CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6227**

Chapter 149, Laws of 2016

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

WASHINGTON WILDLIFE AND RECREATION PROGRAM--RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE RECOMMENDATIONS

EFFECTIVE DATE: 3/31/2016

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| Passed by the Senate March 8, 2016Yeas 45 Nays 2BRAD OWEN**President of the Senate**Passed by the House March 2, 2016Yeas 77 Nays 20FRANK CHOPP**Speaker of the House of Representatives** | CERTIFICATEI, Hunter G. Goodman, Secretary of the Senate of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6227** as passed by Senate and the House of Representatives on the dates hereon set forth.HUNTER G. GOODMAN**Chief Clerk** |
| Approved March 31, 2016 4:54 PM | April 1, 2016 |
| JAY INSLEE**Governor of the State of Washington** | **Secretary of State** **State of Washington** |

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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6227**

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AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2016 Regular Session

**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Honeyford, Keiser, Rolfes, Conway, Ranker, McAuliffe, Mullet, and Chase; by request of Recreation and Conservation Office)

AN ACT Relating to implementing the recommendations of the 2015 review of the Washington wildlife and recreation program; amending RCW 79A.15.010, 79A.15.030, 79A.15.040, 79A.15.050, 79A.15.070, 79A.15.080, 79A.15.110, and 79A.15.130; reenacting and amending RCW 79A.15.060; creating new sections; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  In section 3163, chapter 3, Laws of 2015 3rd sp. sess., the legislature directed the recreation and conservation office to review and make recommendations for changes to the Washington wildlife and recreation program. The recreation and conservation office conducted the review and this act details the proposed recommendations for statutory revisions to chapter 79A.15 RCW that will promote habitat conservation, outdoor recreation, working lands preservation, property rights, coordination between the state and local governments, and ensure continued success of the program for future generations.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.15.010 and 2015 c 225 s 126 are each amended to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Acquisition" means the purchase on a willing seller basis of fee or less than fee interests in real property. These interests include, but are not limited to, options, rights of first refusal, conservation easements, leases, and mineral rights.

(2) "Board" means the recreation and conservation funding board.

(3) "Critical habitat" means lands important for the protection, management, or public enjoyment of certain wildlife species or groups of species, including, but not limited to, wintering range for deer, elk, and other species, waterfowl and upland bird habitat, fish habitat, and habitat for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species.

(4) "Farmlands" means any land defined as: (a) "Farm and agricultural land" in RCW 84.34.020(2); and (b) "farm and agricultural conservation land" in RCW 84.34.020(8).

(5) "Local agencies" means a city, county, town, federally recognized Indian tribe, special purpose district, port district, or other political subdivision of the state providing services to less than the entire state.

(6) "Natural areas" means areas that have, to a significant degree, retained their natural character and are important in preserving rare or vanishing flora, fauna, geological, natural historical, or similar features of scientific or educational value.

(7) "Nonprofit nature ((~~conservancy corporation or association"~~)) conservancies means ((~~an~~)) organizations as defined in RCW 84.34.250.

(8) "Riparian habitat" means land adjacent to water bodies, as well as submerged land such as streambeds, which can provide functional habitat for salmonids and other fish and wildlife species. Riparian habitat includes, but is not limited to, shorelines and near-shore marine habitat, estuaries, lakes, wetlands, streams, and rivers.

(9) "Special needs populations" means physically restricted people or people of limited means.

(10) "State agencies" means the state parks and recreation commission, the department of natural resources, the department of enterprise services, and the department of fish and wildlife.

(11) "Trails" means public ways constructed for and open to pedestrians, equestrians, or bicyclists, or any combination thereof, other than a sidewalk constructed as a part of a city street or county road for exclusive use of pedestrians.

(12) "Urban wildlife habitat" means lands that provide habitat important to wildlife in proximity to a metropolitan area.

(13) "Water access" means boat or foot access to marine waters, lakes, rivers, or streams.

