface trails and making changes to the WWRP criteria.

## Next Steps

At the January 2014 meeting, the board will be asked to approve the *Washington State Trails Plan*.

## Attachments

- A. Revised trails plan
- B. Public comment received



WASHINGTON STATE  
Recreation and  
Conservation Office

## **2013-2018 WASHINGTON STATE TRAILS PLAN**

**DRAFT**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the residents and recreationists of Washington for their contributions to this planning effort, including their involvement in Town Hall on-line discussions, the Advisory Group, and the general population survey. We also thank the recreation providers who participated in their own survey.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### PURPOSE AND SCOPE

State law (RCW 79A.35.040) requires the RCO director to prepare a state trails plan as part of the statewide outdoor recreation planning process. The plan is to help provide for the ever increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding resident and tourist population and to enable and encourage the public to engage in outdoor recreation activities.

The *2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan* meets the requirements of state law and is designed to provide a timely and much-needed update to the previous plan adopted in 1991. This plan offers strategic direction for establishing a system of state recreation trails in Washington State for the next 5 years. This plan is a separate but complementary plan designed to support the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) adopted in 2013 by providing specific guidance on trails route planning, designation and coordination.

To this end, this planning process aims to achieve the following goals:

1. Measure the extent to which problems pointed out in the previous (1991) plan have been addressed.
2. Identify key issues and opportunities for meeting public demand for trails over the next 5 years.
3. Identify public needs and priorities for trail use.
4. Develop a compendium of current research on trails use, trends and public input.
5. Provide a framework for synchronizing the trails plan with the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).
6. Provide a coordinated inventory of regional trails and planned trail routes.

Aligned with the overall goals of SCORP planning, the *2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan* acknowledges stakeholder priorities and makes recommendations that will, among other things, help guide state funding decisions for trails in Washington over the next 5 years.

### METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The methodology used to develop this *Trails Plan* was designed to ensure public participation in the planning process, to evaluate supply and demand, to identify key issues, and to assess public priorities and needs regarding trails in Washington.

A 40-member, broadly representative Trails Advisory Committee provided qualitative input by responding to three rounds of questions through an Internet discussion forum and participated in two web-based surveys.

More than 160 people provided over 297 comments on a public blog Web site known as the "Trails Town Hall." They discussed issues related to trails and the Nonhighway Road and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Program.

Research for this plan also included a detailed analysis of data obtained for the SCORP: two web-based surveys of outdoor recreation providers, a large-scale scientific survey of Washington residents, and a literature review.

## IMPORTANCE OF TRAILS

The opportunity to use trails is an integral part of life in Washington State. Washington's trails are an important asset that enables people access to the natural world for recreation, inspiration, and education. Trails provide many important benefits, including outdoor recreation, health and fitness, preservation of resources and open spaces, environmental value, educational value, economic value, and corridors for people and wildlife. Trails have a significant impact on quality-of-life in Washington.

As one of Washington's valuable resources, it is important that trails are managed to support the demands and priorities of residents as well as natural, cultural, historical, and recreational values.

## SUPPLY OF AND DEMAND FOR TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

Trail opportunities in Washington are in great demand. In fact, 72% of Washington State residents participate in outdoor activities that take place on or involve trails. Data in the SCORP was analyzed to determine participation in trails activities specifically, and showed 36 activities, grouped into 11 activity categories. This data shows that:

- 51% of Washington residents participate in hiking involving trails
- 40% participate in walking involving trails
- 24% participate in bicycle riding involving trails
- 17% participate in jogging or running involving trails
- 10% participate in off-roading involving trails
- 8% participate in camping or backpacking in a primitive location involving trails
- 7% participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing involving trails
- 4% participate in horseback riding involving trails
- 3% participate in snowmobiling or ATVing in the snow involving trails
- 2% participate in skating or skateboarding involving trails

Additionally, 12% of Washington residents participate in canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or other manual craft boating activities involving *water trails*.

To determine if supply is meeting demand, outdoor recreation providers were asked to estimate the percent of demand being met by outdoor recreation opportunities in the state. Providers ranked trail opportunities or activities low in terms of the percent of demand being met. Nearly all the trail opportunities or activities ranked lower than the other activities in the SCORP, with all trail opportunities landing in the bottom 10%. Among the lowest ranked opportunities meeting demand overall (and specifically pertaining to trails) are designated snow and ice trails, designated motorized trails, and designated bridle trails.

## TRAIL ISSUES

The Trails Advisory Committee was asked to prioritize 87 problem statements related to 15 trails issue categories. This survey yielded a list of the top 20 problems related to trails (Table 1).

**Table 1. Top 20 Trail Problems for All Issue Categories Combined.**

Rank	Issue Category	Trail Problems (All scores were ranked by percent with 100% being the highest priority)	Mean <sup>1</sup>	Score <sup>2</sup>
1	Capacity	Existing trails are not being maintained, and many are being destroyed from overuse or improper use.	81.14	2,029
2	Multiple-Use Trails	Users often lack education on what is expected and what is permitted on multiple-use trails.	81.00	2,025
3	Maintenance	There is a general lack of funding for maintenance materials and staffing.	80.00	2,000
4	Water Trails	There is not a one-stop source for maps, amenities, campsites, topography, and other information on water trails and access sites.	77.33	1,933
5	Maintenance	Federal and state managers have extensive backlogs of trail maintenance needs.	76.00	1,900
6	Long Distance Trails and Trail Networks	Long distance trails are needed to link existing trails in the state's trails network.	75.00	1,875
7	Access	Trail closures and lack of maintenance have limited access to trails.	72.00	1,800
7	Multiple Use Land Management	Needs of natural resources, such as wildlife and wetlands, are sometimes perceived as excluding trails.	72.00	1,800
7	Private Lands and Private Concerns	Liability issues and concerns have caused private landowners, including timber companies and other large landowners, to close their lands to the public.	72.00	1,800
7	Water Trails	Self-guided routes lack facilities, including havens.	72.00	1,800
7	Urban Trails	Transportation issues are not sufficiently	72.00	1,800

<sup>1</sup> The mean shows where each problem would rank on average.

<sup>2</sup> The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. For the comparison of all problems, the score is the sum of the points given to each problem. The points were weighted to ensure uniformity among all the issue categories. For example, some issue categories only had 3 problems, whereas others had 11. The issue categories were weighted to match the category with the most problems in it to provide a comparison among all the problems presented in the survey

Rank	Issue Category	Trail Problems (All scores were ranked by percent with 100% being the highest priority)	Mean <sup>1</sup>	Score <sup>2</sup>
		considered in trails development in urban areas, resulting in gaps between trails and mass transportation that could link safe routes to school, work, recreation areas, etc.		
12	Volunteers	Managers sometimes lack skills, expertise, or resources to take advantage of volunteer resources.	70.00	1,750
13	Urban Trails	Urban trails sometimes lack linkages with the urban core, cultural and historical landmarks, and public transportation conveniences.	69.33	1,733
14	Trail Safety	There are concerns about the safety of some urban trails, including such concerns as security, safe parking, and minimizing criminal activity.	68.80	1,720
15	Volunteers	Volunteers lack awareness and information on volunteer opportunities, including whom to contact and how to get involved.	68.67	1,717
16	Use Compatibility	There are conflicts between different modes of recreation (e.g., equestrians and mountain bikers, hikers, and motorcyclists).	68.57	1,714
17	Communication	Real-time, easily accessible trails data, including maps, information on trails conditions, and trail closures, are limited.	68.00	1,700
17	Economics and Funding	There are many other needs (e.g., education, criminal justice) competing for government funding, making it difficult to prioritize trails funding.	68.00	1,700
17	Trail Safety	There are increasing concerns regarding parking lot safety and security.	68.00	1,700
20	Capacity	Growing populations and user demands are increasing pressure on all trail systems.	66.86	1,671

## FINDINGS & RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 5 outlines key recommendations supported by the findings of the research. The sources of these recommendations come from the compilation of research conducted for the SCORP, online discussions with the Trails Advisory Committee and NOVA Advisory Group, the two web-based surveys of the Trails Advisory Committee, the Trails Town Hall, and discussions with the RCO.

The six recommendations that follow are considered statewide priorities for the next 5 years and are necessary for supporting the other recommendations developed in this plan. Some

recommendations apply to a range of trails service providers including state and federal agencies, local jurisdictions, and non-profit organizations.

See Chapter 5 for a complete listing of specific recommendations for each of the 15 trails issue categories.

**STATEWIDE RECOMMENDATION #1: Develop a Web site that includes a trails inventory and provides links to other information about federal, state, and local trails.**

The public is seeking a comprehensive and coordinated resource for information about trails. One approach is to develop a Web site that provides information regarding trails, trail locations, trail conditions, trail use, trail amenities, wildlife expectations, and many other information elements. Such a Web site would require coordination among state, federal, local jurisdictions, and non-profit trail providers.

The public noted that such a resource would not be a replacement for on-the-ground signage and trailhead information, nor would it be a replacement for real-time weather or trail conditions. Real-time trail users find these signs and information invaluable. While respondents clearly see a need for a central online source for trails information, both the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall contributors emphasized the importance of informative signage on trails and at trailheads.

**STATEWIDE RECOMMENDATION #2: Improve data gathering among land managers to better understand trail use, users, and modes.**

Town Hall contributors indicated that land managers lack data to make informed decisions about trail capacity, funding, and resources. These contributors supported making trails development decisions based on real data. Currently, comprehensive measures of trail use do not exist, nor is data collected in consistent ways.

**STATEWIDE RECOMMENDATION #3: Support efforts to find increased and/or sustainable revenue sources.**

Among both the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall contributors, funding was a top issue of concern. Many comments called for dedicated funding for trails, rather than reliance on grant funding, especially in light of the many priorities competing for limited funds.

Many felt that user groups, nonprofits, and others need to unite and present data-driven justification for a dedicated funding source for trails development, maintenance, and operations.

**STATEWIDE RECOMMENDATION #4: Support the development of a trails leadership council or other coordinating forum for trails.**

Both the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall contributors emphasized the need to bring user groups together toward common goals. To this end, they suggested the development

of a leadership council for trails. Many thought that by uniting toward common aims of improving, maintaining, and increasing trails throughout the state, user groups could foster more cooperation and collaboration.

Such a leadership council could unite trail users around common objectives, and assist with planning, policy recommendations, and funding priorities. A leadership group could provide two immediate benefits: 1) foster better relationships among user groups, and 2) develop a united constituency for trail issues.

**STATEWIDE RECOMMENDATION #5: Focus on the maintenance of existing trails as a priority.**

Trail maintenance clearly emerged as a key issue among the public. In general, both the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall contributors agree that the use of existing trails should be maximized before focusing on the development of new trails. While stakeholders recognized that new trails may have to be developed to meet capacity demands, they were primarily concerned with ensuring that existing trails not fall into disrepair and become unusable.

These contributors agreed that trail planning should consider maintenance and be proactive rather than reactive. Any new trails development should anticipate trail usage and subsequent maintenance requirements, building into its goals and objectives a method or plan for handling maintenance issues.

**STATEWIDE RECOMMENDATION #6: Encourage and support programs and initiatives focused on user conflict management.**

In the recently conducted SCORP survey, residents and user groups expressed concerns that opportunity for trail activities is unequally distributed among user groups, creating a sense of competition for access and resources. Still, while acknowledging these tensions, commenters called for cooperation and collaboration among user groups. The findings show that the public recognizes more can be gained by trails users working together.

Land managers recognize managing user conflicts is a priority due to the increased diversity of trail recreation activities combined with a limited supply of trails. They want to address user conflicts in order to improve user safety, protect natural resources, minimize crowding, and address threats to quality trails experiences.

Respondents from user groups recognize their own accountability and obligations to help manage user conflicts. They would like help facilitating and supporting user group efforts to manage or minimize user conflicts.

## **RCO ACTIONS**

As a major statewide funding partner for trails, the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) will strive to implement the following action items in response to the statewide trails plan recommendations. Note that statewide recommendations #3 and #6 are outside RCO's scope as a state funding agency and therefore do not apply directly to its core work.

### **RCO ACTION #1: Develop a Web page that is a clearinghouse for trails information.**

In response to statewide recommendation #1, RCO will develop a Web page dedicated to sharing information about trails throughout the state.

Ideas for the Web page include:

- A clearinghouse for trails-related information such as this plan, other state trails plans, and other planning information at the federal, state, or local level as provided by other parties.
- An inventory of regional trails, along with gaps or missing links in those regional trail systems. The inventory would include linked information on each regional trail with information and maps.
- Links to other sources of information about trails from federal, state agencies and local agencies and nonprofit organizations. These links would be a collection of resources where trail users find tools developed by others to plan their trail experiences.

### **RCO ACTION #2: Provide incentives, within existing resources, for grant applicants to submit trail data in consistent ways.**

While RCO grant programs require applicants to address trails use and need as part of the evaluation process, there is no standardized format of how trails data is collected. Some applicants have specific data on trails use and need while others have a general sense of need.

In response to statewide recommendation #2, RCO will revise its program policies to incentivize a consistent method for reporting trails use and need. The incentives will not be financial and must be within the existing funding resources. The use of this information would be to help prioritize funding investments.

### **RCO ACTION #3: Encourage and assist, within existing resources, with the coordination of statewide trails coordinating organization.**

In response to statewide recommendation #4, RCO will, within existing staff and funding resources, provide staff support to assist with and coordinate a statewide trails organization. While RCO staff resources are limited and the agency cannot take an advocacy role, it may provide limited support to an organization that is working towards implementing this plan's recommendations on a statewide level.

**RCO ACTION #4: Support funding for maintenance of trails.**

Two of RCO's grant programs allow for maintenance of trails as a grant project (Nonhighway Off-road Vehicle Activities program and Recreational Trails Program). In response to statewide recommendation #5, RCO will review funding patterns to determine whether the agency is adequately supporting maintenance of trails.

As part of this review, RCO is recommending incorporating the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's sustainability policy recommendations into its trails program priorities and adjust the evaluation criteria to incentivize sustainable design and maintenance goals.

**RCO ACTION #5: Prioritize funding for trail uses identified as being "in demand" in this trail plan and evaluate whether to develop and designate a system of state recreation trails as referenced in RCW 79A.35.**

In response to the public survey on supply and demand for trails, RCO will review grant award results to determine whether the agency is adequately supporting the types of trails identified as in demand. These are:

- Hiking, walking, biking
- Urban and suburban locations
- Access for traditionally underserved groups, including people with disabilities; people representing a variety of age groups, and minority populations.

In addition, RCO will evaluate whether to develop and designate a system of state recreation trails as referenced in RCW 79A.35 and whether trails so designated should receive preference in grant funding. As part of this evaluation, the RCO will consider the feasibility of developing:

- A method for establishing a state system of recreation trails,
- A process to propose trails into the system,
- An inventory of existing trails and potential trail routes for designation as state recreation trails, and
- Adjustments to program funding priorities to increase access to the statewide system of trails.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
History of Trails Plans and Planning.....	1
Local and Regional .....	1
State.....	1
Federal .....	2
Purpose of the <i>2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan</i> .....	3
Overview of Methodology.....	4
Public Participation.....	4
Evaluating Supply and Demand for Trails.....	5
Identifying Key Issues Regarding Trails.....	5
Defining Trails.....	6
Importance of Trails in Washington .....	13
Diverse Outdoor Recreation Opportunities .....	13
Health and Fitness .....	13
Preservation of Resources and Open Spaces .....	13
Environmental Value.....	14
Educational Value.....	14
Economic Value.....	14
Corridors for People and Wildlife.....	15
Chapter 2: Assessment of Supply of and Demand for Trails in Washington.....	16
Supply of Trail Opportunities.....	16
Trails and Land Management .....	16
Demand for Trail Opportunities .....	17
Understanding the Regional and Demographic Characteristics That Impact Demand.....	21
Regional Breakdown of Trail Users Overall.....	21
Demographic Breakdown of Trail Users Overall.....	22
Trail Users Overall by Gender.....	24
Trail Users Overall by Age.....	25
Trail Users Overall by Education Level .....	26
Trail Users Overall by Household Income Level.....	27
Trail Users Overall by Residence Type.....	28
Trail Users Overall by Rent/Ownership of Residence.....	29
Trail Users Overall by Disability Status.....	30
Summary of Demographics of Trail Users.....	31
Latent Demand for Activities Involving Trails .....	31
Trends in Demand for Trail Opportunities.....	34
The Ability of Supply to Meet Public Demand.....	35
Chapter 3: Progress Since 1991 .....	37
Assessing Current Trail Issues.....	37
Assessing Current Trail Problems.....	39
Assessing Progress Toward Solutions.....	46
Comparing the Importance of Trail Issues with Progress on Solutions.....	53
Issue: Access .....	53
Issue: Capacity .....	55
Issue: Communication.....	56
Issue: Economics and Funding .....	57
Issue: Long Distance Trails and State Trail Network.....	59
Issue: Maintenance.....	61
Issue: Multiple-Use Management.....	62
Issue: Issue: Multiple-Use Trails.....	64
Natural Resources and Resource Corridors .....	65

Issue: Private Lands, Private Concerns..... 66

Issue: Rails-to-Trails (Railroad Right-of-Way)..... 67

Issue: Use Compatibility..... 69

Issue: Issue: Utility Corridors..... 71

Volunteers ..... 72

Issue: Water Trails..... 73

Understanding Progress Made Since 1991 ..... 74

Chapter 4: Current Issues in Providing Trail Opportunities ..... 75

  Issue: Access ..... 75

  Issue: Capacity ..... 77

  Issue: Communication ..... 79

  Issue: Economics and Funding ..... 81

  Issue: Long Distance Trails and Trails Networks ..... 85

  Issue: Maintenance..... 86

  Issue: Multiple-Use Land Management ..... 88

  Issue: Multiple-Use Trails..... 90

  Issue: Private Lands and Private Concerns..... 92

  Issue: Rail-Trails and Utility Corridors ..... 93

  Issue: Use Compatibility..... 95

  Issue: Volunteers ..... 99

  Issue: Water Trails..... 101

  Other Issues ..... 101

    Issue: Urban Trails ..... 102

    Issue: Trail Safety..... 103

  Top 20 Most Important Trail Problems..... 104

Chapter 5: Recommendations ..... 107

  Priority Recommendations ..... 107

  Recommendations by Issue Category ..... 111

  RCO Actions..... 116

Sources..... 118

Appendix A: Public Engagement Report for the *2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan* ..... 119

Appendix B: Regional and Demographic Characteristics of Trails Users for 11 Trail Activity  
  Categories..... 249

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1.1. Ratings of the First Part of the Definition of Trails .....	7
Figure 1.2. Reasons for Not Rating the First Part of the Definition of Trails as Excellent .....	8
Figure 1.3. Ratings of the Second Part of the Definition of Trails .....	10
Figure 1.4. Reasons for Not Rating the Second Part of the Definition of Trails as Excellent.....	11
Figure 2.1. Demographic Breakdown of Trail Users Overall .....	23
Figure 2.2. Percent of Males and Females Who Are Trail Users.....	24
Figure 2.3. Percent of All Trail Users by Gender .....	24
Figure 2.4. Percent in the Following Age Categories Who Are Trail Users.....	25
Figure 2.5. Percent of All Trail Users by Age .....	25
Figure 2.6. Percent in the Following Education Categories Who Are Trail Users.....	26
Figure 2.7. Percent of All Trail Users by Education Level .....	26
Figure 2.8. Percent in the Following Income Level Categories Who Are Trail Users .....	27
Figure 2.9. Percent of All Trail Users by Income Category.....	27
Figure 2.10. Percent in the Following Residence Categories Who Are Trail Users.....	28
Figure 2.11. Percent of All Trail Users by Residence Type .....	28
Figure 2.12. Percent of Renters and Owners Who Are Trail Users .....	29
Figure 2.13. Percent of All Trail Users by Rent / Own Residence .....	29
Figure 2.14. Percent of Non-Disabled and Residents With Disabilities Who Are Trail Users .....	30
Figure 2.15. Percent of All Trail Users by Disability .....	30
Figure 2.16. Activities in Which Residents Currently Do Not Participate but in Which They Would Like to Participate.....	32
Figure 2.17. Activities in Which Residents Participate but in Which They Would Like to Participate More .....	33
Figure 3.1. Current Trail Issues.....	38
Figure 3.2. Mean Ratings of Importance of Trail Problems (Part 1).....	40
Figure 3.3. Mean Ratings of Importance of Trail Problems (Part 2).....	41
Figure 3.4. Mean Ratings of Importance of Trail Problems (Part 3).....	42
Figure 3.5. Percent Rating Importance of Trail Problems as a 9 or 10 (Part 1).....	43
Figure 3.6. Percent Rating Importance of Trail Problems as a 9 or 10 (Part 2).....	44
Figure 3.7. Percent Rating Importance of Trail Problems as a 9 or 10 (Part 3).....	45
Figure 3.8. Mean Ratings of the Progress Made Toward Solutions in the Past 10 Years (Part 1).....	47
Figure 3.9. Mean Ratings of the Progress Made Toward Solutions in the Past 10 Years (Part 2).....	48
Figure 3.10. Mean Ratings of the Progress Made Toward Solutions in the Past 10 Years (Part 3).....	49
Figure 3.11. Percent Rating Progress Toward Solutions as a 9 or 10 (Part 1).....	50
Figure 3.12. Percent Rating Progress Toward Solutions as a 9 or 10 (Part 2).....	51
Figure 3.13. Percent Rating Progress Toward Solutions as a 9 or 10 (Part 3).....	52
Figure 3.14. Access: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.....	54
Figure 3.15. Capacity: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.....	55
Figure 3.16. Communication: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress .....	56
Figure 3.17. Economics and Funding: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.....	58
Figure 3.18. Long Distance Trails / State Trail Network: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress .....	60
Figure 3.19. Maintenance: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress .....	61
Figure 3.20. Multiple-Use Management: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.....	63
Figure 3.21. Multiple-Use Trails: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress .....	64
Figure 3.22. Natural Resources and Resource Corridors: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress .....	65
Figure 3.23. Private Lands, Private Concerns: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.....	66
Figure 3.24. Rail-Trails: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress .....	68
Figure 3.25. Use Compatibility: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress .....	70
Figure 3.26. Utility Corridors: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress .....	71
Figure 3.27. Volunteers: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.....	72
Figure 3.28. Water Trails: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress .....	73

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1.1. Key Issues Addressed in the <i>2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan</i> .....	5
Table 1.2. Other Reasons for Not Rating the First Part of the Definition of Trails as Excellent.....	9
Table 1.3. Other Reasons for Not Rating the Second Part of the Definition of Trails as Excellent .....	12
Table 2.1. Washington Residents' Participation in the Trails Activity Categories (Ranked Highest to Lowest) .....	19
Table 2.2. Participation Rates in Trails Activities in Washington .....	20
Table 2.3. Regional Participation Rates of Trail Users Overall.....	22
Table 2.4. Comparison of Rankings in Trails Activities in 2002, 2006, and 2012.....	34
Table 2.5. Rank in Importance of Activity from SCORP 2012 .....	35
Table 2.6. Mean Percentage of Estimated Demand Met (Ranked Lowest to Highest).....	36
Table 4.1. Ranking of Problems Related to Access.....	76
Table 4.2. Ranking of Problems Related to Capacity.....	79
Table 4.3. Ranking of Problems Related to Communication.....	81
Table 4.4. Ranking of Problems Related to Economics and Funding.....	84
Table 4.5. Ranking of Problems Related to Long Distance Trails and Trails Networks.....	86
Table 4.6. Ranking of Problems Related to Maintenance .....	88
Table 4.7. Ranking of Problems Related to Multiple-Use Land Management.....	89
Table 4.8. Ranking of Problems Related to Multiple-Use Trails .....	92
Table 4.9. Ranking of Problems Related to Private Lands and Private Concerns.....	93
Table 4.10. Ranking of Problems Related to Rail-Trails and Utility Corridors .....	95
Table 4.11. Ranking of Problems Related to Use Compatibility .....	98
Table 4.12. Ranking of Problems Related to Volunteers.....	100
Table 4.13. Ranking of Problems Related to Water Trails.....	101
Table 4.14. Ranking of Problems Related to Urban Trails .....	103
Table 4.15. Ranking of Problems Related to Trail Safety.....	104
Table 4.16. The Top 20 Trail Problems for All Issue Categories Combined .....	105

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Ask people who recreate in Washington about their experiences, and more often than not, their experiences will involve trails. In fact, 72% of Washington State residents participate in outdoor activities taking place on or involving trails, and this does not include the many visitors from other states who also use Washington's trails.

The state offers more than 12,000 miles of trails (RCO, 2001), providing ideal places for participating in diverse outdoor recreation opportunities. From participation in traditional activities such as hiking, walking, and horseback riding on trails to the pursuit of mountain biking and off-roading experiences, Washington's trails offer something for everyone.

Public interest in trail issues and legislation affecting these issues has increased during the past decade. However, the most recent statewide trails plan was developed by the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) in 1991. This plan was comprehensive, and it set forth recommendations for meeting residents' needs for state recreation trails, including more than 25 action items.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, recognizing the need for an updated trails plan to guide state decision-making into the future, committed the resources to develop this *2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan*.

## HISTORY OF TRAILS PLANS AND PLANNING

### Local and Regional

City and county planning often includes trail and bike plans. In 2005, Washington's legislature affirmed the importance of local trails and pedestrian networks with the passage of Chapter 360 of Session Laws 2005. This law affected trails and trails planning by requiring communities to consider promoting physical activity and nonmotorized transportation in their comprehensive plans. The law also encourages collaboration between government and the private sector to provide free, accessible opportunities to exercise.

### State

The Washington State Recreation Trails System Act (RCW 79A.35, enacted in 1971 and amended over the years, provides for the planning of a statewide trail system that coordinates existing and proposed trails plans of federal, state, and local agencies within the state. A provision of this law authorized the participation of volunteer organizations in the construction and maintenance of public trails.

Using the authority granted in 79A.35, the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC, now RCO) designated the state's first and only State Recreation Trail, the Pacific Coast Bicycle Route in 1978.

In 1991, the first and only Washington State trails plan was mandated by the legislature as an element of that year's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).<sup>3</sup> The IAC (now RCO) produced the *1991 State Trails Plan*. It provides a vision, goals, and objectives for a statewide trails system. The 1991 plan includes statistical data regarding trails and trail use; a policy and action document with the findings, issues, goals, and actions; and a technical assistance manual. It also identifies a proposed framework for greenway trails, long distance hiking trails, and water trails along with strategies to address issues encountered by stakeholders and managing entities.

Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) transportation plans include planning for pedestrian and bicycle paths. WSDOT's provides funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects that support its [Washington State Bicycle Facilities and Pedestrian Walkways Plan \(2008-2027\)](#). The agency also funds projects, including the state and federally funded Safe Routes to School grant program.

Since 1972, the Washington Department of Ecology has administered the Shoreline Master Program, a statewide framework for managing, accessing, and protecting the 28,204 miles of shorelines in Washington. This program provides guidelines on trails management and access in shoreline areas in Washington's 15 coastal counties.

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission adopted *Centennial 2013* in 2003. It is a strategic plan and vision for the future of State Parks. All three of the plan's priorities acknowledge the importance of trails. The Commission pledged to maintain the state parks' current quality, including facilities; to upgrade existing parks, trails and services, and to add new trails and parks in the future. Included in the plan is a call to action that invites "communities and organizations to donate time, labor, and funds to help complete 100 improvement projects."

## **Federal**

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. The program supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects by providing experienced facilitators with relevant expertise. In 2012, RTCA played an integral role in the development of Spokane's regional trails plan, among other projects. In 2013, RTCA is assisting with 14 projects across Washington, including the development of open space in the Central Puget Sound region, specific trail development in Cowlitz County and the Columbia Gorge, and regional mapping for potential greenway development in Seattle.

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<sup>3</sup> The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is a state and federally mandated requirement for the development of a 5-year outdoor recreation management, conservation, and development plan. To be eligible for Land and Water Conservation Fund grants, each state is required to prepare a SCORP. The SCORP provides a plan for meeting public demand and determining priorities for the acquisition, renovation, and development of recreational resources.

*America's Great Outdoors Initiative: A Promise to Future Americans*, launched in 2011, affirmed public lands and waters as invaluable assets. Trails acquisition, improvement, and management are among its objectives. Two projects in Washington were selected as showcase investments, to help fulfill the initiative's goals "to reconnect Americans to the natural world through parks, trails, and rivers and to conserve and restore working lands and wildlife habitat" and "to create jobs through travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation activities."

The two projects are:

- The Pacific Northwest Trail – Olympic Discovery Trail Convergence, which ties together 1,200 miles of national, state, and local trails, including the 120-mile Olympic Discovery Trail, connecting the cities of Sequim and Port Angeles to the Sequim Bay Area. An additional 120 miles of trail are planned.
- The Lower Columbia River Water Trail, managed by the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership, which travels through inland Washington along 146 miles of the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean. The goal of the project is a Water Trail along the Columbia River's entire length through Washington and designation as a National Water Trail.

Other federal programs that support trails in Washington State include the:

- Recreational Trail Program (Federal Highways Administration funding administered by RCO);
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (National Park Service funding administered by RCO);
- National, Scenic and Historic Trails program (National Park Service).

## **PURPOSE OF THE 2013-2018 WASHINGTON STATE TRAILS PLAN**

The *2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan* meets the requirement of RCW 79A.35.040 and is designed to provide a timely and much-needed update to the previous plan adopted in 1991. This plan offers strategic direction for establishing a system of state recreation trails in Washington State for the next 5 years. This plan is a separate but complementary plan designed to support the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) adopted in 2013 by providing specific guidance on trails route planning, designation and coordination.

To this end, this planning process aims to achieve the following goals:

1. Measure the extent to which problems pointed out in the previous (1991) plan have been addressed.
2. Identify key issues and opportunities for meeting public demand for trails over the next 5 years.
3. Identify public needs and priorities for trail use.

4. Develop a compendium of current research on trails use, trends and public input.
5. Provide a framework for synchronizing the trails plan with the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).
6. Provide a coordinated inventory of regional trails and planned trail routes.

Aligned with the overall goals of SCORP planning, the *2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan* acknowledges stakeholder priorities and makes recommendations that will, among other things, help guide state funding decisions for trails in Washington over the next 5 years.

## OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to develop this *Trails Plan* was designed to ensure public participation in the planning process, to evaluate trail supply and demand, to identify key trail issues, and to assess public priorities and needs regarding trails in Washington.

After a competitive bid process, RCO contracted with Responsive Management, which performed the research for this plan.

### Public Participation

Public and stakeholder participation was conducted in three ways in developing this plan: 1) ad-hoc Trails Advisory Committee, 2) Trails Town Hall discussion on the Web, and 3) telephone survey data.

To ensure adequate stakeholder participation in the trails planning process, Responsive Management convened a 40-member Trails Advisory Committee. This group consisted of representatives from existing RCO standing committees and key stakeholders from throughout the state with expertise in different topic areas. Committee members provided qualitative input through an Internet discussion board, which posed three rounds of questions for feedback and response.

The Trails Advisory Committee also participated in two Web-based surveys about trail issues. The purpose of the first survey was to evaluate the effectiveness and level of achievement of the 1991 plan. This survey explored the recommendations from that plan and assessed progress toward meeting its goals. The researchers conducted this survey in May 2013 and 100% of the committee members responded.

In the second survey, the Trails Advisory Committee identified new and emerging trail issues as well as public priorities for updating the trails plan. The second survey was conducted in July and August 2013, and 63% of the committee members responded.

More than 160 people provided over 297 comments on a public blog Web site known as the "Trails Town Hall" (hereafter referred to as the Town Hall). They discussed issues related to trails and the Nonhighway Road and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Program.

The researchers' analyzed data collected from a telephone survey of Washington residents, conducted for the 2013 SCORP, to provide specific results regarding trails in Washington. A full report on the findings of the Trails Advisory Committee, the NOVA Advisory Group, and the Town Hall are included in Appendix A.

### **Evaluating Supply of and Demand for Trails**

The researchers analyzed data collected from two web-based surveys of outdoor recreation providers performed for the SCORP to assess trails supply and demand. One survey was of local recreation providers, and the other survey was of federal and state government agencies, tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations. The contractors contacted respondents a minimum of five times (three e-mails and two rounds of telephone follow-up calls) from July to October 2012. Providers statewide completed 213 questionnaires. The contractors used the findings from these surveys to evaluate supply.

Similarly, for the 2013 SCORP, the researchers conducted a large-scale scientific survey of Washington residents to assess their participation in recreation, their future needs for recreation, their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities, their issues of concern, and any constraints they had in participating in outdoor recreation in Washington. The researchers obtained 3,114 completed surveys of residents statewide age 18 years and older between August to October 2012. The researchers analyzed these findings for quantitative data related specifically to trails supply and demand.

### **Identifying Key Issues Regarding Trails**

The first survey of the Trails Advisory Committee assessed opinions on the 15 trails issue categories identified in the 1991 plan as well as 3 additional topics for a total of 18 key issues. For the second survey, issue categories were combined or removed, resulting in a total of 15 issue categories and 87 trail problems addressed in the current plan.

Key issues addressed in this Trails Plan are shown in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Key Issues Addressed in the 2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan.**

Access	Private lands and private concerns
Capacity	Rail-trails and utility corridors
Communication	Use compatibility
Economics and funding	Volunteers
Long distance trails and trails networks	Water trails
Maintenance	Urban trails
Multiple-use land management	Trail safety
Multiple-use trails	

## DEFINING TRAILS

Any discussion about trails should begin with a definition. Trails encompass much more than the backcountry and wilderness trails that traditionally come to mind. Increasing urbanization has seen a rise in urban and suburban trails designed not only to provide scenic and recreational value, but also to offer a safe means of transportation. As noted by members of the Trails Advisory Committee, trails are becoming a hybrid of conditions rather than linear, dedicated corridors for recreation.

To assess the accuracy of the definitions proposed in the *1991 Washington State Trails Plan*, the researchers asked the Trails Advisory Committee their opinions about the 1991 definition.

The *1991 Washington State Trails Plan* provides the following definitions for trails:

**A trail is...**

. . . a path, route, way, right-of-way, or corridor posted, signed, or designated as open for travel or passage by the general public but not normally designated as open for the transportation of commercial goods or services by motorized vehicles. [First part]

. . . an opportunity to experience solitude or companionship, recreation or challenge; an opportunity for the appreciation of nature; a means of achieving renewal of body, mind, and spirit. [Second part]

When asked about the first part of the definition of trails, the majority of members of the Trails Advisory Committee appear satisfied: 17% rated this definition excellent, 52% rated it good, 29% rated it fair, and 2% rated it poor (Figure 1.1).

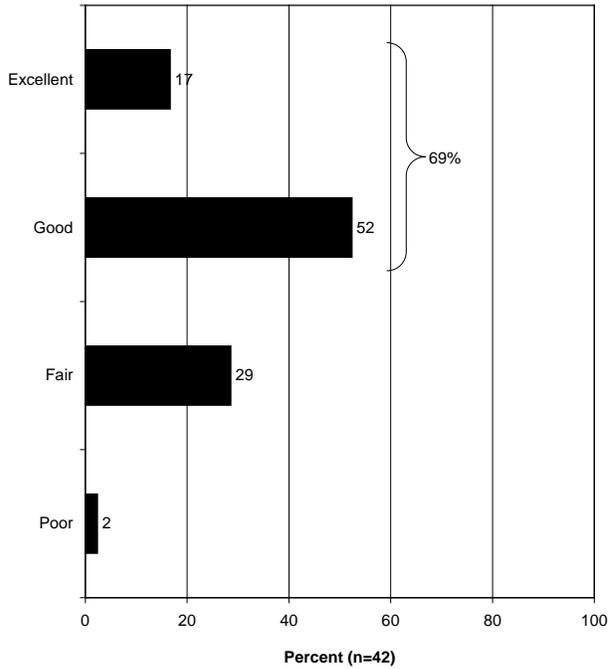
Among those who did not rate the first part of the definition as excellent, the top reasons for not doing so were because it is too complicated (25%), too confusing (22%), not inclusive enough (19%), or for other reasons (25%) (Figure 1.2).

Other reasons given included problems with no reference for the importance of trails as a corridor for habitat, as providing open space, and as a resource for recreation. Others had concerns with the definition citing trails as being “signed,” since many trails do not have signs or are used on private properties and easements (Table 1.2). These results suggest that minor revisions may be considered to improve this definition of trails.

**Figure 1.1. Ratings of the First Part of the Definition of Trails.**

Ratings of the 1991 Trails Plan's first definition of trails:

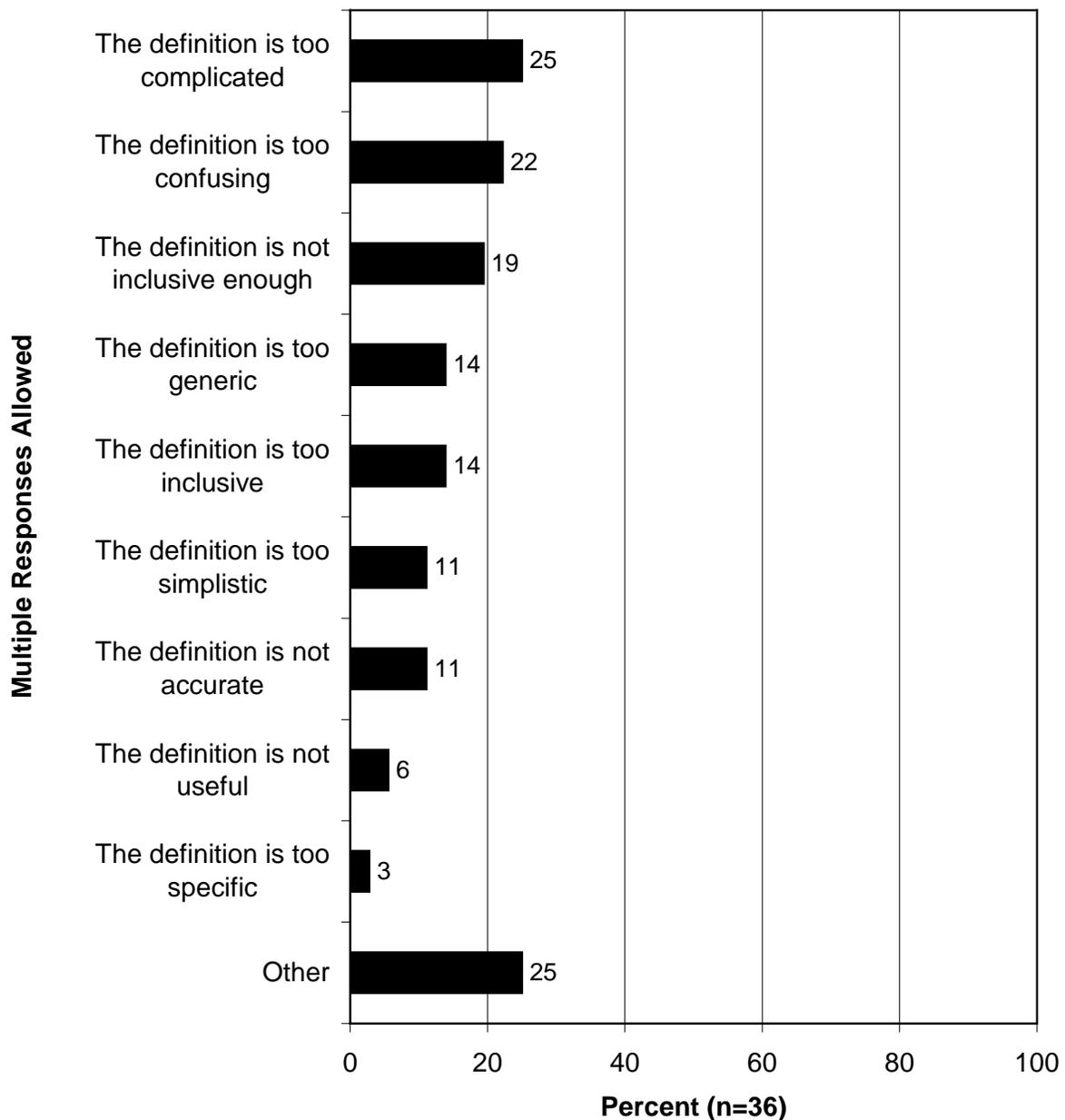
**“... a path, route, way, right-of-way, or corridor posted, signed, or designated as open for travel or passage by the general public but not normally designated as open for the transportation of commercial goods or services by motorized vehicles.”**



**Figure 1.2. Reasons for Not Rating the First Part of the Definition of Trails as Excellent.**

**1991 State Trails Plan's first definition of trails: "... a path, route, way, right-of-way, or corridor posted, signed, or designated as open for travel or passage by the general public but not normally designated as open for the transportation of commercial goods or services by motorized vehicles."**

**Why didn't you rate this definition higher?  
(Asked of those who rated the first definition good, fair, or poor)**



**Table 1.2. Other Reasons for Not Rating the First Part of the Definition of Trails as Excellent.**

<b>Other Reasons (open-ended response)</b>
The definition should include how the public uses the trail.
Trails are used on private property also; easements are included.
Many trails are not signed, but they're still trails.
It's fine. I don't know how you would make it better.
Good enough.
Does not include the word "recreation".
Add corridor for habitat - open space.
The definition should exclude all motorized vehicles for any purpose other than trail maintenance and emergencies.

When asked about the second part of the definition, the Trails Advisory Committee's opinions were mixed: 29% rated this definition excellent, 26% rated it good, 26% rated it fair, and 19% rated it poor (Figure 1.3).

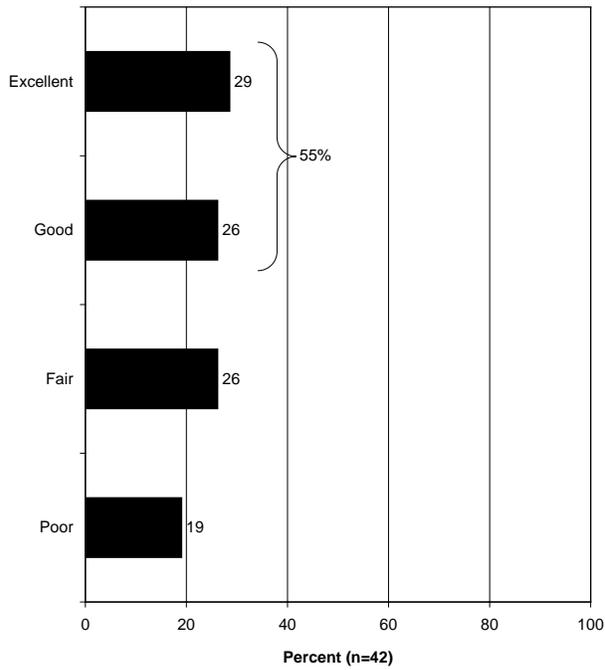
When asked why they did not rate the second part of the definition as excellent, committee members most often cited that the definition is not inclusive enough (29%), not useful (29%), too generic (23%), or too complicated (19%).

However, more than a third of respondents (35%) gave other reasons for not rating the second part of the definition higher (Figure 1.4). In general, committee members felt that the second part of the definition does not consider the importance of trails as transportation; more than half of the respondents who listed other reasons mentioned the importance of transportation, commuting, safe routes to schools, and other utilitarian values of trails (Table 1.3).

**Figure 1.3. Ratings of the Second Part of the Definition of Trails.**

Ratings of the 1991 Trails Plan's second definition of trails:

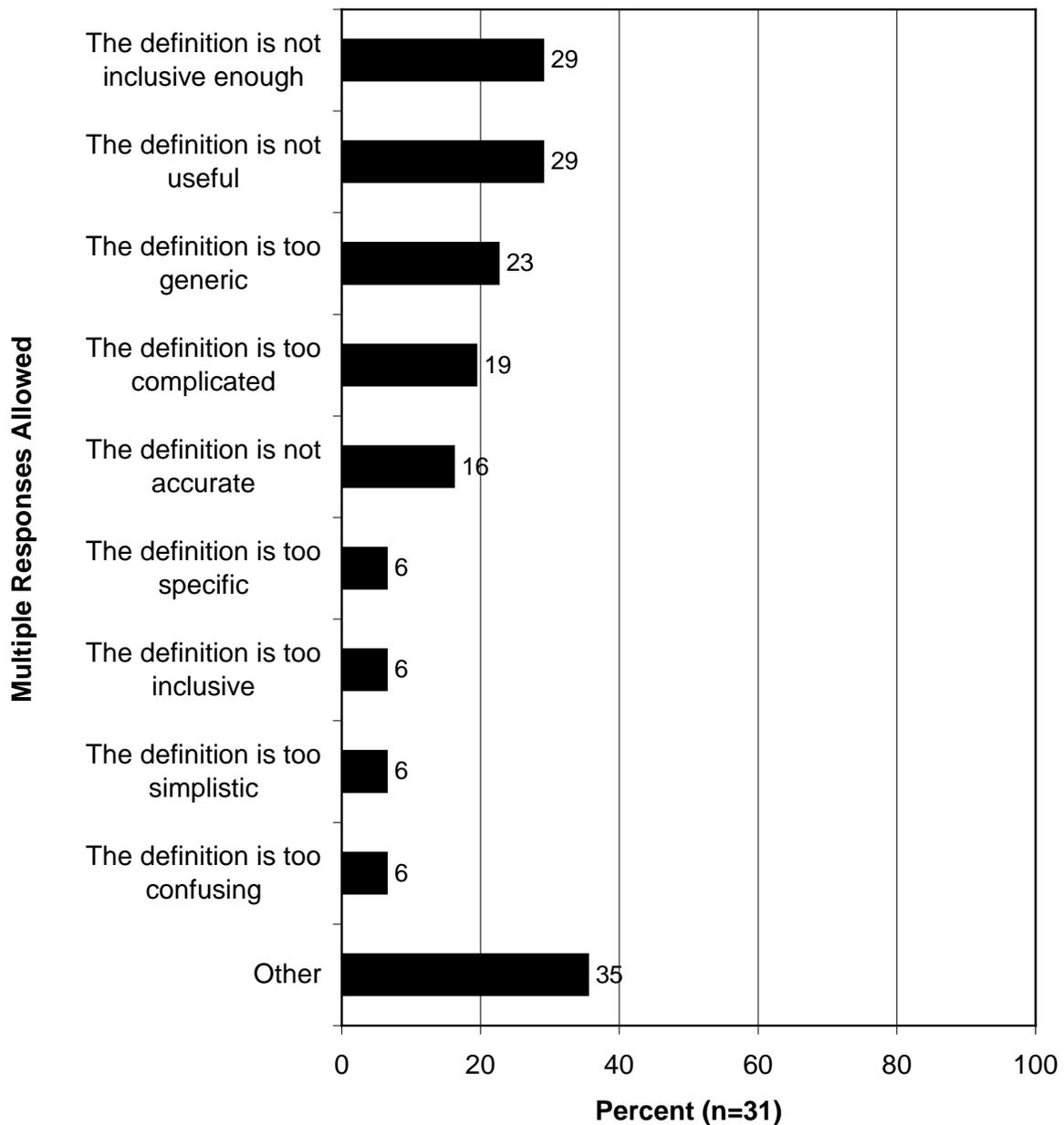
**"...an opportunity to experience solitude or companionship, recreation or challenge; an opportunity for the appreciation of nature; a means of achieving renewal of body, mind, and spirit."**



**Figure 1.4. Reasons for Not Rating the Second Part of the Definition of Trails as Excellent.**

**1991 State Trails Plan's second definition of trails: "...an opportunity to experience solitude or companionship, recreation or challenge; an opportunity for the appreciation of nature; a means of achieving renewal of body, mind, and spirit."**

**Why didn't you rate this definition higher?  
(Asked of those who rated the second definition good, fair, or poor)**



**Table 1.3. Other Reasons for Not Rating the Second Part of the Definition of Trails as Excellent.**

<b>Other Reasons (open-ended response)</b>
Transportation and links to mass transportation, safe routes to schools.
Everything in the definition can be had without a trail.
This is referring to nature/wilderness trails only.
Leaves out transportation.
Inspiring but needs to include practicalities of nonmotorized transportation; these aren't just recreational trails.
There are utilitarian uses for trails as well such as commuting; accessibility and mobility are important.
Can also be for transportation.
Could be slightly simplified.
Describes the experience not what defines a trail.
Philosophical.
Needs to mention that trails can also serve a transportation function, an alternative to traveling along or next to busy roadways.

To further understand opinions regarding the state's definition of trails, the researchers solicited comments through the Trails Advisory Committee and NOVA Advisory Group Internet forums. These comments helped provide a better understanding of the concerns that the committee members have with the current definition of trails.

Again, the comments from the forums showed that many of the members agree that the first part of the definition provides a concrete, objective definition of trails, while the second part of the definition presents challenges. Several committee members found that the second part of the definition was inappropriate because, rather than providing an objective definition, it attempts to assign a value judgment to the type of experience that a person must have on trails. Committee members noted that experience is subjective and depends on an individual's personal values and belief systems.

The consensus is that the second part of the definition appears to focus primarily on recreational, wilderness trails without considering the utility of trails as a means of transportation. These results suggest that a revision to the second part of the definition of trails may need to be considered and should highlight both the recreational and utilitarian value of trails in Washington.

While the current plan does not attempt to redefine trails, this may be a useful consideration in the future as trails use continues to expand and include increasingly diverse functions and activities.

## **IMPORTANCE OF TRAILS IN WASHINGTON**

Washington residents benefit tremendously from trail opportunities in the state. Washington's trails are an important asset and the following section highlights some of the major benefits of trails.

### **Diverse Outdoor Recreation Opportunities**

Trails vary in their setting, from remote wilderness areas to easily accessible urban trails with convenient facilities such as restrooms and picnic tables. Washington offers more than 12,000 miles of trails providing diverse opportunities to Washington residents and tourists.

The range of possible experiences include cross-country skiing on the Methow Community Trail in Okanogan County, biking along the scenic Burke-Gilman Trail through Seattle, snowmobiling on groomed state park trails near Fish Lake, kayaking in the Columbia River Gorge, or biking single-track at Devil's Gulch in western Washington.

### **Health and Fitness**

Trails play an important role in keeping Washington residents active. Trails often support active recreation, such as running, biking, hiking, and walking, that help improve overall health and fitness. The significant benefits of physical activity include helping to control weight and blood pressure and reducing the risk of type 2 diabetes, heart attack, and colon cancer. Participation in physical activity also helps improve mental health, reducing the symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Many traditional active recreation opportunities on trails provide easy and convenient ways of staying active.

### **Preservation of Resources and Open Spaces**

Trails help land managers control access to sensitive habitats for native vegetation and wildlife. Trails prevent degradation by delineating a common route and they provide corridors where people and wildlife can move.

Trails often provide open space for educational, conservation, or recreational purposes. By definition, open spaces are lands left primarily in a natural state to protect their natural, aesthetic, historic, or cultural features. As such, open spaces are permanently protected from development and offer access to natural resources, while simultaneously helping to preserve environmental and ecological systems. These spaces serve the important purpose of helping to maintain natural resources, landscape, wildlife, and wildlife habitat.

Communities throughout the United States are recognizing the importance of trails and open space. Trails are now often built into housing developments to help create urban open space and provide city residents a reprieve from urban congestion. Trails can offer access to recreation activities that urban residents might not otherwise experience due to the distance, inconvenience, and expense of traveling to rural and backcountry recreation.

## **Environmental Value**

Trails offer numerous environmental benefits, the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat perhaps the most important. Trails provide buffers in sensitive habitats such as wetlands, forests, and riparian zones. By directing human access on to pathways, bridges, and boardwalks, trails afford users an opportunity to explore and appreciate scenic areas and wildlife habitat while also protecting environmentally sensitive areas. Use of urban trails also has direct environmental impacts since biking or walking can help reduce carbon emissions, fossil fuel use, and air pollution.

## **Educational Value**

Trails help support environmental education by allowing experiential learning about Washington's natural, cultural, historical, and recreational heritage. Trails can be used to teach both adults and children about wildlife, wildlife habitat, ecosystems, biodiversity, and other environmental concepts through direct exposure, exploration, observation, and investigation. Interpretive trails—those designed to include signage and additional natural, cultural, historical, and recreational information—educate users with information on plants and animals, history, land use, environmental issues, geology, conservation and management, and other topics.

## **Economic Value**

Trails have a significant impact on local and national economies.

Several studies showed that nearby parks, trails, or open spaces helped increase residential property value. The level of the economic impact was influenced by the home's distance from the open space, the size of the park or space, and the characteristics of the neighborhood.

The study found that homes in Portland, Oregon, within 1,500 feet of a park or open space had an increased sale price of between \$845 and \$2,262. Similarly, "Homes located within 1,500 feet of natural forest areas enjoyed statistically significant property premiums, an average of \$10,648, compared to \$1,214 for urban parks, \$5,657 for specialty parks and \$8,849 for golf courses (in 1990 dollars)."

The research also shows that trails and open spaces in urban areas tend to have increase economic benefit to surrounding property owners. These homes are often assessed higher, resulting in higher property tax revenues for municipal governments. Additionally, walkable development helps lower infrastructure costs in several ways, including savings on roads, schools, utilities, and the benefits of retaining agricultural lands.

Indirect economic benefits related to trails include tourism, community improvement, and healthcare cost savings. Tourists using trails spend money in areas nearby. Community improvement occurs when safe trail routes to school and work foster communities where people want to live and encourage economic activity. Healthcare costs can decline because

active recreation opportunities on trails can reduce obesity and the diseases often attributed to a sedentary lifestyle.

### **Corridors for People and Wildlife**

Trails can provide convenient corridors and methods of transportation for both people and wildlife. By providing opportunities to walk or bike to school, work, and community centers these routes offer safe and convenient travel and minimize exposure to roadway congestion.

As the Washington landscape becomes increasingly urbanized and developed, wildlife has a more difficult time traveling freely through fragmented habitat. This can isolate animals and poses a danger to healthy populations of many wildlife species. Trails allow wildlife to move freely and safely from one area to another, especially through urban areas, where they provide important corridors for avoiding roads and congested areas, and population centers.

### **Summary of Trail Benefits**

These benefits show that trails have a significant impact on quality-of-life in Washington State. They provide abundant opportunities for residents to enjoy the scenery, wildlife, and natural beauty of the state's various ecosystems. Furthermore, these opportunities suit any lifestyle, fulfilling some transportation needs and providing natural wilderness areas for leisure, recreation, and education. With changing demographics, such as increasing populations, aging populations, and growing diversity, the research suggests that trail use will only increase because trails are perhaps the most versatile of recreation resources, providing something for everyone.

## CHAPTER 2: ASSESSMENT OF TRAIL SUPPLY AND DEMAND IN WASHINGTON

### SUPPLY OF TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

Washington has about 12,000 miles of trails, according to the *1999 Public and Tribal Lands Inventory* (RCO, 2001). Agencies maintain information about their own trail systems, and regional and metropolitan trails plans also provide localized information about trails systems. The National Recreation Trails database provides information on 48 trails in Washington that have been designated as exemplary trails of local and regional significance.

Many different types of trails are available to residents and visitors in Washington. These include greenways, water trails, bicycle routes, and multiple-use trails, as well as those developed for specific uses, such as for off-road vehicles, mountain bikes, or horses. Many of Washington's high country trails are inaccessible in the winter, or modified for seasonal uses, such as for snowmobiling or cross country skiing.

Long-distance trails traverse Washington. The John Wayne Pioneer Trail, the fourth-longest rail trail in the country, links the Columbia River and the Cascade Mountains. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, which runs between the borders of Mexico and Canada, passes through two National Parks and four National Forests in Washington. The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail reaches its westward end in Astoria, linking nearly 3,700 miles of historic sites and recreational opportunities.

### Trails and Land Management

More than 8,000 miles of trails occur on the estimated 10 million acres of U.S. Forest Service lands in Washington. Colville, Gifford Pinchot, Mount Baker-Snoqualmie, Okanogan and Wenatchee, and Olympic National Forests are located entirely in Washington, while portions of the Umatilla and Kaniksu National Forests are shared with Oregon and Idaho, respectively (USDA Land Area Reports).

The National Park Service manages about 1,500 miles of trail in the North Cascades, Mount Rainier, and Olympic National Parks. State lands host about 1,600 miles of trail, primarily on Washington Department of Natural Resources and Washington State Parks properties. The Washington Department of Transportation also provides paths and routes, with a small percentage of construction programs devoted by state law (RCW Chapter 47.30) to paths and trails. Washington Department of Transportation trails are usually in the form of widened highway shoulders, used primarily bicyclists. Small percentages of trails are also maintained the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Washington Department of Ecology, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

A variety of private and non-governmental organizations also manage trails. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) lists 74 trails covering 1,016 miles in Washington (2013). In addition, the

Columbia River Gorge Commission manages the 80-mile Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area along the border of Washington and Oregon.

The balance of the estimated inventory is managed by local agencies. Counties, cities, and towns provide fewer trail miles than other agencies, but these trails, like the Burke-Gilman Trail in Seattle and the Spokane River Centennial Trail, are highly used because of their proximity to population centers. These trails also link separate trails systems managed by other agencies.

Water trails, also known as blueways, are marked routes on navigable waterways, such as rivers, lakes, canals, and coastlines, for paddlers in nonmotorized boats. Washington has seven designated water trails (Washington Water Trails Association, 2013):

- *Cascadia Marine Trail*: This marine trail has been designated one of only 16 National Millennium Trails by the federal government. This saltwater trail stretches over 140 miles, from the Canadian border on the north to southernmost Puget Sound near Olympia. The trail offers 58 campsites for overnight visits.
- *Kitsap Peninsula Water Trail*: This water trail offers 350 miles of saltwater shoreline on western Puget Sound and Hood Canal.
- *Lakes-to-Locks Water Trail*: This day-use water trail winds through the interior waterways of metropolitan Seattle and includes the Sammamish, Washington, and Union lakes as well as the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks where fresh water meets salt water. The Lakes-to-Locks Water Trail offers more than 100 miles of shoreline and 120 access sites.
- *Willapa Bay Water Trail*: This trail stretches along the southwest coast from Tokeland Marina to Cape Disappointment State Park, providing spectacular views of sandy beaches, dune grasslands, coastal pine forests, and wildlife at play.
- *Lower Columbia*: The Lower Columbia River Water Trail is a 146-mile, bi-state trail spanning the tidally influenced river waters from the Bonneville Dam to the Pacific Ocean.
- *Northwest Discovery*: The Northwest Discovery Water Trail links the Clearwater River in Idaho, the Snake River in Idaho and Washington, and the Columbia River in both Washington and Oregon. The majority of the 367-mile water trail is in eastern Washington State. Bonneville Dam links the Northwest Discovery and Lower Columbia River Water Trails, together offering more than 500 miles of navigable water.
- *Pend Oreille River Water Trail*: Located in the northeastern part of the state, this water trail runs from Idaho to just one mile shy of British Columbia, Canada.

## DEMAND FOR TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

With 72% of Washington State residents participating in outdoor activities taking place on or involving trails, there is great demand for trail opportunities in Washington.

For this assessment, the researchers' analyzed data collected for the SCORP to determine participation in trail activities specifically. As a whole, trail activities in the resident survey conducted encompassed 36 activities, grouped into 11 activity categories.

The results show that:

- 51% of Washington residents participate in hiking involving trails
- 40% participate in walking involving trails
- 24% participate in bicycle riding involving trails
- 17% participate in jogging or running involving trails
- 10% participate in off-roading involving trails
- 8% participate in camping or backpacking in a primitive location involving trails
- 7% participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing involving trails
- 4% participate in horseback riding involving trails
- 3% participate in snowmobiling or ATViing in the snow involving trails
- 2% participate in skating or skateboarding involving trails

Additionally, 12% of Washington residents participate in canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or other manual craft boating activities involving *water trails*. However, because water trails differ considerably from land trails, this user group is not included in the overall 72% of Washington residents who participate in trail-related outdoor recreational activities. With water activities, it is difficult to determine if the activity actually occurred on a water trail.

As shown in Table 2.1, the top-ranked trail activities include hiking, walking, and bicycle riding. Residents spend a mean number of 17.1 days hiking, 97.8 days walking, and 35.5 days bicycle riding on trails.

The full listing of trail-related activity participation rates, including participation by specific types of trails, is shown in Table 2.2.a. and Table 2.2.b.

**Table 2.1. Washington Residents' Participation in the Trail Activity Categories (Ranked Highest to Lowest).**

Rank in Importance (based on participation)	Activity Category	Percent of Residents Participating	Mean Days of Participation
1	Hiking—Trails	51	17.1
2	Walking on Trails	40	97.8
3	Bicycle Riding—Trails	24	35.5
4	Jogging or Running—Trails	17	66
5	Boating—Canoeing, Kayaking, Rowing, Manual Craft	12	NA*
6	Any Off-Road Activity Involving Trails (includes Motorcycle, ATV/Dune Buggy, and 4-Wheel Drive Vehicle subcategories)	10	25.7
7	Camping—Backpacking/Primitive Location	8	10.6
8	Cross-Country Skiing or Snowshoeing—Established Public/Private Trails	7	7.54
9	Horseback Riding—Trails	4	31.9
10	Snowmobiling or ATVing in the Snow—Established Public/Private Trails	3	11.3
11	Skating or Skateboarding Activities Involving Trails	2	24.3

\*Mean days for boating activities could not be calculated based on the SCORP results because days of participation were not obtained for each specific boating activity.

**Table 2.2. Participation Rates in Trail Activities in Washington.**

Activity	Percent of Residents in Washington State Participating in the Activity
<b>Any Recreational Activity Involving Trails*</b>	<b>72.4</b>
<b>Hiking—Trails</b>	<b>51.0</b>
Hiking—Urban Trails	17.5
Hiking—Rural Trails	18.5
Hiking—Mountain or Forest Trails	36.4
<b>Walking on Trails</b>	<b>39.8</b>
Walking With a Pet—Park or Trail Setting	15.5
Walking Without a Pet—Park or Trail Setting	35.3
<b>Bicycle Riding—Trails</b>	<b>24.4</b>
Bicycle Riding—Urban Trails	17.3
Bicycle Riding—Rural Trails	10.8
Bicycle Riding—Mountain or Forest Trails	8.0
<b>Jogging or Running—Trails</b>	<b>17.2</b>
Jogging or Running—Urban Trails	11.4
Jogging or Running—Rural Trails	7.8
Jogging or Running—Mountain or Forest Trails	4.9
<b>Boating—Canoeing, Kayaking, Rowing, Manual Craft*</b>	<b>12.1</b>
Boating—Canoeing, Kayaking, Rowing, Manual Craft—Saltwater*	3.7
Boating—Canoeing, Kayaking, Rowing, Manual Craft—Freshwater*	9.0
Camping—With a Kayak/Canoe*	2.4
Camping—With a Kayak/Canoe—Site Specifically Designated*	1.2
<b>Any Off-Road Activity Involving Trails (includes Motorcycle, ATV/Dune Buggy, and 4-Wheel Drive Vehicle subcategories below)</b>	<b>9.8</b>
Off-Road Activity—Motorcycle—Trails	2.7
Off-Road Activity—Motorcycle—Urban Trails	0.9
Off-Road Activity—Motorcycle—Rural Trails	1.4
Off-Road Activity—Motorcycle—Mountain or Forest Trails	1.8
Off-Road Activity—ATV/Dune Buggy—Trails	5.2
Off-Road Activity—ATV/Dune Buggy—Urban Trails	1.4
Off-Road Activity—ATV/Dune Buggy—Rural Trails	2.3
Off-Road Activity—ATV/Dune Buggy—Mountain or Forest Trails	4.0
Off-Road Activity—4-Wheel Drive Vehicle—Trails	6.6
Off-Road Activity—4-Wheel Drive Vehicle—Urban Trails	1.4
Off-Road Activity—4-Wheel Drive Vehicle—Rural Trails	3.0
Off-Road Activity—4-Wheel Drive Vehicle—Mountain or Forest Trails	4.0
<b>Camping—Backpacking/Primitive Location</b>	<b>8.3</b>
Camping—Backpacking/Primitive Location—Self-Carry Packs	7.7
Camping—Backpacking/Primitive Location—Pack Animals	0.3
<b>Cross-Country Skiing or Snowshoeing—Established Public/Private Trails</b>	<b>7.0</b>
<b>Horseback Riding—Trails</b>	<b>3.9</b>
Horseback Riding—Urban Trails	0.5
Horseback Riding—Rural Trails	2.3
Horseback Riding—Mountain or Forest Trails	2.7
<b>Snowmobiling or ATVing in the Snow—Established Public/Private Trails</b>	<b>2.7</b>

Activity	Percent of Residents in Washington State Participating in the Activity
<b>Skating or Skateboarding Activities Involving Trails</b>	<b>2.2</b>
Roller or Inline Skating—Trail at Outdoor Facility	1.8
Skateboarding—Trail	0.6

\* Activity not included in calculation of overall participation in trail-related recreation.

## UNDERSTANDING THE REGIONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS THAT IMPACT DEMAND

Washington's population has grown dramatically during the past three decades. With a gain of 2,592,384 residents between 1980 and 2010, the state experienced a 63% population increase, almost double the population rate compared to the United States as a whole (36%) (United States Census, 2010).

Several other important demographic changes also are taking place in the state. These include increasing urbanization, an aging population, and an increasing minority population. In order to serve the needs of residents in the state, recreation providers need to understand both the regional and demographic characteristics that affect demand for trails use. For more information on the demographic changes taking place in the state, please see Chapter 1 of the SCORP report.

This section of the *2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan* focuses on the current regional and demographic characteristics of trail users overall in the state. For specific regional and demographic characteristics of trail users in each of the 11 activity categories, please see Appendix B. This information provides invaluable data for better understanding constituents and can be used to better align outreach and communications to target underserved populations.

### Regional Breakdown of Trail Users Overall

Table 2.3 shows the regional participation rates for trail users overall. At the top of the ranking is the King/Seattle region, where 78% of residents participate in outdoor recreational activities involving trails; meanwhile, the Coast region has the lowest percentage of residents participating in outdoor recreational activities involving trails yet still represents a majority of residents (61%).

**Table 2.3. Regional Participation Rates of Trail Users Overall.**

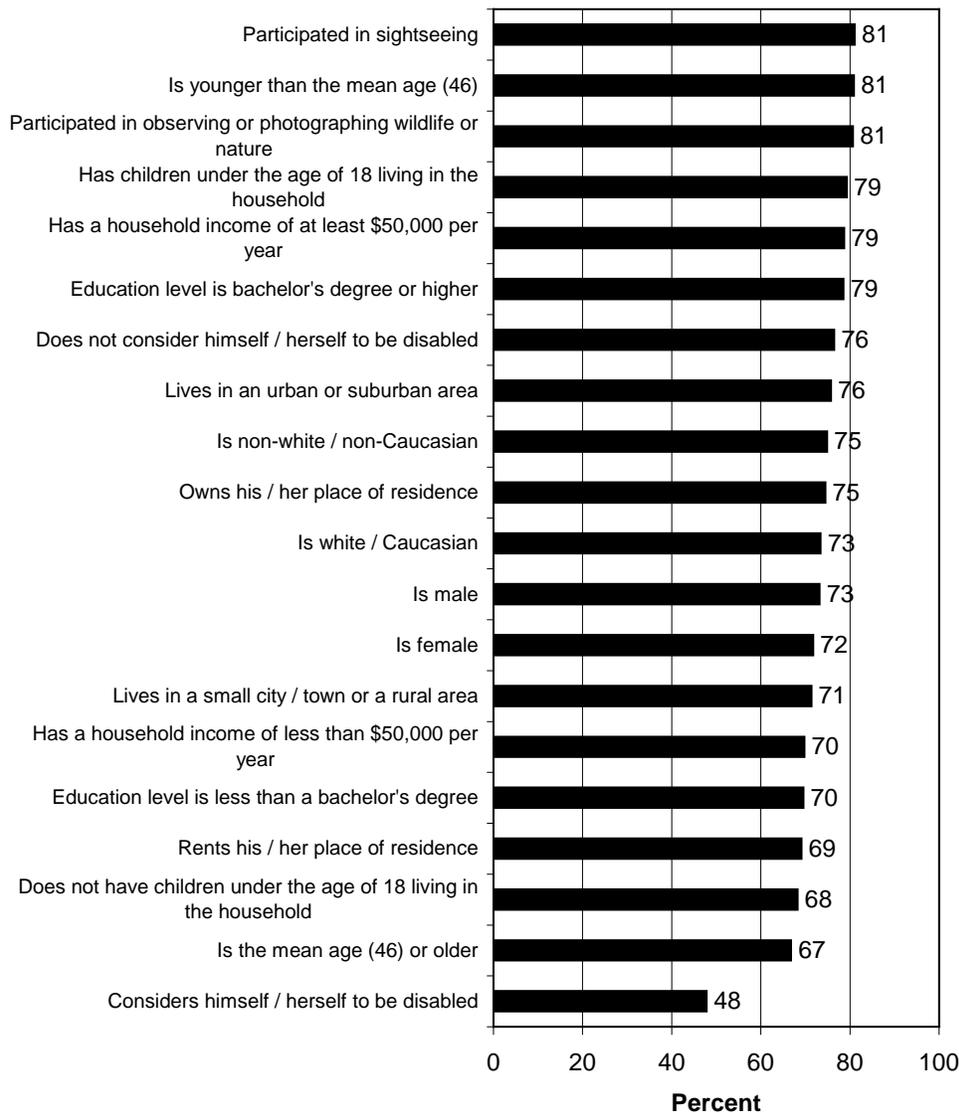
Regional Participation Rates of Trail Users Overall	
King/Seattle	78
Northeast	74
North Cascades	73
The Palouse	73
The Islands	71
Southwest	70
South Central	68
Peninsulas	68
Columbia Plateau	62
The Coast	61

**Demographic Breakdown of Trail Users Overall**

Figure 2.1 shows the breakdown of major demographic and participatory subgroups within the overall survey sample that participate in any type of outdoor recreational activity involving trails. In this ranking, the top groups among all Washington State residents that participate in trail-related outdoor recreational activities include those who participate in sightseeing (81% of this group participates in trail-related outdoor recreation), those younger than the mean age of 46 years old (81%), and those who participate in observing or photographing wildlife or nature (81%). Other groups with at least 75% of individuals participating in trail-related outdoor recreation include those with children under the age of 18 living in the household (79%), those with a household income of at least \$50,000 per year (79%), those with an education level of a bachelor's degree or higher (78%), those who do not consider themselves to be disabled (76%), those who live in an urban or suburban area (76%), non-white / non-Caucasian individuals (75%), and those who own their place of residence (75%).

**Figure 2.1. Demographic Breakdown of Trail Users Overall.**

**Percent of each of the following groups that participate in any type of activity involving trails:**



The series of graphs beginning on the next page breaks down all trail users by seven key demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, household income level, residence type, rent/ownership of residence, and disability status (i.e., whether the respondent considers himself or herself to be disabled). Two types of graphs are included for each demographic characteristic. The first graph shows the percentage of each group within the demographic category participating in trail-related recreation (for instance, 73% of males and 72% of females participate in trail-related outdoor recreation). The second graph is a pie chart

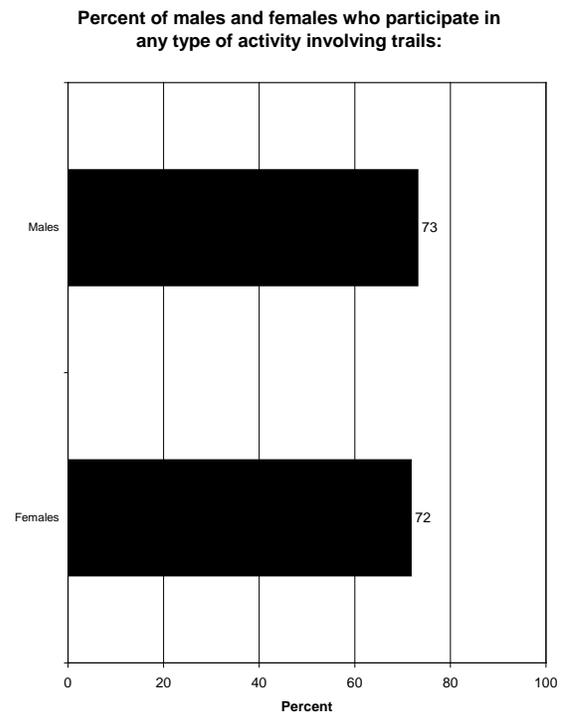
showing a proportional breakdown of all trail users by the demographic category in question (for instance, 50% of all trail users are male and 50% are female).

**Trail Use by Gender**

As shown in Figure 2.2, 73% of all male Washington residents and 72% of all female Washington residents participate in some type of outdoor recreation involving trails. A majority of male and female Washington residents recreate on trails.

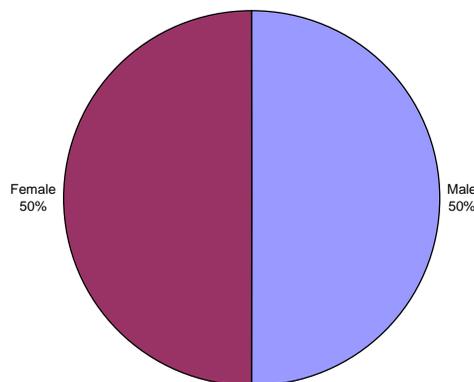
Figure 2.3 shows that of the Washington residents that are trail users, gender is evenly split. Trail users are equally male and female.

**Figure 2.2. Percent of Males and Females Who Are Trail Users.**



**Figure 2.3. Percent of Trail Users by Gender.**

Percent of All Trail Users by Gender:

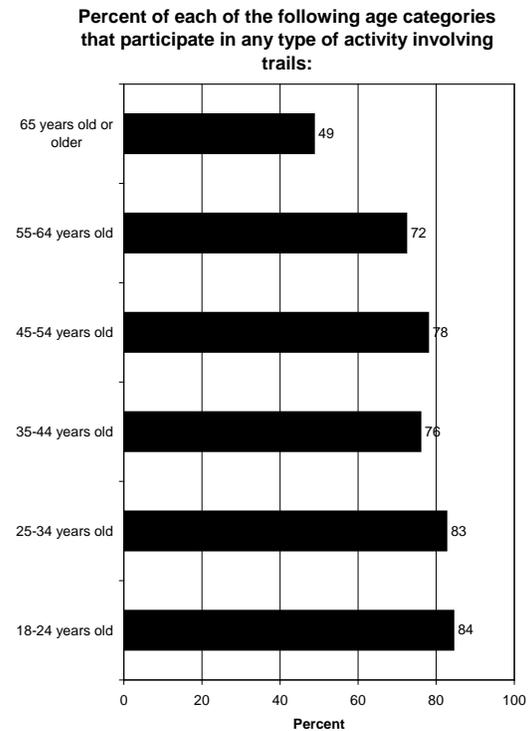


### Trail Use by Age

Figure 2.4 shows that every age category of Washington residents has at least 75% of individuals participating in outdoor recreation involving trails, except for those 65 years old and older which has about half of individuals participating in outdoor recreation involving trails. Regardless of age, a majority of residents participate in trails-related recreation.

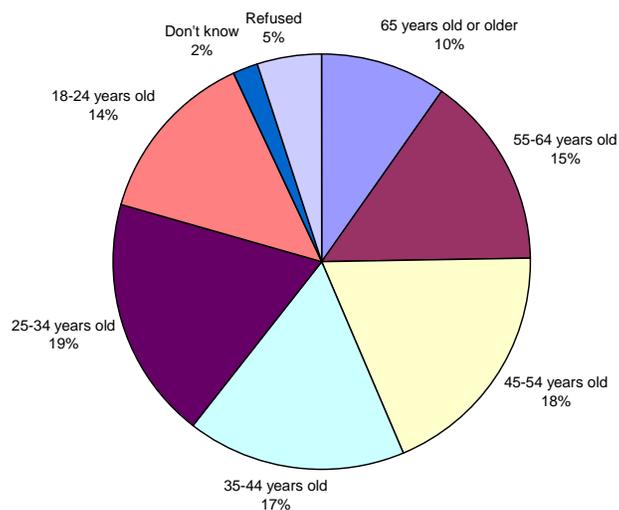
Figure 2.5 shows that of the Washington residents that are trail users, the most sizable categories for participation by age are 25 and 54 years old.

**Figure 2.4. Percent in the Following Age Categories Who Are Trail Users.**



**Figure 2.5. Percent of Trail Users by Age.**

**Percent of All Trail Users by Age:**

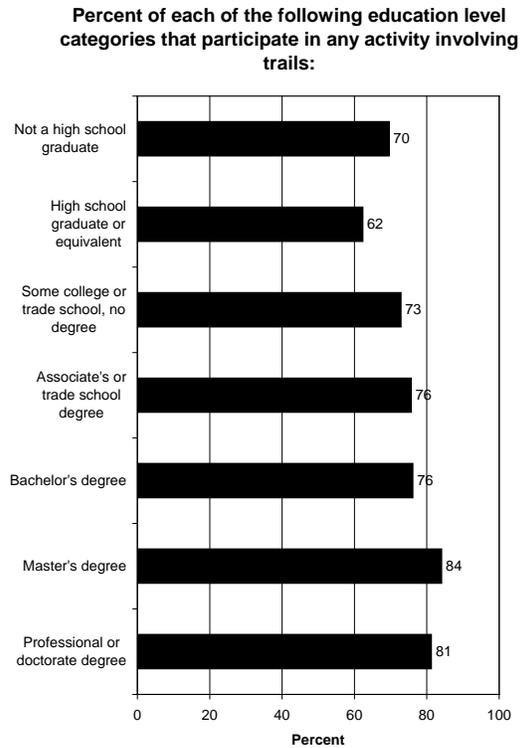


### Trail Use by Education Level

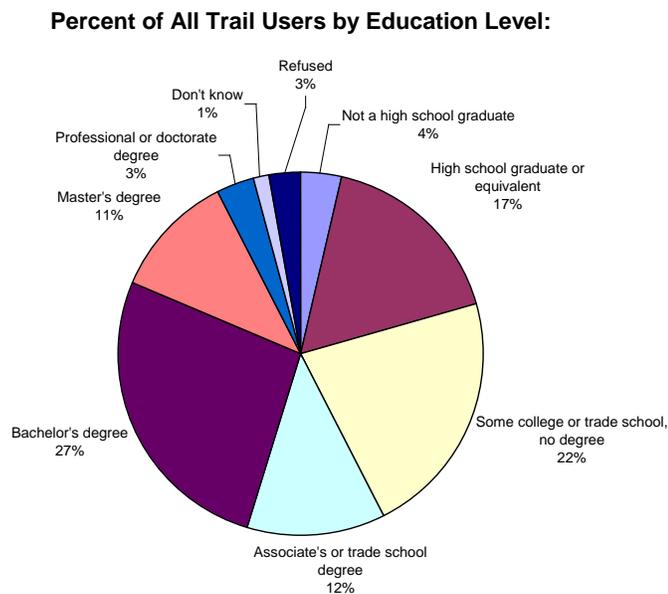
As shown in Figure 2.6, a majority of Washington residents' participate in outdoor recreation involving trails regardless of their education level. In addition, participation tends to increase along with education level.

Figure 2.7 indicates that of trail users, a majority of them have some level of post-high school education. Those with an associate's degree or higher make up about half of all trail users.

**Figure 2.6. Percent in the Following Education Categories Who Are Trail Users.**



**Figure 2.7. Percent of Trail Users by Education Level.**



### Trail Use by Household Income Level

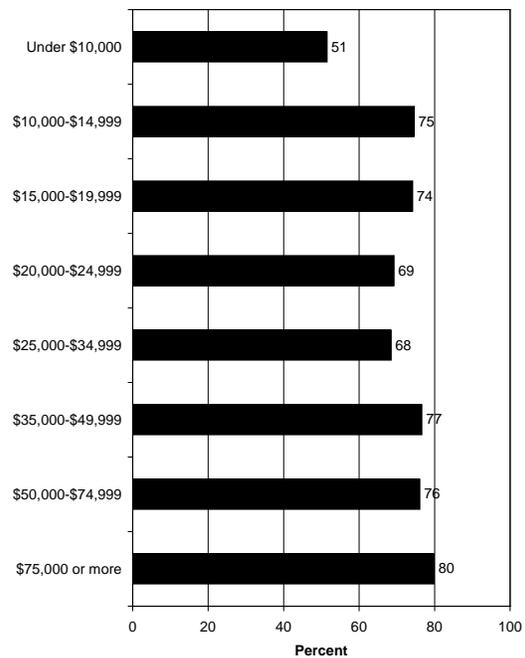
Figure 2.8 indicates that most income categories have at least 68% of all Washington residents participating in trail-related recreation; the exception is in the under \$10,000 category, where just over half of individuals participate.

Figure 2.9 shows that most trail users have a household income of at least \$35,000, while 34% have a household income of \$75,000 or more.

(Note that 19% of all trail users refused the income question or said that they were unsure.)

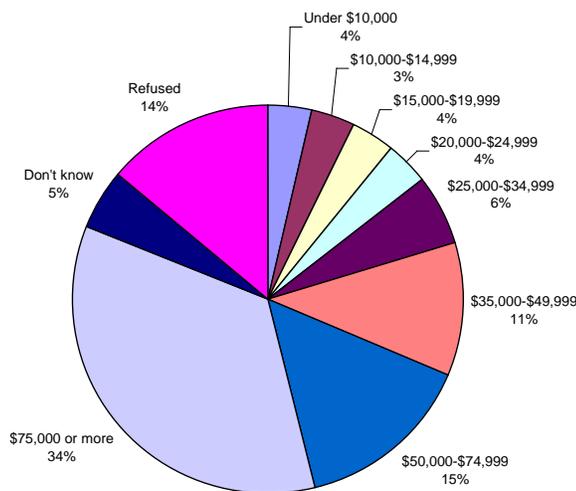
**Figure 2.8. Percent in the Following Income Level Categories Who Are Trail Users.**

Percent of each of the following income level categories that participate in any type of activity involving trails:



**Figure 2.9. Percent of Trail Users by Household Income Level.**

Percent of All Trail Users by Income Category:

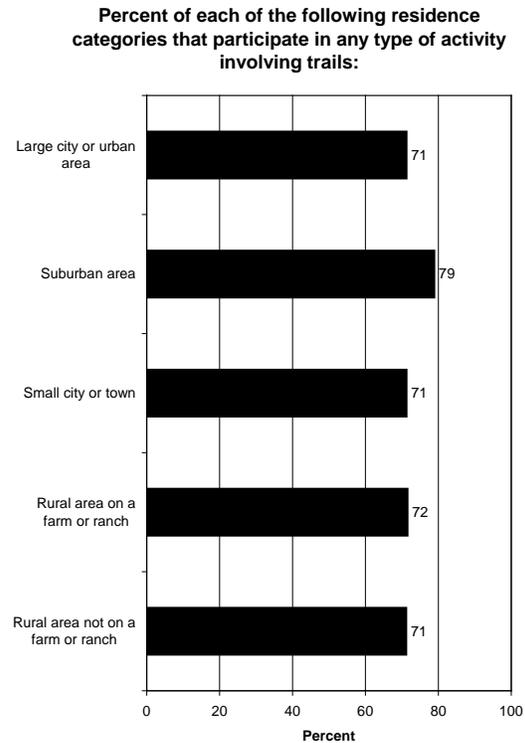


### Trail Use by Residence Type

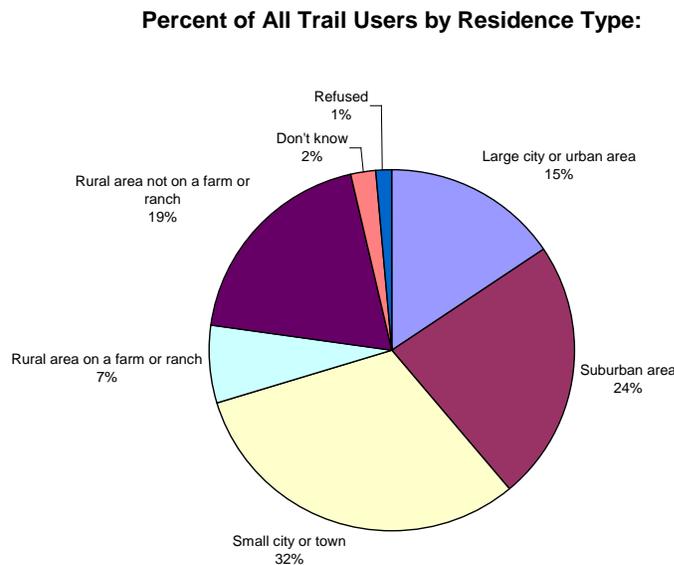
As shown in Figure 2.10, Washington residents' participation in trail-related outdoor recreation is consistent across the major residence categories, with the highest rate (79%) of participation among those living in a suburban area.

Figure 2.11 indicates that 39% of trail users live in a large city, urban area, or suburban area, 32% live in a small city or town, and 26% live in a rural area.

**Figure 2.10. Percent in the Following Residence Categories Who Are Trail Users.**



**Figure 2.11. Percent of Trail Users by Residence Type.**



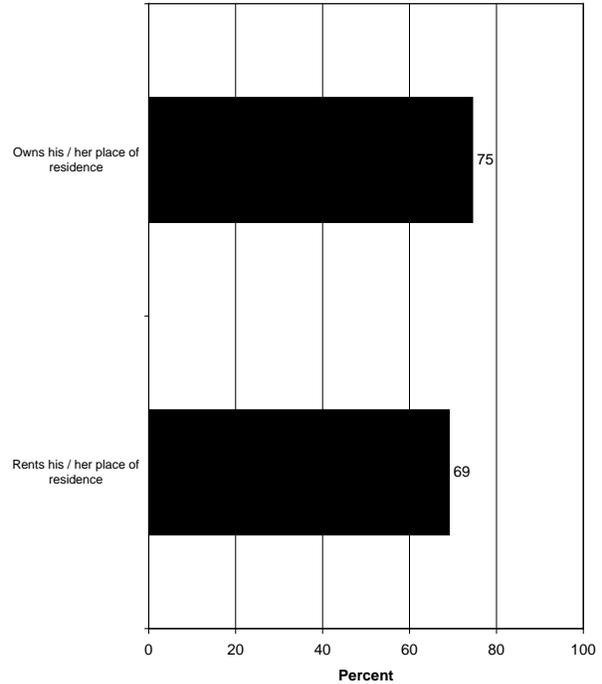
### Trail Use by Rent/Ownership of Residence

Figure 2.12 shows that large majorities of Washington residents who rent or who own their residence participate in trail-related outdoor recreation.

Figure 2.13 shows that nearly three quarters of all trail users are individuals who own their place of residence.

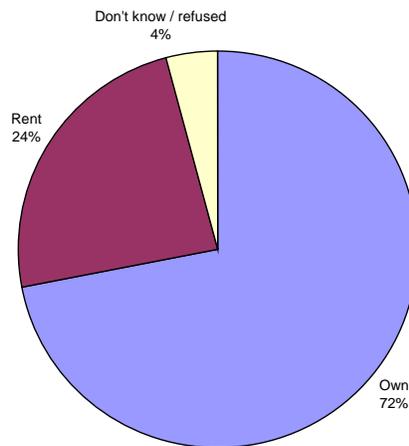
**Figure 2.12. Percent of Renters and Owners Who Are Trail Users.**

Percent of residence renters and owners that participate in any type of activity involving trails:



**Figure 2.13. Percent of Trail Users by Rent/Ownership of Residence.**

Percent of All Trail Users by Rent / Own Residence:



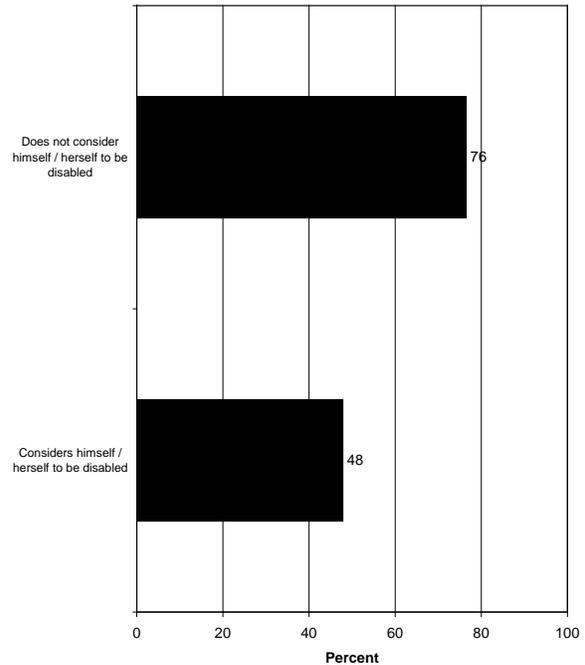
### Trail Use by Disability Status

As shown in Figure 2.14, at least three quarters of non-disabled Washington residents and nearly half of residents with disabilities participate in trail-related outdoor recreation.

Figure 2.15 shows that 7% of trail users overall are people with disabilities.

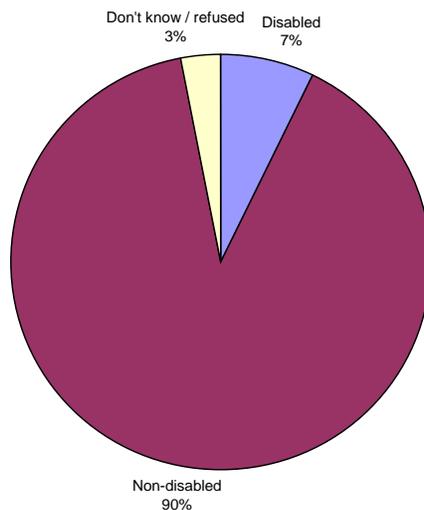
**Figure 2.14. Percent of Non-Disabled and Residents With Disabilities Who Are Trail Users.**

Percent of non-disabled and disabled people who participate in any type of activity involving trails:



**Figure 2.15. Percent of Trail Users by Disability Status.**

Percent of All Trail Users by Disability:



## Summary of Demographics of Trail Users

Washington residents of both genders use trails at a similar rate —73% of male residents and 72% of female residents. People with children under the age of 18 living are more likely to be trail users than those without children.

The vast majority of residents between the ages of 18 and 64 are trail users, but slightly less than half of people 65 years old or older use trails. In general, residents younger than the mean age of 46 are more likely to be trail users than residents in other age categories.

More than three quarters of residents in each of the education levels with a college degree (associate's degree or higher) are trail users. The correlation of income level with trails use varies, with those in the higher income brackets more likely to be trail users.

More than three quarters of suburban residents (79%) are trail users, while 71–72% of people living in large cities, small cities or towns, and rural areas, use trails. Three quarters of homeowners (75%) and 69% of renters in Washington are trail users.

Slightly less than half of all residents with disabilities (48%) are trail users, while 76% of non-disabled residents are trail users.

As the SCORP report shows, the population in Washington is growing. With that growth, the state is becoming more urban, older, and more diverse. These changes increase the demand for trail activities that meet the needs of these growing demographic groups.

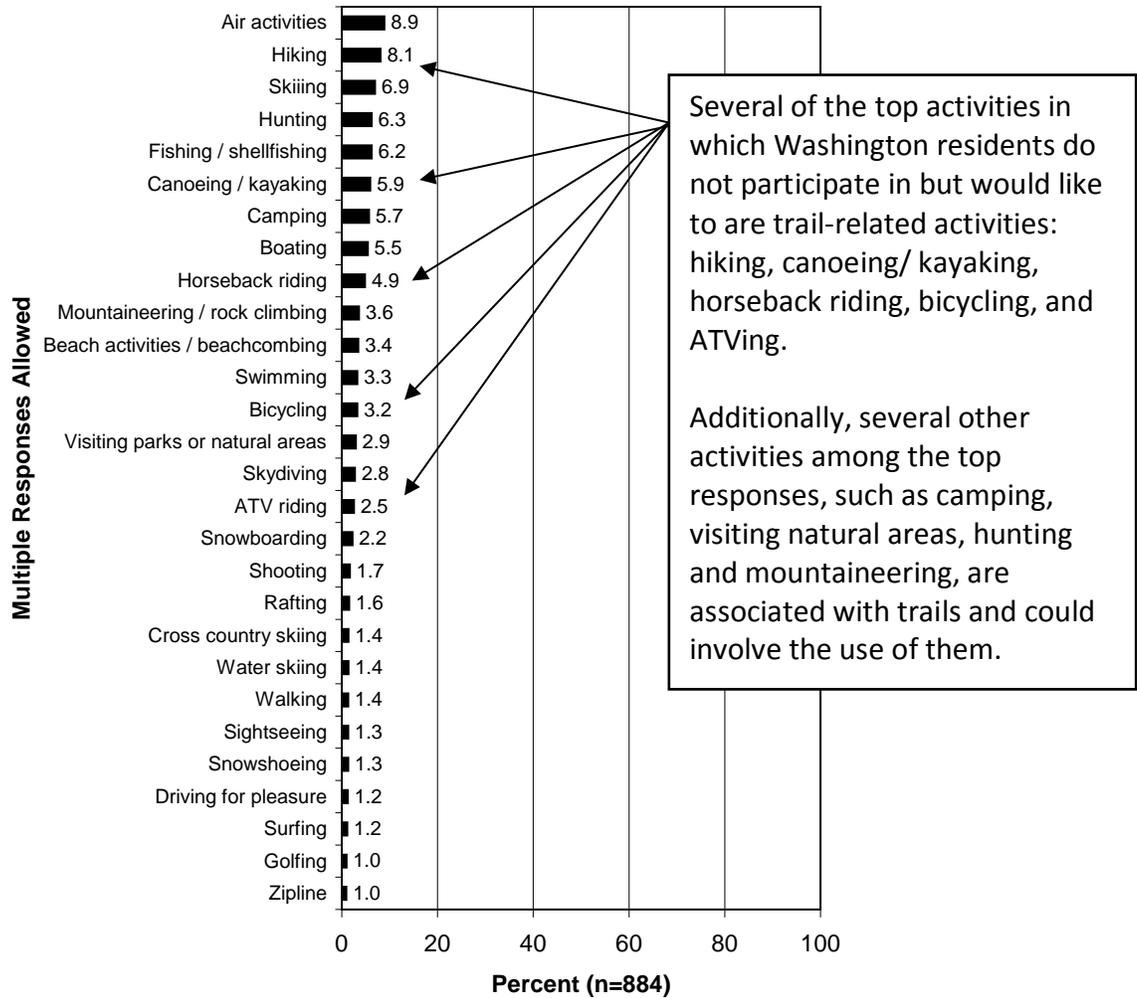
As mentioned, currently 79% of suburban residents and 71% of large city and urban residents use trails. As urbanization and development increases, it can be expected that the demand among these groups will also increase. And, while only 49% of residents age 65 years old and older are currently trail users, as the population ages, land managers and recreation providers can expect the number of older residents participating in trails activities to grow as well. As these trends continue, it remains important for land managers and recreation providers to consider these changes in trails planning and development. Demographic characteristics for each specific trails activity are included in Appendix B.

## LATENT DEMAND FOR ACTIVITIES INVOLVING TRAILS

The SCORP survey had two measures of latent demand for activities: Residents were asked about activities they did not do but wanted to do, and activities in which they *did* participate but wanted to do more. The graphs that follow reflect the results from the two questions out of all respondents who said there were activities they did not do but wanted to do or wanted to do more. More than a quarter (29%) of Washington State residents said that there are outdoor activities that they currently do *not* do but that they would like to do. Figure 2.16 shows these activities.

**Figure 2.16. Activities in Which Residents Currently Do Not Participate but in Which They Would Like to Participate.**

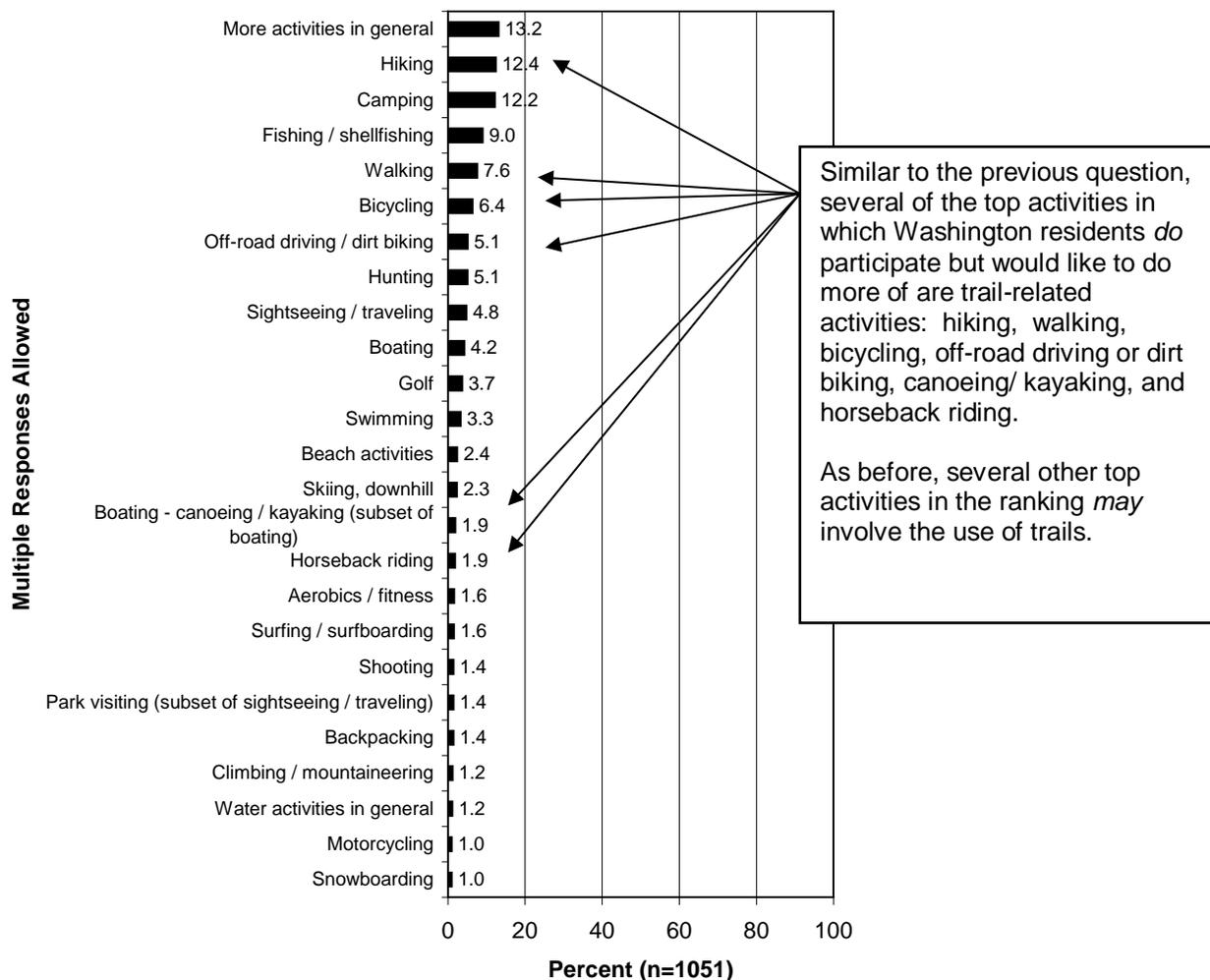
**Q341. Which outdoor activities do you think you'd like to do? (Asked of those who indicate that there is an activity(ies) that they do not currently do but would like to do in Washington.) (Shows only those named by at least 1.0% of respondents.)**



The second measure of latent demand asked residents to name activities in which they currently participate but in which they would like to participate more. A third of residents (33%) have activities in which they participate at a level lower than they would like to participate. Figure 2.17 shows the listing of activities named in the follow-up question.

**Figure 2.17. Activities in Which Residents Participate but in Which They Would Like to Participate More.**

**Q344. Which outdoor activities do you think you'd like to do more of in Washington? (Asked of those who indicate that there is an activity(ies) that they currently do but would like to do more of in Washington.) (Shows only those named by at least 1.0% of respondents.)**



## TRENDS IN DEMAND FOR TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

Table 2.4 shows a comparison of the rankings of 17 major trail-related outdoor recreational activities from two previous SCORP surveys (2002, 2006) with the ranking from the 2012 SCORP survey. It is an abbreviated version of the complete activity comparison list in the SCORP. Because of methodological differences between the three surveys, a direct comparison of participation rates was not possible; however, a comparison of the relative rankings is made in Table 2.4.

In examining the trends, it is important to remember that Table 2.4 reflects overall participation in each activity category, not strictly trail-related activity participation. For instance, the first activity in the table, “walking without a pet,” includes the entire 71% of Washington residents who walked without a pet on sidewalks, streets, indoor facilities, etc., not just the 35% who walked without a pet in a park or trail setting. For this reason, the rankings below should be interpreted as approximate, but not exact, participation trends for trail-related activities.

**Table 2.4. Comparison of Rankings in Trail Activities from SCORP in 2002, 2006, and 2012.**

Activity	2002 SCORP Rank	2006 SCORP Rank*	2012 SCORP Rank	Percent (2012 Survey)
Walking Without a Pet	1	2	2	71.3
Hiking	8	16	6	53.9
Walking With a Pet	5	7	7	51.6
Bicycle Riding	6	9	10	36.9
Jogging or Running	15	12	12	36.2
Boating—Canoeing, Kayaking, Rowing, Manual Craft	38	28	30	11.1
Off-Road—4-Wheel Drive Vehicle	23	26	35	9.5
Camping—Backpacking/Primitive Location	51	50	36	8.3
Horseback Riding	34	55	38	7.7
Off-Road—ATV/Dune Buggy	37	39	41	7.3
Snowshoeing	61	63	44	6.7
Roller or Inline Skating	30	38	50	4.7
Off-Road—Motorcycle	35	46	52	4.2
Skateboarding	41	56	58	2.9
Snowmobiling	44**	61	60	2.7
ATV Riding on Snow or Ice	44**	42	62	2.4
Camping—With a Kayak/Canoe	62	62	62	2.4

\*Based on peak month data; therefore, ranking based on the lower bound estimate of participants in 2006.

\*\*Snowmobiling and ATV riding were combined into one category in 2002.

## THE ABILITY OF SUPPLY TO MEET PUBLIC DEMAND

As part of their efforts to assess outdoor recreation supply for the SCORP study, the researchers conducted two separate web-based surveys of providers of outdoor recreation in Washington State. One surveyed local recreation providers and the other surveyed federal and state agencies, tribes, and nonprofit organizations. Recreation providers gave detailed information on supply, capacity, and the demand met, as well as information about needs and challenges in providing outdoor recreation.

For the local providers survey, respondents were asked to rate the importance of 45 recreation opportunities. Table 2.5 shows only the seven trail opportunities in the survey; they are ranked by level of importance among all 45 activities that the local provider survey asked about in the SCORP.

**Table 2.5. Rank in Importance of Activity from SCORP in 2012.**

	Rank in importance (among seven trail opportunities)	Rank in importance (among all 45 opportunities)	Total number of providers rating importance as high or medium
Surfaced trails	1	3	42
Unsurfaced trails	1	3	42
Surfaced trails appropriate for bicycles	3	18	26
Unsurfaced trails appropriate for bicycles	4	21	20
Designated bridle trails	5	29	10
Designated snow and ice trails	6	37	2
Designated motorized trails	7	45	0

Not all outdoor recreation providers responded to the survey. However, the findings suggest that providers consider surfaced and unsurfaced trails most important. These trails were also ranked in the top 3 among all 45 opportunities in the SCORP survey. Designated motorized trails ranked last among all 45 recreation opportunities, with none of the responding providers rating designated motorized trails as of high or medium importance.

The SCORP findings suggest that trails are a priority area for improvement when compared to other types of outdoor recreation. When providers estimated the percent of demand being met, trail opportunities or activities ranked lowest among all 45 opportunities. Nearly all the trail opportunities or activities ranked much lower than other activities in the SCORP; all landed in the bottom 10% of activities meeting the demand of the public in the state.

As table 2.6 shows, although surfaced and unsurfaced trails ranked in the top 3 for importance, only a little more than half of estimated demand is being met (mean percent of demand met).

**Table 2.6. Mean Percentage of Estimated Demand Met.**

	Rank in demand met (among seven trail opportunities)	Rank in demand met (among all 45 opportunities)	Mean percent of demand met
Unsurfaced trails	1	35	56.59
Surfaced trails	2	37	53.59
Surfaced trails appropriate for bicycles	3	38	52.23
Unsurfaced trails appropriate for bicycles	4	39	51.15
Designated bridle trails	5	42	48.25
Designated motorized trails	6	44	46.67
Designated snow and ice trails	7	45	40

Among the lowest ranked opportunities for meeting demand overall (and specifically pertaining to trails) are designated snow and ice trails, designated motorized trails, and designated bridle trails. Providers estimated that less than half of demand for these activities is being met in Washington.

The SCORP findings show that from 2006 to 2012, the importance of snowshoeing (supported by snow and ice trails) and horseback riding (supported by designated bridle trails) both increased in ranking based on participation rates. On the other hand, off-roading activities (including ATV, 4-wheel, and motorcycle riding) experienced a decline in participation rankings between 2006 and 2012.

Because of the increased use of snow and ice trails and designated bridle trails and with the low demand being met, it is reasonable to conclude that additional opportunities in these activities would be welcomed by Washington State residents.

Many off-roading activities had a substantial drop in participation from 2002 and 2006 to 2012. Off-road 4-wheel driving fell 10.5 in ranking, while off-road motorcycling fell 12.5 in the ranking. However, it is also important to note that designated motorized trails rank last in meeting demand among 45 activities in the state. The SCORP data indicate that off-road driving and dirt biking activities are among the top 10 activities that residents would like to do more.

Again, not all outdoor recreation providers responded to the survey and some provided incomplete responses, so the results cannot be generalized to all providers in Washington. While further investigation is likely needed, the findings do suggest that the supply of trail related recreation opportunities is not completely meeting public demand.

## CHAPTER 3: PROGRESS SINCE 1991

The 1991 Washington State Trails Plan defined 15 trails issue categories and one to three specific problems to address in each issue. The result was a list of 31 problems with specific solutions and actions. To assess progress since 1991, the Trails Advisory Committee completed multiple surveys to explore the state's success at meeting the issues and solutions outlined in the *1991 Washington State Trails Plan*.

Chapter 4 discusses the major issues and problems that are recommended for consideration based on the research collected in this study.

### ASSESSING CURRENT TRAIL ISSUES

The Trails Advisory Committee rated the importance of the 15 trail issues outlined in the 1991 plan plus three additional issues for a total of 18 issues.

The 18 issues were:

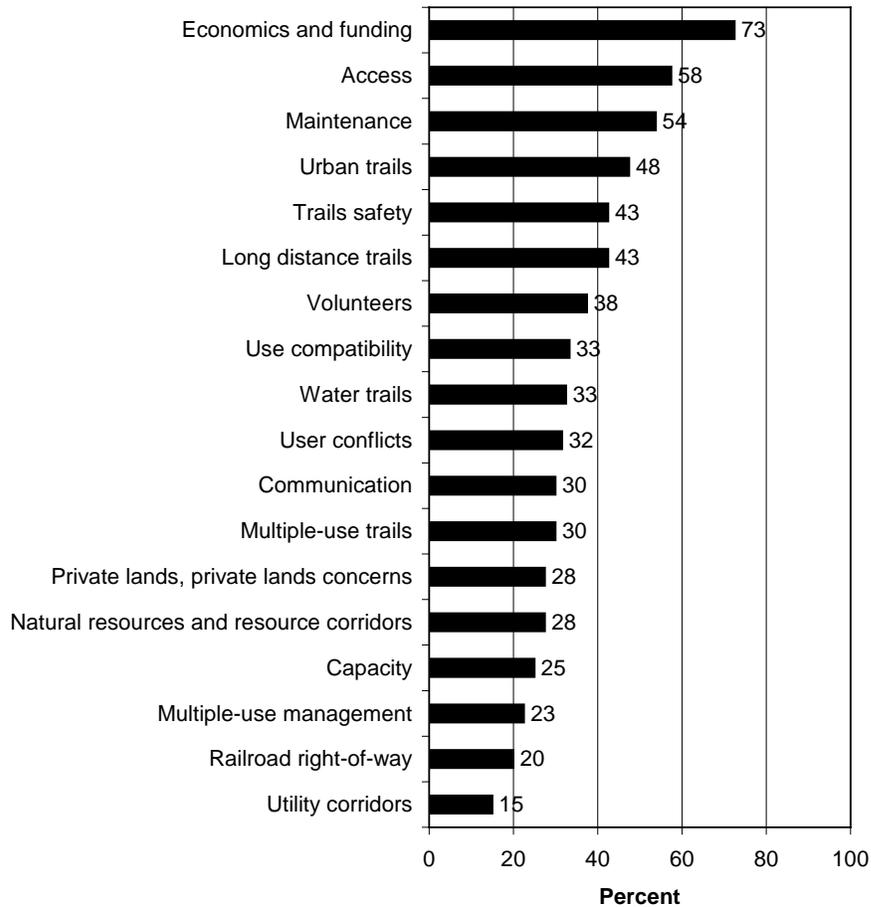
- Access
- Capacity
- Communication
- Economic and funding
- Long distance trails and a state trail network
- Maintenance
- Multiple-use management
- Multiple-use trails
- Natural resources and resource corridors
- Private lands, private concerns
- Railroad right-of-way (Rails to Trails)
- Trail safety (new in 2012)
- Urban trails (new in 2012)
- Use compatibility
- User conflicts (new in 2012)
- Utility corridor
- Volunteers
- Water trails

As shown in Figure 3.1, the Trails Advisory Committee indicated that economics and funding are by far the top issue (73% of respondents rated this as a 9 or 10 in importance). Access and maintenance also rank two and three, respectively (with a majority rating each a 9 or 10 in importance).

At the other end of the spectrum, less than a quarter of the Trails Advisory Committee rated multiple-use management, railroad right-of-way, and utility corridors with a 9 or 10 in importance.

**Figure 3.1. Current Trail Issues (Percent Rating the Importance as 9 or 10).**

**On a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important," the percent rating the importance of each of the following issues for Washington trails in 2013 as a 9 or 10.**



## ASSESSING CURRENT TRAIL PROBLEMS

As reported in the previous section, the 1991 Washington State Trails Plan defined 15 trail issues. Each issue was then defined by one to three specific problem statements. The result was a list of 31 specific problems to be addressed by the trails plan.

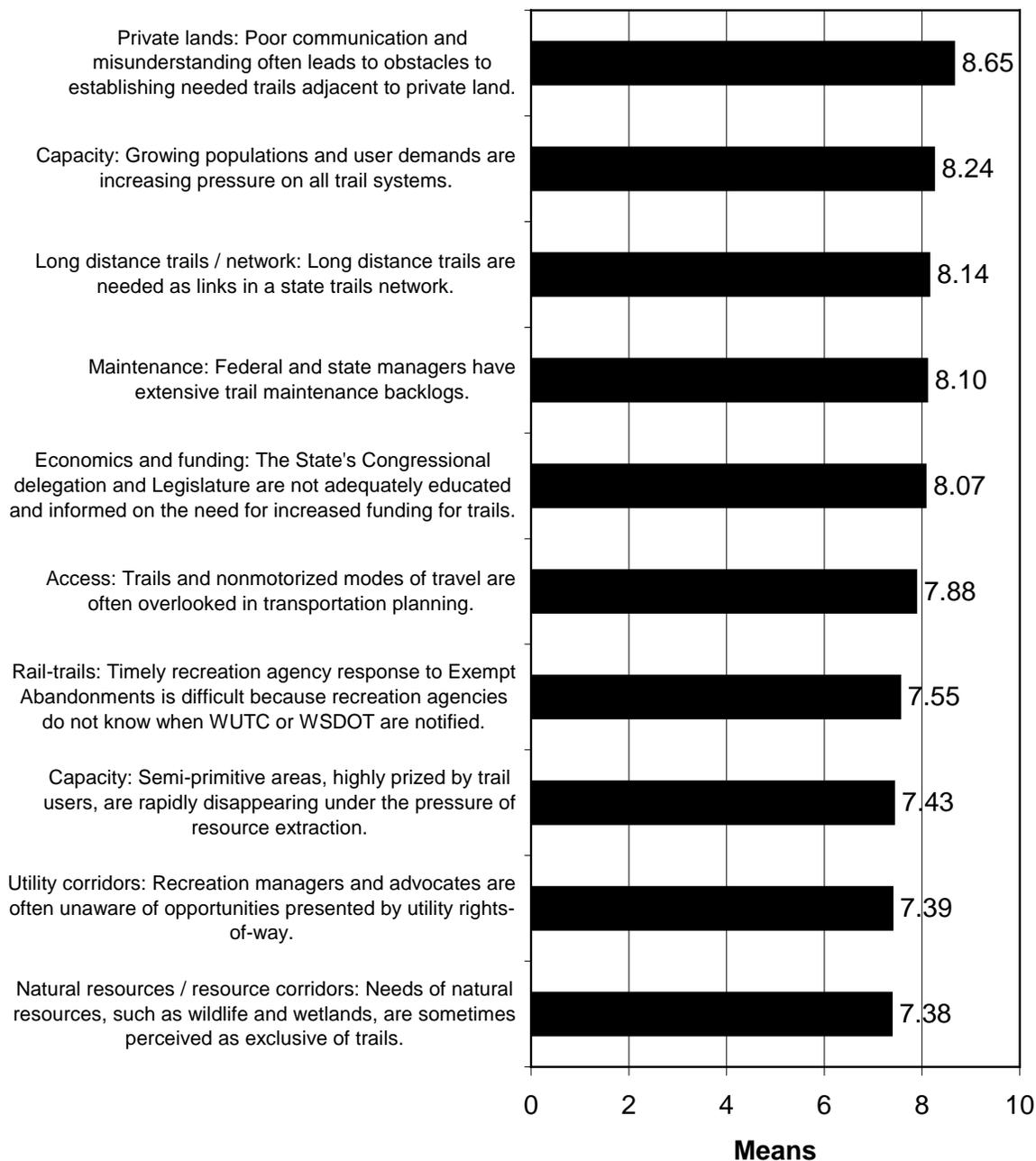
The Trails Advisory Committee rated the importance of the 31 trail problems on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is “not at all important” and 10 is “extremely important.” In general, the Trails Advisory Committee agreed that all 31 trail problems from the 1991 plan were still important; all problems had a mean rating above the midpoint of 5.00 ( Figures 3.2–3.4). Five top problems emerged, with at least half of the Trails Advisory Committee rating the importance of these problems as a 9 or 10 (Figures 3.5–3.7).

The top five trail problem statements are :

1. Private lands: Poor communication and misunderstanding often leads to obstacles to establishing trails adjacent to private land (8.65 mean rating; 57% rated this problem a 9 or 10 in importance) Economics and funding: The State’s Congressional delegation and Legislature are not adequately educated and informed on the need for increased funding for trails (8.07 mean rating; 55% rated this a 9 or 10)
2. Long distance trails/network: Long distance trails are needed as links in a state trails network (8.14 mean rating; 55% rated this a 9 or 10)
3. Capacity: Growing populations and user demands are increasing pressure on all trail systems (8.24 mean rating; 52% rated this a 9 or 10) Maintenance: Federal and state managers have extensive trail maintenance backlogs (8.10 mean rating; 50% rated this a 9 or 10)

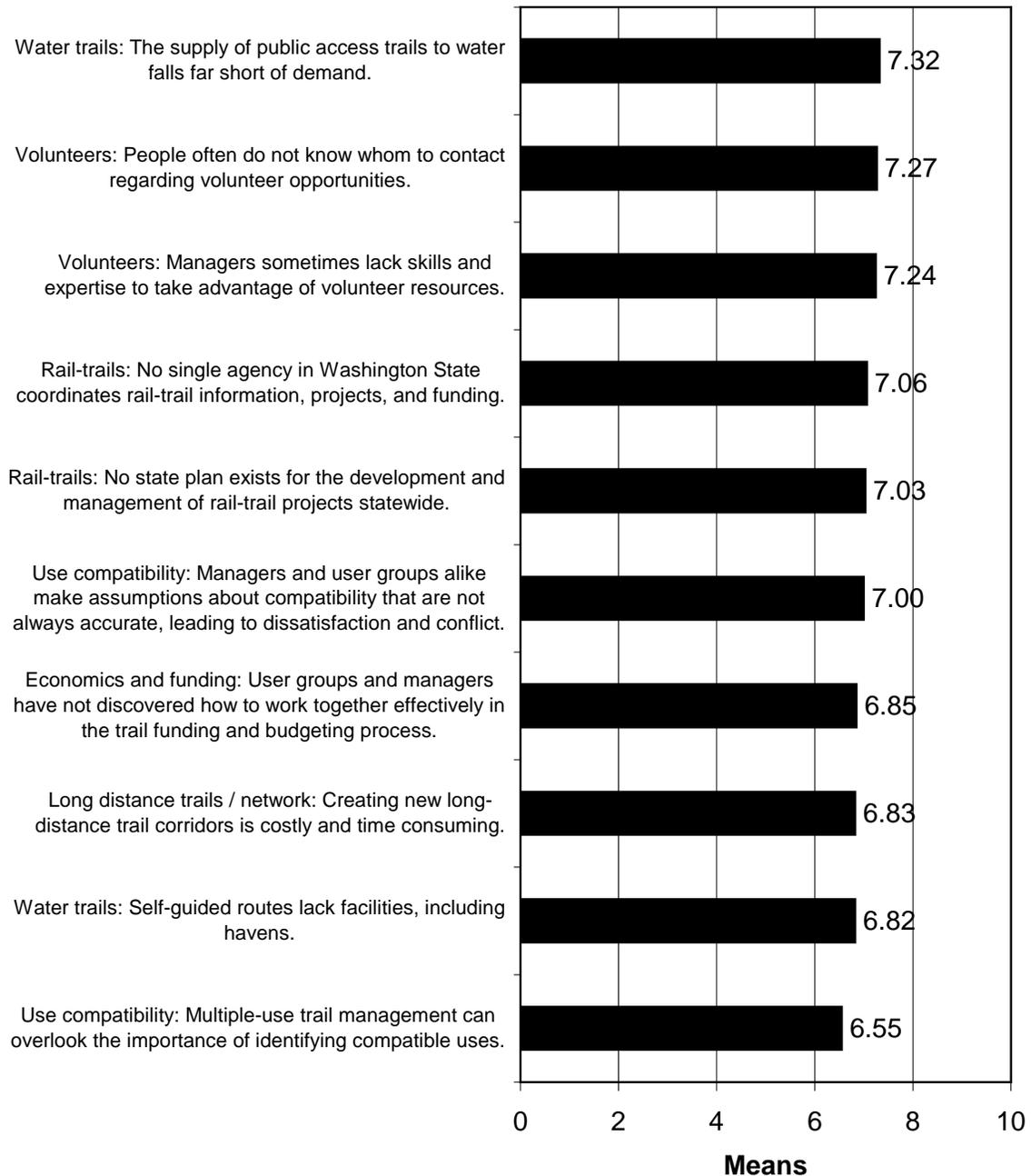
**Figure 3.2. Mean Ratings of Importance of Trail Problems (Part 1).**

**On a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important," the mean rating of importance of the following as problems for trails management in 2013. (Part 1)**



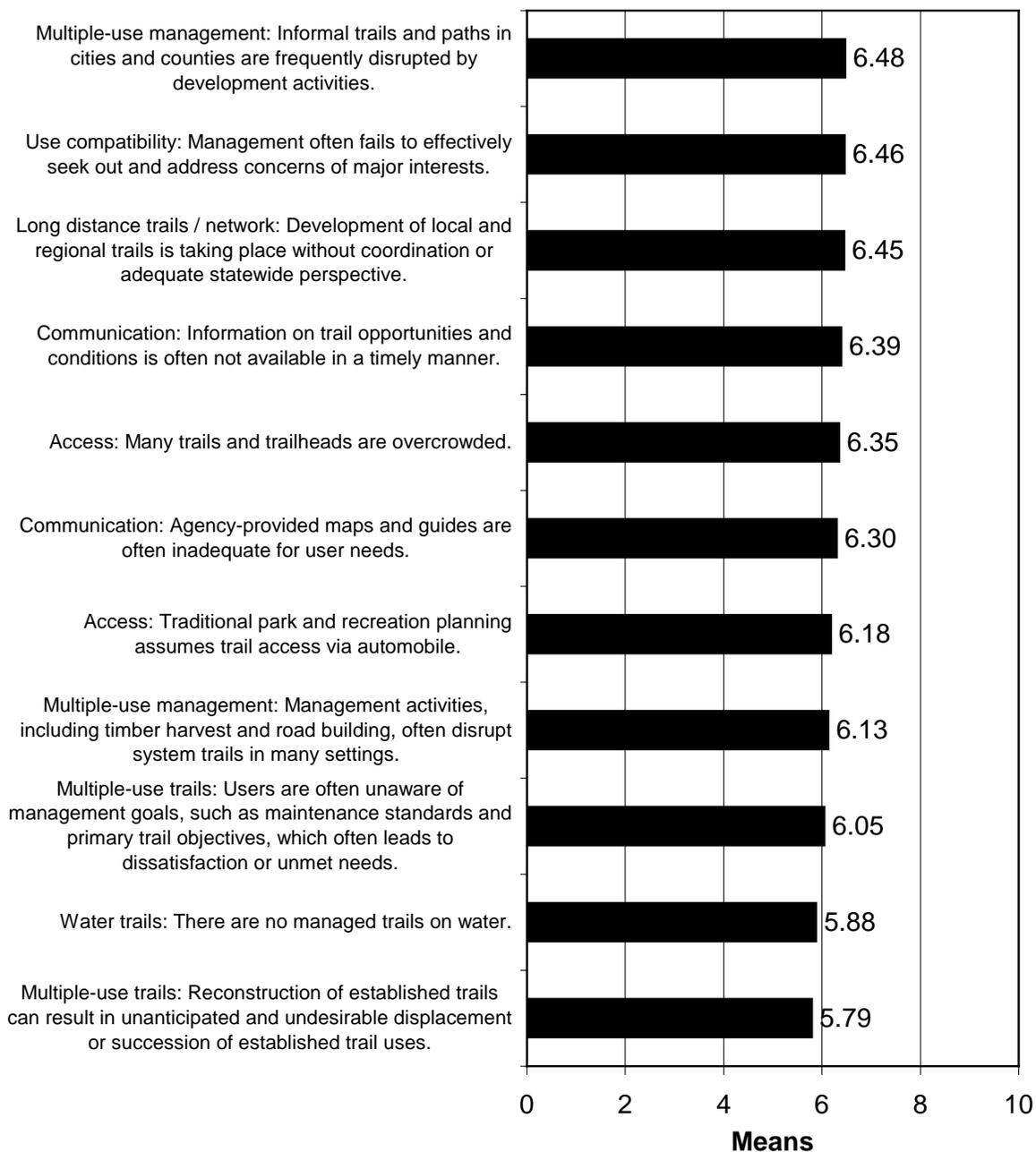
**Figure 3.3. Mean Ratings of Importance of Trail Problems (Part 2).**

**On a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important," the mean rating of importance of the following as problems for trails management in 2013. (Part 2)**



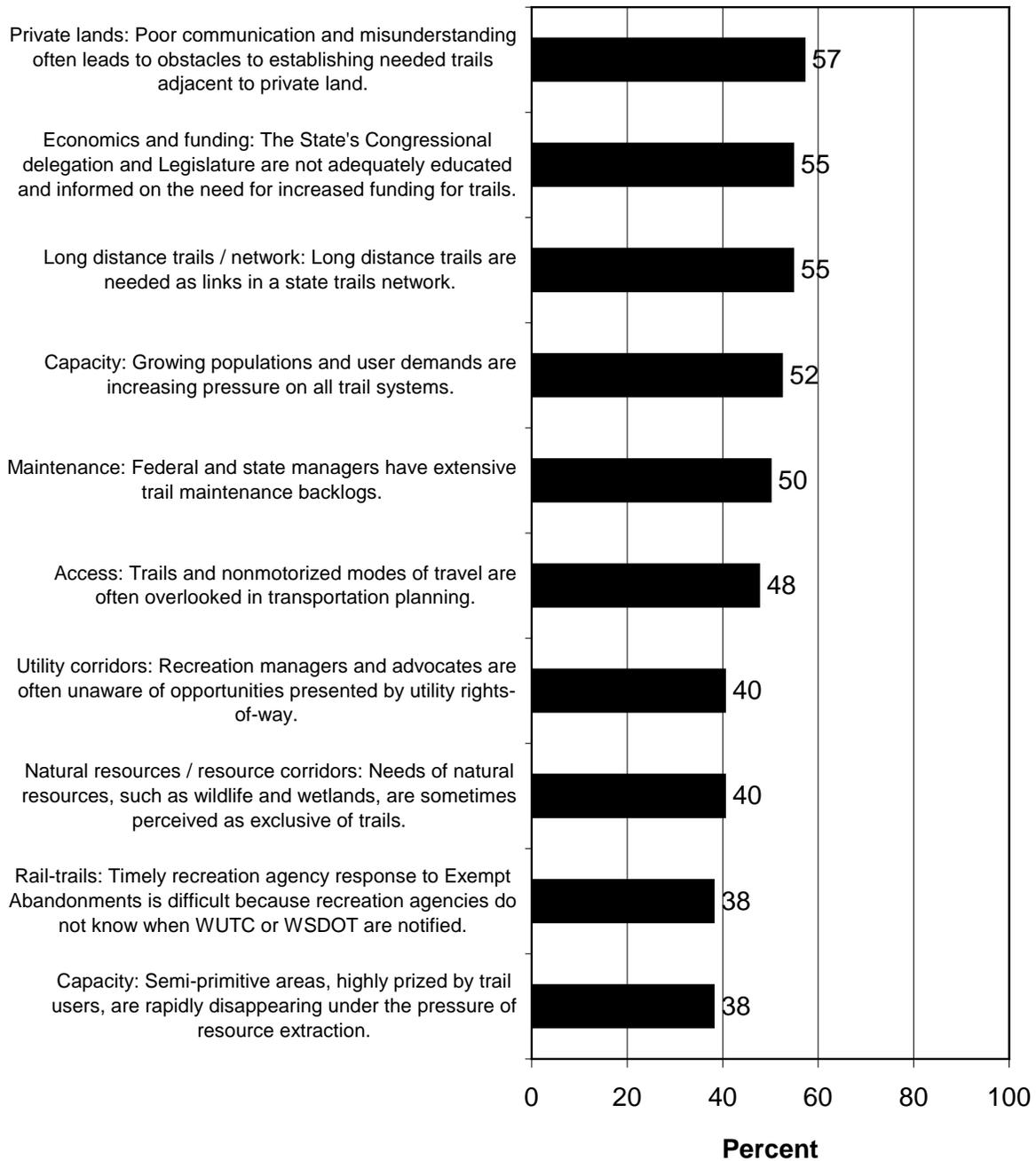
**Figure 3.4. Mean Ratings of Importance of Trail Problems (Part 3).**

**On a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important," the mean rating of importance of the following as problems for trails management in 2013. (Part 3)**



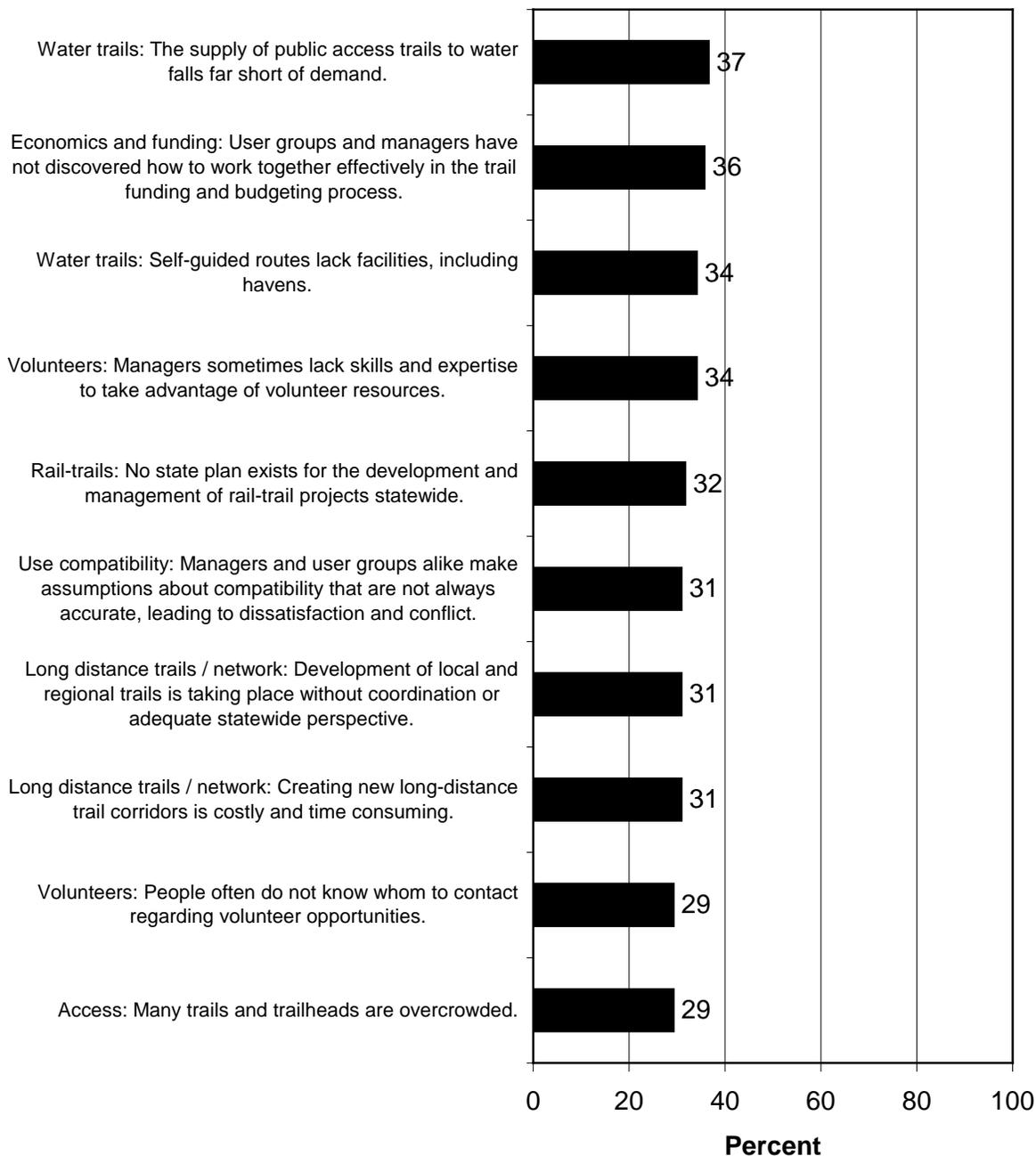
**Figure 3.5. Percent Rating Importance of Trail Problems as a 9 or 10 (Part 1).**

**On a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important," percent who rated the importance of the following problems as a 9 or 10 for trails management in 2013. (Part 1)**



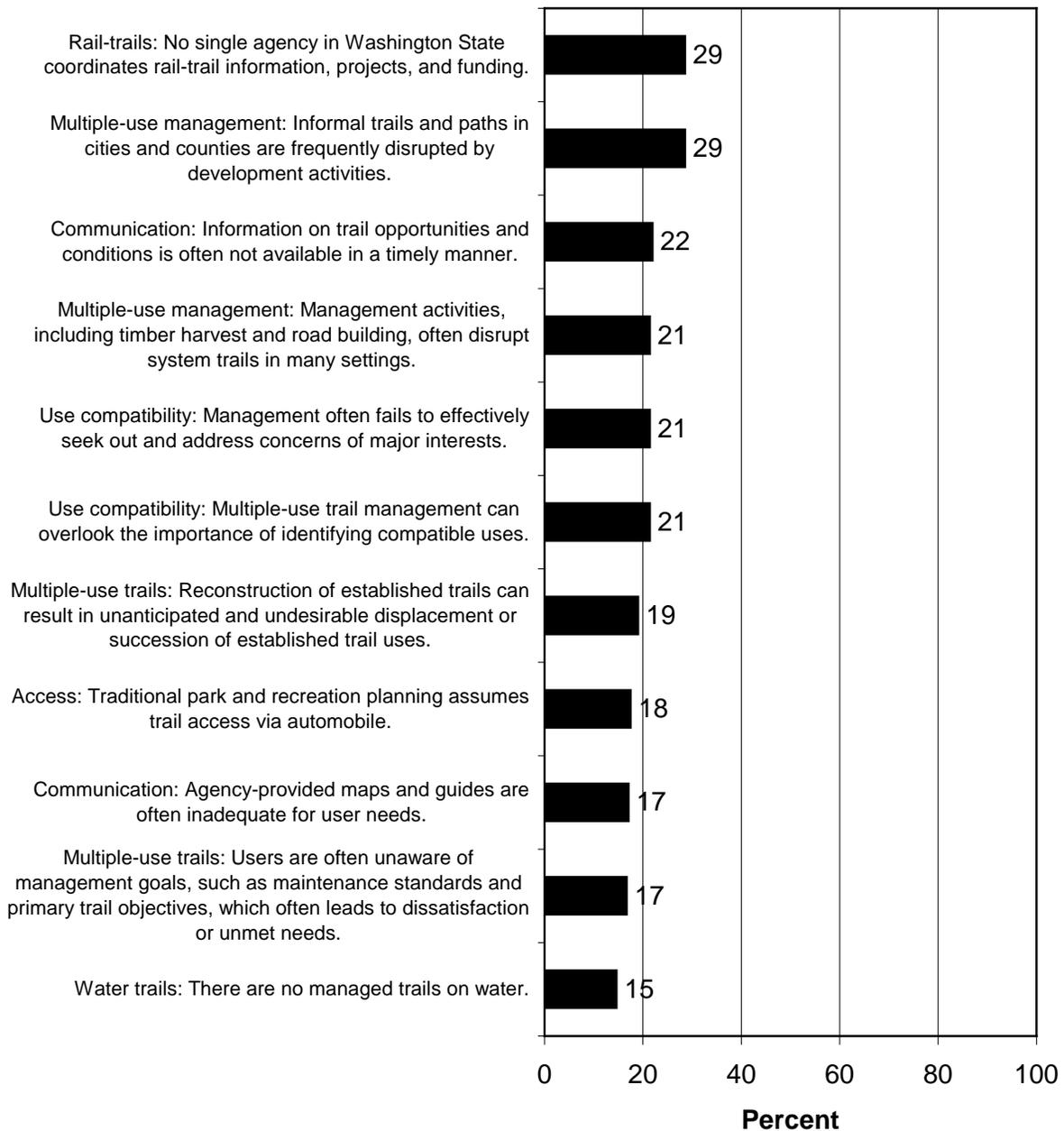
**Figure 3.6. Percent Rating Importance of Trail Problems as a 9 or 10 (Part 2).**

**On a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important," percent who rated the importance of the following problems as a 9 or 10 for trails management in 2013. (Part 2)**



**Figure 3.7. Percent Rating Importance of Trail Problems as a 9 or 10 (Part 3).**

**On a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important," percent who rated the importance of the following problems as a 9 or 10 for trails management in 2013. (Part 3)**



## ASSESSING PROGRESS TOWARD SOLUTIONS

The *1991 Washington State Trails Plan* also outlined 29 solutions, each addressing specific trail problem statements. The Trails Advisory Committee rated progress toward implementing these solutions. In general, the Trails Advisory Committee rated the progress made toward all 29 solutions relatively high; again, the mean rating for each solution was above the midpoint (5.00) (Figures 3.8–3.10). However, none of the solutions received a mean rating of 8.00 or higher (representing excellent progress on the rating spectrum). Figures 3.11–3.13 show the percentage rating each solution as a 9 or 10. Less than half of the Trails Advisory Committee rated progress at a 9 or 10 for each solution.

The solutions toward which the most progress has been made since 1991 were:

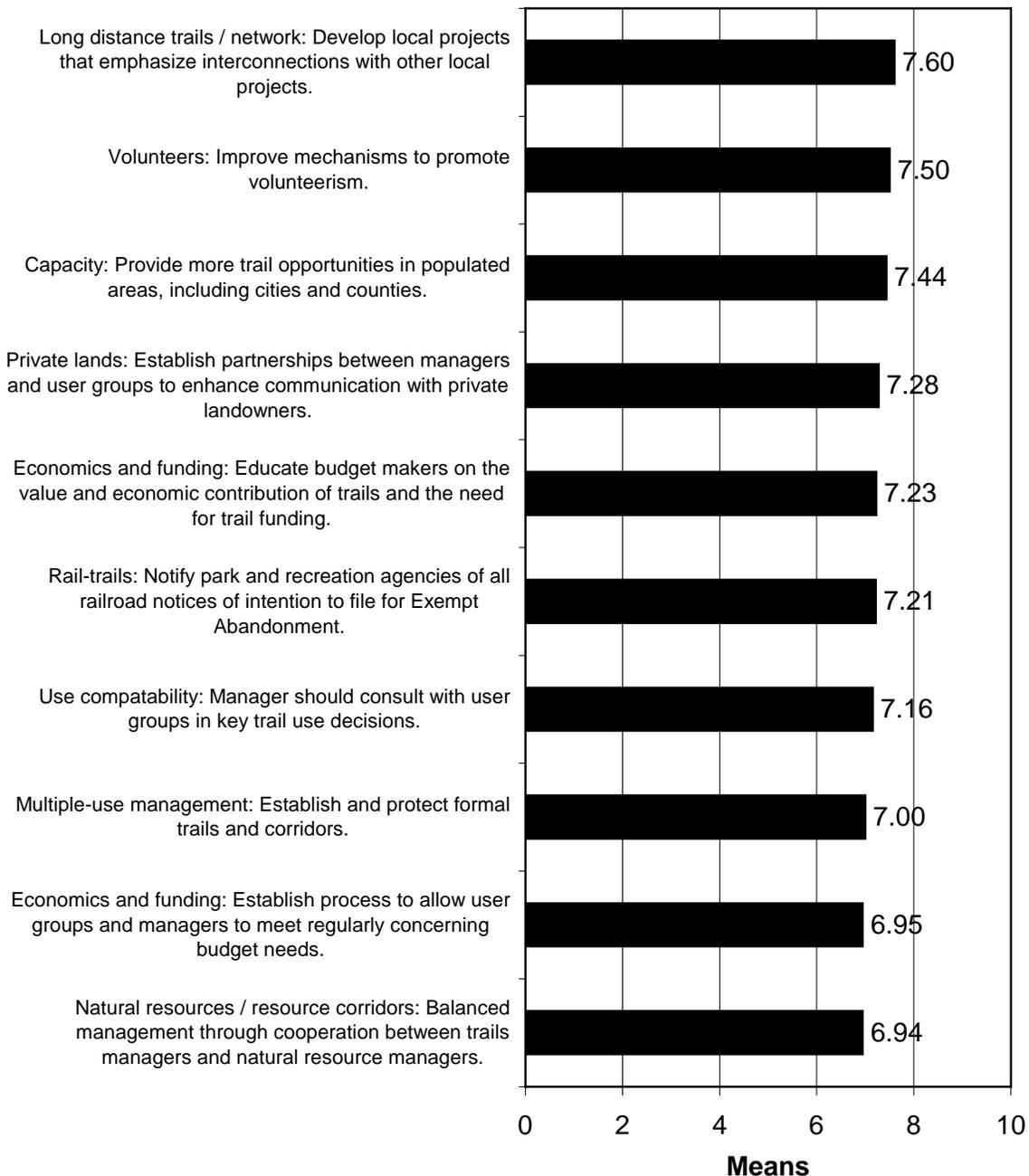
- Long distance trails and a state trail network: Develop local projects that emphasize interconnections with other local projects (7.60 mean rating; 38% rated progress a 9 or 10)
- Volunteers: Improve mechanisms to promote volunteerism (7.50 mean rating; 29% rated progress a 9 or 10)

The solutions toward which the least progress has been made since 1991 were:

- Multiple-use trails: Provide new or substitute trails (5.84 mean rating)
- Use compatibility: Provide on-the-ground management presence during peak use times such as weekends (5.58 mean rating)
- Access: Publicize existing opportunities on less crowded trails (5.46 mean rating)

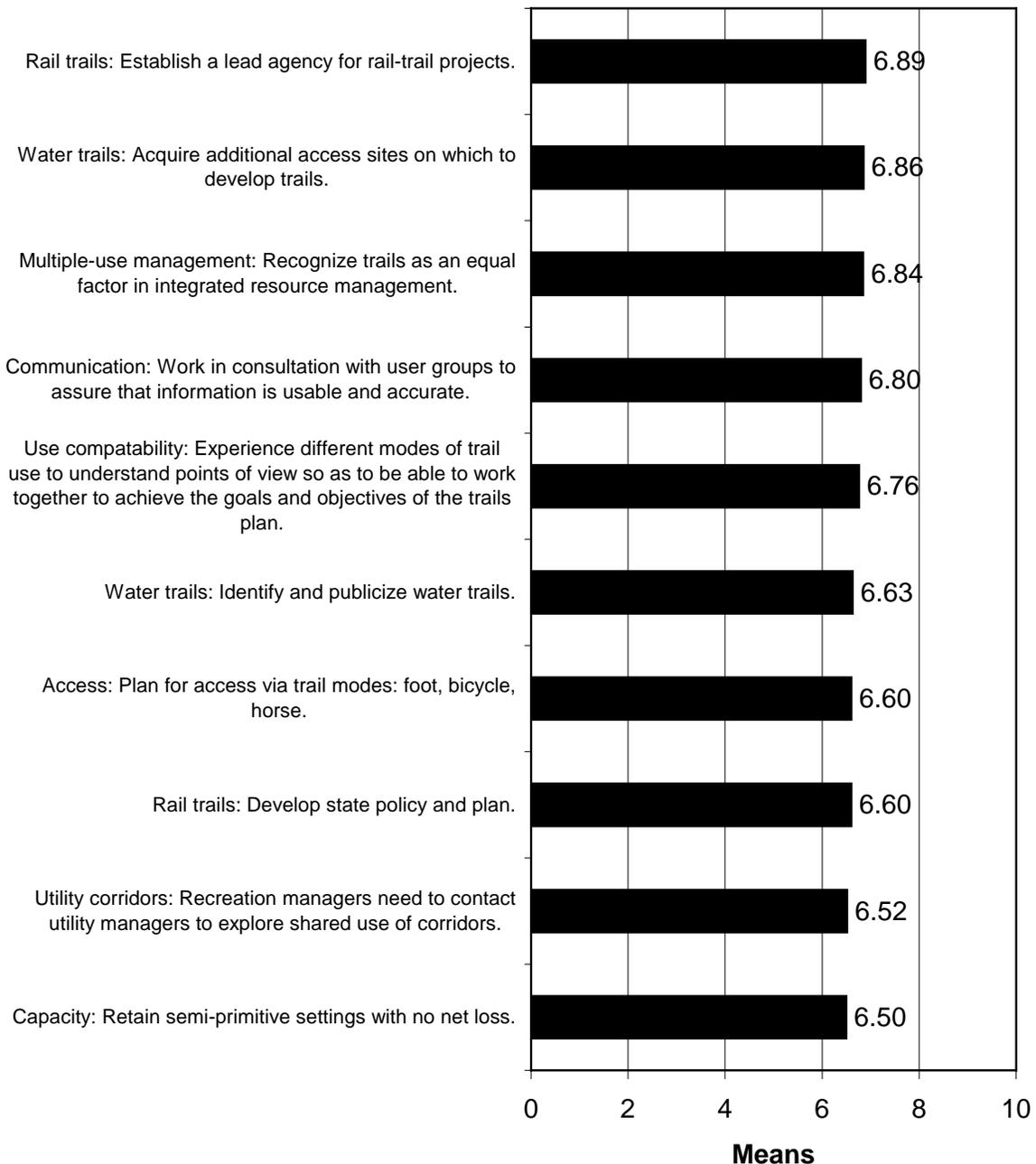
**Figure 3.8. Mean Ratings of the Progress Made Toward Solutions in the Past 10 Years (Part 1).**

**On a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is "poor" and 10 is "excellent," the mean rating of the progress made towards each of the following solutions in the past 20 years. (Part 1)**



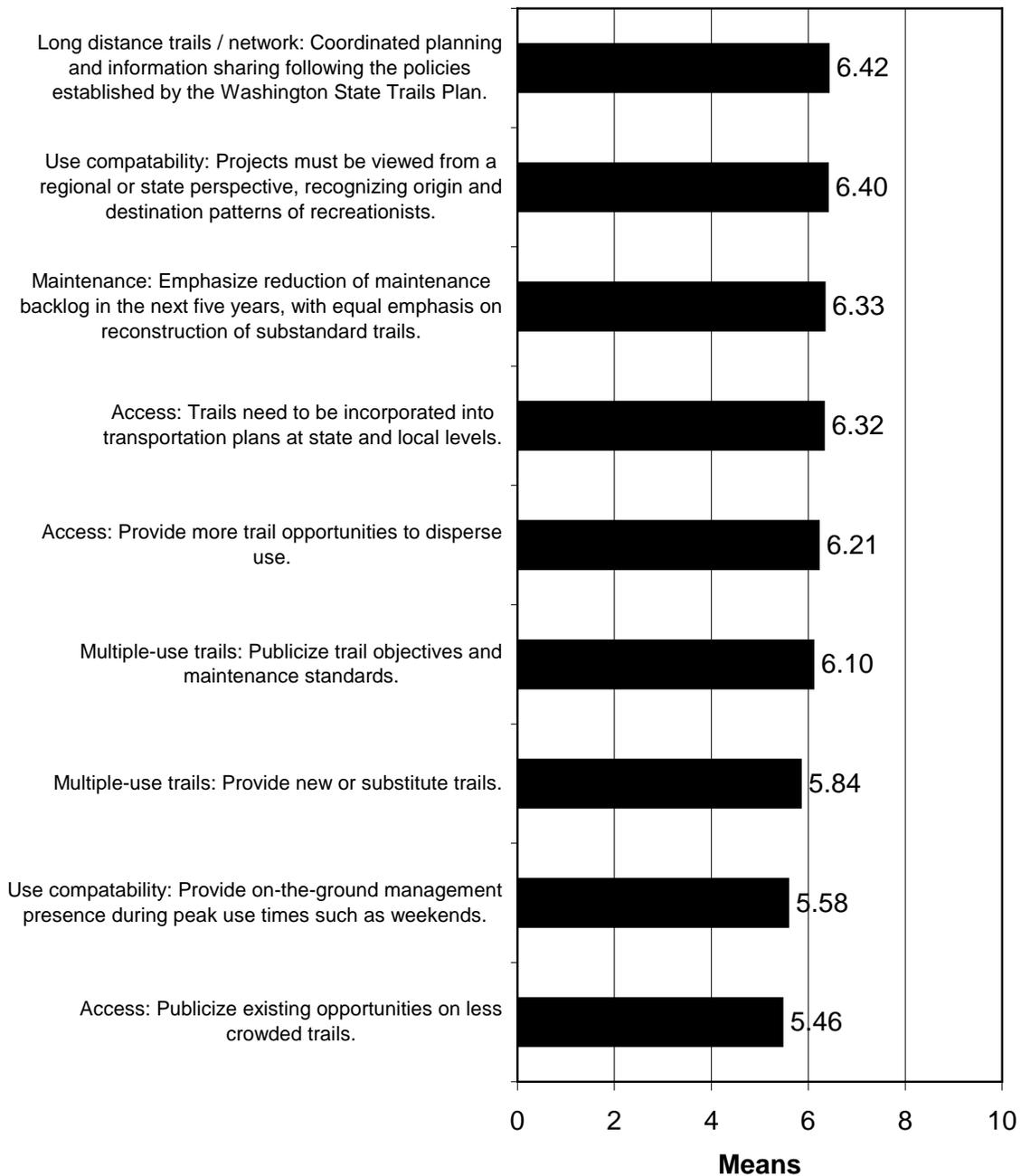
**Figure 3.9. Mean Ratings of the Progress Made Toward Solutions in the Past 10 Years (Part 2).**

**On a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is "poor" and 10 is "excellent," the mean rating of the progress made towards each of the following solutions in the past 20 years. (Part 2)**



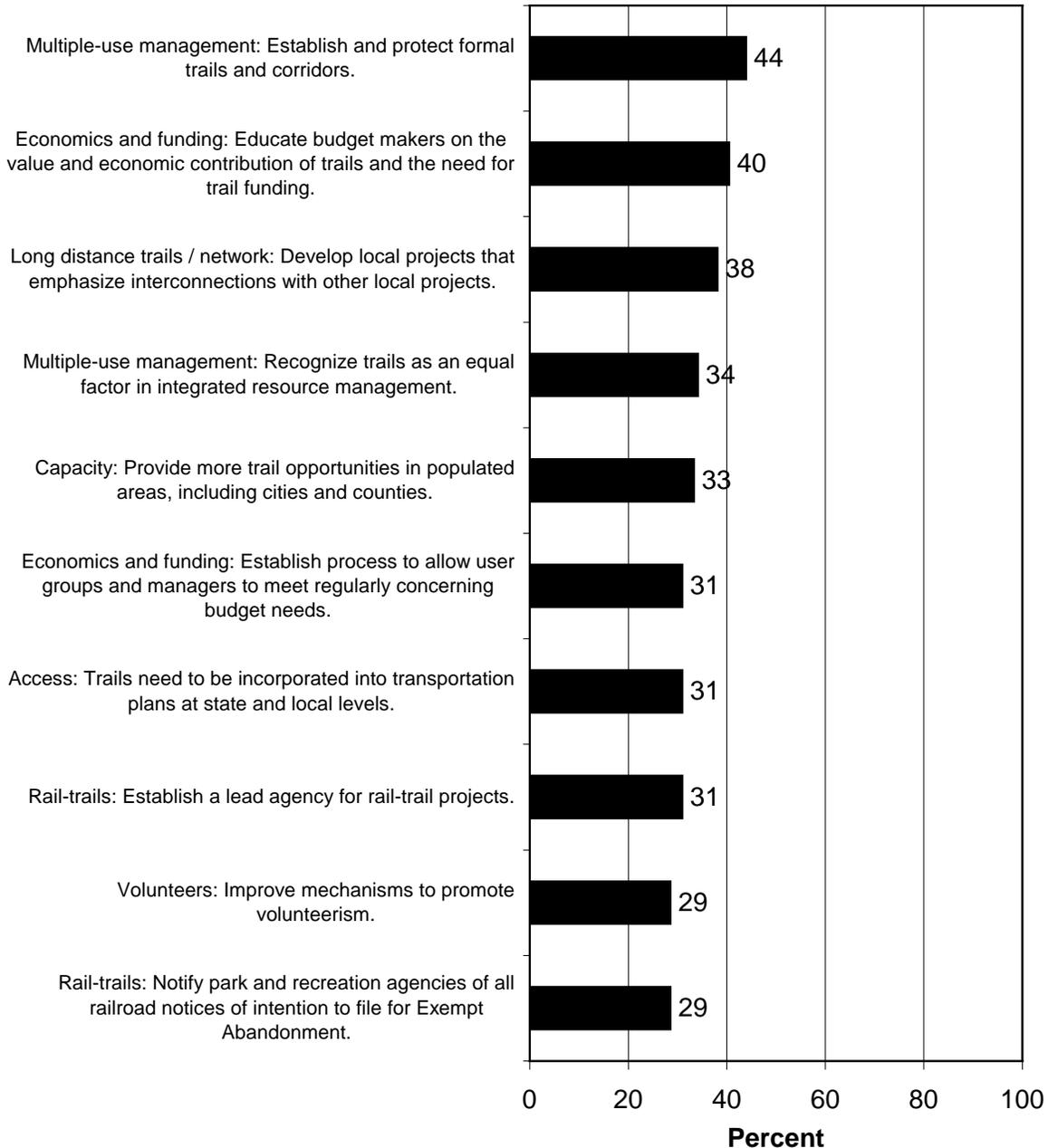
**Figure 3.10. Mean Ratings of the Progress Made Toward Solutions in the Past 10 Years (Part 3).**

**On a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is "poor" and 10 is "excellent," the mean rating of the progress made towards each of the following solutions in the past 20 years. (Part 3)**



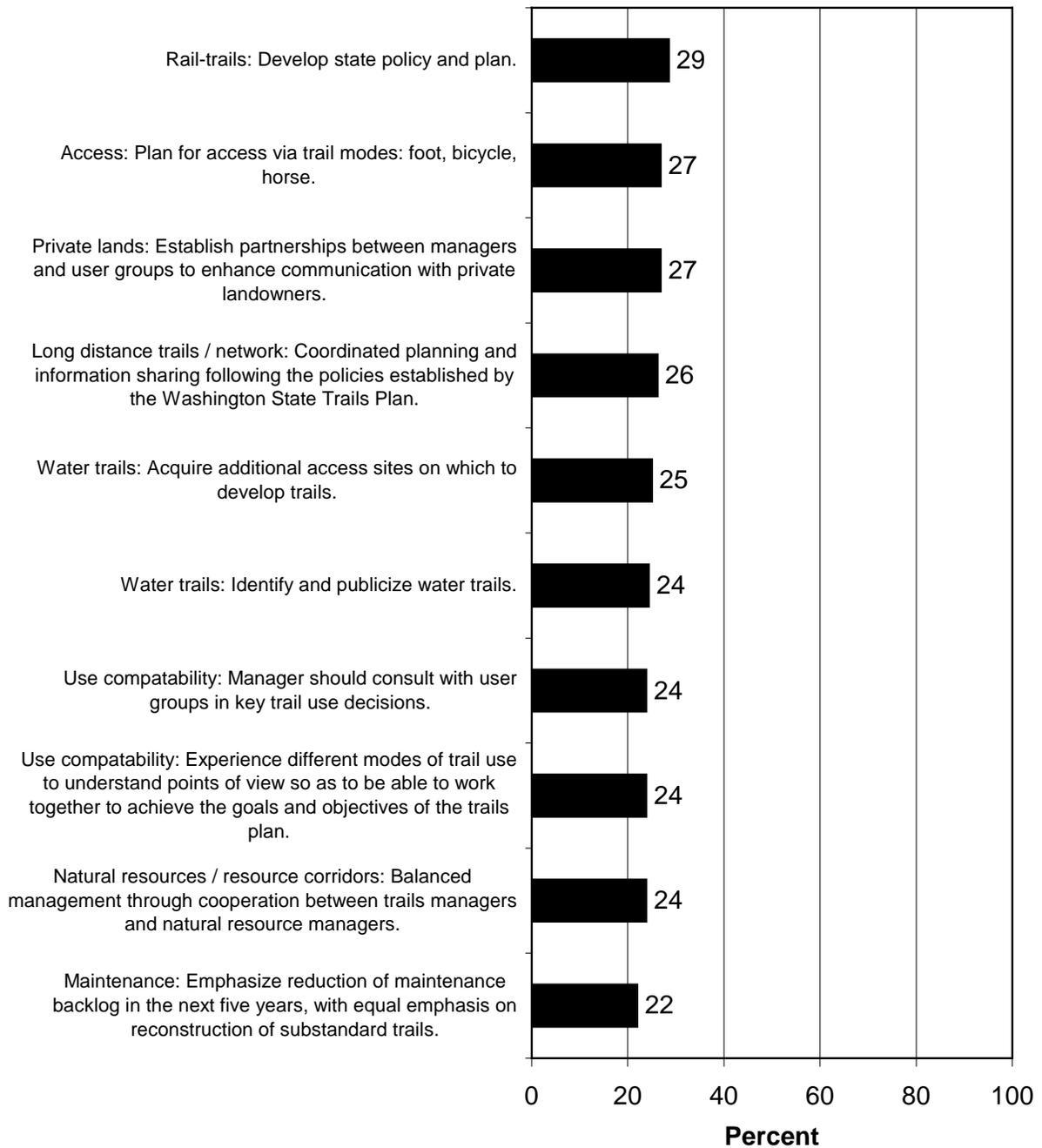
**Figure 3.11. Percent Rating Progress Toward Solutions as a 9 or 10 (Part 1)**

**On a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is "poor" and 10 is "excellent," percent rating the progress made towards each of the following in the past 20 years as a 9 or 10. (Part 1)**



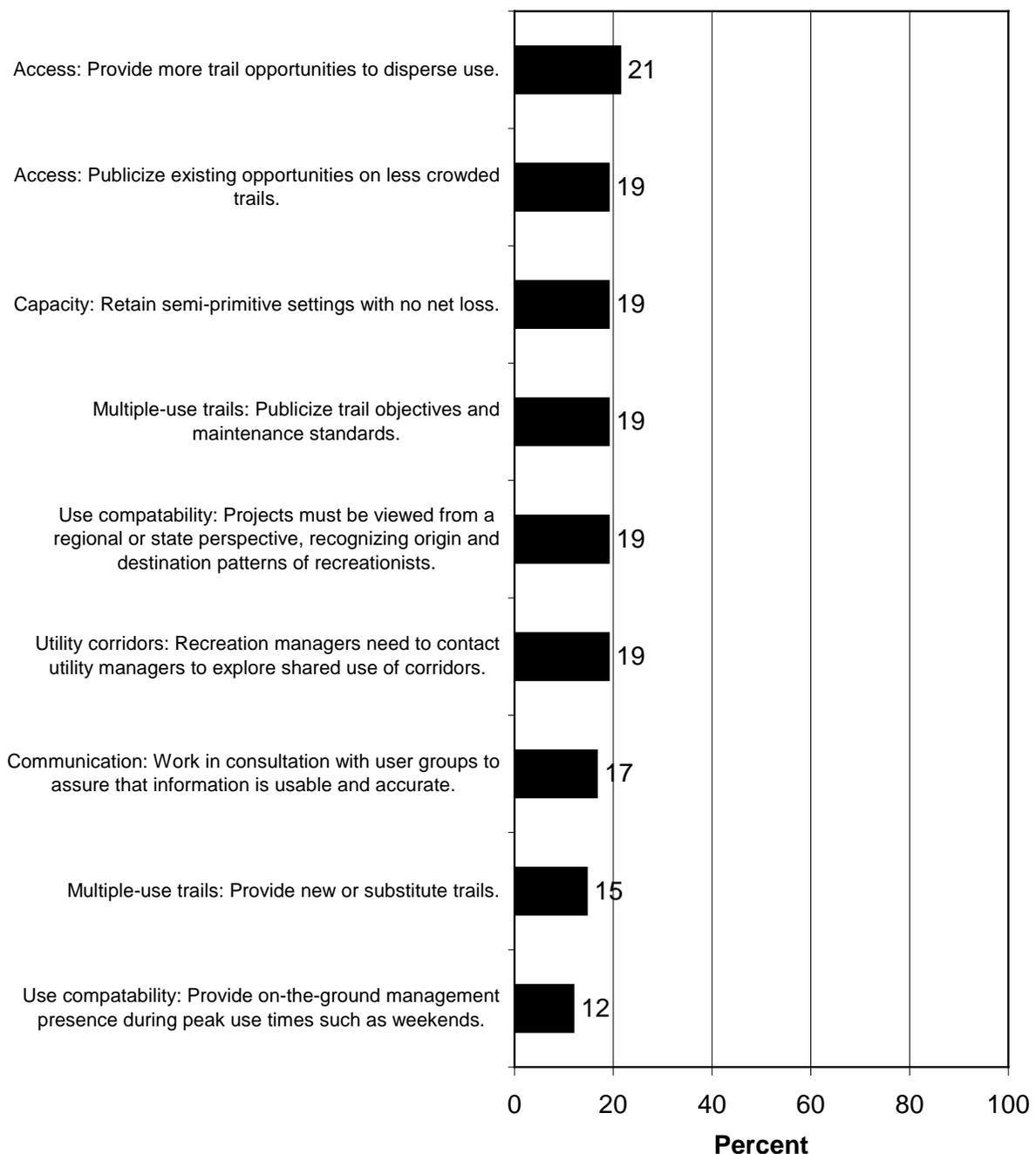
**Figure 3.12. Percent Rating Progress Toward Solutions as a 9 or 10 (Part 2).**

**On a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is "poor" and 10 is "excellent," percent rating the progress made towards each of the following in the past 20 years as a 9 or 10. (Part 2)**



**Figure 3.13. Percent Rating Progress Toward Solutions as a 9 or 10 (Part 3).**

**On a scale of 0 - 10 where 0 is "poor" and 10 is "excellent," percent rating the progress made towards each of the following in the past 20 years as a 9 or 10. (Part 3)**



## **COMPARING THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAIL ISSUES WITH PROGRESS ON SOLUTIONS**

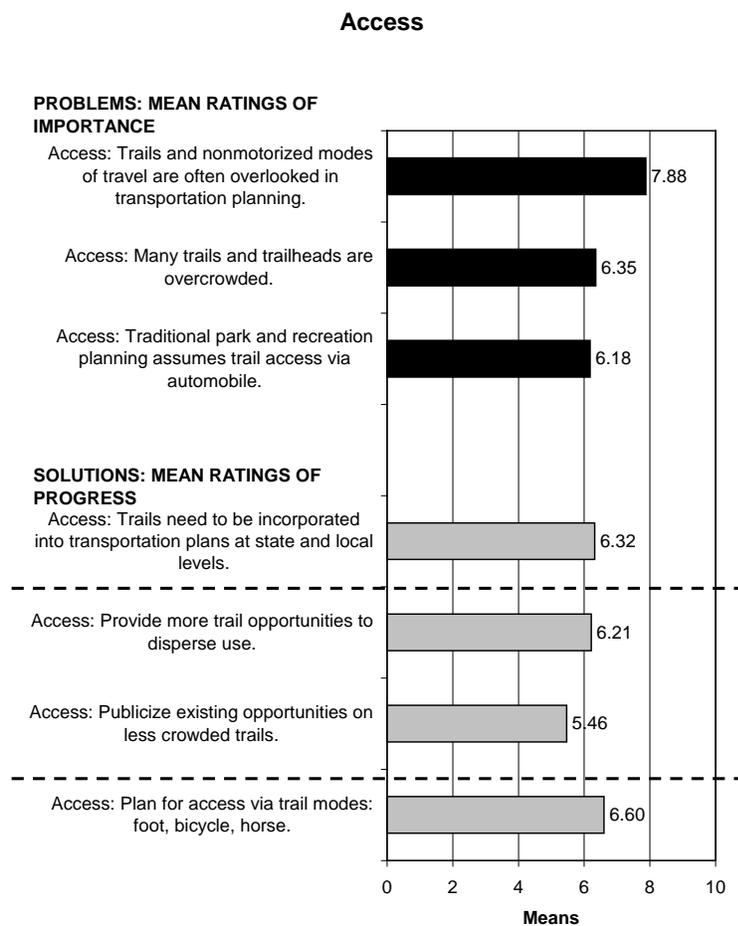
The following section compares the mean rating of importance of each trails issue and problem statement with the mean ratings of progress made toward solutions.

