

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6227

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Implementing the recommendations of the 2015 review of the Washington wildlife and recreation program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Honeyford, Keiser, Rolfes, Conway, Ranker, McAuliffe, Mullet and Chase; by request of Recreation and Conservation Office).

Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks
House Committee on Capital Budget

Background: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Generally. The WWRP provides capital budget funds for the acquisition and development of land for outdoor recreation, habitat conservation, and farmland preservation. Eligible recipients include state agencies, local governments, tribes, and nonprofit entities. The WWRP consists of four accounts: the Habitat and Conservation Account (HCA); the Outdoor Recreation Account (ORA); the Riparian Protection Account (RPA); and the Farmland Preservation Account (FPA).

Each of the accounts receive funds according to a statutory formula, with the HCA and ORA each including multiple funding categories within that account.

The statute provides rulemaking and grant review and prioritization authority to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB), which is administrated by the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO).

2015 WWRP Review. A 2015 capital budget proviso directed RCO to convene and facilitate a stakeholder process to review and make recommendations on the WWRP. RCO submitted a report to the Legislature in December 2015, which includes background on WWRP project funding, a summary of the review process, and a series of statutory and administrative recommendations.

Summary: Modifies WWRP's Account Structure. Several changes are made to the WWRP's account structure. These changes:

- shift funding from the RPA as a separate account into a new riparian protection funding category within the HCA; and

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- rename the FPA as the Farm & Forests Account (FFA), with 90 percent of funds dedicated to farmland preservation projects and 10 percent for projects on forest land. Priorities are set for forest land funds including community support, likelihood of conversion, and existence of multiple benefits.

Shifts Allocation Among WWRP's Accounts. The allocation among WWRP accounts is modified from a structure that varies based on the appropriation level to a structure that provides 45 percent to the HCA, 45 percent to the ORA, and 10 percent to the FFA, regardless of the amount of the appropriation.

Current	SB 6227
Appropriations of \$40 M or less: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% - HCA • 50% - ORA Appropriations over \$40 M: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$20 M - HCA • \$20 M - ORA • Amounts between \$40-50 M: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% - HCA • 10% - ORA • 40% - RPA • 40% - FPA • Amounts over \$50 M: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% - HCA • 30% - ORA • 30% - RPA • 10% - FPA 	Appropriations at all levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45% - HCA • 45% - ORA • 10% - FFA

Shifts Allocation Within the HCA. An additional funding category is established for riparian habitat within the HCA, and the percentage of funds for state lands restoration and enhancement is increased. The percentage of funding for each of the remaining categories decreases.

Current	SB 6227
Allocation within the HCA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45% - Critical habitat • 30% - Natural areas • 20% - Urban wildlife habitat • 5% - State lands restoration and enhancement (DFW & DNR) 	Allocation within the HCA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35% - Critical habitat • 25% - Natural areas • 15% - Riparian habitat • 15% - Urban wildlife • Lesser of 10% or \$3 M for state lands restoration and enhancement (DFW, DNR, State Parks). Amounts in excess of \$3 M are for riparian habitat

Shifts Allocation Within the ORA. The percentage of funds for state recreational lands within the ORA is increased by 5%, while the amount for water access sites is decreased by 5 percent.

Current	SB 6227
<p>Allocation within the ORA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% - State Parks, at least 50% for acquisition • 30% - Local parks, at least 50% for acquisition • 20% - Trails • 15% - Water access sites • 5% - State recreational lands (DFW & DNR) 	<p>Allocation within the ORA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% - State Parks, 40-50% for acquisition • 30% - Local parks, 40-50% for acquisition • 20% - Trails • 10% - Water access sites • Lesser of 10% or \$3 M for state recreational lands (DFW & DNR). Amounts in excess of \$3 M are for water access sites

Modifies WWRP Eligibility and Application Processes.

- Expands eligibility for nonprofit nature conservancies within the HCA to include the natural areas, critical habitat, and urban wildlife categories.
- Allows State Parks to apply for funding from the restoration and enhancement category within the HCA, in addition to DFW and DNR.
- Adds criteria the RCFB must consider when setting acquisition priorities for the HCA.
- Specifies that in addition to reviewing an application with the appropriate local governments, applicants must confer with them as well.

Modifies Allowable Costs and Management Requirements Under the WWRP.

- Adds noxious weed control to allowable incidental costs paid from HCA grant for land acquisitions, in addition to currently authorized costs such as fencing and surveying.
- Specifies that development, recreational access, or fee simple acquisition projects must be accessible for recreation and outdoor education unless the RCFB approves a limitation to protect sensitive species, water quality, or public safety.
- Allows the RCFB to waive a local match for projects that meet the needs of an underserved population or a community in need, as defined by the RCFB. The usual requirement is that a local agency match equals the amount awarded from the ORA.

Includes Definitions and Implementing Provisions.

- Makes changes to allocation under the WWRP effective for appropriations after July 1, 2016. Specifies a timeline for implementation of the various provisions of the bill.
- Defines terms and modifies existing definitions.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate 46 0
House 77 20 (House amended)

Senate 45 2 (Senate concurred)

Effective: March 31, 2016