(14) "Confer" means a dialogue between project sponsors and local county and city officials with the purpose of early review of potential projects. The dialogue may include any matter relevant to a particular project, which may include but need not be limited to: Project purpose and scope; project elements; estimated project cost; costs and benefits to the community; plans for project management and maintenance; and public access.

(15) "Forest lands" means any land defined as "timberland" in RCW 84.34.020(3).

(16) "Multiple benefits" means recreational uses that are compatible with habitat conservation or resources uses or management practices that are compatible with and provide the ability to achieve additional conservation benefits.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.15.030 and 2015 c 183 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Moneys appropriated prior to July 1, 2016, for this chapter shall be divided as follows:

(a) Appropriations for a biennium of forty million dollars or less must be allocated equally between the habitat conservation account and the outdoor recreation account.

(b) If appropriations for a biennium total more than forty million dollars, the money must be allocated as follows: (i) Twenty million dollars to the habitat conservation account and twenty million dollars to the outdoor recreation account; (ii) any amount over forty million dollars up to fifty million dollars shall be allocated as follows: (A) Ten percent to the habitat conservation account; (B) ten percent to the outdoor recreation account; (C) forty percent to the riparian protection account; and (D) forty percent to the farmlands preservation account; and (iii) any amounts over fifty million dollars must be allocated as follows: (A) Thirty percent to the habitat conservation account; (B) thirty percent to the outdoor recreation account; (C) thirty percent to the riparian protection account; and (D) ten percent to the farmlands preservation account.

(2) ((~~Except as otherwise provided in chapter 303, Laws of 2005,~~)) Beginning July 1, 2016, moneys appropriated for this chapter must be allocated as follows: (a) Forty-five percent to the habitat conservation account; (b) forty-five percent to the outdoor recreation account; and (c) ten percent to the farm and forest account.

(3) Moneys deposited in these accounts shall be invested as authorized for other state funds, and any earnings on them shall be credited to the respective account.

((~~(3)~~)) (4) All moneys deposited in the habitat conservation, outdoor recreation, ((~~riparian protection, and farmlands preservation~~)) and farm and forest accounts shall be allocated as provided under RCW 79A.15.040, 79A.15.050, ((~~79A.15.120,~~)) and 79A.15.130 as grants to state or local agencies or nonprofit nature ((~~conservancy organizations or associations~~)) conservancies for acquisition, development, and renovation within the jurisdiction of those agencies, subject to legislative appropriation. The board may use or permit the use of any funds appropriated for this chapter as matching funds where federal, local, or other funds are made available for projects within the purposes of this chapter. Moneys appropriated to these accounts that are not obligated to a specific project may be used to fund projects from lists of alternate projects from the same account in biennia succeeding the biennium in which the moneys were originally appropriated.

((~~(4)~~)) (5) Projects receiving grants ((~~under this chapter that are developed or otherwise accessible for public recreational uses shall be available to the public~~)) for development, recreational access, or fee simple acquisition of land under this chapter must be accessible for public recreation and outdoor education unless the board specifically approves limiting public access in order to protect sensitive species, water quality, or public safety.

((~~(5)~~)) (6) The board may make grants to an eligible project from the habitat conservation, outdoor recreation, ((~~riparian protection, and farmlands preservation~~)) and farm and forest accounts and any one or more of the applicable categories under such accounts described in RCW 79A.15.040, 79A.15.050, ((~~79A.15.120,~~)) and 79A.15.130.

((~~(6)~~)) (7) The board may accept private donations to the habitat conservation account, the outdoor recreation account, ((~~the riparian protection account,~~)) and the ((~~farmlands preservation~~)) farm and forest account for the purposes specified in this chapter.

((~~(7)~~)) (8) The board may retain a portion of the funds appropriated for this chapter for its office for the administration of the programs and purposes specified in this chapter. The portion of the funds retained for administration may not exceed: (a) The actual administration costs averaged over the previous five biennia as a percentage of the legislature's new appropriation for this chapter; or (b) the amount specified in the appropriation, if any. Each biennium the percentage specified under (a) of this subsection must be approved by the office of financial management and submitted along with the prioritized lists of projects to be funded in RCW 79A.15.060((~~(6)~~)), 79A.15.070((~~(7)~~)), ((~~79A.15.120(10),~~)) and 79A.15.130((~~(11)~~)).