### **Issue: Access**

In the 1991 trails plan, access issues focused primarily on how users get to a trail. The plan recommended that it should be possible to access a trail by foot, bicycle, or horse without needing to drive to the trailhead or cross a busy internal park road or parking lot. The discussion of access also focused on barrier-free trails that provide unlimited opportunities for many users, including people with disabilities, the elderly, children, and people with limited mobility.

As shown in Figure 3.14, the 1991 plan indicated that the greatest access issue was that trails and non-motorized modes of travel are often overlooked in transportation planning. Currently, the difference between the importance rating and the progress rating indicates that additional attention is needed in this area.

**Figure 3.14. Access: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**



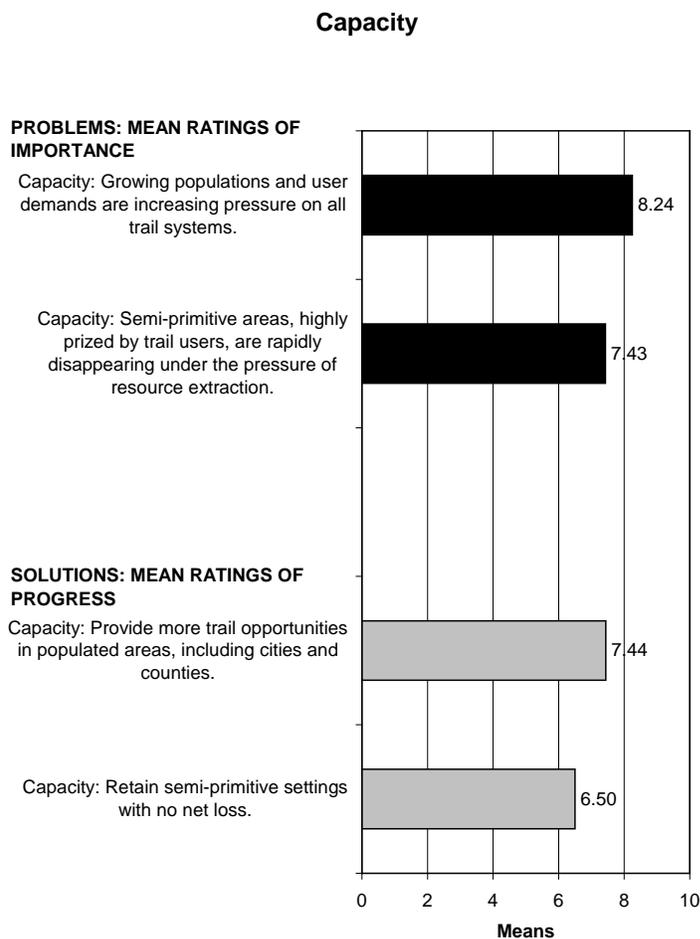
### Issue: Capacity

In the 1991 trails plan, capacity issues focused on the need for existing trails to meet user demand, the capacity of land to carry more trails miles per acre and withstand the impacts of additional visitation, and the maintenance and funding of trails.

While the Trails Advisory Committee identified growing population and user demand as one of the top three problems, their rating of progress made shows that the state is successfully making efforts toward providing more trail opportunities, particularly in populated areas. Still, with continued anticipated growth in the state, this capacity issue likely will remain a problem.

As shown in Figure 3.15, a notable difference exists between the problem of semi-primitive areas disappearing under the pressure of resource extraction (7.43 mean rating) and the progress made toward retaining semi-primitive areas with no net loss (6.50 mean rating). This suggests that a focus on preserving semi-primitive areas is another area of need.

**Figure 3.15. Capacity: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**

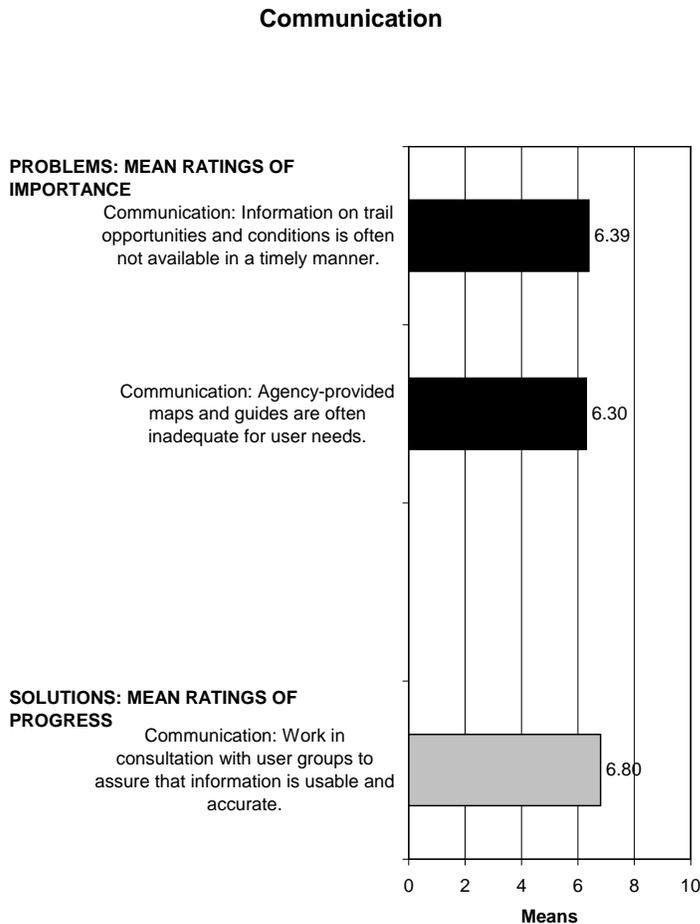


## Issue: Communication

The 1991 trails plan focused on increasing availability of information on trails. Despite an abundance of information about trails, the plan noted that up-to-date, trails-specific information was still hard for some users to obtain.

The state appears to be making progress in its communication efforts (Figure 3.16). As shown, communication appears to be of lower priority for the Trails Advisory Committee compared with other problems. The findings show a positive difference between the importance rating and the progress ratings.

**Figure 3.16. Communication: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**

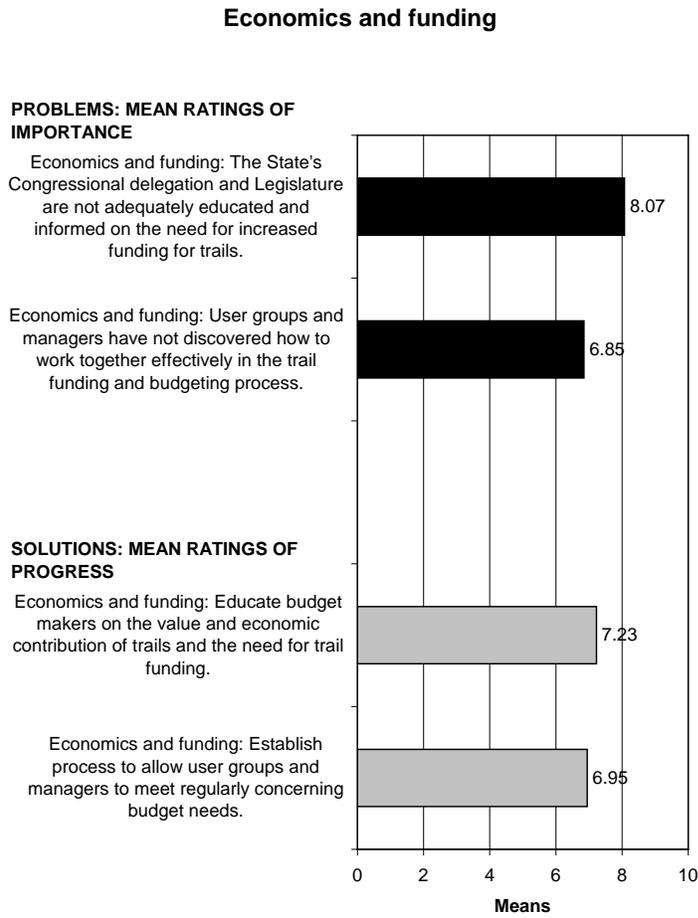


**Issue: Economics and Funding**

In its discussion of economics and funding, the 1991 trails plan considered the economic impact of trails use in Washington. At that time, trail users contributed an investment in outdoor equipment of over \$3.4 billion dollars. However, the plan contended that recreation funding did not compete well with other priorities in the budgeting process, and the plan upheld the importance of regular appropriations for trails recreation. This section of the 1991 trails plan discussed funding sources for federal, state, and local land managers as well as new sources of revenue, such as permits or licenses, taxes on trails equipment, fees on horse or ORV trailers, and additional gasoline taxes.

As shown in Figure 3.17, the most important problem regarding economics and funding rated by the stakeholders is their sense that the state's Congressional delegation and Legislature are not adequately educated and informed on the need for increased funding for trails. Although the survey of the Trails Advisory Committee indicates that much progress has been made on this issue, a gap still exists between progress on this issue and its importance. This indicates that educating policymakers about the value and economic contribution of trails and the need for trails funding continues to be a priority among stakeholders.

**Figure 3.17. Economics and Funding: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**



## **Issue: Long Distance Trails and a State Trail Network**

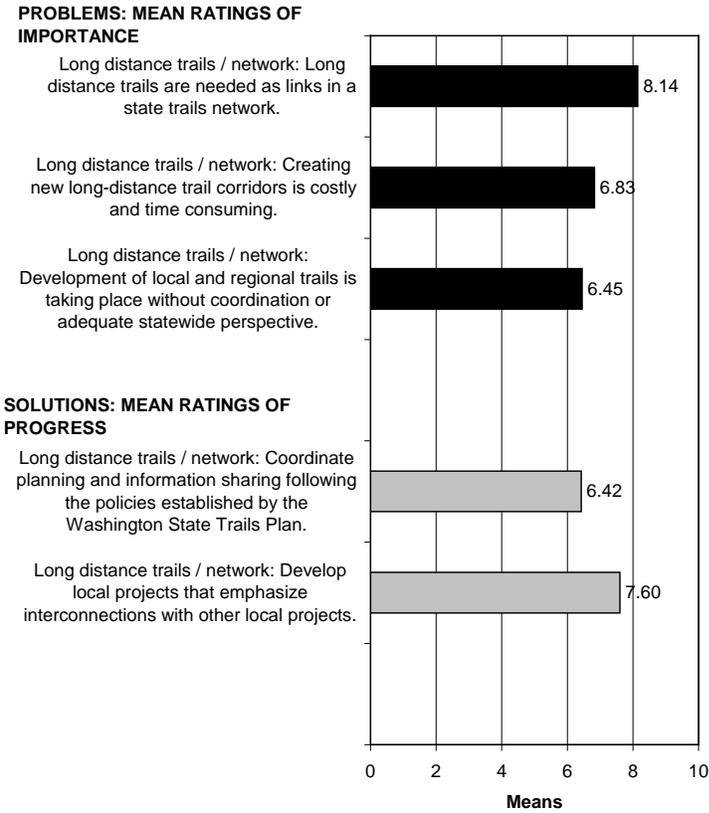
The 1991 trails plan defines long distance trails as a single trail or a series of connected trails requiring three or more days to travel by foot, or a day and half to travel by a motorized vehicle or bicycle. The plan discussed cross-state trails, local-to-local trail connections, and rail-to-trail conversions. The hope was that the coordination of efforts on the trails systems would result in a true state trails network, with the existing regional systems linked by county and regional corridors.

Long distance trails and the state trail network continue to be a top priority for stakeholders. As shown in Figure 3.18, the Trails Advisory committee ranked the need for long distance trails as links in a state trails network among the top trail issues in importance, with a mean rating of 8.14.

One of the solutions to this received a significantly lower progress rating: Coordinating planning and information sharing following the policies established by the Washington State Trails Plan (6.42 mean rating). The significant difference between the importance rating and the progress rating suggests this as a continued area of concern for stakeholders. Still, the findings show significant progress made toward developing local projects that emphasize interconnections with other local projects (7.60 mean rating and the highest rating for progress among all 29 solutions).

**Figure 3.18. Long Distance Trails / State Trail Network: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**

**Long distance trails / network**

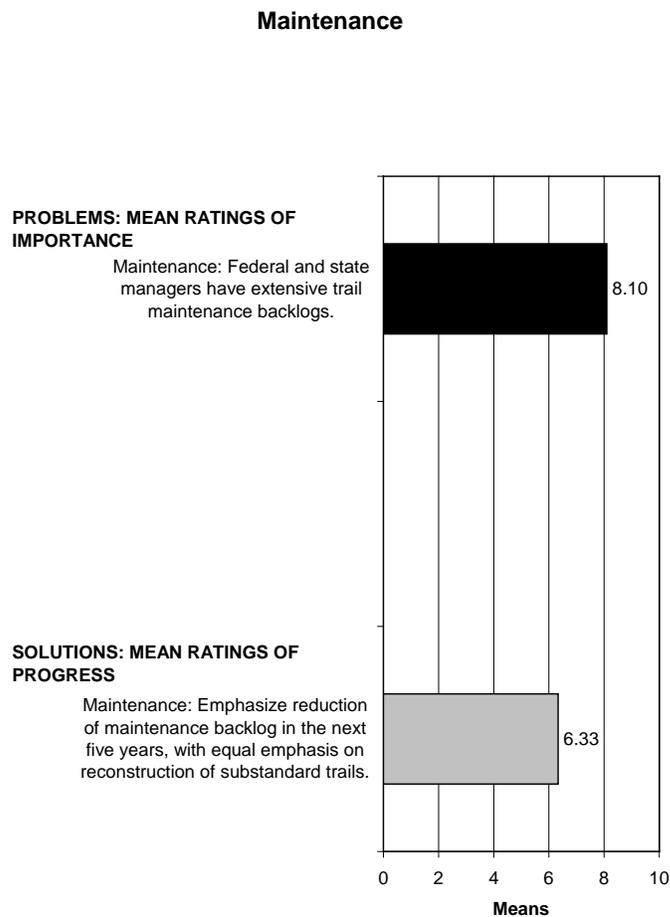


### Issue: Maintenance

In the 1991 trails plan, maintenance focused on proactive trails development, with the most important consideration being whether a trail has been built correctly from the start. The 1991 trails plan noted that appropriate trail design and construction, including route location, would do more for the life of a trail than any amount of maintenance. This section of the plan emphasized the need to redesign and reconstruct “substandard” trails to prevent resource damage and to enhance user safety and enjoyment.

As Figure 3.19 illustrates, the Trails Advisory Committee considers maintenance a priority for state trails planning. The importance of the problem of extensive trails maintenance backlogs had a mean rating of 8.10, while the progress toward reducing the maintenance backlog had a mean rating of 6.3.

**Figure 3.19. Maintenance: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**



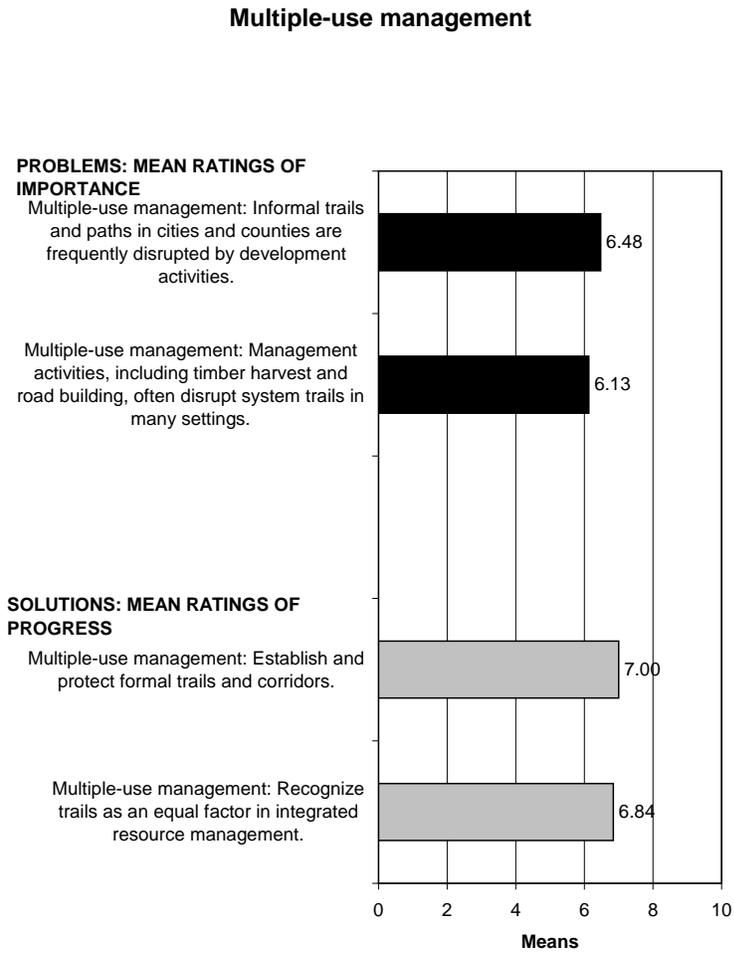
**Issue: Multiple-use Management**

Multiple-use management was defined in the 1991 trails plan as managing the same land base for two or more objectives. The discussion focused on how, in the past, trails suffered under the multiple-use concept, with trails being only a minor consideration in management decisions, secondary to other uses such as forest roads and timber harvest. Only trails protected by certain designations could reasonably be expected to escape disruption, abandonment, or destruction.

However, the 1991 plan highlights a then-new focus on trails created through the Forest Service's Recreation Strategy. This strategy acknowledged the overwhelming response to then-proposed Forest Plans, which made it clear that the public sees recreation as an important use of forest lands nationally. One of the most important features of the Forest Service's Recreation Strategy is its strengthening of the position of recreation in integrated resource management decisions.

Figure 3.20 indicates the Trails Advisory Committee sees much progress made to address problems related to multiple-use management. These problems received lower ratings on the importance scale, while obtaining higher ratings for progress being made.

**Figure 3.20. Multiple-Use Management: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**

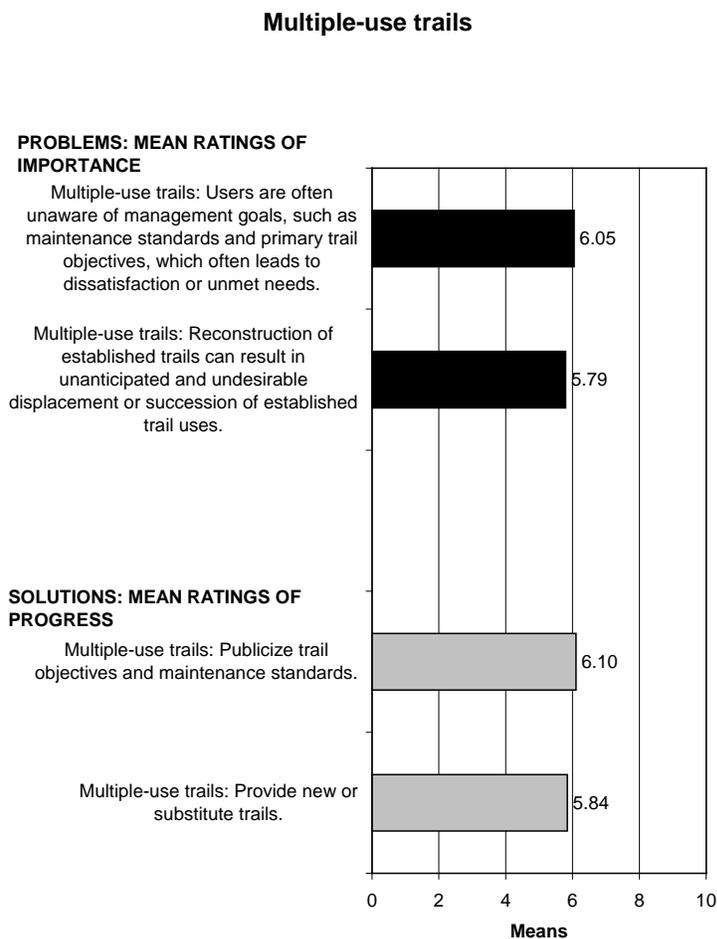


## Issue: Multiple-use Trails

The 1991 trails plan defined multiple-use trails as trails that provide for more than one type of activity. It noted that multiple-use does not have to mean simultaneous use. It could mean seasonal, apportioned, or sometimes limited uses. Multiple-use trails help to accommodate otherwise incompatible uses and minimize user conflicts. Solutions regarding multiple-use trails encouraged trails management based on a primary objective, including primary use, for both trails systems and individual trails. Once the primary use objective is set, other compatible uses can be determined.

The Trails Advisory Committee indicated that multiple-use trails appear to be less of a priority. Multiple-use trail problems rated among the lowest in terms of importance, while also ranking among the lowest in progress made toward solutions. The mean ratings toward progress are still higher than the mean ratings of importance in general, suggesting that the necessary progress is being made.

**Figure 3.21. Multiple-Use Trails: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**



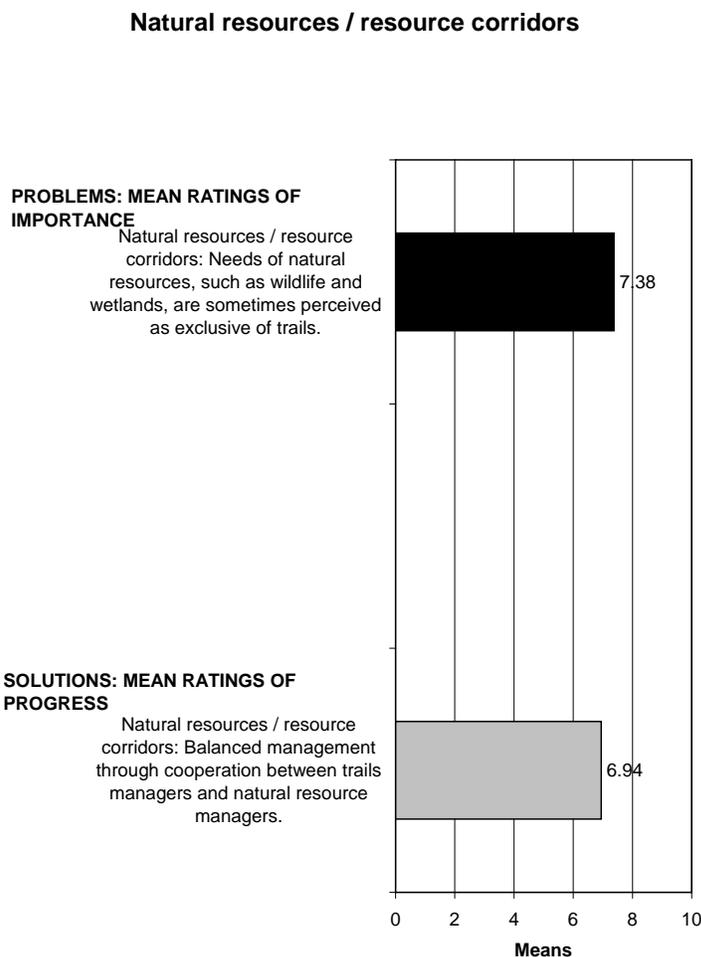
### Issue: Natural Resources and Resource Corridors

Natural resources and resource corridors are often the main reason why a trail exists—allowing access to a lake, to a fishing stream, or to an enjoyable forest walk or ride. The 1991 trails plan emphasized that trails management must take into account the needs of natural resources of all kinds and that certain types of trails uses may compete with natural resources. For example, the same forest that is popular with trail users might be earmarked for timber harvest.

The 1991 trails plan upholds the preservation of natural resource corridors to provide new trail opportunities. A natural resource corridor was defined as a greenbelt or linear open space, which could include an abandoned railroad right-of-way, a wildlife migration corridor, or a watercourse.

The Trails Advisory Committee rated the problem statement of trails being excluded from natural resources and resource corridors among the top ten most important trail problems (Figure 3.22).

**Figure 3.22. Natural Resources and Resource Corridors: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**



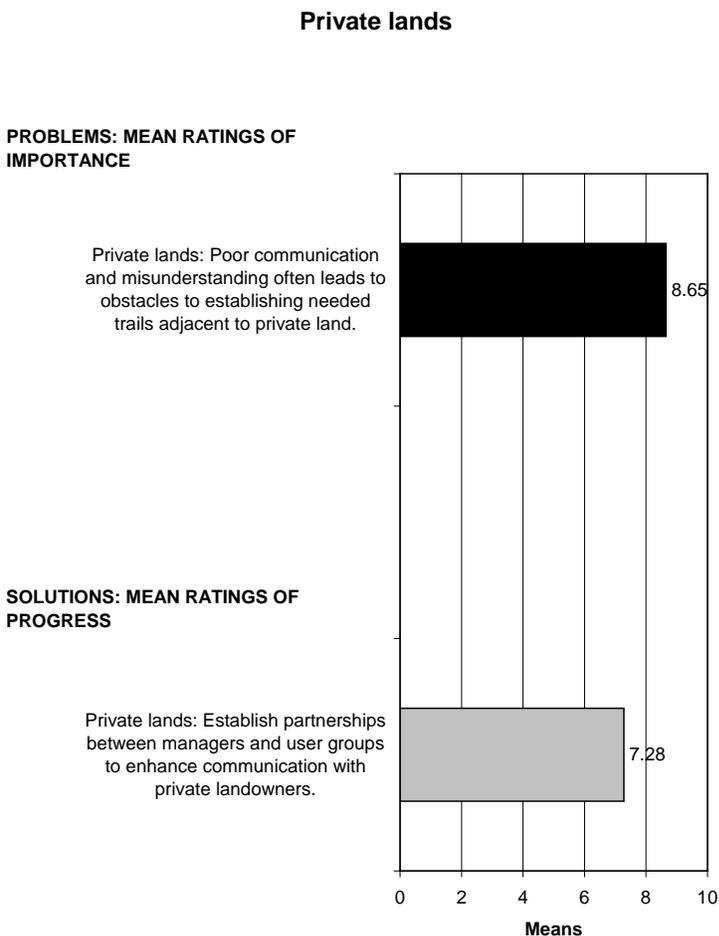
## Issue: Private Lands, Private Concerns

In the 1991 trails plan, private land was considered an issue of concern because, in some cases, private lands border public trails. In these instances, some landowners expressed concerns about litter, vandalism, fences, theft, fire, the spread of weeds, and other problems related to trails projects. Additionally, landowners had questions about adequate compensation for purchase or use of their property.

This issue received the highest mean rating for importance from the Trails Advisory Committee. While the committee indicated that progress has been made toward the proposed solution—establishing partnerships between land managers and user groups to enhance communication with private landowners—the fact that this is identified as the most important problem suggests that more could still be done.

As shown in Figure 3.23, a gap exists between the mean ratings of importance versus the mean rating of progress on this issue.

**Figure 3.23. Private Lands, Private Concerns: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**



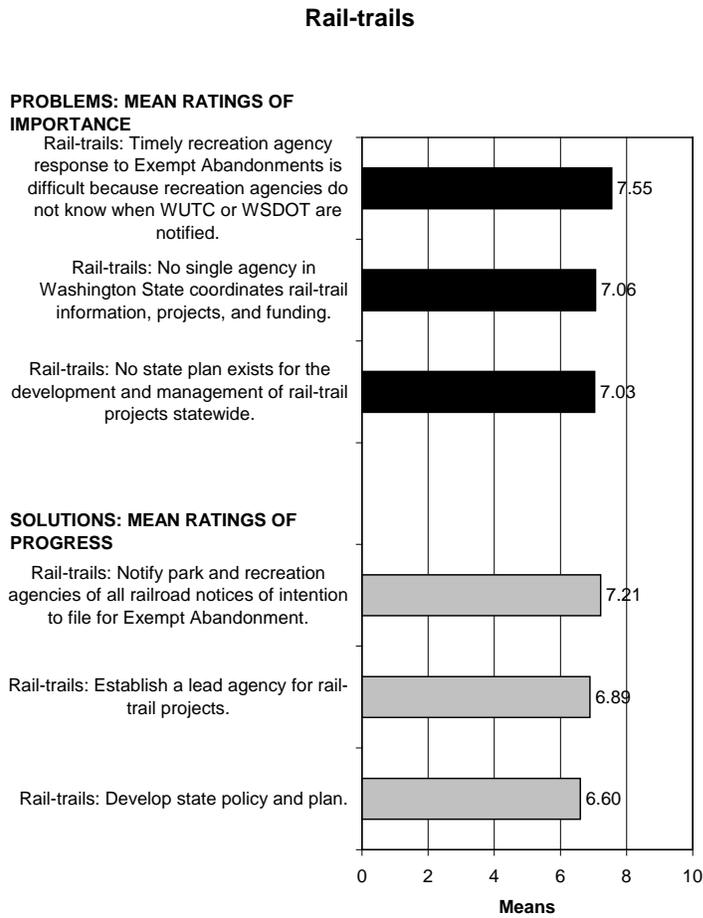
**Issue: Railroad Right-of-Way (Rails-to-Trails)**

The 1991 trails plan highlights Washington State as a national leader in the rails-to-trails movement, but focuses on the gap between abandonments and actual rails-to-trails conversions as a significant opportunity to expand trail miles. The plan suggests that a variety of uses, both mechanized and non-mechanized, can be accommodated by rails-to-trails and advises that appropriate uses should be decided on a case-by-case basis.

As shown in Figure 3.24, of the three problem statements associated with the rails-to-trails issue, the greatest problem is timely response from recreation agencies to Exempt Abandonments notices is difficult because recreation agencies do not know when the state agencies are notified .

The difference between the importance rating and the progress rating suggests that additional work is needed in this area. However, other trail problems and their solutions are rated as more important, suggesting there are greater priorities on which to focus trails planning efforts.

**Figure 3.24. Rails-to-Trails: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**



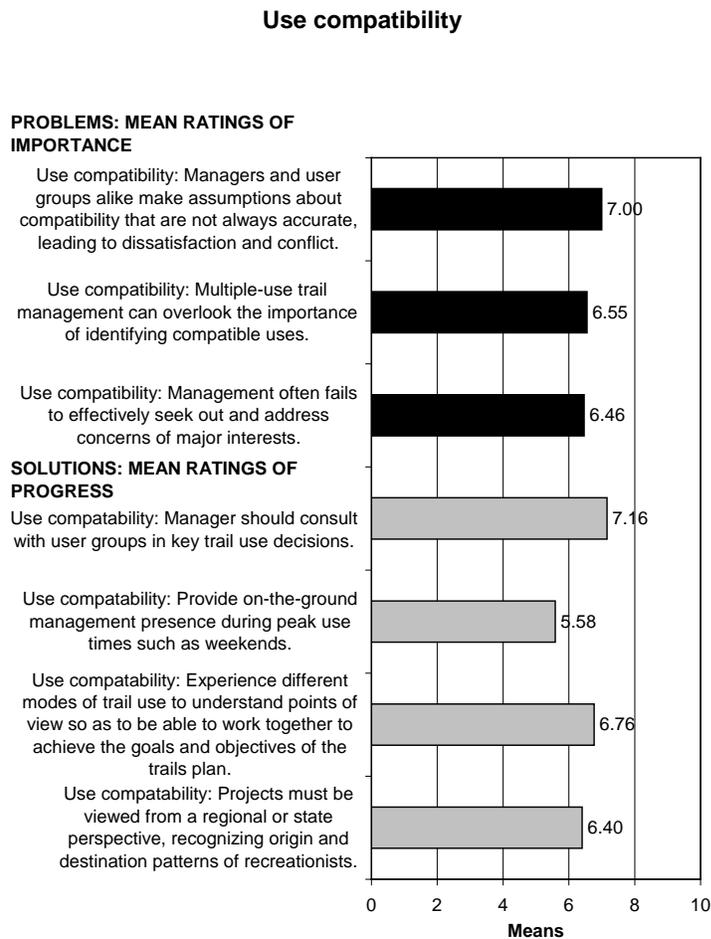
**Issue: Use Compatibility**

Use compatibility was identified as a critical issue in the 1991 trails plan. In its most general form, use incompatibility (or conflict) degrades the quality of a trail experience for a different type of use. Incompatibility means the constant threat of losing a recreational opportunity for one or more user groups. The 1991 trails plan contends that the key to maximizing compatibility is management by land managers in cooperation and consultation with user groups.

Figure 3.25 shows the Trails Advisory Committee indicated that the greatest problem regarding use compatibility is that land managers and user groups both make assumptions about compatibility that are not always accurate, leading to dissatisfaction and conflict (7.00 mean rating).

When exploring solutions to address this problem, the findings suggest that the state has made substantial progress in having land managers consult with user groups to make key trails use decisions. On the other hand, the findings indicate that progress toward having managers provide an on-the-ground management presence during peak-use times such as weekends has one of the lowest ratings.

**Figure 3.25. Use Compatibility: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**

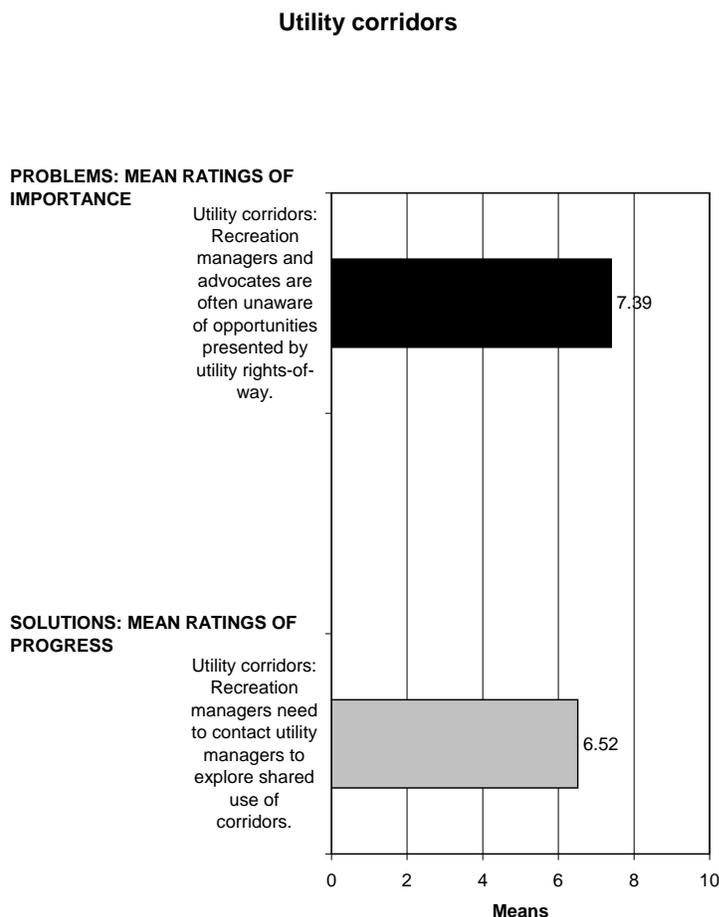


### Issue: Utility Corridors

Utility corridors, such as rails-to-trails routes, fiber optic cable placements, sewage lines, canals, dikes, and power line routes, sometimes offer recreational trails routes opportunities. Utility corridors are especially attractive in areas that are heavily developed, where locating a trail right-of-way might otherwise be impossible. The 1991 trails plan considers the benefits of using utility corridors for recreation trails routes, but it also discusses the challenges of doing so, including right-of-way issues, easements, and levels of management.

This issue was rated among the top ten most important trail problems (7.39 mean rating) by the Trails Advisory Committee. This rating, coupled with the substantially lower rating of 6.52 for progress, suggests that utility corridors remain an important issue.

**Figure 3.26. Utility Corridors: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**

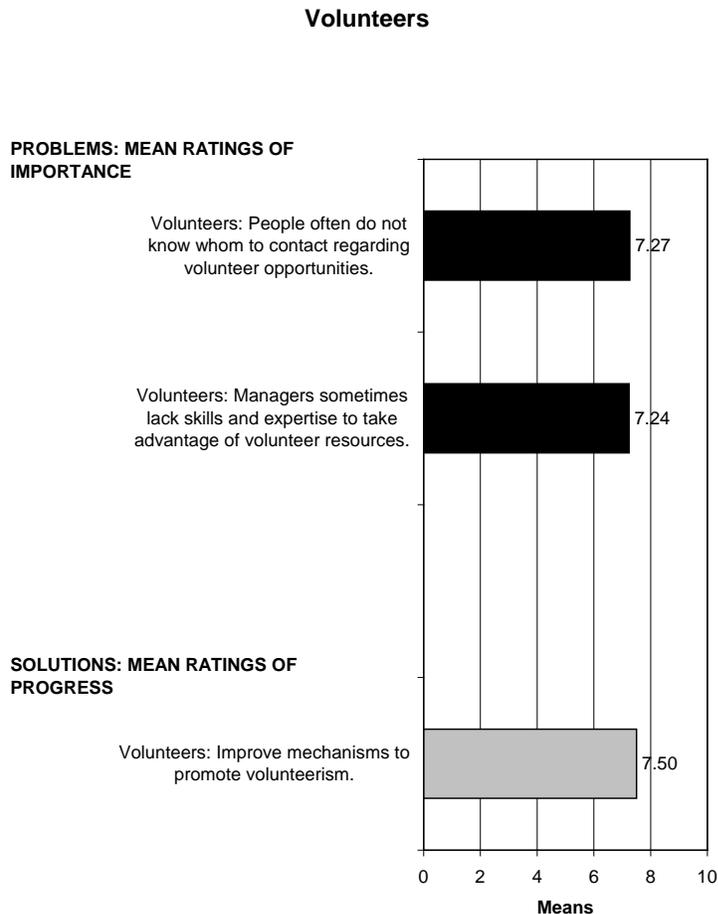


## Issue: Volunteers

The 1991 trails plan outlines the importance of and limitations associated with volunteers working on trails. Volunteers play an essential role in trails planning, development, and maintenance, and they can significantly augment the resources of trails managing agencies. On the other hand, liability is a major concern for land managers, as is reliability, with some volunteers losing interest quickly. Another limitation noted is training for volunteers and that people lack knowledge about how to volunteer.

The Trails Advisory Committee's ratings of volunteer problems and solutions show the greatest progress. While volunteer problems were rated high among all 31 trail problems, the solution received one of the top ratings in terms of progress being made (7.50 mean rating). The progress made toward this rated much higher than the importance of the volunteer problems, suggesting that progress has been made toward addressing volunteer issues since 1991.

**Figure 3.27. Volunteers: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**

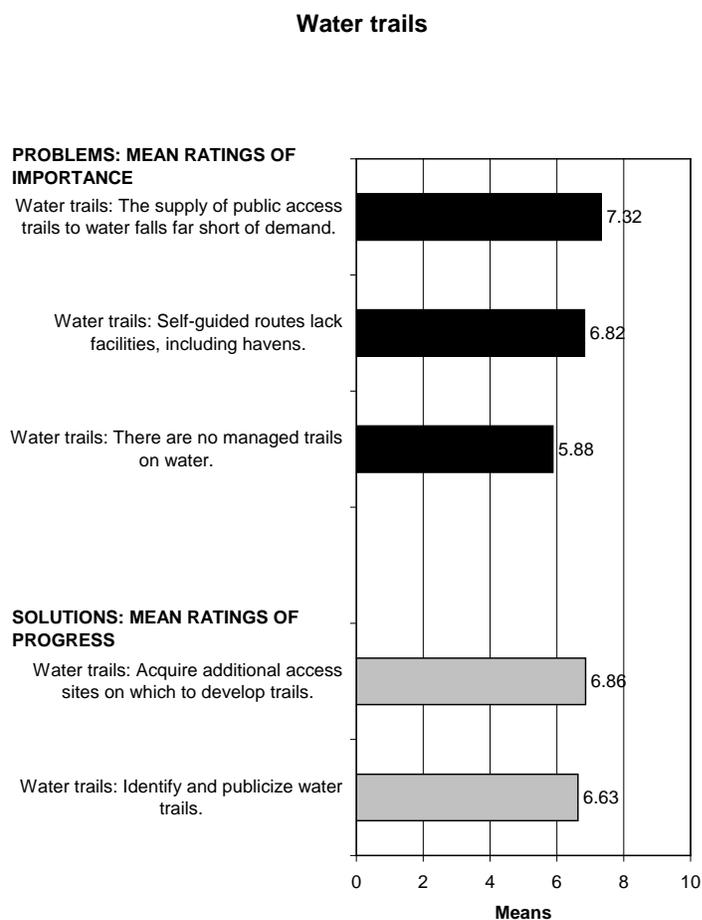


### Issue: Water Trails

The 1991 trails plan defines a water trail as a trail that provides a route or path to, on, or along a body of water. Water trails were emphasized as being in great demand at the time of the 1991 trails plan. Although water trails had been designated, at that time no managed trail on fresh or saltwater existed.

Figure 3.28 indicates that the Trails Advisory Committee sees water trails remaining an important issue for trails planning, particularly with respect to supply and demand. Still, some progress has been made on acquiring additional access sites and in identifying and publicizing water trails. This could explain why the third problem statement about water trails—that there are no managed trails on water—was rated of low importance. In short, the findings indicate that success in increasing and publicizing water trail opportunities since 1991.

**Figure 3.28. Water Trails: A Comparison of Mean Ratings of Importance and Progress.**



## UNDERSTANDING PROGRESS MADE SINCE 1991

The research and findings show that, while some progress has been made on several major issues identified in the 1991 trails plan, most of them remain important considerations. None received a mean score lower than the midpoint of 5.00.

The top three trail issues and associated problem statements are:

- **PRIVATE LAND, PRIVATE CONCERNS:** Poor communication and misunderstanding often leads to obstacles to establishing trails adjacent to private land.
- **CAPACITY:** Growing populations and user demands are increasing pressure on all trails systems.
- **LONG DISTANCE TRAILS AND A STATE TRAIL NETWORK:** Long distance trails are needed as links in a state trails network

Similarly, the Trails Advisory Committee rated the progress made toward all 29 solutions relatively high; again, the mean rating for each solution was above the midpoint (5.00). The solutions toward which the most progress has been made since 1991 include:

- **LONG DISTANCE TRAILS AND A STATE TRAIL NETWORK:** Develop local projects that emphasize interconnections with other local projects.
- **VOLUNTEERS:** Improve mechanisms to promote volunteerism.

A review of each issue shows there is a gap between the importance of an issue and the progress made in many of the problems related to trails. Still, progress has been made in several areas. Comparing the importance of an issue with the progress made, the most success has been made in:

- Addressing communication issues (both the unavailability of information on trail opportunities and trail conditions and the lack of trail maps and guides) by agencies consulting with user groups to assure information is useable and accurate.
- Developing local projects that emphasize interconnections with other local projects as a method to connect long distance trails into a state trail network.
- Establishing and protecting formal trail corridors and recognizing trails as an equal factor in multiple-use management.
- Reducing the overall issue of multiple-use trails.
- Improving access to volunteer opportunities and supporting their efforts by promoting volunteerism.
- Increasing and publicizing water trail opportunities to address the lack of managed trails on water related support facilities.

## CHAPTER 4: CURRENT ISSUES IN PROVIDING TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

This chapter explores the most important issues, challenges, and problems related to providing trail opportunities and facilities. The survey research, discussions with the Trails Advisory Committee, and public comments posted on the Town Hall were used to identify the major trail problems that currently exist in the state.

This chapter highlights qualitative research from discussions on the Trails Town Hall and among the Trails Advisory Committee. Consequently, it is not appropriate to ascribe quantitative meanings to these issues. These discussions provide a context for better understanding key trail issues in Washington.

Based on the qualitative findings, the researchers identified 15 issue categories and 87 trail problems of relevance to the *2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan*. The Trails Advisory Committee prioritized these problems to guide trails planning in the next 5 years. Table 1 in the Executive Summary identifies the top 20 problems.

### Issue: Access

Access is an important issue to ensure trail opportunities exist for all Washington residents. Studies have shown that access issues can have a significant impact on outdoor recreation participation. In fact, in the SCORP, residents lack of facilities or closed facilities and access or travel distance as among the top problems.

Similarly, among both Town Hall contributors and the Trails Advisory Committee, access issues were a considerable concern. The survey of the Trails Advisory Committee identified access as the second most important issues ( Figure 3.1).

Access issues encompass a variety of factors, including availability, accessibility, accommodation, awareness, and assumptions. Town Hall contributors voiced concerns about availability overall, referencing a lack of trail opportunities within a reasonable commute from major population centers. These contributors cited difficulty in accessing trails to participate in specific recreational activities, such as motorized recreation, mountain biking, and horseback riding.

Contributors also discussed the accessibility of trails and trailheads, expressing frustration with trail closures on both private and public lands and concerns about lack of public transit to trailheads.

Respondents indicated that another deterrent to access is the complexity and costs of fees and permits to use trails. Similar to concerns expressed in the SCORP, some trail users were unhappy with the Discover Pass and user fees. While some residents appear willing to pay user fees to ensure and increase access to trails, the financial burden and complexity of obtaining

passes and knowing which one to use was a deterrent for others. These obstacles were likely to deter beginner trail users and families with children.

Some users were frustrated about the multiple fee structure that exists, noting that they were not able to predict which kind of fee or permit was needed for various recreation sites.

Finally, both Town Hall contributors and the Trails Advisory Committee cited concerns about adequate access for residents with disabilities and limited mobility (e.g., elderly residents, children), urban residents, and underserved communities.

Parking also emerged as an important concern. Town Hall contributors discussed both the quantity and quality of parking for trails, indicating that parking was often insufficient and could not accommodate the number of trail users. In addition, they cited problems with inadequate infrastructure that does not meet the needs of the diverse transportation modes used to access trails, such as cars, bicycles, and trailers.

Further, several Town Hall contributors discussed the need for trail maintenance to improve trail access such as a horseback rider needing vertical clearance and a wheelchair user needing horizontal clearance.

One theme that emerged among both the Town Hall contributors and the Trails Advisory Committee was the importance of considering trails as part of the overall transportation infrastructure in Washington. Many users believe that trails are not considered during the transportation planning process often enough, yet trails are becoming increasingly important as transportation links for those commuting to work, schools, cultural attractions, and population centers.

The Trails Advisory Committee ranked access problems priorities for the next 5 years. As shown in Table 4.1, the top three ranked problems related to access are:

- Trail closures and lack of maintenance have limited the access to existing trails.
- Trails and non-motorized modes of travel are often overlooked in transportation planning.
- Insufficient access for underserved communities, including residents with disabilities or limited mobility, children, youth, and urban residents.

**Table 4.1. Ranking of Problems Related to Access.**

Problems Related to Access	Score*	Rank
Trail closures and lack of maintenance have limited access to trails.	198	1
Trails and non-motorized modes of travel are often overlooked in transportation planning. (Problem identified in 1991 trails plan.)	181	2
There is insufficient access for underserved communities, including residents with disabilities or limited mobility, children, youth, and urban residents.	170	3

Problems Related to Access	Score*	Rank
There are not enough trails facilities and opportunities near major population centers.	168	4
Parking at trailheads is insufficient (i.e., not enough capacity).	161	5
There is insufficient access to trailheads by bicycle or public transit. (Problem identified in 1991 trails plan.)	148	6
Trail use requires different permits (i.e., it's too confusing and time-consuming).	146	7
Parking at trailheads does not have adequate infrastructure for all users (cars, trailers, bicycles, etc.)	136	8
Private or public lands closures often prevent access to backcountry trails.	131	9
There is not enough access to water trails.	111	10
Trail use requires too many fees (i.e., it's too expensive).	100	11

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 11 problems, which were assigned points 1-11 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (11 points) and the lowest priority (ranked 11) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

## Issue: Capacity

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the results in the SCORP suggest that the supply of trail opportunities is not meeting public demand. Furthermore, capacity issues become an increasing concern when demographic trends are taken into consideration.

As shown in the SCORP, the population in Washington State has increased dramatically during the past three decades. With a gain of 2.6 million residents between 1980 and 2010, the state has experienced a 63% increase in its population, almost double the population increase in the United States as a whole (36%) (United States Census, 2010). Further, Washington State's population is expected to increase from 6,725,000 in 2010 to 8,154,000 in 2030, an increase of 21%.

The state's population is growing, becoming more urban, becoming older, and becoming more diverse. All of these trends suggest that trails capacity will become increasingly challenging.

These capacity issues have led to other problems, including crowding, improper trails use, environmental damage from overuse, and rogue trails development, when user groups make their own informal recreational trails. Because they are not sanctioned by the land manager, rogue trails often have significant problems, including liability issues, safety problems, and detrimental environmental impacts.

Generally, the discussion of capacity issues focused primarily on making maintenance of existing trails a priority so that the safety and good trail conditions were ensured. Town Hall contributors indicated they thought maintaining existing trails should be a higher priority than developing new trails. However, some Town Hall contributors recognized the necessity of developing new trails, but recognized there should be a balance between maintenance and development of trails.

Several Town Hall contributors recognized the importance of creating a maintenance plan before developing a new trail. Many believed the emphasis for funding should be on maintenance which would also address capacity issues by opening closed or unused trails that have fallen into disrepair.

Related to this issue, Town Hall contributors also cited a lack of on-the-ground data for land managers to make informed capacity, funding, and resource decisions. These contributors supported making trails development decisions based on trails use data, user group data, and frequency of use. However, this type of comprehensive measurement does not currently exist, making it difficult to know exactly what the trail is being used for and how often it is accessed. These discussions suggest a need for conducting on-the-ground field surveys and monitoring trails to determine priorities for improving capacity.

The Trails Advisory Committee also made several observations regarding capacity. Again, the Committee emphasized the pressure that increased demand on trail opportunities. The Trails Advisory Committee also noted there were an insufficient number of trail facilities and opportunities in urban areas and proposed more land easements be pursued to accommodate growing demand.

The discussion among Town Hall contributors and comments made by the Trails Advisory Committee were summarized to identify the major capacity problems that exist in Washington State today. The Trails Advisory Committee was then asked to prioritize these problems to guide trails planning recommendations. As shown in Table 4.2, the top three ranked problems related to capacity are:

- Existing trails are not being maintained and many are being destroyed from overuse or improper use.
- Growing populations and user demands are increasing pressure on all trails systems.
- Land managers do not have enough on-the-ground data (e.g., trails use data, use by category of user, frequency of use) to make informed capacity, funding, and resource decisions.

**Table 4.2. Ranking of Problems Related to Capacity.**

Problems Related to Capacity	Score*	Rank
Existing trails are not being maintained, and many are being destroyed from overuse or improper use.	142	1
Growing populations and user demands are increasing pressure on all trail systems.	117	2
Land managers do not have enough on-the-ground data (e.g., trail use data, use by category of user, frequency of use) to make informed capacity, funding, and resource decisions.	115	3
There are an insufficient number of trails facilities and opportunities in urban areas.	94	4
Not enough land easements for acquisition and development of trails are being pursued to help accommodate the growing demand for trails facilities and opportunities.	91	5
Semi-primitive areas, highly prized by trail users, are rapidly disappearing under the pressure of resource extraction and urbanizing development. (Problem identified in 1991 trails plan.)	88	6
There are not enough water trails in the state.	53	7

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 7 problems, which were assigned points 1-7 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (7 points) and the lowest priority (ranked 7) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

### **Issue: Communication**

Several facets of communication were discussed by both the Town Hall contributors and the Trails Advisory Committee. The groups focused primarily on how to increase information and awareness by targeting user groups, but they also discussed the importance of communication and cooperation among user groups. Communication was seen as the key to getting users onto trails and to encourage cooperation and foster relationships.

Awareness was one of the most important issues related to communication (and also trails access) discussed by Town Hall contributors and the Trails Advisory Committee. The Trails Advisory Committee indicated they believed there was a shortage of trail signage including the need for better identification of trailheads, trail conditions, and wildlife expectations.

These problems were echoed by the Town Hall contributors who contended that lack of awareness was a deterrent for enjoying trails recreation. Town Hall contributors cited the importance of knowing where to go and what activities were allowed on trails. Some Town Hall contributors also indicated trail maintenance was a big problem and voiced frustrations over not knowing the conditions of trails before heading out .

Several Trails Advisory Committee members focused on technology as a means to provide information to trails users and promote awareness trails conditions. The Trails Advisory Committee members suggested improving the availability of real-time trails data by including online maps, information on trails conditions and trails closures, and other trails-related information using Web sites or social media. Map information should be combined with specific trails characteristics and conditions. The need to provide updated, concise online information to trails users was clearly an important priority among the Trails Advisory Committee members. In general, the Trails Advisory Committee would like to see a one-stop resource.

The Trails Advisory Committee identified the need to provide education programs and online forums to trails user groups specifically designed to foster communication and cooperation. They stated there is no online resource available for improving coordination, cooperation, or communication among user groups (e.g., leadership councils, meetings, online blogs, online forums, or online spaces). These resources could improve education and foster a sense of collaboration among user groups and includes discussion topics focused on mutual respect, trail ethics, and best practices.

The need for an online forum was also expressed among the Town Hall contributors. They indicated the forum would be important to facilitate opportunities for trails user groups to work together, rather than simply focusing on tension and differences between them.

Stakeholders also noted the lack of an organization or forum to coordinate discussions regarding trail issues. Trail users expressed the need for a trails organization or forum that would facilitate communication and encourage cooperation. Trail users also are seeking more authority in planning and decision-making on trails. Stakeholders felt an umbrella trails organization could provide an opportunity to further involve user groups and encourage their investment in trail issues.

The Trails Advisory Committee prioritized these problems related to communication. As shown in Table 4.3, the top three ranked communication problems were:

- Real-time, easily accessible trails data, including maps, information on trails conditions, trails closures, etc., are limited.
- Many trails lack signage, including better identification of trailheads, information on trails conditions, interpretive and educational information, and wildlife expectations.
- There is a shortage of education programs among user groups designed to promote mutual respect, trails ethics, and best practices.

**Table 4.3. Ranking of Problems Related to Communication.**

Problems Related to Communication	Score*	Rank
Real-time, easily accessible trails data, including maps, information on trails conditions, trail closures, etc., are limited.	85	1
Many trails lack signage, including better identification of trailheads, information on trails conditions, interpretive and educational information, and wildlife expectations.	83	2
There is a shortage of education programs among user groups designed to promote mutual respect, trail ethics, and best practices.	78	3
Agency-provided maps and guides are often inadequate for user needs.	66	4
There are limited activities for improving coordination, cooperation, or communication among user groups (e.g., leadership council, meetings, online blogs, online forums, or online spaces).	63	5

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 5 problems, which were assigned points 1-5 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (5 points) and the lowest priority (ranked 5) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

### Issue: Economics and Funding

The 2012 *Outdoor Recreation Economy* report shows that outdoor recreation contributed more than \$22.5 billion in consumer spending to Washington's economy, as well as \$1.6 billion in state and local tax revenue. Further, outdoor recreation directly supported 227,000 jobs across the state, along with \$7.1 billion in wages and salaries. The SCORP discusses the importance of outdoor recreation as a major economic engine that produces jobs and tax revenues, especially in local economies and in many instances in rural areas where these jobs and tax revenues are needed.

The following grant programs are available to fund trails in Washington State (RCO, 2010):

- **Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA).** This account provides funding to buy, protect, and restore aquatic lands and to provide public access to the waterfront. Projects funded under the ALEA must be associated with navigable waters of the state. The funding source for ALEA grants is from lease revenue on state-owned aquatic lands .
- **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).** The LWCF provides funding to buy or develop public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Grants support both acquisition and development of active and passive recreation areas and conservation lands. The funding source for LWCF grants is from lease revenue from oil and gas extraction on federal lands.
- **Nonhighway Road and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Program.** NOVA provides funding to buy, develop, or maintain backcountry recreational areas or off-road vehicle parks. These grants also may be used to fund education and enforcement officer patrols. Projects must be for motorized and nonmotorized trails recreation that is

accessed by a nonhighway road<sup>4</sup>. The funding source for the NOVA program is one percent of the state's gasoline excise tax and off-road vehicle registration fees.

- **Recreational Trails Program (RTP).** The RTP provides funding to rehabilitate and maintain recreational trails and facilities that support a backcountry experience. There is a focus on performing annual, routine maintenance on backcountry trails. The RTP is funded in the federal transportation budget.
- **Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP).** The WWRP provides funding for any type of outdoor recreation. Funding is allocated between eleven different categories. Funding for trails is eligible in most of the categories. The WWRP is funded in the state capital budget.

There was a perception among the public that funding was insufficient for meeting the demands of trail development and maintenance in the state. Economics and funding issues were by far the most important issue among the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall contributors. The public understood there are other priorities (e.g., education, criminal justice) competing for government funds. They recognized the difficulty the state has in securing funding for trails given limited budgets and other resources.

While the RCO provides grant funding for trails, respondents expressed that funding has been limited and the grant process competitive. Often, land managers found it difficult to secure funding for important trail development and maintenance projects, resulting in dissatisfaction or frustration among the end users.

The Trails Advisory Committee focused on a need to educate the public and elected officials about the benefits of trails and the cost of building and maintaining trails in an effort to curb underfunding. They viewed trails as a business investment and economic development opportunity, stating that trails provide important transportation linkages that are an important benefit to businesses and local enterprise. Trails were also seen as an important tourism attraction, bringing out-of-state residents to Washington and encouraging them to invest in outdoor recreation opportunities.

The public expressed a lack of information and awareness regarding recreation funding and how funds are spent. In general, the public commented that tracking down the amount of funding received for trails was difficult since funding comes from several government sources as well as nonprofits and grants. As a result, users groups found it challenging to identify problems and solutions regarding funding because they lack awareness of funding sources and money spent on trails. Comments suggested the need for more transparent and informative

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<sup>4</sup> A nonhighway road is any road owned or managed by a public agency or private road for which the owner has granted an easement for public use for which motor vehicle funds were not used for construction or reconstruction in the past 25 years or maintenance in the past 4 years

outreach regarding the amount of funding available for trail opportunities, projects and programs being funded, and the amount spent on trails development and maintenance.

There was a divergence and debate among participants on how trails should be funded. Many thought they are taxed too much already. Some also thought their taxes were better spent on more important priorities such as infrastructure, education, criminal justice, transportation, and commerce. Others were frustrated by passes, permits, and user fees, which they felt were not being properly allocated to preserve recreation opportunities. Others indicated the administration of the Discover Pass has been challenging. Yet, there were many participants who thought taxes and fees were an appropriate funding source for trails.

Town Hall contributors expressed a need for a balanced approach to recreational spending. The idea most often expressed by participants was that use reflected demand. User fees should be based upon the differences in demand for different recreation activities. Some indicated those paying more in fees should have a greater say in decision-making, and others contended that “pay to play” plans should be fair and equitable among all recreationists. Most Town Hall contributors agreed that part of the responsibility in keeping trail opportunities open and available rests with the user groups themselves.

Many believed that funding allocations should be commensurate with use and/or tax contributions. Perhaps nowhere is this apparent inequity more controversial than with the issues surrounding the distribution of NOVA funding and motorized vehicle recreation. This contention is due in part to a lack of awareness and information about NOVA funding. While some users appear to understand the intent behind NOVA programs, others question why NOVA funding supports nonmotorized recreation activities.

More transparency and increased public awareness is needed to demonstrate sources of funding and how they are allocated, particularly in the NOVA program.

At the same time, Town Hall contributors recognized the importance of uniting to preserve funding for all user groups in the NOVA program. Further, they were aware that NOVA funding has declined over the years making it important to protect funding. The Town Hall contributors felt very strongly about restoring NOVA funding and ensuring its sustainability.

Still others called for new, more stable and secure funding sources. Respondents contended that trails maintenance and development are valuable investments and ones offer an appropriate return to the people. As such, respondents felt trails need to be promoted to elected officials and the public to ensure the perpetuity of funding into the future.

Several Town Hall contributors indicated that creativity will be needed to find funding solutions. Finally, the Town Hall contributors requested more authority in the decision-making process for funding allocations. The Trails Advisory Committee also called for more authority in planning, decision-making, and funding allocations among user groups. These perspectives emphasized

the need for improving awareness and transparency regarding funding decisions as well as the importance of including user groups in trails planning.

Members of the Trails Advisory Committee strongly advocated for the development of a dedicated funding source for trails, rather than depending on grant funding. Committee members felt more effort should be made to educate the Legislature that trail issues are a quality-of-life issue that is just as important to the state and local communities as other priorities.

Taking these problems and issues into consideration, the Trails Advisory Committee ranked the importance of specific economic and funding problems. As shown in Table 4.4, the top three ranked problems related to economics and funding are:

- There are many other needs (e.g., education, criminal justice) competing for government funding, making it difficult to prioritize trails funding.
- The state's congressional delegation and legislature need to be more educated and informed on the need for increased funding for trails.
- Funding is not properly allocated between maintenance of existing trails and development of new trails.

**Table 4.4. Ranking of Problems Related to Economics and Funding.**

Problems Related to Economics and Funding	Score*	Rank
There are many other needs (e.g., education, criminal justice) competing for government funding, making it difficult to prioritize trails funding.	170	1
The state's congressional delegation and legislature need to be more educated and informed on the need for increased funding for trails.	163	2
Funding is not properly allocated between maintenance of existing trails and development of new trails.	161	3
Alternatives to government grants have not been adequately considered, explored, or pursued to help provide sustainable funding for trails.	149	4
Recreation sectors perceive that funding allocations are not commensurate with tax contributions from these sectors.	141	5
The legislature can re-direct the funding for the Nonhighway Road and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Program.	127	6
Funding allocations are not matching the contemporary user-demand profile (i.e., popular but more recent recreation modes are not funded commensurate with their popularity).	122	7
Recreation providers find the grant submission process challenging and bureaucratic, making it difficult to obtain trails funding.	121	8
User groups and managers have not discovered how to work together effectively in the trails funding and budgeting process.	118	9
Funding and resource allocations are unfairly distributed between remote, wilderness trails and urban trails.	103	10

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 10 problems, which were assigned points 1-10 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (10 points)

and the lowest priority (ranked 10) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

## **ISSUE: LONG DISTANCE TRAILS AND TRAILS NETWORKS**

A long distance trail is a single trail or a series of connected trails requiring three or more days to travel by foot, or a day and a half to travel by a motorized vehicle or bicycle<sup>5</sup>. Long distance trails are important to the trail community.

The Trails Advisory Committee recognized critical links are missing for trails connectivity, but there was some ambivalence over the importance of developing a long distance trails network. On the one hand, many Trails Advisory Committee members recognized the importance of trails linkages for building community and more wisely managing limited resources. While long distance trails were not a major topic on the minds of Town Hall contributors, some recognized the need for long distance trails.

While most of the Trails Advisory Committee agreed the state needs to prioritize sections of long distance connections and should focus on filling gaps, some members of the group questioned the necessity or importance of a state trails network. These members viewed local trails as a higher priority and some even resisted the trails network altogether, citing the distinct traits, amenities, and characteristics offered by local trails. Overall, when asked to weigh funding for long distance trails versus local trails, most Trails Advisory Committee members agreed that “shorter trails should be the priority.” Discussion on trails connectivity focused on how to connect local trails to long distance trails. The lack of guidance and standards for trail development made this a challenging task among land managers.

The Trails Advisory Committee also expressed concerns over planning, communication, and coordination for long distance trails. Several members noted that there was a lack of communication and cooperation in planning long distance trails among local entities on multi-jurisdictional trails. Members expressed a lack of coordination statewide or the lack of an overall plan to guide the development of long distance trails. The Advisory Committee cited great benefits in increasing multi-jurisdictional communication and cooperation.

Funding long distance trails development and maintenance was also a major issue brought forth by the Trails Advisory Committee. See the section on economics and funding issues raised on trails funding.

Finally, another issue raised by participants related to long distance trails was working with landowners. Landowners have concerns about safety, liability, and unethical recreationists which sometimes result in hesitation among landowners to open some of their land for long distance trails development.

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<sup>5</sup> 1991 Washington State Trails Plan

When presented the major problems related to long distance trails, the Trails Advisory Committee ranked these problems in terms of priority. As shown in Table 4.5, the top three ranked problems related to long distance trails and trails networks are:

- Long distance trails are needed to link existing trails in the state's trails network.
- Liability issues and problems with user groups prevent landowners from providing linkages or corridors for the trails network.
- Development of local and regional trails is taking place without coordination or adequate statewide perspective.

**Table 4.5. Ranking of Problems Related to Long Distance Trails and Trails Networks.**

Problems Related to Long Distance Trails and Trails Networks	Score*	Rank
Long distance trails are needed to link existing trails in the state's trails network.	75	1
Liability issues and problems with user groups prevent landowners from providing linkages or corridors for the trails network.	66	2
Development of local and regional trails is taking place without coordination or adequate statewide perspective.	64	3
There are concerns about how a state trails network will impact the trails, amenities, and character offered by local trails.	45	4

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 4 problems, which were assigned points 1-4 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (4 points) and the lowest priority (ranked 4) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

## ISSUE: MAINTENANCE

Maintenance was one of the most important issues among both Town Hall contributors and the Trails Advisory Committee similar to findings in the SCORP. In general, both groups tended to agree the state should maximize the use of existing trails before development of new trails. While participants recognized that new trails have to be developed to meet capacity demands, they were primarily concerned with ensuring existing trails do not fall into disrepair and becoming unusable.

Town Hall contributors were asked specifically about maintenance versus development of trails. The following question was posed to the group: "Trail providers need money to maintain existing trails and to develop new trails, but they do not have enough money to do both completely. What is the right way to balance these priorities?" The response was overwhelmingly in favor of funding maintenance as the top priority. Again and again, Town Hall contributors agreed that the maintenance of existing trails was paramount.

More importantly, some of these contributors recognized that the demand for maintenance funding might be the result of poor planning during the development phase. Some comments pointed out the challenges faced by funding agencies. Well-planned trails development should anticipate trail usage and subsequent maintenance requirements, building into its goals and objectives a method for handling maintenance issues. In some cases, it was perceived that recreation providers seek funding for maintenance that should have been anticipated during development. This places maintenance on already burdened funding sources.

Another concern raised by the Advisory Committee was the adequacy of trail construction standards. Some members of the committee felt the standards are appropriate (e.g., ensuring environmental sustainability, ADA access), while others believed the construction quality standards are so high that maintenance is actually impeded because the cost and permitting burdens are so stringent.

Others discussed how the state should determine maintenance priorities. In general, Town Hall contributors indicated that maintenance funding should be focused on trails with the greatest demand as well as those with safety issues or those in which closures are threatened.

As a solution to maintenance issues, both Town Hall contributors and the Trails Advisory Committee focused on the importance of engaging volunteer stewardship groups to help build and maintain trails. This was, by far, mentioned as one of the state's greatest assets, and both groups focused on maximizing volunteer contributions to curb funding shortfalls and budget limitations.

While the majority of Town Hall contributors focused on maintenance as a priority, these comments were tempered by those who sought a balance in funding. Some participants recognized the importance of developing new trails in the context of supporting user groups lacking opportunities or to meet capacity. These respondents supported new trail development based upon a thorough plan for the construction and maintenance of the new trail. Again, it was important to these contributors that trails planning consider maintenance, being proactive rather than reactive.

The Trails Advisory Committee determined the highest priorities for maintenance problems. Table 4.6 shows the top three ranked problems related to maintenance:

- There is a general lack of funding for maintenance materials and staffing.
- Federal and state managers have extensive backlogs of trail maintenance needs.
- Construction quality standards are often so high that maintenance is impeded because of the cost and permitting burdens required to meet these standards.

**Table 4.6. Ranking of Problems Related to Maintenance.**

Problems Related to Maintenance	Score*	Rank
There is a general lack of funding for maintenance materials and staffing.	100	1
Federal and state managers have extensive backlogs of trail maintenance needs.	95	2
Construction quality standards are often so high that maintenance is impeded because of the cost and permitting burdens required to meet these standards.	71	3
There is rogue trail building.	55	4
There are no uniform performance standards or measures by which to assess the need for trail maintenance.	54	5

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 5 problems, which were assigned points 1-5 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (5 points) and the lowest priority (ranked 5) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

## **ISSUE: MULTIPLE-USE LAND MANAGEMENT**

Multiple-use management is management of the same land base for two or more purposes<sup>6</sup>. To distinguish between multiple-use land management and other overlapping categories of trail issues, this issue category considers land designation and/or the use of land for recreation development, timber harvest or other commercial uses, as well as natural resource and wildlife corridors. The Ecological Society of America (2000) identifies six land uses:

- resource-extractive activities (e.g., forestry, agriculture, grazing, and mining);
- infrastructure for human settlement (housing, transportation, and industrial centers);
- recreational activities;
- services provided by ecological systems (e.g., flood control and water supply and filtration);
- support of aesthetic, cultural, and religious values; and
- sustainability of the compositional and structural complexity of ecological systems.

In other words, multiple-use land management refers to the broad uses of the actual land and resources rather than multiple recreational uses and user groups which is discussed under the context of the multi-use trails issue.

It was clear some members of the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall perceived recreation uses as secondary to resource extraction activities. Several Town Hall contributors lamented that some roads were closed for timber harvest or trails were lost to commercial or

<sup>6</sup> 1991 Washington State Trails Plan

forest roads. However, it was recognized that a lot has changed since the 1991 trails plan was developed and land managers of resource lands are acutely aware of the economic, social, and environmental benefits of preserving lands for recreation. For example, Forest Service land management has a renewed focus on sustaining ecosystem health and biodiversity as the primary goals for effective land management reducing forest closures.

In general, however, multiple-use land management appears to be much less an issue among the Trails Advisory Committee and the public. A few participants expressed concern for the loss of trails and challenges with trail planning as a result of development and urbanization (i.e., human settlement land use type). For example, there was a perception that community trails were being lost to development.

When presented the major problems related to multiple-use land management, the Trails Advisory Committee ranked these problems in terms of priority. As shown in Table 4.7, the top three ranked problems related to multiple-use land management are:

- Needs of natural resources, such as wildlife and wetlands, are sometimes perceived as excluding trails.
- There is insufficient integrated planning, and managers often do not work together on trails and road building.
- Informal trails and paths in cities and counties are frequently disrupted by development activities.

**Table 4.7. Ranking of Problems Related to Multiple-Use Land Management.**

Problems Related to Multiple-Use Land Management	Score*	Rank
Needs of natural resources, such as wildlife and wetlands, are sometimes perceived as excluding trails.	108	1
There is insufficient integrated planning, and managers often do not work together on trails and road building.	100	2
Informal trails and paths in cities and counties are frequently disrupted by development activities.	86	3
Many trails do not offer educational and interpretive trail opportunities that can be helpful in supporting and encouraging resource protection.	83	4
There is insufficient enforcement of regulations that guide appropriate trail use.	79	5
Management activities, including timber harvest and road building, often disrupt system trails in many settings.	69	6

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 6 problems, which were assigned points 1-6 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (6 points) and the lowest priority (ranked 6) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

## **ISSUE: MULTIPLE-USE TRAILS**

Multiple-use trails provide opportunities for more than one type of use<sup>77</sup>. Multiple-use trails accommodate a variety of outdoor recreation activities, including hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and motorized trail use. Multiple-use does not mean the trail accommodates all uses at all times on all trails. Rather, trail use could be seasonal or limited.

Multiple-use trails can provide equality and fairness to trail users. However, the designation of multiple-use for trails should be carefully considered to address compatibility, safety, and user expectations. Multiple-use trails that are not planned with these considerations in mind can contribute to user conflict and dissatisfaction. As per the recommendations in the 1991 plan, multiple-use trails should be managed for a primary objective or primary use. Once the primary use objective is set for a trail, other compatible uses can be determined.

While multiple-use trails provide additional opportunities, especially for underserved user groups, it is important for users to understand the management goals and maintenance standards for the trail in order to avoid user conflicts. In fact, although multiple-use trails appear to give an element of fairness and equality among user groups, if the primary use objective is not communicated, multiple-use trails can actually cause contention among user groups.

Most Trail Advisory Committee members and Town Hall contributors supported the idea of trails available to everyone. Many agreed there should be more multiple-use trail opportunities. Still, many participants believed limited-use or segregated trails are better for addressing user conflicts. Several key problems were discussed related to multiple-use trails: (1) education and outreach, (2) use compatibility, (3) limited-use, and (4) ADA compliance.

Among both the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall, there was a need to improve education and outreach among user groups to reduce user conflict. Several concerns emerged regarding education and outreach, including users' lack of awareness of management goals as well as lack of education regarding trail etiquette. The Trails Advisory Committee mentioned the importance of providing and communicating clear goals, objectives, and maintenance standards for each trail. Participants felt many users are often unaware of the management or use goals for trails they are using which may result in unethical use and/or dissatisfaction among users

Although some agencies have established primary management objectives for trails use, the Town Hall discussion demonstrated there were many participants who did not have a clear understanding of the primary objective for a specific trail. In general, the Town Hall contributors suggested that communications need to improve to convey primary management objectives. (See the Communications section above.) Additionally, users need to be educated that a primary objective does not necessarily exclude other forms of recreation; rather, it sets

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<sup>77</sup> 1991 Washington State Trails Plan

the standard expectation for trail use. Town Hall contributors suggested increasing and improving signage at trailheads, posting objectives on land management Web sites, standardizing or “branding” trails protocols, and other descriptive annotations added to trails maps.

It was also mentioned the necessity of keeping users informed of trail closures and providing alternative routes: “Prior to trail closures, work with local governments and partners to establish safe alternative routes during reconstruction and long term maintenance disruptions. Communicate such alternative routes to trail users before trail closure.”

Use compatibility is a determination on which trail uses are compatible on the same trail. While this issue is discussed in more detail in a separate section, use compatibility is tangentially related to multiple-use trails. Use compatibility was a source of discussion, and even some contention, among Town Hall contributors, with the discussion centrally focused on nonmotorized versus motorized trail use. Opinions were mixed. Although many participants felt all trails could be shared among all trail users, there were also many who believed restricting trails use to certain user groups was the most effective method for reducing user conflicts and providing the best outdoor recreation opportunities. However, many participants believed that, by working together, multiple-use trails provide the greatest opportunity to the most residents.

While there were many participants who supported multiple-use trails, there are also many who did not agree. Participants felt some uses are not compatible, are disruptive, and have a negative, unsafe, or damaging impact on other users or the environment. For example, trails which allow horses or other animals can leave an unpleasant experience for other uses. Another example is damage from wheeled vehicles cause to tire tracking and ruts which can be a safety issues for other users. Another concern expressed was the inherent dynamics of one mode of recreation conflicting with the dynamics of another mode (e.g., mountain bikers and horse riders).

Participants made the case for limited-use or segregated trails, with a central focus of nonmotorized activities versus motorized activities to help reduce user conflicts

Finally, another major topic of discussion regarding multiple-use trails was the need to provide opportunities for people with disabilities. There were several members of both the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall who mentioned the importance of American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance on trails. Participants felt access was important for many types of trails including motorized and nonmotorized and as links to transportation routes, places of interest, and parks.

The Trails Advisory Committee ranked four problems related to multiple-use trails. As shown in Table 4.8, the top three ranked problems related to multiple-use trails are:

- Users often lack education on what is expected and what is permitted on multiple-use trails.

- Users are often unaware of management goals, such as maintenance standards and primary trail objectives, which often lead to dissatisfaction or unmet needs.
- Some trails are not built to meet use requirements, such as serving a potential transportation function or meeting ADA compliance specifications.

**Table 4.8. Ranking of Problems Related to Multiple-Use Trails.**

Problems Related to Multiple-Use Trails.	Score*	Rank
Users often lack education on what is expected and what is permitted on multiple-use trails.	81	1
Users are often unaware of management goals, such as maintenance standards and primary trail objectives, which often leads to dissatisfaction or unmet needs.	66	2
Some trails are not built to meet use requirements, such as serving a potential transportation function or meeting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance specifications.	56	3
Reconstruction of established trails can result in unanticipated and undesirable displacement or succession of established trail uses.	47	4

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 4 problems, which were assigned points 1-4 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (4 points) and the lowest priority (ranked 4) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

## ISSUE: PRIVATE LANDS AND PRIVATE CONCERNS

Most trail use in Washington takes place on public lands. Further, while this trails plan does not include trail miles on private land, there are some public trail opportunities and issues that have a direct impact on private landowners. For example, the expansion of trails networks may impact private landowners who own land adjacent to or near pathways.

In fact, many landowners own land that borders public trails. Additionally, landowners often provide access to public trails through land exchanges, purchase of easements, and gifts or donations of land. Several concerns impact a private landowner's decisions regarding the use of their property. Liability issues are an important consideration among landowners. Landowners may also be concerned about unethical behavior and/or crimes committed on or near their property. For example, theft, vandalism, dumping, litter, and concerns regarding the impact of some uses are considerations that influence a landowner's decision to allow access to his/her property.

The Trails Advisory Committee recommended more proactive communication and education efforts that target landowners and include landowners in trails planning efforts. This inclusion could foster cooperation and collaboration among land managers and landowners and increase landowner buy-in and investment in trail opportunities. The Trails Advisory Committee also cited the importance of providing landowners adequate compensation for their land.

The Trails Advisory Committee ranked these problems to guide trails planning recommendations. As shown in Table 4.9, problems related to private lands and private concerns are:

- Liability issues and concerns have caused private landowners, including timber companies and other large landowners, to close their lands to the public.
- Poor communication and misunderstanding often leads to obstacles to establishing needed trails adjacent to private land.
- Landowners are not often included in trails planning efforts.

**Table 4.9. Ranking of Problems Related to Private Lands and Private Concerns.**

Problems Related to Private Lands and Private Concerns	Score*	Rank
Liability issues and concerns have caused private landowners, including timber companies and other large landowners, to close their lands to the public.	54	1
Poor communication and misunderstanding often leads to obstacles to establishing needed trails adjacent to private land.	48	2
Landowners are not often included in trails planning efforts.	48	2

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 3 problems, which were assigned points 1-3 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (3 points) and the lowest priority (ranked 3) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

## **ISSUE: RAILS-TO-TRAILS AND UTILITY CORRIDORS**

Rails-to-trails involve the conversion of unused railway corridors into trails or pathways. Utility corridors also offer an opportunity for trails such as along irrigation canals, or electric power lines.

Railroad rights-of-way offer ideal trail opportunities due to their long, linear pathways. They can be an opportunity for greenways in urban areas and often serve as important transportation and recreation links between population centers. In fact, 1,016 miles of railroad rights-of-way have been converted for trail use in Washington State, and another 132 miles are being converted under current projects (RTC, 2013).

Railroad companies that decide to discontinue commercial services over a particular line must request railroad abandonment from the U.S. Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) and notify the Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) of its intent to request abandonment. Some of the issues associated with the process of acquiring abandoned railroad rights-of-way include the sometimes lengthy and burdensome abandonment process,

aggrieved landowners, reactivation of rail service, and disputes over ownership of the railroad right-of-way.

Similarly, the development of utility corridors into trail opportunities also comes with benefits and challenges. There are many benefits to the use of utility corridors for trails, including maximizing the use of utility corridor spaces and aesthetic benefits. The use of utility corridors as trails also fosters partnerships between utility companies and land managers. Still, the use of utility corridors for public trails raises concerns as well, and these issues should be considered in the planning and development of utility corridors into trails. James G. Carlson outlines several topics of concern when planning trails using utility corridors (2007):

- Exposure to tort liability
- Interference with regular utility operation and maintenance activities
- Increased crime (e.g., vandalism of structures, dumping of garbage)
- Protection of structures and facilities
- Conflicts between utility crews and trail users
- Encroachment on adjacent landowners
- Public safety
- Lack of a defined management entity
- Property easements

Thus, while rails-to-trails conversion and utility corridors represent ideal opportunities for trails development, these concerns and issues should be considered in planning for new trails.

One of the major issues discussed by the Trails Advisory Committee regarding rails-to-trails and utility corridors was the lack of oversight. Participants noted a lack of coordination on rails-to-trail information, projects, and funding. Furthermore, participants stated there was no statewide plan for the development and management of rails-to-trails projects which was expressed as a challenge to entities, often non-profit organizations, seeking railroad abandonments to convert into trails. Often, these organizations have limited funding for the oversight, management, and maintenance of rails-to-trails. These participants expressed a difficulty in managing rails-to-trails and learning about regular or exempt railroad abandonments. The Trails Advisory Committee also indicated there was insufficient communication and collaboration between government sectors which leads to rails-to-trails and utility corridor opportunities not being maximized.

Based on discussions, the Trails Advisory Committee ranked 8 problems associated with rails-to-trails and utility corridors. As shown in Table 4.10, the top three ranked problems related to rails-to-trails and utility corridors are:

- Timely recreation agency response to rail corridor abandonments is not well coordinated with transportation entities.
- No statewide plan exists for the development and management of rail-trail projects.
- Permitting requirements often complicate the use of utility corridors for trails.

**Table 4.10. Ranking of Problems Related to Rail-Trails and Utility Corridors.**

Problems Related to Rail-Trails and Utility Corridors	Score*	Rank
Timely recreation agency response to rail corridor abandonments is not well coordinated with transportation entities.	130	1
No statewide plan exists for the development and management of rail-trail projects.	125	2
Permitting requirements often complicate the use of utility corridors for trails.	121	3
There is insufficient communication and collaboration between government sectors to fully capture the benefits of rail conversion opportunities.	114	4
Recreation managers and advocates are often unaware of opportunities presented by utility rights-of-way.	111	5
No single agency in Washington State coordinates rail-trail information, projects, and funding.	108	6
Liability issues and concerns have caused utilities to close their lands to the public.	101	7
There are concerns among users regarding safety when traveling along a utility corridor.	90	8

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 7 problems, which were assigned points 1-7 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (7 points) and the lowest priority (ranked 7) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

## USE COMPATIBILITY

Use compatibility is a determination on which trail uses are compatible on the same trail. As discussed in the previous section on multiple-use trails, use compatibility was an important issue among both the Trails Advisory Committee and Town Hall contributors. Use compatibility such as incompatible use and user conflicts were important issues of concern.

Among both the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall contributors, the discussion regarding use compatibility primarily centered on the use compatibility between nonmotorized and motorized trails uses. There were significant differences in opinion. Many believed motorized trail use has a damaging impact on other trail users' experiences and the environment. Numerous participants stated shared use of motorized vehicle activities provides cost effective opportunities for all users.

It is noteworthy that many participants expressed a desire to increase multiple-use trails for motorized users from motorized and nonmotorized participants to meet demand.

These comments echo similar concerns voiced in the SCORP report, prompting suggestions that designated motorized and off-roading trails and areas be considered as priorities for new trail development.

For some Town Hall contributors, there were inherent differences in recreation modes that make it appear difficult or impossible to fit into a multiple-use framework. In contrast to reasons for public support for multiple-use trails, safety, environmental impacts, and negative impacts on the outdoor recreation experience were all cited as reasons for developing limited-use trails. For these participants, separating users was seen as an appropriate policy response.

These differences in opinion illustrate the challenges that land managers must overcome to effectively manage trails to meet the expectations of all users. In some cases, multiple-use trails appear to help minimize the perception of inequality that exists among users; however, limited-use trails also help address user conflicts by segregating incompatible uses. Land managers should continue to listen to their constituency and obtain on-the-ground, objective data regarding trail usage. Managers and user groups appear to make assumptions about compatibility that are may not always be accurate. Improving on-the-ground information is the best way to make informed management decisions regarding use compatibility. These considerations will help land managers determine the primary objectives of specific trail uses as well as whether or not a trail should be multiple-use or limited-use based on the demands and expectations of constituents.

### **User Conflicts**

An increase in the diversity of recreation activities requiring trail use, combined with a limited supply of trails for compatible use, have made user conflicts a priority area of concern among land managers. In the recently conducted SCORP survey, there were growing concerns among residents and user groups that there was an unequal distribution of opportunity among user groups. In particular, horseback riders, mountain bikers, and motorized users all expressed concerns regarding lack of opportunity for their preferred outdoor recreation activity. Addressing user conflicts can improve user safety, protect natural resources, minimize crowding, and address threats to quality trails experiences.

As discussed in the SCORP, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (2005) provided a spectrum of four types of interactions: (1) complementary, (2) supplementary, (3) competitive, and (4) antagonistic interactions. Accordingly, the goal of recreation providers is to manage resources to keep user interactions complementary or supplementary. By doing so, managers can help minimize user conflicts and foster partnerships among user groups. User conflicts should be addressed because they have serious consequences, including safety issues, user displacement, and even participation desertion.

There was tension among user groups in the Town Hall forum. In fact, comments ranged from frustration and dissatisfaction to antagonism regarding certain outdoor recreation activities and user groups. In general, the impetus behind these viewpoints was a call for more respect for

other users and the environment on the trails. That said, while acknowledging this sense of competition between user groups, there was a call for cooperation and even collaboration among user groups. In general, the participants realized that resolution of user conflicts is primarily the responsibility of the user groups themselves.

The research and findings show the public recognizes there is more to be gained by working together rather than working against one another.

Furthermore, there was optimism among user groups that improved relations are possible. When considering solutions to user conflicts, both the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall contributors focused on the need for facilitating communication and collaboration among user groups. Both groups proposed several methods for bringing diverse user groups together to minimize these conflicts. Suggestions included online resources such as Blogs or forums, a leadership council for trails, and an information clearinghouse for trails management.

There was strong support for a leadership council or forum of diverse user groups by several Trails Advisory Committee members and Town Hall contributors. A positive example described was Washington Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) efforts in Mason and Kitsap counties.

Moving beyond merely improving communications among the user groups, there were others who supported a concerted effort at cooperation and collaboration in trails projects. Many thought that by uniting toward a common goal of improving, maintaining, and increasing trails throughout the state, user groups could foster a relationship of cooperation and collaboration. This type of partnership could provide two immediate benefits: (1) it could help to maximize recreation funding and resources by taking some of the onus off the government to fund and maintain trails and (2) it could foster better relationships between user groups. One of the other benefits cited for participating in these cooperative and collaborative efforts is that it lends credibility to the various user groups; rather than being divided by special interests, user groups can unite with common interests.

A better understanding of other user groups can help to rectify existing conflicts. To this end, Town Hall contributors shared the benefits of simply attending each other's meetings to share needs and experiences and to explore shared values. User groups may have more commonalities than differences and are clearly seeking ways to improve relationships.

While the user groups recognized their own accountability and obligations in helping to minimize user conflicts, they also discussed ways that federal, state, and local governments can facilitate cooperation and minimize conflict. Many contributors expressed a need for better planning for both multiple-use and limited-use trails. Participants felt land and recreation managers have an obligation to plan proactively to inform constituents and minimize user conflicts.

A better understanding and awareness of user expectations and demands was seen as important for the planning, development, and maintenance of trails. The success of trails projects should begin the planning process where multiple-use management best practices and user conflicts can be addressed. However, it was clear from the focused feedback on multiple-use management, use compatibility, and user conflict that trails use and use compatibility are very important issues to the public and should be taken into serious consideration during the planning of any trails project.

The stakeholders suggested government agencies can also improve its messaging and outreach to users. The Town Hall contributors cited the importance of messages and images that represented the diversity among trail users. There were many from the Trails Advisory Committee and Town Halls who indicated that improved communication is needed to better inform recreationists of the uses permitted on the trails, trail etiquette, and trail conditions. Additionally, some participants expressed a need for the government or some other organization to act as a clearinghouse for user groups.

Finally, some Town Hall contributors focused on the importance of umbrella organizations increasing awareness and education among their respective user groups. These contributors indicated that umbrella organizations representing different user groups (e.g., Backcountry Horsemen, Washington Trails Association, Washington ATV Association) can encourage and promote cooperation among the diverse user groups. By focusing on education and outreach regarding trails etiquette and collaboration among user groups, these organizations can help unite efforts to improve trails and trail access for all recreationists.

Based on the discussions the Trails Advisory Committee ranked use compatibility problems. Table 4.11 shows the top three ranked problems related to use compatibility:

- There are conflicts between different modes of recreation (e.g., equestrians and mountain bikers, hikers, and motorcyclists).
- There is a lack of awareness and understanding of the distribution and volume of trail opportunities and trail uses by the different user groups.
- Multiple-use trail management can overlook the importance of identifying compatible uses.

**Table 4.11. Ranking of Problems Related to Use Compatibility.**

Problems Related to Use Compatibility	Score*	Rank
There are conflicts between different modes of recreation (e.g., equestrians and mountain bikers, hikers, and motorcyclists).	120	1
There is a lack of awareness and understanding of the distribution and volume of trail opportunities and trail uses by the different user groups.	111	2
Multiple-use trail management can overlook the importance of identifying compatible uses.	107	3

Problems Related to Use Compatibility	Score*	Rank
There is tension among user groups regarding multiple-use versus limited-use trails.	106	4
There is a perception of inequality among user groups.	95	5
Managers and user groups alike make assumptions about compatibility that are not always accurate, leading to dissatisfaction and conflict.	94	6
Management often fails to effectively seek out and address concerns of major interests.	67	7

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 7 problems, which were assigned points 1-7 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (7 points) and the lowest priority (ranked 7) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

## ISSUE: VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers play an essential role in trail planning, development, and maintenance. From those serving on advisory committees making decisions regarding trail management to work parties performing on-the-ground trail maintenance, volunteers are an invaluable resource helping to take some of the burden off the government and land managers.

The importance of volunteers is also evidenced in the SCORP, in which there is a recommendation to increase the ability of jurisdictions to use volunteers. This recommendation focuses on methods for maximizing the use of volunteers, thereby mitigating some of the funding and resource limitations that recreation providers have experienced. As noted in the discussion on user conflicts in the previous section, volunteerism also provides the secondary benefit of bringing diverse user groups together toward a common goal, thereby helping to minimize user conflicts.

Both the Trails Advisory Committee and Town Hall contributors emphasized the importance of volunteers to trails. Many expressed that volunteers help minimize the funding required for trails development and maintenance, and they also provide on-the-ground work that governments may not have the time or resources to support. Many believed volunteers are the key to increasing trail opportunities in the state.

Although their importance to trails management and maintenance were widely supported, there were also concerns and challenges with using volunteers on trails. Some Town Hall contributors cautioned that volunteers needed to be educated and trained on trails construction, maintenance, uses, and expectations.

Another concern voiced regarding the use of volunteers was their tendency to focus on their preferred recreation activity rather than providing services that benefit all user groups.

Another issue raised by Town Hall contributors related to liability issues and regulations and laws that make it difficult to enlist the assistance of volunteers. Several Town Hall contributors expressed their frustration with these impediments to volunteerism.

Overall, Town Hall contributors frequently supported increasing volunteer contributions for both trail maintenance and new development. Many solutions were offered to help increase volunteerism, including the following:

- Increase communications and outreach regarding opportunities.
- Provide incentives to volunteers.
- Improve education and training of volunteers.
- Provide liability relief.
- Provide relief from onerous standards.

The Trails Advisory Committee ranked volunteer problems to guide trail planning recommendations. As shown in Table 4.12, the top three ranked problems related to volunteers are:

- Managers sometimes lack skills, expertise, or resources to take advantage of volunteer resources.
- Volunteers lack awareness and information on volunteer opportunities, including whom to contact and how to get involved.
- Volunteers lack training and education in trails management.

**Table 4.12. Ranking of Problems Related to Volunteers.**

Problems Related to Volunteers	Score*	Rank
Managers sometimes lack skills, expertise, or resources to take advantage of volunteer resources.	105	1
Volunteers lack awareness and information on volunteer opportunities, including whom to contact and how to get involved.	103	2
Volunteers lack training and education in trails management.	88	3
There are insufficient incentives offered to fully encourage volunteerism.	86	4
Liability issues often prevent the use of volunteers.	72	5
Construction standards might be impeding volunteer contributions.	71	6

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 6 problems, which were assigned points 1-6 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (6 points) and the lowest priority (ranked 6) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

## ISSUE: WATER TRAILS

Washington boasts seven major water trails in the state, offering a variety of boating, camping, and hiking opportunities to recreationists. The Trails Advisory Committee comments suggest that much progress has been made toward improving water trail opportunities in Washington. However, water trails still rates as an important issue for consideration in trails planning. Much of the discussion on water trails had to do with improving information and resources.

In particular, participants expressed a need for a one-stop resource providing maps and information on site amenities, campsites, topography, and other information on water trails and access sites. The Washington Water Trails Association provides some of this information. However, a more robust GIS-based system was desired to better inform users on what to expect and assist in planning.

Other comments focused on improving communications and signs at the site to encourage participation in water trails activities.

The Trails Advisory Committee ranked the major problems associated with water trails. As shown in Table 4.13, the problems related to water trails are:

- There is not a one-stop source for maps, amenities, campsites, topography, and other information on water trails and access sites.
- Self-guided routes lack facilities, including havens.
- There are insufficient trails on water.

**Table 4.13. Ranking of Problems Related to Water Trails.**

Problems Related to Water Trails	Score*	Rank
There is not a one-stop source for maps, amenities, campsites, topography, and other information on water trails and access sites.	58	1
Self-guided routes lack facilities, including havens.	54	2
There are insufficient trails on water.	38	3

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 3 problems, which were assigned points 1-3 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (3 points) and the lowest priority (ranked 3) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

## OTHER ISSUES

In addition to the issues identified in the 1991 trails plan, the Trails Advisory Committee was also asked to consider two additional issues, urban trails and trail safety, that may be considered new or emergent issues related to trails.

## Urban Trails

Urban trails were not specifically addressed in the 1991 trails plan. However, population increases, urbanization, and changing demographics have made urban trails an issue for managers during recent years. Urban trails are shared use pathways, usually providing recreation opportunities for walking and bicycling. These trails facilitate alternative transportation choices and link major parks and open spaces in urban neighborhoods. Urban trails have become increasingly important in local transportation planning and infrastructure. With the emergence of safe routes to school and the increase in using trails as transportation to work and recreation in urban areas, this topic was clearly an emerging and important issue among the Trails Advisory Committee.

Two major issues surfaced regarding urban trails: safety and connectivity. Safety considerations are discussed more in-depth in the following section. Regarding connectivity, there were concerns among the Trails Advisory Committee that transportation and connectivity issues were not adequately considered in trails development in urban areas. Because urban trails tend to serve as mass transportation links, participants noted that urban trails need to connect to sidewalks, bike lanes, and other traffic routes. Additionally, contributors felt urban trails are valued for their links with the urban core, including cultural and historical landmarks in addition to linkages to public transportation.

While urban trails are a new topic of discussion for the *2013-2018 Trails Plan*, there was great interest in providing and improving the urban trail opportunities.

The Trails Advisory Committee ranked urban trail problems. Table 4.14 shows the problems related to urban trails:

- Transportation issues are not sufficiently considered in trail development in urban areas, resulting in gaps between trails and mass transportation that could link safe routes to school, work, recreation areas, etc.
- Urban trails sometimes lack linkages with the urban core, cultural and historical landmarks, and public transportation conveniences.
- Trails compete with other transportation corridors and roads in urban areas creating unique safety and conflict issues (e.g., intersection safety, traffic congestion).

**Table 4.14. Ranking of Problems Related to Urban Trails.**

Problems Related to Urban Trails	Score*	Rank
Transportation issues are not sufficiently considered in trail development in urban areas, resulting in gaps between trails and mass transportation that could link safe routes to school, work, recreation areas, etc.	54	1
Urban trails sometimes lack linkages with the urban core, cultural and historical landmarks, and public transportation conveniences.	52	2
Trails compete with other transportation corridors and roads in urban areas creating unique safety and conflict issues (e.g., intersection safety, traffic congestion).	44	3

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 3 problems, which were assigned points 1-3 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (3 points) and the lowest priority (ranked 3) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

## Trail Safety

Trail safety emerged as an increasing concern for trail planning and maintenance. While trails were built to provide places for recreation and play, sometimes these areas serve as prime locations for vandalism, unsafe behaviors, and even criminal activities. With the growing trend in providing safe routes to schools and close-to-home trails, trail safety has become a growing concern among trails managers. Trail safety does not only include minimizing criminal activity, but it also includes important considerations such as intersection safety, walkable communities, the safety and security of facilities, and 9-1-1 trail address location solutions.

Several Town Hall contributors had concerns regarding multiple-use management and trail safety. Similarly, some trail uses were viewed as incompatible due to safety issues. Safety issues were also identified related to trail speeds. Some recreation modes value speed and these can easily come into conflict with other modes, like horseback riding, where the rapid appearance of a mountain bike, motorcycle, or quad can startle the horse and thereby create a safety risk.

There were also concerns about safe parking, trailheads, and camping areas, primarily focused on the unethical or criminal behavior of others. A number of Town Hall contributors mentioned trailhead parking lots as not secure thereby creating a risk for vehicle break-ins and theft. These safety concerns were cited as problems that occurred in both remote, rural areas as well as in urban areas.

The Trails Advisory Committee ranked trail safety priorities for the *2013-2018 Trails Plan*. Table 4.15 shows the top three ranked problems related to trail safety:

- There are concerns about the safety of some urban trails, including such concerns as security, safe parking, and minimizing criminal activity.
- There are increasing concerns regarding parking lot safety and security.
- Some trails lack safe and visible road crossings, resulting in unsafe intersections of trails near or adjacent to busy roads.

**Table 4.15. Ranking of Problems Related to Trail Safety.**

Problems Related to Trail Safety	Score*	Rank
There are concerns about the safety of some urban trails, including such concerns as security, safe parking, and minimizing criminal activity.	86	1
There are increasing concerns regarding parking lot safety and security.	85	2
Some trails lack safe and visible road crossings, resulting in unsafe intersections of trails near or adjacent to busy roads.	78	3
Increased safety risks occur on multiple-use trails (e.g., horses and mountain bikes, hikers, and motorcycles).	73	4
The inherent risks in some modes of recreation (e.g., motorcycle scrambles, rock or ice climbing, human and dangerous wildlife encounters) are increasing the management burden of agencies.	53	5

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. In this case, there were 5 problems, which were assigned points 1-5 in reverse order, with the top priority (ranked 1) receiving the highest score (5 points) and the lowest priority (ranked 5) receiving the lowest score (1 point). The score is the sum of the points given to each problem.

## TOP 20 MOST IMPORTANT TRAIL PROBLEMS

As part of the analysis of the second survey submitted by the Trails Advisory Committee, the researchers compared the rankings of all the problems listed under every issue category to develop a list of the top 20 problems related to trails (Table 4.16). It is important to note that this identifies the top 20 problems most important to the Trails Advisory Committee. These problems were identified based on discussions and comments from both the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall contributors; however, only members of the Trails Advisory Committee were given the opportunity to rank priority problems. The recommendations in chapter 5 consider these priority problems as well as the priorities discussed in the Town Hall.

**Table 4.16. Top 20 Trail Problems for All Issue Categories Combined.**

Rank	Issue Category	Trail Problems (All scores were ranked by percent with 100% being the highest priority)	Mean	Score
1	Capacity	Existing trails are not being maintained, and many are being destroyed from overuse or improper use.	81.14	2,029
2	Multiple-Use Trails	Users often lack education on what is expected and what is permitted on multiple-use trails.	81.00	2,025
3	Maintenance	There is a general lack of funding for maintenance materials and staffing.	80.00	2,000
4	Water Trails	There is not a one-stop source for maps, amenities, campsites, topography, and other information on water trails and access sites.	77.33	1,933
5	Maintenance	Federal and state managers have extensive backlogs of trail maintenance needs.	76.00	1,900
6	Long Distance Trails and a State Trails Network	Long distance trails are needed to link existing trails in the state's trails network.	75.00	1,875
7	Access	Trail closures and lack of maintenance have limited access to trails.	72.00	1,800
7	Multiple-Use Land Management	Needs of natural resources, such as wildlife and wetlands, are sometimes perceived as excluding trails.	72.00	1,800
7	Private Lands and Private Concerns	Liability issues and concerns have caused private landowners, including timber companies and other large landowners, to close their lands to the public.	72.00	1,800
7	Water Trails	Self-guided routes lack facilities, including havens.	72.00	1,800
7	Urban Trails	Transportation issues are not sufficiently considered in trails development in urban areas, resulting in gaps between trails and mass transportation that could link safe routes to school, work, recreation areas, etc.	72.00	1,800
12	Volunteers	Managers sometimes lack skills, expertise, or resources to take advantage of volunteer resources.	70.00	1,750
13	Urban Trails	Urban trails sometimes lack linkages with the urban core, cultural and historical landmarks, and public transportation conveniences.	69.33	1,733

Rank	Issue Category	Trail Problems (All scores were ranked by percent with 100% being the highest priority)	Mean	Score
14	Trail Safety	There are concerns about the safety of some urban trails, including such concerns as security, safe parking, and minimizing criminal activity.	68.80	1,720
15	Volunteers	Volunteers lack awareness and information on volunteer opportunities, including whom to contact and how to get involved.	68.67	1,717
16	Use Compatibility	There are conflicts between different modes of recreation (e.g., equestrians and mountain bikers, hikers, and motorcyclists).	68.57	1,714
17	Communication	Real-time, easily accessible trails data, including maps, information on trails conditions, and trail closures are limited.	68.00	1,700
17	Economics and Funding	There are many other needs (e.g., education, criminal justice) competing for government funding, making it difficult to prioritize trails funding.	68.00	1,700
17	Trail Safety	There are increasing concerns regarding parking lot safety and security.	68.00	1,700
20	Capacity	Growing populations and user demands are increasing pressure on all trail systems.	66.86	1,671

\*The score was calculated by assigning points based on the ranking given by each respondent. Points were assigned based on the number of problems ranked for each issue. For the comparison of all problems, the score is the sum of the points given to each problem. The points were weighted to ensure uniformity among all the issue categories. For example, some issue categories only had 3 problems, whereas others had 11. The issue categories were weighted to match the category with the most problems in it to provide a comparison among all the problems presented in the survey.

\*\*The mean shows where each problem would rank on average.

## CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter outlines key recommendations supported by the findings of the research. The recommendations come from the compilation of research conducted for the SCORP, online discussions with the Trails Advisory Committee and NOVA Advisory Group, the two web-based surveys of the Trails Advisory Committee, the Trails Town Hall, and discussions with the RCO.

The six recommendations that follow are considered statewide priorities for the next 5 years and are necessary for supporting the other recommendations developed in this plan. Some recommendations apply to a range of trails service providers including state and federal agencies, local jurisdictions, and non-profit organizations.

It is important to note that trail issues cannot be considered independently because many issues overlap or include the same problems. For this reason, many of the recommendations for specific issues may apply to other issues, as well. The end of this chapter includes specific recommendations for each issue category presented discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

### PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The six recommendations that follow are considered priorities for the state during the next 5 years and are necessary for supporting the other recommendations developed in this plan.

#### **STATEWIDE RECOMMENDATION #1: Develop a Web site that includes a trails inventory and provides links to other information about federal, state, and local trails.**

The public is seeking a comprehensive and coordinated resource for information about trails. One approach is to develop a Web site that provides information regarding trails, trail locations, trail conditions, trail use, trail amenities, wildlife expectations, and many other information elements. Such a Web site would require coordination among state, federal, local jurisdictions, and non-profit trail providers.

In planning for the development of this Web site, it is important to understand that the public is seeking comprehensive information about their local trails. .

Some important elements that should be considered in the development of this Web site include:

- Primary use objectives for the trail and allowed uses
- Trail characteristics and conditions
- ADA accessibility
- Facilities and amenities available
- Modes of access
- Trail usage (users, frequency, modes, etc.)
- Wildlife expectations on the trail

More importantly, the public is seeking real-time trails data which could be through an interactive approach in which on-the-ground trail users or land managers can provide timely updates regarding problems with the trails, trail closures, etc. Additionally, this resource should be used to identify gaps in meeting public needs. In other words, the information provided can help determine where additional funding is needed, where there is a lack of access, where capacity thresholds are being stretched, and many other factors that should be considered in decision-making and funding allocations.

This online resource should be a statewide data tool that trail users can access to plan their trail experiences, but it should also provide a method and the tools for replicating the resource at the local level. In other words, the development of this resource should consider ways it can be adapted at the local level.

The public noted that such a resource would not be a replacement for on-the-ground signage and trailhead information, nor would it be a replacement for real-time weather or trail conditions. Real-time trail users find these signs and information invaluable. While respondents clearly see a need for a central online source for trails information, both the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall contributors emphasized the importance of informative signage on trails and at trailheads.

### **STATEWIDE RECOMMENDATION #2: Improve data gathering among land managers to better understand trail use, users, and modes.**

Town Hall contributors indicated that land managers lack data to make informed decisions about trail capacity, funding, and resources. These contributors supported making trails development decisions based on real data. Currently, comprehensive measures of trail use do not exist, nor is data collected in consistent ways.

There is a need for conducting on-the-ground field surveys and monitoring trails to determine priorities for improving capacity.

The Trails Advisory Committee suggested using the Forest Service's National Visitor Use Monitoring Program as a template for the development of a data gathering model and assessment. This program is designed to track estimates of visitors to National Forests and Grasslands. It obtains information related to activity participation, demographic characteristics, visit duration, measures of satisfaction, and expenditures related to the visit (USDA Forest Service, 2012). It was suggested that this type of data collection be conducted annually or twice each year.

Two challenges should be taken into account in these efforts. First, there is the issue of agency capacity and resources to conduct the data collection needed to develop maps and trails communications. An entity would need to with coordinate and manage these efforts. Second, there is the issue of getting this information out to the public. Funding will be needed to develop and communicate these findings. A working group charged with developing a plan for effectively pursuing detailed, on-the-ground data collection as an initial step in this effort. The

plan should clearly identify the funding needed to initiate and maintain data collection efforts, as well as potential funding sources. This recommendation helps support Statewide Recommendation #1 and many other recommendations highlighted in this plan.

**STATEWIDE RECOMMENDATION #3: Support efforts to find increased and/or sustainable revenue sources.**

Among both the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall contributors, funding was a top issue of concern (see Figure 3.28). Many comments called for dedicated funding for trails, rather than reliance on grant funding, especially in light of the many priorities competing for limited funds.

Many felt that user groups, nonprofits, and others need to unite and present data-driven justification for a dedicated funding source for trails development, maintenance, and operations.

In addition to this recommendation for dedicated funding, participants offered many suggestions for increasing revenue for trails. Some participants suggested raising new revenue for trails through new or re-directed taxes or by encouraging donations with vehicle registrations. Others suggested enlisting private companies to provide trail funding or increasing the use of volunteers. Still others suggested the use of inmate labor to build and maintain trails. And finally, some suggested lifting the current cap on the fuel tax that funds the NOVA account.

**STATEWIDE RECOMMENDATION #4: Support the development of a trails leadership council or other coordinating forum for trails.**

Both the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall contributors emphasized the need to bring user groups together toward common goals. To this end, they suggested the development of a leadership council for trails. Many thought that by uniting toward common aims of improving, maintaining, and increasing trails throughout the state, user groups could foster more cooperation and collaboration.

Such a leadership council could unite trail users around common objectives, and assist with planning, policy recommendations, and funding priorities. A leadership group could provide two immediate benefits: 1) foster better relationships among user groups, and 2) develop a united constituency for trail issues.

**STATEWIDE RECOMMENDATION #5: Focus on the maintenance of existing trails as a priority.**

Trail maintenance clearly emerged as a key issue among the public. In general, both the Trails Advisory Committee and the Town Hall contributors agree the use of existing trails should be maximized before focusing on the development of new trails. While stakeholders recognized that new trails may have to be developed to meet capacity demands, they were primarily concerned with ensuring that existing trails not fall into disrepair and become unusable.

These contributors agreed that trail planning should consider maintenance and be proactive rather than reactive. Any new trails development should anticipate trail usage and subsequent maintenance requirements, building into its goals and objectives a method or plan for handling maintenance issues.

The importance of this issue among stakeholders identifies a gap between the grant program funding priorities or requirements and a public that clearly views maintenance as a top priority for increasing trails access and capacity in the state. Well-planned trails development should anticipate trail usage and subsequent maintenance requirements, building into its goals and objectives a method or plan for handling maintenance issues. In some cases, however, recreation providers are seeking funding for maintenance that should have been planned for during development, thereby placing the onus of maintenance on already burdened funding sources.

To address stakeholder concerns regarding maintenance, the funding programs for trails projects should be reviewed to determine whether any changes need to be made. Additionally, funding programs and land managers should consider requirement more planning for maintenance requirements when developing new trails.

**STATEWIDE RECOMMENDATION #6: Encourage and support programs and initiatives focused on user conflict management.**

In the recently conducted SCORP survey, residents and user groups expressed concerns that opportunity for trail activities is unequally distributed among user groups, creating a sense of competition for access and resources. Still, while acknowledging these tensions, commenters called for cooperation and collaboration among user groups. The findings show that the public recognizes more can be gained by trails users working together.

Land managers recognize managing user conflicts is a priority due to the increased diversity of trail recreation activities combined with a limited supply of trails. They want to address user conflicts in order to improve user safety, protect natural resources, minimize crowding, and address threats to quality trails experiences.

Respondents from user groups recognize their own accountability and obligations to help manage user conflicts. They would like help facilitating and supporting user group efforts to manage or minimize user conflicts.

Programs and initiatives should be developed to support conflict management on trails issues. User groups should be supported in their efforts to minimize user conflicts.

Initial ideas offered by stakeholders include:

- Assistance in communicating these efforts through a clearinghouse or one-stop resource focused on user group initiatives and programs;

- Support for stakeholder organizations that wish to meet with one another to discuss common ground issues (e.g., offer neutral meeting management services, create meeting events such as local problem-solving groups, etc.);
- Work with stakeholders to improve the quality of and, perhaps most importantly, the dissemination of ‘best use practices’ for multiple-use trails;
- Improve signage at trailheads; and
- Assist in the creation of work parties that include multiple user groups.

## RECOMMENDATIONS BY ISSUE CATEGORY

The rest of this chapter includes specific recommendations for each issue category discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. See those previous chapters for details on the issues and problems raised. This section focuses on highlight specific recommendations for the next 5 years.

### ISSUE: ACCESS

The top three ranked problems related to access are:

- Trail closures and lack of maintenance have limited access to trails.
- Trails and nonmotorized modes of travel are often overlooked in transportation planning.
- There is insufficient access for underserved communities, including residents with disabilities or limited mobility, children, youth, and urban residents.

#### Recommendations

- Focus on trails maintenance to minimize closures.
- Incorporate trails into transportation and open space plans at state and local levels.
- Prioritize funding for trails planning and development that considers underserved communities.
- Increase and improve parking at trails.

### ISSUE: CAPACITY

The top two ranked problems related to capacity are:

- Existing trails are not being maintained, and many are being destroyed from overuse or improper use.
- Growing populations and user demands are increasing pressure on all trail systems.

#### Recommendations

- Develop new trail opportunities and improve maintenance to existing trails to increase capacity.
- Minimize the difficulty in obtaining land easements for acquisition and development to accommodate the growing demand for trails in the state.
- Increase and improve data gathering on trails use, users, and modes to inform land management decisions.

## **ISSUE: COMMUNICATION**

The top three ranked problems related to communication are:

- Real-time, easily accessible trails data, including maps, information on trails conditions, trail closures, etc., are limited.
- Many trails lack signage, including better identification of trailheads, information on trails conditions, interpretive and educational information, and wildlife expectations.
- There is a shortage of education programs among user groups designed to promote mutual respect, trail ethics, and best practices.

### **Recommendations**

- Provide updated, concise online information to trail users. Increase and improve road signs and signage at trailheads.
- Increase the number of interpretive/educational signs at trailheads and along trails.
- Create education programs and online forums that are specifically designed to foster communication and cooperation between user groups.
- Explore methods for including user groups in planning, funding, and decision-making processes.

## **ISSUE: ECONOMICS AND FUNDING**

The top three ranked problems related to economics and funding are:

- There are many other needs (e.g., education, criminal justice) competing for government funding, making it difficult to prioritize trails funding.
- The state's congressional delegation and legislature need to be more informed on the need for increased funding for trails.
- Funding is not properly allocated between maintenance of existing trails and development of new trails.

### **Recommendations**

- Consider conducting a study on the economic impact of trails.
- Educate the public and elected officials about the benefits of trails as well as the costs of building and maintaining trails.
- Focus on trails as a business investment and economic development opportunity, highlighting how trails provide important transportation linkages for businesses and local enterprise and as tourist attractions. Increase awareness and transparency regarding trails funding and trails expenditures.

## **ISSUE: LONG DISTANCE TRAILS AND A STATE TRAILS NETWORK**

The top three ranked problems related to long distance trails and a state trails network are:

- Long distance trails are needed to link existing trails in the state's trails network.
- Liability issues and problems with user groups prevent landowners from providing linkages or corridors for the trails network.
- Development of local and regional trails is taking place without coordination or adequate statewide perspective.

**Recommendation**

- Develop a collaborative and cooperative strategic plan for long distance trails and trails networks that includes a cost/benefit analysis of current long distance trails and current long distance trail use.
- Address liability issues and landowners' concerns regarding the impact of a state trails network on private land issues.

**ISSUE: MAINTENANCE**

The top three ranked problems related to maintenance are:

- There is a general lack of funding for maintenance materials and staffing.
- Federal and state managers have extensive backlogs of trail maintenance needs.
- Construction quality standards are often so high that maintenance is impeded because of the cost and permitting burdens required to meet these standards.

**Recommendations**

- Explore dedicated funding alternatives for trails maintenance.
- Continue to use volunteers to address the backlog of trail maintenance needs.

**ISSUE: MULTIPLE-USE LAND MANAGEMENT**

The top three ranked problems related to multiple-use land management are:

- Needs of natural resources, such as wildlife and wetlands, are sometimes perceived as excluding trails.
- There is insufficient integrated planning, and managers often do not work together on trails and road building.
- Informal trails and paths in cities and counties are frequently disrupted by development activities.

**Recommendations**

- Focus land management on sustaining ecosystem health and biodiversity as the primary goals.
- Encourage coordination and collaboration among land managers in trails and road building.
- Focus on integrating trails in community planning and housing development.

**ISSUE: MULTIPLE-USE TRAILS**

The top three ranked problems related to multiple-use trails are:

- Users often lack education on what is expected and what is permitted on multiple-use trails.
- Users are often unaware of management goals, such as maintenance standards and primary trail objectives, which often leads to dissatisfaction or unmet needs.

- Some trails are not built to meet use requirements, such as serving a potential transportation function or meeting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance specifications.

### **Recommendations**

- Improve education and outreach among user groups regarding trail goals, objectives, and uses.
- Develop new trails to meet ADA compliance specifications.

## **ISSUE: PRIVATE LANDS AND PRIVATE CONCERNS**

The problems related to private lands and private concerns are:

- Liability issues and concerns have caused private landowners, including timber companies and other large landowners, to close their lands to the public.
- Poor communication and misunderstanding often leads to obstacles to establishing needed trails adjacent to private land.
- Landowners are not often included in trails planning efforts.

### **Recommendations**

- Increase proactive communication and education efforts that target landowners.
- Provide landowners adequate compensation for their land.

## **ISSUE: RAIL-TRAILS AND UTILITY CORRIDORS**

The top three ranked problems related to rail-trails and utility corridors are:

- Timely recreation agency response to rail corridor abandonments is not well coordinated with transportation entities.
- No statewide plan exists for the development and management of rail-trail projects.
- Permitting requirements often complicate the use of utility corridors for trails.

### **Recommendations**

- Work with the WUTC and WSDOT to obtain timely notification of all rail corridor abandonments.
- Work with transportation entities to set policies and procedures for railroad abandonment notifications.
- Improve communication and collaboration between government sectors regarding rail-trails and utility corridors.

## **ISSUE: USE COMPATIBILITY**

The top three ranked problems related to use compatibility are:

- There are conflicts between different modes of recreation (e.g., equestrians and mountain bikers, hikers and motorcyclists).
- There is a lack of awareness and understanding of the distribution and volume of trail opportunities and trail uses by the different user groups.

- Multiple-use trail management can overlook the importance of identifying compatible uses.

### **Recommendations**

- Facilitate communication and collaboration among user groups.
- Improve on-the-ground, objective data.
- Recognize that providing motorized vehicle opportunities is worthy of further research and consideration.
- Increase user group diversity in agency outreach, images, and messages.

### **ISSUE: VOLUNTEERS**

The top three ranked problems related to volunteers are:

- Managers sometimes lack skills, expertise, or resources to take advantage of volunteer resources.
- Volunteers lack awareness and information on volunteer opportunities, including whom to contact and how to get involved.
- Volunteers lack training and education in trails management.

### **Recommendations**

- Increase education and training regarding the use of volunteers in the state.
- Increase communications and outreach regarding volunteer opportunities.

### **ISSUE: WATER TRAILS**

The problems related to water trails are:

- There is not a one-stop source for maps, amenities, campsites, topography, and other information on water trails and access sites.
- Self-guided routes lack facilities, including havens.
- There are insufficient trails on water.

### **Recommendations**

- Develop a one-stop resource for water trails.
- Prioritize water trails facilities and opportunities.

### **ISSUE: URBAN TRAILS**

The problems related to urban trails are:

- Transportation issues are not sufficiently considered in trails development in urban areas, resulting in gaps between trails and mass transportation that could link safe routes to school, work, recreation areas, etc.
- Urban trails sometimes lack linkages with the urban core, cultural and historical landmarks, and public transportation conveniences.

- Trails compete with other transportation corridors and roads in urban areas creating unique safety and conflict issues (e.g., intersection safety, traffic congestion).

### **Recommendations**

- Include urban trails in local transportation and infrastructure planning.

### **ISSUE: TRAIL SAFETY**

The top three ranked problems related to trail safety are:

- There are concerns about the safety of some urban trails, including such concerns as security, safe parking, and minimizing criminal activity.
- There are increasing concerns regarding parking lot safety and security.
- Some trails lack safe and visible road crossings, resulting in unsafe intersections of trails near or adjacent to busy roads.

### **Recommendations**

- Increase law enforcement presence in parking areas and on trails.
- Consider intersection safety and traffic coordination for trails planning.

### **RCO ACTIONS**

As a major statewide funding partner for trails, the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) will strive to implement the following action items in response to the statewide trails plan recommendations.

Note that statewide recommendations #3 and #6 are outside RCO's scope as a state funding agency and therefore do not apply directly to its core work.

#### **RCO ACTION #1: Develop a Web page that is a clearinghouse for trails information.**

In response to statewide recommendation #1, RCO will develop a Web page dedicated to sharing information about trails throughout the state.

Ideas for the Web site include:

- A clearinghouse for trails-related information such as this plan, other state trails plans, and other planning information at the federal, state, or local level as provided by other parties.
- An inventory of regional trails, along with gaps or missing links in those regional trail systems. The inventory would include linked information on each regional trail with information and maps.
- Links to other sources of information about trails from federal, state agencies and local agencies and nonprofit organizations. These links would be a collection of resources where trail users find tools developed by others to plan their trail experiences.

**RCO ACTION #2: Provide incentives, within existing resources, for grant applicants to submit trail data in consistent ways.**

While RCO grant programs require applicants to address trails use and need as part of the evaluation process, there is no standardized format of how trails data is collected. Some applicants have specific data on trails use and need while others have a general sense of need.

In response to statewide recommendation #2, RCO will revise its program policies to incentivize a consistent method for reporting trails use and need. The incentives will not be financial and must be within the existing funding resources. The use of this information would be to help prioritize funding investments.

**RCO ACTION #3: Encourage and assist, within existing resources, with the coordination of statewide trails coordinating organization.**

In response to statewide recommendation #4, RCO will, within existing staff and funding resources, provide staff support to assist with and coordinate a statewide trails organization. While RCO staff resources are limited and the agency cannot take an advocacy role, it may provide support to an organization that is working towards implementing this plan's recommendations on a statewide level.

**RCO ACTION #4: Support funding for maintenance of trails.**

Two of RCO's grant programs allow for maintenance of trails as a grant project (Nonhighway Off-road Vehicle Activities program and Recreational Trails Program). In response to statewide recommendation #5, RCO will review funding patterns to determine whether the agency is adequately supporting maintenance of trails.

As part of this review, RCO is recommending incorporating the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's sustainability policy recommendations into its trails program priorities and adjust the evaluation criteria to incentivize sustainable design and maintenance goals.

**RCO ACTION #5: Prioritize funding for trail uses identified as being "in demand" in this trails plan and evaluate whether to develop and designate a system of state recreation trails as referenced in RCW 79A.35.**

In response to the public survey on supply and demand for trails, RCO will review grant award results to determine whether the agency is adequately supporting the types of trails identified as in demand. These are:

- Hiking, walking, biking
- Urban and suburban locations
- Access for traditionally underserved groups, including people with disabilities, people representing a variety of age groups, and minority populations.

In addition, RCO will evaluate whether to develop and designate a system of state recreation trails as referenced in RCW 79A.35 and whether trails so designated should receive preference in grant funding. As part of this evaluation, the RCO will consider the feasibility of developing:

- A method for establishing a state system of recreation trails,
- A process to propose trails into the system,
- An inventory of existing trails and potential trail routes for designation as state recreation trails, and
- Adjustments to program funding priorities to increase access to the statewide system of trails.

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## APPENDIX A: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT REPORT FOR THE 2013-2018 WASHINGTON STATE TRAILS PLAN

### BACKGROUND

In this project, extensive use of the Internet allowed a convenient and successful way for the public, the Trails Advisory Committee, and the NOVA Advisory Group to discuss the issues affecting revisions to the trails plan without attending in-person meetings. Internet blog Web sites were created for this purpose.

A blog (short for “web log” and defined at [http://codex.wordpress.org/Introduction\\_to\\_Blogging](http://codex.wordpress.org/Introduction_to_Blogging)) is a discussion or informational Web site consisting of discrete entries (‘posts’) and, in the use made here, displayed so contributors can respond to seed questions posed to them and can read and comment on the comments of other contributors. The following sites were used:

Public Town Hall Discussion Website ( <a href="http://watrailstownhall.wordpress.com">http://watrailstownhall.wordpress.com</a> ) For collecting input from the general public.
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Trails Advisory Group Discussion Website ( <a href="http://trailscommittee.wordpress.com">http://trailscommittee.wordpress.com</a> ) For collecting input from this Advisory Group.
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NOVA Advisory Group Discussion Website ( <a href="http://novacommittee.wordpress.com">http://novacommittee.wordpress.com</a> ) For collecting input from this Advisory Group.
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The format used here was to pose questions asking stakeholders to provide narrative answers offering their opinions about the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities on trails and the issues that ought to be included in the *2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan*.

Before posting for public viewing a moderator reviewed all comments to ensure a civil discussion (not a problem for this project) and to ensure spurious posts (e.g., spam) did not get posted.

The Town Hall and Advisory blogs were active from mid-May to mid-August 2013. During that time, the public and advisors were asked to respond to series of questions posted at their sites with each question remaining active until the frequency of commenting decreased (usually about two weeks).

### Caveats

- Do not extrapolate these comments to the state as a whole. In a blog discussion, participation comes from respondents who self-select. This means there is no effort to sample stakeholders in a scientifically valid way (i.e., random sampling). Consequently,

it would be inappropriate to ascribe quantitative meanings (e.g., percentages, majority/minority sentiments, trends) on any issue. Treat these results as valid opinions of individuals, not as a summary of results that are generally applicable across the state.

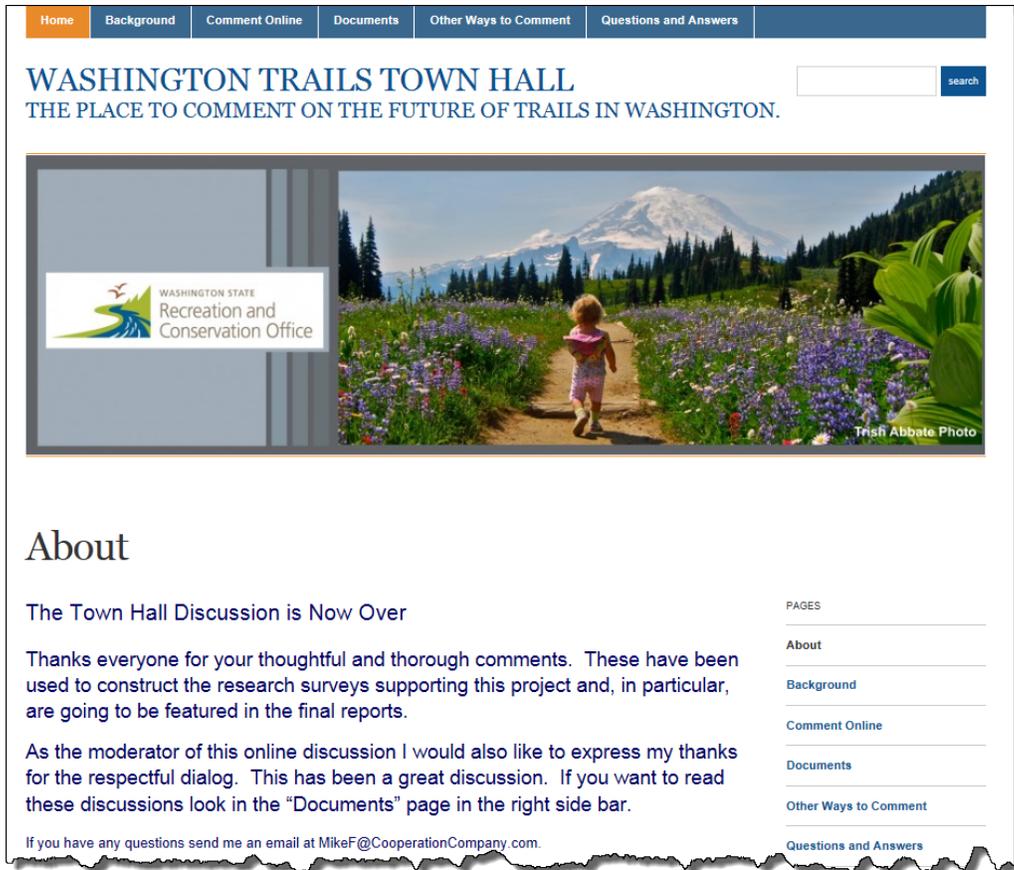
- The results are informative. Despite the qualification above, the stakeholder input is valuable much in the same way as are results from a focus group (i.e., as qualitative descriptions of the core issues that surround the questions posed to stakeholders). This form of input is useful in identifying the issues that are important to stakeholders and for gaining first-level insight about why these issues are important to them. One value of this method of collecting public input is that people can react to each others' comments and, in so doing, can prompt further thoughts and insights from on another.
- Adding the participation rates from each round will not equal the totals presented above. For the total number of participants: Because many people participated in more than one round, the total number of participants reported above does not include duplicates. For the total number of comments: A small number of people who provided e-mail comments requested that their comments not be made available for public viewing. Therefore these people are omitted from the counts below but are included in the grand total.

With these caveats in mind, the Town Hall public input and the Trails Advisory Committee input received for the 2013 revisions to the Washington Trails Plan have been compiled in the section to follow.

## **TOWN HALL INPUT**

### **Introduction**

A key consideration in the re-writing of the Washington Trails Plan was public input. Stakeholders were engaged in seven rounds of discussion over the Internet using a 'blog' Web site as described above (see landing page, below).



To get the word out about the Town Hall discussion forum, RCO sent news releases to media centers across the state. The RCO also e-mailed announcements to its list of interested stakeholders and organizations. In addition, a similar announcement was e-mailed to all people who had previously participated in a similar online discussion for the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. For each round of Town Hall questions, e-mails were sent to the RCO stakeholder list and all previous Trails Town Hall participants were notified of the new question. In each mailing stakeholders were asked to tell their network about the existence of the Town Hall. These online discussions promoted a dialog that was used to construct research components supporting the plan re-write and in writing the plan itself. Participation was robust with 160 people contributing 297 comments (see below),

<b>Total number of comments</b> (i.e., total number of e-mail addresses for all rounds + opt outs)	297
<b>Total number of people commenting</b> (i.e., total number of unique e-mails all rounds + opt outs)	160
Round 1 – Total Emails = # of comments =	101
Unique Emails = # people =	77
Round 2 – Total Emails = # of comments =	44
Unique Emails = # people =	44
Round 3 – Total Emails = # of comments =	43

Unique Emails = # people =	42
Round 4 – Total Emails = # of comments =	37
Unique Emails = # people =	34
Round 5 – Total Emails = # of comments =	32
Unique Emails = # people =	30
Round 6 – Total Emails = # of comments =	14
Unique Emails = # people =	14
Round 7 – Total Emails = # of comments =	27
Unique Emails = # people =	26

## ROUND 1 FINDINGS

### Round 1 Question

What are the most important priorities for improving trails recreation over the next five years?

### Summary Observations by the Blog Facilitator

In this round of discussion, 77 people commented, providing 101 comments. Below is a summary of the themes of the comments, followed by a *verbatim* reporting of all comments.

#### Cooperation vs. Competition

An equestrian noted the risks of in-fighting among backcountry users, “We'd like to see users working together rather than against each other. United we are a small but firm voice for back country recreation funding. Not united we are just making noise for our own pleasure or displeasure.”

One ORV user wants more opportunity for his recreation but also recognized the importance of a coalition of support around trails, “If we work together as volunteers, as good stewards of the land then I believe that we can make a goal of more open and maintained land / trails / recreation areas for everyone in the state.”

And one Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Program Advisory Group member forcefully made his case, “While we all have our own iron in the fire it is apparent that we are arguing over very little. For those that don't know the NOVA account contributions from gas taxes has been significantly diminished by the legislature. The loss of this funding is a crippling blow to the overall funding of all user interests... The entire recreational community needs to advocate for the re-establishment of the accounts, the plate will then hold enough to provide support to all groups. It needs to be impressed on the legislature that dollars committed to NOVA and RTP [Recreational Trails Program] are in many cases double dollars. All of these grants require and receive volunteer labor hours. All of the user groups participate in volunteer support to facilitate these grants... We can all continue to argue over who should get what, however these arguments are better aired in the NOVA grant committee, composed of all user groups. I am not sure what the process is in the RTP program but having served on the NOVA

committee for several years I can attest to fairness of the process... So let's concentrate on the account and then determine how to invest it."

### **Trail Maintenance**

Motorized recreationists pointed out that their lack of access to certain trails means there is no incentive for volunteers to do routine maintenance that helps managers. The thought process was that since their access would depend on trail clearing, grooming, etc., the motorized recreation community would have an incentive to get involved: "Why not let off-road mc clubs have access and they will be cleared in short order." A King County employee stressed the need for maintenance and the value of agency-public partnerships using volunteers for maintenance. There was a strong call for using volunteers, especially in this tight fiscal climate; as one commenter put it, "provide every possible support to volunteer groups who do such terrific work, e.g. Washington Trails Association."

### **Trail Connectivity**

One respondent commented, "To improve the trail system itself, loops and trails that connect with communities or other trails are always helpful." One solution could be, "multi-jurisdictional coordination on trails, since many planned or proposed trails cross multiple ownerships". Some users need a minimum length of trails to make an outing worthwhile; as a horsewoman put it, "For horseback riders, a trail system needs a minimum of 12-15 miles." A motorcycle rider expressed frustration because "many locations make it hard to connect from trail to trail with one trail ending just a mile or two down the road (gravel) from where the next begins. There should be an allowance for riding gravel roads with ORV tags in specific areas." A bicyclist made the point that the term 'trail' should be broadened. Her story was one of abandoning a one-year bicycle road trip for personal safety concerns, "Paved road designated as bicycle routes were truly very dangerous. It would be nice to have a multipurpose network interconnected statewide roads with developed areas accessible for all off-road modalities."

### **Building New Trails and New Opportunities**

At least part of the pressure on current trails could be alleviated by simply changing the designation of what a trail is that is suitable for access to the public. One Town Hall contributor made this case, and then acknowledged the need to manage liability, "Trails are nice. But if funding is scarce, please do not lock people out of areas, just because there is not a world-class walking path. Certainly warnings should be placed advising of the primitive nature (or lack of) a trail. Perhaps advice about 'own risk', and 'own responsibility for rescue' would be appropriate." One user wants more Eastern Washington opportunity for ATVs, "I would like to propose an RV Park setting for four wheel drives rock crawlers ATVs and motorcycles. I believe having such a designated area would relieve pressure off of other areas that are not so desirable and give the four wheelers a place to go. I have seen this done on the Westside but nothing on the east side of the North cascades."

### **Crowding**

There is a concern that crowding of existing facilities for motorized recreationists creates management problems. A dirt biker observed, "By closing other ORV parks they [managers] forced a large number of people to one area. Now over-crowded and unmaintained trails have lead to deteriorated trails that once were very fun and safe to some [that are] often unrideable and extremely dangerous."

### **Location and Accessibility**

Access to information about opportunities was mentioned along with a request to create a Web site with links to trails by type of allowed activity.

### **Road Access and Road Maintenance**

Recreation opportunities are being truncated because of road closures that prevent access to trailheads: "No road means no access, no trail crews, no volunteers, and essentially no trail." Recognized causes for closures included reduced government budgets, gated private roads, and extensive and expensive processes to complete road repairs to modern standards. There is concern that too many logging roads on public lands are closed.

### **Recruitment of the Next Generation**

Contributors noted an interesting shift from previous concerns that the backcountry (therefore trail) use was becoming overcrowded to a new concern that children are not receiving enough exposure to the backcountry thereby breaking connections to the out-of-doors that create a sense of stewardship in young people.

### **Funding**

Many Town Hall contributors called for adequate funding for both maintenance and trails development.

### **Motorized Trails**

"More motorized trails are probably needed, but not necessarily in the 'backcountry'."

### **Specific Problem Sites Mentioned** (paraphrased quotes from the Town Hall contributors):

- Wild Sky Wilderness Area - inability to fund plans that were made.
- Mt. Loop Hwy - inaccessible because of washouts.
- Cougar Mountain - only a small portion of trails can be ridden on horseback.
- Robe Canyon – people are going beyond the sign that warns the trail is hazardous (the trail needs to be made safer).
- Barclay Lake – a heavily used trail appears to be a garbage problem.
- On Forest Service land, the Dry Creek (western Washington) trail has no bridge over Dry Creek, which is not ever dry!

## Multiple-use Versus Limited-Use

There are a wide range of opinions regarding the choice between limiting types of use to 'compatible' activities versus a much wider definition of multiple-use. Perceptions about the compatibility of activities vary widely:

- "I strongly believe in nonmotorized multi-use trails. I've been all over the west and have seen it work splendidly in many locations. HIKE, BIKE and HORSE. The 3 actually get along quite well..."
- "As a multi outdoor recreation user, I believe the state needs to do what it can to make sure everyone who benefits from outdoor recreation, as I do, gets a win out of the process, and not a loss. Win/win not win/lose, or lose/lose. Create a win/win for all recreationalists. Do not close trails or opportunities for us, create more opportunities..."
- "Carefully consider the downsides of 'multi-use' trails... People love their kind of trail use, whatever it is: just think how different it is to zoom along on a motorized vehicle, ride on a horse, or walk. These things do not "just fit together"; one person's fun can all too easily be another person's fun wrecked. We should all have our preferences honored as much as possible."

But, along with this controversy there were clear calls for cooperation. A mountain biker put it this way, "Any time large groups of people share anything, conflicts will occur. My experience however is that the vast majority of users, be they mountain bikers, hikers, or horse riders, go out of their way to be courteous and friendly. Let's not let the few cantankerous obnoxious people that are out there hijack the dialogue and encourage the false perception of the amount of discord that exists between the user groups which actually is exceedingly minimal."

There were also calls for recreationists to recognize the reality of limits that exist. One contributor made the case for user responsibility coupled with respect for each other's rights and the realities of current management capacity: "As a responsible off-road vehicle owner it is upon each party to respect each other's groups access to public lands and coexist in an environment that is not only constrained by the land we have available but also the local and federal budgets allocated to upkeep these public lands."

## Misdirection of 'Dedicated' Funds

Historic Nonhighway Road and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Program funds is a hot-button issue for some Town Hall contributors: "An appalling amount of resources has been raided from funds like NOVA and used for projects and state entities for which they were never intended." One solution offered is to create, "...a legal advisory committee [to] be assigned to review all legislative documents around OHV funding resources, and provide an action plan to create and maintain legislative documentation for funding and use of trails for OHV use."

Accumulating fees and taxes in general are a concern especially when coupled with a perception that these monies are not being spent to support the activities that generated the fee/tax base in the first place: "The other condition forced upon us are this Discover Pass. It

forces us to pay to use an area I already paid for when I purchase my ORV tabs every year for a increasing amount of money.”

Transparency of funding sources and subsequent allocations was mentioned as a need: “What I believe would help most is a lot more transparency in the funding, collecting, and allocation of all the monies gathered for ‘ORV funds.’”

## Fees in General

Similar to the concerns expressed in the public input for the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan some users are not happy with fees (a kind-of 'we-already-pay-taxes-for-this-recreation' argument). Other users accept fees as appropriate. Some users are frustrated about the multiple fee structures that exist, especially when they feel unable to predict which kind of fee is needed for various recreation sites. For example, one contributor put it this way, "I have a federal public lands pass, but some Forest Service areas don't honor it - I have to pay separately for those areas and there's no way to know ahead of time which ones have been privatized."

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## Verbatim Comments from the Town Hall Website in Response to Round 1

Tami  
merritr@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/24 at 4:31 pm

What are the most important priorities for improving backcountry trail recreation over the next five years?

Let's focus on the question asked. The priority is to keep the backcountry trail recreation available, and not closed due to lack of funding! Hundreds of people spend hours and hours of their personal time advocating, volunteering, sometimes back breaking work, to keep backcountry trails open. Volunteers from every user group clean, repair, create, and maintain trails all over our state in support of trail recreation. Allowing user groups to repair and maintain trails is our way to help pay for keeping these trails open to everyone. We, every user group, are losing more and more trails to "lack of funding". We need to fight hard to keep the funds available. Parking and access at trailheads are very important to keep open and maintain, as well as allowing re-routing of trails that are damaged.

Communication between user groups can be civil if we work together. Let's fight to keep funding as a group, and then work as a group to determine its best use.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sondra J  
sgjohn1234@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/23 at 5:19 pm

Lots of horse-riding folks use and maintain trails in the back country, using pack horses to bring in tools volunteer groups for heavy work, misery-whip saws to cut out logs in the wilderness, etc. Haven't seen many backpackers packing in grub hoes, planks for bridges over muddy areas, trail cutting tools, etc. Seen various young folk groups doing great work on PCT and branching trails. Funding isn't getting any better. The Discovery pass money was to be 80% for trail work when enacted. Where'd that 80% go?

Sheila  
mrs.budb@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/22 at 2:52 pm

Need money for maintenance. Even with all the user groups volunteering (a wonderful thing) money is needed to keep trails open and usable for all groups.

Jerry  
hardinester@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/22 at 2:16 pm

The most important priority for the next five years is to identify a funding source that is adequate, steady, and based on ability to pay. I do not support additional "pay to play" schemes. This is contrary to the goal of getting more people, especially families and children, into nature.

Jule  
juleschultz@yahoo.com  
192.230.13.41  
Submitted on 2013/05/22 at 11:45 am

It has been shown time and time again that user groups can create quality trails via volunteer driven groups. Although funding would very much help the process along, the lack of new trails does not come from lack of funding, but rather lack of an area where volunteer driven organizations can build trails. I'd like to see the process for building trails on public land in Washington streamlined by shortening the timeline and reducing red tape.

BOB BROOKE  
saddlesorebob@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/21 at 9:56 pm

While we all have our own iron in the fire it is apparent that we are arguing over very little. For those that don't know the NOVA account contributions from gas taxes has been significantly diminished by the legislature. The loss of this funding is a crippling blow to the overall funding of all user interests.

The entire recreational community needs to advocate for the re-establishment of the accounts, the plate will then hold enough to provide support to all groups. It needs to be impressed on the legislature that dollars committed to NOVA and RTP are in many cases double dollars. All of these grants require and receive volunteer labor hours. All of the user groups participate in volunteer support to facilitate these grants.

We can all continue to argue over who should get what, however these arguments are better aired in the NOVA grant committee, composed of all user groups. I am not sure what the process is in the RTP program but having served on the NOVA committee for several years I can attest to fairness of the process.

So let's concentrate on the account and then determine how to invest it.

Joe Hawkins  
vaq34webmaster@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/21 at 2:25 pm

Each county in Washington State needs to have an ORV park (much like Walker Valley). Everyone on the west side of the state needs to realize that not every piece of ground is wilderness. The state legislature needs to enact laws that will allow private land owners to open their lands up for all recreational uses, laws that protect the land owners and the state from frivolous lawsuits.

I find it funny that when the DNR gave the local press the dog and pony show at Reiter Pit showing the new jeep trails that people actually thought the best solution to the problem was to have the ORV'ers use gravel pits. Reiter Pit is an active dump site and a source of gravel, in another words part of it is still an active gravel pit.

The bottom line is that Washington is growing and our outdoor recreation opportunities are not keeping up with that growth, they are decreasing.

Everyone needs to come together and work towards a goal that will ensure that no more land is locked up by land managers, be they county, state or federal agencies.

For every acre that was put aside for the Wild Sky wilderness and for every other type of this of land closure there needs to be an equal amount of land set aside for the "rest" of the public to use, from hiking to ORVs and everything in between.

If we work together as volunteers, as good stewards of the land then I believe that we can make a goal of more open and maintained land / trails / recreation areas for everyone in the state.

Jule  
juleschultz@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/21 at 2:17 pm

I have heard that in Washington many public lands agencies are reluctant to let new trails go in because of liability and the fear of being sued. This is because Washington law lets trail users sue the State if hurt on public lands because of improperly built or extreme trails. Many more trails may be allowed to be built on public lands if we could reduce/eliminate the liability of the State. Oregon, I believe, has figured this out (e.g. Hood River trails).

Judd bergeson  
judd42685@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/21 at 9:04 am

There needs to be more areas for the 4x4 users.

Tom  
tombaker070@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/20 at 10:11 am

1. Provide a Web site with links to trails by type of activity allowed
2. Trails are important, but so is maintenance. Provide resources to allow groups to adopt trails, and for finding grants

Trail Rider  
onebluedog2@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/20 at 7:56 am

I am a hiker and an equestrian. I agree that we need more multiuse trails, particularly for the ORV users. There is a serious lack of facilities dedicated for ORV use on the west side of the Cascades. There must be some public lands appropriate for this use even if it is just seasonal. I am sure there are groups that will help regulate and maintain the sites. I understand this can be a problem but the ORV park at Sand Lake in Oregon is managed successfully by the US Forest Service. Sharing the trails with motorized vehicles is fine with me as I can hear them coming and get out of the way. Mountain bikes are only a concern on narrow trails with limited sight lines.

Dan  
dancolby41@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/19 at 9:45 pm

Off-road vehicles are at the bottom of the priority list in Washington. Off-road vehicles should be able to go use the forest service roads/clear cuts/logging roads which give us a lot more area to use.

Jeff Chapman  
bbbranch@olympus.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/19 at 12:03 am

The NOVA formula is based on off-highway gas tax spent by all forms of recreation, not just off-road recreational vehicles. So the tax on gas used in pickups pulling trailers and cars driving to trailheads is included, and many of these users are nonmotorized trail users. The fact is hikers, mountain bikers, campers, paddlers, equestrians, and others do actually pay the gas tax that goes into the NOVA account. If NOVA was to be based solely on ATV/bike gas taxes, it would be a much smaller pot of money. The net effect would be the same (actually less) money for motorized recreation. By combining up the off-highway gas tax coming from various user types, we are able to advocate united together to save the NOVA account and stop it from being swept into other uses than supporting the agencies maintaining our backcountry trails systems.

As to ORV tabs, these funds do go to motorized recreation as they are tracked in a separate grant category within the RCO distribution. We agree that these funds should be used for motorized recreation and not swept, and the back country recreation community has been united about this as well.

I believe I speak for all back country groups when we say we believe the NOVA gas tax share should be based on 1% of the full gas tax. At one time it was, but the last two gas tax increases did not include a corresponding NOVA increase. If the legislature passes a new gas tax increase, NOVA should receive its proper share. With back country recreation becoming more and more dependant on grants, NOVA has become a key source of funding for the agencies. The lid should be lifted to its proper level. We Back Country Horsemen listed some 300 multi-user trail and campground maintenance projects that could be completed if the grant funding was available.

With discussions underway in the USFS about downsizing road, trail, and campground inventories due to inadequate revenue, our main desire for the next five years is to avoid this happening through figuring out new funding strategies while protecting existing ones. The USFS should follow the state lead in placing value on recreation and working with the user community on planning and maintenance so that our net recreational assets actually increase, not decrease. This means that these funds for primitive recreation (NOVA, RRA, snowmobile) can not be swept into other uses. RTP needs to be reauthorized as a dedicated fund federally, and the Governor should not opt-out in order to utilize RTP elsewhere. Areas that are losing access, such as Wenas, need a solution to restore public use while working positively and respectfully with private landowners. We would like to see camping restored at Burke Lake, year

around trail use for equestrians in Capitol Forest, reopening of Burnt Hill, more loop options most everywhere, and transparency in the USFS and NPS Trails Classification Systems. We'd like to see RMAP projects that fix habitat for fish use modern culverts and bridges rather than road destruction for stream crossings. We'd like to see a net increase in trail inventory and an assortment of options so that all groups can find a quality and safe experience. We'd like to see movement toward completion of our cross-state trail systems such as the John Wayne, Columbia Plateau, Willapa Hills, and Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail.

And we'd like to see users working together rather than against each other. United we are a small but firm voice for back country recreation funding. Not united we are just making noise for our own pleasure or displeasure.

Dwain

tfd171@yahoo.com

Submitted on 2013/05/18 at 8:12 am

I would like to propose an RV Park setting for four wheel drives rock crawlers ATVs and motorcycles. I believe having such a designated area would relieve pressure off of other areas that are not so desirable and give the four wheelers a place to go. I have seen this done on the Westside but nothing on the east side of the North cascades. The Methow Valley is in dire need of such a place... please look very hard at making this happen I also believe it would be a good economical boost for our dying Valley.

A suggestion place would be the power line section going to the top of Highway 20 on the loop area.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to express our feelings and desires.

Thanks again for your time.

Dwain Hutson owner of NAPA Auto Parts and long time fire chief for the town of Twisp, Wa.

girl

r-m-j@wildmail.com

Submitted on 2013/05/18 at 7:59 am

Here's an example of how hiker trail access has changed over the years. Yesterday I was hiking in the Staircase area of Olympic National Park. My current hiking guide describes two spur trails that are just simply not there anymore, plus one trail that is described as destroyed by a fire in 1985 and has never been resurrected. The Staircase Rapids Bridge has finally been replaced! But it's taken 15 years. The main trail I was on was only cleared of winter damage for the first 3.7 miles, to the first trail junction. That second trail has not been cleared at all. It's mid May, folks. This is a major trail into the Olympic back country. I've noticed that the trails and roads in the Olympics that are used by folks from Seattle get way better maintenance than the rest of the area, and that's not fair. We need trails in areas that get less use too, for us locals, and for people who don't want to hike in a crowd.

On the Forest Service side, the Dry Creek trail has no bridge over Dry Creek, which is not ever dry. Also a big portion of the 'trail' is simply a decommissioned logging road, which goes straight up a steep slope – no switchbacks or nothing. The LeBar end of the Dry Creek trail was inaccessible for about 3 years when the road leading to the trailhead washed out. They have put in one new trail, Copper Creek, but its way too steep for me. By the logic of some of the arguments above, I should be able to ride a dirt bike up that trail since I'm 'disabled' and can't do it on my own.

Privatization of public lands removes trail access too, such as the selling of state park lands in recent years, and the Forest Service practice of leasing land to private concessionaires. I have a federal public lands pass, but some Forest Service areas don't honor it – I have to pay separately for those areas and there's no way to know ahead of time which ones have been privatized.

I hike a lot on private timber company logging roads – they're close to home, saves time and gas. They're open to hikers, mountain bikes, horses; you can even drive your truck on them if you pay for a gate key, but guess what? Even the private timber companies (whom no one would describe as environmental extremists) don't want ATVs/ORVs on their land. Not even on their logging roads. They are just simply inherently too damaging even when used conscientiously. I know they're fun, I've tried it myself, but they are too destructive. I've tried hiking on ATV trails in the off season when there's no one actually riding, and the trails are just mired in erosion and washouts and pooled water – essentially impassable on foot. And there's lots of wildlife that will not stay in an area that has motorized use of any kind or amount. Some uses just cannot be shared.

Tricia Ann Foster  
Triciaann777@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/17 at 9:57 pm

Doug,

I agree its very hard sharing the trail. Horses may become frightened, if a mountain biker is riding toward them. Some separation is very helpful. At least they don't go up Tiger MT cable trail, try running that one.....

John Pope, Anacortes, WA  
popejp@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/17 at 9:50 pm

Learn from Canada and Alaska and allow multiple use on the majority of trails, only restricting it when it is necessary to preserve life and truly endangered species. Our state is among the most blessed with public lands, but has more restrictions than most on allowing multiple use. Any trail open to hikers should be open to at least two or three other user groups, including trails in federal wilderness areas. We need to develop a culture of sharing the sandbox using common sense trail management and community adoption of trail maintenance, This generation of avoiding maintenance and preventing access really has damaged the overall ability of the citizen to enjoy nature in this state. I support many of the views I've seen in this blog, and hope the end result of the survey will be that the agencies and governments charged with serving us will be allowed to do so, support recreation once again. Relax the restrictions and enlist help from organized groups who will work for access.

Candace S Hunter  
candyhunter@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/17 at 9:37 pm

In 2005 my husband and I road a tandem recumbent bicycle from MT St Helen's to San Francisco where we abandoned a one year trip. Paved road designated as bicycle routes were truly very dangerous. It would be nice to have a multipurpose network interconnected statewide roads with developed areas accessible for all off-road modalities. It would be safer than using the highway system. I pay extra fees to ride a motorcycle on the street and would not be opposed to paying a user fee. My question is the maintenance of these roads as Washington can't maintain the paved roads. I also agree with the need for an increase in firing ranges, it is an Olympic sport.

Linda Roe  
lzroe1951@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/17 at 9:29 pm

I would like to see the access to the trails we do have maintained. I do not like the idea of mixing motorized and nonmotorized users. I do not like the idea of hiking on ATV tracks. If I want to breathe exhaust fumes, I can walk in the city. However, I do think that ATV users should have somewhere to ride where that kind of recreation does the least damage to the environment.

Tricia Ann Foster  
Triciaann777@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/17 at 9:22 pm

Dave,

Very informative! Off-road vehicles are at the bottom of the totem pole in Washington. They should be able to go on the forest service roads/clear cuts/logging roads which there are a ton of. Even abandoned logging roads.

Tricia Ann Foster  
Triciaann777@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/17 at 9:07 pm

Rodger,

WTA works on trails, and so does the FS, they even allow users to work a day on the trail to earn a pass for the year (Forest service).

Tricia Ann Foster  
 Triciaann777@yahoo.com  
 Submitted on 2013/05/17 at 9:03 pm

WE already pay the forest service for the trail pass and the state parks/DNR trails new 'Discovery Pass' for recreation.

KJ  
 kjrjatprairierim@aol.com  
 Submitted on 2013/05/17 at 8:42 pm

Loss of private forest land for trail use puts more pressure on public land use. All users need to respect each other and volunteer to help build and maintain trails for motorized and nonmotorized use. Paying user fees and volunteering will be very important to help keep back country trails open and growing to meet demands.

CAMPMEAT  
 dumptrucksteve@yahoo.com  
 Submitted on 2013/05/17 at 8:21 pm

Stop being so ignorant on issues of OHV use. OPEN UP all roads for crying out loud. I have NEVER, EVER, in 12 years of riding my ATV in FERRY County, seen ONE other ATV rider in the woods. Get a life.

steve campbell  
 stevecampbellconstruction@gmail.com  
 Submitted on 2013/05/17 at 9:44 am

Yes the stealing of NOVA funds is a travesty, but just look at the national news this past week. We (somebody) vote these people in. Closer to home in the Methow valley of Okanagan County we are without any ATV trails! This is not cooperation but a "me only" attitude. There is room for all recreational user groups in this valley.

Fabian White  
 fabianwhite3@yahoo.com  
 Submitted on 2013/05/17 at 8:51 am

What are the most important priorities for improving backcountry trail recreation over the next five years?

1. Priority should be for maintenance of existing trails that actually get used the most. Gotta take care of your bread and butter trails first.
2. Replacing or adding signage for existing trails. I love an adventure but getting lost trying to find a trail or while doing a hike is a downer!
3. More vault toilets! I don't have a problem with Mother Nature but my family doesn't love the idea of having to "pop a squat" and that sometimes limits our choices.
4. Involve more "like" users, such as hikers and mountain bikers on the same trails to increase popularity and support.
5. Create "timely" awareness in local publications about the opportunities out there? The Bellingham Herald does a "Summer and Winter Guide" for activities throughout Bellingham and Whatcom county...tennis camps, swim classes, art workshops, etc. Why not pick a popular local Trail and do a short write up/advertisement with a picture? The "Entertainment News NW" is also another potential resource for something like this.

Kevin Ashe  
 d.iga@frontier.com  
 Submitted on 2013/05/17 at 6:48 am

Access to trails is just as important as the trails themselves. With road closures comes trail closures or at the least less used trails. If we don't fight to keep roads open trail planning is almost a mute idea. Once we get assurance that the FS and DNR will come up with a better plan for our mountain roads then it makes sense to come up with plans for our trails.

Byron Stuck  
nmatrust@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/16 at 9:22 am

Kevin is right on "The most important priorities for improving back country trail over the next five years, is to increase the miles of multiple use trails."

