

Proposed Changes to the Acquisition and Development Funding Framework in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – State Parks Category (WWRP - SP)

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) requests the public submit comments on the following proposed policy changes to the funding frameworks in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – State Parks category. This policy, once adopted, would direct how the board would direct funding between acquisition and development costs in the State Parks category. This policy decision follows legislation adopted during the 2016 legislative session. The previous allocation set by the statute was “at least fifty percent of this money for acquisition costs”; the new statutory allocation is “at least forty percent but no more than fifty percent of this money to acquisition costs”.¹² The following policy options are being considered by the board:

Option	Framework	Policy Statement
1	“Strict 40/60”	Fund acquisition costs at 40% and development costs at 60%.
2	“Modified 40/60”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fund acquisition costs at 40% and development costs at 60%. 2. But, fully fund any partially funded acquisition projects or project costs.* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No less than 40%, and no more than 50% of funding allocation shall go to acquisition costs. <p>* Example: In this framework, the formula for any given cycle might result in 41% for acquisition costs and 59% to development costs.</p>
3	“40-40 Competitive”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fund both acquisition and development costs at 40%, 2. then, fully fund any partially funded projects, 3. then, apply remaining funds to unfunded projects starting with the highest ranked project, and work straight down the ranked list. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No less than 40%, and no more than 50% of funding allocation shall go to acquisition costs.
4	“Aim For 50”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund acquisition costs up to 50% but fund no partially funded acquisition projects. The remainder of funds go to development costs.* • No less than 40%, and no more than 50% of funding allocation shall go to acquisition costs. <p>* Example: In this framework, the formula for any given cycle might result in 46% for acquisition costs and 54% to development costs.</p>

Background

Following a [published review](#) of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program ([WWRP](#)) in 2015, the governor

¹ [RCW 79A.15.050\(1\)\(b\)](#)

² [Substitute Senate Bill 6227 Sec 5. \(p.8, lines 12-15\)](#)

signed [Substitute Senate Bill 6227](#) (SSB 6227) in the spring of 2016. SSB 6227 made changes to the WWRP including how the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) shall allocate funds between acquisition and development project costs in the WWRP State Parks category.

Prior to SSB 6227, the previous WWRP State Parks statute stated the board make available “at least fifty percent of this money for acquisition costs.”³ The new law says the board shall allocate “at least forty percent but no more than fifty percent of this money to acquisition costs.”⁴

For more information on WWRP State Parks category policies and evaluation criteria access RCO [Manual 10a](#).

See the 2014 WWRP State Parks evaluation and funding results [here](#) (PDF pages 95-102).

Excerpts from the “Recommendations for Changes” within the [WWRP Review](#) related to the State Parks category are highlighted in Attachment A below.

Decision Requested

Statute requires that the board submit a ranked list of WWRP projects to the Legislature by November 1, 2016.^{5, 6} In order to identify what projects may get funded during the 2016-17 legislative session, RCO staff request a funding framework decision prior to the submittal of the ranked list. Staff requested direction on the above frameworks at the [July 13th board meeting in Bellevue \(Item 7A\)](#)

Strategic Plan Link

Developing policy to allocate funding in WWRP addresses Goals 2 and 3 in the board’s [Strategic Plan](#).

Goal 2: We achieve a high level of accountability in managing the resources and responsibilities entrusted to us.

Goal 3: We deliver successful projects by inviting competition and by using broad public participation and feedback, monitoring, assessment, and adaptive management.

Next Steps

Staff will evaluate public comment on the options presented above and draft a funding framework policy proposal for board decision at the October 2016 meeting.

³ [RCW 79A.15.050\(1\)\(a\)](#)

⁴ [Substitute Senate Bill 6227 Sec 5. \(p.8, lines 8-11\)](#)

⁵ [Substitute Senate Bill 6227 Sec 7. \(p.13, lines 12-21\)](#)

⁶ [Substitute Senate Bill 6227 Sec 10. \(p.18, lines 12-18\)](#)

Attachment A.

[WWRP Review](#) (page 9):

"F. Local Parks and State Parks Acquisition and Development Ratios. Four of the WWRP categories currently require a minimum percent of the allocation for land acquisition – State Parks (at least 50 percent of allocation for acquisition costs), Local Parks (at least 50 percent of allocation for acquisition costs), Water Access (at least 75 percent of allocation for acquisition costs), and Riparian Protection (all projects must include some acquisition component). To address the expressed need for more development projects, we recommend re-balancing the acquisition and development requirement in the local parks and state parks categories to the following:

- a. No less than 40 percent, and no more than 50 percent, of the funding shall go to projects with acquisition.

We recommend that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board shall apply this formula as direction to look at a 60 percent set-aside for development projects, but with the flexibility to scale down to 50 percent if there are a significant number of meritorious acquisition projects. The board can choose to achieve these targets either over one funding cycle or over several funding cycles. This recommendation would require a statutory change."

[WWRP Review](#) (page 19):

"F.State Parks noted that since its inception, the WWRP has been the largest, single source of funding for state park land acquisitions. About 95 percent of park lands acquired with WWRP funds have been properties that are inholdings or adjacent to existing state parks.

Securing these properties has not only helped to enhance recreation and conservation opportunities, but also helped to avoid adjacent land development that conflicts with the public's use and enjoyment of its state parks. In addition, a smaller proportion of WWRP funds has been used to secure significant natural, cultural, and scenic resource lands and hold them for future development of state parks.

State Parks also uses WWRP funds for development of new facilities, which provide access, trailheads, trails, picnic areas, restrooms, water trail sites, campgrounds, and other new amenities that permit recreation use and help connect visitors with state park resources. The balance between acquisition and development within state parks currently is set at 50/50, which is acceptable to the agency, but in the interest of responsiveness to legislative concerns about the condition and need for infrastructure improvements and development of already acquired state park lands, State Parks accepted the recommendation for no less than 40 percent of funds in the State Parks grant category to be used for acquisition projects, with board flexibility to adjust upward to 50 percent for meritorious acquisition projects."