((~~(8)~~)) (9) Habitat and recreation land and facilities acquired or developed with moneys appropriated for this chapter may not, without prior approval of the board, be converted to a use other than that for which funds were originally approved. The board shall adopt rules and procedures governing the approval of such a conversion.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.15.040 and 2008 c 299 s 29 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Moneys appropriated for this chapter prior to July 1, 2016, to the habitat conservation account shall be distributed in the following way:

(a) Not less than forty percent through June 30, 2011, at which time the amount shall become forty-five percent, for the acquisition and development of critical habitat;

(b) Not less than thirty percent for the acquisition and development of natural areas;

(c) Not less than twenty percent for the acquisition and development of urban wildlife habitat; and

(d) Not less than ten percent through June 30, 2011, at which time the amount shall become five percent, shall be used by the board to fund restoration and enhancement projects on state lands. Only the department of natural resources and the department of fish and wildlife may apply for these funds to be used on existing habitat and natural area lands.

(2) Moneys appropriated beginning July 1, 2016, for this chapter to the habitat conservation account shall be distributed in the following way:

(a) Not less than thirty-five percent for the acquisition and development of critical habitat;

(b) Not less than twenty-five percent for the acquisition and development of natural areas;

(c) Not less than fifteen percent for the acquisition or enhancement or restoration of riparian habitat;

(d) Not less than fifteen percent for the acquisition and development of urban wildlife habitat; and

(e) Not less than ten percent or three million dollars, whichever is less, for the board to fund restoration and enhancement projects on state lands. Any amount above three million dollars must be distributed for the purposes of (c) of this subsection.

(3)(a) In distributing these funds, the board retains discretion to meet the most pressing needs for critical habitat, natural areas, riparian protection, and urban wildlife habitat, and is not required to meet the percentages described in subsections (1) and (2) of this section in any one biennium.

(b) If not enough project applications are submitted in a category within the habitat conservation account to meet the percentages described in subsections (1) and (2) of this section in any biennium, the board retains discretion to distribute any remaining funds to the other categories within the account.

((~~(3) Only~~)) (4) State agencies and nonprofit nature conservancies may apply for acquisition and development funds for natural areas projects under subsection (1)(b) of this section.

((~~(4)~~)) (5) State and local agencies and nonprofit nature conservancies may apply for acquisition and development funds for critical habitat ((~~and~~)), urban wildlife habitat, and riparian protection projects under ((~~subsection (1)(a) and (c) of~~)) this section. Other state agencies not defined in RCW 79A.15.010, such as the department of transportation and the department of corrections, may enter into interagency agreements with state agencies to apply in partnership for riparian protection funds under this section.

(6) The department of natural resources, the department of fish and wildlife, and the state parks and recreation commission may apply for restoration and enhancement funds to be used on existing state-owned lands.

((~~(5)~~)) (7)(a) Any lands that have been acquired with grants under this section by the department of fish and wildlife are subject to an amount in lieu of real property taxes and an additional amount for control of noxious weeds as determined by RCW 77.12.203.

(b) Any lands that have been acquired with grants under this section by the department of natural resources are subject to payments in the amounts required under the provisions of RCW 79.70.130 and 79.71.130.

((~~(6)~~)) (8) Except as otherwise conditioned by RCW 79A.15.140 or 79A.15.150, the board in its evaluating process shall consider the following in determining distribution priority:

(a) Whether the entity applying for funding is a Puget Sound partner, as defined in RCW 90.71.010;

(b) Effective one calendar year following the development and statewide availability of model evergreen community management plans and ordinances under RCW 35.105.050, whether the entity receiving assistance has been recognized, and what gradation of recognition was received, in the evergreen community recognition program created in RCW 35.105.030; and

(c) Whether the project is referenced in the action agenda developed by the Puget Sound partnership under RCW 90.71.310.