But we also need to assure our funding base is defended as we've now discovered THREE times since Dave Hiatt above chronicled its creation. In recent years OUR elected officials decided to balance their State Parks budget by stealing \$9.6m of our NOVA funds. And then prior to that, our own governmental bureaucracy decided to dilute the motorized access to these funds by (poorly) conducting a fuel tax study and siphoning off significant funding and worse, decision making authority, for nonmotorized uses. And the third siphoning off (pun intended) was again by our ELECTED reps, this time deciding to limit our fuel tax rebate proportion. That happened when gas prices kept rising and our funding base would've been "more than we needed" in THEIR eyes, so they capped the amount we received and took the rest.

The idea of "pay to play" was ethically and responsibly important to us when we created the NOVA funding sources (gas tax rebates and ORV permits). Apparently ethics and responsibility weren't enough.

Please help us get more single track trail mileage, ATV use opportunities, and 4x4 off-road areas from our NOVA funding source ... while we still have it.

Byron Stuck  
nmatrust@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/16 at 10:01 am

And I don't want to diminish the importance of the hiking, horse and mountain bike opportunities and their needs for funding, great volunteer contributions, etc. I'm just saying that the NOVA fund source wasn't created for those users (even though I hike, mountain bike, and ... rarely ... ride horses). The underserved group here is the motorized user ... and oh by the way ironically ... they're the original creator of NOVA (the V stands for vehicle).

Kevin Vanderhorst  
chevykev@frontier.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/16 at 1:43 am

There is an ever-growing demand for more motorized off-road areas. The #1 priority should be for increasing motorized/multiuse backcountry access. It has been mentioned before, that while OHV use is increasing dramatically, actual available land suited for said OHV use is decreasing, causing overuse of existing legal area. In my county of residence, there is NO OHV area available, which needs to change. By increasing OHV/multiuse access, the use and subsequent needed maintenance overall will decrease in a given area. Also, as Jim P stated, the 4x4 trails are the only true multiuse trails. I also agree that other user groups should also be required to pay for said access to multiuse trails, which would increase the available funds for maintaining/building new trails!

Herb Gerhardt  
hgerhardt@wavecable.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/15 at 9:19 pm

I have been volunteering for DNR for well over 10 years in the Tahuya-Green Mountain State Forests for well over 10 years. I am NOT an ORV'er but a hunter, fisherman, hiker, backpacker, i.e., I participate in nonmotorized recreation activities.

As a volunteer I have worked with both the motorized and nonmotorized users in our area and support everyone's desire to enjoy and recreate in the outdoors. We all have a right to recreate and the state has set up a funding program to fund such recreation. Although this funding program has been raided in the past, it has now been restored to support ALL recreation again. Money is what drives everything we do and from my observation, the secondary money is much, much greater than the money spent on creating trails and ORV areas. I see these \$50,000+ support vehicles come to our area on an almost daily basis. Besides the money that these users pour into our economy for their ORV's, horses, mountain bikes, hunting equipment, fishing equipment, camping equipment, etc, etc, they also pour lots of money into our local economy on shopping in the local area for supplies to support their outdoor activities. So yes, there is a financial payback from our recreation needs and the more opportunities people are given to recreate, the more money goes back into our economy, then there are the health benefits (both mental and physical health) from participating in these activities. The paybacks are endless.....

So now that I have tried to justify spending the money for recreational opportunities, I hope the state will build and maintain more outdoor recreational opportunities. The biggest need is for more ORV opportunities in different areas. Right now, due to the lack of ORV areas, there is an overuse of our Tahuya ORV area. The users have no choice, they have to recreate where they are allowed to recreate and we need to disperse some of this pressure to other areas. Along with building more ORV recreation areas, we also need to provide more Education and Enforcement personnel to keep things running smoothly. From my observations, we are lacking in on the ground Enforcement which give all of us a bad reputation with the local communities. Today, I observed 3 quads and 2 off-road motorcycles racing down our county road with no enforcement anywhere to be seen. This is a fairly common occurrence in our area and needs to be stopped.

Another area which needs be provided is some public target shooting areas where those who desire to shoot, can go and accomplish their recreational needs in a safe and sane manor. DNR and other state and local agencies have been totally ignoring the need for such recreational opportunities. So, target shooting areas must also be addressed in this 5 year plan! Just saying you can't shoot here, is not an acceptable solution.

girl

r-m-j@wildmail.com

Submitted on 2013/05/15 at 8:43 pm

I would have to say that trail access for hikers has decreased substantially. Trails close when bridges wash out and are not replaced. Trails close when logging occurs and are not replaced or reopened. Trails close when winter damage buries them, and they're not cleared for several years sometimes, if ever. Better maintenance, more timely maintenance, replacement of trails obliterated by logging, and faster replacement of bridges, cheaper flimsier bridges if necessary, are critical. Bridges are going to wash out regularly, no need to over-engineer them. And replacing bridges with fords is not good enough – that means the trail is inaccessible except in August and September, the only time of the year that most rivers can be safely waded. I read old hiking guides and I'm saddened by how much has been lost to logging and lack of maintenance and loss of bridges.

Mountain bikes should be allowed on trails and in wilderness areas. There's no good reason for excluding them. They're quiet, there's no exhaust, they're human-powered, and they can't produce any more erosion than horses do. Open trails to mountain bikes.

I'm in favor of multiple use, but not when it comes to mixing ORVs and ATVs with nonmotorized uses. Too much noise, too much exhaust, too much erosion and dust and mud. It's not just annoying to others, it's unsafe and it harasses the wildlife and coats the plant life with dust. The local ATV trails in the Capitol State Forest are basically unusable by anyone else due to the erosion and dust in summer, mud in winter, and the huge potholes they carve out that span the whole trail. I don't mind stepping aside to let people go by, but the ATV trails are too trashed to be used by anyone else. No multiple use possible there.

How about better trail signage in state wildlife areas? There's hiking trails there but no signage to tell you what trails are where and how long they are and where they go.

RW

wescnmbkr1@gmail.com

Submitted on 2013/05/15 at 7:31 pm

It sounds like all of us enjoying the great outdoors are tiring of the Bureaucracy demanding more funding from every one of us that is making up our population. The more population grows, the more the Bureaucrats take from us without stipulating where the funds are being spent. The bigger the Pot grows; it's who ever get's their hand in first grabs the largest amount. It should be specified where the funds are to be spent. EVERYONE using the trails, need to contribute to the Pot! We all need to be responsible for our usage, if you can haul it in, you can haul it out.

Greg Lovelady

GregL12@comcast.net

Submitted on 2013/05/15 at 6:51 pm

The plans should:

1. Encourage the Governor to defend trail funding programs, especially NOVA, RTP, and WWRP-Trails Category, before Congress and the State Legislature.
2. Continue to place a high priority on backcountry trail safety and maintenance projects.

Joan Fleming  
joanfleming@q.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/15 at 3:11 pm

Before building new trails, make sure that existing trails are kept open and repaired. This is especially true if the new trails will be limited to let's say one user group – hiking for example. Several user groups have limited numbers of trails open to them so that losing a trail and not replacing it with a comparable or better trail ends up cramming us onto fewer trails. This ends up with crowded and abused trails. Developing user groups for trail systems helps build relationships between user groups and provides a volunteer base for maintaining trails.

Joan Fleming  
joanfleming@q.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/15 at 3:02 pm

NOVA is funded by a combination of approx. 1% of gas taxes (recently that was about \$5 million dollars) and ORV Use Permits: <http://www.wta.org/action/current-issues/nova>. ORV's are not the only ones contributing to the gas taxes.

Kevin McGrath  
reliable.kevin@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/15 at 11:19 am

The most important priorities for improving back country trail over the next five years, is to increase the miles of multiple use trails. While wilderness and hiker only opportunities have increased many times in recent years, opportunities for motorize use have shrunk dramatically. So dramatically, in fact, that overuse is causing substantial safety and maintenance concerns for the existing multiple use trails. OHV use causes no environmental damage in and of itself; OHV damage occurs only with overuse. It's time to stop the overuse issue by increasing available opportunities and stop the discrimination against motorized users.

Art Waugh  
goldhammer88@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/15 at 11:13 am

The need for 4 wheel drive TRAILS is growing, and the current system is not meeting demand. Several of the current trails are at higher elevations, and not accessible for most of the year. More users are being jammed into ever smaller areas as other agencies are closing ground to access. This causes ever increasing conflicts with users as well as more resource damage, and in turn forcing more closures. There is a great need for lower elevation trails, especially on the west side of the state. (West of the Cascade Crest)

Dave Hiatt  
dhiatt07@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/15 at 10:22 am

By the way, NOVA stands for Nonhighway Off-Road Vehicle Activities.

Keith  
keithpeter@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/15 at 10:20 am

Thanks for the correction Tod!!

Dave Hiatt  
dhiatt07@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/15 at 10:14 am

In the early 70's, despite a growing need for trails and facilities, there were virtually no state or federal funds available to land managers, counties or cities to provide for or maintain trails and recreation facilities for the rapidly growing and popular sport of off-road motorcycling. The motorized users decided to seek help in the legislature to provide for new funding. In 1971, this resulted in the passage of the Washington ATV Act. The 1972-73 ATV fuel use study estimated 4.6% of the state fuel tax to be produced by ATVs and other eligible vehicles by their use on trails and nonhighway roads. An amount of 1% of the state fuel tax was then written into the RCWs as representative of only the off-road and trail use by motorcycles and 4x4's and this amount was made available each year to the Inter-

Agency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) – NOVA program. It is important to note the motorized users gave up their State Constitutional right to an individual refund of their nonhighway & off-road gas tax moneys in exchange for this legislation.

The goal and purpose in the original NOVA program, as stated in IAC's own 1973 policy guidelines for ATV funds:

#### Goal

The goal of the IAC in its administration and distribution of ATV Funds is to increase the availability of trails and areas for all-terrain vehicles by operating a program to provide funding assistance to local and state agencies for the planning, acquisition, development and management of land and facilities for ATV use.

#### Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is three-fold. They will (1) define the manner through which the All-terrain Vehicle Funds shall be distributed, and the use for which they are specified; (2) prescribe methods and standards by which eligible offices of government may apply for funds to the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation; and (3) prescribe rules under which they may obtain moneys to defray expense for planning, acquiring, developing and managing recreational areas and trails for all-terrain vehicles.

This is a fund to provide off-road motorized recreation.

Unfortunately, government did not keep its word to the off-road vehicle (ORV) users when legislators were under political pressure by paid lobbyists from well funded, selfish, anti-access, hate groups like the WTA/Sierra Club, etc. plus an anti-access, anti-motorized fifth column (prior WTA Director on their Olympia staff) from within the Agency to which the ORV users had entrusted administration of their funds (now the RCO).

As a result, the legislature simply stole a large portion of the ORV user's funds for NON-ORV use instead of properly allocating money to them from remaining 1971 3.6% of the fuel tax monies generated by nonhighway roads.

Nonhighway roads are any road not supported by WA State gas tax monies, e.g. all National Forest, BLM, National Park, private & other alphabet agency roads.

There is much more to this story regarding the travesty of theft from the Off-road Vehicle users and WA State is paying the price economically.

Oregon does a much better job of managing ORV funds to benefit the ORV users and as a result, annually adds an estimated \$290 million in equipment sales, \$245 million in trip expenditures and 2,369 jobs to their economy according to the 2008 Economic Impact of OHV Recreation in Oregon report to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department by Kreg Linberg, Oregon State University – Cascades Campus on 12/10/09. I now spend most of my off highway recreational dollars in Oregon.

I hope to live long enough to see the recent travesties of our WA ORV funding rectified so I can go back to spending my dollars in WA. Just contact me if you want a very well documented history of NOVA. I have experienced all of it from before 1971 to now.

Roger B Nelson  
rogerramjet1961@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/15 at 8:36 am

Hi my name is Roger Nelson I am with a good organization called Backcountry Horseman Of Washington we are affiliated with Backcountry Horseman Of America and our mission statement is to perpetuate the common-sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's backcountry and wilderness to work to insure public lands stay open to recreational stock use, to assist various governmental and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resources ,I have been in the Pasyten wilderness many times in my life time and the trail crew is getting less money every year for maintaining trails. I am seeing this problem at the state and federal level. It would also help if funds like NOVA. Which is set up for state agencies for trail maintenance the money be used only just for that reason, the reality of it all with the state and federal agencies getting less money the different user groups will have to step up more and help out.

Tod Petersen  
tod701@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/15 at 6:32 am

Keith,

As the law currently stands the only street legal motorcycles that are required to have an ORV permit to use trails are ones converted pursuant to RCW46.61.705.

William Woodland  
stealthrunner117@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 9:55 pm

I'm with SquakMtn I think that if our NOVA funds are used for Mtn. bike/Horse/Hiking trails...They should PAY for the use!!!! Let's say license all bikes that use our roads like we do...and all hikers/horse riders need to pitch in with the Fees that we as 4x4/ORV riders have to pay!!!!.....NOVA National Off-road Vehicles Assn. Funds!!!!

If they are using Our Nova funds they need to pay like we do!!!! Stealthrunner!

SquakMtn  
john-traeger@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 9:30 pm

Additional Mountain Bike trails should be a priority, along with expanded motorcycle single track. Both groups have been systematically cut out of trail usage in Western Washington, despite the Mountain biking user community becoming very large and well organized.

I agree with the comments about the NOVA funding originally being slated for motorized off-road trails and then unfairly ending up a portion being spent on nonmotorized trails. That being said, I would support expanding the ORV licensing to mountain bikes to increase the revenue base and justify some of the nonmotorized spending.

Eileen Burchett  
lilpony001@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 8:36 pm

Trails are very important for any one that likes the outdoors.

Jacob Phillips  
jacob.l.phillips@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 6:22 pm

Why are cross-country skiing, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, hunting, fishing, sightseeing benefiting from the NOVA funds when they do not pay into them? These funds come from ORV gas purchases and tabs. We need more ORV trails because the current areas are HEAVILY over used due to the number of users versus the number of legal areas to recreate with motorized vehicles. NOVA funds should be used for ORV trails only. I also take part in these other activities, but they should be funded separately.

I like the idea of using the various groups, especially the motorized recreationists to help alleviate the expenses of maintaining other trail types. Motorized users could haul in equipment and perform maintenance and build new trails and haul out trash. We would be happy to do it.

4x4, ATV, and motorcycle maintain horse and single-track trails.

Horseback and motorcycle groups maintain hiking trails.

Hikers do self maintenance on the back country trails.

Jim Putman  
jputman1@q.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 6:03 pm

We need more 4x4 trails that access the backcountry. Many people seem to think that we (as 4x4 users) just enjoy the driving for the driving but the truth is many of us enjoy being able to see the backcountry and visit remote areas to camp or just enjoy the scenery. The Forest Service is closing roads that everyday people like to use at an alarming rate these days. This severely limits access to those of us with disability's or people just lacking the health or time to hike for miles and miles. We all need to be more tolerant of each others choice of access mode and remember that 4x4 trails are the only true multiple use trails. (4x4s, quads, hikers, horses, mt bikers, motorcycles. Everyone can and does use the 4x4 trails.

Chris Marsh  
thehouseofccccc@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 5:30 pm

Opening all public lands to every user group. Open LARGE private forest lands to motorized public. Tear down the gates. Stop the naturalistic bureaucracy. Places need to be open so the public doesn't have to drive 100 miles to use an ORV. If the goal is to be green, then it would be a lot greener for me to go out in the mountains in my back yard than to drive across the state.

matt r  
thatguyisfly@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 4:36 pm

We all need to figure out how to get along out there on the trails (mountain bikes, hikers, or equestrian) and not try to ruin it for everyone except your preferred method of enjoying the great outdoors. If we don't figure out how to do this Washington can take it proverbial ball and not let anyone play.

Keith  
keithpeter@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 11:45 am

Tricia,

They (street legal motorcycles) can ride on the FS roads if they pass street legal requirements and have a license. But there is a majority that are not street legal but pay for an ORV license. These can only be ridden on approved ORV trails. A street legal motorcycle can ride on the ORV trails if they also purchase an ORV license.

Keith  
keithpeter@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 11:40 am

Fuel Taxes

The 18th amendment to the Washington State Constitution dedicates motor fuel tax collections to "highway purposes". Revenue generated from the gas tax is distributed to counties, cities and state accounts. The state receives about half of the total revenues collected. These are the funds which support the WSDOT highway programs as well as the Washington State Ferry System, which is deemed a state highway system by constitution. Highway construction, maintenance, preservation, administration and debt service on highway construction bonds are all funded by these revenues.

The other half of the fuel tax revenues are distributed directly to cities, counties and other agencies for roadway programs that are not part of the state highway system.

Doug  
dmohr@vertafore.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 11:13 am

I am a big fan of mixed use trails. I have spent some time on my dual sport motorcycle in Colorado and Idaho where the trails are shared among hikers, mountain bikers, horseback enthusiasts, and off-road enthusiasts. As a responsible off-road vehicle owner it is upon each party to respect each others groups access to public lands and coexist in an environment that is not only constrained by the land we have available but also the local and federal budgets allocated to upkeep these public lands. I moved to the Northwest from Southern California where the answer was to close land to all users and designate it as wilderness due to a variety of issues related to the delicate ecosystem down south. The Northwest has plenty of natural resources that should allow us to share the available land and not cater to a single specialist group. We all enjoy the outdoors in our own way and just because I choose to explore via motorized travel vs. horse/foot/pedal power should not exclude me and others like me from sharing the trails.

audra  
aadelberger@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 9:07 am

- 1) Provide every possible support to volunteer groups who do such terrific work, e.g. Washington Trails Association.
- 2) Carefully consider the downsides of "multi-use" trails. Hikers, horseback riders, and motorized vehicle riders are all seeking different kinds of recreation, different experiences. It works best when there is lots of segregation, I think, so there's a minimum of anger and frustration about noise, manure, trail damage, slowpoke walkers getting in the way,

and so on. People love their kind of trail use, whatever it is: just think how different it is to zoom along on a motorized vehicle, ride on a horse, or walk. These things do not “just fit together”—one person’s fun can all too easily be another person’s fun wrecked. We should all have our preferences honored as much as possible.

Tricia Ann Foster  
Triciaann777@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 8:32 am

Cheryl,

Have you tried East Cady ridge (Benchmark Mt/ W. Cady Ridge? Bridle trails in Bellevue or how about Crystal Mountain. While hiking these areas, I have noticed plenty of horse trails here, or how about Woodinville’s Equestrian Park. What about Mt St Helens, there are a lot of miles available to ride in that vicinity also. People who own horses can attract your own user groups to lobby for support. There are 1000’s of miles where there are clear cuts which a horse can get passed quickly, unlike a hiker who can only go 2mph average speed.

Doug Sauvage  
dougsa@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 8:24 am

I’d be much more in support of opening up more trails to horses if the riders cleaned up after them. I hate washing poop off my shoes after a run on Cougar.

Tricia Ann Foster  
Triciaann777@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 8:23 am

Robert,

What’s wrong w/ riding ORV’s or motorcycles on forest service roads or DNR roads? There is really a lot of exploring to be had in Washington.

Tricia Ann Foster  
Triciaann777@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 8:14 am

Because there are very few disability accessible trails, I agree let the axe man ride on his off-road wheel chair—that’s part of the multiple use act of public lands is for.

Tricia Ann Foster  
Triciaann777@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 8:04 am

Right so where does the money for tabs go?

Tricia Ann Foster  
Triciaann777@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 8:02 am

It would be great to have more trails for mountain biking/dirt bikes that beginners/intermediate riders can learn on. Motorcycles and ORV’s have space to ride on forest service roads. Its legal even for minors according to a Kirkland, Washington policeman. Hikers can’t complain that ‘they are ripping up the trail.’”

Tricia Ann Foster  
Triciaann777@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 7:58 am

I recently read that State parks were going to get 74 % of the Discovery pass user fee, and DNR 8% and fish and wildlife 8%. This ratio division amount was recommended, even though state parks were originally going to receive the funds. I understood WASDOT gets monies from the gas tax.

I am confident someone can confirm or deny the amounts they get from the gas tax

John  
ladmo@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 7:42 am

The mountain biking community is a fast growing segment of the users of this resource, and are currently locked out of many opportunities for land use. Mountain biking is a low impact activity that should not be grouped in with motorized activities. Our community has demonstrated willingness to assist in trail maintenance and new trail creation. I would like to see expanded mountain bike access to these public resources.

Any time large groups of people share anything, conflicts will occur. My experience however is that the vast majority of users, be they mountain bikers, hikers, or horse riders, go out of their way to be courteous and friendly. Let's not let the few cantankerous obnoxious people that are out there hijack the dialogue and encourage the false perception of the amount of discord that exists between the user groups which actually is exceedingly minimal.

Keith  
keithpeter@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/14 at 5:14 am

What James doesn't realize is the funds collected via ORV tax should go to trails that ORV users are allowed to ride on.

Richard Bessey  
richard@richardbessey.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 10:45 pm

I am requesting more single track for motorcycle riding in South-Western Washington. I have resorted to riding in Oregon a lot. Please look to Oregon for examples (Morrow County ORV Park – great example)

shrubitup  
ontopofit@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 8:25 pm

Let the public recreate. Why all the restrictions? You think it's going to eliminate conflict? You can't please all the people even half the time. As far as nonmotorized uses are concerned there's wilderness, SRMAs, National Parks, ACECs, and other special management classifications. Those exclude motorized use so I ask you why areas outside these must also exclude motorized use?

Funny reading the comments here. One posted that they wanted better and faster access to Lake Isabel. Prior to Reiter Pit closure there was a day when you could ride a motorcycle up there. That'd be a little faster than the current access. Then the comments about Wild Sky Wilderness not developing new trails – I guess providing non-motor recreation in a Wilderness area is contrary to the intrinsic habitat value?

Then the comment from PBryant about motorcycle clubs adopting overgrown/abandoned/forgotten hiker trails. He's right! They'd be clear and open in a matter of weeks once the snow melts. If non-motor users don't have the numbers or ability to haul a chainsaw deep into the woods perhaps they and others would benefit from motor users who clear trails for free?

Fed and state governments don't need to spend money opening trails to the motorized community. Simply remove the legal barrier and we'll find our way along washed out logging roads to the primitive trail that needs clearing etc. More trail miles for all is the only way to reduce trail user conflict!

Deb  
dwilson829@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 7:28 pm

Collaboration. It's clear there are enthusiasts of all types interested in access to recreation areas. We should use our funding for what it was intended, maintain the existing trail systems, and add more. Everyone benefits from a collective effort to make the trail systems they best they can be. The user population can expand as more trails are available, which leads to more traffic in local communities that will be in need of a boost to their economies.

Dave Schuldt  
daveschuldt@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 7:26 pm

More trails open to mountain bikes would be great.

Seth Robertson  
redrobertson@hotmail.co  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 6:20 pm

95% or more of my use of Washington outdoors is on foot hiking. I could be considered an "avid" hiker by most people's definitions. That said, our state should be absolutely ashamed at its treatment of ORV users as a whole. Reducing motorized trail mileage because of user conflict is unfair and illogical. Reducing motorized mileage to avoid erosion while allowing clear cutting in the same area makes one question the impartiality of those making decisions at both local and state levels. I am lucky enough to take my money to another state as far as off-road motorized access goes when I do engage in that activity. I still do most of my hiking in Washington, but my quiet protest is to funnel the (by far greater) money for motorized access to a state that doesn't treat me as a second class citizen while I do it.

Rob Taylor  
tappstractor@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 3:47 pm

I also primarily ride dirt bikes on single track, love the back country, and mountains. We need more trails without any doubt but we also need to make better use of a lot of the trails we have. Many locations make it hard to connect from trail to trail with one trail ending just a mile or two down the road (gravel) from where the next begins. There should be an allowance for riding gravel roads with ORV tags in specific areas.

What I believe would help most is a lot more transparency in the funding, collecting, and allocation of all the monies gathered for "ORV funds". Wouldn't everyone like to know how much money is collected from the gas tax on off-road vehicles, tabs, and user fees? Then where it actually goes. It would feel a lot better knowing that the fees paid by ORV users actually go into the trails and camps we use.

Steve  
stevejustham@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 2:39 pm

I primarily love riding dirt bikes and dual sport motorcycles on the forest roads and single track in the state. But, I am also a hiker, skier, mountain biker, fisher, and hope to get into snowmobiling someday. As a multi outdoor recreation user, I believe the state needs to do what it can to make sure everyone who benefits from outdoor recreation, as I do, gets a win out of the process, and not a loss. Win/win not win/lose, or lose/lose. Create a win/win for all recreationalists. Do not close trails or opportunities for us, create more opportunities. More money for the DNR is not the only way we can tackle the problem. Many states have created opportunities for local counties and small towns to benefit from outdoor recreation, by not making it a crime to ride off-road on a motorcycle or ATV, street legal or not, but by allowing users to legally enjoy their sports, instead of restricting their use, by making it a crime. In these states, these policies have created micro economies for these smaller counties or cities that benefit not only the user group (recreationalists), but the local residents and businesses. Make decisions that benefit us users, and the local municipalities.

James Scarlett-Lyon  
sawatchboy@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 1:25 pm

I strongly believe in nonmotorized multi-use trails. I've been all over the west and have seen it work splendidly in many locations. HIKE, BIKE and HORSE. The 3 actually get along quite well.

Peter Nielson  
nielson425@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 1:16 pm

Per the above report, why are the following activities benefiting from the NOVA funds when they do not pay into them, cross-country skiing, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, hunting, fishing, sightseeing? As Tod states above, these funds come from ORV gas purchases and tabs. We need more ORV trails, especially in Western WA, because

they are over crowded and showing it. NOVA funds should be used for ORV trails only. I also take part in these other activities, but they should be funded separately.

Claudia  
claudiahunter@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 12:35 pm

I live near Mt St Helens and I agree with Darcy's comments. Please add me to your email list.

Keith  
keithpeter@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 11:52 am

I am all about multiple use trails except in the wilderness areas where there are current restrictions

Joseph Wernex  
jawernex@fairpoint.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 11:48 am

There is huge need for more single track motorized trails in WA State. Motorized trails are wearing out from lack of adequate maintenance even though motorized recreationists contribute more revenue than any other user group.

It is long past time for RICO to acknowledge the bigotry and anti-motorized prejudice that exists and act to stop it.

Tod Petersen  
tod701@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 11:42 am

"Where exactly do monies come from to fund NOVA? Is it just motorized vehicles -users who contribute to this fund?"

Two sources:

About 2/3 of the funds come from motor vehicle fuel tax base on an estimate on how much is used on nonhighway roads and off-road.

The rest comes from off-road vehicle registration fees.

Ron Tennyson  
ronsyellowyj@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 10:36 am

Repairing and improving existing trails and expanding the current trail systems and building new trails.

We should put some of the funds towards maintaining and repairing the trails that we have since trails are being closed we need to keep the trails we have open in good condition. We should build new trails or open ones that have been closed. All the trails should have multi use designations such as hiking and horse riding, motorcycle and 4x4 trails and even hiking and 4x4. The trails can be shared and used by multiple groups for the various activities.

There is a large network of logging roads, on public lands, that are closed off because they are not being actively logged. We should petition that these roads be opened for use of hiking, horse riding and motorized vehicle use. The expense should be a minimum since the roads are already there and the studies to put them in have already been done. This would help ease the congestion on some trail systems and allow users to access places that maybe haven't been accessed before.

Tootie Crowson  
crowson2@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 9:48 am

We camped over the 4th of July at Mt. Adam's horse camp last summer. The year BEFORE that, there was fire damage near the camp, now this year we are told that there is no camping at the camp due to the fire?????

Paul Bryant  
317peb@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 9:21 am

Maintain or improve level of opportunity for motor biking on primitive trails in Washington State. Hiking trails are quickly being overgrown and the State and feds have little to no money to maintain many of them. Why not let off-road motorcycle clubs have access and they will be cleared in short order. Every year many of the trails left in Washington where motorized access is allowed are cleared of windfall and brush by enthusiastic volunteers. Give us access to some more trails and we will preserve them, not let them get overgrown and impassable.

darcy  
djmitchem@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 9:19 am

1) Roads. Ironic isn't it? The most important priority for backcountry recreation is not the trails itself, but maintaining the roads that lead to trails. No road means no access, no trail crews, no volunteers, and essentially no trail. At Mount St. Helens an entire system of trails on the north side of the Monument is often inaccessible because private roads leading to these trails do not have easements and are gated, or the public roads are washed out. Look at the trails along Mt. Loop Hwy—inaccessible for years because of washouts. At the same time the USFS is removing roads, and reducing maintenance. Because of NEPA and other laws, the process of fixing a washout is incredibly expensive, especially when compared with what private or state timberland would pay to fix the same road the same way. If all funding went on-the-ground we would be in much better shape, but paperwork takes a huge chunk of dollars. Road and access issues are the biggest problem, by far.

2) Recruitment of the next generation. Let's face it, backcountry recreation is getting old. We used to worry about too many people in the backcountry, and put up barriers like permits, regulation, and fees. Now the opposite is happening— We are not connecting the outdoors with youth. We need to remove barriers, and encourage more use and stewardship of the backcountry by young people.

3) To improve the trail system itself, loops and trails that connect with communities or other trails are always helpful. More motorized trails are probably needed, but not necessarily in the "backcountry". And of course, funding IF the money goes straight to the trail, and not to the EIS, SEPA, NEPA, EA, HPA, etc.

Keith  
keithpeter@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 9:15 am

I have heard since it's inception that they were going to be new trails built in the Wild Sky Wilderness Area. I even went to some meetings where they allowed the public input on proposed new trails in the area. Then like always happens there was not budget in the Mount Baker/Snoqualmie Ranger District for trails. This was part of the stipulation for the creation of Wild Sky was new trails to help with revenue lost because of its creation. The Skykomish Ranger District already has had the plans for several years.

William  
reson46@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 9:08 am

A return in equity to the distribution of trail funding and resources. An appalling amount of resources has been raided from funds like NOVA and used for projects and state entities for which they were never intended. It seems like every year more of these funds are used to add to the already over abundant nonmotorized trail systems and less is used where they are actually needed on motorized trail systems. It is time that those funds are used to develop and support the trails systems for which those taxes were collected from.

Bob Bugert  
bob@cdlandtrust.org  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 8:55 am

Multi-jurisdictional coordination on trails, since many planned or proposed trails cross multiple ownerships.

BestScenicRoutes.com  
sean\_mcdermott@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 8:38 am

Where exactly do monies come from to fund NOVA? Is it just motorized vehicles -users who contribute to this fund?

Brian Johnson  
brian.johnson@stickydrive.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 8:32 am

The most important priority in OHV trail recreation over the next 5 years is to create and maintain iron-clad legislation and funding for this recreational purpose.

I have served on various committees for Washington ORV/OHV trails since 1975. The over-arching issue has never changed. The use of trails and funding to support trails has constantly been under siege.

Definition: Siege – The act or process of surrounding and attacking in such a way as to isolate it from help and supplies, for the purpose of lessening the resistance of the defenders and thereby making capture possible.

I believe that the use of fees to users should be either directly (or indirectly if needed) ear-marked for lobbyist and legislative support dedicated to this recreation.

As high priority specific action – I would recommend a legal advisory committee be assigned to review all legislative documents around OHV funding resources, and provide an action plan to create and maintain legislative documentation for funding and use of trails for OHV use.

Simple stated, if we don't create and maintain the legal right to use trails, nor funds to maintain them, nothing else will really matter. (You don't need trail maintenance, or campgrounds, or anything if you have no place to ride and no way to pay for it)

Tommy Thombs  
tthombstahuyafire@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 8:08 am

Location and accessibility.

Keith W  
kwisn@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 7:56 am

Multiple use trails to satisfy the most user groups.

Cheryl Conklin  
cherylconk@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 7:14 am

State lands have a lot of trails devoted solely to hikers, but not a lot that horseback riders can use. Sometimes the exclusion of horseback riders from a given trail does not seem to be justified and leaves the equestrian-accessible trails so limited that it is not worth the time to trailer a horse to the few miles one can ride. For example, only a small portion of trails on Cougar Mountain can be ridden on horseback; meanwhile, the connector trails to other trail systems, i.e. Squak Mountain, which again would create a meaningful trail system for horseback riding, are not open to equestrians. For horseback riders, a trail system needs a minimum of 12-15 miles. When developing new trails or reviewing current trails, the state should ask "why not allow equestrians on this trail?" and "how can we make this trail system large enough for equestrians?"

Cathy Johnson  
cathy.johnson@kingcounty.gov  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 6:57 am

I believe that trail maintenance is a critical priority for improving trail recreation. As budget cuts have reduced funding for trail maintenance, volunteer groups have had to step up to fill the gap. This has worked really well at Elbe Hills, where a local Backcountry chapter has managed trail maintenance for years, working with the State DNR. DNR pays for the materials, which is nice. I worry about what would happen if DNR could no longer afford to pay for the

materials, as the trails have areas where bridges, steps, water bars, and other features are needed for safe passage with horses.

Tod Petersen  
tod701@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 6:50 am

Expand trail mileage for all types of trail users.

Robert Lind  
clutch250f@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/13 at 2:45 am

Opening up more ORV trails as Washington State keeps closing our riding areas we keep having to use the same ones over and over again, causing them to become over crowded and extremely dangerous. As I pay too much for my ORV tabs for this money to be squandered else where for activities that really don't have anything to do with my sport I find it extremely difficult to have a desire to continue to ride one on authorized riding areas within Washington State or even bother purchasing ORV Tabs when I see that apparently Frisbee golf is more important to our "great" Politicians then a sport that is a cash cow for this state.

I have watched as my sport (Dirt Biking) has been demonized by a lot of groups and politicians as being damaging for the environment yet when I have been to other states and have seen that their parks are not only larger but better maintained for less. Yet this state has been constantly telling us we don't matter for park use. The fact that on the west side alone we have really two places to ride, Capital Forest and Belfair. Capital Forest being closed during the winter doesn't help for making it safer to ride at Belfair. I've personally have had to change the way I go to Belfair because of how dangerous these politicians have made it. By closing other ORV parks they forced a large number of people to one area. Now over crowded and unmaintained trails have lead to deteriorated trails that once were very fun and safe to some often unrideable and extremely dangerous.

The other conditions forced upon us is this Discover Pass. Forcing us to pay to use an area I already paid for when I purchased my ORV tabs every year for an increasing amount of money. I use to for one day of riding, (all went to local shops) for gas and snacks about \$80 before tabs. Now all the money the state has collected in taxes off of my purchases, \$75 a year for tabs for one bike, roughly \$3,000 in taxes for my truck, \$156 for truck tabs, \$20 more in gas taxes and finally all the taxes collected for our gear which can be roughly \$400. You can venture to guess that we don't support having to pay anymore then our fair share.

These conditions force us in the off-road community to ride in unauthorized areas, purchases gear and our vehicles in other states that actually supports us. It's not our fault that politicians keep demonizing a sport they know nothing about, or how they want to kill it because it sounds mean and evil. You'd have more community support for any park project and get volunteers by opening up more land and giving us a place to ride instead of trying to kill us by closing them down and making us illegal. It's also very funny to us that you can smoke pot in Washington yet you can't go riding on public lands with your family on dirt bikes with out getting tickets or your bike taken away for park rangers.

Tricia Ann Foster  
Triciaann777@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/12 at 11:18 pm

Last weekend, I hiked Robe canyon w/ my five year old. (on the Mountain Loop Highway) It is a very popular hike for families and many people were drawn past the sign that tells you it is hazardous. It needs to be made safer for families in order to reach the (first) tunnel that families want to get to.

Tricia Ann Foster  
Triciaann777@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/12 at 11:02 pm

It would be great to add more accessible trails to lakes such as Lake Isabel and accessing Jay, Shaw Lake from the Sultan Basin for example. It appears to be less miles to hike if there were directions from Sultan basin. From the times I have seen Jay, Shaw, and the Wallace Lake there is no beach access to spend time there. There is a peek a boo view of the Wallace lake. The most beautiful places are far and difficult to get to, so I am advocating reaching locations within an hours drive or less for trail pass holders, from (for example) King and Snohomish county.

The Barclay lake trail is heavily used, and there appears to be a garbage problem, even though there is a can at the trailhead. People are not respecting carry it in carry it out,

Jay Brand  
whiskeyspitranch@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/12 at 9:36 pm

Please add me to your email list

jim  
jjocoffee@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/12 at 9:05 pm

Expand single track for motorcycle riding in western Washington

ziggy gevers  
willycpc@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/12 at 9:03 pm

Mountain biking trails, trail running, and also backpacking! ;)

Jean  
Jeans4U@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/12 at 9:00 pm

I strongly believe in this!

Jean  
Jeans4U@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/12 at 8:58 pm

I feel that we should make it a priority to keep all backcountry trails accessible to hikers and horseback riders. I'm a volunteer that spends many hours with the upkeep of these trails and making them usable to horseback riders. We need to keep the funding available to DNR in order for the necessary equipment and supplies for bridges, cleaning up downed trees across these trails, etc. With all the volunteer hours people put in it saves the government a lot of money that they don't have to pay employees.

Thank you!

JimEG  
olywajim@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/12 at 8:00 pm

More unsurfaced bicycle trails – "mountain bike".

Thanks!

Al Pelletier  
sekiusweep@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/12 at 6:59 pm

Trails are nice. But if funding is scarce, please do not lock people out of areas, just because there is not a world-class walking path. Certainly warnings should be placed advising of the primitive nature (or lack of) a trail. Perhaps advice about "own risk," and "own responsibility for rescue" would be appropriate. I am just saying that semi-wilderness doesn't have to be like a city park, for people to enjoy it.

In many cases, state land can be used to provide access to trails, or logging roads or streams on adjacent private forest lands or national forests. I envision a way to walk, cycle or horseback from places like Lake Ozette to places like Amanda Park. Many forest lands allow nonmotorized use, but there needs to be a place to get off the pavement, park, and unload.

Lastly, I know an ex "Axe man" who has a gas-powered, 4WD off-road wheelchair! I believe handicapped persons should be allowed to use powered transportation on some otherwise nonmotorized areas.

B Burnett  
holnam@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/12 at 6:42 pm

Please do not let the powers that be raid the NOVA funds as they did before.

## ROUND 2 FINDINGS

### Round 2 Question

Trail providers need money to maintain trails and to develop new trails; but they do not have enough money to do both completely. What is the right way to balance these priorities?

### Summary Observations by the Blog Facilitator

In this round of discussion, 44 people commented, providing 44 comments. Below is a summary of the themes of the comments, followed by a *verbatim* reporting of all comments.

### Funding Was the Most Frequent Theme of the Comments Provided

One Town Hall contributor observed that, “I am a little surprised at how many commenters have focused on where to find more funding; I interpreted the question as asking about how to set priorities for existing funding. But, I value reading ALL comments and thank everyone for making them.”

Comments about funding ranged from:

- Calls for no additional spending using the logics of: living-within-our-means, just make the hard choices between maintenance and new development, and user fees are inequitable for low income citizens, to
- Calls for balancing spending between recreation sectors using the logic of fairness in a way that matches the tax contributions of the different sectors, to
- Calls for coordinated efforts to secure more and stable funding using the logic that recreation maintenance and development are valuable investments in their own right, ones that pay an appropriate return to the government.

Specific suggestions provided by Town Hall contributors included:

- **NOVA funding allocations.** There are strong feelings in the ORV community that past government allocation decisions surrounding the NOVA account have been wrong. The main theme of these concerns is that ATV users are not receiving spending allocations that match the level of their tax contributions. The solutions offered were consistently around the idea of returning to an allocation that is commensurate with tax contributions. As one commenter put it, “The solution is to have the RCO support returning a full 1% [i.e., the ORV tax contributions] to benefit (see JLARC report) its rightful owners, the ORV users. The RCO should then work with the nonmotorized users

to obtain their own funding from the remaining 3.6% instead of stealing from the ORV users.”

- **Increasing user fees.** The idea most often expressed by these contributors is that use reflects demand and user fees should reflect the differences in demand for different recreation activities. There also were some calls for creating, “...a user fee similar to ORV tabs for nonmotorized bicycles, horseback, and hikers”. One contributor proposed, “I would create a ‘Week in Washington’ pass for tourists, and use it as a promotional item: free state map, week DP [Discovery Pass good for one week], coupons, promotions etc.”
- **Make grant-making easier.** “Grants need to be easier—less administration and overhead, more on the ground. Stop making DNR, Parks, and WDFW go through the whole 2-year RCO process—just give them \$ to fix trails without all the dog-and-pony show waste. The RCO guidelines need to value economy, efficiency, and simplicity more.”
- **Just make the hard decisions.** “The balance of these priorities should swing toward maintaining existing trail systems. Washington has a number of backlogged trail maintenance issues that affect the safety and quality of the trail user’s experience. New trail systems should only be built when there is a clear funding mechanism to support the new trail system.”
- **Use volunteers.** Many contributors pointed, with pride, to extensive contributions already being made to the public trails system by volunteers, usually through organized groups. As one commenter put it, “For example, part of the mission of the Back Country Horsemen is their annual commitment of thousands of volunteer man hours & the use of their equipment, horses & pack animals to clear & repair & create new trails for the benefit of walkers, hikers & bicycle rides as well as recreational horsemen on nonmotorized trails.” Town Hall contributors frequently called for increasing this use of public-spirited volunteer contributions for both maintenance and new development. To make this happen, respondents noted several kinds of actions that would help:
  - **Provide incentives to individuals.** As stated by one person, “As an incentive for persons to actively participate [volunteer] several times, they should be given some compensation such as a discount on the user fee or as WDNR gives a free pass for logging 24 hrs. of volunteer service.”
  - **Provide liability relief.**
  - **Provide relief from onerous standards.**

### **Prioritizing Limited Resources**

There were many comments about different ways to think about the prioritization of government spending.

- **Recognize different management needs.** Some contributors expanded the usual definition of what should be considered a trail in RCO funding decisions. These people called upon decision makers to provide different policies that are aligned with the inherently different management needs of different types of trails. For example, “Trails in more suburban and interurban areas require public input and the balanced view of other needs. They also require consideration of the near term population growth that may interfere with or conflict with trail use or trail maintenance and the changing needs of the area. Generally, these areas require more administration, money, and resources than undeveloped areas.”
- **Prioritize public safety.** One contributor said, “Some priority has to be assigned to the work inventory that is the most urgent for safety issues and secondarily to work that serves a balance of use to the user groups with an eye to the groups most willing to contribute to the work that needs to be done.”
- **Balance between demand and cost.** As stated by one contributor, “Focus of the trail systems that provide the most recreational opportunity for the least out of pocket cost, those that attract the most volunteer interest and donated capital expense has been and appears to be a thoughtful approach for the next term of years.” Another commented, “People will ‘vote with their feet.’ The trails of all types that get the most use will need, and get, the most funding for maintenance.”
- **Balance between demand and the maintenance burden.** A Town Hall contributor explained, “...I feel the highest priority should be to provide funding for trail maintenance over trail development. However, development of new trails in areas for user groups that are under served should also be considered as a high priority if there is a clear long term commitment that has been made for them to be maintained by the user groups, and if providing the new trail does not adversely affect the area or other users in that area. Without the maintenance commitment, it makes no sense to pursue new trail development.”
- **Balance equal opportunity in decision making.** As stated by one contributor, “While I support maintenance of existing trails over construction of new trails, I do feel that there needs to be a mechanism for evaluating the need for a new trail. For example, if a large geographic area has no accessible trails suitable for one or more recreational groups, and a viable plan for construction and sustained maintenance of a suitable new trail is presented, it should be considered. However, I think that should be the exception, not the rule.”

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## **Verbatim Comments from the Town Hall Website in Response to Round 2**

DRAFT (September 2013)

Mike Dawson  
gwazala@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/08 at 9:45 am

Both trail maintenance and new construction need more funding. If you look at the ratio of trails to population size, the situation has gotten worse and worse over the decades. Trailheads and campgrounds have become so crowded as to be inaccessible or unpleasant to those seeking simple outdoor recreation on our public lands. Yet we have vast areas, in the forests at least, where use could be spread out to accommodate the crowds and provide better recreational experiences. In addition, conflicts between motorized and nonmotorized users are increasing. The evidence is clear that demand outstrips availability when it comes to trails.

Creativity will be needed to find funding solutions. Forget about the status quo and look for new ideas to get at the big picture: Restoring our lost heritage of inexpensive, uncrowded, outdoor recreation on public lands.

Jenifer Taylor  
Submitted on 2013/06/06 at 1:28 pm

From the Moderator: Comment submitted by email.

Hello,

The thing that bothers me the most is trails with noisy vehicles of any kind using the part I want to walk on. If they are confined to a given area, I can just walk elsewhere. Stock poop is a minor annoyance compared to vehicles. I am a hiker and an old horse rider so I know the attraction of the trails in the mountains, but still hope many of them will be available for us 2 legged types. Four legged types do damage narrow trails pretty badly, thinking of the trails like that from Camp Handy to Boulder Shelter.

Glad you are working on the big plan.

Shannon Good  
Xany@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/06 at 12:10 pm

I think maintenance of existing trails should be emphasized over building new ones. If trails are not maintained (such as removing blow downs and washouts) they become very user unfriendly. We see this happening in the national forest trails and in wilderness areas all the time. We have a good system of recreational trails – but they need to be kept in decent condition to be used. I realize that these trails are managed by varied agencies – but that could be coordinated at state level. The point is, let's keep what we have in good repair!

On a local level, volunteers make a world of difference. In Mount Vernon, we have built a destination worthy mountain bike & hiker trail network at Little Mountain. All built by volunteers. We are seeing diverse user groups and families getting outside & exercising in a natural place – some of these folks may develop healthy lifestyle habits from these small beginnings.

Beth Blay  
bbinaz@earthlink.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/06 at 9:03 am

The issue is on-going and difficult, but keeping up existing trails should be the top priority as once lost, we may never have them again... Private funding and volunteer work can sustain this while the government entities regroup. Stop the raids by govt. of funds earmarked for trails and do not permit further tapping into that till...

Dave  
grumpyscoutii@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/05 at 7:57 pm

Maintain what is there before spending any more of our hard earned tax dollars! And let's get better balance in who participates in the planning process. I am part of the full size 4x4 community, and, in my opinion, we are not given equal time in trail issues. We keep being pushed into smaller an area, which leads to more issues, which lead to more closures. Seeing a pattern here? Start treating us as a legitimate user group.

John Palmer  
zigstermeister@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/03 at 8:59 pm

Proper maintaining and rebuilding existing trails to withstand the demands of its current users should come first. Groups responsible for this need to follow and enforce a set standard for achieving this. Easier said than done, working with volunteers this can prove to be difficult. Educating those that volunteer and making sure they have a good understanding of trail construction should be a priority. The WTA is a great organization that has a good structure for implementing this in my experience.

Anita Matthay  
amatthay@olympen.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/03 at 4:46 pm

I'm an older hiker on the Olympic Peninsula and love my twice weekly hikes to challenge myself, stay in shape, socialize with friends and enjoy the peace, beauty and quiet of the great outdoors. I volunteered with WTA when I lived near the Cascades. Our wilderness will be an ever greater tourist draw in the future. I like the first idea of corporate sponsors, and thought Al Pelletier's comments sounded sensible. Didn't read all comments.

Cathy  
cathy.johnson@kingcounty.gov  
Submitted on 2013/06/03 at 6:16 am

We need to maintain the trails we have first, then any money left over can go to build new trails where demand exists.

Gary Hagland  
haglandg@toritraining.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/02 at 9:56 pm

The State of Washington does not suffer from a lack of trails. Maintain the ones that exist.

Richard Coulson  
stiqquest@wavecable.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/02 at 3:36 pm

Richard Coulson

As a user of trails on the North Olympic Peninsula, it is very discouraging to try to re-instate the right to legally access the US Forest Service to ride ATV's. As others have stated, when you have to deal with Government Official and all the timeless and mountainous paperwork, you could grow a new Old Growth Forest. An example of this is their ability to stonewall by not adhering to their own rules. By their own rules, they are mandated to establish a forest plan every 10-15 years. The last time one was done on the Olympic National Forest was 1991. As you can see this was 22 years ago. The best that I have been able to garner from a "Responsible Official" is they don't have enough money. Who does?

IN the meantime my generation (Babyboomer) is slowly dying off. It would seem that what I see and hear from other user groups is right on fix and maintain before expanding and get Big Government out of the way.

Forest Shomer  
inypass@whidbey.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/31 at 10:49 pm

Focus first on maintenance of existing trails. Adding trails potentially adds to the overburden of trails not receiving sufficient maintenance—compounds the problem.

John  
john@moosefish.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/31 at 8:17 am

I believe the balance between maintaining existing trails and developing new trails should reflect use patterns. A trail that receives high usage should receive more maintenance funding than a trail that is rarely used. The exception is that if a seldom used trail is unsafe it should be assessed for closure or repair.

New trails should be developed to accommodate usage. The decision to develop a new, more sustainable trail up Mailbox Peak near North Bend is a good example of this principle. As trails in the area became overloaded, the existing Mailbox Peak trail experienced a surge in traffic. However, the rough trail has sections that are unsafe for hikers unfamiliar with the short, steep route. The new trail will ease traffic on surrounding trails such as Mt. Si and provide a safe and less intense experience for hikers.

I am in favor of reasonable user fees to fund improvements as well as partnerships with local advocacy and user groups.

Lori Flemm  
loriflemm@live.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/30 at 7:35 pm

Generally speaking, I don't think we should build a new trail that can't be maintained. The maintenance management plan should be defined before the trail is constructed. Balance should be a local decision; it would be tough to achieve balance on a statewide level. I hope our state grant programs won't devote funds only toward statewide priorities. Each trail provider has to identify their own priorities. Priorities change, and seem to change before the next plan is written.

Few people are satisfied maintaining existing trails. People always want more and want new. Look at how many trails are created by users going off trail. Within a week of opening a new regional asphalt bicycle/pedestrian trail in our city, many were calling for it to be extended closer to their home.

Volunteers (eagle scouts, church groups, and students) are building a municipal hiking trail in our city that the neighborhood trail users are maintaining because they appreciate having the trail close to home, and want to see it remain in good shape. Minimal public dollars and staff time have been used for construction or maintenance. We would not have the trails we have in our state without volunteers.

Claudia Johnson  
jojohnso@charter.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/29 at 10:12 pm

I find your request for feedback to be very non-user friendly. Some of us really care about trails, but are not experts on the state of trails in WA and need more details or at least a simple summary to go on. We might know our trail systems close to home, but might not know the overall state wide picture. You don't provide any summaries of where trails are now, their status, pictures? You are assuming that folks will read the 56 page Nova plan (2005-2011). I did, it was not helpful. Why don't share some maps of where existing trails are, how they are distributed across the state or by zip code and how the funding is distributed? Where are the proposed new trails located? How much would it cost to bring in new trails into service (an estimate per mile of trail would be nice)? Is the distribution of trails equal by region? Zip code? Race? Income level? What trails are available to disabled users/wheelchair accessible? What is a basic description of the current trail situation that we could read to provide you with some feedback? Social media is great—but the onus is on government to make its data accessible and easy to read—if it really wants comment from the public at large. Otherwise, this is just a formality with little meaning—just the appearance of an open process.

Earl Nettin  
esnettin@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/29 at 7:44 pm

We need to maintain the trails we have with no closures. Volunteers are always ready to help. Let's make use of them.

Helen M  
helenorjohn@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/29 at 3:29 pm

I believe existing trails and access to existing trails should take priority. I would like to see the road to Excelsior trailhead be repaired, also the road to Canyon Creek.

Norm  
normbuckley@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/29 at 11:17 am

My two cents worth: Maintain existing trails and access roads as the highest priority.

Mike McGlenn  
mike@mikemcglenn.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/29 at 10:22 am

The current back log of trail maintenance is growing daily. The fires, the pine beetle and other issues have really set things back and will for the foreseeable future. Maintaining the current trails to standard in most cases should be the first priority. On a national basis, collaboration and partnerships with other user groups has been a big help in stretching the dollars available. In the case of horsemen, we seem to be getting older and less able to do some of the ground work. But we can pack in tools, supplies, materials, food and camps for folks like the Washington Trails Association so that younger backs can get the ground work done. Look for ways to partner with nontraditional groups. Conservation groups will help work on trails. Sports teams, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts anyone who enjoys being out doors can help. Volunteers will put in many hours opening up and maintaining their access to the outdoors. It would be helpful to streamline the bureaucratic paperwork machine that in many cases makes it very difficult to volunteer. Make it easier for all of us, horsemen, hikers, bikers to do the work needed and it will make the money go farther.

Logan  
logan.riggs@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/28 at 1:36 pm

I think that maintaining existing trails should be the highest priority. 100 eroded trails covered in blowdown are pretty much useless to anybody. If there is not enough money to keep 'enough' trails maintained then what good does it do to build another trail that will succumb to lack of maintenance? I imagine you can maintain 10 miles of trail or more for the cost of opening 1 new mile.

Darrell Wallace  
exec@bchw.org  
Submitted on 2013/05/28 at 11:21 am

While I support maintenance of existing trails over construction of new trails, I do feel that there needs to be a mechanism for evaluating the need for a new trail. For example, if a large geographic area has no accessible trails suitable for one or more recreational groups, and a viable plan for construction and sustained maintenance of a suitable new trail is presented, it should be considered. However, I think that should be the exception, not the rule.

I am a little surprised at how many commenters have focused on where to find more funding; I interpreted the question as asking about how to set priorities for existing funding. But I value reading ALL comments and thank everyone for making them.

darcy  
djmitchem@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/28 at 10:52 am

Over the last decade I have seen our rural quality-of-life erode—and a lot of it traces to the collapse of forestry providing honorable family wage jobs. The USFS has no money or jobs to speak of since the spotted owl. Mechanization and high L & I also have reduced employment. Rural communities, like mine, have lost mills that paid taxes and supported public works. Instead, our county is currently thinking of giving away its parks. Once vibrant communities like Morton, Packwood, and Darington are shriveling, and trying to rely on “tourism”. We seem to find plenty of ways and funding to save salmon, save owls, save wolves, save wetlands, but we are failing to save our communities. Gallantly, citizens have stepped up with friends groups, clubs, partnerships and other volunteer efforts. These are good, and need to continue, but more funding is needed. The Discover Pass was a noble idea, but administered badly—doing more harm than good, and putting more burden on fewer people. I would create a “Week in Washington” pass for tourists, and use it as a promotional item: free state map, week DP, coupons, promotions etc. But our system threatens and scares tourists—they show up at a beach and can’t even buy a pass on site!

Meanwhile, thousands—even millions—of acres of private timberlands are being closed to public recreation or moved to a pay or lease model. These timberlands pay pennies per acre in property taxes while systematically removing “public benefits” that justified these low rates in the first place. I believe a review of tax breaks here is appropriate, with any additional income dedicated to providing recreation on public lands to compensate for the loss on private. Also, income from private land leases and fees should be rolled into the hotel/motel tax or timber excise tax with that funding dedicated to providing recreation on public lands. The idea of reviewing our tax policies was discussed in the new SCORP, and needs to be taken seriously.

I also believe barriers to volunteers (supported by public employee unions) need to be removed. We must get past this protectionism. Grants need to be easier—less administration and overhead, more on the ground. Stop making DNR, Parks, and WDFW go through the whole 2-year RCO process—just give them \$ to fix trails without all the dog-and-pony show waste. The RCO guidelines need to value economy, efficiency, and simplicity more. Our laws need updated and overhead capped—Replace SEPA with best management practices. 90% + of every dollar should go on the ground. Primitive dirt trails and gravel parking lots (which because of ADA are basically shunned) should be encouraged. Get creative with funding, too. Business partnerships, concessions, leases, sponsorships, camp hosts, maintenance partnerships with cities and schools, Metropolitan Park Districts —many things are possible with flexibility. Imagine how much money a coffee cart at a popular beach or trailhead could bring in!

A portion of the general fund should go to cover the “conservation” missions of state public lands. Why should recreationists alone pay for archaeology, wetland preservation, old growth studies, endangered species and other items unrelated to recreation facilities/or game species? These areas benefit the whole population. In general, we need to comb our laws and policies and find efficiencies, scrutinize regulations, review incentives, create opportunity, remove barriers, and focus funds on the ground.

Steve  
stevejustham@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/28 at 9:50 am

Volunteers can maintain and create most if not all of the trails in the ORV community, and are already doing that a fair amount.

Requiring expensive environmental studies and other hurdles created to slow or reverse the new trail building process, is a waste of money and has made it difficult to move forward with new trails being built, and is used as a deterrent by anti ORV groups, which just wastes time and taxpayers money.

Get user groups to do the trail maintenance and develop new trails.

William  
reson46@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/28 at 8:56 am

Completely agree with Dave Hiatt. The NOVA fund has been continually eroded and completely raided in the past. It needs to be restored to its original purpose. If the taxes I contribute through OHV use were actually used for OHV trails, there would be no funding issues.

Keith Wisnieski  
kwisn@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/28 at 7:58 am

Every user should help fund maintaining existing trails and establishing new trail. Each user should be responsible to pay their fair share and not depend on the largess of another group.

Maintaining trails should have priority over new trail development.

Linda N. McAskill  
lmcask1@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/28 at 6:59 am

There are many groups that could be communicated with that would be willing to volunteer for maintaining trails, such as the military. Washington State has many military personnel that might like very much to explore and work on trails in urban and high country, partnering with DNR or USFS on projects, might just need a schedule and or transportation.

Should avoid user fees and or higher user fees, so all the public can enjoy the outdoors. Nonmotorized use is my preferred use of funds. Enjoys the sights and sounds of being outdoors!

Kathy Young  
kyoung1735@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/27 at 8:29 pm

I certainly agree with the comments of Mr. Ron Downing, Volunteers are an invaluable resource in maintaining trails and backcountry facilities, I have seen the level of dedication and the abilities of these volunteers when building and clearing trails. It will continue to be advantageous for the various user groups to work cooperatively with the government agencies to keep our trails open.

Joan Fleming  
joanfleming@q.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/27 at 5:52 pm

Areas like Capitol Forest near Olympia get a lot done with heavy participation by user groups. Also, grants are applied for well in advance to acquire the materials needed to get the work done. So, despite insufficient Discover Pass funds, projects are getting done. Development of strong, cooperative user groups goes a long way towards keeping trails open.

Ron Downing  
vpfarm@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/27 at 3:59 pm

Trails in undeveloped areas have been developed in large part by the equine community as a matter of need or preference for transportation or recreation. Clearing the right of way has been done as needed by the users. Over the past 50 years of my experience with trail building and maintenance, most of this work has been done in private-public partnerships with most of the capital assets funded by the public agency. Some priority has to be assigned to the work inventory that is the most urgent for safety issues and secondarily to work that serves a balance of use to the user groups with an eye to the groups most willing to contribute to the work to be done. The value of the volunteer commitment can be used to supplement the agency budget directly and in support of grants, matching and in full. Trails in more suburban and interurban areas require public input and the balanced view of other needs and the near term population growth that may inter fear with or conflict with trail use or trail maintenance and the changing needs of the area. Generally, these areas require more administration, money, and resource than undeveloped areas. Focus of the trail systems that provide the most recreational opportunity for the least out of pocket cost, those that attract the most volunteer interest and donated capital expense has been and appears to be a thoughtful approach

for the next term of years. When the economy gets stronger and as agency budgets that have jurisdiction over these areas can be restored, lesser priority or higher cost projects not funded could be approached. Trails and facilities not maintained due to budget shortfalls should be signed as not maintained for liability issues, but allowed to remain open for use as long as safety and other concerns are not acute.

David Overfield  
kdx220dave@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/27 at 3:09 pm

Charge a user fee similar to ORV tabs for nonmotorized. Bicycles, Horseback, Hikers,

In my opinion we are not getting enough of the Discover pass money the State Parks need to raise their fees to support themselves.

Jack  
horsedoc@rainierconnect.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/27 at 11:53 am

I am an outdoorsman. When I was younger, hiking was foremost in my recreation. After getting older I have resorted to riding those same trails on my mule. On almost all trail rides we perform some trail work, from removing downed trees to clearing brush and replacing water bars. I have found a tremendous amount of satisfaction working with other user groups like Washington Trails Association, Pacific Crest Trails Association, ORV clubs and the Boy Scouts. We all have one thing in common, and that is to enjoy the backcountry.

Backcountry stock (horse, mule and pack-stock) activity is up 14% over the last year. It continues to rise after following our recent "recession". As stock use increases, the amount of funding for it should also increase, and should be proportionate to the volunteer hours we spend improving the trails we all use.

RW  
wescnmbkr1@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/27 at 9:45 am

A few years ago while employed by REI, we were asked to donate time to work on several trails in the Cascades. Quite a number of employees agreed to donate their time and some included some materials and equipment.

So before I give my opinion as to where to get more funds for these projects, I would like to see a dedicated report of where the present funds are being spent and the amount of dollars presently spent, as well as where these funds are coming from. Every administration and division has out stretched arms asking for MORE!!!

Gavin Glore  
gavinglore@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/26 at 4:07 pm

Priority should be given to the user groups who support and maintain the existing and planned trails on public land. There are numerous non-profit groups who help with maintenance, construction and stewardship of the state forests that they patronize. As the demographics of our state shift, the groups that use and support these resources have changed accordingly. With reductions in funding the new normal, it is imperative that the agencies that manage trails identify the groups that will support those efforts and find ways to support those groups. A good example in my area is Friends of Capitol Forest. They work with all user maintain existing trails and are actively working with local land managers (Washington DNR) to enhance the user experience for all appropriate recreation activities. Groups like these should be recognized for the thousands of hours they invest in a public resource.

Chris Marsh  
thehouseofccccc@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/26 at 11:20 am

I believe if they put their efforts into maintaining the trails and roads out there will be no reason to build new ones. Instead of closing a damaged trail and build a new one. Get them all repaired and then build new ones. Use the KISS method to fix them. Loggers have been building and maintaining roads cheaply for years. Using trees to build bridges, existing gravel pits to rebuild roads, get rid of the environmental bureaucracy. Open all public and private forest land up to everyone and better policing of the bad people and we all can get along and enjoy the outdoors.

Gail Garman, Salmon Ridge Coordinator for the Nooksack Nordic Ski Club  
evobunny@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/26 at 10:29 am

As someone who has worked hard to maintain the Salmon Ridge Trail System in northwest Washington for the last 14 years, I feel the highest priority should be to provide funding for trail maintenance over trail development. However, development of new trails in areas for user groups that are under served should also be considered as a high priority if there is a clear long term commitment that has been made for them to be maintained by the user groups, and if providing the new trail does not adversely affect the area or other users in that area. Without the maintenance commitment, it makes no sense to pursue new trail development.

Gail Garman,  
Salmon Ridge Coordinator for  
Nooksack Nordic Ski Club

Wayne  
wfmohler@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/26 at 10:25 am

Priority should be to take care of what you presently have.

Cheryl Conklin  
cherylconk@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/26 at 9:34 am

Everyone loves the glamour and publicity of opening a new trail. However, trails are useless and sometimes dangerous if they're not maintained; that has to be the top priority, especially with the seasonal beating that the trails of the PNW receive.

William Casperson  
willcasp@outlook.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/26 at 9:15 am

NOVA funds should only be used to maintain resources used for motorized activities, as that is where the funds come from. In the case of nonmotorized activities, the funds should only be used to maintain access to the activities, as that is where the non highway fuel is used.

Jason Ridlon  
jhridlon@fairpoint.net  
Submitted on 2013/05/26 at 7:10 am

The balance to these priorities should swing toward maintaining existing trail systems. Washington has a number of backlogged trail maintenance issues that affect the safety and quality of the trail user's experience. New trail systems should only be built when there is a clear funding mechanism to support the new trail system.

kevin ashe  
d.iga@frontier.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/26 at 6:41 am

Right now there can be no 'balance' to the trail situation. I believe all efforts and resources have to be applied to the existing trails. If not, we will lose them. Why divert monies to new trails when we can't adequately take care of the old ones? This should be our priority: keep the existing trails healthy THEN as new funding arises we can branch out creating new trails. But let me say once again, we need to focus on roads too. Without roads we will not need trails due to access. There is a push right now to close 75% of roads in the Mt. Baker / Snoqualmie Forest. 75%!!! Most people will quit using the trails if this happens. Thank you

Catherine (Cathie) Christie  
Cathie.Christie@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/26 at 1:47 am

Appropriate PARTNERING with the trails user groups is one hands on approach to fix trails & 'getter done.

I've only recently returned to using our local state & national trail systems again since 2010, but In my youth & raising my daughter we used to walk, hike, bike & camp all over outside of the obvious weekender campsites.

Now, at my current retirement age, my most effective mode of access & enjoyment to the peace & quiet of our 'for public' held lands has been to travel by horseback – my Appaloosa gelding & I have now traveled hundreds of miles of trails together in WA, ID, MT, WY, CO & this year OR too. I have friends well into their 80's still successfully riding these backcountry trails, the locations of the dreams in our youth.

I became a member of several trail riding organizations (BCH, JWPWR & ApHC) to access their knowledge of our current trail systems as well as to contribute to the seasonal repair & upkeep of those trails.

For example, part of the mission of the Back Country Horsemen is their annual commitment of thousands of volunteer man hours & the use of their equipment, horses & pack animals to clear & repair & create new trails for the benefit of walkers, hikers & bicycle rides as well as recreational horsemen on nonmotorized trails.

The BCH also add their fundraiser dollars \$\$\$ to available grant \$\$\$ monies to & thru the governing agencies entrusted with the care & maintenance of our public lands.

The BCH continually look for ways to partner with those governing agencies to get more of the needed jobs done quickly & environmentally compatible each year.

There is so much more the BCH would/could do if there weren't so many strings, (issues & egos?) seemingly locked into the governmental processes.

There are also riders in other clubs & organizations who would gladly partner, volunteer time & resources with you to ensure the continued horse riding access if you would but provide a sensible path through the red tape so we could all just move from endless planning to actually repairing or creating new trails.

I believe partnering with all & within the user groups with those individuals willing to work, not just show up & play, is a strong solution for you. You may contact me anytime & Hope to see you on the trails too!

Sincerely,

Catherine Christie

REALTOR

Women's Army Corp Vietnam Era Veteran

Member since 2011 of:

Back Country Horsemen of America & WA

Appaloosa Horse Club

John Wayne Pioneer Wagons & Riders

Cathie.Christie@gmsil.commailto:Cathie.Christie@gmsil.com ;

CathieChristie@Windermere.commailto:CathieChristie@Windermere.com ;

Al Pelletier

sekiusweep@gmail.com

Submitted on 2013/05/25 at 10:31 pm

People will "vote with their feet." The trails of all types that get the most use will need, and get, the most funding for maintenance. There needs to be a way to promote volunteer trail maintenance on less used routes.

To construct new trails, things like B&O tax credits to private landowners (corporate) or property tax credits to individuals. Can generate capital and encourage access. 501C nonprofits can raise tax-exempt capital to donate to the state or private route owners. The boost to local economies that results from trail use will be the impetus to businesses to contribute. Also trail users will be encouraged to voluntarily contribute to what they want for trails. This solution won't please everyone, but it should come close.

KJ

kjrjatprairierim@aol.com

Submitted on 2013/05/25 at 9:44 pm

I believe increasing user fees is a fair way of sharing the opportunity to use, develop, and maintain trails. Agencies may need to sponsor specific work parties to attract volunteers to help with the development and maintenance of trails. As an incentive for persons to actively participate several times, they should be given some compensation such as a discount on the user fee or as WDNR gives a free pass for logging 24 hrs. of volunteer service.

Dave Hiatt  
dhiatt07@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/05/25 at 8:57 pm

The solutions are available if the legislators in Olympia will support the State Constitution as they have sworn to do. Gas taxes for fuel use on other than State funded roads and highways is to be refunded to users per the WA State Constitution.

NOVA (Nonhighway Off-Road Vehicle Activities) was created in the early seventies as an aggregation of the refund eligible money from ONLY the Off-road Vehicle (4WD, ATV & Dirt Bike) users. The 1972-73 ATV fuel use study estimated 4.6% of the state fuel tax to be produced by ALL nonhighway vehicle use, e.g. ORVs + cars driving to hiking trailheads + scenic driving on NHRs + hunting + berry picking, etc. The ORV users gave up their State Constitutional right to an individual refund of their personal nonhighway & off-road gas tax refund moneys in exchange for this legislation that was to benefit only them via their 1% of the overall 4.6%.

Unconstitutional legislative action has subsequently arbitrarily capped the 1% at significantly less than 1% of the gas tax. Other legislative actions at the behest of anti-access, anti-motorized, anti-shared use, paid lobbyists and biased IAC (now RCO) staff stole a large percentage of the NOVA funds for nonmotorized use. See my prior post for details.

The solution is to have the RCO support returning a full 1% to benefit (see JLARC report) its rightful owners, the ORV users. The RCO should then work with the nonmotorized users to obtain their own funding from the remaining 3.6% instead of stealing from the ORV users.

We should also end the DNR's skim of approximately 36% of the NOVA funds right off the top as they have continually reduced or eliminated ORV use on DNR lands and should no longer have these funds.

A true 1% for only the real NOVA ORV trail users and proper allocation of the other 3.6% for nonmotorized trail users will provide adequate funding if the appropriate users are allowed to select where those funds are utilized, i.e. user control, NOT RCO control.

Paul Yelk  
paulp575@dog-walker.us  
71.32.219.191  
Submitted on 2013/05/25 at 7:53 pm

Getting corporate alliances to assist with funding. In return, they could promote their alliance with a small sign and logo.

## ROUND 3 FINDINGS

### Round 3 Question

Thanks for telling us your priorities in the previous rounds of discussion. This time let's get specific. Please list 2-5 of the most important issues relating to trails you see as emerging in the next five years (and only for the next five years). Think broadly—consider all kinds of trails (land, water, rural, urban, motorized, nonmotorized, etc.). In other words, if you were in charge, what is the short list of emerging issues you would pay attention to that could be realistically addressed (or at least started) in the next five years?

### Summary Observations by the Blog Facilitator

In this round of discussion, 41 people commented, providing 42 comments. Below is a summary of the themes of the comments, followed by a *verbatim* reporting of all comments.

### Cooperation Issues

While acknowledging a sense of competition between user groups, Town Hall contributors wished to re-frame that controversy. As one contributor put it, “Teach tolerance between ALL trail users. Tolerate don’t discriminate.” Some contributors pointed out the potential loss if there is a lack of cooperation, “There are a lot of roads and bridges that need to be fixed, and state park employees that need to be paid, so if you want to argue about it, trail users all lose.” There is optimism in the user community that improved relations are possible, “Multi-use with minimal conflict is possible, Washington needs to learn how to do it. I live in a town that has developed a 4 user group multi-use ethic. Motorcycles, Mountain Bikes, Hikers, and Horsemen all share at least some of the trails, with restrictions to one or more of the groups where it makes sense.”

Additionally, there were calls for the users, themselves, to work on solutions instead of appealing to the government: “Trail opposition needs to be met head on – nimbys [not-in-my-back-yard], conflicting user groups, and “entitled” users. WE need to start working together better.” “With respect to both trail maintenance and use, perhaps it is time that Washington State combined up the various ad hoc efforts of user groups to sit at the round table together into a trails leadership council. By this we would spend less time finding fault with each other and more time finding solutions to state, regional, and local issues.”

#### **Specific Issues Identified in this Category:**

- Lack of a user-group forum for enabling cooperation (e.g., a ‘leadership council’ as proposed by one commenter)
- Lack of user-group collaborations (e.g., maintenance work parties) on the same trail system
- Perceptions of unfair treatment as a user group that has been singled out as unpopular (e.g., motorized users) or as an ignored user group (e.g., mountain bikers) or as a heritage user-group that is being displaced by incompatible uses on a trail (e.g., equestrians and hikers by mountain bikers and motorized users)
- Shortage of education programs
- Pervasive attitude among users of an ‘us-versus-them’ competitive decision-making environment instead of an ‘us-against-the-problem’ collaborative environment
- ORV community frustration over allocations of NOVA funds
- Lack of understanding of the distribution and volume of trail use by the different user groups

#### **Trail Program Capacity and Administration Issues**

It is not just problems that need management planning. Sometimes success creates a new management need. One commenter said, “Make sure you plan for success as well as diminish opportunities for conflict. If you build a good multi-use area, sign it and encourage good behavior, establish a local council made up of various users, you will get your maintenance taken care of by appreciative user maintenance organizations, similar to the folks who maintain the Pacific Northwest Scenic Trail. Let’s leave a legacy of cooperation, not conflict and exclusion.” The issue of accommodating underserved users was mentioned, “Accessibility for multi-generational users, – children to elders.”

**Specific Issues Identified in this Category:**

- Funding allocations do not match the contemporary user-demand profile
- Funding, in total, is insufficient
- Users do not have enough control of expenditures
- Different user sectors are asked to carry a disproportionate amount of the tax and fee burden
- Lack of water trails in the state (e.g., water walks, paddles, boating)
- Lack of land trails associated with water
- The need for an inventory of trail use by category of users
- Zoning of use versus multiple use
- Multiple fee and permit requirements across the various government sectors

**Access Issues**

Considerable concern was expressed by contributors about limited access. There were repeated references to the lack of opportunity within a 'reasonable' commute from major population centers, especially for motorized recreation. Other Town Hall contributors expressed concerns about backcountry road closures on both public and private lands. Often, these stakeholders noted that road openings would create a quick and easy increase in opportunity, and that this increased recreation opportunity would ease congestion and multiple-use conflicts by spreading the current use across more land. At the same time, other respondents pointed out that increasing recreation areas through road openings is not free; it carries an increased management and enforcement responsibility and also increases liability concerns since opening a road implies that a landowner has met appropriate public safety standards.

**Specific Issues Identified in this Category:**

- Limited facilities near major population centers (e.g., comments about long commute times to recreation sites, especially for motorized recreationists)
- Rogue (unauthorized) trail construction and use
- Closure of private lands to public recreation
- Closure of public lands to public recreation
- Insufficient connection of trails to communities
- Incorporating trails into the transportation system
- Lack of trail-to-trail connectivity
- Trails not being integrated into the transportation systems
- Trail closures
- Road closures (e.g., logging roads suitable for motorized recreation)
- Access road deficiencies
- Access for under-served communities, especially children and youth, and underserved geographies
- Education

## Trail Maintenance Issues

Some Town Hall contributors expressed frustration that, despite wanting to assist government managers, there are impediments that arise from the high standards that are applied to trails. For some, the problem is about getting access to resources from the RCO, "My complaint is the lengthy process and procedure to apply for NOVA grants. No longer can I do it myself, I must hire a consultant for the process." Others cautioned that volunteers are not a complete solution, "Volunteer trail maintenance done to excess... When a trail is 'brushed' to six-foot width when three feet is sufficient, we lose a lot of the most interesting plants which are the very reason I am on the trail..."

### Specific Issues Identified in this Category:

- Backlog of maintenance
- Increasing intensity of use adding onto the existing maintenance need
- Use of volunteers (some people say use more, others say be careful because of concerns about the quality of work and liability)
- Construction standards and permitting requirements are too onerous
- Wheel damage to trails
- Feet (human) and damage to trails
- Invasive species
- Use of herbicides
- Horse hoof damage to trails

## Multiple Use Issues

A large number of comments were received about single- versus multiple-use on the same trail.

### Specific Issues Identified in this Category:

- Multiple use is possible (even desirable). As one commenter put it, in his area "Motorcycles, Mountain Bikes, Hikers, and Horsemen all share at least some of the trails, with restrictions to one or more of the groups where it makes sense." And he expressed that multiple use carries with it a desirable impact, "I know if our mindset is about enjoying the outdoor experience rather than denying access to public lands (i.e., the recent closure of a campsite in the N Cascades because a bear had a meal at a garbage can) the state can actually help its residents get outdoors...a theme we need to encourage." Other commenters cautioned against negatively stereotyping user groups as it is inaccurate and unhelpful, "Keep in mind that the majority of users are not causing the problems but it only takes one in a thousand to reflect adversely to the rest of them." And some commenters observed that separated use can make the evolution of cooperation more difficult, "Segregated use not only concentrate[s] use in certain areas, but it also tends to create a false sense of ownership/entitlement within user groups, breeds intolerance, and results in various interests digging their heels deep in order to protect what is perceived to be 'theirs'. This in turn will make cooperation and collaboration amongst various user groups even harder."

- Respect. Two recurring complaints among users in a multiple-use setting were user groups not cleaning up after themselves (most frequently feces from animals being left on the trail for the next user to avoid) and damage that wheeled vehicles cause to trails (most frequently trail rutting and breakdowns caused by tire tracking and speed turning on trail bends). Another concern is that the inherent dynamics of one mode of recreation conflicts with the dynamics of another mode (e.g., mountain bikers and horse riders): “This is not a matter of one group being better than another but rather capacity or traffic management when the use of a trail system by fast moving users becomes heavy enough that there is a significant safety factor that drives other users away.” There were frequent calls by respondents for users to respect the needs of users that come after them or that they meet on a trail.
- Advocacy is more important. In the face of these concerns, contributors noted that multiple use could mean the ability to create a coalition of support for trails. The logic was that more citizens using trails can mean a stronger voice for this recreation in state policy.
- Acknowledge that there are incompatible uses. Safety concerns arise when recreationists who value speed on the trail and recreationists that need no surprises use the same trail. For example, an equestrian said, “My concern is bikes and horses on the same trails. The bike riders go as FAST as they can. When they come around those corners at that speed and come up on a horse.....”

## Safety, Security, and Quality of the Experience Issues

Town Hall contributors were concerned about safety issues, usually in regards to the multiple-use issues discussed above. Some recreation modes value speed and these can easily come into conflict with other modes, like horse-back riding, where the rapid appearance of a mountain bike, motorcycle, quad, etc., can startle the horse and thereby create a safety risk. A number of respondents mentioned trailhead parking lots as not secure thereby creating a risk for vehicle break-ins and theft. Additionally, different users have different tolerance levels for noise in their recreation environment; indeed, some seek out trails as a way to escape their noisy day-to-day living environment to find peace and quiet, while others seek out remote recreation on trails because it is a venue where using noisy equipment is more acceptable than in their normal, day-to-day living environment.

### Specific Issues Identified in this Category:

- Safety
- Parking lot security
- Enforcement
- ‘Traffic’ management on the same trail by users with inherently different modes of trail use
- Parking lot and trailhead deficiencies (e.g., lack of toilets, vehicle break-ins, inadequate signs)
- The need for bicycling trails, especially in urban areas, that are safe and efficient
- Adding ‘trails’ extensions (lanes) to vehicle-oriented bridges
- Domestic animal (dogs and horses primarily) feces on trails.
- Noise on the trails – acceptable or not?

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## Verbatim Comments from the Town Hall Website in Response to Round 3

John Pope, Anacortes, WA  
popejp@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/21 at 8:18 am

1. Multi-use with minimal conflict is possible; Washington needs to learn how to do it. I live in a town that has developed a 4 user group multi-use ethic. Motorcycles, Mountain Bikes, Hikers, and Horsemen all share at least some of the trails, with restrictions to one or more of the groups where it makes sense. Alaska and BC both share better than we do. Let’s show that we can do it by opening up more trails like the Carlton area ORV system...it does work!

2. Make sure you plan for success as well as diminish opportunities for conflict. If you build a good multi-use area, sign it and encourage good behavior, establish a local council made up of various users, you will get your maintenance taken care of by appreciative user maintenance organizations, similar to the folks who maintain the Pacific Northwest Scenic Trail. Let’s leave a legacy of cooperation, not conflict and exclusion.

3. Water on trails makes users blame each other. BCO, IMBA and other groups know how to design a dry trail. Dry trails reduce irritation between groups over who is at fault.

4. I have travelled by bike, horse, foot, motorcycle and jeep over many of our trails. I know if our mindset is about enjoying the outdoor experience rather than denying access to public lands (i.e., the recent closure of a campsite in the N Cascades because a bear had a meal at a garbage can) the state can actually help its residents get outdoors...a theme we need to encourage. We really have been guilty of denying access to our public and the result is an obese population that is turning its back on the backcountry experience.

William  
reson46@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/20 at 2:56 pm

1. Additional motorized trails.
2. Motorized trails near the population centers that use them. (Hint – there are no OHV areas within King County)
3. Funding theft – restore the funds collected from OHV users to use on OHV trails. Stop stealing to pay for nonmotorized trails.

Forest Shomer  
inspass@whidbey.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/17 at 11:31 pm

I use surfaced trails as a bicyclist and nonmotorized 'soft' trails as a walker and hiker. The issues or concerns I will list seem to be heightening a little with each passing year

On surfaced trails: two concerns.

(1) Dogs, whose owners don't clean up after them; and unleashed dogs going after moving bicycles. I have been bitten in that very situation. It's pretty dangerous as a rider to be fending off a charging dog.

(2) Increasing use of herbicides. This becomes repetitive, annual or more, since killing off the vegetation only results in new vegetation, usually weedier, replacing what was killed. It makes it unsafe to pick berries along the trail, which is something that many of us like to do each summer.

On soft trails, three items.

(1) Backcountry trailheads are less and less secure. There is theft and break-ins. Discourages people from leaving a car for any length of time, even for just a few hours. There needs to be a way to deter theft, maybe by video cam.

(2) Damage to trail surfaces by wheels. The main damage I am seeing has been done by mountain-bike wheels churning through wet places. It's much more difficult and expensive to repair a remote trail, so I would ask my mountain bike-riding friends to dismount and walk past wet areas in order to preserve trails for all users.

(3) Volunteer trail maintenance done to excess. We have the tools to quickly do a fair amount of damage to the trailside flora. When a trail is 'brushed' to six-foot width when three feet is sufficient, we lose a lot of the most interesting plants which are the very reason I am on the trail: to study plants and do photography. By early summer I often find that the uniquely interesting plants along the trail have been thoroughly shredded for the purpose of making the trail more open for convenience of one user group (e.g., mountain bikers) to the detriment of other users who just need a traditional single-path narrow trail lined with native wildflowers, berries, etc. This issue could be addressed by educating volunteers to recognize diversity, know what is native, and use more restraint in clearing the path.

Jeff Selby, PTC Vice President for Jefferson County  
SelbyJL44@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/19  
Submitted by email, posted by the moderator

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the RCO's request for comments on the future of Washington State trails. I wish to address a specific area of concern here in Jefferson County. It is the Jefferson Trails Coalition's desire to work with the RCO on our proposed routing of the Olympic Discovery Trail (ODT) through Anderson Lake State Park (ALSP) and further south on the Quimper Peninsula toward Discovery Bay and on to the connection with the ODT in Clallam County. We see this as the natural extension of the Larry Scott Memorial Trail (LSMT) in Jefferson County.

The Jefferson Trails Coalition (JTC) is the Jefferson County "chapter" of the Peninsula Trails Coalition (PTC), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation registered in Washington State, whose vision it has been for the past 25 years to establish a nonmotorized transportation and recreation corridor across the northern lowlands of the Olympic Peninsula from Port Townsend to La Push on the Pacific Ocean. Here in Jefferson County the LSMT is considered to be the eastern end of the ODT. Over the past two decades, the LSMT has grown from an idea to now extend 7.3

miles from the boatyard in Port Townsend, south on the Quimper Peninsula to the Milo-Curry Road intersection with S. Discovery Rd., near the Four Corners intersection on Highway 20. The section of the ODT from Port Townsend to ALSP and possibly on to Discovery Bay is also considered to be coincident with the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail (PNNST). The PNNST stretches from Glacier National Park in Montana, across northern Idaho and Washington, and crossing Puget Sound from Whidbey Island into Port Townsend via the Coopville-to-PT State ferry route. The PNNST was designated as part of the National Scenic Trail network by President Obama just two years ago as part of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. That was the first such designation in the previous 25 years. We are proud to be associated with the Pacific NW Trail Association and have been working closely with that organization for the past four years.

After years of investigating various alternative routes beyond the Four Corners area, the JTC has concluded that a route that involves ALSP would be the most beneficial route to the promotion of the ODT, the PNNST, the ALSP itself, and the Tri-Area community of Chimacum, Port Hadlock, and Irondale. In addition, when the Tollefson Trail is completed, linking Hadlock and Chumacum, another route accessing the ALSP from State Highway 19 may be possible. Having this recreational resource in this region will have a lasting economic benefit for the local community and indeed the entire Olympic Peninsula as well. Nationally, it has been well documented that a resource of this nature in other parts of the country accounts for literally millions of dollars in economic support. The State Parks System would certainly be a beneficiary of that support. The Olympic Peninsula Visitors Bureau has recognized that in addition to creating an attractive transportation and recreational corridor locally, it will attract many visitors from outside the area, adding to the economic vitality of the entire region. As a result, they allowed the PTC to enhance our website with a grant of \$25,000.

Continuing south from the Anderson Lake Park entrance road, we would like to see it pass through the ALSP land on the south side of the road, through Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) land and continue its route toward Eaglemount Rd. From there it would continue through DNR and private land toward the intersection of State Highway 20 and US Highway 101 at the southern tip of Discovery Bay. These possible routes have been thoroughly scouted by the PTC/JTC.

A great deal of effort has been expended by the PTC working with the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), the North Olympic Salmon Coalition (NOSC), the Washington State Dept. of Transportation (WADOT) and a private water company at the tip of Discovery Bay to coordinate the design of the ODT around the tip of the Bay with the shoreline restoration project in which the WDFW is currently engaged. The PTC last year raised \$45,000 in a special fundraising effort to support the inclusion of the ODT in this design. These were all private donations from within the local area, a testimony to the great interest and dedication of the support of the trail concept by the local community.

To the north of the Park, the route will need cooperation from both private and public land owners and easement holders. The JTC has presented our desires for a trail corridor to the Jefferson PUD, which has recently acquired the electric grid infrastructure from PSE, including the easement for some of the distance of the proposed route between Four Corners Rd. and the ALSP.

These are the desires of the Jefferson Trails Coalition, the PTC, the PNTA, and many local individuals regarding this particular section of the ODT. Further information about the Peninsula Trails Coalition organization, our mission and goals, and examples of our progress on various projects along the entire route of the ODT, can be accessed on our website, [www.OlympicDiscoveryTrail.com](http://www.OlympicDiscoveryTrail.com). Our desire is to promote a trail design that is of consistent parameters over the entire breadth of the Peninsula. Specifically, the trail design page on our website, [http://www.olympicdiscoverytrail.com/about\\_us/trail\\_design.html](http://www.olympicdiscoverytrail.com/about_us/trail_design.html), will indicate the characteristics and design of the trail as it would approach and pass through ALSP. However, we see this as a staged, on-going approach, with no expectations that it will reach the final design configuration upon initial construction, or frankly at any time in the near future.

Lori Flemm  
loriflemm@live.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/17 at 11:11 pm

1. Need funds to acquire rail trails when abandoned. Need funds to acquire trail corridors/easements and build for children to get to school on foot or bicycle, which can also be used for recreational use.
2. Light existing trails used by commuter bicyclists and pedestrians.
3. Dog owners need to clean up pet waste; in the future plastic bags may be banned or not provided due to budget cuts.
4. IT is easier to build a road over a creek or lake than a trail. Permitting agencies need to acknowledge nonmotorized trails as a legitimate use and not make it so difficult.

5. Trail opposition needs to be met head on – nimbys, conflicting user groups, and “entitled” users. WE need to start working together better.

Larry Beardslee  
larry\_\_beardslee@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/17 at 11:16 am

Leaving Republic we have a 5 mile multi-use trail. Two miles are paved. All of the multitude of users get along without complaint (an occasional youth will speed on a quad, but he is soon met by police).

My complaint is the lengthy process and procedure to apply for NOVA grants. No longer can I do it myself, I must hire a consultant for the process. Twenty five years ago when I got the first of many NOVA grants, it was not near as complex. Rural areas are expected to have trails, but we do not have DNR or USFS staffing.

Don Larson  
larson\_don@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/17 at 9:24 am

The biggest issue we face today and going forward for 5 years is intolerance, it's painfully clear after reading so many of these comments.

If forest managers continue to employ discriminate practices in their travel management, entire cultures will suffer, local economies and tourism markets will suffer, user conflict will only escalate and eventually law abiding people will become criminals just so they can recreate.

As a 46 year old native of this state who's children are 4th generation off-road motorcyclists, I can answer the question asked above – “Can we really believe that there aren't enough places to drive machines?” Answer: Yes, believe it and by all means do your own fact checking but there is not one, (1), ORV park in King County. While the sport grows, all the state and forest managers have done is close more and more and more areas down to motorized use.

A statement like motorcyclists don't “need” to be in the backcountry can easily be turned to say that no one “needs” to be in the backcountry and that hikers can just as easily enjoy the closed forest roads as much as any other user. Off-road motorcyclists continue to spend hundreds of dollars on aftermarket exhaust systems that provide quieter performance, specialized and costly “trials” tires that do not dig up the trail surface and off-road motorcycle clubs continue, as they have for years, to perform thousands of hours each year on trail maintenance.

The next 5 years need to include –

1. A true understanding and awareness amongst all users and managers that there are many LEGITIMATE ways of recreating and just because one or more groups does not care for the other, no single user group or organization should have influence over land managers convincing them that it would be in anyone's best interest to lockout other users whether they be motorized, MTB, equestrian, hikers, trail runners, dog walkers, etc.....
2. More access! Quit closing trails and forests!
3. Legislation that abolishes the state's, (or any land owner's) liability or responsibility for accidents and injuries that occur during the act of recreation. We are all free thinking humans and the activities we participate in can be dangerous but we still willingly participate.
4. No more red tape and environmental paralysis when trying to create new opportunities and areas for recreation. Common sense needs to prevail and it does not include the same standards and requirements to build a trail as it does to build an REI with a 100k sq. ft. parking lot and wetland marsh outback.
5. With the intent of sounding redundant more access, tolerance of non-hiking user groups and no more closures!

Sue Wheeler  
sjwheeler65@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/17 at 8:50 am

One of the big things for me is closing timberland and gating access to trails. The big timber companies are going to start charging and it affects access to the outdoors. I walk on logging roads for exercise and might not have anyplace to walk. At Mt. St. Helens, my favorite trailheads are already locked behind private timber company gates. I think the discovery pass and all the other passes are confusing. You never know what you need where and have to keep moving passes around. I work in tourism and all these land closures and passes and requirements are hurting my

business. Hikers can't get to trails, hunters can't use land, and anglers aren't allowed access to the river. We need to do something now or our lifestyle will be ruined.

Kathryn Longfellow  
klongfellow@frontier.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/16 at 9:11 pm

There are several areas that I think are important to address:

1. Accessibility for multi-generational users, – children to elders
2. Maintenance of trails and trailheads as well as roads leading to the trailheads. The access roads need to address vehicles having a lower wheel clearance.
3. Separation of motorized use areas from nonmotorized use areas
4. Safe bicycle routes away from motorized vehicle use
5. Trailheads that are fairly easy to locate – better signage and maps

janet welch  
aloha@olympus.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/16 at 6:59 pm

All users need to recognize that their use causes impacts to the trails, to varying degrees. A bicycle on a relatively flat trail might not cause much damage, but on a steep trail the impact increases disproportionately. The same is true for horse or motorized vehicles, but to a greater degree. Walkers create impact in that they often outnumber the others, at least on the trails I frequent.

But in all cases, these users need to pay back for their use. Where there is erosion happening that can be easily remedied, sometimes just routing water from flowing down the trail, they need to just DO IT. We can't expect someone else to clean up after us, or to do minor maintenance that can avoid major maintenance needs in the future.

And if funding is short, the less impactful uses should receive priority in order to provide the most recreation for the highest number of people.

And, lets not forget that closed roads can be used by ORVs...they don't need to rip through the backcountry when the ride is the focus rather than the things that slower travelers enjoy.

My bias is toward preserving the motorless opportunities—can we really believe that there aren't enough places to drive machines?

Steve Means  
big\_slacker@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/16 at 10:01 am

We really need more MTB and multi use trails. All you need to do is look at how people 'get along' on urban multi use trails in Bellevue for instance, or the massive success and volunteer maintenance on Duthie Hill in Issaquah.

Jeff Chapman  
bbbramch@olympus.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/13 at 11:42 pm

We saddle and pack stock users are concerned with the inability by our land management agencies to keep up with trail maintenance, particularly with the loss of a credible agency work force on the land. While it is true that volunteers can perform some of the work, there are many catches to even willing volunteers being able to volunteer. The expectation is that the agencies are still charged with nothing going wrong and everything being iron clad perfect in the sense that work efforts and results do not infringe on anyone's and everyone's interpretations of regulations. Nothing is addressed promptly anymore, not even fighting wildfires. Some of our users have tried to treat invasive species only to be told they were disturbing natural and cultural resources. When it comes to backcountry trails, the winters bring blowdowns and slides, the agencies evaluate this through the summer, and if lucky the trails are fixed by late fall.....just in time for another winter.

The nature of volunteerism too is that citizen participants often feel rewarded by the work that most benefits their form of recreation. This means there is in some cases a shift in what gets done based on the interests of the workers rather than the agency objectives. A horseback rider needs vertical clearance. A wheelchair user needs horizontal

clearance. Switchbacks become narrow. Bridges become footlogs. Logs across trails and weak bridges are blockades to horse use but not to hikers or bikers. All in all there is a downgrading of trail function. If trails don't meet a multi-user standard, then friction develops between user groups. This results in efforts to segregate users or simply close trails to certain users. Responsible users do not want nondurable trails. We have nondurable trails because we can't keep up. But the agencies do have a choice which is to not make fixing trails more of an administrative/policy investment than an on-the-ground one.

Another issue is the need to address expanded populations of certain user types in areas like King County that quickly results in displacement of existing users. This is often related to an expanding mountain biking population that in numbers can be a challenge for other trail users. This is not a matter of one group being better than another but rather capacity or traffic management when the use of a trail system by fast moving users becomes heavy enough that there is a significant safety factor that drives other users away. Just like with traffic management, trail systems in populated areas need to be engineered, signed, and in many cases, expanded. The goal is that every outdoor enthusiast should be able to find a way to safely enjoy her/his form of recreation as long as it isn't careless or destructive.

With respect to both trail maintenance and use, perhaps it is time that Washington State combined up the various ad hoc efforts of user groups to sit at the round table together into a trails leadership council. By this we would spend less time finding fault with each other and more time finding solutions to state, regional, and local issues.

As to the claims about NOVA and ORV tabs, ORV tab funding goes to motorized uses as it should. NOVA does get distributed to motorized and nonmotorized trail users since funding for NOVA comes from gas spent by both motorized and nonmotorized users to get to the trails. When I drive my truck and horse trailer to the trailhead, I am paying into the NOVA fund with the nonhighway gas I am using. Some motorized users say they want their entire share. Well, you are getting your entire share. So instead of quibbling let's work together to make sure we both don't lose our shares. There are a lot of roads and bridges that need to be fixed, and state park employees that need to be paid, so if you want to argue about it, trail users all lose.

ross krump  
rossk@q.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/13 at 10:02 pm

The lack of off highway vehicle use areas, where the vehicles are challenged, would be my biggest concern. I see the biggest problem with "rogue" trails and illegal motorized traffic on lands is due to the lack of usable off highway trails for 4x4 vehicles. I hate to use a quote from a movie, but "if you build it they will come" really comes to mind. Giving the off-road 4x4 community a place to go out and really challenge themselves and their vehicles will lend itself to keeping vehicles on legal trails. I would like to give the example of the Tillamook forest off-road trail system, there are many trails, hardcore to beginner for ATVs, motorcycles, and 4x4 vehicles, and coming together with timber harvesting. The local economy gains from the use of these areas also. Having a place to go where everyone has fun together and helps to maintain the area has been a pleasant experience.

Herb Gerhardt  
hgerhardt@wavecable.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/13 at 10:46 am

I would say Education and Enforcement are the top priority. We have too many idiots in the woods that make the users feel uncomfortable and even scarred at times. We all need to help in combating these idiots. Keep in mind that the majority of users are not causing the problems but it only takes one in a thousand to reflect adversely to the rest of them.

We need to provide more safe camping opportunities near our trails.

We need to provide sanctioned areas where people can target shoot safely and not creating conflicts with other users. Yes, target shooting is a recreational activity enjoyed by many and if not done properly can create a problem with other recreational users.

Trail users need to be better educated to stay only on designated trails and not build unauthorized trails which destroy vegetation and animal habitat.

Fabian White  
fabianwhite3@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/13 at 9:22 am

Please list 2-5 of the most important issues relating to trails you see as emerging in the next five years (and only for the next five years).

1. Determining what trails are actually being used and how much in relation to ALL trails as a percentage. (With the limited finances available, money should go to the top trails being used.)
2. User review of ALL trails sounds in order! Maybe it's time to relax/change user restrictions on some trails? With that said, it only takes a few bad apples from any single user group to spoil the harmony. I have been nearly run over by mountain bikers racing downhill going around blind corners. I have had to dodge piles of horse poop across the trail. And I've had to scrape dog poop out of my boots on more than one occasion.
3. Maintenance of existing access roads, trailheads, and trails is paramount. Volunteerism is great but not a practical way to assure this is done. Money will have to be spent here. Can we shop around and be smart about the best labor to do this? (i.e., minimum wage vs. \$20-30/hr civil employees?, correctional work crews?)
4. Trailhead improvements where possible like vault toilets? Signboards/maps/etc? Or remote solar/battery powered security cameras at high theft/vandalism spots to help deter those activities? (thinking of a high pole, like a DOT traffic camera?) The rangers, sheriffs, etc can't be at all places at once. We need to expand their reach with technologies.

Al Pelletier  
 sekisweep@gmail.com  
 Submitted on 2013/06/12 at 7:22 pm

It is hard to add much to the above comments, and most of them seem well thought out and well stated.

FUNDING is likely the top priority. One idea comes to mind. If WiFi can be available at the entry points, whichever "pass" may be required for that area can be purchased by cell, text, lap top or on-board computers. I recently heard about a Canadian citizen who visited Washington. He thought he'd bought every pass or permit, but still got an \$80 citation for lack of some pass. If the information is posted, people can comply better. An extra "donation" amount could be designated to NOVA, or some local maintenance group.

Entry fees for private land can also be collected this way.

I never expected the cell phone to supersede the sheath knife as the outdoors-person's most indispensable tool, but we live in the modern age.

There are so many miles of graveled roads now, that it shouldn't be necessary to construct any more ORV trails. Just allow access. Horses and quads don't share trails very well. I don't know exactly how to "share the road" for all users. But I hate to divide the state into "horse only" or "Snowmobile only" or "kayak only" areas. This topic might be worthy of a separate chat session!

Dave Hiatt  
 dhiatt07@gmail.com  
 Submitted on 2013/06/11 at 11:34 pm

The one thing the RCO should do right now is correct the wrongs inflicted on the ORV users and manage the NOVA directly for the sole benefit of the ORV users.

The RCO should work diligently to educate the legislature as necessary to rectify the IAC's prior egregious violation of the trust placed in them by the ORV users.

The second thing the RCO should do is to educate recreational users and the legislature as to the original precepts of the NOVA program and insure that Nonhighway gas taxes from NON-ORV users are properly refunded to fund NON-ORV recreation without stealing Nonhighway Off-Road Vehicle Activities funds from the ORV users as is currently aided and abetted by the RCO.

Third, the users providing the funds must have control of where those funds are spent (NOT RCO staff) once proper funding is restored.

Once in control of their own funds, the users will be able to prioritize projects to effectively and efficiently provide for the needed recreational opportunities. Anything less, e.g. this whole time and money consuming WTTT ephemeral exercise is more comparable to debating how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, than to actually providing any benefit to recreationists.

Nathan

nathanchamilton@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/11 at 1:16 pm

Unleash the trail builders. Local equestrians feel besieged by growing numbers of Mountain bikers. Meanwhile, new rules are calling for more red-tape for new trails (engineering reviews). We share well, but would be happier if we were allowed to make more of our own trails.

Scott Smith  
emailsucks98@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/11 at 12:15 pm

1. Leverage user groups for maintenance of existing trails & construction of new trails. Encourage "Adopt a trail" programs for primary users of those trails.
2. Stop restricting usage on DNR working forests due to "environmental concerns". If it's going to be clear-cut soon, why not people enjoy it while it's here?
3. More new specialized-use trails to spread use out, which in turn reduces user conflicts. For instance; give motors, horses, XC & DH MTB'ers new separate trails, which will reduce use on multi-use / hiking trails.

Sheila B  
mrs.budb@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/11 at 10:47 am

I agree with all above. There needs to be motorized and nonmotorized trail availability-including parking and access roads maintained. I too am a Back Country Horseman and am disappointed that when an access has a problem, it is often closed-specifically Deep Creek a campground that I love and has not been open for many years now. I believe that trail maintenance is the next biggest issue. With the cuts to funding, more user groups should be trained and allowed to help with trail maintenance and maybe spend the money providing access for everyone. The other issue that concerns me is safety at the camps. Many times vandals seem to take over camps again resulting in closures. Trails are for all who want to use them and treat them as the special places they are, no matter where they are.

Michael S.  
miposity2002@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/11 at 9:21 am

Hikers are disproportionately powerful. That is a big, big problem. Bikers, ORV folks, and equestrians have just as much right to trail access overall than anybody else. That's not to say that some trails are inappropriate for certain uses, but only to say that the days of only having access if hikers or the Sierra Club deems it OK need to end NOW.

leonard francies  
len.francies@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/11 at 12:45 am

Per capita mountain bike citizens have more stewardship time than hiking citizens. The data sources are random yet if you have the spirit of truth seeking I'm confident you will validate the Mountain Cyclists quandary of being lazier than hikers.

The dedicated Mountain Bike community wishes for greater cooperation and discussion within the ever ongoing back room negotiations.

This is not intended to conflict or argue with other groups. The intent is to remind of our right to expect a lifestyle earned place at all levels of the negotiating table.

Mire Levy  
mire101@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/10 at 11:27 pm

Priority issue that needs to be addressed NOW so that Washington will be better prepared 5, 10 years from now is for the State land manager community to start realizing that segregated use is NOT the solution to the expected increase in outdoor recreation needs caused by projected population growth. In fact, segregated use will be the cause for increase in user conflicts in the future if not corrected soon.

Segregated use not only concentrate use in certain areas, but it also tends to create a false sense of ownership/entitlement within user groups, breeds intolerance, and results in various interests digging their heels deep in order to protect what is perceived to be "theirs". This in turn will make cooperation and collaboration amongst various user groups even harder. Land managers, by intending to limit user conflicts, are actually creating new ones that will become more difficult to undo with each passing year.

We have seen this being played out in the other Washington in the political arena, and this Washington certainly deserves better than this. Create more shared use opportunities so that ALL trail usage can be more widely

dispersed. Be the agent to facilitate inter-group collaborations by building a common ground for ALL user groups to care about. We are all in this together, after all.

Kathy  
kyoung1735@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/10 at 9:55 pm

Within the next five years I would like to see an emphasis on trailhead parking and maintenance of existing trails. I think it will be important to train and encourage larger numbers of volunteers to assist with maintenance, In this time of tightened budgets volunteers can make the difference in keeping our recreation areas open. Make the volunteer opportunities very visible to the various user groups and to new users, and new groups.

Don Larson  
larson\_don@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/10 at 4:10 pm

An equitable share of trails for ALL users is what's needed, now and 5 years from now. As a single track motorcyclist I am way past the "important issue" stage and left dealing with the fact that I must travel 2 to 4 hours round trip to use a trail system that still allows the use of motorized vehicles (for now). I live in rural King county and I am surrounded by county and state funded trail systems that discriminate against anything without a human or horse heartbeat, (i.e., motorized, MTB and dogs) yet there are gun ranges, gravel pits, and highways all around us creating noise and pollution BUT there is no motorized trail access ANYWHERE in King Co.

The important issue going forward for 5 years is the practice of de-commissioning, or shutting down ANY trails!!! The practice of closing and locking gates to keep the public of public land is another issue not only prevalent now but seemingly gaining in popularity with forest managers.... If the current pace of shutting the public out keeps up for the next 5 years, there will be no legal place for anyone to recreate on trails.

To the question that ORV contributes more funding per individual, I would remind other user groups that while ORV users also pay for hauling vehicles, fuel (in the ORV as well), taxes, tabs, D-Pass, Forest Pass, supporting local establishments and economies, etc..... ORV's are also required to purchase and maintain state ORV tabs. When we start seeing the state require stickers on horses, hiking boots and MTB's in order to just set foot or rubber on a trail, things will become equitable...

Like Shrubitup said – "Tolerate, don't discriminate"  
Happy Trails....

Tom Fitzpatrick  
t-cfitz2@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/10 at 3:57 pm

1. Teach toleration. 2. Look esp. closely at state lands close to population centers so the demand for trails can be addressed in a cost- and energy-efficient manner. 3. Need to keep up-to-date the population data for each user group as one basis for distributing resources in a fair way.

Tarekith  
Tarekith@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/10 at 2:12 pm

Encourage more inter-group trail maintenance days on shared use trails. Currently it's only the hiker, or only the bikers, etc that get together to do maintenance on trail days. By encouraging users from different groups to work together, more could be done to foster a more positive attitude that we're all on this together. We all need less of the "us versus them" attitude that predominates so many trail issues today.

Better maintenance of access roads would be nice as well.

Byron Stuck  
nmatrust@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/10 at 1:34 pm

I very much like Joe's comment about a clear and pointed bias against OHV enthusiasts and thus failure to address their needs. My personal view is that the statewide organization of which I'm president likely WAS CREATED

because of the failure of the RCO and related governmental agencies to respect and attempt to meet the OHV community's needs. It's a personal choice when user groups disagree; it's a failure of government when that disagreement devalues the needs of one side, creating the external need for advocacy.

And since you've given us 2-5 issues, I'd add the availability of OHV trails as a second priority. That includes single track for motorcycles, and wider trails/roads for OHVs with more than two wheels.

Third I'd ask for funding sources (pay-to-play for the various user groups) and clearly would include volunteer hours as part of the payment. Protecting those funding sources is an issue in itself but not even our elected officials and judges have shown that to be possible ...

My fourth and final issue would be to make the funding system integrated across governmental units. It's not the user's fault that the state's trail systems require a Discover Pass for DNR access and a USFS pass for other trails. Oh wait, this was supposed to be achievable within 5 years ... sorry, strike this one!

Bryan P  
Commerce@terran.org  
Submitted on 2013/06/10 at 12:16 pm

1. Not losing any more MTB-use trails to Wilderness designation.
2. Fixing Wilderness designation to allow MTB as a grandfather option or case-by-case with review.
3. More MTB-use trails.
4. Ensuring that National Park hiking-only trails are preserved and maintained, but kept wild and natural.

darcy  
djmitchem@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/10 at 10:16 am

Emerging issues:

- 1) Closure of private lands to public recreation.

For the last century large timber companies have allowed (and our public laws/tax policy has encouraged) public recreational access to private timberland. Now that is changing, as these lands have gone from "closed to motorized access" to "closed to all entry without paying". In the past, rural residence didn't need trails because they had logging roads to hike or ride horses, bicycles, motorcycles, ATV's. We have already seen how closing these lands to motorized access is causing a huge push for more motorized areas on public land. Now imagine if walking/horseback/mountain bike were closed on timberland, too. Rural and suburban areas will need to provide replacement trails. Many rural horseback riders do not have trailers, and ride from home through neighboring timberlands. Soon they will need public trails, as motorized does. As private land closes, there will be increased demand for access to public lands and links to public trails. The implications of closing millions of acres of private land is a key emerging issue.

- 2) Trails that connect regional parks to communities.

Our national/regional parks and monuments want to be connected to nearby communities with trails. Mount Rainier NP is doing this and Mt. St. Helens is looking at possibilities. Regionally connecting trails are the future.

- 3) Incorporating trails into the transportation system:

Local governments are recognizing that trails can become part of the transportation system. Trails for commuting, safe routes to schools, wellness and fighting obesity, connecting parks with communities—all these issues are related to using and adding trails to communities. As urban/suburban linking trails become more important safety and vandalism (metal thieves, drug activity, prowlers etc) will need to be aggressively combated by partnerships between users and government. Easements, rail road rights-of-way, shoulder of roads, utility corridors: all of these options will need to be looked at for linking trails.

- 4) New trails being "regulated to death"

New trails may be priced out of existence because of barrier free, paved standards on top of multiple layers of costly environmental scrutiny, and a web of grant requirements. Trails are supposed to have obstacles and be challenging. Today's standards aren't trails but narrow roads. Trails near or along water are especially vulnerable to extinction via regulation.

- 5) Funding system shake-up.

Reading all these posts tells me of an impending battle over NOVA funds between motorized and nonmotorized. Although I hike, and do not ride motorized at all, I see the real angst over this fund—especially after State Parks “poached” the money and they don’t allow motorized. RCO needs a more efficient distribution system. And budget proposals that just ignore the ratings and put the money in areas with the most votes are unethical. The Discover pass is floundering with admin. Taking too much while the same groups pay more and more. User anger is growing at the whole system. I foresee another shake-up in funding.

Heather McCartney  
hmccartney@ci.mukilteo.wa.us  
Submitted on 2013/06/10 at 9:16 am

The Three Key Issues for Trails in the Future are:

1) Access to the water and Puget Sound (waterwalks and paddles)

The State of WA needs to work with BNSF to develop a “Puget Sound Access Initiative” that identifies where access points are and where they are possible in the future with underpasses or bridges over BNSF RR Tracks. BNSF is willing to work on this and having a vision would assist local jurisdictions in completing it over time.

2) Safe & separated bikeways that are connected

Bicycling whether to commute, long-distance or exercise needs to be on safe routes. Having them separated helps to ensure this. Connectivity is key to allow the rider to choose the level of challenge and distance. STP and STV are examples where routes that are safe need to be provided. One hundred mile loops need to be planned.

3) Trail Maintenance and Miss Use of public property. The Forest Service is underfunded for the heavy use that their official campsites and ATV trails. The unofficial use is creating significant problems for rivers and streams and destruction with automatic firearms. Partnerships are needed to increase maintenance and manage usage.

Joe Clark  
larsonclark@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/10 at 9:13 am

It’s good to have a place for trail users to express their views which hopefully will result in expansion of recreational trails that are equitable for ALL trail users. As a regular volunteer on a trail building/maintaining crew it’s easy to see the need for additional sustainable trails and less ‘bootleg’ activities that damage the environment and give a bad name to recreational trail users. Cooperation among all parties is key.

Tootie Crowson  
crowson2@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/10 at 8:46 am

My concern is bikes and horses on the same trails. The bike riders go as FAST as they can. When they come around those corners at that speed and come up on a horse.....

We also horse camp with BCH, and the roads to the camps need to be repaired and maintained.

Kye iris  
kye.iris@dfw.wa.gov  
Submitted on 2013/06/10 at 8:30 am

Throughout the state there are many trails that have fallen into disuse, and the neighboring landowners have blocked legal access to the trails. County and State agencies do not have the resources dedicated to pursue reclaiming this public asset. Often re-opening the trail involves extensive legal fees. A funding category dedicated to reclaiming these assets could help the public regain access.

shrubitup  
ontopofit@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/09 at 10:26 pm

Teach tolerance between ALL trail users. Tolerate don’t discriminate.

Chris Marsh  
 thehouseofcccc@msn.com  
 Submitted on 2013/06/09 at 10:10 pm

1. Open all public and private forest lands to everyone.
2. Educate the people. Have a system like Oregon where everyone who ORV's must take a certification class. This includes minors. Educate the nonmotorized users to understand that the lands are for everyone. Though they enjoy their sightseeing by nonmotorized use, it isn't the only way to view the scenic areas. I personally love to have an adventure in a motorized vehicle to get to the area and then do some hiking as well. That doesn't make us bad people to recreate differently. Also educate the people on reporting the vandalism and illegal dumping of garbage and yard debris. That is a main reason that roads get closed because of the costs to clean up the messes of the inconsiderate people. Educate the firearm target shooters to clean up after they are done. These messes that they leave behind are just ridiculous but everyone you talk to will tell you they clean up after themselves. We all can get along and enjoy the great outdoors if we all understand where each other is coming from and respect each others decisions on how to recreate.
3. Law enforcement.....stop the thefts, the breaking of windows, the vandalism, the illegal dumping, and the burning of stolen cars. I know of one sheriff that patrols an area by me and has to cover hundreds of miles. He just has roads closed so that it can be easier to pack the citizens into one area to be monitored. We should be able to monitor each other along with more patrols to make us all safer. The Meth heads that break into our stuff need to be dealt with swiftly and harshly. We the people worked hard to own our nice stuff not to give it to jerks to get high.
4. Stop the bureaucracy.....trail systems can be fixed simply by using the resources that are provided on the land. The loggers do it. Mine the existing gravel pits. Build log bridges. Stop over engineering of simple things. Make people responsible for their own actions. The government does not need to save them from themselves. A higher power will decide that.....not the government. Quit wasting money on studies that uses all the money that was intended to do the project. That to me is the most ridiculous part. 500,000 for a person or group of people to tell the government if they can or can't build something. We the people already pay wages for people within the government who are more than qualified to make those decisions. Stop the frivolous lawsuits from out of state or from the so call victims. You knew the risks before you went out. If you know you are injury prone.....stay home.
5. Quit charging for everything. Rouge trails are being built because not only is there no place to go, there are beginners that maybe can't afford to get into an area. So they are place into a position to violate to have fun. Reiter Pit was a great place for everyone (and there was many) until it was downsized and became an elitist park. And if you do need to charge, charge fees to everyone, license the horse, the hiker, the biker.....so along with their discovery pass they have a 40 dollar licensing fee as well. **SO MY BIGGEST THING IS TO MAKE IT FAIR ACROSS THE BOARD!!!!** Or give the ones who pay the most fees.....the biggest say on land use and not turn them into the minority or the problem child.

People wonder why other people are always angry is because we are not allowed to recreate in our own fashion. The elitists have turned us into caged animals.....

Jerry  
 hardinester@gmail.com  
 Submitted on 2013/06/09 at 10:08 pm

My top two five-year trails priorities are:

1. Improve access for under-served communities, especially children and youth, and underserved geographies.
2. Build capacity for inspiring trail users to develop and practice a "trail ethic." Examples include the excellent Wild Whatcom in Bellingham and the USFS Mountain Stewards program. One goal of such educational programs should be to anticipate and address trail user conflicts.

Crazy Eddie  
 roberts.noah@gmail.com  
 Submitted on 2013/06/09 at 8:38 pm

I would like to see a lot more support for urban bike traffic, especially commuter oriented. Our roads lack both in number and quality of bike lanes that in fact don't even support all kinds of pedal transport. Education is getting better and I find that the yelling is reduced, but it's still not particularly safe out there. I know at least one road plan where millions are going to be spent "updating" one of the worse roads in Lacey which crams bikes in a tiny, 3' lane in an area where they'll also be smashing the lane width for cars to a barely possible level.

Plans for future development should place MORE attention to bikes, not less. We need less roundabouts that are perhaps safer for drivers but extremely dangerous for bikes and pedestrians. We should be looking at countries in Europe that are encouraging bike and foot traffic within their cities and reaping the great benefits to the encouraged consumer behavior in the local marketplaces.

I would also like to see better support for MTB trails in our parks, but I believe the issue of urban bike traffic is more important for our future and is quite definitely an immediate issue for the next five years at least.

Linda Roe  
lzroe1951@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/09 at 6:46 pm

1) Road access to trailheads. So many trails have been lost to the public due to deteriorating or undriveable roads. 2) Unsafe conditions on the trails, for hikers and horses, washed out bridges, rockslides etc. These would be my top priorities

Linda McAskill  
lmcask1@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/09 at 12:25 pm

Maintenance of access roads and adequate parking for nonmotorized use. Equestrians and hikers. Many of the access roads are a landmine of potholes. Such as the Middle Fork Teanaway road into Indian Camp Campground. 5 MPH max. Very hard on vehicles and animals in trailer.

Beth Blay  
bbinaz@earthlink.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/09 at 11:23 am

Priority issue(s): 1. Maintain existing trails 2. Safety—separate motorized from nonmotorized & do NOT permit earphone use by any user. This limits ability for users to be aware of other users whether hiker, horse, or biker and creates dangerous situations 3. Encourage local business involvement for either sponsorship(s) or actual work. 4. Given the fact that as an equestrian, I maintain 2 horses at no small expense, pay taxes on property to do so & also pay license & tax fees for pick up and horse trailer plus fuel and maintenance for same, I question prior comment that ORV contributes more funding per individual. (I also belong to Back Country Horsemen and contribute toward actual trail work.)

Joseph Wernex  
jawernex@fairpoint.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/08 at 7:19 pm

The single most important question facing the trails community today is whether off-road vehicle enthusiasts will continue to be subjected to bias, discrimination and often malicious prejudice and hate speech or IF RCO and other government agencies involved with trail based recreation will summon the ethics and courage to ensure that motorized trail recreationists are at long last treated with fairness and equality. A civil rights and equality act for outdoor recreation as it were.

It is unacceptable and blatantly unethical that members of the ORV community, who contribute more funding per individual recreationist than any other trail based group, have access to far fewer trails than those in other groups.

Most if not all of the RTP (Symms Act) money is generated by ORV recreationists, however only a very small portion is actually expended on trails for ORV recreation. WHY ??? In regard to in state trail funding I.e. NOVA funds ORV recreationists are again the highest contributors per individual. Again why?? ORV recreationists use fuel on which tax is collected both when traveling to trailheads on nonhighway roads and while riding their machines on trails.

There are so few single track ORV trails available in WA state that those that do exist are subject to a high of wear due to the extraordinarily high volume of use. By and large maintenance on the few trails that exist is grossly inadequate. Major increases in single track ORV trail is a necessity.

erik bledsoe  
 mrairikk@yahoo.com  
 Submitted on 2013/06/08 at 5:21 pm

The lack of off highway vehicle use areas, where the vehicles are challenged, would be my biggest concern. I see the biggest problem with “rogue” trails and illegal motorized traffic on lands is due to the lack of usable off highway trails for 4x4 vehicles. I hate to use a quote from a movie, but “if you build it they will come” really comes to mind. Giving the off-road 4x4 community a place to go out and really challenge themselves and their vehicles will lend itself to keeping vehicles on legal trails. I would like to give the example of the Tillamook forest off-road trail system, there are many trails, hardcore to beginner for ATVs, motorcycles, and 4x4 vehicles, and coming together with timber harvesting. The local economy gains from the use of these areas also. Having a place to go where everyone has fun together and helps to maintain the area has been a pleasant experience.

## ROUND 4 FINDINGS

### Round 4 Question

In your conversation so far, you have expressed frustration about the various trails user groups not cooperating. How would you fix this problem?

- What are the things user groups can do to fix this problem on their own without asking government to help?
- What are the things government can do to fix (or help fix) this problem?

### Summary Observations by the Blog Facilitator

In this round of discussion, 34 people commented, providing 37 comments. Below is a summary of the themes of the comments, followed by a *verbatim* reporting of all comments.

### Aspirations Expressed by Town Hall Contributors

“The government can’t fix this problem until each user respects other users’ rights to the trail.”

“All trail activists need to stick together and unite for trails.”

“I agree with Kathleen. We need to respect the reasons different groups of people want to get outdoors. As others have said, it looks like there’s enough land for a wide variety of trails and experiences. We’re not arguing about ‘elites’ here, it seems to me, but about what it means to share something. We have separate urban spaces for different types of activities –think schools, malls, residential areas, and so on– and yet we still ‘share’ the city–think roads, civic spirit, elections. We can do the same in non-urban areas: share them by agreeing on what activities get separate spaces and which ones are to be used by all.”

“Right now, the users groups are more polarized than they should be due to lack of understanding each other. Facilitating greater understanding between the groups would help the groups understand their common goals rather than keep people focused on half truths and outright falsehoods.”

## Things User Groups Can Do On Their Own

### Cooperative Projects Build Cooperative Behavior

One Town Hall contributor articulated this general principle: “As to how everyone can get along, I’ll echo what some of the others have said – work together on trail projects.” Several respondents presented the premise that if user groups started working together on projects where they have a shared interest, then cooperation would evolve. A backcountry horseman observed that all users are likely to get more attention from government managers when they cooperate, “The user groups can and should do joint/collaborative projects. When a money issue comes up the agency in question will be much more interested in helping if it sees a cohesive group of users not just one special interest group.” This same horseman also noted there are some natural alliances where mutual benefit can arise simple because of the different attributes of their sport, “The hikers learned some years ago that to get volunteers to work beyond about 3 miles from the trailhead was very difficult. Now BCHW partners with WTA to pack in their tools, food and camp 6, 8 10 or whatever miles.” A hiker thinks youth mentoring, across user sectors, is one way to achieve a long-term solution, commenting, “...mentoring young hikers/riders on trail etiquette goes a long way to solving the problem.”

### Participating in Each Others’ Meetings

Several contributors shared positive benefits that have arisen from the simple act of users attending each others’ meetings to share needs, experiences, and explore shared values. A backcountry horseman from Whatcom County said, “We at BCH of Whatcom County have had the opportunity to talk at the Bikers meetings, we have invited them to meet with us. These meetings help each side to see that we really aren’t so different.” Another commenter said, “I would ask ambassadors from each group (people unafraid of conflict and excellent speaking skills) to go attend the meetings of the other groups...”

### Explicit Events to Promote Mutual Understanding and Cooperation

A hiker suggests, “I like the previous idea about a sit-down or picnic with all users getting to know each other to find common ground.”

### Create Forums for Bringing Users Together

A user from Mason/Kitsap Counties notes a Department of Natural Resources success in his area that can serve as a model for what can be done:

“Here in our Mason/Kitsap County areas we have what we call a Focus Group which is comprised of all user groups like 4x4, Quads, Motorcycle, mountain bike, horse, hunters, fishermen, hikers and individuals who are concerned about our DNR Managed Lands in our area. We generally meet on the first Thursday of the month except for summer months in open public meetings and our local DNR Recreation Manager discusses the issues at hand which will or do affect our recreational opportunities...”

When any user has specific access, facilities, trails camping or any other concerns, they can discuss them at an open forum and the USERS present will come up with recommendations to DNR as to how they, the users, want these resolved. The DNR Recreation Manager asks what all the users think about the topic and then calls for a consensus vote as to what actions/rules the users want DNR to take.

We have used this process now for around 20 years it works really well and I recommend it for all recreation areas to hash out and resolve conflicts between users.”

According to Town Hall contributors, providing an information clearinghouse would help. In support of the stakeholder ideas about user groups interacting more, several users suggested that an impediment is simply not knowing when and where each other meets nor about how to contact one another. Therefore, some form of a clearinghouse to make that information easily accessible would help. For example, “Government could also help with having links on sites about recreational lands TO the user groups’ websites so we could have easy access to meetings and contacts for the user groups...”

### **Education and Enforcement**

Several Town Hall contributors believe that there is a need for improved education programs. Respect and best multiple-use practices were the themes most of these respondents identified as appropriate for educational messaging. For example, one contributor expressed, “...the user group umbrella organizations need to prioritize educating their groups on the importance of working together for more access for everyone.” Others pointed out that there are some enforcement tools available but the level of enforcement is insufficient.

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## **Things Government Can Do to Improve Cooperation**

### **Messaging**

There were calls for improved messaging and imaging representing trail users as a diverse group. A backcountry horseman put it this way, “There are hikers, bikers, equestrians and others. The photos in their brochures need to show all types so that a user hiker in say the North Cascade Park when looking at the information will see that they might meet a horse on a shared trail.” One user suggests using ‘respect contracts’ wherein users are asked to understand and acknowledge appropriate simultaneous use of the same trail, ...have patrons sign respect contracts (such as pack it in pack it out/No dumping)...”

### **Broadening Opportunity**

Town Hall contributors noted that one cause of increasing user-group conflict is a declining quantity of opportunity. An off-road motorist wants the ‘backcountry’ road system open, “...open all the Public and private forest land to everyone. If you open all the foothill roads back up, you will find that the high country stuff will become less populated because we won’t have to go so far away from home to enjoy our hobby.” A hiker suggests, “Turn roads into multi-use trails instead of a line of tank traps.” She also encourages use of incentive systems to encourage private land owners to open opportunities, “Change the property tax law to strongly

encourage timber companies with millions of acres to keep free public access.” Many respondents referenced their impressions of a maintenance backlog that is affecting supply. One potential solution came from a hiker who recommends changing rules and regulations making it easier to use volunteers, “Change the union-protection laws so volunteers can do essential services.” And she recommends user-group support for dedicated funding coming from dedicated users, “Promote an excise tax on outdoor equipment (similar to successful hunting/fishing model) dedicated to on-the-ground trails/facilities.”

### **Auditing Agency Performance**

Some argued for a way to assess the way providers provide supply across the diversity of user groups, especially in the NOVA program, “Audit the NOVA program and the RCO looking for bias, waste, and inconsistencies. Use best management practices instead of wasteful reviews to put more funds on the ground.”

### **Separating “Non-Compatible” Uses**

For some contributors there are inherent differences in recreation modes that make it difficult or impossible to reconcile into a multiple-use framework. For these stakeholders separating users is an appropriate policy response. For example, an equestrian commented about safety as a need, “Last year while riding our horses on Mt. Spokane, we had a Mountain biker come off of a switchback and was on top of us before we even heard him... It was scary for us, (and we are not novice riders.) and also for our horses... I have always been for sharing the wonderful resources of our most beautiful State. But after this incident happening, what would solve this issue, to make all parties happy? As Riders it makes one very uneasy that this issue happening again, while enjoying our horse back outing. If that had happened to a Novice Rider, or Riders and green Horses it would have had a terrible ending.... The areas need to be split, or some kind of warning, of the danger, of Bikes and Horses...” Another contributor sees that value differences means there is a need for separation: “It is apparent that motorized and nonmotorized user groups do not have shared values. Therefore, we can save time by not arguing values. Equestrians, hikers, mountain bikers value quiet, visual enjoyment of natural habitat, and viewing wildlife up close... ORV users are seeking varied motorized experiences in back country areas away from paved roads. These users do not object to loud motor noise and are not bothered by gasoline odors or exhaust fumes. They appear to prefer a faster mode of travel... It is reasonable for these two user groups to have separate access to separate trail systems.” Another commenter suggests day-rotation to provide reasonable separation while making the same area available to different groups, “For areas that are contested so much maybe a shared use, but on different days, would work.”

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## **Verbatim Comments from the Town Hall Website in Response to Round 4**

Scott Chezick  
schezick@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/07/12 at 9:24 pm

I think before any measure of fairness or equity is possible it is time to look at some real data and facts rather than a flawed and biased survey. According to Washington's State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), There is a much greater interest in Frisbee golf ( which I believe was ranked #17) than there is for ORV usage which was ranked in the 40's if I recall and second to last only behind shooting areas. What I would like to see is some real hard data gleaned from visiting the current available areas during peak usage periods and getting a real count of the number of actual users. I ride Walker Valley and I estimate several hundred users many of which have traveled 1 to 2 hours will use it on a busy Saturday or Sunday. I would bet a paycheck that the busiest Frisbee Golf Park set in the middle of densely populated Seattle doesn't see the same number of users in a month. I don't buy the validity or collection methods of the survey at all.

Travis Redfield  
travis.redfield@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/12 at 11:51 am

Sorry if my answer is not completely on topic, I can't help it...

I ride motorcycles on trail but I am also an avid trail runner and these days I probably accumulate more miles on trail running trail than I do riding a motorcycle. That said, I have never felt as a trail runner that I do not have adequate access to trails, but I can not say the same for riding my motorcycle.

I enjoy running technical trails, it's a challenge. I also want to ride technical trails for the same challenge. I would not want to be restricted to running on logging roads so please don't think that a motorcycle rider is going to be happy if you take away their technical trails and give them logging roads to ride.

If you want to reduce conflict with OHVs, then restricting their use is not the answer. By doing so you are simply moving the use from one area and concentrating it in another and that is what I think has brought us here in the first place. If you want to decrease conflict than give the OHVs more areas/trails to reduce contention/conflict. Keep in mind my point earlier; we want to ride the same trails that you like to hike/run/etc.

Stop the finger pointing at OHVs for trail erosion. As far as I am concerned the majority of damage occurs due to over-use, lack of water management (run-off), or trail design. For example, hikers have the least impact but I can easily point you to hiking only trails that have as much damage as an OHV trail due to over-use and run-off. The increase in OHV is a fact. This is, in large part, due to the increase in families that enjoy OHV recreation. However, due to the limited trails available to OHV and concentration of users on these trails is what is leading to erosion and not the OHV user. Increase the trails and decrease the erosion.

Finally, I am tired of the elitist attitude from other users who treat OHV users like they don't belong. We do belong and it's time you get over yourself. There are already enough non-multi-use trails/areas that if you can't get along then don't use multi-use trails.

Greg  
newmaniac@ymail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/10 at 4:21 pm

Given that HB 1632 passed, it is important that the State put out clear, easy to access information on appropriate OHV use. The State of Idaho does a great job at this. Here are links to examples of user-friendly information they have produced on OHV use:

<http://www.stayontrails.com/>

[http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Recreation/OHV%20Website/Keep/OHV\\_Booklet\\_2013\\_small.pdf](http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Recreation/OHV%20Website/Keep/OHV_Booklet_2013_small.pdf)

Washington State can do better! We are better...we require helmets!

Sally  
scoop@embarqmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/30 at 4:47 pm

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on trail management issues in Washington State. My husband and I are members of Backcountry Horsemen of Washington, and despite his disability, we've both put in plenty of time on work parties, some of which was on hiker-only trails. I hike, but he can't.

We think Backcountry Horsemen does a good job of educating members, and taken as a whole, the group does a staggering amount of volunteer trail work. With our expensive horse-hauling rigs and RV's, we pay PLENTY into the

NOVA fund, and I'm tired of motorized users claiming that that they are the only contributors. They aren't. ORV clubs need to do a better job of educating their members and reach out to all ORV users to persuade them that if riders don't observe sustainable practices on public land, they will find themselves confined to less and less trail opportunity. Perhaps ORV sellers could help point new owners to responsible use?

Muscle-powered recreation enthusiasts in general avoid areas that see heavy motorized use. The role of government is to keep everybody happy, i.e. reduce conflict in the backcountry. A friend of mine is a retired manager for a large timber company. Just before he retired, he participated in a decision to close ALL of that company's land to ALL users. The reason was that it was easier to exclude everybody than it was to allow nonmotorized use only. He said there was only one thing wrong with ORV's: "They don't come with 80 acres of your own land to tear around on." So Good Luck, public land managers! I appreciate your dilemma.

Adequate funding for enforcement is needed. Nobody should go to the trouble to document bad backcountry behavior (by any user) only to be told that nothing can be done. Maybe there need to be statutory changes. Nobody should be able to sue the state for an accident suffered while recreating on public land.

Anyone who recreates in the backcountry has seen the damage irresponsible use of ORV's can do. They are just not compatible with muscle-powered recreation. The dust alone can be a considerable health hazard to horses and riders. (think Green Mountain trail in the Gifford Pinchot, near Keenes Horsecamp . . . it's open to motorcycles, but nearby wilderness trails are not. Compare and contrast.)

ORV's do need more opportunities, because with the marketing behind them, their use will only increase. Letting them access old logging roads in less-erodable areas might be one solution, or even opening trails to them in areas where timber sales are planned in the near future. Because of their speed, they need lots of miles.

Maybe a front-end sales tax on ORV's dedicated to a trails (and enforcement) program for their exclusive use would help.

For the record, we DO own an ORV, and we do use it daily . . . on our own property.

I agree with the comment I saw about making sure that horse camps are reserved for horse use. That's something government can do. If somebody is camped in a horse camp without a horse, and a horse user shows up, the horse user should be able to "bump," them. Horses have special needs and the camp was built to accommodate them. I've helped build some of them. I also agree with the comment that horse opportunities need a minimum of 12 miles of riding. That keeps my horse busy for around 3 hours at a walk.

What can government do to keep everybody happy? Recognize that putting everyone on the same trails won't work and fund trail recreation accordingly. The legislature needs to quit diverting money from the NOVA fund and stop starving state agencies with a recreation mandate. Washingtonians deserve great outdoor recreational opportunities!

T.Marble

tgmarble@yahoo.com

Submitted on 2013/06/29 at 4:18 am

Well, if we must separate user groups.....separate them with EQUAL amounts of land, with equal amenities. The ONE consistency I've seen in Washington is the denial of use by one (or more) groups to appease another group; this is being done due to urban sprawl and mainly hatred. If equestrians, mountain bikers, OHV users or hikers are going to be denied use of an area (say with-in X miles of nearest large municipality), then they are granted access to another area (with-in X miles of nearest large municipality). If an area is deemed off limits to any one (ore more) user group(s), then in equality, the group(s) being denied access then gain access to another equally sized area.

User funding also needs to be established. ORV users and Snowmobilers "tax" themselves to pay for the trails and maintenance that they use. Why don't other user groups do the same? Pay for trail use by the mile, day, year...whatever.

When an area is closed to certain uses, the users being denied access feel victimized and degraded. That is no way for land use to make people feel.

Remember, hikers can go anywhere that anyone else can; other user groups...can not.

mikef

Submitted on 2013/06/28 at 9:30 am

Comment from Gail Garman; submitted by email, posted by the moderator.  
evobunny@comcast.netmailto:evobunny@comcast.net

Trails in the National Forest are considered “multi-use” trails with the ideal that they should be shared by different user groups. However, conflict between user groups can result when the quality of the trail experience is diminished by other types of users. One example of such a conflict can be seen with the cross-country ski trails. Skiers need safe, well groomed, tracked ski trails for an optimal trail experience. However, snowshoers and people with dogs also like to use these trails, and in some places, people with “fat” bikes are also allowed on the ski trails. Snowshoes and dogs damage the surface of the ski trails. “Fat” bikes, often ride in the center of the trail risking collision with skate skiers. So these different user groups have trouble sharing trails. To help resolve this conflict at the Salmon Ridge Trail System, the ski club laid out separate snowshoe trails to satisfy the snowshoers and keep them off the ski trails. It's not a perfect solution however, it takes a lot of education (by the user groups), cooperation and good clear trail signs (by the government) so it is clear which trails are intended to be used by one user group or the other. If possible, it would be nice if there could be an on site person to help guide users to the appropriate trails – either a government person or a volunteer representing a user group.

So in general, if user groups can share a trail without causing conflict, then I think the best solution is for the government to simply posting signs to indicate which user groups are meant to share the trail. User groups can encourage sharing these trails by doing education programs in the community and meeting with other user groups to resolve conflicts.

However, if a user group causes trail destruction or simply is not a good fit with other user groups (e.g., horses and motorized bikes) then, the best solution may be to separate user groups by directing each group to a trail dedicated for their use. This separation of user groups is done at commercial ski areas, which have separate snowshoe trail systems, and dog-friendly trails, but is seldom seen on public trails. If conflicts can not be resolved by getting user groups to cooperatively share a trail, then the best solution would seem to be separating the user groups.

Gail Garman,

Salmon Ridge Coordinator and WRAC member

Shane Donogh

facebook.com/shane.donogh x

shanedonogh@gmail.com

Submitted on 2013/06/28 at 9:29 am

We have so much land in this great state that everyone should be able to share! 2 wheeled off-road motorcycles have a foot print that is much less than a 4x4, quad, or even a horse. Stop whining about “erosion” and “sediment” caused by motorcycles (ever been in the mountains during a rain storm?). If OHV users stay on designated trails and don't ride them out of season the trails will be sustainable for years with volunteer work (See Teanaway, Taneum and Naches trail systems, been there for years)

I know that not all OHV enthusiasts know how to deal with horses or other user groups they may encounter on the trail, so I think that information at the trailheads and even signs along multi-use trails that instructs people how to properly deal with other user groups is a great idea.

Open 'old' Reiter and the Sultan basin back to single track motorcycles! The only user group that should be locked out of the forests are the tweakers and trash dumpers, and those that don't stay on designated trails (this requires enforcement, which DNR failed to do at Reiter for years, which is why it was ultimately stolen from OHV users). However, locking out OHV users of the areas they have used for years only creates outlaw riders that ride them anyways (see no enforcement) and/or more congestion of other OHV areas AND shared use trails, inherently creating more danger and conflict for non-OHV and OHV users alike. In all my years of riding dirt bikes at Reiter I never once had any negative encounters with other trail users. I HAVE been threatened by tweakers with guns out there more than once, but who gets kicked out of the forest? Family OHV enthusiasts

It comes down to common courtesy and an understanding that everyone deserves access to our public lands.

AC

anthony.cree@gmail.com

Submitted on 2013/06/27 at 2:09 pm

Hikers: show tolerance for every other use group.

MTB: Slow down a bit on multi use trails. Don't skid around every corner (Ranger Creek last week, for instance, had fresh ruts from skidding on EVERY corner). Leave the bike park mentality in the bike park; it doesn't belong on multi use trails.

Equestrians: Expect to see other users and train your horse accordingly. Clean up after yourselves, parking lots shouldn't be full of horse manure. Neither should trails.

Motorcycles: Put a quiet muffler and a trials tire on. Hiker intolerance is your worst enemy; the fringe element within your own ranks is your second worst enemy.

Government: recognize that you represent all recreation groups, not just hikers. Structure funding on an equitable basis. For example, the Discover pass would make a lot more sense as a per user fee, rather than as a per car parking fee. Generally quit screwing everyone but hiking groups.

John  
ladmo@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/26 at 9:51 am

Question A – the user group umbrella organizations need to prioritize educating their groups on the importance of working together for more access for everyone. Unfortunately, it is my impression that in some cases the leadership of the umbrella organizations believes in further opposing the other groups.

Question B – There are certain accepted “Truths” the groups have for each other which have varying amounts of accuracy. It would help to try to get some impartial facts to either prove or disprove some of these commonly held “Truths”. The people that make decisions regarding land use need to use facts rather than emotionalism and false truths when deciding important issues.

Here's a list off the top of my head of some of the “Truths” I've encountered.

Mountain bikers never yield to other users.

Horse riders never clean up after their horses – move the poop off the trail.

All hikers are selfish and want the trails to themselves and won't share with anyone.

Horses are by far the most destructive users on the trails (excepting motorized users)

Horse riders never do trail work (at least in the Puget Sound Region).

Motorized users deserve to be on all trails because their gas and vehicle taxes pay the majority of the cost.

The only reason more state lands are not made available to the public is because the state land managers are lazy and do not want to create more work for themselves.

Mountain bikers are a bunch of lawless hoodlums.

Right now, the users groups are more polarized than they should be due to lack of understanding each other. Facilitating greater understanding between the groups would help the groups understand their common goals rather than keep people focused on half truths and outright falsehoods. Always remember though that for some users, they will focus on the negative no matter what the truth really is. When decisions are made, those extreme viewpoints should be considered for what they are (worthless).

John  
twitter.com/moosefish x  
john@moosefish.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/26 at 9:51 am

I agree that there is a significant difference between motorized and nonmotorized use. I'm a hiker and tend not to favor areas that are heavily used for motorized recreation. By encouraging users to choose destinations and routes based on current usage (motorized vs. nonmotorized vs. whatever) they will be less likely to come into conflict.

Restrictions on trail use should be based on common values and trail sustainability. A motorized vehicle may cause too much damage to a wet-area trail and hikers on a motorized trail may pose a safety hazard. In some cases, alternating days for different uses might be possible. The Middle Fork (of the Snoqualmie) trail alternated bicycle days with non-bicycle days to lessen safety and conflict issues.

audra  
aadelberger@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/26 at 8:35 am

I agree with Kathleen. We need to respect the reasons different groups of people want to get outdoors. As others have said, it looks like there's enough land for a wide variety of trails and experiences. We're not arguing about “elites” here, it seems to me, but about what it means to share something. We have separate urban spaces for different types of activities –think schools, malls, residential areas, and so on– and yet we still “share” the city–think

roads, civic spirit, elections. We can do the same in non-urban areas: share them by agreeing on what activities get separate spaces and which ones are to be used by all.

Lori Flemm  
loriflemm@live.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/25 at 10:08 pm

Question A: User groups need only live by the golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

Question B: The government can't fix this problem until each user respects other users' rights to the trail.

David LeBlanc  
david@trottingfool.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/24 at 10:34 pm

I've been on trails shared with just about any type of user, and have seen mostly courteous behavior. If people behave, we can all share, unless the trail just isn't passable. I do think the motorized users have a bigger challenge – they account for the few instances of outright malicious behavior I've seen, and they move a lot faster than anyone else. They're also more likely to accidentally frighten other users. It is probably best for them to have their own space, or at least make sure trails are well signed as shared so everyone can be careful.

As to how everyone can get along, I'll echo what some of the others have said – work together on trail projects. All the nonmotorized users have more in common than not. Some education is sometimes in order, especially in more urban areas – I've seen cyclists put themselves and equestrians in a lot of danger through sheer ignorance. A simple "Hi horsey!" can make a huge difference.

Some trails just aren't passable by a horse or a bicycle – it is fine for those to be hiker only. Others should only be reserved for single use for cause, or if equal areas are reserved for each type of user.

Janice Baker  
wannabafarm@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/24 at 9:26 pm

Last year while riding our horses on Mt. Spokane, we had a Mountain biker come off of a switchback and was on top of us before we even heard him... It was scary for us, (and we are not novice riders.) and also for our horses..

We had never given it any thought when we started this ride, about a Bike Rider coming out of No place, and putting us both off the trail. It was pretty shocking.

I have always been for sharing the wonderful resources of our most beautiful State. But after this incident happening, what would solve this issue, to make all parties happy? As Riders it makes one very uneasy that this issue happening again, while enjoying our horse back outing. If that had happened to a Novice Rider, or Riders and green Horses it would have had a terrible ending... So hopefully the areas need to be split, or some kind of warning of the danger, of Bikes and Horses...

Safety needs to be addressed, for all, and showing respect for others would go along ways on both sides of the issue.

darcy  
djmitchem@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/24 at 8:00 pm

1-What can groups/individuals do?

Personally, I mostly hike, but I also work with tourism, land access and rural economic development issues. Our county would love to have a motorized trail component—but there truly is a bias against this (ATV, 4x4, snowmobile etc). Part of it is the Puget Sound (urban) centered state we live in. Things to improve this: I am saddened that WTA has a nonmotorized only bent, and sends out mailers/email/surveys hashing on motorized. We need a group that advocates for ALL trails anywhere. Look at what WTA working with Backcountry horse has been able to do for trails. If that synergy added motorized, imagine what good could happen. Currently, each group picks their type of activity and has their own lobbyist. Our state government is so lobbyist-centered that individuals really don't have a voice. All trail activists need to stick together and unite for trails. I talked to our US Representative who was very impressed when ALL user groups, motorized and non, combined to promote federal dollars for trails.

I like the previous ideas about a sit-down or picnic with all users getting to know each other to find common ground. Maybe joint motorized-horse-hiker work parties on the same trails could build a coalition. Courtesy on the trail, and

mentoring young hikers/riders on trail etiquette goes a long way to solving the problem. Hikers need to work on tolerance—do trail apples really don't hurt anything? Does hearing a motor really ruin the whole day?—and motorized needs to be extra careful to stay on trails, and out of water. Everyone should make a commitment this year to try the type of trail recreation they do not like. If you hike, try a motorcycle or 4-wheeler. If you ride, go for a hike or horseback ride. Who knows, you might find a new passion.

2—What can the government do.

Turn roads into multi-use trails instead of a line of tank traps. Get easements to landlocked public land. Change the property tax law to strongly encourage timber companies with millions of acres to keep free public access. Train new employees to respect and value all types of recreation—hunting, 4X4, snowmobile, ATV, everything. (A lot of the colleges have that same “humans are bad and touching the ground is bad” type of bias.) Audit the NOVA program and the RCO looking for bias, waste, and inconsistencies. Use best management practices instead of wasteful reviews to put more funds on the ground. Change the union-protection laws so volunteers can do essential services. Simplify passes. Review all regulations making certain they are absolutely necessary today. Stop with the environmental guilt-for-being-alive already—the real problem is not “stepping off the trail” or camping without a permit but a lack of people who care.

Both groups: Promote an excise tax on outdoor equipment (similar to successful hunting/fishing model) dedicated to on-the-ground trails/facilities.

Chris Marsh  
thehouseofcccc@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/24 at 6:46 pm

Oh and finally, open all the Public and private forest land to everyone. If you open all the foothill roads back up, you will find that the high country stuff will become less populated because we won't have to go so far away from home to enjoy our hobby.

Thanks,

Chris Marsh  
thehouseofccccc@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/24 at 6:42 pm

I feel with all the discrimination towards Off-road Users that there won't be a non-governmental solution to the problem. From comments I read from this discussion and previous discussions, I laugh when I hear that OHV's are loud and stinky, comments from horse owners.....I am not sure if they have ever noticed that their poo does stink just like everyone else's. Hikers don't like us because we are motoring in the backwoods, but they are so inclined to drive....though the woods, to get to there hiking destination, seems Ironic. Mountain bikers just want to be able to have their own place to go and not care about the reason of the site seeing that we OHV users, hikers and horseback riders tend to like to do. I personally ride motorcycles, quads, and drive a 4x4. After I drive which ever vehicle to my desired ending point, I will hike with my kids to see the sites. I find that the majority of off-road motorcyclists are very courteous and are most likely to help a person in need. Most other OHV users are the same but I have also experienced some bad apples who in my opinion act like the Elitist hikers, they have spent thousands of dollars on their 4x4's and you don't belong. These are all great hobbies for the individual and also family. Ever since they closed Rieter Pit, it seems that Friends and families have split apart. It was a Huge Regionally Centrally Located area that could be used by all. Many have bought camp lots near there for the reason of the easy access plus there were a lot of family activities inside the park as well. The Hikers and Horseback riders killed that. Everywhere that I want to go and that I have taken my kids to as have my parents taught me to go is being closed to appease the elitists. EVERYONE needs to respect and get along with each other. As another commenter has said "QUIT CRIMINALIZING THE OHV USER!!!!!!"

I also feel that the Government can get involved by telling the elitists Sorry, or better NO! It is not yours....it is the publics. Providing more law enforcement managing the parking lots. This heroin, crackhead epidemic is getting very tiresome and if the government can go in and target a terrorist from thousand of miles away.....they need to stop these thugs and terrorists. Washington State government needs to manage its money better so they don't have to steal from what the monies were intended for. If Seattle wants a new tunnel.....they can pay for it, not the whole state. Mercer Island uses the I-90 Bridge not the citizens of Spokane, so I am sorry put a toll on the bridge don't raise my gas taxes to appease the legislator that represents the Island. This society needs to be funded by user base. I should pay usage tax on my vehicles and not overcharged on a motor home that gets driven two to five times a year. This states government should stop spending millions of dollars on consultants to tell a group if a project is feasible or not. There are plenty of engineers on staff that I am sure would love a good project and their salary is already in the budget. Quit killing areas with bureaucracy, over-engineering, and get rid of the safety bubble that we are all being forced to live in. I was once was told.....if you are going to be stupid, you best be tough. Quit paying out to ignorant sue happy people. If I die because I crashed, 1.) it was more than likely it was MY fault. 2.) I died happy. Some families are just not meant for adventure and maybe they need to realize it and stay home and not sue because they did not have adequate warning.....you must assume that you are in the wilderness, you must be a survivor or learn to survive.

This government needs to learn to say no to the wrong people, not the right.

Mike McGlenn  
mike@mikemcglenn.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/24 at 4:32 pm

I too am a Back Country Horseman as are several others noted in the comments. As to question A: The user groups can and should do joint/collaborative projects. When a money issue comes up the agency in question will be much more interested in helping if it sees a cohesive group of users not just one special interest group. In addition, each group brings a different skill set. The hikers learned some years ago that to get volunteers to work beyond about 3 miles from the trailhead was very difficult. Now BCHW partners with WTA to pack in their tools, food and camp 6, 8 10 or whatever miles. The workers hike in light and get the work done. BCHW then goes in and packs it all out to the trailhead on horses and mules. A win deal for all. Something to remember, if a horse can't negotiate a trail often neither can a hiker or biker. So the sharing is beneficial for all parties.

In Georgia the BCH group and several others came up with a COTRAIL plan. The USFS helped and eventually it won a national award for innovation in trail work. You should be able to find it on the Internet.

Have a meet, eat and greet work party. Roger in his comments talks about the Blanchard Mountain. This is a DNR location. Each group comes to work on the trail and trailheads at least one day a year. I think about 100 showed up this year. The horses pack things up to the work spot. The hikers and bikers get to where they need to be. Some group volunteers the food and prep for it. At the end of the day they ALL have learned how much can be accomplished working together.

We at BCH of Whatcom County have had the opportunity to talk at the Bikers meetings, we have invited them to meet with us. These meetings help each side to see that we really aren't so different.

Question B. The government.

The agencies need to openly acknowledge that all user groups exist and not keep noting only a few of them. There are hikers, bikers, equestrians and others. The photos in their brochures need to show all types so that a user hiker in say the North Cascade Park when looking at the information will see that they might meet a horse on a shared trail. The trailheads need the nearly universal signs showing how the trail sharing should work. They can provide the leadership person to make sure the work is done to the correct standard.

There was a program some years ago with the MBSNF where the Ranger could issue a crew leader card to qualified volunteers. This cut back on the manpower and money problems of the agency. The volunteer crew leader could take the project on and get it done without there needing to be an agency person on site all the time. This would be useful now when the agencies are not getting budget money to manage or work their projects.

Horse riding and hiking are quiet recreation. Both parties travel at about 3 – 4 miles per hour. This is what most of the current trails were designed and built for. Mountain biking is by advertisement, observation and emails a thrill sport. Over time the government agencies need to address this from a safety standpoint. For the thrill aspect of the bike sport someplace other than the traditional 3 -4 miles per hour trail needs to be available.

Courtesy and respect for others definitely needs to be reinstated in our lives.

Jack  
horsedoc@rainierconnect.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/24 at 12:59 pm

We as a group (Backcountry Horseman, mountain bikers, hikers (WA Trails Assoc.) and even ATV enthusiast have all joined together to put on twelve Eagle Scout projects that improve trails for all users. All it takes is farsighted people to show how working together benefits all user groups and the Eagle Scouts as well.

Unfortunately the politics keep stealing the funds that should go toward trail maintenance, which causes all groups to compete for funding. By solving that problem some of the conflict would be decreased scientifically.

Herb Gerhardt  
hgerhardt@wavecable.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/24 at 11:58 am

Michael requested that I explain what a Focus Group which I used in my previous post is and how it works.

Here in our Mason/Kitsap County areas we have what we call a Focus Group which is comprised of all user groups like 4x4, Quads, Motorcycle, mountain bike, horse, hunters, fishermen, hikers and individuals who are concerned about our DNR Managed Lands in our area. We generally meet on the first Thursday of the month except for summer months in open public meetings and our local DNR Recreation Manager discusses the issues at hand which will or do affect our recreational opportunities. These include Events (ORV and Non-ORV) in which 25+ people plan to participate in, Timber Sale plans which may affect existing trails therefore impacting the recreational users and other things like enforcement, camping, trash, safety, wetland and wildlife issues.

When any user has specific access, facilities, trails camping or any other concerns, they can discuss them at an open forum and the USERS present will come up with recommendations to DNR as to how they, the users, want these resolved. The DNR Recreation Manager asks what all the users think about the topic and then calls for a consensus vote as to what actions/rules the users want DNR to take.

We have used this process now for around 20 years it works really well and I recommend it for all recreation areas to hash out and resolve conflicts between users. I think this process would also work very well in areas where large Federal land owners and private timber companies allow recreation to come up with agreeable rules that everyone can live with.

Kathleen  
mksmith@olypen.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/24 at 11:54 am

It is apparent that motorized and nonmotorized user groups do not have shared values. Therefore, we can save time by not arguing values. Equestrians, hikers, mountain bikers value quiet, visual enjoyment of natural habitat, and viewing wildlife up close.

ORV users are seeking varied motorized experiences in back country areas away from paved roads. These users do not object to loud motor noise and are not bothered by gasoline odors or exhaust fumes. They appear to prefer a faster mode of travel.

It is reasonable for these two user groups to have separate access to separate trail systems. The two user groups – motorized and nonmotorized are simply not compatible. While I personally regret the amount of noise in our world and dislike the destruction of habitat, nonetheless, ORV users wish an experience with motors that is off-road.

That a good deal of our nation is already committed to noise and motorized vehicles; and since hiking, biking and horseback riding are means of quiet enjoyment of nature, and are much valued by an aging population as well and younger age groups, as well as a preponderance of people seeking quiet and a retreat to natural beauty; we can best be served by separating the user groups.

Signage pointing out respectful, responsible behaviors would be helpful. But definitely separate the motorized from nonmotorized users.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Don Larson  
larson\_don@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/24 at 11:13 am

What can user groups do on their own? – Understand and accept the various user needs with an understanding that there is room for everyone in this state. Just like there are different “types” or “classes” of nonmotorized users, there are different “types” or “classes” of motorized users. I think that many nonmotorized users don’t see the difference between a light weight two wheeled motorcycle and a 4 wheeled ATV or Jeep. Off-road motorcyclists primarily enjoy single track trail, the same trails desired by Equine, MTB and Hikers. Understanding amongst users that single track trails are used by motorcyclists that have no desire to ride quad or jeep trails, (or forest roads), would be a start in identifying the reason for conflict on multi use trails. I can assure a lot of Hikers that many of the trails that you hike on today were originally built by cross country motorcyclists. Off-road motorcyclists can cover 70+ miles of single track in a day and see everything TO INCLUDE wild animals such as goats, deer, elk, bear, etc.... (For those that think wild animals are “run off” by motorized users).

There are so many acres and square miles out there of available resources that there should not be any conflict. Multi-use trail systems can work with the understanding that “multiple uses” are occurring... and to the claims of safety issues – How bout we start with facts and statistics? I have been riding single track multi-use trails for 30+ years and have never even heard of an accident between a motorized and nonmotorized user? If nonmotorized users want to use a trail system specific to their use, they should be able to and as such, a motorized user should be able to find a single track trail system that they can use specifically as well.... the resources and space are there!!!! But to go out on a multi-use trail system and immediately start complaining about one particular user group is short sighted at least.... I have also heard the excuse of noise and the fact that nonmotorized users do not get “peaceful enjoyment” that apparently they are entitled to and to that I think many motorized users will admit that more education is needed in keeping our machines quiet. There are state and federal laws that can easily be enforced on the trail and the vast majority of motorcyclists are keeping the dB levels well below the legal limits but to put things in perspective as nonmotorized users, you will also hear aircraft while in the outdoors, probably more often than you will hear an ORV.

So... Understanding the needs of the different users amongst users, tolerance amongst users, proper trail etiquette, etc....

What can the government do? – First and foremost, quit bowing down to elitist hiking and environmental groups that are anti-access. Make sure that lobbyists and/or special interests are not employed by the forest managers!!! Cut through the red tape and be able to open up new opportunities to user groups that are motivated to make such opportunities work. Allowing elitists to green wash a situation and say that allowing different or multiple uses is bad for the environment without producing science or even common sense to the argument has to stop.... the threat of a law suit needs to be eliminated.

Restore the NOVA allocations to their original intent.

Start taxing bicycles, horses and hiking boots just like ORV’s are currently taxed. This funding can be used accordingly and then these user groups can also become a self funded form of recreation just like ORV users.

Quit closing gates and shutting out the public. Provide more enforcement and for Pete’s sake start acting on tips and evidence of illegal activity when a recreational user presents... (I actually gave a name and address on some mail and check book that I found at the bottom of a pile of household garbage at a Reiter clean up, to a DNR enforcement officer who looked me right in the face and told me they could not do anything with it?!?!?) When people understand

there are consequences they are less likely to commit crimes against the forest and we can start unlocking all of these big ugly yellow gates!

Thanks.

Rod Farlee  
rodfarlee@olympen.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/24 at 10:58 am

David Hiatt, the 2002 NOVA fuel use study found that ORV use contributed only 20% of revenues (80% USFS/NPS road use and gas tax revenue is by hikers and stock users accessing trailheads and campgrounds), but ORV facilities benefit from the majority of NOVA expenditures.

I support your goal of more ORV opportunities, but the facts don't support your contention that ORV use is being shorted by NOVA. See <http://www.wta.org/action/current-issues/nova> updated by [http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual\\_13-NOVA-EE.pdf](http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/Manual_13-NOVA-EE.pdf) page 10.

tchrlady  
eileenpeter50@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/24 at 10:34 am

First, thank you for asking us!

In your conversation so far, you have expressed frustration about the various trails user groups not cooperating. Q1How would you fix this problem? Q2What are the things user groups can do to fix this problem on their own without asking government to help?

Answer to Q1-2: I would ask ambassadors from each group ( people unafraid of conflict and excellent speaking skills to go attend the meetings of the \*other groups\*, example: I am an equestrian ( Pacific Northwest Endurance Rides, American Endurance Ride Conference, Back Country Horsemen and Washington) and have an explicit enduring interest in using and sharing trails; I could find like-minded folks in MY groups to attend meetings of hikers, mountain bikers, and motorized vehicle groups so I would then understand their worldview and share mine on their turf. From there we could continue to share and air issues and be more cohesive in nature when supporting the creation and maintenance of outdoor trails for all of our usage. This could also serve as education for all of us as we learn what the other group values and hear what they think about our choice of recreation. I would love it if we were explicitly invited to those local/regional meetings. I am unsure of where to find the meetings, thus see my answer to the next Q

Q3: What are the things government can do to fix (or help fix) this problem?

Government could help with ensuring all user groups are heard ( example, DNR's Capitol Forest management plan) for all management issues. Government could also help with having links on sites about recreational lands TO the user groups websites so we could have easy access to meetings and contacts for the user groups; it would help with group usage cohesion. In addition, government could also publish educational treatises created by each user group that shows what they do and value.

Linda Roe  
lzroe1951@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/23 at 7:57 pm

Motorized users and nonmotorized users need to stay separated. For areas that are contested so much maybe a shared use, but on different days, would work. Even numbered days, one group, odd days another. Cooperating on trail maintenance and cleaning up trash would go a long way toward getting your particular user group some PR with other user groups and government agencies.

