

**RCW 79A.15.120 Riparian protection account—Use of funds. (1)**

The riparian protection account is established in the state treasury. The board must 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.

(2) Moneys appropriated for this chapter to the riparian protection account must be distributed for the acquisition or enhancement or restoration of riparian habitat. All enhancement or restoration projects, except those qualifying under subsection (9) (a) of this section, must include the acquisition of a real property interest in order to be eligible.

(3) State and local agencies and lead entities under chapter 77.85 RCW, nonprofit nature conservancy organizations or associations, and the conservation commission may apply for acquisition and enhancement or restoration funds for riparian habitat projects under subsection (1) 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 funds under this section.

(4) The board may adopt rules establishing acquisition policies and priorities for distributions from the riparian protection account.

(5) Except as provided in \*RCW 79A.15.030(7), moneys appropriated for this section 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.

(6) 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, and signing.

(7) The board may not approve a local project where the local agency or nonprofit nature conservancy organization or association share is less than the amount to be awarded from the riparian protection 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 share.

(8) State agencies receiving grants for acquisition of land under this section must pay an amount in lieu of real property taxes equal to the amount of tax that would be due if the land were taxable as open space land under chapter 84.34 RCW except taxes levied for any state purpose, plus an additional amount for control of noxious weeds equal to that which would be paid if such lands were privately owned. The county assessor and county legislative authority shall assist in determining the appropriate calculation of the amount of tax that would be due.

(9) In determining acquisition priorities with respect to the riparian protection account, the board must consider, at a minimum, the following criteria:

(a) 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 shall be eligible. Such applications are eligible for a conservation lease extension of at least twenty-five years of duration;

(b) Whether the projects are identified or recommended in a watershed planning process under chapter 247, Laws of 1998, salmon

recovery planning under chapter 77.85 RCW, or other local plans, such as habitat conservation plans, and these must be highly considered in the process;

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

(d) 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;

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

(f) 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;

(g) 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;

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

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

(10) Before November 1st of each even-numbered year, the board will recommend to the governor a prioritized list of projects to be funded under this section. The governor may remove projects from the list recommended by the board and will 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. [2009 c 341 § 4; 2009 c 16 § 2; 2007 c 241 § 37; 2005 c 303 § 6.]

**Reviser's note:** \*(1) RCW 79A.15.030 was amended by 2016 c 149 § 3, changing subsection (7) to subsection (8).

(2) This section was amended by 2009 c 16 § 2 and by 2009 c 341 § 4, 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—2007 c 241:** See notes following RCW 79A.25.005.

**Effective date—2005 c 303 §§ 1-14:** See note following RCW 79A.15.010.