((~~(7)~~)) (9) After January 1, 2010, any project designed to address the restoration of Puget Sound may be funded under this chapter only if the project is not in conflict with the action agenda developed by the Puget Sound partnership under RCW 90.71.310.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.15.050 and 2007 c 241 s 30 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Moneys appropriated prior to July 1, 2016, for this chapter to the outdoor recreation account shall be distributed in the following way:

(a) Not less than thirty percent to the state parks and recreation commission for the acquisition and development of state parks, with at least fifty percent of the money for acquisition costs;

(b) Not less than thirty percent for the acquisition, development, and renovation of local parks, with at least fifty percent of this money for acquisition costs;

(c) Not less than twenty percent for the acquisition, renovation, or development of trails;

(d) Not less than fifteen percent for the acquisition, renovation, or development of water access sites, with at least seventy-five percent of this money for acquisition costs; and

(e) Not less than five percent for development and renovation projects on state recreation lands. Only the department of natural resources and the department of fish and wildlife may apply for these funds to be used on their existing recreation lands.

(2) Moneys appropriated beginning July 1, 2016, for this chapter to the outdoor recreation account shall be distributed in the following way:

(a) Not less than thirty percent to the state parks and recreation commission for the acquisition and development of state parks, with at least forty percent but no more than fifty percent of the money for acquisition costs;

(b) Not less than thirty percent for the acquisition, development, and renovation of local parks, with at least forty percent but no more than fifty percent of this money for acquisition costs;

(c) Not less than twenty percent for the acquisition, renovation, or development of trails;

(d) Not less than ten percent for the acquisition, renovation, or development of water access sites, with at least seventy-five percent of this money for acquisition costs; and

(e) Not less than ten percent or three million dollars, whichever is less, for development and renovation projects on state recreation lands. Any amount above three million dollars must be distributed for the purposes of (d) of this subsection.

(3)(a) In distributing these funds, the board retains discretion to meet the most pressing needs for state and local parks, trails, and water access sites, and is not required to meet the percentages described in subsections (1) and (2) of this section in any one biennium.

(b) If not enough project applications are submitted in a category within the outdoor recreation account to meet the percentages described in subsections (1) and (2) of this section in any biennium, the board retains discretion to distribute any remaining funds to the other categories within the account.

((~~(3)~~)) (4) Only the state parks and recreation commission may apply for acquisition and development funds for state parks under subsections (1)(a) and (2)(a) of this section.

(5) Only local agencies may apply for acquisition, development, or renovation funds for local parks under subsections (1)(b) and (2)(b) of this section.

((~~(4)~~)) (6) Only state and local agencies may apply for funds for trails under subsections (1)(c) and (2)(c) of this section.

((~~(5)~~)) (7) Only state and local agencies may apply for funds for water access sites under subsections (1)(d) and (2)(d) of this section.

(8) Only the department of natural resources and the department of fish and wildlife may apply for funds for development and renovation projects on existing state recreation lands under subsections (1)(e) and (2)(e) of this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.15.060 and 2009 c 341 s 3 and 2009 c 16 s 1 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

(1) The board may adopt rules establishing acquisition policies and priorities for distributions from the habitat conservation account.

(2) Except as provided in RCW 79A.15.030((~~(7)~~)) (8), moneys appropriated for this chapter may not be used by the board to fund staff positions or other overhead expenses, or by a state, regional, or local agency to fund operation or maintenance of areas acquired under this chapter.

(3) Moneys appropriated for this chapter may be used by grant recipients for costs incidental to acquisition, including, but not limited to, surveying expenses, fencing, noxious weed control, and signing.

(4) The board may not approve a local project where the local agency share is less than the amount to be awarded from the habitat conservation account.