Lloyd Gelentere  
lloydkg@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/23 at 3:35 pm

Keep motorized vehicle trails separate from horse riders, bikers and hikers. Allow motorize vehicles to use logging roads or forestry roads. Stop pulling out culverts and blocking these roads. By blocking these roads motor bikes have no place to go except on trails

Erik B

mrairikk@yahoo.com

Submitted on 2013/06/23 at 10:16 am

The issue I have with other users groups is that they use lies and threat of court action if the government agencies (FS, BLM, DNR) allow motorized user groups to try and expand their ever dwindling trail system. And as most everyone knows the government agencies will back down at any threat of court action.

If all user groups can not get along and figure out a sensible plan of the public lands that all tax paying users pay for, then no one should be allowed.

Not everyone can hike or bike or ride horses.

Roger B Nelson

rogerramjet1961@hotmail.com

Submitted on 2013/06/23 at 9:46 am

Hi my name is Roger Nelson, I belong to a organization called Backcountry Horsemen Of Washington here is a perfect example of different user groups working together on June 1st of the last few years is National Trail Days and all these different user groups work together on different trails and projects ours happen to be at Blanchard Trail system in Alger, Washington, outside off Bellingham, we haul gravel with our stock with L boards and five gallon buckets and gravel bags the animals are packing two hundred pounds of gravel each horse or mule carries to the trail where it is needed. Also, we work with the USFS, we work with this federal agency and hiking clubs to pack in their camping supplies and food and tools to work on trails.

Herb Gerhardt

hgerhardt@wavecable.com

Submitted on 2013/06/23 at 9:32 am

In our Mason/Kitsap county areas, I do not believe we really have such disagreements do to the cooperative efforts of the user groups who attend the Tahuya/Green Mountain DNR Focus Group Meetings. We hash out disagreements at this Focus Group and generally come up with an agreeable solution.

Furthermore, I do agree with using NOVA funds for DNR grant projects and Education/Enforcement. I encourage more Focus Groups for more local lands to resolve disagreements between user groups.

Tricia Ann Foster

Triciaann777@yahoo.com

Submitted on 2013/06/23 at 9:24 am

FS/DNR/WA St Parks can have patrons sign respect contracts (such as pack it in pack it out/No dumping) and liability waivers and RE-OPEN the closed roads Such as in the Sultan Basin. There are 1000's of miles of DNR/forest service roads ORV's could ride on. ORV's riders should petition areas they need, especially locations where there are not already hiking trails to lakes/lookout towers etc. Insist/demand refunds until you get an appropriate location in Washington. I heard there is only one, and it's dangerously eroded. Respect gets respect, most of the time.

Tricia Ann Foster

Triciaann777@yahoo.com

Submitted on 2013/06/23 at 9:03 am

I hike/bike to the right of the road/trail, unless it is not safe to do so. If there is a hiker/walker on the forest service road I slow down/stay to the right. Horses won't get along well with mountain bikes. Aggressive off leash dogs or dogs that poop on the trail are not going to get along with me. Citing/penalizing disrespect for keeping a trail clean could help prevent some future problems.

Kevin,

Forest service trail maps show which trails are meant for specific user groups. Not all trails are on the maps, but I've noticed since 1992 that a lot of 'hiking only trails' cannot be biked due to the rough/awkward narrow rocky areas filled w/ tree roots trails, not to mention elevation.

The US Forest service sells the maps that appear to 'exclude' user groups/separate user groups.

I think US forest service is part of the government.

Tootie Crowson  
crowson2@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/06/23 at 8:59 am

I would like to see boldly lettered signs which say the site is for horse camping only in horse camps.

Also we could use informational signage educating bike riders as to how to conduct themselves when the trails are shared by users riding horses. My concern is that the bike riders goal is to challenge themselves by going as fast as they can. When they come upon a horse this is very dangerous.

Perhaps changing the user groups mix by combining bikes and ATVs, instead of bikes and horses would solve the problem.

I believe these issues can be addressed without government intervention.

Larry Beardslee  
larry\_\_beardslee@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/22 at 9:34 pm

We share the planet, we can share the trails.. All hikers can use all trails, but some are for the exclusive use of the elite. I encourage complainers or those observing bad behavior to photograph (even with cell phone) and send in to our trail website. Few want their behavior recorded.

See first 2 paragraphs of Dave Hiatt's letter.

Application for NOVA funds now requires a staff or consultant—much too burdensome.

Al Pelletier  
sekiusweep@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/22 at 5:24 pm

For areas where there is high demand for different and non compatible usage, groups may need to agree to a reservation system and perhaps even a lottery system to accommodate each other. User fees would be appropriate, as the constant use will likely require constant maintenance. It's not like in mountain man days, but large events can be scheduled well in advance .

If the fuel taxes apply to "publicly funded roads and highways," and if ORV trail construction and maintenance is publicly funded, maybe the fuel tax exemption no longer applies. If people can afford to burn up fifty gallons of fuel a day, another \$5 in fuel tax won't make them stay home, or ruin their outing.

Hunters are accustomed to paying special "tags" to hunt in some specific areas. They also pay daily permit fees to private landowners. This isn't my dream of the "wild west", but we would not be having this discourse if demand did not exceed enjoyable usage of some public lands.

Linda McAskill  
lmcask1@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/22 at 5:22 pm

Safety and not destroying the land, frightening off all the natural animals should be a priority. I am a fan of any nonmotorized use. Hikers, equestrian, and bikers; keep them all involved in maintaining the trails and camping areas. Trails signs sure would be appreciated and help encourage "Go Play Outside! Keep our generation and the younger ones to go outside and enjoy the fabulous opportunities on public land. Keep in mind 10% of any group are usually complainers.

Kevin McGrath  
reliable.kevin@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/22 at 3:15 pm

This is a simple issue of basic courtesy that is easily resolved by the users. They must share the trails with other user groups and stop maneuvering to exclude others from the resources. Government can help by providing some leadership and discouraging those who would exclude another group.

This does not mean there cannot be specialized trails or areas. However, when one user group has access to almost all public lands and fights to deny ever decreasing areas to others, it will lead to ever increasing contempt for those users and the system which supports their exclusion of others.

Dave Hiatt  
dhiatt07@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/06/22 at 3:06 pm

Answer to question A –

Pressure the hiking elitists to agree to the sharing of desirable public lands with equestrians, mountain bicycles and OHVs. Add this pressure by insisting that land management reward the users who will share public lands by providing them with more opportunity while removing opportunity from hiking elitists who refuse to share and instead whine until they get their way, i.e. reward cooperation and penalize selfishness.

Answer to question B –

The solutions are available if the legislators in Olympia will support the State Constitution as they have sworn to do. Gas taxes for fuel use on other than State funded roads and highways is to be refunded to users per the WA State Constitution.

NOVA (Nonhighway Off-Road Vehicle Activities) was created in the early seventies as an aggregation of the refund eligible money from ONLY the Off-road Vehicle (4WD, ATV & Dirt Bike) users. The 1972-73 ATV fuel use study estimated 4.6% of the state fuel tax to be produced by ALL nonhighway vehicle use, e.g. ORVs On & Off nonhighway roads + street legal vehicle operation ON Nonhighway Roads to hiking trailheads, scenic areas, hunting, fishing, berry picking, etc. The ORV users gave up their State Constitutional right to an individual refund of their personal nonhighway & off-road gas tax refund moneys in exchange for this legislation (creating NOVA) that was to benefit only them via their 1% of the overall 4.6%.

Unconstitutional legislative action has subsequently arbitrarily capped the 1% at significantly less than 1% of the gas tax. Other legislative actions at the behest of anti-access, anti-motorized, anti-shared use, paid lobbyists and biased IAC (now RCO) staff stole a large percentage of the NOVA funds for nonmotorized use. See my prior posts for details.

The solution is to have the RCO and all Off & On nonhighway road (NHR) users support returning a full 1% to benefit (see recent JLARC report) its rightful owners, the ORV users. The RCO should then work with the On NHR users to obtain their own funding from the remaining 3.6% of the Nonhighway on road use instead of stealing from the ORV users.

We should also end the DNR's skim of approximately 36% of the NOVA funds right off the top as they have continually reduced or eliminated ORV use on DNR lands, are now directly charging for access to DNR lands and should no longer have these funds.

A true 1% of the gas tax for ONLY the NOVA (Off-Road) ORV trail users and proper allocation of the other 3.6% of the gas tax from Nonhighway on road use for nonmotorized trail users will provide adequate funding if the appropriate users are allowed to select where those funds are utilized, i.e. user control, NOT RCO control.

## ROUND 5 FINDINGS

### Round 5 Question

Over the years trail uses have changed. Today, a trail is often used for more than one type of activity (e.g., equestrian, ORV, hiking, mountain bicycling, etc.). The documents that guide planning for trails and NOVA recommend designating a 'primary use' (primary management objective) to identify the main purpose for the trail.

We have two questions for you,

- For the trails that you use, is it clear what the primary management objective is?
- How is that objective made clear to you (e.g., signs, design elements of the trail, outreach materials, Web sites, people in your network)?

## Summary Observations by the Blog Facilitator

In this round of discussion, 30 people commented, providing 32 comments. Below is a summary of the themes of the comments, followed by a *verbatim* reporting of all comments.

### **For the trails that you use, is it clear what the primary management objective is?**

Answers to this question ranged from “yes” to “no.”

Those people saying “yes” cited the look and feel of a trail, signs, and authoritative sources (like agency websites) as providing them with a clear understanding of the primary management objective for a trail. Those people saying “no” cited lack of signs as a key reason the primary management objective was not clear.

A packgoat enthusiast also noted two less obvious implications of a trail’s primary management objective not being clear.

- First, an assumption by some users is that if a trail is labeled for an intended use (e.g., equestrians), then some of these users assume that is the sole use. Consequently, they are not mindful of the potential presence of other users thereby creating the potential for conflicts.
- 
- Second, the absence of labeling a trail as potentially being used by a rare user group, like packgoat users, means other users are not looking for and, therefore, are not prepared to avoid conflicts.
- 

One Town Hall contributor put it this way:

“There are also times when it says ‘equestrian’ trail, yet that to many horse folks means it is a horse trail only and no other stock should be using it. I would like to see ‘stock’ trail signs – this again is a safety issue too for other trail users. On trails we are on with our packgoats we generally put a sign up at the trailhead that indicates ‘Please be aware – Packgoats are on the Trail.’”

### **How is that objective made clear to you (e.g., signs, design elements of the trail, outreach materials, Web sites, people in your network)?**

- Signs at trailheads
- Map annotations
- User group Web sites (e.g., Washington Trails Association (<http://www.wta.org>); Northwest Motorcycle Association <http://www.nmaoffroad.org>); Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance (<http://evergreenmtb.org>); Back Country Horsemen of Washington (<http://www.bchw.org>))
- Guidebooks

- On-line forums and social media (examples not given): “I also participate in on-line forums where mountain bikers dialogue about all manner of mountain biking related matters – including where to ride, current trail conditions, etc”
- The nature of the trail bed. “...although a trail may be marked as open to several activities (hike, horse, bike etc). I have found myself hiking trails that are clearly preferred by horses, motorized or mtn. bike. The tread of the trail is the real ‘tell’ more so than a sign telling what it is legally open to”
- Knowledge shared inside a network of users
- The Bainbridge Island Metro Park & Recreation District recently, implemented signage that works with smart phone technology and enables a user’s location to be displayed as a phone app

### **Suggestions for Improvements**

- More and better signage at trailheads
- Postings on property owner Web sites (e.g., Forest Service, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Wildlife’s LT Murray webpage)
- Standardize this part of information presentation across recreation providers so it can be easily spotted via a shared ‘branding’ protocol
- Improve information for private lands as they are not as well documented as public lands
- In addition to trailhead signs that inform users about the designated primary use of a trail, add model safety and courtesy behaviors that are appropriate for the multiple-use on that trail
- Add icons or other descriptive annotations to trail maps

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### **Verbatim Comments from the Town Hall Website in Response to Round 5**

darcy  
djmitchem@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/26 at 8:52 am

1) Although a trail may be marked as open to several activities (hike, horse, bike etc). I have found myself hiking trails that are clearly preferred by horses, motorized or mtn. bike. The tread of the trail is the real “tell” more so than a sign telling what it is legally open to.

2) The management objective is unclear until you are on the ground. Over time you just learn which areas are preferred by which groups. Maps are the best way to spend money on this. Signs good too, but expensive to replace and easy targets.

Lys Burden  
WPburden@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/23 at 1:56 am

I mostly use the trail network in our small city that is developed for both walking and bicycling. Trails are not designated for specific user groups, I have never seen any user conflict, and people I have met have been very courteous on trails. The outlying trails are even used by horse back riders, which can cause some surface damage in some seasons, but does not seem to be any great problem.

Linda Roe  
lzoe1951@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/20 at 9:22 pm

Yes, on the trails that I use it is clear about what the primary intended use is. I use trails for hiking, and obtain the information from hiking websites (WTA) guidebooks and maps. It is sometimes not clear whether a trail is suitable for horses or mountain bikes. I avoid the trails open to motorized recreation.

Linda McAskill  
lmcask1@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/18 at 9:43 am

I am an equestrian, trail rider. Would be helpful if the user information, or best suited information is posted on the property owner website. Such as USFS, DNR, or LT Murray. Adequate parking information would be very helpful for most of us that trailer or drive to the trailhead. Trail signs would sure help in safety, for all public recreation. Even if it is just a diamond marker, or a sign that says "trail". If route crosses road, need to know where the trail starts up again / continues.

Don Larson  
larson\_don@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/17 at 2:43 pm

Q1. Yes but it's not easy and there is certainly no standard.

Q2. I would say that it varies from system to system. I use primarily high country, single track multi-use systems to ride my off-road motorcycle. Depending which Ranger District or DNR region, the trailheads are sometimes clearly marked barring any vandalism (which usually means someone has tried to remove the motorized symbols) but sometimes they are not clearly marked or designated at all. I get most of my information from the Northwest Motorcycle Association, (NMA), website, the ranger district's websites or social media groups. I have found discrepancies between maps and trailhead signage as to whether or not specific trails are open to motorized use or not. The Internet and personal experience are what I rely on most to identify the intended use of a trail system.

Karen Johnson  
kjrjatprairierim@aol.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/16 at 8:56 pm

DNR usually does a good job of signing trail use as does USFS. Use of private lands is more difficult since it may not be signed or publicized as to use.

Perry Barrett  
perry@biparks.org  
Submitted on 2013/07/16 at 4:06 pm

Our trail classification is based on three classes of trails in our park lands. These three trail types range among user groups, design elements and underlying land restrictions, such as conservation easements or grant restrictions. The trails with the greatest width, Class I, are designed for heavy participation, nonmotorized users with larger tread width of 5'-6' and include built structures, such as bridges, boardwalks, culverts, signage and trailhead parking. Gravel is used to augment native soils, and trail design reduces obstacles while increasing sight lines in this category. Class II type trails have a narrower width, less gravel, fewer built structures and parking provided at the trailhead. Both Class I and II accommodate equestrians in parts and as mapped, and both classes of trail category provide for a seasonal, proactive approach to maintenance. Our Class III trail designation is the District's narrowest at 3', pruning is conducted as needed and natural materials are preferred over gravel. These trails are targeted for hiking use and occasional equestrian use depending on the site's topography. This last trail category serves as a connector type trail within a larger park trail system. Recently, we have implemented signage that works with Smart phone technology and enables a user's location to be displayed as a phone app. Dogs are typically on-leash by park rules.

Donna Ruelas Semasko  
dsemasko@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/07/16 at 2:36 pm

No, many trails that we as packgoat enthusiasts use, are not clear as to the primary management objective. We use BLM, DNR, forest, state forests, and a few state park trails. It would be educational for the other trail users on these trails to know that packgoats are on the trail, especially for horse riders and bicyclists. This is a safety issue. Many times a trail has no designation as to who/what is allowed to use the trail. There are also times when it says "equestrian" trail, yet that to many horse folks means it is a horse trail only and no other stock should be using it. Would like to see "stock" trail signs – this again is a safety issue too for other trail users. On trails we are on with our packgoats we generally put a sign up at the trailhead that indicates "Please be aware – Packgoats are on the Trail."

John  
ladmo@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/07/15 at 7:31 pm

As a mountain biker, I obtain trail information via the Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance website, which provides a wealth of information related to riding opportunities. Evergreen does not post trail information related to locations bikes are not allowed. I also participate in on-line forums where mountain bikers dialogue about all manner of mountain biking related matters – including where to ride, current trail conditions, etc. When I go to a trail the first time, I always take the time to read signs and other informational postings.

I most often ride trails near my home that were built by mountain bikers, who also maintain them, but the trails I am thinking of primarily exist on private land that access is granted via a permit system, so that may exist outside of your questions above.

I sometimes ride at Tiger Mountain. As far as I can remember, besides the signs illustrating the right of way rules, there is no indication of a primary use. This is curious because the new trail that opened August last year, and the other trail nearing completion, are entirely (as far as I know) constructed by mountain bikers. It would be nice if the community that invests their own sweat and money and time into building a trail was granted primary use status. I believe that is the way it should be.

Byron Stuck  
nmatrust@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/15 at 4:59 pm

I'd like to add this to my comments just submitted:

I've seen DNR sign studies spend nearly \$500k of our hard earned gas taxes and user fees and with very little benefit. Maintaining accurate web listings with modest on the ground signage is what I'd buy if it were my money ...

Byron Stuck  
nmatrust@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/15 at 4:56 pm

Yes, the trails that I use are listed as multiple use where motorized use is permitted on the web. There may also be local icon signs showing this. When it's not visible with trail signage the websites do list this and that's where I typically look first anyway. In my 35 years here these areas have been fairly stable so the motorized users I ride with know where to ride, and where not to ride. The occasional new visit I take (to Foggy Dew for example) was preceded by both the web research to find legit motorized trails as well as online forum research to confirm practice. I don't find local signage typically available and wouldn't want to pay for more of it if it were. The web pages can't be destroyed or wear out as easily as the web information!

Lori Lennox  
llennox82@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/15 at 4:17 pm

For the most part there is adequate signage on most of the trails I use, that is if vandals haven't shot them or stolen them. And with the Internet it is now very easy to verify that info ahead of time by going to the land manager websites. Know where you go! The Back Country Horsemen social media options are great for us stock users who want to know where we can ride our horses and mules, including trail conditions.

One thing I have on my wish list for all trails is a set speed limit. I think that would help all users have fewer issues with the other ones. A galloping horse, a trail runner, or a biker going at speed can all be dangerous to other users who are going at the walking pace most trails are designed for. Specific trails all going one way for those wishing to go fast might be an idea in some areas?

Heather McCartney  
hmccartney@ci.mukilteo.wa.us  
Submitted on 2013/07/15 at 2:18 pm

As a managing agency, we decide on the trail use as part of the preliminary scoping of the Master Plan for the parkland. This allows users to comment on what they would like and usually how it is being used currently. Our trails have a primary use for walkers and runners. In one case, we are allowing mountain bikes and are monitoring wear and tear and whether that use can be sustained. One change to assist with allowing that use is using gravel rather than bark. In a second case, the "social trails" were created by mountain bikers and this allowed runners and walkers

to use the trails. So, when it came time to approve a Master Plan for this park and open space, mountain bikers are intended as a continued use. Walkers also asked that they can walk their dogs. Our parks have leash laws, so we have allowed that and are monitoring whether accidents between walkers, dogs and bikers occur. If there are accidents, then we will need to revisit the uses and whether separate trails need to be designated. We use signs at the entrances of trails to indicate whether mountain biking is allowed.

Smthfoxgrl  
abuschling@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/15 at 1:57 pm

yes  
signs

Kathleen  
mksmith@olympen.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/15 at 11:43 am

#1 clearly mark trailhead with uses – hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers. Clearly post safety behaviors when horses are passing hikers; bikers should slow on “blind” corners, and/or stop to allow horses to pass. Clearly mark “Nonmotorized Use Only”.

#2 more outreach materials and maps clearly marked with uses would be helpful. Many of us hikers and equestrians do not want to encounter motorized vehicles.

It is my understanding that horses can access Olympic National Park at some trailheads. This should be made clear on maps.

Tootie Crowson  
crowson2@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/07/15 at 10:36 am

As a point of general information. The Back Country Horsemen of Washington maintain trails in Capital Forest. We pack in with mules, horses and gravel to build and repair trails.

Tootie Crowson  
crowson2@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/07/15 at 10:23 am

Yes I know what users can use the trails as I read the signage.

This weekend a woman was nearly killed while riding her horse in Capital Forest. A mountain bike came around a blind corner at high speed. She ended up in the ER with a huge gash on her face requiring 15 stitches. This has always been a major concern for horseback riders. I question the wisdom of mixing bikes and horses on the same trails. Wouldn't it be smarter to put wheeled vehicles together, and leave horses and hikers together?

davemcmains  
wrongwa@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/15 at 8:55 am

As I am a motorized user, I rely on Forrest service trailhead signs and maps. The one thing I like and respect is that OHV (four wheel drive) trails are the only true multiple use trail system! We will allow any user group to use our trails, but you have to remember that “everyone” is using the trails so you have to be more tolerant to different user groups. I feel we as motorized users do not get a fair shake in that respect. We welcome any users to utilize our trail systems! I find it disturbing that some single track trails are hiker only and you can not use Horses or mountain bikes on them. If hikers want trails that only hikers can use, then go to the wilderness areas, we have a lot of hiker only trails there and you do not have to travel far to find a wilderness there!

Forest Shomer  
inspass@whidbey.net  
Submitted on 2013/07/15 at 8:37 am

I use public trails only, primarily on the Olympic Peninsula and on islands in the Salish Sea. And yes, the intended use of most of those trails is generally obvious, if not always by signage, then by the presence of a stile at the trailhead. Still, I will notice tire treads on some of those trails that are marked for foot traffic only.

Tina  
tina.miller@kingcounty.gov  
Submitted on 2013/07/15 at 8:13 am

Having a primary user identify is a key to the respect that other users give to those primary users. As an example, Tiger Mt. Forest near the summit – mountain bikes are the primary user. Bikes are expecting others to get off the trails for them, while across Hwy 18 to the south on Taylor Mt. forest – the primary user is horses. I see people riding mountain bikes getting off the trail to allow the horses to move through. More signage would help even more to implement what is in the plans.

Dave  
kdx220dave@yahoo.com  
199.245.127.13  
Submitted on 2013/07/15 at 4:26 am

Yes,

Typically the trail systems are marked as to what user groups they are intended for and usually maps are available.

ross krump  
rossk@q.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/14 at 12:46 pm

The trails and ORV paths that I use most are on the Olympic Peninsula, on National Park, Forest Service, DNR and private timber lands. Those who have never been here and enjoyed these trails and roads might find all this access hard to even believe! National Park is walk-in only, no animals or bikes. Most Forest Service and DNR land is drive and/or walk horseback bicycle, etc. And there is almost zero traffic most days. When logging is going on, there are usually warning signs about the truck traffic. Hunting is the most utilized non-industry access purpose on these lands. The private forest lands are often walk or bicycle only, and some require a fee; \$10 per day is typical. No, there is little signage on the roads as to the recreational opportunities.

It is necessary to google up the various agencies or major landowners and maybe phone them.

It is not as "wide open" now as, it was back in the days of 1950's up on till 1970's More roads are gated. But while most who live here take all this access for granted, many visitors seem ecstatic at seeing so much forest, big trees and occasional wild animals. These gravel roads may be the best way for handicapped people to ever see these things. The limiting factor is usually a place to park. There is no special security at most places you can park. Fortunately, there has been very little "car prowling" around here. I can't promise anything, but I often park and walk many miles from my vehicle.

We The People, need to be-able to use OUR land for our recreation ORV needs, and the same goes for all of the rest of the people , specking for me self and others , when we get older our walking ability become less able to talk.

Chuck Preble, Peninsula Trails Coalition  
chuckpreble@msn.com  
65.102.190.143  
Submitted on 2013/07/14 at 11:45 am

The primary objective of the trail I most use and support (the Olympic Discovery Trail) is to safely support multiple types of users. The primary users supported are walkers/hikers/runners, bicyclists (road and mountain), disabled users/mobility devices, and equestrians (where possible). Thus it is a multi-user trail, or in the AASHTO trail standards terminology, a shared use path. This objective has shaped the design of the trail in many ways, such as width, surface, grade, turn radius, signage, etc. This is made clear to users through signage, such as rules for sharing, passing, control of dogs, etc, and by information posted on kiosks at trail access points.

We also state our trail objectives in another way, which relates to the users purpose for using the trail. We support three primary purposes: recreation, commuting, and tourism. These have also shaped the design of the trail. For instance, in support of commuters, the trail connects and passes through the major population centers in the region. Our maps and website are primarily designed to provide the information nonmotorized tourists need to plan trips using the trail.

Sheila  
mrs.budb@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/07/13 at 10:32 pm

No, I would not say that the management objective is clear.

I usually find out about trails for equestrian use from friends. Sometimes there is signage but more often not.

Lloyd Gelentere  
lloydkgh@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/13 at 9:31 pm

Question #1 No, signs are not available or have been taken down.

Question #2 signs

Tricia Ann Foster  
Triciaann777@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/13 at 9:14 pm

Usually it is clear what a trail is primarily used for. The forest service often has signs that say no biking etc if they don't want bikers on it. The trail itself often dictates if bikes for example should not be on the trail. It is too difficult/too many roots/rocks/turns that are not manageable, except for hiking.

The forest service maps also show what a trails primary use is on the backs of the green trails maps (5 min. map).

Design elements of the trail such as a wider single track (wide trail) can fit a horse, but many can not, the terrain appears too difficult/ such as winding elevation going over and under fallen logs.

Many hiking/biking guide books describe trails in the books.

Tarekith  
Tarekith@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/13 at 7:58 pm

The trails I use are designed for sustainable mountain biking most of the time, with erosion and water runoff counter-measures usually making it clear who designed and maintains the trail (bikers).

Kathryn Longfellow  
klongfellow@frontier.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/13 at 7:52 pm

For the trails that I use it is clear who the expected primary user is. I get that information from trail guides/books and from websites.

Herb Gerhardt  
hgerhardt@wavecable.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/13 at 7:47 pm

Yes, in the Tahuya and Green Mountain State Forests the trail objective is clearly known by maps, signs and Internet. I do not think anyone has a question of knowing what is and is not permitted in our area. DNR is doing a good job in that respect.

Al Pelletier  
sekiusweep@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/13 at 7:25 pm

The trails and ORV paths that I use most are on the Olympic Peninsula, on National Park, Forest Service, DNR and private timber lands. Those who have never been here and enjoyed these trails and roads might find all this access hard to even believe! National Park is walk-in only, no animals or bikes. Most Forest Service and DNR land is drive and/or walk, horseback, bicycle, etc. And there is almost zero traffic most days. When logging is going on, there are usually warning signs about the truck traffic. Hunting is the most utilized non-industry access purpose on these lands. The private forest lands are often walk or bicycle only, and some require a fee, \$10 per day is typical. No, there is little signage on the roads as to the recreational opportunities.

It is necessary to google up the various agencies or major landowners and maybe phone them.

It isn't quite as "wide open" now as when I moved here in the 1970s. More roads are gated. But while most who live here take all this access for granted, many visitors seem ecstatic at seeing so much forest, big trees and occasional wild animals. These gravel roads may be the best way for handicapped people to ever see these things. The limiting factor is usually a place to park. There is no special security at most places you can park. Fortunately, there has been very little "car prowling" around here. I can't promise anything, but I often park and walk many miles from my vehicle.

Joan Fleming

joanfleming@q.com

Submitted on 2013/07/13 at 7:03 pm

It depends on the trail and the "owner". I am a horseback rider and a hiker. Some trails clearly designate who the users are – motorized vs. nonmotorized and then maybe mountain bike/hike/horse or just hike/horse (e.g. Capitol Forest – DNR). The same usually goes for state and/or National Forest. Other trails are very informally marked if at all even within the DNR system. Private lands (e.g. Weyerhaeuser, etc.) usually have some designation at entry – usually stating nonmotorized. DNR, State Parks, State/National Forest usually have websites that clearly state authorized uses. Green Trails maps are also helpful.

Norm

normbuckley@msn.com

Submitted on 2013/07/13 at 6:59 pm

Yes (On maintained hiking trails). There is usually a FS sign at the trailhead. The trail is a conduit to get to an objective (peak) as a path of least resistance. Knowing it is or is not used by other activities does not usually concern the hiker/climber from what I have observed. That information is not on the MBSNF web site so most

## ROUND 6 FINDINGS

### Round 6 Question

In this online discussion you've told us that communication among trails user groups is important. You said that by communicating better you could:

- promote respect and understanding among users
- work together more effectively to accomplish more for trails

If you were going to improve communication between users, how would you do it? Tell us about how you envision more communication occurring:

- What tools or mechanisms might work?
- How could there be an incentive for people to use it and have the desired impact of improving the quality and quantity of communications?
- Who would host/maintain it?
- Would it be used?
- What purposes would it serve and how would you tell if it was meeting those purposes?

## Summary Observations by the Blog Facilitator

In this round of discussion, 14 people commented, providing 14 comments. Below is a summary of the themes of the comments, followed by a *verbatim* reporting of all comments.

## Potential Interventions

- Improve and increase the signage, especially those that stress good safety behaviors,
  - "...clearly defining usage rules well before the trailhead..."
- Make events sponsored by one user group known to other user groups so there can be shared participation.
  - "A website that listed all the recreational landscapes around the state and scheduled events on each one would help."
- Actively manage for user-group interactions.
  - A member of the Backcountry Horsemen put it this way, "Some entity that will exist over the long haul will need to be the moderator for whatever system evolves. The user groups can come and go. A government entity will be around for awhile. So the agency that is dealing with the issue will need to have a person with responsibility for maintaining the system and monitoring it. The agencies of course have no money and not much for staff, so this will be difficult, they will have to want to do it and plan for it."
  - But, at the same time, ensure balanced and fair participation, "Please don't let one group take command of the whole thing i.e. hiking community. Allow other groups input, snowmobilers, fishermen, hunters, motorcyclests, etc."
  - 'Get together' groups need to be, "... manageable in size and fairly represent the spectrum of users."
- Create or build on a forum for inter-group communications.
  - "Most trail advocates, in my experience, love to talk about their project, and are willing to seek cooperative efforts. The challenge has been a forum to make it happen."
  - "It would be good if more people would actively support the State Trails Coalition, a non-partisan volunteer body that works to promote communication among trail enthusiasts, land owners/managers, and government agencies."
- Add webinar meetings into the mix of stakeholder and manager meetings.
- Create a social media presence.

## Suggested Constructive Interactions

- Share stories and common aspirations between user groups.
  - "...educating each user group on the concerns of the others and presenting ways to mitigate their impact would help."

- Offer in-person opportunities that bring together different user groups. “Field trips that take motorized folks and put them on a horse–hikers on a cycle or quad–motorized on foot or horseback–mix it up to build empathy. A ‘walk a mile in their boots’ approach.”
- Joint work parties.
- Deal with mistrust, especially between users and government managers.
  - “It will be interesting to see what, if any action takes place as a result of this Town Hall input. Talk is cheap with most government programs so I will not hold my breath waiting for actionable results.”
  - Educate agency personnel by offering “...‘recreation diversity’ training for fed and state employees....”
- Use the Internet and social media tools appropriately.
  - “Internet discussions probably aren’t the best way to get people with various opinions and needs to come together. That needs to happen at user group or advisory group meetings, or through projects and initiatives that bring people together face to face.”
  - “I’ve been impressed with the result of this tool [online Town Hall] actually. Distrust is a hard barrier to overcome, especially when part of it is focused on the RCO or other governmental staff themselves. Michael [the Town Hall moderator] has managed to walk a line as moderator where the fringe left and right have had to focus on issues and not people, and that’s seemed to provide good opportunities to share information. I think when the incentive is unbiased moderation and the opportunity to be heard, that helps. It still begs the question of ‘what would you get done here other than ventilating?’ But this has been one good tool.”
  - Ensure that online tools meet the needs of participants: Set up a Google Group or similar system. Some of us older folks, yes I am one, don’t like or use the newest social media systems. The younger more tech inclined folks use social media all the time. Many in the over 50 crowd don’t. There is a challenge here as many of the user groups are made up of more senior folks. To me an email communication could work, but not the more social media systems.

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## **Verbatim Comments from the Town Hall Website in Response to Round 6**

Beth Blay – Back Country Horsemen  
bbinaz@earthlink.net  
Submitted on 2013/08/02 at 3:34 pm

We share trails and we share working on them with user groups. There is conflict which results from NOT understanding the dangers of this with regard to right of way...The triangle sign explaining this should be posted at every major trailhead. Also, headphones should not be permitted to be used by any group as they render the user oblivious to fellow trail users. This can and does result in wrecks with injuries.

John  
john@moosefish.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/31 at 8:13 am

I think members of each user group would benefit from learning what the other groups do to support trails and outdoor recreation. Sharing stories about mountain bikers and horseback riders working on trails would help hikers recognize their contributions. Understanding how licensing fees from motorized vehicles benefit the outdoors might help nonmotorized users appreciate motorized users.

Additionally, clearly defining usage rules well before the trailhead would help prevent conflict. If a hiker was well aware that there would be motorized users on the trail they were intending to hike before they even left their home they wouldn't be surprised when they arrived.

Finally, educating each user group on the concerns of the others and presenting ways to mitigate their impact would help. If hikers knew that they should stand on the downhill side of the trail as horses pass or bikers knew they shouldn't speed around blind corners when hikers are present they'd be less likely to cause problems.

Greg Lovelady  
GregL12@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/07/29 at 6:09 pm

It would be good if more people would actively support the State Trails Coalition, a non-partisan volunteer body that works to promote communication among trail enthusiasts, land owners/managers, and government agencies. This organization has been hosting state trails conferences, which is its primary mission, since 1998. I'm not sure if the success it has had would have been possible without the help it has received from the state RCO/IAC and the National Park Service. Given the large number of trail enthusiasts in Washington, I'm unsure why its conferences have been rather moderately attended, with participation averaging about 200 people from all corners of the trail world (motorized, nonmotorized, urban, back country, etc.). Even so, the success of this organization and its mission of promoting communication may do much to ensure the future of trails in this state.

darcy  
djmitchem@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/29 at 5:37 pm

Field trips that take motorized folks and put them on a horse-hikers on a cycle or quad-motorized on foot or horseback-mix it up to build empathy. A "walk a mile in their boots" approach. A few events like this, along with joint work parties would really build a "trail-oriented" coalition. I would also require "recreation diversity" training for fed and state employees-they need to understand the deeply felt ownership aka. Love for different activities, not just the politically correct activities that are taught in college as green or good. Hunting, riding, biking, snowmobiling, mountain bike, 4x4, quad, orienteering, etc. All these activities need to be appreciated. A good start would be a WTA or BCH type group that advocates for all trails.

Birdie  
birdied9@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/29 at 2:33 pm

This response regards the topic for discussion - better communication among users. It's important when events are scheduled that are geared to a particular group that everyone else is aware of it. A website that listed all the recreational landscapes around the state and scheduled events on each one would help. Usually these events are posted by users groups on websites that cater to their specific interest. Having a "master list" for each landscape that covered all activities could help reduce conflict. The website could also highlight volunteer events and opportunities, offer advice about how to interact with other users and animals, etc. The site could also feature places to volunteer for national trails day and national public lands day. RCO would be a logical sponsor for the site, but a private sponsor could/might get advertising support.

Internet discussions probably aren't the best way to get people with various opinions and needs to come together. That needs to happen at user group or advisory group meetings, or through projects and initiatives that bring people together face to face.

Mike McGlenn  
mike@mikemcglenn.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/29 at 2:17 pm

I am a Back Country Horsemen member. Over the years we have taken part in many of these forum situations. Many have been state wide, some more regional. Some things that have worked well. Start with the basic get a group of users together for a lunch or dinner meeting. The group needs to be manageable in size and fairly represent the spectrum of users. One of the best ways to create understanding and communication is to set down and break bread together. Meet and talk with the users in a semi formal situation. Basically see that we all put one leg of the pants on at a time. The different user groups need to invite the others to come to their meetings. Invite them to make a short presentation. Get to know the people. Most of what we all do is about the personal relationships we foster with the other user groups and the agency folks.

Once you have the basic personal relationships established it is much easier to be able to use an email system to continue the dialog. Set up a Google Group or similar system. Some of us older folks, yes I am one, don't like or use the newest social media systems. The younger more tech inclined folks use social media all the time. Many in the over 50 crowd don't. There is a challenge here as many of the user groups are made up of more senior folks. To me an email communication could work, but not the more social media systems.

One of the previous commenters makes a great point. Communication has to work both ways. We the users can spot a situation quickly where the agency is simply checking the box that says we asked for outside input. We know the

decision has already been made so why should we bother to respond. That position by the agency is totally unacceptable and needs to change.

Some entity that will exist over the long haul will need to be the moderator for whatever system evolves. The user groups can come and go. A government entity will be around for awhile. So the agency that is dealing with the issue will need to have a person with responsibility for maintaining the system and monitoring it. The agencies of course have no money and not much for staff, so this will be difficult, they will have to want to do it and plan for it.

The agencies need to admit they do not have the staff to get their missions accomplished anymore. They need to embrace the volunteer groups and make it easier for the volunteers to help accomplish the mission.

Keith  
keithpeter@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/29 at 5:39 am

Please don't let one group take command of the whole thing i.e. hiking community. Allow other groups input, snowmobilers, fishermen, hunters, motorcyclists, etc

Dave Hiatt  
dhiatt07@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/28 at 8:35 pm

Teaching the RCO personnel and land managers Webster's definition of compromise and insisting that all of them use the word appeasement instead of the word compromise when appropriate, would be a good place to start ensuring that communication actually occurs.

RCO staff and most land management people misuse these two words, i.e. they talk in New Speak. This is one of the root causes for the lack of communication.

Webster's definition of a compromise. That is; "a settlement in which each side makes concessions".

Compromise does not apply when the RCO/Land Managers ask us to come to the table to discuss how much we are willing to give up. The proper term for that action is appeasement.

Compromise discussions need to start from the standpoint of what new areas they are willing to open for motorized access, in exchange for closing an area currently open to motorized users.

Fix that and you will actually have communication instead of miscommunication.

It will be interesting to see what, if any action takes place as a result of this Town Hall input. Talk is cheap with most government programs so I will not hold my breath waiting for actionable results.

Byron Stuck  
nmatrust@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/28 at 12:50 pm

I've been impressed with the result of this tool actually. Distrust is a hard barrier to overcome, especially when part of it is focused on the RCO or other governmental staff themselves. Michael has managed to walk a line as moderator where the fringe left and right have had to focus on issues and not people, and that's seemed to provide good opportunities to share information. I think when the incentive is unbiased moderation and the opportunity to be heard, that helps. It still begs the question of "what would you get done here other than ventilating?" But this has been one good tool. It also helps bridge the time and space continuum where it's hard to get to places or meeting times. I don't think "number of lawsuits" or "satisfaction scores" would be good measures but I appreciate the need to assess progress here.

Donna Ruelas-Semasko – Evergreen Packgoat Club/Edelweiss Acres  
dsemasko@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/07/28 at 9:21 am

Would use webinar type meetings where many different trail users could sign in and listen and ask questions – would definitely have specific items to discuss each time – would invite all trail users – clubs, associations, companies, land managers, etc. Perhaps each time a different club or land manager or user association could be the “host”. In between, we could all discuss things via facebook or e-mail. I believe the more we offered this type of platform the more people would join especially if we can be certain that our voice would be heard to the powers that be as concerns trails. Donna

kevin ashe  
d.iga@frontier.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/28 at 8:57 am

It looks like I have missed a couple opportunities to address these issues. As to this latest inquiry, let me say: of course communication is always important. And among the various user groups but the most important is communication is between the groups and those in government positions. We must let the government know that we want most all trails left open and we also need an open road to get to the trails. Like is said at the beginning, road closures mean trail closures. This is the most important communication that, at the present time, needs to be communicated. Of what real use is it to waste time talking about a few trails when the forest service wants to close 75% of the roads. I fear we have missed the main issue.

Cheryl Conklin  
cherylconk@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/28 at 8:40 am

Sometimes it seems like certain user groups (i.e., hikers) are over-represented on trail committees, while others (i.e., equestrian or bikers) are not or are under-represented. (Please note that that I hike, bike and ride horses.) All types of user groups should be represented on committees and advisory boards.

These should be chaired by an unbiased employee from the agency involved.

Lloyd Gelentere  
lloydkggh@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/28 at 8:05 am

Meetings with all user trail groups together on trail maintenance and changes. Using information from this meeting before laws are passed and rules are made. For example of bad rule changes with no impute, taking culverts out of old logging roads and closing roads, Road less areas in wilderness areas, no chain saws to clear trails in wilderness areas.

Jim Harris  
jimharris183@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/07/28 at 7:34 am

Most trail advocates, in my experience, love to talk about their project, and are willing to seek cooperative efforts. The challenge has been a forum to make it happen. The WTA has facilitated information distribution, but cooperative brainstorming, with an incentive to implement the outcomes, has not been strong. So here are some thoughts.

Money is always a motivator, so it would be easy to say that including collaborative efforts as scoring criteria for RCO grant programs would assist in this effort. The challenge is establishing realistic categories. Some community trails are, by location, focused on a single agency/advocate and may be very limited on user types due to safety considerations, while regional trails have the potential for coordination with other agencies and non-profit organizations working on adjacent connectors or phases of the same trail, which also provides greater opportunities to evaluate the range of multiple uses that can be accommodated. How to establish the criteria for those classes of trail and related cooperation/coordination grant scoring criteria could be lead by RCO or it could be facilitated by a collaborative effort of RCO and WTA.

There may be a better approach – grassroots, stakeholder facilitated efforts are always the best, but right now people see the value but lack the motivator to make it happen.

## ROUND 7 FINDINGS

### Round 7 Question

In our surveys, in this online Town Hall, and in the Advisory Groups people are telling us that funding is one of the most important issues. We would like to know your ideas for solutions.

So far, your comments seem to be split between taxes and user fees, with some people feeling that they already pay enough and some people feeling that it is worth it to pay. Still, other people feel like the money they are spending on taxes etc. should be prioritized to address more important issues than trails or that they pay enough already.

Will the funding issue get worse (or at least not get much better) or will it work itself out over time? If funding is a problem, what alternatives/solutions, in your opinion, will have both the *desired impact and be acceptable* to Washington's residents?

### Summary Observations by the Blog Facilitator

In this round of discussion, 26 people commented, providing 27 comments. Below is a summary of the themes of the comments, followed by a *verbatim* reporting of all comments.

Most people responding to this Town Hall question felt that the funding issue would continue to worsen and they expressed the following concerns and ideas.

### It's More Than Paying a Fee; It Is Also About Leaving a Legacy

"Our trails may have started out with funding from taxpayers, but I believe in order for any trail system to be sustained and made available for generations to come the current user needs to have a "pay it forward" mentality. If we the users don't care, why should anyone else. We have inherited a beautiful outdoor legacy in WA State thanks to the volunteers and trail users before us. Now it is our turn."

### Concerns about Funding

#### Spending Efficiency

There are concerns about the administrative efficiency in making and allocating spending decisions, especially from NOVA stakeholders. These concerns centered on the belief that the grant application process is too complex.

- "RCO administration is eating a lion's share of the NOVA funds with their complex grant application process, which has evolved from a simple visit and recommendation of a staff person to a 2 year complexity not designed for better facilities, but to cover RCOs behind."

#### Discover Pass and NOVA Account Fund Allocations

"As I see it we do not have a funding problem for trails in Washington State. The problem that we have is the funds that are collected through the Discover Pass go towards maintaining State Parks and not the trail system. 84% of the money that is collected goes to [s]ate parks, 8% to Fish and Wildlife and 8% to trails." "I think if you use the NOVA funds as they were designed to

be used, there should be enough money for trails and education and enforcements. The NOVA funds must not be used to support WA Parks operations.”

### Unfair Competition

At least one private campground provider feels disadvantaged because she is required to have customers pay hotel/motel taxes while public providers are not so required.

### Unnecessarily High Standards

Some contributors believe that the current construction and maintenance standards are impeding progress because meeting these standards is more expensive than is necessary for trails. Their logic is that because the work is on trails, it can proceed with different standards than for other public infrastructure projects like roads.

### Multiple Permit Requirements

- Though not expressed as a funding problem, *per se*, the various government permit requirements across providers were cited as an impediment to recreation participation.
- There were calls for a simplified and unified permit structure. The goal of doing so would be to make it easy for a recreationist to meet the legal permit requirements across multiple providers.

### Ideas for New Revenue Sources

**Excise tax on outdoor recreation equipment.** There was some interest in creating a new revenue stream through an excise tax on outdoor equipment like tents, mountain bikes, hiking boots, etc. The reference point for this recommendation is the successful use of this funding approach for fish and wildlife issues in the nation,

- “This system is already in place for hunting/fishing, and it is supported by users and has done good things. Strange that only Hunting and fishing has stepped up in this way, but not hiking, camping, and riding.”
- This support for a new tax, however, was made with conditions. Some Town Hall contributors believe there is waste in the current system of funding and their support for a new tax is conditioned on first eliminating this waste.
- Another condition users would impose is assurance that the new tax funding would be dedicated to the purpose of supporting the recreation activities that generated this new tax money.

**Reallocate some of the existing hotel/motel taxes.** A private campground owner made the point that some of the hotel/motel taxes she collects should be directed to her customer base,

- “Use or tweak existing laws in creative ways. I own a campground that caters to outdoor enthusiasts, but the hotel/motel tax I pay into only promotes city or developed tourism. The amount that campgrounds and other outdoor lodging like cabins and resorts pay in, should go to outdoor tourism items (like trails and trail promotion).”

**Volunteer check boxes on vehicle license applications.**

- “I know this idea has been around but I support the concept of including on our vehicle and personal license renewal forms the box to check if they wish to include \$5.00 specifically for recreational trails.”

### **Broaden the funding base generally by enlisting private companies.**

- “Since trail use benefits the local communities and the people who use them perhaps putting in for grants from large companies could come up with extra funding. This is indeed a tough question and as a person commented already funding will continue to be challenging into the future.”

### **Improve and increase the use of non-staff labor sources.**

- Maximize the use of volunteers. Use labor from the state’s prison population to build and maintain trails.

### **Raise the fuel tax cap for NOVA.**

- “One effort that hopefully can gain some traction is raising the artificial lid on fuel tax for the NOVA program. Right now it is capped at 1% even though research has shown that non highway fuel use is as much as 3.5%.”

## **Additional Ideas and Comments**

### **Add Trails to Transportation Development Projects**

- “Convince developers to add trails to subdivisions. Incorporate trails into the transportation system and the county and regional transportation level. The DOT should play a larger role in trails. Scenic Byways should at a minimum provide easy access to nearby trails and support trailheads.”

### **Information Request**

- “...to further this discussion, a simple chart of the current funding sources (federal, state, DP [Discover Pass], gas, volunteer) and how it is spent would be helpful.”

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## **Verbatim Comments from the Town Hall Website in Response to Round 7**

John  
john@moosefish.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/13 at 7:41 am

The current model does not provide a consistent source of funding for the maintenance of existing trails let alone development of new trails. I favor a hybrid approach of user fees and taxes.

While a system funded only by user fees makes sense for dedicated users of the trail system, I think it places a barrier in front of the casual user. Some minimum level of service should be available to all at no cost aside from taxes.

However, a user fee should be imposed on areas of enhanced service or exceptional quality. For example, National Forests are free to use (as long as you stay away from developed sites and trailheads), but National Parks generally have an entrance fee. A Washington-based example would be the SnoPark system that has a graduated fee system based on the services provided. Care will be required to ensure the user fees are not so high as to make the fee areas accessible only by those with the means to pay them.

Regardless of the solution, it should run for five or more years at a time so administrators can plan for more than the current budget cycle.

mikef - Posted by the moderator for Joseph,  
fraid@earthlink.net  
Submitted on 2013/08/12 at 1:58 pm

The following comments are submitted in response to "Washington Trails Town Hall". Comments address a variety of the questions and request for comment. Throughout I will use real examples to demonstrate points and provide clarity.

I am a retired forest engineer, land surveyor and outdoor recreation specialist. An avid outdoorsman, I enjoy motorcycle trail riding, equestrian trail riding, hiking, camping, hunting, fishing and collecting rocks and minerals.

Throughout my professional career I have been very involved with trails, particularly single track motorcycle trails. I have written two books on Motorcycle Trail Location, Design, Construction, Maintenance and management. Both published by American Motorcyclist Association. I have also written articles motorcycle trail recreation which has been used in various publications. Working with the Motorcycle Industry Council and various state and federal agencies I have lectured on the subject of motorized trails and recreation all across the US.

#### Funding:

With most agencies of state government complaining of insufficient funding the probability of obtaining more funding for trails is indeed slim.....Unless perhaps nonmotorized trail users are finally willing to begin to pay their fair share and purchase use permits as the motorized trail community has done for over 40 years.

If funding is difficult to obtain, to be successful we must think creatively and discover how to do more with the funding we do have available

Before the recreation trail community agrees to simply "throw money at the problem" we must take a careful look at how well (or poorly) our money is managed by both the agencies that make grants for trail projects and by the agencies that receive those funds to build and maintain trails. Trail users in Washington State must demand trail providing agencies become much, much more efficient and effective in the use of public outdoor recreation trail dollars. Other states are far more efficient and effective—WA needs to catch up! (The outstanding ORV and snowmobile programs in Idaho quite literally make a disgrace of what is happening here in WA State.)

After more than 30 years of observing of land managing agencies responsible for providing trails for outdoor recreation I am lead to conclude most in this state are operating at low efficiency.... We have seen federal agencies install \$50,000 trail bridges costing more than loggers spend on bridges for heavy haul (logging traffic). That alone ought to inspire trail users to raise serious questions about how efficiently the various funds available for trails are used.

As a region forest engineer with a limited road budget I was forced to learn to be very efficient. One result was to learn to construct timber stringer bridges efficiently and to extend their useful life. I have not seen any of that technology used in recent trail construction and it should be.

Rather than start from square one RCO should begin by studying organizations in other states that build and maintain trails efficiently – and have a high degree of user satisfaction. After 35 years of riding motorized trail bikes in the state of Idaho I know they have an excellent program that puts the great majority of motorized trail money on the ground building and maintaining trails – rather than being wasted on law enforcement, administration and the like. The states of Oregon and Utah also have vigorous motorized trail construction and maintenance programs. All available evidence indicates Washington State gives motorized trail users the least value for the money. The Idaho program in particular ought to be studied in an attempt to find ways to improve the failing program(s) here in Washington.

Some characteristics of The Idaho State Parks Off-Road Motor Vehicle Recreation Program:

- Projects involving expenditure of ORV funds must have the sponsorship of 1 or more legitimate motorized trail machine clubs.
- Agencies, trail machine clubs and IDPR (Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation) work together to find and develop high quality projects that benefit motorized trail recreation....And consequently benefit nonmotorized recreationists who are also allowed to use these trails funded by OHV recreationists.
- IDPR employs 3 to 4+ highly trained and very efficient trail construction and maintenance crews. These elite trail crews are available for use on motorized projects on lands managed by agencies that provide motorized trail opportunities. Requests for crews are prioritized on a competitive basis and the trail machine community selects the successful applicants.
- IDPR also makes grants on a competitive basis to agencies for motorized trail construction and maintenance. These projects must also have the sponsorship of one or more motorized trail machine clubs.

- IDPR trail crews work long shifts of 8 ten hour days which minimizes travel costs and increases production.
- VERY IMPORTANT: Land managing agencies in Idaho work to make it as easy as possible for volunteers to contribute to the maintenance and upkeep of motorized trails. In WA state agencies require so much useless paper work, special training, so called certification and bureaucratic monkey motion that volunteer efforts are successfully discouraged.

RCO should require grant recipients of trail construction and maintenance funds leave no stone unturned in an effort to make it as easy as possible for volunteers to contribute their labor. Agencies need to publish specifications for maintenance work and let the recreating public get the work done instead on talking them to death and burying projects in paper work.

On a recent vacation in Idaho I talked with USFS employees on two separate occasions who spoke of how pleased they were with the outstanding efforts of Motorized trail machine users in maintaining and improving trails on an informal basis and then reporting results to the agency. No sign of the discouraging attitudes we get from USFS in WA State.

One USFS person in Idaho person described an instance where 20+ riders from a trail machine club of had spent an entire day reinstalling a culvert taken out by flash flood. In another instance an agency employee told me that due to the maintenance work of trail machine clubs his district had completed all of their planned maintenance work by the end of July and were working on major trail improvements that they had been wanting to accomplish for several years. Wouldn't it be great to see some of that attitude and the success that goes with it in WA State!

Referring back to the study on ORV recreation conducted by Dr. A.E. Keir Nash for IAC over 35 years ago one will discover a very large portion of the ORV user population are skilled tradesmen and professional engineers. The ability of these recreationists to undertake and complete trail building and maintenance projects and trails is impressive. An example from personal experience: When I was an outdoor recreation specialist I worked with volunteers from a trail machine bike club and completely constructed a 40 foot log stringer trail bridge in a single weekend. Trees were felled for stringers and bark peeled, sills laid, stringers winched into place and pinned, cedar decking split and spiked in place. Shear rails cut and bolted down and bridge ready for use. Cost to the agency no more than a few dollars for pins and spikes. Compare this to the \$50,000 trail bridges the federal government builds and in the process wastes scarce trail funds.

The failure of agencies to utilize the potential of the ORV community for trail construction and maintenance is an unacceptable situation that needs correcting.

PERHAPS THE REAL PROBLEM IS THAT WE DON'T REALLY NEED MORE MONEY FOR TRAILS – WE JUST NEED TO USE WHAT WE HAVE MUCH MORE EFFECTIVELY.

Another way to put more trail money on the ground is to make major reductions in expenditures that don't directly increase the maintenance work accomplished or construction of additional trail miles on the ground. Make major reduction in expenditures for administration and law enforcement. Limit grants for law enforcement to no more than 2% of NOVA funds and limit law enforce expenditures to weekends and holidays May through October.

Efficiency and effectiveness in trail construction, maintenance, and management.

The costs of constructing maintaining and managing trails are influenced by large number of variables, many of which are routinely ignored. This is a complex subject and one can only touch on the issues in a short letter. For an agency to provide an effective program much careful thought must be given to a wide variety of issues. I will only touch on this subject as it is quite complicated and a discussion could fill a book.

To give an example: I recently reviewed a newly constructed trail that had been located and constructed by contract. Much of the trail was located on a steep, dry south facing slope. The high, steep cut slopes were already beginning to ravel and erode. The trail could be seen from some distance, due to being located in the open. With a lack of adequate moisture on the south facing slope it is unlikely that the cut and fill slopes will re-vegetate. It would have been a simple matter to locate the trail in timber on the north side of the ridge. Neither the contractor nor the agency recognized the problems they were creating.

Switchbacks improperly located, designed and constructed become trail structures frequently expensive to maintain or fail.

An example in WA State: The responsible agency chose an employee to locate a new trail whose only qualification was "he rides a trail bike so he ought to be able to locate a trail bike trail". I did not view the trail until well after construction had been completed. By that time improperly located and constructed switchbacks were already beginning to fail; portions of the trail were located on overly steep slopes and cut slopes were raveling; steep grades and inadequate drainage were causing ruts to develop. None of this should have happened and could have been avoided by a competent trail locator. Trails must be located, designed and constructed with a great deal of thought given to building a structure that will not be expensive to maintain.

RCW 46.09 the WA off-road and nonhighway vehicle act.

It must be pointed out that RCW 46.09 came about solely through the actions of off-road vehicle enthusiasts who addressed their legislators and petitioned them to enact legislation that would (1) rescind the right to receive a rebate on the state tax on fuel used off-road for ORV recreation and (2) Require a permit and impose a fee on vehicles used for said recreation and (3) make those funds available to agencies of state, local and federal government to construct and maintain trails for ORV recreation. Thanks to the generosity and sense of fairness of the ORV community they have never asked that nonmotorized recreationists be prohibited from sharing in the use of facilities OHV use paid for. To thank motorized users for their generosity there are unfortunately some very vocal members of the nonmotorized community who have deliberately and routinely subjected motorized users to bigotry, prejudice, malicious discrimination and hate speech. This problem is in dire need of resolution.

Allowing funds generated by ORV recreation to be used for any exclusively non- motorized uses is nothing less than fraud and theft.

The issue of contribution to NOVA funding by recreation group-

NOVA funds are derived from (1) The state tax on fuel consumed by vehicles traveling off-road and on trails and nonhighway roads, (2) ORV permit fees that are paid exclusively by ORV recreationists.

- A family of equestrian enthusiasts pulling a loaded horse trailer with a pickup truck loaded with a camper begin to make a contribution when wheels make contact with the surface of a nonhighway road. The contribution derives from the state tax on the fuel consumed traveling on the nonhighway road. The contribution is significant as the tow vehicle is large, heavy and rarely fuel efficient. The contribution ends when the equestrian ends the nonhighway road travel and returns to the county road, state highway etc. It matters not what the pickup, horse trailer, horse feed, saddles cost as none of these expenditures contribute a single penny to funding trails.
- A family of ORV enthusiasts typically pulls a travel trailer behind a large heavy pickup loaded with motorized trail machines. The contribution of fuel tax revenue from fuel consumed by the tow vehicle is significant and similar to that of the equestrian; however the ORV enthusiast then unloads motorized trail machines for each member of the family and continues to consume fuel for the duration of the trip. Other things being equal the ORV enthusiast's contribution in fuel tax exceeds that of the equestrians. In addition however, the ORV enthusiast family must pay an additional fee for an "ORV permit" for each of their trail machines. (It should be clear that OHV enthusiasts contribute more revenue to trail maintenance and construction than any other trail using group.
- A group of hikers travel in their Subaru for few days of hiking. In their fuel efficient vehicle they contribute little in the way of fuel tax that supports the NOVA fund and nothing for permit fees.

In conclusion ORV and equestrian enthusiasts are carrying a majority of the burden for funding the NOVA program while hikers and similar recreationists contribute little.

The utterly gut wrenching, disgusting reality of the situation is that those who contribute the most to the program receive the very, very, very least in return.....RCO and certain other agencies of government appear quite content to allow this state of affairs to continue. Somehow, someone needs to summon the courage, the ethics and honesty to bring this disgraceful situation to a just resolution!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Trail wear, degradation, sediment delivery, horse manure, and water quality

The typical reaction to issues of trail wear, degradation and sediment delivery is to blame Off-road Vehicles and ignore all else. That answer is neat, simple and wrong (and often tinged with anti- motorized bias and more than a little bigotry). Incompetent location, design, construction and maintenance coupled with inadequate miles of trail system for the motorized trail user population has much more to do with the problem than the type of trail user.

At least two researchers have addressed the problem of trail wear, degradation and sediment delivery. In a study comparing the erosion impacts of horses, hikers, bicycles and motorcycles, the sediment yields from horse trails were greater than any other type of use. (Seney and Wilson 1991). Harrison in another study reached the same conclusion. Wilson and Seney in a 1994 study in Gallatin National Forest found that users on foot (hikers and horses) make more sediment available than do users on wheels (mountain bikes and motorcycles).

Hammitt and Cole in a 1987 study found that excessive amounts of horse manure pose a threat to water quality.

It is clear that ORV recreationists have frequently been blamed for problems that are more attributable to other users. This in no way indicates equestrian recreationists should be subjected to the bigotry and bias that has befallen trail machine enthusiasts.....It very strongly suggest state and federal government agencies responsible for funding, building maintaining, managing and providing recreation trails have to date done a truly biased and incompetent job. Instead of blaming recreationists certain government agencies need to clean up their act!!

The need for additional miles of ORV trail

According to a USFS study published in 2005 titled "Off-Highway vehicle recreation in the United States, Regions and States: A National Report from the National Survey on Recreation and The Environment (NSRE)." In 1960 when the first National Recreation Survey was done for the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, Off-Highway motorized recreation was not even on the radar as a recreational activity... "OHV use is now widely recognized as one of the fastest growing outdoor activities." The study goes on to say that driving vehicles off-road became one of the fastest growing activities between 1982 and 2001. According to the study the number of OHV participants grew from 36 million in 1999-2000 to 51 million in 2003-2004.

The rapid growth of this recreation has little abated since 2003-2004. In the 4 year period growth averaged 3.75 million participants per year.

Facing trail recreation today is a situation of far, far too few miles of trail for a growing number of Americans who find this fascinating recreation meets their need for outdoor trail activity better than any other. The problem is one of State and Federal government land managing and funding agencies miserably failing to meet the outdoor recreation trail needs of this large and growing segment of American outdoor recreationists.

The same thing happens to ORV trails as happens to forest roads: as the traffic load increases so does wear on the facility increase. ORV traffic needs to be spread over a much larger trail system. As pointed out above the amount of wear per trail traveler is greater for equestrian use HOWEVER equestrian and foot travelers have an impossibly huge mileage of trails over which their use is spread out. In addition since nonmotorized travelers may travel cross country and are not confined to designate routes as are OHV recreationists, nonmotorized travelers have a virtually infinite number of routes and miles available to them.

There are so few trails available for ORV use in Washington State and so many OHV recreationists that trails wear out from heavy use and lack of proper maintenance.

THE SINGLE GREATEST NEED IN TRAIL BASED RECREATION IN WASHINGTON STATE TODAY IS FOR LARGE INCREASES IN ORV TRAIL MILEAGE. THIS IS WHERE THE GREAT MAJORITY OF AVAILABLE TRAIL FUNDS SHOULD BE EXPENDED.

What can be done enhance cooperation among the various trail user groups?

As one who enjoys both riding and packing horses and riding trail motorcycles I have encountered more problems with hikers while on the trail than with any other group. Every time I have encountered motorcycles while horseback they have pulled over, shut off their engines and talked to us. Every time I have encountered folks on horses while motorcycle trail riding they have courteously thanked us for pulling over and talking so the horses would know what we are.

One thing about encountering motorcycles when on horseback – you can hear them coming and prepare. When bicycles come flying around a blind corner it can create a problem. We need to give a lot of thought to this issue and not just lock others out as some hikers like to do. We are all American citizens and EVERYONE has an equal right to high quality trail recreation.

I have had hikers hide in the brush when we approached on horses then one of them moved when we were right next to them. The mustang I was riding did not take well to the situation as one would expect. All the hikers needed to do was get off on the downhill side of the trail and talk as we approached. Have also had problems with hikers and dogs when on horseback.

The big problem is that there are all too many hikers who simply do not respect other trail users. They whine and snivel about horse manure on the trails, they don't like to encounter people on mountain bikes and complain about noise from motorcycles- even though there has been a huge amount of reduction in motorcycle sound emissions compared to even 10 years ago.

A big step in the right direction would be for funding and land managing agencies to stop acquiescing to the trash talk and hate speech by certain hikers. Certain of the publications some hikers read rivals that of hate groups of the past.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment

Sandy Sternod, VP WA State Snowmobile Association 2013-14  
ssternod@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/11 at 1:10 pm

As a winter recreationist having been involved with State Parks Winter Recreation Program on both the nonmotorized and motorized advisory committees as representative for 12 years, and a member of the WA State Snowmobile

Association for over 20 years, I believe it is essential for users to pay a fee to support whatever trail system they are using. Our trails may have started out with funding from taxpayers, but I believe in order for any trail system to be sustained and made available for generations to come the current user needs to have a “pay it forward” mentality. If we the users don’t care, why should anyone else. We have inherited a beautiful outdoor legacy in WA State thanks to the volunteers and trail users before us. Now it is our turn.

Snowmobilers pay dedicated fees to support their program directly. They have an annual budget that they live within and thousands of hours of volunteer time year round to keep this winter recreation activity available for families.

I believe that the RCO continues to be relevant, and that they are continually re-evaluating how to better serve the outdoor recreation committee by making those that are asking for funds are thoughtful and specific about funding needs when asking for a grant. Yes, this can be an onerous task, but it is necessary to ensure that these funds are not wasted on frivolous ideas. I am part of scoring committee and know how tedious it can be review all the grants that are presented, but I appreciate reading about grants that provide necessary funding for maintenance and continued longevity. In addition to user fees, grant funds continue to be essential to maintain trail maintenance for the future.

Larry Beardslee TCMRA NCATV BCHW  
larry\_\_beardslee@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/10 at 7:21 am

RCO administration is eating a lion’s share of the NOVA funds with their complex grant application process, which has evolved from a simple visit and recommendation of a staff person to a 2 year complexity not designed for better facilities, but to cover RCO’s behind.

darcy  
djmitchem@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/08 at 9:19 am

One more thing...

Concerning #4 above, I also do not think it is fair that as a Private campground owner I must collect hotel/motel tax, but public campgrounds do not. If they had to pay into the fund like me, that could provide more funding for outdoor rec. facilities and promotion.

darcy  
djmitchem@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/08 at 9:06 am

1) Optimize the dollars you already have on the ground.

As a volunteer I recently applied for/received an RCO grant. We are used to doing things cheaply and quickly. The waste in that system is absurd—multi-page applications, hours of office work, presentations, tracking, reviews, ADA everything, paved everything etc. Those hours at the computer should be buying bridges instead. Why do DNR/WDFW/USFS/Parks even need to jump through these hoops for MAINTENANCE funds? If we can’t trust them to prioritize trails internally, then incompetent people are in the jobs. Just give them their % and put the funds on the ground! Use Best management instead of individual EA’s, SEPA’s, NEPA’s, HPA’s, FPA’s. All this paper wastes our money and doesn’t fix trails. I’m just familiar with one program, but most government projects are run this way—study two years for two weeks of actual work. Lower the standards—these are trails not roads. There are ways around the bid laws, prevailing wage, volunteer limitations, but we may need legislative fixes for some of this waste. One way is to set up non-profits for volunteer labor, and use public funds for supplies. Every charity that calls me looking for a donation, I always ask what % goes “on the ground”—has anyone asked that of our trail funding? Audit the whole system with the goal of putting funds on the ground ASAP.

2) The Discover Pass is hideous. It is an ok idea gone rogue. The result is similar to poaching ORV funds for state parks. Hunters/horseback/motorized/bike are subsidizing state parks that limit those uses. Such an unfair approach will never get support. The “hassle factor” is the next biggest problem. Adding to the confusion is the Federal pass system, and now each private timber company is getting into the fee game. I would support more general fund fees for state parks (to compensate for the habitat/historic/ecological uses of state parks that benefit everyone in the state). Revamp the DP—a license plate sticker good for 5 years, or an upgraded license plate and it covers EVERYONE and EVERYTHING. Something you don’t have to think about each time you leave for the woods. Keep State park entrance fee if you want, but not for DNR/WDFW. If you must keep it, promote it as a positive marketing and tourism tool (buy a DP get discounts, coupons, free coffee at local shops, etc.) But if it is tossed out all together, I would celebrate.

3) AFTER the waste is fixed (and only after that), I would support an excise tax on outdoor equipment like tents, mtn. bikes, hiking boots at the federal level. But the funds need to be watchdogged carefully. This system is already in place for hunting/fishing, and it is supported by users and has done good things. Strange that only hunting and fishing has stepped up in this way, but not hiking, camping, and riding. It might even work in-state because we have many passionate outdoor folks. Maybe a voluntary campaign such as for every pair of boots, donate a dollar for trails. We have the big outdoor retailers here (REI, Cabelas, etc.) get them on board. Safeway is always doing this type of charity work at checkout.

4) Use or tweak existing laws in creative ways.

I own a campground that caters to outdoor enthusiasts, but the hotel/motel tax I pay into only promotes city or developed tourism. The amount that campgrounds and other outdoor lodging like cabins and resorts pay in, should go to outdoor tourism items (like trails and trail promotion). Timber companies are now charging for access their land. They are now essentially large private "resorts" and should pay into the same funds as other resorts. That money should be used to improve recreation on public lands. Metropolitan Park Districts and other special purpose districts should be used to fund more local neighborhood trails. In my county, the road dept. was using gas funds for trails to simply widen the shoulder of county roads. Our parks director convinced him to put those dollars into real trails—now that fund has \$350,000 just waiting to be used on neighborhood trails that connect. Convince developers to add trails to subdivisions. Incorporate trails into the transportation system and the county and regional transportation level. The DOT should play a larger role in trails. Scenic Byways should at a minimum provide easy access to nearby trails and support trailheads.

5) Re-visit the whole NOVA issue. As we have seen there is a huge amount of angst over this fund between groups. Take another look at it and push the legislature to optimize and streamline this fund for ALL trails.

6) REQUEST: to further this discussion, a simple chart of the current funding sources (federal, state, DP, gas, volunteer) and how it is spent would be helpful.

Scott Chezick  
schezick@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/08/07 at 8:56 pm

I have anywhere from three to four ORV's that I pay for tabs on each year. I wouldn't have a problem with the \$120 or so I spend a year if I felt like ORV users were getting a fair shake. I would gladly pay double if I knew that each dollar I spent was being responsibly used with a genuine goal of providing the only thing off-road riders really want – More places to ride. Living in Western Washington I am lucky that I happen to live near Walker Valley and only have to drive a little over an hour. I would be curious to know if any of the sales tax generated from the sale of ORV's is allocated to supporting ORV activities.

Ron Tennyson  
ronsyellowyj@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/07 at 7:41 am

As I see it we do not have a funding problem for trails in Washington State. The problem that we have is the funds that are collected through the Discover Pass go towards maintaining State Parks and not the trail system. 84% of the money that is collected goes to state parks, 8% to Fish and Wildlife and 8% to trails. If State Parks needs to maintain their parks then let them place user fees at the gate when people enter the park.

ORV tabs should be used to support recreation on state lands as well as money collected for the NOVA fund. Make our state representative's use the money as it was designed instead of raiding the funds to pay for more of their pet projects. The theft of the NOVA funds is a perfect example of why we cannot trust our state elected officials to wisely use money that we give them.

I would support a program where off-road vehicle users paid for ORV tabs if 100% of the money went to support off-road vehicle activities. Let hikers pay their fee supporting hiking trails, Horsemen pay fees to support their sport and so on. I would also require that the NOVA funds be used as they were intended and the Discover Pass program was shared fairly among the groups or better yet if the program died and went away.

As I see it off-roaders pay a lot more in taxes for their sport than do hikers. We have to pay for the registration on the vehicle either license tabs or ORV tabs. We also have tow vehicles and campers or RV's that we pay the tax on. We pay to stay in state and federal parks as well as private campgrounds that pay their taxes. We buy fuel, food, parts and everything else that is involved with our sport and there are taxes on these items.

I think we are paying our fair share now lets see some benefit from it.

Chris Marsh  
thehouseofccccc@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/06 at 8:51 pm

I feel that we pay more than enough for the lack of trails for ORV use. The more fees you charge, the more you turn these activities into a higher income elitists sport. Thus creating more and more illegal trails and trespassing because the lower income people or individuals trying to get into the sport can't afford to play. I totally agree that the other user groups should pay license fees as well as the ORV users. What I don't like is that if I have a street legal vehicle that I am charged triple almost to use it on public lands. Quit supplying subsidies to businesses and other special user groups, use the monies that we pay to come back to us and the activities that we chose to do. Keep it cheap, keep it simple, and everyone will be happy.

Beth Blay – Back Country Horsemen  
bbinaz@earthlink.net  
Submitted on 2013/08/06 at 1:56 pm

I know this idea has been around but I support the concept of including on our vehicle and personal license renewal forms the box to check if they wish to include \$5.00 specifically for recreational trails.

Don Larson  
larson\_don@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/06 at 1:39 pm

Require license tabs /stickers on MTB's, Horses and Hiking Boots. The funding can go directly to NOVA after the DOL gets their cut....

You'll still need a Disco Pass to park at the trailhead but hey.... welcome to my world.

Kathryn Longfellow  
klongfellow@frontier.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/06 at 12:35 pm

Funding is always a concern for maintenance and improvement of any project. I think the trail system is very vital for the health of our community and that it needs to be enticing to use and explore for all members of the community whether young or old, temporarily able or disabled. I think that a board tax base would be the best approach as I think user fees for trail use would be hard to enforce and would be discouraging for a novice trail walker.

Kevin McGrath  
reliable.kevin@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/06 at 10:28 am

Funding will continue to deteriorate as long as the originally intended funds continue to be siphoned off. Like a bucket full of holes, the more you pour in, the higher water level simply means more holes for water to flow out. The only long term solution is to patch the holes, one step at a time, faster than new ones are created.

Along with education, infrastructure and protection; recreation (including trails) are the basic tenants for which our tax collections were authorized and intended. Our sales, fuel and property taxes provided ample funding for these purposes prior to the addition of outlandish social and environmental programs added in recent decades. Active pruning of these programs is the only way to restore proper funding for basic government services (including recreation) because no amount of funding can ever satisfy the appetite for social/environmental engineering.

If you want proper funding for things that matter, vote out the social/environmental meddlers and replace them with plain spoken people who are committed to simplify, prioritize and eliminate. Start fixing holes at the bottom of the bucket and work your way up. Otherwise there's no water at the bottom in a drought.

Donna Ruelas-Semasko  
dsemasko@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/08/06 at 10:19 am

As trails are designated for different users, could it be possible to entice those particular users to pay user fees? Stock trails where horses are used are more expensive to keep up than hiker trails; those trails where we use our packgoats are also stock trails but our stock adds nothing to the detriment of the trail; mountain bike user trails are also expensive to keep up. Designating trails by users and charging accordingly may help but those of us trail users

should not bear the brunt of the funding. Since trail use benefits the local communities and the people who use them perhaps putting in for grants from large companies could come up with extra funding. This is indeed a tough question and as a person commented already funding will continue to be challenging into the future.

Al Brown  
al@yakimagreenway.org  
Submitted on 2013/08/06 at 10:15 am

As the Executive Director of a small non-profit, I manage a 3 passive use parks, 15 mile-long urban trail system with 8 paved trailheads, two playgrounds, two boat launches and several fishing ponds. We take care of all of this without any government level support. When we build new things, local government has stepped in to sponsor grants that we do not qualify for, but we raise the local match as needed. We do not have a fee to use system, so all of it is open to the public without charge. It takes an effort for us to raise all of the funds necessary from the local community, but we have been doing this for some time. A large part of the community does not realize that we are not government funded. They believe their taxes pay for what we do, but the segment of the community that knows we are not subsidized by public funds has responded in a huge way in both direct financial support and fundraising events. The community also supports us with a huge volunteer effort. In such a small organization, we dedicate nearly one full-time person to manage volunteers. This allows us to leverage every hard dollar we receive. Any new taxes or fees imposed by government could have a negative impact on our ability to generate the funds to take care of all that we do and should be clearly thought out before implementation. Local, State and Federal regulation should help us do the job we do, rather than hinder our abilities.

In short, maybe it's time to consider alternatives to taxes and fees, as both have inherent drawbacks.

Shane Donogh  
shanedonogh@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/06 at 9:52 am

1. Currently I have 3 discover passes, 4 ORV tabs, and 1 Northwest Forest Pass. I am thoroughly confused on where I will need which pass in the state of Washington. Please simplify this process. Also, a very small percentage of the money I spent on those passes will go to Off Highway Vehicle trails, where I spend most of my time.
2. Enforcement and patrols on our public and private forest land should be a much bigger priority. One of the reasons why Reiter and other places get shut down was because DNR never patrolled or enforced anything, and I have heard the reason for that was lack of funds. Patrols and enforcement can be expensive (that is why there are so many darn yellow gates up these days, the cheapest form of enforcement is exclusion), but I personally say that is an expense I would pay for if it helps keep more trails and roads open in our PUBLIC forests. We can all help this process by reporting trash dumping, stolen vehicles, meth labs, and other illegal activities to proper authorities/land managers.
3. Don't waste money on bringing in unnecessary outside materials for building trails and engineered bridges. The majority of trails can be made and maintained using the resources of the land and with volunteer work hours, like it has been done for decades.

Tom  
washelk18@yahoo.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/06 at 9:20 am

I don't believe trails should have any sort of fee structure for maintenance or use. I think our prison population should be employed to maintain and construct the necessary trail infrastructure. Give them something to do. I am ok with the Northwest forest pass. They seem to be using those funds wisely.

Keith Birkhofer  
keith.birkhofer@vsi.cc  
Submitted on 2013/08/06 at 9:15 am

User fees are the perfect solution to funding "problems". Why should a non-user pay for something they never use? Maybe we have a spending problem, rather than a funding problem.

Tootie Crowson  
crowson2@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/08/06 at 8:59 am

Isn't NOVA the funding mechanism? And then there is the Discover Pass. I for one am really tired of all the fees and taxes being leveled on us. BCHW and other groups work to maintain the trails. Besides these three things, what else is needed?

John Keates  
keates3@msn.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/06 at 8:37 am

I don't see the funding situation getting better unless some type of action is taken in the near future. Just last week I was receiving more e-mails about certain members of Congress wanting to eliminate the Recreation Trails Program (RTP). RTP is a huge contributor to our trail maintenance for motorized and nonmotorized recreation in our state. User fees are already being levied to use state and federal land via a forest pass, discover pass or ORV tags. One effort that hopefully can gain some traction is raising the artificial lid on fuel tax for the NOVA program. Right now it is capped at 1% even though research has shown that non highway fuel use is as much as 3.5%. This is one specific funding measure that trails enthusiasts could support to bring in additional dollars. Raising the cap is been proposed but so far the legislature has not supports a Bill to address this.

William  
reson46@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/06 at 7:33 am

If the legislature would not steal money from dedicated funds, like NOVA, there would be no funding problems. I do not support any additional taxes or user fees. The state has proven they can't be trusted with their existing funding. Who in their right mind would support giving them more? When they do create a user fee system, like the Discover Pass abomination, it becomes a system that forces DNR and DFW users to subsidize state parks that they do not even use! Plus they make it as difficult and confusing to use as possible.

Dave Hiatt  
wohva.org x  
dhiatt07@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/05 at 8:22 pm

See my prior comments regarding NOVA only being the 1% of the gas tax attributable to off-road vehicles and strongly suggesting the RCO educate the legislature that in the 1970's there was an additional 3.5% of the gas taxes attributable to nonhighway road use.

Then get the legislature to properly apportion that other 3.5% of the gas tax for NON Off-road Vehicle use. The NON ORV recreational money pot would have money to burn if the RCO did this.

Return NOVA (Nonhighway Off-Road Vehicle Activities) funds to where they belong, i.e. to only the ORV users it was intended for (they are the only ones who have given up their personal WA State Constitutional Right to a refund) and remove the phony cap that currently puts their amount way below 1% of the gas tax so they get their full 1% of the gas tax. See the recent JLARC report stating the current cap is improper and should be rectified.

The RCO could accomplish this education of the legislature if they so desired. After all the IAC was the agency that assisted the nonmotorized users in their theft of the ORV funds some years ago. Therefore, the RCO should rectify that action by educating the legislature as to what the IAC did in the past and give NOVA back to the ORV users.

Anything less just adds justification for citizen mistrust of government and their refusal to ever support providing money to government for anything given government's proven record of abusing prior trust placed in them. Once burned, twice learned and we will NOT forgive nor forget!

SquakMtn  
john-traeger@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/08/05 at 6:13 pm

There is no doubt the current funding model is broken. One of the primary problems with taxpayers these days is they demand some kind of immediate and personal benefit from any tax or fee they pay. What they are missing is all of the indirect benefits of taxes that support sustainable trail systems; economic growth for local communities, lower healthcare costs for society due to a more active population, regions and the state attracting industries and

companies due to a healthy and accessible outdoor environment. It is very hard to quantify these benefits, especially in short term dollars. Yet ignoring them results in a slow decent into economic irrelevancy and environmental decay.

This means that until the taxpayer mentality changes, the funding issue will become worse. User fees will never capture the total revenues needed, as they can only be raised so far before people lose interest and total revenues actually drop. Unfortunately for the current users, the economy, and the environment, it doesn't appear the change will come anytime soon.

Gelentere  
lloydkgh@gmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/05 at 6:00 pm

Go back to logging for funding trails. The forests are in horrible shape and need to be thinned to promote tree growth. Let cattle and sheep graze on state and federal land as a source of revenue. If the forest were cleaned up high temperature forest fires would be reduced saving money on fighting forest fires. Go back to hiring forester instead of recreation planners to accomplish the above.

Scott Thomas  
scottryanthomas@hotmail.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/05 at 4:51 pm

Trail systems are multi-generational serving people in all ages, stages and abilities in life, so they are among the most important issues any level of government should address and are worthy of financial support. Even so, funding for all public programs will be challenging well into the future as we continue to experience funding constraints from all sources. It seems to me that user fees tend to limit access and provide inadequate funding for maintenance, much less development of public facilities. As such, we should pursue broad tax sources generated by the whole community as the benefits (such as health) accrue to the whole community, whether an individual uses the trail system or not.

Chris Searcy  
chris\_searcy@comcast.net  
Submitted on 2013/08/05 at 4:23 pm

Prioritize tax revenue on trails and other linear facilities that promote a healthy, active lifestyle. User fees should be used more for distinct, destination-type facilities such as state parks, boat launches, ORV parks, etc. that are more logistically feasible for collecting user fees.

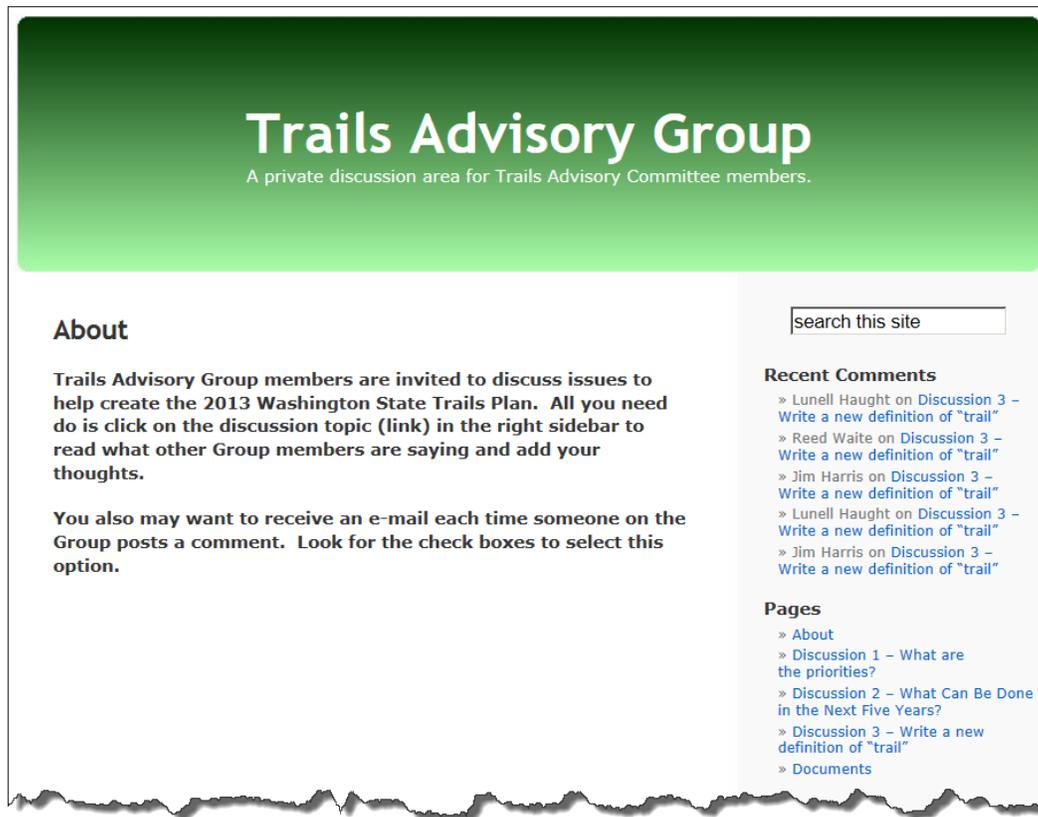
Herb Gerhardt  
hgerhardt@wavecable.com  
Submitted on 2013/08/05 at 4:20 pm

I think if you use the NOVA funds as they were designed to be used, there should be enough money for trails and education and enforcements. The NOVA funds must not be used to support WA Parks operations. I would presume that NOVA funding is increasing yearly since there is more and more outdoor nonhighway recreation.

## TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT

### INTRODUCTION

A key participant in the re-writing of the Washington Trails Plan was the Trails Advisory Committee. This group of knowledgeable stakeholders was engaged in several rounds of discussion over the Internet using a 'blog' Web site (see landing page, below).



These online discussions promoted dialog on several issues that was used to construct research components supporting the development of the *2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan*. This Advisory Committee was made up of the members of the several Standing Committees that assist the Recreation and Conservation Office with policy development and funding allocations on trails and NOVA issues and other informed stakeholders. The Committee included 40 members.

#### Participants from the RCO's standing Recreational Trails Program Advisory Committee

Doug	Conner	Eastern Washington Dirt Riders
Brian	Crowley	Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance
Kevin	Farrell	Washington State Department of Ecology
Nikki	Fields	Washington State Parks

Durlyn	Finnie	Recreational Trails Program Advisory Committee
Gerry	Hodge	Washington Water Trails Association
Ted	Jackson	Recreational Trails Program Advisory Committee
Michael	Jones	City of Blaine
John	Keates	Mason County
Kristen	Kuykendall	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Ian	Macek	Washington Department of Transportation
David	McMains	Pacific Northwest Four Wheel Drive Association
Gary	Paull	U.S. Forest Service
Sandy	Sternod	Washington State Snowmobile Association
Patricia	Wible	Recreational Trails Program Advisory Committee
<b>Participants from the RCO's standing Washington Wildlife Recreation Program Trails Advisory Committee</b>		
Dave	Bryant	Richland Parks and Recreation
Tom	Eksten	Bothell Resident
Roger	Giebelhaus	Thurston County
Jim	Harris	Washington Wildlife Recreation Program Trails Advisory Com.
Ray	Heit	Chelan County Public Utility District
Fran	Milan	King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Michael	O'Malley	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Chris	Parsons	Washington State Parks
Kate	Schneider	Parametrix, Inc.
Tim	Wahl	Bellingham Parks and Recreation Department
<b>Others</b>		
Linda	Berry-Maraist	North Kitsap Trails Association
John	Bottelli	Spokane County Parks and Recreation
Brad	Cownover	U.S. Forest Service
Karen	Daubert	Washington Trails Association
Buzz	Grant	Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition
Jonathan	Guzzo	Washington Trails Association
Lunell	Haught	Inland Northwest Trails Coalition
Jon	Knechtel	Pacific Northwest Trail Association
Brit	Kramer	Washington Recreation and Park Association
Kathy	Kravitt-Smith	Pierce County
Jeff	Lambert	Spokane Mountaineers
Jon	Paulson	Mountains to Sound Greenway
Ed	Spilker	Washington Department of Transportation
Renee	Tkach	Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Reed	Waite	Washington Water Trails Association

## FINDINGS FROM DISCUSSION 1

### Discussion 1: What are the most important priorities for improving backcountry trail recreation over the next five years?

Dave Bryant:

Assurance that all new trails that are constructed meet the minimum ADA-ABA accessibility standards. Specifically those receiving any state funding assistance.

kate schneider:

I think funding for maintaining trails and trailheads is critical. I also think supporting outreach and posting signage are important in increasing usership.

Nikki Fields:

I think we're at the point where we are losing backcountry trails due to lack of maintenance, so finding a way to maintain what we have is key. I sat on the RTP advisory committee, and there were about 80 projects, all seeking funding to maintain hundreds of miles of trails on Forest Service land, and all saying that their maintenance backlog was immense. And what happens to all the projects that didn't get funding? It would be much better if there were some kind of secure funding for that kind of necessary maintenance, so that the grant program could focus more on system improvements.

Also, I work for State Parks, and while backcountry trails aren't our main focus, most of our parks are too far away from urban areas for them to be competitive for WWRP Trails grants. So when we want to develop new trails, it seems like our projects fall through the cracks. The NOVA and RTP programs can really only fund small projects, and State Park trails don't usually compete well in WWRP-Trails. So we're left with really important projects sitting around for years while we seek funding.

Gerry Hodge:

I hate myself for being non-committal, but intelligent balance is what we should continue to strive for. There are legitimate needs for all groups: motorized, nonmotorized, water, backcountry, midcountry, close to home, winter, etc. Hopefully updating the trails plan includes evaluating the actual usage patterns so monies can be smartly applied. I also like the timeline of 5 years in the question as we shouldn't wait 22 years to evaluate usage changes.

Jim Harris:

It is easy to understand the need for more trail maintenance and new trails of many types, shared, dedicated, motorized, nonmotorized. There is a willingness and a desire, but dollars are always the limiting factor, (even over restrictive permitting can be overcome if you have the funds for mitigation).

Sources of funding outside tax dollars are going to be the new horizon. How does that saying go, about doing it the same way, over and over, and expecting different results?

Corporate Washington benefits from trails. Quality-of-life for corporate executives is a factor in where they locate. It is also a factor in employee recruitment and productivity. So those that don't even have a connection to outdoor recreationists, as consumers, benefit from trails.

If government agencies approach corporate funding, they corporate response is "your government, funded from taxes we pay, don't ask us for financial assistance. But well organized non-profits can be successful in this arena, i.e. Mountains to Sound Greenway.

How can government agencies assist in organizing and coordinating trail users, creating project specific support groups and training them on how to involve corporate support in the project? Not just asking for money, but involving them in the visioning and decision making.

There is also a need to work with the legislature to create environmental protection laws that recognize that trails and outdoor recreation are of value to the environment. Currently projects improving the quality-of-life for humans face the same restrictive requirements as business and residential development.

Nikki Fields:

Well said, Jim.

Ian Macek:

I would agree that funding for maintaining the system is needed.

I think another priority should be access to backcountry trails and trailheads. Can they be accessed by bicycle or transit, or can folks only access them by using a personal vehicle? Identifying key trails, trailheads, and sites where one doesn't need a motor vehicle to access may open up the backcountry to a new user group.

Reed Waite:

Definitions? What is backcountry trail recreation? My quick Googling came up with these thought-provoking hits:

'A backcountry area in general terms is a geographical region that is:

- isolated
- remote
- undeveloped
- difficult to access
- The term may apply to various regions that are reasonably close to urban areas but are:
- not immediately accessible by car
- at relatively high altitude
- not generally frequented by human visitors
- limited to human-powered vehicles

While the term "backcountry" is roughly comparable to the term "wilderness", they are not necessarily equivalent. "Wilderness" implies more the condition, whereas "backcountry" implies more the position. Backcountry is similar to hinterland.

There is some debate about the accessibility of people by means other than human power. While wilderness is a state of mind that implies pristine and untouched landscapes, backcountry serves as areas of land explored exclusively by human power. Wilderness exists in many places, including the backcountry.

The backcountry contains many hazards including rough terrain, life-threatening weather, avalanches and wild animals.[1] Tragic accidents and dramatic backcountry rescues of stranded hikers, climbers or skiers are a staple of news reporting.[2] Some jurisdictions have discussed placing limits on human access to the backcountry during times of particular danger.[3]

A more well-known, Australian term is "outback" or in some countries "the bush."

from <http://www.answers.com/topic/backcountry#ixzz2TwPKIZMP>

'Trails in the [park] core area should be more accessible, and designed, marked, and maintained to a higher Trail Class standard as they are likely to see higher usage. Backcountry area may be appropriate for longer distance trail opportunities, single use trails, and a lower level of management. Trails in backcountry areas offer a more intimate experience with fewer visitors, a greater challenge, and sometimes higher risk. Risk is associated with difficulty and remoteness of a trail, the probability of meeting others, and the level of management.

from [http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/greenway/docs/DCR\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/greenway/docs/DCR_guidelines.pdf)

I'm compelled to say protection of 'backcountry' is most important priority. To me, this means vigilance of human civilization intrusions in the backcountry in the form of things that detract from a natural experience. And for me that's nonmotorized activities like those allowed in federal Wilderness areas. For others, it may include motor: boat, plane, bike, Time to talk is now.

Balance is key. We've got a maintenance backlog for what we have now and a backlog for backcountry areas needed for future generations.

Chris Parsons:

Funding for public access to backcountry trails and trailheads is important, but the expense of maintaining these trails in a condition that ensures the users safe use of the trail is critical. What good is hiking on a trail if you twist your ankle? Let's fund the coordination of volunteer and skilled workers to repair and improve our public trails, especially the federal lands trail system into wilderness areas (over used and in poor condition).

WA State Parks cross-state trail system should be supported with planning grants in order to engage communities in the placement and design of trailheads near communities that will benefit economically with tourist dollars and to help gain local support. The grant criteria providing extra points for being located near urban areas is unfair to backcountry or cross-state trail systems.

Durlyn Finnie:

The experience of wildness, getting away from civilization is what should be available to the public. Keeping the trails safe, and access of course take money. The private-public partnership is a method deserving of more effort. We all need to get out there!

Lunell Haught:

Trail priorities

There are countless legitimate ways to prioritize and it's sort of like 'which puppy do I leave at the shelter?' for me. While on the RCO grant evaluation committee I too wondered why the maintenance projects weren't simply included in the state budget. I have always been influenced by the volunteer maintenance participation as a way to judge potential support, but that needs a group such as WTA or a volunteer coordinator (state funded? And are we replacing bargaining unit work?) So there should be some consideration for that. In this economy I can make a case for a CCC type program in addition to subsidizing highway projects.

A concern I have with prioritizing by 'use' is from two personal experiences. I was the budget administrator when Title IX was implemented (my gawd, is she THAT old...yes) and at the time there was very little participation for girls and now you can't keep girls away. The culture changed based, in part, on attention (including funding). The other experience was when we first started asking the public for input on parks and we got a lot of soccer fields and swing set input. No one even thought of trails but now we know 'if you build them they will come.' So I'm reluctant to make a policy based on actual use as the only criteria. There has to be the 'inspired cool factor' because people invent recreational activities we haven't even considered.

As to ADA and parking lots, I liked what some of the presenters said at the last Washington State Trails Conference, which essentially was 'describe the condition and let the user decide if s/he can go'. I also find, at least in Spokane County, that we get trapped into a situation where we're trying to build a trailhead and end up having to improve a road, build to 'city' standards and end up spending a fortune (given to a little hyperbole here) when in my opinion a gravel lot with biological/natural storm water treatment would do it – but we spend money on parking lots and not trails because of the requirements which make sense in some situations (urban) but not others.

Signage – at another WTS conference one attendee reminded me that few signs were part of the outback experience – and I had to re-think my thoughts. I don't think we should be losing people outside, but I do think as long as we're going to put signs out they should be educational as well as directional. Here's what I mean. Explain how to 'read' a landscape – how to walk into a place that has few/no signs and consider sun angle, slope, drainage, a little orienteering, if you will. Look up from your smart phone and ask yourself 'what makes sense'? Say part of the experience is to make it different from downtown. And signs that explain multi-use: not just who yields to whom, but ideas that people can understand. "When you ride up to a horse the horse thinks you're a mountain lion and will rear, throw the rider and kick you and your bike" People frequently have NO idea how they impact other users. Not sure, but many independent spirited ones of us who do like to get out in nature are not diligent rule followers anyway, so helping users understand why may be useful. "Keep dog on leash" cries against everything independent about us. Something like: "Keep dog on leash to avoid damaging ground nesting birds and so you can find the poop when s/he goes and carry it out" may make more sense.

Although remote trails may be less used than urban ones, just knowing they are there is like money in the bank. We don't have to spend it, and we feel more secure knowing it's there. The sense of well being we have knowing we have outback, trails and somewhere to go is surely on a happiness priority.

As far as economic contribution – yes, we do have data telling us companies prioritize and prize quality-of-life, settle here, and create jobs here. There should be public funding of public land and I don't know for sure how to work this,

but having had my own uber-small business for 16 years I can tell you I'm not unhappy some of these taxes are spent on parks! Particularly when there are so few low cost activities for people, I love that people can still go out and enjoy.

The relationship between all the parks agencies/jurisdictions (Federal, state, county, municipal); Washington State Department of Transportation; and local transportation agencies is important so park/train investments can be coordinated. In Spokane County this is fairly well done, and it may be fairly well done elsewhere, but this coordinated effort certainly maximizes efficiency and opportunity.

I think projects/activities should be prioritized based on values (we identified them to include sustainability, etc). I think we should be unapologetic that we can't do everything everywhere. I can't camp in the public library, even though it's my tax dollar that's supporting it.

Jon Knechtel:

Funding for backcountry trails has been dwindling at a very aggressive rate over the years. There are many reasons for this starting with reductions in agency budgets. RTP funding through the RCO has helped immensely but in no way does it provide all that's needed, and I don't see a real solution on the horizon. As the Director of Trail Operations and Management for the Pacific Northwest Trail Association, the NGO for the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail and the USFS, I see this on a daily basis. We rely heavily on volunteers and our youth programs, but funding is getting harder and harder to come by.

Some sort of dedicated funding is needed on a national level to maintain all of our trails whether they are backcountry, front country, or urban. The health benefits of trails as well as the economic benefits to local communities are well documented. I feel these reasons make a very good case for a dedicated funding source.

Patti Wible:

Several aspects come to mind; first, providing stable, meaningful funding for backcountry trails. They should be set up with no diversion possible of committed funding. Secondly; user groups need to work together in new ways. Possible State Trails Council? We have tried some things on our own but they tend to lack consistency, and need state leadership. Especially when it comes to trail maintenance and trail sharing issues.

Third, recreation needs more interagency and inter-department significance when it comes to planning; and projects. There are several good examples; of agencies out to complete a project with lack of planning; or coordination with the recreation side. Case in point—a decommissioned road-turned trail-at Green Mountain in Kitsap County. Property managed by DNR; notified users of some ditches being installed for RMAP/ stream stabilization. Over sixty ditches were installed; some were over 10 feet deep; rendering a previously heavily used trail (and handicapped accessible) unsuitable for any use. It will cost more to repair the trail to make it usable again than it did for it to be ripped up with a lack of coordination with DNR or the user groups. Or; how about the closure of horse camping at Burke Lake where the WDFW advisory group doesn't include the recreational users?

Jim Harris:

I agree with Patti's comments regarding:

- 1) Greater trail development coordination. It would be interesting to see what a work group could develop for a strategic plan for a State Trail Council.
- 2) There needs to be better interagency and intra-agency coordination. DFW made a presentation for development of a section of the Discover Trail during the last grant cycle, during which they state, if the trail were not built as part of the fish habitat improvement underway, it very likely would not be permitted. That may be true, if you look at permitting regulations narrowly, but fails to pass any common sense test.

Jonathan Guzzo:

We need to maintain a strong system of front country trails statewide to serve new hikers, but I'm concerned about losing backcountry trail opportunities. Time and time again, we see hikers start in the front country, and then develop a hunger to extend their adventures to backcountry hikes, using both day and overnight opportunities.

Our members are looking for destinations in the backcountry, such as lakes, peaks, rivers, waterfalls, views and other features. Secondly, hikers who visit the backcountry are looking for relative solitude, and well-maintained trails.

Hikers, like most trail users, are looking for loop opportunities, and many hikers want access to great features pretty quickly,

We need funding to support a range of opportunities. We can't just focus on the most popular trails while less-heavily-used trails languish. Given the triage state of our current trail funding situation, that's what happens. But to truly serve backcountry hikers and other trail users, we have to maintain opportunities beyond the gold-plated standards.

## FINDINGS FROM DISCUSSION 2

**Discussion 2: Thanks for your perspectives on important priorities. Let's refine your list down to a vital-few things that should be on a work list for the State. Please list 2-5 of the most important issues relating to NOVA you see as emerging in the next five years (and only for the next five years). Think broadly—consider all kinds of issues that if worked on would improve things for NOVA stakeholders. In other words, if you were in charge and responsible to all citizens in the state, what is the short list of emerging issues you would work on that could be realistically addressed (or at least started) in the next five years?**

Jon Knechtel:

As stated broadly in the responses to question #1, funding is the biggest need for all trails. With the health and education benefits derived from using trails, I think the state should reach out to the federal government for funding from HHS and DOE for trails. This would help all types of trails move forward.

Starting early in young peoples lives will give them an awareness of nature, stewardship, and the physical (and mental) benefits of trails. I feel we've lost an entire generation and need to start early to rectify those mistakes. This pertains to all trail types!

There are a lot of non-profit trail groups already working to achieve these results and they need financial help to continue the good work they're doing. Partnering with these groups, the state would have greater leverage in obtaining funding. The health benefits of trails would begin to be evident in a very short time frame and reduction in health costs would be beneficial to the entire population.

Jonathan Guzzo:

There is tremendous interest in developing and maintaining trails close to recreation opportunities. It's important to pay policy attention to them, but we shouldn't do that at the expense of our backcountry trails. Backcountry trails are the backbone of our hiking opportunities, giving hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers the wild lands experiences that they come to crave. Many of our best backcountry trails are within easy striking distance of Seattle and other urban areas, so they serve a population that ranges from casual hikers to experienced overnight backpackers. If we neglect maintenance of these critically important routes in the interest of adding and upgrading front country trail miles, we'll be doing a tremendous disservice to a broad and committed swathe of the recreation community. These are the same people who join organizations and volunteer to maintain trails. Examples of trails that are difficult to follow, damaged or unsafe include Headlee Pass, Sloan Peak and Squire Creek off the Mountain Loop Highway and Basalt Creek and Jack Creek on the Wenatchee River Ranger District—to name just a very few. The Trails Plan should address the need for backcountry trails and ensure that funding for their maintenance and repair continues.

At the risk of being obvious, the continued downward trajectory of agency funding levels is alarming. Our state and federal partners have gone from a slow downward glide path to a barely-controlled tumble. Legislative bodies at both the state and federal levels are unable to agree on budgets, which leads to uncertainty and a chronic ability to plan on the part of the agencies that serve outdoor recreationists. And the upcoming sunset of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) which provides critical funding for trails and other National Forest amenities, does not add to agency confidence, since the first half of each federal fiscal year's operations are paid for out of carryover FLREA funds, at least on Region 6 National Forests. Our elected officials must reauthorize FLREA and appropriate adequate funds to maintain our existing trail network.

Hand in hand with the impacts of funding cuts/sequestration goes the retirement of our agency staff. We are losing experienced land managers at a frustrating clip as they reach retirement age or are offered early retirement. In many

cases, these are the staff with whom we coordinate when we're planning trail maintenance activities. Losing them does not just mean that we are losing their work—we're potentially losing their critical on-the-ground knowledge and perspective. In the near term, that knowledge and perspective is irreplaceable, and the near term is a crisis. Land management agencies must prioritize mentorships for incoming staff and retention of existing long-term staff. Non-profits must inspire and train the next generation of agency land managers.

Finally, our public lands travelways—roads and trails—are fragile. One good swipe from a winter storm can wreak havoc on the entire system, causing millions in damage and closing trails and roads for years. We must work with Congress, the state legislature and our agency partners to coldly analyze our road system and close the ones that are not needed for core recreational or administrative purposes. We can use the saved money to upgrade and stormproof our recreation access opportunities.

Reed Waite:

Not an emerging issue, it's the continuing de-funding of maintenance and operation of trails and related facilities on nearly every level of government. There are bright spots in small pockets around the state where citizens enjoy, participate, and vote for trails-related bonds, recreation programs, and invest in purchase and development of land and waterfront properties.

My morning walk around Seattle's Green Lake is shared with the Park Dept's garbage truck's daily pickup, mowers, arborists, and paved trail brushers. I pass by volunteer planted and maintained gardens. Dog poop is picked up, fishers cast away, cyclists/boarders/rollerbladers/skaters coast along, kayaks and shells join endurance swimmers and pedal boats on the water. The commitment to public fitness and care for the park is evident.

Adequate funding for M&O at state, federal, and local levels is the key issue. \$\$\$'s fund committed professional agency staff, extend life of facilities, and protect the natural resources we depend upon.

I can't help but compare my experience last week in the Canada's province of Quebec. I registered in a NEW facility for a guided climb on a NEW via ferrate. The parking lots were messy – as construction vehicles moved through and the lots were being EXPANDED. Highway billboards advertised PARKS. I had no problem with the combined 15% national/provincial sales/consumption tax. I could see the benefits.

Gerry Hodge:

I'm taking the 'realistically addressed' piece of the question seriously and trying to avoid the idealistic and theoretical (although I believe wholeheartedly in those also).

Funding. Funding. Funding. My first important issue has more to do with the trail user. I see the continued trend of 'pay-to-play' funding playing out even further. Unfortunately, most of these schemes involve 'nuisance' fees that do more to keep bureaucrats employed and users inconvenienced than to actually benefit the resource. My preference is to not wall off the backcountry with more fees and complication.

A second concern is using the limited funding to get the most bang for the user buck. Use actual and projected use patterns to direct the most money where the highest usage is and will be. I know this could negatively impact some current recipients, but, as a state, we need to serve the most with limited resources.

Thirdly, rework the weighting of the grant criteria to more reward those with private dollar and volunteer labor contributions. Eliminate the ability of governmental grant applicants to claim other government monies as a "match"—or, at least, call out the private contributions in a separate category and weigh them more heavily.

Lastly, make it a stated priority for all outdoor resource agencies and private recreational concerns to have legislative talking points to continually hammer home the importance of the outdoors to our quality-of-life. As tax funding begins to flow back in, outdoor recreation should not be the last in line for money. We need to market our cause more effectively.

Linda Berry-Maraist:

Five things that can be done in addition to funding:

- 1) Lower the costs of trails by addressing some major issues that drive up expenses, especially for paved shared use paths. The issues around grade requirements are extremely expensive—the glaciers simply missed the memo that the world should be flat and ADA accessible. Sidewalks and roads have more flexibility than the standards for a paved shared use path—that is simply absurd, and enormously expensive both in terms of financial cost and environmental impact, which creates an enormous barrier to getting them built. We have to have a means to address the reality that Washington has hills, and that people know that and yes we want to minimize the steepness of paved trails when possible, but we want to build them in lots of places where it is not flat.
- 2) Deal with the stormwater regulations and the interpretation that the new DOE stormwater regulations require all new bike shoulder projects to carry the burden of retrofitting the entire roadway for stormwater. If a minor bike project is burdened with solving the environmental ills of an entire roadway, adding bike shoulders will be cost prohibitive. This needs to be addressed at the state level.
- 3) Facilitate and support water trails access, including overnight camping at reasonable intervals. Puget Sound is unique with its many sheltered water ways and this could be a major marketing tool for ecotourism—where else can you get out in the water so easily in so many locations?
- 4) Work with WSDOT to champion flexibility in allowing nonmotorized use and crossing of highway corridors. That ROW was purchased by WA citizens—it should be seen as a resource that can support transportation by reducing the #s of people clogging the roads and increasing use of transit and nonmotorized methods. Allowing trail access in and to a WSDOT ROW should be seen as transportation Demand Management tool to be supported, not a problem to be fought.
- 5) Broaden the recreational users statute to include protection for government owned land and cut back on the risks to local (and state) government for allowing trails and public use. Reducing the amount of liability that local governments are responsible for will make them more likely to consider ways to get to “yes”, instead of reasons to say no.

## FINDINGS FROM DISCUSSION 3

**Discussion 3: The 1991 Washington State Trails Plan provides the following definitions for trails:**

**A trail is...**

**... a path, route, way, right-of-way, or corridor posted, signed, or designated as open for travel or passage by the general public but not normally designated as open for the transportation of commercial goods or services by motorized vehicles.**

**... an opportunity to experience solitude or companionship, recreation or challenge; an opportunity for the appreciation of nature; a means of achieving renewal of body, mind, and spirit.**

**Findings: The joint conclusion of the TRAILS and NOVA Advisory Groups is that the definition of a ‘trail’ from the 1991 Washington State Trails Plan should be revised. The Advisory Groups agree that a new definition for the Recreation and Conservation Office should,**

- Specifically reference recreation**
- Be broadly inclusive of habitat types and modes of transport without making value judgments supporting a priori policy and funding choices,**
- Reference trails as a part of the state’s transportation system, and**
- Not reference the nature of the experiences associated with trail use.**

mikef:

Advisory Group member John Keates provided this comment by email:

Michael, my opinion is coming up with one definition for a trail will be practically impossible. I ride my bicycle on rail trails, hike, mountain bike ride, cross country ski and even do some motorcycle riding still. Each trail seems a bit different to me and the trail experience is also a bit different. Please don't include a definition that eliminates motorized vehicles. For example, motorized on trails for commercial purposes is needed just to do trail maintenance.

Of the two definitions given, the second was better.

Michael Fraidenburg:

From the Facilitator

Let's have a discussion about this. Please offer amendments to my draft language or tell us if you are in agreement with it as written.

—————DRAFT RECOMMENDATION—————

Definition of 'trails' in the NOVA and Trails Plans

Key Findings and Recommendation

The 1991 Washington State Trails Plan provides the following definitions for trails:

A trail is...

. . . a path, route, way, right-of-way, or corridor posted, signed, or designated as open for travel or passage by the general public but not normally designated as open for the transportation of commercial goods or services by motorized vehicles.

. . . an opportunity to experience solitude or companionship, recreation or challenge; an opportunity for the appreciation of nature; a means of achieving renewal of body, mind, and spirit.

Findings: The joint conclusion of the TRAILS and NOVA Advisory Groups is that the definition of a 'trail' from the 1991 Washington State Trails Plan should be revised. The Advisory Groups agree that a new definition for the Recreation and Conservation Office should,

- Specifically reference recreation,
- Be broadly inclusive of habitat types and modes of transport without making value judgments supporting a priori policy and funding choices,
- Reference trails as a part of the state's transportation system, and
- Not reference the nature of the experiences associated with trail use.

Recommendation: The NOVA and TRAILS Advisory Groups recommends the following definition.

The term 'recreational trail' means a part of the state's transportation system that consists of a clearly defined route of travel with a distinct starting point (trailhead) and ending point (trail end) that is a thoroughfare or track that can be mapped across land, snow, ice, or water that is used for recreational purposes.

### END ###

Reed Waite:

Nice and concise.

Can we go down the path a bit further? The phrase "a part of the state's transportation system" begs the question whether local, county, private, federal (insert word: trails, facilities, infrastructure, etc. here)\_\_\_\_\_ would be included or excluded.

In most areas of the country, people hearing the words 'state transportation system' will be thinking train, bus, subway, ferry, freeway, etc..

WSDOT may have something to say about this. "The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is the steward of a large and robust TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM [emphasis added], and is responsible for ensuring that people and goods move safely and efficiently. In addition to building, maintaining, and operating the state highway system, WSDOT is responsible for the state ferry system, and works in partnership with others to maintain and improve local roads, railroads, airports, and multi-modal alternatives to driving." from <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/about/>

Dropping the 'state's transportation system' wording works out to this for a definition:

—The term 'recreational trail' means ... a clearly defined route of travel with a distinct starting point (trailhead) and ending point (trail end) that is a thoroughfare or track that can be mapped across land, snow, ice, or water that is used for recreational purposes.===

There's a small typo that I just loved – the distinct STARING point (trailhead). If you're anything like me, you'll be staring at the starting point, gazing at the ending point, and gawking all along the way! Great way to include idea of viewscape in trails.

Nikki Fields:

The proposed definition seems to go on and on, and I'm not sure about the distinct ending point part of it, since loop trails may not have distinct end points, plus end points and start points are the same thing, depending on your direction. Also, trails that join with sidewalks or roads for part of their length may not be so distinct.

How about:

The term 'recreational trail' means a route of transportation, mapped across land, snow, ice, or water, that is used for recreational purposes.

Lunell Haught:

I'm happy with trails being either transportation or recreation, (I commute on a trail that many use only as recreation) and am happy with it being loop or point to point. Not sure how long it has to be. I don't think they have to meet regulated specifications (certain surface, width); and although one might need a motorized vehicle to do repairs (like creating ditches on either side of one which would be a killer project with a shovel and not much hassle with a back hoe, I don't envision them as accommodating motorized vehicles.

Jim Harris:

Michael,

I'm responding to the draft definition. It's a good beginning, but I have a couple of questions to which I would be interested in hearing the reaction of others.

We are defining "recreation trails". While nonmotorized trails have been recognized as transportation corridors, it is my impression, based on federal transportation project funding, that this is not equivalent to "recreation". In the current definition, the sentence structure implies all recreation trails are part of the state transportation system. I would suggest, at the end of the definition, including language that states that some recreation trails are also part of the state transportation system.

I struggle with water trails. Can they be defined as "tracks that can be mapped"? I'm currently working on a water trail project as part of a FERC requirement and was ask to define a "water trail". Washington State Park's WAC defines it as, "a network of water trail sites", which I agree with, since there is no designated or constructed route between the water trail sites. It is more like backcountry travel where destinations exist, but no trail.

Thoughts from others?

Jim Harris

Lunell Haught:

You asked both a yes/no question as well as for discussion so not sure what all you want – the short answer is no, I don't agree. The longer answer is either we need to have modifiers on the term 'trail' or define it. I'm thinking "Trails have historically implied a path or waterway for walking or a few people in a vessel, typically through a natural environment, the current use includes trails with a variety of surfaces having designated or shared use with muscle powered conveyances for either transportation or recreation."

Dave McMains:

There is still the use of motorized trails that need to be addressed. They should not be part of the State transportation system as then the gas tax monies that are refunded to NOVA will be forfeit and the funding will be harder to raise for other projects. You can bet if it is stated that trails are part of the transportation system, there will never be funds available for our projects!

Kate Schneider:

I do not agree with the definition. Do trails need a starting and ending point? Some loop, some have several, some gradually begin. If we're talking about being part of a transportation system, doesn't that imply they're used for commuting, not just recreation? I would suggest keeping it simple, trails are a defined route. I also shy away from the "clearly defined route", as some are not so clear or defined.

Jim Harris:

The challenge with the previous trail definition is the vague, broadly inclusive approach. Without clarity of purpose, the current effort could end up in the same place.

What are we defining? What is included and what is excluded?

We are not interested in trails used by loggers to get from an upper landing to a lower landing, or other pathways used for commercial operations.

We are interested in developed or managed recreational trails.

We are not interested in motorized transportation corridors, but are interested in recreational motorized off-highway trails.

We are not interested in community sidewalks, but are interested in community trail systems.

The key is our focus on recreational use. So the definition of recreational trails must include a definition of recreation – an activity that utilizes leisure time for purposes that result in restoration of the human body, and/or restoration of the human mind, and/or the restoration of the human spirit.

A recreational trail may be used for other purposes, such as a nonmotorized transportation corridor, but if I'm correct, RCO's state trail plan focuses on recreational trails, while state and county transportation plans address nonmotorized transportation corridors.

This clarification is needed to also distinguish water trails from navigational channels.

A trail is developed or managed, as opposed to a path through a vacant lot. A trail or trail segment has an identifiable starting and stopping point. They may be the same point in the case of a loop trail.

A recreational trail may cross land, snow, or water, but a water trail is less defined by a specific place, and more by the general route and the network of upland facilities that provide access and support to the water trail user.

All that said – let me take past and current language under consideration and suggest the following -

A RECREATIONAL TRAIL is:

a path, route, or corridor, designated as open for travel or passage by the general public; to be utilized for leisure time activities, as a means of achieving renewal of body, mind, and/or spirit, through the opportunity to experience solitude or companionship, through the opportunity to experience mental and physical challenge or restful exercise; while participating in travel across land, water, or snow; by motorized or nonmotorized means.

The key words are "designated" (does this include climbing routes that are published, I have no problem with this inclusion), "leisure time activity", and "travel".

Lunell Haught:

The reason Spokane County didn't specify only recreation or only transportation in its trail plan is because it didn't want to be excluded from transportation (enhancement) funds when they could be used on a trail that has great recreational function, but also provides a commuter corridor also. In Spokane County this would be the Fish Lake Trail, the Centennial Trail, and the north transportation corridor (formerly known as the north/south freeway). I believe the Gillman Trail might be another example of this.

Jim Harris:

I agree with Lunell that recreation trails may also be transportation corridors and eligible for transportation enhancement funding, but that is not a defining characteristic of a recreational trail.

Reed Waite:

Jim's definition gets some great words, in that it speaks to the range of recreational experience.

Appreciate Lunell's comments about specifying trails as transport or recreation. I'm not that concerned about this. There are many trails that have multiple designations. The Lakes-To-Locks Water Trail on metropolitan Seattle/King County waters has been used as a commute/transportation route by some people rowing or paddling to work; this does not negate the Trail's other more primary uses. Likewise the Northwest Discovery Water Trail is a recreational trail that best reflects the historic route of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery from the Clearwater in Idaho the confluence of fresh and salt waters on the Columbia at Bonneville Dam. You'll see L&C signage on some interstates and funding comes from many sources.

Lunell Haught:

Reed – thanks for your thoughts – my concern isn't how it's used but how it is designated – many of us have been on funding bodies that have looked at how to exclude requests – and don't want us to inadvertently disqualify ourselves for something – just trying to bet the best of all possible worlds :)

## NOVA ADVISORY GROUP INPUT

### INTRODUCTION

A key participant in the development of *2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan* and the Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Program Plan was the NOVA Advisory Group. This group of knowledgeable stakeholders was engaged in three rounds of discussion over the Internet using a 'blog' Web site (see landing page, below).

**NOVA Advisory Group**  
A private discussion area for NOVA Advisory Group members.

**About**

NOVA Advisory Group members are invited to discuss issues here to help create the 2013 update to the Washington State NOVA Plan. All you need do is click on the discussion topic (link) in the right sidebar to read what other Group members are saying and add your thoughts.

You also may want to receive an e-mail each time someone on the Group posts a comment. Look for the check boxes to select this option.

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**Recent Comments**

- » Rich Haydon on Discussion 3 – Write a new definition of "trail"
- » Don Scogings on Discussion 3 – Write a new definition of "trail"
- » Brenda Yankoviak on Discussion 3 – Write a new definition of "trail"
- » mikef on Discussion 3 – Write a new definition of "trail"
- » Rich Haydon on Discussion 3 – Write a new definition of "trail"

**Pages**

- » About
- » Discussion 1 – What are the Priorities?
- » Discussion 2 – What Can Be Done in the Next Five Years?
- » Discussion 3 – Write a new definition of "trail"
- » Documents

These online discussions promoted dialog on several issues that was used to construct research components supporting elements of the Trails Plan and the development of the NOVA Plan. This Advisory Group was made up of the members of the NOVA Standing Committee that assists the Recreation and Conservation Office with policy development and funding allocations on NOVA issues.

NOVA Advisory Group Members		
Mike	Blankenship	
Rick	Burk	Eastern Washington Dirt Riders
Louise	Caywood	Back Country Horsemen of Washington
Paul	Dahmer	Department of Fish and Wildlife
Dawn	Erickson	
Glenn	Glover	Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance
Steve	Hahn	Washington State Parks
Richard	Haydon	
Mark	Levensky	
Mark	Mauren	Department of Natural Resources
Mary	O'Neil	Audubon Society
Chris	Parsons	Washington State Parks
Jim	Putman	Pacific Northwest Four Wheel Drive Association
Casey	Salisbury	Mason County Sheriff's Department
Don	Scogings	
Brenda	Yankoviak	USDA Forest Service - Wenatchee

## FINDINGS FROM DISCUSSION 1

**Discussion 1: What are the most important priorities for improving backcountry trail recreation over the next five years?**

Mark Levensky:

Remove trees and brush from hiking/horse trails and make safe crossings for hikers/horses over streams, rivers, and boulder fields.

Rick Burk:

New opportunities are always exciting and grab a lot of attention but we also need to remember that stewardship of existing trails is a constant and continuing need in being able to provide for all recreationists groups and protect and preserve the resources we have all developed.

Chris Parsons:

Maintenance of existing off-road trail systems remains a priority (fix what we already have). Wintertime recreation for public trail grooming (both for snow mobile and skiing) enables safe access to winter recreational areas and should continue to be funded. Federal trail systems going into wilderness areas needs special attention and more funding from the federal government to repair and maintain these important trails.

Rich Haydon:

As Mark, Rick, and Chris have already stated, maintenance of existing trails and facilities needs to be a priority over new development. Within the realm of maintenance, prevention and restoration of trail tread erosion needs to be the priority— this is the kind of damage that has the most long-term impact and is ultimately the most difficult to mitigate. Beyond that, there are relatively under-served recreation types that need to be considered; water based recreation (water trails, fishing access, put-ins and take-outs), bicycle trails (both paved and MTB trails), urban-proximate trails, and winter recreation trails being perhaps the best examples. Those less-served recreation types show a lot of potential for increased demand, compared to the more long-established modes of use, and a forward looking policy needs to recognize that. It's all a matter of balance— there will always worthy development projects, just like there will always be a need to serve the large demands for more “regular” recreation types, both motorized and nonmotorized— but within those broader sideboards an emphasis on maintenance and on less-served use types will be helpful.

Don Scogings:

I strongly agree with Rich. The State, Forest Service and DNR will have limited funding in the near term, perhaps even the next five years. In this environment, maintenance should take priority over development.

Don Scogings:

In reviewing the 2005-2011 NOVA Plan I find the following:

The Foreword, page vi “When policies are implemented, we anticipate that new facilities will be designed to minimize maintenance and —”

Policy C-5, page 12 “Projects can often incorporate design elements that reduce maintenance needs.”

Stronger wording is needed in both of these policies with emphasis on maintenance.

Policy C-12, page 14 “Program administrators suggested that historically, too much funding has been directed to capital projects without necessary maintenance infrastructure and funding to support the efforts.”

Discussion, section C, ORV Sport Parks, page 20 “Others point out that IAC’s support and acquisition and development of sport parks has created increased demand for limited ORV dollars for maintenance and operations.’

Discussion, section E, ORV and Nonmotorized Recreation: “Maintenance is a High Priority”

Appendix 1, 4. NOVA Program: 1994-2002, page 31 According to Table 3, maintenance received about 44% of what projects received. I think we should examine what the 2005-2012 ratio was.

Perhaps the target ratio in the updated plan should be 50/50.

Maintenance clearly was a major consideration in developing the 2005-2011 Plan and seems to me to be even more important in developing the updated plan.

Mark Mauren:

What are the most important priorities for improving backcountry trail recreation over the next five years?

- 1) More stable funding source for recreation providers to support management, enforcement and maintenance of their recreation programs. Though the majority of the current grants go towards maintenance and E&E, long term we need to shift the funding more towards development if we hope to meet the current and future level of service that the public demands.
- 2) Statewide look at what type and level of service that needs to be provided along with a more coordinated approach by recreation providers in helping to meet the statewide and regional service needs.
- 3) Development of guidelines for design and construction of sustainable and durable trails that meet user satisfaction.

- 4) Ensure more consistency in trail design and development to minimize long term maintenance cost and maintain user satisfaction.
- 5) Easy access for the public to maps and information regarding outdoor recreation opportunities in the state.
- 6) Better coordination with the recreation providers, law enforcement and the public in developing a more integrated approach to education and enforcement.
- 7) Care and feeding of volunteers – coordination, information, training and other support mechanisms.
- 8) Address private landowners gating access roads to public lands
- 9) Address why private landowners are closing their lands (Liability, cost) to public recreation opportunities
- 10) Address county and state regulation that were developed for the urban environment and not the forest environment. Current regulations have dramatically increasing the cost of redeveloping and developing trails on state and private lands.

Louise Caywood:

Maintenance and education on backcountry trails should be the priority (i.e., volunteer coordination, adhering trail maintenance to specification guidelines, signage and user contributions to educate newer users about how to conserve the lands they are using).

Dawn Erickson:

As has been stated above I agree that maintenance should be a priority over development especially when funding is scarce. I agree that volunteers are important and should be supported but so too should agencies that do the maintenance as much of the maintenance work is tedious and not necessarily the work volunteers want to do. Would like to see more development of bicycle trails. Road access to recreation sites is a concern.

Brenda Yankoviak:

Priorities for improving backcountry trail recreation over the next five years:

- Balance between maintenance of existing and new development. While we need to focus on continued maintenance of existing infrastructure, the 'public good' is not static, so we need to make a conscientious effort to ensure we're maintaining those trail systems and other infrastructure that are still best serving a public need. We also need to be adaptable and responsive to changing societal needs, and invest now for longer term sustainability. In many cases, our trail systems developed over time and were not specifically planned out with the most sustainable location or desirable user experiences in mind. We should continue to fund new, environmentally and financially sustainable development or re-routing of sections of trail that are in poor locations or on un-sustainable grades. This development may be more expensive in the short term, but could provide for cheaper maintenance needs and more desirable user experiences for the long term.
- Stable funding is key. Having said that, we also need to continue to keep the application process competitive so applicants continue to strive to be adaptable, creative and forward thinking in how they get the work done.
- Somehow need to address the threat of development within public land borders as timber companies continue to sell their land. This is a big concern for the Forest Service, as private in holdings can lead to reduced public access and increase management complexity.
- I agree with Mark that recreation providers and the public could benefit from a more coordinated approach to identifying and managing recreation opportunities across the state. Agency personnel are often (mentally) constrained by jurisdictional boundaries, but the public (and, in truthfulness, many roads and trails) often do not know or care about those boundaries.

Don Scogings:

Many trails and trailheads have not been properly maintained for a decade or more. Maintaining and upgrading these trails should be a priority and will provide greater the greater benefit.



## FINDINGS FROM DISCUSSION 2

**Discussion 2:** Thanks for your perspectives on important priorities. Let's refine your list down to a vital-few things that should be on a work list for the State. Please list 2-5 of the most important issues relating to NOVA you see as emerging in the next five years (and only for the next five years). Think broadly—consider all kinds of issues that if worked on would improve things for NOVA stakeholders. In other words, if you were in charge and responsible to all citizens in the state, what is the short list of emerging issues you would work on that could be realistically addressed (or at least started) in the next five years?

Mark Mauren:

- 1) More stable funding source for recreation providers to support management, enforcement and maintenance of their recreation programs. Though the majority of the current grants go towards maintenance and E&E, long term we need to shift the funding more towards development if we hope to meet the current and future level of service that the public demands.
- 2) Statewide look at what type and level of service that needs to be provided along with a more coordinated approach by recreation providers in helping to meet the statewide and regional service needs.
- 3) Easy access for the public to maps and information regarding outdoor recreation opportunities in the state.
- 4) Address private landowners gating access roads to public lands
- 5) Address county and state regulation that were developed for the urban environment and not the forest environment. Current regulations have dramatically increasing the cost of redeveloping and developing trails on state and private lands.

## FINDINGS FROM DISCUSSION 3

**Discussion 3:** The 1991 Washington State Trails Plan provides the following definitions for trails:

A trail is...

... a path, route, way, right-of-way, or corridor posted, signed, or designated as open for travel or passage by the general public but not normally designated as open for the transportation of commercial goods or services by motorized vehicles.

... an opportunity to experience solitude or companionship, recreation or challenge; an opportunity for the appreciation of nature; a means of achieving renewal of body, mind, and spirit.

**Findings:** The joint conclusion of the TRAILS and NOVA Advisory Groups is that the definition of a 'trail' from the 1991 Washington State Trails Plan should be revised. The Advisory Groups agree that a new definition for the Recreation and Conservation Office should,

- Specifically reference recreation
- Be broadly inclusive of habitat types and modes of transport without making value judgments supporting a priori policy and funding choices,
- Reference trails as a part of the state's transportation system, and
- Not reference the nature of the experiences associated with trail use.

Rich Haydon:

How concise should this definition be? Here is some food for thought:

A trail is a designated, signed, and maintained travel way with the primary purpose of providing for public recreation or public access to a recreation site.

A trail will normally be distinguished by an improved tread surface, generally between 12 and 50 inches in width, and may include other developed features, structures, or signs necessary for the use and enjoyment of the trail by its intended user types.

In some cases, such as water trails or over-snow trails, an improved tread surface may be lacking, but in the absence of a continuous or well-defined tread other developed features, structures, or signs will clearly define a route of travel, a trailhead, and a trail end.

A trail should be designed and maintained to accommodate specified types of recreation which have been determined as appropriate to the setting and land use designation of that trail and its surrounding corridor. Trail design and maintenance standards should reflect levels of difficulty and challenge commensurate with that trail's specified appropriate types of use, while providing for public safety and the protection of natural and cultural resources associated with the trail.

"When you go somewhere; the way you got there is a trail."

Rich Haydon:

Here is a simple approach used by the Federal government for the RTP program:

U.S.C.

Title 23 – HIGHWAYS

CHAPTER 2 – OTHER HIGHWAYS

Sec. 206 – Recreational Trails Program

(2) Recreational trail.—The term "recreational trail" means a thoroughfare or track across land or snow, used for recreational purposes such as—

- (A) pedestrian activities, including wheelchair use;
- (B) skating or skateboarding;
- (C) equestrian activities, including carriage driving;
- (D) nonmotorized snow trail activities, including skiing;
- (E) bicycling or use of other human-powered vehicles;
- (F) aquatic or water activities; and
- (G) motorized vehicular activities, including all-terrain vehicle riding, motorcycling, snowmobiling, use of off-road light

trucks, or use of other off-road motorized vehicles.

Mark Mauren:

Though some members of the public may not be thrilled with the current definition of a trail

“a path, route, way, right-of-way, or corridor posted, signed, or designated as open for travel or passage by the general public but not normally designated as open for the transportation of commercial goods or services by motorized vehicles.”

It is short, generic and doesn't impose a value judgment. The NOVA grant program has worked hard over the last decade to be transparent, fair and neutral.

I would not include “. . . an opportunity to experience solitude or companionship, recreation or challenge; an opportunity for the appreciation of nature; a means of achieving renewal of body, mind, and spirit.”

Because it begins to bring subjectivity into the definition which opens the door to Interpretation and potential argument.

Paul Dahmer:

Replying within the context of the NOVA Program would narrow the definition of trails given that NOVA is a recreation program. Looking more broadly, the first definition seems accurate and most inclusive without making value judgments.

Brenda Yankoviak:

I agree with the last 2 callers: The first part of the current definition seems to be appropriately stated. The second, more esoteric part of the definition could/should be deleted. It's more of a value statement and doesn't help to further define what a trail is.

Don Scogings:

I think the Federal government definition provided by Rich Haydon is best. Adding definitions of what trails are not to be used for is inappropriate. The title “Recreational Trail is” would be better than “A trail is...” This definition uses the words “a track across land or snow,” this seems to me to be incomplete. At least add water.

Michael Fraidenburg

From the Facilitator

Let's have a discussion about this. Please offer amendments to my draft language or tell us if you are in agreement with it as written.

—————DRAFT RECOMMENDATION—————

Definition of ‘trails’ in the NOVA and Trails Plans

Key Findings and Recommendation

The 1991 Washington State Trails Plan provides the following definitions for trails:

A trail is...

. . . a path, route, way, right-of-way, or corridor posted, signed, or designated as open for travel or passage by the general public but not normally designated as open for the transportation of commercial goods or services by motorized vehicles.

. . . an opportunity to experience solitude or companionship, recreation or challenge; an opportunity for the appreciation of nature; a means of achieving renewal of body, mind, and spirit.

Findings: The joint conclusion of the TRAILS and NOVA Advisory Groups is that the definition of a 'trail' from the 1991 Washington State Trails Plan should be revised. The Advisory Groups agree that a new definition for the Recreation and Conservation Office should,

- Specifically reference recreation,
- Be broadly inclusive of habitat types and modes of transport without making value judgments supporting a priori policy and funding choices,
- Reference trails as a part of the state's transportation system, and
- Not reference the nature of the experiences associated with trail use.

Recommendation: The NOVA and TRAILS Advisory Groups recommends the following definition.

The term 'recreational trail' means a part of the state's transportation system that consists of a clearly defined route of travel with a distinct starting point (trailhead) and ending point (trail end) that is a thoroughfare or track that can be mapped across land, snow, ice, or water that is used for recreational purposes.

### END ###

Rich Haydon:

I'd suggest changing the word "mapped" to something more active, along the lines of "navigated," or perhaps "followed," "traversed," "travelled," "taken," etc.

But as is I think it's a marked improvement over the old definition.

Michael Fraidenburg

Submitted by Mary Levensky by email.

Posted by the facilitator.

Michael,

Concerning the proposed definition of "recreational trail," I don't think a precise and accurate definition is possible. But "clearly defined" should be changed to "more or less clearly defined" to account for over-grown, seldom used, rock wall, boulder field, and water trails. (Are there clearly defined trails to the top of northwest mountains? Is there a clearly defined water trail between Orcas and Sucia? "Start at North Beach, head north, and be sure to keep west or east of Parker Reef!")

Mark

Brenda Yankoviak:

I like the first part of the original 1991 definition (without the values statement and adding 'A recreational trail is...'). Clearly, much thought was put into development of that definition: it's inclusive of many types of trails, (e.g. path, route, right of way, etc) provides some general language (e.g. travel or passage, not normally designated as open) to provide for interpretation or flexibility, if needed, and distinguishes a recreational trail from a commercial route. I like the original definition better than the proposed new definition. I don't think the idea of a trail being mapped or having a trailhead or ending point really adds to the understanding of what makes a trail a trail, and don't think defining the resource type (land, air, water, snow, ice, etc) is necessary either.

Don Scogings:

I agree the definition needs to be changed.

Rich Haydon:

I guess it's worth going back to the start: if folks are not comfortable with a definition that narrows the meaning of a "recreation trail" then maybe there is no reason to "define" the word in terms of NOVA. If the standard dictionary definition of a trail is sufficient, then crafting a NOVA-specific definition is unnecessary.

Are there “trails” that shouldn’t qualify as “a trail” for the purposes of NOVA, or qualities essential for a trail to be eligible for consideration under NOVA? If there aren’t concerns of that kind then there is no more need to define “trail” than there is to define “recreation,” “bicycle,” or “horse.” Perhaps the real issue is “public access.”

## APPENDIX B: REGIONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAIL USERS FOR 11 TRAIL ACTIVITY CATEGORIES

### WALKING TRAIL USERS

In total, 40% of Washington State residents participate in some type of walking activity involving trails: 16% of Washington residents walk *with* a pet in a park or trail setting and 35% of Washington residents walk *without* a pet in a park or trail setting. The mean number of days Washington State residents participate in walking activities is 98 days per year (note that this figure includes participants of *all* walking activities, not just those involving trails). Participation rates for walking activities are reflected in the table below.

Activity	Percent of Residents in Washington State Participating in the Activity
<b>Walking on Trails</b>	<b>39.8</b>
Walking With a Pet—Park or Trail Setting	15.5
Walking Without a Pet—Park or Trail Setting	35.3

### Regional Breakdown of Walking Trail Users

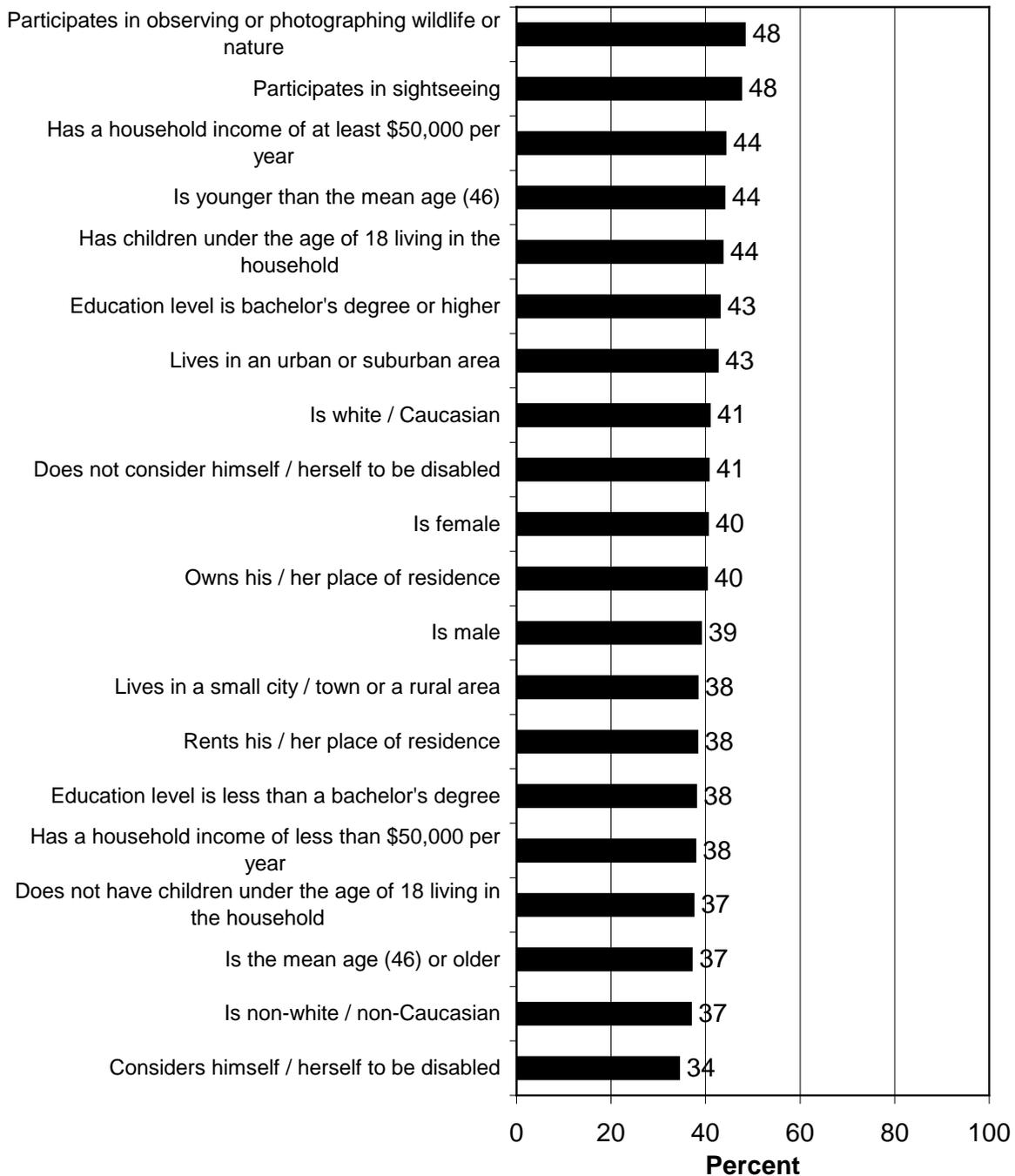
The table below shows the regional participation rates for walking trail users. At the top of the ranking are the Islands and King/Seattle regions, each with 44% of residents participating in walking activities involving trails; meanwhile, the Columbia Plateau region has the lowest percentage of residents participating in trail-related walking activities (28%).

Regional Participation Rates of Walking Trail Users	
The Islands	44.3
King/Seattle	43.9
Peninsulas	42.0
The Palouse	41.1
Southwest	40.5
South Central	38.8
Northeast	36.9
North Cascades	34.3
The Coast	32.9
Columbia Plateau	28.1

## **Demographic Breakdown of Walking Trail Users**

The graph on the following page shows the breakdown of major demographic and participatory subgroups within the overall survey sample that participate in walking activities involving trails. In this ranking, the top groups among all Washington State residents that participate in walking activities involving trails include those who participate in observing or photographing wildlife or nature (48% of this group participates in walking activities involving trails) and those who participate in sightseeing (48%). The next top tier of groups participating in walking activities involving trails consists of those with a household income of at least \$50,000 per year (44%), those younger than the mean age of 46 (44%), and those with children under the age of 18 living in the household (44%).

**Percent of each of the following groups that participate in walking activities involving trails:**



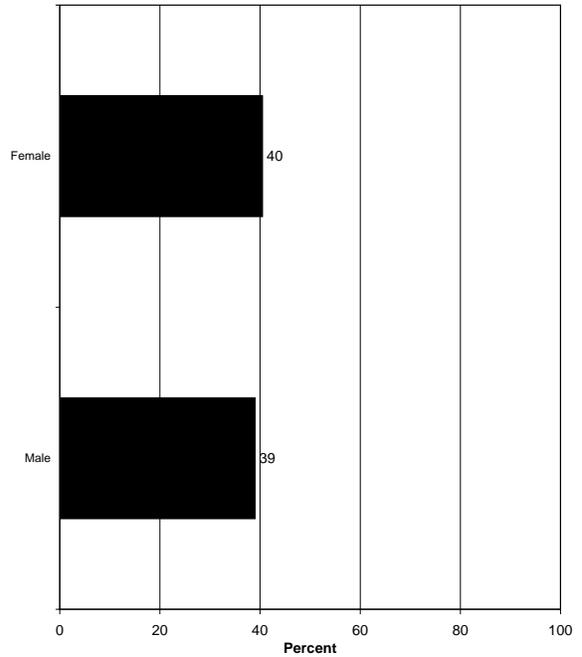
The series of graphs beginning on the next page breaks down walking trail users by seven key demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, household income level, residence type, rent/ownership of residence, and disability status (i.e., whether the respondent considers him- or herself to be disabled). Two types of graphs are included for each demographic characteristic. The first graph is a histogram showing the percentage of each group within the demographic category participating in walking activities involving trails (for instance, 40% of females and 39% of males participate in walking activities involving trails). The second graph is a pie chart showing a proportional breakdown of walking trail users by the demographic category in question (for instance, 52% of walking trail users are female and 48% are male).

## Walking Trail Users by Gender

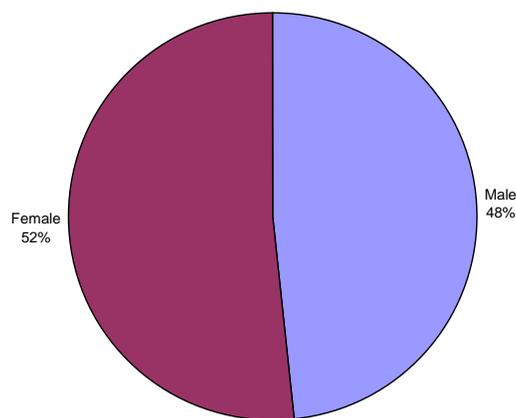
As shown in the histogram to the right, 40% of male Washington residents and 39% of female Washington residents participate in some type of outdoor recreation involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that slightly more female than male Washington residents participate in walking activities involving trails.

Percent of males and females who participate in walking activities involving trails:



Percent of Walking Trail Users by Gender:

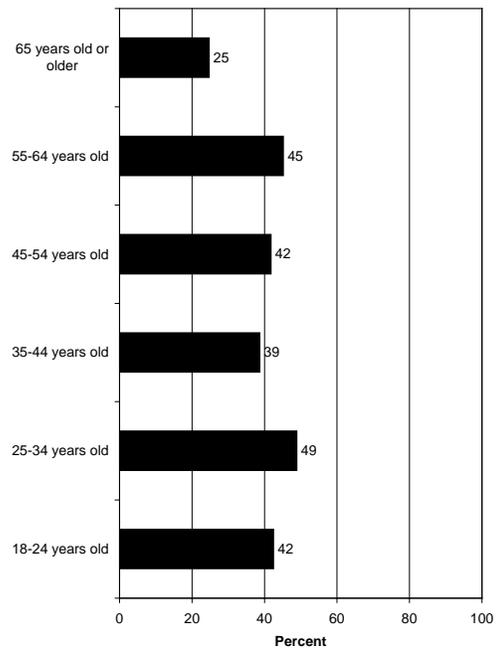


## Walking Trail Users by Age

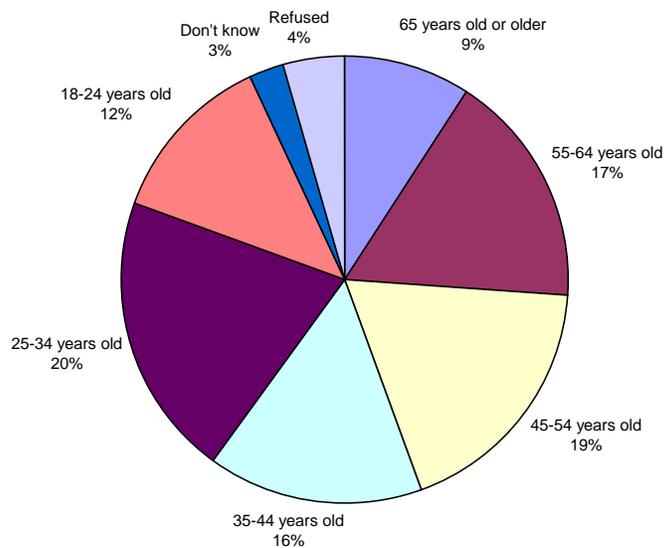
The histogram to the right shows that the most common age category for participation in walking activities involving trails is 25-34-year-olds; this is followed by 55-64-year-olds, 18-24-year-olds, and 45-54-year-olds.

The pie chart below shows that walking trail users in Washington are fairly evenly comprised of both younger and middle-aged adults.

Percent of each of the following age categories that participate in walking activities involving trails:



Percent of Walking Trail Users by Age:

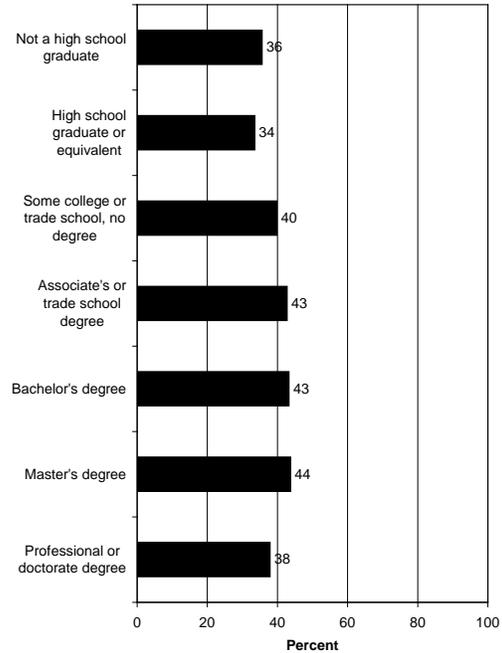


### Walking Trail Users by Education Level

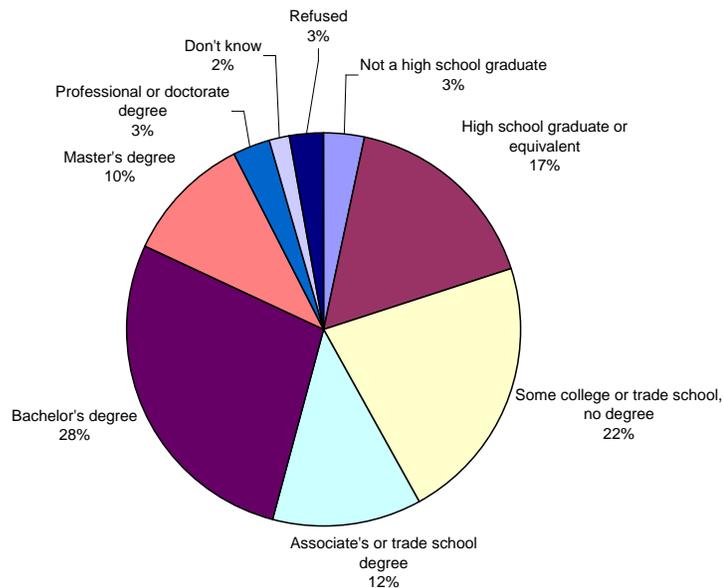
As shown in the histogram to the right, participation in walking activities involving trails generally tends to increase slightly along with education level; the exception is those with a professional or graduate degree, who participate at a lower rate than those with some college or trade school, those with an associate’s or trade school degree, those with a bachelor’s degree, and those with a master’s degree.

The pie chart below shows that participants of walking activities involving trails most commonly hold a bachelor’s degree or have completed some college or trade school.

Percent of each of the following education level categories that participate in walking activities involving trails:



Percent of Walking Trail Users by Education Level:



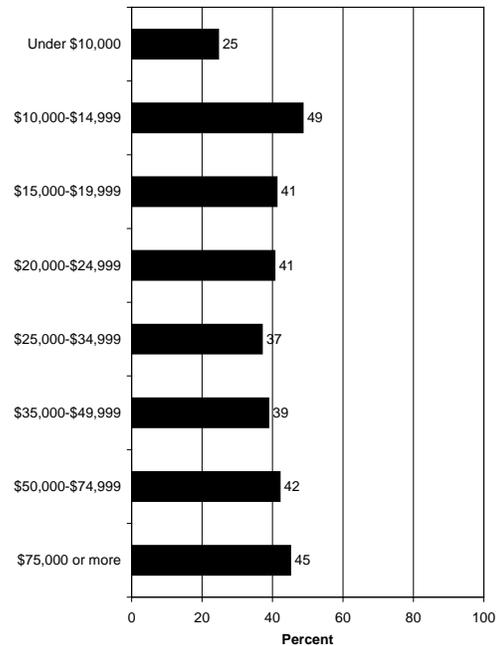
### Walking Trail Users by Household Income Level

In the histogram to the right, the top household income category for participating in walking activities involving trails is the \$10,000-\$14,999 category, followed by the \$75,000 or more and \$50,000-\$74,999 categories.

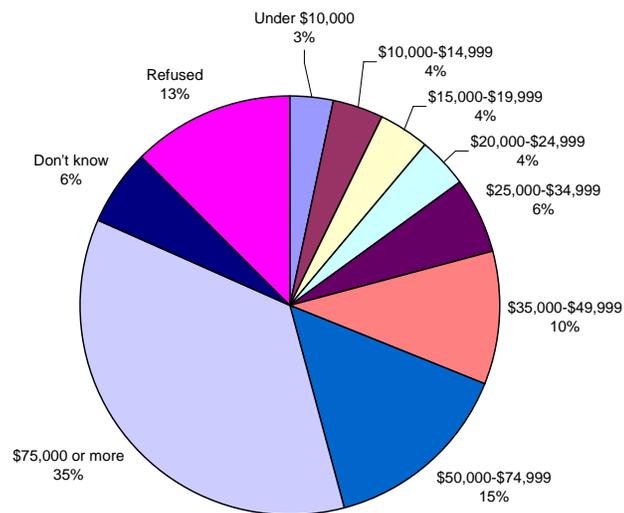
The pie chart below shows that most walking trail users have a household income over \$35,000; more than a third have a household income of \$75,000 or more.

(Note that 19% of walking trail users refused the income question or said they were unsure.)

Percent of each of the following income level categories that participate in walking activities involving trails:



Percent of Walking Trail Users by Income Category:

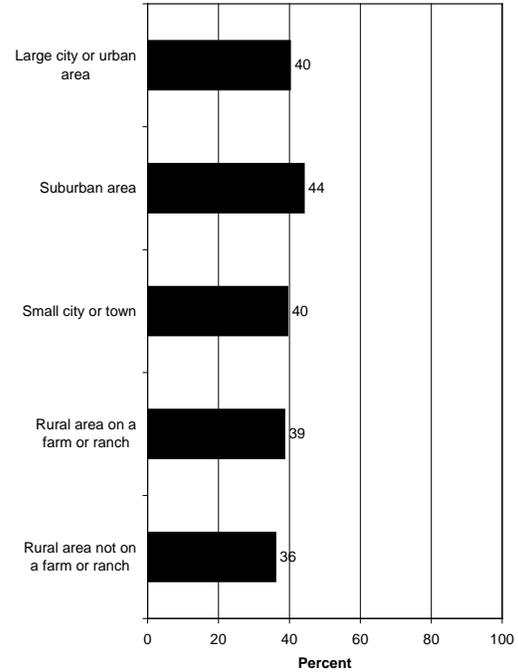


### Walking Trail Users by Residence Type

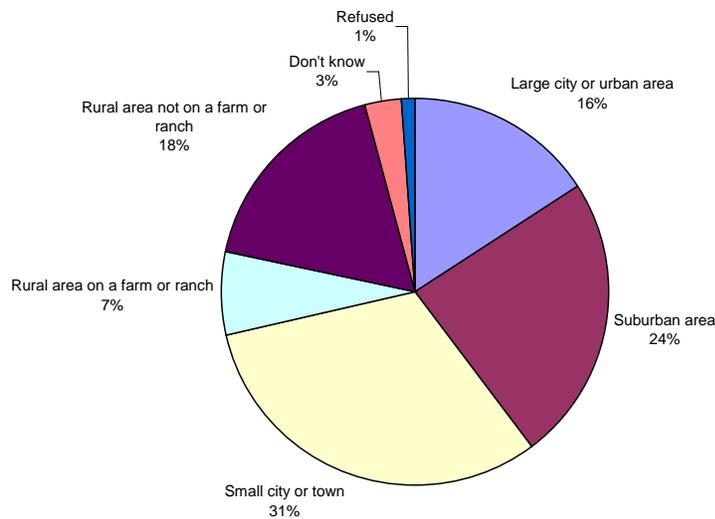
As shown in the histogram at right, participation in walking activities involving trails is fairly consistent across the major residence categories; the highest rate of participation is among those living in a suburban area.

The pie chart below indicates that participants of walking activities involving trails most often live in small cities or towns, rural areas, or suburban areas.

Percent of each of the following residence categories that participate in walking activities involving trails:



Percent of Walking Trail Users by Residence Type:

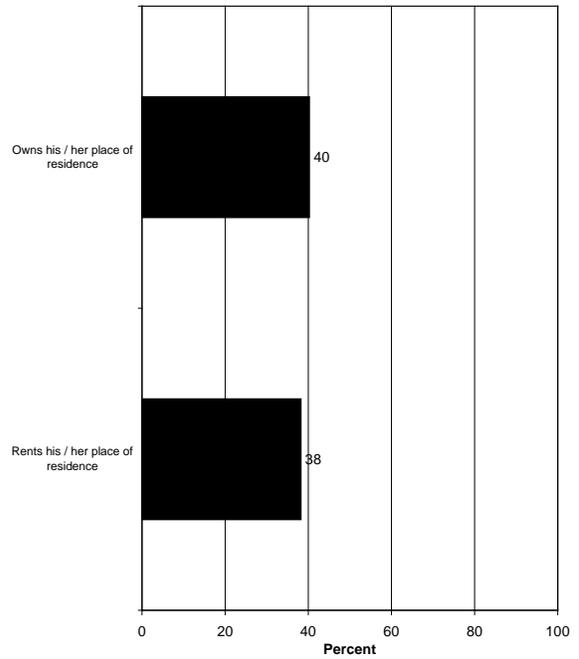


### Walking Trail Users by Rent/Ownership of Residence

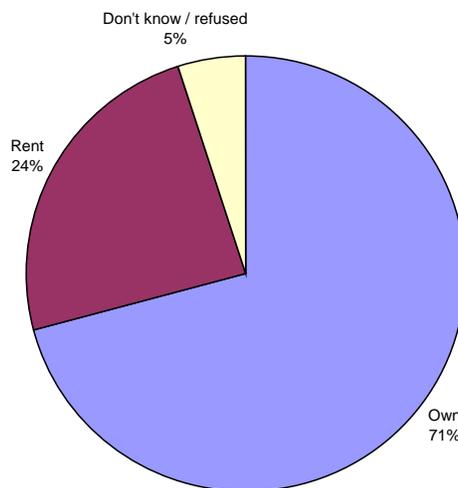
The histogram to the right shows similar rates of participation in walking activities involving trails among both owners and renters, with around 40% of each group participating.

The pie chart below shows that nearly three quarters of walking trail users own their place of residence.

Percent of residence renters and owners that participate in walking activities involving trails:



Percent of Walking Trail Users by Rent / Own Residence:

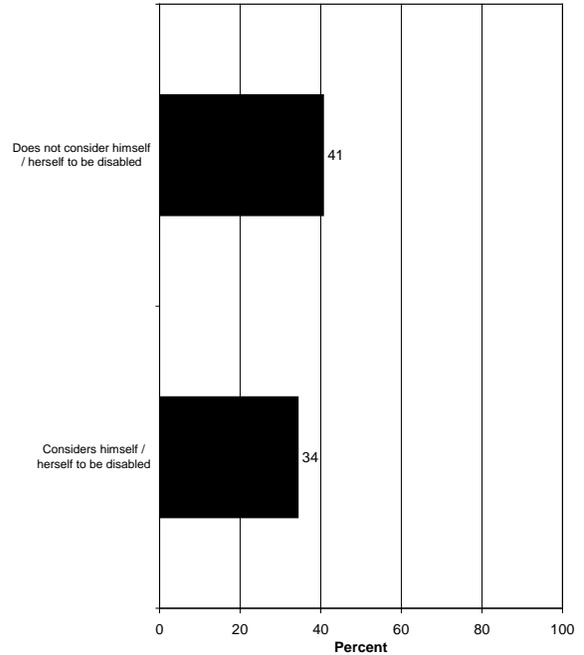


### Walking Trail Users by Disability Status

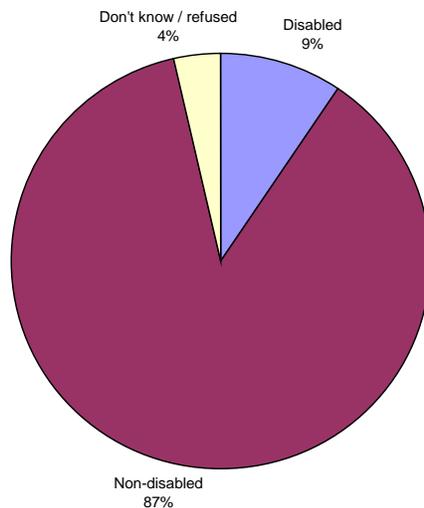
As shown in the histogram at right, the participation rate for walking activities involving trails among disabled individuals is only slightly less than the rate for non-disabled individuals, with 34% of disabled Washington residents participating compared to 41% of non-disabled residents.

The pie chart below shows that about one in ten walking trail users is disabled.

Percent of non-disabled and disabled people who participate in walking activities involving trails:



Percent of Walking Trail Users by Disability:



## HIKING TRAIL USERS

In total, 51% of Washington State residents participate in hiking activities involving trails: 18% of Washington residents hike on urban trails, 19% of Washington residents hike on rural trails, and 36% of Washington residents hike on mountain or forest trails. The mean number of days Washington State residents participate in hiking activities is 17 days per year (note that this figure includes participants of *all* hiking activities, not just those involving trails). A breakdown of participation rates for hiking activities involving urban, rural, and mountain/forest trails is shown in the table below.