(5) In determining acquisition priorities with respect to the habitat conservation account, the board shall consider, at a minimum, the following criteria:

(a) For critical habitat and natural areas proposals:

(i) Multiple benefits for the project;

(ii) Whether, and the extent to which, a conservation easement can be used to meet the purposes for the project;

(iii) Community support for the project based on input from, but not limited to, local citizens, local organizations, and local elected officials;

((~~(ii)~~)) (iv) The project proposal's ongoing stewardship program that includes estimated costs of maintaining and operating the project including, but not limited to, control of noxious weeds((~~,~~)) and detrimental invasive species, and that identifies the source of the funds from which the stewardship program will be funded;

((~~(iii)~~)) (v) Recommendations as part of a watershed plan or habitat conservation plan, or a coordinated regionwide prioritization effort, and for projects primarily intended to benefit salmon, limiting factors, or critical pathways analysis;

((~~(iv)~~)) (vi) Immediacy of threat to the site;

((~~(v)~~)) (vii) Uniqueness of the site;

((~~(vi)~~)) (viii) Diversity of species using the site;

((~~(vii)~~)) (ix) Quality of the habitat;

((~~(viii)~~)) (x) Long-term viability of the site;

((~~(ix)~~)) (xi) Presence of endangered, threatened, or sensitive species;

((~~(x)~~)) (xii) Enhancement of existing public property;

((~~(xi)~~)) (xiii) Consistency with a local land use plan, or a regional or statewide recreational or resource plan, including projects that assist in the implementation of local shoreline master plans updated according to RCW 90.58.080 or local comprehensive plans updated according to RCW 36.70A.130;

((~~(xii)~~)) (xiv) Educational and scientific value of the site;

((~~(xiii)~~)) (xv) Integration with recovery efforts for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species;

((~~(xiv) For critical habitat proposals by local agencies,~~)) (xvi) The statewide significance of the site.

(b) For urban wildlife habitat proposals, in addition to the criteria of (a) of this subsection:

(i) Population of, and distance from, the nearest urban area;

(ii) Proximity to other wildlife habitat;

(iii) Potential for public use; and

(iv) Potential for use by special needs populations.

(c) For riparian protection proposals, the board must consider, at a minimum, the following criteria:

(i) Whether the project continues the conservation reserve enhancement program. Applications that extend the duration of leases of riparian areas that are currently enrolled in the conservation reserve enhancement program are eligible. These applications are eligible for a conservation lease extension of at least twenty-five years of duration;

(ii) Whether the projects are identified or recommended in a watershed plan, salmon recovery plan, or other local plans, such as habitat conservation plans, and these must be highly considered in the process;

(iii) Whether there is community support for the project;

(iv) Whether the proposal includes an ongoing stewardship program that includes control of noxious weeds, detrimental invasive species, and that identifies the source of the funds from which the stewardship program will be funded;

(v) Whether there is an immediate threat to the site;

(vi) Whether the quality of the habitat is improved or, for projects including restoration or enhancement, the potential for restoring quality habitat including linkage of the site to other high quality habitat;

(vii) Whether the project is consistent with a local land use plan or a regional or statewide recreational or resource plan. The projects that assist in the implementation of local shoreline master plans updated according to RCW 90.58.080 or local comprehensive plans updated according to RCW 36.70A.130 must be highly considered in the process;

(viii) Whether the site has educational or scientific value; and

(ix) Whether the site has passive recreational values for walking trails, wildlife viewing, the observation of natural settings, or other multiple benefits.

(d) Moneys appropriated for this chapter to riparian protection projects must be distributed for the acquisition or enhancement or restoration of riparian habitat. All enhancement or restoration projects, except those qualifying under (c)(i) of this subsection, must include the acquisition of a real property interest in order to be eligible.

(6) Before November 1st of each even-numbered year, the board shall recommend to the governor a prioritized list of all ((~~state agency and local~~)) projects to be funded under RCW 79A.15.040((~~(1) (a), (b), and (c)~~)). The governor may remove projects from the list recommended by the board and shall submit this amended list in the capital budget request to the legislature. The list shall include, but not be limited to, a description of each project and any particular match requirement, and describe for each project any anticipated restrictions upon recreational activities allowed prior to the project.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.15.070 and 2007 c 241 s 33 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) In determining which state parks proposals and local parks proposals to fund, the board shall use existing policies and priorities.