Activity	Percent of Residents in Washington State Participating in the Activity
<b>Hiking—Trails</b>	<b>51.0</b>
Hiking—Urban Trails	17.5
Hiking—Rural Trails	18.5
Hiking—Mountain or Forest Trails	36.4

### Regional Breakdown of Hiking Trail Users

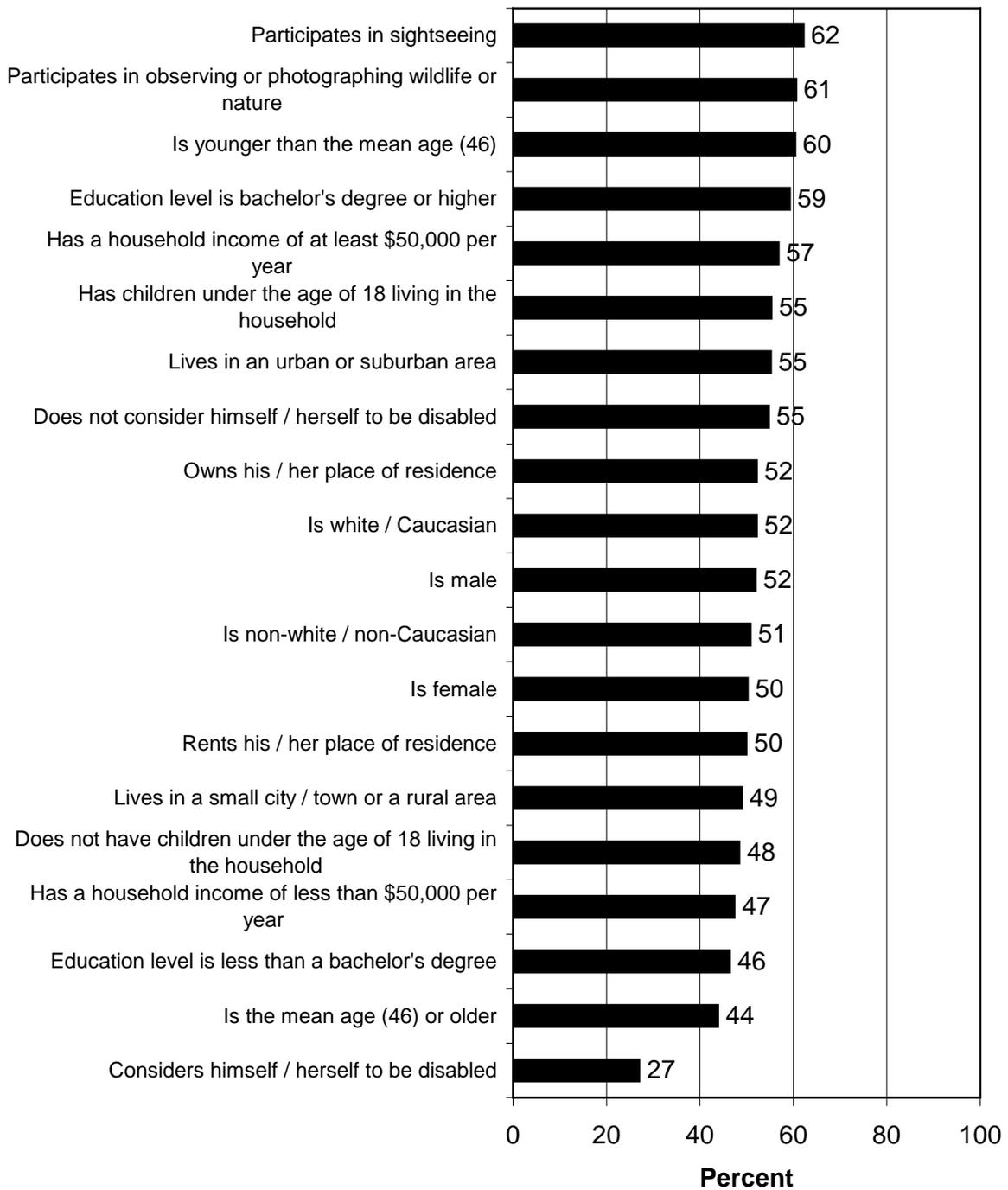
The table below shows the regional participation rates for hiking trail users. At the top of the ranking is the King/Seattle region, in which 57% of residents participate in hiking activities involving trails; at the other end of the spectrum, the Columbia Plateau region has the lowest rate of participation in hiking activities involving trails (30% of residents in this region engage in such outdoor recreation).

Regional Participation Rates of Hiking Trail Users	
King/Seattle	56.5
North Cascades	55.3
The Islands	53.9
Southwest	50.1
The Palouse	47.2
Northeast	47.2
South Central	43.2
Peninsulas	41.9
The Coast	38.8
Columbia Plateau	30.3

### **Demographic Breakdown of Hiking Trail Users**

The graph on the following page shows the breakdown of major demographic and participatory subgroups within the overall survey sample that participate in hiking activities involving trails. In this ranking, the top groups among all Washington State residents that participate in hiking activities involving trails include those who participate in sightseeing (62% of this group participates in hiking activities involving trails), those who participate in observing or photographing wildlife or nature (61%), and those younger than mean age of 46 (60%). The next top tier of groups participating in hiking activities involving trails consists of those with an education level of a bachelor's degree or higher (59%) and those with a household income of at least \$50,000 per year (57%).

### Percent of each of the following groups that participate in hiking activities involving trails:



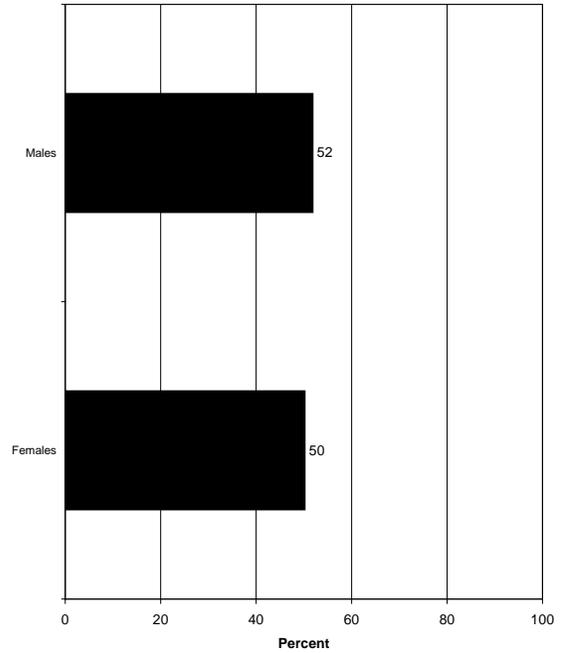
The series of graphs beginning on the next page breaks down hiking trail users by seven key demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, household income level, residence type, rent/ownership of residence, and disability status (i.e., whether the respondent considers him- or herself to be disabled). Two types of graphs are included for each demographic characteristic. The first graph is a histogram showing the percentage of each group within the demographic category participating in hiking activities involving trails (for instance, 52% of males and 50% of females participate in hiking activities involving trails). The second graph is a pie chart showing a proportional breakdown of hiking trail users by the demographic category in question (for instance, 50% of hiking trail users are male and 50% are female).

### Hiking Trail Users by Gender

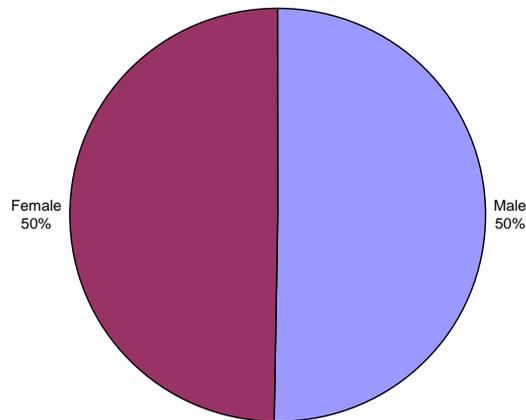
As shown in the histogram to the right, about half of male and female Washington residents participate in hiking activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows an even gender split among hiking trail users in Washington.

Percent of males and females who participate in hiking activities involving trails:



Percent of Hiking Trail Users by Gender:

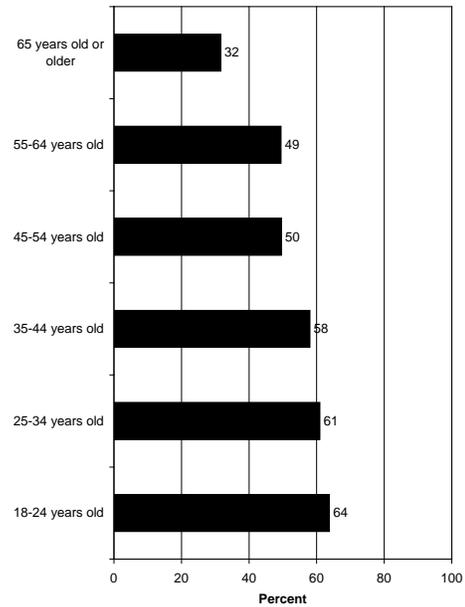


### Hiking Trail Users by Age

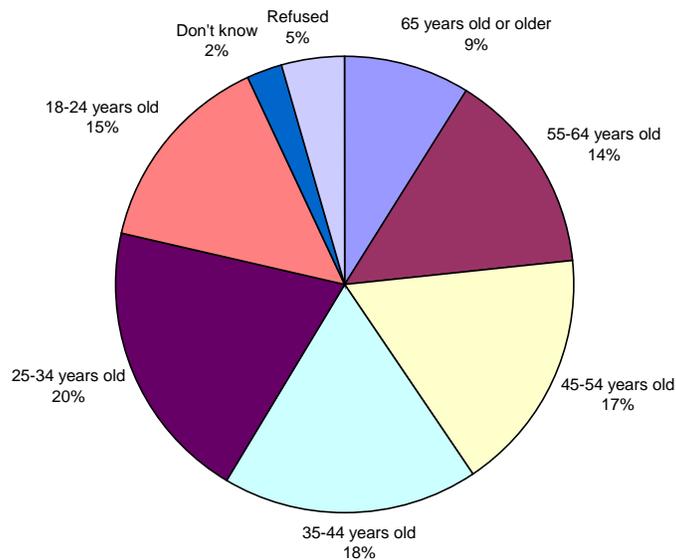
The histogram to the right shows that participation in hiking activities involving trails generally declines with age: nearly two-thirds of 18-24-year-olds participate in hiking involving trails, compared to about a third of those 65 years old and older.

The pie chart below shows that most hiking trail users fall between the ages of 25 and 54 years old.

Percent of each of the following age categories that participate in hiking activities involving trails:



Percent of Hiking Trail Users by Age:

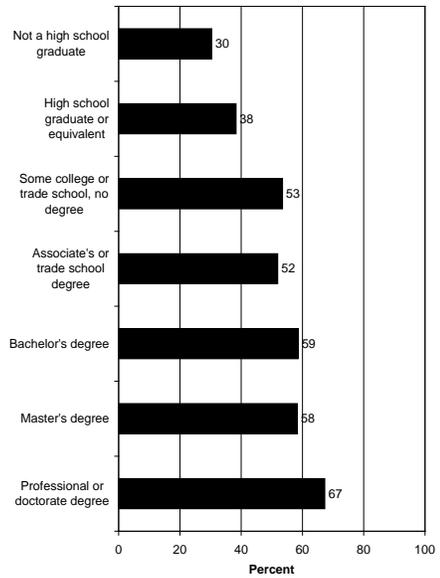


### Hiking Trail Users by Education Level

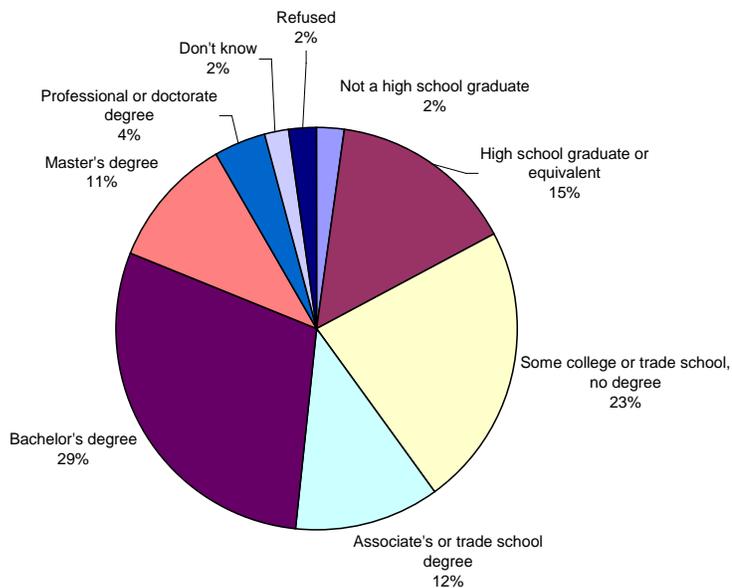
As shown in the histogram to the right, participation in hiking activities involving trails generally tends to increase along with education level, with the highest rate of participation among those with a professional or doctorate degree.

The pie chart below shows that a majority of hiking trail users have completed, at minimum, an associate's or trade school degree.

Percent of each of the following education level categories that participate in hiking activities involving trails:



Percent of Hiking Trail Users by Education Level:



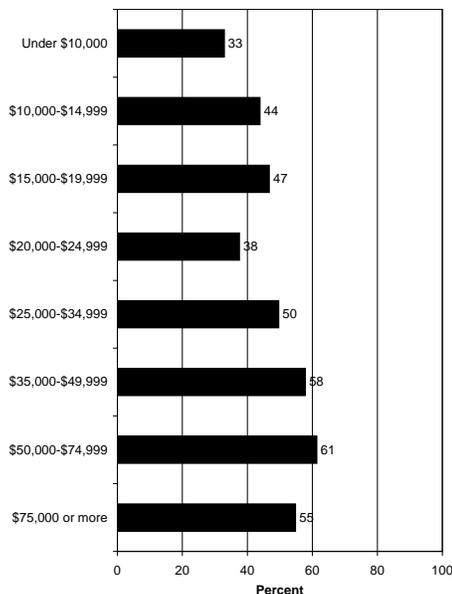
### Hiking Trail Users by Household Income Level

In the histogram to the right, household income categories at or above the \$25,000 level have at least 50% of individuals participating in hiking activities involving trails; the lower income categories have less than half of individuals participating.

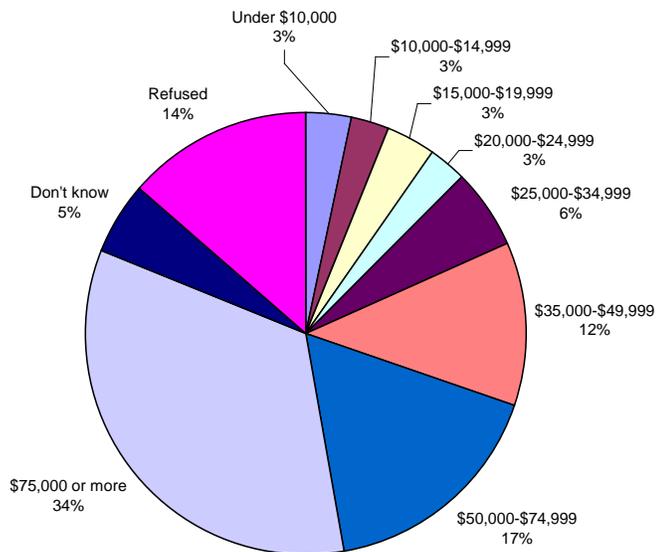
The pie chart below shows that just over half of all hiking trail users have a household income of \$50,000 or more.

(Note that 19% of hiking trail users refused the income question or said they were unsure.)

Percent of each of the following income level categories that participate in hiking activities involving trails:



Percent of Hiking Trail Users by Income Category:

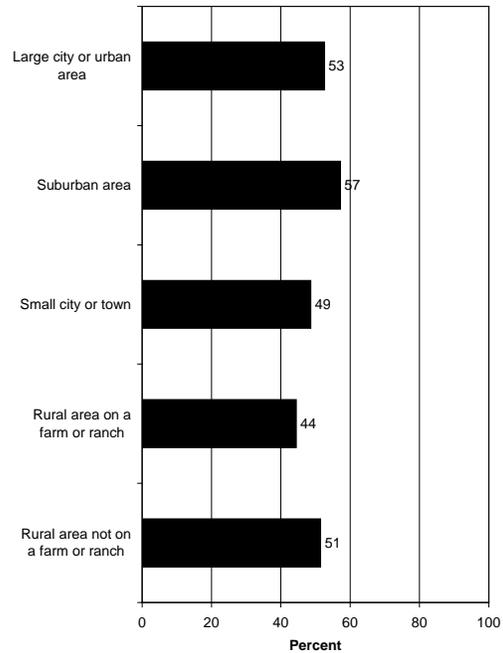


### Hiking Trail Users by Residence Type

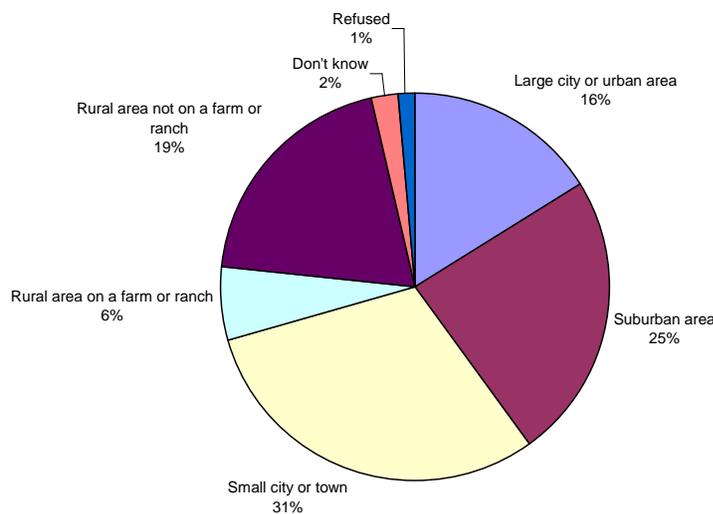
As shown in the histogram at right, participation in hiking activities involving trails is fairly consistent across the major residence categories; the highest rate of participation is among those living in a suburban area.

The pie chart below indicates that hiking trail users most often live in small cities or towns, suburban areas, or rural areas.

Percent of each of the following residence categories that participate in hiking activities involving trails:



Percent of Hiking Trail Users by Residence Type:

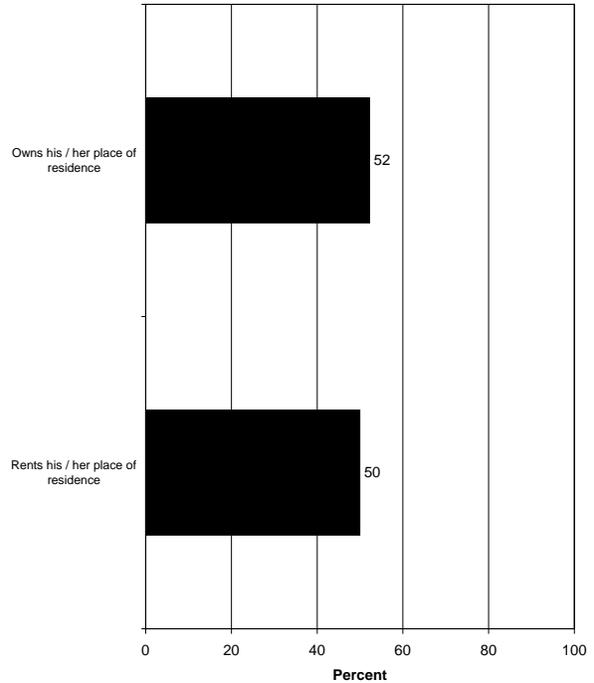


### Hiking Trail Users by Rent/Ownership of Residence

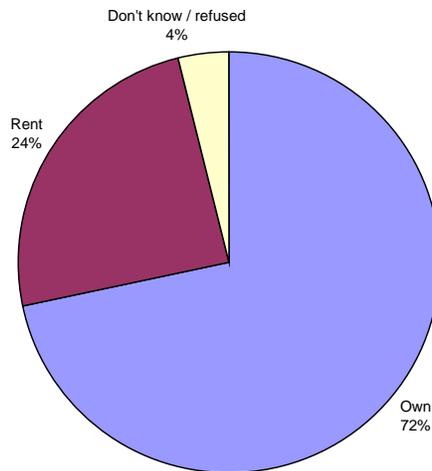
The histogram to the right shows that about half of residence renters and owners participate in hiking activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that nearly three quarters of hiking trail users own their place of residence, with around a quarter renting.

Percent of residence renters and owners that participate in hiking activities involving trails:



Percent of Hiking Trail Users by Rent / Own Residence:

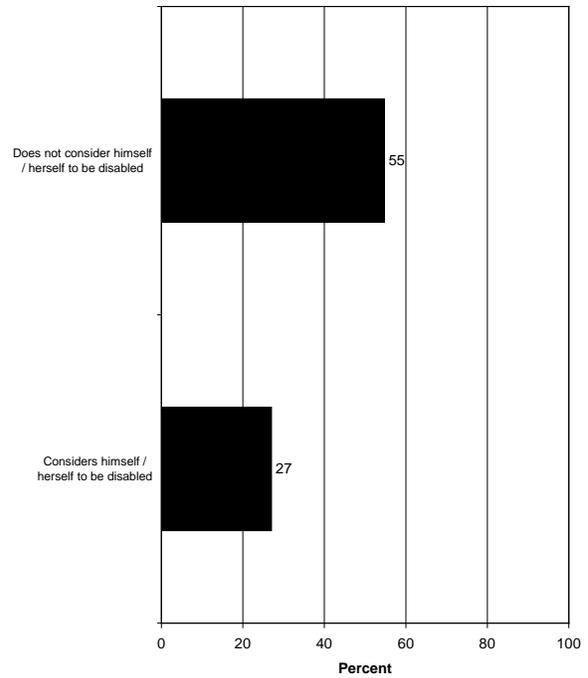


### Hiking Trail Users by Disability Status

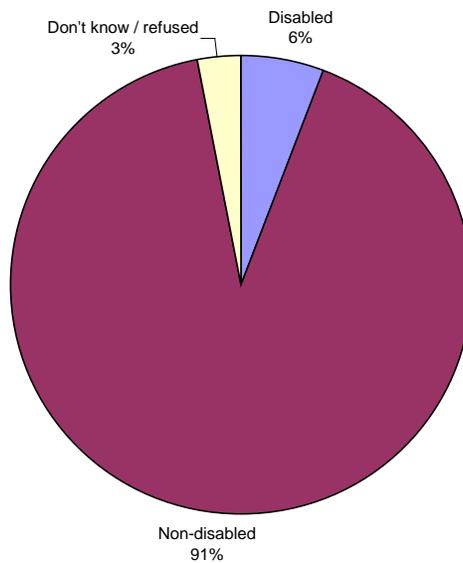
As shown in the histogram at right, more than half of non-disabled residents and more than a quarter of disabled residents participate in hiking activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that 6% of hiking trail users are disabled individuals.

Percent of non-disabled and disabled people who participate in hiking activities involving trails:



Percent of Hiking Trail Users by Disability:



## BICYCLE TRAIL USERS

In total, 24% of Washington State residents participate in bicycle riding activities involving trails: 17% of Washington residents participate in bicycle riding on urban trails, 11% of Washington residents ride on rural trails, and 8% of Washington residents ride on mountain or forest trails. The mean number of days Washington State residents participate in bicycle riding activities is 36 days per year (note that this figure includes participants of *all* bicycle riding activities, not just those involving trails). A breakdown of participation rates for walking activities involving urban, rural, and mountain/forest trails is shown in the table below.

Activity	Percent of Residents in Washington State Participating in the Activity
<b>Bicycle Riding—Trails</b>	<b>24.4</b>
Bicycle Riding—Urban Trails	17.3
Bicycle Riding—Rural Trails	10.8
Bicycle Riding—Mountain or Forest Trails	8.0

### Regional Breakdown of Bicycle Trail Users

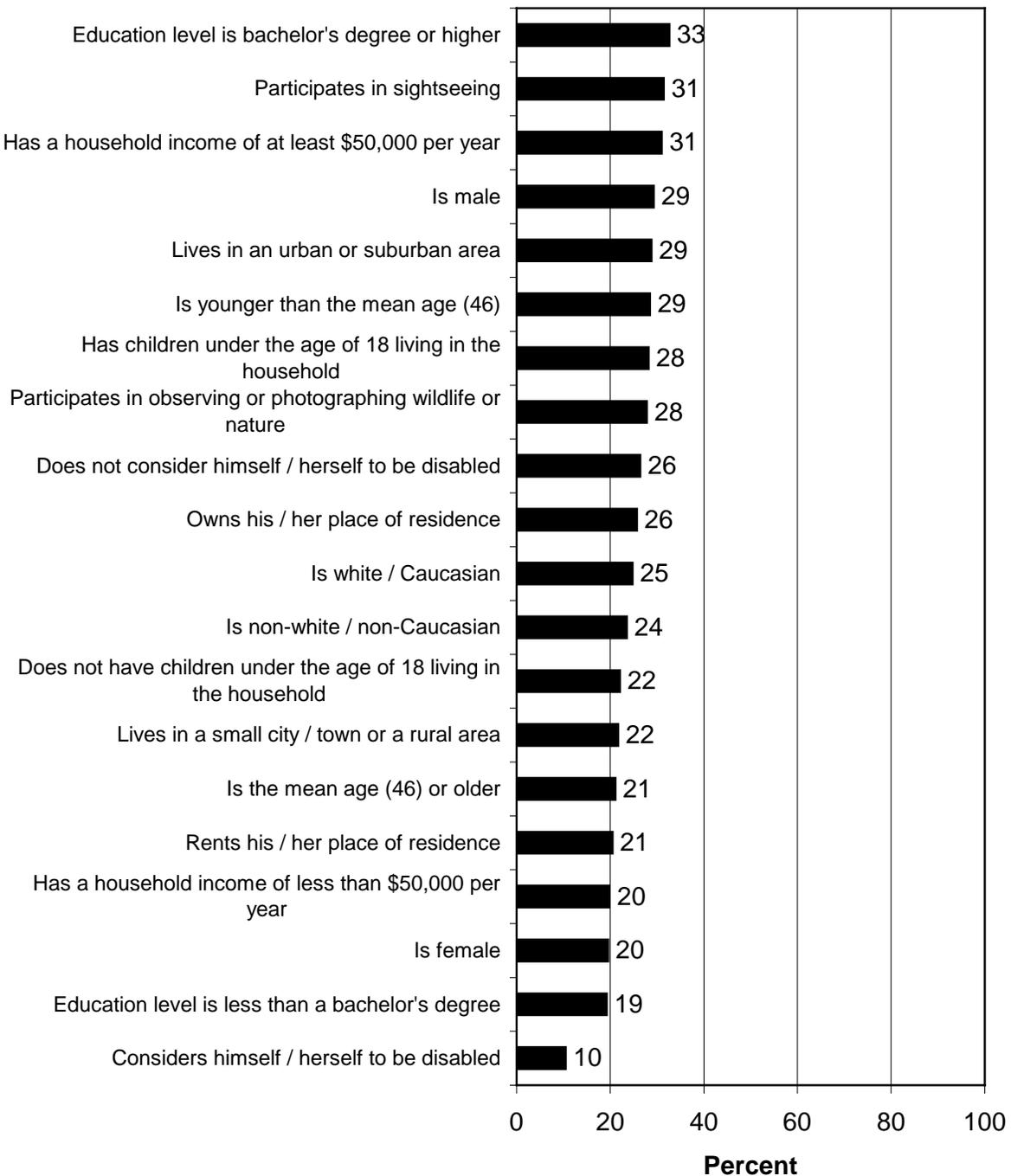
The table below shows the regional participation rates for bicycle trail users. At the top of the ranking is the Palouse region, where 31% of residents participate in bicycle activities involving trails; by contrast, the Peninsula region has the least amount of residents participating in bicycle activities involving trails, with just 15% of residents doing so.

Regional Participation Rates of Bicycle Trail Users	
The Palouse	30.9
King/Seattle	27.6
Northeast	27.5
North Cascades	24.2
Southwest	23.5
South Central	22.3
The Islands	20.5
Columbia Plateau	20.3
The Coast	17.5
Peninsulas	14.9

## **Demographic Breakdown of Bicycle Trail Users**

The graph on the following page shows the breakdown of major demographic and participatory subgroups within the overall survey sample that participate in bicycle activities involving trails. In this ranking, three groups among all Washington State residents have more than 30% of individuals participating in bicycle activities involving trails: those with an education level of a bachelor's degree or higher (33%, the top demographic group for participants of bicycle activities involving trails), those who participate in sightseeing (31%), and those with a household income of at least \$50,000 per year (31%). Demographic groups with at least 28% of individuals participating in bicycle activities involving trails include males (29%), those who live in an urban or suburban area (29%), those younger than the mean age of 46 (29%), those with children under the age of 18 living in their household (28%), and those who participate in observing or photographing wildlife or nature (28%).

**Percent of each of the following groups that participate in bicycle activities involving trails:**



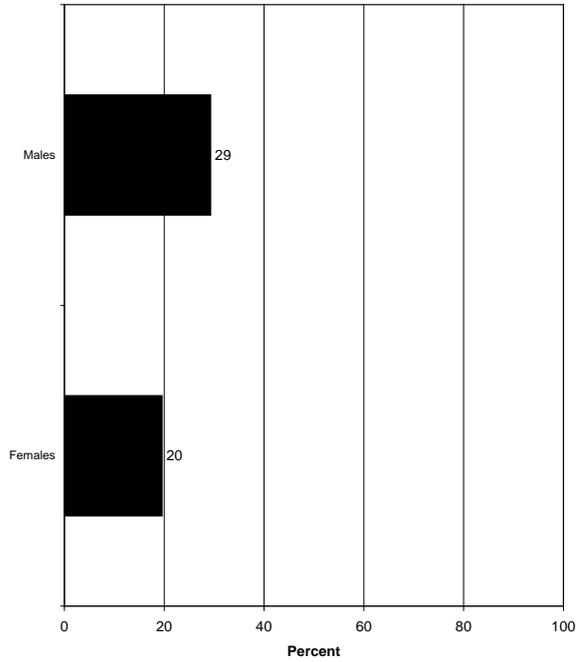
The series of graphs beginning on the next page breaks down bicycle trail users by seven key demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, household income level, residence type, rent/ownership of residence, and disability status (i.e., whether the respondent considers him- or herself to be disabled). Two types of graphs are included for each demographic characteristic. The first graph is a histogram showing the percentage of each group within the demographic category participating in bicycle activities involving trails (for instance, 29% of males and 20% of females participate in bicycle activities involving trails). The second graph is a pie chart showing a proportional breakdown of bicycle trail users by the demographic category in question (for instance, 59% of bicycle trail users are male and 41% are female).

### Bicycle Trail Users by Gender

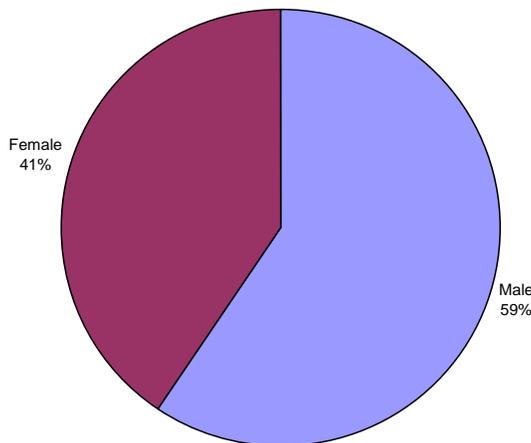
As shown in the histogram to the right, more than a quarter of male Washington residents and a fifth of female Washington residents participate in bicycle activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that the majority of bicycle trail users in Washington are male.

Percent of males and females who participate in bicycle activities involving trails:



Percent of Bicycle Trail Users by Gender:

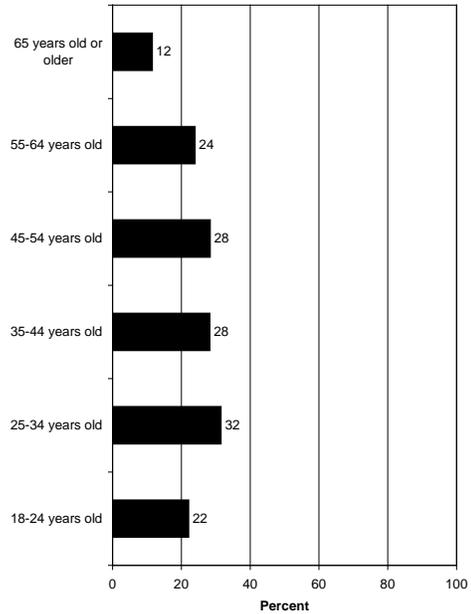


### Bicycle Trail Users by Age

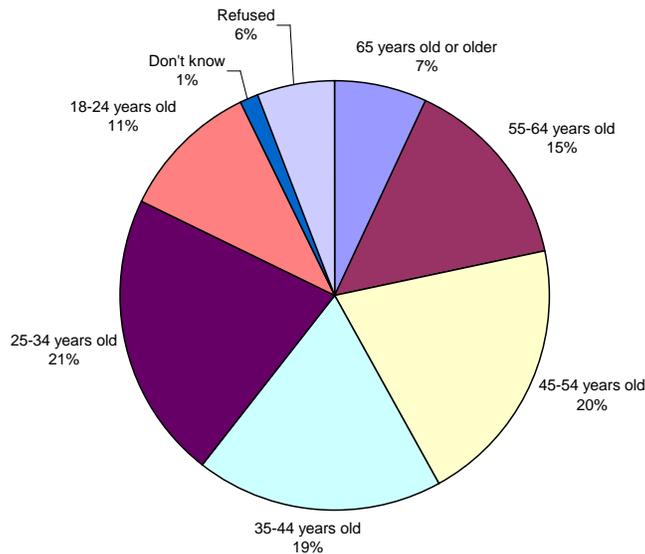
The histogram to the right shows that the most common age categories for participation in bicycle activities involving trails are 25-34-year-olds, 35-44-year-olds, and 45-54-year-olds.

The pie chart below shows that bicycle trail users in Washington are fairly evenly distributed throughout the young adult and middle age categories.

Percent of each of the following age categories that participate in bicycle activities involving trails:



Percent of Bicycle Trail Users by Age:

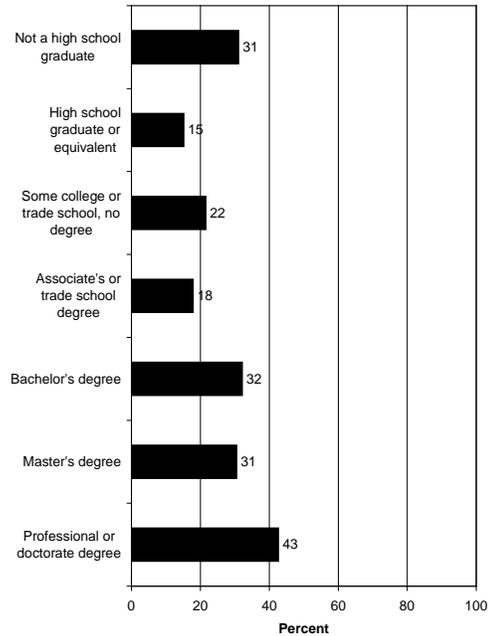


### Bicycle Trail Users by Education Level

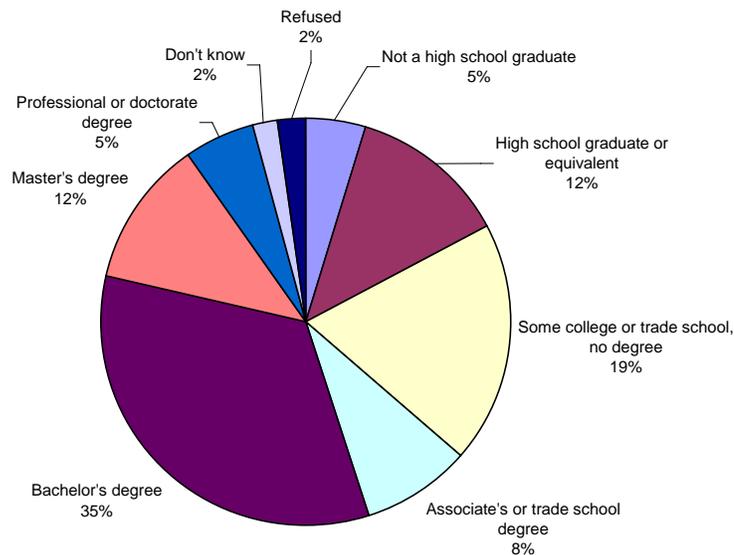
As shown in the histogram to the right, participation in bicycle activities involving trails is highest among non-high school graduates as well as those with a bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, or professional or doctorate degree.

The pie chart below shows that a majority of bicycle trail users in Washington have completed, at minimum, an associate’s or trade school degree.

Percent of each of the following education level categories that participate in bicycle activities involving trails:



Percent of Bicycle Trail Users by Education Level:



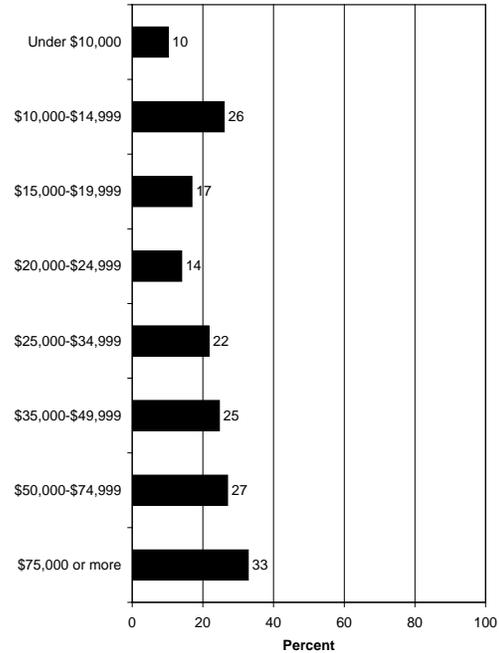
### Bicycle Trail Users by Household Income Level

In the histogram to the right, participation in bicycle activities involving trails generally tends to increase with household income level; the major exception is in the \$10,000-\$14,999 category, where more than a quarter of individuals participate in bicycle activities involving trails.

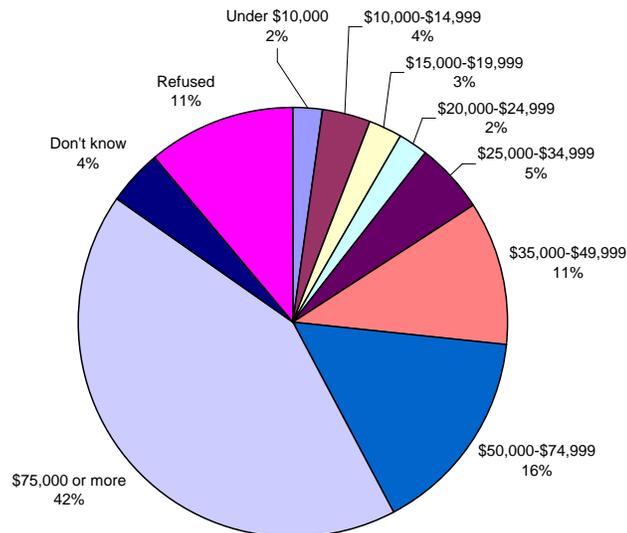
As shown in the pie chart below, most bicycle trail users have a household income of at least \$50,000.

(Note that 15% of bicycle trail users refused the income question or said they were unsure.)

Percent of each of the following income level categories that participate in bicycle activities involving trails:



Percent of Bicycle Trail Users by Income Category:

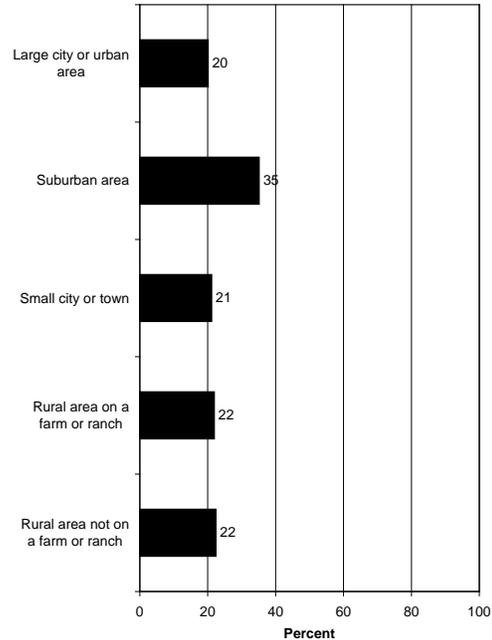


### Bicycle Trail Users by Residence Type

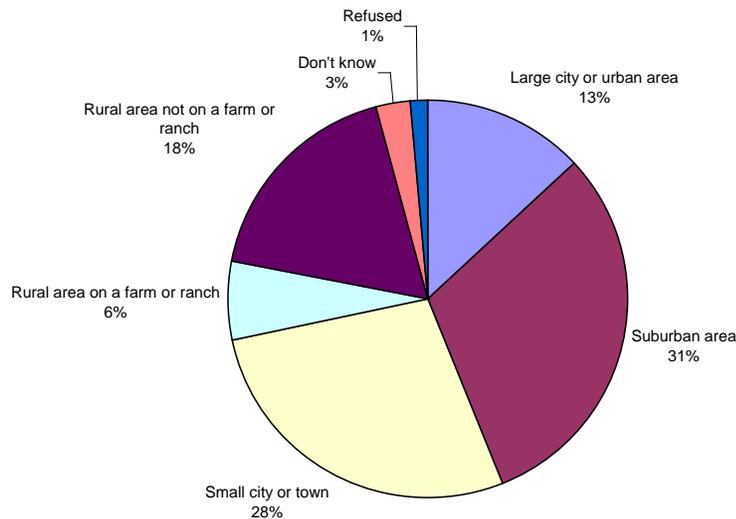
As shown in the histogram at right, most of the major residence categories have around a fifth of individuals participating in bicycle activities involving trails; the exception is the suburban area category, where more than a third of individuals participate in this type of outdoor recreation.

The pie chart below indicates that participants of bicycle activities involving trails most often live in suburban areas, small cities or towns, or rural areas.

Percent of each of the following residence categories that participate in bicycle activities involving trails:



Percent of Bicycle Trail Users by Residence Type:

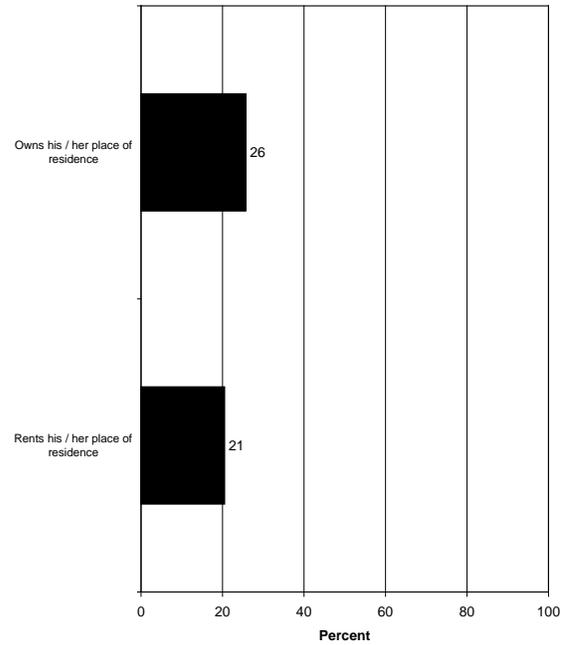


### Bicycle Trail Users by Rent/Ownership of Residence

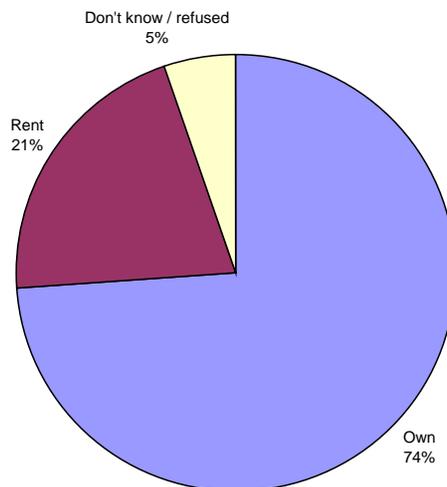
The histogram to the right indicates that about a quarter of residence owners and a fifth of residence renters participate in bicycle activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that nearly three quarters of bicycle trail users own their place of residence; at least a fifth rent.

Percent of residence renters and owners that participate in bicycle activities involving trails:



Percent of Bicycle Trail Users by Rent / Own Residence:

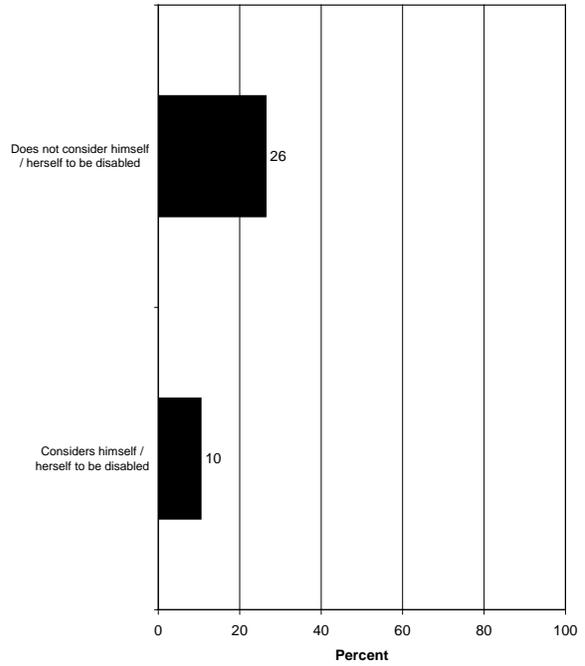


### Bicycle Trail Users by Disability Status

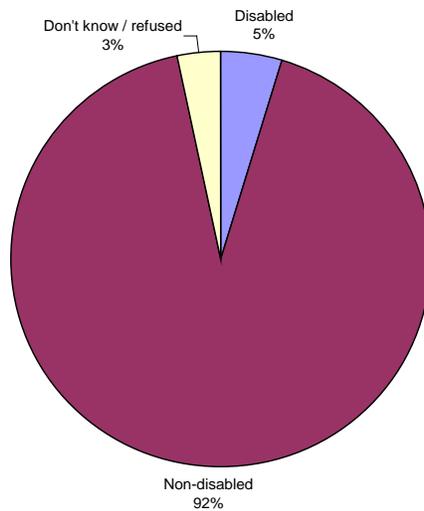
As shown in the histogram at right, about one in four non-disabled Washington residents and one in ten disabled residents participate in bicycle activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that 5% of bicycle trail users are disabled residents.

Percent of non-disabled and disabled people who participate in bicycle activities involving trails:



Percent of Bicycle Trail Users by Disability:



## HORSEBACK TRAIL USERS

In total, 4% of Washington State residents participate in horseback riding activities involving trails: 0.5% of Washington residents engage in horseback riding activities on urban trails, 2% of Washington residents participate on rural trails, and 3% of Washington residents participate on mountain or forest trails. The mean number of days Washington State residents participate in horseback riding activities is 32 days per year (note that this figure includes participants of *all* horseback riding activities, not just those involving trails). A breakdown of participation rates for horseback activities involving urban, rural, and mountain/forest trails is shown in the table below.

Activity	Percent of Residents in Washington State Participating in the Activity
<b>Horseback Riding—Trails</b>	<b>3.9</b>
Horseback Riding—Urban Trails	0.5
Horseback Riding—Rural Trails	2.3
Horseback Riding—Mountain or Forest Trails	2.7

### Regional Breakdown of Horseback Trail Users

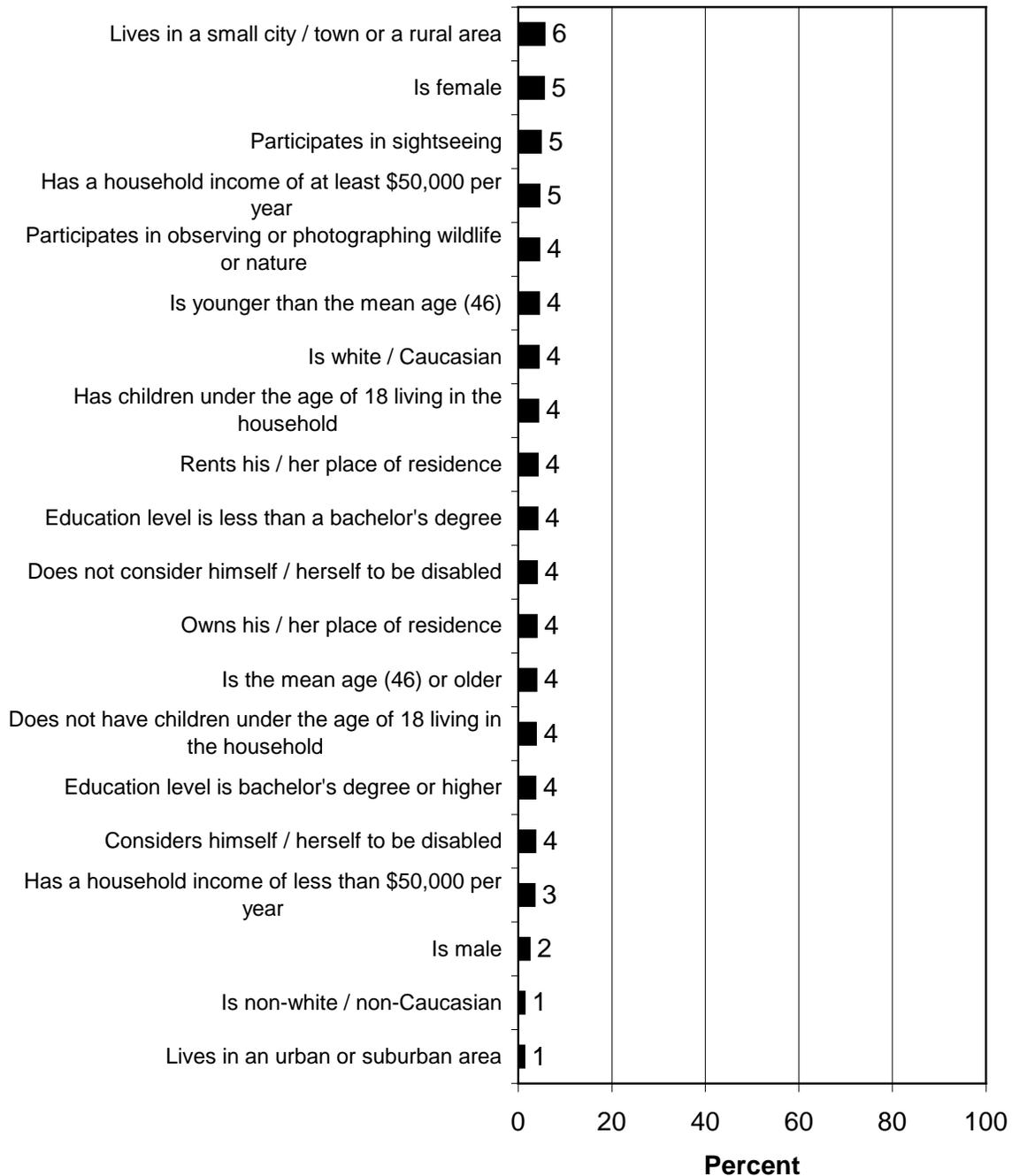
The table below shows the regional participation rates for horseback trail users. At the top of the ranking are the North Cascades and Northeast regions, each with 6% of residents participating in horseback riding activities involving trails; meanwhile, the Islands, King/Seattle, and Columbia Plateau regions occupy the low end of the spectrum, each with around 2% of residents participating in horseback riding activities involving trails.

Regional Participation Rates of Horseback Trail Users	
North Cascades	6.39
Northeast	5.77
The Coast	5.09
Peninsulas	4.42
South Central	3.78
Southwest	3.77
The Palouse	2.51
The Islands	2.47
King/Seattle	2.27
Columbia Plateau	2.14

### **Demographic Breakdown of Horseback Trail Users**

The graph on the following page shows the breakdown of major demographic and participatory subgroups within the overall survey sample that participate in horseback activities involving trails. In this ranking, just four groups among all Washington State residents have at least 5% of individuals participating in horseback riding activities involving trails: those who live in a small city or town (6%, the top demographic group for participants of horseback activities involving trails), females (5%), those who participate in sightseeing (5%), and those with a household income of at least \$50,000 per year (5%). The rest of the demographic and participatory categories account for no more than 4% of residents participating in horseback activities involving trails.

### Percent of each of the following groups that participate in horseback activities involving trails:



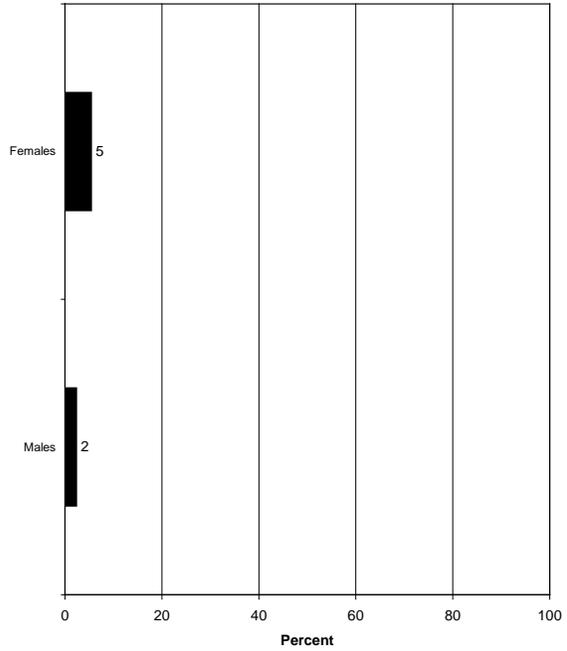
The series of graphs beginning on the next page breaks down horseback trail users by seven key demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, household income level, residence type, rent/ownership of residence, and disability status (i.e., whether the respondent considers him- or herself to be disabled). Two types of graphs are included for each demographic characteristic. The first graph is a histogram showing the percentage of each group within the demographic category participating in horseback riding activities involving trails (for instance, 5% of females and 2% of males participate in horseback riding activities involving trails). The second graph is a pie chart showing a proportional breakdown of horseback trail users by the demographic category in question (for instance, 70% of horseback trail users are female and 30% are male).

### Horseback Trail Users by Gender

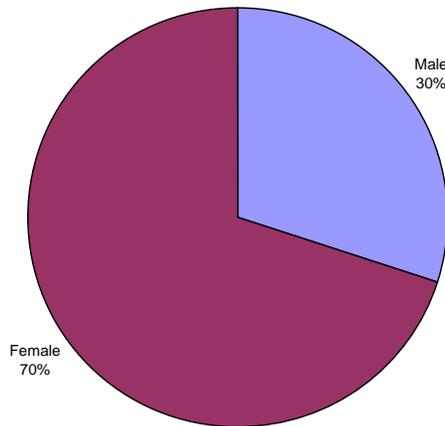
As shown in the histogram to the right, overall participation in horseback riding activities involving trails is quite low among both males and females: just 5% of females and 2% of males participate.

The pie chart below shows that females make up more than two-thirds of horseback trail users overall.

Percent of males and females who participate in horseback activities involving trails:



Percent of Horseback Trail Users by Gender:

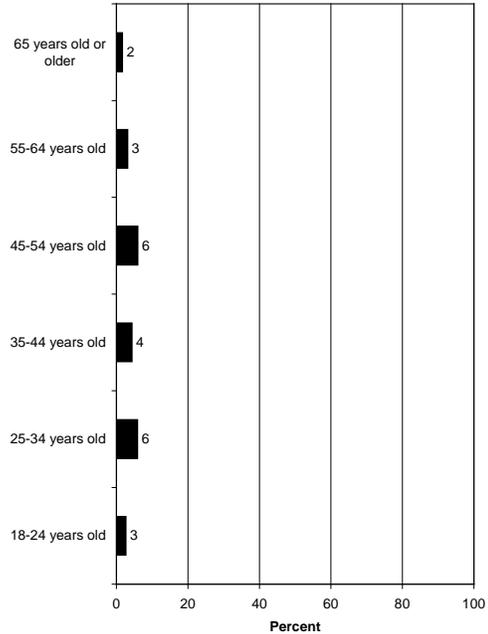


### Horseback Trail Users by Age

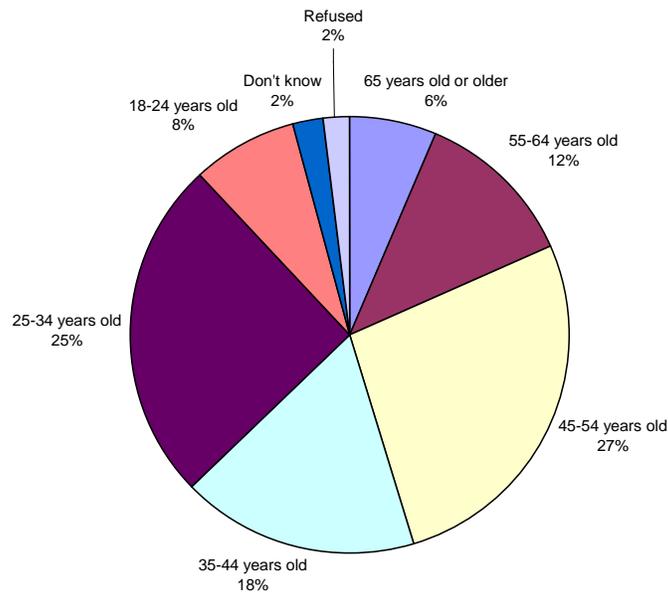
The histogram to the right shows that younger and middle age adult categories show the highest rates of participation in horseback activities involving trails, although no more than 6% of any age category takes part in such activities.

The pie chart below shows that most horseback trail users are between the ages of 25 and 54 years old.

Percent of each of the following age categories that participate in horseback activities involving trails:



Percent of Horseback Trail Users by Age:

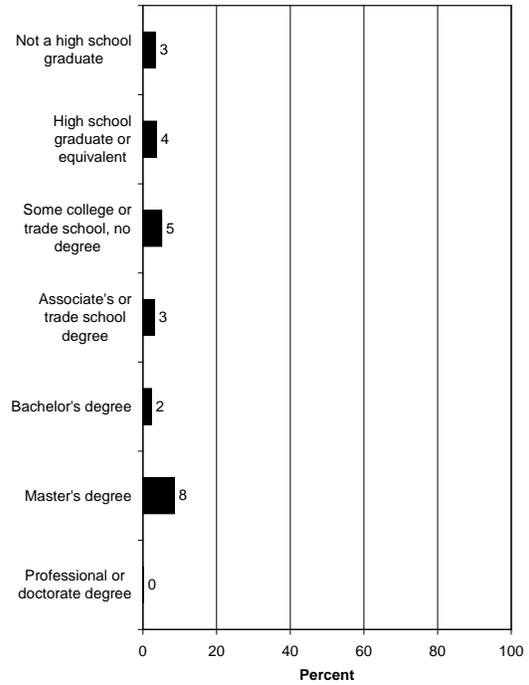


### Horseback Trail Users by Education Level

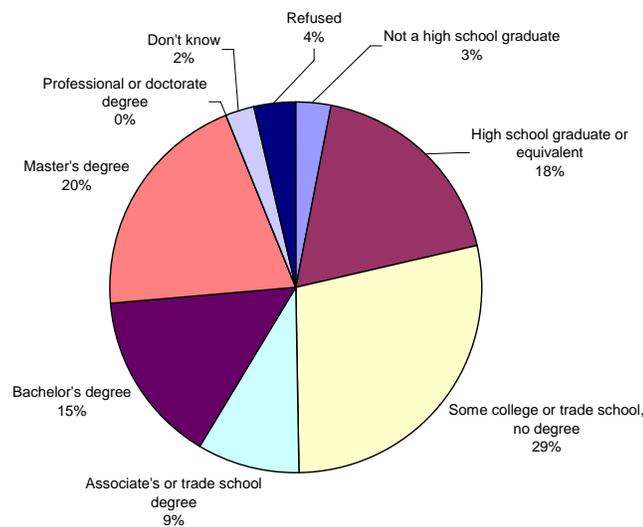
As shown in the histogram to the right, Washington residents with a master’s degree are the top education level category for participation in horseback activities involving trails, followed by those who have completed some college or trade school.

The pie chart below shows that horseback trail users have most commonly completed some college or trade school without a degree; meanwhile, slightly less than half hold an associate’s degree or higher.

Percent of each of the following education level categories that participate in horseback activities involving trails:



Percent of Horseback Trail Users by Education Level:



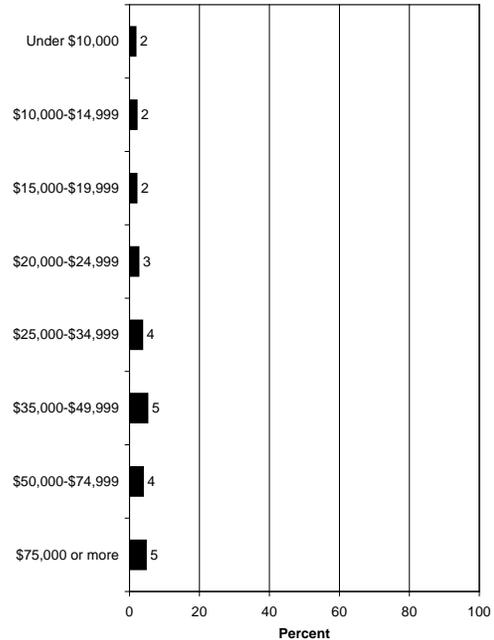
### Horseback Trail Users by Household Income Level

The histogram to the right shows that participation in horseback riding activities involving trails is most common among the upper household income categories.

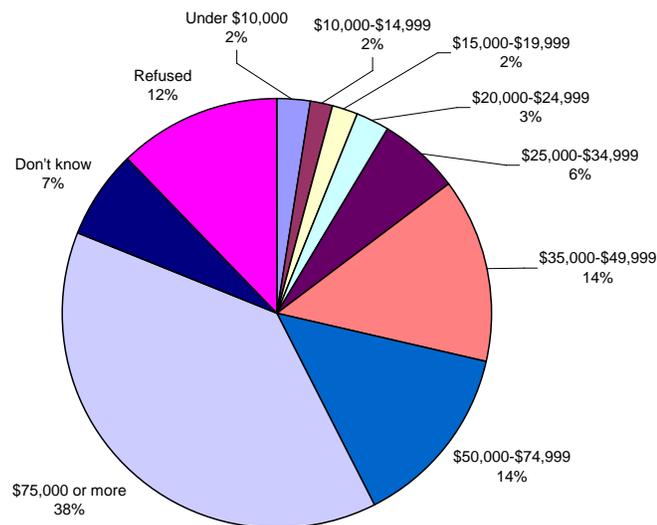
The pie chart below shows that a majority of horseback trail users have a household income of at least \$50,000.

(Note that 19% of horseback trail users refused the income question or said they were unsure.)

Percent of each of the following income level categories that participate in horseback activities involving trails:



Percent of Horseback Trail Users by Income Category:

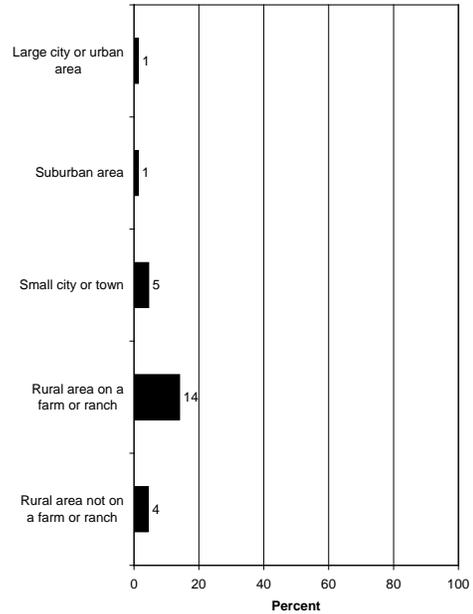


### Horseback Trail Users by Residence Type

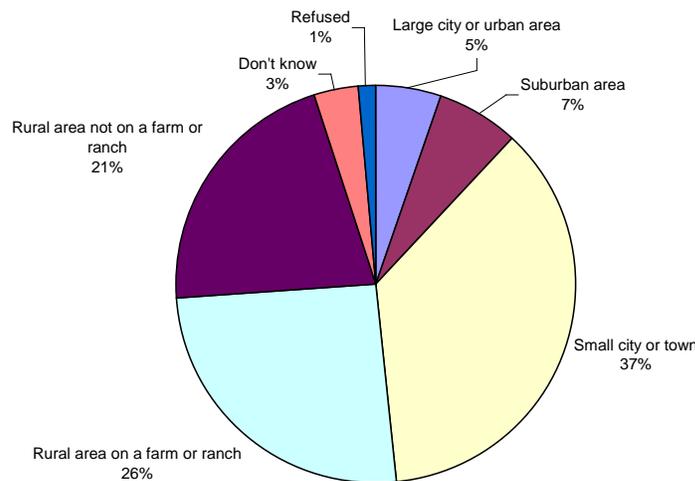
As shown in the histogram at right, participation in horseback activities involving trails is most common among those who live in a rural area.

The pie chart below indicates that the vast majority of horseback trail users reside in a small city or town or rural area.

Percent of each of the following residence categories that participate in horseback activities involving trails:



Percent of Horseback Trail Users by Residence Type:

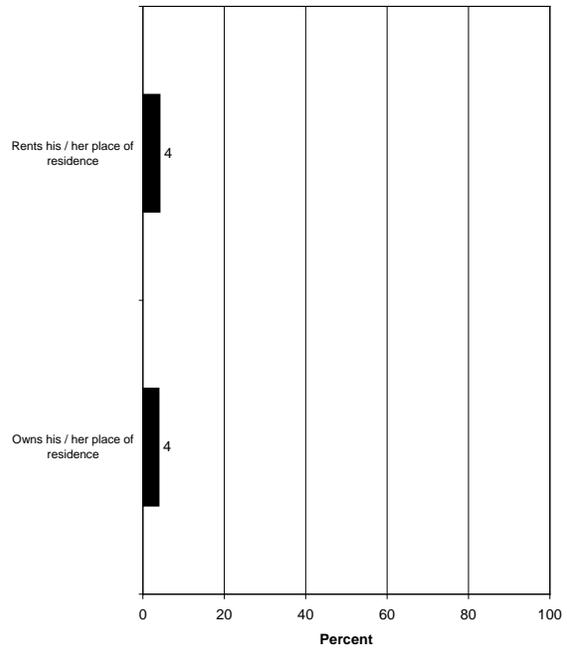


### Horseback Trail Users by Rent/Ownership of Residence

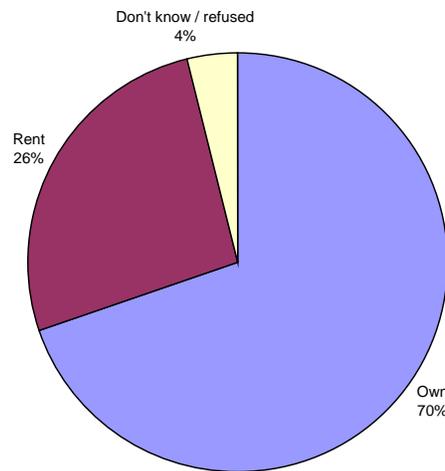
The histogram to the right shows similar rates of participation in horseback activities involving trails among both residence renters and owners.

The pie chart below shows that nearly three quarters of horseback trail users own their residence, with about a quarter renting.

Percent of residence renters and owners that participate in horseback activities involving trails:



Percent of Horseback Trail Users by Rent / Own Residence:

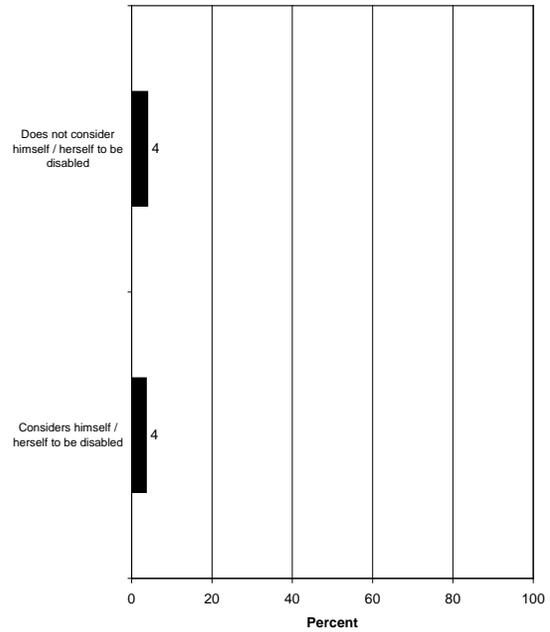


### Horseback Trail Users by Disability Status

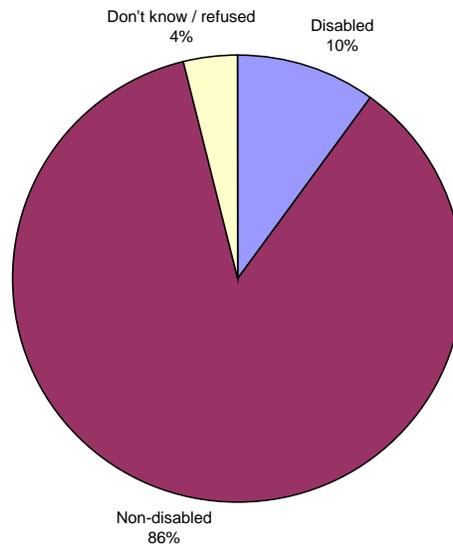
As shown in the histogram at right, both non-disabled and disabled individuals participate in horseback activities involving trails at the same rate.

The pie chart below shows that at least one in ten horseback trail users considers him- or herself to be disabled.

Percent of non-disabled and disabled people who participate in horseback activities involving trails:



Percent of Horseback Trail Users by Disability:



## OFF-ROADING TRAIL USERS

In total, 10% of Washington State residents participate in off-roading activities involving trails: 3% of Washington residents go off-roading on trails using a motorcycle, 5% of Washington residents go off-roading on trails using an ATV or dune buggy, and 7% of Washington residents go off-roading on trails using a 4-wheel drive vehicle. The mean number of days Washington State residents participate in off-roading activities is 26 days per year (note that this figure includes participants of *all* off-roading activities, not just those involving trails). A breakdown of participation rates for motorcycle, ATV/dune buggy, and 4-wheel drive vehicle off-roading activities involving urban, rural, and mountain/forest trails is shown in the table below.

Activity	Percent of Residents in Washington State Participating in the Activity
<b>Any Off-Roading Activity Involving Trails (includes Motorcycle, ATV/Dune Buggy, and 4-Wheel Drive Vehicle subcategories below)</b>	<b>9.8</b>
Off-Roading—Motorcycle—Trails	2.7
Off-Roading—Motorcycle—Urban Trails	0.9
Off-Roading—Motorcycle—Rural Trails	1.4
Off-Roading—Motorcycle—Mountain or Forest Trails	1.8
Off-Roading—ATV/Dune Buggy—Trails	5.2
Off-Roading—ATV/Dune Buggy—Urban Trails	1.4
Off-Roading—ATV/Dune Buggy—Rural Trails	2.3
Off-Roading—ATV/Dune Buggy—Mountain or Forest Trails	4.0
Off-Roading—4-Wheel Drive Vehicle—Trails	6.6
Off-Roading—4-Wheel Drive Vehicle—Urban Trails	1.4
Off-Roading—4-Wheel Drive Vehicle—Rural Trails	3.0
Off-Roading—4-Wheel Drive Vehicle—Mountain or Forest Trails	4.0

### Regional Breakdown of Off-Roading Trail Users

The table on the next page shows the regional participation rates of off-roading trail users. At the top of the ranking is the Northeast region, in which 21% of residents participate in off-roading recreation involving trails; by contrast, the King/Seattle region has the lowest rate of participation in off-roading activities involving trails, with just 4% of residents participating in these activities.

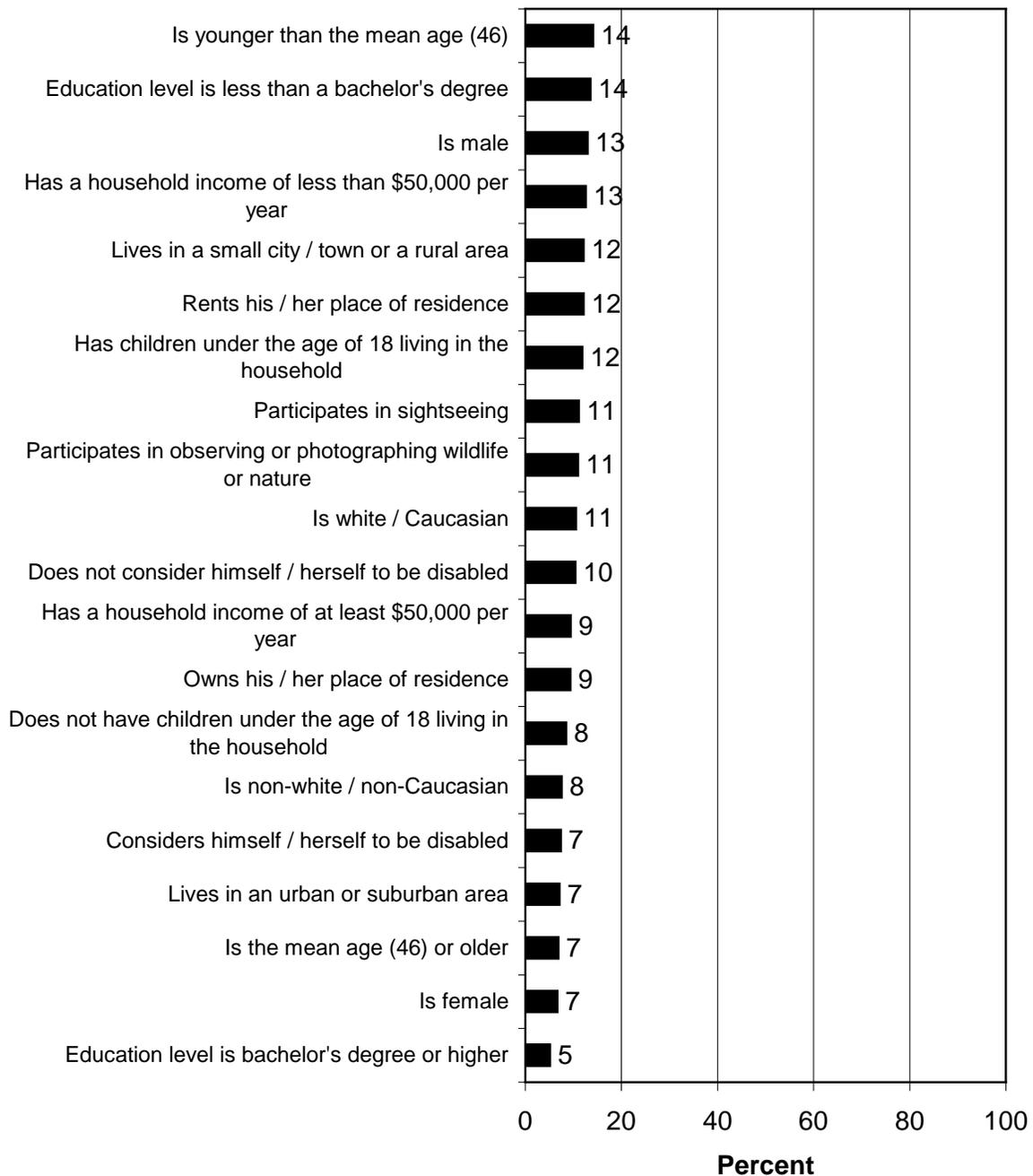
Regional Participation Rates of Off-Roading Trail Users	
Northeast	21.24
Columbia Plateau	17.85
Peninsulas	16.21

The Coast	16.12
South Central	11.67
Southwest	11.04
The Palouse	8.96
North Cascades	7.78
The Islands	4.59
King/Seattle	4.31

### **Demographic Breakdown of Off-Road Trail Users**

The graph on the following page shows the breakdown of major demographic and participatory subgroups within the overall survey sample that participate in off-roading activities involving trails. In this ranking, the top groups among all Washington State residents that participate in off-roading activities involving trails include those younger than mean age of 46 (14% of this group participates in off-roading activities involving trails), those with an education level of less than a bachelor's degree (14%), males (13%), those with a household income of less than \$50,000 per year (13%), those who live in a small city/town or rural area (12%), those who rent their place of residence (12%), and those with children under the age of 18 living in the household (12%).

**Percent of each of the following groups that participate in off-roading activities involving trails:**



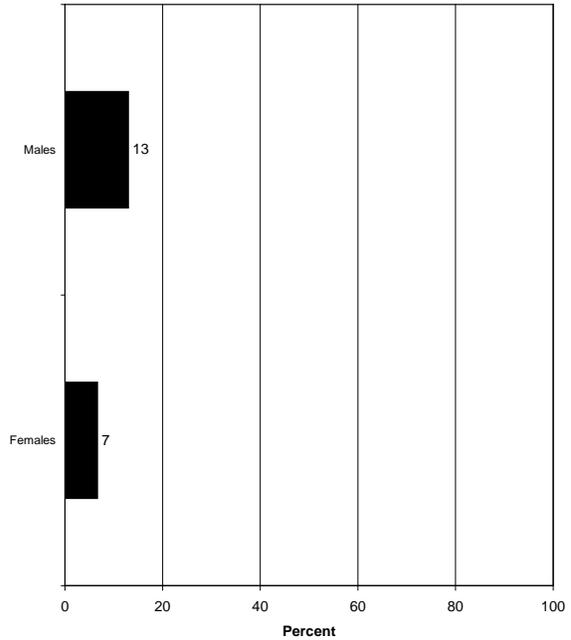
The series of graphs beginning on the next page breaks down off-roading trail users by seven key demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, household income level, residence type, rent/ownership of residence, and disability status (i.e., whether the respondent considers him- or herself to be disabled). Two types of graphs are included for each demographic characteristic. The first graph is a histogram showing the percentage of each group within the demographic category participating in off-roading activities involving trails (for instance, 13% of males and 7% of females participate in off-roading activities involving trails). The second graph is a pie chart showing a proportional breakdown of off-roading trail users by the demographic category in question (for instance, 66% of off-roading trail users are male and 34% are female).

### Off-Road Trail Users by Gender

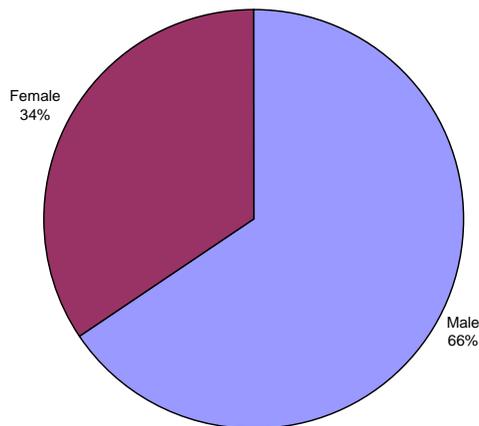
As shown in the histogram to the right, 13% of male Washington residents and 7% of female Washington residents participate in off-roading activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that two-thirds of off-roading trail users in Washington are male.

Percent of males and females who participate in off-roading activities involving trails:



Percent of Off-Road Trail Users by Gender:

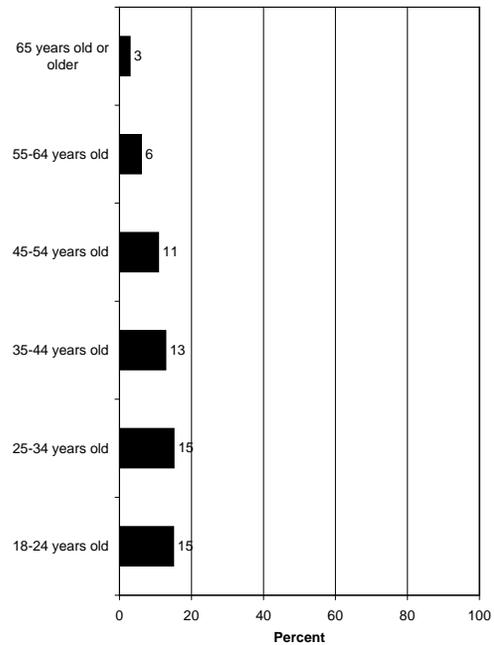


### Off-Roading Trail Users by Age

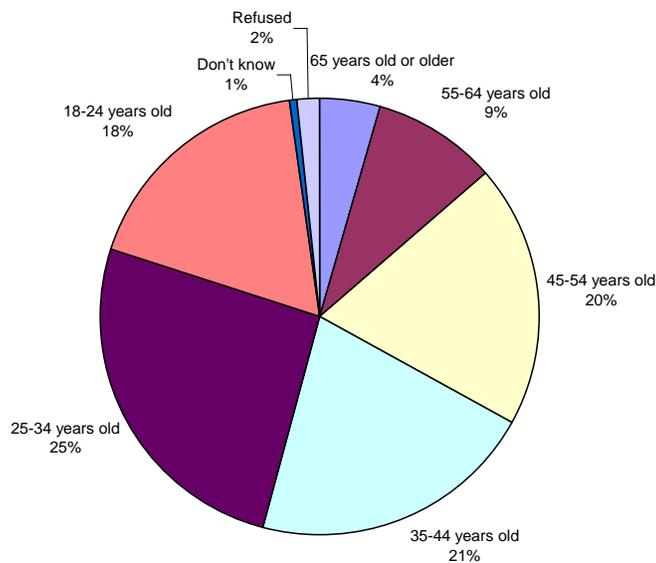
The histogram to the right shows that participation in off-roading activities involving trails generally decreases with age, with participation most common among those between the ages of 18 and 34 years old.

The pie chart below shows that four younger and middle age categories predominate among off-roading trail users: 18-24-year-olds, 25-34-year-olds, 35-44-year-olds, and 45-54-year-olds.

Percent of each of the following age categories that participate in off-roading activities involving trails:



Percent of Off-Roading Trail Users by Age:

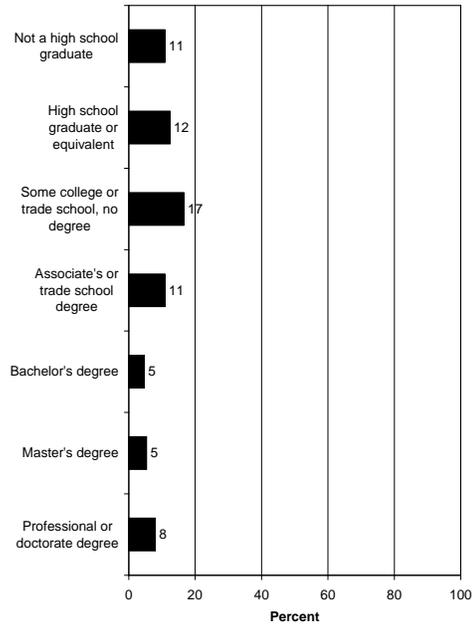


### Off-Road Trail Users by Education Level

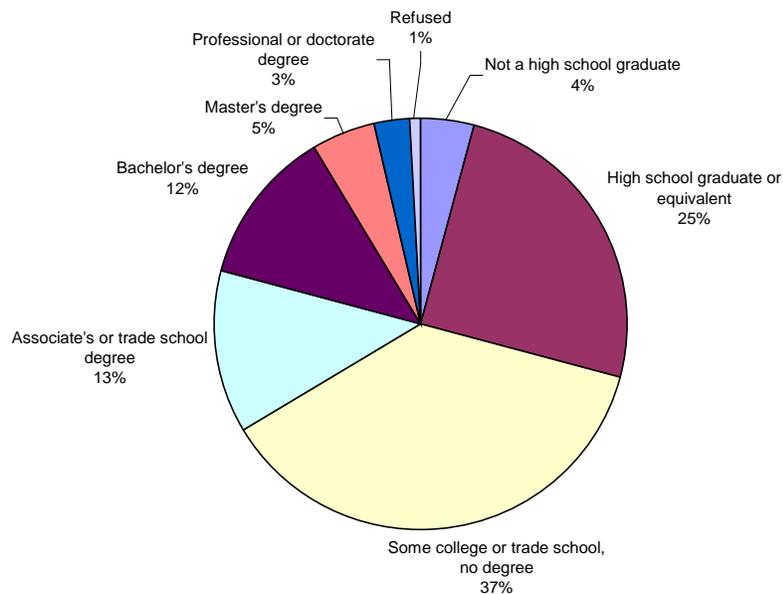
As shown in the histogram to the right, participation in off-riding activities involving trails is highest among non-college graduates.

The pie chart below shows that most off-riding trail users in Washington have completed, at most, some college or trade school without a degree.

Percent of each of the following education level categories that participate in off-riding activities involving trails:



Percent of Off-Road Trail Users by Education Level:



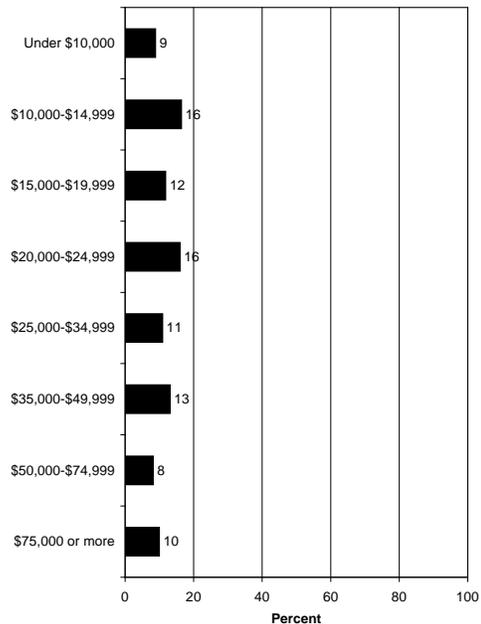
### Off-Road Trail Users by Household Income Level

In the histogram to the right, the top household income categories for participating in off-roading activities involving trails are the \$10,000-\$14,999 and \$20,000-\$24,999 categories.

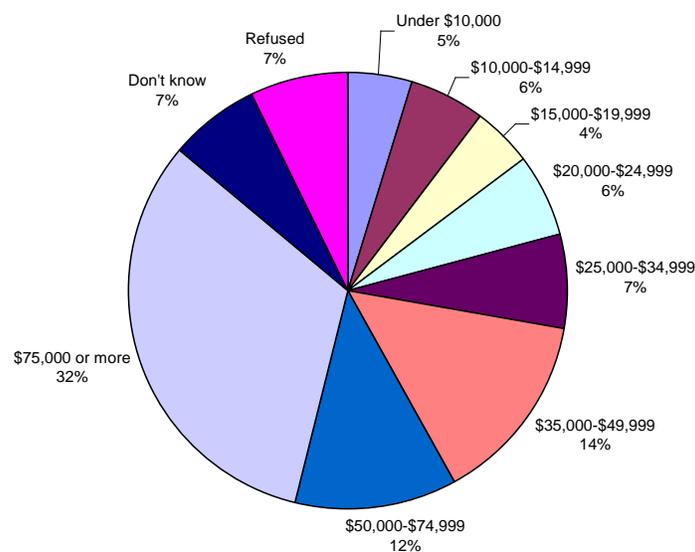
The pie chart below shows that most off-roading trail users in Washington have a household income of less than \$75,000.

(Note that 14% of off-roading trail users refused the income question or said they were unsure.)

Percent of each of the following income level categories that participate in off-roading activities involving trails:



Percent of Off-Road Trail Users by Income Category:

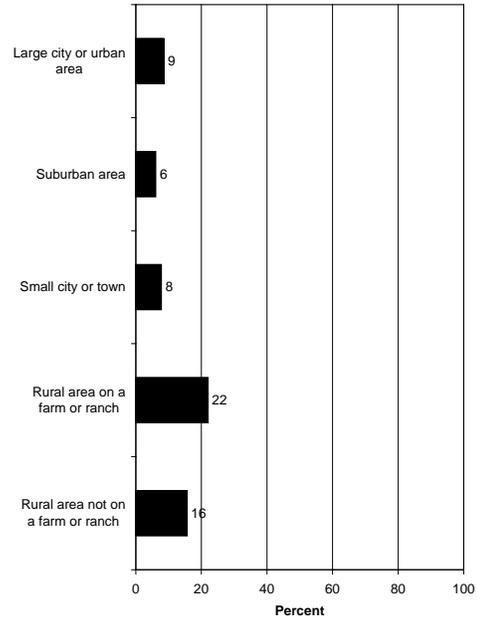


### Off-Road Trail Users by Residence Type

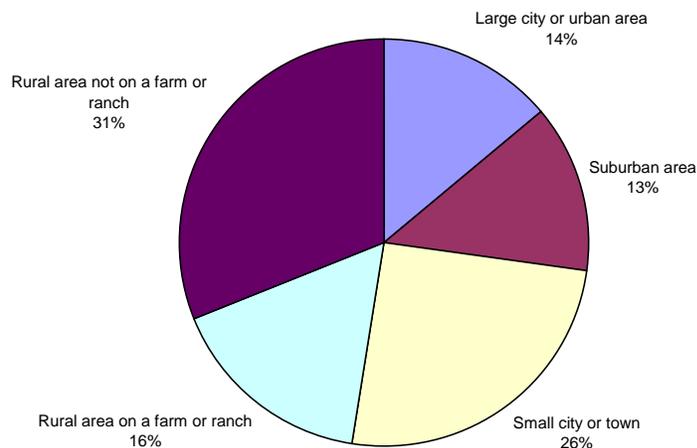
As shown in the histogram at right, the highest rates of participation in off-riding activities involving trails are among those who reside in rural areas.

The pie chart below indicates that nearly half of all off-riding trail users live in a rural area.

Percent of each of the following residence categories that participate in off-riding activities involving trails:



Percent of Off-Road Trail Users by Residence Type:

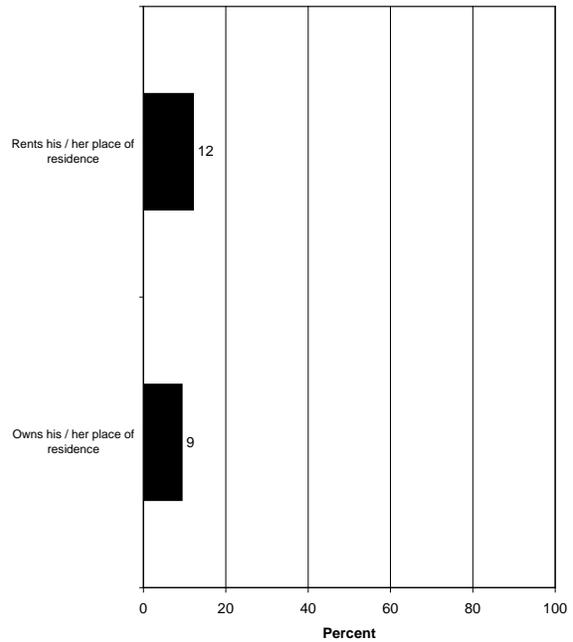


### Off-Road Trail Users by Rent/Ownership of Residence

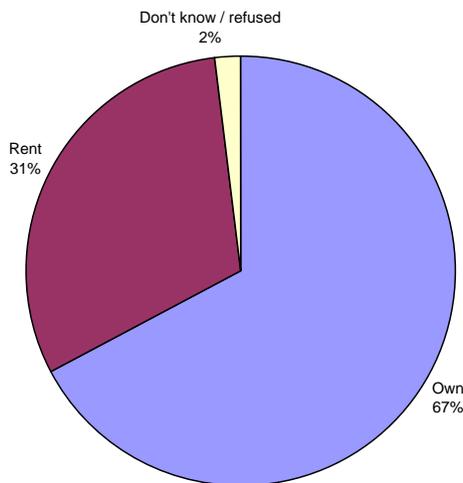
The histogram to the right shows that 12% of residence renters and 9% of residence owners participate in off-riding activities involving trails.

The pie chart below indicates that about two-thirds of off-riding trail users own their place of residence.

Percent of residence owners and renters that participate in off-riding activities involving trails:



Percent of Off-Road Trail Users by Rent / Own Residence:

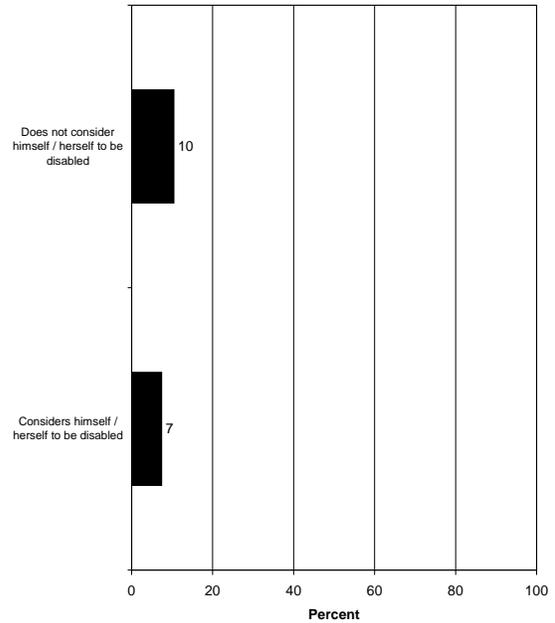


### Off-Road Trail Users by Disability Status

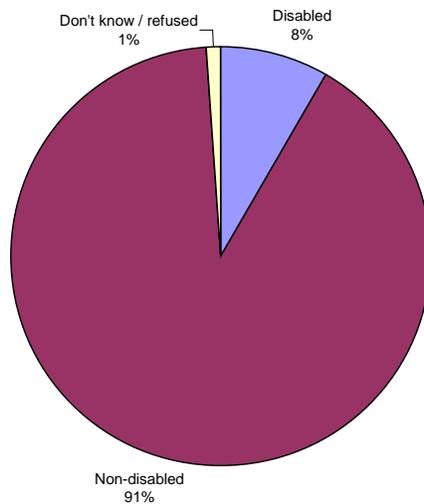
As shown in the histogram at right, 10% of non-disabled Washington residents and 7% of disabled residents participate in off-riding activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that nearly one in ten off-riding trail users is a disabled individual.

Percent of non-disabled and disabled people who participate in off-riding activities involving trails:



Percent of Off-Road Trail Users by Disability:



## JOGGING/RUNNING TRAIL USERS

In total, 17% of Washington State residents participate in jogging or running activities involving trails: 11% of Washington residents jog or run on urban trails, 8% of Washington residents jog or run on rural trails, and 5% of Washington residents jog or run on mountain or forest trails. The mean number of days Washington State residents participate in jogging/running activities is 66 days per year (note that this figure includes participants of *all* jogging/running activities, not just those involving trails). A breakdown of participation rates for jogging/running activities involving urban, rural, and mountain/forest trails is shown in the table below.

Activity	Percent of Residents in Washington State Participating in the Activity
<b>Jogging or Running—Trails</b>	<b>17.2</b>
Jogging or Running—Urban Trails	11.4
Jogging or Running—Rural Trails	7.8
Jogging or Running—Mountain or Forest Trails	4.9

### Regional Breakdown of Jogging/Running Trail Users

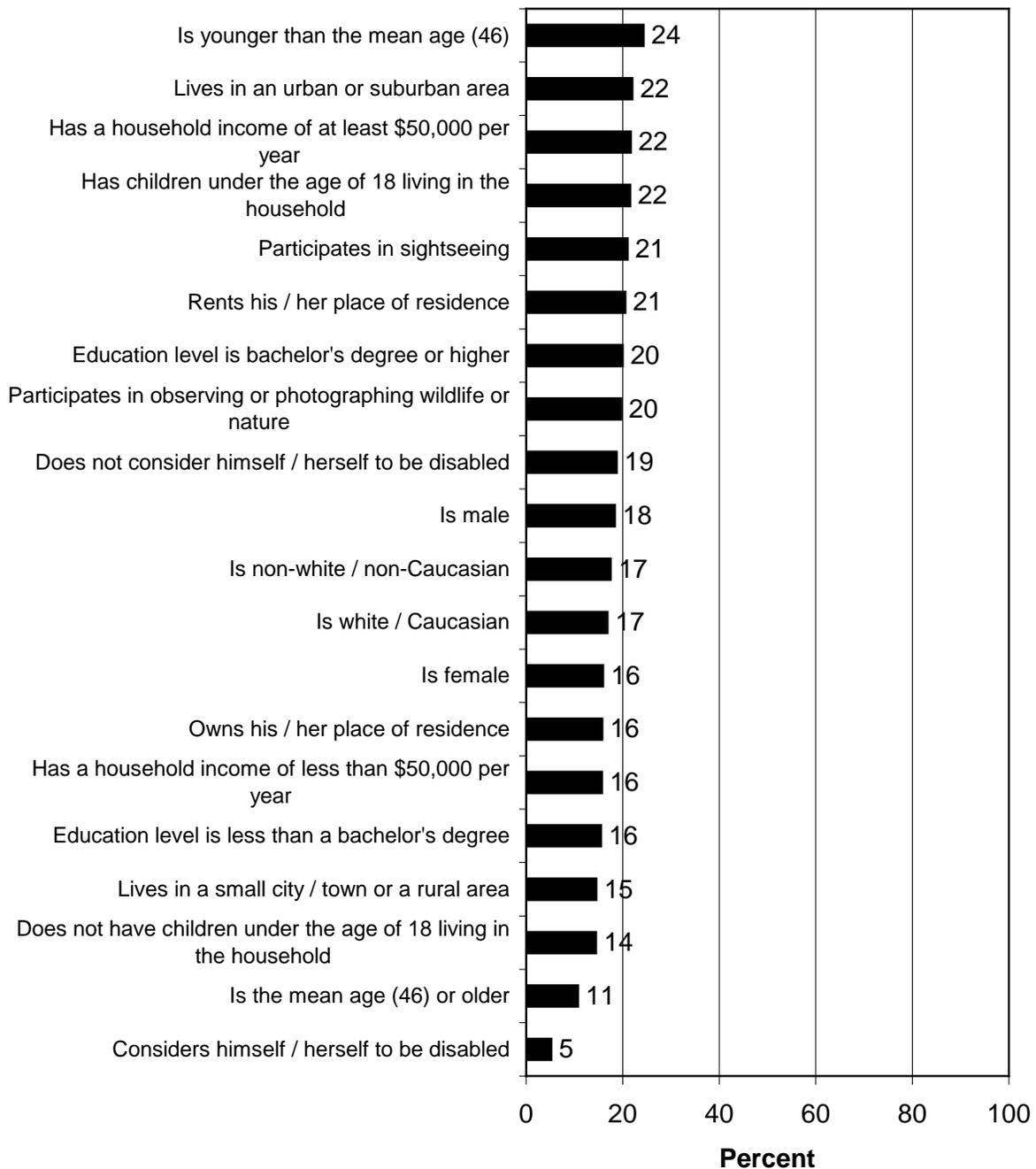
The table below shows the regional participation rates for jogging/running trail users. At the top of the ranking is the King/Seattle region, in which 24% of residents participate in jogging or running activities involving trails; meanwhile, just 7% of residents in the Coast region participate in this type of trail-related outdoor recreation.

Regional Participation Rates of Jogging/Running Trail Users	
King/Seattle	24.04
The Palouse	18.48
The Islands	17.82
South Central	15.34
Southwest	15.30
Northeast	13.75
North Cascades	13.72
Peninsulas	12.45
Columbia Plateau	11.52
The Coast	7.20

### **Demographic Breakdown of Jogging/Running Trail Users**

The graph on the following page shows the breakdown of major demographic and participatory subgroups within the overall survey sample that participate in jogging/running activities involving trails. In this ranking, six groups among all Washington State residents have at least 20% of individuals participating in jogging/running activities involving trails: those younger than the mean age of 46 (24% of this group participates in jogging/running activities involving trails), those who live in an urban or suburban area (22%), those with a household income of at least \$50,000 per year (22%), those with children under the age of 18 living in the household (22%), those who participate in sightseeing (21%), and those who rent their place of residence (21%).

**Percent of each of the following groups that participate in jogging or running activities involving trails:**



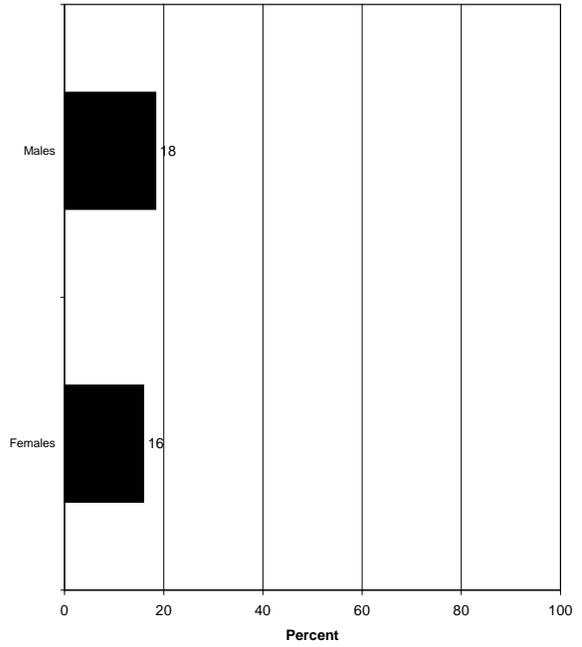
The series of graphs beginning on the next page breaks down jogging/running trail users by seven key demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, household income level, residence type, rent/ownership of residence, and disability status (i.e., whether the respondent considers him- or herself to be disabled). Two types of graphs are included for each demographic characteristic. The first graph is a histogram showing the percentage of each group within the demographic category participating in jogging/running activities involving trails (for instance, 18% of males and 16% of females participate in jogging/running activities involving trails). The second graph is a pie chart showing a proportional breakdown of jogging/running trail users by the demographic category in question (for instance, 53% of jogging/running trail users are male and 47% are female).

### Jogging/Running Trail Users by Gender

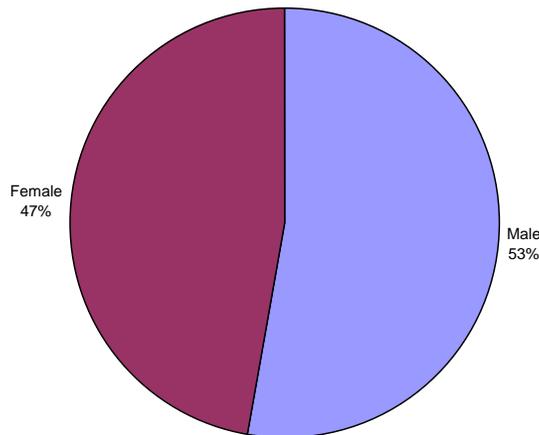
As shown in the histogram to the right, 18% of male Washington residents and 16% of female Washington residents participate in jogging/running activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that just over half of all jogging/running trail users are male.

Percent of males and females who participate in jogging or running activities involving trails:



Percent of Jogging or Running Trail Users by Gender:

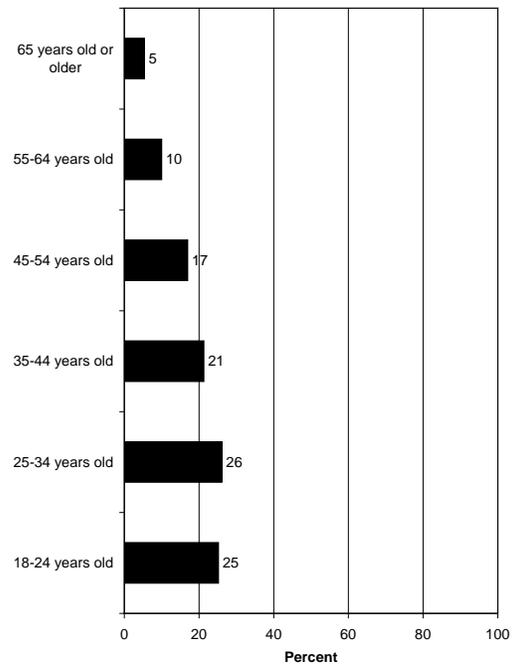


## Jogging/Running Trail Users by Age

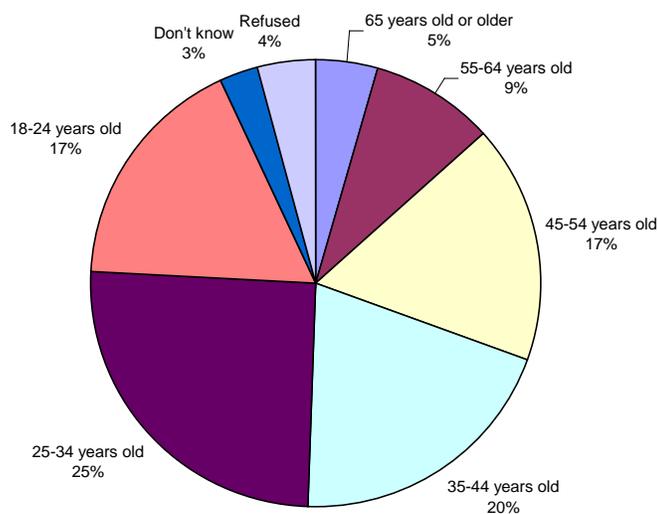
The histogram to the right shows that participation in jogging/running activities involving trails is most common among younger age categories, particularly those 18-34 years old.

The pie chart below shows that jogging/running trail users in Washington are most commonly between the ages of 25 and 44 years old.

Percent of each of the following age categories that participate in jogging or running activities involving trails:



Percent of Jogging or Running Trail Users by Age:

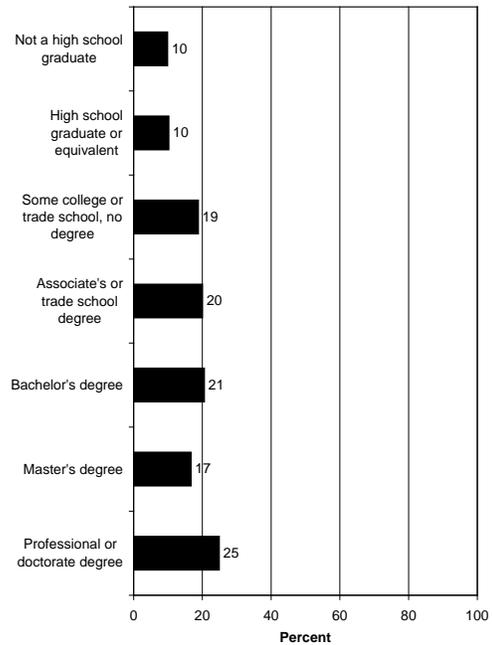


### Jogging/Running Trail Users by Education Level

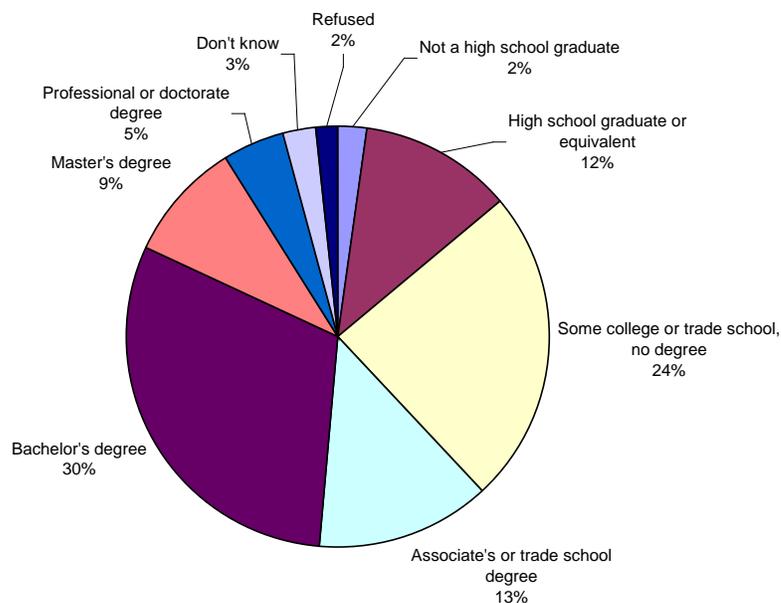
As shown in the histogram to the right, the highest rates of participation in jogging/running activities involving trails are among those with a professional or doctorate degree (25%), those with a bachelor’s degree (21%), and those with an associate’s or trade school degree (20%).

The pie chart below shows that a majority of jogging/running trail users in Washington have completed, at minimum, an associate’s or trade school degree.

Percent of each of the following education level categories that participate in jogging or running activities involving trails:



Percent of Jogging or Running Trail Users by Education Level:



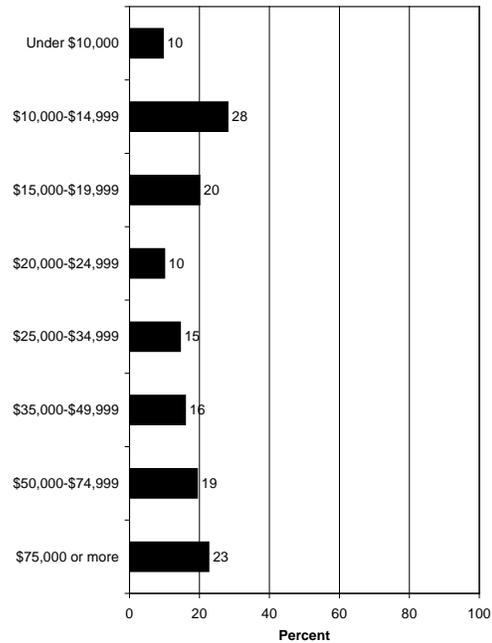
### Jogging/Running Trail Users by Household Income Level

In the histogram to the right, the top household income category for participating in walking activities involving trails is the \$10,000-\$14,999 category (28%), followed by the \$75,000 or more category (23%).

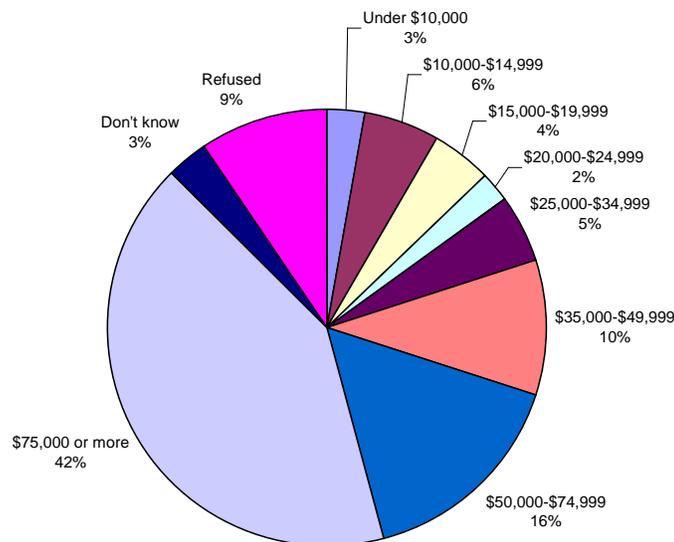
The pie chart below shows that most jogging/running trail users in Washington have a household income of \$50,000 or more.

(Note that 12% of jogging/running trail users refused the income question or said they were unsure.)

Percent of each of the following income level categories that participate in jogging or running activities involving trails:



Percent of Jogging or Running Trail Users by Income Category:

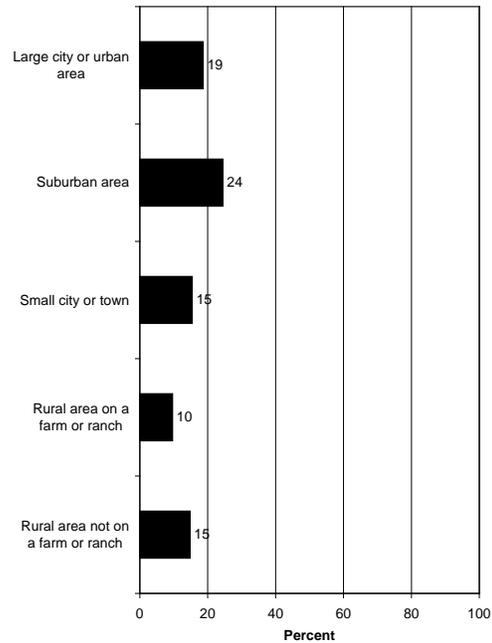


### Jogging/Running Trail Users by Residence Type

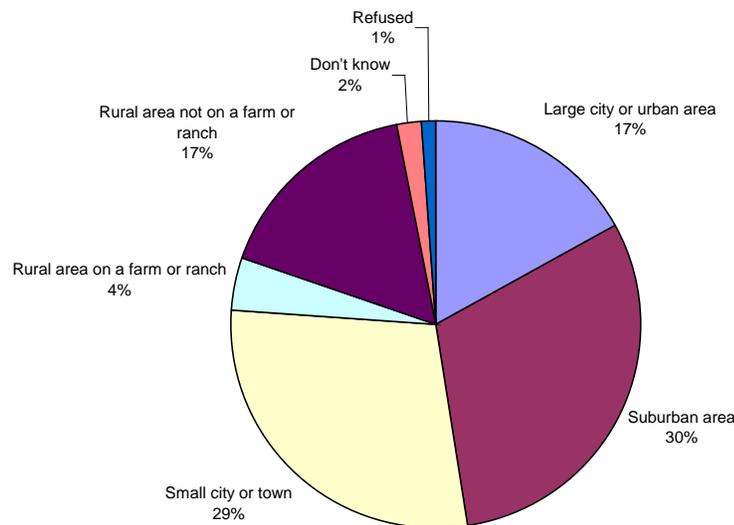
As shown in the histogram at right, participation in jogging/running activities involving trails is fairly consistent across the major residence categories: about a quarter of those in suburban and rural areas and a fifth of those in large cities/urban areas participate in this type of recreation.

The pie chart below indicates that participants of jogging/running activities involving trails most often live in suburban areas or small cities or towns.

Percent of each of the following residence categories that participate in jogging or running activities involving trails:



Percent of Jogging or Running Trail Users by Residence Type:

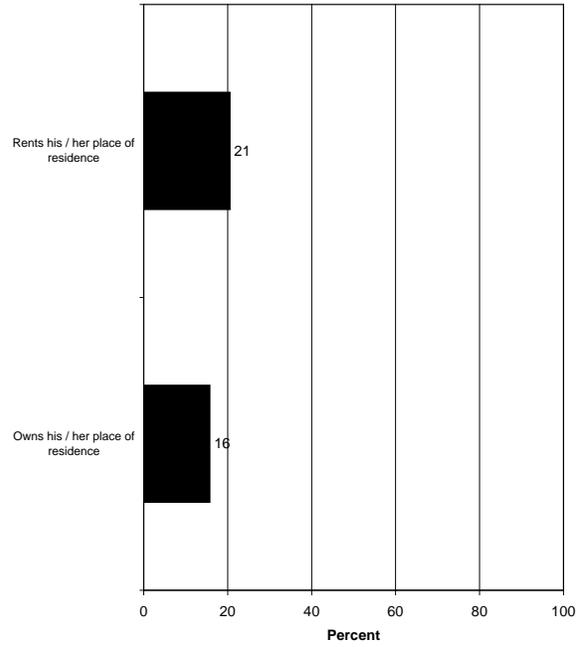


### Jogging/Running Trail Users by Rent/Ownership of Residence

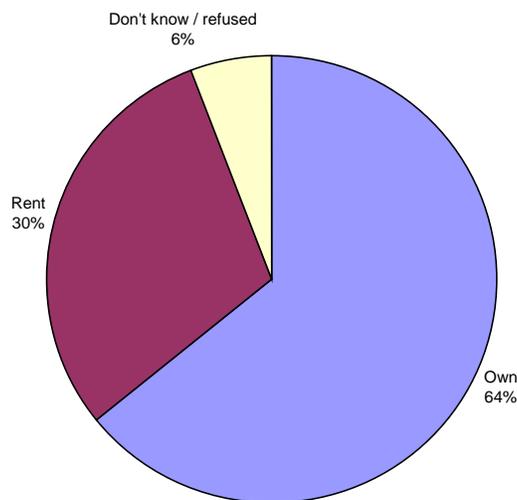
The histogram to the right shows that 21% of residence renters and 16% of residence owners participate in jogging/running activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that about two-thirds of jogging/running trail users own their place of residence, while about a third rent.

Percent of residence renters and owners that participate in jogging or running activities involving trails:



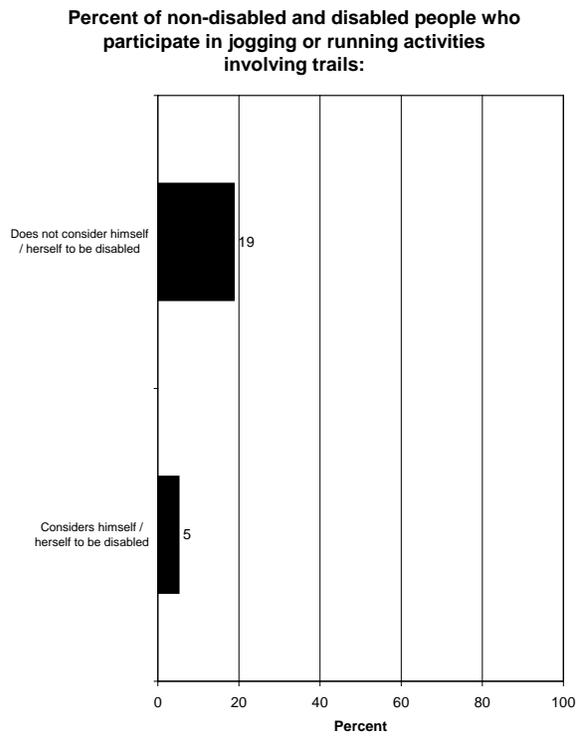
Percent of Jogging or Running Trail Users by Rent / Own Residence:



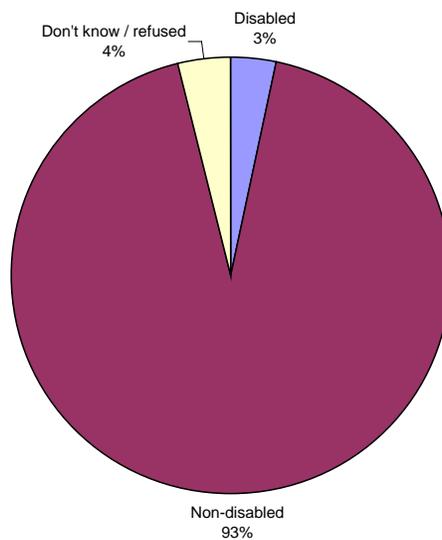
### Jogging/Running Trail Users by Disability Status

As shown in the histogram at right, nearly a fifth of non-disabled Washington residents and just 5% of disabled residents participate in jogging/running activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that just 3% of jogging/running trail users are disabled individuals.



**Percent of Jogging or Running Trail Users by Disability:**



## CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING/SNOWSHOEING TRAIL USERS

In total, 7% of Washington State residents participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing on established public or private trails. The mean number of days Washington State residents participate in cross-country skiing activities is 9 days per year, while the mean number of participation days for snowshoeing activities is 4 days per year (note that these figures refer to participants of *all* cross-country skiing and snowshoeing activities, not just activities involving trails).

### Regional Breakdown of Cross-Country Skiing/Snowshoeing Trail Users

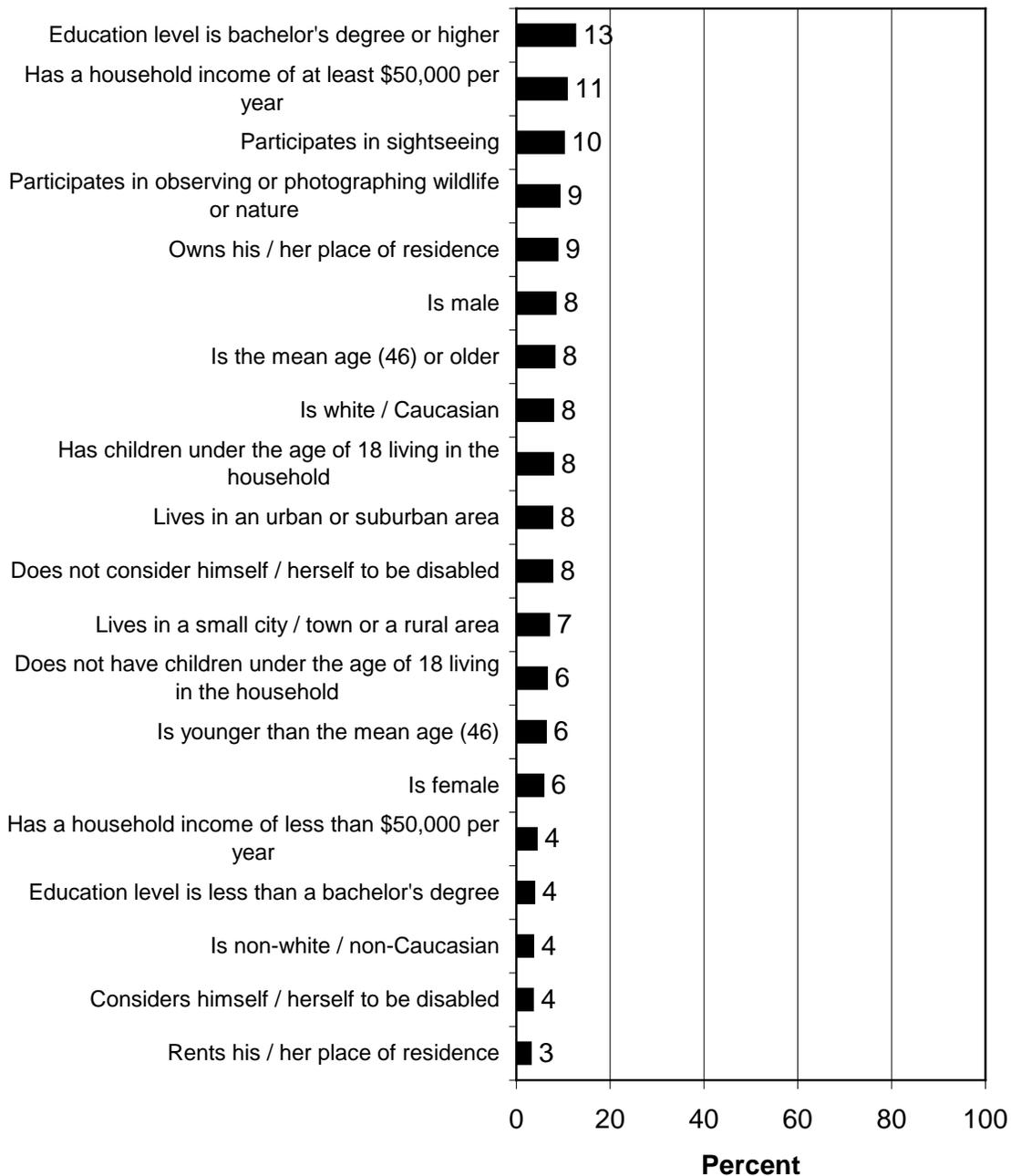
The table below shows the regional participation rates for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing trail users. At the top of the ranking is the Northeast region, in which 10% of residents participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails; meanwhile, the Coast region has just 1% of residents participating in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails, making it the region with the lowest rate of participation in this activity.

Regional Participation Rates of Cross-Country Skiing/Snowshoeing Trail Users	
Northeast	10.08
King/Seattle	9.40
North Cascades	9.00
The Islands	8.91
Peninsulas	4.36
Southwest	4.33
South Central	3.61
Columbia Plateau	1.98
The Palouse	1.67
The Coast	1.37

### **Demographic Breakdown of Cross-Country Skiing/Snowshoeing Trail Users**

The graph on the following page shows the breakdown of major demographic and participatory subgroups within the overall survey sample that participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails. In this ranking, just three groups among all Washington State residents have at least 10% of individuals participating in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails: those with an education level of a bachelor's degree or higher (13% of this group participates in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails), those with a household income of at least \$50,000 per year (11%), and those who participate in sightseeing (10%).

**Percent of each of the following groups that  
participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing  
activities involving trails:**



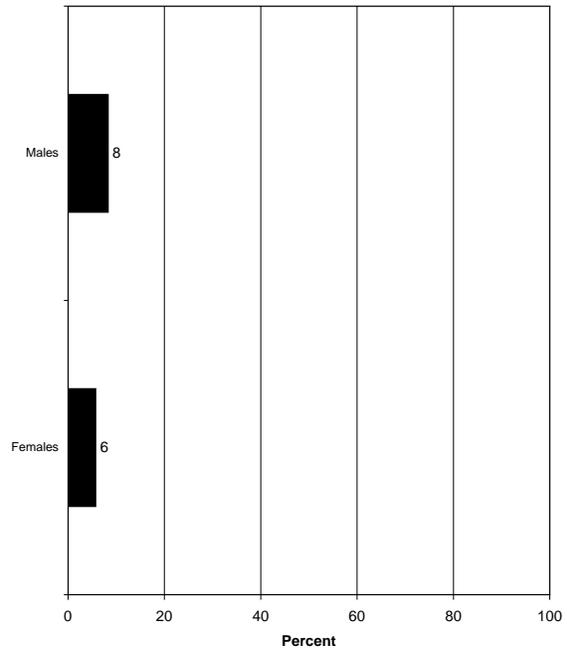
The series of graphs beginning on the next page breaks down cross-country skiing or snowshoeing trail users by seven key demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, household income level, residence type, rent/ownership of residence, and disability status (i.e., whether the respondent considers him- or herself to be disabled). Two types of graphs are included for each demographic characteristic. The first graph is a histogram showing the percentage of each group within the demographic category participating in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails (for instance, 8% of males and 6% of females participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails). The second graph is a pie chart showing a proportional breakdown of cross-country skiing or snowshoeing trail users by the demographic category in question (for instance, 59% of cross-country skiing or snowshoeing trail users are male and 41% are female).

### Cross-Country Skiing/Snowshoeing Trail Users by Gender

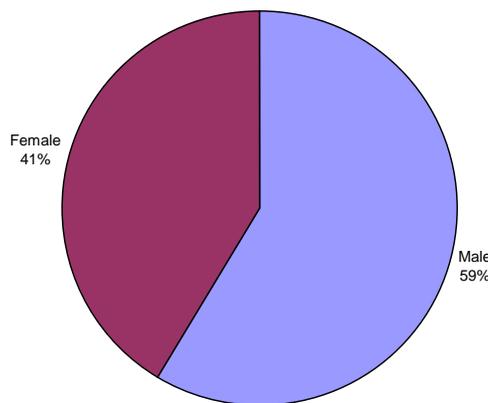
As shown in the histogram to the right, 8% of male Washington residents and 6% of female Washington residents participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that a majority of all cross-country skiing or snowshoeing trail users are male.

Percent of males and females who participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails:



Percent of Cross-Country Skiing or Snowshoeing Trail Users by Gender:

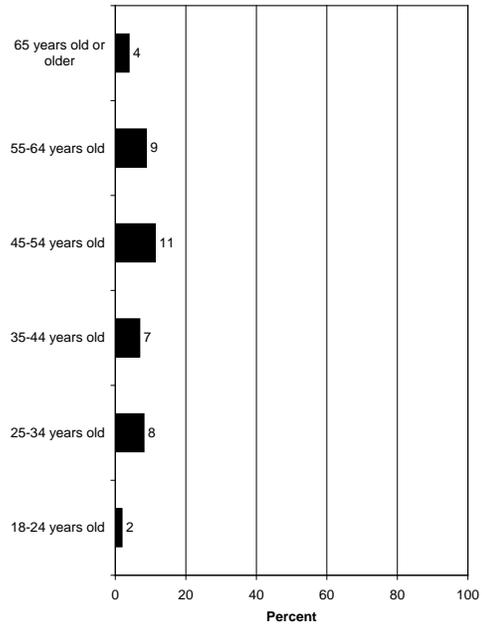


### Cross-Country Skiing/Snowshoeing Trail Users by Age

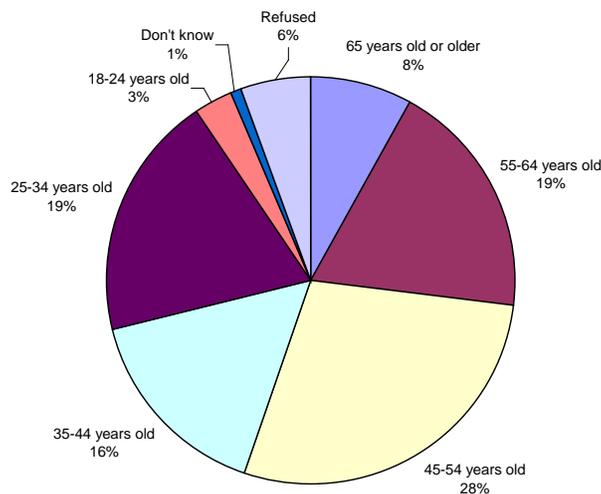
The histogram to the right shows that the most common age categories for participation in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails are 45-54-year-olds (11%), followed by 55-64-year-olds (9%), 25-34-year-olds (8%), and 35-44-year-olds (7%).

The pie chart below shows that cross-country skiing or snowshoeing trail users in Washington are fairly evenly comprised of younger, middle-aged, and older adults.

Percent of each of the following age categories that participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails:



Percent of Cross-Country Skiing or Snowshoeing Trail Users by Age:

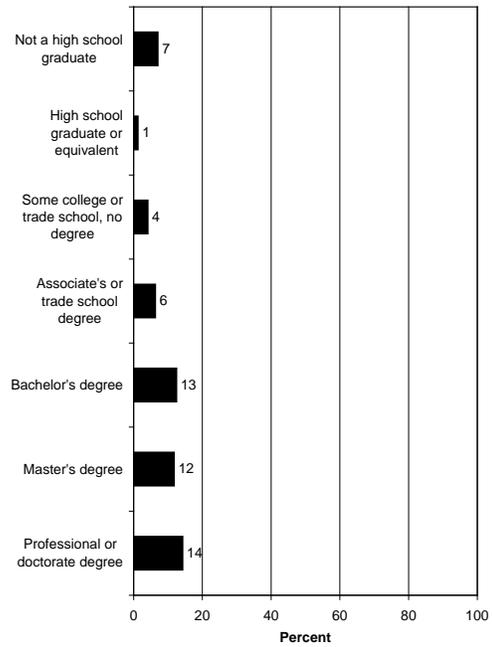


### Cross-Country Skiing/Snowshoeing Trail Users by Education Level

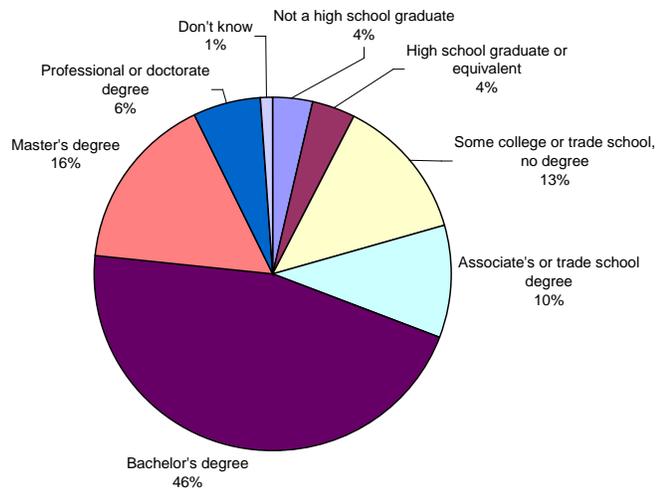
As shown in the histogram to the right, participation in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities is highest among those who have completed a bachelor's degree or higher.

The pie chart below shows that the majority of cross-country skiing or snowshoeing trail users have completed, at minimum, a bachelor's degree.

Percent of each of the following education level categories that participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails:



Percent of Cross-Country Skiing or Snowshoeing Trail Users by Education Level:



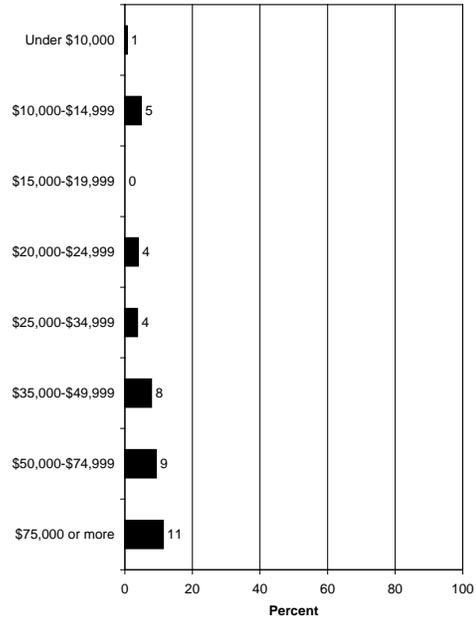
### Cross-Country Skiing/Snowshoeing Trail Users by Household Income Level

The histogram to the right shows that participation in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities generally increases with household income, although those in the \$10,000-\$14,999 category participate at a rate comparable to those with a household income between \$20,000 and \$34,999.

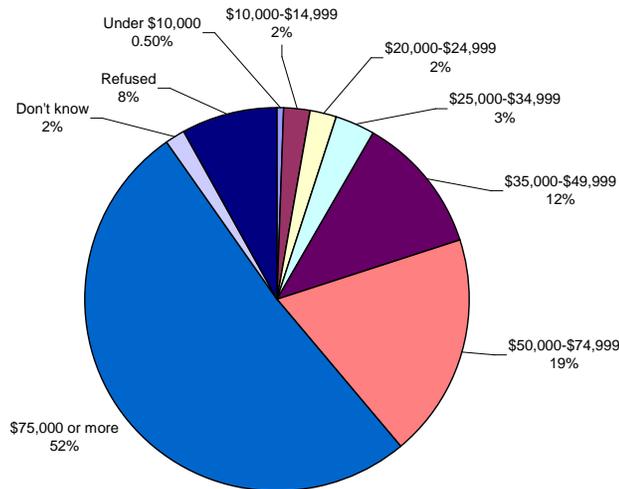
The pie chart below shows that a bare majority of cross-country skiing or snowshoeing trail users have a household income of \$75,000 or more.

(Note that 10% of cross-country skiing or snowshoeing trail users refused the income question or said they were unsure.)

Percent of each of the following income level categories that participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails:



Percent of Cross-Country Skiing or Snowshoeing Trail Users by Income Category:

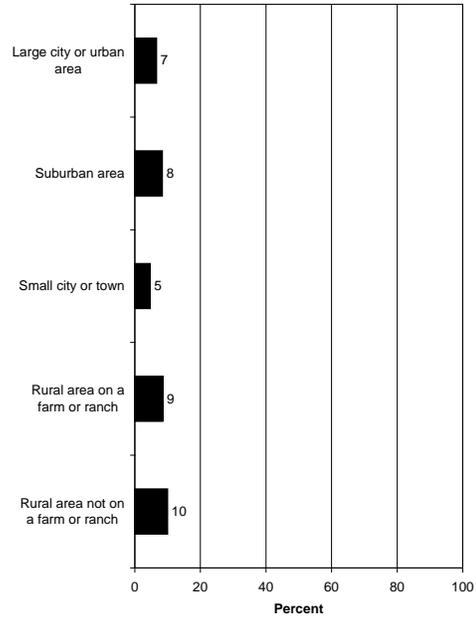


### Cross-Country Skiing/Snowshoeing Trail Users by Residence Type

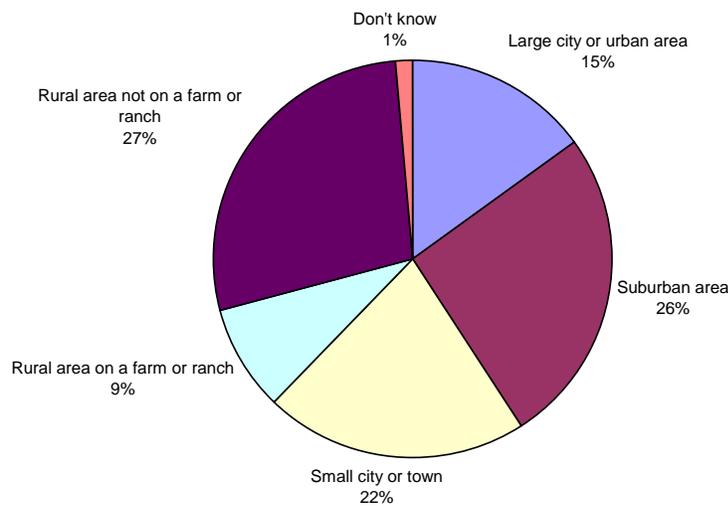
As shown in the histogram at right, participation in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails is fairly consistent across the major residence categories; although residents from small cities/towns tend to participate at a slightly lower rate than residents from the other residence categories.

The pie chart below indicates that cross-country skiing or snowshoeing trail users most often live in rural or suburban areas.

Percent of each of the following residence categories that participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails:



Percent of Cross-Country Skiing or Snowshoeing Trail Users by Residence Type:

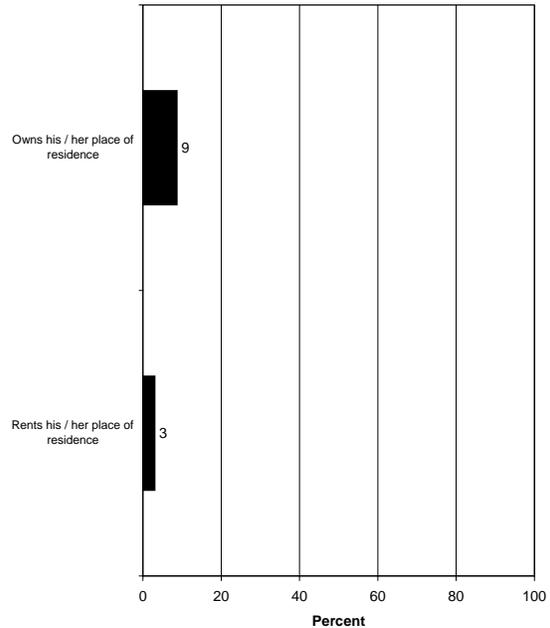


### Cross-Country Skiing/Snowshoeing Trail Users by Rent/Ownership of Residence

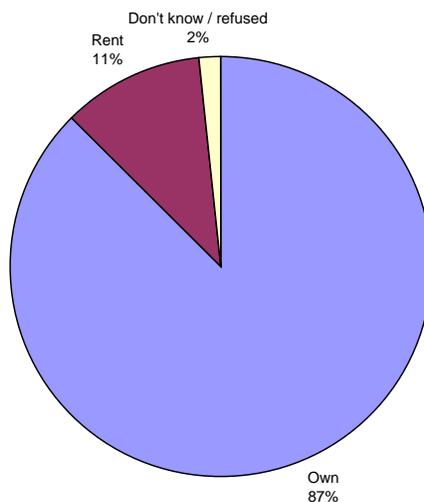
The histogram to the right shows that 9% of residence owners participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails, while just 3% of residence renters participate in such activities.

The pie chart below shows that the vast majority of cross-country skiing or snowshoeing trail users own their place of residence; meanwhile, about one in ten rent.

Percent of residence renters and owners that participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails:



Percent of Cross-Country Skiing or Snowshoeing Trail Users by Rent / Own Residence:

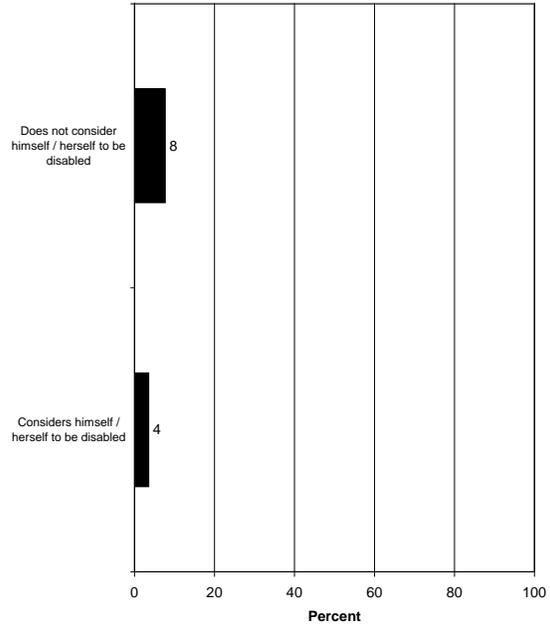


### Cross-Country Skiing/Snowshoeing Trail Users by Disability Status

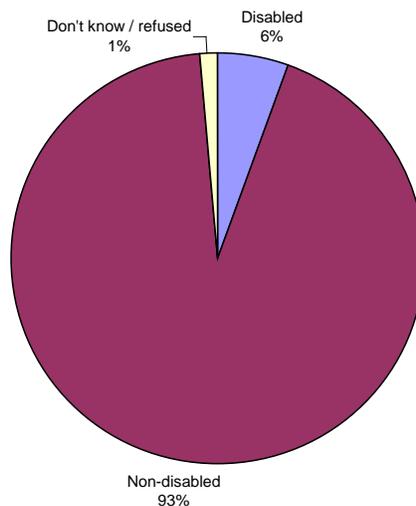
As shown in the histogram at right, 8% of non-disabled Washington residents and 4% of disabled residents participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails.

The pie chart below indicates that 6% of cross-country skiing or snowshoeing trail users are disabled.

Percent of non-disabled and disabled people who participate in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing activities involving trails:



Percent of Cross-Country Skiing or Snowshoeing Trail Users by Disability:



## SNOWMOBILE/ATV TRAIL USERS

In total, 3% of Washington State residents participate in snowmobiling or ATV riding in the snow on established public or private trails. The mean number of days Washington State residents participate in snowmobile or ATV activities is 11 days per year (note that this figure includes participants of *all* snowmobiling or ATV riding in the snow activities, not just activities involving trails). Note that general ATV use is discussed in the previous section on off-roading; in this section, “snowmobile/ATV trail users” refer to individuals recreating in a snow setting.

### Regional Breakdown of Snowmobile/ATV Trail Users

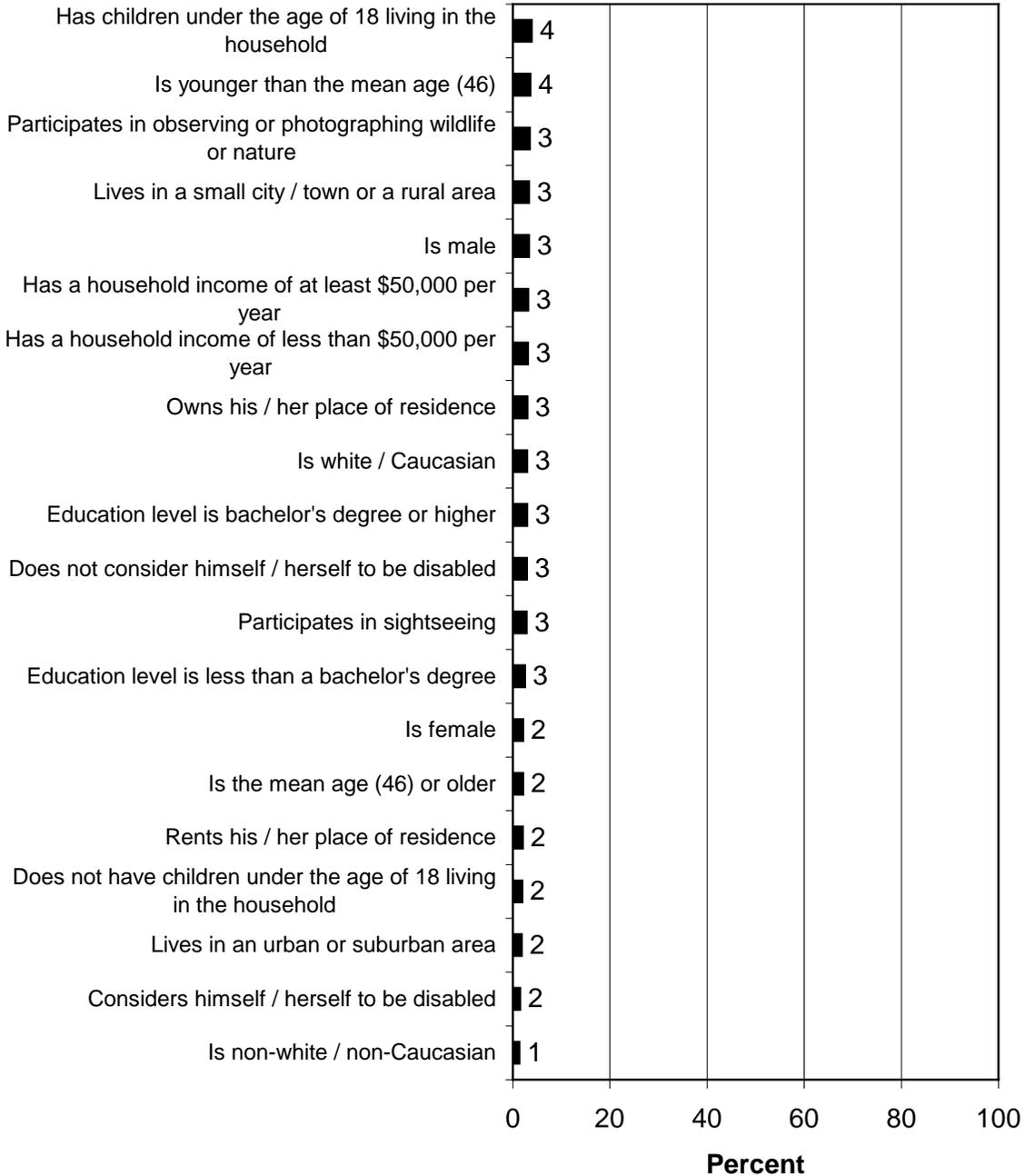
The table below shows the regional participation rates for snowmobile/ATV trail users. At the top of the ranking is the Northeast region, where 7% of residents participate in snowmobile/ATV activities involving trails; meanwhile, the King/Seattle, Coast, and Islands regions each have around 1% of residents participating in snowmobile/ATV trail-related recreation.

Regional Participation Rates of Snowmobiling/ATV Trail Users	
Northeast	7.16
Columbia Plateau	5.06
South Central	3.40
North Cascades	3.29
Southwest	2.69
The Palouse	2.32
Peninsulas	1.54
King/Seattle	1.21
The Coast	0.85
The Islands	0.59

### Demographic Breakdown of Snowmobile/ATV Trail Users

The graph on the following page shows the breakdown of major demographic and participatory subgroups within the overall survey sample that participate in snowmobile/ATV activities involving trails. In this ranking, just two groups among all Washington State residents have more than 3% of individuals participating in snowmobile/ATV activities involving trails: those with children under the age of 18 living in the household (4% of this group participates in snowmobile/ATV activities involving trails) and those younger than the mean age of 46 (4%).

### Percent of each of the following groups that participate in snowmobile or ATV activities involving trails:



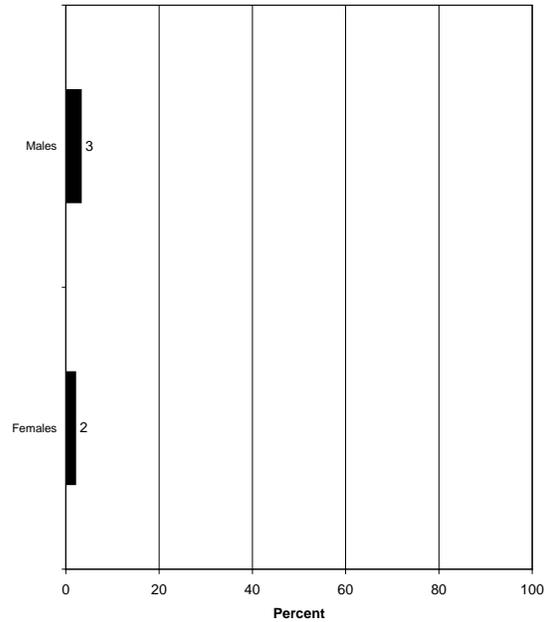
The series of graphs beginning on the next page breaks down snowmobile/ATV trail users by seven key demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, household income level, residence type, rent/ownership of residence, and disability status (i.e., whether the respondent considers him- or herself to be disabled). Two types of graphs are included for each demographic characteristic. The first graph is a histogram showing the percentage of each group within the demographic category participating in snowmobile/ATV activities involving trails (for instance, 3% of males and 2% of females participate in snowmobile/ATV activities involving trails). The second graph is a pie chart showing a proportional breakdown of snowmobile/ATV trail users by the demographic category in question (for instance, 61% of snowmobile/ATV trail users are male and 39% are female).

### Snowmobile/ATV Trail Users by Gender

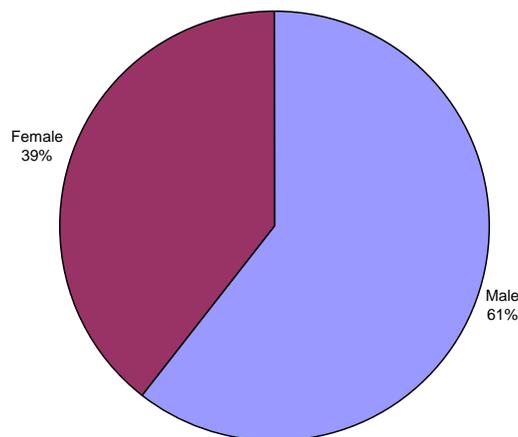
As shown in the histogram to the right, 3% of male Washington residents and 2% of female Washington residents participate in snowmobile/ATV activities involving trails.

The pie chart below indicates that most snowmobile/ATV trail users are male.

Percent of males and females who participate in snowmobile or ATV activities involving trails:



Percent of Snowmobile or ATV Trail Users by Gender:

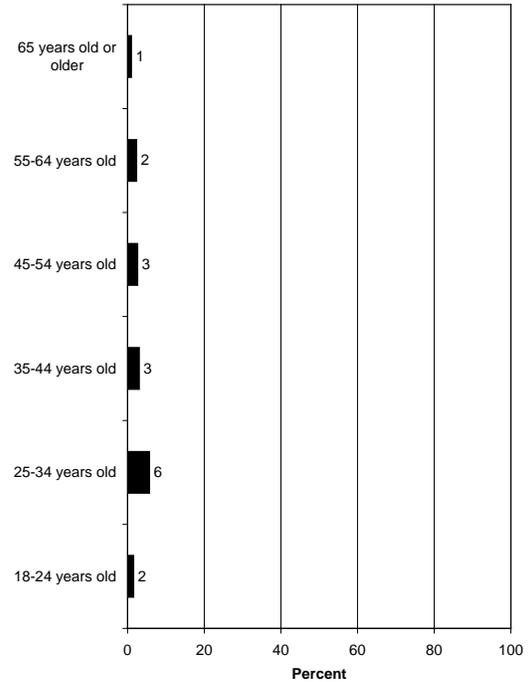


### Snowmobile/ATV Trail Users by Age

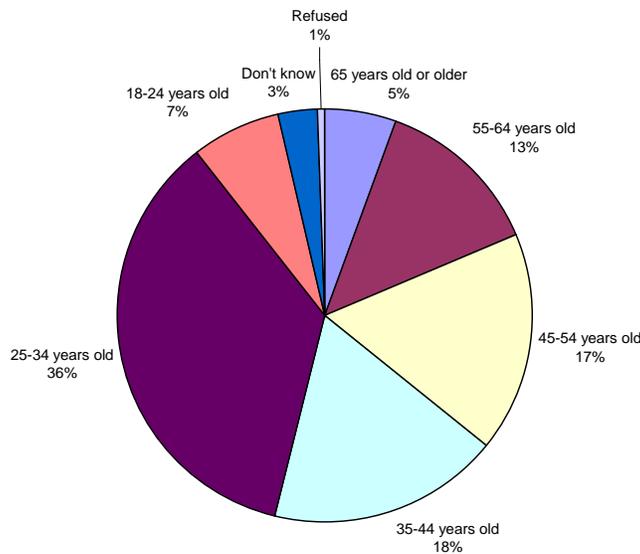
The histogram to the right shows that the most common age category for participation in snowmobile/ATV activities involving trails is 25-34-year-olds.

The pie chart below shows that a majority of snowmobile/ATV trail users in Washington are between the ages of 25 and 44 years old.

Percent of each of the following age categories that participate in snowmobile or ATV activities involving trails:



Percent of Snowmobile or ATV Trail Users by Age:

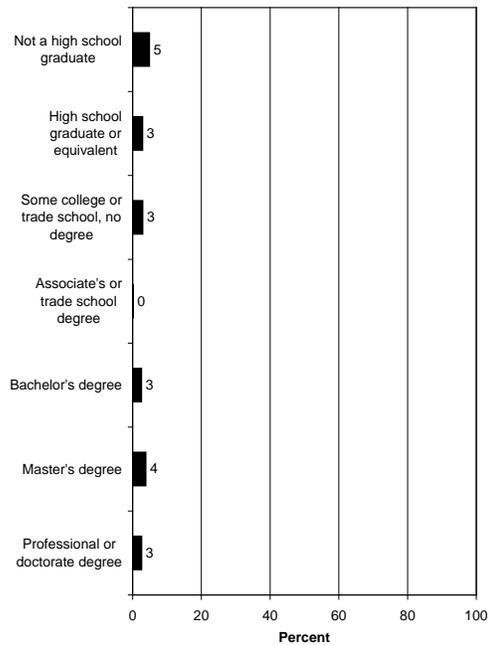


### Snowmobile/ATV Trail Users by Education Level

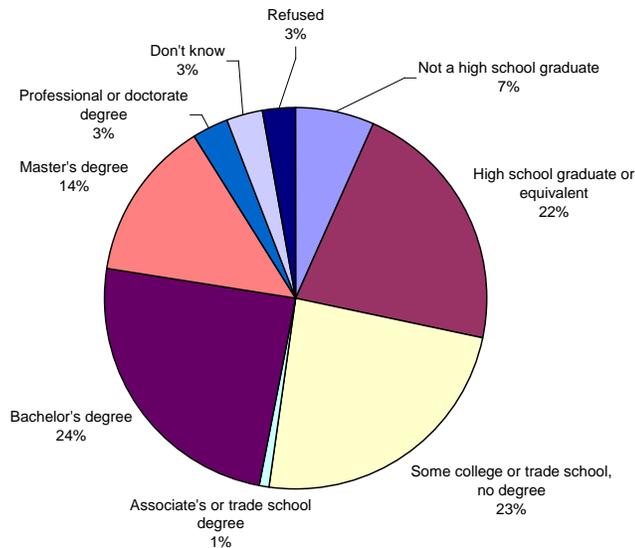
As shown in the histogram to the right, participation in snowmobile/ATV activities involving trails is fairly consistent across the various education level categories, with the exception of the associate's or trade school degree category.

The pie chart below shows that most snowmobile/ATV trail users have completed, at most, a bachelor's degree.

Percent of each of the following education level categories that participate in snowmobile or ATV activities involving trails:



Percent of Snowmobile or ATV Trail Users by Education Level:



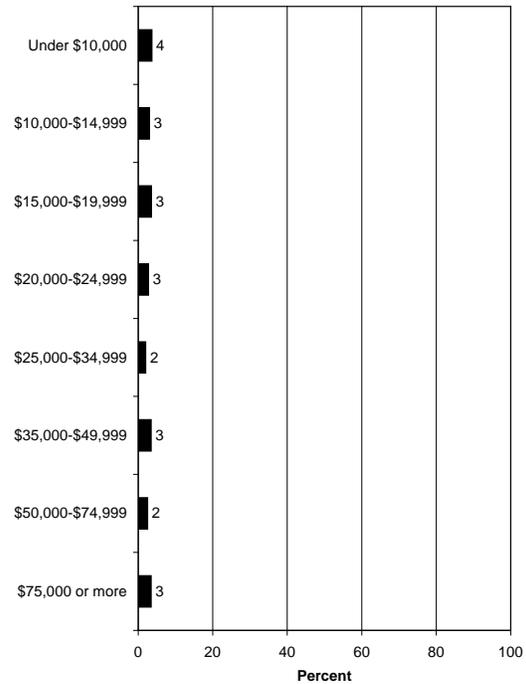
### Snowmobile/ATV Trail Users by Household Income Level

In the histogram to the right, participation rates for snowmobile/ATV activities involving trails are fairly similar across the various household income categories.

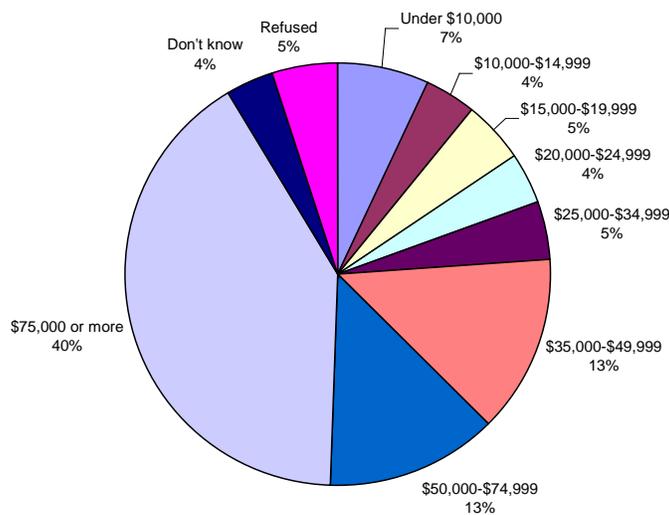
The pie chart below shows that most snowmobile/ATV trail users have a household income of \$50,000 or more.

(Note that 9% of snowmobile/ATV trail users refused the income question or said they were unsure.)

Percent of each of the following income level categories that participate in snowmobile or ATV activities involving trails:



Percent of Snowmobile or ATV Trail Users by Income Category:

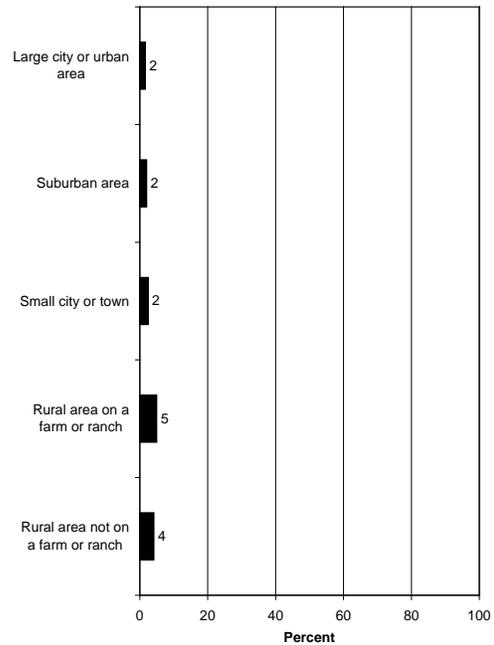


### Snowmobile/ATV Trail Users by Residence Type

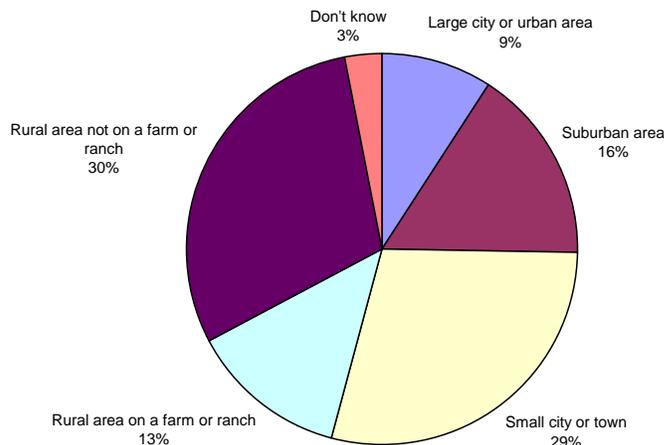
As shown in the histogram at right, participation in snowmobile/ATV activities involving trails is most common among those living in a rural area.

The pie chart below indicates that snowmobile/ATV trail users most often live in rural areas or small cities or towns.

Percent of each of the following residence categories that participate in snowmobile or ATV activities involving trails:



Percent of Snowmobile or ATV Trail Users by Residence Type:

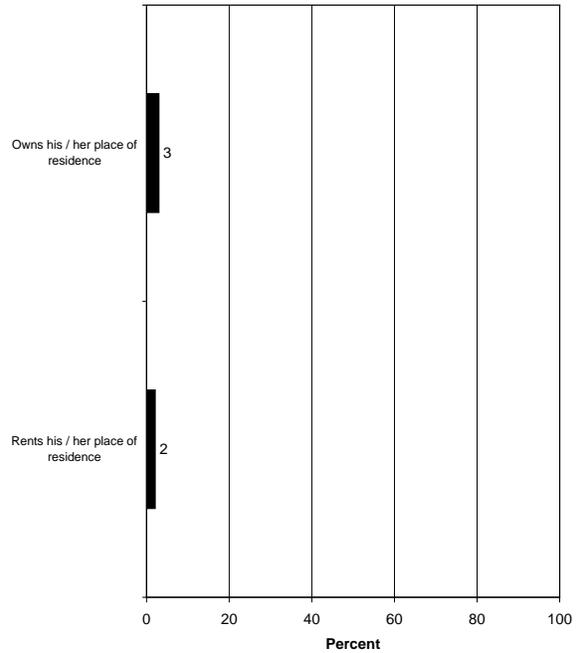


### Snowmobile/ATV Trail Users by Rent/Ownership of Residence

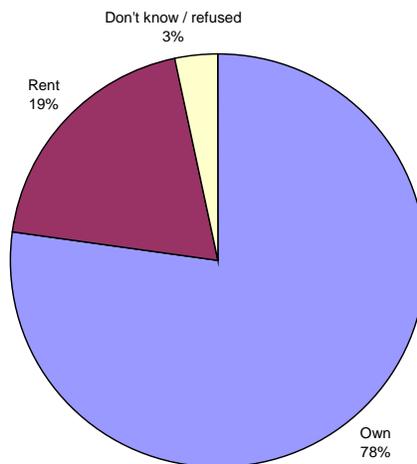
The histogram to the right shows fairly similar rates of participation in snowmobile/ATV activities involving trails among both owners and renters.

The pie chart below shows that more than three quarters of snowmobile/ATV trail users own their place of residence; about a fifth rent.

Percent of residence renters and owners that participate in snowmobile or ATV activities involving trails:



Percent of Snowmobile or ATV Trail Users by Rent / Own Residence:

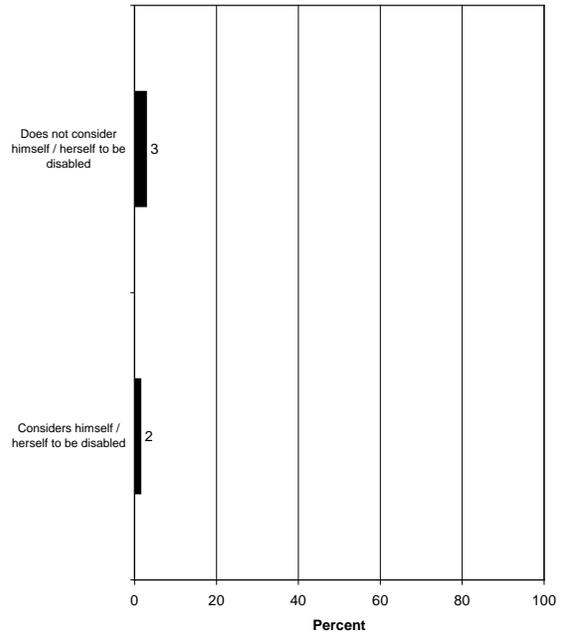


### Snowmobile/ATV Trail Users by Disability Status

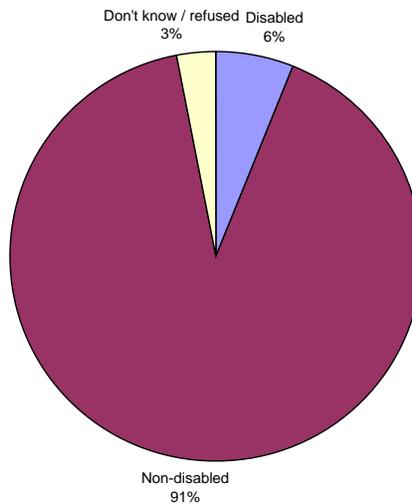
As shown in the histogram at right, the rates of participation for snowmobile/ATV activities involving trails are fairly similar for both non-disabled and disabled Washington residents.

The pie chart below shows that 6% of snowmobile/ATV trail users are disabled individuals.

Percent of non-disabled and disabled people who participate in snowmobile or ATV activities involving trails:



Percent of Snowmobile or ATV Trail Users by Disability:



## SKATING/SKATEBOARDING TRAIL USERS

In total, 2% of Washington State residents participate in skating or skateboarding activities involving trails: 2% of Washington residents participate in roller or inline skating on trails at outdoor facilities, and 1% of Washington residents go skateboarding on trails. The mean number of days Washington State residents participate in skating activities is 13 days per year, while the mean number of days per year for participation in skateboarding is 40 days (note that these figures are based on participants of *all* skating and skateboarding activities, not just those involving trails). A breakdown of participation rates for skating and skateboarding activities involving trails is shown in the table below.

Activity	Percent of Residents in Washington State Participating in the Activity
<b>Skating or Skateboarding Activities Involving Trails</b>	<b>2.2</b>
Roller or Inline Skating—Trail at Outdoor Facility	1.8
Skateboarding—Trail	0.6

### Regional Breakdown of Skating/Skateboarding Trail Users

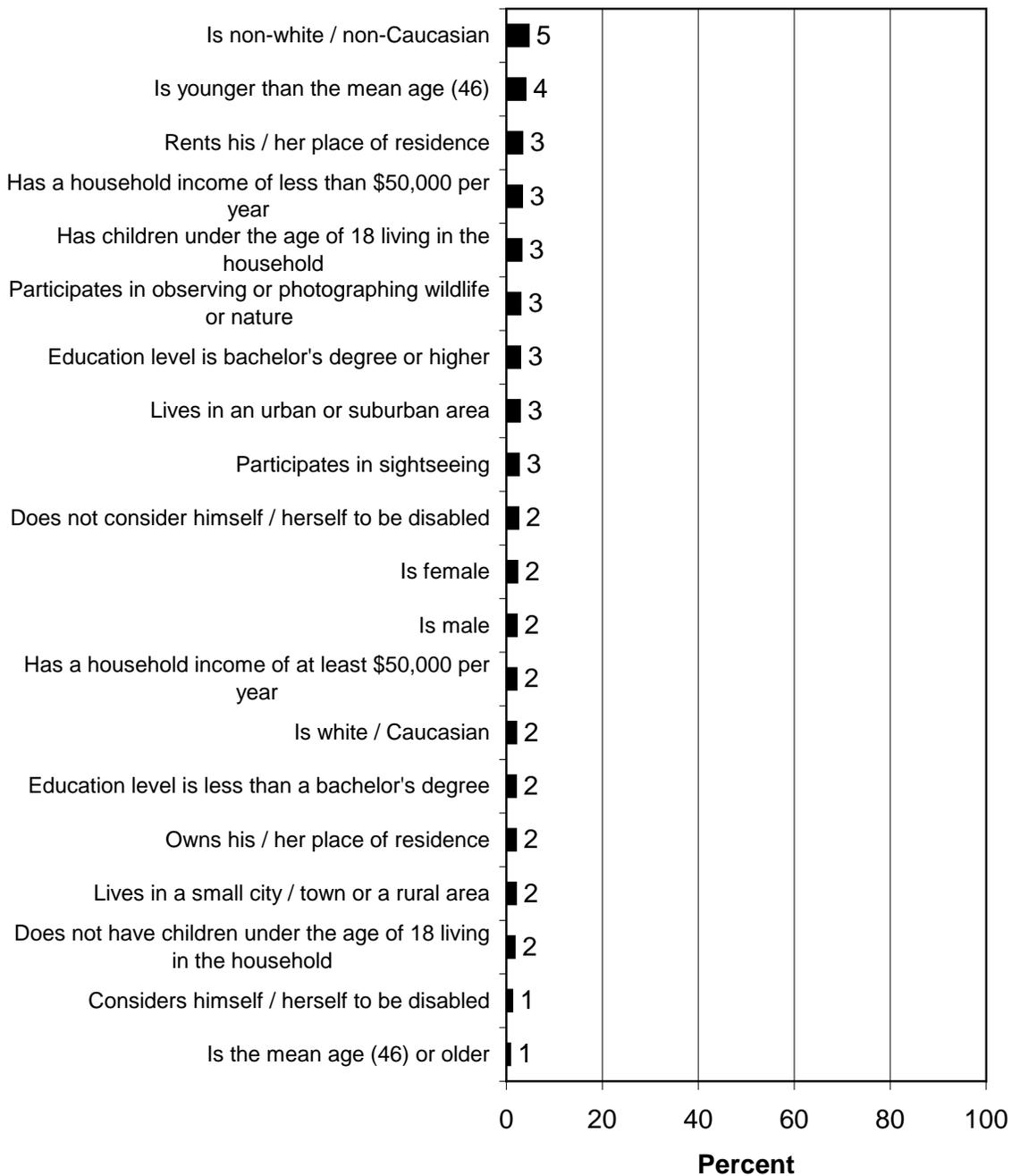
The table below shows the regional participation rates for skating/skateboarding trail users. At the top of the ranking are the King/Seattle, Columbia Plateau, and South Central regions, in which 3% of residents participate in skating or skateboarding activities involving trails; at the other end of the spectrum are the Northeast, Palouse, and Islands regions, each with around 1% of residents participating in skating or skateboarding activities involving trails.

Regional Participation Rates of Skating/Skateboarding Trail Users	
King/Seattle	3.15
Columbia Plateau	3.07
South Central	2.57
The Coast	1.95
North Cascades	1.88
Southwest	1.79
Peninsulas	1.72
Northeast	1.41
The Palouse	0.75
The Islands	0.67

### **Demographic Breakdown of Skating/Skateboarding Trail Users**

The graph on the following page shows the breakdown of major demographic and participatory subgroups within the overall survey sample that participate in skating/skateboarding activities involving trails. In this ranking, just two groups have more than 3% of individuals participating in skating/skateboarding activities involving trails: non-white/non-Caucasian residents (5% of this group participates in skating/skateboarding activities involving trails) and those younger than mean age of 46 (4%).

### Percent of each of the following groups that participate in skating or skateboarding activities involving trails:



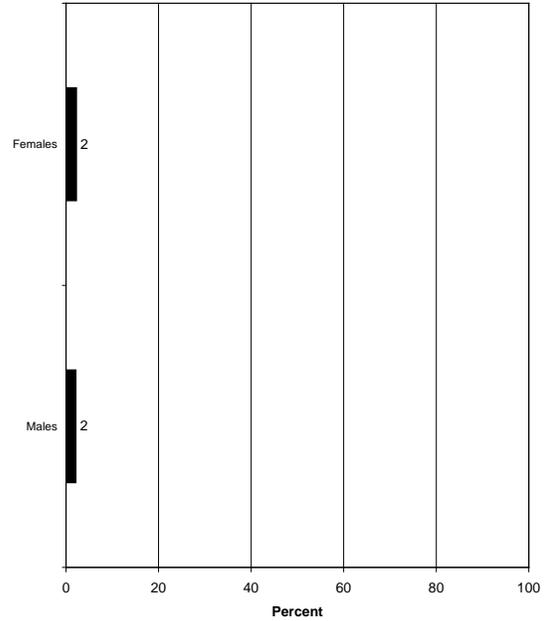
The series of graphs beginning on the next page breaks down skating/skateboarding trail users by seven key demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, household income level, residence type, rent/ownership of residence, and disability status (i.e., whether the respondent considers him- or herself to be disabled). Two types of graphs are included for each demographic characteristic. The first graph is a histogram showing the percentage of each group within the demographic category participating in skating/skateboarding activities involving trails (for instance, 2% of females and 2% of males participate in skating/skateboarding activities involving trails). The second graph is a pie chart showing a proportional breakdown of skating/skateboarding trail users by the demographic category in question (for instance, 52% of skating/skateboarding trail users are female and 47% are male).

### Skating/Skateboarding Trail Users by Gender

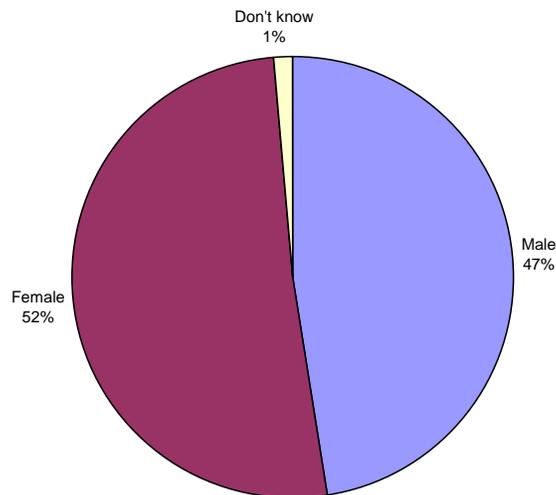
As shown in the histogram to the right, 2% of both female and male Washington residents participate in skating/skateboarding activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that slightly more than half of all skating/skateboarding trail users are female.

Percent of males and females who participate in skating or skateboarding activities involving trails:



Percent of Skating or Skateboarding Trail Users by Gender:

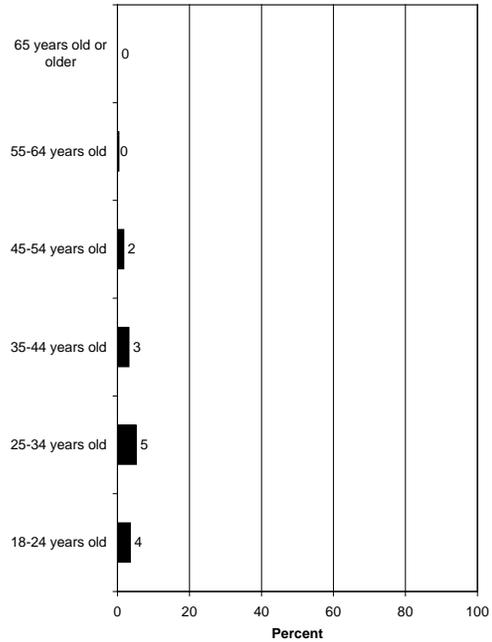


### Skating/Skateboarding Trail Users by Age

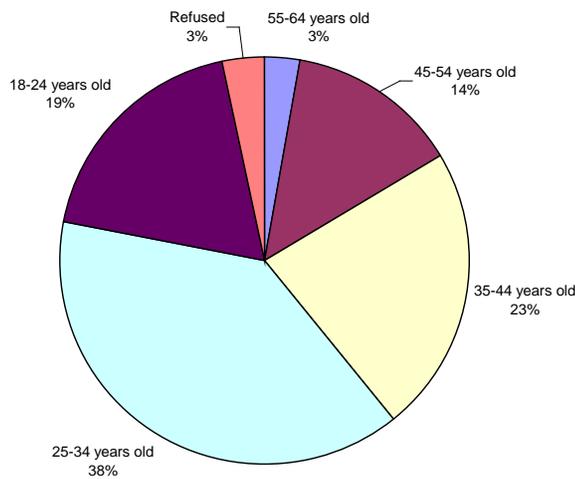
The histogram to the right shows that participation in skating/skateboarding activities is most common among 18-24-year-olds and 25-34-year-olds.

The pie chart below shows that the majority of skating/skateboarding trail users in Washington are between the ages of 18 and 34 years old.

Percent of each of the following age categories that participate in skating or skateboarding activities involving trails:



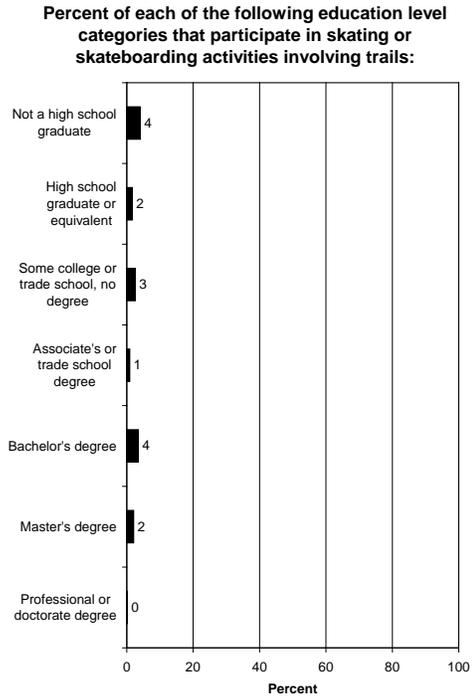
Percent of Skating or Skateboarding Trail Users by Age:



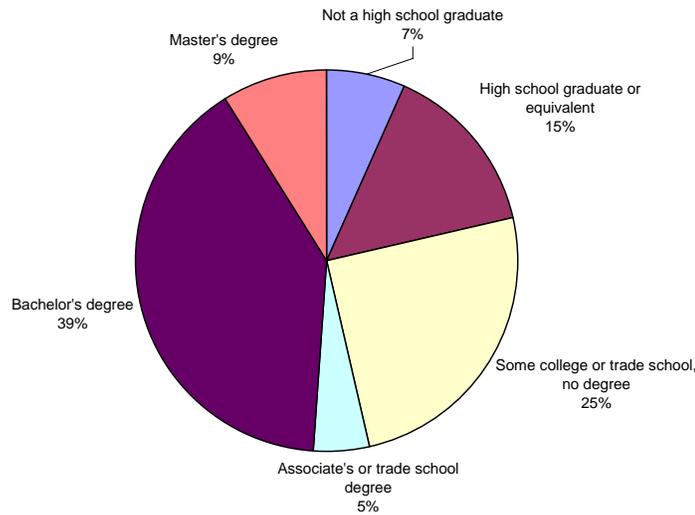
### Skating/Skateboarding Trail Users by Education Level

As shown in the histogram to the right, participation in skating/skateboarding activities involving trails is greatest among non-high school graduates and those with a bachelor’s degree, followed by those with some college or trade school (no degree).

The pie chart below shows that skating/skateboarding trail users most commonly hold a bachelor’s degree or have completed some college or trade school.



**Percent of Skating or Skateboarding Trail Users by Education Level:**



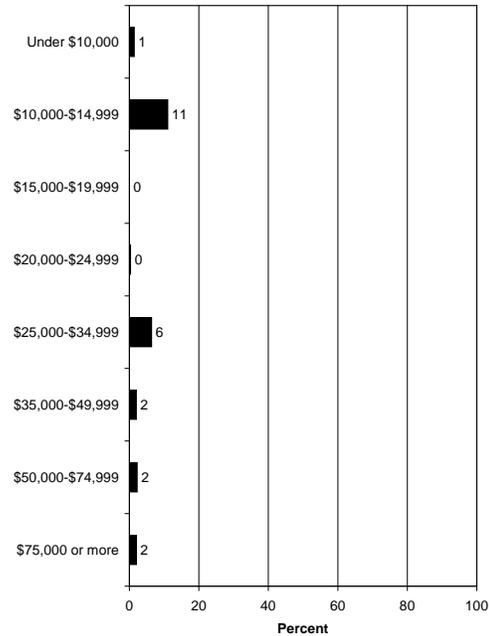
### Skating/Skateboarding Trail Users by Household Income Level

In the histogram to the right, the top household income category for participating in skating/skateboarding activities involving trails is the \$10,000-\$14,999 category, followed by the \$25,000-\$34,999 category.

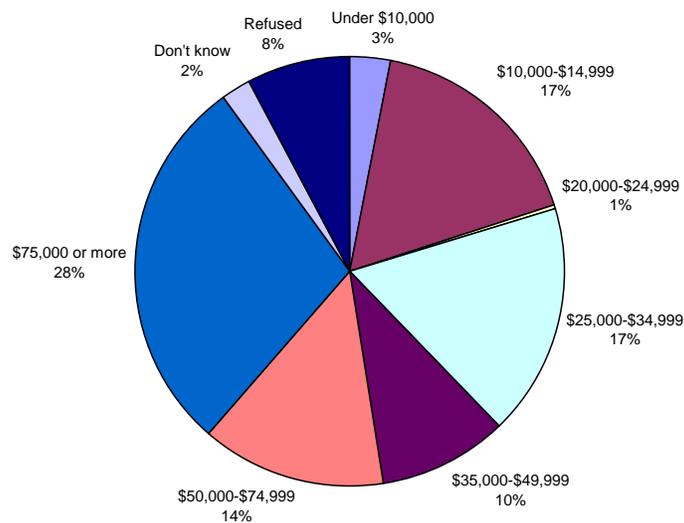
The pie chart below shows that just under half of all skating/skateboarding trail users have a household income of \$49,999 or less.

(Note that 10% of skating/skateboarding trail users refused the income question or said they were unsure.)

Percent of each of the following income level categories that participate in skating or skateboarding activities involving trails:



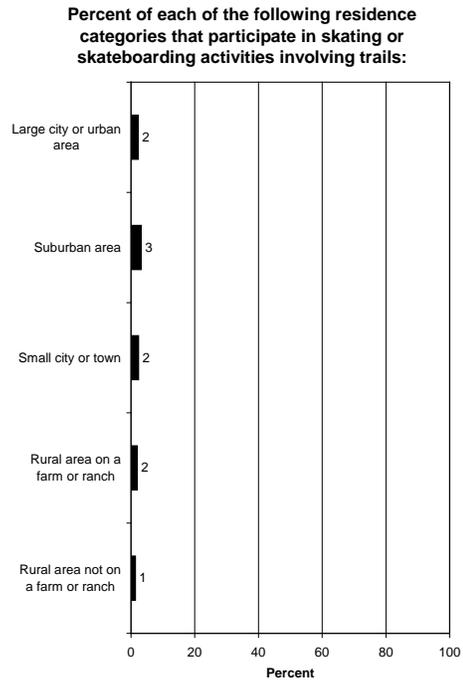
Percent of Skating or Skateboarding Trail Users by Income Category:



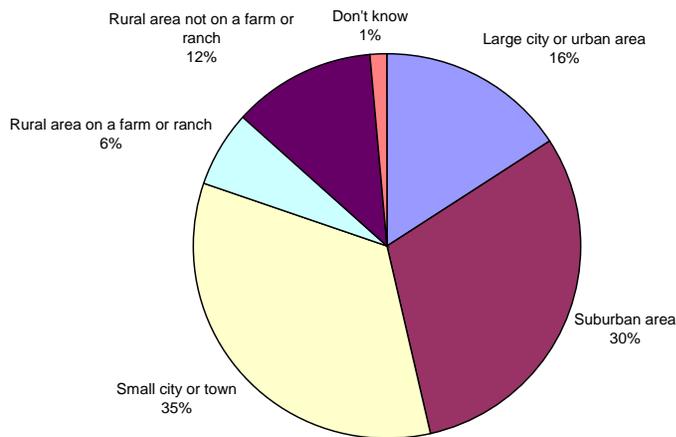
### Skating/Skateboarding Trail Users by Residence Type

As shown in the histogram at right, participation in skating/skateboarding activities involving trails is fairly even across the major residence categories, with no category having more than 3% of individuals participating in these activities.

The pie chart below indicates that skating/skateboarding trail users most often live in small cities or towns or suburban areas.



Percent of Skating or Skateboarding Trail Users by Residence Type:

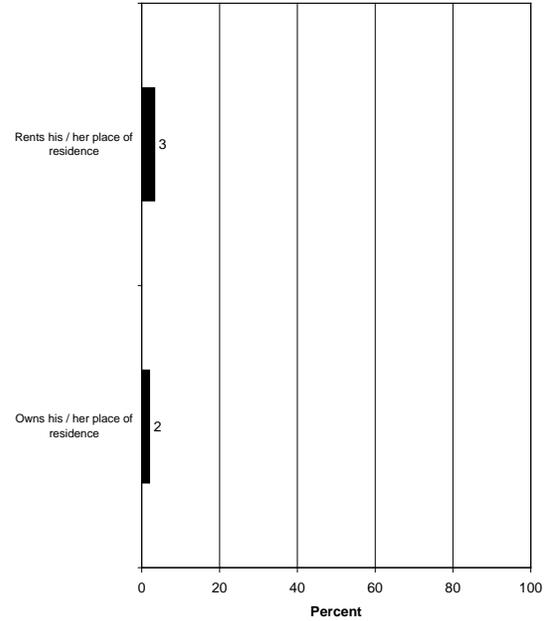


### Skating/Skateboarding Trail Users by Rent/Ownership of Residence

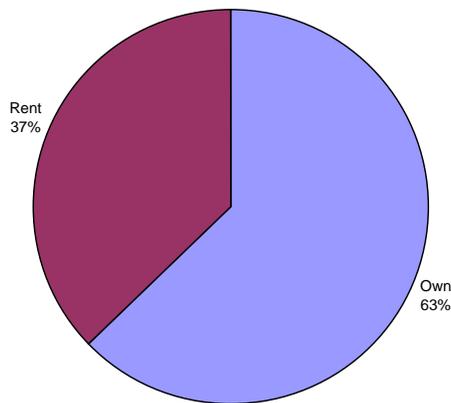
The histogram to the right shows fairly similar rates of participation in skating/skateboarding activities involving trails among both owners and renters.

The pie chart below shows that nearly two-thirds of skating/skateboarding trail users own their place of residence; meanwhile, more than a third rent.

Percent of residence renters and owners that participate in skating or skateboarding activities involving trails:



Percent of Skating or Skateboarding Trail Users by Rent / Own Residence:

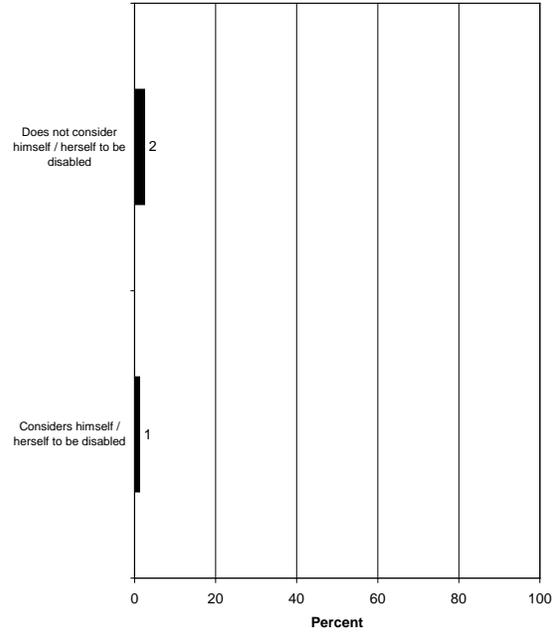


### Skating/Skateboarding Trail Users by Disability Status

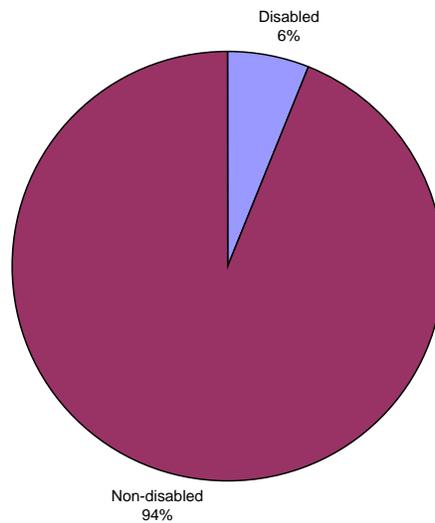
As shown in the histogram at right, just 2% of non-disabled Washington residents and 1% of disabled residents participate in skating/skateboarding activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that 6% of skating/skateboarding trail users are disabled.

Percent of non-disabled and disabled people who participate in skating or skateboarding activities involving trails:



Percent of Skating or Skateboarding Trail Users by Disability:



## CAMPING/BACKPACKING TRAIL USERS

In total, 8% of Washington State residents participate in camping or backpacking activities in a primitive location involving trails: 8% of Washington residents camp or backpack in a primitive location involving trails using self-carry packs, and less than 0.5% of Washington residents camp or backpack in a primitive location involving trails using pack animals. The mean number of days Washington State residents participate in camping activities is 11 days per year (note that this figure includes participants of *all* camping activities, not just those involving backpacking on trails or primitive locations). A breakdown of participation rates for camping and backpacking activities involving trails is shown in the table below.

Activity	Percent of Residents in Washington State Participating in the Activity
Camping—Backpacking/Primitive Location	8.3
Camping—Backpacking/Primitive Location—Self-Carry Packs	7.7
Camping—Backpacking/Primitive Location—Pack Animals	0.3

### Regional Breakdown of Camping/Backpacking Trail Users

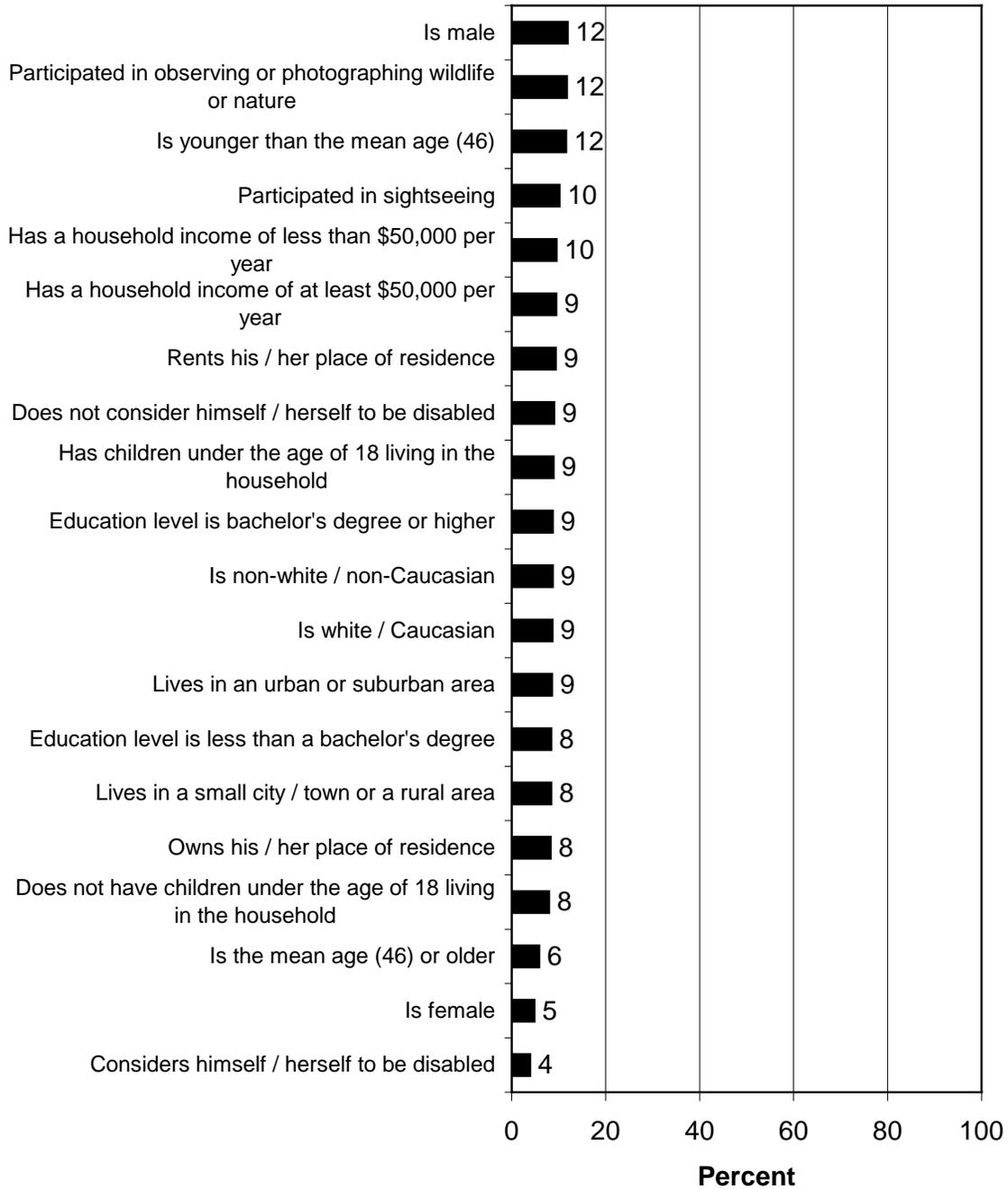
The table below shows the regional participation rates for camping/backpacking trail users. At the top of the ranking is the North Cascades region, where 10% of residents participate in camping/backpacking activities involving trails; by contrast, the Palouse region has the lowest percentage of residents participating in camping/backpacking activities involving trails (7%).

Regional Participation Rates of Camping/Backpacking Trail Users	
North Cascades	10.0
The Islands	9.3
The Coast	9.2
Southwest	8.8
Columbia Plateau	8.7
South Central	7.8
King/Seattle	7.6
Northeast	7.4
Peninsulas	7.0
The Palouse	6.9

### **Demographic Breakdown of Camping/Backpacking Trail Users**

The graph on the following page shows the breakdown of major demographic and participatory subgroups within the overall survey sample that participate in camping/backpacking activities involving trails. In this ranking, the top groups among all Washington State residents that participate in camping/backpacking activities involving trails include males (12% of this group participates in camping/backpacking activities involving trails), those who participate in observing or photographing wildlife or nature (12%), and those younger than the mean age of 46 (12%). The next top tier of groups participating in camping/backpacking activities involving trails consists of those who participate in sightseeing (10%) and those with a household income of less than \$50,000 per year (10%).

**Percent of each of the following groups that participate in camping or backpacking activities involving trails:**



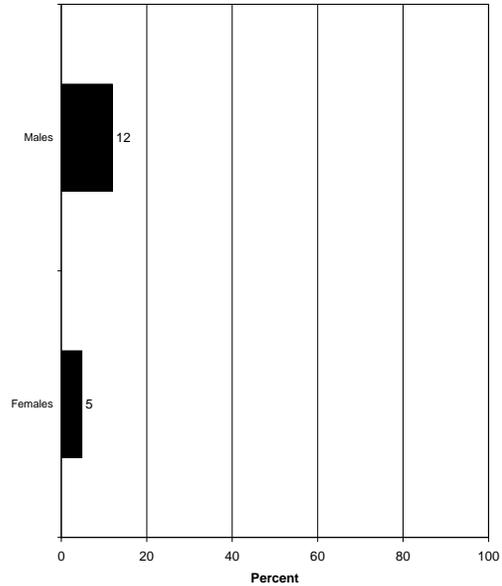
The series of graphs beginning on the next page breaks down camping/backpacking trail users by seven key demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, household income level, residence type, rent/ownership of residence, and disability status (i.e., whether the respondent considers him- or herself to be disabled). Two types of graphs are included for each demographic characteristic. The first graph is a histogram showing the percentage of each group within the demographic category participating in camping/backpacking activities involving trails (for instance, 12% of males and 5% of females participate in camping/backpacking activities involving trails). The second graph is a pie chart showing a proportional breakdown of camping/backpacking trail users by the demographic category in question (for instance, 71% of camping/backpacking trail users are male and 29% are female).

### Camping/Backpacking Trail Users by Gender

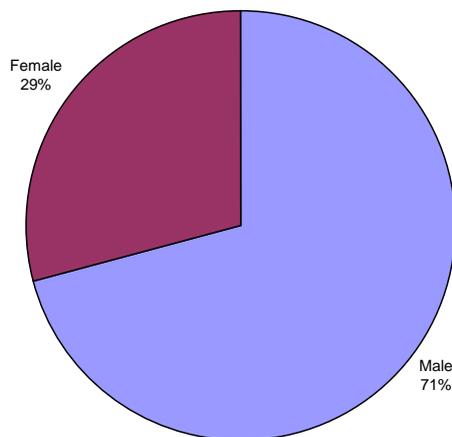
As shown in the histogram to the right, 12% of male Washington residents and 5% of female Washington residents participate in camping/backpacking activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that nearly three quarters of all camping/backpacking trail users are male.

Percent of males and females who participate in camping or backpacking activities involving trails:



Percent of Camping or Backpacking Trail Users by Gender:

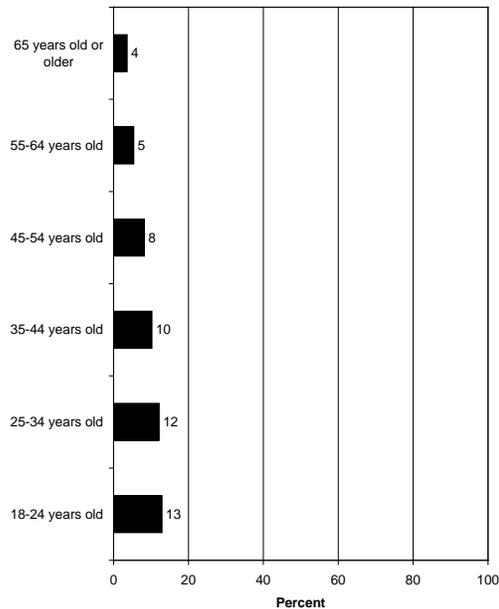


### Camping/Backpacking Trail Users by Age

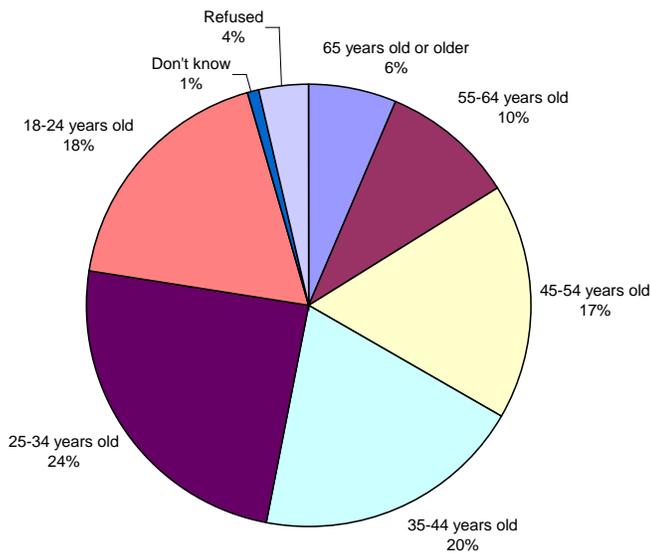
The histogram to the right shows that participation in camping/backpacking activities involving trails generally decreases with age, with 18-24-year-olds and 25-34-year-olds having the highest rates of participation.

The pie chart below shows that most camping/backpacking trail users in Washington are younger or middle-aged adults.

Percent of each of the following age categories that participate in camping or backpacking activities involving trails:



Percent of Camping or Backpacking Trail Users by Age:

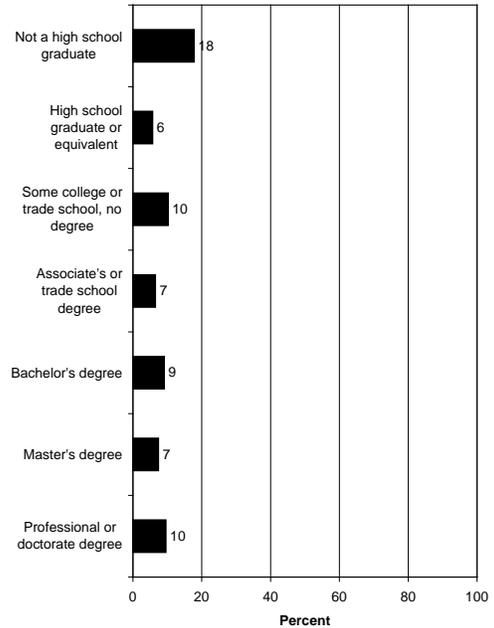


### Camping/Backpacking Trail Users by Education Level

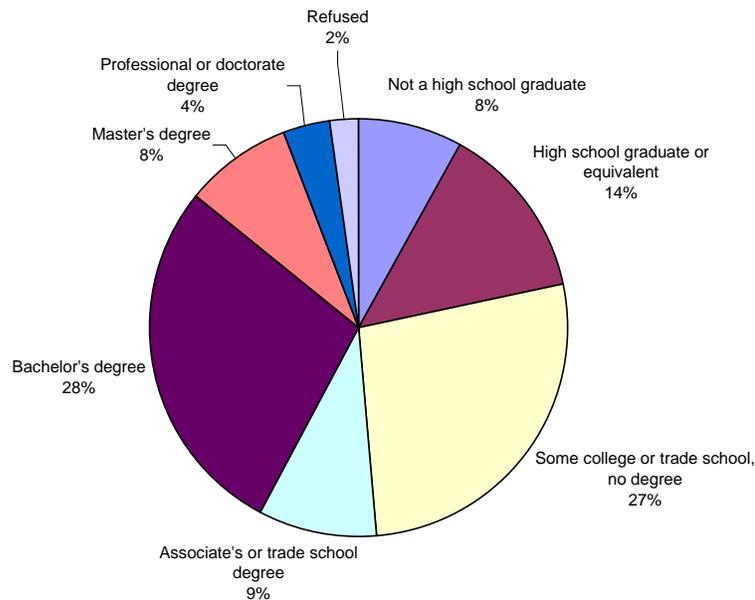
As shown in the histogram to the right, non-high school graduates have the highest rate of participation in camping/backpacking activities involving trails, followed by those with some college or trade school (no degree) and those with a professional or doctorate degree.

The pie chart below shows that camping/backpacking trail users most commonly have completed some college or trade school or hold a bachelor's degree.

Percent of each of the following education level categories that participate in camping or backpacking activities involving trails:



Percent of Camping or Backpacking Trail Users by Education Level:



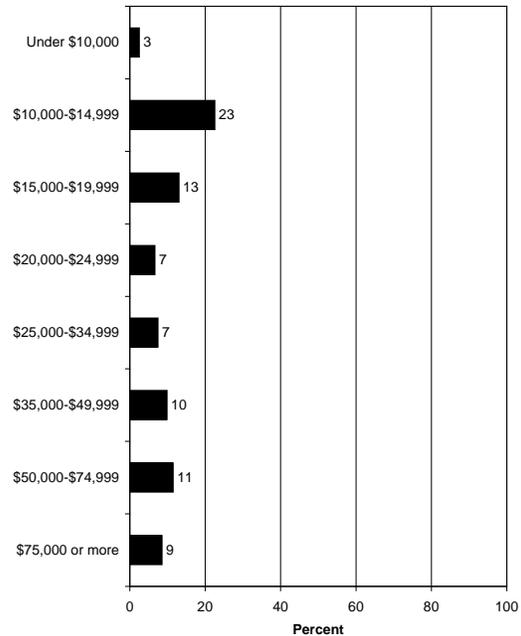
### Camping/Backpacking Trail Users by Household Income Level

In the histogram to the right, the top household income category for participating in camping/backpacking activities involving trails is the \$10,000-\$14,999 category, followed by the \$15,000-\$19,999 and \$50,000-\$74,999 categories.

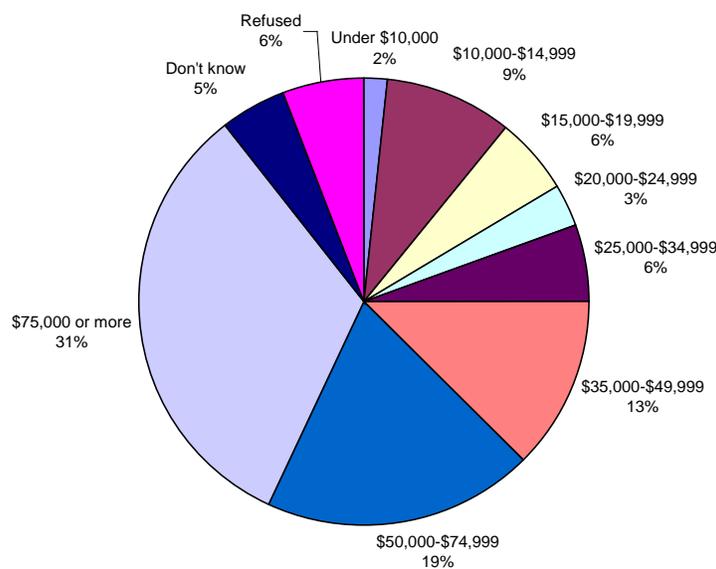
The pie chart below shows that half of all camping/backpacking trail users have a household income over \$50,000; about a third have a household income of \$75,000 or more.

(Note that 11% of walking trail users refused the income question or said they were unsure.)

Percent of each of the following income level categories that participate in camping or backpacking activities involving trails:



Percent of Camping or Backpacking Trail Users by Income Category:

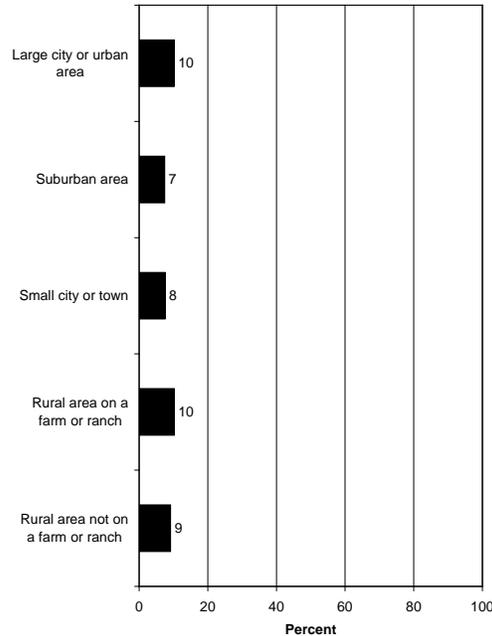


### Camping/Backpacking Trail Users by Residence Type

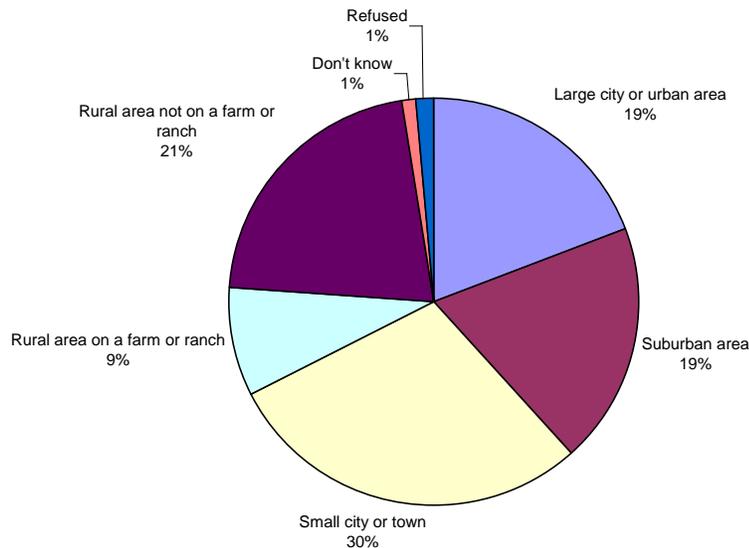
As shown in the histogram at right, participation in camping/backpacking activities involving trails is fairly consistent across the major residence categories; the highest rates of participation are among those living in a large city or urban area or a rural area.

The pie chart below indicates that camping/backpacking trail users most often live in a rural area or a small city or town.

Percent of each of the following residence categories that participate in camping or backpacking activities involving trails:



Percent of Camping or Backpacking Trail Users by Residence Type:

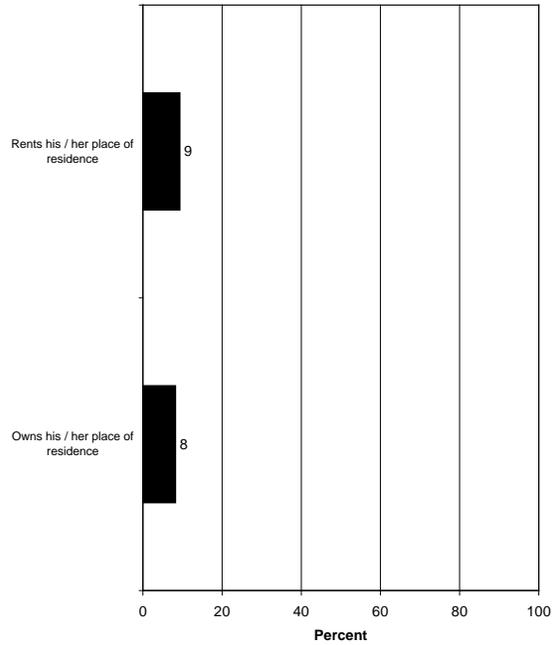


### Camping/Backpacking Trail Users by Rent/Ownership of Residence

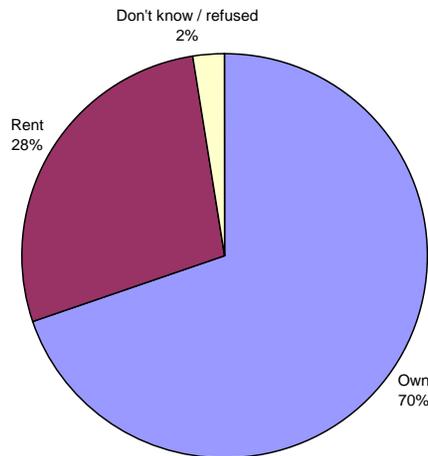
The histogram to the right shows similar rates of participation in camping/backpacking activities involving trails among both owners and renters, with 9% of renters and 8% of owners participating.

The pie chart below shows that nearly three quarters of camping/backpacking trail users own their place of residence; just over a quarter rent.

Percent of residence renters and owners that participate in camping or backpacking activities involving trails:



Percent of Camping or Backpacking Trail Users by Rent / Own Residence:

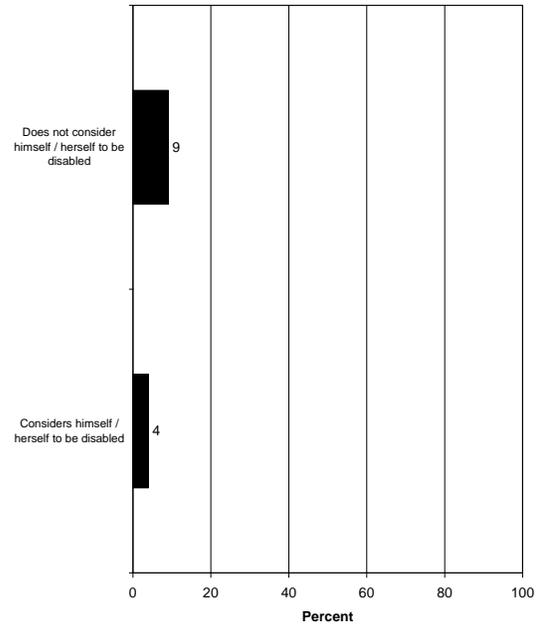


### Camping/Backpacking Trail Users by Disability Status

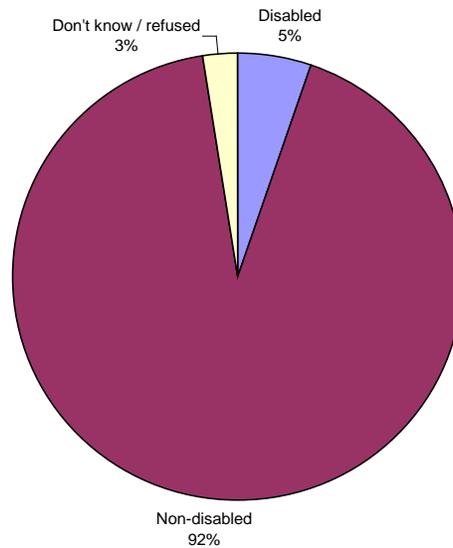
As shown in the histogram at right, 9% of non-disabled Washington residents and 4% of disabled residents participate in camping/backpacking activities involving trails.

The pie chart below shows that, among all camping/backpacking trail users, 5% are disabled individuals.

Percent of non-disabled and disabled people who participate in camping or backpacking activities involving trails:



Percent of Camping or Backpacking Trail Users by Disability:



## MANUAL CRAFT WATER TRAIL USERS

In total, 12% of Washington State residents participate in a canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or other manual craft boating activity involving water trails: 4% of Washington residents participate in canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or using a manual craft in saltwater; 9% of Washington residents participate in canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or using a manual craft in freshwater; 2% of Washington residents camp with a canoe or kayak; and 1% of Washington residents camp with a canoe or kayak at a specifically designated site. A breakdown of participation rates for canoeing, kayaking, rowing, and manual craft activities involving water trails is shown in the table below.

Activity	Percent of Residents in Washington State Participating in the Activity
Boating—Canoeing, Kayaking, Rowing, Manual Craft*	12.1
Boating—Canoeing, Kayaking, Rowing, Manual Craft—Saltwater*	3.7
Boating—Canoeing, Kayaking, Rowing, Manual Craft—Freshwater*	9.0
Camping—With a Kayak/Canoe*	2.4
Camping—With a Kayak/Canoe—Site Specifically Designated*	1.2

\* Activity not included in calculation of overall participation in trail-related recreational activities.

### Regional Breakdown of Manual Craft Water Trail Users

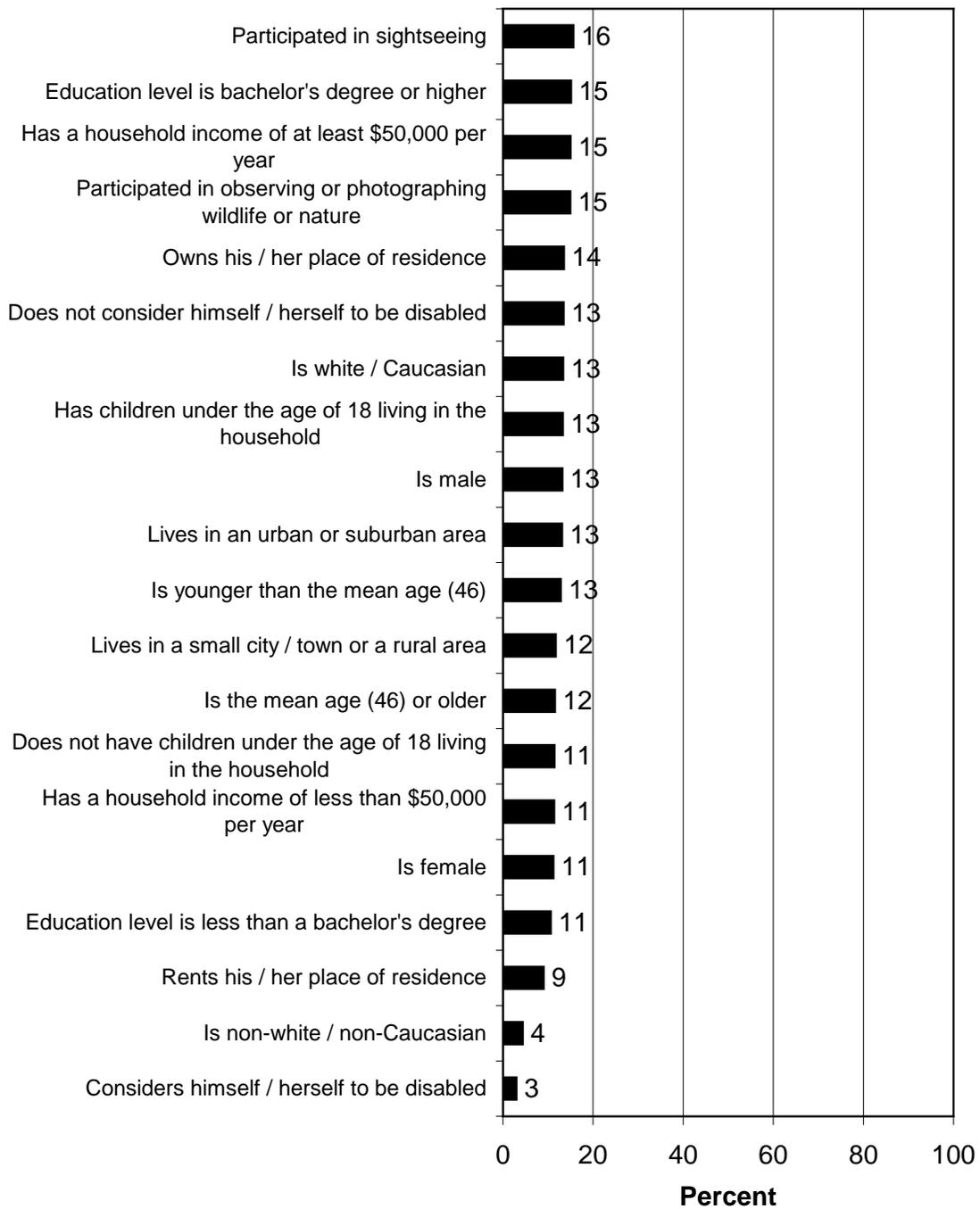
The table below shows the regional participation rates for manual craft water trail users. At the top of the ranking is the Islands region, with 19% of residents participating in manual craft activities involving water trails; meanwhile, the Palouse region has the lowest percentage of residents participating in manual craft activities involving water trails (6%).

Regional Participation Rates of Manual Craft Water Trail Users	
The Islands	18.8
Northeast	18.0
Peninsulas	14.1
North Cascades	12.1
King/Seattle	12.0
Southwest	10.9
Columbia Plateau	10.5
South Central	9.9
The Coast	8.9
The Palouse	5.7

### **Demographic Breakdown of Manual Craft Water Trail Users**

The graph on the following page shows the breakdown of major demographic and participatory subgroups within the overall survey sample that participate in manual craft activities involving water trails. In this ranking, four groups have at least 15% of individuals participating in manual craft activities involving water trails: those who participate in sightseeing (16% of this group participates in manual craft activities involving water trails), those with an education level of a bachelor's degree or higher (15%), those with a household income of at least \$50,000 per year (15%), and those who participate in observing or photographing wildlife or nature (15%).

**Percent of each of the following groups that participate in manual craft activities involving water trails:**



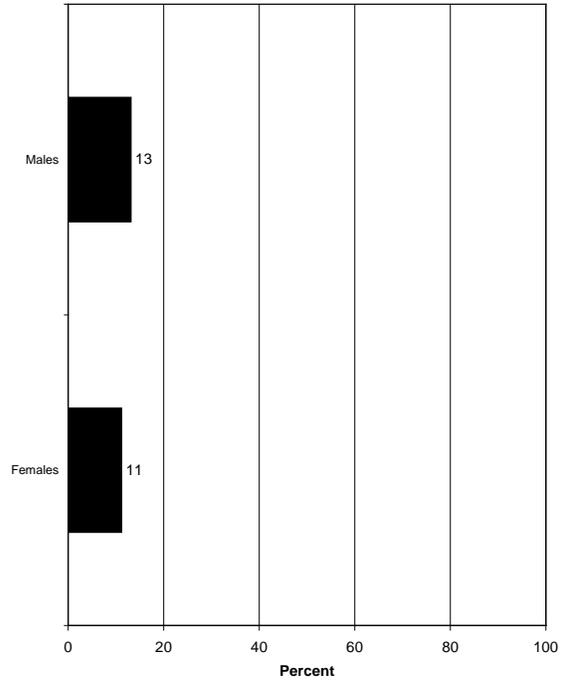
The series of graphs beginning on the next page breaks down manual craft water trail users by seven key demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, household income level, residence type, rent/ownership of residence, and disability status (i.e., whether the respondent considers him- or herself to be disabled). Two types of graphs are included for each demographic characteristic. The first graph is a histogram showing the percentage of each group within the demographic category participating in manual craft water trail activities (for instance, 13% of males and 11% of females participate in manual craft water trail activities). The second graph is a pie chart showing a proportional breakdown of manual craft water trail users by the demographic category in question (for instance, 53% of manual craft water trail users are male and 47% are female).

### Manual Craft Water Trail Users by Gender

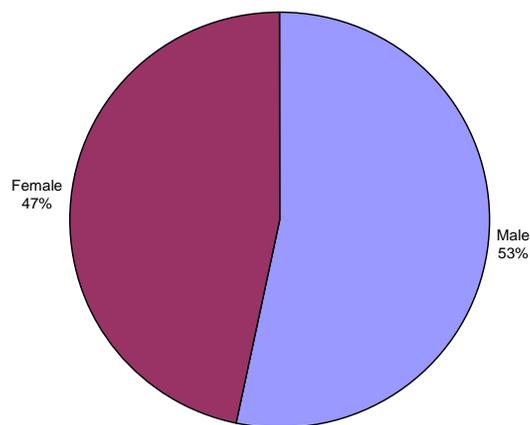
As shown in the histogram to the right, 13% of male Washington residents and 11% of female Washington residents participate in manual craft water trail activities.

The pie chart below shows that, among all manual craft water trail users, 53% are male.

Percent of males and females who participate in manual craft activities involving water trails:



Percent of Manual Craft Water Trail Users by Gender:

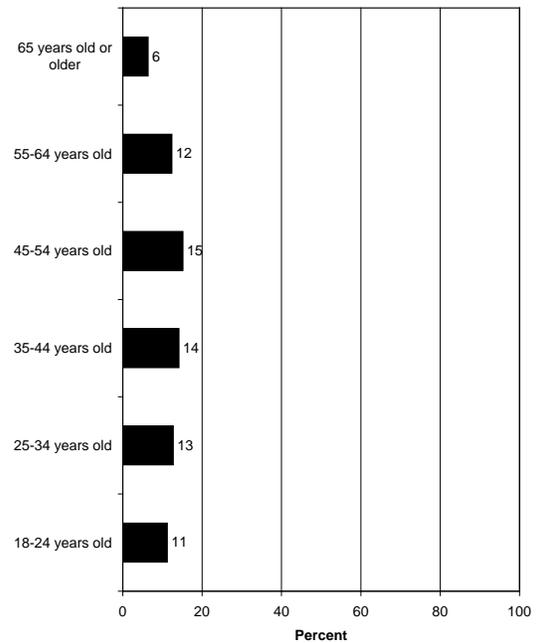


### Manual Craft Water Trail Users by Age

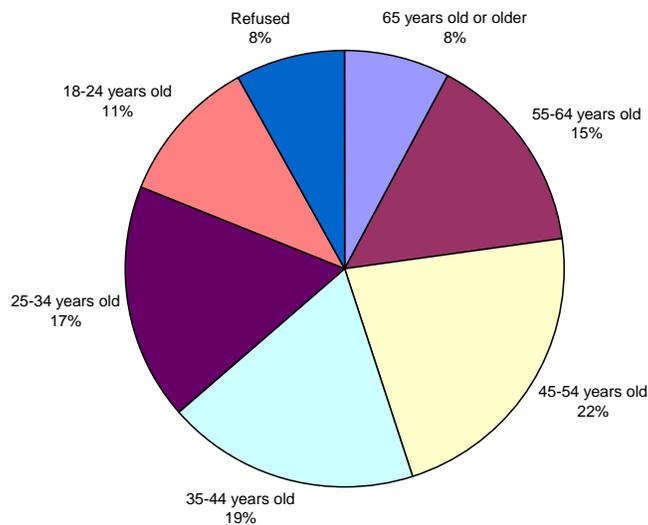
The histogram to the right shows that participation in manual craft water trail activities is most common among middle-aged adults, with the top categories for participation being 45-54-year-olds, 35-44-year-olds, and 25-34-year-olds.

The pie chart below shows that manual craft water trail users in Washington are fairly evenly comprised of younger- and middle-aged adults.

Percent of each of the following age categories that participate in manual craft activities involving water trails:



Percent of Manual Craft Water Trail Users by Age:

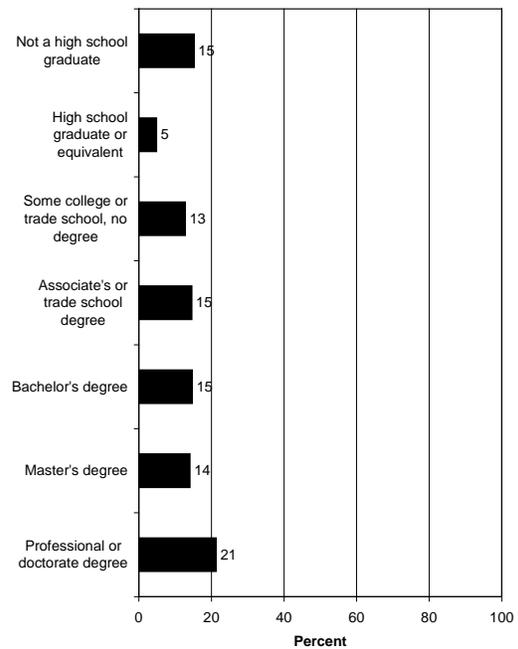


### Manual Craft Water Trail Users by Education Level

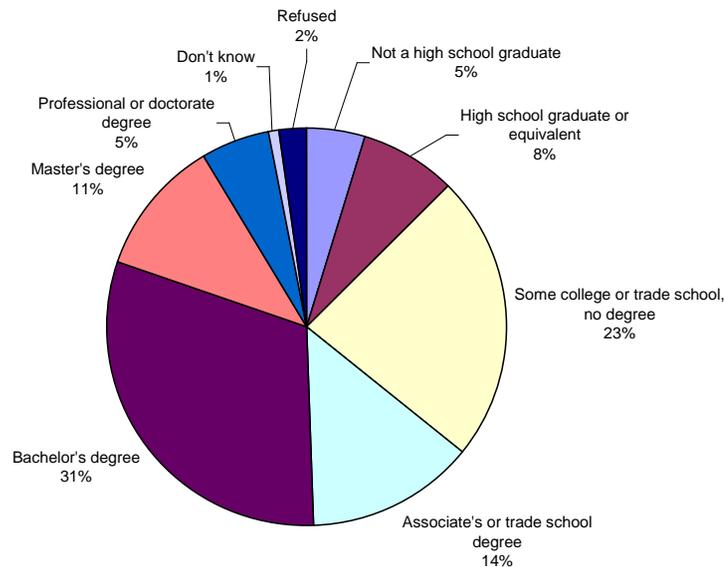
As shown in the histogram to the right, participation in manual craft water trail activities is highest among those with a professional or doctorate degree, followed by those with a bachelor's degree, an associate's or trade school degree, and non-high school graduates.

The pie chart below shows that participants of manual craft water trail activities are most commonly individuals with a bachelor's degree or those who have completed some college or trade school (no degree).

Percent of each of the following education level categories that participate in manual craft activities involving water trails:



Percent of Manual Craft Water Trail Users by Education Level:



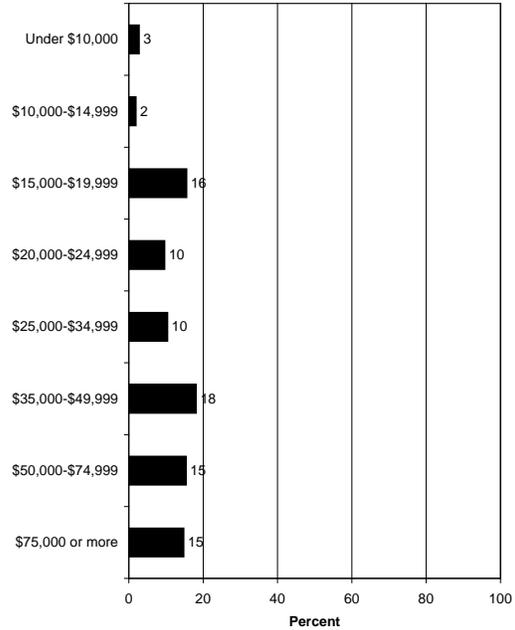
### Manual Craft Water Trail Users by Household Income Level

In the histogram to the right, the top household income category for participating in manual craft water trail activities is the \$35,000-\$49,999 category, followed by the \$15,000-\$19,999 category.

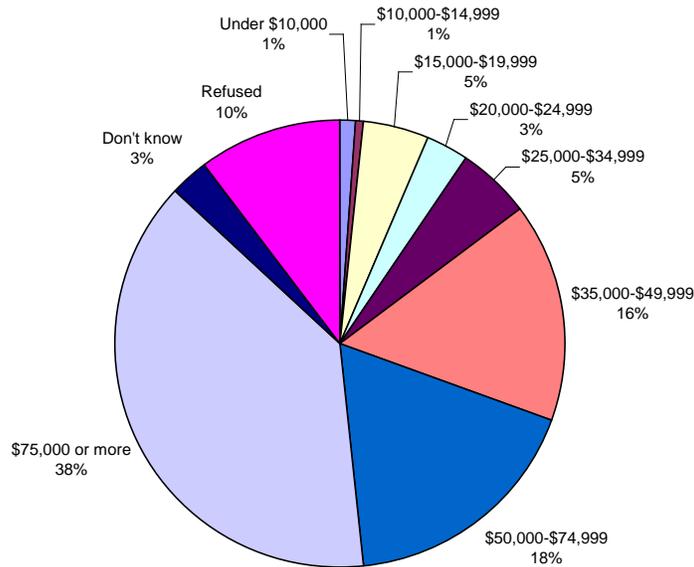
The pie chart below shows that most manual craft water trail users have a household income of \$50,000 or more.

(Note that 13% of manual craft water trail users refused the income question or said they were unsure.)

Percent of each of the following income level categories that participate in manual craft activities involving water trails:



Percent of Manual Craft Water Trail Users by Income Category:

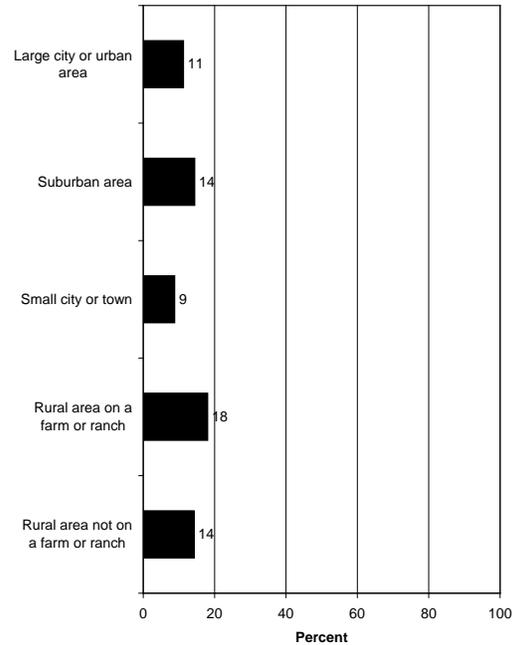


### Manual Craft Water Trail Users by Residence Type

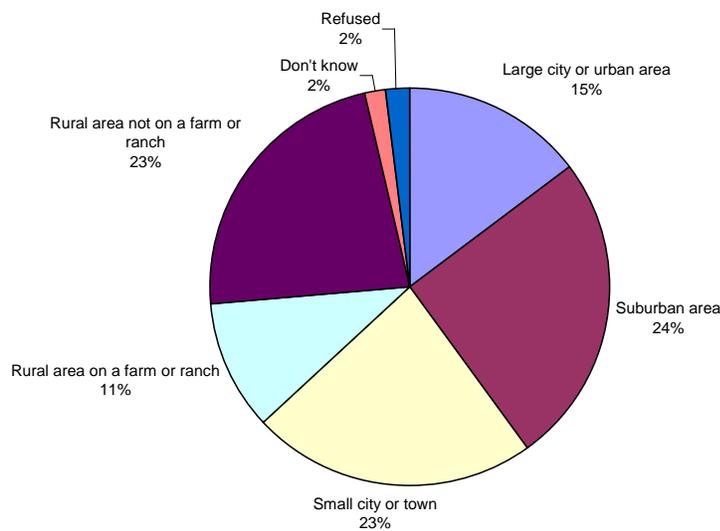
As shown in the histogram at right, participation in manual craft water trail activities is highest among those living in a rural area and those living in a suburban area.

The pie chart below indicates that manual craft water trail users most often live in a rural area, suburban area, or small city or town.

Percent of each of the following residence categories that participate in manual craft activities involving water trails:



Percent of Manual Craft Water Trail Users by Residence Type:

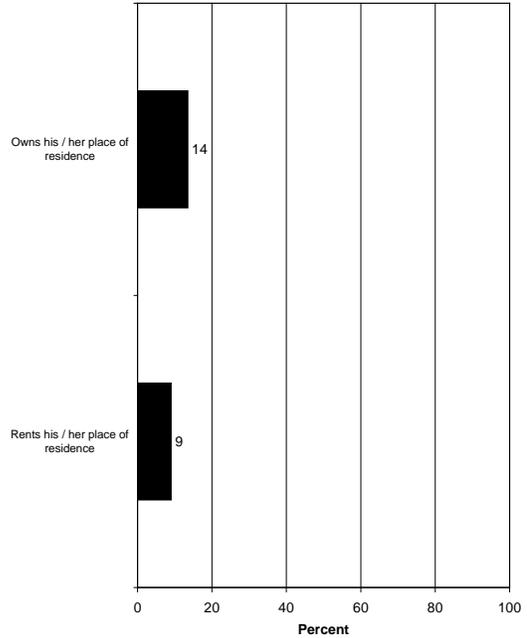


### Manual Craft Water Trail Users by Rent/Ownership of Residence

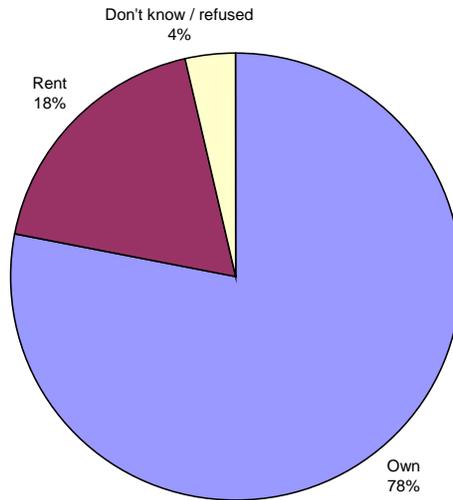
The histogram to the right shows that 14% of residence owners participate in manual craft water trail activities, compared to 9% of residence renters.

The pie chart below shows that, among all manual craft water trail users, more than three quarters own their place of residence, while nearly a fifth rent.

Percent of residence renters and owners that participate in manual craft activities involving water trails:



Percent of Manual Craft Water Trail Users by Rent / Own Residence:

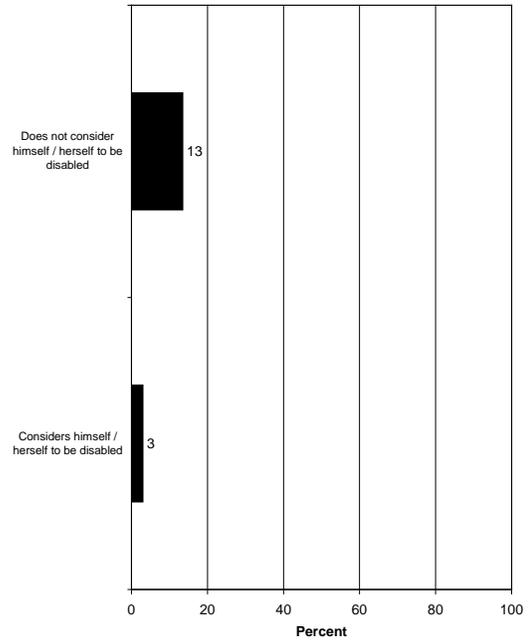


### Manual Craft Water Trail Users by Disability Status

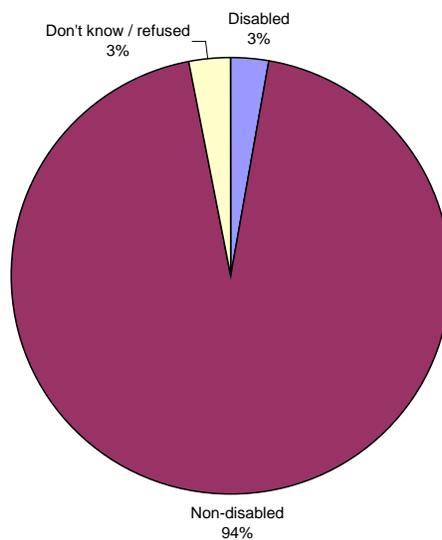
As shown in the histogram at right, 13% of non-disabled Washington residents participate in manual craft water trail activities, compared to just 3% of disabled residents.

The pie chart below shows that disabled residents account for just 3% of all manual craft water trail users.

Percent of non-disabled and disabled people who participate in manual craft activities involving water trails:



Percent of Manual Craft Water Trail Users by Disability:



## Attachment B: DRAFT Trails Plan Comments Received

DRAFT Trials Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
<p><b>Concern about specific safety issue.</b></p>	<p>I did not see the safety issue of bollards mentioned in the report. Two people have been killed by striking bollards on the Foothills Trail while riding bicycles. Look at any bollard and you will likely find many tire marks where bicycles have hit them.</p> <p>I suggest two solutions a) mark the approach to all bollards with a line on the pavement at least 44 feet long to give riders at least 2 seconds to react (the AASHTO standard is inadequate), and b) replace fixed bollards with flexible ones. The most desirable solution would be to do both.</p> <p>John S. Selby Board Member <a href="#">Foothills Rails-to-Trails Coalition</a></p>
<p><b>Support for:</b></p> <p><b>Supporting local and county jurisdictions in determining their needs and strategies for trails funding.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communicating the SCORP findings about the high level and widespread participation in walking and hiking across the state</b></li> </ul>	<p>With regard to the Economics and Funding Section, Page 81, I find that this section accurately reflects the current issues with regard to the subject. On page 112, there are several recommendations with regard to this.</p> <p>This study has seemed to overlooked the importance of local and county funding for trails. One of the successes in this area over the past six years is the King County Proposition 2 Levy that was passed in 2007. It provided a stable six year funding package for local jurisdictions to construct regional trails and trails that connect to regional trails. The relative stability of the funding and the widespread availability to municipalities has fueled many great trail projects. There is some merit to supporting local and county jurisdictions in determining their needs and strategies for trails funding. The draft plan makes no mention of this option.</p>

DRAFT Trails Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>At the same time, the shortfall of state level funding is clearly articulated. I would propose that the plan mention this as an option and that RCO could provide support to counties and local jurisdictions who want to develop their own levy packages.</p> <p>With regard to the Communications, I would like to see one additional recommendation that would be to communicate the high level and widespread participation in walking and hiking across the state, as described in the SCORP. If citizens realized how common and popular walking and hiking were, the support for funding would be reinforce.</p> <p>Paul West City of Mercer Island Parks Natural Resources Coordinator</p>
<p><b>Support for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Multi-use management and proactive involvement of user groups as the best means to improve cooperation and reduce trail conflict and resource competition.</b></li> <li>• <b>Changing WWRP Trails category scoring criteria to allow a greater opportunity for soft surface trails to compete for funding.</b></li> <li>• <b>Funding of trail maintenance.</b></li> <li>• <b>Improved data gathering to better identify areas of need, leading to</b></li> </ul>	<p>Evergreen is Washington State’s largest mountain bike organization with over 9,000 followers in chapters statewide dedicated to trail maintenance, education, advocacy and trail building. We are an important partner with state and federal land managers across Washington, contributing over 10,000 hours of volunteer labor in the past year alone.</p> <p>Washington's most recent State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) reflects the popularity of mountain biking with 22% of state residents reporting that they ride bicycles on trails of all types. Both subjectively and objectively the sport has grown dramatically since its early days in the 1990s and is now accepted as a legitimate, low-impact human powered recreation. In fact, as reflected in the Trails Plan and in SCORP, cycling on trails is second only to hiking/walking both in percentage of participation and in frequency of participation.</p> <p>A major impediment to even broader participation in our sport remains limited access and over-use of those trails currently open to mountain biking. This problem is particularly relevant in areas closest to higher population centers where prior uses often advocated for trail closure out of concerns over erosion and conflict.</p>

DRAFT Trails Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
<p><b>the most effective allocation of resources.</b></p> <p><b>Concern about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Access to and over-use of those trails currently open to mountain biking, and significant unmet need.</b></li> <li>• <b>Emphasis on long distance and regional trails as a priority; lowering priority of singletrack, soft surface trails.</b></li> <li>• <b>Either/or recommendation that emphasizes maintenance over new development to support growing demand</b></li> <li>• <b>Not being able to provide input on the development of the SCORP and Trails surveys.</b></li> <li>• <b>Developing state website providing trails information for public lands as resources do not exist for this to be done in a way that creates a meaningful resource in a cost effective manner.</b></li> </ul>	<p>We would like to bring your attention to areas of significance in the study which are relevant to the issue of trail use in general and our form of recreation in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provider assessment identified a high level of unmet need for trail recreation. This was in fact higher than the participant assessment of need. We hypothesize that the land managers and recreation providers actually have a stronger connection to the cumulative demand where individuals may be more tolerant of, or desensitized to, the limited access.</li> <li>• Multi-use management by working with recreation user groups was identified as a priority in the 1991 plan and has been shown to be effective. We believe that this proactive involvement of user groups should be reemphasized as the best means to improve cooperation and reduce trail conflict and resource competition. This is consistent with the generally broad support for multi-use trails from SCORP and the Trails Advisory committee where the need to support broad recreation with limited financial resources and to contain the impact on our natural environment by not overbuilding the trail network—something that would be exacerbated by excessive "segregation" of users.</li> <li>• Town hall comments notwithstanding (Responsive Management made clear that free form, internet discussions should be used for guiding future studies—not as a basis for policy decisions), the SCORP results showed a high level of interest in cooperation between trail users and low levels of conflict. Where conflict did exist user group involvement and education was suggested as the preferred approach to a solution with administrative restrictions as a later option. The referenced FHWA/NRTA guidelines of 1994 remain the best approach to planning and managing trails in a way that reduces conflict to levels which would be acceptable to the recreating public.</li> <li>• Long distance and regional trails were identified as a priority, by default putting singletrack, soft surface trails as being of lower importance. We strongly disagree and do not believe this interpretation is supported by the evidence provided by SCORP,</li> </ul>

DRAFT Trails Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>the provider assessment, the Trail Plan Advisory Committee, or even the Town Hall discussions. Within urban and to some degree suburban areas the wide, hard surface, paths provide both recreation and transportation benefits. However, outside of these areas the dominant demand is for recreation that connects the participant more closely with nature - not the experience of being on a road without cars. This also best uses the limited funds available for recreation with singletrack trails much lower cost, lower impact, and can be leveraged with volunteer labor assisting in their construction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent with the above, Evergreen has joined WTA and Backcountry Horsemen of Washington in asking RCO to make changes to the WWRP Trails category scoring criteria to allow a greater opportunity for soft surface trails to compete for funding.</li> <li>• We strongly support the recommendation for funding of trail maintenance, however it is not and should not be an either/or recommendation between maintenance and new development to support growing demand. Outdoor recreation in Washington State is a \$22.5 billion dollar industry, generating \$1.6 billion in state and local taxes and employing 226,000 people. Failure to keep pace with demand, as well as maintenance, will impair this vital economic sector - one which is actually larger than aviation.</li> <li>• Improved data gathering will help to better identify areas of need, leading to the most effective allocation of resources. We ask that one area of improvement be in recreation group involvement in a revision of the underlying participant survey questions used for SCORP. The recreation community (hiking, biking, water, etc) all became aware of the start of the SCORP process too late to provide input on the survey itself, rather only becoming involved at the point of interpreting the results. While we understand the interest in being able to identify trends (indicated by RCO as the reason for making no changes to the underlying survey) outdoor recreation has fundamentally changed since this survey was developed and an update is necessary to ensure the most valuable and relevant information to guide decisions going forward.</li> </ul>

DRAFT Trials Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While a state website providing trails information for public lands may seem like an appropriate undertaking we do not believe that the resources exist for this undertaking to be done in a way that creates a meaningful resource in a cost effective manner. The dynamic nature of both the trail information and the technology developing indicates this is best left to the market to provide a solution - whether that be "for-fee" services or the trail resources already available through organizations like WTA and Evergreen.</li> </ul> <p>Thank you for the work of RCO staff in successfully supporting and improving recreation in Washington State. We look forward to continuing to work with you in this effort which is so important to our economy as well as fundamental to the quality of life of state residents.</p> <p>Glenn Glover Executive Director Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance</p>
<p><b>Support for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Focusing land management on sustaining ecosystem health and biodiversity as the primary goals.</b></li> <li><b>Encouraging coordination and collaboration among land managers in trails and road building.</b></li> <li><b>Examining the effects of trails on natural resources and using that to inform decisions about trail development.</b></li> </ul>	<p>The Plan indicates a top issue for multiple-use trails is "Needs of natural resources, such as wildlife and wetlands, are sometimes perceived as excluding trails." While many projects involving trails provide general natural resource benefits, there very well may be times when natural resource needs may be better served by excluding trails. We share concern about the compatibility of trails and natural resource values, and we question the use of the term "perceived" in characterizing this issue.</p> <p>Trails can provide numerous benefits for the public including improved recreation, health, connection to nature, and local economics. However, the physical presence of trails and their use by humans have adverse impacts to fish and wildlife habitat and the use of that habitat by some fish and wildlife. Impacts from trails and their uses are documented in scientific literature and vary according to species, trail type, use, and characteristics.</p>

DRAFT Trials Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
<p><b>Concern about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use of the word “perceive” to characterize issue of impacts of trails that are documented in the scientific literatures.</b></li> <li>• <b>Adverse impacts that trails can have to fish and wildlife habitat and the use of that habitat by some fish and wildlife.</b></li> </ul>	<p>The physical presence of trails can: remove habitat, interrupt movement or migration, affect intra-specific interactions, and alter predator-prey behavior. The use and maintenance of trails by humans can: disrupt intra- and inter-specific interactions, promote nuisance wildlife, decrease animal fitness, prevent use of trails and adjacent habitat, and increase mortality. In addition, trails can adversely impact rare plants and their habitats direct or indirectly through trail construction, on and off-trail use, and the introduction or spread of non-native or invasive plants.</p> <p>Effects to fish, wildlife, rare plants, their habitats, and their ecosystems should be taken into consideration when planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining trails. In some instances, the needs of these natural resources may very well indicate that trails should be excluded from certain areas. This is not a perception issue, but an examination of impact, options, and other factors. The Plan could be improved by better acknowledging this potential conflict. We support the Plan's recommendations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus land management on sustaining ecosystem health and biodiversity as the primary goals.</li> <li>• Encourage coordination and collaboration among land managers in trails and road building.</li> </ul> <p>The Service has many grant programs that provide funds, often matched by state and local dollars, for conservation land acquisition, recreational access, and habitat restoration. Each grant program provides federal assistance that is intended to accomplish specific goals. In general, however, the Service's mission is to provide for the conservation of fish and wildlife resources. Accordingly, where RCO and Service funding are co-mingled, we recommend that the effects of trails on natural resources be fully examined and used to inform decisions about trail development.</p> <p>We look forward to working with you to sustain ecosystem health and biodiversity, and if there are any questions about these comments, please don't hesitate to contact us.</p>

DRAFT Trails Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>Joanne Stellini, Biologist Coordinator, Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (S6) in Washington State 360-753-4323, <a href="mailto:joanne_stellini@fws.gov">joanne_stellini@fws.gov</a></p> <p>Ginger Phalen, Biologist Coordinator, National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant and Puget Sound Coastal Programs in Washington State 360-753-5819, <a href="mailto:ginger_phalen@fws.gov">ginger_phalen@fws.gov</a></p> <p>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Washington Fish and Wildlife Office 510 Desmond Drive SE Lacey WA 98503</p>
<b>Support for the Trails Plan.</b>	<p>The change in policies shows much study and thought and I support it 100 %</p> <p>R. W. Chauner</p>
<p><b>Support for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improvement/maintenance of existing trails</b></li> <li>• <b>More trails, especially family-type trails for motorized recreation.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Concern about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How the Trails plan will inform local jurisdictions' trail planning efforts.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I just read through the draft WSTP and the draft NOVA plan. These seem to be very comprehensive with data supporting the need for improvement /maintenance of existing trails and a need for more trails. One point that sticks out to me is the reduction in motorized users along with the overuse of existing trails. This tells me that we have a greater demand for motorized user trails. The lack of family-type trails for motorized recreation is cause for reduced participation.</p> <p>Also, I see these as high-level guidelines, laying the groundwork and assumptions for further efforts. How do these documents feed subsequent action on a more local scale? I assume any county, city or other local trail planning must follow these plans, but I don't see a direct connection between these documents and local efforts. Can you please explain?</p>

DRAFT Trails Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>Thank you,            David A. Pimentel            26604 SE 236th St.            Maple Valley, WA</p>
<p><b>Concern about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Making the statewide recommendations short an clear and convincing.</b></li> </ul>	<p>About the Trails Report. I suspect that the most important part of it to readers who weren't part of the making of it is the list of six State Wide recommendations. If so, the recommendations should be short and clear and convincing. Here is my try at making Recommendation #1 short and clear and convincing.</p> <p>Recommendation #1: Develop a Web site that includes an inventory of federal, state, and local trails in Washington. The inventory would include information about each trail's location, route, condition, distance, weather, difficulties, uses, amenities, and wildlife. The Web site would not be a replacement for trail signage or recent trail reports. Making and maintaining such a Web site would require considerable coordination between federal, state, and local agencies, and non-governmental groups and individuals.</p> <p>If you think that my re-writing of Recommendation #1 is unnecessary or unsatisfactory then ignore it and let me know and I won't go on. As you know, writing out such recommendations is hard work.</p> <p>Mark Levensky</p>
<p><b>Support for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>RCO funding for obtaining legal</b></li> </ul>	<p>Draft Trails plan comments:            Having participated in all the town hall discussions, and being an active trail use I submit the following comments:</p>

DRAFT Trials Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
<p><b>public access through private land to existing or future trails.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improving information about immunity from liability on private lands</b></li> <li>• <b>Removing the requirement for warning signs for manmade conditions.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Concern about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Program efficiencies and putting funds “on the ground.”</b></li> <li>• <b>Lack of coordinated inventory of planned routes mentioned in the plan.</b></li> <li>• <b>Lack of vision, and specifics.</b></li> <li>• <b>Reinventing a process that works (i.e., Rails to Trails Conservancy has an email “alert”)</b></li> <li>• <b>Lack of public access through private land to existing or future trails.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where is efficiency? RCO, design, and grant inefficiencies were brought up over and over in the town hall comments but government efficiency is not included in the trails plan. Apparently nobody was listening. Instead, the draft plan diverts even more funds from “on the ground” results to administrative and paperwork moves like a new website, new data collection, and a new forums. (recommendations # 1, 2,4 ) Maintenance and funding of existing trails, clearly the highest public priority, are last in recommendations (#5 and 6) with no emphasis on efficiency or directing limited dollars on the ground. These recommendations will put more government workers behind desks (coordinating a website, building a coalition, managing data, planning) and LESS people fixing trails! The RCO process will continue to waste funds in administration--funds that are needed on the ground. Where is the self-audit? The plan’s main failure is no “efficiency with funds” directive.</li> <li>• Where is the coordinated inventory of planned routes mentioned in item #6 as purpose of this trail plan? I do not see this.</li> <li>• The Draft trails plan is basically a statement of how things are today (demographics, trail use, who, what, where, when) but really doesn’t have a vision or direction outlined for the future. The few recommendations outlined are not very specific. This plan needs more teeth, vision, and specifics.</li> <li>• Issue Rail trail coordinating (pg 114). The issue arose that government agencies do not know when rail corridors are being abandoned. The Rails to Trails Conservancy has an email “alert” that notifies anyone who signs up when rail lines in their area are being abandoned. No use reinventing a new process— just use theirs for FREE.</li> <li>• Access: recommendation: consider RCO funding for obtaining legal public access through private land to existing or future trails. (see private lands concerns below). Some private landowners are blocking the public from public lands and trails, then using those trails and lands exclusively for their “paying” customers. Landlocked trails need to be addressed. The NOVA plan does a better job on this</li> </ul>

DRAFT Trials Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>issue than the trails plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private lands: private concerns: Liability is <u>not</u> the reason timber companies are closing their land. We have a recreational immunity statute in Washington state that addresses liability. Smaller landowners may not be aware of this law, but industrial timberland certainly is.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. It needs to be acknowledged in this section that some public trails are blocked by private landowners. For example, just in SW Washington the official trailheads for DNR’s Mitchell Peak trail system, and the USFS’s Vanson Peak backcountry trail system are locked behind private gates. Miles of existing public trail are made virtually inaccessible to the public by the actions of private landowners. There is no more efficient use of our funds that to gain access to existing trails.</li> <li>b. Add recommendation: pursue public use easements to existing trailheads where needed. (The NOVA plan suggests this direction). A new grant category, or an expanded category may be needed to look at using RCO funds to obtain easements to existing trailheads, public lands, or recreation roads.</li> <li>c. Encourage state legislators to make our recreational immunity statute “iron clad” for example, by removing the requirement for warning signs for manmade conditions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Darcy Mitchem Toutle, WA</p>
<p><b>Support for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>More soft-surface trails;</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased funding for soft-surface trails</b></li> </ul>	<p>As the largest statewide trails organization in the country, Washington Trails Association (WTA) represents over 12,000 members and over 3000 volunteers who work on year-round on federal, state and local trails located throughout the state. We also are the voice for the hiking community at large which includes over 2.3 million unique users to our website annually, 40,000 subscribers to our e-newsletter annually, and 2700 hikers who are so engaged with trails that they contribute trip reports regularly.</p>

DRAFT Trails Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approving WWRP trails category criteria changes.</b></li> <li>• <b>User fees in limited circumstances.</b></li> <li>• <b>New trails that connect heavily used trails</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Concern about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trail maintenance backlog.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Our feedback can be summarized as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Support more soft-surface trails;</li> <li>2) Increase funding for soft-surface trails;</li> <li>3) Approve WWRP trails category criteria changes.</li> </ol> <p><b>WTA is very concerned regarding lack of prioritization of soft-surface trails in this plan.</b></p> <p>One only needs to review the 2013 SCORP results to see the importance of hiking on soft-surface trails to the residents of Washington:</p> <p>Hiking 53.9  Hiking TRAILS 51.0 and 2,600,000 people.  Hiking Urban Trails 900,000  Hiking Rural Trails 951,000  Hiking Mountain or Forest Trails 1,872,000 <i>That is a lot of hikers prioritizing soft-surface trails!</i></p> <p>While 2008 SCORP used different methodologies and reported the data in difference formats, it is important to note one of the conclusions contained in that report: "The high level of preference for the unpaved path may not be an indicator of either satisfaction or dissatisfaction with walking on sidewalks and road shoulders, but <i>may be reasonably interpreted as an indicator of unmet demand.</i>"</p> <p>Indeed, there is clearly huge unmet demand for soft-surface trails in every county of the state. We recommend that such trails be clearly prioritized in the final plan.</p> <p><b>WTA recommends more funding for soft-surface trails throughout the state.</b></p>

DRAFT Trials Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>Public funding to maintain trails on federal, state and local land has declined precipitously in the past two decades and this decline is not likely to change. One traditional way that this decline has been addressed has been to increase user fees. We have taken a strong stance whereby we do not support user fees in general, but considering that there are few options currently, we support them in limited circumstances. We are concerned that there will be more reliance upon such fees and that users will soon (if they have not already) have reached their limits and the result will be that we will have fewer users of our spectacular trail system.</p> <p>Trails funding should not only include desperately needed maintenance backlogs, but also for construction of new trails. WTA volunteers work more hours and complete more complicated projects each year but is never able to come close to keeping up with the demand. Global warming has resulted in more trails being washed away and in some cases closed forever. And the increase in forest fires has resulted in more trails being severely damaged to the point where access is closed for years.</p> <p>In terms of new construction, we recommend that the focus be on trails that connect heavily used trails (e.g. Pratt Connector on the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River) and those that are close to population centers (e.g. Roslyn Trail and Park Point Trail).</p> <p><b>WTA supports immediate administrative changes to the WWRP trails category criteria</b></p> <p>WTA also recommends immediately acting upon a few administrative adjustments to WWRP trails category criteria that could result in many more recreation users being served, address a crying need for more soft-surface trail miles and attract a more diverse constituency of supporters in Olympia and in the general public. The small changes will benefit WWRP by bringing more backcountry hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, youth and diverse populations into the communities served by WWRP. These changes are</p>

DRAFT Trials Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>essential to the long-term stability of WWRP funding.</p> <p>We note that the key challenge facing WWRP’s advocates is ensuring that the program is relevant to broad constituencies, both legislative and public. As WWRP’s public and legislative support grows, it will be easier to fend off reductions in funding and challenges to the Advisory Committee’s rankings at the legislature. Washingtonians who use soft-surface trails are an energetic, growing and diverse group. They are also a group that feels alienated from WWRP, since the vast majority of Trails Category funding goes to paved or graveled trail opportunities.</p> <p>The administrative adjustments will prepare WWRP for the future by benefiting the next generation of trail users, young people who will mature as advocates, not only for outdoor recreation, but for the landscapes and ecosystem services protected by WWRP. Stewarding these important landscapes will also steward WWRP funds by leveraging the trail work of our organizations. We can deliver a mile of new backcountry trail at a significantly lower cost than a contractor. And backcountry trails are less expensive to build and maintain.</p> <p>A glance at the High Point trailhead near Issaquah suffices to prove that there is a crying need for more soft-surface trail opportunities in areas close to population centers. High Point is 20 miles from Seattle and serves 250,000 people annually. That is true statewide. By funding new trail opportunities in our State Parks, Natural Resource Conservation Areas and State Forests, we will satisfy that need, reduce crowding at trailheads and obviate the impacts that our trails experience from heavy use.</p> <p>It is in that spirit that we recommend the following changes to the WWRP Trails Category evaluation criteria. These changes can be made administratively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criterion #1, Project Design: We recommend that this criterion be silent on the</li> </ul>

DRAFT Trails Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>issues of accessibility. Accessibility is not referenced in the RCW and the inclusion of this element unfairly discourages soft-surface trails. Most importantly, Project Design scores should reflect the design’s fidelity to the project’s purpose and need. For example, does a trail designed for mountain bikes conform to commonly understood and evolving design standards for mountain bikes and respond to the needs of the mountain bike community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criterion #4, Trail and Community Linkages: We recommend that “community” be construed to include cultural, socio-economic, ethnic and physical community—that applicants in the Trails Category should be allowed to include information about cultural and socio-economic diversity on their trail systems as a way to satisfy the requirements of this question. For instance, trails on DNR and State Parks lands that do not connect residential areas still attract highly diverse trail users, particularly in the I-90 corridor.</li> <li>• Criterion #5, Water Access, Views and Scenic Values: We recommend that this criterion be edited to allow scenic views of any kind. This criterion excessively favors water access in a way that is unsupported by the RCW, particularly since the Outdoor Recreation Account includes a Water Access Category separate from the other categories. For instance, the Ollalie Mountain Bike Project considered by the Advisory Committee in 2011 is spectacularly scenic from the standpoint of mountain and forest views. However, since it lacked water access or views, it scored poorly in this criterion. One simple approach would be to remove the primary vs. secondary distinction as regards water access and scenic values/views of water.</li> </ul> <p>These changes will clear some space in the category for less-developed trail proposals to compete with more-developed opportunities. \$1-1.5 million more in WWRP funding annually allocated to less-developed trails will be transformative.</p>

DRAFT Trials Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can answer any questions or provide further information about this feedback to the State Trails Plan.</p> <p>Karen Daubert Executive Director Washington Trails Association</p>
<p><b>Concern about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Web site duplicating resource that already exists.</b></li> <li>• <b>Reduced access to family-friendly trail due to closure of Forest Service Road</b></li> </ul>	<p>I am a 44-year-old female hiker with a 9-year-old son (who also enjoys hiking). I would like to add a few comments to the trails plan.</p> <p>1) I see there is consideration of a web site "clearinghouse" with trail information. A centralized site would be great, especially to learn of trails that are inaccessible due to road closures, etc. I would like to point out that <a href="http://wta.org">wta.org</a> has a great website with a lot of trails information. Perhaps consulting their site might help prevent reinventing the wheel and/or reduplicating efforts.</p> <p>2) Closures of Forest Service Roads cause significant "access" problems for trails. I would specifically like to advocate for reopening of Forest Service Road #7174 to Corral Pass. The trail from Corral Pass to Noble Knob is, in my opinion, one of the best in the state, especially for kids. I learned of the trail when I was pregnant and unable to climb steep grades and had continued using the trail with my son. Beautiful views are afforded hikers physically unable to tackle large elevation gains because the "climbing" is done by car. (There are also fields of wild strawberries and copious blue huckleberry bushes.) While Noble Knob itself is "accessible" by an alternative trail, that trail require gaining elevation that puts it out of reach of families with young children. Sadly that road has been closed for at least a couple of seasons. I have wanted to bring other families who have had little hiking experience to that trail as it provides such a great experience ... but that gem of a trail is inaccessible due to an unmaintained (&amp; closed) road.</p> <p>Thank you for your time. -Keleigh Muzaffar 8806 221st Pl. SW</p>

DRAFT Trials Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	Edmonds, WA 98026
<p><b>Support for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trails leadership group</b></li> <li>• <b>Focus on maintenance, while recognizing need for planning and development.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Concern about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Emphasis on predominantly urban bike/pedestrian user groups.</b></li> <li>• <b>Undercounting of economic impact of equestrian trail users.</b></li> <li>• <b>Under-representation of equestrian and snow sports in the conclusions from the plan that resulted in proposed RCO Action #6.</b></li> <li>• <b>RTP and NOVA funds being spent on other purposes they were not meant to cover.</b></li> <li>• <b>Funneling the meager funding used for primitive trail maintenance into urban trails such as that in RCO Action #5.</b></li> <li>• <b>About RCO Action #2—consistency in gathering data; we have found the federal National Visitor Use</b></li> </ul>	<p>The Back Country Horsemen of Washington represents the trail riding equestrian community throughout the State of Washington. We have a very active membership of homeowners, ranchers, farmers, business owners, and recreational riders within 34 chapters located in Eastern and Western Washington. Our membership is well known to the state and federal land management agencies for their efforts with volunteer trail maintenance, outdoor education with a focus on good stewardship ethics, funding advocacy for appropriations and grants, and reviewing public recreational policy. We have long been represented on both the NOVA and RTP committees, and we have been a major advocate for the stable funding for those off-highway gas tax based grant programs. This effort finds our members in Olympia, in Washington D.C., and in many towns and communities in our state.</p> <p>While the revision of the S.C.O.R.P. recreational analysis as well as the Trails Plan and NOVA Plan updates have generated great conversations among a broad audience, it needs to be known that many of these discussions have been on-going in the recreational community for quite some time. Over the past several years we have had a number of user leadership group roundtables, from the DNR Sustainable Recreation Work Group to the Coalition of Outdoor Groups to the current Big Tent effort. The NOVA and RTP committees have also been forums that have brought the recreational user groups together. It certainly makes sense that these efforts continue so that the recreational community can find common ground in our need to protect and grow existing and new funding sources. A formalized user oversight group is also a good way to provide some peer leadership dialoging on user conflicts with the intent of mitigating issues before they escalate.</p> <p>Our main concern of the SCORP and Trails Plan is that they are biased inappropriately towards the bike/pedestrian predominately urban user groups. Most of the comparison metrics are designed with the urban trail user in mind. Yes, there are fewer horseback</p>

DRAFT Trials Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
<p><b>Monitoring (NVUM) system to be deeply flawed.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Potential use of trails classification system or recreational zoning methods that are ineffective.</b></li> <li>• <b>How this Trails Plan will be used and that any possible process or funding revisions consider the needs of all of the user groups.</b></li> </ul>	<p>riders on our lands now than bicycle riders, particularly since many equestrians are also bicycle riders. However, based on economic contributions, we believe it costs as much to keep and use one horse as one hundred bicycles. You can't park a horse in a garage. Horse ownership is a 24 hour 365 day activity that employs farmers, ranchers, trainers, veterinarians, builders, horseshoers, and many other skilled working wage jobs, Our members have trucks, trailers, and living quarters which makes us consumers of the sales, parts, and services provided by the state's robust recreational vehicle industry. We are far more than a "4%" trail user group, and clearly are one of the major rural users and maintainers of our state and federal trail systems.</p> <p>One example of this built-in bias is that economic value was not taken into consideration in the SCORP study or the Trails Plan. They do compare trail based recreation from the demographic distribution of rural and urban user types, and then link post-secondary education to these factors. It is hard to understand how knowing who has a college degree is important with respect to trail use. Yes, horseback riding is clearly more likely to be engaged in by rural citizens due to the very space/land requirements that make it an economic driver. We also have a much higher percentage of disabled users, even more than what the study indicates. Our riders may have bad knees, bad backs, and many are quite senior in years, but most of them don't consider themselves disabled since they can still ride and volunteer in the back country. Also being rural, many of our members are war veterans, another criterion overlooked in the study.</p> <p>With the Town Hall commenting, BCHW members were a major contributor. Rural recreation users seemed to provide a major share of comments. And yet they were largely ignored in the findings. For example, on Page 36 of the Draft State Trails Plan, it states.....</p> <p><b><i>"Among the lowest ranked opportunities for meeting demand overall (and specifically pertaining to trails) are designated snow and ice trails, designated motorized trails, and designated bridle trails. Providers estimated that less than</i></b></p>

DRAFT Trials Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p><b><i>half of demand for these activities is being met in Washington. "</i></b>  <b><i>"The SCORP findings show that from 2006 to 2012, the importance of snowshoeing (supported by snow and ice trails) and horseback riding (supported by designated bridle trails) both increased in ranking based on participation rates. "</i></b>  <b><i>"Because of the increased use of snow and ice trails and designated bridle trails and with the low demand being met, it is reasonable to conclude that additional opportunities in these activities would be welcomed by Washington State residents."</i></b></p> <p>Meeting demand is addressed later in the Trail Plan RCO Action #6, except it recommends this.....</p> <p><b><i>"RCO ACTION #5: Prioritize funding for trail uses identified as being in demand in this trail plan and develop a system of state recreation trails.</i></b>  <b><i>In response to the public survey on supply and demand for trails, RCO will review funding patterns to determine whether the agency is adequately supporting the types of trails identified as in demand which are:</i></b>  <b><i>o Hiking, walking, biking</i></b>  <b><i>o Urban and suburban locations</i></b>  <b><i>o Access for traditionally underserved groups, including people with disabilities; people representing a variety of age groups and access for minority populations. "</i></b></p> <p>There is nothing here about horseback riding and snowshoeing, both identified as having needs in demand in the same plan by a greater ranking (Table 2.6). Furthermore, different grant programs have different funding sources. NOVA and RTP come from gas tax generated by off-highway backcountry use and not "urban and suburban locations". These funds need to be spent on the trails systems they were meant to cover and not swept into some other purpose. This actually is an objective in the NOVA Plan.</p> <p>We do appreciate the focus on maintenance. Funding for maintenance of existing trails has become less dependable even as trail infrastructure such as bridges, puncheons, and</p>

DRAFT Trials Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>even access roads deteriorate. It is indeed the drop in maintenance and maintenance funding that we recognize the most. This does not mean that you don't need planning, development, and even acquisitions to have a credible recreation program. In many cases, we volunteers aren't even allowed to perform maintenance unless the planning is done and the environmental check list is completed. This is the result of a large number of seemingly good bills and rules that Washington State decided were needed for oversight staffing during well funded years. These requirements are still in place during lean years. As to planning, it makes no sense for the state to be tearing out secondary roads that are used as mainline trails in recreational areas and then claim there is no money for maintenance or trail expansion. Stop tearing out our recreational amenities, and we won't have to spend as much state money to recreate them.</p> <p>We generally agree with the statewide recommendations in the Trails Plan, but we are leery about any discussion that might lead to funneling the meager funding used for primitive trail maintenance into urban trails such as that in RCO Action #5. We also have concerns about RCO Action #2 as to gathering data consistency. The Plan discusses using something like the federal National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) system. We in BCH have found the NVUM system to be deeply flawed and weighted to certain user types whom the canvassers are familiar with.</p> <p>This also touches upon another subject not addressed in the plan, trails classifications. State Parks already uses a recreational zoning method that is not all that effective at balancing recreational needs. DNR seems to be following the lead of the US Forest Service by that it is very easy policy-wise to close roads and trails, but very difficult to maintain or establish them.</p> <p>One final word is that while we don't know how this Trails Plan will be used, we strongly recommend that the RCO carefully consider any possible process or funding revisions</p>

DRAFT Trials Plan Comments October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>with all of the user groups in Washington State so that the wide variety of rural and urban recreational activities are fairly measured and supported.</p> <p>Robert Gish President, Back Country Horsemen of Washington</p>
<p><b>Concern about mixed use trails.</b></p>	<p>I am writing to you to keep wilderness trails the way they are...We don't need a lot of traffic on these beautiful trails/other than foot and hooves. Please consider the impact on all parts before changing the Plan...Thank you for your time...</p> <p>Cathy Elledge Olympia .Wa</p>

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

**Meeting Date:** November 2013  
**Title:** Review of the Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Plan  
**Prepared By:** Sarah Gage, Management Analyst

**APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM**

### Summary

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) has been working with a consultant to complete the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Program (NOVA) Plan. The draft plan was published for comment following the September 2013 Recreation and Conservation Funding Board meeting. This memo provides an update on the comments received, changes made to the plan recommendations, and an overview of the next steps.

### Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Direction
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Briefing

## Background

State law<sup>1</sup> requires the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) to maintain and update a plan to guide distribution of Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Program (NOVA) funds. The plan must be updated once every three biennia.

In January 2013, the board adopted a list of policy priorities for 2013 that included an update to the NOVA Plan. At the September 2013 meeting, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff presented the draft plan. Nine stakeholder priorities and six recommendations for board/RCO action resulted from the board presentation.

### Stakeholder Priorities

These statewide priorities may apply to a range of nonhighway and off-road vehicle access providers, including state and federal agencies, local jurisdictions, and non-profit organizations.

1. Protect the NOVA fund
2. Make maintenance a funding priority for NOVA

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<sup>1</sup> RCW 46.09.250

3. Address road closures that limit access
4. Minimize user conflicts
5. Encourage designs that minimize future maintenance
6. Ensure that NOVA funds augment, but do not replace, other funding
7. Do not use NOVA funds to subsidize private ORV sports parks
8. Encourage trail reconstruction that corrects environmental problems
9. Ensure that the NOVA Advisory Committee represents all user groups

## **Recommendations for Board/RCO Actions**

### **1. Review the goals for the NOVA Program and the Recreational Trails Program to determine whether the programs are complementing each other.**

The board should review the program's grant award results to determine whether changes need to be made to the allocation of funds based on the NOVA plan key findings and stakeholder feedback. For example, NOVA and RTP funds are increasingly awarded for maintenance and operation projects, so less funding is awarded for development and acquisition projects. The board should review whether this pattern of funding is consistent with the goals of the program.

### **2. Review NOVA program priorities (Policy A-1 and C-10) for acquisition, development, and maintenance and operation type projects.**

The board should review the policies that state that NOVA funds shall not augment or replace other funds, and that operating and capital projects will compete directly for funding. In conjunction with recommendation #1, the board should review whether the increased funding of maintenance projects would be consistent with the policies that restrict NOVA funds from being used to replace other funds.

### **3. Review NOVA program policy (Policy C-2) that encourages projects near population centers.**

RCW 79A.25.250 requires the board to place a high priority on parks that are near urban populations. Stakeholder feedback, however, placed less of a priority on funding NOVA projects near population centers. The board should review whether the current criterion for meeting the law can be modified to address stakeholder feedback or whether the board should seek a modification to the population proximity statute. The current criterion has a maximum score of two points. .

### **4. Prioritize NOVA Program funding for projects that are designated as statewide trails per RCW 79A.35.**

The recommendations in the Washington State Trails Plan call for the board to develop a method for designating a system of state recreation trails. If a system of state recreation trails is

established, the NOVA program could place a priority on funding those state recreation trails that are eligible for funding in the NOVA program.

**5. Prioritize program funding for projects that incorporate sustainable design practices to protect and improve the environment and reduce trail maintenance needs.**

The board should incorporate its sustainability policy recommendations into the NOVA program priorities and adjust the evaluation criteria. This action is already proposed (see Item 11).

**6. Retain all other policies in the NOVA Program as currently written.**

RCO staff finds all other NOVA program policies to be consistent with the research findings and stakeholder input for the NOVA 2013-2018 plan.

### **Public Comment Process**

Staff posted the plan (Attachment A) on the RCO Web site and notified an interested party list of about 1,200 individuals on October 4, 2013. The three-week public comment period ended October 25, 2013.

### **Public Comment Received**

RCO received 18 responses from 17 individuals related to the request for comment on the NOVA Plan (Attachment B).

- Sixteen comments expressed concerns about the funding formula in the NOVA program and perceived inequities in distribution of grant funds.
- Five comments supported the stakeholder recommendations in general.
- Five comments expressed concerns about decreased access to trails for motorized recreation, with one person recommending using NOVA funds to obtain legal access through private lands to existing public lands.
- Two comments addressed prioritizing NOVA projects near population centers. One recommended re-evaluating that priority and the other supported increased access to motorized recreation close to population center.
- Two comments supported keeping the NOVA fund priorities on motorized and multi-use trails.
- Two comments from the same individual suggested that grant proposals for motorized projects should compete only against other motorized projects, not with nonmotorized projects.

## **Next Steps**

At the January 2014 meeting, the board will be asked to approve the Washington State Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicles Activities (NOVA) Plan 2013-2018.

## **Attachments**

- A. Revised NOVA plan
- B. Public Comment Received



WASHINGTON STATE  
Recreation and  
Conservation Office

**WASHINGTON STATE NOVA PLAN  
2013-2018**

**DRAFT**

**Conducted for the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office  
by Responsive Management**

DRAFT (September 2013)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Ted Willhite, Twisp Resident  
Pete Mayer, Everett Resident  
Harriet Spanel, Bellingham County Resident  
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Don Hoch, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission  
Jed Herman, Washington Department of Natural Resources

### NOVA Advisory Committee

#### Citizen Members

Mike Blankenship, Off-Road and All-Terrain Vehicles  
Jeremy Blasdel, Nonhighway Road Community  
Arlene Brooks, Off-Road and Four-Wheel Drive  
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We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the residents and recreationists of Washington for their contributions to this planning effort, including their involvement in Town Halls and the NOVA Advisory Committee.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan updates the *2005-2011 NOVA Plan* and sets forth policies to guide expenditures under the NOVA Act (RCW 46.09.370), thereby providing funding to local, state, and federal agencies for acquiring land; planning, building, and maintaining facilities; and managing opportunities for nonhighway road (NHR), nonmotorized (NM), and off-road vehicle (ORV) recreational users. This plan is presented and administered by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), formerly the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC).

The NOVA program provides funding to develop and manage nonhighway road, nonmotorized, and ORV recreational activities, with a portion of the funding available for education and enforcement programs that encourage environmentally responsible use of the outdoors and minimize user group conflicts through positive management techniques. Except for ORV facilities, activities supported by NOVA must be accessed by a nonhighway road, meaning a public road that was not built or maintained with state gasoline tax funding.

NOVA funding comes from ORV permits and a portion of the state gasoline tax paid by users of ORVs and nonhighway roads (roads not supported by state fuel taxes), which include Forest and National Park Service roads. About 1% of all state fuel tax revenues go into the NOVA account.

Funding is divided among categories by formulas established in statute at a ratio of 70% earmarked for recreational facilities and 30% earmarked for education and enforcement. Among the recreational uses, of the annual sum: 30% goes to non-trail opportunities, such as campgrounds, toilets, and scenic turnouts; 30% goes to nonmotorized recreation, such as hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding; 30% goes to motorized recreation, such as dirt bike, ATV, and 4x4 use; and 10% is allocated as competitive across all three categories, with the greatest benefit going to projects that serve the largest number of users.

The grant process is open and competitive, and grant applications are accepted in even-numbered years. Organizations that are eligible for NOVA grants include local governments; special purpose districts, such as park districts and port districts; Native American tribes; state agencies; and federal agencies. NOVA-eligible projects can receive grants for all aspects of a project cycle, including planning, land acquisition, development/construction, maintenance and operation, and education and enforcement.

The methodology used to develop the *2013-2018 Washington NOVA Plan* was designed to ensure public participation in the planning process, to assess policy issues identified in the 2005 NOVA Plan and identify emerging issues, to evaluate NOVA demand, and to develop priorities and recommendations for implementing the program.

The data and research collected for the NOVA Plan update include:

- an outreach blog Web site, "Trails Town Hall," to collect comments from the general public;
- a NOVA Advisory Committee discussion Web site;

- a survey of the NOVA Advisory Committee; and
- portions of the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) related to NOVA recreation (39 activities from 13 activity categories).

The Town Hall and Advisory Committee blogs were active from mid-May to mid-August. The survey was conducted with the NOVA Advisory Committee in July and August 2013. SCORP data were collected during a large-scale 2012 general population telephone survey of Washington residents. The SCORP data were further analyzed to parse out quantitative data specifically related to NOVA recreation.

There is a great deal of demand for NOVA opportunities in the State of Washington. An astounding 94% of Washington residents participate in some form of nonhighway road recreation, 86% participate in nonmotorized recreation, and 16% participate in ORV recreation.

As a whole, NOVA recreation consists of 39 activities within 13 of the 16 activity categories as defined by the SCORP. While the SCORP did not specifically ask how respondents accessed a recreation opportunity (i.e., if they accessed it via a Nonhighway road), the following table indicates which NOVA activities that the SCORP data showed having the highest participation rates.

**Table 1: NOVA Activities with the Highest Participation Rates**

SCORP Activity Category	NOVA Activities within this category	Percent of Residents Participating
<b>Walking, hiking, climbing, or mountaineering</b>	Hiking mountain or forest trails	36%
	Hiking rural trails	19%
<b>Nature activities</b>	Wildlife viewing /photographing	59%
	Fishing or shellfishing	34%
	Gathering/collecting things in a nature setting	27%
<b>Water-related activities</b>	Canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or using other manual craft	11%
<b>Sightseeing</b>	Sightseeing at a scenic area	59%
<b>Bicycle riding</b>	Biking in rural trails	11%
	Biking in mountain or forest trails	8%
<b>Snow and ice activities</b>	Snowshoeing	7%
	Cross country skiing	5%
<b>Off-roading for recreation</b>		15%
<b>Horseback riding</b>	Horseback riding on rural trails	2%
	Horseback riding on mountain or forest trails	3%

The 2005-2011 NOVA Plan had set forth major policies related to three topical areas:

- NOVA Program (Policies A-1 to A-4)
- NOVA education, information, and law enforcement (Policies B-1 to B-5)
- NOVA recreational facility acquisition, development, operation and maintenance, and planning (Policies C-1 to C-15)

As part of this update to the Plan, the NOVA Advisory Committee responded to a survey, which in part asked them to rate the importance of each existing policy. The committee expressed overall satisfaction with most existing policies, ranking them as important to extremely important.

Analysis of the NOVA Advisory Committee survey results, the Advisory Committee discussion Web site, and the Trails Town Hall public forum indicate that stakeholders have the following priorities.

## **Stakeholder Priorities**

### **1. Protect the NOVA fund**

Stakeholders consider it essential to protect the NOVA fund, especially in light of its reallocation by the state legislature in the recent past. They also noted that the NOVA fund originally consisted of 1% of the state fuel tax, but that recent gasoline tax increases have not included a corresponding NOVA fund increase. A recurring suggestion from stakeholders was to create an entity that could advocate on behalf of NOVA interests.

### **2. Make maintenance a funding priority for NOVA**

An overwhelming majority of the NOVA Advisory Committee and public comments expressed that the top priority of NOVA funding should be maintenance of existing trails and facilities, instead of facilities acquisition, planning, development, education/information, or law enforcement. NOVA recreationists and professionals are concerned that trails and recreation facilities can become dangerous and could be closed due to deferred maintenance.

### **3. Address road closures that limit access**

NOVA participants indicate that road closures by private landowners (timber companies in particular) have greatly reduced access to existing trails. Several ORV users suggested that, if they were provided access, they could effectively clear and maintain trails with volunteers. They suggest that NOVA funds to purchase public access through private lands could be an efficient expenditure for enhancing recreational opportunities.

### **4. Minimize user conflicts**

While NOVA recreationists recognize that some amount of conflict may be inevitable, they felt that problems could be minimized through communication and cooperation between user groups. Recommendations included developing a leadership council or other organization that

convenes different user groups or, in a similar vein, group collaborations such as maintenance work parties by groups using the same trail system. People also suggested that clear and concise information about the source and intent of NOVA funding would help alleviate frustration among user groups who feel they are not getting their fair share of NOVA funds.

**5. Encourage designs that minimize future maintenance**

NOVA stakeholders would like to see the program encourage projects with designs that minimize the need for ongoing maintenance (e.g., choosing the best trail tread material). Similarly, they suggested that applicants for maintenance and operation projects state how their project's goals and objectives meet future maintenance needs and sustainability issues.

**6. Ensure that NOVA funds augment, but do not replace, other funding**

Respondents noted that NOVA allows grant recipients to achieve results that would not be possible without state funding, but that the program is not designed to replace other funding sources. They felt that the NOVA program should encourage sponsors to provide matching funds, although no consensus emerged about whether this should be a requirement. Respondents further observed that organizing and supporting user-group volunteers has proven to be an effective way to stretch limited NOVA funds; recreationists are often glad to provide time and labor to support their favorite activities.

**7. Do not use NOVA funds to subsidize private ORV sports parks**

NOVA stakeholders held differing opinions, generally drawn along user group lines, as to how much NOVA funding should contribute to the development of ORV sports parks. Proponents claim that ORV recreationists contribute to the NOVA fund and should have ORV sports parks to go to; they noted that ORV sports parks also help alleviate user conflict on overcrowded trails and facilities. Consensus emerged that NOVA should not subsidize the profits of private ORV sports park operators.

**8. Encourage trail reconstruction that corrects environmental problems**

Respondents observed that trail reconstruction can be less expensive than new construction, and that it often presents opportunities to rebuild trails to current standards and correct environmental problems. They felt that project sponsors should try to retain trail difficulty and user experiences and minimize user displacement, but that reconstruction should be emphasized as a sustainable and desirable option.

**9. Ensure that the NOVA Advisory Committee represents all user groups**

The NOVA Advisory Committee should consist of nonmotorized and ORV recreationists, as well as local, state, and federal agency representatives, to represent the views and needs of users, organizations, and agencies that are affected by NOVA funding. To date it is generally believed that the committee is functioning as intended.

## Recommendations for RCO Actions

RCO staff studied the findings and conclusions that Responsive Management produced from its research, and made the following recommendations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for action items that could be implemented by RCO.

**1. Review the goals for the NOVA Program and the Recreational Trails Program to determine whether the programs are complementing each other.**

The board should review the program's grant award results to determine whether changes need to be made to the allocation of funds based on the NOVA plan key findings and stakeholder feedback. For example, NOVA and RTP funds are increasingly awarded for maintenance and operation projects, so less funding is awarded for development and acquisition projects. The board should review whether this pattern of funding is consistent with the goals of the program.

**2. Review NOVA program priorities (Policy A-1 and C-10) for acquisition, development, and maintenance and operation type projects.**

The board should review the policies that state that NOVA funds shall not augment or replace other funds, and that operating and capital projects will compete directly for funding. In conjunction with recommendation #1, the board should review whether the increased funding of maintenance projects would be consistent with the policies that restrict NOVA funds from being used to replace other funds.

**3. Review NOVA program policy (Policy C-2) that encourages projects near population centers.**

RCW 79A.25.250 requires the board to place a high priority on parks that are near urban populations. Stakeholder feedback, however, placed less of a priority on funding NOVA projects near population centers. The board should review whether the current criterion for meeting the law can be modified to address stakeholder feedback or whether the board should seek a modification to the population proximity statute. The current criterion has a maximum score of two points.

**4. Prioritize NOVA Program funding for projects that are designated as statewide trails per RCW 79A.35.**

The recommendations in the Washington State Trails Plan call for the board to develop a method for designating a system of state recreation trails. If a system of state recreation trails is established, the NOVA program could place a priority on funding those state recreation trails that are eligible for funding in the NOVA program.

**5. Prioritize program funding for projects that incorporate sustainable design practices to protect and improve the environment and reduce trail maintenance needs.**

The board should incorporate its sustainability policy recommendations into the NOVA program priorities and adjust the evaluation criteria. This action is already proposed (see Item 11).

**6. Retain all other policies in the NOVA Program as currently written.**

RCO staff finds all other NOVA program policies to be consistent with the research findings and stakeholder input for the NOVA 2013-2018 plan.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction .....	8
The NOVA Program.....	8
Definitions.....	8
Assessment of the NOVA Program .....	9
NOVA Funding and Eligibility .....	13
Chapter 2: Methodology.....	16
NOVA Advisory Committee .....	16
Public Outreach .....	16
2013 Washington SCORP .....	16
Chapter 3: Assessment of Demand for NOVA in Washington.....	19
Nonhighway Road Recreational Use.....	20
Nonmotorized Recreational Use.....	22
Off-Road Recreational Use .....	24
Chapter 4: Assessment of NOVA Program Policies.....	26
Top Funding Priority.....	29
NOVA Program General Policies .....	30
NOVA Education/Information and Law Enforcement (E & E) Policies .....	35
NOVA Recreation Facility Acquisition, Development, Maintenance and Operation, and Planning ..	38
Chapter 5: Other Key Issues Affecting NOVA .....	47
Access.....	47
User Conflicts .....	48
ORV Sports Parks .....	50
Chapter 6: Priorities and Recommendations .....	51
Appendix A: Regional and Demographic Characteristics of NOVA Users .....	55
Appendix B: NOVA Advisory Committee Survey .....	92
Appendix C: Chapter 46.09 RCW .....	116
Appendix D: 2005-2011 NOVA Plan Appendix.....	136

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### THE NOVA PROGRAM

Since 1971, the state of Washington has administered a program designed to serve off-road vehicle (ORV) recreational users. The program was broadened in 1978 to fund educational and enforcement programs, in 1986 to serve nonmotorized recreational users, and in 2004 to serve nonhighway road recreational users.

Originally titled the All-Terrain Vehicle Program and later the ORV Program, this expanded operation is now known as the **Nonhighway Road and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Program**. Hereinafter the term NOVA is used to refer to the program established by Chapter 46.09, Revised Code of Washington (RCW), Off-Road and Nonhighway Vehicles (see Appendix C).

This plan updates the *2005-2011 NOVA Plan* and sets forth policies to guide expenditures under the NOVA Act, thereby providing funding to local, state, and federal agencies for acquiring land; planning, building, and maintaining facilities; and managing opportunities for nonhighway road (NHR), nonmotorized (NM), and ORV recreational users. This plan is presented and administered by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), formerly called the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC).

The NOVA Plan **vision** is to:

*Maintain a framework that allows various user groups and agencies to provide quality opportunities for Off-Road Vehicle, nonhighway road, and nonmotorized recreationists—opportunities that satisfy user needs, are environmentally responsible, and minimize conflicts among user groups.*

The NOVA Plan **goals** are to:

- Assess issues related to the NOVA Program,
- Provide policy guidance on the use of NOVA funds, and
- Make recommendations about future program direction.

### DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are important in understanding the policies and usage classifications in this plan. The complete list of definitions (RCW 46.09.310) can be viewed in Appendix C.

- **“Nonhighway road”** means any road owned or managed by a public agency or any private road for which the owner has granted an easement for public use for which appropriations from the motor vehicle fund were not used for (a) original construction or reconstruction in the last twenty-five years, or (b) maintenance in the last four years.

- **“Nonhighway road recreation facilities”** means recreational facilities that are adjacent to, or are accessed by, a nonhighway road and intended primarily for nonhighway road recreational users.
- **“Nonhighway road recreational user”** means a person whose purpose for consuming fuel on a nonhighway road or off-road is primarily for nonhighway road recreational purposes including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing, camping, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, picnicking, driving for pleasure, kayaking/canoeing, and gathering berries, firewood, mushrooms, and other natural products.
- **“Nonmotorized recreational facilities”** means recreational trails and facilities that are adjacent to, or accessed by, a nonhighway road and intended primarily for nonmotorized recreational users.
- **“Nonmotorized recreational user”** means a person whose purpose for consuming fuel on a nonhighway road or off-road is primarily for nonmotorized recreational purposes including, but not limited to, walking, hiking, backpacking, climbing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking, horseback riding, and pack animal activities.
- **“Off-road vehicle recreation facilities”** include, but are not limited to, ORV trails, trailheads, campgrounds, ORV sports parks, and ORV use areas, designated for ORV use by the managing authority, that are intended primarily for ORV recreational users.
- **“Off-road vehicle recreational user”** means a person whose purpose for consuming fuel on a nonhighway road or off-road is primarily for ORV recreational purposes including, but not limited to, riding all all-terrain vehicle, motorcycling, or driving a four-wheel drive vehicle or dune buggy.

## ASSESSMENT OF THE NOVA PROGRAM

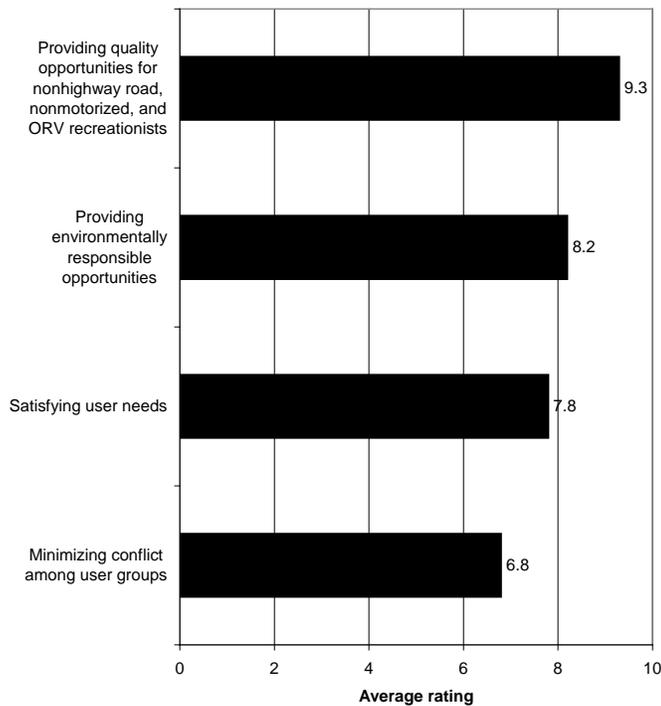
RCO’s contractor, Responsive Management, provided the NOVA Advisory Committee (discussed further in Chapter 2) with a survey that asked members to assess the NOVA Program, rate the individual NOVA policies (see Chapter 4), and provide open-ended comments on key or emerging issues. Nine of the sixteen committee members completed the survey.

The first part of the survey focused on the overall effectiveness of the NOVA Plan. The survey asked: Has the *2005-2011 NOVA Plan* has met its overall vision?

- One respondent selected *strongly agree*
- Six respondents selected *moderately agree*
- One respondent selected *neither agree nor disagree*
- One respondent selected *moderately disagree*. (The survey typically requested a comment from those who disagreed with a given statement or policy. In this case, the respondent claimed that the NOVA Plan did not provide strategic direction for the type, location, and quantity of recreation opportunities needed in the state.)

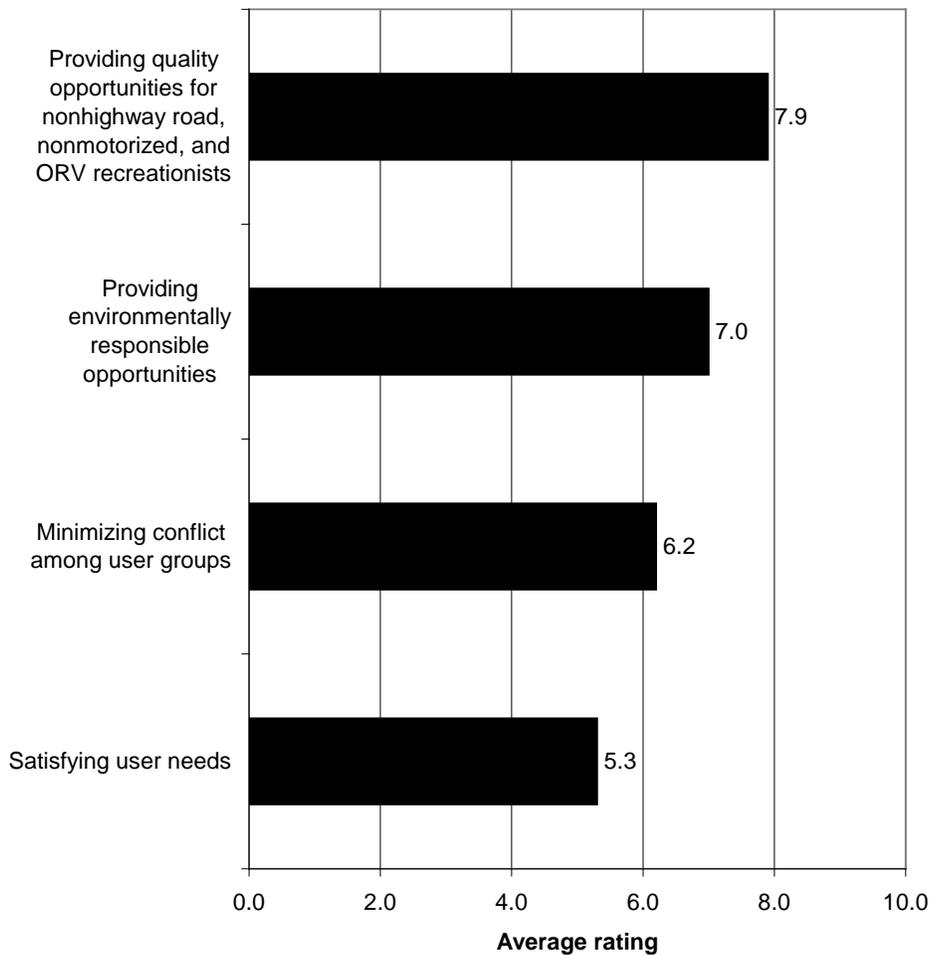
Next, the survey asked the Advisory Committee to rate the importance of each element of the NOVA Plan vision. As the following graph shows, “providing quality opportunities for nonhighway, nonmotorized, and ORV recreationists” is considered the most important element, with an average rating of 9.3 out of 10, while “minimizing user conflict” is considered the least important element, with an average rating of 6.8.

**How important is each element of the 2005-2011 NOVA Plan vision? (On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important.")**



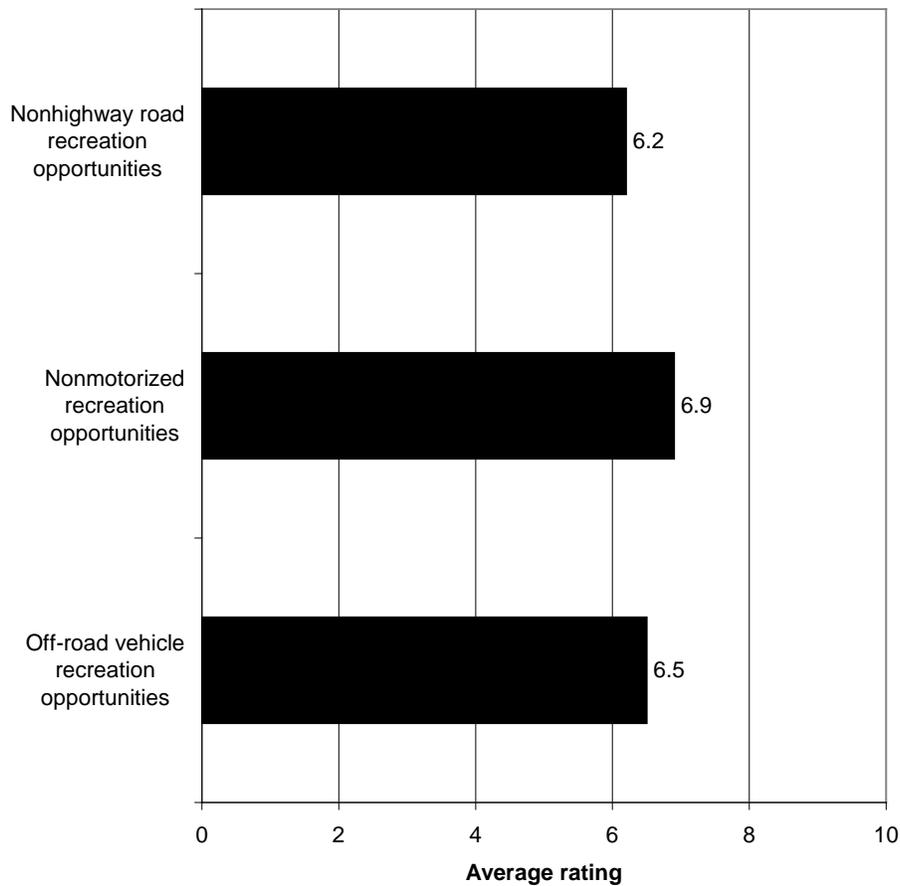
The survey asked the committee to rate the performance of Washington's NOVA recreation providers in fulfilling each of the specific elements of the NOVA Plan's vision. The respondents indicated that providers were most effective at "providing quality opportunities for nonhighway, nonmotorized, and ORV recreationists," with an average rating of 7.9 out of 10, and were least effective at "satisfying user needs," with an average rating of 5.3.

**Please rate the performance of Washington's NOVA recreation providers in fulfilling each of the specific elements of the plan's overall vision. (On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "poor" and 10 is "excellent.")**



Finally, the survey asked committee members to rate how effective the implementation of the NOVA Plan has been at improving recreation opportunities within each of the major NOVA funding categories (nonhighway road, nonmotorized, and off-road vehicle). The average rating for each category was 6.2 out of 10 for nonhighway road recreation, 6.9 for nonmotorized recreation, and 6.5 for off-road vehicle recreation.

**Overall, how effective do you think the implementation of the NOVA Plan has been at improving the following recreation opportunities in Washington since 2005? (On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all effective" and 10 is "very effective.")**



The rest of the survey results are considered in later chapters. Chapter 4 discusses the Advisory Committee’s assessment of the NOVA Program policies, and Chapter 5 discusses other key issues noted in the survey as well as from the Advisory Committee discussion blog and the Trails Town Hall public forum.

## NOVA FUNDING AND ELIGIBILITY

The NOVA program provides funding to develop and manage nonhighway road, nonmotorized, and off-road vehicle recreational activities, with a portion of the funding available for education and enforcement programs. Education and enforcement programs encourage environmentally responsible use of the outdoors and minimize user group conflicts through positive management techniques.

Except for off-road vehicle facilities, activities supported by NOVA must be accessed by a nonhighway road, meaning a public road that was not built or maintained with state gasoline tax funding.

NOVA funding comes from off-road vehicle permits and a portion of the state gasoline tax paid by users of off-road vehicles and nonhighway roads (roads not supported by state fuel taxes). Nonhighway road include U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service roads.

About 1% of all state fuel tax revenues go into the NOVA account. Funding is divided among categories by formulas established in statute at a ratio of 70% earmarked for recreational facilities and 30% earmarked for education and enforcement.

Within the recreation sum:

- 30% goes to non-trail opportunities, such as campgrounds, toilets, and scenic turnouts;
- 30% goes to nonmotorized recreation, such as hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding;
- 30% goes to motorized recreation, such as dirt bike, all-terrain vehicle, and 4x4 vehicle use;
- 10% is allocated as competitive across all three categories, with the greatest benefit going to projects that serve the largest number of users.

The NOVA Fuel Use Study, funded by the legislature in 2002, randomly sampled recreational fuel use by more than 7,000 vehicles statewide. Of funds that go into the NOVA program, about 50% comes from people driving on U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service Roads to camp, fish, hunt, pick berries, watch birds, or participate in other nonmotorized activities; 30% comes from people who hike, mountain bike, ride horses or use pack animals; and 20% comes from people who ride dirt bikes, all-terrain vehicles, 4x4 vehicles, or other motorized vehicles.

The grant process is open and competitive, and grant applications are accepted biennially. Organizations that are eligible for NOVA grants include local governments; special purpose districts, such as park districts and port districts; Native American tribes; state agencies; and federal agencies. On average, \$7 million is available for each biennial application period (that is, about \$3.5 million per year).

The funding ceiling per project is shown in the following table.

<b>NOVA Program Grant Assistance Limits</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Maintenance and Operation</b>	<b>Land Acquisition, Development, Planning</b>
<i>Nonhighway Road</i>	\$100,000 for each project	\$100,000 for each project
<i>Nonmotorized</i>	\$100,000 for each project	\$100,000 for each project
<i>Off-Road Vehicle</i>	\$200,000 for each project	No limit
<i>Education and Enforcement</i>	\$200,000 for each project	

NOVA-eligible projects can receive grants for all aspects of a project cycle, including planning, land acquisition, development and construction, maintenance and operation, and education and enforcement. Details and restrictions regarding NOVA funding of these project aspects are discussed below.

### **Planning**

Planning funds can be used for the development of comprehensive plans, construction drawings, environmental assessments, feasibility and preconstruction studies, traffic route surveys and reconnaissance, and site master plans.

### **Land Acquisition**

Land acquisition can include a purchase in fee title or lesser interests such as leases and easements. In most cases, any land purchased must be kept for recreational purposes indefinitely. Leases must be purchased for at least 25 years. NOVA grants may not be used for land acquisition by federal agencies.

### **Development and Construction**

Development and construction grant funds may be used for the following:

- Access roads, parking areas, trails, and trail heads
- Utilities, including water, electric, and telephone service
- Sanitary facilities, including sewer systems and other related utilities
- Route and interpretive signs and informational bulletin boards
- Picnic and camping areas
- Wildlife viewing facilities

- Nonmotorized boating access facilities
- Off-road vehicle sports park facilities including, but not limited to, motocross tracks, sand drag strips, 4-wheel drive competitive and play facilities, spectator facilities, concession buildings, and park administration and maintenance facilities
- Employee residences, typically related to an off-road vehicle sports park facility; the construction of residences must be for employees directly involved in the operation and maintenance of a NOVA-assisted project
- Extensive renovation or redevelopment of existing improvements when they have deteriorated to the point where their usefulness or safety is impaired (although not because of inadequate maintenance) or when the facility has become outmoded

**Maintenance and Operation**

NOVA grants are available for the maintenance and operation of off-road vehicle riding areas, trails, trail heads, day-use areas, campgrounds, off-road vehicle sports parks and intensive use areas, support structures and facilities, snow removal and trail grooming for non-snowmobile recreation, water access sites that serve nonmotorized activities, or other facilities with the primary objective of nonhighway road, nonmotorized, or off-road vehicle recreation.

**Education and Enforcement**

Education and enforcement activities may include making in-field contacts with NOVA recreational users and groups to encourage responsible behavior, providing information and education materials for public distribution, and protecting resources and facilities from theft and vandalism. Eligible projects include the employment of personnel, including law enforcement staff, and capital equipment purchases, provided that they are 100% dedicated to NOVA education and enforcement activities.

Source: <http://www.rco.wa.gov/grants/nova.shtml>

## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

RCO contracted with the consulting firm Responsive Management to undertake this plan. They designed the methodology to develop the *2013-2018 Washington NOVA Plan* to ensure public participation in the planning process, to assess policy issues identified in the 2005 NOVA Plan and identify emerging issues, to evaluate NOVA demand, and to characterize stakeholder priorities and recommendations for implementing the program.

### NOVA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

To ensure adequate public participation in the NOVA planning process, the consultants consulted the standing 16-member NOVA Advisory Committee. The committee consists of local, state, and federal governmental representatives and citizen stakeholders. Members have NOVA recreational experience, provide topical and geographical diversity, and possess first-hand knowledge of key recreational issues.

The committee provided qualitative input to the plan through an Internet discussion board. The consultants posed three rounds of questions to the NOVA Advisory Committee, and the group was given time to provide feedback and response.

The NOVA Advisory Committee also participated in a web-based survey. The survey was designed in part to evaluate the effectiveness of the 2005 plan by exploring its recommendations and assessing the progress toward meeting its goals. The survey also assessed committee members' opinions on and attitudes toward NOVA recreation opportunities currently provided by the state, explored public priorities for NOVA use, and identified new and emerging issues for consideration in updating the NOVA plan.

The survey took place in July and August 2013. Nine of the 16 committee members completed the survey.

### PUBLIC OUTREACH

Responsive Management collected input from the general public by using a blog Web site known as the "Trails Town Hall." This gathered comments for use in both the *2013-2018 Washington State Trails Plan* and the *2013-2018 Washington State NOVA Plan*.

The public had an opportunity to comment on and discuss six questions. All told, 160 people provided 300 comments on the Trails Town Hall Web site.

### 2013 WASHINGTON SCORP

Another major source of data used to update the *2005-2011 NOVA Plan* was the research conducted in support of the Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The data were collected during a large-scale scientific survey conducted by Responsive Management in 2012 for the RCO.

The SCORP research was designed to determine residents' participation in outdoor recreation in Washington, as well as their opinions on recreational facilities and opportunities. Although the SCORP did not specifically ask how respondents accessed a recreation opportunity (i.e., if they

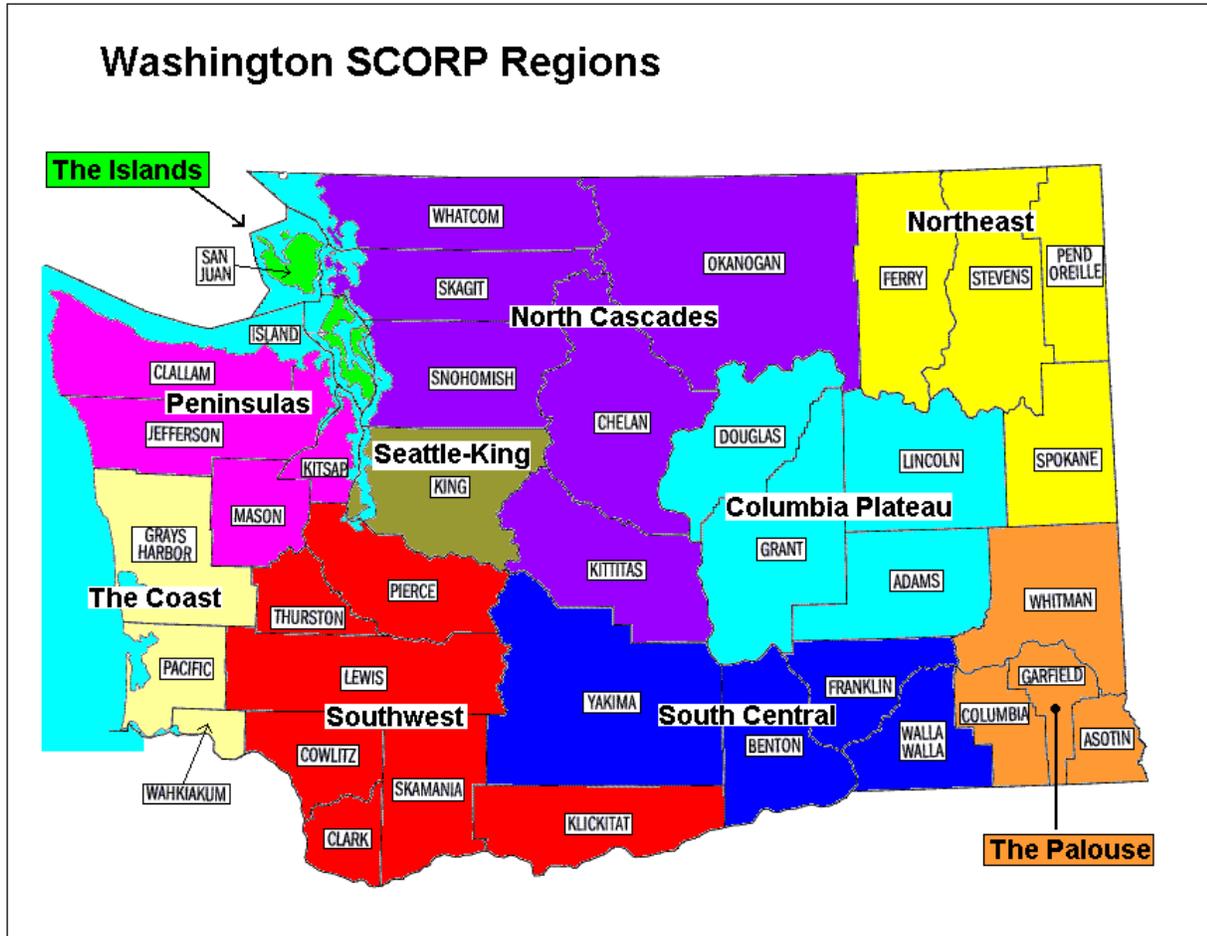
accessed it via a nonhighway road), NOVA-related activities discussed in the SCORP represent the major activities that take place in a nonhighway, nonmotorized, or off-road vehicle location or setting.

Responsive Management and the RCO developed the telephone survey questionnaire cooperatively. Responsive Management pre-tested the questionnaire to ensure proper wording, flow, and logic. A central polling site at the Responsive Management office allowed for rigorous quality control over the interviews and data collection.

Responsive Management conducted the telephone survey Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday from noon to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., local time, from August to October 2012. Responsive Management used the Questionnaire Programming Language for data collection and obtained a total of 3,114 completed interviews statewide.

The consultants analyzed the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program, as well as proprietary software developed by Responsive Management. Findings of the telephone survey are reported at a 95% confidence interval for the statewide results. For the entire sample of Washington residents statewide, the sampling error is at most plus or minus 1.76 percentage points, with a sample size of 3,114 and a population size of 5,143,186 Washington residents 18 years old and older.

Throughout this report, NOVA-related outdoor recreation participation is discussed both in terms of overall statewide participation as well as regional participation, with the regional results based on the breakdown shown in this map:



Note: Map was produced in color; may not be legible in black and white.

- The Islands: Island and San Juan Counties
- Peninsulas: Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, and Mason Counties
- The Coast: Grays Harbor, Pacific, and Wahkiakum Counties
- North Cascades: Chelan, Kittitas, Okanogan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties
- Seattle-King: King County (including the City of Seattle)
- Southwest: Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Lewis, Pierce, Skamania, and Thurston Counties
- Northeast: Ferry, Pend Oreille, Spokane, and Stevens Counties
- Columbia Plateau: Adams, Douglas, Grant, and Lincoln Counties
- South Central: Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla, and Yakima Counties
- The Palouse: Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Whitman Counties

## CHAPTER 3: ASSESSMENT OF DEMAND FOR NOVA OPPORTUNITIES IN WASHINGTON

There is a great deal of demand for NOVA opportunities in the State of Washington. An astounding 94% of Washington residents participate in some form of nonhighway road recreation, 86% participate in nonmotorized recreation, and 16% participate in ORV recreation.

As a whole, NOVA recreation consists of 39 activities within 13 of the 16 activity categories as defined by the SCORP. While the SCORP did not specifically ask how respondents accessed a recreation opportunity (i.e., if they accessed it via a nonhighway road), the following table indicates which NOVA activities that the SCORP data showed having the highest participation rates.

**Table 1: NOVA Activities with the Highest Participation Rates**

SCORP Activity Category	NOVA Activities within this category	Percent of Residents Participating
<b>Walking, hiking, climbing, or mountaineering</b>	Hiking mountain or forest trails	36%
	Hiking rural trails	19%
<b>Nature activities</b>	Wildlife viewing /photographing	59%
	Fishing or shellfishing	34%
	Gathering/collecting things in a nature setting	27%
<b>Water-related activities</b>	Canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or using other manual craft	11%
<b>Sightseeing</b>	Sightseeing at a scenic area	59%
<b>Bicycle riding</b>	Biking in rural trails	11%
	Biking in mountain or forest trails	8%
<b>Snow and ice activities</b>	Snowshoeing	7%
	Cross country skiing	5%
<b>Off-roading for recreation</b>		15%
<b>Horseback riding</b>	Horseback riding on rural trails	2%
	Horseback riding on mountain or forest trails	3%

There are three major NOVA recreational funding categories: nonhighway road recreation, nonmotorized recreation, and off-road vehicle recreation. A fourth major funding category, education and enforcement, applies to all aspects of NOVA recreation.

## **NONHIGHWAY ROAD RECREATIONAL USE**

The first of these funding categories to be discussed, nonhighway road recreation, includes the most popular of outdoor recreational activities. In fact, an overwhelming 94% of Washington residents engage in at least one of these recreational pastimes, which include but are not limited to:

- Sightseeing
- Wildlife viewing and photographing
- Picnicking
- Camping
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Canoeing or kayaking
- Driving for pleasure
- Gathering berries, mushrooms, firewood, or other natural items

The following graph shows a demographic breakdown of nonhighway road recreational users: 94% of Washington residents participated in at least one recreational activity that fits within this category (meaning only 6% of Washington residents did not).

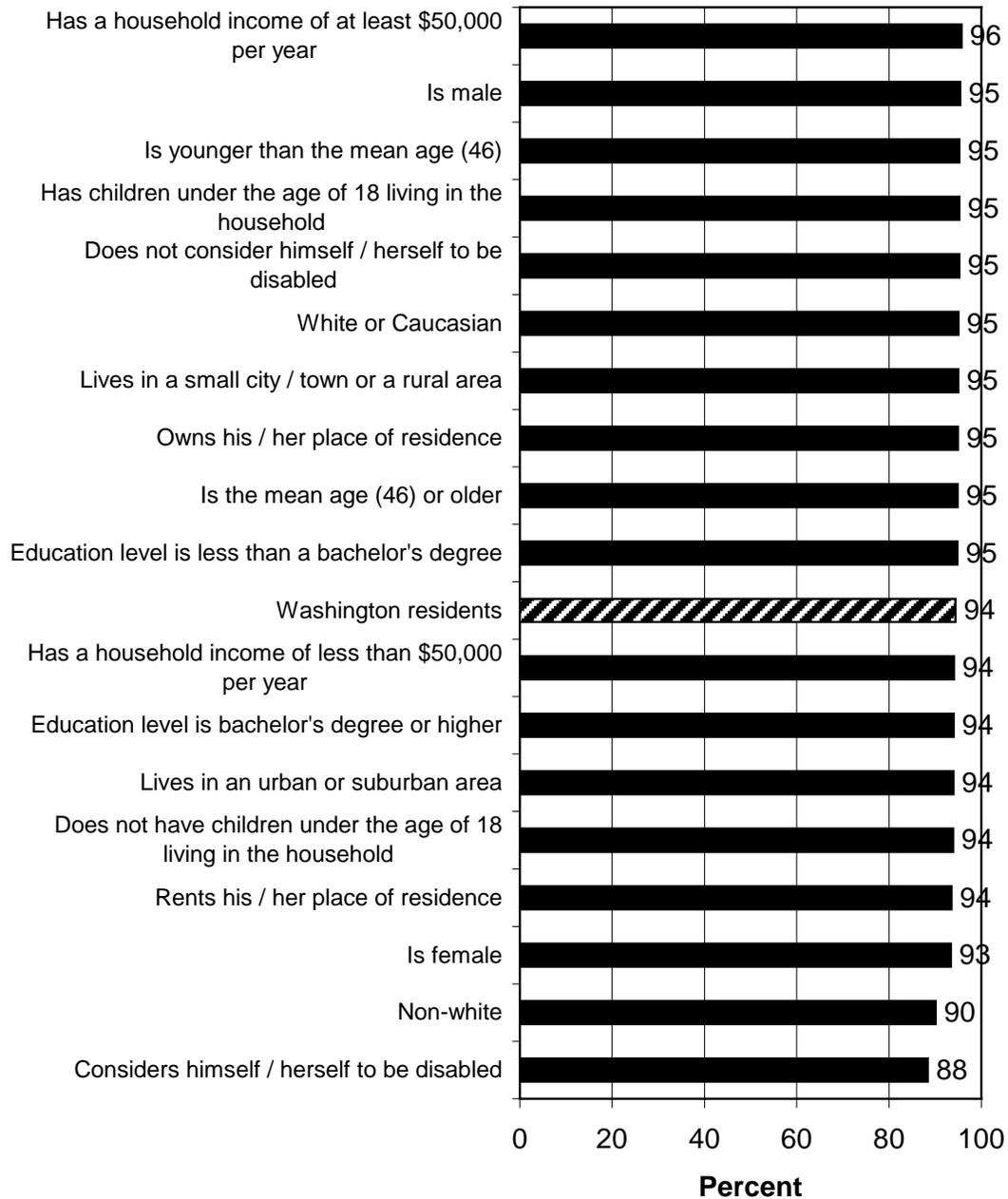
This 94% value is thus the baseline for demographic comparisons and is shown as a patterned bar on the graph. All the demographic groups shown above this baseline are positively correlated with participation in nonhighway road recreational use, and all the groups below are negatively correlated.