(2) Except as provided in RCW 79A.15.030((~~(7)~~)) (8), moneys appropriated for this chapter may not be used by the board to fund staff or other overhead expenses, or by a state, regional, or local agency to fund operation or maintenance of areas acquired under this chapter.

(3) Moneys appropriated for this chapter may be used by grant recipients for costs incidental to acquisition and development, including, but not limited to, surveying expenses, fencing, and signing.

(4) The board may not approve a project of a local agency where the share contributed by the local agency is less than the amount to be awarded from the outdoor recreation account. The local agency's share may be reduced or waived if the project meets the needs of an underserved population or a community in need, as defined by the board.

(5) The board may adopt rules establishing acquisition policies and priorities for the acquisition and development of trails and water access sites to be financed from moneys in the outdoor recreation account.

(6) In determining the acquisition and development priorities, the board shall consider, at a minimum, the following criteria:

(a) For trails proposals:

(i) Community support for the project;

(ii) Immediacy of threat to the site;

(iii) Linkage between communities;

(iv) Linkage between trails;

(v) Existing or potential usage;

(vi) Consistency with a local land use plan, or a regional or statewide recreational or resource plan, including projects that assist in the implementation of local shoreline master plans updated according to RCW 90.58.080 or local comprehensive plans updated according to RCW 36.70A.130;

(vii) Availability of water access or views;

(viii) Enhancement of wildlife habitat; and

(ix) Scenic values of the site.

(b) For water access proposals:

(i) Community support for the project;

(ii) Distance from similar water access opportunities;

(iii) Immediacy of threat to the site;

(iv) Diversity of possible recreational uses;

(v) Public demand in the area; and

(vi) Consistency with a local land use plan, or a regional or statewide recreational or resource plan, including projects that assist in the implementation of local shoreline master plans updated according to RCW 90.58.080 or local comprehensive plans updated according to RCW 36.70A.130.

(7) Before November 1st of each even-numbered year, the board shall recommend to the governor a prioritized list of all ((~~state agency and local~~)) projects to be funded under RCW 79A.15.050((~~(1) (a), (b), (c), and (d)~~)). The governor may remove projects from the list recommended by the board and shall submit this amended list in the capital budget request to the legislature. The list shall include, but not be limited to, a description of each project and any particular match requirement, and describe for each project any anticipated restrictions upon recreational activities allowed prior to the project.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.15.080 and 2007 c 241 s 34 are each amended to read as follows:

The board shall not sign contracts or otherwise financially obligate funds from the habitat conservation account, the outdoor recreation account, ((~~the riparian protection account,~~)) or the ((~~farmlands preservation~~)) farm and forest account as provided in this chapter before the legislature has appropriated funds for a specific list of projects. The legislature may remove projects from the list recommended by the governor.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.15.110 and 2007 c 241 s 36 are each amended to read as follows:

((~~A~~)) State or local ((~~agency~~)) agencies or nonprofit nature conservancies shall review the proposed project application and confer with the county or city with jurisdiction over the project area prior to applying for funds for the acquisition of property under this chapter. The appropriate county or city legislative authority may, at its discretion, submit a letter to the board identifying the authority's position with regard to the acquisition project. The board shall make the letters received under this section available to the governor and the legislature when the prioritized project list is submitted under ((~~RCW 79A.15.120, 79A.15.060, and 79A.15.070~~)) this chapter.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.15.130 and 2009 c 341 s 5 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The ((~~farmlands preservation~~)) farm and forest account is established in the state treasury. The board will administer the account in accordance with chapter 79A.25 RCW and this chapter, and hold it separate and apart from all other money, funds, and accounts of the board. Moneys appropriated for this chapter to the ((~~farmlands preservation~~)) farm and forest account must be distributed for the acquisition and preservation of farmlands and forest lands in order to maintain the opportunity for agricultural and forest management activity upon these lands.

(2)((~~(a) Moneys appropriated for this chapter to the farmlands preservation account may be distributed for (i) the fee simple or less than fee simple acquisition of farmlands; (ii) the enhancement or restoration of ecological functions on those properties; or (iii) both~~)) Moneys appropriated beginning July 1, 2016, for this chapter shall be divided as follows:

(a) Not less than ninety percent for the acquisition and preservation of farmlands.

(b) Not less than ten percent for the acquisition and preservation of forest lands.

(3) Moneys appropriated for this chapter to the farm and forest account may be distributed for: (a) The acquisition of a less than fee simple interest in farmlands or forest land, such as a conservation easement or lease; (b) the enhancement or restoration of ecological functions on those properties; or (c) both. In order for a farmland or forest land preservation grant to provide for an environmental enhancement or restoration project, the project must include the acquisition of a real property interest.

((~~(b) If a city, county, nonprofit nature conservancy organization or association, or the conservation commission acquires a property through this program in fee simple, the city, county, nonprofit nature conservancy organization or association, or the conservation commission shall endeavor to secure preservation of the property through placing a conservation easement, or other form of deed restriction, on the property which dedicates the land to agricultural use and retains one or more property rights in perpetuity. Once an easement or other form of deed restriction is placed on the property, the city, county, nonprofit nature conservancy organization or association, or the conservation commission shall seek to sell the property, at fair market value, to a person or persons who will maintain the property in agricultural production. Any moneys from the sale of the property shall either be used to purchase interests in additional properties which meet the criteria in subsection (9) of this section, or to repay the grant from the state which was originally used to purchase the property.~~

~~(3)~~)) (4) Cities, counties, nonprofit nature ((~~conservancy organizations or associations~~)) conservancies, and the conservation commission may apply for acquisition and enhancement or restoration funds for farmland or forest land preservation projects within their jurisdictions under subsection (1) of this section.

((~~(4)~~)) (5) The board may adopt rules establishing acquisition and enhancement or restoration policies and priorities for distributions from the ((~~farmlands preservation~~)) farm and forest account.

((~~(5)~~)) (6) The acquisition of a property ((~~right~~)) interest in a project under this section ((~~by a county, city, nonprofit nature conservancy organization or association, or the conservation commission~~)) does not provide a right of access to the property by the public unless explicitly provided for in a conservation easement or other form of deed restriction.

((~~(6)~~)) (7) Except as provided in RCW 79A.15.030((~~(7)~~)) (8), moneys appropriated for this section may not be used by the board to fund staff positions or other overhead expenses, or by ((~~a city, county, nonprofit nature conservancy organization or association~~)) cities, counties, nonprofit nature conservancies, or the conservation commission to fund operation or maintenance of areas acquired under this chapter.

((~~(7)~~)) (8) Moneys appropriated for this section may be used by grant recipients for costs incidental to restoration and acquisition, including, but not limited to, surveying expenses, fencing, noxious weed control, and signing.

((~~(8)~~)) (9) The board may not approve a local project where the local agency's or nonprofit nature ((~~conservancy organization's or association's~~)) conservancies' share is less than the amount to be awarded from the ((~~farmlands preservation~~)) farm and forest account. In-kind contributions, including contributions of a real property interest in land, may be used to satisfy the local agency's or nonprofit nature ((~~conservancy organization's or association's~~)) conservancies' share.