The graph shows that the demographic groups *most likely* to participate in nonhighway road recreational activities include those with an annual household income of at least \$50,000 (96% of this group participates) and male residents (95%), whereas the demographic groups *least likely* to engage in these activities are residents with disabilities (88%) and non-white/non-Caucasian residents (90%).

Note that these are not strong correlations. The most positive correlation is only 2% above the baseline value, and the most negative correlation is only 6% below. Nonhighway road recreation is a broad category that includes many popular recreational activities; all of the demographic groups exhibit high participation rates.

Appendix A presents a more focused analysis of the regional and demographic characteristics of specific recreational activities.

## Percent of each of the following groups who are nonhighway road recreational users



## NONMOTORIZED RECREATIONAL USE

Nonmotorized recreation follows closely behind nonhighway road recreation in popularity among Washington State residents. As the name implies, nonmotorized recreation includes human-powered or animal-powered activities. These include but are not limited to:

- Walking
- Hiking
- Backpacking
- Climbing
- Cross country skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Mountain biking
- Horseback riding
- Pack animal activities

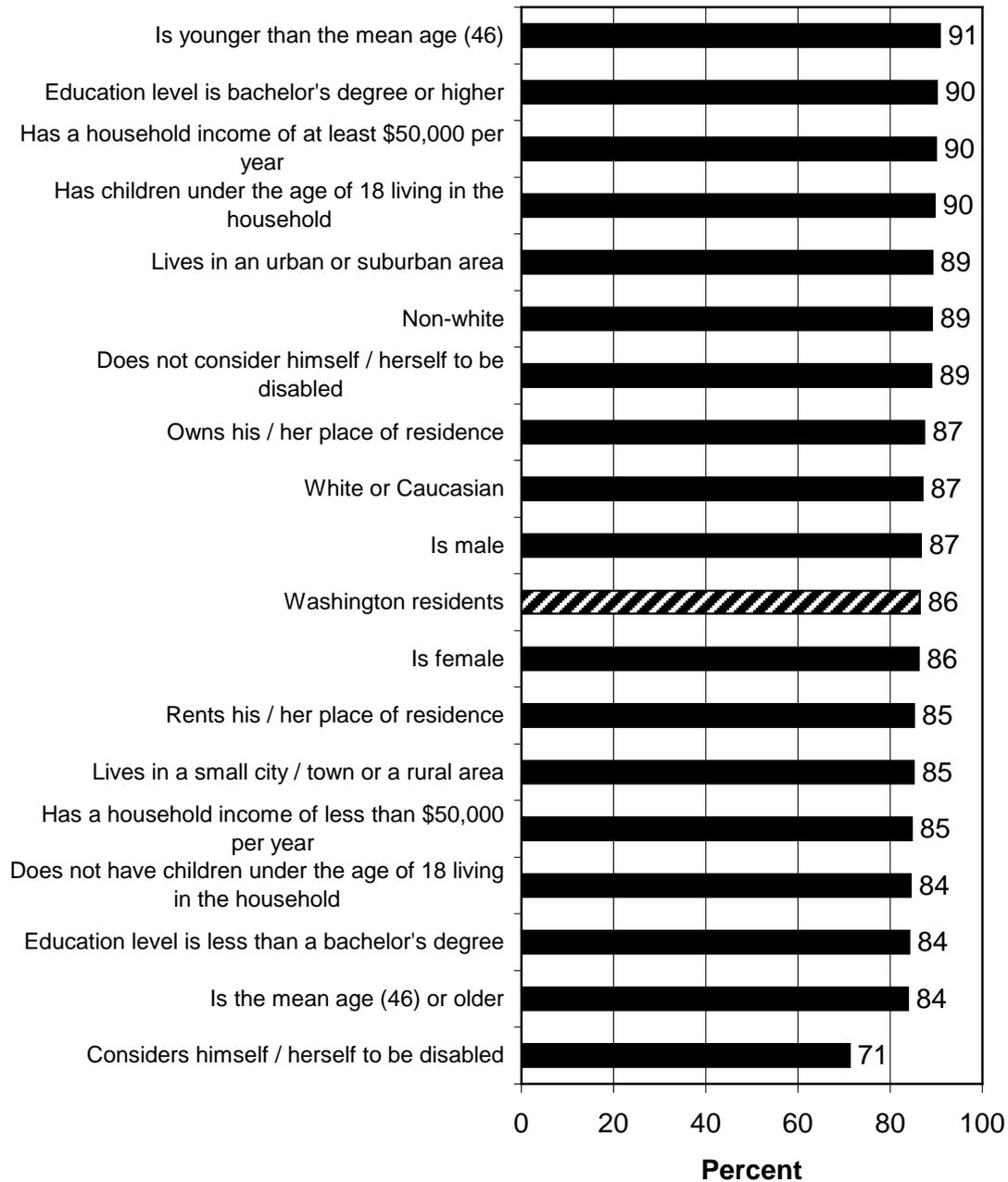
In all, 86% of Washington residents engage in at least one of these recreational activities, so this is the baseline value for demographic comparisons. The following graph shows that the demographic group *most likely* to engage in nonmotorized recreational activities consists of those younger than the mean age of 46 (91% of this group participates), and the demographic group *least likely* to engage in these activities consists of residents with disabilities (71%).

The graph shows that only one demographic group, residents with disabilities, has a strong negative correlation to participation in nonmotorized recreation (meaning this is the only percentage that is substantially different from the baseline value). By definition nonmotorized recreation includes human-powered and animal-powered activities, which can present obstacles to individuals with disabilities. Despite this, 71% is a high participation rate.

As with nonhighway road recreation, nonmotorized recreation is a wide-reaching category that includes many popular recreational pastimes, and consequently large participation rates are observed in each demographic group.

Refer to Appendix A for analysis of the regional and demographic characteristics of specific recreational activities.

**Percent of each of the following groups who are nonmotorized recreational users:**



## OFF-ROAD VEHICLE RECREATIONAL USE

Off-road vehicle recreation has a significantly lower participation rate among Washington residents compared to nonhighway road or nonmotorized recreation. This may be due to its specialized nature and the cost of owning or resting an ORV.

NOVA-related off-road vehicle recreation can occur at off-road facilities, rural trails, or mountain or forest trails and typically involves the following vehicles:

- Motorcycles
- Dune buggies
- All-terrain vehicles (ATVs)
- 4-wheel drive vehicles

In total, 16% of Washington residents engage in some form of off-road vehicle recreation, so this is the baseline value for making demographic comparisons.

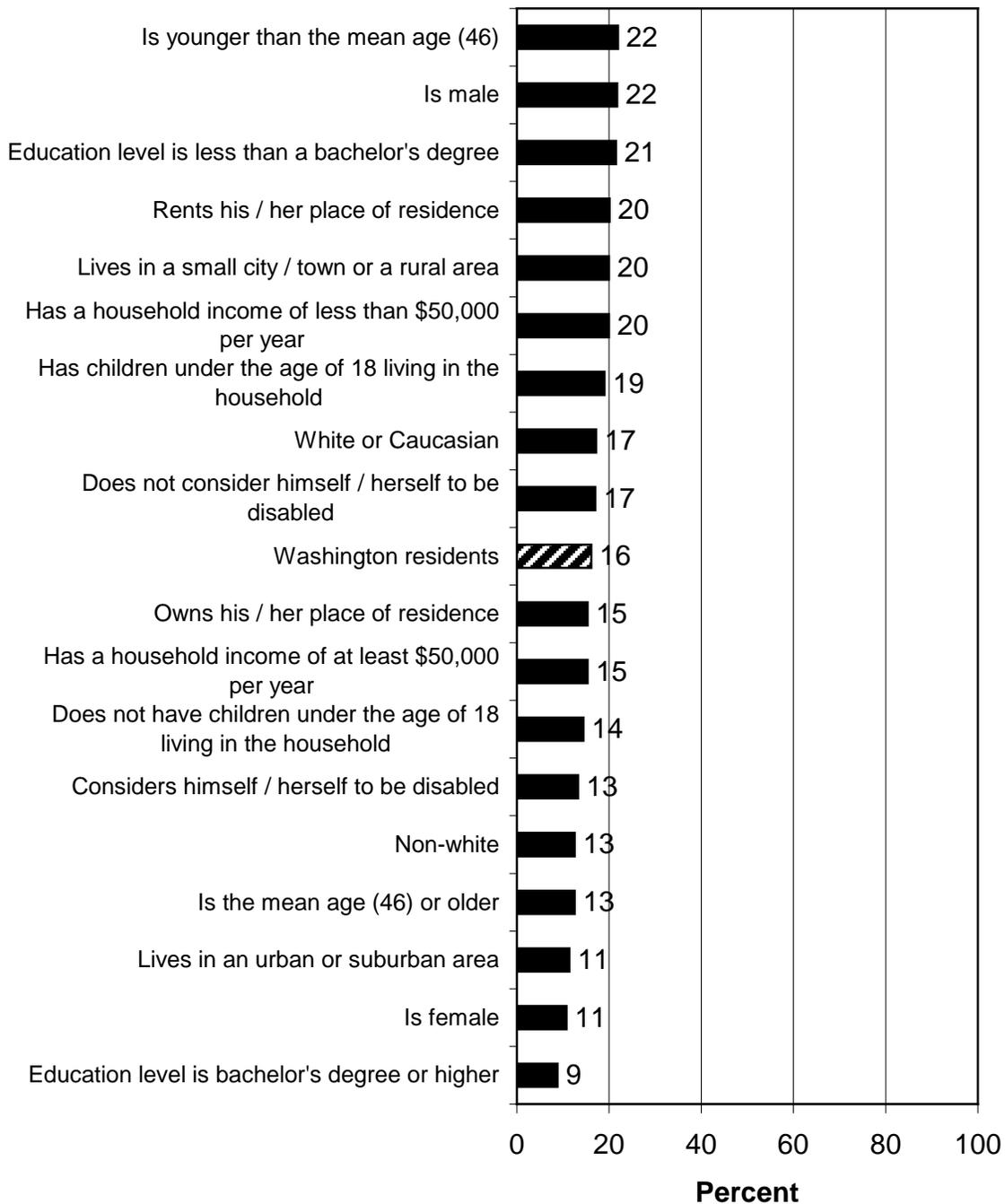
The following graph shows that the demographic groups *most likely* to participate in off-road vehicle recreation include those younger than the mean age of 46 (22% of this group participates), male residents (22%), and those with an education level less than a bachelor's degree (21%).

Conversely, the demographic groups *least likely* to engage in these activities include those who live in an urban or suburban area (11%), female residents (11%), and those with an education level of a bachelor's degree or higher (9%).

Compared to the other major NOVA categories, slightly more variation exists in the demographic groups' correlation to participation in off-road vehicle recreation. However, the positive and negative correlations are not very strong, most likely due to the grouping of activities.

Refer to Appendix A for analysis of the regional and demographic characteristics of specific recreational activities.

**Percent of each of the following groups who are  
ORV recreation users:**



## CHAPTER 4: ASSESSMENT OF NOVA PROGRAM POLICIES

The 2005-2011 NOVA Plan had set forth major policies related to three topical areas:

- NOVA Program (Policies A-1 to A-4)
- NOVA education, information, and law enforcement (Policies B-1 to B-5)
- NOVA recreational facility acquisition, development, operation and maintenance, and planning (Policies C-1 to C-15)

Responsive Management provided the NOVA Advisory Committee with a survey, which in part asked them to rate the importance of each policy\* on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is “not at all important” and 10 is “extremely important.” Nine of the sixteen members of the Advisory Committee completed the survey.

In general, the NOVA policies are considered to be important, but in light of funding limitations it is helpful to see a comparative, quantitative ranking to help establish priorities moving forward.

The graph on the next two pages shows how the NOVA Advisory Committee ranked the existing policies. Note that policy descriptions have been shortened on the graph due to space limitations, but a complete description of each policy, a discussion of its ranking in the survey, and a summary of the open-ended (qualitative) comments provided in the survey are included in this section.

As the graph demonstrates, the policies ranked as the *most important* in the survey are:

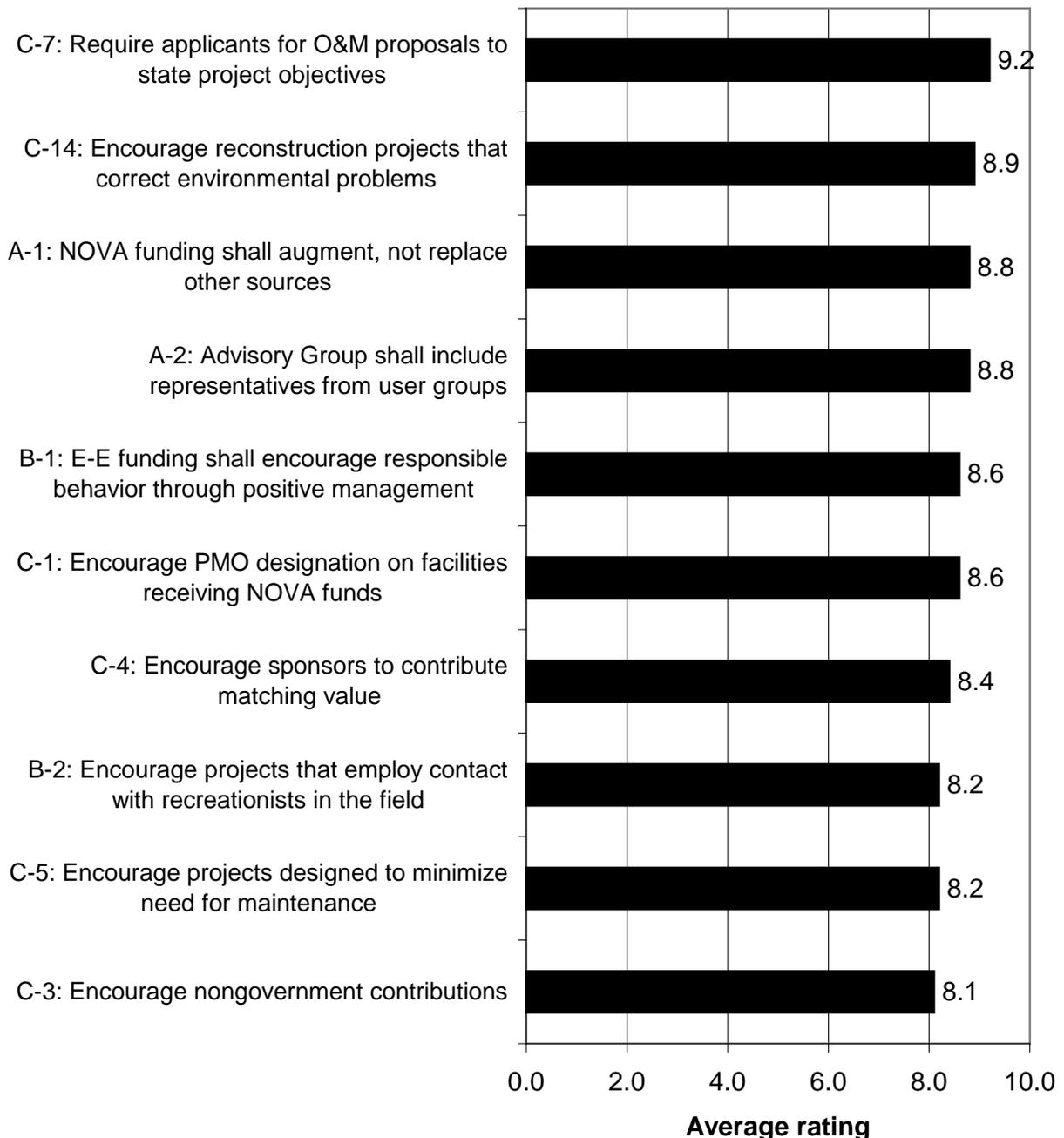
- C-7: Require applicants for operation and maintenance projects to state their project’s goals and objectives in the application (the average score was 9.2 out of 10);
- C-14: When reconstructing trails, encourage projects that correct environmental problems, retain trail difficulty and user experiences, and minimize user displacement (8.9);
- A-1: NOVA funding shall augment, not replace, other sources of funding (8.8); and
- A-2: The NOVA Advisory Committee shall include representatives from user groups and agencies affected by NOVA funding (8.8).

In contrast, the policies ranked as the *least important* are:

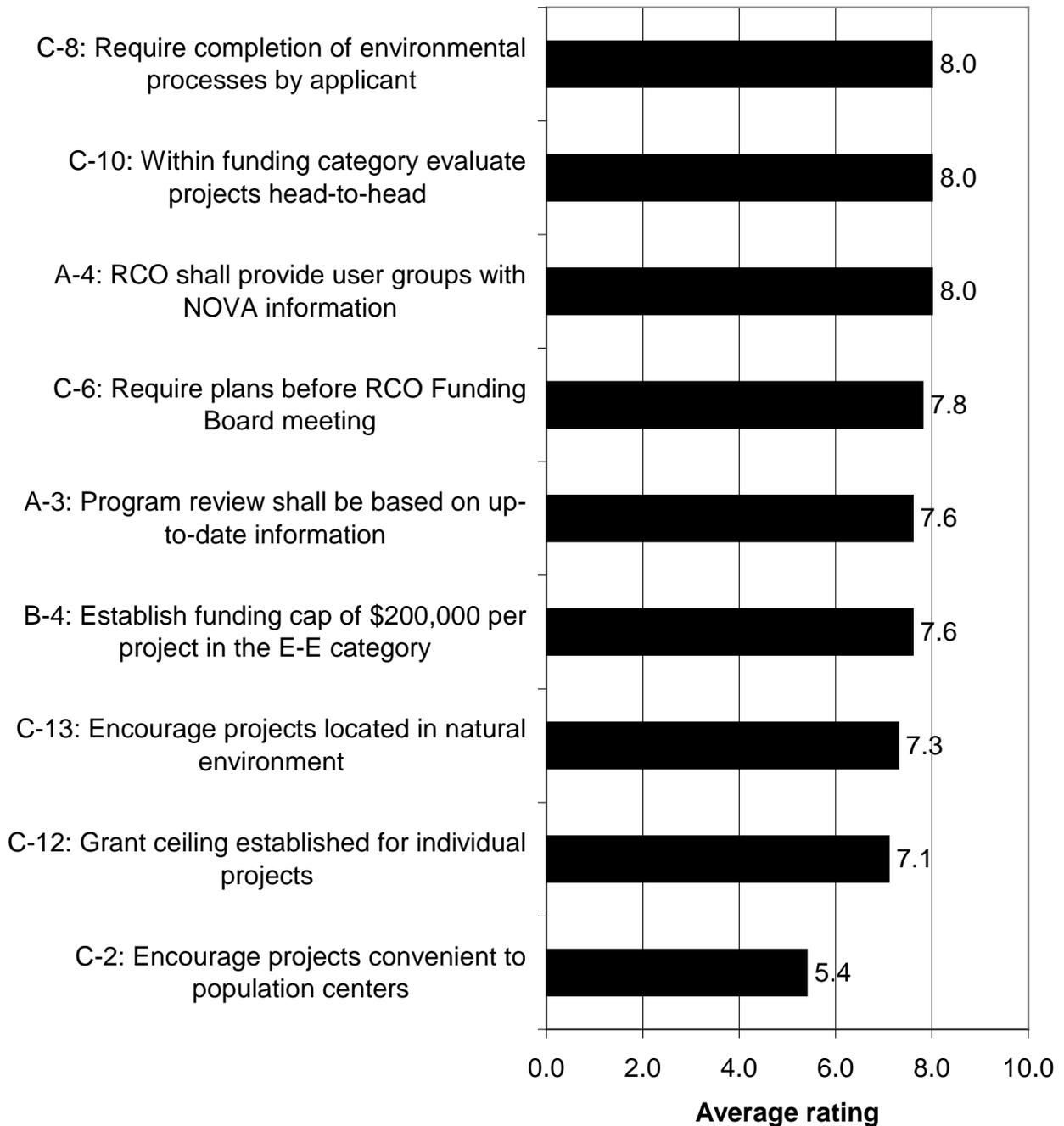
- C-2: Encourage projects convenient to population centers (average score of 5.4 out of 10);
- C-12: Grant ceiling established for individual projects (7.1); and
- C-13: Encourage projects in areas that are predominantly natural, such as are typically found in a “backcountry” environment (this policy does not apply to the off-road vehicle funding category) (7.3).

\* Policies B-3, B-5, C-9, C-11, and C-15 are not subject to change and Responsive Management did not include them in the survey at the direction of the RCO. However, the descriptions of these policies have been included in this section.

**Please indicate how important the following policies SHOULD BE for the 2013-2018 NOVA Plan on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important." (1 of 2)**



**Please indicate how important the following policies SHOULD BE for the 2013-2018 NOVA Plan on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important." (2 of 2)**



## TOP FUNDING PRIORITY

A key question in the survey provided the Advisory Committee with six choices for general categories of NOVA funding and asked them to select the top priority.

“What do you think SHOULD be the top priority for NOVA funding for the *2013-2018 NOVA Plan*?”

- Education/information
- Law enforcement
- Planning
- Facilities acquisition
- Development
- Maintenance and operation

An overwhelming eight of the nine respondents selected “Maintenance and operation” as the top priority; one respondent selected “Facilities acquisition.”

When asked why they selected this as the top priority, respondents’ comments were generally consistent with the idea that development or new construction of recreation opportunities did not make sense given the backlog of maintenance needs.

They noted that existing trails and facilities are in danger of closing if they become unsafe or inaccessible through neglect. One respondent indicated that money for education and enforcement is important, but user behavior is less of a concern than trail conditions. The committee’s response to this question is consistent with the high ratings of importance given to policies that relate to operation and maintenance.

A review of comments received through the Trails Town Hall forum shows that much of the general public agrees that maintenance of existing NOVA-related recreational opportunities should take precedence over new development.

A major concern noted in comments on this NOVA Advisory Committee survey as well as in the Trails Town Hall and Advisory Committee forums, is the diversion of NOVA funds by the legislature toward projects and entities for which the funds were not originally intended.

In addition, respondents stated that the NOVA fund was originally comprised of 1% of the state gasoline tax, but that the most recent fuel tax increases did not include a corresponding increasing in the NOVA fund.

The remainder of this chapter discusses the ratings and comments provided for the individual policies, grouped into the three major topical areas. The discussion of each policy includes the policy text as originally published in the 2005 plan, followed by a summary of the survey results, and relevant comments provided by the NOVA Advisory Committee.

## **NOVA PROGRAM GENERAL POLICIES**

The NOVA Program shall allow agencies to provide quality opportunities for nonhighway road, nonmotorized, and off-road vehicle recreationists—opportunities that satisfy user needs, are environmentally responsible, and minimize conflict among user groups. Sponsors will demonstrate accountability and help attain this goal, in part, by reporting on project related activities.

### **Policy A-1: NOVA funding shall augment, not replace, other sources of funding.**

The NOVA Program allows user groups and public agencies to work cooperatively to provide nonhighway road, nonmotorized, and off-road vehicle recreation opportunities. Because of the program's revenue source and the effects of its funding, the program brings together many interests that sometimes conflict. NOVA funds shall be used to provide quality recreation opportunities in a manner that strives to minimize conflict and environmental damage.

NOVA funding is intended to enhance the capabilities of recreation providers and managers. Similar to other RCO funding programs, NOVA funding shall achieve results that would not be possible without state funding. It shall not replace other funding. When NOVA funding is available for maintenance and operation, for example, it shall not be used to replace or divert monies that would otherwise be available for that purpose.

The Advisory Committee gave this policy an average rating of 8.8 out of 10, one of the highest scores, emphasizing the important of incorporating other revenue sources into NOVA-related recreation.

Such sources may include matching funds provided by project sponsors (discussed further under Policy C-4) or the organization of user group volunteers for maintenance, operation, or education/information activities.

### **Policy A-2: The NOVA Advisory Committee shall include representatives from user groups and agencies affected by NOVA funding.**

The Advisory Committee shall include the following representatives:

- 3 state agencies (Department of Natural Resources, State Parks, Department of Fish and Wildlife)
- 1 federal agency (Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, National Park Service)
- 1 local government (police, sheriff, or other administrator of NOVA projects)
- 3 off-road vehicle (intent to include off-road motorcycle, all-terrain vehicle, and four-wheel drive)
- 4 nonmotorized recreation
  - 2 hiking (hiker, backpacker, climber, etc.)

- 1 mountain bicycling
- 1 equestrian
- 3 nonhighway road with one or more of the following recreational interests associated with fuel used on nonhighway roads:
  - Hunting and/or fishing (required)
  - Driving for pleasure or sightseeing
  - Wildlife viewing
  - Camping
  - Picnicking
  - Gathering (firewood, berries, mushrooms, etc.)

In selecting members the RCO will strive to ensure:

- They represent federal, state, and local government and primary NOVA-related recreation (all-terrain vehicle riding, horse/stock users, four-wheel driving, mountain bicycling, hiking, motorcycling).
- They demonstrate the support of those represented.
- Together they comprise a broad range of human diversity (gender, geography, ethnicity, physical ability, age).
- They have the time and resources to participate.
- They have basic experience in and an understanding of NOVA issues.
- They are committed to helping implement the policies reflected in this plan and the project evaluation system.

Likewise, after selection, committee members will:

- Represent those groups/agencies for which they have been selected.
- Demonstrate the support of those represented.
- Commit the time and resources needed for participation.
- Remain committed to the policies in this plan and project evaluation system by providing recommendations that reflect program policies and ensure the integrity of the project evaluation process.

In accordance with RCW 46.09.340, only representatives of the NOVA Advisory Committee's off-road vehicle and mountain biking recreationists, government representatives, and land managers will make recommendations regarding the expenditure of off-road vehicle permit funds received under RCW 46.68.045.

The Advisory Committee rated this policy as highly important, giving it an average rating of 8.8 out of 10.

In a self-evaluation of its performance in serving NOVA user groups and agencies since 2005, the committee gave itself an average score of 8.0.

In related questioning, all the respondents either *strongly agree* or *moderately agree* that the NOVA Advisory Committee is qualified to make decisions regarding NOVA projects, and all but one of the

respondents either *strongly agree* or *moderately agree* that the committee fairly represents user groups (one respondent gave a neutral response).

When asked about term limits, five of the respondents stated there should be no term limit, with two respondents suggesting a 4-year term and one each suggesting terms of 6 years or 8 years.

The respondents were generally consistent in stating that the role of the NOVA Advisory Committee is to assist the RCO in evaluating and selecting projects for NOVA funding without bias. Members should have experience with NOVA-related recreation and represent their user group while remaining impartial and respectful of other user groups. Respondents to the survey indicated that the NOVA Advisory Committee is properly executing its intended function.

**Policy A-3: NOVA Program review and administration shall be based on valid, up-to-date information.**

At least once every 12 years the RCO will seek funding to complete a new NOVA fuel-use study. (The 12-year cycle coordinates with the NOVA Plan, which by statute, must be updated every six years.) In completing the survey, the RCO will:

*“...study the source and make recommendations on the distribution and use of funds provided to NOVA recreational activities under RCW 46.09.170. The study shall determine the relative portion of the motor vehicle fuel tax revenues that are attributable to vehicles operating on nonhighway roads or off-road trails for recreational purposes... [and] shall include the types of vehicles and location of their use, the types of recreational activities, the types of recreational facilities used, and the recreational use of forest roads.”*

The 2005–2011 NOVA planning process was informed by the 2003 *Washington State Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Fuel Use Survey* and a U.S. Forest Service trailhead user survey.

The Advisory Committee gave this policy an average rating of 7.6 out of 10, making this one of the lower-ranked policies in terms of relative importance.

When asked if NOVA review and administration is based on valid, up-to-date information, most respondents *moderately agree* with the statement, with one selecting *strongly agree* and one selecting *moderately disagree* (this respondent contends that the 2003 fuel use study is too outdated).

Survey respondents indicated that the RCO is doing an excellent job, given the difficulty and expense of gathering data on NOVA-related recreational needs. One respondent indicated that NOVA funds should not be so heavily based on usage, which tends to underserve less populated areas. Another suggestion was to include local area planning and infrastructure data, while another was to gather information on how the other western states administer their outdoor recreation programs.

Multiple respondents expressed concern that there was a lack of follow-up on funded projects to ensure that the dedicated funds were efficiently applied to the stated goals and objectives.

In a separate question, eight respondents were *somewhat satisfied* and one was *very satisfied* with the use of funds provided to NOVA recreation opportunities.

**Policy A-4: The RCO shall endeavor to provide user groups with current NOVA-related information through a variety of communication methods.**

Efficient and effective communication is critical for increasing awareness, building trust, and ensuring that accurate information is available to recreationists. The planning process for the 2005-2011 NOVA Plan suggested that recreationists are generally unaware of the NOVA Program, funding sources, funding allocations, and the role of the NOVA Advisory Committee. To this end, the plan discussed methods for increasing information and outreach.

Policy A-4 seeks to expand communication methods and increase public awareness regarding the NOVA Program and NOVA funding decisions.

The NOVA Advisory Committee was asked to rank the five means of communication that the RCO currently uses to provide user groups with information on the NOVA Program. The scores were weighted in which a respondent's top selection received 5 points, the second choice received 4 points, etc. The table below shows that updated web pages and e-mails are considered the most effective methods of communication.

Ranking	Form of Communication	Weighted Score
1	Updated Web pages	34
2	E-mails	27
3	News releases	24
4	Informational materials distributed at retail outlets	17
5	Informational materials attached to Department of Licensing notifications	16

The Advisory Committee gave this policy an average rating of 8.0 out of 10 in terms of its relative importance to the NOVA Program.

When the survey asked the committee to assess the RCO's performance in providing user groups with current information through varied communications since 2005, the average score was 6.5.

Multiple respondents acknowledged that rapid changes in information technology present challenges in delivering focused messaging, particularly to older recreationists. Challenges also exist in reaching users who are not part of organized groups.

Finally, for the section on Policy A-4, the Advisory Committee was asked the following question:

“In your opinion, what are the best ways to provide user groups with information on the NOVA Program? [CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]”

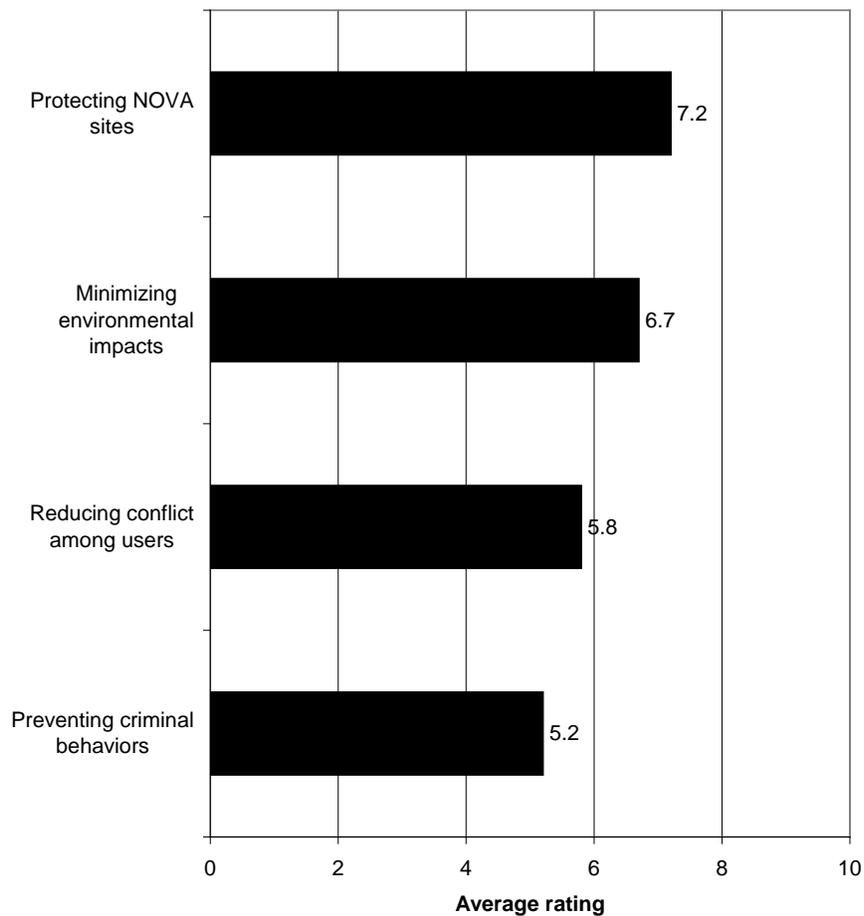
<b>Number of Selections</b>	<b>Form of Communication</b>
5	E-mails
5	News release
6	Updated Web pages
2	Informational materials distributed at retail outlets
2	Informational materials attached to Department of Licensing notifications
0	Direct mail
2	RCO News You Can Use (electronic newsletter)
4	Newspapers
2	Radio
1	Television
3	Public meetings/open houses
4	RCO Web site
4	Facebook
0	Google+
0	Pinterest
0	Twitter
0	YouTube
1	Blogs
2	Internet search engines (e.g. Google, Yahoo!, Bing)
0	RSS feeds
1	Other: Use partner organizations in recreation
1	Other: Articles in user group magazines
1	Other: Direct notifications to recreation groups

## NOVA EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT (E & E) POLICIES

In the NOVA program, the primary focus of education/information and law enforcement policies is on recreational behaviors.

First, the survey asked the NOVA Advisory Committee to assess the performance of the RCO in focusing education and enforcement efforts on recreational behavior since the 2005 plan. The graph below shows average ratings that range from 7.2 (out of 10) for protecting NOVA sites to 5.2 for preventing criminal behaviors.

**Please assess the PERFORMANCE of the RCO in focusing E-E efforts on the following recreational behaviors since 2005 (on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "poor" and 10 is "excellent"):**



The survey also asked the committee to rank the above-referenced recreational behaviors regarding which one should be the most important focus for education and enforcement efforts in this updated plan. The scores were weighted so that a respondent's top selection received 4 points, the second choice received 3 points, etc.

In keeping with the previous assessment, the table below shows that crime prevention was considered to be the most important focus for ongoing education and enforcement efforts.

Ranking	Recreational Behavior	Weighted Score
1	Preventing criminal behaviors (e.g. trash dumping, firearm use, trailhead thefts, trespassing, and vandalism)	30
2	Protecting NOVA sites	21
3	Minimizing environmental impacts	20
4	Reducing conflict among users	17

**Policy B-1: E&E programs shall help preserve NOVA opportunities. E&E funding shall encourage responsible recreational behaviors through positive management techniques.**

Because law enforcement can reduce recreationists' inappropriate behavior, it helps protect the availability of sanctioned NOVA opportunities. Education and enforcement measures should include positive management to improve recreational behaviors. NOVA funding shall not, however, be used to replace local law enforcement funding. It shall instead augment local capabilities and result in improved NOVA recreation management. In general, projects that focus solely on enforcement of area closures, or within areas with few or no legal opportunities, shall be discouraged.

This policy is considered very important by the Advisory Committee, who gave an average rating of 8.6 out of 10.

**Policy B-2: Encourage projects that primarily employ contact with current NOVA recreationists in the field during high use seasons.**

During the 2005 planning process, there were concerns about focusing education and enforcement efforts in schools, which many believe encourages otherwise uninterested children and youth to desire the speed and power of an off-road vehicle. The suggestion was to focus education and enforcement efforts on those already using NOVA trails by engaging interest clubs or organizations.

Policy B-2 was developed to focus scarce education and enforcement resources on existing users at the place and time of NOVA activity, while discouraging activities that have fewer benefits, such as “mall shows” and many in-school (K-12) programs. This maximizes the benefit to users.

Policy B-2 helps concentrate funding on expenditures most directly related to education and enforcement activities, such as education and enforcement personnel salaries and benefits, and related materials and equipment.

The Advisory Committee gave the importance of this policy an average rating of 8.2 out of 10, and a majority of respondents either strongly agree or moderately agree that education and enforcement efforts should target existing users. A couple of members disagreed, though, stating that the program should not preclude efforts to reach school age children or non-users.

Regarding law enforcement, three respondents would like to see a greater presence at NOVA trails and sites while the remaining six would like it to remain about the same.

In a related question, seven of the respondents believe criminal behavior is best prevented through an equal focus of education and enforcement, while one respondent each would like to see more education or more law enforcement.

The NOVA Advisory committee expressed only minor concerns about safety on trails as a result of criminal or other behaviors. They noted, however, that any further reductions in education and enforcement funding create a worry that crime will increase and people will stop going to NOVA-related trails and sites.

**Policy B-3: Require E&E project applicants to provide project goal and objective information as part of the application process. Encourage applicants to provide demand and need information as a part of the evaluation process.**

It is important that key planning elements, (program goals and objectives, description of demand and need) be retained as part of the application process. Additionally, the requirement for regular progress reports on activities and expenditures will be continued.

Policy B-3 is not subject to change, and in the interest of providing the NOVA Advisory Committee with a streamlined survey, Responsive Management did not include it in the survey at the direction of the RCO. The policy wording is included here to provide readers with the complete set of policies.

**Policy B-4: Establish a funding cap of \$200,000 per project.**

Before adoption of this policy, the limit on education and enforcement project support was based on Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees. However, caps based on FTEs were cumbersome to calculate, especially when applicants sought funding for multiple FTEs, each of which planned to work a different number of hours annually, and at various hourly rates.

As a result, in 2007 the cap method was changed from one based on FTEs and equipment to one based solely on individual projects – the same method used in other RCO grant programs with caps.

The Advisory Committee gave the importance of Policy B-4 an average rating of 7.6 out of 10.

In follow-up questioning, none of the respondents oppose a cap of \$200,000 per education and enforcement project, nor do they oppose funding education and enforcement projects for up to two consecutive years.

One respondent suggested reaching users not targeted by education and enforcement efforts in the past, such as those who participate in cycling, mountain biking, climbing, water sports, and snow sports. Another cautioned that, as overall recreation increases, monitoring of activities will need to increase to prevent criminal activity.

### **Policy B-5: Fund E&E projects for up to two consecutive years.**

Allowing education and enforcement funding to be used for two years increases budget certainty for sponsors and may result in higher quality programs. At the same time, it reduces the work associated with annual project evaluation for sponsors, the NOVA Advisory Committee, and the RCO.

Policy B-3 is not subject to change, and in the interest of providing the NOVA Advisory Committee with a streamlined survey, Responsive Management did not include it in the survey at the direction of the RCO. The policy wording is included here to provide readers with the complete set of policies.

A question in the previous section showed that all respondents support funding education and enforcement projects for up to two consecutive years.

## **NOVA RECREATION FACILITY ACQUISITION, DEVELOPMENT, MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION, AND PLANNING**

### **Policy C-1: Encourage a primary management objective designation on facilities receiving NOVA funding.**

Primary management objective designations (equestrian, off-road vehicle, hiking, mountain bicycling, etc.) help identify the primary purpose and function of a NOVA site and also guide management decisions regarding the site. Designating trails and other facilities with a primary management objective not only helps clarify the experience users can expect, but also provides clear and consistent direction to managers.

The Advisory Committee gave the importance of Policy C-1 an average rating of 8.6 out of 10, making it one of the highest ranked policies.

Eight of the respondents *strongly support* having a primary management objective. One respondent selected *moderately oppose*, stating that such designations are not followed consistently by land managers and can be viewed by some as user segregation.

In general, the committee views primary management objectives as a useful tool in avoiding user conflicts. It was noted that the NOVA Program needs to strike a balance between providing multi-use trails and facilities and recognizing that certain recreation types have specific needs.

### **Policy C-2: Encourage projects convenient to population centers.**

One of the issues raised during the previous NOVA planning process was how to provide NOVA opportunities in urban areas or for underserved populations. Because of the nonhighway road threshold criteria (access via a non-gasoline tax supported road, etc.) and emphasis on natural settings, most NOVA recreation opportunities are provided in relatively remote settings. While it is often difficult or impossible to locate such opportunities in urbanized areas, priority shall be given to projects convenient to such areas.

The Advisory Committee gave the importance of Policy C-2 an average rating of 5.4 out of 10, making it the lowest ranked of all the policies.

A follow-up question asked the committee if there is an adequate supply of NOVA sites convenient to urban areas; five of the respondents *moderately agree*, two *moderately disagree*, and two are neutral.

On the topic of NOVA recreation locations, the respondents provided a wide range of comments, some of which are shown below.

- Urban demand is growing faster than other types and development limits opportunities.
- By focusing funds on urban areas we cannot spread the use out. Small towns are more dependent on recreation for their economy; in our mobile culture users will drive to remote recreation areas.
- There is an increased need for short trails for cycling, mountain biking, etc. without trailering long distances.
- As rural areas become more urbanized, there is increased demand for access to nonmotorized and motorized trails.
- As fuel costs increase and roads become more crowded, there is an increased importance of recreation convenient to population centers. People are less likely to go to remote trailheads.
- Communities should designate and fund open space, without relying so much on NOVA funding.

**Policy C-3: Encourage non-government contributions.**

Contributions of money, materials, and/or services by volunteers, the private sector, nonprofit organizations, and others are important in the NOVA Program. Donations stretch scarce public funding, improve the overall cost-benefit ratio, extend “ownership” to those involved in the project, and help demonstrate broad public support.

The Advisory Committee gave the importance of Policy C-3 an average rating of 8.1 out of 10.

Six of the respondents *strongly agree* and three *moderately agree* that the NOVA Program should encourage non-government contributions.

In the interest of providing the NOVA Advisory Committee with a streamlined survey, Responsive Management did not include a space for open-ended comments on this policy.

**Policy C-4: Encourage sponsors to contribute matching value to their project.**

Project sponsors who contribute part of a project’s cost (via dollars, materials, or labor/service) make NOVA Program dollars reach more projects while demonstrating a local commitment in the project’s success.

The Advisory Committee gave the importance of Policy C-4 an average rating of 8.4 out of 10.

All respondents either *strongly agree* or *moderately agree* that the NOVA Program should encourage sponsors to contribute matching value to their projects. When asked about an appropriate match, a few respondents indicated the ratio should be 50/50, while others suggested a lower amount, ranging from 10% to 30% of the project’s value.

Another question asked if a matching contribution should be *required* for project funding: two respondents *strongly agree*, two *moderately agree*, one *moderately disagrees*, and one was neutral. Those who agree with a matching requirement were asked to suggest a percentage; the responses ranged from 10% to 30%, lower than the amounts suggested for recommended contributions in the earlier question.

Next, the survey asked if funding from other programs administered by the RCO Funding Board should be considered as matching funds for NOVA projects. This question evenly divided the Advisory Committee, as two respondents each selected *strongly agree*, *moderately agree*, *moderately disagree*, and *strongly disagree* (one selected *don’t know*).

In addition, the Advisory Committee was asked if the NOVA Program should encourage volunteer opportunities that are approved by the land manager. On this the respondents were united, with seven selecting *strongly agree* and two selecting *moderately agree*.

Multiple respondents indicated that the NOVA Program could encourage volunteerism through recognition programs, such as feature stories of volunteers in action on local newscasts or in newspapers. The NOVA Program project sponsors could also provide support and information to the volunteer base, educate users on how the NOVA Program benefits them, and show those in charge of non-government contributions how NOVA projects benefit everyone.

**Policy C-5: Encourage projects that have design considerations that minimize the need for ongoing maintenance.**

Projects can often incorporate design elements that reduce maintenance needs. Decisions about placement and materials (e.g. tread surfaces) often affect maintenance needs. Adequate consideration of maintenance during the design phase can result in long-term savings that far outweigh most short-term construction cost increases.

The Advisory Committee gave the importance of Policy C-5 an average rating of 8.2 out of 10. Note, however, that six respondents scored this policy as a 10. Several respondents indicated that they support Policy C-5 due to concerns over diminishing maintenance funding.

One respondent, who strongly dissented, gave the policy a 0, thereby driving down the average. This respondent emphasized that projects should be evaluated for their overall cost-benefit ratio.

**Policy C-6: Require general plans and completion of applicant-required processes before the RCO Funding Board meeting.**

Policies C-6 through C-8 are project planning requirements collectively designed to ensure that projects support community goals, address a defined problem, and comply with environmental laws and regulations. All are “base requirements” before the RCO authorizes a project.

Policy C-6 states that project sponsors shall provide evidence of planning that supports the proposed project. Unlike project-specific engineering plans, these general plans shall clearly define goals, objectives, and needs, and be developed in a process that includes opportunities for public participation. They may include local agency comprehensive park plans, growth management plans, national forest plans, national park management plans, etc.

The Advisory Committee gave the importance of Policy C-6 an average rating of 7.8 out of 10. One respondent indicated that this policy is not feasible.

**Policy C-7: Require applicants for maintenance and operation proposals to state their project's goals and objectives in the application. Encourage these applicants to provide "need" information during project evaluations.**

If a project (the "solution") is to be successful, it must be clearly linked to a defined problem. Stating a project's goals and objectives accomplishes this. A *goal* is a broad statement of intent that describes a desired outcome, for example, "stop resource damage" or "improve trail safety." *Objectives* are connected to the goal and are both more specific and measurable. Objectives help us know when the goal has been accomplished. Typical objectives include "stop trail sediment from entering streams" and "apply federal trail safety standards."

"Need" is not so easily defined and so is rated in the more subjective project evaluations. In the NOVA program, need relates to a project's support as expressed in a publicly reviewed and adopted state, regional, or other plan. It can be described in terms of physical condition of existing facilities, safety and environmental issues, or the threat of the loss of an opportunity. Need can vary with the availability of similar opportunities, travel times, accessibility, and use levels.

The NOVA Advisory Committee rated the importance of Policy C-7 as 9.2 out of 10. This is the most highly ranked of all the policies, which supports the committee's earlier selection of maintenance and operation as the top NOVA funding priority.

**Policy C-8: Require completion of applicant required environmental processes before issuing a Project Agreement.**

Consistent with local, state, and federal laws and regulations, applicants must comply with environmental planning and review requirements. This means demonstrating compliance with either the State or National Environmental Policy Act (SEPA or NEPA). In most cases, this means providing to the RCO within 90 days after RCO funding approval such documentation as a Determination of Non-Significance (for SEPA) or a Record of Decision, Decision Notice, or Decision Memo (for NEPA).

Applicants must also comply with any permitting requirements, including shoreline, hydraulics, building, health, etc. The RCO does not require proof of compliance with these other permit obligations.

The Advisory Committee rated the importance of Policy C-8 as 8.0 out of 10.

Committee members generally support environmental protection measures; in a follow-up question, four respondents indicated they were *very concerned* about the environmental impacts of NOVA recreation, four were *somewhat concerned*, and one was *not at all concerned*.

Additional comments stated the caution that overregulation could place a financial strain on worthwhile projects. One respondent asked how Policy C-8 would apply to specific planning

projects, while another stated there was a patchwork of different environmental requirements at the county level.

**Policy C-9: Require a lease period of at least 25 years for projects acquiring leases.**

This policy primarily concerns the Washington Department of Natural Resources. Before adoption of this policy, the RCO required that, at minimum and short of a fee simple purchase, any land acquisition project needed to guarantee a lease lifespan of 50 years. However, since it is nearly impossible to obtain a 50-year lease today—because facility life expectancy is usually only 20-25 years—this requirement is reduced to 25 years.

Policy C-9 is not subject to change, and in the interest of providing the NOVA Advisory Committee with a streamlined survey, Responsive Management did not include it in the survey at the direction of the RCO. The policy wording is included here to provide readers with the complete set of policies.

**Policy C-10: Within their respective nonhighway road, nonmotorized, or off-road vehicle funding categories, evaluate acquisition, development, maintenance and operation, and planning projects on a head-to-head basis.**

By statute, NOVA facility funding is divided into three categories: *nonhighway road*, *nonmotorized*, and *off-road vehicle*. Requiring that all projects within these categories compete in direct competition with one another is one way we can help ensure that only the most desirable projects are funded.

The Advisory Committee gave the importance of Policy C-10 an average rating of 8.0 out of 10.

Respondents indicated that applications need more detailed cost estimates for a fair evaluation. Project evaluations need to address maintenance and operation in addition to growing recreation opportunities to meet demand. One respondent felt that a project's proximity to urban centers should not influence scoring. Another respondent stated that "RCO does a great job of fair and transparent evaluation."

**Policy C-11: Fund maintenance and operation projects for up to two consecutive years.**

Allowing maintenance and operation funding to be used for two years increases budget certainty for sponsors and may result in higher quality programs. At the same time, it reduces the work associated with an annual project submission for sponsors, the NOVA Advisory Committee, and the RCO.

Policy C-9 is not subject to change, and in the interest of providing the NOVA Advisory Committee with a streamlined survey, Responsive Management did not include it in the survey at the direction of the RCO. The policy wording is included here to provide readers with the complete set of policies.

**Policy C-12: The grant ceiling for individual projects is limited as shown in the following table.**

<i>NOVA Program Grant Assistance Limits</i>		
<i>Category</i>	<i>Maintenance and Operation</i>	<i>Land Acquisition, Development, Planning</i>
<i>Nonhighway Road</i>	\$100,000 for each project	\$100,000 for each project
<i>Nonmotorized</i>	\$100,000 for each project	\$100,000 for each project
<i>Off-Road Vehicle</i>	\$200,000 for each project	No limit
<i>Education and Enforcement</i>	\$200,000 for each project	

The above limits are imposed due to the shortage of funds available for projects.

Plan research strongly suggests broad support for increasing the availability and quantity of NOVA funding. One of the most intensely discussed issues during plan preparation was trail maintenance.

Program administrators suggested that historically, too much funding has been directed to capital projects without the necessary maintenance infrastructure and funding to support the efforts. Public comments received through the Trails Town Hall forum indicate that recreationists also find maintenance of trails to be their most important issue.

With the exception of off-road vehicle sport parks, the RCO has rarely seen a maintenance and operations project that approaches the \$200,000 limit. The RCO limits the number of competition off-road vehicle sport parks it will support because of their relatively high cost.

The Advisory Committee gave the importance of Policy C-12 an average rating of 7.1 out of 10, making it one of the lowest ranked policies in the survey.

When asked if they support or oppose the NOVA grant ceiling for individual projects, two respondents *strongly support*, three *moderately support*, three *neither support nor oppose*, and one *moderately opposes* the policy.

Another question asked the committee members if they support or oppose funding NOVA maintenance and operation projects for up to two consecutive years; six respondents *strongly support* and three *moderately support* the policy.

Some respondents stated that increasing costs and inflation made the grant ceiling problematic and suggested corresponding adjustments to the grant ceiling. In one example, the capital cost of a trail designed to minimize future maintenance costs (durable tread design) is greater than the cost of a traditional trail, so such a project may have a reduced chance at funding. Again the concern was

expressed that NOVA funding might not even be available from year to year. Also, one respondent noted that off-road vehicle land acquisition should have limits and be equal to the other categories.

**Policy C-13: Encourage emphasis on projects in areas that are predominantly natural, such as are typically (but not necessarily) found in a “backcountry” environment. This policy does not apply to the ORV funding category.**

To be eligible for nonhighway road and nonmotorized funding, projects must be adjacent to or accessed by a nonhighway road. Consideration of a "backcountry experience" in project selection is based on the notion that additional emphasis should be placed on allocating funds back to the type of setting where funds were generated.

A portion of the NOVA fund is generated by motorists traveling on nonhighway roads, such as those that occur in national parks or forests. As such, travelers who pay the fuel tax will benefit from projects on or next to these roads. This policy, however, does not apply to the off-road vehicle funding category.

The Advisory Committee gave the importance of Policy C-13 an average rating of 7.3 out of 10, making it one of the lowest ranked policies in the survey.

Multiple respondents cautioned that “natural” seems subjective, and any project served by a nonhighway road should be eligible. One comment noted that access to trails and remote sites is decreasing due to more forest road closures. Maintenance of remote locations is another concern noted in the comments. One respondent claimed that natural and urban needs are of equal importance, so this policy should not bias project selection.

**Policy C-14: When reconstructing trails, encourage projects that correct environmental problems, retain trail difficulty and user experiences, and minimize user displacement.**

Reconstruction can be less expensive than new construction and often presents opportunities to employ current standards and correct environmental problems. Project sponsors shall be sensitive to current trail uses and experiences, and seek to minimize "over building" the trail and significantly changing the opportunity for either motorized or nonmotorized users.

The Advisory Committee gave the importance of Policy C-14 an average rating of 8.9 out of 10, making it one of the highest ranked policies in the survey.

Respondents indicated that trails should be accessible to people with disabilities as well as those willing to make an effort. It was noted that trails in an environmentally problematic area should be abandoned rather than reconstructed. Also, additional environmental requirements may not allow trails to be built to the same difficulty factors.

Committee members noted that there is a backlog of trail repair needs in remote areas, and the use of non-natural construction material is expected to increase, for both reconstruction and new construction, in an effort to minimize future maintenance efforts.

**Policy C-15: Find appropriate sites through the initiative of land managers.**

The RCO will not assume a proactive role in site identification. Consistent with its other programs, the RCO will continue to rely on public land managers to identify appropriate NOVA project sites through their land use planning and public involvement processes. Recreationist groups are encouraged to continue to work with land managers to identify sites. RCO staff will continue to publicize the availability of NOVA funding opportunities through its grant workshops, web page, and publications.

Policy C-15 is not subject to change, and in the interest of providing the NOVA Advisory Committee with a streamlined survey, Responsive Management did not include it in the survey at the direction of the RCO. The policy wording is included here to provide readers with the complete set of policies.

## CHAPTER 5: OTHER KEY ISSUES AFFECTING NOVA

In evaluating the NOVA Advisory Committee survey scoring and comments, the Advisory Committee online discussion blog, and the public Trails Town Hall online discussion forum, certain key issues begin to emerge. Top concerns and suggestions provided by the general public were generally consistent with those provided by NOVA administrators and providers. Also noteworthy was that comments from the public often demonstrated a substantial knowledge of the NOVA Program, suggesting that education and information efforts have gained traction since the program's implementation.

Access, user conflict, and off-road vehicle sports parks are the top concerns.

### ACCESS

Access issues are an important area of concern among Washington recreationists and recreation providers.

The NOVA Advisory Committee survey asked members to rate access to **overall NOVA opportunities** in Washington State. One respondent selected *excellent*, six selected *good*, and two selected *fair*; no one indicated that access was poor.

Next the survey asked if they were satisfied with access to **nonhighway road** recreation. Four respondents were *very satisfied* and five were *somewhat satisfied*.

The survey then asked if they were satisfied with access to **nonmotorized** recreation. Six respondents were *very satisfied*, two were *somewhat satisfied*, and one was *somewhat dissatisfied*. The *somewhat dissatisfied* respondent commented that backlogs of maintenance prevented trail use in back country areas.

Finally, the survey asked if they were satisfied with access to **off-road vehicle** recreation. Three respondents were *very satisfied*, one was *somewhat satisfied*, two were *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, one was *somewhat dissatisfied*, and one selected *don't know*). The respondent who was *somewhat dissatisfied* commented that huge areas of National Forest with thousands of miles were being systematically removed, resulting in a large shortfall of off-road vehicle access.

A number of NOVA Advisory Committee members stated that road closures by private landowners, particularly timber companies, were shutting off access to existing trails. One respondent recommended using that agencies use NOVA funds to purchase public access across private lands.

Respondents noted the need for more access for people with disabilities (likely to be motorized users) and for more urban trails. They also expressed concerns that changing environmental regulations and increased traffic are having a detrimental effect on NOVA access.

Recreationists also pointed out the increased closing of access roads by private landowners. One person suggested that, if off-road vehicle users can gain access through the large network of logging

roads, existing trails could be cleared by volunteers in no time. Respondents suggested incentives to private landowners that could include user fees, tax incentives, or reductions/removals of liability.

## USER CONFLICTS

User conflicts are an important area of concern among recreationists and recreation planners. The survey of the NOVA Advisory Committee asked them to assess the extent of the user conflict issue. One respondent stated it was a *major problem*, seven stated it was a *minor problem*, and one said it was *not at all a problem*.

The NOVA Advisory Committee survey respondents were evenly divided when asked if problems with user conflicts have increased or decreased since 2005. Four each selected *increased* and *decreased*.

Those who said user conflicts have *increased* commented that more off-road vehicle participation and lower social tolerance have exacerbated the issue, with too many people sharing too few recreation areas. This corresponds to the access issues previously discussed; many recreationists commented on access issues and user conflicts within the same Trails Town Hall discussion.

In contrast, those who stated that problems with user conflicts have *decreased* since 2005 cited more communication and cooperation between user groups. Recreation organizations have found common ground, thereby decreasing both real and perceived conflicts through better planning and outreach efforts.

Although the term “user conflicts” typically refers to recreationist behavior at trails and other recreation sites, it is important to note that conflicts also exist with regard to NOVA Program funding allocations.

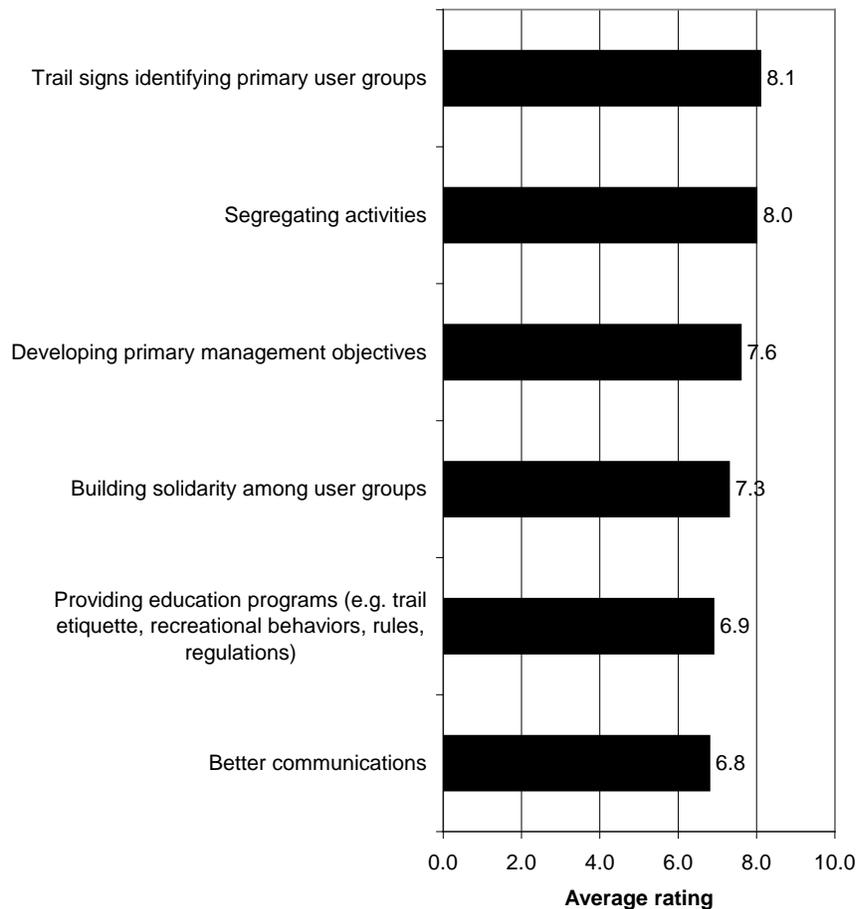
Numerous comments in the public Trails Town Hall forum are from motorized recreationists who feel that fees from off-road vehicle fuel purchases and tabs are being spent on nonmotorized trails. This concern was exacerbated when the state legislature redirected NOVA funds to Washington State Parks in fiscal year 2010-2011.

Some Trails Town Hall participants suggested that users of biking, horseback, or hiking trails should have to purchase licenses similar to off-road vehicle permits. In contrast, nonmotorized recreationists claim that motorized users receive a disproportionate amount of NOVA funding, because a majority of NOVA funds come from fuel taxes paid by nonmotorized users to get to trails or other facilities. It is apparent that clarifying the source and intent of NOVA funding would help alleviate this manifestation of user conflict.

Recommendations to improve user conflict issues include a user group forum (“a leadership council” as proposed by one commenter), user group collaborations (e.g. a maintenance work party by user groups on the same trail system), and data-driven conflict analysis with planning for resolutions.

The NOVA Advisory Committee survey asked members to rate the effectiveness of different management efforts in addressing user conflicts. As the following graph shows, “trail signs identifying primary user groups” was considered the most effective, with an average score of 8.1 out of 10, and “better communications” was considered the least effective, with an average score of 6.8.

**In your opinion, how effective are the following management efforts in addressing user conflicts?  
(On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all effective" and 10 is "extremely effective.")**



## ORV SPORTS PARKS

"ORV sports park" means a facility designed to accommodate competitive off-road vehicle recreational uses including, but not limited to, motocross racing, four-wheel drive competitions, and flat track racing. Use of off-road vehicle sports parks can be competitive or noncompetitive.

Many respondents questioned the level of NOVA Program support for events at the ORV sports parks assisted with RCO funds versus maintenance of backcountry trail-related facilities. The general sentiment among this group was that the fees and charges of the parks should cover more of the cost of user events and be more comparable to other publicly managed opportunities.

On the other hand, supporters of NOVA funding for management of ORV sports parks felt that, because the areas provide unique regional opportunities, they should receive more funding from state sources. Others pointed out that the RCO's support of acquisition and development of sports parks has created increased demand for limited off-road vehicle dollars for maintenance and operations, and has reduced the ability to create new, dispersed off-road vehicle trail opportunities. It was specifically mentioned that King County does not have an ORV sports park, a concern noted for urban areas in general.

The NOVA Advisory Committee survey asked members if they believe off-road vehicle sports parks should become more self-sufficient. The group mostly agreed with this idea, with six respondents who *strongly agree*, two who *moderately agree*, and one who *neither agrees nor disagrees*. ORV sports parks are usually contracted to private managers, and the consensus was that NOVA funds should not go to increase the profits of private entities who charge user fees.

The next question on the NOVA Advisory Committee survey received a more divided response: Do you support or oppose NOVA funding going toward ORV sports parks? Three respondents chose *moderately support*, two chose *neither support nor oppose*, one chose *moderately oppose*, and three chose *strongly oppose*.

Those in support claim that development of motorized recreational facilities is a legitimate use of NOVA funds, and that off-road vehicle users need somewhere to go so they will not impact trail systems. However, both supporters and opponents of ORV sports parks indicated that NOVA funds should not enhance operational profits.

## CHAPTER 6: PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This updated NOVA Plan is based in part upon further analysis of the raw data collected for the 2013 Washington SCORP. The SCORP data show that an astonishing 94% of Washington residents participate in some form of nonhighway road recreation, 86% participate in nonmotorized recreation, and 16% participate in off-road vehicle recreation.

Although the SCORP did not specifically ask how respondents accessed a recreation opportunity (i.e., if they accessed it via a nonhighway road), NOVA-related activities represent the major activities from the SCORP survey that take place in a nonhighway, nonmotorized, or off-road vehicle location or setting. In all, NOVA recreation consists of 39 activities listed within 13 of the 16 activity categories as identified in the SCORP. Clearly, the amount and allocation of NOVA funding is of great importance to Washington residents.

Analysis of the NOVA Advisory Committee survey results, the Advisory Committee discussion Web site, and the Trails Town Hall public forum indicate that stakeholders have the following priorities.

### Stakeholder Priorities

#### 1. Protect the NOVA fund

Stakeholders consider it essential to protect the NOVA fund, especially in light of its reallocation by the state legislature in the recent past. They also noted that the NOVA fund originally consisted of 1% of the state fuel tax, but that recent gasoline tax increases have not included a corresponding NOVA fund increase. A recurring suggestion from stakeholders was to create an entity that could advocate on behalf of NOVA interests.

#### 2. Make maintenance a funding priority for NOVA

An overwhelming majority of the NOVA Advisory Committee and public comments expressed that the top priority of NOVA funding should be maintenance of existing trails and facilities, instead of facilities acquisition, planning, development, education/information, or law enforcement. NOVA recreationists and professionals are concerned that trails and recreation facilities can become dangerous and could be closed due to deferred maintenance.

#### 3. Address road closures that limit access

NOVA participants indicate that road closures by private landowners (timber companies in particular) have greatly reduced access to existing trails. Several ORV users suggested that, if they were provided access, they could effectively clear and maintain trails with volunteers. They suggest that NOVA funds to purchase public access through private lands could be an efficient expenditure for enhancing recreational opportunities.

#### 4. Minimize user conflicts

While NOVA recreationists recognize that some amount of conflict may be inevitable, they felt that problems could be minimized through communication and cooperation between user groups. Recommendations included developing a leadership council or other organization that convenes

different user groups or, in a similar vein, group collaborations such as maintenance work parties by groups using the same trail system. People also suggested that clear and concise information about the source and intent of NOVA funding would help alleviate frustration among user groups who feel they are not getting their fair share of NOVA funds.

#### **5. Encourage designs that minimize future maintenance**

NOVA stakeholders would like to see the program encourage projects with designs that minimize the need for ongoing maintenance (e.g., choosing the best trail tread material). Similarly, they suggested that applicants for maintenance and operation projects state how their project's goals and objectives meet future maintenance needs and sustainability issues.

#### **6. Ensure that NOVA funds augment, but do not replace, other funding**

Respondents noted that NOVA allows grant recipients to achieve results that would not be possible without state funding, but that the program is not designed to replace other funding sources. They felt that the NOVA program should encourage sponsors to provide matching funds, although no consensus emerged about whether this should be a requirement. Respondents further observed that organizing and supporting user-group volunteers has proven to be an effective way to stretch limited NOVA funds; recreationists are often glad to provide time and labor to support their favorite activities.

#### **7. Do not use NOVA funds to subsidize private ORV sports parks**

NOVA stakeholders held differing opinions, generally drawn along user group lines, as to how much NOVA funding should contribute to the development of ORV sports parks. Proponents claim that ORV recreationists contribute to the NOVA fund and should have ORV sports parks to go to; they noted that ORV sports parks also help alleviate user conflict on overcrowded trails and facilities. Consensus emerged that NOVA should not subsidize the profits of private ORV sports park operators.

#### **8. Encourage trail reconstruction that corrects environmental problems**

Respondents observed that trail reconstruction can be less expensive than new construction, and that it often presents opportunities to employ current standards and correct environmental problems. They felt that project sponsors should try to retain trail difficulty and user experiences and minimize user displacement, but that reconstruction should be emphasized as a sustainable and desirable option.

#### **9. Ensure that the NOVA Advisory Committee represents all user groups**

The NOVA Advisory Committee should consist of nonmotorized and ORV recreationists, as well as local, state, and federal agency representatives, to represent the views and needs of users, organizations, and agencies that are affected by NOVA funding. To date it is generally believed that the committee is functioning as intended.

## Recommendations for RCO Actions:

RCO staff studied the findings and conclusions that Responsive Management produced from its research, and made the following recommendations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for action items that could be implemented by RCO.

**1. Review the goals for the NOVA Program and the Recreational Trails Program to determine whether the programs are complementing each other.**

The board should review the program's grant award results to determine whether changes need to be made to the allocation of funds based on the NOVA plan key findings and stakeholder feedback. For example, NOVA and RTP funds are increasingly awarded for maintenance and operation projects, so less funding is awarded for development and acquisition projects. The board should review whether this pattern of funding is consistent with the goals of the program.

**2. Review NOVA program priorities (Policy A-1 and C-10) for acquisition, development, and maintenance and operation type projects.**

The board should review the policies that state that NOVA funds shall not augment or replace other funds, and that operating and capital projects will compete directly for funding. In conjunction with recommendation #1, the board should review whether the increased funding of maintenance projects would be consistent with the policies that restrict NOVA funds from being used to replace other funds.

**3. Review NOVA program policy (Policy C-2) that encourages projects near population centers.**

RCW 79A.25.250 requires the board to place a high priority on parks that are near urban populations. Stakeholder feedback, however, placed less of a priority on funding NOVA projects near population centers. The board should review whether the current criterion for meeting the law can be modified to address stakeholder feedback or whether the board should seek a modification to the population proximity statute. The current criterion has a maximum score of two points.

**4. Prioritize NOVA Program funding for projects that are designated as statewide trails per RCW 79A.35.**

The recommendations in the Washington State Trails Plan call for the board to develop a method for designating a system of state recreation trails. If a system of state recreation trails is established, the NOVA program could place a priority on funding those state recreation trails that are eligible for funding in the NOVA program.

**5. Prioritize program funding for projects that incorporate sustainable design practices to protect and improve the environment and reduce trail maintenance needs.**

The board should incorporate its sustainability policy recommendations into the NOVA program priorities and adjust the evaluation criteria. This action is already proposed (see Item 11).

**6. Retain all other policies in the NOVA Program as currently written.**

RCO staff finds all other NOVA program policies to be consistent with the research findings and stakeholder input for the NOVA 2013-2018 plan.

## APPENDIX A: REGIONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF NOVA USERS FOR 13 NOVA ACTIVITY CATEGORIES

Raw data collected for the 2013 SCORP were analyzed to parse out quantitative data specifically related to NOVA recreation. Although the SCORP did not specifically ask how respondents accessed a recreation opportunity (i.e., if they accessed it via a nonhighway road), NOVA-related activities discussed in the SCORP represent the major activities that take place in a nonhighway, nonmotorized, or off-road vehicle location or setting.

In all, NOVA includes 39 recreational activities from 13 of the 16 activity categories as defined by SCORP. The following table lists all of the SCORP-defined activities, with NOVA-related recreation highlighted in grey.

### Participation Rates in All of the Activities

Activity	Percent of Residents in Washington State Participating in the Activity
Sightseeing	56.8
Sightseeing—public facility	23.7
Sightseeing—cultural or historical facility	25.3
Sightseeing—scenic area	47.7
Nature Activities	81.4
Visiting nature interpretive center	29.2
Interpretive center—individual, family, informal group	26.1
Interpretive center—organized club, group, or school	3.3
Wildlife viewing/photographing	59.0
Wildlife viewing/photographing—plants	9.1
Wildlife viewing/photographing—birds	34.1
Wildlife viewing/photographing—land animals	40.4
Wildlife viewing/photographing—marine life	6.4
Gathering/collecting things in nature setting	27.2
Gathering/collecting—berries or mushrooms	14.9
Gathering/collecting—shells, rocks, or vegetation	18.4
Gathering/collecting—firewood	6.7
Gathering/collecting—Christmas tree	4.2
Gardening, flowers or vegetables	56.7
Gardening, flowers or vegetables—community garden/pea patch	2.3
Gardening, flowers or vegetables—yard/home	55.5
Fishing or Shellfishing	34.1
Fishing for shellfish	11.3
Fishing for finfish	27.1

Fishing—total freshwater	26.3
Fishing—total saltwater	15.6
Fishing from bank, dock, or jetty—saltwater	7.4
Fishing from bank, dock, or jetty—freshwater	17.3
Fishing from private boat	18.5
Fishing from private boat—saltwater	9.2
Fishing from private boat—freshwater	13.0
Fishing with guide or charter	3.1
Fishing with guide or charter—saltwater	1.7
Fishing with guide or charter—freshwater	1.8
Picnicking, BBQing, or Cooking Out	80.9
Picnicking, BBQing, or cooking out—site specifically designated	43.2
Picnicking, BBQing, or cooking out—location not specifically designated	6.3
Picnicking, BBQing, or cooking out—group facility	26.6
Water-Related Activities	75.2
Beachcombing	32.6
Beachcombing—saltwater	28.2
Beachcombing—freshwater	11.4
Swimming or wading at beach	38.8
Swimming or wading at beach—saltwater	27.7
Swimming or wading at beach—freshwater	17.4
Surfboarding	2.1
Wind surfing	1.0
Wind surfing—saltwater	0.4
Wind surfing—freshwater	0.7
Inner tubing or floating	17.1
Boating—any boating	35.6
Boating—any boating—saltwater	13.5
Boating—any boating—freshwater	29.0
Boating—whitewater rafting	2.8
Boating—general, except whitewater rafting	32.8
Boating—canoeing, kayaking, rowing, manual craft	11.1
Boating—canoeing, kayaking, rowing, manual craft—saltwater	3.7
Boating—canoeing, kayaking, rowing, manual craft—freshwater	9.0
Boating—sail boating	3.5
Boating—sail boating—saltwater	2.1
Boating—sail boating—freshwater	1.9
Boating—sail boating—less than 26 feet	1.6
Boating—sail boating—26 feet or more	1.8
Boating—using personal watercraft	5.2
Boating—using personal watercraft—saltwater	1.0

Boating—using personal watercraft—freshwater	4.7
Boating—motorboating other than personal watercraft	24.8
Boating—motorboating other than personal watercraft—saltwater	9.3
Boating—motorboating other than personal watercraft—freshwater	21.3
Boating—motorboating—less than 26 feet	20.0
Boating—motorboating—26 feet or more	4.5
Boating—using a charter service or guide	1.8
Boating—using a marina	7.7
Boating—using public transient moorage facilities	2.3
Boating—using a boat ramp	22.5
Water skiing	7.4
Water skiing—saltwater	1.3
Water skiing—freshwater	6.8
Scuba or skin diving	1.6
Scuba or skin diving—saltwater	1.2
Scuba or skin diving—freshwater	0.7
Snorkeling	3.7
Snorkeling—saltwater	1.9
Snorkeling—freshwater	1.9
Using a splash park	8.1
Using a spray park	6.4
Snow and Ice Activities	31.3
Snowshoeing	6.7
Sledding, inner tubing, or other snow play	15.5
Snowboarding	7.1
Snowboarding—downhill facility	6.5
Snowboarding—location not specifically designated	1.1
Skiing, downhill	10.4
Skiing, cross country	4.5
Snowmobiling	2.7
ATV riding on snow or ice	2.4
Ice skating	3.3
Ice skating—outdoors	1.7
Ice skating—indoors	2.0
Ice hockey	0.5
Ice hockey—outdoors	0.1
Ice hockey—indoors	0.3
Air Activities	3.8
Bungee jumping	0.6
Paragliding or hang gliding	0.2

Hot air ballooning	0.2
Sky diving/parachuting from plane/glider	0.8
Base jumping	0.0
Flying gliders, ultralights, or other aircraft	1.5
Taking chartered sightseeing flight	0.2
Walking, Hiking, Climbing, Mountaineering	90.0
Walking with a pet	51.6
Walking with a pet—on leash in park	25.1
Walking with a pet—off leash in dog park	11.5
Walking with a pet—location not specifically designated	21.3
Walking without a pet	71.3
Walking without a pet—sidewalks	38.7
Walking without a pet—roads or streets	39.5
Walking without a pet—park or trail setting	35.3
Walking without a pet—outdoor track	2.9
Walking without a pet—indoor facility	0.9
Hiking	53.9
Hiking—trails	51.0
Hiking—urban trails	17.5
Hiking—rural trails	18.5
Hiking—mountain or forest trails	36.4
Hiking—off trail	10.9
Climbing or mountaineering	10.0
Climbing or mountaineering—alpine areas/snow or ice	3.6
Climbing or mountaineering—rock climbing indoors	1.9
Climbing or mountaineering—rock climbing outdoors	4.6
Bicycle Riding	36.9
Bicycle riding—roads or streets	26.6
Bicycle riding—trails	24.4
Bicycle riding—urban trails	17.3
Bicycle riding—rural trails	10.8
Bicycle riding—mountain or forest trails	8.0
Bicycle riding—no established trails	6.9
Bicycle riding—racing/on race course	0.9
Bicycle riding—velodrome	0.5
Bicycle riding—BMX	0.6
Bicycle touring	2.6
Bicycle touring—day trip	2.3
Bicycle touring—overnight trip	0.7
Horseback Riding	7.7
Horseback riding—stables or grounds	2.8
Horseback riding—roads or streets	1.3

Horseback riding—trails	3.9
Horseback riding—urban trails	0.5
Horseback riding—rural trails	2.3
Horseback riding—mountain or forest trails	2.7
Horseback riding—no established trails	2.7
Off-Roading for Recreation	15.3
Off-roading—motorcycle	4.2
Off-roading—motorcycle—off-road facility	0.9
Off-roading—motorcycle—roads or streets	2.0
Off-roading—motorcycle—trails	2.7
Off-roading—motorcycle—urban trails	0.9
Off-roading—motorcycle—rural trails	1.4
Off-roading—motorcycle—mountain or forest trails	1.8
Off-roading—motorcycle—no established trails	1.7
Off-roading—ATV/dune buggy	7.3
Off-roading—ATV/dune buggy—off-road facility	1.5
Off-roading—ATV/dune buggy—roads or streets	1.8
Off-roading—ATV/dune buggy—trails	5.2
Off-roading—ATV/dune buggy—urban trails	1.4
Off-roading—ATV/dune buggy—rural trails	2.3
Off-roading—ATV/dune buggy—mountain or forest trails	4.0
Off-roading—ATV/dune buggy—no established trails	2.8
Off-roading—4-wheel drive vehicle	9.5
Off-roading—4-wheel drive vehicle—off-road facility	1.7
Off-roading—4-wheel drive vehicle—roads or streets	1.8
Off-roading—4-wheel drive vehicle—trails	6.6
Off-roading—4-wheel drive vehicle—urban trails	1.4
Off-roading—4-wheel drive vehicle—rural trails	3.0
Off-roading—4-wheel drive vehicle—mountain or forest trails	4.0
Off-roading—4-wheel drive vehicle—no established trails	2.5
Camping	42.4
Camping—with a kayak/canoe	2.4
Camping—with a kayak/canoe—site specifically designated	1.2
Camping—with a kayak/canoe—location not specifically designated	1.4
Camping—in a boat	2.4
Camping—in a boat—on open water	0.6
Camping—in a boat—state park or site specifically designated	1.3
Camping—in a boat—location not specifically designated	0.8
Camping—in a boat—in a marina	0.7
Camping—with a bicycle	1.2
Camping—with a bicycle—campground	1.1

Camping—with a bicycle—location not specifically designated	0.4
Camping—backpacking/primitive location	8.3
Camping—backpacking/primitive location—self-carry packs	7.7
Camping—backpacking/primitive location—pack animals	0.3
Camping—tent camping with car/motorcycle	26.5
Camping—tent w/ car/motorcycle—campground	21.2
Camping—tent w/ car/motorcycle—location not specifically designated	7.9
Camping—RV camping	14.2
Camping—RV camping—campground	11.2
Camping—RV camping—location not specifically designated	4.7
Hunting or Shooting	21.4
Hunting	9.4
Hunting—archery equipment	2.2
Hunting—firearms	8.5
Hunting—modern firearms	8.0
Hunting—rifle	6.2
Hunting—shotgun	4.1
Hunting—handgun	1.0
Hunting—blackpowder firearms	1.2
Hunting—blackpowder rifle	1.2
Hunting—blackpowder shotgun	0.3
Hunting—blackpowder handgun	0.3
Hunting—big game	8.0
Hunting—birds or small game	4.8
Hunting—waterfowl	1.9
Shooting	17.4
Shooting—archery equipment	3.6
Shooting—modern firearms	15.7
Shooting—rifle	11.4
Shooting—shotgun	8.4
Shooting—handgun	10.9
Shooting—blackpowder firearms	2.5
Shooting—blackpowder rifle	2.4
Shooting—blackpowder shotgun	1.0
Shooting—blackpowder handgun	1.5
Target shooting	15.3
Trap shooting	4.6
Skeet	4.0
Sporting clays	3.5
Other target or clay sports	1.7
Recreational Activities	82.7

Playground use	36.9
Playground use—park facility	30.0
Playground use—school facility	13.8
Aerobics or fitness activities, but not weights	37.8
Aerobics or fitness activities, but not weights—at a facility	26.4
Aerobics or fitness activities, but not weights—not at home	30.1
Weight conditioning	27.6
Weight conditioning—at a facility	20.6
Weight conditioning—not at home	20.9
Jogging or running	36.2
Jogging or running—streets or sidewalks	23.2
Jogging or running—trails	17.2
Jogging or running—urban trails	11.4
Jogging or running—rural trails	7.8
Jogging or running—mountain or forest trails	4.9
Jogging or running—outdoor track	2.7
Jogging or running—indoor track	2.2
Swimming (all, except at beach)	51.6
Swimming in pool	38.2
Swimming in pool—outdoors	18.1
Swimming in pool—indoors	24.2
Swimming in natural waters	35.7
Roller or inline skating	4.7
Roller or inline skating—roads, sidewalks, other places	0.3
Roller or inline skating—trail at outdoor facility	1.8
Roller or inline skating—indoor facility	2.2
Skateboarding	2.9
Skateboarding—roads, sidewalks, places not specifically designated	1.1
Skateboarding—trail	0.6
Skateboarding—skate park or court	2.4
Badminton	6.0
Badminton—outdoor facility	2.2
Badminton—indoor facility	0.8
Handball, racquetball, or squash	4.2
Handball, racquetball, or squash—outdoor facility	0.4
Handball, racquetball, or squash—indoor facility	3.5
Volleyball	10.3
Volleyball—outdoor facility	5.8
Volleyball—indoor facility	3.3
Basketball	16.8
Basketball—outdoor facility	9.1

Basketball—indoor facility	7.8
Tennis	10.1
Tennis—outdoor facility	9.1
Tennis—indoor facility	2.2
Field sports	11.0
Football	5.3
Rugby	0.2
Lacrosse	0.4
Soccer	7.0
Soccer—outdoors	6.2
Soccer—indoors	0.7
Baseball	5.4
Softball	7.8
Golf	15.5
Golf—driving range	5.1
Golf—pitch-n-putt	1.6
Golf—9- or 18-hole course	13.3
Indoor Community Facilities	28.4
Activity center	5.5
Arts and crafts class or activity	3.5
Class or instruction	7.4
Social event	14.8
Frisbee Activities	16.8
Frisbee—disc golf (also called frisbee golf)	4.5
Frisbee—ultimate frisbee or frisbee football	3.0

## SIGHTSEEING USERS

The table below shows the regional participation rates for NOVA sightseeing users, which consists of sightseeing in scenic areas. Note that the overall sightseeing activity category, with a participation rate of 57%, includes sightseeing at a public facility and sightseeing at a cultural or historical facility, which are not included under NOVA.

Three regions ranked as having over 50% of Washington residents participating in NOVA sightseeing activities: the Islands, the North Cascades, and the Peninsulas. The Coast (40%) and South Central (41%) show the lowest participation rates.

Regional Participation Rates of NOVA Sightseeing Users (%)	
The Islands	55
North Cascades	52
Peninsulas	51
King/Seattle	49
South West	46
North East	46
Columbia Plateau	44
The Palouse	43
South Central	41
The Coast	40

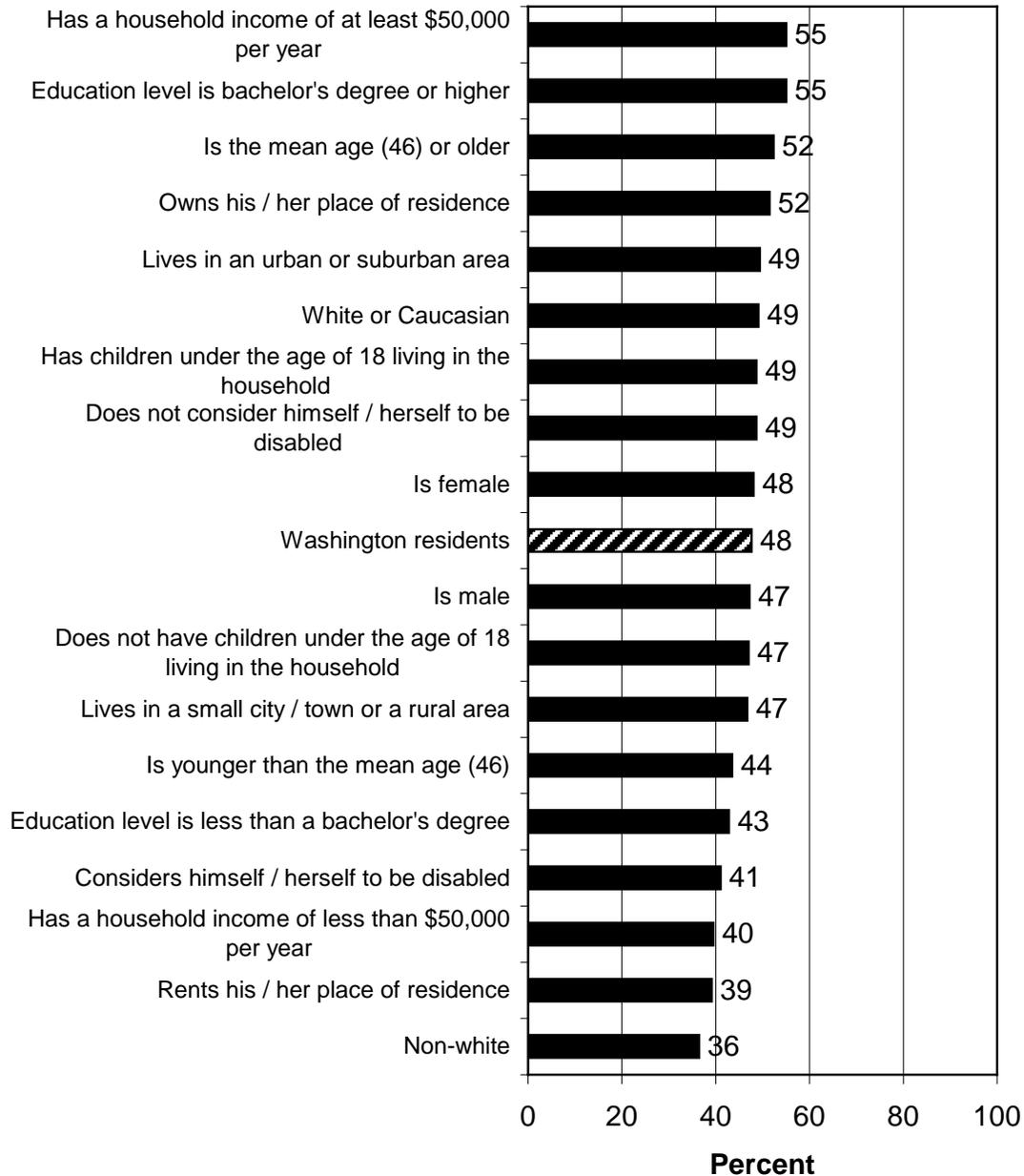
In total, 48% of Washington residents participate in sightseeing in a scenic area. As the following graph shows, the demographic groups *most likely* to engage in sightseeing in a scenic area (i.e., groups with a participation rate greater than 50%) include:

- People with a household income of at least \$50,000 per year,
- People with an education level of a bachelor's degree or higher,
- People at a mean age of 46 years or older, and
- People who own their place of residence.

Meanwhile, the groups *least likely* to participate in sightseeing (i.e., groups with a participation rate of 40% or less) include

- Residents who are non-white/non-Caucasian,
- People who rent their place of residence, and
- People with a household income of less than \$50,000 per year.

**Percent of each of the following groups who participated in sightseeing in a scenic area in Washington in 2012:**



## NATURE ACTIVITIES—WILDLIFE VIEWING/PHOTOGRAPHING

In the SCORP, this recreation category (nature activities) includes 16 different types of nature activities. The NOVA Program includes two of these, one of which is observing or photographing wildlife or nature.

Participation rates in each Washington region are shown below. At the top of the ranking are the Islands at 68% and the Peninsulas at 65%, while the lowest participation occurs in South Central (50%).

The Islands	68
Peninsulas	65
North Cascades	62
South West	59
North East	59
The Palouse	58
King/Seattle	58
Columbia Plateau	55
The Coast	55
South Central	50

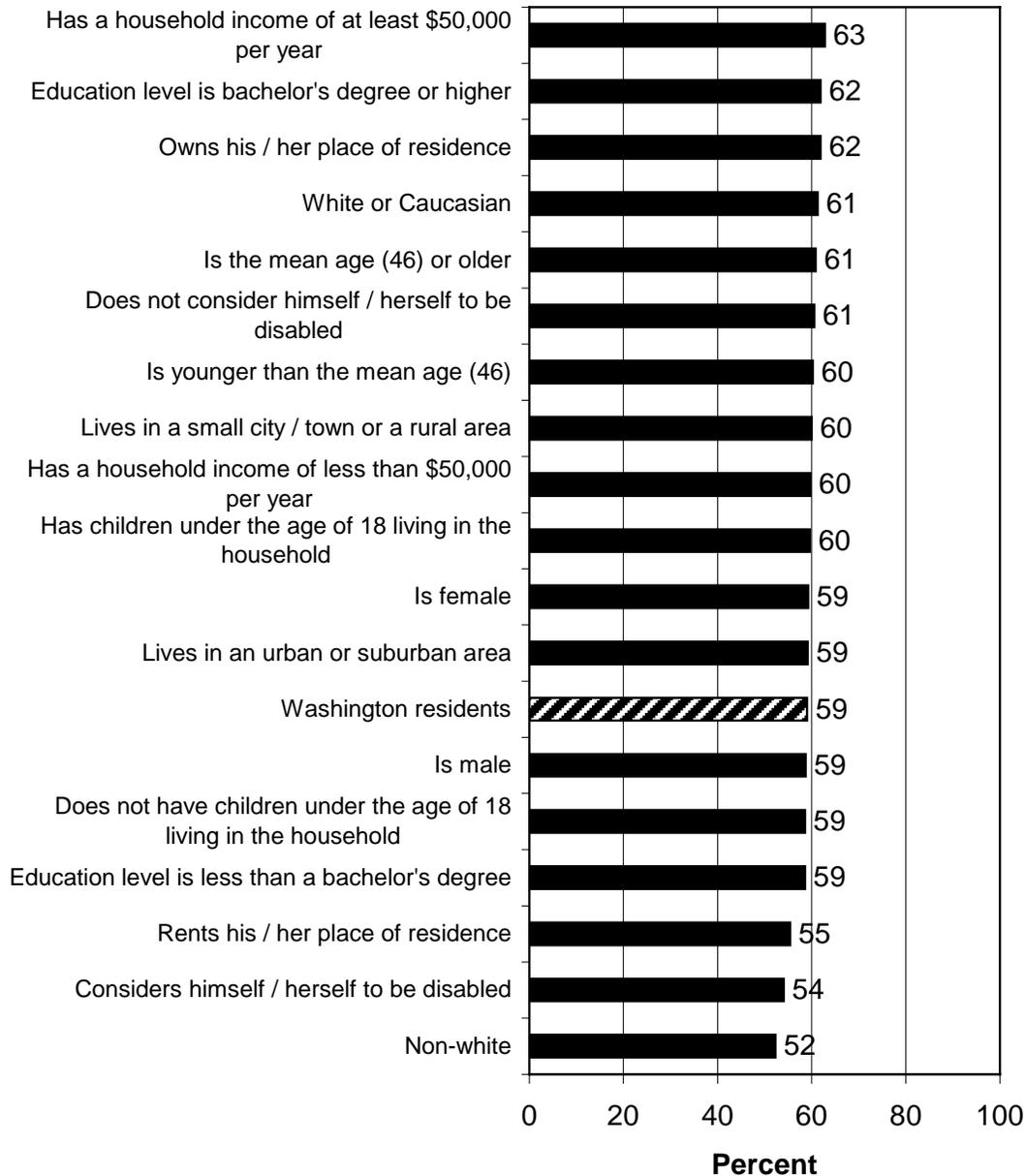
In total, 59% of Washington residents participate in wildlife viewing or photographing. The following chart shows that the demographic groups *most likely* to engage in wildlife viewing or photographing include:

- those with an annual household income of at least \$50,000 (63% of this group participates),
- those with an education level of a bachelor's degree or higher (62%), and
- those who own their place of residence (62%).

In contrast, the groups *least likely* to engage in the activity include:

- non-white/non-Caucasian residents (52%),
- those who consider themselves to be disabled (54%), and
- those who rent their place of residence (55%).

**Percent of each of the following groups who participated in observing or photographing wildlife or nature in Washington in 2012:**



## NATURE ACTIVITIES—GATHERING/COLLECTING THINGS IN A NATURE SETTING

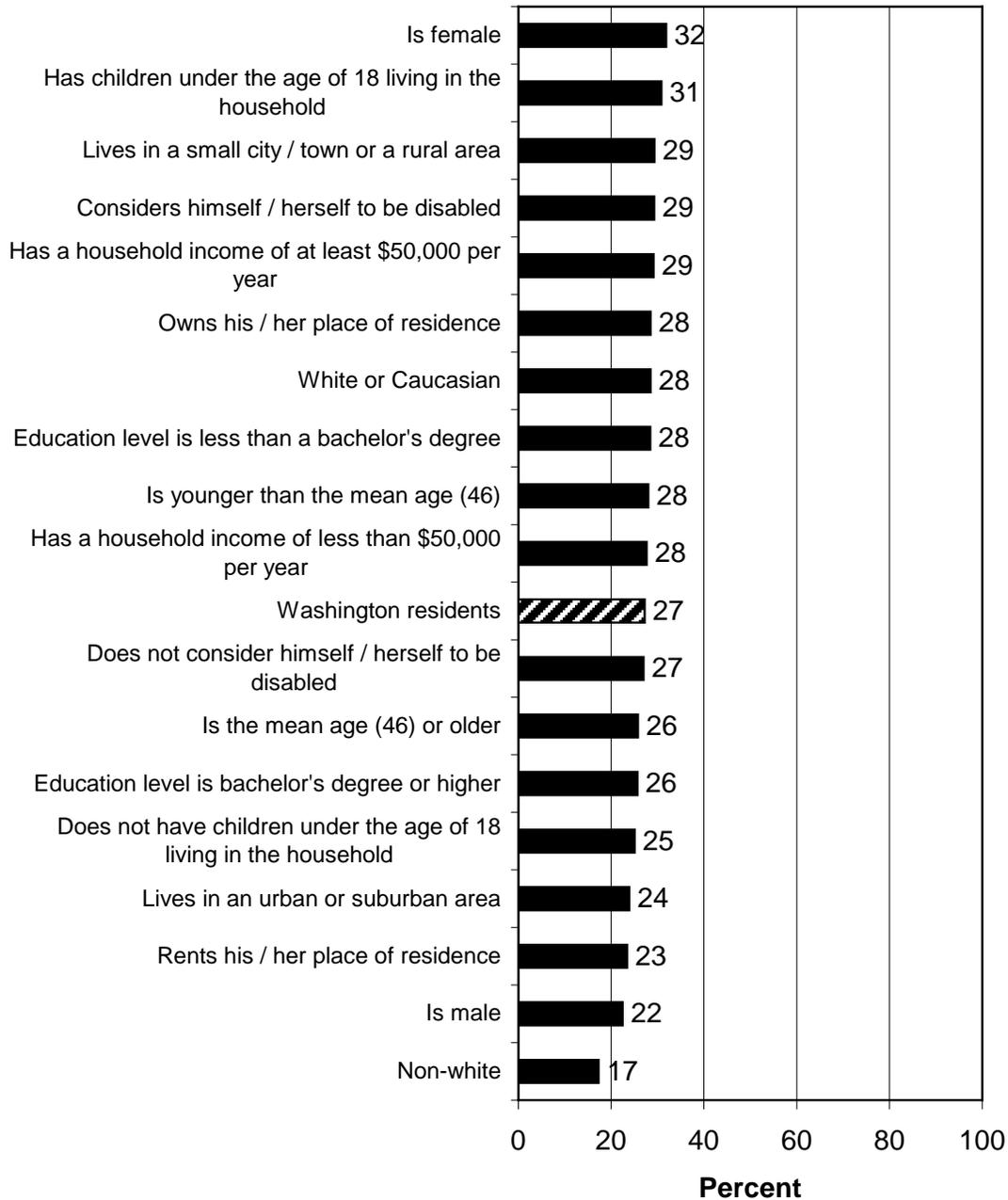
The other nature activity from the SCORP that falls within a NOVA classification is gathering/collecting things in a nature setting, which has a 27% participation rate among Washington residents.

Items gathered by recreationists can include berries or mushrooms (15% of Washington residents do this); shells, rocks, or vegetation (18%); firewood (7%); and Christmas trees (4%). As shown in the table below, the region with the most gathering/collecting participation is the Islands at 39%. Meanwhile, less than a quarter of residents participate in the Palouse (23%) and South Central (24%).

Regional Participation Rates of Gathering or Collecting Things in a Nature Setting (%)	
The Islands	39
North East	32
The Coast	32
Peninsulas	30
North Cascades	28
South West	26
King/Seattle	26
Columbia Plateau	25
South Central	24
The Palouse	23

The following graph shows that the demographic groups *most likely* to engage in gathering/collecting include female residents (32% participate) and those who have children under the age of 18 living in the household (31%). Meanwhile, demographic groups *least likely* to engage in the activity include non-white/non-Caucasian residents (17%) and male residents (22%).

**Percent of each of the following groups who participated in gathering or collecting in a nature setting in Washington in 2012:**



## FISHING OR SHELLFISHING

In total, 34% of Washington residents participate in fishing—both freshwater and saltwater—or shellfishing activities.

This overall category includes the following activities:

- fishing for finfish (27% of Washington residents participate)
- total freshwater fishing (26%)
- fishing from a bank, dock, or jetty in freshwater (17%)
- total saltwater fishing (16%)
- fishing from a private boat in freshwater (13%)
- fishing for shellfish (11%)
- fishing from a private boat in saltwater (9%)
- fishing from a bank, dock, or jetty in saltwater (7%)
- fishing with a guide or charter in saltwater (2%)
- fishing with a guide or charter in freshwater (2%).

The following table shows fishing participation by region. Nearly half of residents in the Columbia Plateau and the Coast regions participate, both with rates of 47%. In contrast, only 26% of residents in the King/Seattle region go fishing or shellfishing.

Regional Participation Rates of Fishing or Shellfishing (%)	
Columbia Plateau	47
The Coast	47
Peninsulas	46
The Islands	45
The Palouse	43
South West	38
North East	37
North Cascades	34
South Central	33
King/Seattle	26

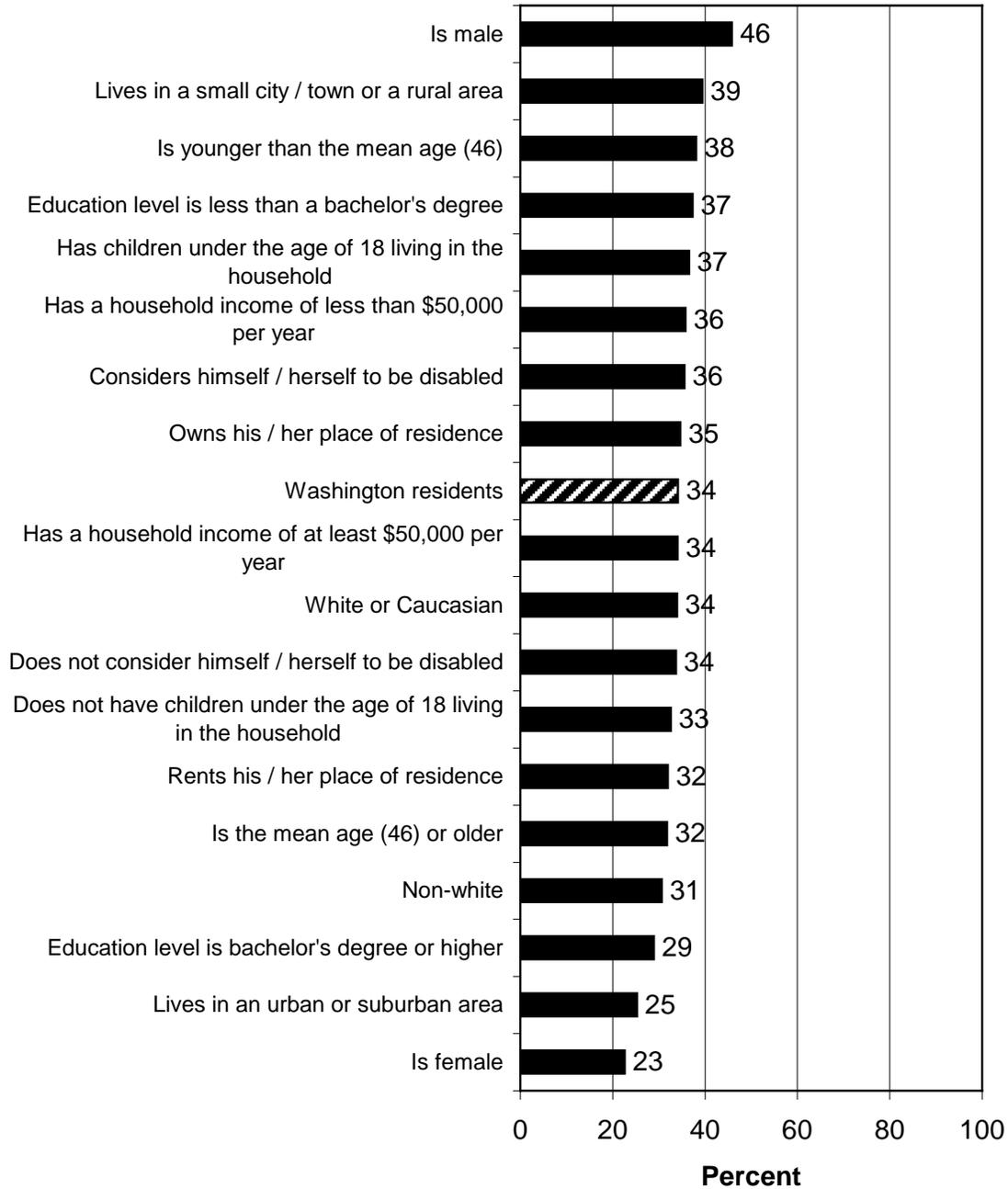
The following graph shows that the demographic groups in Washington State most likely to engage in fishing include:

- male residents (46% of males participate),
- those who live in a small city/town or rural area (39%), and
- those younger than the mean age of 46 years (38%).

The demographic groups least likely to engage in the activity include:

- female residents (23%),
- those who live in an urban or suburban area (25%), and
- those with an education level of a bachelor’s degree or higher (29%).

**Percent of each of the following groups who participated in fishing or shellfishing in Washington in 2012:**



## PICNICKING, BARBECUING, OR COOKING OUT

In all, 81% of Washington residents participate in picnicking, barbecuing, or cooking out. Within this SCORP activity category, NOVA includes picnicking, barbecuing, or cooking out at a specifically designated site (43% of Washington residents do this) or at a group facility (27%).

The table below shows that the regions with the highest participation in picnicking, barbecuing, or cooking out are the Coast (68% of Washington residents) and the South West (63%), while the Islands region has the lowest participation rate of 47%.

Regional Participation Rates of Picnicking, Barbecuing, or Cooking Out (%)	
The Coast	68
South West	63
North East	57
North Cascades	57
Peninsulas	56
Columbia Plateau	56
South Central	54
The Palouse	53
King/Seattle	52
The Islands	47

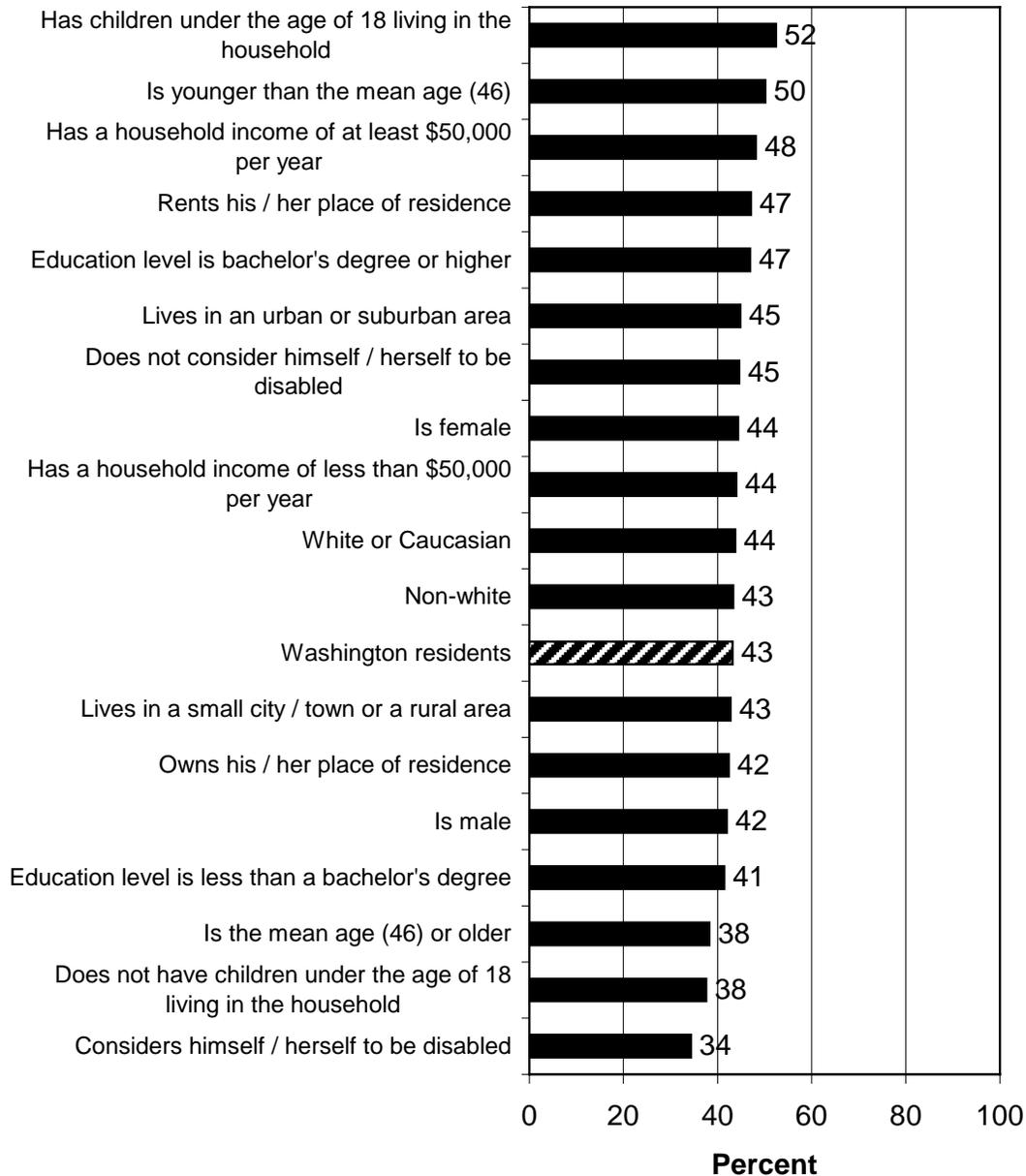
The following graph shows that the demographic groups most likely to engage in NOVA-related picnicking, barbecuing, or cooking out include:

- those who have children under the age of 18 years living in the household (52% of this group participates in the activity),
- those younger than the mean age of 46 years (50%), and
- those with an annual household income of at least \$50,000 (48%).

Conversely, the demographic groups least likely to engage in the activity include:

- those who consider themselves to be disabled (34%),
- those who do not have children under the age of 18 years (38%), and
- those older than the mean age of 46 years (38%).

**Percent of each of the following groups who participated in NOVA-related picnicking in Washington in the past 12 months:**



## WATER-RELATED ACTIVITIES—CANOEING, KAYAKING, ROWING, OR USING MANUAL CRAFT

In total, 75% of Washington residents participate in water-related activities, such as beachcombing, swimming, or boating in the SCORP; this overall category includes 47 different types of water-related activities. NOVA includes a subset of the boating category—canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or using manual craft—which has an 11% participation rate among Washington residents (9% participate in freshwater and 4% participate in saltwater, with some who do both).

The table below shows that the regions with the highest participation in canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or using manual craft are the Islands (18% of Washington residents) and the North East (16%), while the Palouse has a participation rate of only 5%.

The Islands	18
North East	16
Peninsulas	13
North Cascades	12
King/Seattle	11
South West	9
South Central	8
Columbia Plateau	8
The Coast	8
The Palouse	5

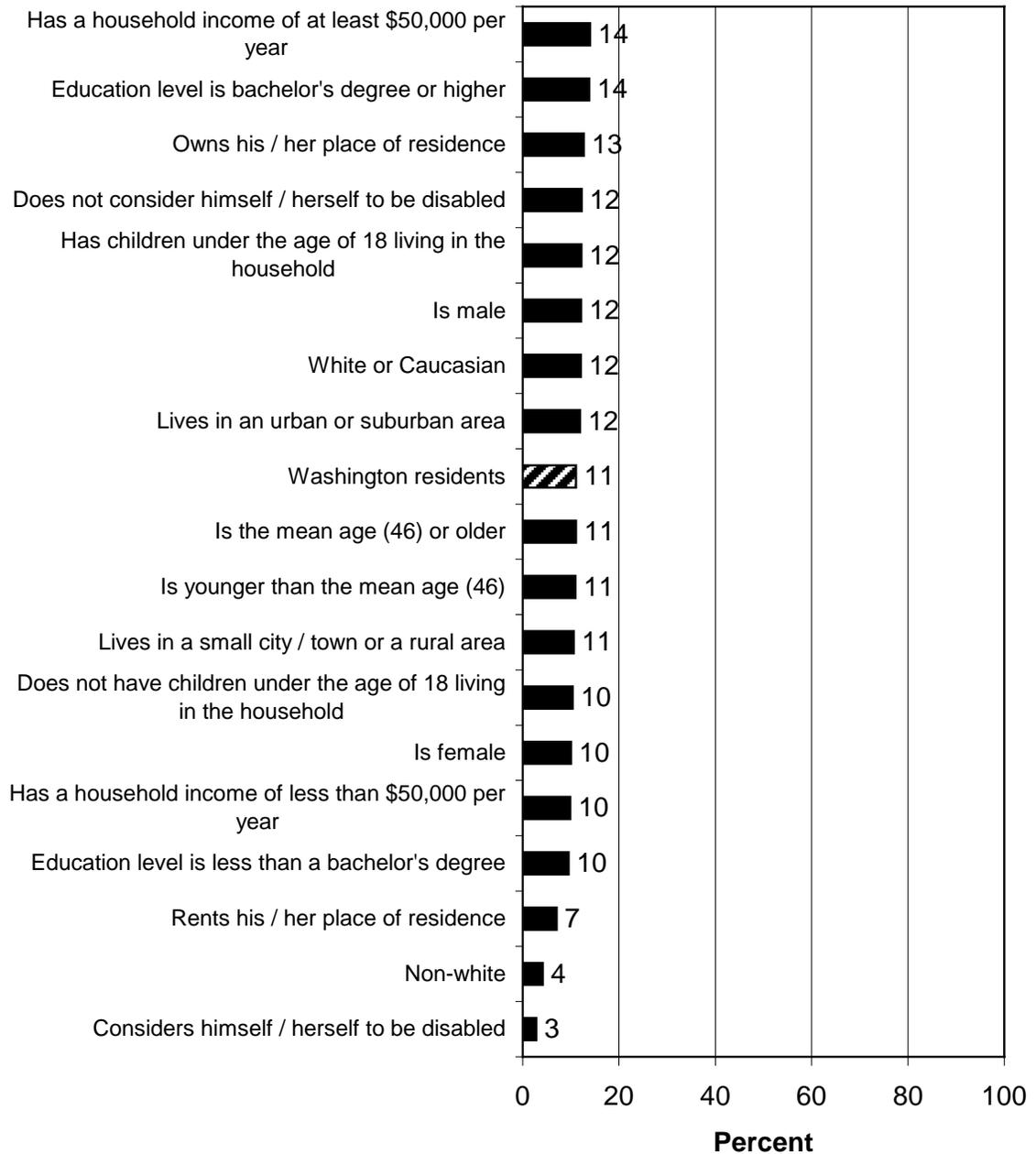
Unsurprisingly, the SCORP data show that boating activities have a higher correlation among residents who exhibit more affluent characteristics. The following graph shows that the demographic groups most likely to engage in canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or using a manual craft include:

- those with an annual household income of at least \$50,000 (14% of this group participates in the activity),
- those with an education level of a bachelor's degree or higher (14%), and
- those who own their place of residence (13%).

The demographic groups least likely to engage in the activity, all at participation rates under 10%, include:

- those who consider themselves to be disabled (3%),
- non-white/non-Caucasian residents (4%), and
- those who rent their place of residence (7%).

**Percent of each of the following groups who participated in canoeing, kayaking, rowing, or using a manual craft in Washington in 2012:**



## SNOW AND ICE ACTIVITIES— SNOWSHOEING OR CROSS COUNTRY SKIING

In total, 31% of Washington residents participate in snow and ice activities; this overall category includes 12 different constituent activities in the SCORP. Within this activity category, NOVA includes snowshoeing (7% of Washington residents participate) and cross country skiing (5%). Note that 9% of Washington residents participate in either snowshoeing or cross country skiing; this percentage accounts for those who do both.

The table below shows the highest participation by far to be in the North East region, with 18% of its residents engaging in snowshoeing or cross country skiing, followed by the North Cascades at 12%. All the other regions have participation rates at 10% or less, with the lowest percentages in the Coast (2%) and the Columbia Plateau (4%).

Regional Participation Rates of Snowshoeing or Cross Country Skiing (%)	
North East	18
North Cascades	12
King/Seattle	10
The Islands	9
South West	6
Peninsulas	6
South Central	5
The Palouse	5
Columbia Plateau	4
The Coast	2

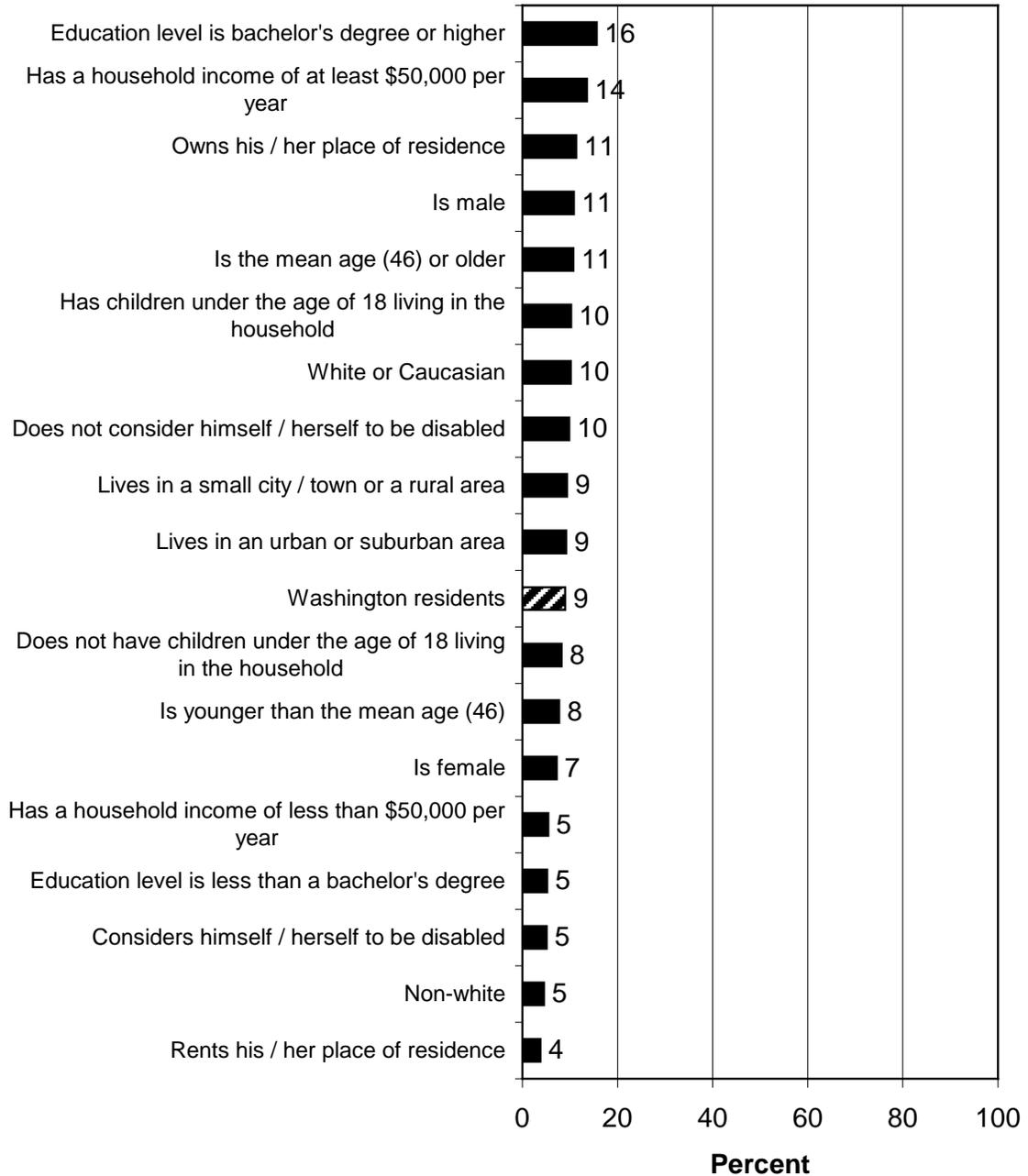
The following graph shows that the demographic groups most likely to engage in snowshoeing or cross country skiing include:

- those with an education level of a bachelor’s degree or higher (16% of this group participate in the activity),
- those with an annual household income of at least \$50,000 per year (14%), and
- those who own their place of residence (11%).

The demographic groups least likely to engage in the activity include:

- those who rent their place of residence (4%),
- non-white/non-Caucasian residents (5%), and
- residents who consider themselves disabled (5%).

**Percent of each of the following groups who participated in cross-country skiing or snowshoeing in Washington in 2012:**



## WALKING, HIKING, CLIMBING, OR MOUNTAINEERING

In total, 90% of Washington residents participate in walking, hiking, climbing, or mountaineering, an overall category that includes 25 specific recreational activities in the SCORP.

### Walking Activities

NOVA-related walking activities include walking with or without a pet in a park or trail setting; 48% of Washington residents engage in at least one of these activities, with 25% who go walking with a leashed pet in a park and 35% who go walking without a pet in a park or trail setting (these percentages do not add up to 48% due to the residents who engage in both activities).

The table below shows the regional participation rates for NOVA-related walking. At the top of the ranking are the Islands and King/Seattle regions, each with 44% of residents participating in walking activities involving parks or trails; meanwhile, the Columbia Plateau region has the lowest percentage of residents participating in NOVA-related walking activities (28%).

Regional Participation Rates of NOVA-Related Walking (%)	
The Islands	44
King/Seattle	44
Peninsulas	42
The Palouse	41
Southwest	41
South Central	39
Northeast	37
North Cascades	34
The Coast	33
Columbia Plateau	28

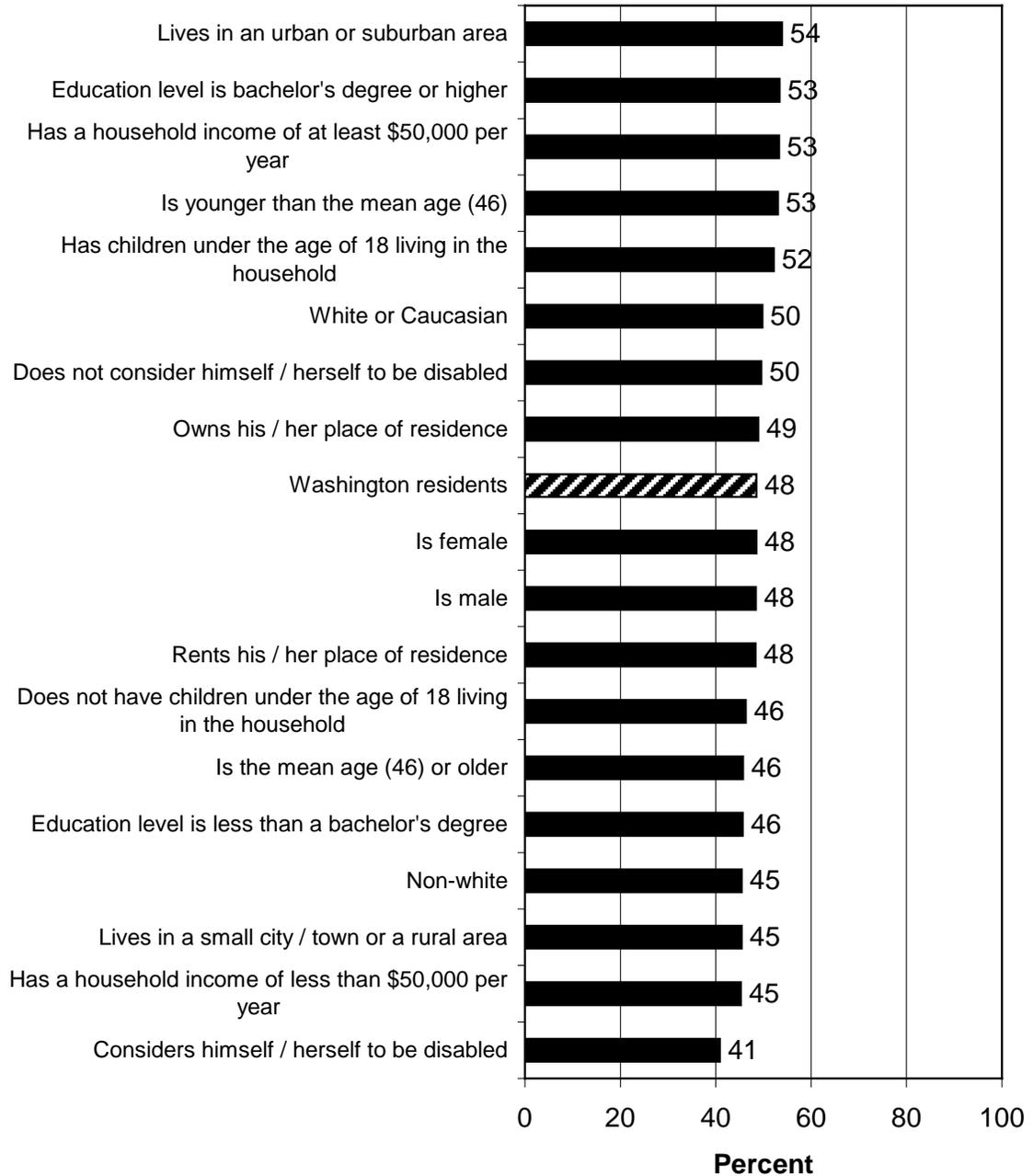
The following graph shows that the demographic groups *most likely* to engage in NOVA-related walking include:

- those who live in an urban or suburban area (54% of this group participates in the activity),
- those with an education level of a bachelor’s degree or higher (53%),
- those with an annual household income of at least \$50,000 (53%), and
- those younger than the mean age of 46 years (53%).

The demographic groups *least likely* to engage in the activity include:

- residents with disabilities (41%),
- those with an annual household income of less than \$50,000 (45%),
- those who live in a small city/town or rural area (45%), and
- non-white/non-Caucasian residents (45%).

**Percent of each of the following groups who participated in NOVA-related walking in Washington in 2012:**



## Hiking Activities

NOVA-related hiking activities include hiking rural trails and hiking mountain or forest trails; 42% of Washington residents engage in at least one of these activities, with 19% who go hiking on rural trails and 36% who go hiking on mountain or forest trails (these percentages do not add up to 42% due to the residents who engage in both activities).

The table below shows the regional participation rates for NOVA-related hiking. At the top of the ranking is the King/Seattle region, with 48% of residents participating in hiking activities involving rural, mountain, or forest trails, followed by the North Cascades region, with a 46% participation rate. In contrast, the Columbia Plateau region has the lowest percentage of residents participating in NOVA-related hiking activities (23%).

Regional Participation Rates of NOVA-Related Hiking (%)	
King/Seattle	48
North Cascades	46
The Islands	45
The Palouse	40
South West	40
North East	37
Peninsulas	36
South Central	31
The Coast	30
Columbia Plateau	23

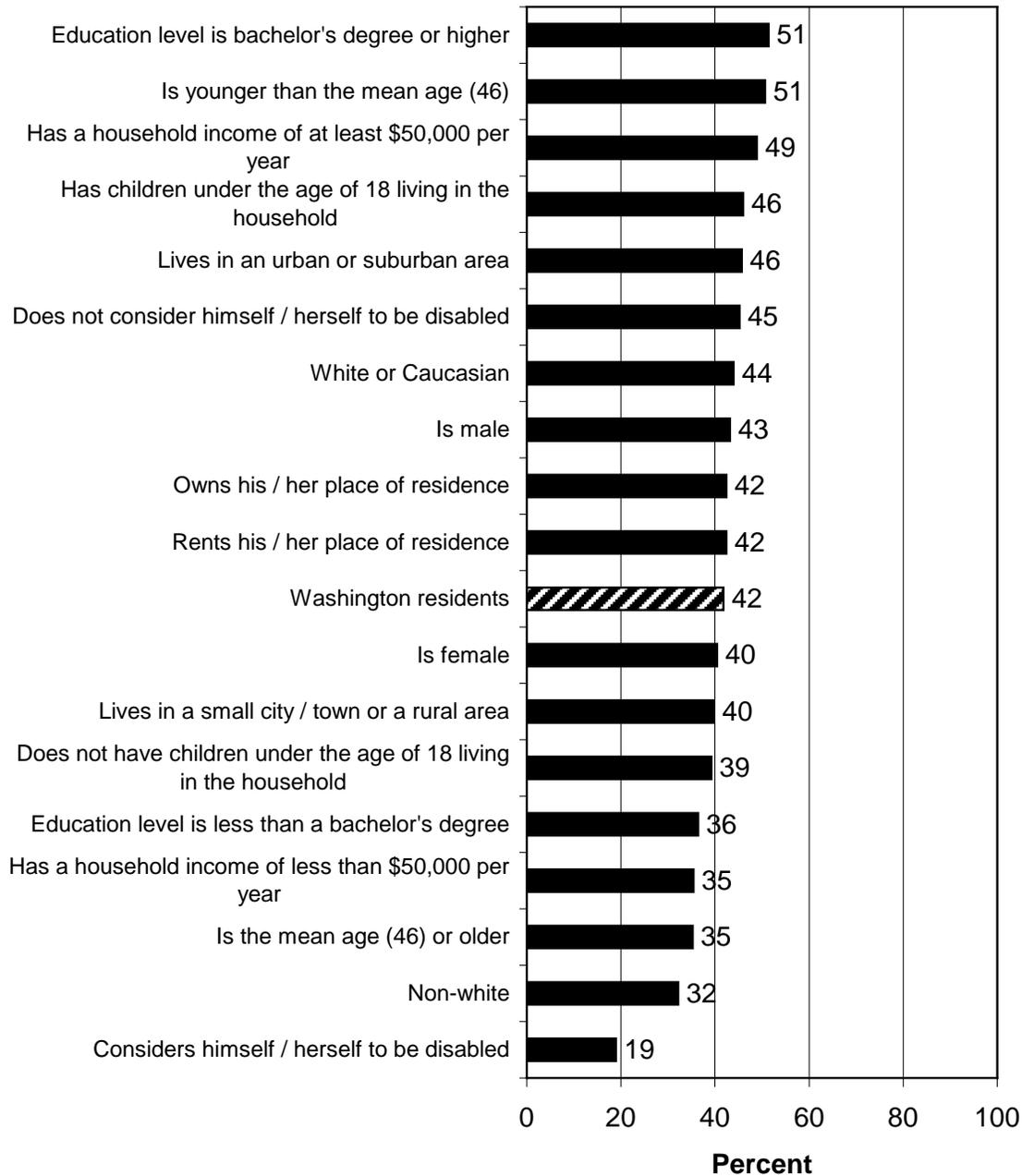
The following graph shows that the demographic groups most likely to engage in NOVA-related hiking include:

- those with an education level of a bachelor's degree or higher (51% of this group participates in the activity),
- those younger than the mean age of 46 years (51%), and
- those with an annual household income of at least \$50,000 (49%).

The demographic groups least likely to engage in the activity include:

- residents with disabilities(19%) and
- non-white/non-Caucasian residents (32%).

**Percent of each of the following groups who participated in hiking on rural, mountain, or forest trails in Washington in 2012:**



## BICYCLE RIDING

In total, 37% of Washington residents participate in bicycle riding, an activity category that includes 10 specific biking activities in the SCORP. Within this category, NOVA includes bicycle riding on rural trails (11% of Washington residents participate) and bicycle riding on mountain or forest trails (8%). In all, 14% of Washington residents participate in at least one of these hiking activities; this percentage includes residents who engage in both.

The table below shows the regional participation rates for NOVA-related bicycle riding, which is fairly consistent across the regions. At the top of the ranking is the North East, with 18% of its residents participating in biking activities involving rural, mountain, or forest trails. In contrast, the Islands and the Coast regions have the lowest participation rates, with both at 10%.

North East	18
North Cascades	15
The Palouse	15
South West	15
Columbia Plateau	15
King/Seattle	12
Peninsulas	11
South Central	11
The Coast	10
The Islands	10

The following graph shows that the demographic groups most likely to engage in NOVA-related bicycle riding include:

- male residents (19% of males participate in the activity) and
- those with an education level of a bachelor's degree or higher (18%).

The demographic groups least likely to engage in the activity include:

- residents with disabilities (8%) and
- female residents (8%).

**Percent of each of the following groups who participated in bicycle riding on rural, mountain, or forest trails in Washington in 2012:**



## HORSEBACK RIDING

In total, 8% of Washington residents participate in horseback riding, an activity category that includes 6 specific horseback riding activities in the SCORP. The NOVA Program includes horseback riding on rural trails (2% of Washington residents participate) and horseback riding on mountain or forest trails (3%). In all, 3% of Washington residents participate in NOVA-related horseback riding; this percentage includes residents who engage in both.

In general, a small percentage of Washington residents engage in horseback riding. The table below shows the highest participation rates occurring in the North East, North Cascades, and Peninsulas regions, all at 4%, while the lowest participation rates occur in the Islands (1%) and King/Seattle (2%).

Regional Participation Rates of NOVA-Related Horseback Riding (%)	
North East	4
North Cascades	4
Peninsulas	4
The Coast	3
South Central	3
South West	2
The Palouse	2
Columbia Plateau	2
King/Seattle	2
The Islands	1

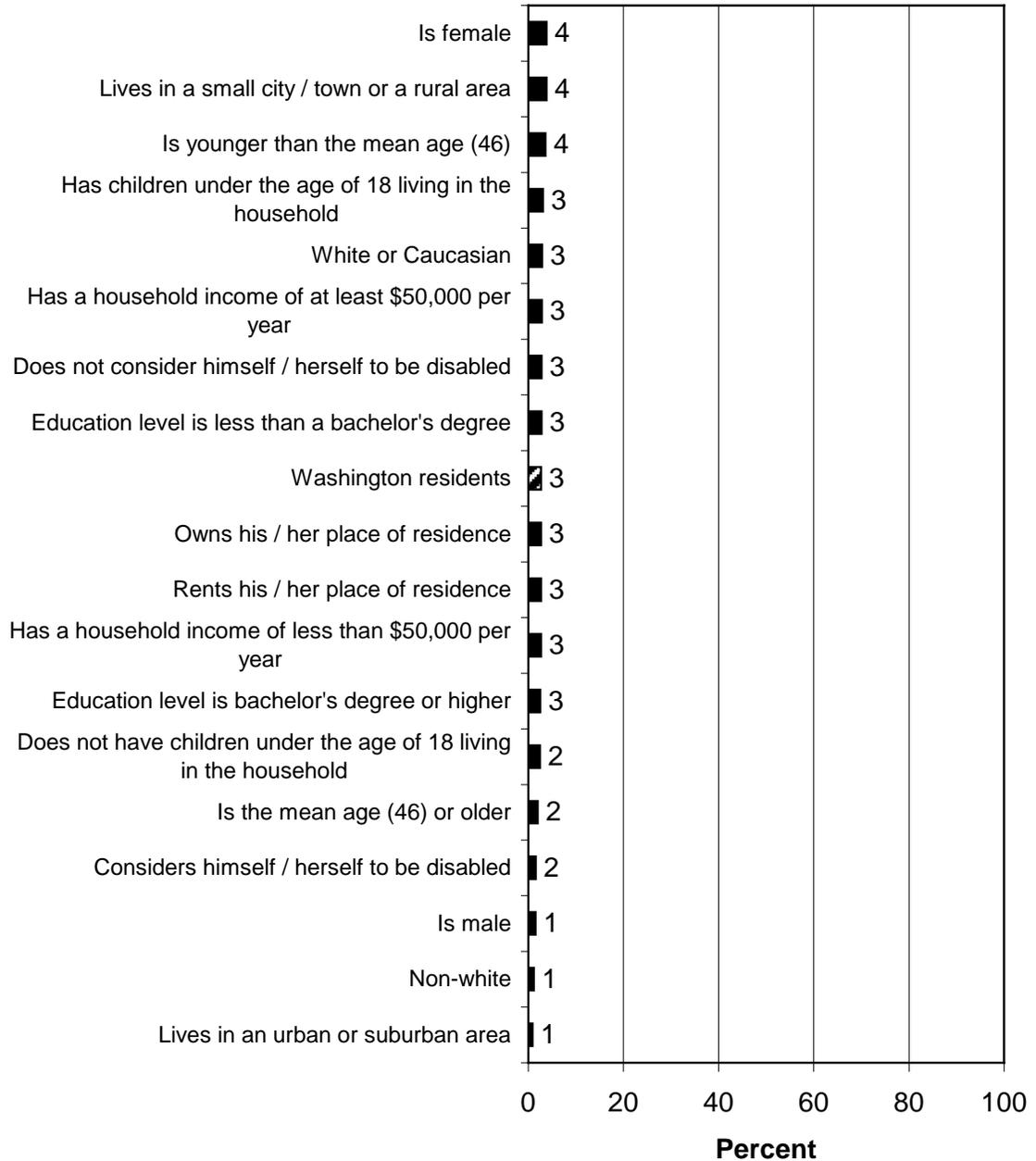
The following graph shows that the demographic groups most likely to engage in NOVA-related horseback riding, all at a 4% participation rate among Washington residents, include:

- female residents,
- those who live in a small city/town or rural area, and
- those younger than the mean age of 46.

The demographic groups least likely to engage in the activity, all at 1% participation, include:

- those who live in urban or suburban areas,
- non-white/non-Caucasian residents, and
- male residents.

**Percent of each of the following groups who participated in horseback riding on rural, mountain, or forest trails in Washington in 2012:**



## OFF-ROADING FOR RECREATION

In the SCORP, this recreation category includes 18 specific off-roading activities. Half of these fall within the NOVA classification. Here are the participation rates among Washington State residents:

- Motorcycle—off-road facility (1%)
- Motorcycle—rural trails (1%)
- Motorcycle—mountain or forest trails (2%)
- ATV/dune buggy—off-road facility (2%)
- ATV/dune buggy—rural trails (2%)
- ATV/dune buggy—mountain or forest trails (4%)
- 4-wheel drive vehicle—off-road facility (2%)
- 4-wheel drive vehicle—rural trails (3%)
- 4-wheel drive vehicle—mountain or forest trails (4%)

In total, 9% of Washington residents participate in NOVA-related off-roading activities. This percentage accounts for recreationists who engage in more than one activity.

Participation varies more between regions in this category. The regions with the highest participation in off-roading are the North East (21%), and Columbia Plateau (19). The regions with the lowest participation are King/Seattle (5%), the Islands (5%), and the Palouse (7%).

Regional Participation Rates of NOVA-Related Off-Roading (%)	
North East	21
Columbia Plateau	19
Peninsulas	15
The Coast	12
South Central	10
South West	9
North Cascades	9
The Palouse	7
The Islands	5
King/Seattle	5

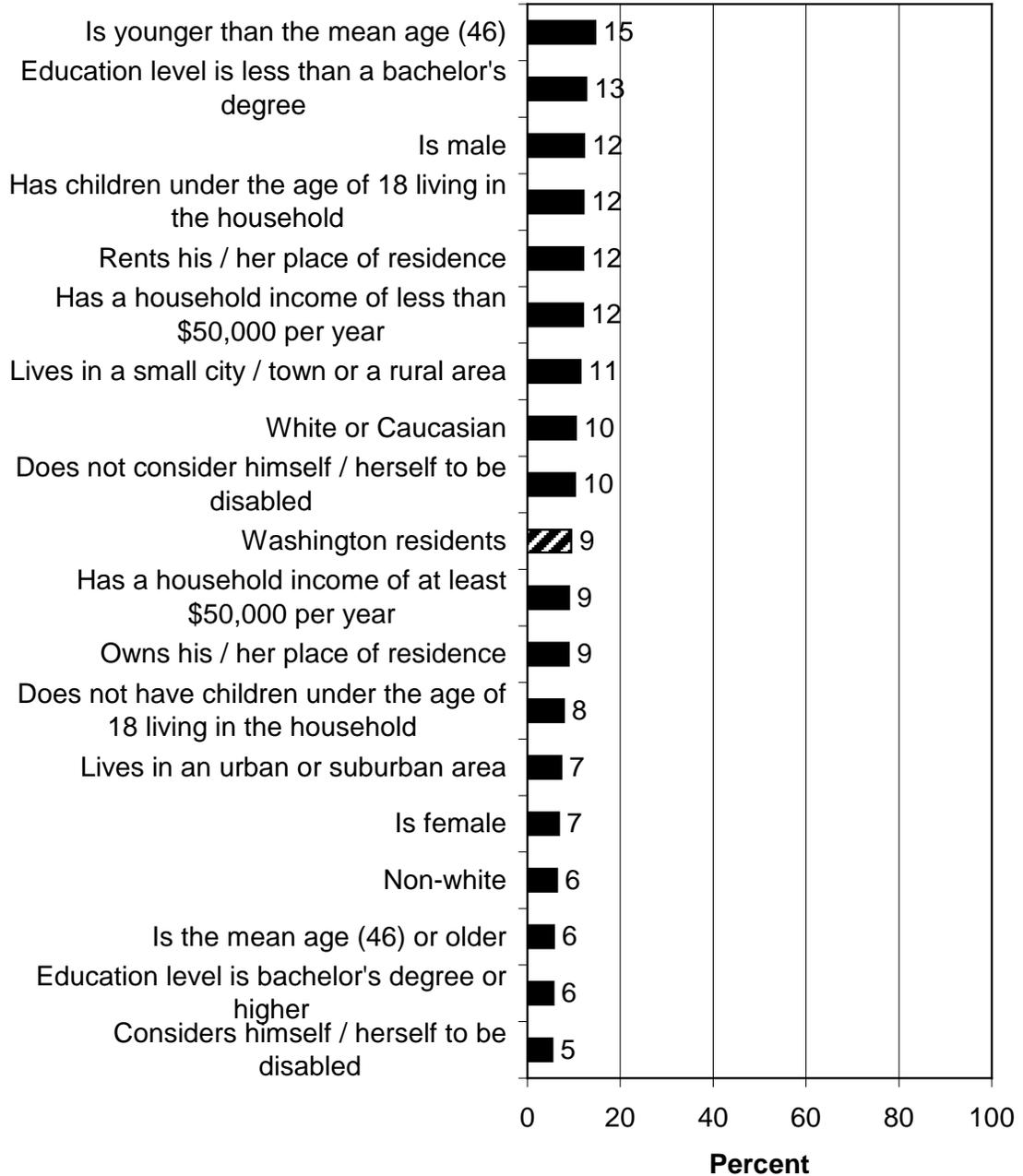
The following graph shows that the demographic groups *most likely* to engage in NOVA-related off-roading include:

- those younger than the mean age of 46 (15% of this group participates),
- those with an education level less than a bachelor’s degree (13%), and
- male residents (12%).

The demographic groups *least likely* to engage in the activity include:

- residents with disabilities (5%),
- those with an education level of a bachelor’s degree or higher (6%), and
- those above the mean age of 46 (6%).

**Percent of each of the following groups who participated in NOVA-related off-roading in Washington in 2012:**



**CAMPING**

In the SCORP, this recreation category includes 14 specific camping activities, 6 of which fall within the NOVA classification. The following lists each NOVA-related camping activity and its participation rate among Washington State residents:

- With a kayak/canoe—site specifically designated (1%)
- With a bicycle—campground (1%)
- Backpacking/primitive location—self-carry packs (8%)
- Backpacking/primitive location—pack animals (0.3%)
- Tent with car/motorcycle—campground (21%)
- RV camping—campground (11%)

In total, 33% of Washington residents participate in NOVA-related camping activities. This percentage accounts for recreationists who engage in more than one activity.

The table below shows the regional participation rates for NOVA-related camping activities. At the top of the ranking are the Islands and Columbia Plateau regions, each with 41% of its residents participating in NOVA-related camping. The regions with the lowest participation rates are King/Seattle (26%) and the Peninsulas (27%).

Regional Participation Rates of NOVA-Related Camping (%)	
The Islands	41
Columbia Plateau	41
North East	39
North Cascades	38
The Coast	37
South West	37
South Central	35
The Palouse	33
Peninsulas	27
King/Seattle	26

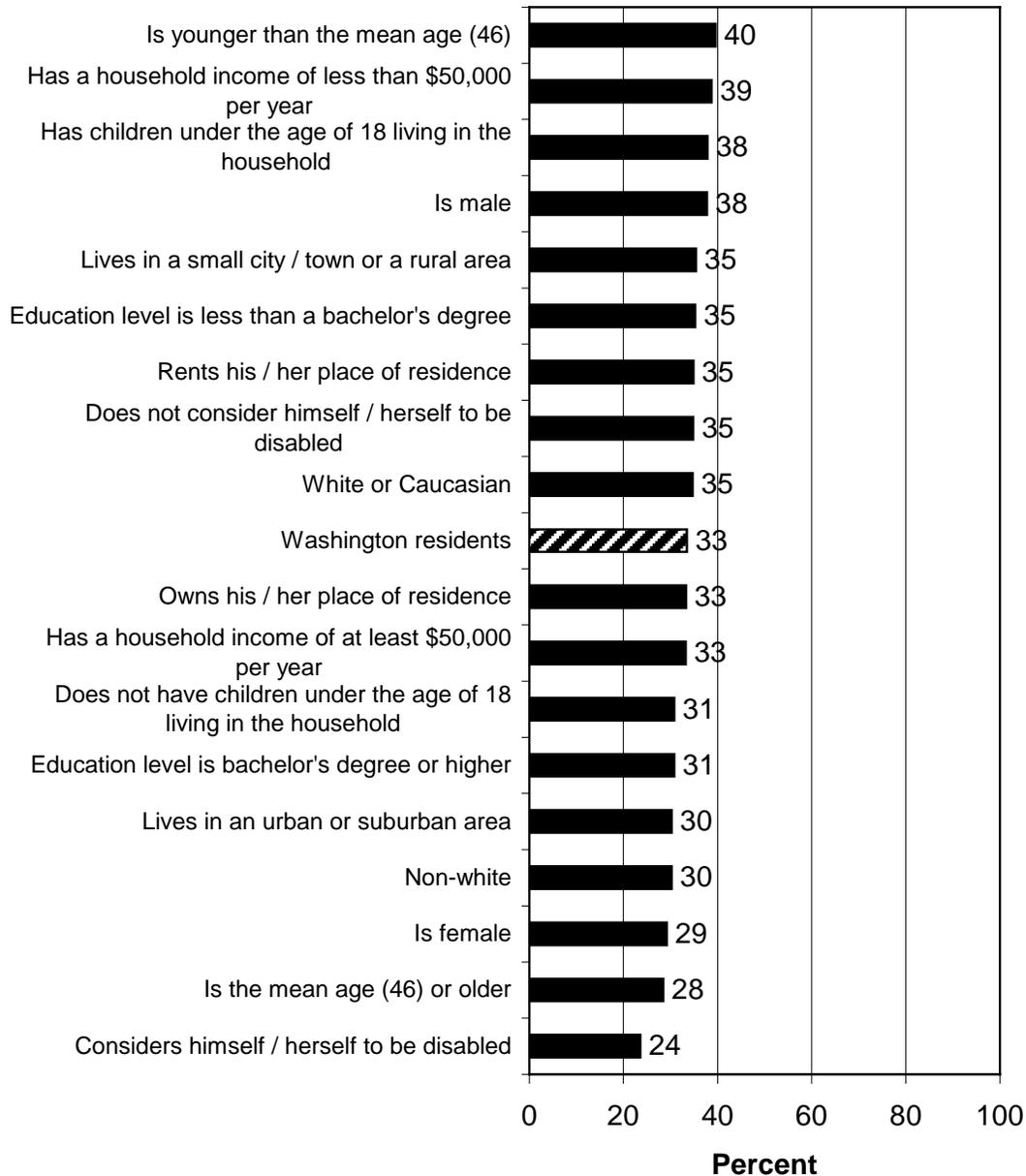
The following graph shows that the demographic groups most likely to engage in NOVA-related camping include:

- those younger than the mean age of 46 (40% of this group participates),
- those with an annual household income of less than \$50,000 (39%),
- those with children under the age of 18 living in the household (38%), and
- male residents (38%).

The demographic groups least likely to engage in the activity include:

- residents with disabilities (24%),
- those older than the mean age of 46 (28%), and
- female residents (29%).

**Percent of each of the following groups who participated in NOVA-related camping in Washington in 2012:**



## HUNTING

In all, 21% of Washington residents participate in hunting or shooting sports, a recreation category that includes 22 different hunting or shooting activities in the SCORP. Within this activity category, NOVA includes hunting with archery equipment (2% of Washington residents participate) and hunting with modern firearms, including rifles (6%), shotguns (4%), and handguns (1%). Nine percent of Washington residents participate in NOVA-related hunting; this percentage accounts for those who do more than one activity.

The table below shows that the regions with the highest participation in NOVA-related hunting are the Palouse, Columbia Plateau, and Coast regions, all with a 17% participation rate among Washington residents. In contrast, the regions with the lowest participation are King/Seattle (4%) and South Central (7%).

Regional Participation Rates of NOVA-Related Hunting (%)	
The Palouse	17
Columbia Plateau	17
The Coast	17
North East	16
South West	12
The Islands	11
North Cascades	10
Peninsulas	10
South Central	7
King/Seattle	4

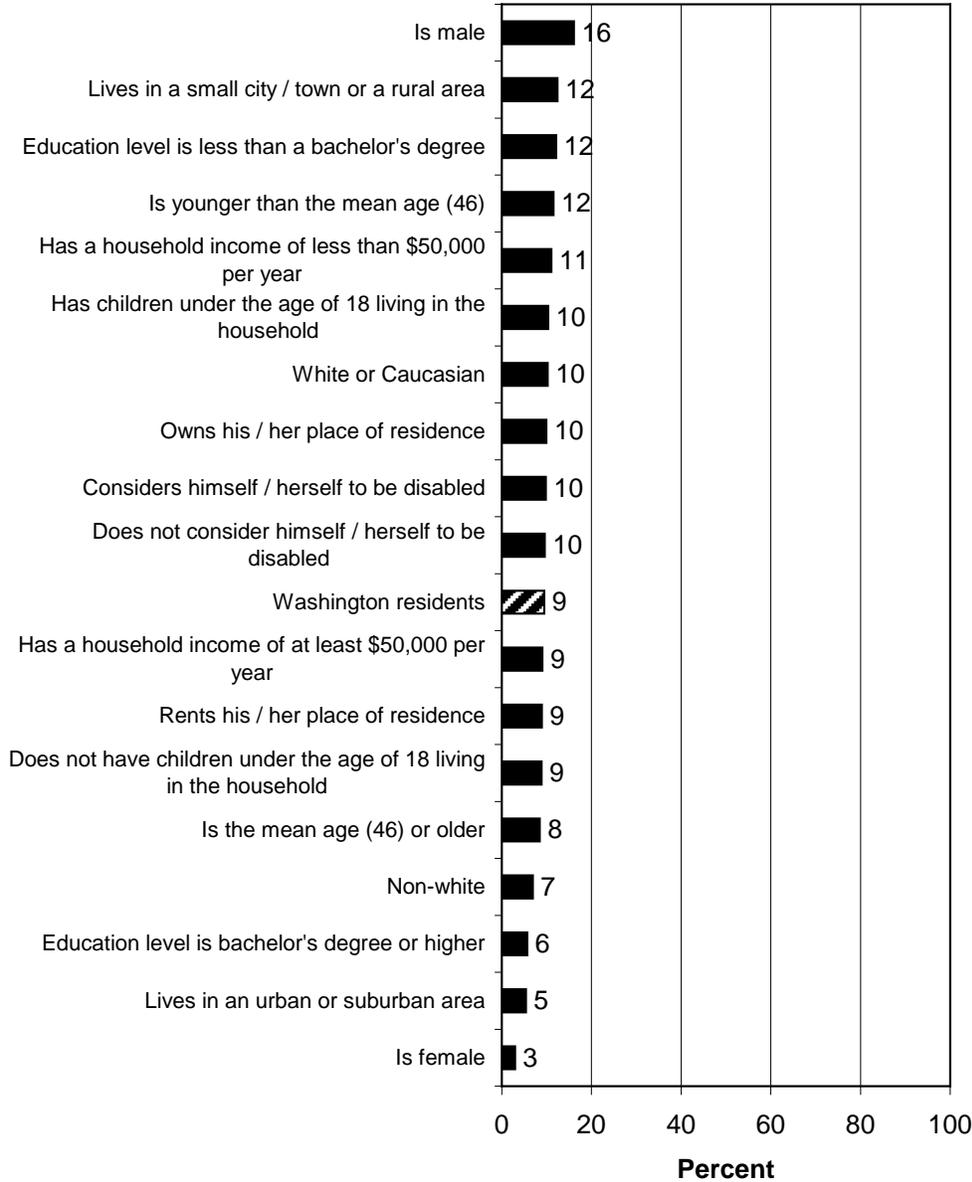
The following graph shows that the demographic groups most likely to engage in NOVA-related hunting include:

- male residents (16% of this group participates),
- those who live in a small city/town or rural area (12%),
- those with an education level less than a bachelor's degree (12%), and
- those younger than the mean age of 46 (12%).

The demographic groups least likely to engage in the activity include:

- female residents (4%),
- those who live in an urban or suburban area (5%),
- those with an education level of a bachelor's degree or higher (6%), and
- non-white/non-Caucasian residents (7%).

**Percent of each of the following groups who participated in NOVA-related hunting in Washington in 2012:**



## **AIR ACTIVITIES—PARAGLIDING OR HANG GLIDING**

In total, just 4% of Washington residents participate in air activities, such as bungee jumping or hang gliding (note that this overall category includes 7 different types of air activities). Within this category, NOVA includes paragliding or hang gliding. Because only 0.2% of Washington residents participate in this activity, no further analysis was conducted for this NOVA report.

## APPENDIX B: NOVA ADVISORY COMMITTEE SURVEY

### SURVEY OF NOVA ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO ASSESS WASHINGTON'S NONHIGHWAY AND OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ACTIVITIES (NOVA) PROGRAM

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is working with Responsive Management, a nationally-recognized outdoor recreation and natural resource research firm, to develop the *2013-2018 NOVA Plan*.

This plan will set forth policies to guide expenditures under the Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Act, providing funding for acquiring land, planning, building, maintaining facilities, and managing opportunities for nonhighway road (NHR), nonmotorized (NM), and off-road vehicle (ORV) recreational users.

As a reminder, RCW 46.09.310 defines these terms as follows:

- “Nonhighway road recreational user” means a person whose purpose for consuming fuel on a nonhighway road or off-road is primarily for nonhighway road recreational purposes, including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing, camping, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, picnicking, driving for pleasure, kayaking/canoeing, and gathering berries, firewood, mushrooms, and other natural products.
- “Nonmotorized recreational user” means a person whose purpose for consuming fuel on a nonhighway road or off-road is primarily for nonmotorized recreational purposes including, but not limited to, walking, hiking, backpacking, climbing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking, horseback riding, and pack animal activities.
- “ORV recreational user” means a person whose purpose for consuming fuel on nonhighway roads or off-road is primarily for ORV recreational purposes, including but not limited to riding an all-terrain vehicle, motorcycling, or driving a four-wheel drive vehicle or dune buggy.

This survey will take about 20 minutes of your time, and your expertise is crucial to understanding the key issues related to NOVA activities. In this survey, you will be asked to determine the importance of specific policies defined by the *2005-2011 NOVA Plan* and to identify new and emerging NOVA issues. The full *2005-2011 NOVA Plan* is available at [http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/rcfb/nova/NOVA\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/rcfb/nova/NOVA_Plan.pdf).

As part of the Advisory Committee, you are a representative of your community. Please answer the survey questions with this concept in mind, speaking as a representative of your community.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this important assessment. Please submit your responses by **August 9, 2013**.

What is your primary area of interest for NOVA opportunities? [CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

- Nonhighway road recreation
- Nonmotorized recreation
- ORV recreation
- Don't know

**NOVA PLAN VISION**

The NOVA Plan vision is to maintain a framework that allows various user groups and agencies to provide quality opportunities for Off-Road Vehicle, nonhighway road, and nonmotorized recreationists—opportunities that satisfy user needs, are environmentally responsible, and minimize conflict among user groups.

In general, do you agree or disagree that 2005-2011 NOVA Plan is meeting its overall vision?

- Strongly agree (skip next question)
- Moderately agree (skip next question)
- Neither agree nor disagree (skip next question)
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know (skip next question)

[IF DISAGREE] Why do you disagree that the 2005-2011 NOVA Plan is meeting its overall vision?  
[OPEN-ENDED]

How important is each element of the 2005-2011 NOVA Plan vision? (On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important.")

Vision Elements	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Providing quality opportunities for nonhighway road, nonmotorized, and ORV recreationists												
Satisfying user needs												
Providing environmentally responsible opportunities												
Minimizing conflict among user groups												

Please rate the performance of Washington's NOVA recreation providers in fulfilling each of the specific elements of the plan's overall vision. (On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "poor" and 10 is "excellent.")

Vision Elements	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Providing quality opportunities for nonhighway road, nonmotorized, and ORV recreationists												
Satisfying user needs												
Providing environmentally responsible opportunities												

Minimizing conflict among user groups												
---------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Overall, how effective do you think the implementation of the NOVA Plan has been at improving nonhighway, nonmotorized, and off-road vehicle opportunities in Washington since 2005? (On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is “not at all effective” and 10 is “very effective.”)

NOVA Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Nonhighway road recreation opportunities												
Nonmotorized recreation opportunities												
Off-road vehicle recreation opportunities												

**NOVA PROGRAM POLICIES**

The *2005-2011 NOVA Plan* sets forth major policies related to three topical areas: NOVA Program; NOVA education, information, and law enforcement; and NOVA recreational facility acquisition, development, maintenance, and planning. These policies are used to evaluate and select projects for NOVA funding. The first section of the survey begins by asking about policies related to the overall NOVA Program.

**Policy A-1: NOVA funding shall augment, not replace, other sources of funding.**

Similar to other RCO funding programs, NOVA funding allows grant recipients to achieve results that would not be possible without state funding. It is not designed to replace other funding. When NOVA funding is available for maintenance and operation, for example, it shall not be used to replace or divert monies that would otherwise be available for that purpose.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate HOW IMPORTANT you think Policy A-1 SHOULD be for the <i>2013-2018 NOVA Plan</i> on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is “not at all important” and 10 is “extremely important.”												

What do you think SHOULD be the top priority for NOVA funding for the *2013-2018 NOVA Plan*?

- Education/information
- Law enforcement
- Planning
- Facilities acquisition
- Development
- Maintenance and operation
- Don't know

Why do you think this should be a top priority for NOVA funding for the *2013-2018 NOVA Plan*?  
[OPEN-ENDED]

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to **NOVA funding** in the next 5 years?

[OPEN-ENDED]

**Policy A-2: The NOVA Advisory Committee shall include representatives from user groups and agencies affected by NOVA funding.**

The NOVA Advisory Committee consists of nonmotorized and ORV recreationists, and local, state, and federal agency representatives. The Advisory Committee provides valuable advice to RCO and represents the views and needs of the users, organizations, and agencies that are affected by NOVA funding.

Concerns regarding the authority of the NOVA Advisory Committee were raised during the previous NOVA planning process. Recreationists want to be assured that Advisory Committee volunteers were well informed and involved in their role on the Committee.

Policy A-2 requires a review of NOVA Advisory Committee representation, job descriptions, term limits, etc. to ensure that Committee members best represent NOVA user groups.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please assess the PERFORMANCE of the NOVA Advisory Committee as representatives of user groups and agencies since 2005: Indicate how well you think the Committee is meeting this NOVA Plan goal. (On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "poor" and 10 is "excellent.")												
Please indicate how important you think Policy A-2 SHOULD be for the 2013-2018 NOVA Plan on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important."												

Do you agree or disagree that the NOVA Advisory Committee has the qualifications needed to make decisions regarding NOVA projects?

- STRONGLY AGREE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY AGREE (Skip next question)
- NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY DISAGREE
- STRONGLY DISAGREE
- DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF DISAGREE] Why do you disagree that the NOVA Advisory Committee has the qualifications needed to make decisions regarding NOVA projects?

[OPEN-ENDED]

Do you agree or disagree that the NOVA Advisory Committee fairly represents user groups?

- STRONGLY AGREE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY AGREE (Skip next question)
- NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE (Skip next question)

MODERATELY DISAGREE  
 STRONGLY DISAGREE  
 DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF DISAGREE] Why do you disagree that the NOVA Advisory Committee fairly represents user groups?  
 [OPEN-ENDED]

What do you think should be the job description for serving on the NOVA Advisory Committee?[OPEN-ENDED]

What do you think should be the term limit for serving on the NOVA Advisory Committee? [OPEN-ENDED]

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to the **NOVA Advisory Committee** in the next 5 years?[OPEN-ENDED]

**Policy A-3: NOVA Program review and administration shall be based on valid, up-to-date information.**

The 2005-2011 NOVA planning process was informed by the 2003 [Washington State Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Fuel Use Survey](#) and a U.S. Forest Service trailhead user survey. RCO is required to seek funding to complete a new NOVA fuel-use study at least once every 12 years.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate how important you think Policy A-3 SHOULD be for the <i>2013-2018 NOVA Plan</i> on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important."												

Do you agree or disagree that NOVA review and administration is based on valid up-to-date information?

STRONGLY AGREE (Skip next question)  
 MODERATELY AGREE (Skip next question)  
 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE (Skip next question)  
 MODERATELY DISAGREE  
 STRONGLY DISAGREE  
 DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF DISAGREE] Why do you disagree that NOVA review and administration is based on valid up-to-date information? [OPEN-ENDED]

Are there other types of information that you think should be considered for NOVA Program review and administration? [OPEN-ENDED]

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to NOVA Program **review and administration** in the next 5 years? [OPEN-ENDED]

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to NOVA Program **use of valid up-to-date information** in the next 5 years? [OPEN-ENDED]

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the use of funds provided to NOVA recreational activities?

Very satisfied (skip next question)

Somewhat satisfied (skip next question)

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (skip next question)

Somewhat dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Don't know (skip next question)

Why are you dissatisfied with the use of funds provided to NOVA recreational activities?

[OPEN-ENDED]

**Policy A-4: The RCO shall endeavor to provide user groups with current NOVA-related information through a variety of communication methods.**

The planning process for the *2005-2011 NOVA Plan* suggested that recreationists are generally unaware of the NOVA Program, funding sources, funding allocations, and the role of the Advisory Committee. To this end, the plan discussed methods for increasing information and outreach.

Policy A-4 seeks to expand communications methods and increase public awareness regarding the NOVA Program, NOVA funding, and how funding decisions are made. Efficient and effective communication is critical for increasing awareness, building trust, and ensuring that accurate information is available. The RCO plan for increasing outreach includes e-mails, news releases, updated web pages, and other informational materials distributed at retail outlets or with Department of Licensing notifications.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please assess the PERFORMANCE of the RCO in providing user groups with current information through varied communications since 2005: Indicate how well you think the RCO is meeting this NOVA Plan goal. (On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "poor" and 10 is "excellent.")												
Please indicate how important you think Policy A-4 SHOULD be for the <i>2013-2018 NOVA Plan</i> on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important."												

In your opinion, of the means of communication that RCO currently uses, what are the best ways to provide user groups with information on the NOVA Program?

[CHECK ALL THAT APPLY... OR RANK?]

Emails

News releases  
 Updated web pages  
 Informational materials distributed at retail outlets  
 Informational materials attached to Department of Licensing notifications

In your opinion, what are the best ways to provide user groups with information on the NOVA Program?

[CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

Emails  
 News releases  
 Updated web pages  
 Informational materials distributed at retail outlets  
 Informational materials attached to Department of Licensing notifications  
 Direct mail  
 RCO News You Can Use electronic newsletter  
 Newspapers  
 Radio  
 Television  
 Public meetings / open houses  
 RCO Web site  
 Facebook  
 Google+  
 Pinterest  
 Twitter  
 YouTube  
 Blogs  
 Internet search engines (e.g., Google, Yahoo!, Bing)  
 RSS feeds  
 Other [ENTER OTHER]  
 Don't know

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to providing user groups with current NOVA-related **information** in the next 5 years?

[OPEN-ENDED]

### **NOVA EDUCATION/INFORMATION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT (E&E) POLICIES**

The *2005-2011 NOVA Plan* sets forth major policies related to three topical areas: NOVA Program; education, information, and law enforcement; and NOVA recreational facility acquisition, development, maintenance, and planning. These policies are used to evaluate and select projects for NOVA funding.

This section of the survey asks about policies related to education/information and law enforcement (E&E).

The primary focus of education/information and law enforcement is on recreational behaviors.

Please indicate how important you think education and enforcement efforts focused on the following recreational behaviors SHOULD be in the 2013-2018 NOVA Plan on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is “not at all important” and 10 is “extremely important.”

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Protecting NOVA sites												
Minimizing environmental impacts												
Reducing conflict among users												
Preventing criminal behaviors (e.g., trash dumping, firearm use, trailhead thefts, trespassing, and vandalism)												

**Policy B-1: E&E programs shall help preserve NOVA opportunities. E&E funding shall encourage responsible recreational behaviors through positive management techniques.**

NOVA information/education and law enforcement (E&E) focuses primarily on recreational behavior. Thus, education and enforcement include positive management to improve recreational behaviors. Because law enforcement can reduce recreationists’ inappropriate behavior, it helps protect the availability of sanctioned NOVA opportunities.

NOVA funding shall not, however, be used to replace local law enforcement funding. It shall instead augment local capabilities and result in improved NOVA recreation management. In general, projects that focus solely on enforcement of area closures, or within areas with few or no legal opportunities, shall be discouraged.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate how important you think Policy B-1 SHOULD be for the 2013-2018 NOVA Plan on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is “not at all important” and 10 is “extremely important.”												

Do you agree or disagree that E&E funding should encourage responsible recreational behaviors through positive management techniques?

STRONGLY AGREE (Skip next question)

MODERATELY AGREE (Skip next question)

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE (Skip next question)  
 MODERATELY DISAGREE  
 STRONGLY DISAGREE  
 DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF DISAGREE] Why do you disagree that that E&E funding should encourage responsible recreational behaviors through positive management techniques?  
 [OPEN-ENDED]

**Policy B-2: Encourage projects that primarily employ contact with current NOVA recreationists in the field during high use seasons.**

During the 2005 planning process, there were concerns about focusing E&E efforts in schools, which many believe encourages otherwise uninterested children and youth to desire the speed and power of an ORV. The suggestion was to focus E&E efforts on those already using NOVA trails by engaging interest clubs or organizations.

Policy B-2 was developed to focus scarce E&E resources on existing users at the place and time of NOVA activity, while discouraging activities that have fewer benefits, such as “mall shows” and many in-school (K-12) programs. This maximizes the benefit to users.

Policy B-2 helps concentrate funding on expenditures most directly related to E&E activities, such as E&E personnel salaries and benefits, and related materials and equipment.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate how important you think Policy B-2 SHOULD be for the 2013-2018 NOVA Plan on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is “not at all important” and 10 is “extremely important.”												

Do you agree or disagree that the target group for information and education efforts should be existing users?

STRONGLY AGREE (Skip next question)  
 MODERATELY AGREE (Skip next question)  
 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE (Skip next question)  
 MODERATELY DISAGREE  
 STRONGLY DISAGREE  
 DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF DISAGREE] Why do you disagree that the target group for information and education efforts should be existing users?  
 [OPEN-ENDED]

In your opinion, would you like to have more or less information/education resources directed at projects concerning appropriate recreational behaviors for NOVA trails and sites?

More

About the same amount (skip next question)

Less (skip next question)

Don't know (skip next question)

[IF MORE] Why would you like to see more information/education resources directed at projects concerning appropriate recreational behaviors for NOVA trails and sites?

[OPEN-ENDED]

[IF MORE] How would you like to see more information/education delivered in these projects?

[OPEN-ENDED]

[IF LESS] Why would you like to see less information/education resources directed at projects concerning appropriate recreational behaviors for NOVA trails and sites?

[OPEN-ENDED]

In your opinion, would you like to see more or less law enforcement presence at NOVA trails and sites?

More

About the same amount

Less

Don't know

[IF MORE] Why would you like to see more law enforcement presence on NOVA trails?

[OPEN-ENDED]

[IF LESS] Why would you like to see less law enforcement presence on NOVA trails?

[OPEN-ENDED]

A primary focus of E&E efforts is on preventing criminal behaviors. Do you believe this is best done through more education, more enforcement, or both equally?

More education

More enforcement

Both equally

Don't know

In your opinion, is trail safety a major or minor issue of concern among user groups (when considering trail safety, please keep in mind that this question focuses on the behavior of other recreationists not the physical conditions of the trails)?

Major issue

Minor issue

Not an issue at all

don't know

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to **enforcement and education and recreation management** in the next 5 years?

[OPEN-ENDED]

**Policy B-4: Establish a funding cap of \$200,000 per project in the Education/Information and Law Enforcement (E&E) category.**

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate how important you think Policy B-4 SHOULD be for the <i>2013-2018 NOVA Plan</i> on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important."												

Do you support or oppose the NOVA E&E project funding cap of \$200,000 per project?

- Strongly support (skip next question)
- Moderately support (skip next question)
- Neither support nor oppose (skip next question)
- Moderately oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know (skip next question)

[IF OPPOSE] Why do you oppose the funding cap of \$200,000?

[OPEN-ENDED]

Do you support or oppose funding NOVA E&E projects for up to two consecutive years?

- STRONGLY SUPPORT (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY SUPPORT (Skip next question)
- NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY OPPOSE
- STRONGLY OPPOSE
- DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF OPPOSE] Why do you oppose funding NOVA projects for up to two consecutive years?

[OPEN-ENDED]

Overall, what would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to NOVA **education/information and law enforcement projects** in the next 5 years? [OPEN-ENDED]

**NOVA RECREATION FACILITY ACQUISITION, DEVELOPMENT, MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION, AND PLANNING**

The 2005-2011 NOVA Plan sets forth major policies related to three topical areas: NOVA Program; education, information, and law enforcement; and NOVA recreational facility acquisition, development, maintenance, and planning. These policies are used to evaluate and select projects for NOVA funding. This section of the survey asks about policies related to recreation facility acquisition, development, maintenance, and planning.

**Policy C-1: Encourage a primary management objective designation on facilities receiving NOVA funding.**

Primary management objectives designations (equestrian, ORV, hiking, mountain bicycling, etc.) help identify the primary purpose and function of a NOVA site and also guide management decisions regarding the site. Designating trails and other facilities with a primary management objective not only helps clarify the experience users can expect, but also provides clear and consistent direction to managers.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate how important you think Policy C-1 SHOULD be for the 2013-2018 NOVA Plan on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important."												

Do you support or oppose a primary management objective designation on facilities receiving NOVA funding?

- STRONGLY SUPPORT (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY SUPPORT (Skip next question)
- NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY OPPOSE
- STRONGLY OPPOSE
- DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF OPPOSE] Why do you oppose a primary management objective designation on facilities receiving NOVA funding?

[OPEN-ENDED]

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to **primary management objective designations** in the next 5 years?

[OPEN-ENDED]

**Policy C-2: Encourage projects convenient to population centers.**

One of the issues raised during the previous NOVA planning process was how to provide NOVA opportunities in urban areas or for underserved populations. Because of the nonhighway road threshold criteria (access via a non-gasoline tax supported road, etc.) and emphasis on natural settings, most NOVA recreation opportunities are provided in relatively remote settings. While it is often difficult or impossible to locate such opportunities in urbanized areas, priority shall be given to projects convenient to such areas.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate how important you think Policy C-2 SHOULD be for the 2013-2018 NOVA Plan on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important."												

Do you agree or disagree that there is an adequate supply of NOVA sites that are convenient for urban areas and population centers?

- STRONGLY AGREE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY AGREE (Skip next question)
- NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY DISAGREE
- STRONGLY DISAGREE
- DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF DISAGREE] Why do you disagree that there is an adequate supply of NOVA sites that are convenient for urban areas and population centers?

[OPEN-ENDED]

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to NOVA **recreation locations** in the next 5 years?

[OPEN-ENDED]

**Policy C-3: Encourage nongovernment contributions.**

Contributions of money, materials, and/or services by volunteers, the private sector, nonprofit organizations, and others are important in the NOVA Program. Donations stretch scarce public funding, improve the overall cost-benefit, extend “ownership” to those involved in the project, and help demonstrate broad public support.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate how important you think Policy C-3 SHOULD be for the 2013-2018 NOVA Plan on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is “not at all important” and 10 is “extremely important.”												

Do you agree or disagree that the NOVA Program should encourage nongovernment contributions (e.g., money, materials, volunteer services)?

- STRONGLY AGREE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY AGREE (Skip next question)
- NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY DISAGREE
- STRONGLY DISAGREE
- DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF DISAGREE] Why do you disagree that the NOVA Program should encourage nongovernment contributions (e.g., money, materials, volunteer services)?

[OPEN-ENDED]

**Policy C-4: Encourage sponsors to contribute matching value to projects.**

Similar to Policy C-3, project sponsors who contribute part of a project’s cost (via dollars, materials, or labor/service) make NOVA Program dollars reach more projects while demonstrating a local commitment to the project’s success.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate how important you think Policy C-4 SHOULD be for the 2013-2018 NOVA Plan on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is “not at all important” and 10 is “extremely important.”												

Do you agree or disagree that the NOVA Program should encourage sponsors to contribute matching value to projects?

- STRONGLY AGREE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY AGREE (Skip next question)
- NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY DISAGREE

STRONGLY DISAGREE

DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF DISAGREE] Why do you disagree that the NOVA Program should encourage sponsors to contribute matching value to projects?

[OPEN-ENDED]

What do you think would be an appropriate match for nongovernment contributions? [OPEN-ENDED]

Do you agree or disagree that a match should be required for project funding?

STRONGLY AGREE

MODERATELY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE (Skip next question)

MODERATELY DISAGREE (Skip next question)

STRONGLY DISAGREE (Skip next question)

DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF STRONGLY OR MODERATELY AGREE] What match percentage should be required for project funding?

Do you agree or disagree that funding from other programs administered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board be considered match?

STRONGLY AGREE

MODERATELY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

MODERATELY DISAGREE

STRONGLY DISAGREE

DON'T KNOW

Do you agree or disagree that the NOVA Program should encourage volunteer opportunities that are approved by the land manager?

STRONGLY AGREE

MODERATELY AGREE

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

MODERATELY DISAGREE

STRONGLY DISAGREE

DON'T KNOW

In your opinion, what are some of the best ways to encourage volunteers to support the NOVA Program?

[OPEN-ENDED]

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to **non-government contributions and sponsors contributing matching value** in the next 5 years? [OPEN-ENDED]

**Policy C-5: Encourage projects that have design considerations that minimize the need for ongoing maintenance.**

Projects can often incorporate design elements that reduce maintenance needs. Decisions about placement and materials (e.g., tread surfaces) often affect maintenance needs. Adequate consideration of maintenance during the design phase can result in long-term savings that far outweigh most short-term construction cost increases.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate how important you think Policy C-5 SHOULD be for the <i>2013-2018 NOVA Plan</i> on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important."												

Do you agree or disagree that the NOVA Program should encourage projects that have design considerations that minimize the need for ongoing maintenance?

- STRONGLY AGREE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY AGREE (Skip next question)
- NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY DISAGREE
- STRONGLY DISAGREE
- DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF DISAGREE] Why do you disagree that the NOVA Program should encourage projects that have design considerations that minimize the need for ongoing maintenance?  
[OPEN-ENDED]

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to **maintenance** in the next 5 years?  
[OPEN-ENDED]

**Policy C-6: Require general plans and completion of applicant-required processes before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board meeting.**

**Policy C-7: Require applicants for maintenance and operation proposals to state their project’s goals and objectives in the application.**

**Policy C-8: Require completion of applicant required environmental processes before issuing a Project Agreement.**

Policies C-6 through C-8 are project planning requirements developed to ensure that projects support community goals, address a defined problem, and comply with environmental laws and regulations.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate how important you think Policy C-6, C-7, and C-8 SHOULD be for the <i>2013-2018 NOVA Plan</i> on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is “not at all important” and 10 is “extremely important.”												

Do you have specific comments about Policy C-6, Policy C-7, Policy C-8? [OPEN-ENDED]

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to **NOVA project planning requirements** in the next 5 years?  
[OPEN-ENDED]

How concerned are you with the environmental impacts of NOVA recreation?  
 Very concerned  
 Somewhat concerned  
 Not at all concerned

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to the **environmental impacts** of NOVA recreation in the next 5 years?  
[OPEN-ENDED]

**Policy C-10: Within their respective NHR-NM-ORV funding categories, evaluate acquisition, development, maintenance and operation, and planning projects on a head-to-head basis.**  
 By statute, NOVA facility funding is divided into three categories: Nonhighway road, nonmotorized, and off-road vehicle. Requiring that all projects within these categories compete in direct competition with one another is one way we can help ensure that only the most desirable projects are funded.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate how important you think Policy C-10 SHOULD be for the 2013-2018 NOVA Plan on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important."												

Do you agree or disagree that all projects within these categories should compete directly with one another and that it ensures that only the most desirable projects are funded?

- STRONGLY AGREE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY AGREE (Skip next question)
- NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY DISAGREE
- STRONGLY DISAGREE
- DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF DISAGREE] Why do you disagree that all projects within these categories should compete directly with one another and that it ensures that only the most desirable projects are funded?  
[OPEN-ENDED]

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to the **fairness of project evaluation** among the three funding categories in the next 5 years?  
[OPEN-ENDED]

**Policy C-12: The grant ceiling for individual projects is limited as shown here:**

NOVA Program Grant Assistance Limits		
	Maintenance & Operations	Land Acquisition-Development-Planning
<b>NHR</b>	\$100,000 per project	\$100,000/project
<b>NM</b>	\$100,000 per project	\$100,000/project
<b>ORV</b>	\$200,000 per project	[No Limit]

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate how important you think Policy C-12 SHOULD be for the 2013-2018 NOVA Plan on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important."												

Do you support or oppose the NOVA grant ceiling for individual projects?

- STRONGLY SUPPORT (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY SUPPORT (Skip next question)
- NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY OPPOSE
- STRONGLY OPPOSE
- DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF OPPOSE] Why do you oppose the NOVA grant ceiling for individual projects?  
[OPEN-ENDED]

Do you support or oppose funding NOVA maintenance and operation projects for up to two consecutive years?

- STRONGLY SUPPORT (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY SUPPORT (Skip next question)
- NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE (Skip next question)
- MODERATELY OPPOSE
- STRONGLY OPPOSE
- DON'T KNOW (Skip next question)

[IF OPPOSE] Why do you oppose funding NOVA maintenance and operation projects for up to two consecutive years?  
[OPEN-ENDED]

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to **grant funding ceiling or time limitations** in the next 5 years?

**Policy C-13: Encourage emphasis on projects in areas that are predominantly natural, such as are typically (but not necessarily) found in a "backcountry" environment. This policy does not apply to the ORV funding category.**

To be eligible for nonhighway road and nonmotorized funding, projects must be adjacent to or accessed by a nonhighway road. Consideration of a "backcountry experience" in project selection is based on the notion that additional emphasis should be placed on allocating funds back to the type of setting where funds were generated.

A portion of the NOVA fund is generated by motorists traveling on nonhighway roads, such as those that occur in national parks or forests. As such, travelers who pay the fuel tax will benefit from projects on or next to these roads. This policy does not apply to the ORV funding category.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate how important you think Policy C-13 SHOULD be for the 2013-2018 NOVA Plan on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important."												

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to projects in **areas that are predominantly** natural in the next 5 years?  
 [OPEN-ENDED]

**Policy C-14: When reconstructing trails, encourage projects that correct environmental problems, retain trail difficulty and user experiences, and minimize user displacement.**

Reconstruction can be less expensive than new construction and often presents opportunities to employ current standards and correct environmental problems. Project sponsors shall be sensitive to current trail uses and experiences, and seek to minimize "over building" the trail and significantly changing the opportunity for either motorized or nonmotorized users.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Please indicate how important you think Policy C-14 SHOULD be for the 2013-2018 NOVA Plan on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all important" and 10 is "extremely important."												

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to **trail reconstruction** in the next 5 years?  
 [OPEN-ENDED]

**Access**

Access issues are an important area of concern among recreationists and recreation planners.

How would you rate access to NOVA opportunities in the State of Washington?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

How satisfied are you with access to *nonhighway road recreation* opportunities in Washington?

Very satisfied  
 Somewhat satisfied  
 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied  
 Somewhat dissatisfied  
 Very dissatisfied  
 Don't know

[IF DISSATISFIED] Please explain why you are dissatisfied with access to nonhighway road recreation opportunities.

How can access be improved through the use of the NOVA account?

How satisfied are you with access to *nonmotorized recreation* opportunities in Washington?

VERY SATISFIED  
 SOMEWHAT SATISFIED  
 NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED  
 SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED  
 VERY DISSATISFIED  
 DON'T KNOW

[IF DISSATISFIED] Please explain why you are dissatisfied with access to nonmotorized recreation opportunities.

How can access be improved through the use of the NOVA account?

How satisfied are you with access to *ORV recreation* opportunities in Washington?

VERY SATISFIED  
 SOMEWHAT SATISFIED  
 NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED  
 SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED  
 VERY DISSATISFIED  
 DON'T KNOW

[IF DISSATISFIED] Please explain why you are dissatisfied with access to ORV recreation opportunities and how can access be improved through the use of the NOVA account.

### **User Conflicts**

User conflicts are an important area of concern among recreationists and recreation planners. Would you say user conflicts are a major problem, a minor problem, or not at all a problem for the NOVA Program?

Major problem  
 Minor problem  
 Not at all a problem (skip the next question)  
 Don't know (skip the next question)

Do you think problems with user conflicts have increased, decreased or stayed the same since 2005?

Increased

Stayed the same (skip the next question)

Decreased (skip the next question)

Don't know (skip the next question)

[IF INCREASED] Why do you think problems with user conflicts have increased since 2005?

[OPEN-ENDED]

[IF DECREASED] Why do you think problems with user conflicts have decreased since 2005?

[OPEN-ENDED]

In your opinion, how effective are the following management efforts in addressing user conflicts?

(On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is "not at all effective" and 10 is "extremely effective.")

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Don't know
Developing primary management objectives												
Segregating activities												
Providing education programs (e.g., trail etiquette, recreational behaviors, rules, regulations)												
Better communications												
Trail signs identifying primary user groups												
Building solidarity among user groups												

What would you identify as the top new or emerging issues related to user conflicts in the next 5 years?

[OPEN-ENDED]

## ORV Sports Parks

When the previous NOVA Plan was being developed, there was discussion about support of events and competitions associated with ORV sport parks.

**"ORV sports park" means a facility designed to accommodate competitive ORV recreational uses including, but not limited to, motocross racing, four-wheel drive competitions, and flat track racing. Use of ORV sports parks can be competitive or noncompetitive in nature.**

Many respondents questioned the level of NOVA Program support for events at the competition sports parks assisted with RCO funds versus maintenance of backcountry trail-related facilities. The general sentiment among this group was that the fees and charges of the parks should cover more of the cost of user events and be more comparable to other publicly managed opportunities.

On the other hand, supporters of NOVA funding for management of sports parks felt that, because the areas provide unique regional opportunities, they should receive more funding from state sources. Others pointed out that RCO's support of acquisition and development of sports parks has created increased demand for limited ORV dollars for maintenance and operations, and has reduced the ability to create new, dispersed ORV trail opportunities.

Do you agree or disagree that ORV sports parks should become more self-sufficient?

Strongly agree

Moderately agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Moderately disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

[IF AGREE] Why do you agree that ORV sports parks should become more self-sufficient?

[OPEN-ENDED]

[IF DISAGREE] Why do you disagree that ORV sports parks should become more self-sufficient?

[OPEN-ENDED]

Do you support or oppose NOVA funding going toward ORV sports parks?

Strongly support (skip next question)

Moderately support (skip next question)

Neither support nor oppose (skip next question)

Moderately oppose

Strongly oppose

Don't know (skip next question)

[IF SUPPORT] Why do you support NOVA funding going toward ORV sports parks?

[OPEN-ENDED]

[IF OPPOSE] Why do you oppose NOVA funding going toward ORV sports parks?

[OPEN-ENDED]

## Final Questions

What would you identify as the single most important issue that you would like to see addressed in the *2013-2018 NOVA Plan*?

[OPEN-ENDED]

Are there any other NOVA issues you were not asked about but that you would like to see addressed in the *2013-2018 NOVA Plan*?

YES

NO (Skip next question)

What other issues would you like to see addressed in the *2013-2018 NOVA Plan*?

[OPEN-ENDED]

Please provide any additional comments or suggestions you have.

All information provided in this survey will remain confidential, and no response will be associated with your name or identification information. For the purposes of tracking responses, however, we ask that you please provide your name and organizational affiliation. Thank you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organizational Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.

## APPENDIX C: CHAPTER 46.09 RCW

### Chapter 46.09 RCW

#### OFF-ROAD AND NONHIGHWAY VEHICLES

##### RCW Sections

##### GENERAL PROVISIONS

- [46.09.300](#) Application of chapter -- Permission necessary to enter upon private lands.
- [46.09.310](#) Definitions.
- [46.09.320](#) Certificates of title.
- [46.09.330](#) Off-road vehicle dealers -- Licenses -- Fee -- License plates -- Title application upon sale -- Violation.
- [46.09.340](#) Nonhighway and off-road vehicle activities advisory committee.
- [46.09.350](#) Accident reports.
- [46.09.360](#) Regulation by local political subdivisions or state agencies.
- [46.09.370](#) Statewide plan.
- [46.09.380](#) Enforcement.

##### REGISTRATIONS AND USE PERMITS

- [46.09.400](#) Issuance -- Decals -- Fees.
- [46.09.410](#) Registrations -- Original and renewal application -- Requirements -- Decals -- Out-of-state operators.
- [46.09.420](#) Registrations and decals -- Exemptions.
- [46.09.430](#) Use permits -- Application requirements.
- [46.09.440](#) Prerequisite to operation.

##### USES AND VIOLATIONS

- [46.09.450](#) Authorized and prohibited uses.
- [46.09.460](#) Operation by persons under thirteen.
- [46.09.470](#) Operating violations -- Exceptions.
- [46.09.480](#) Additional violations -- Penalty.
- [46.09.490](#) General penalty -- Civil liability.

##### REVENUE

- [46.09.500](#) Motor vehicle fuel excise taxes on fuel for nonhighway vehicles not refundable.
- [46.09.510](#) Nonhighway and off-road vehicle activities program account.
- [46.09.520](#) Refunds from motor vehicle fund -- Distribution -- Use.

[46.09.530](#) Administration and distribution of off-road vehicle moneys.

[46.09.900](#) Severability -- 1971 ex.s. c 47.

**Notes:**

**Rules of court:** Monetary penalty schedule -- IRLJ 6.2.

Emergency medical services fee: RCW [46.17.110](#) and [46.68.440](#).

## 46.09.300

Application of chapter — Permission necessary to enter upon private lands.

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all lands in this state. Nothing in this chapter, RCW [79A.35.040](#), [79A.35.070](#), [79A.35.090](#), [79A.35.110](#), and [79A.35.120](#) shall be deemed to grant to any person the right or authority to enter upon private property without permission of the property owner.

[2005 c 213 § 2; 1972 ex.s. c 153 § 2; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 6. Formerly RCW [46.09.010](#).]

**Notes:**

**Findings--Construction -- 2005 c 213:** "The legislature finds that off-road recreational vehicles (ORVs) provide opportunities for a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities. The legislature further finds that the limited amount of ORV recreation areas presents a challenge for ORV recreational users, natural resource land managers, and private landowners. The legislature further finds that many nonhighway roads provide opportunities for ORV use and that these opportunities may reduce conflicts between users and facilitate responsible ORV recreation. However, restrictions intended for motor vehicles may prevent ORV use on certain roads, including forest service roads. Therefore, the legislature finds that local, state, and federal jurisdictions should be given the flexibility to allow ORV use on nonhighway roads they own and manage or for which they are authorized to allow public ORV use under an easement granted by the owner. Nothing in this act authorizes trespass on private property." [2005 c 213 § 1.]

**Effective date -- 2005 c 213:** "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect July 1, 2005." [2005 c 213 § 9.]

**Purpose -- 1972 ex.s. c 153:** See RCW [67.32.080](#).

## 46.09.310

Definitions.

\*\*\* CHANGE IN 2013 \*\*\* (SEE [1883-S.SL](#)) \*\*\*

\*\*\* CHANGE IN 2013 \*\*\* (SEE [1632-S.SL](#)) \*\*\*

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Advisory committee" means the nonhighway and off-road vehicle activities advisory committee established in RCW [46.09.340](#).

(2) "Board" means the recreation and conservation funding board established in RCW [79A.25.110](#).

(3) "Dealer" means a person, partnership, association, or corporation engaged in the business of selling off-road vehicles at wholesale or retail in this state.

(4) "Highway," for the purpose of this chapter only, means the entire width between the boundary lines of every roadway publicly maintained by the state department of transportation or any county or city with funding from the motor vehicle fund. A highway is generally capable of travel by a conventional two-wheel drive passenger automobile during most of the year and in use by such vehicles.

(5) "Nonhighway road" means any road owned or managed by a public agency or any private road for which the owner has granted an easement for public use for which appropriations from the motor vehicle fund were not used for (a) original construction or reconstruction in the last twenty-five years; or (b) maintenance in the last four years.

(6) "Nonhighway road recreation facilities" means recreational facilities that are adjacent to, or accessed by, a nonhighway road and intended primarily for nonhighway road recreational users.

(7) "Nonhighway road recreational user" means a person whose purpose for consuming fuel on a nonhighway road or off-road is primarily for nonhighway road recreational purposes, including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing, camping, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, picnicking, driving for pleasure, kayaking/canoeing, and gathering berries, firewood, mushrooms, and other natural products.

(8) "Nonhighway vehicle" means any motorized vehicle including an ORV when used for recreational purposes on nonhighway roads, trails, or a variety of other natural terrain.

Nonhighway vehicle does not include:

(a) Any vehicle designed primarily for travel on, over, or in the water;

(b) Snowmobiles or any military vehicles; or

(c) Any vehicle eligible for a motor vehicle fuel tax exemption or rebate under chapter [82.36](#) RCW while an exemption or rebate is claimed. This exemption includes but is not limited to farm, construction, and logging vehicles.

(9) "Nonmotorized recreational facilities" means recreational trails and facilities that are adjacent to, or accessed by, a nonhighway road and intended primarily for nonmotorized recreational users.

(10) "Nonmotorized recreational user" means a person whose purpose for consuming fuel on a nonhighway road or off-road is primarily for nonmotorized recreational purposes including, but not limited to, walking, hiking, backpacking, climbing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking, horseback riding, and pack animal activities.

(11) "Organized competitive event" means any competition, advertised in advance through written notice to organized clubs or published in local newspapers, sponsored by recognized clubs, and conducted at a predetermined time and place.

(12) "ORV recreation facilities" include, but are not limited to, ORV trails, trailheads, campgrounds, ORV sports parks, and ORV use areas, designated for ORV use by the managing authority that are intended primarily for ORV recreational users.

(13) "ORV recreational user" means a person whose purpose for consuming fuel on nonhighway roads or off-road is primarily for ORV recreational purposes, including but not limited to riding an all-terrain vehicle, motorcycling, or driving a four-wheel drive vehicle or dune buggy.

(14) "ORV sports park" means a facility designed to accommodate competitive ORV recreational uses including, but not limited to, motocross racing, four-wheel drive competitions, and flat track racing. Use of ORV sports parks can be competitive or noncompetitive in nature.

(15) "ORV trail" means a multiple-use corridor designated by the managing authority and maintained for recreational use by motorized vehicles.

[2010 c 161 § 213; 2007 c 241 § 13; 2004 c 105 § 1; 1986 c 206 § 1; 1979 c 158 § 129; 1977 ex.s. c 220 § 1; 1972 ex.s. c 153 § 3; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 7. Formerly RCW [46.09.020](#).]

**Notes:**

**Effective date -- Intent -- Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session -- 2010 c 161:** See notes following RCW [46.04.013](#).

**Intent -- Effective date -- 2007 c 241:** See notes following RCW [79A.25.005](#).

**Effective date -- 1986 c 206:** "This act shall take effect on June 30, 1986." [1986 c 206 § 17.]

**Purpose -- 1972 ex.s. c 153:** See RCW [79A.35.070](#).

46.09.320

Certificates of title.

The department shall issue a certificate of title to the owner of an off-road vehicle. The owner shall pay the fee established under RCW [46.17.100](#). Issuance of the certificate of title does not qualify the vehicle for registration under chapter [46.16A](#) RCW.

[2011 c 171 § 24; 2010 c 161 § 214.]

**Notes:**

**Intent -- Effective date -- 2011 c 171:** See notes following RCW [4.24.210](#).

**Effective date -- Intent -- Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session -- 2010 c 161:** See notes following RCW

DRAFT (September 2013)

[46.04.013.](#)

## 46.09.330

## Off-road vehicle dealers — Licenses — Fee — License plates — Title application upon sale — Violation.

(1) Each dealer of off-road vehicles in this state shall obtain either a miscellaneous vehicle dealer license as defined in RCW [46.70.011](#) or an off-road vehicle dealer license from the department in a manner prescribed by the department. Upon receipt of an application for an off-road vehicle dealer license and the fee described under subsection (2) of this section, the dealer is licensed and an off-road vehicle dealer license number must be assigned.

(2) The annual fee for an off-road vehicle dealer license is twenty-five dollars, which covers all of the off-road vehicles owned by a dealer and not rented. Off-road vehicles rented on a regular, commercial basis by a dealer must have separate registrations.

(3) Upon the issuance of an off-road vehicle dealer license, each dealer may purchase, at a cost to be determined by the department, off-road vehicle dealer license plates of a size and color to be determined by the department. The off-road vehicle dealer license plates must contain the off-road vehicle dealer license number assigned to the dealer. Each off-road vehicle operated by a dealer, dealer representative, or prospective customer for the purposes of testing or demonstration shall display dealer license plates assigned by the department.

(4) A dealer, dealer representative, or prospective customer may only use dealer license plates for the purposes prescribed in subsection (3) of this section.

(5) Off-road vehicle dealer license numbers are nontransferable.

(6) It is unlawful for any dealer to sell any off-road vehicle at wholesale or retail or to test or demonstrate any off-road vehicle within the state unless the dealer has either a miscellaneous vehicle dealer license as defined in RCW [46.70.011](#) or an off-road vehicle dealer license as required under this section.

(7) When an off-road vehicle is sold by a dealer, the dealer shall apply for a certificate of title in the purchaser's name within fifteen days following the sale.

(8) Except as provided in RCW [46.09.420](#), it is unlawful for any dealer to sell at retail an off-road vehicle without registration required in RCW [46.09.440](#).

[2010 c 161 § 220; 2010 c 8 § 9002; 1990 c 250 § 24; 1986 c 206 § 5; 1977 ex.s. c 220 § 7; 1972 ex.s. c 153 § 9; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 13. Formerly RCW [46.09.080](#).]

**Notes:**

**Reviser's note:** RCW [46.09.080](#) was amended twice during the 2010 legislative session, each without reference to the other. For rule of construction concerning sections amended more than once during the same legislative session, see RCW [1.12.025](#).

**Effective date -- Intent -- Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other**

DRAFT (September 2013)

**amendments made during the 2010 legislative session -- 2010 c 161:** See notes following RCW [46.04.013](#).

**Severability -- 1990 c 250:** See note following RCW [46.18.215](#).

**Effective date -- 1986 c 206:** See note following RCW [46.09.310](#).

**Purpose -- 1972 ex.s. c 153:** See RCW [79A.35.070](#).

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#### 46.09.340

#### Nonhighway and off-road vehicle activities advisory committee.

(1) The board shall establish the nonhighway and off-road vehicle activities advisory committee to provide advice regarding the administration of this chapter. The committee consists of governmental representatives, land managers, and a proportional representation of persons with recreational experience in areas identified in the most recent fuel use study, including but not limited to people with off-road vehicle, hiking, equestrian, mountain biking, hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing experience.

(2) After the advisory committee has made recommendations regarding the expenditure of the fuel tax revenue portion of the nonhighway and off-road vehicle account moneys, the advisory committee's off-road vehicle and mountain biking recreationists, governmental representatives, and land managers will make recommendations regarding the expenditure of funds received under RCW [46.68.045](#).

(3) At least once a year, the board, the department of natural resources, the department of fish and wildlife, and the state parks and recreation commission shall report to the nonhighway and off-road vehicle activities advisory committee on the expenditures of funds received under RCW [46.68.045](#) and [46.09.520](#) and must proactively seek the advisory committee's advice regarding proposed expenditures.

(4) The advisory committee shall advise these agencies regarding the allocation of funds received under RCW [46.09.520](#) to ensure that overall expenditures reflect consideration of the results of the most recent fuel use study.

[2010 c 161 § 224; 2007 c 241 § 19; 2004 c 105 § 8; 2003 c 185 § 1; 1986 c 206 § 13. Formerly RCW [46.09.280](#).]

#### Notes:

**Effective date -- Intent -- Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session -- 2010 c 161:** See notes following RCW [46.04.013](#).

**Intent -- Effective date -- 2007 c 241:** See notes following RCW [79A.25.005](#).

**Effective date -- 1986 c 206:** See note following RCW [46.09.310](#).

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#### 46.09.350 Accident reports.

The operator of any nonhighway vehicle involved in any accident resulting in injury to or death of any person, or property damage to another to an apparent extent equal to or greater than the minimum amount established by rule adopted by the chief of the Washington state patrol in accordance with chapter [46.52](#) RCW, or a person acting for the operator shall submit such reports as are required under chapter [46.52](#) RCW, and the provisions of chapter [46.52](#) RCW applies to the reports when submitted.

[1990 c 250 § 25; 1977 ex.s. c 220 § 12; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 19. Formerly RCW [46.09.140](#).]

#### Notes:

**Severability -- 1990 c 250:** See note following RCW [46.18.215](#).

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#### 46.09.360 Regulation by local political subdivisions or state agencies.

**\*\*\* CHANGE IN 2013 \*\*\* (SEE [1632-S.SL](#)) \*\*\***

Notwithstanding any of the provisions of this chapter, any city, county, or other political subdivision of this state, or any state agency, may regulate the operation of nonhighway vehicles on public lands, waters, and other properties under its jurisdiction, and on streets, roads, or highways within its boundaries by adopting regulations or ordinances of its governing body, provided such regulations are not less stringent than the provisions of this chapter. However, the legislative body of a city with a population of less than three thousand persons may, by ordinance, designate a street or highway within its boundaries to be suitable for use by off-road vehicles. The legislative body of a county may, by ordinance, designate a road or highway within its boundaries to be suitable for use by off-road vehicles if the road or highway is a direct connection between a city with a population of less than three thousand persons and an off-road vehicle recreation facility.

[2006 c 212 § 4; 1977 ex.s. c 220 § 15; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 23. Formerly RCW [46.09.180](#).]

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#### 46.09.370 Statewide plan.

The board shall maintain a statewide plan which shall be updated at least once every third biennium and shall be used by all participating agencies to guide distribution and expenditure of funds under this chapter.

[2007 c 241 § 18; 1986 c 206 § 11; 1977 ex.s. c 220 § 18. Formerly RCW [46.09.250](#).]

**Notes:**

**Intent -- Effective date -- 2007 c 241:** See notes following RCW [79A.25.005](#).

**Effective date -- 1986 c 206:** See note following RCW [46.09.310](#).

46.09.380  
Enforcement.

The provisions of this chapter shall be enforced by all persons having the authority to enforce any of the laws of this state, including, without limitation, officers of the state patrol, county sheriffs and their deputies, all municipal law enforcement officers within their respective jurisdictions, fish and wildlife officers, state park rangers, and those employees of the department of natural resources designated by the commissioner of public lands under RCW \*[43.30.310](#), [76.04.035](#), and [76.04.045](#).

[2001 c 253 § 3; 1986 c 100 § 52; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 25. Formerly RCW [46.09.200](#).]

**Notes:**

**\*Reviser's note:** RCW [43.30.310](#) was recodified as RCW [43.12.065](#) pursuant to 2003 c 334 § 127.

46.09.400  
Issuance — Decals — Fees.

**\*\*\* CHANGE IN 2013 \*\*\* (SEE [1632-S.SL](#)) \*\*\***

The department shall:

- (1) Issue registrations and temporary ORV use permits for off-road vehicles;
- (2) Issue decals for off-road vehicles. The decals serve the same function as license plates for vehicles registered under chapter [46.16A](#) RCW; and
- (3) Charge a fee for each decal covering the actual cost of the decal.

[2011 c 171 § 25; 2010 c 161 § 215; 1990 c 250 § 23; 1986 c 206 § 2; 1977 ex.s. c 220 § 2; 1972 ex.s. c 153 § 4; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 8. Formerly RCW [46.09.030](#).]

**Notes:**

**Intent -- Effective date -- 2011 c 171:** See notes following RCW [4.24.210](#).

**Effective date -- Intent -- Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session -- 2010 c 161:** See notes following RCW [46.04.013](#).

**Severability -- 1990 c 250:** See note following RCW [46.18.215](#).

**Effective date -- 1986 c 206:** See note following RCW [46.09.310](#).

**Purpose -- 1972 ex.s. c 153:** See RCW [79A.35.070](#).

46.09.410

Registrations — Original and renewal application — Requirements — Decals — Out-of-state operators.

**\*\*\* CHANGE IN 2013 \*\*\* (SEE [1632-S.SL](#)) \*\*\***

(1) The application for an original ORV registration has the same requirements as described for original vehicle registrations in RCW [46.16A.040](#) and must be accompanied by the annual off-road vehicle license fee required under RCW [46.17.350](#), in addition to any other fees or taxes due for the application.

(2) The application for renewal of an ORV registration has the same requirements as described for the renewal of vehicle registrations in RCW [46.16A.110](#) and must be accompanied by the annual off-road vehicle license fee required under RCW [46.17.350](#), in addition to any other fees or taxes due for the application.

(3) The annual ORV registration is valid for one year and may be renewed each subsequent year as prescribed by the department.

(4) A person who acquires an off-road vehicle that has an ORV registration must:

(a) Apply to the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director for a transfer of the ORV registration within fifteen days of taking possession of the off-road vehicle; and

(b) Pay the ORV registration transfer fee required under RCW [46.17.410](#), in addition to any other fees or taxes due at the time of application.

(5) The department shall issue an ORV registration, decals, and tabs upon receipt of:

(a) A properly completed application for an original ORV registration; and

(b) The payment of all fees and taxes due at the time of application.

(6) The ORV registration must be carried on the vehicle for which it was issued at all times during its operation in this state.

(7) Off-road vehicle decals must be affixed to the off-road vehicle in a manner prescribed by the department.

(8) Unless exempt under RCW [46.09.420](#), any out-of-state operator of an off-road vehicle, when operating in this state, must comply with this chapter. If an ORV registration is required under this chapter, the out-of-state operator must obtain an ORV registration and decal or a temporary ORV use permit.

[2010 c 161 § 218; 2004 c 106 § 1; 2002 c 352 § 1; 1997 c 241 § 1; 1986 c 206 § 4; 1977 ex.s. c 220 § 6; 1972 ex.s. c 153 § 8; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 12. Formerly RCW [46.09.070](#).]

**Notes:**

**Effective date -- Intent -- Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session -- 2010 c 161:** See notes following RCW [46.04.013](#).

**Effective date -- 2004 c 106 § 1:** "Section 1 of this act takes effect with registrations that are due or become due November 1, 2004, or later." [2004 c 106 § 2.]

**Effective dates -- 2002 c 352:** "Sections 7, 9, and 28 of this act are effective with registrations that are due or will become due September 1, 2002, and thereafter. Section 26 of this act takes effect October 1, 2002. The remainder of this act takes effect July 1, 2002." [2002 c 352 § 30.]

**Effective date -- 1986 c 206:** See note following RCW [46.09.310](#).

**Purpose -- 1972 ex.s. c 153:** See RCW [79A.35.070](#).

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## 46.09.420

### Registrations and decals — Exemptions.

**\*\*\* CHANGE IN 2013 \*\*\* (SEE [1632-S.SL](#)) \*\*\***

ORV registrations and decals are required under this chapter except for the following:

(1) Off-road vehicles owned and operated by the United States, another state, or a political subdivision of the United States or another state.

(2) Off-road vehicles owned and operated by this state, a municipality, or a political subdivision of this state or the municipality.

(3) Off-road vehicles operated on agricultural lands owned or leased by the off-road vehicle owner or operator.

(4) Off-road vehicles owned by a resident of another state that have a valid ORV use permit or vehicle registration issued in accordance with the laws of the other state. This exemption applies only to the extent that a similar exemption or privilege is granted under the laws of that state.

(5) Off-road vehicles while being used for search and rescue purposes under the authority or direction of an appropriate search and rescue or law enforcement agency.

(6) Vehicles registered under chapter [46.16A](#) RCW or, in the case of nonresidents, vehicles validly registered for operation over public highways in the jurisdiction of the owner's residence.

[2011 c 171 § 26; 2010 c 161 § 217; 2004 c 105 § 9; 1986 c 206 § 3; 1977 ex.s. c 220 § 4; 1972 ex.s. c 153 § 6; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 10. Formerly RCW [46.09.050](#).]

**Notes:**

**Intent -- Effective date -- 2011 c 171:** See notes following RCW [4.24.210](#).

**Effective date -- Intent -- Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session -- 2010 c 161:** See notes following RCW [46.04.013](#).

**Effective date -- 1986 c 206:** See note following RCW [46.09.310](#).

**Purpose -- 1972 ex.s. c 153:** See RCW [79A.35.070](#).

#### 46.09.430

#### Use permits — Application requirements.

(1) The application for a temporary ORV use permit must be made by the owner or the owner's authorized representative to the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director on a form furnished or approved by the department. The application must contain:

- (a) The name and address of each owner of the off-road vehicle; and
- (b) Other information that the department may require.

(2) The owner or the owner's authorized representative shall sign the application for a temporary ORV use permit.

(3) The application for a temporary ORV use permit must be accompanied by the temporary ORV use permit fee required under RCW [46.17.400](#), in addition to any other fees or taxes due for the application.

(4) A temporary ORV use permit:

- (a) Is valid for sixty days; and
- (b) Must be carried on the vehicle for which it was issued at all times during its operation in this state.

[2010 c 161 § 219.]

**Notes:**

**Effective date -- Intent -- Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session -- 2010 c 161:** See notes following RCW [46.04.013](#).

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## 46.09.440

Prerequisite to operation.

Except as provided in this chapter, a person shall not operate an off-road vehicle within this state unless the off-road vehicle has been assigned an ORV registration or temporary ORV use permit and displays current decals and tabs as required under this chapter.

[2010 c 161 § 216; 1977 ex.s. c 220 § 3; 1972 ex.s. c 153 § 5; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 9. Formerly RCW [46.09.040](#).]

**Notes:**

**Effective date -- Intent -- Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session -- 2010 c 161:** See notes following RCW [46.04.013](#).

**Purpose -- 1972 ex.s. c 153:** See RCW [79A.35.070](#).

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## 46.09.450

Authorized and prohibited uses.

**\*\*\* CHANGE IN 2013 \*\*\* (SEE [1632-S.SL](#)) \*\*\***

(1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, it is lawful to operate an off-road vehicle upon:

(a) A nonhighway road and in parking areas serving designated off-road vehicle areas if the state, federal, local, or private authority responsible for the management of the nonhighway road authorizes the use of off-road vehicles; and

(b) A street, road, or highway as authorized under RCW [46.09.360](#).

(2) Operations of an off-road vehicle on a nonhighway road, or on a street, road, or highway as authorized under RCW [46.09.360](#), under this section is exempt from registration requirements of chapter [46.16A](#) RCW and vehicle lighting and equipment requirements of chapter [46.37](#) RCW.

(3) It is unlawful to operate an off-road vehicle upon a private nonhighway road if the road owner has not authorized the use of off-road vehicles.

(4) Nothing in this section authorizes trespass on private property.

(5) The provisions of RCW [4.24.210](#)(5) shall apply to public landowners who allow members of the public to use public facilities accessed by a highway, street, or nonhighway road for recreational off-road vehicle use.

[2011 c 171 § 27; 2010 c 161 § 221; 2006 c 212 § 2; 2005 c 213 § 4. Formerly RCW [46.09.115](#).]

**Notes:**

**Intent -- Effective date -- 2011 c 171:** See notes following RCW [4.24.210](#).

**Effective date -- Intent -- Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session -- 2010 c 161:** See notes following RCW [46.04.013](#).

**Findings--Construction--Effective date -- 2005 c 213:** See notes following RCW [46.09.300](#).

46.09.460

Operation by persons under thirteen.

**\*\*\* CHANGE IN 2013 \*\*\* (SEE [1632-S.SL](#)) \*\*\***

(1) Except as specified in subsection (2) of this section, no person under thirteen years of age may operate an off-road vehicle on or across a highway or nonhighway road in this state.

(2) Persons under thirteen years of age may operate an off-road vehicle on a nonhighway road designated for off-road vehicle use under the direct supervision of a person eighteen years of age or older possessing a valid license to operate a motor vehicle under chapter [46.20](#) RCW.

[2005 c 213 § 5. Formerly RCW [46.09.117](#).]

**Notes:**

**Findings--Construction--Effective date -- 2005 c 213:** See notes following RCW [46.09.300](#).

46.09.470

Operating violations — Exceptions.

**\*\*\* CHANGE IN 2013 \*\*\* (SEE [1632-S.SL](#)) \*\*\***

(1) Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, it is a traffic infraction for any person to operate any nonhighway vehicle:

- (a) In such a manner as to endanger the property of another;
- (b) On lands not owned by the operator or owner of the nonhighway vehicle without a lighted headlight and taillight between the hours of dusk and dawn, or when otherwise required for the safety of others regardless of ownership;
- (c) On lands not owned by the operator or owner of the nonhighway vehicle without an adequate braking device or when otherwise required for the safety of others regardless of ownership;
- (d) Without a spark arrester approved by the department of natural resources;
- (e) Without an adequate, and operating, muffling device which effectively limits vehicle noise to no more than eighty-six decibels on the "A" scale at fifty feet as measured by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) test procedure J 331a, except that a maximum noise level of one hundred and five decibels on the "A" scale at a distance of twenty inches from the exhaust outlet shall be an acceptable substitute in lieu of the Society of Automotive Engineers test procedure J 331a when measured:
- (i) At a forty-five degree angle at a distance of twenty inches from the exhaust outlet;
- (ii) With the vehicle stationary and the engine running at a steady speed equal to one-half of the manufacturer's maximum allowable ("red line") engine speed or where the manufacturer's maximum allowable engine speed is not known the test speed in revolutions per minute calculated as sixty percent of the speed at which maximum horsepower is developed; and
- (iii) With the microphone placed ten inches from the side of the vehicle, one-half way between the lowest part of the vehicle body and the ground plane, and in the same lateral plane as the rearmost exhaust outlet where the outlet of the exhaust pipe is under the vehicle;
- (f) On lands not owned by the operator or owner of the nonhighway vehicle upon the shoulder or inside bank or slope of any nonhighway road or highway, or upon the median of any divided highway;
- (g) On lands not owned by the operator or owner of the nonhighway vehicle in any area or in such a manner so as to unreasonably expose the underlying soil, or to create an erosion condition, or to injure, damage, or destroy trees, growing crops, or other vegetation;
- (h) On lands not owned by the operator or owner of the nonhighway vehicle or on any nonhighway road or trail, when these are restricted to pedestrian or animal travel;
- (i) On any public lands in violation of rules and regulations of the agency administering such lands; and
- (j) On a private nonhighway road in violation of RCW [46.09.450\(3\)](#).
- (2) It is a misdemeanor for any person to operate any nonhighway vehicle while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or a controlled substance.
- (3)(a) Except for an off-road vehicle equipped with seat belts and roll bars or an enclosed passenger compartment, it is a traffic infraction for any person to operate or ride an off-road vehicle on a nonhighway road without wearing upon his or her head a motorcycle helmet fastened securely while in motion. For purposes of this section, "motorcycle helmet" has the same meaning as provided

in RCW [46.37.530](#).

(b) Subsection (3)(a) of this section does not apply to an off-road vehicle operator operating on his or her own land.

(c) Subsection (3)(a) of this section does not apply to an off-road vehicle operator operating on agricultural lands owned or leased by the off-road vehicle operator or the operator's employer.

(4) It is not a traffic infraction to operate an off-road vehicle on a street, road, or highway as authorized under RCW [46.09.360](#) or [46.61.705](#).

[2011 c 171 § 28; 2011 c 121 § 4; 2006 c 212 § 3; 2005 c 213 § 3; 2003 c 377 § 1; 1979 ex.s. c 136 § 41; 1977 ex.s. c 220 § 10; 1972 ex.s. c 153 § 12; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 17. Formerly RCW [46.09.120](#).]

**Notes:**

**Rules of court:** Bail in criminal traffic offense cases -- Mandatory appearance -- CrRLJ 3.2.

**Reviser's note:** This section was amended by 2011 c 121 § 4 and by 2011 c 171 § 28, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW [1.12.025](#)(2). For rule of construction, see RCW [1.12.025](#)(1).

**Intent -- Effective date -- 2011 c 171:** See notes following RCW [4.24.210](#).

**Effective date -- 2011 c 121:** See note following RCW [46.04.363](#).

**Findings--Construction--Effective date -- 2005 c 213:** See notes following RCW [46.09.300](#).

**Effective date -- Severability -- 1979 ex.s. c 136:** See notes following RCW [46.63.010](#).

**Purpose -- 1972 ex.s. c 153:** See RCW [79A.35.070](#).

46.09.480

Additional violations — Penalty.

(1) No person may operate a nonhighway vehicle in such a way as to endanger human life.

(2) No person shall operate a nonhighway vehicle in such a way as to run down or harass any wildlife or animal, nor carry, transport, or convey any loaded weapon in or upon, nor hunt from, any nonhighway vehicle except by permit issued by the director of fish and wildlife under RCW [77.32.237](#): PROVIDED, That it shall not be unlawful to carry, transport, or convey a loaded pistol in or upon a nonhighway vehicle if the person complies with the terms and conditions of chapter [9.41](#) RCW.

(3) For the purposes of this section, "hunt" means any effort to kill, injure, capture, or purposely disturb a wild animal or bird.

(4) Violation of this section is a gross misdemeanor.

[2004 c 105 § 4; (2004 c 105 § 3 expired July 1, 2004); 2003 c 53 § 233; 1994 c 264 § 35; 1989 c 297 § 3; 1986 c 206 § 7; 1977 ex.s. c 220 § 11; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 18. Formerly RCW [46.09.130](#).]

**Notes:**

**Rules of court:** Bail in criminal traffic offense cases -- Mandatory appearance -- CrRLJ 3.2.

**Expiration dates -- Effective dates -- 2004 c 105 §§ 3-6:** "(1) Section 3 of this act expires July 1, 2004.

(2) Section 4 of this act takes effect July 1, 2004.

(3) Section 5 of this act expires June 30, 2005.

(4) Section 6 of this act takes effect June 30, 2005." [2004 c 105 § 11.]

**Intent -- Effective date -- 2003 c 53:** See notes following RCW [2.48.180](#).

**Effective date -- 1986 c 206:** See note following RCW [46.09.310](#).

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46.09.490

General penalty — Civil liability.

(1) Except as provided in RCW [46.09.470](#)(2) and [46.09.480](#) as now or hereafter amended, violation of the provisions of this chapter is a traffic infraction for which a penalty of not less than twenty-five dollars may be imposed.

(2) In addition to the penalties provided in subsection (1) of this section, the owner and/or the operator of any nonhighway vehicle shall be liable for any damage to property including damage to trees, shrubs, or growing crops injured as the result of travel by the nonhighway vehicle. The owner of such property may recover from the person responsible three times the amount of damage.

[2011 c 171 § 29; 1979 ex.s. c 136 § 42; 1977 ex.s. c 220 § 16; 1972 ex.s. c 153 § 16; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 24. Formerly RCW [46.09.190](#).]

**Notes:**

**Rules of court:** Monetary penalty schedule -- IRLJ 6.2.

**Intent -- Effective date -- 2011 c 171:** See notes following RCW [4.24.210](#).

**Effective date -- Severability -- 1979 ex.s. c 136:** See notes following RCW [46.63.010](#).

**Purpose -- 1972 ex.s. c 153:** See RCW [79A.35.070](#).

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## 46.09.500

Motor vehicle fuel excise taxes on fuel for nonhighway vehicles not refundable.

Motor vehicle fuel excise taxes paid on fuel used and purchased for providing the motive power for nonhighway vehicles shall not be refundable in accordance with the provisions of RCW [82.36.280](#) as it now exists or is hereafter amended.

[1977 ex.s. c 220 § 13; 1974 ex.s. c 144 § 1; 1972 ex.s. c 153 § 13; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 20. Formerly RCW [46.09.150](#).]

**Notes:**

**Purpose -- 1972 ex.s. c 153:** See RCW [79A.35.070](#).

## 46.09.510

Nonhighway and off-road vehicle activities program account.

The nonhighway and off-road vehicle activities program account is created in the state treasury. Moneys in this account are subject to legislative appropriation. The recreation and conservation funding board shall administer the account for purposes specified in this chapter and shall hold it separate and apart from all other money, funds, and accounts of the board. Grants, gifts, or other financial assistance, proceeds received from public bodies as administrative cost contributions, and any moneys made available to the state of Washington by the federal government for outdoor recreation may be deposited into the account.

[2007 c 241 § 15; 1995 c 166 § 11. Formerly RCW [46.09.165](#).]

**Notes:**

**Intent -- Effective date -- 2007 c 241:** See notes following RCW [79A.25.005](#).

## 46.09.520

Refunds from motor vehicle fund — Distribution — Use.

**\*\*\* CHANGE IN 2013 \*\*\* (SEE [1883-S.SL](#)) \*\*\***

(1) From time to time, but at least once each year, the state treasurer shall refund from the motor vehicle fund one percent of the motor vehicle fuel tax revenues collected under chapter [82.36](#) RCW, based on a tax rate of: (a) Nineteen cents per gallon of motor vehicle fuel from July 1, 2003, through June 30, 2005; (b) twenty cents per gallon of motor vehicle fuel from July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2007; (c) twenty-one cents per gallon of motor vehicle fuel from July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2009; (d) twenty-two cents per gallon of motor vehicle fuel from July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2011; and (e) twenty-three cents per gallon of motor vehicle fuel beginning July 1, 2011, and thereafter, less proper deductions for refunds and costs of collection as provided in RCW [46.68.090](#).

(2) The treasurer shall place these funds in the general fund as follows:

(a) Thirty-six percent shall be credited to the ORV and nonhighway vehicle account and administered by the department of natural resources solely for acquisition, planning, development, maintenance, and management of ORV, nonmotorized, and nonhighway road recreation facilities, and information programs and maintenance of nonhighway roads;

(b) Three and one-half percent shall be credited to the ORV and nonhighway vehicle account and administered by the department of fish and wildlife solely for the acquisition, planning, development, maintenance, and management of ORV, nonmotorized, and nonhighway road recreation facilities and the maintenance of nonhighway roads;

(c) Two percent shall be credited to the ORV and nonhighway vehicle account and administered by the parks and recreation commission solely for the acquisition, planning, development, maintenance, and management of ORV, nonmotorized, and nonhighway road recreation facilities; and

(d) Fifty-eight and one-half percent shall be credited to the nonhighway and off-road vehicle activities program account to be administered by the board for planning, acquisition, development, maintenance, and management of ORV, nonmotorized, and nonhighway road recreation facilities and for education, information, and law enforcement programs. The funds under this subsection shall be expended in accordance with the following limitations:

(i) Not more than thirty percent may be expended for education, information, and law enforcement programs under this chapter;

(ii) Not less than seventy percent may be expended for ORV, nonmotorized, and nonhighway road recreation facilities. Except as provided in (d)(iii) of this subsection, of this amount:

(A) Not less than thirty percent, together with the funds the board receives under RCW [46.68.045](#), may be expended for ORV recreation facilities;

(B) Not less than thirty percent may be expended for nonmotorized recreation facilities. Funds expended under this subsection (2)(d)(ii)(B) shall be known as Ira Spring outdoor recreation facilities funds; and

(C) Not less than thirty percent may be expended for nonhighway road recreation facilities;

(iii) The board may waive the minimum percentage cited in (d)(ii) of this subsection due to insufficient requests for funds or projects that score low in the board's project evaluation. Funds remaining after such a waiver must be allocated in accordance with board policy.

(3) On a yearly basis an agency may not, except as provided in RCW [46.68.045](#), expend more than ten percent of the funds it receives under this chapter for general administration expenses incurred in carrying out this chapter.

(4) During the 2009-2011 fiscal biennium, the legislature may appropriate such amounts as reflect the excess fund balance in the NOVA account to the department of natural resources to install consistent off-road vehicle signage at department-managed recreation sites, and to implement the recreation opportunities on department-managed lands in the Reiter block and Ahtanum state forest, and to the state parks and recreation commission. The legislature finds that the appropriation of funds from the NOVA account during the 2009-2011 fiscal biennium for maintenance and operation

of state parks or to improve accessibility for boaters and off-road vehicle users at state parks will benefit boaters and off-road vehicle users and others who use nonhighway and nonmotorized recreational facilities. The appropriations under this subsection are not required to follow the specific distribution specified in subsection (2) of this section.

[2010 1st sp.s. c 37 § 936; 2010 c 161 § 222. Prior: 2009 c 564 § 944; 2009 c 187 § 2; prior: 2007 c 522 § 953; 2007 c 241 § 16; 2004 c 105 § 6; (2004 c 105 § 5 expired June 30, 2005); prior: (2003 1st sp.s. c 26 § 920 expired June 30, 2005); 2003 1st sp.s. c 25 § 922; 2003 c 361 § 407; 1995 c 166 § 9; 1994 c 264 § 36; 1990 c 42 § 115; 1988 c 36 § 25; 1986 c 206 § 8; 1979 c 158 § 130; 1977 ex.s. c 220 § 14; 1975 1st ex.s. c 34 § 1; 1974 ex.s. c 144 § 3; 1972 ex.s. c 153 § 15; 1971 ex.s. c 47 § 22. Formerly RCW [46.09.170](#).]

**Notes:**

**Reviser's note:** This section was amended by 2010 c 161 § 222 and by 2010 1st sp.s. c 37 § 936, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW [1.12.025](#)(2). For rule of construction, see RCW [1.12.025](#)(1).

**Effective date -- 2010 1st sp.s. c 37:** See note following RCW [13.06.050](#).

**Effective date -- Intent -- Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session -- 2010 c 161:** See notes following RCW [46.04.013](#).

**Effective date -- 2009 c 564:** See note following RCW [2.68.020](#).

**Severability -- Effective date -- 2007 c 522:** See notes following RCW [15.64.050](#).

**Intent -- Effective date -- 2007 c 241:** See notes following RCW [79A.25.005](#).

**Expiration dates -- Effective dates -- 2004 c 105 §§ 3-6:** See note following RCW [46.09.480](#).

**Expiration date -- Severability -- Effective dates -- 2003 1st sp.s. c 26:** See notes following RCW [43.135.045](#).

**Severability -- Effective date -- 2003 1st sp.s. c 25:** See note following RCW [19.28.351](#).

**Findings--Part headings not law -- Severability -- 2003 c 361:** See notes following RCW [82.36.025](#).

**Effective dates -- 2003 c 361:** See note following RCW [82.08.020](#).

**Purpose -- Headings -- Severability -- Effective dates -- Application -- Implementation -- 1990 c 42:** See notes following RCW [82.36.025](#).

**Effective date -- 1986 c 206:** See note following RCW [46.09.310](#).

**Effective date -- 1975 1st ex.s. c 34:** "This 1975 amendatory act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety, the support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect July 1, 1975." [1975 1st ex.s. c 34 § 4.]

**Purpose -- 1972 ex.s. c 153:** See RCW [79A.35.070](#).

## 46.09.530

## Administration and distribution of off-road vehicle moneys.

**\*\*\* CHANGE IN 2013 \*\*\* (SEE [1632-S.SL](#)) \*\*\***

(1) After deducting administrative expenses and the expense of any programs conducted under this chapter, the board shall, at least once each year, distribute the funds it receives under RCW [46.68.045](#) and [46.09.520](#) to state agencies, counties, municipalities, federal agencies, nonprofit off-road vehicle organizations, and Indian tribes. Funds distributed under this section to nonprofit off-road vehicle organizations may be spent only on projects or activities that benefit off-road vehicle recreation on lands once publicly owned that come into private ownership in a federally approved land exchange completed between January 1, 1998, and January 1, 2005.

(2) The board shall adopt rules governing applications for funds administered by the recreation and conservation office under this chapter and shall determine the amount of money distributed to each applicant. Agencies receiving funds under this chapter for capital purposes shall consider the possibility of contracting with the state parks and recreation commission, the department of natural resources, or other federal, state, and local agencies to employ the youth development and conservation corps or other youth crews in completing the project.

(3) The board shall require each applicant for acquisition or development funds under this section to comply with the requirements of either the state environmental policy act, chapter [43.21C](#) RCW, or the national environmental policy act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 4321 et seq.).

[2010 c 161 § 223; 2007 c 241 § 17; 2004 c 105 § 7; 1998 c 144 § 1; 1991 c 363 § 122; 1986 c 206 § 9; 1977 ex.s. c 220 § 17. Formerly RCW [46.09.240](#).]

**Notes:**

**Effective date -- Intent -- Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session -- 2010 c 161:** See notes following RCW [46.04.013](#).

**Intent -- Effective date -- 2007 c 241:** See notes following RCW [79A.25.005](#).

**Purpose -- Captions not law -- 1991 c 363:** See notes following RCW [2.32.180](#).

**Effective date -- 1986 c 206:** See note following RCW [46.09.310](#).

## 46.09.900

## Severability — 1971 ex.s. c 47.

If any provision of this 1971 amendatory act, or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this 1971 amendatory act, or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

## APPENDIX D: 2005-2011 NOVA PLAN APPENDIX

### A. NOVA Program, A History

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#### 1. ATV Program: 1971 – 1978

In 1971 the Legislature created the state All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Program through language placed in Chapter 46.09 of the Revised Code of Washington. This law, as later amended, established a fund source for the development and management of "ATV recreation." At that time this was an all encompassing, generic term for motorized, off-highway recreation with motorcycles (trail bikes), four-wheel drive vehicles, and conventional automobiles when used on backcountry roadways. Since then, the term "ATV" has come to mean something entirely different. It now refers to a small, easy-to-straddle off-road vehicle (ORV) with three or four low-pressure tires.

The ATV Program was the result of two groups' interest in the state gasoline tax revenue generated from motor vehicle fuel consumed off of public highways. One group, mostly composed of state government agencies, noted that there were extensive road systems on state lands, namely those managed by the departments of Wildlife and Natural Resources, and the Parks and Recreation Commission. These road systems were open to the public, but built and maintained from funds other than the tax on motor vehicle fuels. The legislature wanted to divert a portion of motor fuel taxes to manage these "nonhighway roads."<sup>[5]</sup>

The other group looking at state gas tax revenues generated from motor fuel consumed off highways was a coalition of ORV enthusiasts. That group took a different tack to a similar goal. Under the terms of RCW 82.36.280 there is a general rule that a refund will be made on any taxes paid on motor fuel consumed off the "regular" public highway system. Refunds are made to boaters, farmers, and others for off-highway use of motor fuels under this section. The coalition wanted motor fuel taxes paid on fuel consumed by ORV vehicles to be diverted to programs benefiting the users.

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<sup>[5]</sup> It was determined that, although the State Constitution earmarks the gas tax for exclusive use for highway purposes, this does not mean that the money can only be used for city streets, county roads and public highways built or maintained by the state Department of Transportation. The term "public highway" appeared to be broad enough to include other roads constructed and maintained by public agencies. To clarify the issue, a new term -nonhighway roads (NHRs)- was coined. These are roads that are open to public use and are not constructed but may potentially be maintained, at least in part, with gas tax revenues. (In the early 1970s, only state and privately managed roads were classified as "nonhighway.")

Almost simultaneously, the state legislature and the ORV recreation coalition sought to divert some gasoline tax revenues from public highway programs to nonhighway and ORV programs. The result was the 1971 legislation that created the ATV Program.

Under the ATV Program, IAC distributed one percent of the fuel tax, along with a portion of the permit fees paid by ATV users. A block grant program helped state agencies in maintaining certain roadways, and assisted both state and local agencies in managing ATV recreation. IAC distributed nearly \$8 million dollars among 34 agencies between 1972 and 1978 under this program. Most of the ATV expenditures were for coordinators, site searches and plans, with less spent on land acquisition and development.

### **Fuel Use Study: 1972 – 1973**

In 1972-73 an All-Terrain Vehicle Fuel Use Study was conducted to help determine how much of the fuel tax should be diverted to the ATV Program. The study, conducted by the Research and Technology Division of the then Department of Motor Vehicles, examined how much gas tax revenue was generated from motor vehicle fuel consumed by recreational traffic on nonhighway roads <sup>[6]</sup> and by recreational use of ORVs. The study revealed that nonhighway recreational uses accounted for about 4.61 percent (77.9 million gallons) of the 1.7 billion total taxable gallons of motor fuel sold from July 1, 1972 through June 30, 1973.

While the study provided information on how much of the fuel tax should be dedicated to nonhighway recreation or ATV purposes, it did not provide detailed information about the proportions of fuel used by various types of ATV use. For example, the study did not separate fuel consumption between nonhighway roads and trails or privately managed lands; nor did it measure the amount of fuel used for recreation on federally managed nonhighway roads (national forests and national parks), on which significant recreation-related travel occurs. Results of the study did indicate that of the nonhighway-use fuel sold:

- 40.5 percent was used on state managed nonhighway roads;
- 28.5 percent was used on privately managed nonhighway roads and trails and lands; and
- 31.0 percent was used on state and federally managed trails/lands.

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<sup>[6]</sup> RCW 46.09.020 seems to define a nonhighway road broadly enough to include the popular routes leading to Paradise and Sunrise in Mt. Rainier National Park, Hurricane Ridge in Olympic National Park, and Windy Ridge in the Mt. St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. Across the state, nonhighway roads are used by recreationists to access rivers and forest lands (including trailheads, used predominately by equestrians, hikers, mountain bicyclists, off-road vehicle recreationists, and cross-country skiers). Nonhighway roads are also used by those who may never leave the vicinity of their vehicle while they enjoy the ride, a roadside viewpoint, picnic table, or a related support facility.

## 2. ORV Program: 1977 – 1986

By the mid-1970s, it became apparent that most of the agencies participating in the IAC-managed ATV Program were experiencing great difficulties in using the funds to achieve the program's objectives. Therefore, a coalition of recreation user groups and state agencies approached the 1977 Legislature requesting modifications to the All-Terrain Vehicle Act.

As a result, the legislature amended Chapter 46.09 RCW to create the Off-Road and Nonhighway Vehicles Act, better known as the ORV Act. A primary change in this legislation was the way ORV funds were distributed. Under the amended law, funds distributed by IAC shifted from a block grant method to one based on individual project merit. In other words, funding could only occur now after project sponsors had presented firm plans and commitments to provide ORV recreation.

The amount of motor vehicle fuel excise tax transferred to the ORV Program remained at one percent. The 4.61 percent level found in the fuel use study was not politically feasible to refund.

Under the 1977 Act, funding earmarked for the benefit of nonmotorized facilities, previously distributed by IAC, was now provided directly to the state agencies. The Department of Wildlife received 3.5 percent of the one percent refund "solely for the acquisition, planning, development, maintenance and management of nonhighway roads and recreation facilities." The Department of Natural Resources received 25 percent for the same purposes, plus another 20 percent "to be used only for the acquisition, planning, development, maintenance and management of designated ORV trails, areas and campgrounds."

In effect, IAC was out of the nonmotorized funding picture. It was charged solely with distributing the remaining 51.5 percent of the one percent to federal, state, and local agencies to manage ORV programs.

The first year of project-specific funding and allocation of the first state ORV grants to a federal agency (Wenatchee National Forest) was 1978. Projects funded in 1978 would prove to be an accurate prediction of program direction for the next several years: grants to counties emphasized planning, intensive use, education, and enforcement, while grants to state and federal agencies emphasized dispersed opportunities on trails. No requests were received from cities.

From 1978 through 1986, IAC administered \$9.7 million under the ORV Program for ORV recreation facilities and programs (Table 1).

<b>Table 1.</b>				
<b>IAC Administered ORV Program Funding (1978 - 1986)</b>				
<b>Agency Type</b>	<b>Off-Road Vehicle Projects</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>
	Education and Enforcement	Maintenance and Operation	Planning, Acquisition & Development	
Local	\$1,956,000	\$1,820,000	\$2,810,000	\$6,586,000
State	10,000	261,000	231,000	502,000
Federal	0	2,000	2,582,000	2,584,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,966,000</b>	<b>\$2,083,000</b>	<b>\$5,623,000</b>	<b>\$9,672,000</b>

### 3. NOVA Program: 1986 – 1993

As the mid-1980s approached, it again became apparent that more fine-tuning of the ORV legislation would be needed. The program had evolved to a point where a different user group was demanding to be heard—the "nonmotorized" recreationists. This group is composed primarily of individuals, such as hikers or equestrians, who use nonhighway roads (NHR) to access nonmotorized recreational opportunities on Department of Natural Resources or Forest Service roads to access trail heads. This group wanted a share of the funds for the acquisition and development of lands and facilities.

A second reason for modifying Chapter 46.09 RCW was to establish priorities among the agencies and user groups competing for funding under this grants program. A compromise for allocation of program funds, reached after months of intense debate, mandated that:

- IAC would receive 54.5 percent (instead of 51.5 percent) of the available funds for distribution for recreational nonmotorized facilities, ORV education and law enforcement activities, and recreational ORV facilities;
- The Department of Natural Resources would receive 40 percent for nonmotorized and ORV purposes (and divert 10 percent of its share to IAC for ORV law enforcement);
- The Department of Wildlife would continue to receive 3.5 percent for nonmotorized purposes; and
- The State Parks and Recreation Commission would receive 2 percent for ORV purposes.

A NOVA Program Advisory Committee, established by the 1986 Act (RCW 46.09.280), assists IAC in administration of its NOVA funds. The committee consists of nonmotorized and ORV recreationists, and local, state and federal agency representatives. Committee members provide valuable advice to IAC and represent the views and needs of the users, organizations and agencies that are affected by NOVA funding.

Between 1986 and 1993, IAC granted \$17.7 million for ORV recreation facilities and programs, and nonmotorized recreation facilities (Table 2).

<b>Table 2.</b>					
<b>IAC Administered NOVA Program Funding (1986 – 1993)</b>					
<b>Agency Type</b>	<b>Off-Road Vehicle Projects</b>			<b>Nonhighway Road Projects</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	Education and Enforcement	Maintenance and Operations	Planning, Acquisition & Development	Planning, Acquisition & Development	
Local	\$3,954,000	\$2,108,000	\$3,880,000	\$372,000	\$10,314,000
State	170,000	0	1,190,000	799,000	2,159,000
Federal	313,000	114,000	2,637,000	2,138,000	5,202,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,437,000</b>	<b>\$2,222,000</b>	<b>\$7,707,000</b>	<b>\$3,309,000</b>	<b>\$17,675,000</b>

In 1990, the Legislature raised the fuel tax \$.05 per gallon (from \$.18 to \$.23). At that time it also amended Chapter 46.09 RCW (and other recreational fuel tax refund statutes) to prevent any of the increase from being refunded to the NOVA Program. In effect, the legislature capped the refund, limiting it to the portion of the fuel tax rate in effect in 1990.

### **1992-93 Legislative Session**

1992 saw the first serious attempt to modify Chapter 46.09 RCW since the NOVA Program was created in 1986 and the NOVA fuel tax refund was "capped" in 1990. This attempt was embodied in Substitute Senate Bill 5319.

If passed into law, this bill would have lifted the 1990 cap imposed on fuel tax increases for both the NOVA Program and the IAC-managed Boating Facilities (Initiative 215) Program and given IAC discretion to move funds between ORV and nonmotorized categories. The amount of NOVA funds earmarked for E&E grants would have remained fixed at 20 percent.

Although passage of the bill would have increased the amount of NOVA funding, some NOVA stakeholders were concerned about changes to the funding apportionments. In a transportation committee hearing reflective of the contentious nature of the program, conflicting statements were made by apparently polarized NOVA interests—motorized interests opposed the proposal while most nonmotorized interests favored it.

Although the bill passed out of policy committees it never reached the floor of the Senate for a vote. Some observers believe that the bill survived early defeat because of the interest of Eastern Washington legislators in securing more funds for county ORV law enforcement efforts, and the considerable support of those benefiting from increases to the boating facilities funding.

**4. NOVA Program: 1994 - 2002**

In the period between adoption of the 1993 and 2002 Plans, the Program funded 289 NOVA projects totaling more that \$28 million dollars, including sponsoring agency contributions (Table 3).

<b>Table 3.</b>				
<b>IAC Administered NOVA Program Funding (1994 – 2002<sup>(1)</sup>)</b>				
<b>Funding Category</b>	<b># of Projects</b>	<b>IAC NOVA Funding</b>	<b>Sponsor Match</b>	<b>Total Value</b>
Education & Enforcement (ORV E&E)	59	\$5,302,511 <sup>(2)</sup>	\$1,875,150	\$7,177,622
Maintenance & Operations (ORV M&O)	58	4,688,742	2,926,934	7,615,676
Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Projects	81	7,260,020	974,859	8,234,879
Nonmotorized (NM) Projects	75	3,394,507	2,165,249	5,559,757
<b>Total</b>	<b>289<sup>(3)</sup></b>	<b>\$20,645,780</b>	<b>\$7,942,193</b>	<b>\$28,587,973</b>

<sup>(1)</sup> NOVA projects were not funded in 2002; funding meetings were rescheduled for March of succeeding years.

<sup>(2)</sup> Amount exceeds 20% [RCW 46.09.170(1)(d)(iii)] due to Dept. of Natural Resources transfers provided under RCW 46.09.170(1)(a)(v).

<sup>(3)</sup> Includes a formerly funded project type (“ORV support coordinator”). From 1979 – 1993 16 such projects were funded.

**5. NOVA Program: 2003 – 2005**

By 2001, interest in a new fuel use study had reached a peak, causing the legislature to direct IAC “...to determine the relative portion of motor vehicle fuel tax revenues attributable to vehicles operating off-road and on nonhighway roads for various recreational purposes directed”. The 12-month diary based survey was completed in February 2003 and signaled the beginning of another round of sweeping program changes.

A direct result of the presentation of “*Washington State Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Fuel Use Survey*”, prepared for IAC by Hebert Research, Inc., was passage of Substitute Senate Bill 1698, signed by the Governor on May 9, 2003. This law revised the NOVA Advisory Committee membership and directed that it make recommendations to the 2004 Legislature. In effect, the advisory committee was to review the NOVA Program distribution formulas and policies and make recommendations back to the Legislature consistent with the most recent fuel use study.

The resulting “*Report to the Legislature: Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program* (December 31, 2003) provided the recommendations summarized on page 5. These recommendations led to Substitute House Bill 2489, signed into law on March 24, 2004, which adopted the changes proposed in the *Report to the Legislature*. To complete the process, IAC adopted the related program policy manuals on September 14, 2004. By March 10, 2005, the first group of 71 projects under the revised law had been funded by IAC.

After the funding meeting of March 2005 (in which a record 109 projects were submitted for funding consideration), IAC changed the program’s schedule. In the future, funding meetings would be held in November, to synchronize the NOVA funding schedule with the majority of IAC’s grants programs. This meant there would be two NOVA funding meetings in 2005.

## **B. ORV Education, Information, and Law Enforcement History**

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The education and enforcement (E&E) category of the NOVA Program is established in RCW 46.09.170. Under the block grant ATV Program in effect in the early and mid-70s, no discrete law enforcement projects were funded. In 1977, however, the “ATV law” was changed to the “ORV” law and state ORV funds were no longer made available on a block grant basis. Instead, ORV funds were distributed on a competitive project basis. That year, the first education-oriented grant was made.

Between 1978 and 1985, education and enforcement grant applications competed with all other ORV project applications. The number and amount of education and law enforcement grants grew quickly. In late 1985, concern was expressed about the amount of funding used for E&E activities. E&E funding had increased over 75 percent between 1984 and 1985 (Table 4). In fact, grant dollars awarded to E&E projects over a six-year period had increased 500 percent. As one result, IAC adopted an administrative guideline to limit E&E grants to \$45,000 per full-time equivalent (FTE).



<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b># Projects</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b># Projects</b>
1979	\$101,000	3	1989	-	-
1980	146,000	5	1990	\$749,000	18
1981	146,000	4	1991	685,000	16
1982	242,000	5	1992	798,000	16
1983	370,000	7	1993	599,000	12
1984	316,000	7	1994	1,280,342	15
1985	559,000	9	1995 <sup>†</sup>	1,356,311	15
1986	562,000	10	1997	1,412,578	15
1978	679,000	14	1999	1,459,036	14
1988	606,000	14	2002 <sup>‡</sup>	1,585,000	14

Note: In November 1989 a new schedule of deadlines was adopted which moved the E&E funding meeting from November to March of each year. To account for the additional time needed to carry projects through to the next funding meeting in March of 1990, three months of supplementary funding support was added to each 1988 project. (Funding meeting dates were also changed in 1997 and 2002.)

<sup>†</sup> 1995 marks the beginning of the biennial funding cycle.

<sup>‡</sup> 2002-2003 funding is an estimate based on 14 E&E applications requesting \$1,585,000.

Until 1986, 50% of the ORV dollars managed by IAC could be allocated to the E&E category. That year, the NOVA legislation was amended, in part to limit E&E funding from IAC's NOVA apportionment (54.5 percent of total) to no more than 20 percent. Another provision, made during last-minute negotiations among various interests, had the Department of Natural Resources return 10 percent of its direct NOVA appropriation to IAC for E&E grants in those counties where DNR managed ORV facilities.

The *1987 Washington State Off-Road Vehicle Plan* recommended "E&E projects give priority to proposals that demonstrate a primary focus on the education and safety of ORV users, and the promotion of a responsible outdoor ethic."

NOVA funding supports a wide variety of education and enforcement activities. Some sheriff's departments, such as those in Chelan and Yakima counties, put uniformed officers in the field to contact enthusiasts on trails and in campgrounds.

An increasing number of USDA, Forest Service sponsors receive NOVA funding for seasonal trail rangers who perform education and enforcement. The Forest Service looks to these rangers to help manage use on federal lands, especially as new or improved facilities such as trails and camps have increased in numbers and management challenges.

The Department of Natural Resources also competes with other sponsors for E&E funding. The agency is increasingly faced with "urban problems" on its lands. Vandalism, shootings, and other illegal activities have forced DNR to request funding for its own law enforcement personnel.

In previous years, non-enforcement programs, such as those in Snohomish County (1990-92) and the Tacoma Metropolitan Park District, have used NOVA funds to support ORV education and awareness activities (no law enforcement elements). These agencies emphasized in-school and pick-up- and-ride programs to teach the fundamentals of environmental sensitivity and riding safety to young people.

Other miscellaneous E&E activities are not easily categorized. Examples include publication of the *Washington ORV Guide* (a reference of places to ride, legal requirements, and riding etiquette), displays at the Puyallup Fair (a major booth at the state's most-attended exposition), and an ORV curriculum project (development of a standardized education "package" for program sponsors).

## 2002 Issues

Education and enforcement and maintenance and operations grants were streamlined in 1995 from annual funding to a biennial cycle.

Since the 1993 Plan update a few long standing county participants in the E&E program have dropped out:

- Kittitas County, 18 projects from 1978-1999, none thereafter.
- Thurston County, 14 projects from 1978-1991, none thereafter.
- Pierce County, 6 projects from 1985-1992, none thereafter.

One reason for these departures from the program is the difficulty in finding qualified deputies to work only six months each year.

Longstanding program participants are:

- U.S. Forest Service, 45 projects from 1987-2001.
- Yakima County, 25 projects from 1978-2001.
- Chelan County, 23 projects from 1978-2001.
- Grant County, 15 projects from 1983-2001.
- Washington State Department of Natural Resources, 17 projects from 1993-2001.
- Mason County, 13 projects from 1985-2001.

## 2004 Changes

Before the 2004 legislative session, chapter 46.09 of the Revised Code of Washington authorized use of funds only for ORV user education and information and law enforcement programs. In the 2004 legislative session,

DRAFT (September 2013)

and in accord with NOVA Advisory Committee recommendations, “ORV” was removed from the mandate, thus effectively allowing NOVA E&E projects to address other NOVA activities: equestrian and hiking.

### **C. ORV Facility Planning, Acquisition, and Development History**

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Off-road vehicle activity began modestly in the years immediately following World War II, when surplus military vehicles came into use for recreational purposes. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, ORV recreation exhibited rapid growth.

The increase in recreational use of ORVs quickly came into conflict with a decided lack of developed facilities designed and sanctioned for ORV use. Because of this, ORV use often negatively impacted communities or neighborhoods, land and resources, and other forms of recreation.

The initial lack of facilities forced ORV use into a difficult position—the most visible use was unsanctioned and therefore not widely accepted by the public. Virtually all ORV use quickly became identified in the public mind with objectionable behavior—whether an unlicensed youth riding an unmuffled motorcycle on a vacant lot, or intense ORV use heavily impacting vegetation on public or private land.

Most recreation-providing agencies, especially at the local level, did not have the resources necessary to plan or provide ORV facilities. One key resource initially in short supply was funding.

Under the ATV Program, IAC distributed about \$8 million in block grants to 31 counties and to the Department of Game (now Fish and Wildlife), the Department of Natural Resources, and the State Parks and Recreation Commission. Funds were distributed according to the ORV facility inventory of a given area.

Dissatisfaction with a perceived lack of accountability in the "inventory-driven" block grant program led to the formation of a user-oriented task force to review the ATV Program. Coordinated by IAC, the task force included the Northwest Motorcycle Association, the Pacific Northwest Four-Wheel Drive Association, and the Department of Natural Resources. The task force's efforts resulted in important changes to Chapter 46.09 RCW in 1977, including the creation of a project-specific grant program, which allowed grants explicitly for planning, land acquisition, and facility development.

Since the late 1970s, IAC has committed about \$33.2 million in funding for ORV planning, acquisition, and development projects under the ORV

Program, and later the NOVA Program.

Historically, land acquisition projects have not played a very large role in the NOVA Program. For example, there were only 9 acquisition projects funded between 1978 and 1993. Only 5 projects were funded between 1994 and 2000. Nearly all of these projects were submitted by the State Department of Natural Resources to acquire leases for recreation facilities, such as trails and campgrounds.

#### **D. ORV and Nonmotorized Facility Maintenance and Operation History**

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ORV and nonmotorized (NM) recreation facilities include trails, trailheads, campgrounds, and day use areas. Owning and managing these facilities involves many ongoing responsibilities, including trail clearing, outhouse and picnic table repair, fire and weed control, fence and sign repair, and visitor management. Ideally, maintenance and operation should achieve a standard that, among other things, protects the resource and visitor, preserves functionality, satisfies legal requirements, and minimizes long-term capital costs.

The NOVA Program has the ability to fund management of ORV and nonmotorized facilities. Because IAC is given the discretion to use NOVA funds for capital and management purposes, it must decide the most beneficial uses. Thus, due to the relative scarcity of nonmotorized funds before the 2004 changes to the funding formula, and until adoption of the 2002 Plan, IAC policy did not allow the granting of funds to nonmotorized maintenance and operation projects.

Since 1978, the vast majority of IAC's maintenance and operation support has gone to local agencies to assist intensive use areas—ORV sport parks.

In the late 1980s at least three factors contributed to increased demand for NOVA's maintenance and operation funding:

- Completion of a third IAC-funded sport park in Spokane County. ORV sport parks have traditionally received the vast majority of their management funding from IAC. After completion, and despite initial assurances that its facility would be self-supporting, Spokane's sport park began competing with facilities in Thurston County and Richland for M&O dollars.
- Shifting of tasks previously funded under the Education and Enforcement (E&E) category. It became increasingly apparent that many dimensions of proposed projects, previously funded as E&E, were maintenance and operation responsibilities. These tasks were separated out and shifted to projects seeking maintenance and operations funding.

- Increase in Forest Service sponsored maintenance and operations projects. Forest plans identify NOVA as a potential funding source for management of its dispersed ORV opportunities.

## 2002 Update

*Sport Parks.* For the 2000-01 period, maintenance and operation grant requests from Spokane County for its Airway Heights ORV Sport Park decreased substantially. For that period, it requested and received \$64,820 for a tractor/backhoe and general-liability insurance. No funding was requested for general maintenance and operations, even though considerable funding had been granted for these purposes previously: \$207,898 (1994-95), \$207,301 (1996-97), \$104,375 (1998-99).

Early in 1999, a private party was engaged to operate the park on behalf of the county with its full range of ORV activities and events: open 10 months of the year (10 AM to dusk, seven days a week), including a four-wheel drive course, mud-bog, sand drags, asphalt racing, oval dirt racing, motocross track and overnight camping. In addition to providing the majority of the overhead expenses required to operate the park, the contractor was obligated to provide an estimated annual in kind contribution of \$50,000 to Spokane County, reflected in the form of the two year "Sponsor Match" of \$100,000 for the IAC grant.

*Forest Service Trails.* Maintenance and operation grants to the U.S. Forest Service have increased dramatically since the 1993 Plan:

- 1984-1993, 11 grants, during 10 years, an average of 1.1 grants/year.
- 1994-1999, 35 grants, during 6 years, an average of 5.8 grants/year.
- 2000-2005, 45 grants, during 6 years, an average of 7.5 grants/year.

There are two reasons for this increase. The first is the removal of a policy affecting maintenance and operations funding to the Forest Service. Before 1991, the policy limited the Forest Service to all but the most rudimentary and low cost trail maintenance, such as spring trail removing debris that would blow/fall down over the winter. Until that time, IAC's priority was to support new trail development, of which the Forest Service provided many proposals for IAC to fund:

- 1978-2000, 87 development projects funded, an average of 4 projects/year.
- 1978-1993, 58 development projects, an average of 3.9 projects/year.
- 1994-2000, 29 development projects, an average of 4.8 projects/year.
- 2001-2005, 35 development projects, an average of 7 projects/year.

From these numbers, it appears funded development projects actually increased (from an average of 3.9 to 7 projects per year). However, sometimes there is a fine line between defining a project as maintenance and operations or renovation. Since 1993, IAC has funded 91 ORV development projects, about 25% of which provided new opportunities. The remaining 52 projects either renovated an existing site or made improvements such as bridging creeks to allow the existing use to continue without harming the environment.

Renovation projects rarely run into environmental opposition (i.e. lawsuits, internal concerns expressed by agency biologists, etc.) when the Forest Service is completing its checklist to determine whether or not the project should proceed on to IAC's funding process. Correcting environmental problems on existing trails was the primary reason the majority of these projects were brought to IAC.

The second reason for the increase in IAC NOVA funding to the Forest Service are the severe cutbacks in federal funding. These cutbacks have resulted in more applications to IAC. Just one example of the several reductions the Forest Service's recreation programs have suffered involves timber revenues. Historically, Region 6's (Oregon and Washington) has received greater recreation funding than the other regions. This was due to a vigorous timber program that was able to financially support some recreation improvements such as trailheads. More importantly, however, is that timber revenues also funded the bulk of overhead costs, such as computers, office space, and support staff.

Because of economic concerns regarding impacts on rural communities the Forest Service budgets in Region 6 were maintained at higher levels than in the rest of the nation. In 2002, however, the regional foresters decided to level the funding throughout the nation. This resulted in serious budget reductions in the recreation program in 2004, 2005, and 2006. These reductions have hit the local ranger districts particularly hard with reductions in the range of 30% each year.

## **2005 Update**

In 2002, Thurston County closed the Thurston-Grays Harbor Counties' ORV sport park, citing a need to maintain and improve parks that benefit local residents. Also cited were concerns about liability following the deaths of two people. Until the closure, the County had operated one of only three publicly owned competition parks in the state assisted with NOVA funds.

The other two are in Spokane County and Richland.

IAC, which had provided the principal source of funding for the park's acquisition, development, and maintenance, cited serious concerns that the county had violated its NOVA contracts by closing the park. As a result, and after multiple attempts over a two-year period to negotiate the reopening of the park, the state filed a lawsuit in 2004 requesting that a judge decide the

rights and responsibilities of both the county and the state in this matter. In

2005, however, the Legislature adopted a budget proviso [section 303(4), ESSB6090] that resolved the matter by directing pursuit of one of two options:

- Thurston and Grays Harbor counties could sell the property with the proceeds to be reinvested in opportunities for off-road vehicles in Western Washington; or
- Thurston and Grays Harbor counties could transfer ownership of the property to another local or state agency for ORV recreation purposes.

In September 2005, Thurston County transferred ownership of its portion of the park to Grays Harbor County (GHC) and it was reopened in October 2005.

#### **E. Nonhighway Road and Nonmotorized Categories Facility Planning, Acquisition, and Development History**

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Until 1986, the ORV Program, predecessor to today's NOVA Program, funded motorized projects only. That year, Chapter 46.09 of the Revised Code of Washington was amended to allow the funding of nonmotorized projects. Later, in 2004, the law was again amended, this time to allow funding of projects that primarily benefit recreationists who are not trail users, but rather those who stay close to the nonhighway roads, such as anglers, gatherers (berry pickers, rock hounds, wood cutters, etc.), sightseers, etc. The rationale for these amendments is that recreationists pay taxes on fuel when they use nonhighway roads for recreational purposes, thereby contributing to this fuel tax-supported program.

*A nonhighway road, as defined by Chapter 46.09 RCW is:*

*"... owned or managed by a public agency, or any private road for which the owner has granted an easement for public use for which appropriations from the motor vehicle fund were not used for (a) original*

*construction or reconstruction in the last 25 years; or (b) maintenance in the last four years."*

An example of a "typical" nonhighway road is a federal or state logging road. These roads are built and maintained by timber receipts, general fund appropriations, and (for roads managed by the Departments of Natural Resources or Wildlife) NHR monies from Chapter 46.09 RCW. Additionally, NHRs also include roads within state forests and parks as well as national parks and forest lands.

Until 2004, Chapter 46.09 RCW limited IAC's Nonmotorized Category project funding to 20 percent of its total NOVA fund in any given year. Through 2001, this amounted to about \$400,000 to \$600,000 per year. Until completion of the 2002 NOVA Plan, IAC allocated nonmotorized funds to capital and planning projects. Grants for maintenance and operation projects were not allowed.

### **2001-2005 Update**

Since 1994, IAC funded 81 nonmotorized and nonhighway road development projects, a minority of which provided new opportunities while most renovated existing facilities or completed such projects as trail bridges. Through the years, most nonmotorized programs have shifted from a focus on development projects (pre-1994) to a focus on renovations (post-1993). Volunteer labor contributions have become very significant since 1993. There are a variety of reasons for this, including the federal downsizing of support for maintenance.

## Attachment B: DRAFT NOVA Plan Comments Received

Draft NOVA plan October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
<p><b>Support for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Protecting NOVA funding;</b></li> <li>• <b>Prioritizing maintenance;</b></li> <li>• <b>Re-evaluating prioritizing projects near population centers;</b></li> <li>• <b>Examining how NOVA and RTP could complement each other</b></li> <li>• <b>Prioritizing funding for projects that reduce environmental impact and best support the needs of the recreation communities.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Concern about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prioritizing funding for projects that are designated as statewide trails, when this designation process has not yet been codified.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft 2013 - 2018 Washington NOVA Plan. Washington Trails Association (WTA) is the leading advocacy, trail maintenance and education organization for hikers in Washington State. With more than 12,000 members and 3,000 volunteers statewide we are the voice for Washington's hikers working toward safe, accessible and enjoyable hiking opportunities throughout the state. WTA has a long history of working to ensure the Non-highway Road and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Program is a viable and successful mechanism for funding trail maintenance projects and enhancing the trail experiences of non-motorized recreationalists.</p> <p>Upon review the draft plan WTA is pleased by several of the recommendations, including the desire to protect NOVA funding to augment additional recreation and trail maintenance funding opportunities. In a time when funding continues to dwindle, we applaud RCO's commitment to this important program. WTA is also encouraged to see that NOVA will continue to prioritize projects that focus on trail maintenance. As the number for non-motorized recreational users in Washington continues to grow, having a sustainable, well maintained, trail system for them to enjoy safely becomes increasingly important.</p> <p>We would also like to echo the plan's recommendation to re-evaluate prioritizing projects near population centers. The non-highway users and non-motorized recreationalists, whose gas tax generates the funds for NOVA, are traveling non-highway roads primarily to get outside of urban centers. It makes sense then that the dispersal of these funds should support backcountry experiences, in order to provide opportunities similar to those being sought while traveling non-highway roads.</p>

Draft NOVA plan October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>Finally, while it makes sense for the NOVA program to complement the Recreational Trails Program, this does not mean it needs to have the same funding goals; rather they should work to build a complimentary statewide trail system that features quality backcountry trails as well as close in recreation opportunities. It seems imprudent to prioritize funding for projects that are designated as statewide trails, when this designation process has not yet been codified. WTA encourages ROC to continue to focus prioritizing funding for projects that reduce environmental impact and best support the needs of the recreation communities.</p> <p>Thank you for giving WTA a chance to comment on this plan. If you would like additional information or clarification please do not hesitate to contact us.</p> <p>Kindra Ramos Interim Advocacy Director – Washington Trails Association</p>
<p><b>Concern about funding formula in NOVA program.</b></p>	<p>I adamantly oppose the use of any NOVA funds to support any form of non-motorized recreation.</p> <p>I suggest that you tax bicyclists and hikers separately to fund their sport. I have to license all of my motorized sport vehicles including ATVs, UTVs, snowmobiles, and motorcycles, and I pay gas tax for all the fuel that I use. Let the non-motorized recreationists SHARE THE PAIN along with the roads and trails. What part of Non-highway Off-road Vehicles Activities (NOVA) don't you understand.</p> <p>Edward Surette, President; Mountain Trails Grooming Association Board Member; North Central ATV Club Winthrop, WA</p>
<p><b>Support for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use of NOVA funds to obtain legal</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I strongly support the concept of using NOVA funds to obtain legal public access through private lands to existing public lands, trails, and recreation roads. This is a</li> </ul>

Draft NOVA plan October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
<p><b>public access through private lands to existing public lands, trails, and recreation roads.</b></p> <p><b>Concern about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Obtaining full 1% of the gas tax for the NOVA program.</b></li> <li>• <b>Program efficiency and streamlining.</b></li> </ul>	<p>huge priority in SW Washington where numerous public trails, and tens of thousands of acres of public land, and hundreds of miles of public non-highway roads are landlocked by private companies. For example, in Cowlitz County an entire 38,000-acre DNR state forest is landlocked by Weyerhaeuser Company. We also have an 7,000-acres state wildlife area that is landlocked, as well as three Mount St. Helens National Monument trailheads that are behind private timber company gates. The Toutle Valley Community Assoc. has made legal public access to these public lands it's highest priority for improving quality of life, and economic development. These huge areas are access by non-highway roads, but aren't eligible for NOVA under RCO's current guidelines for "control and tenure". I personally have lobbied the DNR, Weyerhaeuser, Cowlitz County Commissioners, the Forest Service and our state reps to find a way to gain legal public access and grant eligibility. It's almost a Catch-22. <u>Our community couldn't apply for NOVA grants because the public land has no legal access, but we really needed a NOVA grant to get that access in the first place.</u> It is imperative that the RCO change policies (see below from pg. 47) to allow NOVA funds to be used to gain access to landlocked lands, trails, and non-highway recreation roads. No more efficient use of funding could ever be conceived since these lands, roads and trails already exist in the public domain—the public just can't get to them!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>I would strongly support this idea being incorporated into RCO policy for both NOVA and Trails.</b> Pg. 47 "A number of NOVA Advisory Committee members stated that road closures by private landowners, particularly timber companies, were shutting off access to existing trails. One respondent recommended using that agencies use NOVA funds to purchase public access across private lands".</li> <li>• Federal, state, or county agencies should be able to use NOVA funds to obtain public access to existing public lands, roads, or facilities. (NOVA currently says funds cannot be used for federal land acquisition.) Easement or access acquisition needs to be included in its own category.</li> </ul>

Draft NOVA plan October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RCO should push to gain the full 1% of the gas tax for the NOVA program.</li> <li>• The whole plan lacks measures to ensure efficient use of funds. Review and audit all the grant, administrative, and paperwork requirements. Prioritize projects that put funding on the ground. Reduce the administrative burden. Streamline the process more, even if it means less data, precision, or RCO involvement.</li> </ul> <p>Darcy Mitchem Toutle, WA</p>
<b>Concern about funding formula in NOVA program.</b>	<p>FUNDS FOR OHV,ATV &amp; OTHER MOTER VEHICALS SHOULD RECIEVE THE MAJORITY BECAUSE THEY ARE THE ONES CONTRUBTING THRU THER TAXS</p> <p>Marla &amp; Jerry Stephenson</p>
<b>Concern about funding formula in NOVA program.</b>	<p>I feel that the allocation of funds is subverting the entire ORV community. While NOVA income comes from the ORV community, hardly any is used to preserve, maintain and protect them. As stated,</p> <p>"NOVA funding comes from ORV permits and a portion of the state gasoline tax paid by users of ORVs and nonhighway roads (roads not supported by state fuel taxes), which include Forest and National Park Service roads. About 1% of all state fuel tax revenues go into the NOVA account." -Washington State NOVA Draft Plan</p> <p>Why then is the focus of NOVA against the people who fund it? Why do I see my money supporting an organization that has no intent on supporting my activities? As I ponder these questions I am also reminded of the heritage of NOVA, an organization founded by ORV enthusiasts.</p> <p>I am disheartened by this new draft plan. I only wish to receive the fair support of the foundation for which I have been funding for years.</p>

Draft NOVA plan October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>I wish to mention, not only am I a proud ORV enthusiast, but a proud non-motorized activity enthusiast as well. As a general avid outdoorsman, I have no objection for paying a fee to support any one of my other activities whether is be kayaking, hiking, mountain biking, etc. So long as the fees I pay to enjoy those types of recreation goes to support those activities in their respective recreational "categories".</p>
<p><b>Concern about funding formula in NOVA program.</b></p>	<p>I am a avid off highway motorcycle rider and would like to add my comments to the discussion. It is my understanding that NOVA funding comes from ORV tabs and the portion of the gas tax estimated to be generated by ORV's.</p> <p>If that is the case, why don't we get what we are paying for? Do any of the "other" user groups pay tabs for their horses, bicycles, hiking boots, etc?</p> <p>In the last few years Washington State has implemented the discover pass, this is a step in the right direction because at least these other user groups are finally paying something. Interestingly enough, we are required to purchase a forest pass in addition to paying tabs on ORV's. I just want to make sure that funds generated by the motorized community are used to enhance motorized recreation!</p> <p>Treyce Hart</p>
<p><b>Support for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stakeholder recommendations, generally.</b></li> <li>• <b>Education and enforcement being structured so that it is similar to the agency proportions for operations and maintenance.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Concern about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Funding formula in NOVA</b></li> </ul>	<p>I general I support the stakeholder recommendations, and share the sentiments expressed by below Mrs. Driscoll below.</p> <p>"I have been seeking out the history of this program since 2008 and talked with folks from all forms of recreation interest and state agency staff regarding this subject. And it has become quite clear to me that there has been a trend since the mid to late 1970's to reduce motorized recreation through questionable funding reductions resulting in the implementation of ORV tabs in order to help make up a once realized funding level and policies that have reduced a once abundant statewide access to a handful of concentrated locations that have only served to accent "damage" adding to a cultural sentiment that seeks</p>

Draft NOVA plan October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
<p><b>program.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Access to motorized recreation.</b></li> </ul>	<p>to further "restrict use" rather than "disperse" it in a way that makes the natural riding trails less disturbed or sustainable. This trend has also redirected public recreation interests because of the now limited opportunities for motorized recreation, yet we maybe failing to recognize that the largest population demographic is aging and entering their mobility challenges and in need of what the Department of Justice has mandated in 2010 to allow trail access for 'other power-driven mobility devices'."</p> <p>My other suggestive comment is that the "education and enforcement" be structured similar to the agency proportions for operations and maintenance. This would help to hedge against laying staff off in the event of another NOVA sweep by future legislative action.</p> <p>Ted Jackson, Sultan, WA</p>
<p><b>Concern about funding formula in NOVA program.</b></p>	<p>I am an avid off highway motorcycle rider and would like to add my comments to the discussion. It is my understanding that NOVA funding comes from ORV tabs and the portion of the gas tax estimated to be generated by ORV's. If that is the case, why don't we get what we are paying for? Do any of the "other" user groups pay tabs for their horses, bicycles, hiking boots, etc?</p> <p>In the last few years Washington State has implemented the discover pass, this is a step in the right direction because at least these other user groups are finally paying something. Interestingly enough, we are required to purchase a forest pass in addition to paying tabs on ORV's. I just want to make sure that funds generated by the motorized community are used to enhance motorized recreation!</p> <p>Maybe Tim Eyman should start a new petition to allocate the money appropriately back to the payer of the Nova Fund.</p>

Draft NOVA plan October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>Tim Rogers Bothell, WA</p>
<p><b>Concern about funding formula in NOVA program.</b></p>	<p>My husband and I are senior's and our UTV is our source of enjoyment. We are unable to hike or ride horses now so we really appreciate our UTV and the trails and roads available here in the Okanogan County area.</p> <p>We are asking you to Please make sure funds generated by the motorized community are used to enhance motorized recreation and multiple-use trails - not just hiking trails.</p> <p>Rodney and Marie Maberry Omak, WA</p>
<p><b>Support for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stakeholder recommendations, generally.</b></li> <li>• <b>Keeping the NOVA fund priorities on motorized and multi-use trails.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Concern about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Funding for NOVA program.</b></li> <li>• <b>Funding formula in NOVA program.</b></li> </ul>	<p>I would like to provide comments re: the draft Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicles Activities (NOVA) Plan 2013-2018.</p> <p>I agree in principle with the Stakeholder Recommendations, but am very concerned that the priorities of the NOVA grants will be changed to reflect the SCORP participation rates: 86% nonmotorized and 16% motorized recreation.</p> <p>NOVA was created by off-road (ORV) users to provide grants to develop, maintain and manage trails and nonhighway road systems. A fuel-use study estimated 4.6 percent of the state fuel tax was generated by ORV use. In lieu of receiving a fuel-tax refund, in 1973 ORV users asked the Legislature to put the money into this special account. They also voluntarily agreed to an ORV permit, with the fees also going into the NOVA account.</p> <p>The funds are to be used to manage, create and maintain motorized off-road recreation. By law, the funds are to be used 70% to motorized recreation and 30% to multi-use recreation.</p>

Draft NOVA plan October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	<p>NOVA has been a great program for every type of trail user, including but not limited to: ORV's, mountain bikers, hikers and backcountry horsemen. More than \$76 million has been provided through NOVA for over 1,000 projects throughout Washington. Grant recipients have also voluntarily contributed more than \$27 million in matching resources.</p> <p>Any attempt to use the SCORP findings to reprioritize the funds away from motorized recreation will be met with resistance by the off-road community. (Recall the uprising and lawsuit in 2009 when the Legislature swept the NOVA account and handed the money to State Parks?)</p> <p>We see the NOVA account as ORV money, to be used to fund our sport. Simply put, we pay to play – and have willingly done so for decades, unlike many nonmotorized user groups.</p> <p>Please keep the NOVA fund priorities on motorized and multi-use trails.</p> <p>Tom Stever, Service Advisor, I-90 Motorsports, Issaquah, WA</p>
<p><b>Support for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stakeholder recommendations, generally.</b></li> <li>• <b>Keeping the NOVA fund priorities on motorized and multi-use trails.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Concern about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Funding for NOVA program.</b></li> </ul>	<p>I would like to provide comments re: the draft Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicles Activities (NOVA) Plan 2013-2018.</p> <p>I agree in principle with the Stakeholder Recommendations, but am very concerned that the priorities of the NOVA grants will be changed to reflect the SCORP participation rates: 86% nonmotorized and 16% motorized recreation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The motorized community is most likely under-represented in the SCORP study. In general, ATV/ORV users ride with their friends and family; they do not belong to ATV/ORV clubs or organizations and certainly lack the fund-raising outreach</li> </ul>

Draft NOVA plan October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Funding formula in NOVA program.</b></li> </ul>	<p>and paid staff of the nonmotorized community such as Sierra Club, Washington Trails Association, Conservation Northwest, Trout Unlimited, and others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nonetheless, NOVA was created by off-road (ORV) users to provide grants to develop, maintain and manage trails and nonhighway road systems. A fuel-use study estimated 4.6 percent of the state fuel tax was generated by ORV use. In lieu of receiving a fuel-tax refund, in 1973 ORV users asked the Legislature to put the money into this special account. They also voluntarily agreed to an ORV permit, with the fees also going into the NOVA account.</li> </ul> <p><b>The funds are to be used to manage, create and maintain motorized off-road recreation. By law, the funds are to be used 70% to motorized recreation and 30% to multi-use recreation.</b></p> <p>NOVA has been a great program for every type of trail user, including ORV users, mountain bikers, hikers and backcountry horsemen. More than \$76 million has been provided through NOVA for over 1,000 projects throughout Washington. Grant recipients have also voluntarily contributed more than \$27 million in matching resources.</p> <p>Any attempt to use the SCORP findings to <i>reprioritize</i> the funds away from motorized recreation will be met with fierce resistance by the off-road community. (Recall the uprising and lawsuit in 2009 when the Legislature swept the NOVA account and handed the money to State Parks?)</p> <p>We see the NOVA account as our money, to be used to fund our sport. Simply put, we pay to play – and have willingly done so for decades, unlike many nonmotorized user groups.</p> <p>Please keep the NOVA fund priorities on motorized and multi-use trails.</p> <p>Linda Driscoll</p>

Draft NOVA plan October 2013	
Topic/Question	Commenter and Comment
	Owner, PREMIER POLARIS, Off-Road Riding Specialists
<b>Concern about funding formula in NOVA program.</b>	<p>I am continually outraged that the NOVA funds, which are obtained entirely from the motorized off road recreational vehicle gas taxes, are used for non-motorized recreational uses! These groups have no rights to these funds. They should raise their own money by user fees or other sources. Please change the way these funds are distributed and route them to the groups which paid into these funds and rightly deserve them!</p> <p>Peter Nielson Mukilteo, WA</p>

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

**Meeting Date:** November 2013  
**Title:** Review Draft Changes to the Grant Programs and Criteria for 2014  
**Prepared By:** Leslie Connelly, Policy Specialist

**APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM**

### Summary

This memo presents the draft policy and criteria changes to the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities program, Recreational Trails Program, and Trails category in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. This memo also presents some additional draft policy changes that would affect all Recreation and Conservation Funding Board projects.

### Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Decision
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Request for Direction
<input type="checkbox"/>	Briefing

## Background

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff is proposing revisions to Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) policies and grant programs beginning with the 2014 grant cycle. The proposed revisions are based on priorities in the *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*, draft *Washington State Trails Plan*, and staff recommendations. SCORP was adopted by the board in June. The Trails Plan was reviewed by the board at its September meeting and submitted for public comment in October; the board is scheduled to review it in November 2013 and approve it in January 2014.

Pending further board direction, these proposed changes will be made available for public review and comment in November and December. Staff will then summarize comments and present final recommendations to the board at its January meeting.

### Proposed Changes

There are five changes proposed as identified in the table below. The proposed changes are presented in detail in Attachment A.

**Table 1**

Policy Topic	Current Policy	Proposed Change	Reason
<p>#1: Implement the board’s sustainability policy into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonhighway Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Program;</li> <li>• Recreational Trails Program (RTP);</li> <li>• Youth Athletic Facilities; (YAF) and</li> <li>• All categories in the outdoor recreation account, except for state parks, of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP).</li> </ul>	<p>The board’s sustainability policy is in the manual, but not reflected in the criteria.</p>	<p>Add a question to the evaluation criteria to address the sustainability policy.</p>	<p>Incorporates existing policy into the evaluation criteria.</p> <p>Supports findings in SCORP.</p> <p>Board intended to implement the policy in all relevant programs following pilot in select grant programs.</p>
<p>#2: Clarify how the evaluation question regarding reducing government costs :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-government contribution question in RTP</li> <li>• Cost efficiencies question in the local parks, water access, and trails category of WWRP.</li> </ul>	<p>The evaluation criteria include a question on reducing government costs through non-governmental contributions and cost efficiencies.</p>	<p>Revise the question to clarify that non-governmental contributions and cost efficiencies are donations from private and non-profit organizations.</p>	<p>Clarify the question and provide better guidance on what is considered a contribution or donation. Aligns question with revisions proposed for the LWCF criteria.</p>
<p>#3: Revise the definitions for maintenance and development projects in NOVA and RTP.</p>	<p>Maintenance projects are defined as routine work on trails and trail facilities within an existing trail footprint. Development projects are any trail renovation or new construction.</p>	<p>Modify the project type definitions so that: Maintenance projects are defined as any work on existing trails. Development projects are defined as any new trail work.</p>	<p>Aligns trail project work to how projects are implemented on the ground and with the definitions from the Federal Highway Administration for RTP.</p>
<p>#4: Allow advisory committees to make a “do not fund” recommendation in the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA), Boating Facilities Program (BFP), Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), RTP, and YAF grant programs.</p>	<p>There is no policy currently in place in these programs. Policy exists only in the NOVA program.</p>	<p>Provide an option for the advisory committee to recommend not funding a specific project. The board would retain its authority to fund or not fund any project.</p>	<p>Allows the advisory committee to raise concerns about projects that it does not believe should receive funding.</p>

Policy Topic	Current Policy	Proposed Change	Reason
#5: Clarify how the matching share policy relates to the matching share evaluation criteria in FARR, BFP, NOVA, RTP, YAF, and the riparian category in WWRP.	The matching share policy allows applicants to match one board-funded grant with another. The evaluation criteria on matching shares awards points based on the applicant providing match above the required minimum.	Continue to allow one RCO grant to match another RCO grant, but do not count the RCO matching grant toward matching share points.	Matching share points should be awarded based upon the applicant's resources, not other RCO grant resources. Applicant resources include any other grant or contribution that is not another RCO grant.

## Analysis

The proposed changes reflect the opportunity to make a number of policy improvements that support the board's goals to:

- Achieve a high level of accountability in managing the resources and responsibilities entrusted to the board, and
- Deliver successful projects by inviting competition and by using broad public participation and feedback, monitoring, assessment, and adaptive management.

More specifically, the proposed changes will:

- Implement the board's commitment to sustainability,
- Modify program funding policies to reflect current practices in the field,
- Align the definitions of trails with federal program policies,
- Simplify language to be more accessible to the general public and applicants, and
- Support projects that are also supported by other funding sources.

## Potential Future Changes

After adoption of the Washington State Trails Plan and the Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicles Plan, RCO staff expects to bring additional changes and recommendations to the board for consideration. These ideas are emerging from the trails and NOVA plans as well as feedback from public comments and the board.

After the Trails and NOVA plans are adopted, RCO staff will discuss with the board priorities for moving forward. While additional ideas are still emerging, some potential future ideas to explore include:

- Align grant programs with findings in SCORP and the draft trails plan.

- Evaluate whether to develop and designate a system of state recreation trails as referenced in RCW 79A.35 and whether trails so designated should receive preference in grant funding.<sup>1</sup>
- Determine the level of support to provide to trails maintenance projects versus development projects.<sup>1</sup>
- Review the importance of funding NOVA projects near population centers.<sup>1</sup>

## Next Steps

Pending board direction, RCO staff will post the proposed policy and evaluation criteria changes on its Web site for public review and comment. Staff will review public comments received, respond to comments, and summarize them for the board's consideration. Staff will prepare final recommendations and present them at the board's January meeting. Any changes approved in January would apply to grants starting in 2014.

## Attachments

- A. Draft Policy Statements for Public Review

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<sup>1</sup> RCO action item in the draft trails and/or NOVA plans.

## Attachment A: Draft Policy Statements for Public Review

### #1: Implement the Sustainability Policy

The board's sustainability policy is currently referenced in most grant program manuals. When the policy was adopted, sustainability considerations were incorporated into the project design evaluation question for development projects in the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program, and the local parks and state parks categories of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP). More recently, the board adopted an update to the *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)* that elevated the importance of sustainability as it relates to outdoor recreation. In response, staff proposed revisions to the LWCF evaluation criteria, which include creating a separate evaluation question on sustainability and environmental stewardship that applies to acquisition and development projects. The board will consider adopting this new evaluation question, along with other LWCF criteria changes at its November meeting. In addition, sustainability concerns were raised in the trails plan and NOVA plan.

This proposal would incorporate the evaluation question currently under consideration for the LWCF program into the criteria for the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicles Activities (NOVA) program, Recreational Trails Program (RTP), Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) program, and the state lands development, trails, and water access categories of WWRP. In addition, the new evaluation question would replace the current sustainability considerations in the local parks categories of WWRP.

The goal is to have a similar evaluation question on sustainability in all evaluation criteria used to score recreation projects.

Below is the proposed evaluation question for NOVA, RTP, YAF, and the local parks, state parks, state lands development, trails and water access categories in WWRP. The question is proposed to be worth five points.

**Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship.** Will the project result in a quality, sustainable, recreational opportunity while protecting the integrity of the environment?

The following considerations are provided to help applicants and evaluators understand some of the elements that help a project score well. A successful proposal need not address each item. Applicants should elaborate on all points clearly relevant to their project. Factors to consider for acquisition and/or development and renovation projects are outlined in the table below.

Acquisition	Maintenance and Development
a. Does the acquisition and proposed development preserve the natural function of the site?	a. Does the proposed development protect natural resources onsite and integrate sustainable elements such as low impact development techniques, green infrastructure, or environmentally preferred building products?
b. How do the proposed uses protect, enhance or restore the ecosystem functions of the property?	b. Vegetation/Surfaces - Are you replacing invasive plant species with native vegetation? Are you using pervious surfaces for any of the proposed facilities?
c. Are there invasive species on site? If there are, what is your response plan?	c. Education - Are you installing interpretive panels/signs that educate users about sustainability?
d. What is the strategy or plan for maintenance and stewardship of the site?	d. Materials - What sustainable materials are included in the project?
e. How do the natural characteristics of the site support future planned uses?	e. Energy - What energy efficient features are you adding?
f. Is the proposed acquisition located close to the intended users?	f. What modes of transportation provide access to the site?
g. What modes of transportation provide access to the site?	g. Water - Is the on-site storm water managed by rain gardens, porous paving, or other sustainable features? Does the design exceed permit requirements for storm water management?
h. Does this project protect wetlands or wetland functions? Describe the size, quality, and classification.	h. If there are wetlands on site, describe the size, quality and classification and explain how the design and considers the wetland functions.
i. How does the proposed acquisition help create connectivity? How many acres are already protected? How critical is this property to the overall plan?	i. What is the strategy or plan for maintenance and stewardship of the site?
j. What other noteworthy characteristics demonstrate how the natural features of the site contribute to energy efficiency, less maintenance, fewer environmental impacts, or sustainability?	j. What other developed features will contribute to increasing energy efficiencies, reducing maintenance, minimizing environmental impacts, or being more sustainable?

## #2: Clarify Non-government Contributions and Cost Efficiencies

In RTP and the local parks, trails and water access categories of WWRP, there is an evaluation question on reducing government costs through non-government donations and contributions. The question is called "non-government contributions" in RTP and "cost-efficiencies" in the WWRP categories. The current criteria are as follows:

**RTP Evaluation Criteria #6** - Non-government contributions. Does this project reduce government costs through documented donations (labor, equipment, materials), signed cooperative agreements, or signed memoranda of understanding (including no cost easements and leases, interagency agreements, a maintenance and operations contract, donations, or similar cost saving arrangements)?

Because contributions sometimes "disappear" after project evaluation, it is very important that applicants provide RCO with documentation such as signed agreements or memoranda of understanding. The following considerations are provided to help applicants and evaluators understand some of the elements that help a project score well. A successful proposal need not address each bullet. Respondents should elaborate on all points clearly relevant to their project.

- The significance of the non-governmental contribution for this project
- The longevity of the commitment for this project.

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points.

0 points	No or weak evidence of non-government contributions provided for the current grant request.
1-2 points	Little to modest evidence of non-government contributions provided.
3-4 points	Signed documentation of significant, non-government contributions provided to RCO.
5 points	Signed documentation of exceptionally high, non-government contributions provided to RCO.

**WWRP Local Parks, Water Access, and Trails Evaluation Criteria #8- Cost**

**Efficiencies.** (Acquisition/Development/Combination) <sup>2</sup> The extent that this project demonstrates efficiencies and/or reduces government costs through documented use of:

- Volunteers.
- Donations.
- Signed cooperative agreements.
- Signed memoranda of understanding (such as no-cost easements/leases, maintenance/operation arrangements, or similar cost savings).

▲ Point Range

0 points No evidence presented.

1-2 points The benefit of any such agreement is marginal.

3 points Cooperative measures will result in moderate efficiencies and/or savings.

4-5 points Cooperative measures will result in substantial efficiencies and/or savings.

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 1.

The proposed change is to align this question with revisions proposed in the LWCF program for the same type of question. The revised evaluation question will clarify what types of contributions should be considered as reducing government costs. The clarifications are intended to simplify terms used and provide better guidance to make it easier for applicants to answer and evaluators to score. Finally, the question is aligned to be the same regardless of the funding program.

The proposed evaluation question on reducing government costs is below. The evaluation question is proposed to be the same for RTP and local parks, water access, and trails categories in WWRP.

**Cost efficiencies.** To what extent does this project demonstrate efficiencies or a reduction in government costs through documented use of donations or other resources?

Donations – cash, real property, volunteer labor, equipment use, or materials

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<sup>2</sup> Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State 2002-2007, Chapter 5

- What are the donations for this project?
- Who is making the donation?
- What is the value of the donation and how was the value determined?
- Is the donation in hand?
- If the donation is not in hand, do you have a letter of commitment from the donor that specifies what is being donated and when?
- Is the donation necessary for implementation of the project? Are donations included in the project proposal?

Private grants awarded by non-governmental organizations

- Is there a private grant that is being used as match for this project?
- Who awarded the grant?
- What is the grant amount?
- What is the purpose of the grant?
- When will grant funds be available?

Are there other efficiencies for this project that will result in cost savings?

- What is the cost efficiency?
  - Who is providing it?
  - What's the value?
  - When was the commitment made and when does it expire?
-

### #3: Modify the definitions for maintenance and development projects in NOVA and RTP.

In the RTP program, the board currently defines maintenance and development as follows:

**Maintenance** – Grants may be used to maintain recreational, trail-related facilities. Maintain means the regular upkeep (routine, annual maintenance) needed to avoid an impaired condition and keep a trail or trail facility open for use. Except for snow-based winter recreation trails, maintenance only may be performed on trails and trail facilities that are managed and in use. Activities designed to re-open a closed trail are not maintenance. Applicants for routine annual maintenance projects may request a grant for two consecutive years.

**Development, including renovation** - RTP funds may be used to develop or renovate trails and trail-related facilities. Renovation means extensive repair to bring a facility up to standards suitable for public use. Renovation is undertaken after a facility has deteriorated to the point where its usefulness is impaired and no longer meets public health, safety, or other requirements.

Renovation includes activities intended to improve an existing site or structure to increase its service life or functions. It does not include maintenance activities.

In the NOVA program, there are no specific definitions for maintenance and operation and development. Instead, there is a list of the types of eligible projects. Development projects include construction of roads, trails, and support facilities. Maintenance and operation projects include routine maintenance for trails, facilities and sites such as cleaning, painting, minor repairs, and trail clearing.

In response to challenges with scoping maintenance and development projects in NOVA and RTP, managing scope of work during project implementation, and ensuring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, RCO staff proposes to modify the definitions for these types of projects to better reflect how trail projects are implemented in the field. In addition, the modifications are intended to align with the definitions from the Federal Highway Administration for RTP. The changes will help clarify eligible costs for RTP and NOVA. For example, operation costs such as sewage pumping are eligible in NOVA, but not RTP.

The proposed definitions for maintenance and development projects in NOVA and RTP are changed as follows:

#### **RTP, Manual 16, Eligible Project Types**

*Maintenance projects* - Maintenance and restoration of existing trails may be interpreted broadly to include any kind of trail maintenance, restoration, rehabilitation, or relocation.

*Development projects* - Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages for recreational trails, may be interpreted broadly to include development or rehabilitation (not routine maintenance) of any trailside and trailhead facility. Trailside and trailhead facilities should have a direct relationship with a recreational trail; a highway rest area or visitor center is not an appropriate use of funds.

“Rehabilitation” means extensive repair needed to bring a facility up to standards suitable for public use.

### **NOVA, Manual 14, Eligible Project Types**

*Maintenance and operation projects* - Maintenance and operation of existing trails may be interpreted broadly to include any kind of trailside, trailhead or trail maintenance, operation, restoration, rehabilitation, or relocation. “Rehabilitation” means extensive repair needed to bring a facility up to standards suitable for public use. “Operation” means non-capital costs such as cleaning restrooms, garbage service, septic service, etc.

*Development projects* – Development ~~and rehabilitation~~ of trailside and trailhead facilities, new trails, and trail linkages for recreational trails, ~~may be interpreted broadly to include, development or rehabilitation (not routine maintenance) of any trailside and trailhead facility or new trail.~~ Trailside and trailhead facilities should have a direct relationship with a recreational trail; a highway rest area or visitor center is not an appropriate use of funds.

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#### #4: Do Not Fund Recommendation

A new policy is proposed to provide an avenue for the advisory committees to recommend that an application not receive grant funds even though it may meet all of the program eligibility requirements. This policy is similar to one already included in the Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities grant program and proposed in the Firearms and Archery Range Recreation program. This new policy is being proposed for following programs:

- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account
- Boating Facilities Program
- Boating Infrastructure Grants
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Recreational Trails Program, and
- Youth Athletics Facilities.

The new proposed policy would allow the advisory committee to make a recommendation to the funding board to not fund a project based upon significant concerns. Applicants would have an opportunity to respond to questions about their proposal prior to the advisory committee making their decision.

The new proposed policy is as follows:

Occasionally during evaluations, the advisory committee may express significant concerns about a project, such that it would like to discuss a "do not fund" recommendation. If this occurs, the advisory committee may discuss their concerns at the post-evaluation meeting, which takes place after application scores are tabulated.

If a "do not fund recommendation" is scheduled to be considered, RCO will invite the applicant to attend the post-evaluation meeting to respond to questions. To ensure all projects are treated equally, no additional testimony from applicants or visitors is taken at the post-evaluation meeting. The advisory committee determines a "do not fund recommendation" by a simple majority vote of the committee members present at the post-evaluation meeting.

RCO staff will forward to the board a summary of the "do not fund recommendation" and any committee member comments. The board will consider the advisory committee's recommendation at a regularly scheduled public meeting, before the ranked list is adopted (consideration may take place at the same meeting, but the do not fund recommendation will be discussed before the ranked list is adopted). The board retains discretion in awarding all grant funds.

## #5: Matching Share Policy

Board policy currently allows for one board-funded grant to match another grant. The match policy is:

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant may be used as match, if:

- The grants are not from the same Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant program,
- Only elements eligible in *both* grant programs are counted as the match,
- Each grant is evaluated independently and on its own merits, as if the match were coming from elsewhere, and
- The sponsor (except Native American tribes) provides at least 10 percent of the total project cost in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution.

The following programs have an evaluation question that awards points based on the amount of match provided by the applicant that is above the minimum requirement:

- Firearms and Archery Range Recreation
- Boating Facilities Program
- Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities
- Recreational Trails Program
- Youth Athletics Facilities, and
- Riparian Protection Account in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

The evaluation question is meant to provide incentives to applicants to provide additional match beyond the required minimum amount. The score is based on the percentage of additional match provided. For example, in the NOVA program, 5 additional points are awarded if more than 50 percent of the total project cost is provided as match, regardless of source. Currently, applicants receive matching share points regardless of the source of the match provided, including other RCO grants.

The proposed change adds a clarifying statement to the board's matching share policy that restricts the use of other RCO grants when awarding matching share points if such a question exists in the program's evaluation criteria.

The proposed statement is:

For evaluation scoring purposes, an RCO grant used as match will not count toward the award of matching share points.

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

**Meeting Date:** November 2013

**Title:** Review Draft Changes to the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program State Parks Category Evaluation Process and Criteria

**Prepared By:** Nona Snell, Policy Director  
Marguerite Austin, Section Manager

### Summary

This memo presents the draft changes to the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program State Parks category evaluation process and evaluation criteria.

### Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Decision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Direction
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Briefing

## Background

The Washington State Legislature established the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) in 1990. The program was envisioned as a way for the state to accomplish two goals: acquire valuable recreation and habitat lands before they were lost to other uses and develop recreation areas for a growing population. The State Parks category in the Outdoor Recreation account is open only for projects proposed by the State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission). The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) approves policies that govern WWRP.

The board adopted Resolution 2007-30, *Evaluation Process for the State Parks Category*, in November 2007. The resolution delegates the evaluation and ranking of State Parks category projects to the Washington State Parks Commission, following board approval of the evaluation process and criteria. The Commission then submits its list to the board for approval and project funding. The policy revision was approved by the board for the following reasons:

- The Commission is the sole eligible applicant for the category.
- The WWRP statute does not include specific criteria for assessing projects in the category.
- Delegating the project evaluation and ranking process reduces the demand on RCO staff resources and avoids duplication of evaluation processes.

- The process was intended to eliminate the problem of having the Commission reorder a ranked list that was provided by a volunteer evaluation panel.
- The Commission could place greater emphasis on the priorities it establishes through planning and prioritization.

During the spring of 2008, the Commission drafted evaluation criteria for the category. In March 2008, the board adopted the evaluation criteria following public comment. At the September 2010 meeting, the board adopted its sustainability policy and modified the State Parks category design criterion to place greater emphasis on sustainability.

### **Current Evaluation Process**

The current evaluation process is as follows:

1. The State Parks and Recreation Commission reviews the list of candidate projects at a spring work session. This meeting is open to the public but no public comment is taken.
2. State Parks staff submits grant applications to RCO staff who review the applications to determine eligibility, completeness, and consistency with board policies.
3. State Parks staff is invited to a project review meeting where they present their projects to a technical review team comprised of State Parks staff, who also serve as evaluators. The team is comprised of eight to ten members. All are State Parks staff, except that one may be a citizen representative. The members include:
  - Assistant director of Parks Development Services,
  - Capital program manager
  - Planning program manager
  - Stewardship program manager
  - Two regional managers
  - Two capital program regional managers
  - Programs manager
  - Citizen (e.g., State Parks Foundation, nonprofit organization, etc.)
4. Although not required, State Parks typically brings all of its projects forward for review. The team helps identify any issues of concern and provides feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal.
5. The evaluation takes place.
  - a. The Commission identifies high priority projects. State Parks staff shares this information with evaluators at the evaluation meeting before the project presentations.
  - b. The evaluation team uses board approved evaluation criteria (Attachment A) to score each project and develop the ranked list of projects. RCO staff observes or moderates the evaluation meeting. The meeting is open to the public, but only authorized representatives of State Parks or RCO staff may address the evaluation team or the presenters.

6. At the meeting following project evaluation, State Parks staff presents the preliminary ranked list to the Commission and requests approval. The meeting is open to the public and members of the public may offer comments. State Parks staff provides a summary of written comments for consideration.
7. The Commission submits its ranked list to the board for final approval and inclusion with the board's recommendation to the Governor and Legislature.

### **Proposed Evaluation Process**

RCO and State Parks staff proposes changing the process as follows to create more efficiency and transparency:

1. The State Parks and Recreation Commission will approve the list of candidate projects at a Commission meeting before submitting their applications to RCO. This meeting is open to the public.
2. State Parks staff will submit grant applications to RCO by established timelines. RCO staff will review the project proposals to determine eligibility, completeness, and consistency with board policies.
3. State Parks will conduct a technical review of the proposed projects with the purpose of improving clarity, substance, and delivery of the presentation. Staff involved with this review may or may not serve as evaluators. RCO staff will moderate and serve as reviewers.
4. State Parks staff will present the projects to the Commission, who will score the evaluation question that addresses how well the project supports the mission and vision of State Parks. The evaluation scores will remain confidential until after the Commission's scoring process. The meeting is open to the public and members of the public may provide written or oral comments.
5. An evaluation team will be established that includes:
  - Up to six State Parks staff members, representing the following programs: capital development; partnerships and planning; stewardship; lands; operations; or business development. These staff members will be different than those who present the projects for evaluation.
  - Up to six representatives appointed by RCO's Director, including citizens, staff from nonprofit organizations, or staff from other governmental entities.
6. State Parks staff will make in-person presentations to the evaluation team, which will score all projects using the proposed evaluation criteria included in Attachment B. RCO staff will moderate the evaluation meeting.
7. After evaluation, State Parks staff will share the preliminary ranked list with the Commission. The Commission will not have the ability to change the ranking but may withdraw projects.

8. RCO staff will present the preliminary ranked list to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for final approval and inclusion with the board's recommendation to the Governor and the Legislature.

### **Summary of Proposed Criteria Changes**

Staff proposes the following changes to the existing evaluation instrument (Attachment A). The proposed evaluation instrument is included as Attachment B. The proposed criteria implement board-adopted priorities included in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and priorities outlined in the State Park and Recreation Commission's Transformation Strategy.

- Modifies the Public Need criteria to remove references to the Centennial 2013 Vision and to add consistency with the State Parks Strategic Plan.
- Simplifies the Project Significance criterion and modifies it to align with State Parks strategic goals. For example the ability to save money or increase revenue.
- Changes the Immediacy of Threat criterion to also consider potential operating impacts.
- Updates the Project Design criterion to place more emphasis on providing access for people with disabilities and to move the questions related to sustainability to the revised Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship criterion.
- Places greater point emphasis on sustainability by separating it from the design criterion. Sustainability is more broadly defined to capture sustainable design and environmental stewardship. The new criterion is consistent with the sustainability policy and criterion previously adopted by the board
- Expands the match criterion to provide points for partnerships or match that advance State Parks' goals and updates the scoring recommendations.
- In the Readiness to Proceed criteria, the proposal adds consideration of any operational impacts and the potential for revenue enhancement.
- Places greater point emphasis on projects that clearly align with the mission and vision of State Parks. While State Parks staff may recommend points for this criterion, Commissioners will actually score the question (see step 4 in the proposed evaluation process). The intent is to ensure that the projects funded in the State Parks category meet needs outlined in the mission and vision.

In addition, staff proposes across-the-board edits so that the criteria and questions are clearer to applicants and evaluators. Also, staff reordered the criteria to create a more logical flow. With the addition of several new criteria, the total points possible are increased from 58 to 68 points.

## Analysis

The changes proposed to the evaluation process and evaluation criteria are designed to help maintain the integrity of the evaluation process and to improve its transparency in a way that supports the board's goals to:

- Achieve a high level of accountability in managing the resources and responsibilities entrusted to the board, and
- Deliver successful projects by inviting competition and by using broad public participation and feedback, monitoring, assessment, and adaptive management.
- Improving the quality of the project proposal presentations.

More specifically, the proposed changes will:

- Give the Commission the opportunity to voice their opinion and take part in the project selection process.
- Provide multiple opportunities for the public to comment on the proposed projects and reduce redundancy.
- Align the grant-funded projects with the State Parks Transformation Strategy.

## Next Steps

Staff will request comments from board members at the November meeting. Following the meeting, staff will incorporate any changes requested by the board and publish the proposal for public comment. A summary of the public comments will be provided for board consideration when the final proposal is presented to the board for adoption at the January 2014 meeting.

If the board adopts the proposed process and criteria, both will be published for use beginning with the 2014 grant round.

## Attachments

- A. Current WWRP State Parks Category Criteria
- B. Proposed WWRP State Parks Category Criteria

## Attachment A: Current Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Evaluation Criteria for the State Parks Category

### Manual 10a, Section 3

This project category is reserved for the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission for acquisition and/or development of state parks.

<b>State Parks Criteria Summary</b>					
<b>Score</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Maximum Points Possible</b>	<b>Focus*</b>
Evaluation Team	1	Public Need	Acquisition, Development, Combination	5	State
Evaluation Team	2	Project Significance	Acquisition, Development, Combination	15	Agency
Evaluation Team	3	Project Design	Development	10	Technical
			Combination	5	
Evaluation Team	4	Immediacy of Threat	Acquisition	10	State
			Combination	5	
Evaluation Team	5	Expansion / Phased Project	Acquisition, Development, Combination	10	State
Evaluation Team	6	Multiple Fund Sources	Acquisition, Development, Combination	5	State
Evaluation Team	7	Readiness to Proceed	Acquisition, Development, Combination	5	Agency
Evaluation Team	8	Shows Application of Sustainability	Acquisition, Development, Combination	5	Agency
RCO Staff	9	Population Proximity	Acquisition, Development, Combination	3	State
<b>Total Points Possible = 58</b>					

\*Focus—Criteria orientation in accordance with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) policy of developing evaluation systems based on three need factors

- State—those that meet general statewide needs (often called for in Revised Codes of Washington or SCORP)
- Agency—those that meet agency needs (usually an item of narrower purview, often called for in the State Parks and Recreation Commission’s plans)
- Technical—those that meet technical considerations (usually more objective decisions than those of policy).

## Detailed Scoring Criteria: State Parks Category

### *Evaluation Team Scored*

1. **Public Need.** Describe why this facility should be built or property acquired? Is it cited in CAMP (Classification and Management Plan, a State Parks Commission-approved comprehensive plan for a park), cited in the current State Parks 10-year capital plan, consistent with State Parks’ Centennial 2013 Vision, or identified by the public, etc.?

#### ▲ Point Range

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| 0 points   | No CAMP, master plan, not in 10-year capital plan or consistent with the 2013 Centennial Vision, no or little public interest   |
| 1-2 points | In 120 Parks, CAMP approved, in 10-year capital plan, some public support, property acquisition listed in CAMP but not essential  |
| 3-5 points | CAMP approved, master plan prepared, in 10-year capital plan, property acquisition resolves management problem or needed for capital project, or implements cultural resources plan or stewardship plan |

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 1.

2. **Project Significance.** Describe why this is a project of statewide or regional merit. Is this a ‘high priority’ project?

#### *Factor and Measure*

- **Significance:** Whether the project has traits that relatively few places have, such as listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or that the park contains uncommon natural, cultural, or historic resources, or possesses uncommon recreational attributes and whether State Parks plays an essential role in ensuring that the significant traits are protected, enhanced, and made appropriately available to the public.
- **Popularity:** Project at a park with high visitation or that operates at a high percent of capacity
- **Experiences:** Number and quality of experiences provided
- **Uniqueness:** Unique experiences provided.

- **Flora and fauna:** Outstanding example of specific habitat for flora or fauna in abundance or quality or both
- **Scenery:** Well known for scenic qualities (e.g., cited in tourist brochures as an attractive, popular site for photography or other art, referenced in news articles, etc.)
- **Size:** Has sufficient size to accommodate current and future uses and maintain quality of experience
- **Condition:** Facilities (built environment) add to the visitors' experience

Normally, projects at parks offering a variety of natural resource, cultural resource, or recreation resources, particularly in an area with few similar resources will score higher than those offering few or a single opportunity. However, if a single, significant need is identified and strongly met as a single element, the project can score well on this question. For example: acquisition of a rare site for a single purpose, recreational opportunity; or natural or cultural resource; or developing facilities that enhance the experience at such a site (e.g., Doug's Beach – wind-surfing launch site, Peshastin Pinnacles – rock climbing, petroglyphs, etc.).

▲ Point Range

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| 0 points   | Park not on the 120 park list, capital project, or acquisition does not contain significant natural, cultural or recreation attributes.  |
| 1-3 points | Capital project or acquisition provides access to good quality natural, cultural or recreation attributes; noted in 10-year capital plan, CAMP, or master plan; fills identified void. |
| 4-5 points | Capital project or acquisition a priority in master plan, 10-year capital plan, essential element in park development, or protects vital resources.                                    |

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 3.

3. **Project Design (development and combination projects only).** Describe how this project demonstrates good site and building design.

Measure the quality of the functional and aesthetic aspects of the site design as related to the site and the proposed uses. Will site resources be made available appropriately for recreation? Will environmental or other important values be protected by the proposed development? Will sustainability be considered in the design? Consider the size, topography, soil conditions, natural amenities, and location of the site to determine if it is well suited for the intended uses. Some design elements that may be considered include: Accuracy of cost estimates; recreation experiences; aesthetics; maintenance; site suitability; materials; spatial relationships; and user-friendly, universally accessible design, integration of sustainable elements, etc.

Examples of included sustainable categories and elements:

Sustainable Category/Element	Example
Plants/Landscapes/Surfaces	Native shrubs
Education	Interpretive panels including sustainability
Materials	Recycled decking
Energy	High-efficiency lighting
Water	On-site storm water managed by rain gardens, porous paving
Other Sustainable Elements	Noteworthy element(s) determined by the sponsor to make the project require less energy, less maintenance, cause fewer environmental impacts, or otherwise be more sustainable

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 2 for development projects and 1 for combination projects. Maximum points provided *only* if applicant addresses all the components of the question, including sustainability.

4. **Immediacy of Threat (acquisition and combination projects only).** Describe the consequences of not obtaining this land now. Consider the availability of alternatives. Where none exist, the significance of a threat may be higher.

▲ Point Range

0 points No evidence presented.

1-2 points Minimal threat; site resource opportunity appears to be in no immediate danger of a loss in quality or to public use in the next 36 months.

3 points Actions are under consideration that could result in the opportunity losing quality or becoming unavailable for public use.

4-5 points Actions will be taken that will result in the opportunity losing quality or becoming unavailable for future public use

or

A threat situation has occurred or is imminent and has led a land trust to acquire rights in the land at the request of the applicant agency.

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 2 for acquisition projects and 1 for combination projects.

5. **Expansion/Phased Project.** Is this a continuation of a previous project? When did the previous project start and end (if applicable)? Is this a distinct stand-alone phase?

▲ Point Range

0 points Not part of phased plan, or expansion project, or last phase completed more than 4 years ago

1-2 points Previous phase completed 2-3 years ago.

3-5 points A key starting point for a multi-phase project or builds on a project started less than 2 years prior; expands a popular or notable site/facility

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 2.

6. **Multiple Funding Sources.** Are there multiple funding sources proposed to support this project? A fund source must contribute 5 percent or more of the total project cost in cash, grants, or in-kind services to qualify as a fund source.

▲ Point Range

0 points No other fund sources

1-2 points One other fund source

3-4 points More than one other fund source

AND

1 point Sources outside of the state budget receive a point if they exceed 25 percent of the grant request amount

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 1.

7. **Readiness to Proceed.** Is the project fully designed and permitted (development) or is there a written sales agreement with the property owner (acquisition)? Are there any significant local zoning or permitting issues?

▲ Point Range

- 0 points Acquisition: No signed sales agreement with landowner
- 0 points Development: Construction drawings less than 60 percent completed and no permits in-hand
- 1-5 points Acquisition: Signed sales agreement completed
- 1-5 points Development: All permits in-hand

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 1.

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?

▲ Point Range

- 0 points Acquisition: Project provides no evidence of protecting natural or cultural resources.
- 0 points Development: Project does not demonstrate a high standard of stewardship (e.g., energy conservation, waste reduction, use of sustainable products, etc.)
- 1-5 points Acquisition: Project protects key natural/cultural resources.
- 1-5 points Development: Project demonstrates highest standards of stewardship (e.g., energy conservation, waste reduction, use of sustainable products, etc.)

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 1.

**Scored by RCO Staff—Applicants Do Not Answer**

9. **Proximity to Human Populations.** Where is this project located with respect to urban growth areas, cities and towns, and county density? Acquisition/Development; Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250 (Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and urban area parks)

This question is scored by RCO staff based on a map provided by the applicant. To receive a score, the map must show the project location and project boundary in relationship to a city's or town's urban growth boundary.

▲ Point Range

A. The project is within the urban growth area boundary of a city or town with a population of 5,000 or more.

- Yes: 1.5 points
- No: 0 points

AND

B. The project is within a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile.

- Yes: 1.5 points
- No: 0 points

The result from "A" is added to the result from "B." Projects in cities with a population of more than 5,000 *and* within high density counties receive points from both "A" and "B."

RCO staff awards a maximum of 3.

Revised November 2007

***Note: the following is a placeholder pending action by the Puget Sound Partnership. As a placeholder, it will not be scored until further notice.***

10. **Puget Sound Partners.** Is the project sponsored by an entity that is a Puget Sound partner, as defined in Revised Code of Washington 90.71.010?

This criterion will apply only to projects within Water Resource Inventory Areas 1-19. This determination will be made on or before the project evaluation, not at some later date. When the Puget Sound Partnership determines a method for designating Puget Sound partners, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will modify policies to prevent less preferential funding treatment to sponsors not eligible to be Puget Sound partners.

## Attachment B: Proposed Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Evaluation Criteria for the State Parks Category

Manual 10a, Section 3

This project category is reserved for the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission for acquisition and/or development of state parks.

<b>State Parks Criteria Summary</b>					
<b>Score</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Project Type</b>	<b>Maximum Points Possible</b>	<b>Focus*</b>
Evaluation Team	1	Public Need	Acquisition, Development, Combination	5	State
Evaluation Team	2	Project Significance	Acquisition, Development, Combination	15	Agency
Evaluation Team	3	Threat and Impact	Acquisition	10	State
			Combination	5	
Evaluation Team	4	Project Design	Development	10	Technical
			Combination	5	
Advisory Committee	5	Sustainability and environmental stewardship	All projects	10	SCORP
Evaluation Team	6	Expansion / Phased Project	Acquisition, Development, Combination	10	State
Evaluation Team	7	Partnership or Match	Acquisition, Development, Combination	5	State
Evaluation Team	8	Readiness to Proceed	Acquisition, Development, Combination	5	Agency
State Parks Commission	9	Consistency with Mission and Vision	Acquisition, Development, Combination	5	Agency
RCO Staff	10	Proximity to Human Populations	Acquisition, Development, Combination	3	State
<b>Total Points Possible = 68</b>					

\*Focus—Criteria orientation in accordance with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) policy of developing evaluation systems based on three need factors

- State—those that meet general statewide needs (often called for in Revised Codes of Washington or SCORP)

- Agency—those that meet agency needs (usually an item of narrower purview, often called for in the State Parks and Recreation Commission’s plans)
- Technical—those that meet technical considerations (usually more objective decisions than those of policy).

## Detailed Scoring Criteria: State Parks Category

### *Evaluation Team Scored*

1. **Public Need.** Describe why this project should be built or this property acquired. Is it:
  - a. Cited in CAMP (Classification and Management Plan)?
  - b. Identified in a park master plan, or other approved planning document?
  - c. Included in the current State Parks 10-year capital plan?
  - d. Consistent with the State Parks Strategic Plan?
  - e. Identified and supported by the public or by park partners?

#### ▲ Point Range

0 points	No CAMP or other plan, no or little public interest
1-2 points	Consistent with CAMP or other plan, some public support, property acquisition listed in CAMP but not essential
3-5 points	Consistent with CAMP or other plan, resolves a management problem, essential to a partnership or will increase park visitation, strong public support

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 1.

2. **Project Significance.** Describe how this project supports State Parks strategic goals. Does it:
  - a. Serve underserved visitors or communities?
  - b. Protect or restore natural or cultural resources?
  - c. Have a demonstrated ability to save money or increase park [net](#) revenue?
  - d. Provide recreational, cultural, or interpretive opportunities people want?
  - e. Promote meaningful opportunities for volunteers, friends, and partners?
  - f. Facilitate a meaningful partnership with other agencies, tribes, or non-profits?

#### ▲ Point Range

0 points	Does not directly support strategic goals
1-2 points	Moderately supports one or two strategic goals
3-5 points	Strongly supports at least one strategic goal or moderately supports three or more strategic goals

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 3.

3. **Threat and Impacts (acquisition and combination projects only).** Describe why it is important to acquire the property now. Consider:
- a. Is there an immediate threat to the property that will result in a loss in quality or availability of future public use?
  - b. Will the acquisition result in additional operating impacts, and if so, is there potential for those impacts to be offset by additional revenue?

▲ Point Range

0 points	No evidence of threat to the property, and/or the acquisition will result in unreasonable operating impacts
1-2 points	Minimal threat to the property, or the acquisition will result in moderate operating impacts
3-5 points	Imminent threat of the property losing quality or becoming unavailable for future public use, or a threat led to a land trust acquiring rights in the land at the request of State Parks, and operating impacts will be minimal or offset by additional revenue

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 2 for acquisition projects and 1 for combination projects.

4. **Project Design (development and combination projects only).** Is the project well designed?

Consider the following:

- Does this property support the type of development proposed? Describe the attributes: size, topography, soil conditions, natural amenities, location and access, utility service, wetlands, etc.
- How does the project design make the best use of the site?
- How well does the design provide equal access for all people, including those with disabilities? How does this project exceed current barrier-free requirements?
- Does the nature and condition of existing or planned land use in the surrounding area support the type of development proposed?
- How does the design conform to current permitting requirements, building codes, safety standards, best management practices, etc.? What, if any, are the mitigation requirements for this project?
- Does the design align with the described need?

- Are the access routes (paths, walkways, sidewalks) designed appropriately (width, surfacing) for the use and do they provide connectivity to all site elements?
- For trails, does the design provide adequate separation from roadways, surfacing, width, spatial relationships, grades, curves, switchbacks, road crossings, and trailhead locations?
- Is the cost estimate realistic?

▲ Point Range

0 points	Design is not appropriate for the site or the intended use
1-2 points	Design is moderately appropriate for the site and the intended use
3-4 points	Design is very appropriate for the site and the intended use, it addresses most elements of the question, and cost estimates are accurate and complete
5 points	Design addresses all elements of the question very well, and cost estimates are accurate and complete

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 2 for acquisition projects and 1 for combination projects.

5. **Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship.** Will the project result in a quality, sustainable, recreational opportunity while protecting the integrity of the environment?

Factors to consider for acquisition and/or development projects are outlined in this table.

Acquisition	Development
a. Does the acquisition and proposed development preserve the natural function of the site?	a. Does the proposed development protect natural resources onsite and integrate sustainable elements such as low impact development techniques, green infrastructure, or environmentally preferred building products?
b. How do the proposed uses protect, enhance or restore the ecosystem functions of the property?	
c. Are there invasive species on site? If there are, what is your response plan?	b. Vegetation/Surfaces - Are you replacing invasive plant species with native vegetation? Are you using pervious surfaces for any of the proposed facilities?
d. What is the strategy or plan for maintenance and stewardship of	c. Education - Are you installing interpretive panels/signs that educate

the site?

users about sustainability?

<p>e. How do the natural characteristics of the site support future planned uses?</p>	<p>d. Materials - What sustainable materials are included in the project?</p>
<p>f. Is the proposed acquisition located close to the intended users?</p>	<p>e. Energy - What energy efficient features are you adding?</p>
<p>g. What modes of transportation provide access to the site?</p>	<p>f. What modes of transportation provide access to the site?</p>
<p>h. Does this project protect wetlands or wetland functions? Describe the size, quality and classification.</p>	<p>g. Water - Is the on-site storm water managed by rain gardens, porous paving, or other sustainable features? Does the design exceed permit requirements for storm water management?</p>
<p>i. How does the proposed acquisition help create connectivity? How many acres are already protected? How critical is this property to the overall plan?</p>	<p>h. If there are wetlands on site, describe the size, quality and classification and explain how the design considers the wetland functions.</p>
<p>j. What other noteworthy characteristics demonstrate how the natural features of the site contribute to energy efficiency, less maintenance, fewer environmental impacts, or sustainability?</p>	<p>i. What is the strategy or plan for maintenance and stewardship of the site?</p>
	<p>j. What other developed features will contribute to increasing energy efficiencies, reducing maintenance, minimizing environmental impacts, or being more sustainable?</p>

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 2.

6. **Expansion/Phased Project.** Describe whether this project supports past investments. Consider:

- a. Is the project part of a phased acquisition or development?
- b. When did the previous phases start and end?
- c. Is this project a distinct stand-alone phase?

▲ Point Range

0 points	Not a phased project or is not a distinct stand-alone project
1-2 points	Previous phase completed more than 6 years ago
3-4 points	Previous phase completed less than 3 years ago, or project is a key starting point for a new multi-phase project
5 points	Project is a key phase in a statewide legacy project or it expands a popular or notable park or facility

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 2.

7. **Partnerships or Match.** Describe how this project supports strategic partnerships or leverages matching funds. Consider:
- a. Does the project help form strategic partnerships with other agencies, tribes, or non-profits? (A strategic partnership is one that is ultimately expected to offset expenses, leverage investments, or stimulate activity that directly or indirectly generates a financial return.)
  - b. Does the partnership facilitate a key State Parks goal or objective?
  - c. Does the project have a match of cash, grants, or in-kind services?

▲ Point Range

0 points	No partners or match
1-2 points	One partner or up to 10% match
3-4 points	Two partners or 11-24% match
5 points	Three or more partners or 25% or more match

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 1.

8. **Readiness to Proceed.** Describe the project's timeline. Consider:
- a. For development projects, is it fully designed and permitted?
  - b. For acquisition projects, is there a written sales agreement with the property owner?
  - c. Are there any significant zoning or permitting issues?
  - d. Has an economic impact analysis been completed for the project that identifies operational impacts and potential for revenue enhancement?

▲ Point Range

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| 0 points   | (Acquisition) No agreement with landowner, and fiscal impact will be substantial and require operational impact from the legislature.<br>(Development) Construction drawings less than 60 percent complete and fiscal impact will be substantial and require operational impact from the legislature. |
| 1-2 points | (Acquisition) Willing seller and/or economic impact analysis identifies minimal operating impacts.<br>(Development) Construction drawings over 60 percent complete, and/or economic impact analysis identifies minimal operating impacts.   |
| 3-5 points | (Acquisition) Signed sales agreement, and/or economic impact analysis identifies potential revenue from the project.<br>(Development) All permits in hand and/or economic analysis identifies potential revenue from the project.   |

Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 1.

**Scored by Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission—Applicants do not answer**

9. **Consistency with Mission and Vision.** How well does this project support the State Parks mission and vision?

▲ Point Range

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| 0 points   | Does not support the State Parks mission or vision     |
| 1-2 points | Moderately supports the State Parks mission and vision |
| 3-5 points | Strongly supports the State Parks mission and vision   |

The State Parks Commission awards a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 1.

**Scored by RCO Staff—Applicants do not answer**

10. **Proximity to Human Populations.** Where is this project located with respect to urban growth areas, cities and town, and county density?

This question is scored by RCO staff based on a map provided by the applicant. To receive a score, the map must show the project location and project boundary in relationship to a city's or town's urban growth boundary.

▲ Point Range

- A. The project is within the urban growth area boundary of a city or town with a population of 5,000 or more.
- Yes: 1.5 points
  - No: 0 points

AND

- B. The project is within a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile.

- Yes: 1.5 points
- No: 0 points

The result from A is added to the result from B. Projects in cities with a population of more than 5,000 *and* within high density counties receive points from both A and B.

RCO staff awards a maximum of 3 points multiplied by 1.

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Briefing Memo

**Meeting Date:** November 2013  
**Title:** Service Recognition: Bill Chapman  
**Prepared By:** Rebecca Connolly, Board Liaison

**APPROVED BY RCO DIRECTOR KALEEN COTTINGHAM**

### Summary

This is a request for the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) to recognize the service of Chairman Bill Chapman.

### Board Action Requested

This item will be a:

- Request for Decision
- Request for Direction
- Briefing

Resolution #: 2013-27

Purpose of Resolution: Recognize the service of Chairman Bill Chapman.

### Background

Board chairman Bill Chapman was appointed to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) in 2004 by Governor Christine Gregoire. Following his reappointment in 2008, he served as a member of the board until January 2009, when the Governor appointed him as chairman. Chapman will complete his second term as chairman on December 31, 2013, having served the people of Washington State for nine years.

During Chapman's tenure, the board established its policies for sustainability, began to track metrics to inform future policy refinements, and initiated efforts to help project sponsors share best practices for incorporating sustainable elements into projects. He also led the board in developing an award program to recognize projects that either visionary or have a lasting legacy. He also served on the board during the recruitment and hiring of the RCO director, Kaleen Cottingham. Since 2004, the board also has provided millions of dollars for projects and worked hard to ensure that agency processes were efficient, accountable, and fair.

This resolution recognizes Bill Chapman's service to the board, the Recreation and Conservation Office, and Washington State.

### Attachments

A. Individual Service Resolution



A Resolution to Recognize the Service of

*Bill Chapman*

To the Residents of Washington State and the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

**WHEREAS**, from November 2004 through December 2013, Bill Chapman served the residents of the state of Washington as a member and chairman of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Chapman's service assisted the State of Washington in protecting some of its most important wildlife habitat and farmland, and in providing opportunities for a vast array of recreational pursuits statewide; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Chapman's dedication to environmental and economic sustainability led the board to craft and adopt a sustainability policy, incorporate criteria into key grant programs, and conduct outreach and education efforts to help project sponsors use more sustainable practices and elements; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Chapman's leadership helped the board develop a program that recognize sites that embody the realization of a long-range vision or that have resulted in a lasting legacy; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Chapman's intellect, lawyerly debate skills, focus on strategically investing public funds, and belief in sharing successes inspired the board and helped it to ensure that its policies and practices create projects that improve the quality of life for current and future generations; and

**WHEREAS**, during Mr. Chapman's nine-year tenure, the board funded 1,502 grants, creating a state investment of \$454 million in Washington's great outdoors; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Chapman's current term expires on December 31, 2013 and members of the board wish to recognize his support, leadership, and service;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that on behalf of the residents of Washington and in recognition of Mr. Chapman's dedication and excellence in performing his responsibilities and duties as a member and chairman, the board and its staff extend their sincere appreciation and compliments on a job well done.

Approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board  
in Olympia, Washington  
on November 6, 2013

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Betsy Bloomfield  
Citizen Member

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Harriet Spanel  
Citizen Member

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Pete Mayer  
Citizen Member

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Ted Willhite  
Citizen Member

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Don Hoch  
Washington State Parks

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Jed Herman  
Department of Natural  
Resources

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Joe Stohr  
Department of Fish and  
Wildlife