((~~(9)~~)) (10) In determining the acquisition priorities for farmland projects, the board must consider, at a minimum, the following criteria:

(a) Community support for the project;

(b) A recommendation as part of a limiting factors or critical pathways analysis, a watershed plan or habitat conservation plan, or a coordinated regionwide prioritization effort;

(c) The likelihood of the conversion of the site to nonagricultural or more highly developed usage;

(d) Consistency with a local land use plan, or a regional or statewide recreational or resource plan. The projects that assist in the implementation of local shoreline master plans updated according to RCW 90.58.080 or local comprehensive plans updated according to RCW 36.70A.130 must be highly considered in the process;

(e) Benefits to salmonids;

(f) Benefits to other fish and wildlife habitat;

(g) Integration with recovery efforts for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species;

(h) The viability of the site for continued agricultural production, including, but not limited to:

(i) Soil types;

(ii) On-site production and support facilities such as barns, irrigation systems, crop processing and storage facilities, wells, housing, livestock sheds, and other farming infrastructure;

(iii) Suitability for producing different types or varieties of crops;

(iv) Farm-to-market access;

(v) Water availability; and

(i) Other community values provided by the property when used as agricultural land, including, but not limited to:

(i) Viewshed;

(ii) Aquifer recharge;

(iii) Occasional or periodic collector for storm water runoff;

(iv) Agricultural sector job creation;

(v) Migratory bird habitat and forage area; and

(vi) Educational and curriculum potential.

((~~(10)~~)) (11) In allotting funds for environmental enhancement or restoration projects, the board will require the projects to meet the following criteria:

(a) Enhancement or restoration projects must further the ecological functions of the farmlands;

(b) The projects, such as fencing, bridging watercourses, replanting native vegetation, replacing culverts, clearing of waterways, etc., must be less than fifty percent of the acquisition cost of the project including any in-kind contribution by any party;

(c) The projects should be based on accepted methods of achieving beneficial enhancement or restoration results; and

(d) The projects should enhance the viability of the preserved farmland to provide agricultural production while conforming to any legal requirements for habitat protection.

((~~(11)~~)) (12) In determining the acquisition priorities for forest land projects, the board must consider, at a minimum, the following criteria:

(a) Community support for the project;

(b) A recommendation as part of a limiting factors or critical pathways analysis, a watershed plan or habitat conservation plan, or a coordinated regionwide prioritization effort;

(c) The likelihood of conversion of the site to nontimber or more highly developed use;

(d) Consistency with a local land use plan, or a regional or statewide recreational or resource plan. The projects that assist in the implementation of local shoreline master plans updated according to RCW 90.58.080 or local comprehensive plans updated according to RCW 36.70A.130 must be highly considered in the process;

(e) Multiple benefits of the project;

(f) Project attributes, including but not limited to:

(i) Clean air and water;

(ii) Storm water management;

(iii) Wildlife habitat; and

(iv) Potential for carbon sequestration.

(13) In allotting funds for environmental enhancement or restoration projects, the board must require the projects to meet the following criteria:

(a) Enhancement or restoration projects must further the ecological functions of the forest lands;

(b) The projects, such as fencing, bridging watercourses, replanting native vegetation, replacing culverts, etc., must be less than fifty percent of the acquisition cost of the project including any in-kind contribution by any party;

(c) The projects should be based on accepted methods of achieving beneficial enhancement or restoration results;

(d) The projects should enhance the viability of the preserved forest land to provide timber production while conforming to any legal requirements for habitat protection.

(14) Before November 1st of each even-numbered year, the board will recommend to the governor a prioritized list of all projects to be funded under this section. The governor may remove projects from the list recommended by the board and must submit this amended list in the capital budget request to the legislature. The list must include, but not be limited to, a description of each project and any particular match requirement.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The allocations in sections 3, 4, and 5 of this act apply to the prioritized list of all projects submitted by November 1, 2016. The eligibility provisions in sections 4 and 5 of this act for nonprofit nature conservancies, as defined in RCW 84.34.250, and eligibility provisions in section 10 of this act are effective for projects submitted in 2016. The recreation and conservation funding board shall provide a prioritized list of projects to be funded under RCW 79A.15.130(2)(b) by November 1, 2017. All other provisions of this act apply to subsequent grant cycles.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  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 immediately.

**--- END ---**

Passed by the Senate March 8, 2016.

Passed by the House March 2, 2016.

Approved by the Governor March 31, 2016.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State April 1, 2016.